

Appendix

MEMORY ACTIVITIES IN MORE DETAIL

1. SPIDERWEB



▲ Memory workshop, Cartagena 2009. Photo by Jesús A. Colorado

Objectives: To introduce participants and begin to create an atmosphere of trust. To offer a visual image - a spider web - to introduce the subject of the construction of historical memory as an interactive and shared process.

Process: Standing in a large circle each person introduces themselves and briefly says something about themselves. Once the first person has introduced themselves they take the skein of yarn and throw it

towards another person that they do not know, without letting go of the end of the yarn. At the end the group, now tied into a web, tries to move towards the right and left, ahead and back. The yarn spider web is a metaphor for how we weave our memories as diverse members of particular groups.

2. INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION: WHY DO WE REMEMBER? WHY DO WE FORGET?

Objective: This activity examines the role and function of memory and remembering in societies, so that participants examine their visions and points of view on the role of the memory of the victims in processes of historical clarification.

Process: a. In this activity participants are asked to brainstorm, based on the question ‘why do we remember?’ And then, ‘why do we forget?’

b. The answers are registered on flipchart paper or a board, and once the majority of the participants have been heard a summary is read aloud of what the group sees as the “functions of memory” (see example in page 41). The group is invited to comment.

c. The following questions for discussion can be introduced:

What is the memory that we need to face the tasks of the present?

Being in the present, here, today, why do we construct historical memory? Does this call for a collective effort?

These questions seek to establish a bridge between the expectations of the participants and the process of construction of historical memory. They also seek to gain an understanding of what participants see as the role of memory work.

3. MENTAL MAPS (TRACES)

Objective: The objective of this activity is to develop a mental map of the local area in which participants identify:

- a. The traces of the violence and human suffering in the landscape and in their physical surroundings, or the places where specific events occurred.
- b. The traces or marks on the landscape of their organizing initiatives and of resistance, with the aim of increasing awareness and those places that are significant in their experience.

The group breaks out into groups of at most ten participants. We suggest dividing participants into groups of men, women and young people.

Ask the questions:

What are the significant traces of your memories of the violence and the suffering in the region _____?

What are the significant traces of your memories of resistance to violence (or of organizing initiatives) in the region?

Initially a place is identified that all participants recognize (for example, the plaza, a monument) and it is 'illustrated' or located on the paper.

Each participant locates the place of a trace that is significant in their memories (they can place a symbol, letters, or a drawing on the map) and shares with the group the memory associated with this trace.

Once all participants have located and shared their memories, the group looks at the finished map and makes observations about what they see:

What does this map tell us about the traces of violence and suffering?

This moment is also an opportunity for "completing" the map: add what participants consider should be in a map of significant traces that did not come out through individual memories.

The process of looking at the map is repeated with the question:

What does this map tell us about the traces of resistance (or organizing initiatives) in the region?

The group looks at the maps and discusses the following question:

Which are the broader events (conjunctures) that most widely affected the community or the region and left traces of violence or resistance?

This step should allow for placing on the map traces (of violence or resistance) that mark the history and historical memory of the region, and establishing those places that are emblematic of the violence and the suffering. The question does not seek to create a consensus around one version but rather to locate individual memories in a broader historical and spatial register.

4. WALKING MAPS - WALKABOUTS

Objectives: Identify the emblematic places, scenes and significant routes in the memory of the inhabitants of the region and the ways they remember the events that took place there.

Process: This activity is done with a small group of people who have a deep knowledge of the surroundings.

First ask each participant to draw on their paper a route that goes by significant places that have traces or inspire testimony about the violence or the resistances, as well as places they consider historical because of the events that happened there and the memories about them.

The routes are shared and the group then collectively designs one route to take.

Stories are recorded at each place that is visited (ask: what happened here?) and a visual registry is taken (photos).

When the route is finished the group may return to the initial gathering place and develop a map of the route.

During the walk, discussion can be deepened on the impact of the violence, documenting changes and losses.

5. TIMELINES

Objective: To construct a chronological sequence (timeline or periodization), based on individual and group memories of the milestones and events that marked the life [or specific period] of the region.

Process: Initially each participant works individually, reconstructing their timeline based on the question:

What are the milestones or significant events in your memories of the violence and the suffering?

What are the milestones or significant events in your memories of the resistance (or the organizing initiatives) in the region?

Each participant presents their timeline and shares their memories. These timelines are placed on the wall. When finalizing the testimony or narrative of each individual, invite the group to reflect on what they see in this visual biography.

The group then works to create a collective timeline based on the question:

What are the critical regional conjunctures³⁴ in which these individual milestones and events happened?

Before beginning to identify the critical conjunctures, the group decides:

What is the date from which they will start to reconstruct events and the date on which they will finish?

This date has substantial implications since its choice reflects the perceptions of the group of the dynamics of the violence and of resistance. When finalizing the testimony or narrative of each individual, invite the group to reflect on what they observe in this visual timeline.

³⁴ Conjuncture: this word refers to the combination of factors and circumstances in which specific or local events are framed. For example, the displacement of the inhabitants of a municipality is part of a larger conjuncture of the expansion and strategic control of territories by armed actors in the region.

6. VISUAL BIOGRAPHY

Objective: To reconstruct the memory (the historical life) of a period of the violence on the basis of the events, people, and memories of the participants.

Process: Identify an event or date that the participants considers marks a “before” and an “after” in their lives This date is placed/written/drawn on the paper on the wall.

Using this event as a reference point, each participant places on the paper and shares their memories sparked by the question:

What is an event, fact, date or person that is telling of the violence and the suffering during _____
_____ (a specific period)?

Which is an event, fact, date or person that is telling of the resistance of the women (or any other group) during _____
_____ (a specific period)?

When finalizing the testimony or narrative of each individual, the group reflects on what they observe in this visual social biography.

7. BODYMAPS

Objective: To identify the traces and marks of violence and suffering on the bodies of women and men. This activity seeks to identify - as possible - aspects of sexual and physical violence, either because during the activity some participants decide to share their stories privately, or because a registry of some of these marks are represented in the bodymaps. For this activity small and homogenous groups work well (for example: of similar age, gender, sexual orientation).

Process: Note on the process: when doing body maps it is very important to follow a gradual process of trust building in the group, of the participant with their body, and with the art materials. Two complementary activities should be considered:

- a. Activities for building trust and loosening inhibitions, particularly those that put participants in touch with their body (for example, walking on tiptoes).
- b. Introductory activities (warm-up) and activities that explore visual expression by means of colour. This can be through finger painting (trace marks freely) or with brushes (using large brush strokes).

The facilitator briefly introduces how our bodies, like the landscape, carry traces and marks of memory. The activity explores how our bodies remember through the question:

What are the traces of suffering on your body? What are the traces of resistance and hopes on your body?

Activity of connection between body and surroundings: ask participants to stand up and walk around, feeling their connection to the Earth and the energy that circulates between them. Feel your feet on the earth. Move your toes and the soles of your feet, push them against the ground. Raise your heels so that you can feel your calf muscles. Tap your legs, thighs, calves and feet so that they wake up. This can be done seated.

Participants take turns drawing the silhouette of the body of another person.

Each participant looks for a place to work and begins to work on the silhouette of their body. It is important that the facilitator explain that there is no restriction on the way each participant wants to express these traces on their silhouette: they can use abstract expressionist drawings, symbols, words, spots, magazines cut outs, etcetera.

Before initiating work on the body outlines, give participants blank pages so that they can explore the media, the colors and forms of expression, using finger painting, brush strokes, or any other form.

Once the participants finalize their maps, these are placed on the wall.

Each participant shares their map. General Discussion:

What do we see? Commonalities? Differences?

Later the group discusses how the violence and the war affected differently the bodies of men, women, young people, LGBT people and indigenous and Afro-descendant people.

Close with a group well-being or relaxation activity.

8. IMAGE AND MEMORY QUILTS

Objective: To recognize how participants see themselves in the present, to identify their perspectives on the future, and on the role of truth, historical clarification, and reparations from a democratic perspective founded on the recognition of persons as citizens with rights. On the basis of this recognition evaluate actions - alliances, advocacy - that can be done so that the perspective on the future reflected in the quilt can come true.

Process: Introduce the activity reflecting on how all memory activities form a bridge not only between the present and the past, but also the past, present and future. If we go back to the ideas that were formulated in response to the question why do we remember, we can see that the future is as important here as the past and the present. In this activity we reflect on and examine who we are (or came to be) after what happened, and how we see the future. Give everyone a piece of paper so that they can create an image that explores the question:

How did we survive what happened?

Invite participants to explore the question by going back to the past as if it were a painting with certain images, scents, and people that we remember. When you remember how you survived you will think of some situations or moments that speak to or are an example of who you are today and how you survived. Some questions that can help to reconstruct these images-situations:

What objects, places, people, and activities do you remember about that moment? How did you feel? What scents, sounds or noises do you remember? What forms, colors and textures capture the memories, emotions or feelings that you want to communicate?

Everyone works individually on their image on a paper square, cutting, drawing, and gluing.

One by one each participant places their image in a matrix that becomes a quilt of pieces (use an outline of a matrix with the number of squares that corresponds to the number of participants), located on a wall visible to all the participants, and presents their image and the memories that it evokes. The listening and attention of the group to the story of each individual is very important.

When all participants have placed their image and shared their story, invite them to look at the quilt as a whole. Ask for their reactions and analysis:

What do you see? Commonalities? Differences? Reactions?

The facilitator comments on the sequence that the workshop has followed: past-present-future, and introduces the questions:

What are your hopes for the future? How do you see yourself in the future?

Each participant works on another square of paper and designs another image (or this part can be done by means of notes without images). Some questions that can help them construct their images of the future are: Who do I want to be in the future? What expectations do I have about the future?

Each individual picture is taped to the others, making a quilt of images about the past, the present and the future. Whoever wants to can share with the others what they wanted to express with their drawings.

Ask the questions:

What do you think we should do so that violent events like those we have remembered today are not repeated?

What do you think we can do collectively so that the community can move towards the future that you want?

Write down the answers. Let participants know that these answers will be reviewed towards the end of the workshop with the purpose

of formulating recommendations. This it is an important moment for examining the role that reparations and demands for truth and justice play in this group's perspective or expectations for the future.

9. SAMPLE AGENDA MEMORY WORKSHOP

First Day

Introduction

- Length of time: Approximately an hour and half, but this depends on the questions and expectations that the group has.

Greeting, brief presentation of the facilitators, the organization, and the objectives of the workshop.

Presentation of participants: spider web activity (or another icebreaker).

Introduce the organization hosting the event: its aims, reach, tasks, and what type of collaboration it is asking for.

Then ask the group: What do you see as the possibilities for this type of work? What would you like the outcome of this workshop to be? The answers are written on butcher paper and are clarified and alternatives are suggested for those expectations that will not be met by the workshop.

Explain what products will result from this work (for example a report, book, photographic exhibition, formulation of a series of recommendations of public policy or a public presentation) and how the results will be returned to the community.

Come to an agreement with the group about the use that will be made of the materials created by the group during the workshop. Can photos of them be put online? Can they be shown in an exhibit? Included in a report?

Introduction of the objectives of the workshop and agenda.

Basic agreements.

Objective: To create an atmosphere of trust and respect that allows for sharing memories and giving testimony about the past.

If the facilitators consider that there is tension or distrust in the group this activity can be done before introducing each participant, with the purpose of developing common agreements for the operation and interaction of the group and to create from the beginning an atmosphere of respect, trust and nonaggression.

Process: The group discusses some agreements that allow the participants to feel comfortable and, as much as is possible, create an atmosphere of trust to be able to tell their stories and express their ideas. It is important to emphasize that these agreements will guide both exchanges between participants and with the facilitators. Ask the question:

What do you need from other participants, the facilitators and yourself so that we have an atmosphere of trust and tranquility to share experiences, memories and ideas?

The agreements are written on butcher paper and put in a place visible to all participants. The idea is to reach basic agreements which all follow.

Once these agreements are discussed, two basic assumptions about participation in the workshop are presented: participation is voluntary (without any consequences if they decide not to speak or leave) and the information that is shared is confidential. Clarify the limits of confidentiality when information is compiled in a group format (although all the participants commit to confidentiality, facilitators cannot ensure that all participants will respect this agreement).

Recording: explain why you want to record the workshop and clarify the right of each participant to ask that the recording be interrupted, or that certain parts of what they say not be included. Ask for permission to record. Only then begin to record.

Mention the presence of a person for psycho-social support and ask:

What would you hope for as individuals and as a group from the person in charge of psycho-social support, from the other facilitators, and from the group as a whole in regards to offering appropriate emotional support and solidarity?

A memory activity from the methods mentioned above (Appendix 3-8).

A bodily activity to build group cohesion and trust.

A second memory activity.

Depending on the group and region, the facilitator chooses which activities to do on the first day and in what order. We suggest doing a maximum of two memory activities (in the order of past, present, future) and one psycho-social activity (between the memory activities) on the first day. The important thing is that the facilitator is tuned in to the group process. If the process of sharing is extended or if there is a need to take a break to offer individual support, it is important to do that, and if as a result there is only time for one activity it is preferable to privilege the process of the group over sticking to the agenda.

Closing for the day

Select one of the activities for well-being and relaxation.

Second day

The objective of the second day is to work in a deeper way on some specific aspects of the construction of the historical memory by means of:

a. The exploration of a specific subject like physical and sexual violence, land, social movements and resistance initiatives, daily resistance, or the reconstruction of memories from the perspective of a specific group such as LGBT, men, women, young people or adults.

b. Deepen the evaluation and reconstruction of the impact of the war. That is to say, investigate in a deep way based on the following questions:

What changed after what happened? What and who changed what happened?

What personal, family and community losses did it cause? What significant economic, cultural, emotional and spiritual damages did it generate?

How did you face what happened?

c. Develop an agenda that considers both recommendations for the work of the organization coordinating the work as well as issues of reparations from the perspective of the group.

The structure of the day is flexible and should be decided on by agreement of the group, but it is characterized by work in small groups. This day is also an opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews.

- For subjects such as land, maps can be used.
- For subjects like organizing, social movements and resistance initiatives, timelines can be used.
- To respond to questions about losses, an inventory can be made on butcher paper or you can construct a diagram that illustrates the losses.

10. CLOSING ACTIVITY

Recommendations and collective agenda.

Objective: Review hopes for the future and the demands and ideas that participants have expressed about justice and reparations, with the purpose of formulating a collective agenda that includes specific recommendations to include in a report.

Process: The facilitator summarizes the hopes for the future that the participants have expressed and what they consider must be done so that the remembered events of violence are not repeated (timeline and quilts).

The facilitator asks: today the word ‘reparation’ is frequently mentioned. When you hear that word, what comes to mind?

The answers are written down in the paper, summarized, and the various forms of reparations are reviewed (appendix 5), and how the construction of historical memory from the perspective of the regions and victims is part of a form of historical repair is presented.

The participants discuss in groups:

What recommendations should be made so that this is not repeated?

What can be done so that these proposals and recommendations are visible?

Each group presents/displays their recommendations and these are registered on the butcher paper.

In this final activity ask groups to work on their collective agendas regarding historical clarification and reparations and to formulate a series of recommendations.

Final round of comments.

The facilitator closes, thanking the participants.

11. INTERVIEWS

Interviews, a conversation among two or more people with one of them asking questions that elicit information memories or opinions, allow us to gather testimony about one or several specific events. These memories can be of their experience, for example, as a combatant in one of the armed groups or their survival strategies as civilians in the middle of the war, or their initiatives to resist the war. Interviews can

also be done to learn how people evaluate the contexts and historical processes surrounding violent events or acts of resistance.

To write a report that includes the different voices and perspectives of victims we suggest that both in the selection of who to interview as well as during the interview you take into account differences such as class, race, generation, gender, and sexual orientation, and the ways in which violence affects and is experienced differently by different people, and how this also shapes their answers and ways of remembering.

Interviews, as a way of enabling deeper and more intimate conversations, are an important way to hear, facilitate, and validate accounts of those aspects of memory, emotions, or stories that tend to be silenced or not developed because they are outside of what are socially considered to be significant or acceptable memories.

INTERVIEWING VICTIMS

A sequence suggested for these interviews is:

1: Reconstruction of the past (memory of the facts of the violence)

What happened? In your own words, what happened? How did it happen? Who were they? Why did this happen? What did they do to and to whom? (Women, men, young people, LGBT people, ethnic groups).

Who did it affect and how? How did this affect you as a woman/young person/leader/indigenous person? How did this affect your community-group-family? How did you live through this? How did you, or do you, feel about this?

2. Evaluation of the impact of the event

How did you face what happened? What did you do after what happened?

What changed after what happened? Who did it change?

What personal, family and community losses did it cause? What significant economic, cultural, emotional, and spiritual damages did it generate?

3. Perspective on the future

Who are you after what happened? What makes coexistence difficult today? What do you think needs to be done so that this is not repeated? What are your hopes for the future? What are your demands?

Consent to participate in interviews

Before carrying out the interview it is suggested that the interviewed person be informed of the objectives of the interview, their rights as an interviewee, and the possible emotional impact of reconstructing memory. We recommend that the interviewee be asked to sign a consent form before starting the interview, or if circumstances do not allow for this (security, mistrust, level of education), verbal consent be recorded.

The material developed in Guatemala for the REMHI project (the Inter-diocesan Project for the Recovery of Historical Memory, *Proyecto Interdiocesano de Recuperación de Memoria Histórica*) offers a series of recommendations and suggestions of how to conduct an interview to support the reconstruction of historical memory. What follows is a short summary of their suggestions.

ATTITUDE OF THE INTERVIEWER

The work of the interviewer is important and delicate, and requires preparation. It requires listening with great attention and gathering testimony from people with respect for their experience, language, and manner of speaking.

The interviewer has to make the person feel welcome and comfortable, help them express their experience, and faithfully gather their testimony. As such, the interviewer should:

Prepare a suitable location, with sufficient privacy so that the interviewee can be calm and assured that their testimony will be confidential.

Concentrate on listening to the testimony of the person and try to help them express themselves, but without asking too many questions. A calm attitude and looking at the person attentively will help to create this environment.

At all times it is important that the interviewer not judge the person, treat them as a “poor thing”, or be scared by their story. The interviewee should be treated with understanding.

After the interviews, if the interviewee has requested confidentiality, the interviewer should keep the identity of the narrator completely secret.

The practice of active listening, paying attention to both verbal and non-verbal communication to establish a relationship of trust with the person contribute to a stronger communication and interaction.

SOME BASIC POINTS REGARDING THE ATTITUDE OF THE INTERVIEWER

- Use simple words and body language that conveys understanding, interest, and respect. Treat the interviewee in a friendly and affectionate way according to local cultural convention.
- Ask the questions calmly. Take care not to turn it into an interrogation. The questions are there to help get and structure the information. For example: And how was that? Who participated? What else happened? The questions can help make the testimony more specific and help the person speak about themselves. For example: How did you live through this? What consequences did it have for you?
- Help the person, insofar as possible, speak about themselves and their feelings and not only about the objective facts. If this is not possible, after finishing the testimony, leave a space to speak with the person about how they feel and to try to offer them support.

- Support them to analyze the reality of what happened and how they feel about it (how can feelings such as guilt, anger, etc be reinterpreted?).
- Control your reactions so as to not block communication. Avoid treating the victim as sick, or showing disbelief of what you hear, or making assessments about people.

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS IN INTERVIEWS

If the person does offer specific information or the interview wanders, try to focus the interview using the question guide. If this happens be sure to note it in the summary of the interview. If the person is uncollaborative or manipulative the interviewer should try to concentrate on the interview and not get nervous. Focus on the subject and do not give the interviewee more information than normal.

If the person freezes up because they don't want to share some fact or are afraid of the interviewer, have patience, ask, and encourage the person while also respecting their right to not speak. If they are affected by the memories, leave time for the person to recover and then ask them if they want to continue.

