

# **GOING BEYOND THE ARCHIVE: FACILITATED DIALOGUE USING PUBLIC HISTORY COLLECTIONS**

**An Introduction to the Series of Facilitated  
Dialogue Workshops**

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August 2016

**The Community Memorialisation Project, Sri Lanka**



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This document serves as an introduction to the series of dialogue workshops designed for the Community Memorialisation Project, on using public history collections for conversations on non-recurrence of violent conflict.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 THE NEED FOR MEMORIALISATION IN POST-WAR CONTEXT

Every post-war context is different and subject to unique considerations when practising memorialisation. However, the process of dealing with the past is necessary to rebuild society. It is important to acknowledge the violence of the past, learn lessons from the collective and individual experiences of war and violence, and work to mitigate and transform the root causes of conflict that may increase the possibility of violent conflict in the future. Therefore, it is important to be sensitive, intuitive and nuanced to the specific socio-economic, ethno-political and historical contexts of a post-war situation when designing a process of dealing with the past.

In the post-independence era, Sri Lanka has experienced many incidents of violence and violent conflict. The ethnic riots of the 50s, the youth insurrections of the 70s and 80s and the ethno-political conflict that ended with a crushing military victory in 2009 after a 26-year civil war. In many of these instances there was no political solution which resulted in the creation of obvious winners and losers. The post-war narrative created, has been nationalistic and triumphalist in recent years. The Government went on to memorialise only the soldiers that died, building monuments and symbolic representation of victory eschewing the chance to create a just peace. In the aftermath of the 2015 election, the transitional justice mechanisms and its processes took precedence with memorialisation being considered a part of reparations.

Consultations with ordinary citizens<sup>1</sup>, including those who have been directly affected by war, have resulted in the following findings:

- A clear majority of people of those consulted feel that it is important to memorialise in some way, so as 'to remember' what happened.
- Community level memorialisation and opportunities to memorialise all the dead by their families, relatives, village or community groups is important. While these are happening at some level, those with specific grievances (particularly in the North) felt that community memorialisation should not equate the prolonged experiences in the North with the experiences of violence and conflict in the South. This necessitates a nuanced understanding that while all have experiences of war and violence, there are varying degrees of such experiences, varying degrees of psychological, political and socio-economic impact, and varying degrees of political, psychological and socio-economic needs.
- While most Sri Lankans have some experience and knowledge of violent conflict and its impacts, there is little positive and reflective transference of those experiences between generations. There is little space created to do so and there is little understanding of 'why' Sri Lanka had a violent conflict. However, it can be inferred that without understanding 'why' and what elements or conditions were present when conflict occurred, it is difficult for a society to recognise the signs and symptoms for which it needs to be vigilant in order to prevent future conflict and violence. The need for learning and sharing experiences between generations, especially with those born after the conflict was seen as necessary. In some cases this was to keep the memory wrongs against a particular community alive while in other cases it was so the next generation might truly understand their own history.

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<sup>1</sup> The project held five consultation workshops bringing together approximately 250 participants in total from Kandy, Badulla, Batticaloa, Monaragala, Ampara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi

- It is important to capitalise on the multi-directional implications of memory. There are fresh conflicts brewing in Sri Lanka that are not being linked adequately to the experiences of its violent past in order to learn from them to prevent future violence.

It is within this context that the Community Memorialisation Project existed.

## **1.2 AN OVERVIEW: THE COMMUNITY MEMORIALISATION PROJECT (CMP)**

The Community Memorialisation Project facilitated access to multiple narratives of personal history. Personal narratives therefore are 'real' to those that experienced it and the absolute truth does not matter as much as the ability to tell one's own perspective. The project worked within the idea that memory must be dealt with, in homogenous groups first, so as to create space for pain and prejudice to emerge, before working with the perceived 'other'. The project itself, took no position on the processes of Sri Lanka's transitional justice. It attempted to add the vast reserve of memory about conflict and violence within society as a tool to assess and contribute to prevention of present and future conflicts.

The overall goal of the project, implemented jointly by Search for Common Ground and the Herstories Project Curator is to create an environment conducive to acknowledging and protecting multiple historical memories on violent conflict across socio-ethnic, political, and regional divides in Sri Lanka. The project was implemented in Matara, Ampara, and Mannar districts.

The specific objectives of the memory project were:

- To create platforms for individuals and communities, across ethnic, political and regional divides, to share their stories and engage in community dialogue and memorialising
- To preserve historical memory through archiving and disseminating the narratives to a wider audience
- To facilitate a process of common understanding on policy outlooks and programs on managing, and using historical memories for peacebuilding

To do this, the project focused on four pillars of work:

- Collecting and archiving life-histories of individuals and groups
- Deepening dialogue and sharing life histories at a grassroots level to engage communities over a sustained period on creating empathy and compassion for each other as well as acknowledge the need for, and work on building a value-based society
- Widening the dialogue through media outlets and social media for sharing histories, and encouraging discussion on personal responsibilities and impacts on prevention of violence through civic responsibility and value-based societies
- Engaging policy-makers and practitioners in processes of memorialisation for future peace



# 2. INTRODUCTION TO THE DIALOGUE PROCESS OF THE COMMUNITY MEMORIALISATION PROJECT

## 2.1 AN OVERVIEW

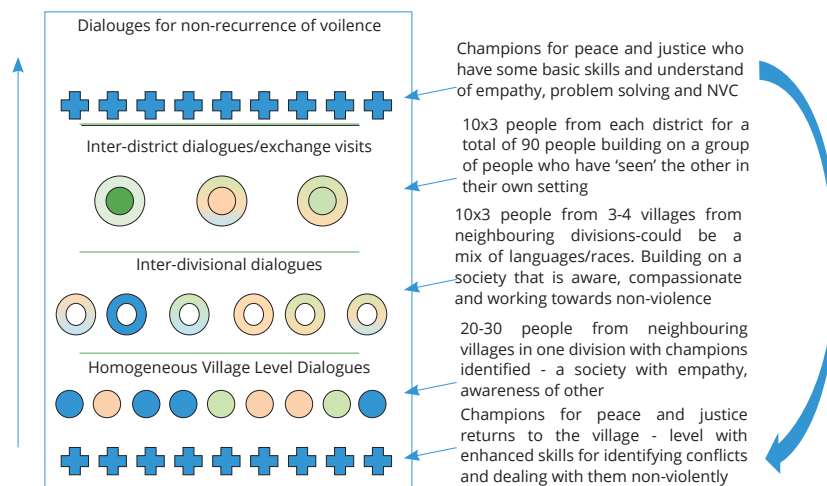
The dialogue process was designed based on local needs that emerged during the consultations which fits with the project’s ethos of learning and evolving according to context. It has been piloted, reviewed and tested in all three districts in local languages with various ethno-religious groups, and reviewed based on feedback from facilitators, participants and district partners before being finalised. The project is therefore based on a validated methodology. In the future, the project will provide orientation and facilitation training for value-based understanding of conflict and visioning for non-recurrence for selected youth, so as to create a second layer of leadership for non-recurrence of violence at the district level.

## 2.2 RATIONALE AND EXPECTATIONS

The objective of the dialogue process is to engage diverse communities in this discussion in order to ultimately create a group of ‘champions’ or community leaders at different levels of society who are aware of the potential of non-violence, have a basic understanding of problem solving skills and are interested in non-recurrence of violence. They are ideally supported by a like-minded community that has been exposed to village level (Phase 1) and divisional level (Phase 2) dialogues. They have seen multiple narratives, accept that war or violence is not what they want for their future, and agree with the need for a value-based society that chooses non-violence, empathy, compassion and understanding of the ‘other’ as a basis for future peace. Therefore, they are able to provide a basis of support to the ‘champions’ so they can act on managing emerging tensions within their community contexts.

Deepening dialogue at a community level involves a relationship with the same communities over a period of time. These same communities have engaged in introductory pocket meetings, multiple story collection visits and at specific consultation workshops. The dialogue process is designed to further this engagement by deepening the dialogue through three phases: village-level dialogue with homogeneous groups, divisional level dialogue with mixed-groups (in some cases), and district-level dialogues bringing together people across districts.

### Rationale and expectations of dialogue process:



## 2.3 LESSONS LEARNED FROM IMPLEMENTING THE DIALOGUE WORKSHOPS

Through this dialogue process, the CMP hoped to support the creation of a public discourse on non-recurrence of violence by learning from the mistakes of our past, through access to stories of ordinary people with extraordinary experiences of violence and courage. The people to people dialogue process was complimentary to the wider media campaign that saw social media, TV, radio, newspaper and dialogue with media personnel on building a discourse on non-recurrence of violent conflict. The discourse in both methods of outreach and dialogue, is centred on the concept of a value-based society.

### Statistics from the Dialogue Workshops under the Community Memorialisation Project:

The project focused on Matara (South), Mannar (North-Western) and Ampara (Eastern) districts for the launch of the dialogue workshops. It will continue the dialogue process in these three districts, as well as begin a new series of dialogues in Anuradhapura, Kalutara, and Monaragala districts from 2018.

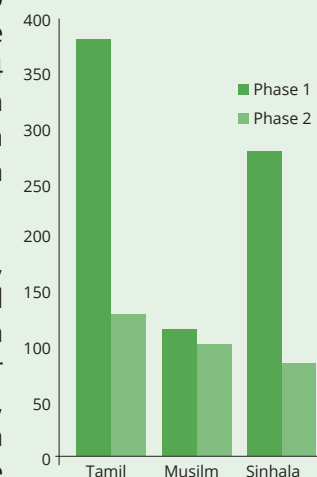
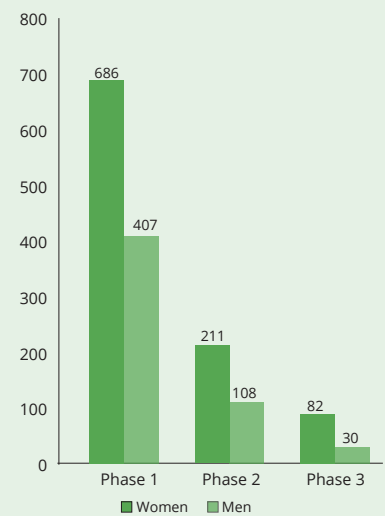
**Phase 1 (village-level):** 13 dialogue workshops were held in Ampara (with 30 villages and 345 people participating), 10 dialogues workshops in Matara (with 37 villages and 252 people participating), and 15 dialogues in Mannar (with 32 villages and 496 people participating). Overall, 686 women and 407 men participated in the dialogue workshops. Of these, 380 were Tamil, 116 Muslim, and 279 Sinhala. 182 of these were under 25 years old.

**Phase 2 (divisional level):** 5 dialogues were held in Ampara (with 123 people participating from the 30 villages from Phase 1), 2 held in Matara (with 93 people participating from the 23 villages from Phase 1), and 4 dialogues in Mannar (with 103 people participating from the 27 villages from Phase 1). Of these, 211 were women and 108 were men. 130 Tamil, 102 Muslim and 87 Sinhala (including Ampara district) participated over all.

**Phase 3:** Three exposure visits were held in each district, with 16 people from Mannar participating in Ampara and Matara, 15 people from Ampara participating in Matara and Mannar, and 20 from Matara participating in Mannar and Ampara. At each location, 15 from Mannar in Mannar, 23 from Ampara in Ampara and 23 from Matara in Matara welcomed the visitors as hosts and/or participated in the district level workshops and/or as story-tellers as the visitors went to sites of violence and atrocities. Of the participants (including youth), 30 were male while 82 were female.

A total of 1093 people at village-level, 319 at divisional-level and 102 people at district level participated in the three phases of the dialogue process. Those that participated in Phase 2 and 3 also participated in the village dialogues thereby creating a logical progression of understanding about each other, conflicts in Sri Lanka, and awareness and skill development of conflict prevention with a focus on Sri Lankan values.

Women and Men participating



## VILLAGE-LEVEL DIALOGUES:

In Phase 1, the village level dialogues worked with homogeneous communities who have gone through the workshop for building non-violent, value-based societies. These communities have had the opportunity to reveal and explore their own experiences in a safe space. They saw, heard and responded to stories about their own experiences and the other's experiences through a mini exhibition of the archive. This workshop introduces a sense of catharsis in sharing one's own stories while creating empathy through access to other's stories. They had the opportunity to explore their own prejudices, their own pain, openly voice their experiences before their community, and accept that each of them hoped for a non-violent future for the next generation. The high level of enthusiasm to read 'other's' stories while fully engaging in the memory mapping exercise indicated their interest in engaging in conversations about the past and willingness to deal with it. The patient manner of sharing information, experiences and hopes between the young and the old generations at each workshop highlighted the need for space for inter-generational conversations about war, violence and the future. Some of the lessons learned that helped refine the facilitation guide, based on the initial pilots and feedback from the village level dialogue workshops (with 771 responses to all questions) were:

1. Safe spaces for dialogue in homogeneous groups:
  - People were free to share their negative responses such as anger, bitterness and hatred because they were in homogeneous groups where they believe they will not be judged, or have to speak in 'peacebuilding jargon'. They were also free to voice their anger or prejudice while comparing or measuring their perceived suffering ('we have suffered more than them', 'they killed our people, why should we feel sorry that their people suffered'). A safe space where they are with familiar groups, where expressing such emotions and opinions would not be viewed as negative was an important part of the process of catharsis, before one is able to engage with the content constructively. Out of 771 respondents 73% women and 86% men said they felt 'free to speak', while 95% of Sinhalese and 66% of Tamils also felt 'free to speak'.
  - It is important to have two well-trained facilitators, preferably a woman and a man who are of the same ethnic group as the participants, in order to create this safe and understanding space. It is important that the facilitators understand the project and agree with its objectives fully. Project team members who are not of the same ethnicity and language group should not be present in order to create the safe space.
2. The optimum use of time:
  - The length needed for an effective workshop was 5-6 hours completed within one day during the weekend. Due to various reasons such as harvesting season, other village level society meetings, school or work it was obvious that people would not come for two days in a row if the content were to be spread out, and that they will always be late, thereby affecting start times. Out of 38 workshops, it is a positive sign that most of those that attended stayed for the entire day.
3. Voluntary participation:
  - The participants weren't selected or invited. The project partners worked through community leaders to invite anyone who had participated in the story-collection process, as well as anyone from the village who would wish to participate at the sessions. With an open invitation to a few surrounding villages, each workshop had an average number of about 35-45 participants. Although this process ensures self-selection, it was important to have a good balance of elders (about 20%), youth (about 20%) and the rest being middle-aged, to encourage inter-generational dialogue.

- Those who had lived through conflict and those who had very little personal experience of conflict (but were either prone to radicalisation due to a lack of understanding of a range of experiences, or indifferent because war and violent conflict were abstract concepts) need facilitated spaces to share experiences and thoughts. 89% of Sinhala speaking (including Muslims) and 65% of Tamil speaking (including Muslims) of the 771 respondents felt that envisioning a better future together with all age groups was 'useful'. Of those that were in their teens (75%) and twenties (78%) and those in their 60s (76%) and 70s (69%), and over 70% of those in between felt that the inter-generational exchange was 'useful'. Those who said 'very useful', said they learned about the need to create a future society which is ethical and without violent conflict.
4. Experience voicing and sharing:
- Sharing one's own experiences and responding to those experiences emotionally, as well being given the opportunity to see a wide range of stories of war and violence helps create the view that many truths or multiple narratives exist. When they look at a large collection of such stories, (presented unedited, written in one's own hand or as videos and photo-essays) it fleshes out abstract ideas about suffering due to war or violence visually. To the surprise of the facilitators, most people read or viewed stories diligently and responded to the sessions with overwhelming emotion (positively or negatively).
  - Sinhala speaking (90%) and Tamil speaking communities (69%) found the ability to express themselves and share their stories 'useful'. 84% of males and 72% of females found the ability to share 'useful'. On average over 75% of all age groups found the sessions dealing with one's own past valuable. Those who said it was 'not very useful' cited reasons such as 'they felt sad, afraid or worried' (15 responses, all Tamil language). Those who said 'useful' and 'very useful' cited reasons such as 'they learnt about the conflict, gained knowledge, gained understanding of the past' (68 responses, mixed). Interestingly, recollecting old memories was cited as a reason for marking 'not useful' as well as 'very useful'.
  - More among the Sinhalese speakers found learning about the other 'useful' (87% versus 67% in Tamil speaking communities). Those who said 'not very useful' said they 'felt sad, that they understood other's experiences and that everyone is the same'. Those who said 'very useful' also said they were able to 'see the hardships of others / people they didn't know'. They also noted the similarity of the suffering which indicates that the same reasons or feelings were interpreted differently. Some Tamil speaking respondents said 'it is like my experience'. On average about 80% of all age groups found it 'useful'. The negative responses at the sessions, were about not equating the suffering of the North with the suffering of the South. As a result, all facilitators made a conscious effort to never equate or try to insinuate similarities, but let such thoughts emerge if at all from the group.
5. Values and ethics as a means of non-recurrence of violence:
- Catharsis and empathy were highly effective approaches to the conversation about how one can personally commit to prevent violent conflict or combat emerging conflicts. As most of the values that emerged through the discussions were basic values, and acceptable to most people within and across barriers, the potential benefits of 'returning' to an 'innately Sri Lankan' value-based society emerged easily from the participants. About 90% of Sinhala speakers and 65% of Tamil speakers found discussing values and ethics as a basis for managing conflicts or preventing violence against the other 'useful'. Over 75% of those aged less than 29, found it 'useful' compared to about 70% of those over 65, indicating that a return to values was something that resonated as an acceptable practice with older as well as younger

groups. Those who said 'very useful' generally noted that 'ethics is important for the betterment and development of our country', and that 'they learnt about things that should be respected in society'. One respondent said 'I was able to grasp some of the ethics that have slipped away from my life'.

### DIVISIONAL-LEVEL DIALOGUES:

In Phase 2, at the inter-divisional dialogues, people were invited to participate from those that participated in the village dialogues (based on self-selection and some who were identified as potential 'champions'). 'Champions' (including youth) drawn from the village dialogues were intended to be individuals who display leadership qualities, have a voice or standing in their communities, committed to peacebuilding, and those who are ready to mobilise their communities in times of need. At this level, the groups were not homogenous but mixed in race, religion and language as they represented 4-5 villages from across divisions within the same district. At this stage, the groups were given an introduction to a set of skills, tools and further exposure to the stories and issues of their own districts, to enable them to address emerging and existing conflicts, non-violently.

The feedback from Phase 2 of the dialogue series revealed that:

- Dialogue across community groups - There is significant interest in meeting the 'other' community. Even meeting the others from one's own district was looked at positively. Having been through the village-level dialogues where they had the opportunity to express themselves was useful, as when other ethnicities met at the divisional workshops, they were able to share their concerns even if they were contested opinions.
- Practical tools helped - Exercises that were creative and fun ways to enable inter-generational dialogue meant that people remembered the skills they learned better. Games inter-mixed with some conceptual input were more effective for engagement and retention. Games that used elements of real-life situations were memorable.
- Defining and understanding conflict - Most participants identified emerging conflicts in their areas, or simply discord or contested issues in their villages with which they would like to engage. Participants felt that understanding 'conflict', and how to address and prevent them from becoming violent at a basic level, was made easier by thinking about one's own identified issues.

### DISTRICT-LEVEL DIALOGUES:

In Phase 3, at the inter-district level dialogues, a selected group of 'champions' were further strengthened with new skills. They were also connected to 'champions' from other districts thereby creating a support network. Phase 3 is primarily about 'connection' and understanding the other, as a real human being and a 'friend'. The programme was designed to give people the opportunity to meet, live with and learn about the other immersing oneself in the environment and culture of the other. Participating in the 'memory walks' to sites of violence with their 'hosts' also enables them to understand the feelings and post-conflict needs of others better. The dialogue workshops, provided the participants with a higher level of skills and tools to enable them to deal with emerging conflicts more effectively by linking the experiences and lessons of the past to possible eruptions of violence in future. At each of these workshops the participants stayed in the homes of their 'district hosts'.

Some of the feedback from the participants validated the process and its impacts:

- Walking to a site of memory - Listening to the stories of those who were there when atrocities happened makes the event and their experiences, undeniable. In some places where the stories included atrocities by the State, some of those from the



South were visibly shaken. However, without facilitation and intervention, the group discussed the nature of truth, and experiences themselves and accepted the grief and pain of those who shared their story. This kind of 'direct' sharing was seen as something that cemented an earlier learning about multiple truths.

- Living in people's homes was a startling experience for some - several people stated that on first meeting, their warmth and hospitality stunned the guests. Going into homes that were of less affluent backgrounds was a shock to some, especially for those from the South. In addition, being the only Tamil in a house full of Sinhalese, or the only Sinhalese in a room full of Tamil boys, or a Muslim in a house that was trying to accommodate specific cultural habits was difficult at first. However, the hospitality, kindness and eagerness to take care of the guest, shown on all sides generally, created an environment of complete comfort by the second day. Many have indicated that even though language was a barrier, they were able to connect. Those who were able to understand and speak the other's language even marginally seemed to have built deeper connections, being able to speak about politics and issues of significance. Many have stated that they have continued to keep in touch with their hosts, some even planning second visits after the event.
- Sharing lessons - Many have indicated that once they returned to their homes they shared their experiences with others. The lessons shared have not been limited to abstract experiences, but to opinions about the Sinhala-Tamil-Muslim conflicts, values and ethics, different needs of various ethnic groups based on their experiences and to ways in which to manage small issues. This has been corroborated through feedback and evaluations, indicating that 'champions' maybe able to influence their fellow villagers towards non-violence, acceptance of the 'other', and empathy.

### GENERAL LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DIALOGUE PROCESS ARE:

- Frequency of contact - As part of the pilot phase of the project, the three phases were done about a month apart from village level dialogues to the exchange visits. This meant that each set of participants first met the group during the project introductions, story-collections and pocket meetings about three months apart over a period of a year. Between that and the dialogue workshops, there may have been another six months. Ideally, there should be smaller meetings or activities in between this process. This would have encouraged the participants to keep the dialogue open, and build on the connections they made during the facilitated dialogue workshops.
- Youth engagement - While there is a clear need for inter-generational dialogue and the three phases create such opportunities, having specific strategies designed to engage youth in the interim is also necessary. Ideally, there can be activities designed in-between each of the phases, for youth to further engage with their elders or with peers on memory, story-telling and learning skills for preventing violence.
- Flexibility: It is imperative that flexibility is built into the design of the dialogue process and the sessions of the facilitation guides. Each situation is unique. As such, the facilitators should be able to adjust the timing, the content and the outputs of the dialogue workshops. This requires extensive training for facilitators to be able to mitigate potential challenges and practice do no harm approaches.
- Mini-exhibition - The travelling exhibition of the archive is a central part of the process. This exhibition should be curated to cover a variety of issues, needs, experiences and impacts from multiple angles. Diverse communities, diverse victims, diverse perpetrators and diverse voices should be represented. The facilitators can curate it further on location according to the needs or sensitivities of the participants.

However, the feedback has indicated that having more stories (even if not all can be read during the session) highlights the scale and lasting impact of the many conflict experiences. The travelling exhibition must be followed by discussion, dialogue and support in handling difficult emotions or memories. It also requires a reference strategy for trauma counselling if the need arises.

- Self-selection - The process of self-selection which results in participants volunteering to continue from Phase 1 to Phase 3, sometimes means not all people going through the entire process are necessarily natural leaders or 'champions'. However, some of them may become empowered through the process to become leaders. In allowing for self-selection, those who are naturally interested in a non-violent future, or are open to engaging and learning may come forward rather than those with extreme views. The feedback from the workshops also indicates that working with those that are interested is more apt for the purpose of these dialogues, as it is not designed specifically to engage or challenge those with extreme views. They may even prove to be a disruptive force if specifically invited to join the workshops.

## 3. INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDES

### 3.1 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The facilitation guides are meant to be used by facilitators during the workshop. However, please note that it must be used only after careful consideration and fully familiarising yourself with the details of the guiding notes, the project, the archive and the context of the location. The facilitation guides can be used with various archives or without. However, not using a story archive would hinder the effect of learning about the other.

### 3.2 WHAT IS INCLUDED

There are three facilitation guides which are intended for Phases 1 through 3 of the dialogue process.

1. 'Building a Value-Based Society: Contributing to Non-recurrence of Violence in Future' – The guide includes six sessions and a detailed notes to the facilitator. The notes supplement the information and tips given in the session plans. It provides further information on the logic of the process, the assumptions made, the descriptions of the life-histories being used during the workshop, and further information on dealing with sensitive or contested narratives as well as engaging with trauma and potential threats and violent opposition from outside.
2. 'Understanding and Rising above Conflict' - There are five sessions in this facilitated dialogue workshop. It includes annexes with directions for activities and games. It also includes a quick reference guide for ease of use.
3. 'Walking in Another's Shoes' - This guide is for a four day process, with the first and the last simply being about planning a welcome and goodbye for the visitors. It includes a facilitation guide for a one-day workshop and for one day of site visits interspersed with dialogue sessions.

The facilitation guides include additional resources needed for the sessions, such as a theoretical inputs, or descriptions of specific tools or equipment needed for the session. They also include any feedback forms and hand-outs used during the workshops.



## 4. FACILITATION TIPS

### 4.1 THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

- These workshops are meant to be facilitated dialogues. As such, the primary role of the facilitator is to engage communities in conversation, teasing out or eliciting their views and thoughts. The facilitator should at no point be a trainer (or an expert in subject knowledge), imparting knowledge, or leading the participants by providing personal opinions. This may create bias or the unintentional consequence of participants providing responses according to what we may 'want' to hear rather than their own thoughts.
- One of the most important roles of the facilitator at every session is to provide the 'debrief'. It is during this component that the abstract lessons learned through games/activities are clearly defined, unpacked and presented to the group as a 'take-away' skill, idea or practice. The facilitator must be diligent in facilitating the connections between the memory walk, the game, the conversation between groups and the values and skills that can be drawn from it, as it relates to real life. It is important that the facilitator develops a set of questions for each session based on the guidelines provided.
- There will be difficult histories and narratives emerging in some discussions. The facilitator's role is to be mindful of potential trauma of re-awakening old memories. If collective or individual trauma is very pronounced, stop the sessions or take those individuals aside and offer them the psycho-social referral services available at district levels through the district partner.

### 4.2 GENERAL TIPS FOR FACILITATION

- The facilitator must be clear in instructions, in the order of the session and in providing input where necessary, without going into 'trainer mode'. Generally, the facilitator should always attempt to throw back questions or ideas coming from the audience to the participants themselves to create a brief dialogue instead of providing new content, except where direction, definitions or clarity is required.
- It is important that everyone is able to fully participate. As such, there is a mix of small group work, individual work and open forum discussions. If some people dominate discussions, employ means of balancing this out by giving the disruptors other roles (such as scribe, presenter, and group work facilitation support).
- Allow time for discussion but also move the conversation along quickly between sessions without giving away too much information about what to expect in the next sessions. Try to stay within the indicated time durations for each session.
- In most cases, parents are not able to leave their children behind. If they bring the children, engage the district partner or project coordinator in providing entertainment (toys, colouring books or drawing materials for them).
- Respect the wishes of those who find the conversation difficult and choose to leave the workshop. Do not attempt to coerce or cajole them to stay.
- Use culturally appropriate ice-breakers and energisers whenever necessary.

- Always acknowledge multiple narratives, versions of the truth and gratefully acknowledge honest, open dialogue.
- The facilitator and the partner organisation would be the familiar contact points for the visiting participants. Therefore, the role of the facilitators and partners will also include guiding the participants through interactions, cultural differences, language barriers and workshops.
- The timings within the sessions are suggestions only. The facilitator is free to adjust them as he/she sees fit. The session content is also a guideline. Where necessary, the terms, level of complexity, and even activities can be adjusted or substituted depending on the composition, openness, capacity and potential tensions within the groups.
- It is important to create opportunities for bonding and inter-generational dialogue within and between village groups where possible. The memory walks are extremely important in fostering a connection between groups. Make sure that people are in mixed groups as they share, understand and debrief on what they see. Encourage the participants to 'put themselves in the others' shoes' while they walk around.
- Have all necessary material – coloured papers, pens, markers, blue-tack, flip charts, boards, flashcards, jigsaw puzzle pieces, feedback material and a box of props for role-play game.

### 4.3 WHAT TO DO: BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE WORKSHOP

At each stage of workshop engage with the project coordinators and district partners as follows.

#### **Before each workshop:**

##### *Venue considerations:*

- For Phases 1 and 2, the venue must have two separate sections so that the travelling exhibition of 'others' stories can be set up in a separate space where participants will not have access to it before the relevant session.

##### *Understanding participant background and identifying 'champions':*

- The participants should generally include about 20% youth (below 25), 20% elders (above 65) and 60% in between. It must also be gender balanced as much as possible. The district partner is familiar with the composition of each group. As such, the facilitator needs to familiarise himself/herself with the general background of the participants and any special cases before the workshop.

##### *Understanding village background:*

- The district partner or organiser should be familiar with the background of violent experiences in the village or villages at the workshop. It is important to understand what these are before beginning the workshops – for example, village was heavily affected by JVP violence or by army violence, or the village was affected by war and displacement etc.

##### *Selection of stories for the mini-exhibition:*

- The stories that are displayed at the mini-exhibition or the village maps displayed in Phases 2 and 3, should be selected to reflect some similarities and some differences of the experiences of the participants at each workshop.

**During the workshop:***Support facilitator or co-facilitator:*

- There is a need for a co-facilitator or supporting facilitator during the workshops to help with group work, to help with clustering ideas that emerge and manage participants. Plan out who and how this will work together with the district partner and the project coordinator.

*Engaging with Rapporteur:*

- There should be a note-taker at each workshop. Coordinate with him/her the most unobtrusive method of recording the conversations and outcomes of dialogue without attribution to specific individuals.

**After the workshop:***After Action Review:*

- After each workshop, the project coordinator should conduct a brief discussion with the facilitator and district partner about the workshop.

*Maintaining a facilitation diary:*

- The facilitator is expected to keep a short diary of reflections immediately following the workshop, thus recording first impressions.

## 5. ANNEXES:

### 5.1 KEEPING A FACILITATION DIARY

It is important that as a facilitator, engaging in one or more sessions, you keep a facilitation diary which includes your impression of the day's proceedings and a brief after action review conducted with the project partners. The format of each entry should be:

Date:

Venue:

Number of participants:

Impressions:

- Did the logic of the programme work?
- Were the objectives met?
- What worked and what did not?
- Anything you have learned that you may add or change in the next workshop?
- How did you feel about the workshop and its outcomes?
- Any special notes?

### 5.2. AFTER ACTION REVIEW FORMAT (AAR FORMAT)

Question	Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was supposed to happen?</li> <li>• What actually happened?</li> <li>• Why were there differences?</li> </ul>	These questions establish a common understanding of the work item under review. The facilitator should encourage and promote discussion around these questions. In particular, divergences from the plan should be explored.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What worked?</li> <li>• What didn't?</li> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	These questions generate reflection about the successes and failures during the course of the project, activity, event or task. The question 'Why?' generates understanding of the root causes of these successes and failures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would you do differently next time?</li> </ul>	This question is intended to help identify specific actionable recommendations. The facilitator asks the team members for crisp and clear, achievable and future-oriented recommendations.

Source: [http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/after\\_action\\_review](http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/after_action_review)

### 5.3. STATIONERY CHECKLIST

At each training there should be:

- Flip charts and flip chart boards - 3
- Brown paper - 3
- Ballpoint pens - 30-40
- Colour pencils - 3 cases
- Colour felt pens - 3 cases
- White board markers in three colours - 3
- Permanent markers in three colours - 3
- Thumb tacks or pins - 1 packet
- Blue tack - 1 packet
- Tape - 1 roll
- Bristol board - 6
- Flash cards/ coloured paper squares - 60-80
- Post-it notes in two colours - 2 packets
- White A4 size paper - 40 sheets
- Projector and screen
- Any special tools and equipment designed to be use during the sessions such as props for games, picture cards, theories to be explained etc.
- First aid kit
- Children's toys and drawing materials to keep young children entertained
- Resource pool of approximately 50 life-histories in video, photo-essays, trees of life, letters and Children's Memory Map formats along with their translations.



## 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 a need for a 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.

