


<b>Section A</b>		
<b>Institution:</b> University of St Andrews 		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 26: Modern Languages and Linguistics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Improving our Understanding of Positive Change in Post-Genocide Rwanda		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 1 Oct 2016 - 30 Sept 2018		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Nicki Hitchcott	Professor	01 September 2016 - present
Hannah Grayson	Research Fellow	01 October 2016 - 30 September 2018
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 01 September 2016 - 31 August 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>Section B</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Hitchcott's AHRC-funded research project 'Rwandan Stories of Change' examined the ways in which testimonies from Rwandans who lived through the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi demonstrate positive psychological change or 'post-traumatic growth'. Through collaboration with Rwandan therapists and an international NGO, the project's research has generated the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A group of Rwandan psychotherapists has used our research to make changes in their clinical practice and to train approximately 5% of the total number of therapists in Rwanda.</li> <li>(ii) The Genocide Archive of Rwanda (Kigali, Rwanda) holds new, accurate translations of testimonies from Kinyarwanda into English (which is now the primary language of education in Rwanda). This has improved the quality of documentation available to users of the archive (scholars and online visitors from around the world).</li> <li>(iii) The Aegis Trust (UK/US/Rwanda-based NGO) has systematically integrated our translations as new resources into its country-wide peace education programme in Rwanda. The translated stories are commonly used as a starting point for discussion about peace and reconciliation after genocide.</li> <li>(iv) Rwandan genocide survivors have welcomed opportunities to tell their own stories and be heard by an international audience of researchers and the general public in Scotland and worldwide.</li> <li>(v) Non-academic audiences' knowledge and understanding of Rwanda have increased through our public engagement programme, our publications, and our use of social media.</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>During the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, over a million people were brutally massacred in just one hundred days, often by friends, neighbours and even family members. Community surveys in Rwanda reported that 35.6% of genocide survivors were suffering from trauma in 2017-18. In this project, we examined the ways in which traumatised individuals have rebuilt their lives with an emphasis on what is described as 'post-traumatic growth'.</p> <p>Post-traumatic growth is a concept originally developed in Clinical Psychology. It describes the process whereby individuals who have experienced traumatic life events transform their lives and themselves in positive ways. It is measured across five domains: (i) a greater appreciation of life; (ii) an enhanced sense of personal strength; (iii) closer relationships with loved ones; (iv) an increased understanding of spiritual matters; and (v) the identification of new possibilities and/or</p>		

directions in life. We used the concept in this Modern Languages-led project as a tool for analysing testimonial narratives.

The project was led by Professor Nicki Hitchcott (PI, St Andrews) who also supervised the Postdoctoral Research Assistant, Dr Hannah Grayson at St Andrews (2016-18). The Co-I was Professor Stephen Joseph (Nottingham). Psychologist, Dr Laura Blackie (Nottingham) was co-author on some of the project's publications and collaborated with the team on two workshops for therapists in Kigali held in 2018. In September 2018, Hitchcott was shortlisted for the inaugural Wellcome/Health Humanities Medal in the category of Best International Research for this project.

Our project partner was the Aegis Trust, an international NGO based in the UK, the US and Rwanda, which manages the Genocide Archive of Rwanda based at the Kigali Genocide Memorial. The Aegis Trust campaigns for the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities around the world, runs peace-building education and outreach programmes in Rwanda, and undertakes research, policy advice and advocacy where people need protection.

The Genocide Archive of Rwanda was the first and is still the largest archive of materials relating to the 1994 genocide in the world. It provides universal access to its collections in its physical archive, based in Kigali, and through its website. The research team, led by Hitchcott, worked closely with the Rwandan archive team to ensure that our research was relevant and useful to them. We also employed a local team of translators and transcribers to provide accurate translation. Wherever possible, we included Rwandan people in our public engagement events to ensure that our research reached interested parties in Rwanda and beyond. A leader of the Rwandan community in the UK was a member of the project's Advisory Board.

Hitchcott and Grayson selected, from the Genocide Archive of Rwanda, a corpus of key oral testimonies from survivors and perpetrators of the 1994 genocide. The original testimonies were collected by staff members of the Aegis Trust between 2014 and 2016 in Kinyarwanda (the interviewees' native language and the major language in Rwanda). In Rwanda, we recruited a team of native speakers to transcribe the testimonies in Kinyarwanda, translate them into English, then back-translate them into Kinyarwanda to ensure accuracy. We then performed a qualitative analysis of the testimonies looking for indicators of social and psychological change. Through our analysis and comparison of these testimonies, we identified some of the ways in which individuals articulate post-traumatic growth in Rwanda.

The key findings from the research, disseminated as two co-edited volumes, nine articles/chapters and more than twenty conference papers and invited lectures, are:

2.1 There is evidence of post-traumatic growth in the testimonies of both survivors and perpetrators of genocide (R1; R2).

2.2 Although we found evidence of post-traumatic growth in the Rwandan testimonies, we concluded that the concept needs further refinement in the context of post-genocide Rwanda to ensure that cultural and linguistic differences are fully understood (R3; R4).

2.3 Post-traumatic growth is measured cross-culturally using the Post-traumatic Growth Inventory or PTGI (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). Our research identified a need to nuance the PTGI in order to account for a number of areas specific to individuals' recovery from trauma in Rwanda. For example, we found that changes in survivors' autonomy were inherently linked to their sense of connectedness to the community (R3).

2.4 A full understanding of post-genocide Rwanda needs to take account of the diverse and often contradictory narratives that have emerged from and about the country since 1994. For example, individuals' stories are often influenced by the government's master narrative, which strongly emphasises reconciliation and forgiveness. This can affect the ways in which post-traumatic recovery is expressed (R5; R6).

The research was carried out under the AHRC-funded project, 'Post-Traumatic Growth in Testimonies from Survivors and Perpetrators of the Rwanda Genocide' ('Rwandan Stories of Change'), at the University of St Andrews between October 2016 and September 2018.

### 3. References to the research

The research was funded by the AHRC and published in peer-reviewed journal articles and edited volumes with highly regarded publishers.

R1 Grayson, Hannah, Nicki Hitchcott, Laura Blackie and Stephen Joseph (eds), *After the Genocide in Rwanda: Testimonies of Violence, Change and Reconciliation* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2019). ISBN 978-1-78831-828-0 (Copy can be supplied on request).

R2 Blackie, Laura E. R., Nicki Hitchcott and Stephen Joseph, 'Looking for Post-Traumatic Growth in Perpetrators of the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda: A Discussion of Theoretical and Ethical Issues', *Journal of Perpetrator Research*, 1 (2017), open access: DOI: [10.21039/jpr.v1i1.39](https://doi.org/10.21039/jpr.v1i1.39)

R3 Grayson, Hannah 'Articulating Growth in Rwandan Terms: Adapting the Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory', *Studies in Testimony*, 1 (2018). (open access):

<https://studiesintestimony.co.uk/issues/volume-one-issue-one/articulating-growth-in-rwandan-terms/>

R4 Grayson, Hannah, 'A Place for Individuals: Positive Growth in Rwanda', *East African Literary and Cultural Studies*, 3.2-4 (2017), (open access): DOI: [10.1080/23277408.2017.1374052](https://doi.org/10.1080/23277408.2017.1374052)

R5 Grayson, Hannah and Nicki Hitchcott (eds), *Rwanda Since 1994: Stories of Change* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019). ISBN 978-1-78694-199-2 (Copy can be supplied on request).

R6 Blackie, Laura E. R. and Nicki Hitchcott (2018) *I am Rwandan: Unity and Reconciliation in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, *Journal of Genocide Studies and Prevention*, 12 1(2018), open access: DOI: [10.5038/1911-9933.12.1.1480](https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.12.1.1480)

### 4. Details of the impact

Through close collaboration with our Rwandan partners, we ensured that our research had a range of impacts on beneficiaries in the UK, Rwanda and worldwide: (i) Rwandan therapists have made changes to their clinical practice and training; (ii) the range and accuracy of archival materials about the genocide have now increased; (iii) the Aegis Trust has received new resources for use in their peace education programme; (iv) Rwandan survivors have been given the opportunity to tell their own stories and have them heard; and (v) non-academic audiences' knowledge and understanding of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi have increased.

#### 4.1 Rwandan psychotherapists have made changes to their practice and training

In March 2018, Hitchcott, Blackie, Grayson and Joseph led a day-long workshop with 22 people (Rwandan therapists) hosted by the Genocide Archive of Rwanda team in Kigali where we presented our research. The therapists came from different areas of Rwanda. They used a range of therapeutic techniques with patients, but all focused on the diagnosis and treatment of symptoms (PTSD) rather than on positive change (post-traumatic growth). Having engaged with our research, participants decided to use the concept of post-traumatic growth in their practice as follows: before and after therapeutic interventions; to evaluate patients' state of mental health; to assess processes of healing and resilience; and within focus group discussions (S1).

Hitchcott and Blackie then held a follow-up workshop in September 2018 with a smaller, focused subgroup of 7 people (Rwandan therapists). In this workshop, we produced a draft clinical checklist, co-designed with the therapists. The co-designed clinical checklist has **changed the way those psychotherapists and counsellors work with their patients in Rwanda**. All 7 members of the subgroup confirm this. For example, one therapist wrote "*I understand now how traumatic experience can lead to positive change in the client life. Before I didn't know about it*" (S2, p.4). The therapists now look for signs of post-traumatic growth as indicators that their patients' mental health is improving.

Since the workshops, the 7 people (therapists) have been **using the co-designed checklist to evaluate the effectiveness of their therapeutic interventions and to better understand and measure their clients' recovery** through the therapeutic process. 6 of the 7 people (therapists) who attended the second workshop have confirmed in follow-up correspondence that they are using the checklist and "*it works*" (S3). As a result, both patients and therapists are now

benefitting from focusing on positive changes since trauma rather than on post-traumatic symptoms. The therapists have also been using what they learnt in our two workshops to train other therapists in Rwanda: one therapist trained 61 people (clinical psychologists) in post-traumatic growth over 3 days (S3, p.6). In total, just under 100 people (therapists) have now received training. According to SURF (Survivors Fund Rwanda), this represents around 5% of the total number of therapists working in Rwanda.

#### **4.2 The Genocide Archive of Rwanda now has more extensive and more accurate documentation**

Through our collaboration with the Aegis Trust and the Genocide Archive of Rwanda, we gained access to a collection of unpublished orally-recorded testimonies from survivors and perpetrators of the Genocide against the Tutsi, collected between 2014 and 2016 (ten years after the genocide). The Head of Education at the Archive has confirmed that our careful translation of 26 testimonies (totalling 168,000 words) has **increased the volume of linguistically and culturally accurate materials** held in the Genocide Archive of Rwanda (S4). This is important for ensuring that what happened in the genocide is fully and accurately recorded, particularly as so many witnesses have died since they gave their testimony.

#### **4.3 The Aegis Trust has benefited from new resources for its peace education programme**

Our research has **created new legacy material** for the Aegis Trust's Peace and Values-Based Education Programme in Rwanda. In 2019-2020, the Aegis Rwanda education team used our translations to train 234 people (164 parents, 38 peace ambassadors and 32 youth) at the Kigali Peace School (S5, pp.6-8). Our translations of testimonies are used by the Aegis trainers as a starting point for discussions about how to promote peace and reconciliation in Rwanda. The country-wide peace education programme is also supported by the online portal, *Ubumuntu* Digital Platform (<https://ubumuntu.rw/#1>) on which includes the testimonies we worked on in the project. The digital platform was launched in July 2019 and targets a range of users, including teachers, students, parents and policymakers (S4).

#### **4.4 Rwandan genocide survivors have been given the opportunity to tell their own stories and have them heard**

Rwandan community leaders in the UK have acknowledged the importance of our research for Rwandan people in **providing a forum for survivors to share their stories** and for raising awareness about what happened in the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994. Rwandan genocide survivor and CEO of the London-based Ishami Foundation, which draws on survivor experiences to build equality, tolerance and peace in Rwanda and the UK, was one of the key speakers in our public engagement programme on 28 January 2017. He told us that the 'Rwandan Stories of Change' project (<https://rwandan.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk>) provided "*a solid platform to study and learn about Rwanda and for keeping the memories of our lost ones alive*" (S6).

Our published book of testimonies (R1) and contributions to both the Genocide Archive of Rwanda and the Peace Education Programme have **ensured that Rwandan genocide survivors' stories are now recorded** permanently, accurately, and are easily available to an international audience. As the Head of the Education Department wrote, "*the project did give once again a voice to the survivors and other experience groups*" (S4). One of our Advisory Board members, himself a community leader for Rwandans in the UK, confirmed that "*through this project many Rwandan survivors met and exchanged their own stories and their pains they went through and the successes they have achieved. Some of the survivors live in Rwanda or in Africa and others live in the UK, Europe and even Americas*" (S7, p.1).

#### **4.5 Non-academic audiences have improved knowledge and understanding of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda**

News about our book of testimonies and our storytelling events was disseminated through the project's website and Twitter feed. This ensured that the survivors' stories reached the largest possible audience. Twitter analytics for May 2019 showed that, when we tweeted that the book of testimonies from the archive had been published, that tweet received 3,523 impressions among a total of 44,800 impressions for that month. One year after the project's end, in November 2019, the project had 1,363 people (followers) on Twitter, 16% of them in Rwanda, 11% in the US and Canada, 9% in Europe, 2% in Australia and 2% in Kenya (S8).

Our public engagement programme consisted of screenings, talks and public conversations with survivors. We presented 3 film screenings in 2017 and 2018 at the Byre Theatre St Andrews, with expert panels. Hitchcott gave public talks about the project: (i) for Holocaust Memorial Day at Drummond High School, Edinburgh (January 2017); (ii) at the annual Rwandan genocide commemoration event known as *Kwibuka* (Kinyarwanda for 'Remember'), at Glenrothes Baptist Church (April 2018); and (iii) at the Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh (April 2019). At the *Kwibuka* events, she also read excerpts from the testimonies translated by the project team. Hitchcott hosted public conversations with Rwandan survivors living in Scotland (in the Byre Theatre St Andrews, April 2019) and with a Kigali-based survivor-author, her translator and her publisher (Lighthouse Bookshop Edinburgh, July 2019).

Our engagement events have led to improved public awareness and understanding of both the concept of post-traumatic growth and the events and impact of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. For example, 34 people completed exit questionnaires after our sold-out (80 attendees) screening of the film 'Soccer My Saviour' on 28 January 2017, which included a discussion with a genocide survivor and former Rwandan footballer, and the Chaplain to the Scottish Football Association. 47% of the respondents were not connected to the University. 100% of the respondents reported that the event had helped their understanding of post-traumatic growth, a concept of which 67% had no prior knowledge. 100% also reported that the event had improved their understanding of the 1994 genocide (S9). After our event around the film, 'The Faces We Lost' (screening and Q&A) at the Byre Theatre, St Andrews (January 2018), 62% of the audience (50 people; 40% of whom were not connected to the University) reported that their knowledge of the Genocide against the Tutsi had improved from poor/fair to fair/good (S10).

In May 2018, Hitchcott was invited by Edinburgh Interfaith to present the project at a meeting with the UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide at the Scottish Parliament. Edinburgh Interfaith is a charity that brings together different faith communities to work towards a safer and more inclusive Scotland. This was a culmination of our public engagement work to bring the project to community associations and to **improve knowledge and understanding of the Genocide against the Tutsi** among audiences (general public, school children and teachers) in Scotland. In October 2019, Hitchcott was invited to attend a Scotland/Rwanda roundtable, organised by the International Division of the Scottish Government. As Rwanda has been one of three sub-Saharan African partner countries for Scotland since 2017, the project has made a contribution to strengthening Scotland's relationship with one of its key partners in international development.

##### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

S1 Paper evaluation forms of our March 2018 Kigali workshop by 20 Rwandan psychotherapists.

S2 Paper evaluation forms of our September 2018 Kigali workshop by 7 Rwandan psychotherapists.

S3 Sample emails from the Rwandan therapists who attended our workshops (2019-20).

S4 Email from the Head of Education at the Genocide Archive of Rwanda (29 August 2018).

S5 Aegis Trust Report on the Peace Education Programme (2019-20).

S6 Statement from Rwandan Genocide Survivor and CEO of the Ishami Foundation, London (2 October 2018).

S7 Statement from Rwandan community leader in the UK and member of the project's advisory board (1 October 2018).

S8 Twitter analytics audience insights data for 'Rwandan Stories of Change' (@RwandanSOChange) (November 2019).

S9 Exit questionnaires from 'Soccer my Saviour' (28 January 2017). 34 questionnaires were completed.

S10 Exit questionnaires from 'The Faces We Lost' (31 January 2018). 50 questionnaires were completed.