

Global Initiative for  
JUSTICE, TRUTH +  
RECONCILIATION

# AFRICAN YOUTH TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE ACADEMY



**Final Report of Participant  
Sub-Grant Projects**



International Coalition of  
**SITES of CONSCIENCE**



## ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) is a global network of museums, historic sites and grassroots initiatives dedicated to building a more just and peaceful future through engaging communities in remembering struggles for human rights and addressing their modern repercussions. Founded in 1999, the ICSC now includes more than 275 Sites of Conscience members in 65 countries. The ICSC supports these members through seven regional networks that encourage collaboration and international exchange of knowledge and best practices.

**Learn more at [www.sitesofconscience.org](http://www.sitesofconscience.org).**

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Founded by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR) is a Consortium of nine organizations around the globe dedicated to multi-disciplinary, integrated and holistic approaches to transitional justice. Grounded in a spirit of collaboration, each GIJTR project is managed by a specific Consortium member with support from other members.

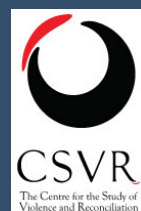
This report was produced as part of a ten-month-long GIJTR project titled “African Youth Transitional Justice Academy,” which aimed to enable a group of activists and civil society actors under the age of 35 from throughout Africa to gain a practical understanding of transitional justice in the African context, and the role that youth can play in transitional justice processes.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Written by Parusha Naidoo  
With contributions from Sarah Case

## GIJTR PROJECT PARTNERS

The African Youth Transitional Justice Academy was implemented by GIJTR partners the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), Public International Law & Policy Group (PILPG), Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), and consultant Humanitarian Law Center.





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# INTRODUCTION

## About the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation Consortium

Around the world, there is an increasing call for justice, truth and reconciliation in countries where legacies of gross human rights violations cast a shadow on transitions from repressive regimes to participatory and democratic forms of governance.

To meet this need, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) launched a new initiative, the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR), in August 2014. Supported by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the U.S. Department of State, the goal of the GIJTR is to address new challenges in countries in conflict or transition, struggling with legacies of ongoing gross human rights abuses.

ICSC leads a Consortium of nine organizational partners: American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI), USA; Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR), Indonesia; Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), South Africa; Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), Cambodia; Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF), USA; Humanitarian Law Center (HLC), Serbia; Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG), Guatemala; and Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG), USA. In addition to leveraging the expertise of the Consortium members, ICSC taps into the knowledge and longstanding community connections of its 275 member organizations in 65 countries in order to strengthen and broaden the Consortium's work.

Consortium partners, along with members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, develop and implement a range of rapid response and high-impact program activities, utilizing both restorative and retributive approaches to justice and accountability for gross human rights violations. The expertise of the organizations under the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation includes:

- Truth-telling, reconciliation, memorialization and other forms of historical memory;
- Documenting human rights abuses for transitional justice purposes;
- Forensic analysis and other efforts related to missing and disappeared persons;
- Victims' advocacy such as improving access to justice, psychosocial support and trauma mitigation activities;
- Providing technical assistance to and building the capacity of civil society activists and organizations to promote and engage on transitional justice processes;
- Reparative justice initiatives; and
- Ensuring gender justice in all of these processes.

To date, the GIJTR has led civil society actors in multiple countries in the development and implementation of documentation and truth-telling projects, undertaken assessments of the memorialization, documentation and psycho-social support capacities of local organizations, and launched a transitional justice "academy" to provide activists and non-traditional actors in the Middle East and North Africa region with training, support and opportunities to participate in the design and implementation of community-driven transitional justice approaches.

Given the diversity of experience and skills within the Consortium and amongst ICSC network members, the program offers post-conflict countries and countries emerging from repressive regimes a unique opportunity to address transitional justice needs in a timely manner, while promoting local participation and building the capacity of community partners.

# About the African Youth Transitional Justice Academy

The GIJTR's work in conflict and post-conflict countries has shown that youth must play an active role in transitional justice processes in order for societies to move forward toward more just and peaceful futures after periods of repression and gross human rights violations, but young people are often unable to fully engage in transitional justice processes because they lack foundational knowledge related to issues of truth, justice and reconciliation. Launched in January 2019 by Consortium partners the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), Public International Law & Policy Group (PILPG), Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVr) and consultant Humanitarian Law Center (HLC), the African Youth Transitional Justice Academy was a ten-month project that aimed to support a group of young activists and civil society actors to raise awareness and engage in activities related to truth, justice and reconciliation in their home countries, while recognizing their potential, as young leaders, to play a crucial role in transitional justice processes.

The ten young activists who made up the Academy's participants came from Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, South Africa, The Gambia, South Sudan and Rwanda and were selected as part of a competitive application process. The GIJTR hosted two trainings for the group, the first of which focused on providing attendees with a broad foundational knowledge of transitional justice mechanisms, while the second offered participants training in using participatory methods involving the arts, culture, education, community dialogue and media to address transitional justice needs. Simultaneously, the Academy aimed to provide participants with opportunities for networking and sharing experiences and expertise across diverse African contexts. As part of this effort, GIJTR supported the participants to engage in cross-regional collaboration and, working in pairs, to develop small projects to address issues related to justice, truth and reconciliation in their communities with financial and technical support from the Consortium partners. These subgrants allowed the participants to put into practice the lessons and ideas they exchanged throughout the Academy trainings and to pilot new initiatives when they returned home. The following report highlights the results of the participants' projects—all innovative programs launched and implemented by young activists with an eye toward engaging youth on key transitional justice issues.



**African Youth Transitional Justice Academy participants and facilitators, Kigali, May 2019**



# SUB-GRANT PROJECTS



Participants visit the Kigali Genocide Memorial (left) and interact during a participatory methodologies training (right)

# Training youth as advocates for social cohesion

## Project overview

Armel's project sought to address the current challenges of Ivory Coast's peace process and the legacy of human rights violations that occurred between 1990-2011. This project was timely and needed, with a resurgence of social demands in the public realm, growing intercommunity conflicts, and the country soon to enter a presidential election in 2020. Armel hoped not only to respond to the ensuing national tensions but also prevent the onset of electoral violence. This was achieved by engaging young people as the key actors in preventing violence and promoting social cohesion within their communities. With the help of local youth leaders, the project mobilized 26 participants to undergo a training on transitional justice in order to better understand their role in advocating for peace and cohesion in their own communities. Many participants had been impacted by previous periods of electoral violence or had experienced intercommunity violence.



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Armel Gonkapiou Gouandeu

**Country:** Ivory Coast

**Project:** Learning from the past to prevent violence

**Affiliation:** Observatoire Ivoirien des Droits de l'Homme (OIDH)

## Challenges and successes

Armel noted the significance of the project site, Agboville (situated outside the capital of Abidjan), explaining, "This town was one of the areas that was strongly impacted by the 2010-2011 post-election crisis. But there have been few initiatives there to help the people heal from their wounds." This context was particularly important to consider within the climate of distrust towards activities around the peace process, which has been regarded as largely political. Gaining the support of the community and interest from participants for the project therefore presented a challenge, as he explained: "People are very resistant to these types of actions... long explanations of the value of the activities were necessary in order to gain their buy-in." Despite this initial weariness towards the project, a large number of young people expressed their interest in participating in the training. In accounting for the success of the project, Armel noted that by the end of implementation, "...participants hailed the project as a glimmer of hope" for their communities. Going forward, Armel plans to request support from new sponsors in order to sustain the results of this project and expand implementation to other communities in-need.

"I tell young people that, in everything we are doing, we have a single country--Ivory Coast. We work for peace, for social cohesion, so that our future will be better."  
- Sub-grant project participant



# Amplifying community-driven processes

## Project overview

The main intervention of Caroline's project was the facilitation of an intergenerational consultation with 30 community representatives from a diverse range of ethnic groups in Juba, South Sudan. The consultation focused on engaging community representatives to devise methods of preventing inter-communal conflicts and promote reconciliation. The intervention also offered an important space for awareness-raising around transitional justice, with participants holding varied understandings of its processes and mechanisms. For Caroline, transitional justice is a vital avenue to respond to justice and reconciliation concerns at the grassroots level. However, she had witnessed that many people perceive it to be solely a government-led process. The consultation contributed to changing these perceptions of transitional justice and ensured that participants began to understand their role within their immediate communities to advocate for transitional justice processes. In reflecting on her project, Caroline spoke of the potential that community-driven initiatives have in addressing deep-rooted issues while also recommending suitable approaches to responsible government stakeholders, which can be used in designing a nation-wide transitional justice process.



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Caroline Kibos

**Country:** South Sudan

**Project:** Community violence prevention

**Affiliation:** Center for Inclusive  
Governance, Peace and Justice

## Challenges and successes

A notable success of this project was the high response to intervention. Caroline explained that, on the day of the activity, a large number of community representatives wanted to participate, indicating both a significant need and interest. While primarily a success, this high turnout also presented an obstacle within an already limited time-frame for project implementation. Caroline, along with many of her peers in the Academy, noted the need to balance a desire for significant and widespread impact with the realities of limited resources and the project implementation timeframe. Caroline noted that, "One day was not enough for the consultation, as participants needed more time to air out their grievances and ways to resolve their issues." Nevertheless, she regarded the consultation as a successful pilot initiative, explaining that the way communities utilize resolutions made during the dialogue will have important implications for the future. Indeed, participants were invigorated by the consultation, establishing a strong basis for future interventions and indicating "commitment to organize themselves at a community level as mechanisms for preventing and responding to conflict." Building on the momentum of this intervention, Caroline explained that she hopes to continue working on project and to roll out a model for community conflict coping mechanisms.

"I have learnt that transitional justice is a peoples' process and must be approached through a bottom-top approach." - Caroline

# Promoting peace through storytelling

## Project overview

Daniel's background in media and interest in the mechanisms of transitional justice prompted him to plan a project that could combine his passions for story-telling and healing. The project focused on the launch of an online platform to house inspiring stories from people who have experienced the first-hand effects of violent conflict. In creating the platform, the purpose of the activity was to provide an avenue for memorialization, healing, reconciliation, truth-seeking, forgiveness and documentation. Named 'Hopelatern,' the project focused on promoting more compassionate and peaceful communities. Daniel saw the necessity for this project, explaining, "We discovered the need to document, create a platform and spaces for people to easily access these inspirational behavioral change and healing stories, to foster intergenerational self-reflection and dialogues." The first story to go live on the platform, entitled 'Finding Good', is that of Carl Wilkens, a humanitarian aid worker who was the only American to choose to remain in Kigali during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.



**TO FOLLOW MORE OF HOPELATERN'S WORK, VISIT THE PROJECT'S WEBSITE:**  
[HTTPS://WWW.HOPELATERN.ORG/](https://www.hopelatern.org/)



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Daniel Ganza

**Country:** Rwanda

**Project:** Learning from the past to prevent violence

**Affiliation:** Think Outside the Box

## Challenges and successes

With little prior experience building websites, Daniel persevered through the technical challenges of needing to create a functional platform aligned to the goals of the project. Working with web developers, he learned that creating a digital platform required strategy, time and a team. A turning point towards success in his project was building a team of web developers and a videographer who shared his vision and understood the tasks at hand. Securing the first stories for the project was an additional success, as Daniel explained, "There are so many stories I want cover, some are far from Kigali and require long distance travel, some you need authorization to cover for certain subjects... for me the first two stories that I shot are a stepping stone in covering all of the other stories. With these stories, I can approach other stakeholders to support the production of other stories." Beyond documenting these stories and adding more content to the website, the project will continue by expanding the accessibility and reach of the stories through communal screenings and dialogues as a catalyst for discussion, reflection, learning, and inspiration.

"Hopelatern is all about promoting compassionate and peaceful communities. Through this platform, we preserve stories of behavioral change and healing from past/present violent communities as a memoir for learning." - Daniel

# Awareness-raising on transitional justice for youth

## Project overview

While The Gambia attempts to respond to the legacy of the Jammeh regime, more remains to be done to ensure that the transitional justice process is as inclusive and accessible as possible. Realizing that many Gambian youths are not well equipped with information about the ongoing transitional justice process, Fatou designed an intervention to address this gap in knowledge, with a concentration on social cohesion, accountability, reconciliation and raising awareness on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). She recognized that two groups in particular have not received adequate information and inclusion: youth and Gambians living outside the country's capital. Participants of this project fell into both categories, as the activity was focused on youth based in Jammeh's hometown, a village in the west coast region that suffered serious human rights violations. The project included presentations on the different transitional justice mechanisms being implemented in The Gambia and the goals of the process, as well as an intergenerational dialogue focused on easing ethnic tensions within the community. Reflecting on her project, Fatou noted, "We need to find more ways to engage young people in community building and national development. But most importantly we learnt that youth can be an agent of change in their communities, particularly in areas of reconciliation."



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Fatou Baldah  
**Country:** The Gambia  
**Project:** Engaging youth in transitional justice  
**Affiliation:** Women in Liberation and Leadership (WILL)

## Challenges and successes

Fatou faced skepticism and resistance to her project, with many people in the village initially viewing the initiative as an attack on them as supporters of the Jammeh regime and perceiving the larger Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) as a witch-hunt against the Jola ethnic group. These conditions posed a clear challenge to launching the project. Citing her training at the Academy, Fatou discussed her response to the challenge, noting, "From the onset, I was able to identify those who had come prepared for tension; therefore, I was able to calmly set the ground rules and made sure that everyone knew that the space was a safe space where we had to respect each other's opinion." Despite these initial difficulties, implementation continued with notable successes, including a clear shift in the views held towards the TRRC as participants gained a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the Commission's mandate. From this project, community ambassadors were identified to support victims at a local level and connect them with the TRRC. These ambassadors will also receive mentorship and continued support to engage their communities in dialogue on the TRRC.

"We need organizations like to yours... Because not many of us are privileged to have such information... But after listening, I know that you are here to help us. I will now go and share this message with my family and neighbors."  
- Sub-grant project participant

# Addressing Rwanda's history for a united future

## Project overview

Inspired to learn more of Rwanda's history, pre- and post-colonization, Ganza framed his project around two public dialogues that engaged both young and old. The aim of the dialogues was to gather information regarding the achievements of Rwanda before the Genocide of 1994, and to better map out the future that different generations envision for their country. In addition to these two dialogues, the project also included taking a group of youth to visit the liberation war museum. The secondary focus of the project was the role of sport in reconciliation. Through the dialogues, traditional sports that are no longer widely played were documented. These sports were then later taught to youth participating in the dialogues, as a method to revive a sense of pride in the history and tradition of Rwandan sports and promote unity.



**CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING LINK TO SEE A VIDEO GANZA PRODUCED ON HIS PROJECT:**  
[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=YI17AGN\\_R3W&FEATURE=YOUTU.BE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YI17AGN_R3W&feature=youtu.be)



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Ganza Kanamugire Bertin

**Country:** Rwanda

**Project:** Peace and reconciliation through media

**Affiliation:** Afflatus Africa

## Challenges and successes

A noteworthy achievement of the project was the interest it garnered from many stakeholders, specifically schools who believed their students benefitted and would continue to benefit from the dialogue series. In addition, the project became a formative space for Ganza himself, who was able to learn more of his own country's history. While the activities planned for this project were implemented successfully, he explained that, in some cases, unexpected events occurred that shifted the timeline of implementation. Needing to be flexible and understanding of the changes to participants' schedules was critical to continuing relationships for future work. Reflecting on this, Ganza shared, "There were many challenges and discouragements. I learned flexibility, problem solving, time management, prioritizing, empathy and negotiating." Going forward, Ganza intends to continue organizing dialogue events, mainly in schools, and hopes to publish the insights and lessons gained from the dialogues in the format of a book.

"I realized that I have to learn a lot about our country's history, unity, reconciliation, truth and healing. This project has also given me more courage and increased the passion I have to make a positive change."  
- Ganza

# Reconciling divided communities through dialogue

## Project overview

Lalla saw a gap in the understanding of transitional justice among young people, and a spike in violence where “some young people took justice into their own hands in the north of Mali.” The project offered an opportunity to bring 15 youths together and train them in transitional justice mechanisms that could be applied to their contexts. The training drew on the training modules she received during the Academy and her previous experience promoting women’s rights. It also provided a space to discuss the provisions of Mali’s fragile Peace Agreement that resulted from negotiations in Algiers in 2015 and the impact of the agreement’s implementation on young people. In reporting on her project, Lalla shared a critical insight: “I learned the importance of increasing the involvement of young people in the peace process. In our situation in Mali, the young people are the ones who join criminal and jihadist groups, but when negotiations start, they are not included, and when a Peace Agreement is settled, the content is not translated into a language that the young people can understand. I think that everywhere we should advocate for young people to be more involved in the peace process as decision-makers and primary beneficiaries.”



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Lalla Moulker Sall

**Country:** Mali

**Project:** Youth engagement in transitional justice

**Affiliation:** Association Femmes Leadership et Développement Durable (AFLED)

## Challenges and successes

For many of the participants in Lalla’s training, trauma and memories of previous violent episodes in their communities remained close to the surface. The project was not designed to directly respond to these experiences of trauma, and participants were initially hesitant to engage in dialogue. As the training progressed, however, the participants began to feel more comfortable and understand the objective of the activity and requested supplementary forums to express their frustrations and past experiences. They also recognized the value of a space for discussion and the information and training being offered on the Peace Agreement. At the training’s conclusion, there was a remarkable shift, from the majority of the participants not understanding the Peace Agreement, to eventually recognizing it as a positive step. One participant who had been particularly skeptical transformed his view of Mali’s context, noting that the Peace Agreement was needed as a kind of compromise to facilitate living together harmoniously. Lalla intends to secure further funding to continue working with young people to raise their awareness on transitional justice, reconciliation and forgiveness. She sees this work as a need not only in the north of Mali but throughout her country.

“It is clear that in the coming years we will be confronted with the search for sustainable peace and I am going to invest myself in this.”

- Lalla

# Addressing violence through community structures

## Project overview

Based in the township of Diepsloot, this project aimed to address aspects of reconciliation and crime prevention by bringing community stakeholders together through creative methodologies. With a background in performing arts, Ntuli designed this project to address pressing issues within the community through theater and dialogue. Project implementation began with the collection of input from diverse community members on their violence prevention concerns and the interpretation of their responses into a theatrical performance. The resulting play was used to facilitate dialogue on crime and transitional justice in two workshops that included the Community Policing Forum, Diepsloot Youth Desk, and South African Police Services (SAPS) from the Diepsloot police station. Ntuli explained that, through the workshops, the stakeholders were able to discover common ground: "We looked to work on a common goal, which is crime prevention and lowering the recurrence of some the issues such as xenophobic attacks and growing gangs in schools and around the community."



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Ntuli Nkanyiso Nelson

**Country:** South Africa

**Project:** Community Violence Prevention

**Affiliation:** Diepsloot Youth in Action

## Challenges and successes

Securing consistent stakeholder engagement was a challenge as the project progressed. Ntuli explained that some of the participants between the two workshops differed and that this created an obstacle, as more time was needed to brief new participants. Added to this challenge was the need for longer-term commitment from participants outside of the time allocated for the workshops. The third challenge involved difficulties securing a suitable venue with limited project resources. Despite these challenges, Ntuli was able to implement the performances and create an environment that was conducive to dialogue in the workshops. A notable success was the creation of a strong foundation for further collaboration between community members from diverse backgrounds and the likelihood of future activities stemming from the project.

Going forward, Ntuli noted that there was growing support and interest from outside the community as well: "We have enhanced our network around Gauteng province through this project, as we have seen many stakeholders looking to partner with us through the project and other future projects we plan to do in relation to crime prevention and keeping the youth of Diepsloot active in arts and sport."

"The project gave me the opportunity to interact more with different personalities in engaging on community issues regardless of age and social class...The community at large has solutions and more constructive ideas for the growth and safety of the community." -

Ntuli

# Empowering youth in reconciliation processes

## Project overview

Understanding youth to be a critical actor in any transitional justice process, Zeze's project sought to engage and empower young people in their understanding of transitional justice. Working within a context where youth are often mobilized toward violence by political leaders for their personal interests, he was aware of the dual experience of young people as both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations. He explained the need for this kind of project, saying, "We think that involving youth in transitional justice and violence prevention processes could help them understand the ideas of social cohesion, justice and reconciliation in order to make them actors in the national reconciliation process in our society in Guinea." The project involved a transitional justice capacity building workshop, collection of eyewitness accounts on human rights violations, and a radio program on remembrance and memorialization. Reflecting on the project, Zeze noted that participants displayed a clear determination to take the skills and concepts they had gained during the workshop and use them to advocate for the stalled national reconciliation process. In addition, participants expressed the need for further training on issues they identified as important, including trauma management and assisting victims of human rights violations.



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Tamba Zeze Guilavogui

**Country:** Guinea

**Project:** Involving Youth in Transitional Justice

**Affiliation:** Consortium des Associations des Jeunes pour la Défense des Victimes de Violences en Guinée (COJEDEV)

## Challenges and successes

Mobilizing and maintaining a set group of young participants was a challenge during the project due to the time of year: schools were closed for annual vacation and the project faced potential disruptions due to the rainy season. To overcome this, Zeze explained, "We had to encourage participants by staying in constant contact with them from the first contact until the date of the meeting." Despite this, attendance was high, and a key achievement was the inclusion of young women in the activities and an emphasis on the links between gender and transitional justice during the workshop. Zeze noted, "Participation of girls was a real achievement knowing that the issue of gender is so sensitive and sometimes neglected in our communities." This project also led to the creation of a monitoring and training device where workshop participants committed to forming an association that would promote reconciliation. Zeze plans to work with this association to further the project while also developing tools for facilitation/training for young people throughout the country.

"I found students and youth committed to changing the image of their country to look towards the future. I also found that young people are capable of effectively participating in the transitional justice process." - Zeze



**ZEZE'S PROJECT WAS FEATURED ON THIS MEDIA PAGE:**

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/Y3739R22](https://tinyurl.com/y3739r22)

# Educating children on peace and civic engagement

## Project overview

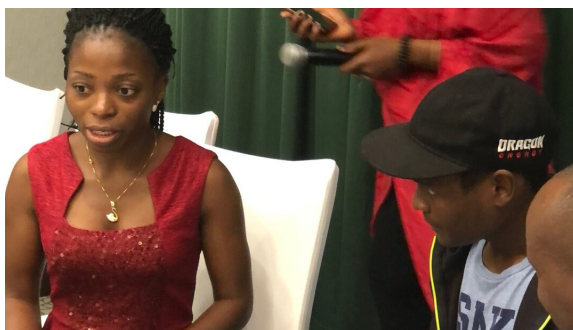
In 2011, the Ivorian government initiated a transitional justice process with the aim of forging unity in the context of post-election violence. Amandine observed that participation from almost all sectors of the country's population was encouraged in the process, with the exception of children and young people. This gap in participation is critical, given that surveys conducted after the crisis indicated that children and young people were both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations. Amandine's project sought to address the gap of previous and current mechanisms by building the capacity of 15 young Ivorians to understand transitional justice and their role in furthering peace and social cohesion. Implementation began with a planning meeting and the assembling of project partners. Phases 2-3 covered a capacity building workshop and an art workshop for participants from the Coalition of Children's Organizations and the Action, Justice and Peace Network. The first workshop focused on creating a strong conceptual foundation of transitional justice that was age-appropriate, while the second workshop facilitated creative engagement with participants drawing their perspectives and proposals for social cohesion and peace in the form of comic strips.



**AMANDINE'S PROJECT WAS FEATURED ON THESE MEDIA PAGES:**

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/YXRAD7FD](https://tinyurl.com/yxrad7fd)

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/Y36ME2T9](https://tinyurl.com/y36me2t9)



## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

**Name:** Teloh Amandine Macoura Gbadé

**Country:** Ivory Coast

**Project:** Involving Young People and Introducing Children to the Transitional Justice Process in Ivory Coast

**Affiliation:** Réseau Action, Justice et Paix

## Challenges and successes

Working with children required delivering the workshop content in a manner that was appropriate to their ages and conceptual understanding of ideas of peace and social cohesion. To overcome this challenge, he included a range of dynamic activities to convey the content in an engaging manner. A second challenge was related to the preconceived notions of justice held by participants. The majority of children involved had been negatively affected by the violence of 2011 and had been exposed to ideas of vengeance from the adults around them. Amandine explained "According to the children, the majority of these people want vengeance, or want to participate in the violence... because they think that other young people did it during past crises and were rewarded." Using art to address this was an important medium for the children to explore their own views. As a project achievement, he reflected that "Through art and drawing, during the project the children showed that not only did they have their own way of understanding the transition mechanisms, but also that they could use art and drawing to express their point of view." Going forward, the project will build on the children's comic strips by producing a publication to encourage children to understand transition mechanisms. Amandine will also continue advocating for state and national authorities to effectively consider children and young people in the national processes.

"...the transition desired by the transitional justice mechanisms cannot be effective unless today's children are trained to become actors to protect peace and social cohesion in future society. - Amandine



# PARTICIPANTS' LESSONS & REFLECTIONS FROM THE ACADEMY

"I am grateful for the lessons from the training, I was well prepared when I had to handle the workshops within the project implementation. It also enhanced my knowledge about transitional justice, and its implementation and the impact it has on the society... The academy also offered opportunities to network across Africa and learn from each other as young Africans." - Ntuli Nkanyiso Nelson

"Before I attended the trainings, I had an idea for a project but it was very vague. The knowledge I gained from the trainings and the advice from the facilitators helped me to have a clear understanding about my project and helped me to get a plan of activities that could be more impactful."  
- Ganza Kanamugire Bertin

"One of the important lessons I got from the academy is that Transitional Justice is really about addressing community justice and reconciliation concerns. However, it is often perceived as national or rather governmental processes with top-bottom approach. This knowledge inspired me to implement this project at community level ..."  
- Caroline Kibos

"We need to find more ways to engage young people in community building and national development. But most importantly we learnt that youth can be agents of change in their communities, particularly in areas of reconciliation."  
- Fatou Baldah

"Cherish and make good use of the powerful behavioral change and healing stories... If we can document, create a platform and spaces for people to watch these stories and engage in self-reflection discussions, then we will discover the power of stories as a peace building tool."  
- Daniel Ganza



Participants join group discussions and exercises at African Youth Transitional Justice Academy workshops in Kigali, May & July 2019



# FACILITATORS' REFLECTIONS

## CHRISTOPHER KREUTZNER, PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW & POLICY GROUP, USA

PILPG was thrilled to lend its legal expertise to the Academy, which showcased the capacity of youth leaders to transform conflict-affected states. Although youth comprise the largest demographic in Africa, domestic and international transitional justice efforts do not always provide youth with the skills or space to participate. The Academy has empowered participants to engage in these processes - participants dramatically improved their knowledge-base in designing and implementing transitional justice projects. The Academy also facilitated the formation of long-lasting relationships among youth activists. These relationships will provide a basis for future collaboration and information-sharing, which are essential ingredients for long-term peace and stability.

## LEBOGANG MARISHANE, CONSTITUTION HILL, SOUTH AFRICA

The youth who participated in the academy had many more synergies than we initially realized. Issues confronting youth in Africa cut across contexts and require a consolidated and systematic approach – this is exactly what the Academy seeks to do. It remains important for young people to be part of these discussions and the design of programs that engage them. This can be done through peer-learning and monitoring, as evident in the workshops where participants readily engaged to share strategies in program design and implementation. Collaborations that emerged from the workshops can only strengthen local efforts and provide the support needed to confront the issues facing Africa's youth.

## PREDRAG MILETIC, HUMANITARIAN LAW CENTER, SERBIA

Having the unique opportunity to meet these young people and listen to what they had to say made me feel much more confident about the future struggle for just societies across Africa. Their readiness to face and address the most serious wrongdoings and the heavy burden of historical legacies in their respective societies seemed so decisive to me. And, their prior knowledge of transitional justice processes and understanding of Africa's different contexts showed that they were mutually supportive and approached this workshop as a solid, drilled team.

## ASHLEY NELSON, INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE, USA

Working with the participants of the AYTJA has been a highlight of my career. I was so impressed with them as both individuals and team players. Not only were they exceptionally knowledgeable about the human rights opportunities and challenges in their specific contexts, but they were so eager to share those insights as well as listen and learn from others in the group. Given their intelligence and dedication to fostering justice and peace in their countries and communities, I have no doubt that with the proper programmatic and financial support, they will make a true difference.

## DENIS NGALA, MANENE CULTURAL TRUST, KENYA

I am glad that I was given the opportunity to join the African Youth TJ Academy as a facilitator. What amazing souls: we had participants who are inspired to create social transformation. I would recommend this program to continue so that in three to five years we will be having a network of people who can raise their voices from all corners of Africa.

## SELBY XINWA, CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF VIOLENCE AND RECONCILIATION, SOUTH AFRICA

Of critical importance were the participants' energy, skill and the expertise they put into their projects, albeit with small resources. I also found participants willing to engage and share their individual projects among themselves. I hope that they continue with these projects as they provide space for many young people in the continent who require such interventions in the face of prevalent violence (gender-based and Femicide) as well as some states in the continent cracking down on democratic civil society organizations' activities. For me, they represent the voiceless.

# CONCLUSION

Collectively, the project descriptions compiled here reflect the need for programs designed to engage youth on issues related to truth, justice and reconciliation from the earliest stages of a country's post-conflict recovery until long after the conflict has ceased. They speak to the importance of ongoing innovation in the mechanisms developed to promote reconciliation, justice and remembrance, as many of the participants' non-traditional approaches were effective in reaching communities that likely would not have had access to or been interested by more formal mechanisms. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the projects compiled here are a testament to the potential for youth across Africa to act as leaders in addressing the most pressing transitional justice needs in their communities and to the creativity and determination of this particular group. It is GIJTR's hope that this report will prove to be a source of inspiration and learning for other young practitioners pursuing grassroots transitional justice initiatives and funders looking to support innovative, youth-led programs.

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# DEDICATION



**Sise participating in a group discussion at the African Youth Transitional Justice Academy, May 2019**

In the final months of the project, all of us who were involved in the African Youth Transitional Justice Academy were devastated to learn of the passing of Sise Sawaneh in a tragic car accident. Sise was a Gambian journalist, an activist, a fearlessly outspoken woman and youth advocate, and a generous and engaged participant in our African Youth Transitional Justice Academy. Her project, which she was in the midst of implementing, focused on bringing together a diverse group of young people and community leaders in Garawol, a small town in eastern Gambia, to join a dialogue on peace-building, reconciliation, and a caste conflict—a cause about which she was passionate. Sise's warm and independent spirit will be dearly missed by everyone involved in the project. We would like to dedicate this report to her memory.

We will remember passion, dedication and kindness and be inspired by her always.



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