



## D 1. ARCHIVING

An archive is any collection of physical traces of the past that has been organized in some way that makes it possible to find and use information. An archive, in the broadest sense, can range from a collection of drawings produced in one of the memory work activities described above, to a set of audio recordings of oral history interviews, to an online collection of photos, videos, and newspaper articles about the conflict, to a physical space housing official or institutional documents, personal documents from activists, commemorative objects, posters, and more. An archive could cover a range of topics, from losses, to specific social groups, the history of a particular organization, documentation of human rights abuses, to life histories of peacemakers. An archive might be formally curated, or it could be set up as something that anyone can add to. A formal space and archival training is not necessarily required.<sup>18</sup> What is key is a commitment to ensuring that the documents are stored and managed ethically and responsibly, with the aim of making them more widely available or safely preserved.

*More than a repository of objects or texts, the archive is also the process of selecting, ordering and preserving the past. It is simultaneously any accessible collection that potentially yields data, and a site for critical reflection and contestation of its social, political, and historical construction. The archive is also a widespread social practice. We archive ourselves in action, in our files, and on our shelves, as well as on Facebook, YouTube, blogs, and in photos and videos, through every available medium.*

*Hirsch and Taylor, 2012*

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<sup>18</sup> Should you want to set up a more formal space your organization may be able to receive some support for this from a local public or university library. The organization Archivists Without Borders may also be able to offer support with setting up a more formal archiving system. The Documentation Affinity Group of the International Center for Transitional Justice is also a useful resource. See their guide Documenting Truth (Bickford et al, 2009) and also the guide The Records of NGO's: Memory ... to be shared: A practical guide in 60 questions (available in Arabic, Croatian, English, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish) (LeGoff, n.d.).

## Uses and strategies for archival work

Archives and archival work are key memory work strategies used by a variety of formal and informal organizations. The pioneer work of organizations such as the South African History Archive (SAHA) or Memoria Abierta (Open Memory) (Argentina) illustrate the power of archives and archival strategies to: a) collect, preserve and make available printed, visual or audio documentation regarding mass violations of human rights or mass violence, b) create new sources to document histories of resistance, oral histories or silenced events and, c) facilitate ample and democratic access to information and knowledge on the truth of what happened in particular periods or events.

**This list of archival strategies used by the South African History Archive (SAHA)** provides a detailed example of the rich and vast terrain and uses of archives to:

- Preserve documents, photographs, posters, music, artifacts and oral histories that reflect resistance. For example, SAHA has a collection of nearly 5000 apartheid-era struggle posters donated by various activists<sup>19</sup> that are now used in commemorative events and outreach efforts aimed at drawing on the visual vocabulary of the past to inform and enrich contemporary struggles for justice.
- Locate and collect existing documents on specific topics under-represented in archives or largely inaccessible to the public. For example the TRC Project (2003 –2006) of SAHA in conjunction with the University of the Witwatersrand added 30 new archival collections related to the TRC.
- Obtain the release of documents by both public and private bodies under Freedom of Information legislation either as part of truth recovery efforts or in support of ongoing struggles for justice.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See SAHA publication *Images of defiance*

<sup>20</sup> See SAHA publication *Paper Wars*; see also the work of the National Security Archive

- Collect oral histories to fill in gaps in the historical record and give voice and visibility to groups that have been excluded from the record. For example, SAHA interviewed community members from three poor communities in South Africa in 2007 - 2008, to explore the extent to which life had or had not changed since South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 and to interrogate the socio-economic legacies of apartheid.<sup>21</sup>
- Conduct art / memory workshops to capture histories excluded from official truth telling bodies such as the TRC. For example SAHA used art-making in combination with archival artifacts and oral history to explore the Khulumani Support Group members' memories relating to repression and violence on the East Rand in the lead up to the first democratic elections in South Africa, and to record and interpret these memories.<sup>22</sup>
- Work with young people to explore and document local histories. For example, SAHA trained community interns in the large township of Tembisa in 2010 – 2011 to capture stories of life and activism in this marginalized community.

*By Catherine Kennedy, SAHA*

Archiving can be both a way to do memory work, and a way to inspire it. Memory workers could, for example, ask people to share stories, documents, photos and artifacts to add to the archive. Artifacts -everyday objects that are connected to a memory of a person or story about the past-, are important archival material. Rather than relinquishing treasured items that are used to keep memories alive, photos can be taken of these. Precious documents and photos can also be photographed or scanned while in people's homes. The project "Vestigios [traces]" by Memoria Abierta in Argentina is an example. Memoria Abierta invited relatives and friends of the victims of the dictatorship to identify material objects or mementos they kept. Photos

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<sup>21</sup> See SAHA publication *Forgotten voices in the present* and related DVD *A dream deferred* -

<sup>22</sup> See SAHA publication *Katorus stories*

were taken of each object and the object's owner was asked to share its story. A virtual photo mosaic archive was created. It provides access to each photo and the story behind it and offers a glimpse of very personal stories while also contributing to the construction of collective memory.<sup>23</sup>

The items collected in an archive can also then be used in various ways as a spark for continued memory work. They can be used on a large paper timeline in a workshop where participants are asked to share stories to fill in the gaps and respond to newspaper articles or official documents they feel are misleading. The stories shared can then be added to the archive. Materials from archives can be used in classrooms to teach about the histories of conflict, violence and resistance. They can also be exhibited in public spaces to inspire conversations and education. Materials have been shared as this kind of spark in various creative public ways, from radio documentaries<sup>24</sup>, to comic books and photonovellas, to guides for educators, to murals, to videos and multimedia DVDs,<sup>25</sup> and in physical as well as online exhibits.<sup>26</sup> Artifacts have even been displayed on a traveling converted bus turned transitory museum of memory in Medellín, Colombia.

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23 See Memoria Abierta

24 See SAHA's CD of radio documentaries *Voices from our past*

25 See SAHA's DVD and related educators' guide on John Vorster Square, the feared police station where security police reigned in apartheid South Africa

26 See for example SAHA commemorative virtual exhibition that allow visitors to the exhibition to post comments or anecdotes



- ▲ The Skin of Memory. A Public Art Project in Barrio Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia. Photo: Carlos Sánchez, 2000

### Ways of Sharing Memory Work

*By Brenda Pineda, of the Human Rights office of the Archbishopric of Guatemala, Historical Memory Unit, [ddhh@odhag.org.gt](mailto:ddhh@odhag.org.gt)*

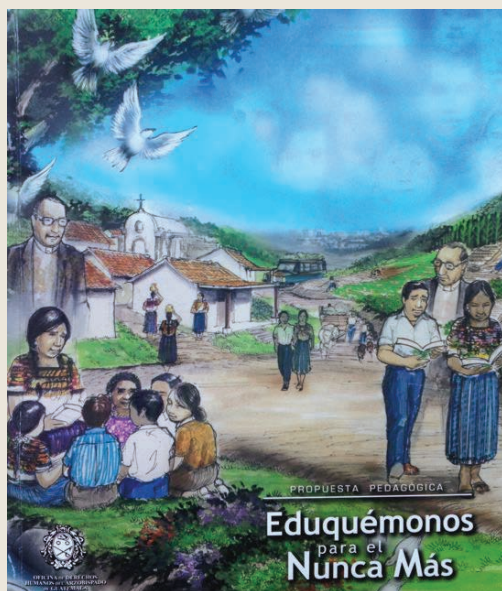
Our first step in returning the memory work to communities and doing follow-up with them was to design, along with our Reconciliation outreach workers, an easier to understand version of the REMHI Report: *Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica*, Recovery of Historical Memory (Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Arzobispado de Guatemala, 1998) issued by the church under Bishop Gerardi in 1998. The grassroots version of the report “Memory, Truth and Hope” is more accessible for the majority of the population. This report contains a summary of the four volumes, written in language more appropriate for the context of the communities and with images.



▲ The Grassroot's Guatemalan Report

We wrote it so that it could facilitate reflection on both the contents, and what it is that makes up historical memory. This is why we also wrote a Memory, Truth and Hope Guide, based on the Grassroots Report and directed at adults and community leaders. Its aim is to initiate the process of giving back memories and explaining and clarifying what happened and learning from the past through a step by step methodology for understanding what happened in the conflict, analyzing its causes and effects, interpreting history, understanding the present, reflecting, and making a commitment to a reality of Never Again.

In the year 2000 we began a process of training pastoral and community leaders from different areas from the country. Every year a new group is integrated into the process and commits to replicating the training with their respective communities.



▲ Guatemalan Lesson Planner for teachers

Later, we realized the need for new generations to also know what happened, as outlined in one of the recommendations of the REMHI. We need to widely share the results of the investigations about the past and give them back through testimonial and pedagogical materials that can be used by teachers in schools, and offer a symbolic recognition of the experiences described in the testimonies and dignify the victims. These ways of returning memory can also help youth learn lessons from them. This is why the ‘Let us educate ourselves so it never happens again’ Lesson Plans were designed with the help of teachers from several areas as well as professionals from different disciplines. Advocacy has been done for several years to lobby the Ministry of Education to include it in the official primary and secondary curriculums, but as of yet it has not been included.





- ▲ Indigenous Guatemalan teachers receiving training on using pedagogical material

Hasta comunidades enteras fueron señaladas de "guerrilleras" por estar ubicadas en ciertos lugares del país. Especialmente entre el año 1978 y el año 1983, las comunidades del Ixcán, de las Verapaces, el área Ixil y el altiplano central, de quienes se sospechaba estar al lado de la guerrilla, seguido vivían ataques militares, bombardeos y masacres.



- ▲ Image from the grassroots report, Spanish text above drawing reads “Even entire communities were fingered as ‘guerillas’ for being located in certain areas of the country. Particularly between the years 1978 and 1982, the communities in the Ixcán, Verapaces, Ixil and central highlands that were suspected of supporting the guerillas repeatedly lived through military attacks, bombardments, and massacres.”

An archive can also be used to *recuperate and share disperse documents about the conflict* and offer various opportunities to use them and respond to these, from online comments, to writing on a large piece of paper on the wall next to an official report in an exhibit, to formal speaking events. Obtaining official documents often requires a formal access to information request. Organizations such as SAHA and Archivist without Borders have done campaigns, conducted training and developed resources to widely share how to navigate the often cumbersome and complicated process of access to information.<sup>27</sup>

Not all countries have freedom of information legislation and some memory workers have successfully pushed to win this right. In the last ten years some forty countries have introduced legislation to facilitate access to information.<sup>28</sup> Even when the right to information exists, extended requests, campaigns, and even lawsuits may be required to get some documents be declassified. Privacy laws are sometimes cited to protect government officials, though most countries recognize that privacy does not apply to official information.

## **SOME ISSUES TO CONSIDERING WHEN DOING ARCHIVAL WORK**

*Privacy* is a concern in regards to materials collected from individuals and organizations. Many may be more comfortable sharing their material with the archive if their personal information (name, address, and other identifying information) is masked. There are various ways to anonymize data to protect the identity of people. This may also be important to suggest in cases where sharing information could put people at risk.

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27 See SAHA website for its *Freedom of Information Programme (FOIP)*

28 Those interested in campaigning for such legislation can find many resources from the global network of freedom of information advocates. Their site, *freedominfo.org*, "describes best practices, consolidates lessons learned, explains campaign strategies and tactics, and links the efforts of freedom of information advocates around the world." You may also find the technical advice and funding available from the *Open Society Foundation* useful, as well as the best practices and other advice from the Freedom of Information project at *Privacy International*.

Others might ask that materials be shared only after a certain period of time, after they are dead, or only for specific purposes. It will help if it is clear who will have ongoing *ownership and control* of the archive and how it will be managed. If in doing memory work interviews were done or documents collected before the possibility of an archive was considered, it is important to go back to those people and request formal permission before making them publicly available in the archive.

*Copyright issues* should also be discussed with those donating materials when applicable. They may choose to retain copyright, or offer the rights to reproduce the materials only for educational, scholarly and other non-commercial uses. It may not be clear who owns the copyright to some of the materials you might wish to archive. Posters, for example, may have been designed by an anonymous collective. If you face this dilemma, see the South African History Archive discussion of how they are addressing this issue.

The *safety* of material and the risks of storing it in particular locations need to be considered. Sometimes it is not yet safe to share materials from an archive. In these cases it may also not be safe to physically possess certain documents about human rights violations or the conflict. Such materials are sometimes sent out of the country for safekeeping and organizations like Archivists without Borders work with local organizations to facilitate digitalization of material and storage outside of the country.

## **D 2. DOCUMENTING (COUNTS, LISTS)**

The forms of memory work and practices of remembering described so far provide important documentation for a variety of uses: historical clarification, reconstruction of the critical events, dignifying victims, making visible victims' responses and resistance, finding evidence, and creating databases or archives. In all, they serve as documents of memory (Brown, 2012) for a variety of present and future purposes.

Most of the organizations consulted in the preparation of this material see documentation as a key component and function of their memory

work. This work is closely linked to archival work but it further includes specific activities that generate quantitative and qualitative information. For example, in the face of wildly different numbers given for the dead in a conflict, some groups have engaged in their own counts. In Croatia, the organization Documenta believes that if there is a factual basis for memory, further steps can be taken. Their work seeks to document the human losses of the war, to collect personal memories of war, create an antiwar campaign archive, and to put together an oral history library.

### **Documenta Project: Human Losses in Croatia 1991-1995**

*By Vesna Terselic, Documenta, Croatia*

This project seeks to determine the number of victims of the 1991-1995 war. The overview of all victims with their names and basic data – day, month and year of birth, occupation, ethnicity, religion, etc, time and place of violation (death), type of violation, status in war – civilian-military status at death, perpetrators (if known) and other relevant data.

- 5,672 victims have been registered; more than 2,000 field interviews have been conducted;
- Victim's cards (questionnaires) have been filled by researchers for more than 2,200 victims and signed by relatives or eyewitnesses;
- More than 8,500 pages of court documentation have been scanned and archived;
- More than 2,000 photographs of sites of death, mass graves, cemeteries and documentation from private and official archives have been taken.

To construct a count of the dead, Documenta gathered names of victims and visited the families of persons killed or disappeared to collect their stories, mementos and to scan photos (see box). In Liberia this process was also successfully used as a way to elicit mass participation in historical memory work. Even when a formal truth commission process has been held some may not have reported deaths or other crimes out of fear or for other reasons. In Peru for example, a community registry was established after

the Truth Commission had submitted their report. The registry contains many cases not considered by the commission. In El Salvador, a count and genetic database of missing and potentially stolen children is maintained by the National Search Commission for Children Disappeared during the Conflict. The commission was created by executive decree after a 2005 sentence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights condemned the Salvadoran state for the disappearance of two children (Ernestina and Arlinda Serrano) by the army in 1985, during the civil war. It functions as an autonomous institution, but depends on an annual budget through the Executive branch. Since the Commission was installed in 2010 it has established a permanent gene bank that provides genetic information of those who lost their children during the civil war. The current estimate is that some 900 children are missing. The commission has so far managed to facilitate ten re-encounters of people who were adopted as children in the US, Canada, Europe, Mexico and Central America. It has also set up a web site available in five languages, through which users can make contact in a discreet way. The Commission has a general coordinator, a geneticist, six investigators, two social workers and one psychologist. The work does not end with the re-encounters, but also focuses on community level solidarity groups that support other victims of the armed conflict.<sup>29</sup>

### **A Victim's Count: The Snowball Method in Zimbabwe's Diamond fields**

*By Farai Maguwu, Center for Research and Development, Zimbabwe*

It can be hard to know how many people were injured in a conflict. In Zimbabwe, one organization created a 'victim count' project to document the violence committed by the Zimbabwean's state security forces in the diamond fields. They used a snowball method of victim identification.

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<sup>29</sup> The description of the work of the Commission is a contribution of Victor Manuel Perez from the National Search Commission for Children Disappeared during the Conflict.

In repressive states there is a high concentration of secret agents in public, private and communal spheres. Victims fear that the state may want to prosecute them or further persecute them for the crime they suffered for. In such cases there is a high level of mistrust and victims may deny that they suffered abuse for fear of recrimination. This was the case in the military crackdown in Zimbabwe's Marange diamond fields which left, in our estimates, more than 500 people dead between November and December 2008. Some of the victims were severely tortured and thrown in jail thereafter without treatment. Those released from the Police Cells went into hiding without having received treatment fearing that state security agents would follow them up. Consequently those who escaped after being tortured in the diamond fields did not go to hospital fearing arrest and further torture. However, a few hundred victims who had been severely tortured were "dumped" in hospitals by state security agents. The victims usually gave false addresses to hospital staff whilst others fled the hospital as soon as they felt better, fearing arrest and further torture. There was surveillance at the hospitals to ensure that no pictures of the victims were taken.

The Center for Research and Development engaged sympathetic hospital staff members who would give us access to the victims, sometimes early in the morning, before dawn, or in the dead of the night. The hospital staff also helped with the body count as they alerted the Centre's staff each time a body was brought to the hospital mortuary from Marange. Hospital records of Marange victims were also obtained which gave CRD a rough estimate of how many victims were being admitted at this facility per day. CRD also arranged to support some of the victims with treatment through a partnership with some private doctors who assist victims of human rights abuses. But the majority of the victims remained in hiding in spite of the serious injuries they had sustained. They viewed everyone with suspicion as some of them had been abducted and tortured again by the state security agents. After failing to get the cooperation of the victims for a couple of days, we managed to find a victim who was familiar

with our work. This victim then assisted CRD to identify other victims whom she knew. Once they got assistance the victims went on to identify other victims, until more than a hundred received assistance. We call this the Snowball Method. It is effective because it reduces the risk of retribution for both the victim and the victim identifier.

Our reports, which contained chilling stories from victims and survivors, went out to the whole world resulting in the Kimberly Process (KP) Certification Scheme sending a fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe between 29 June and 4 July 2009. Because we had built a good relationship with the victims we managed to get a sample of volunteers among the victims who came forward to narrate their stories to the KP team. The KP team produced a damning report calling on the KPCS to temporarily ban diamonds coming from the Marange region until the human rights abuses had stopped.

### **D 3. COMMEMORATIVE PRACTICES AND CEREMONY**

— Commemorative practices in which a person (or group of) or event(s) are remembered are another expressive means of memory work by survivors, victim's organizations, transitional justice interventions, and State led interventions. During commemorations participants join in the work of memory through ceremony or rituals, performative speeches or texts, and embodied presence. A commemoration may involve official and formalized occasions of public memory, or intimate and close moments of family remembrance. It may be something done once, or something done at a regular time in the same place (say, every first Wednesday), or it may involve the regular presence of an object, either in one place (such as a memorial bench), or traveling to different sites (a memorial exhibit). When there is not the political and thus physical space for commemoration it may have to be more ephemeral, such as weekly pickets or chalking in front of the homes of perpetrators or former torture sites. Commemoration can also be done online (memorial websites), and even through cell phones. Commemorative information

about sites can be made available as either a text or an audio or video clip to those who call or text in to a phone number posted at the site or scan a smart barcode posted there or through an app (application) that recognizes the users physical location through GPS.

### Weekly vigils:

The Mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina (las Madres) famously held weekly vigils at the Plaza de Mayo during the dictatorship, asking to know what had happened to their children. They continue to hold these vigils today, 35 years later. The practice has now spread around the world and regular vigils are held by many other groups of family members of the disappeared. *The Indonesian Association of Families of the Disappeared* (IKOHI) and other victims groups, pictured below, directly inspired by las Madres, hold a vigil every Thursday afternoon from four to five in front of Presidential Palace in Jakarta. They raise public awareness and pressure on the existing and unresolved cases of human rights violation in Indonesia during the dictatorship of Suharto from 1966 to 1998. As Mugiyanto, of IKOHI, puts it, they aim to send the president the message that “we are still here, we will never forget, and we are still demanding truth and justice”, in counter to implicit government policy to forget the past. By displaying the pictures and memorabilia of the victims, the group struggles “against forgetfulness”, or “Melawan Lupa” in the Indonesian language.







- ▲ Indonesian mothers of the disappeared at a Thursday rally in 1998. The woman with the white headband is Maria Sumarsih, one of the founders of the Thursday vigil. Photo courtesy of Mugiyanto, IKOGI



- ▲ Mugiyanto Chairperson of IKOGI and survivor of disappearance speaking in 1998 at a Thursday vigil in front of the Indonesian Presidential Palace to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the disappearance of 13 activists. Photo courtesy of Mugiyanto, IKOGI

### D 3.1 MEMORIALS

Memorials can be formal and informal, permanent, and less so. They might be as ephemeral as flowers on poles, or might be more solid objects built to serve as a lasting public tribute to a person, group or event. They can also be sites or structures that are preserved because of their ties to people or events.

Official monuments are often imposing; they offer glorified versions of people and events, and tend to represent history as timeless. Community (or 'people-friendly') memorials are meant to unlock memory and be accessible and compelling at eye level.<sup>30</sup> They might be made by local artists, such as those commissioned by the Sunday Times in South Africa, or made together by students or community members as a mosaic, mural, garden, tree with hand tied notes, quilt, or *arpillera* (appliqué cloth art).



- ▲ Memorial to the victims of the Atiak massacre. A visit by survivors during a community exchange with social leaders and survivors from Colombia. Atiak, Uganda, 2010. Photo by Erin Baines

30 See SAHA's *Meeting History Face-to-Face: A Guide to Oral History*

Memorials may commemorate a particular event, a particular person, or those who died in a particular town. They might be as simple as a collection of stones with names of the dead and disappeared, or might be a formal granite memorial with those names. Memorials can dignify victims and ensure they are remembered in collective memory. Stories collected through memory work can also be memorialized by preserving them in an art form.

The creation of such memorials has generally happened through community organizing, and focusing on such a project has often strengthened such organizing and can draw new participants into memory work. Once completed memorials can inspire continued memory work, for example if events are held at the memorial where stories are shared.

### D 3.2 CEREMONY AND RITUAL

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How can ceremony make this work transformative?

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Opening and closing rituals can help to “stop time” and establish memory workshops or other memory reconstruction activities as a spacetime outside of the everyday. Ceremonies can be a way to incorporate indigenous practices and understandings of memory and healing, but ceremonies do not need to be traditional or established - they can be newly created for this work. They can help to open a safe space for remembrance and reflection. Ceremony can strengthen shared values (e.g. Ubuntu) and community norms, “When tied to ceremony, transformation becomes exponential: cognitive, emotional, spiritual”<sup>31</sup> Ceremony and ritual can move people from their heads to their hearts.

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31 Intervention by Sharon Tira at the workshop Dialogues on Memory: Strategies for reconstructing memories in conflict and post-conflict zones.

**Memory ceremonies for transformation:**

*by Mark Marvey, Naymote, National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections, Liberia*

Amongst the most traditional ceremonies of remembrance are festivals that evolve around burial of dead persons. Such ceremonies however, have been and continue to be, characterized by periods of reflections, when the elderly or close relatives recount the life experiences of the dead and advance caution to the partakers of the ceremony. Although these ceremonies have commemorated the departure of loved ones, relatives or community members, societies in their wisdom have seen the need to draw lessons from the lives of those departed. The fundamental reason for this has been to inform the conduct of members that are still alive and, especially to ensure that they avoid mistakes made by the dead with the hope of inspiring change of attitudes amongst community members.

Inclusion of ceremony and circle work in memory work and truth telling scenarios creates a transformative space to re-story shared histories and for reflective dialogue and re-connecting. Ceremony is a way to honour those participating.

**Ceremony as a pathway of healing and transformation**

By Paulette Regan and Brenda Ireland, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, TRC.

Canada's TRC is mandated to produce a comprehensive report on the history of the Indian residential school system that for over a century, removed Indigenous children from their families and communities, with devastating consequences. Thousands of students in the schools suffered severe sexual and physical abuse and most children lost connections with their families, languages and cultures. The Commission will make recommendations to the Government of Canada concerning the Indian Residential Schools' system (IRS) and experience including: the history, purpose, operation and supervision of the IRS system, the effect and consequences of IRS (including systemic harms, intergenerational consequences and the impact on human dignity) and the ongoing legacy of the residential schools.

Ceremony and ritual play a key role in TRC national and community events, and more broadly, there are many other community-based projects in which Indigenous peoples draw on the ceremonies, rituals and oral history traditions that are integral to their own culturally specific laws. Ceremony can strengthen shared values and community norms. As part of cultural revitalization and the rebuilding of their nations, Indigenous peoples in Canada are using these embodied practices to remember their past together. Ceremony and healing rituals prepare participants to work through difficult emotions associated with trauma by creating safe space for memory, the sharing of stories, reflection, healing and transformation to occur. Collectively, these traditional practices are powerful and dynamic; they can be adapted to new circumstances. Ceremony is essential to the work of healing and transformation; it moves people from their heads to their hearts.

