

WALKING IN ANOTHER'S SHOES

A Facilitation Guide for Exchange, Empathy and Dialogue at District Level

Developed by

Radhika Hettiarachchi

December 2017 – January 2018

The Community Memorialisation Project, Sri Lanka

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the third dialogue workshop in the series

1.1 Agenda

Travel Day

- 05.00 - 05.30 a.m. - Gathering in designated meeting place.
- 05.30 - 14.30 p.m. - Arrival at location (the accompanying project partner will provide an introduction to the visiting district).
- 15.00 - 16.00 p.m. - Traditional non-sectarian welcome, introduction and departing to hosts' houses.

Day 1: Workshop

- 08.30 - 09.00 a.m. - Arrival at venue, together with hosts.
- 09.00 - 11.00 a.m. - Session 1: Who are we? Where are we from? What have we experienced?
- 11.00 - 11.30 a.m. - Tea/Coffee and exhibition of village-level maps from previous sessions.
- 11.30 - 13.00 p.m. - Session 2: What values do we share? What do we want in the future? What lessons have we learned from our past?
- 13.00 - 13.30 p.m. - Lunch
- 13.30 - 14.30 p.m. - Session 3: Identifying conflicts, and transforming conflicts through value-based visioning and mediation.
- 14.30 - 16.00 p.m. - Session 4: Debrief and wrap-up.
- 16.60 - 16.30 p.m. - Tea/coffee and return to hosts' houses/ free time/ cultural show/site visit.

Day 2: Memory walks

- 08.30 - 09.00 a.m. - Arrival at meeting point with the hosts.
- 09.00 - 10.00 a.m. - Travelling and introduction to site of memory (in Division 1)/ tea/ coffee/breakfast while travelling.
- 10.00 - 11.30 a.m. - Session 1: Visiting the site of memory (in division 1).
- 11.30 - 12.30 p.m. - Travel to second site of memory or 'conversation point' (in division 2).
- 12.30 - 13.30 p.m. - Introduction to division and lunch on location.
- 13.30 - 15.00 p.m. - Session 2: Visiting the site of memory (in division 2) or exchanging stories.
- 15.00 - 15.30 p.m. - Session 3: Walk and talk.
- 15.30 - 16.00 p.m. - Session 4: Debrief of exchange visit and feedback.
- 16.00 - 16.30 p.m. - Tea/coffee/ cultural show/ site visits/ return to hosts' houses/ free time.

Travel Day

- 06.00 - 06.30 a.m. - Gathering at designated meeting point.
- 06.30 - 07.00 a.m. - Farewells and departure.
- 16.00 - 16.30 p.m. - Arrival at home district and departure to homes.

1.2 Specific tips for facilitators

- Support the community leaders who are conducting the memory walk with questions, suggestions or language needs without making your presence very prominent.
- A group photo should be taken of the participants on the first day, to be printed and shared with all the contact details of participants at the end to ensure further engagement/connection.
- There should be a first aid kit with partners, as well as a plan for contingencies or emergencies during the exposure visit.
- The participants should be asked to bring something from their districts as small souvenirs to the hosts and vice versa if they would like to do so. While traditional greetings and welcomes should be encouraged, it is best to avoid religious practices if all religions cannot be represented.
- The facilitators will be supported by translators and group facilitators in each group. It is important that all these support personnel are briefed well in advance of their role as well as each session, so that they are able to ensure the smooth progression of the workshop and amply support primary facilitators.

2. SESSION GUIDE:

PRELIMINARY WORKSHOP

2.1. Who are we? Where are we from? What have we experienced?



OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION:

This session is meant to introduce groups of participants to each other, and connect them at a deeper, empathetic level to each other through story-telling and sharing of experiences both positive and negative.



SESSION DURATION:

2 hour



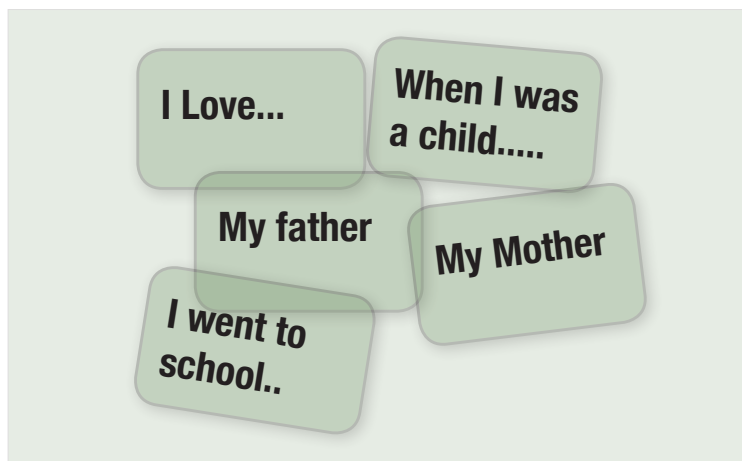
MATERIALS:

Maps of all villages represented should be put up around the room, pens, paper, and a set of flashcards with phrases written on them/translations.

Learning about each other (2 hours):

Depending on number of participants, divide into 4 or 5 groups, so that it is a mixed group where possible (with translation options). Ask the district based groups to stay together first, then shout out a number from 1 to 4 or 5. Before dividing into their new groups, the district based groups are given coloured name tags to write their names on (the colour indicates the district). Divide the groups so that they are mixed language and district groups. Each participant gets a card from the flashcards, with a phrase written on it. Each participant also gets two post-it notes. The group selects a Spokesperson and names their group. (15 minutes).

- **Part I:** The participant has to 'tell a story' about themselves, beginning with the words on the card. There are 5 topics. The story must include their names, their places of birth, their village and any other details they want to share with their group. This is an account of their personal or family history. The Group Translator takes notes and summarises each story in the other language. The spokesperson must also take notes in his/her own language. Once everyone has gone through the round, the round ends and the next part begins. (30 minutes).



- **Part II:** Each person writes a phrase that relates to a difficult experience of violence or war and sticks it on their person. One person starts and the others ask questions from the person about the phrase. The group facilitator/translator must try to incorporate the following questions if they do not emerge from the group - What does the phrase mean? Why that experience matters or is important? What impact it had on their lives and how did it make one feel? The facilitators can help each group come up with some of these questions to launch the conversation if necessary and summarise each response for the group in the sister-language. (30 minutes).
- **Part III:** Each person writes a phrase that relates to a happy experience or positive memory of co-existence and non-violent resolution to an issue and sticks it on their body somewhere. One person begins while the others ask questions about the phrase. The Group Facilitator/Translator must try to incorporate the following questions if they do not emerge from the group - What does the phrase mean? Why that experience matters or is important? What impact it had on their lives and how did it make one feel? The facilitators can help each group come up with some of these questions to launch the conversation if necessary and summarise each response for the group in the sister-language (30 minutes).
- **Part IV:** The Group Spokesman then introduces everyone in their group to the plenary giving their name, village, and something specific about their life story while the Translator summarises in the sister-language. (15 minutes).

During tea/coffee between session 1 and session 2, everyone is then encouraged to go see the village maps that are pasted around the room. Long explanations are not necessary because most people within the small groups would have had the opportunity to hear about these experiences. This is meant to be a walk-through where the magnitude of experiences regardless of where one is from, shows how pervasive and real the experiences of violence and war is for all those who are participating.

2.2 What values do we share? What lessons have we learned from our past? What do we want in the future?



OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION:

During this session, the participants are reminded again of the values they believed were important to them, and they can personally control. The session also reminds the participants of the mapping exercise they did, and the lessons they learned in analysing their own past, as well as the kind of society they wanted their children to inherit as discussed in phase 1 and 2. The overall objective of this session is to realise that Sri Lankans in all parts of the country, do have a basic set of values and a vision for the future that are more similar than different. This is then the starting point to building bridges towards non-recurrence of violence in future.



SESSION DURATION:

2 hour



MATERIALS:

Pens/post-it notes/ jigsaw puzzle that completes a tree of life/tree of life exhibition material as a sample.

The large group is broken up into 4 -5 new groups in the same way as before where all districts and languages are represented in each group as much as possible. Each group is given a few pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that are of different colour. The tree of life, which some are familiar with is converted for this exercise so that ROOTS representing values/ BARK representing lessons learned/ the LEAVES representing hopes for the future. The puzzle should be on a table or the floor. While the Translator has a role, there is no need for a Spokesperson or new group name. (15 minutes).



Game: Jigsaw (1.5 hours)

- **Part I:** Each small team, introduce each other again, with their name and village. They then take each piece of the jigsaw that they have been given which are a mixture of parts of the bark, parts of the roots and some leaves of varying colours. Each part will say words such as values, lessons learned, future hopes. Each part is discussed as a group. Each conversation should be recorded and summarised for the group by the translator/facilitator.

- **Part II:** within the groups the participants discuss what values they have or believe should develop personally or are important for co-existence, democracy and governance based on the very first dialogue workshop. They then write down a few values they agreed are the most important on the post-it notes and paste it on the relevant jigsaw part. The Facilitator gives the groups 15 minutes to discuss this, and then rings a bell which signals moving to the next set of pieces. They then discuss the pieces of bark and the lessons they have learned through their experiences, in order to ensure non-recurrence of violence at a personal or village level. Facilitators need to remind people here that what is beyond one's control (politics, government policy) is secondary here, unless it is about what as citizens they can do to advocate for change. They write down some of the lessons on which they agree on post-it notes. After 15 minutes the Facilitator signals when it is time to move on to the next section. They then discuss the final pieces – leaves – which is about what they want their lives and their children's lives to be like in the future. Again, they write down three visions for the future on post-it notes. The Facilitator indicates times-up after 15 minutes. (Overall 45 minutes)
- **Part III:** Each group comes to the middle and tries to put the jigsaw together, until it forms a tree. Then each group tells the plenary what their values, lessons and future hopes are. Together with the whole group looks at the completed tree. A brief discussion can ensure about filling in any missing values or lessons or hopes that the group believe must be highlighted. (30 minutes).

Debrief (30 minutes)

The facilitator takes out a few pieces from each colour in the tree and proceeds with the debrief. The debrief is important and should highlight the similarity of basic values, similarity of lessons learned and similarity of hopes for the future. The idea that all citizens have a role to play in the future, all citizens have rights and responsibilities to make that happen, all have similar hopes and dreams in a united Sri Lanka should be highlighted here. The differences should also be highlighted (land issues or missing persons might be relevant only to a particular group) and discussed. By taking a few values, or lessons or hopes out of the tree, the facilitator should show how it is important for each of these needs to be met in order to complete the 'whole' tree. A tree that has missing pieces will not be sustainable. Therefore, even though we are from different places, we as a Sri Lankan community are connected: what affects one, affects all and we have a responsibility to learn about the 'other', and if possible work towards all our various goals being met rather than avoiding or disregarding others' issues, in order for a sustainable, just peace and non-recurrence of violence.

During lunch break, ask for volunteers for a role-playing game from a single language group that is prominently represented in the region (regardless of ethnicity). The facilitator hands over a character to each person, as well as the roles and characteristics of the others. The facilitator explains to this group what the context is, and asks the group to sit together while they eat so that they may prepare or plan for their drama which should be a maximum of 15 minutes. It should be a mime with minimal speaking unless absolutely necessary to convey meaning. The facilitator helps the group prepare.

2.3 Identifying and transforming conflicts through value-based visioning and mediation



OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION:

During this session, the participants are introduced to basic skills for identifying conflicts or early warning signs as well as a set of skills for negotiation and mediation. The overall objective is to increase the understanding and skill level of community leaders for managing and transforming potential or existing local conflicts.



SESSION DURATION:

2 hour



MATERIALS:

The escalation of conflict cards, white board, basic character props like wigs, sarees, scarves, walking sticks, moustaches.

Activity: Walking in another's shoes (60 minutes)

Volunteer 'actors' from the group are given a real problem or potential conflict from the district. Due to language barriers, the role-play is to be mimed with minimal speaking. It is probably best to have one language for role-play while Translators help the others to understand the context. The volunteers who have already had time to prepare are given a further few minutes to get 'into character'. (10 minutes).

- **Part I:** All the participants are asked to stand in a circle around to form a 'theatre'. In the middle, act one of the game begins where the characters are at a village meeting or a scene of fight or other relevant location. Each character is given a tag or board to wear with the character's details written in two languages. Each character mimes the issue from their perspective. (5 minutes).
- **Part II:** There are two ways to play this - the facilitator can either stop the role-playing at any time, asking the players to halt, while the audience has a chance to suggest options or ideas, like in Forum theatre, where the role-playing resumes taking these suggestions into consideration. Or the facilitator can let the actors complete the story-arc as devised without participation. The facilitator stops the game when it reaches an impasse, a solution or when enough time has passed. Please note that option 1 may take too much time and is therefore less preferred. The facilitator asks the characters to go back to the group. (20 minutes).
- **Part III:** The facilitator leads the group through the following perspectives in an interactive dialogue (25 minutes):
 - Analysis
Who are the actors involved? What are their needs?
 - Options
Can we coordinate and collaborate to achieve all needs? Is there an option that may satisfy everybody? Where are the points that threaten a violent outcome and can these be avoided or managed?

It is important to note that this session is not about finding a solution to these problems, and therefore, the impossibility of easily solving entrenched problems should be highlighted. However, we are using an existing problem to showcase concepts that are important in recognising potential conflicts and violent outcomes in order to move onto the debrief.

2.4 Debrief and wrap-up of the day



OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION:

Continuing on from the previous session, during this session, the participants are introduced to basic skills for identifying conflicts or early warning signs as well as a set of skills for negotiation and mediation. The overall objective is to increase the understanding and skill level of community leaders for managing and transforming potential or existing local conflicts.



SESSION DURATION:

1.5 hour



MATERIALS:

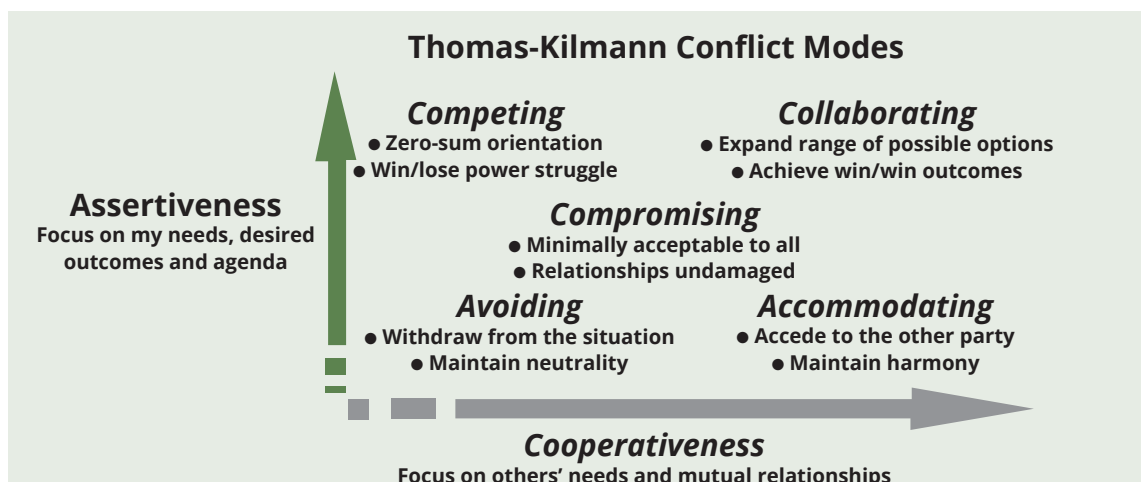
The Thomas-Kilmann conflict modes chart translated into two languages to be placed on a board. Two areas for debrief in each language.

Debrief (20 minutes)

For ease and clarity of providing an input, the facilitator breaks up the participants into language specific groups. The facilitator reminds every one of the escalation cards that are pasted on one of the walls at this point. The facilitator reminds the participants about the lessons from phase 2 of the dialogue process:

- That conflict can be negative or positive and it can help us improve and learn.
- If we are to achieve a win-win situation, basing any negotiation on the other's interests or by understanding their needs is the correct place to start.
- It is also important to highlight here that it is easier to intervene before a conflict becomes too entrenched.
- Similarly, it is important to intervene before egos are hurt, or there is a loss of face, or anger distorts the original problem.

The facilitator then shows the following diagram on the board, highlighting that there are five ways to address a conflict. The facilitator highlights the following: Moving from avoiding the problem until it becomes too much of a conflict; to competing for either side's victory which leaves one party as the loser; to accommodating one party which is still peaceful but one party loses out; to compromising which is a workable solution but remains limited in achievements for both sides; to collaborating with each other to find many different options of creating win-win situations.



Activity: Interactive brainstorming (30 minutes)

The group is encouraged to participate in an interactive discussion on the qualities of leadership that is needed for engaging their communities and their community leaders in managing or transforming existing or potential conflicts on the ground.

- **Part I:** The facilitators begin by asking the group what the ideal end to a conflict situation is as learned in other phases of the dialogue process and in the previous session. Then the facilitator highlights that final and ideal situation - Win/Win, is where potential opponents are treated as problem-solving partners. The facilitator asks the group for what the required characteristics are in an environment of 'problem-solving' in conflict contexts. These are some of the following possible responses: it requires empathy, understanding, curiosity, caution, willingness to listen, tolerance, kindness, patience and a sense of respect for the other. The facilitator can remind the group that this is what a value-based society can hope to achieve.
- **Part II:** In order to do this, the facilitator reminds the group that community leaders and mediators need to have certain leadership qualities that make it possible for them to be heard, or to engage effectively with other leaders. The facilitator asks the group for suggestions of what these maybe. If some of the following don't emerge, the facilitator could also share the characteristic and ask the participants for their ideas of what that may mean in real life-situations.
 - ◆ **Creative responses:** Positive attitudes to addressing conflicts are displayed. Try something new or different. But always keep one's context in mind.
 - ◆ **Empathy:** Acknowledging the other's point of view and trying to understand why it may be important to them. Be willing to listen to the other and feel for them. Try to make them feel for you. What are their interests rather than their entrenched positions?
 - ◆ **Appropriate assertiveness:** Without blaming or attacking, one's own needs are clearly stated. When engaging the other, it is important to be respectful and kind, but confident.
 - ◆ **Cooperation and Collaboration:** Where power imbalance affects decision-making, appropriate responses to the inequalities are first understood, actors are identified and approached. Alliances with powerful voices are formed for positive resolution of conflicts.
 - ◆ **Managing emotions:** Emotions are expressed without hurting the other and the other's emotions are acknowledged without prejudice or hatred. Take time out to calm down. Come back to the conversation when calmer.
 - ◆ **Willingness to resolve:** Benefits of resolving - for all parties - are understood and analysed before engaging the other. But always be willing to give and take, rather than come away without resolution.
 - ◆ **Mapping the conflict:** All key parties are identified and their needs and concerns are understood. It is important to understand who is involved and what their interests are.
 - ◆ **Designing options:** A wide range of options is considered without debating or justifying at this stage. Present these options to leaders or communities. Try to establish at the very outset, that the ideal resolution is a win-win situation where everyone is satisfied but no one is victorious. Fairness should be a characteristic of such a situation.

- ◆ **Negotiation:** Fair, just and common-sense should prevail. Always listen before speaking.
- ◆ **Mediation:** Remain impartial as much as possible. If one cannot be, and one's interests are in conflict with another, try to find a suitable third-party that can remain impartial.
- ◆ **Broadening perspectives:** Suggested solutions are presented in terms of how they affect the broader context beyond the issue itself. Showcase, and remind the community that the best options are where, they will stop a violent outcome or create a negative impact on one's community.

Wrap-up (10 minutes)

Facilitator starts the wrap-up by outlining the objectives of the workshop and follows through a quick summary of each session:

- Sharing stories and building empathy for each other.
- Learning that our values are the same, so we can build on that for co-existence.
- Learning that the lessons learnt are similar, so we can build on that for co-existence.
- Learning that we have similar goals for ourselves and our children, so we can build on that for the next generation.
- Learning that there are still specific needs and wants that we have to understand in each other and understand as challenges that need to be resolved if peace is to be sustainable.
- Learning that there are many ways to deal with conflict but the best being collaboration towards a win-win situation.
- Learning and understanding the qualities of leadership and how to mediate or negotiate in a situation that is difficult, entrenched, and in a dynamic political and social context.

Final game: Triangle game (30 minutes)

The facilitator asks each participant to silently select two other people in the group as 'partners', but keep it themselves. Depending on the size of the group, the facilitator might want to split the group into two or three. Each participant must form a triangle with the other two people he/she has selected without speaking or indicating to them in any way that they are the chosen. The facilitator draws an equidistant triangle on the board or shows one made of paper as an example of the three corners of a triangle. The game begins as participants are asked to walk around the room but always trying to maintain an equidistant triangle with the two selected individuals. Eventually once the room settles as everyone finds the ideal placement, the facilitator will highlight how everyone is inter-dependent and linked to each other. What affects one, affects the other. At this point the facilitator gives a twist in the game: The facilitator tells the group that if one person dies, anyone who selected that person dies too, and so on. The facilitator taps one person and says you're dead, at which point the tapped person must fall to the ground. As one by one connected to the person also dies, the whole room should fall down, further highlighting the point that we are all inter-connected.

At the end of day, along with the tea/coffee, the participants may want to end the session in a way they see fit. The possibilities are with a song/speech/dance/silent mediation of religions/a handshake or in any other way the groups choose to thank each other for their presence.

3. SESSION GUIDE:

MEMORY WALKS AND GROUP DIALOGUE

3.1. Memory walk



THE OBJECTIVE IN THIS SESSION:

This session is about being able to see, hear and walk through an experience of another. The visceral experience of being in situ, is hoped would create a greater sense of awareness, empathy and understanding for the other.

Activity 1 (1.5 hours)

The community leaders take the visitors through their personal experiences of a violent or difficult experience. The facilitator plays a secondary role. The facilitator provides translation support, or helps manage the group and their questions if necessary.

Activity 2 (1.5 hours)

If there is no second site of memory, the facilitator leads the group in story-telling and sharing of experiences of the community from a different division. The facilitator may choose to invite people to share or run the activity as Session 1 the previous day, 'who are we? Where are we from? What have we experienced?' since it is a new group of people from the same district who have not known each other before.

Debrief (30 minutes)

Once the community leaders have walked the visitors through their site of memory, the facilitator can step in to facilitate questions from the visitors. Some of these should be –

- How do the hosts feel about sharing their memories?
- How do the visitors feel when they walk through this site and listen to the stories of the villagers?
- How is this experience helpful?

The participants are encouraged to ask questions from each other and the hosts. They are encouraged to share how they feel about the experience of the other, rather than their opinion about the incident, its veracity or who is responsible. This session is not about explaining, refuting, excusing or justifying any incident. The facilitator needs to be prepared for dissenting voices particularly by not justifying the actions of any part as the truth or just. Instead if, and only if, dissenting voices that argue about 'truth' should emerge, the facilitator needs to explain to the group that this exchange is about people's personal experiences and while the truth is important, it is always important to remember that personal experiences and feelings are subjectively true and important to the individual.

3.2. Walk and talk: (30 minutes)



THE OBJECTIVE IN THIS SESSION:

Is to provide the hosts and visitors with time to share, learn and bond with each other away from the project staff, facilitators and planners. This is also a way for the groups to focus on what they want to learn, or talk about, rather than the designated workshop module. It provides the participants an opportunity to control the dialogue.

Activity:

- **Part I:** The group is broken up into mixed groups of 3-4 people with at least one person with dual language ability or a Translator where possible.
- **Part II:** In plenary, the facilitator asked for topics or questions that people might have for each other (they don't all have to do with violence, war and can be about positive experience, business, partnerships, culture etc.). The facilitator jots these down on a board and asks people to get together in groups of 3-4 under each topic that interests them. It can also be something completely different that is not on the board.
- **Part III:** The groups grab a question from the board or creates a question of their own. The groups are asked to walk about in the vicinity on their own or with another person who is able to translate and discuss whatever they want to talk about.

3.3. Debrief of exchange visit as a whole: (30 minutes)

The facilitator runs through all the activities that the participants have completed during the weekend. The facilitator can highlight each session and what was learned or discussed in brief. The facilitator highlights the importance of understanding, empathy and compassion, communication and curiosity in learning about the 'other'; patience, tolerance and negotiation in managing relationships within and across community groups for the goals of co-existence and non-recurrence of violence.

Facilitator goes through each of the sites visited, shares the key topics of discussion, key questions asked and the key concerns or challenges highlighted during the sessions so that the participants are able to develop an idea about the journey that they have been on – not just on this exposure visit but on the project from collecting stories, to each of the dialogue processes which builds one on the other.

3.4 Feedback game: (15 minutes)

Give everyone 3 coloured post it notes (or cards)

- On the green - write what you liked best about the weekend
- On the pink - write what you liked the least about the weekend
- On the yellow - write the most important thing you learned from the weekend

(The colour code should be written up on a board so that participants do not get confused)

Once they finish, they can come up and stick it on a board or if we feel anonymity is important to get more candid feedback, they can fold the card/paper and drop it in a box.

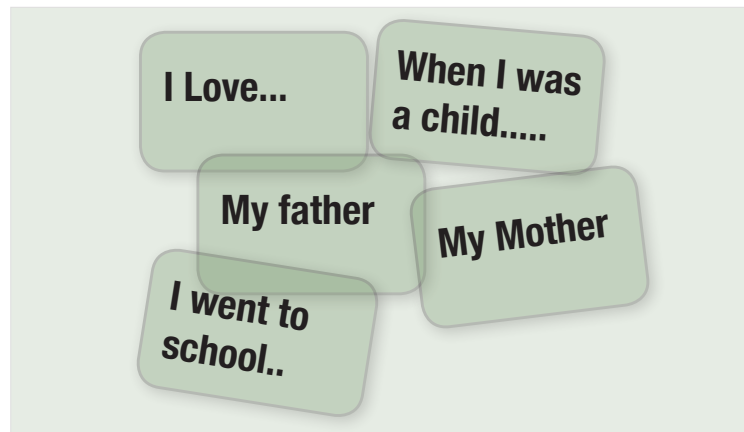
People are invited to share their thoughts if they are willing to do so. Participants are encouraged to ask questions from each other, or share each other's thoughts on the exposure visit.

End the session with standing in a circle and silently meditating on one's own religion.

The facilitator thanks the group for their participation and ends the weekend by offering participants the opportunity to thank each other in any way they choose. The participants are each given a group photo and the contact details of the whole group, so that they may stay in touch.

4. ANNEXES

4.1: List of phrases for deck of cards to launch conversations about self:



Annex 4.2: Memory walk location details

The sites of memory should be locations where acts of violence due to conflict happened. These sites can be sites of contested narratives. They can be sites of criminal violence or atrocities. They can also be sites where communities resolved violence peacefully and stand in testament to people's ability to be empathetic. They can be memorial sites that can launch a conversation on memory, remembrance and personal truths. It can either be a triumphant victory monument, reminders of a violent act, a reminder of heroism, or a site of an erased memorial. The two or three sites should be of significance to diverse communities, or different divisions so that the many sides to a conflict can be highlighted. The memory walks should be led by community leaders, and story-tellers who were witnesses to the incident.

Example: Ampara - Sites of memory and violence

The community leaders will lead the memory walk.

1. Veeramunai Hindu Kovil: This is a Kovil which housed a refugee camp when the villagers sought refuge during the conflict. The historic temple is said to have been established in the 1500s. However, on 12.08.1990, 55 villagers taking refuge at the Kovil were brutally attacked and massacred allegedly by Muslim home-guards from Sammanturai. The communities now live in peace although the memories of the violent past still remain in their mind. As a result of their grim past experience, they do not wish for a return of violence.
2. Gonagolla village and temple: This is the site of a historic temple with ancient frescoes, dating back to the 3rd century. This village experienced the murder of 55 people on the night of 03.08.1990. The memories of this incident are still haunting the villagers. Their association with the temple that provided them the desperately needed aid, and emotional support is indelibly etched in the minds of the people.
3. Pottuvil court area: Villagers claim that young men who were suspected of supporting terrorism and were rounded-up by the armed forces from camps. They were then brought to this location and burned as an example to others. This happened in the 1990s. However, no scars of such an act remain at the site, as a new court complex is built on site, thereby erasing the atrocities that witnesses claim happened there.

4.3: Potential problems for role-play activity

The role-play activity could be based on a real-life situation from the relevant location, a real-life situation from elsewhere, an amalgamation of a few realistic situations or a completely fabricated scenario yet with realistic and culturally appropriate elements. These role play scenarios should be sensitive to any power dynamics. It should not be potentially problematic politically and racially charged scenarios that may cause tensions within the community. The crux of the problem should be clearly defined. Any current dynamics related to the problem should be clearly defined. All the characters should be clearly outlined with their particular interests, positions and intentions. No solution should be presented. The actors are meant to use this role-play to launch a conversation about conflict, and are not meant to present a solution to the problem.

Example: Mannar: Public good vs. Personal gain

The issue: The illegal encroachment of land and filling up of villus increases the chance of floods, accumulation of garbage, spread of diseases and potential conflict. The issue is about negotiating with everyone who has encroached the canals, wetlands, villus, in and around Mannar town to be able to release the few feet encroached for the greater good of all, averting the danger of clogging water drainage systems.

Characters:

- The LG official - who is sympathetic to the cause, but his corrupt attitude overrides his desire to do what is correct.
- The encroacher - who is unwilling to let go of the land he has encroached.
- Civil society activist - who is working on the issue is trying to convince people of the greater good.
- Bystanders - who are affected by the situation speak about it passionately. They have a voice in the community and could be convinced to act but prefer to remain on the fringes.
- The flood victims - who are directly affected but are voiceless.
- Community leaders - who are key opinion makers and mobilisers. As yet they have refrained from interfering in making drastic changes.
- Youth - one group that are eager to create the change that is needed to make a better city. Another segment of youth prefer to remain unconcerned.

About the author –

Radhika Hettiarachchi is a researcher, curator and development practitioner. She is primarily engaged in the field of peacebuilding with expertise in memorialisation and oral history, as well as the arts as a means of creating space for civil society discourse on issues of gender, security, memory justice and reconciliation. She read English and Communications Theory at York University, Canada, and holds a Masters in Development Management from the London School of Economics and Political Science, U.K.

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About the project –

The Community Memorialisation Project is a joint project of Search for Common Ground and The Herstories Project along with district partners - Viluthu Centre for Human Resource Development in Mannar, Prathiba Media Network in Matara and Women Development Foundation in Ampara.

- The project captures individual and shared community narratives in order to prioritise and strengthen community owned memorialisation. Its primary objective is to facilitate an environment that acknowledges and preserves multiple histories, while encouraging empathy through inter-generational transfer and inter-regional sharing of memory to support peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.
- Building on individual stories the project team works with the communities to share their stories and facilitate dialogue within their communities about why memorialisation is needed, why multiple narratives should co-exist, and how we remember, at the divisional level and between the participating districts. The process focuses on empathetic listening and acknowledgement.
- There is clearly a need for wider public engagement. This is based on web-based and social media based platforms to add, debate and engage with the stories as well as on questions of memorialisation. With the participants' permission, the project will share these life stories through a traveling exhibition, an online archive, and a physical archive at the national level, similar to its predecessor - the Herstories Project.
- The project will contribute to discourse and practice, through regular learning circles, sharing of practice notes, new processes of monitoring and evaluation tools devised for this project and recommendations for a memory policy, based on views and needs at a village or district level.

While the project will have a cathartic and empathetic impact on the participants sharing their life stories at an individual level, it will also facilitate their voices and needs to be heard, through its wide dissemination. The success of the project will be in attitudinal changes – about the need to hear and acknowledge the many personal truths that exist. At a wider level, it will contribute to how Sri Lankans memorialise and historicise our past, and to making processes of justice, truth and reconciliation inclusive.

