

RESEARCH REPORT

‘Stories We Bring to Life’

How Civil Society Uses Narrative in Transitional Justice Contexts

July 2026



Cover Image: Left, Grace Agenda undertakes a project activity in Kenya on the 2021 Kinshasa Declaration on Reparations by survivors of sexual violence on March 1, 2025 (Grace Agenda). Center, women survivors and community members participate in an evening social cohesion dialogue in the village of Kerr Mot Ali, Upper Saloum District, The Gambia (WAVE-Gambia). Right, a participant in an LBT women's forum in Colombia, held in 2023, engages in an activity on developing a national action plan (Colombia Diversa).

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About ICTJ

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) works across society and borders to challenge the causes and address the consequences of massive human rights violations. We affirm victims' dignity, fight impunity, and promote responsive institutions in societies emerging from repressive rule or armed conflict as well as in established democracies where historical injustices or systemic abuse remain unresolved. ICTJ envisions a world where societies break the cycle of massive human rights violations and lay the foundations for peace, justice, and inclusion. For more information, visit www.ictj.org

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ABBREVIATIONS

CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FARC-EP	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army
FGM	Female genital mutilation
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
JEP	Special Jurisdiction for Peace
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex+
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
TJRC	Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission
TRRC	Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission

Executive Summary

Narrative is an important element of transitional justice. Efforts to address past human rights violations involve different accounts or representations of what happened and why, who was harmed, who is responsible, and how the violations can be addressed or prevented from happening again. The establishment of a single, shared narrative about the past in the aftermath of widespread abuses is likely unrealistic in most contexts, which often remain at least partially divided and sometimes deeply polarized. However, a process in which significant elements of society come together to reduce the prevalence of false, oversimplified, and divisive narratives and attempt to acknowledge the violations that occurred can be an important mechanism of change.

Despite the role that narrative can play in transitional justice, its explicit use as a lens for research and analysis and a tool for communication, dialogue, advocacy, mobilization, and policy engagement is arguably underutilized by transitional justice practitioners and stakeholders. Compelling and credible stories or other communications techniques can help change people's values and beliefs and achieve transitional justice objectives. This includes stories about the experiences and journeys of individual victims, practitioners, leaders, and other stakeholders, but it also includes broader representations of relationships, communities, cultures, institutions, structures, and societal goals. There are virtually unlimited ways in which people, communities, and societies can seek to build narratives. While common transitional justice measures, such as truth commissions, reparations programs, memory work, reforms, and judicial processes, certainly provide space to employ such an approach, so too do other areas, such as the arts, media, education, and political and social movements.

The research presented in this report was conducted as part of a study designed to understand, and learn from, how different actors involved in transitional justice processes narrate and communicate their impact and value. The focus on narrative captures the content, form, and audiences of these actors' communications work. In a transitional justice context, a narrative lens can help us to interpret the narrative landscape, understand what issues and ideas are salient at specific times and in particular contexts, and show how broader support for justice can be fostered. The study focuses on Colombia, The Gambia, and Kenya. These three countries have experienced different mixes of violence and serious human rights violations and are currently at different stages of the process of addressing those violations. The narrative landscape related to transitional justice in each case is naturally distinct, but there are discourses that overlap and, ultimately, connect with long-term peace and development in multiple ways.

Colombia's implementation of formal transitional justice mechanisms spans more than two decades, resulting in a comprehensive process and institutional architecture that has continued to evolve, including through the 2016 peace agreement. Almost 10 years into its transition out of authoritarian rule, The Gambia is at the stage of implementing its truth commission's recommendations by setting up mechanisms for accountability and reparation. After decades of authoritarian rule and state-sanctioned political violence, Kenya went through a period of post-electoral violence in 2007, after which it pursued truth and reform, though the need for reform, reparation, and accountability persists. In addition to core elements of transitional justice, like truth, accountability, reparation, and nonrecurrence, the range of discourses used in these countries includes those of democratization, corruption, peace, transformation, and reconciliation, among others. All these concepts intersect with each other and relate to sustainable development.

The term narrative refers to patterns of stories that are held by individuals or groups and that convey beliefs or understandings about the way the world works. Stories, in this sense, are made up of the accounts, discourses, framing, and messaging that actors use to describe and communicate their work and goals and how they fit within a community's or society's journey from the past to an imagined future. This study treats narrative as a lens through which to analyze how actors involved in transitional justice understand and project their own role in this journey. Applying this lens does not imply that each actor consciously engages in "narrative work" or "storytelling," although some do. Narrative is instead the conceptual framework that ties together notions of story, discourse, and communication, one that can be particularly helpful in transitional justice contexts.

The research study comprised desk-based research and interviews in three case study countries: Colombia (six interviews with eight participants), Kenya (five interviews with five participants), and The Gambia (nine interviews with 14 participants). Interviews took place between March and August 2025, primarily with civil society actors, with additional interviews conducted with government representatives, academics, and ICTJ staff.

Key Findings

Civil society actors involved in transitional justice use stories, carefully selecting their content and framing to achieve their own objectives. These may include raising the visibility of a particular topic in a transitional justice process, shaping the opinions and actions of relevant actors like policymakers, engaging wider audiences as stakeholders, or accessing donor funds. This narrative communications work is vitally important, and yet it tends to be under-funded, under-discussed, and under-researched. This is often due to limited resources and skills but also to a broader gap in transitional justice practice and thinking. If the narrative communications work of transitional justice stakeholders were to be taken seriously and well resourced, it has the potential to support better justice, peace, and development outcomes. Based on the actors' approaches to messaging and communications in Colombia, The Gambia, and Kenya, we identify three key themes: narrative framing, narrative construct and ownership, and narrative dissemination.

What Stories Are Being Told?

Narrative framing refers to the content of the stories that actors are telling about transitional justice and their own work, how they have changed over time, and with which wider discourses around justice and development they align. We demonstrate that actors are agile in making decisions about which discourses will connect best with different audiences and which will best promote their work, be it human rights, sustainable peace, or livelihoods. These decisions about

narrative framing take place in the context of an evolving transitional justice process. Opportunities to amplify or shift messaging may present themselves due to the inception of a new transitional justice mechanism or key political decision.

How Are Narratives Developed?

Narrative construct and ownership speak to the stories transitional justice actors share about themselves in terms of resources, strategies, and audiences, and in relation to the stories other actors tell. We reflect on how individual actors construct sub-narratives as part of a broader narrative landscape in which civil society organizations, state institutions, communities, and victims all have their own agendas and messages. We find that many organizations will join with others to strengthen their voice through a shared story as an impact strategy. In each country context, there is an ongoing negotiation over narrative ownership, whether between different transitional justice stakeholders or more broadly as a question of national identity and empowerment. Given these dynamics, it is important to understand communications and narrative as a two-way process of listening as well as telling.

How Are Messages Communicated to Audiences?

Narrative dissemination refers to the way messages are shared with different audiences, often to persuade those audiences in a particular direction. We analyze how the salient framings are chosen by actors according to their intended audiences and the specific contexts in which the organizations work. Decision-making around which communication vehicle is most effective—for example, print media, radio, social media, sports, or arts—depends on available resources, training, and knowledge of local cultures. These considerations shape organizations' choices about the content and form of the stories they tell about their work in the context of transitional justice.

Supporting Narrative and Communications Work

Civil society actors use narratives to advocate, promote, disseminate, and generate impact, but they work at different scales and timelines and have different access to resources and visibility. If such important narrative communications work is to be leveraged as a mechanism of change, partners and funders must consider how narrative framing, form, ownership, and dissemination can be best understood and purposed. This includes supporting how narrative work is built into wider action, including the promotion of capacity building, exchange, and activities focused on communications work, which require communications budgets. They should ensure an inclusive range of voices are funded and supported in their work, thereby encouraging a more dynamic narrative landscape. Including narrative landscapes when mapping contexts and actors and ensuring conflict-sensitive programming can better inform transitional justice stakeholders in all aspects of their strategy and communications work.

It is also important to acknowledge that not all narrative shifts are intentional or intuitive. The discrepancies in how organizations prioritize and strategize communications illustrate their range of awareness and capabilities to identify and use narrative. These capabilities are shaped by challenging contexts that are geographically, professionally, financially, and thematically stratified. Recognizing and supporting transitional justice actors' narrative communications work, in terms of technical training but also with psychosocial support, is essential. This should be a multidirectional process where both technical and contextual communication expertise is shared to create best practice standards that are relevant and useable and that connect actors to their desired audiences.

Chapter 1. Narratives and Transitional Justice

Understanding Narratives

While a singular definition of a narrative does not exist, there is broad agreement that narrative is “of the world and not about it.”¹ Narrative has been described as “the world we live in, a delicate dance between language, symbol, meaning, and action. While we cannot escape it, we can strive to better understand its opportunities and its challenges, its capacities and its limits.”² In this sense, narrative is as much a product as a representation of the way we live our lives. Narrative is more than a singular story; it is a pattern of stories that are held by individuals or groups and contain beliefs about the way the world works.³ Studies on narrative often distinguish between master and counter narratives, exploring how dominant understandings of the world may stand in tension with individuals’ stories and experiences,⁴ while narrative change activists and actors point to the power of narrative in shifting public opinion and creating change.⁵

Narratives are not innately harmful or beneficial, as studies have shown.⁶ It is also very difficult to measure the effect that narrative strategies can have on opinions and beliefs.⁷ There is, however, a strong sense running through the literature of the power of narrative change to support progressive political and social agendas in the areas of race, gender, and economic inequality. As Marshall Ganz writes in his study of public narrative and power, “Stories, strategically told, can powerfully rouse a sense of urgency; hope; anger; solidarity; and the belief that individuals, acting in concert, can make a difference.”⁸ Work on narrative change focuses on “public discourse” and supporting “ongoing transformation” for “positive social change.”¹⁰ Narrative strategy can take both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication targeted at different kinds of audiences.

1 Colette Daiute and Cynthia Lightfoot, *Narrative Analysis: Studying the Development of Individuals in Society* (SAGE, 2004), xi.

2 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, “The Narrative Transformation Lab,” George Mason University, <https://carterschool.gmu.edu/research-impact/carter-school-peace-labs/narrative-transformation-lab>

3 June Han and Nikki Kalra, ORS Impact, “Narrative Change: A Review of Concepts, Frameworks and Approaches” (September 2024), 11.

4 Molly Andrews and Michael Bamberg, eds., *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004).

5 See, for example, the Narrative Change Lab (<https://inspiritfoundation.org/narrative-change-lab/>) or the Narrative Initiative (<https://narrativeinitiative.org/>).

6 Katherine McComas and James Shanahan, “Telling Stories About Global Climate Change: Measuring the Impact of Narratives on Issue Cycles,” *Communication Research* 26.1 (1999): 30-57; Sara Cobb et al., Institute for Integrated Transitions, “The Role of Narrative in Managing Conflict and Supporting Peace” (2021).

7 Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic, “Measuring Narrative Engagement,” *Media Psychology* 12.4 (2009): 321-347.

8 Marshall Ganz, “Public Narrative, Collective Action, and Power,” in *Accountability Through Public Opinion: From Inertia to Public Action*, eds. Sina Odugbemi and Taeku Lee (Washington DC: The World Bank, 2011), 288-289.

9 Han and Kalra, “Narrative Change,” 11.

10 Elena Dalpiaz and Giada Di Stefano, “A Universe of Stories: Mobilizing Narrative Practices During Transformative Change,” *Strategic Management Society* 39.3 (2018): 664-696.

While it is difficult to measure the success of narrative change strategies, lessons learned identify the importance of understanding audience (both supportive and resistant), understanding what narratives are currently circulating about a particular issue, and being able to generate messaging that is framed by common values.¹¹ In addition, a narrative change strategy is most likely to be successful if it intersects with the audiences' preexisting narratives, can create a basis for stories that can then be authentically told by the people seeking change, and narrates a future that the audience wants.¹² These insights speak to the importance of timing, research, and skillful implementation.

A relatively new approach, the narrative policy framework, identifies three levels on which narrative can influence policy processes: the micro level, meaning how individuals inform and are informed by narratives; the meso level, meaning how policy narratives are deployed by policy actors who participate in the groups, coalitions, and organizations that compose the policy subsystem; and the macro level, meaning how policy narratives that are embedded in cultures and institutions shape public policy.¹³

Connecting this work to transitional justice contexts, Sara Cobb et al. suggest that narratives can be visualized as trees "rooted in major events and mythic stories and branching out into practices, policies and other outcomes that give each narrative tree its shape." Because polarized societies "tend to be dominated by a few large trees that represent simplified narratives," they suggest that the proliferation of narrative trees with some intersecting branches and common roots may help to reduce conflict through the development of a more inclusive narrative landscape.¹⁴ Louis Bickford has argued for transitional justice and narrative change to be brought closer together, seeking to capitalize on the overlapping goals of generating a narrative shift and creating common narratives about who we are.¹⁵

Narrative is not an end point, but a means by which perspectives, relationships, and structures can be shifted.¹⁶ In a transitional justice context, a narrative lens can help us to interpret the narrative landscape, understand what issues and ideas are salient at specific times and in particular contexts, and show how broader support for justice can be fostered. Narratives can be used for narrative change, but also for a range of direct and indirect objectives according to whatever an actor is trying to achieve.

Understanding Narratives and Transitional Justice

Narrative is an important element of transitional justice in that efforts to address past human rights violations involve different accounts or representations of what happened and why, who was harmed, who is responsible, and how the violations can be addressed or prevented from happening again. These accounts both shape and are shaped by the ways in which we frame, interpret, and understand our identities, social relations, political arrangements, and society itself. The establishment of a single, shared narrative about the past in the aftermath of widespread abuses is unrealistic in most contexts, which often remain at least partially divided and sometimes deeply polarized. However, a process in which significant elements of society come together to reduce the prevalence of false, oversimplified, and divisive narratives and attempt

11 Social Change Initiative, "Narrative Change," <https://www.socialchangeinitiative.com/narrative-change>

12 Liz Manne et al., Liz Manne Strategy, "About Narrative Change Strategy" (2021).

13 M.D. Jones et al., "Introducing the Narrative Policy Framework," in *The Science of Stories: Applications of the Narrative Policy Framework in Public Policy Analysis*, eds. M.D. Jones et al. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1-25.

14 Cobb et al., "The Role of Narrative."

15 Louis Bickford, Memria, "When Transitional Justice Met Narrative Change Theory" (February 6, 2024).

16 Brett Davidson, "Narrative Change and the Open Society Public Health Program," *On Think Tanks* (2016).

to acknowledge basic facts about the violations that occurred can be an important mechanism of change.¹⁷ Such a process can recognize victims, harms suffered, and responsibilities, as well as redefine relationships and chart a way forward.

Transitional justice comprises an increasingly complex field of actors, including but not limited to policymakers, victims' groups, practitioners, politicians, and the wider citizenry.¹⁸ It is also often a contested space in which different actors working on different issues using different discourses seek to shape the process, amplify their voices, or make claims about the past.¹⁹ This "narrative landscape" is "specific to each context [and] can either deepen or mitigate divisions."²⁰ Navigating this space can be difficult, especially for actors who may not have access to resources or public visibility. Within transitional justice processes, there are formal spaces in which narratives are shared, developed, and promoted, for example in truth commissions or legal proceedings and judgments. There are also outreach programs within national, hybrid, and international courts, as well as official statements made by public figures, such as politicians or truth commission chairpersons. There are also informal narrative spaces, sometimes within but also outside of transitional justice processes. These can include the arts, social media, and even protest movements. All actors involved in transitional justice, both formally and informally, are constantly making choices about how they frame their work.

Narrative can be an important part of transitional justice mechanisms' communications strategies. However, there are challenges to informing the wider public about the content of their work while constructing and communicating stories about the past, present, and future. An overemphasis on *storytelling* and voice risks ignoring the importance of listening and ensuring that all stories are heard.²¹ The selection of certain stories to represent harm or experience risks flattening complex individual stories or reframing them in ways that disempower the storyteller.²² Narrative agency—meaning the ability to tell a story—is key to have that story heard and for the story to be framed and used in a way that fairly represents the storyteller.²³ Despite the role that narrative can play in transitional justice, it has been under-studied, and the explicit use of narrative as a lens of research and analysis and a tool of communication, dialogue, advocacy, mobilization, and policy engagement is arguably underutilized by transitional justice practitioners and stakeholders.

As necessary as legal expertise, technical knowledge, and data and evidence are to transitional justice, they need to be accompanied or complemented by compelling and credible stories or other communications techniques that help change people's values and beliefs and achieve transitional justice objectives. Recent work has demanded a more central role for narrative and communications within the vision of transitional justice, to "delegitimise the dehumanising narratives that impede a better future and [...] replace them with convincing and inclusive ones."²⁴

17 Pablo de Greiff, *Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies* and New York University Center on International Cooperation, "The Applicability of Transitional Justice in Pre-Conflict Contexts" (2021), 14; Michael Ignatieff, "Articles of Faith," *Index on Censorship* 25.5 (1996).

18 Zinaida Miller, "Effects of Invisibility: In Search of the 'Economic' in Transitional Justice," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 2 (2008): 271.

19 Kieran McEvoy and Lorna McGregor, "Transitional Justice from Below: An Agenda for Research, Policy and Praxis," in *Transitional Justice from Below: Grassroots Activism and the Struggle for Change*, eds. Kieran McEvoy and Lorna McGregor (Hart Publishing, 2008), 187.

20 Cobb et al., "The Role of Narrative."

21 Janine Natalya Clark, "Storytelling and Listening in Transitional Justice Processes: Addressing the Marginalisation of More-than-Human Worlds," *Social and Legal Studies* 34.5 (2024).

22 Ibid; Ulrike Lühe and Erin Baines, "Difficult Stories that Haunt: Towards Research Otherwise in Transitional Justice," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 19.1 (2025).

23 Elisabeth Porter, "Gendered Narratives: Stories and Silences in Transitional Justice," *Human Rights Review* 17 (2016).

24 Institute for Integrated Transitions, "Changing the Narrative: The Role of Communications in Transitional Justice," (2019), 1.

This includes stories about the experiences and journeys of individual victims, practitioners, leaders, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, but it also includes broader representations or framings of relationships, communities, cultures, institutions, structures, and societal goals. This work must be done to ensure that narratives are inclusive as well as effective.

At the international level, the sustainable peace and development agenda provides one of the broadest possible frameworks in which narratives used by transitional justice stakeholders can be situated. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for example, can be used to articulate various accounts of how more just, peaceful, inclusive, and equitable societies in countries that have experienced massive human rights violations might be established through violence prevention, access to justice, rule of law, inclusive institutions, anticorruption, and gender equality. This framework may be useful at the level of global mobilization and policy engagement, as demonstrated by initiatives using storytelling, such as the #SDG16Now Campaign.²⁵

Within such broad international agendas, however, there are virtually unlimited ways in which people, communities, and societies can seek to build constructive narratives. In this sense, existing agendas (such as sustainable development) and even fields of practice (such as transitional justice) should not be used to constrain the use of narrative but to identify opportunities to use it to shape discourse, culture, policy, and practice, and to meaningfully connect with and mobilize support among those who may be on the periphery or even outside of formal justice processes. While common transitional justice measures, such as truth commissions, reparations programs, memory work, and judicial processes, certainly provide space to employ such an approach, so too do other areas, such as the arts, sports, media, education, and political and social movements.

25 See the #SDG16Now Campaign, <https://sdg16now.org/>

Chapter 2. Case Studies and Narrative Context

The country contexts examined here—Colombia, The Gambia, and Kenya—represent societies that have experienced different mixes of violence and human rights violations and are at different stages of addressing those violations. The narrative landscape related to transitional justice in each case is naturally distinct, but there are discourses that overlap and, ultimately, connect with long-term peace and development in multiple ways.

Colombia's implementation of formal transitional justice mechanisms spans more than two decades, resulting in a comprehensive process and institutional architecture that has continued to evolve, including through the 2016 peace agreement. The Gambia, almost 10 years into its transition out of authoritarian rule, is beginning to implement its truth commission's recommendations by setting up mechanisms for accountability and reparation. Kenya went through decades of authoritarian rule followed by a period of post-electoral violence in 2007, after which it pursued truth, accountability, and reform, though the need for reform and accountability remains.

In addition to the core elements of transitional justice, such as truth, accountability, reparation, and nonrecurrence, the range of discourses used in these countries include those around democratization, corruption, peace, transformation, and reconciliation, all of which intersect with each other and relate to sustainable development at various points. Within these contexts, civil society actors have chosen the messaging and communication strategies they believe will most effectively achieve their goals.

Colombia

Colombia has endured a long-lasting armed conflict since the mid-1960s. It has involved many different actors, notably: guerrilla groups, which emerged during the 1960s out of peasant and communist uprisings against the state; right-wing paramilitary groups formed in the 1980s with the complicity of public officials and comprised mainly of landowners wanting to protect themselves from guerrilla groups; and drug traffickers. The conflict has been driven by political ambitions, social and economic tensions, and competition for resources. Numerous factors contributed to the evolution and degradation of conflict, including the persistence of agrarian issues (such as the concentration of land ownership, the rural-urban gap, and inequality), the emergence and proliferation of drug trafficking, limited political participation, and the fragmented nature of state presence and services in the regions most affected by armed conflict. Mass violence created more than 9 million victims of death, displacement, enforced disappearance, sexual and gender-

based violence (SGBV), forced recruitment of children, and torture, over the span of 50 years. This is roughly 18 percent of the country's population.

Colombia is in the process of implementing a peace agreement that put an end to 50 years of internal conflict with the country's biggest guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army (FARC-EP). This agreement contains the results of four years of negotiation on six points: agrarian reform, political participation, illicit drugs, victims, ending the conflict, and implementation of the peace accord. To address the chapter on victims, the parties established the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Recurrence, positioning conflict victims' rights to accountability, truth, and reparations at the center of the transitional justice process. Victims have played an important role in Colombian politics at various points throughout the decades of conflict. While accountability for crimes committed by non-state and state armed forces remains a contentious and politically charged issue, the comprehensive peace accord represents Colombia's most holistic, wide-ranging effort to address the root causes of conflict and fulfill victims' rights. New institutions began work in 2017, namely the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP by its Spanish acronym), a truth commission, and a unit to search for people who disappeared during the conflict. Significant progress has been made; however, opposition, lack of trust, and recent escalations in violence threaten to hamper continued advancement.

The narrative landscape related to transitional justice in Colombia has evolved over the past two decades. It has included a range of discourses around demobilization and reintegration, restorative justice, territorial transformation, and total peace, all of which address elements of justice, peace, and development in different ways. Most recently, peace negotiations at the regional level have put the spotlight on localized violence and illegal economies, while JEP's first sentences have raised the issue of restorative sanctions. Colombia's diverse and active civil society offers many opportunities for narrative communications and diversity of voices. A strong domestic agenda around transitional justice also means that wider sensitization of the public has been largely successful. However, ongoing insecurity and violence, as well as a large population spread over a large territory, present significant challenges in reaching audiences and undertaking impactful narrative communications work.

The Gambia

Located in West Africa, The Gambia is a majority Muslim country home to several ethnic groups, with English as its official language. During the ninth and tenth centuries, Arab Muslims traded with the region through The Gambia, with the Portuguese being the first Europeans to arrive in 1455. Ruled under the British Empire from 1765 until independence in 1965, The Gambia was first led by Dawda Jawara, who won several elections until he was overthrown in a 1994 coup by Yahya Jammeh. In the 22 years that followed, numerous human rights violations were committed under Jammeh's authoritarian rule. This included summary executions, murder, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, and torture. Defeated in the 2016 presidential elections, Jammeh momentarily contested the results before being forced to flee in exile to Equatorial Guinea, where he remains.

The newly elected government quickly established a security sector reform mechanism, a commission of inquiry on the financial dealings of the former dictator (operating from July 2017 to April 2019), the Constitution Review Commission (operating from June 2018 to March 2020), and the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) (opening in September 2018). The TRRC's mandate was extended twice to allow it time to finalize

and submit its final report and recommendations to the country's president, which it did in November 2021. The final report, which became public a month later, calls for Yahya Jammeh to be held accountable, finding that at least 240 persons were murdered by state agents under his rule. His victims range from people he perceived to be security threats, political opponents, close associates he fell out with, ordinary citizens, and journalists. The report also recommends prosecution of members of the Junglers, a paramilitary group under Jammeh's direct orders. In December 2024, members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) made the historic decision to establish a special tribunal for The Gambia to deal with crimes committed under Jammeh's regime from 1994-2017. The TRRC also recommended government delivery of holistic and transformative reparations to all victims. In accordance with this recommendation, a reparations commission was established in April 2025 with the swearing in of seven commissioners.

A post-authoritarian context, the narrative landscape related to transitional justice in The Gambia also includes a range of discourses, such as those around democratization, corruption, governance, and reconciliation. While the recent setting up of legal frameworks for accountability, reparations, and memorialization means those issues are front and center, the long-term process of implementing the TRRC's recommendations will provide for many intersections between justice, security, and development. The Gambia's diverse civil society is still recovering from repression during Jammeh's rule, as is the media. While there are strong local voices in transitional justice work, the process is largely donor-led, and there are still significant challenges in terms of wider societal trust and trust between Gambians and the government, both of which hamper narrative communications work.

Kenya

Kenya's contested December 2007 presidential election led to a political, economic, and humanitarian crisis in which post-election violence lasting until February 2008 resulted in an estimated 1,100 deaths and 350,000 displaced. Incumbent President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner, but his main opponent, the late Raila Odinga, alleged electoral manipulation. International observers accused both sides of engaging in electoral manipulation. What followed were riots, targeted ethnic violence, destruction of property, and displacement of communities. The elections themselves had been preceded by deep political and ethnic tensions that fed into the dynamics of violence. For example, historical colonial deprivation of ancestral lands from indigenous communities, as well as the socioeconomic exclusion and poverty of certain communities, fueled anger and exposed certain individuals and groups to harm.

Following mediation, a National Accord and Reconciliation Act was signed in 2008. A coalition government was formed, paving the way for the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC). The CIPEV Report, released in October 2008, highlighted the government's failure to address underlying causes of violence, as well as the ways in which the violence had been planned and organized by politicians, businessmen, and criminal gangs often financed by politicians and tribally divisive businesses. The TJRC was given a broad mandate to investigate human rights violations committed in the country between December 1963 and February 2008. Subsequently, the commission decided to extend into the colonial era as it was established that the 2007 post-election violence emanated from repressive laws, policies, and practices inherited by successive independence governments (including land injustices and displacement), captured institutions (security, judiciary, legislature, and media), and state-sanctioned human rights violations without any public scrutiny or accountability. The TJRC faced serious challenges in its

work, including questions about its independence, boycotts, and inconsistent funding, which led to the final report only being submitted in May 2013.

Based on over 40,000 hearings and statements provided to the TJRC, the report recommended public apologies, an inquiry into compensation for abuses committed during colonial rule and post-colonial independence governments, commemoration of a National Human Rights Day, and security sector and judicial reforms. The TJRC also recommended that the judiciary fast-track the establishment of an International Crimes Division of the High Court to be responsible for the trial of some of the cases referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for investigation and prosecution. These cases were eventually thrown out due to politically motivated interests, as most of those listed for possible investigation were, and still are, high ranking individuals in government. Despite collecting the largest number of statements of any truth commission, the pace of reforms has been slow, and the cases before the International Criminal Court (ICC) have been withdrawn or vacated, often due to political interference.

The narrative landscape related to transitional justice in Kenya is a product of the country's decades of authoritarian rule and post-electoral violence, and includes discourses around democratization, reconciliation, corruption, institutional and constitutional reform, accountability, and rule of law. While the TJRC issued its recommendations more than a decade ago, recent peaceful anti-government protests and the violent responses to those protests have demonstrated the continued need for fairer economic policies and security sector reform. The current volatile context in Kenya means that daily insecurity and frequent changes in political representation are realities that hamper transitional justice work, in particular the ability of civil society actors to communicate key messages.

Chapter 3. Narrative Framing: What Stories Are Being Told?

Narrative framing refers to how actors tell stories about transitional justice and their own work. In this chapter, we reflect on the content of stories being told, how they have changed over time, and with which wider discourses about justice and development they align. We find that actors are agile in making decisions about which discourses will connect best with different audiences and which will best promote their work, be it human rights, sustainable peace, or livelihoods. These decisions about narrative framing take place in the context of an evolving transitional justice process. Opportunities to amplify or shift messaging may present themselves upon the inception of a new transitional justice mechanism or key political decision.

Key Finding 1: Actors Are Agile in Their Use of Different Justice or Development Framings

“So, we don’t talk about transitional justice as an independent conversation. We look at transitional justice within the context of human rights and dignity and access and equality...For example, if you’re talking about victims of police violence, and we talk about transitional justice, we look at it from the time when we need to get evidence to the investigation, to the security, to the protection. So, we look at it as a wholesome ecosystem and not just as a standalone item. It’s not just about conviction, but it’s about the process and the delivery and the procedure to the point where there is relief for this person.”²⁶ — Interviewee from Kenya

Civil society actors in transitional justice contexts can be incredibly agile in evoking different justice or development framings to talk about what they do. Many of the organizations interviewed for this study focus on specific issues, such as women’s health, youth mobilization, or legal redress, but have often used a range of discourses depending on the audience or desired impact of the work.

A representative of a Colombian women’s organization working on negotiated settlement in the framework of the 2012–2016 negotiations and later the JEP explained that “even when we were part of the peace negotiation, part of the discussion was that, given that women are victims of the violence, what are the benefits of the peace that we want to enjoy as women...in terms of education, health, housing, all the social and cultural rights that are lacking in these

²⁶ Interview conducted online, July 9, 2025.

territories... The reason why armed actors were able to conquer the territories was precisely because of the lack of the state presence." While this organization does not work specifically on employment or economic issues, it "takes into account the agenda of women" and thus the need to find solutions for root causes of violence by addressing economic and social rights in its communications.²⁷ In The Gambia, an interviewee who had worked on public outreach by the TRRC told us that community visits were about "try[ing] to convince them that this is also about the reorganization of the state...to ensure there is no repetition."²⁸ This determined the way outreach work was framed, presenting the search for truth as both a quest for political reform and non-repetition of violence. In both examples we see the mutual strengthening of transitional justice and development framings in their work.

In The Gambia, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) focused on SGBV found sustainable development a challenging but important framing for its advocacy and sensitization around female genital mutilation (FGM). While "sustainable development is part of what we need to achieve, especially with regards to FGM," they said, this framing was not well received by the communities in which they work because "sustainable development for them is a white person problem."²⁹ In response, the organization refers instead to the African Union Transitional Justice Policy Framework because it is framed more around African governments "achieving solutions for their own problems," and it discusses FGM as a health rather than a human rights issue.³⁰ A youth NGO describes its advocacy around governance issues as encouraging young people to engage with "duty bearers," such as local government representatives, to build trust and awareness of youth rights and responsibilities.³¹ This was framed as part of the longer-term goals of transitional justice, such as democratic reform and guarantees of non-repetition, which require trust between the state and the public, as well as civic engagement by all sectors of the population.

In Kenya, one actor described transitional justice not as an independent conversation but as intrinsically linked to human rights and equality:

In a way, we input transitional justice in the conversation by recognizing the different barriers that exist, so it is development, it is human rights, it's dignity. For example, if you're talking about victims of police violence, and we talk about transitional justice, we look at it from the time when we need to get evidence to the investigation, to the security, to the protection. So, we look at it as a whole-some ecosystem and not just as a standalone item. It's not just about conviction, but it's about the process and the delivery and the procedure to the point where there is relief for this person.³²

To capture this in their messaging, they described the importance of working in dialogue with victims of police violence, explaining that the different parts of a transitional justice process need to be completed, including investigations, protection of victims, convictions, and then the restoration of dignity. Transitional justice in their work can only be defined as completed when the victim is "able to live in dignity or...able to have the confidence to say that I am healing, and I am better." This is an expansive and victim-centered framing of the transitional justice process intended to engage and support victims throughout often time-consuming and traumatic legal processes.

²⁷ Interview conducted online, April 23, 2025.

²⁸ Interview 8 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

²⁹ Interview conducted online, June 17, 2025.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Interview 2 conducted in person, June 10, 2025.

³² Interview conducted online, July 9, 2025.

Some actors in The Gambia focus on wider economic pressures on transitional justice processes and the strategic function of agile narratives in accessing operational funding. The civil society landscape there is diverse and not as siloed as in other national contexts, with organizations working on different issues that get funding from different international agencies for their varied advocacy engagements.³³ Transitional justice does not operate in a vacuum and political will for these processes ebbs and flows in relation to livelihood pressures: “More and more young Gambians are taking to canoes to flee the country in search of livelihood. And that of course would have an adverse impact on such a broad and ambitious reform process that requires a lot of resources, not just financial resources, but it requires the resource of hope and faith in it, and it’s very difficult for people to be hopeful and faithful to a process when they’re not eating.”³⁴ These realities demand messaging that can connect transitional justice processes with the everyday realities of Gambians, such as ensuring reparations payments are made, tackling land dispossession, and framing non-repetition as a guarantee of the peace and stability necessary for economic growth.

A Colombian organization talked about the importance of indigenous framings of transitional justice: “How do, for example, indigenous or Afro-Colombian communities understand justice and restorative justice? That’s something that we pay a lot of attention to... These perspectives guide our work, since we are not in a position to impose anything. Engaging with these different approaches has been an important part of some of the projects we selected and worked on.”³⁵ This organization purposefully selects indigenous community partners for projects and draws on indigenous framing of restorative justice when advocating for particular approaches to restoration.

Key Finding 2: The Advent of a Formal Transitional Justice Process Shapes the Way in Which Actors Frame Their Work

“There was no way we could have just focused on sexual and reproductive health or sexual and gender-based violence without addressing transitional justice.”³⁶ — Interviewee from The Gambia

Narrative framing is often shaped at the very beginning of formal transitional justice processes. This is especially the case for organizations that predate a transitional justice process or that were founded to work on specific issues that intersect with, but are not contained to, a specific transitional justice mechanism. Actors across all three contexts demonstrate a creative and often strategic approach to issue-based activities and their framing for, and through, transitional justice. This creates both opportunities and constraints.

According to the representative of one Gambian NGO working on sexual and reproductive health rights, there was “no way we could have just focused on sexual and gender-based violence or reproductive health” because relative to transitional justice, it was not a priority and didn’t receive as much attention.³⁷ They therefore pivoted their work, shifting focus to the intersections between their thematic areas of work and the formal transitional justice process. They worked with the TRRC in a health advisor capacity and leveraged the context of the formal process to promote a wider mandate of ensuring inclusive access to health care. This opportunity, while advantageous for the organization’s visibility and ability to shape public awareness, was not easy. The cultural context of shame and invisibility around sexual and reproductive health played a

33 Ibid.

34 Interview 6 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

35 Interview conducted online, April 16, 2025.

36 Interview conducted online, June 17, 2025.

37 Ibid.

role in determining health-seeking behavior long before the transitional justice process and even Jammeh's rule. As we were told by a representative of a transitional justice organization, "this is expected in a context where civil society organizations were already established with clearly defined missions and mandates but then had to adapt to a transitional justice context."³⁸

An actor from Colombia described the significance of Law 1448 on victims and land restitution, passed in 2011, with its "framework of justice and social organization," noting that it "allows us to advocate and plan at the territorial level...to participate" in shaping how reparations are understood and claims can be made. In Colombia, some organizations were made eligible for collective reparations from the Victims' Unit despite not necessarily working directly on transitional justice. Instead, they found transitional justice framing for their specific areas of focus as and when it made sense to them.³⁹ For example, an organization focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) rights joined forces with a wider feminist movement to advocate for the recognition of LGBTQI+ people as victims. In doing so, they were able to push for the inclusion of a gender commission as part of the truth commission. As they describe it, the "main achievement was to convince the feminist litigant that violence against LGBTQI+ people was gender violence."⁴⁰

One Gambian podcaster described their work as "all part of memorialization," choosing specific topics to discuss that are closely connected to the transitional justice process, its mechanisms, and outcomes.⁴¹ For example, they recorded one podcast about universal jurisdiction at the time of the trial of the former Interior Minister Ousman Sonko in Switzerland and another looking at relevant legal frameworks around the time the Special Accountability Mechanism was being debated and designed.

These examples emphasize the importance of leverage points that help guide choices about how to frame and communicate different issues and activities. For example, the establishment of a formal mechanism such as a truth commission will offer opportunities to frame activities with reference to the mandate or focus of the commission. This will be encouraged by levels of political and popular interest galvanized by the work of such mechanisms, as well as availability of funding to work on transitional justice. Interest and funding tend to drop off as mechanisms complete their work or political priorities shift. This dynamic is directly linked with frustrations among victims and the wider public about the long timeline of transitional processes, as well as the slow realization of change and impact, something which must be navigated by actors involved in transitional justice in their narrative communications work.

Key Finding 3: The Stories Actors Tell Adapt Over Time to Reflect Changing Contexts

"We see what happens, we see that there is a referendum, there is a truth commission, that there is a JEP, we explain it, we form an opinion and an idea on it, we criticize it when we think we should criticize it, and then we present different proposals."⁴² — Interviewee from Colombia

Contexts naturally change over time, and narratives reflect this. One organization in Colombia spoke about the "pivotal moments" of the formal transitional justice process which have

38 Validation feedback received November 5, 2025.

39 Interview conducted online, April 16, 2025.

40 Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

41 Interview conducted online, June 11, 2025.

42 Interview conducted online, April 25, 2025.

prompted their priorities to “have changed over time.”⁴³ For example, they went from fostering and promoting alternative forms of justice when the Victims’ Unit was established in 2011, to a focus on the technical legal assistance required during the 2016 peace agreement negotiations, and, more recently, to a focus on expectations around JEP’s first sentences. These shifts in focus were reflected in the topics the organization would promote through its communications about its work. Another actor discussed the nature of presenting commentary on changing circumstances that goes beyond information sharing and foregrounds idea formation through narrative. They described their work translating human rights issues into accessible language and formats such as videos, documentaries, or social mapping. In their words, they “see what happens, we see that there is a referendum,⁴⁴ there is a truth commission, that there is a JEP, we explain it, we form an opinion and an idea on it, we criticize it when we think we should criticize it, and then we present different proposals with the task of explaining to communities and social organizations the progress in the area of transitional justice and special jurisdiction that is happening.”⁴⁵

In The Gambia, a representative of a youth NGO said that it was difficult to engage young people in the transitional justice process, especially in the early stages when the focus was on the financial dealings of the regime. However, when the TRRC began its work and the proceedings were made publicly available and widely distributed, the evidence of human rights violations built young people’s awareness and drew them into the discussions.⁴⁶ Capitalizing on this opportunity, the organization launched a caravan initiative where they traveled across the country playing music composed to explain past violence and advocate for youth mobilization in justice seeking.

A Kenyan NGO representative reflected from a personal level on how the term “transitional” can cause confusion when used in relation to both historical and contemporary events:

I’ve always been struggling with understanding how long should the transitional justice last, how long because it cannot be continuously. We are in a state of transitional justice forever. So, because we’ve been trying to seek reparations for the historical injustices, but we also have another layer of victims for today, like the ones who were killed recently by police during the protests in 2024 and 2025. When will their transitional justice moment come and end? I would rather maybe sometimes talk of justice without the word transitional, because justice is something which you can keep on fighting for infinitely.⁴⁷

The interviewee did not offer any immediate solutions to this dilemma but raised it as a question when reflecting on the changing context of their communications work.

It is not only transitional justice processes that change over time. Broader political contexts also evolve and consequently create the frameworks within (or against) which issues are framed. A representative of a women’s organization in Kenya described the challenges it faces in its advocacy work to “really engage with champions in a specific [government] office” when there is turn-over in ministries and the people in charge.⁴⁸ This leads to shifting priorities and agendas and the need for constant relationship building and persuading new politicians and officials of the

43 Interview conducted online, April 16, 2025.

44 In 2016, Colombians narrowly rejected the peace agreement with FARC-EP in a national referendum, leading to its subsequent revision and approval by Congress.

45 Interview conducted online, April 25, 2025.

46 Interview 2 conducted in person, June 10, 2025.

47 Interview conducted online, August 13, 2025.

48 Interview conducted online, July 18, 2025.

importance of their work. Several actors in Colombia highlighted the contemporary context of illicit economies and ongoing violence by illegal armed groups.⁴⁹ They consider this to be “the greatest difficulty” in working toward justice now, as it has decreased political and social participation in decision-making spaces.⁵⁰ Ongoing violence also confuses the boundaries of what is now defined as a transitional issue. In response, this organization has begun working through schools to share information with teachers and pupils, as well as holding targeted information workshops with youth representatives living in rural areas who are able to attend and then take information back to their hard-to-reach communities.

In The Gambia, narrative development and change is a gradual process that reflects wider political issues and occasionally trigger events. “Sometimes, of course, you will see that there are times when Gambians are more reactive than proactive. So, naturally you see that the attitude of the people is they sit back until when something comes about....Then they will come and join that crusade.”⁵¹ This example refers to the protest on May 8, 2025, organized by the group Gambians Against Looted Assets, which targeted the controversial sale of properties and businesses formerly owned by ex-President Jammeh. Critics say they are being sold at below market value and through a process lacking transparency. These assets are being sold following the findings of the commission of inquiry set up in 2017 to investigate the financial corruption of Jammeh’s regime. The protest took place after local media reported on the progress of the ongoing sale of assets.

In addition to the opportunities a formal transitional justice process can offer, inaction or slow progress can create significant communications challenges over time. As one Colombian NGO explained, transitional justice is slow, and when there are no jail sentences or reparations are not forthcoming, it can be “difficult to explain the complexity of transitional justice to the victims.”⁵² This broader “victims’ fatigue”⁵³ was mentioned by several actors in The Gambia, thanks to slow implementation of recommendations from mechanisms such as the TRRC. This has meant that victims are now dying and “the energy that was there when things started has started to fade a little.”⁵⁴ When an actor’s work is partly or even largely about shaping opinion and behaviors, the ebb and flow of transitional justice action can have profound consequences and require innovation in terms of communications. This may include using new forms of social media (such as TikTok), increasing community outreach, and framing work according to current priorities, such as democratic reform and corruption in the case of The Gambia.

49 Interview conducted online, April 22, 2025; Interview conducted online, April 23, 2025; Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

50 Interview conducted online, April 22, 2025.

51 Focus group conducted in person, June 13, 2025.

52 Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

53 Interview conducted in person, June 11, 2025; Interview 2 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

54 Interview 2 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

Chapter 4. Narrative Construction and Ownership: How Are Narratives Developed?

The stories actors share about themselves and their work must be constructed as a function of resources, strategies, and audiences but also, importantly, in relation to the stories that other actors tell. In this chapter, we reflect on how individual actors construct sub-narratives as part of a broader narrative landscape in which civil society organizations, state institutions, communities, and victims all have their own agendas and messages. We find that many organizations will join with others to strengthen their voice through a shared story as an impact strategy. At the same time, however, it can be challenging to balance one's agenda with other, sometimes competing, narratives and priorities at the local, national, and international levels. In each country context there is an ongoing negotiation over narrative ownership, whether between different transitional justice stakeholders or more broadly as a question of national identity and empowerment. Given these dynamics, it is important to understand communications and narrative as a two-way process of listening as well as telling.

Key Finding 4: Collective Framing Is Important but Challenging

"We must write our story about ourselves so that we can share it as much as we want to share it."⁵⁵ — Interviewee from The Gambia

Actors in each of the country contexts referred to the work needed to move between an individual organization's narratives and a more collective narrative framing that ensures greater voice and influence. One victims' organization in Colombia described the challenge of "how to find a strategy to unite all of the different organizations and engage all of us in a single dialogue strategy."⁵⁶ This is particularly important for organizations that are collective subjects of reparations in Colombia. Here, a universal human rights framework has been useful for bringing together diverse activities, experiences, and priorities in a shared agenda. In this case, the victims' organization works with rural populations on questions of food governance and livelihoods. Upon joining as collective subjects of reparations, they reframed these priorities as grassroots empowerment.

The importance of common framing is also relevant to both the cases of The Gambia and Kenya, even though collective reparations for NGOs are not part of their transitional justice processes. In The Gambia, a representative of a network of victims' organizations spoke about the

⁵⁵ Interview conducted in person, June 9, 2025.

⁵⁶ Interview conducted online, April 22, 2025.

importance of “working collectively” and warned of “the danger of a single story,” emphasizing the need to select stories that “we can highlight to tell a more complete story.”⁵⁷ In Kenya, a representative of a transitional justice NGO described the importance of their work convincing the public that transitional justice is important “for the country and not just individuals.... When there is conflict, inflation goes up, the economy is at a standstill.”⁵⁸

Another Colombian actor discussed communication challenges across scales. Organizations were often faced with the challenge of balancing their own agendas and principles with their work with other actors. This requires a deliberate employment of different framings. One Colombian victims’ organization described a process of positioning themselves at and between different levels: state, national, and local. They lamented that “the state agenda is sometimes not the same as our agenda.”⁵⁹ A different Colombian NGO expanded this idea to capture the communications challenges not just across different agendas, but also in the face of competing narratives and claims of truth. “There is narrative fragmentation and a dispute for the official narrative.... Victims have their own truth, the communities have their own truth, and there is a clash with the justice processes, because justice owns the truth based on proof, on evidence.”⁶⁰

Colombian NGOs reflected on how one of their greatest challenges has been developing a strategy to unite all the different organizations in a single dialogue strategy.⁶¹ There have been attempts at working with transitional justice colleagues nationally and even internationally in Venezuela, Peru, Mexico, and Chile to have a set of strategic regional messages around certain issues such as organized crime, legal challenges, and how to have a security policy that can be more efficient in guaranteeing the rule of law. “But it’s not easy, it’s not easy. So maybe the only thing is that we can say we want to save the Amazon, that’s easy, but from then on, everything is very difficult. So, all these differences between countries are not easy. I think that it’s possible, and it can have great potential.”⁶²

Key Finding 5: Ownership Matters and Is Contested

“Their narrative is not the same narrative as written in other books or that paramilitaries gave when sharing their histories. It was their story.”⁶³ — Interviewee from Colombia

A common theme discussed across the case studies was the question of narrative ownership. Interesting techniques and forms were employed to both diversify voices and reclaim stories of violence as well as justice. One women’s organization in Colombia published two books of testimonies by women who narrated their own stories. This was important work because “[t]heir narrative is not the same narrative as written in other books or that paramilitaries gave when sharing their histories. It was their story.”⁶⁴ It also has important wider influence on the transitional justice process. In this case, for example, the testimonies highlighted the question of territories and collective experiences even before the 2016 peace negotiations and agreement had formalized this approach. This had been part of awareness raising about the importance of collective subjects in transitional justice for Colombia. A representative of a Gambian NGO working on memorialization emphasized the importance of “the perspective of the victims...

57 Interview 3 conducted in person, June 10, 2025.

58 Interview conducted online, July 10, 2025.

59 Interview conducted online, April 22, 2025.

60 Interview conducted online, April 25, 2025.

61 Interview conducted online, April 22, 2025.

62 Interview conducted online, April 28, 2025.

63 Interview conducted online, April 23 2025.

64 Ibid.

with stories being told their way.”⁶⁵ Their work documented cases of enforced disappearance through the use of direct testimony from victims and witnesses, as well as through personal objects provided by victims’ families. A women’s organization in Kenya puts the stories of survivors front and center in its communications work, demonstrating for different audiences that the issue is “not an abstract reality” and that the women are empowered as storytellers through the process.⁶⁶

It is relevant to note when issues are framed as local ones versus when framings evoke regional, national, or even international responsibilities. When asked what international and multinational donors could do to supportive narrative change work, a Gambian government official reflected on how the importance of local narrative ownership complicates that outside involvement. “The mode of communication must come from the community itself. Everything from the language spoken to the messaging being given...these discussions are really best had between the communities.”⁶⁷

It is important to recognize when international audiences shape national and local narratives of transitional justice. The same government official shared their concerns that Gambian narratives are being led by international transitional justice priorities, rather than their own. “It’s typically an outside organization that has already designed what they want to hear and asks Gambia to chip in. So, I feel like those conversations are pessimistic. They can sometimes focus too deeply on one issue and miss out on many other contextual issues that are happening in The Gambia. But ultimately, the dream is that we have researchers and outlook institutions that are packaging what’s happening in the Gambia and presenting it as a package to the world.”⁶⁸ This was echoed by a Gambian NGO discussing how the nature of their work has changed for international audiences: “It’s kind of difficult in a sense because the UN and the EU already have thematic areas that they want to intervene in, and this changes our participation.... We’re currently under a project...but you’ll see that where we started in terms of the activities that we wanted to do has changed three times in the process,”⁶⁹ according to the donors’ different thematic foci.

As one Gambian NGO working on memorialization told us, funding for enforced disappearance and transitional justice is now drying up. In response, they are “more and more framing ourselves in terms of the human rights context” and highlighting the fact that they are women-led and women-focused to navigate and survive the trends of donor interest. This has led to a shift in messaging toward “hope-based communication” and “communicating to prevent rather than redress.”⁷⁰

Key Finding 6: Communication Is About Listening as well as Disseminating

“I think that the lesson learned...[is that]...we should not come to a conclusion in deciding how to communicate, [instead] consulting with the community and with the audience we want to reach. In other words, many times, the most important thing is what the community tells us... We need to learn from the bottom up. That’s the lesson learned.”⁷¹ — Interviewee from Colombia

Understanding narrative as listening illustrates the essential bilateral nature of communication. It is logical that in shaping their narratives for specific audiences, actors involved in transitional

65 Interview 2 conducted in person, June 10, 2025.

66 Interview conducted online, July 18, 2025.

67 Interview 6 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

68 Ibid.

69 Interview 2 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

70 Interview 2 conducted in person, June 10, 2025.

71 Interview conducted online, April 25, 2025.

justice have listened to the priorities (in issue and communication style) of those they wish to inform, learn from, or create with. Narratives do not simply appear or disappear; they are given prominence through their use and relevance. There is both a human and strategic imperative for listening to be central to this process.

A Colombian NGO discussed the importance of this in the quote above about learning the lesson from the bottom up. The example used to illustrate this was the ongoing dialogues with different ethnic and indigenous communities in Colombia in which documentation is less relevant, and narratives can be observed via performance and ritual. Listening to the desired forms of narrative and content is vital to contextualizing narratives more fully and moving beyond writing and talking as dominant modes of understanding.

Chapter 5. Narrative Dissemination: How Are Messages Communicated to Audiences?

Narrative dissemination refers to the way messages are shared with different audiences, often to persuade those audiences in a particular direction. In this chapter, we explore the salient framings chosen by actors according to their intended audiences and the specific contexts in which the organizations work—contexts that are inherently challenging, technically and politically, from a communications perspective. Decision-making around which communication vehicle is most effective—print media, radio, social media, arts—depends on available resources, training, and knowledge of local cultures. These considerations shape organizations’ choices about the content and form of the stories they tell about their work in the context of transitional justice.

Key Finding 7: Challenging Contexts Shape Communication

“Transitional justice is not a clickable subject.”⁷² — Interviewee from The Gambia

Actors in each country described challenging communications contexts that limit their ability to communicate with beneficiaries, the wider public, and funders. This included lack of technology or communications infrastructure, as well as knowledge asymmetries and low levels of education and literacy.⁷³ Such contexts mean that organizations are unable to undertake certain communications work, such as translating their communications into multiple languages or reaching remote communities.⁷⁴ This was emphasized particularly by Colombian civil society organizations. Multiple interviewees emphasized how the presence of armed groups in the territories creates restrictions on participation in political events and social activities, and thus limits the reach of their communications.⁷⁵

Multiple NGOs raised the risk of communicating narratives about inherently contested issues related to transitional justice. A Gambian actor explored the risk of backlash for publicizing transitional justice narratives. “In my tribe, it is not acceptable to fight your own, and most of them see my work as me fighting my own blood. So, I had a lot of social media backlash, people posting stuff about me not being connected to my roots.”⁷⁶ Another Colombian NGO

72 Interview 6 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

73 Interview conducted online, April 22, 2025.

74 Interview conducted online, April 28, 2025.

75 Interview conducted online, April 22, 2025.

76 Interview conducted in person, June 11, 2025.

reflected on risks posed to civil society by the military and armed groups.⁷⁷ A Kenyan actor reported receiving threats and intimidation for hosting a press conference on police brutality.⁷⁸

In The Gambia, one government representative lamented the fact that “transitional justice is not a clickable subject,” requiring ever more creative ways to engage different stakeholders.⁷⁹ She highlighted the COVID-19 pandemic and rising costs of living: “Nowadays, everything we speak about sounds like a lofty ideal because of the cost of living.”⁸⁰ In comparison to immediate and everyday needs, the resource- and time-intensive transitional justice process can easily seem disconnected from the lives of ordinary people.

Key Finding 8: Strategies and Techniques Vary According to Specific Audiences

“I compare transitional justice work to running an advertisement.”⁸¹ — Interviewee from Kenya

Many organizations across the three country contexts spoke about a need to carefully choose language according to audience. For example, one NGO in Colombia, which advocates for the inclusion of LGBTQI+⁸² rights and experiences in transitional justice, said that when engaging with journalists, mass media, and social networks, they use “light” language based on how receptive the general public is likely to be to particular terms. For example, they would use “lesbian, trans, bisexual” or “violence motivated by discrimination,” rather than “LGBTQI+.” When communicating with more specialized actors, they will “use the best language depending on who we are talking to” and “play with the language depending on the audience.” If an actor focused on democracy and not gender, for example, the NGO would frame their work to be about inclusive societies as democratic societies.⁸³

In The Gambia, one NGO working on SGBV described how it framed its activities through the lens of transitional justice when engaging with youth but spoke in terms of health and shared data on instances and impacts of SGBV when engaging older audiences who were more likely to accept forms of SGBV as rooted in tradition and protected by a culture of silence.⁸⁴ Another Gambian NGO working on memorialization frames its work in terms of forgiveness when engaging individuals and civil society, using religious terms and ideas of justice from religious texts, but would then use legal framings when engaging state actors.⁸⁵ As the representative put it, “when we are targeting, we try to know who our targets are.”⁸⁶

Another Colombian NGO working on the translation of norms and laws for dissemination amongst communities talked about the need to “try to have simple language,” dictated by the intended audience and what would likely be understandable.⁸⁷ For example, when talking with victims’ organizations about transitional justice, it will talk about the performance of various mechanisms and develop alternative accessible reports. When talking with indigenous groups, the form is oral and workshop-based and includes ritual and social mapping. With LGBTQI+ and women, the NGO uses language around the body as territory and encourages performance

77 Interview conducted online, April 28, 2025.

78 Interview conducted online, August 13, 2025.

79 Interview 6 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

80 Ibid.

81 Interview conducted online, July 8, 2025.

82 Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

83 Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

84 Interview conducted online, June 17, 2025.

85 Interview 2 conducted in person, June 10, 2025.

86 Ibid.

87 Interview conducted online, April 25, 2025.

as a means of dissemination. With ex-combatants, it works through autobiographies, interviews, artistic work, and video clips. However, when communicating with donors and international collaborators, it uses WhatsApp networks and database lists, sharing the products it has created to demonstrate value.⁸⁸

A Gambian researcher discussed the importance of religious language and communication channels in rural Gambia. When approaching community discussions, they talked to local imams to find verses from the Quran that would help to communicate the principles of transitional justice. A Kenyan NGO worker talked about using religious language to explain different perspectives of justice and the complexities of thinking about forgiveness:

We explain that even the Bible says that talking is not enough, that accountability is important. So, what does that look like? Because I think when we introduce the concept and the words transitional justice, everybody was looking at transitional justice within the context of the ICC. And those were so intertwined that we had a group of people who were not comfortable because they thought, if I talk about transitional justice, I'm talking about these people going to jail which is not forgiveness.⁸⁹

The same Gambian researcher discussed the futility of “shouting” at policy actors about transitional justice issues or “being confrontational.”⁹⁰ He explained the importance of collaborative engagement and backchanneling when wishing to communicate with them. Then, “Next time, before they do any major engagement, they will reach out to you unofficially to pick your brain. We are thinking of doing this this way. What do you think? Should we give you time to speak...to reach out to people in your network and whatever you come up with, we can meet and have a discussion around it.”⁹¹ He went on to reflect on how the positionality of different actors is just as important as the language in sharing narratives. “How do I communicate transitional justice to someone from Foni, where Jammeh comes from, in a manner that will make them understand that really, it is not just about Foni, it's about the larger Gambia. And there is the need for this process to be successful. How do I communicate that? I have to find a language that is not threatening, a language that speaks to retributive justice in a manner that makes that person understand.”⁹²

A Kenyan NGO worker reflected on the use of the term transitional justice itself, acknowledging it can be too loaded and therefore hinder discussions with politicians. “In the delivery of justice, or even in the delivery of an acknowledgment that there's need for transitional justice...this language that we use can be a barrier...We know that an activity is part of the process of transitional justice, but we don't use those words because those words become barriers to further conversation around inclusion, rights, and access.”⁹³ Furthermore, they discussed the importance of allowing victims to use their own language and mirroring that language back to them. This ensures that the processes remain focused on the right people and that narratives can be owned (as discussed above) and do not get stuck in “NGO speak.”⁹⁴ The NGO worker explained, “We allow survivors to talk about what they consider as justice and how they want to see that justice in what shape and size and color, and by doing that, we then allow our survivors to define what they consider transitional justice to be, so we drop buzzwords

88 Ibid.

89 Interview conducted online, July 9, 2025.

90 Interview conducted in person, June 9, 2025.

91 Ibid.

92 Interview conducted in person, June 9, 2025.

93 Interview conducted online, July 9, 2025.

94 Ibid.

and then use the experiences of survivors, which are much more powerful.”⁹⁵ This requires a language interpretation process to connect formal terms with the lived experiences of victims. “So, I can ask a victim, ‘Would going to jail be enough?’ He says, ‘I don’t think for me that is enough. I need a person to go to jail, but I need them to make sure that I also recover what I have lost.’ So, you start having the different elements of transitional justice incorporated, just in different language, within the context of what I’m looking for in reparation and compensation and justice and accountability.”⁹⁶

The language issue is not only a question of framing and messaging that will resonate with different audiences. It is an issue of translation and working in multilingual contexts. One Gambian NGO explained that because “reparations is not a word in our context,” it needed to use description rather than direct translation of terms.⁹⁷ It also lamented a lack of resources to translate its outputs or have sign language during events.⁹⁸

Key Finding 9: The Aim Is Often to Persuade the Audience

“Now, patterns of violence caused by prejudice have been recognized and are to be included as crimes of persecution at the territorial level, and the peace tribunal is exploring it at the national level. The future is to think about reparation and how this will be translated into material effect for the victim. But we think that legally, we have protected the victims in terms of justice rendering.”⁹⁹ — Interviewee from Colombia

Civil society actors often use specific messaging and framing to persuade different audiences and connect stakeholders, funders, or issues to their broader work and agendas. A strategy described by a Kenyan women’s organization was one of identifying and working with “champions” in particular government offices, targeting them for sustained advocacy over time.¹⁰⁰ In the Kenyan context, this includes the President’s Women’s Advisor, Attorney General, Director of Public Prosecutions, and members of the State Department for Gender. This strategy of persuasion is enhanced by “adjust[ing] our messaging with different duty bearers,” avoiding “being accusatory” in favor of being “diplomatic, [although] sometimes to the extent that we wonder if our message is being taken seriously.”¹⁰¹ These advocacy efforts are resource and time consuming, often taking years of work “just to get one simple outcome.”¹⁰² Such adjustments also take place when communicating with the wider public or affected communities. One Gambian actor who had worked on TRRC public outreach said he would describe “transitional justice [as] a hospital,” rather than using legal or technical rights language. He tried to persuade communities of the importance of a transitional justice process because “if you are sick as a country, [you] need to take the medicine prescribed.”¹⁰³

One LGBTQI+ organization in Colombia had a clear strategy of “communicating to transform the image of LGBTQI+ people.”¹⁰⁴ More specifically, this organization has used litigation to make the argument that LGBTQI+ discrimination and the armed conflict are intertwined. It focused on building public and official memory by evidencing the differentiated

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Interview conducted online, June 17, 2025.

98 Ibid.

99 Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

100 Interview conducted online, July 18, 2025.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 Interview 3 conducted in person, June 12, 2025.

104 Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

way in which LGBTQI+ people experienced the armed conflict.¹⁰⁵ As it described, “we built legally the structure that would allow violence against LGBTQI+ people to be considered as gender violence,” explicitly using the legal opportunities of the transitional justice process to engender wider social, cultural, and political change.¹⁰⁶ Achieving this required the persuasion of legal actors, but also the development of new investigation methodology. This methodology was designed to interrogate claims of ignorance about discrimination and has been successful in obtaining information later used in litigation.¹⁰⁷ As part of their communications strategy, the legal work was complemented by a sustained public education campaign, which required “a language that was very general to convince people” in the face of disinformation from right-wing, religious, and non-progressive sectors of society.¹⁰⁸ These activities included distributing condoms in bars with peace signs, as well as developing an online repository with videos, animation, and poetry “as a way of sharing the horror of war without making it a caricature or retraumatizing.”¹⁰⁹

The same organization reflected on its creation of methodologies based on language analysis to improve the investigation of justice. The reason for this was to re-sensitize offending language that has excluded certain identities from victim categorization. They focused on heteronormative language norms in justice processes that could be exclusionary. “We designed a methodology for a gendered approach to justice investigation, one that enables the obtaining of information that has led to sentences that are very important. Thanks to the language analysis, which is now taught among the same officials, we know that they are training people on how to ask better questions, how to better read the answers, and this, I think, is part of the work we have done.”¹¹⁰

Key Finding 10: Narratives Are Cultural in Construct and Form

“The issue of transitional justice is so sensitive that if you communicate wrongly, it has a huge impact on the whole issue.”¹¹¹ — Interviewee from The Gambia

Connecting with different audiences requires developing and packaging narratives and messages in ways that resonate with cultural contexts. One youth NGO in The Gambia tried to find ways of communicating “stories we bring to life,” saying that it was more about the mode of communication than the story itself that informed its communications strategy.¹¹² It prioritizes simple messages about rights and community delivered in engaging ways, for example through poetry and songs translated into local languages.¹¹³ A Colombian actor talked about working “with young people, with young rappers, making songs about how they experience the conflict; for example, we’re producing a podcast right now, we’ve published books, fictional novels, and I think those are really the kind of initiatives that have a lot of potential to show the transformations that may occur in a country after a peace agreement.”¹¹⁴ Another Colombian NGO discussed its interest in nonverbal communication and its production of infographics and tree planting to mark events and information points: “In communities, we have been planting trees, to help people connect with what happened....Communities get to learn together.”¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Interview conducted online, April 2, 2025.

¹¹⁰ Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

¹¹¹ Interview 2 conducted in person, June 10, 2025.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Interview conducted online, April 16, 2025.

¹¹⁵ Interview conducted online, April 23, 2025.

A Colombian NGO explained the different choices it would make about form and content based on cultural context:

For example, for victim's organizations, the narrative we use is the narrative of the performance, of the walks, alternative reports, because this is how the victims' organizations and the community are using that narrative. If it's in the case of indigenous or Afro-descended communities, then the narrative is different, the narrative is more oral; we do workshops with rituals, with social mapping, with documentaries, videos. If it's with LGBTQI+ communities or with women, for example, there are important cases of narratives, like the body has territorial war and resistance, leading to workshops and lots of performances with the LGBTQI+ community, public testimonies, alternative reports or 'shadow reports' we call them. For example, a shadow report is an alternative report to the truth commission, so it's having a report from the standpoint of the victim. If it's with former combatants, the narrative is different, the way of communicating. Here we use autobiographies, interviews, artistic work, video clips, so depending on the audience and the community you work with, then we choose the narrative. In the past, [the organization] specialized itself in multimedia development graphic design, in graphic design of the images on social networks. We are on TikTok. In other words, we have languages that are different from the typical language of social organizations and of NGOs, so we can reach out to a more diverse audience, especially to certain ages.¹¹⁶

One group in Colombia told us they are trying to be more active in making podcasts and shaping cultural narratives, motivated by the availability of new technologies and increased donor demand.¹¹⁷ Clearly, multiple factors are at play when determining the forms of communications used to develop and share narratives. Another NGO in Colombia spoke of the impact art can have on "cultural transformation" as a "very useful way to approach conversations that have been specialized in the past." It can create connection at the level of human experience and sensitivity.¹¹⁸ This work plays the role of sensitizing more broadly and generating wide receptivity so that more targeted actions for change can take place. This was also mentioned by another, research-focused NGO, which provided information for the media to share "positive messages we consider to be key for the country," making sure that its "narratives are built around democracy and human rights."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Interview conducted online, April 25, 2025.

¹¹⁷ Interview conducted online, April 16, 2025.

¹¹⁸ Interview conducted online, April 24, 2025.

¹¹⁹ Interview conducted online, April 28, 2025.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The research presented in this report was conducted as part of a study designed to understand, and learn from, how civil society actors involved in transitional justice processes narrate and communicate their impact and value. The focus on narrative captures the content, form, and audiences of these actors' communications work. In three national contexts, this narrative lens is used to interpret the narrative landscape, understand what issues and ideas are salient at specific times and in particular contexts, and show how broader support for justice can be fostered. The findings include stories about the experiences and journeys of individual victims, practitioners, leaders, and other stakeholders. They also include broader representations of relationships, communities, cultures, institutions, structures, and societal goals.

These stories have been organized around three key themes: narrative framing, narrative construct and ownership, and narrative dissemination. We demonstrate that actors are agile in making decisions about which discourses will connect best with different audiences and which will best promote their work, be it human rights, sustainable peace, or livelihoods. These decisions about narrative framing take place in the context of an evolving transitional justice process.

Individual actors construct sub-narratives as part of a broader narrative landscape in which other civil society organizations, as well as state institutions, communities, and victims all have their own agendas and messages. We find that many organizations will join with others to strengthen their voice through a shared story as an impact strategy. In each country context, however, there is an ongoing negotiation over narrative ownership, whether between different transitional justice stakeholders or more broadly as a question of national identity and empowerment. Given these dynamics, it is important to understand communications and narrative as a two-way process of listening as well as telling.

Finally, we analyzed how the salient framings are chosen by actors according to their intended audiences and the specific contexts in which they work. Decision-making around which communication vehicle is most effective—print media, radio, social media, arts—depends on available resources, training, and knowledge of local cultures. These considerations shape organizations' choices about the content and form of the stories they tell about their work in the context of transitional justice.

Supporting Transitional Justice Actors

Civil society actors working in contexts of transitional justice use narratives to advocate, promote, disseminate, and generate impact. These actors focus on varied issues that relate to transitional justice but also overlap with human rights, gender and sexuality, youth, governance, conflict and violence, and socioeconomic development. They work at different scales and timelines and have different access to resources and visibility. If such important narrative communications work is to be leveraged for transitional justice outcomes, funders must consider how narrative framing, form, ownership, and dissemination can be best understood and purposed. This starts with funding procedures and processes allowing diverse methods for applying for funds. However, this needs to extend to support for how narrative work is built into wider transitional justice action, including the promotion of capacity building, exchange, and activities focused on communications work, which requires communications budgets in grant allocations.

Transitional justice work is, in many ways, narrative work. If transitional justice is understood as a process in which significant elements of society come together to reduce the prevalence of false, oversimplified, and divisive narratives and attempt to acknowledge basic facts about the violations that occurred, such narrative communications work can be leveraged as an important mechanism of change. In focusing on this narrative work, we can better interrogate and understand the long-studied tenets of transitional justice—accountability, truth, reparations, and memorialization—all of which are culturally produced and, in some way, culturally owned. Funders of transitional justice should ensure funding and support for an inclusive range of voices, thereby encouraging a more dynamic narrative landscape. Including narrative landscapes when mapping contexts and actors and ensuring conflict-sensitive programming can better inform transitional justice stakeholders in all aspects of their strategy and communications work.

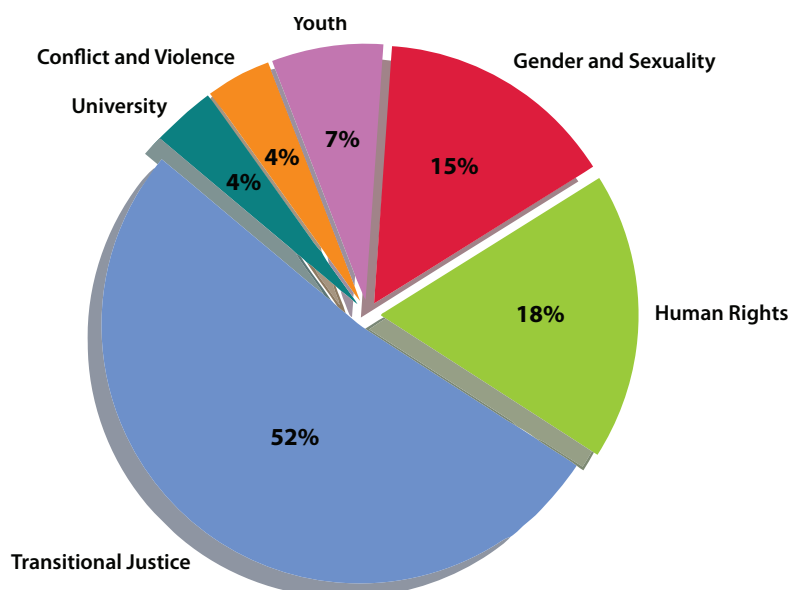
It is also important to acknowledge that not all narrative shifts are intentional or intuitive. The discrepancies in how organizations prioritize and strategize communications strategies illustrate a range of awareness and capabilities to identify and use narrative in their work. These capabilities are shaped by the challenging contexts presented in this report—contexts that are geographically, professionally, financially, and thematically stratified. Recognizing and supporting transitional justice actors' narrative communications work, in terms of technical training but also with psychosocial support, is essential. This should be a multidirectional process where both technical and contextual communication expertise is shared to create best practice standards that are both relevant and useable and that connect actors to their desired audiences. What unifies the three contexts is the concept of narratives as listening. Within transitional justice research and work, there is much about truth telling and truth seeking but very little on truth listening and receiving. The reception of these narratives needs to be researched further to better understand the multidirectional creation of narratives and the potential of narrative communications work to improve transitional justice outcomes.

Annex 1. Methodology

Data collection was conducted in two successive steps to facilitate the further refinement of the research focus. In practice, this involved an initial desk review which then informed the data collection processes to follow, including in-person interviews in The Gambia and online interviews in Colombia and Kenya. Researchers discussed emerging themes from the first round of data collection and agreed on any changes and revisions necessary to narrow down the scope of the research questions. Key data collection activities were qualitative, with all data collection completed between March and August 2025. This included:

Method	Objective
Literature review	Identify key actors and moments in the transitional justice processes of each case, as well as an understanding from other sources of how actors narrate and communicate their impact and value.
Key informant interviews and focus groups	Building on the findings of the desk review, understand how different transitional justice actors narrate and communicate their impact and value.

Figure 1: The Primary Issue of Focus Identified by Each Participating Organization



Limitations

Rapid review: Findings from this research were drawn from a relatively small sample of relevant documentation, 18 key informant interviews, and a validation workshop.

Uneven geographic scope: The Gambia is the predominant case study of this research and involved in-person interviews through a country visit. Interviews for Colombia and Kenya were conducted remotely for logistical and accessibility reasons, which means there is less data from these secondary case studies.

Availability of stakeholders: The nature and timeline of this rapid review meant some key stakeholders were unable to participate. Some actors were hesitant to participate in interviews due to availability and accessibility of internet connection. Overall, the research included diverse perspectives across stakeholder groups in each case study, including local, national, and international transitional justice actors and donors.

Annex 2. Interview Questions

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction and informed consent	
Explain the purpose of the research, its independent nature, how confidentiality will be protected, and obtain verbal consent (refer to plain language statement); if audio recording the interview, obtain consent prior to recording. ☐ OK Name: Position: Organization: Contact information:	
Research Question	Interview Questions
Warm up	Consent and overview of the research Thank the participant for their time Introduce the purpose of the research Confirm consent for participation and recording and/or note-taking. Assure confidentiality and explain how the data will be used. <i>Could you start by telling us about your role and your organization/project?</i> <i>How long have you worked for this organization/project?</i> <i>How does your organization describe its main objectives and activities?</i> <i>How does your organization explain the contribution that its engagement with transitional justice processes makes to these broader objectives?</i>
How do a diverse range of transitional justice actors understand their role, impact, and value?	<i>What are the current priorities for transitional justice in your country?</i> <i>Have these priorities changed over time?</i> <i>What processes related to transitional justice is your organization engaged with? How are those processes framed by the government or other actors that design/implement them?</i> <i>Can you identify the impacts that your work has had, and why do you think these impacts were possible?</i> <i>What communication strategies/techniques does your organization use to explain/communicate/frame its work, objectives, value, impact? Why has it chosen these strategies/techniques?</i>

	<i>Does your organization adapt how it describes its own work according to the way the transitional justice processes are framed by others?</i> <i>Conversely, do you think that your organization has shaped the discourse around the transitional justice processes?</i>
What are the key audiences with which actors share narratives of their impact and value?	<i>Who is most interested in learning about your priorities and impact as an organization?</i> <i>How do you connect with different audiences?</i> <i>How do you prioritize these audiences in the dissemination of your work?</i> <i>Who are your aspirational audiences?</i>
What are the impediments to the successful narration and communication of actors' impact and value?	<i>What challenges does your organization face in communicating its role/ value/impact?</i> <i>Who would you like to know about the impact and value of your organization, but have not been able to connect with?</i> <i>Why are you not able to reach them? (narratives/ visibility/ scope)</i> <i>Are other transitional justice actors able to reach audiences that you are not? Why is this?</i> <i>Are there aspects to your work that are difficult to understand and communicate as transitional justice?</i>
How can successful narrative and communication strategies be scaled up and diversified?	<i>What approaches have been particularly effective in communicating role/ value/impact? What could be improved? What lessons would be useful to other actors in similar contexts?</i> <i>What would facilitate your access to the audiences you would like to communicate with about the priorities and impact of your organization?</i>
Thanks, and next steps	<i>Is there any other information you wish to share on the present topic before we finish the interview?</i> Thank you for your time and contributions to the present study. The findings of the study will be shared via a series of open and targeted outputs. If you agree we will add you to the list of participants to share these with.

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