

Healing Through Remembering  
**Conversation Guide**  
on Dealing with the Past



# Healing Through Remembering Conversation Guide on Dealing with the Past



Healing Through Remembering

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# Healing Through Remembering

## Conversation Guide on Dealing with the Past

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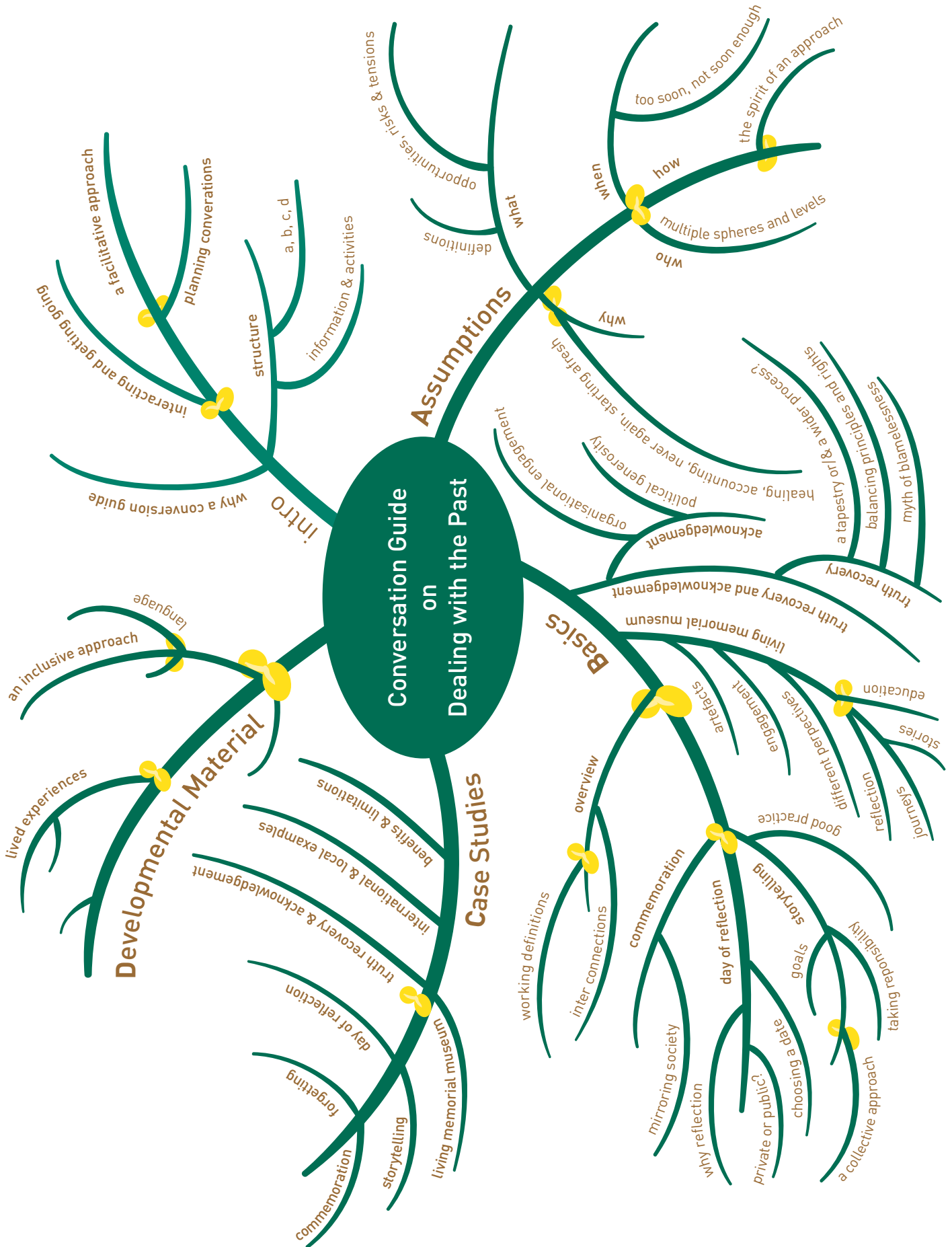
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# introduction

Healing Through Remembering is a cross community project made up of a diverse range of individuals who have been meeting for a number of years to address the issue of how to deal with the past relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

Healing Through Remembering regards dealing with the past and remembering as important issues for civic and wider society to engage with, debate, discuss and dialogue on.

Healing Through Remembering believes that how society deals with the past informs and shapes the future. It advocates that it is better to give proper and due consideration to ways of dealing with the past and remembering, even should one decide that no further action is required.

It is this belief which has informed the development of the Conversation Guide.

## A Conversation Guide

Healing Through Remembering recognises that to deal with the past and to remember is both complex and difficult. The process Healing Through Remembering has engaged in has been one which has identified and asked many questions to which no fixed ready-made answers or positions can easily exist. For this reason what has been produced is a Conversation Guide rather than a training manual.

The primary purpose of producing a Conversation Guide on dealing with the past is to support conversations to take place. The Guide is designed to provide easier access into what is a complex issue and debate by outlining key concepts.

Healing Through Remembering recognises that engagement may result in more questions being generated as well as a wide range of other responses and possibly action. It is difficult to predict the exact nature of the outcomes of conversation. However, it is hoped that the Guide will enable conversations which will themselves, along with any subsequent questions or activity, further inform and shape the debate.

The Conversation Guide is a tool which provides parameters within which to frame a conversation and to ask questions. The Guide is written for facilitators and others with group facilitation skills interested in supporting individuals and groups to engage on the issue of dealing with the past and remembering.

## Structure to the Conversation Guide

The Guide contains four sections A, B, C and D which contain eleven sets of thematic workshop materials.

The four sections are:

- A Assumptions** - this section examines the underlying assumptions and questions relating to what, why, when, where, who, and how to approach dealing with the past and remembering. This section contains materials for two thematic workshops.
- B Basics** - this is the core section of the Conversation Guide providing an overview to, and detail on, five approaches to dealing with the past and remembering. These are the five approaches Healing Through Remembering has focused upon. The approaches are: Commemoration, Day of Reflection, Storytelling, Truth Recovery and Acknowledgement, and a Living Memorial Museum. This section contains materials for seven workshops. Workshops include an overview to the five approaches and a workshop on each area. Whilst Healing Through Remembering has considered Truth Recovery and Acknowledgement as one approach, the Guide contains two workshops developed in order to enable a more in-depth consideration of each of these two dimensions.
- C Case Studies** - this section provides case studies of international and local examples of approaches for dealing with the past. It includes website links and an outline of possible “benefits” and “limitations” of each approach. The Case Study Material is provided in order to supplement the workshop materials and Healing Through Remembering encourages its use in order to broaden and deepen understanding, in particular how each approach has been applied globally.
- D Developmental Material** - this section contains workshop materials for two thematic developmental areas considered to be related to the debate on dealing with the past. These may be usefully built into a workshop programme to enable a deeper understanding of what are complex issues. Healing Through Remembering recognises that dealing with the past and remembering touches and connects with a number of other key issues and therefore this section is one which will develop and grow. The two workshop themes included are, Lived Experiences and, An Inclusive Approach. This section could be developed to contain other thematic workshop materials on, for example, Forms of Violence, Forms of Truth, Forms of Justice.

## A Conversation Guide - a suggested Framework and Methods

The overall style of the Conversation Guide is one which “*seeks to impart information and invite engagement*”. The Guide endeavours to do this through eleven thematic workshops.

Each thematic workshop contains **framework information** and **conversation methods** in the form of a conversation activity or a number of conversation activities, which together act as a **conversation guide**.

The framework information within each workshop is based on that developed by Healing Through Remembering and has been extracted from the work of sub groups and research and discussion papers. These resources have been a product of engagement and dialogue between a diverse range of individuals (many of whom are on an individual and/or professional capacity engaged with dealing with the past on a daily basis).

The **framework information** is provided to help frame the conversation and can be used in a number of ways. This information may be read by the facilitator who in their own words conveys the material to others, or it may be copied as workshop input into handout, overhead, or power-point presentation formats, as aids to group discussion.

A number of **conversation methods** are also suggested. These include the following:

**reflective questions** - open-ended questions which can be used for individual reflection and group conversation. For example, what stories (relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland) do you think have been told publicly?

**agree and disagree continuums** - the reading out of statements requiring participants to reflect on their own response and position and to place themselves along the continuum between agree and disagree explaining their reasons for this choice. This activity allows for exploration of the range of participants’ positions and thinking on the related issue. (This activity requires “Agree” and “Disagree” signs and some space).

**focused conversations** - these are sets of questions using an ORID framework i.e. which uses objective, reflective, interpretative and decisional questions thereby recognising that individuals know and learn in different ways. Each type of question reveals specific information. Objective questions seek to clarify what participants know i.e. what is the objective information they have been given or received? Reflective questions in this exercise enable participants to identify their associations and emotions which often inform thinking. Interpretative questions enable participants’ own interpretations, analysis, and thinking to come to the fore. Decisional questions can be useful in assisting resolving conversations, therefore making the most of the focus given to the subject by participants. By seeking out information as to where or how the group wishes to proceed to next, rather than leaving conversations unresolved, decisional questions can help bring conversation to a close. Focused Conversations are also framed with opening and closing statements, the purpose of which is to set the conversation in context. The questions used are sample questions and can be amended. This activity is based on the Technology of Participation and the Focused Conversation Method developed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs ([www.ica-international.org](http://www.ica-international.org)). (This activity requires pieces of paper and a sticky wall, or post-it notes and a flip chart stand).

**role plays** - enables participants to explore the dynamics of “life like” situations and offers the opportunity for participants to step into different characters and roles. Participants should be encouraged to take on roles they are less familiar with and thereby gain some further insight into the complexity, positions, and dilemmas of others. (This activity requires a situation brief and character roles, which are provided).

**practical activities** - provides some ways whereby participants may explore the issues relating to dealing with the past and also begin to consider how to progress work in this area. Activities include; a storytelling activity and a community audit and a community curation activity. (These activities will require time to be provided to participants to undertake preparation and research as part of the activity).

### Further Conversation Methods

The conversation methods provided are practical suggestions. These can be further added to and further developed to suit group needs.

**a transferable focus** - the focus of many of the suggested activities within one approach is transferable and therefore can be transferred to enable consideration of other approaches. For example, one suggested activity within the storytelling section is a conversation on the goal of storytelling. This could be adapted to a conversation around the goals of any truth recovery process, or the goals of dealing with the past. The latter could be a useful group conversation to build in at the end of a series of workshops or conversations.

**case studies** - can also be used in a number of ways to develop the conversation and understanding of participants. These are set out thematically and correspond to the approach used within the Basics section. Examples can be extracted by the facilitator to inform the discussion. Each case study section considers the benefits and limitations of each approach which could be developed into an additional conversation activity. The Case Studies also provide a series of website links. These are suggested websites (and others may exist) opening up the possibility for an interactive website tour on dealing with the past to be developed. This may provide an alternative method for engaging participants in conversation on dealing with the past.

**mind mapping** - a mind map outlining the content of the Conversation Guide is included in the Guide for use, with references by way of example, of how mind mapping can be a useful organising tool. Mind mapping is a visual technique for recording key ideas and associated thoughts. A mind map can be started by writing the *central topic* in the centre of the page and recording the *key organising* thoughts that come to mind on interconnected lines (as branches). From there will flow other *associated thoughts*. If using the mind mapping technique it can be useful to write in capitals and to use only one word where possible. Encourage participants to let the thoughts and writing flow, without pausing to think too much about where thoughts go on the page. Tidying up can be done afterwards. For more information see [www.buzantraining.co.uk](http://www.buzantraining.co.uk). For those interested, consideration could be given to how to create a group mind map which brings together individual mind maps.

## Interacting with the Guide

The Guide is designed to be as interactive as possible. The following symbols have been integrated into the Guide to assist ease of usage:



**framework information** - this is framework information developed by Healing Through Remembering for consideration of the issue of dealing with the past and remembering. This information will assist the facilitator to frame a conversation. As already outlined, it can be used in various ways, for example, conveyed through the facilitator in his or her own words or transferred to formal input formats such as a handout or overhead slide.



**conversation activity** - this is a conversation method and a suggested conversation activity. It includes guidance on the purpose, preparation, materials, length of time required, and a task instruction.



**interactive handout** - this is information presented in a “handout” or “overhead slide” format for use in a group activity to aid discussion.



**a talking point** - this is a point developed by Healing Through Remembering which may in itself be an interesting point for group discussion.



**a principle** - this is a principle or value considered as underpinning the approach being taken and can be a talking point in itself.



**useful reference material** - this provides information as to other useful materials developed by Healing Through Remembering which the facilitator or group may wish to refer to. These are available from Healing Through Remembering.

## Getting discussion going

The Guide can be used in a number of ways to assist groups in having conversations on dealing with the past to take place.

**“dip in and out”** - go straight to the material relating to the theme or approach that the group is interested in and use as required.

**“a starter conversation”** - hold one or two workshops which explore issues such as what is dealing with the past and why, or which provide an overview of the range of approaches which could be considered as useful to dealing with the past. Beginning in this way may highlight further interests around which a workshop programme can be developed.

**“a conversation process”** - the Guide contains eleven workshop sections (or thematic conversation guides) in total. Healing Through Remembering’s practical suggestion to groups interested in dealing with the past and remembering is to set aside two to three hours on a monthly basis for twelve months to consider the Assumptions, Basics, Case Studies, and related Developmental issues. Creating a group conversation process over a longer period of time will allow for ongoing engagement and reflection. An approach which develops a conversation and reflection over time may enable group consensus to emerge. (If choosing this approach it would be advisable to build in an introductory session at the start to help set the scene and to plan the conversation or workshop programme. See Planning Conversations).

## Planning Conversations

The Guide is designed to assist plan and hold conversations on dealing with the past and remembering by providing information and suggested conversation activities and pointers for usage. In order to provide flexibility and allow for the necessary tailoring required to meet a group’s interests and needs as well as a facilitator’s style, structured workshop outlines are not provided.

Facilitators will need to plan and structure each conversation or workshop as well as add in other elements. The following is some relevant guidance.

**good practice** - facilitators should endeavour to follow and demonstrate good practice. Good practice includes using appropriate activities and ensuring participants are fully informed, for example, being aware of the process and being involved in and agreeing the purpose or any learning outcome. Good practice will also involve being attentive to the setting up, opening and closing of sessions. The setting up and opening of a session may involve creating an introductory element. This may be at the start of the first session or it may take the form of an introductory session itself. For groups embarking on this kind of conversation for the first time or on a lengthy conversation or workshop process, good practice would be to include an Introductory Session.

**an introductory session** - an introductory session might include:

- introductions - who is in the room?
- hopes and expectations - what are people hoping to get out of the session? (For example, “decisions”, “plans”, “exploration”, “the chance to hear other people’s points of view”, and “the space to think the issue through” etc)
- concerns/worries
- clarification of the programme for the workshop session or workshop sessions. (This should examine the extent to which expectations might be met and the extent to which concerns/worries can be addressed)
- ground rules - what will make this conversation work? (This can often take care of some of the concerns and worries). Ground-rules might include active listening, one person speaking at a time, respecting differences of opinion, avoiding negative stereotypes, speaking in the “I”, and taking responsibility for what information is shared and how it is shared
- the use of an appropriate icebreaker might conclude the introductory session and lead on to opening the first thematic conversation on dealing with the past. (See opening up and closure of conversations).

**opening up and closure of conversations** - good practice in relation to holding conversations on dealing with the past would include being attentive to the opening up and closure of the conversations to enable as full and open participation as participants choose.

In opening conversations facilitators may need to incorporate an appropriate ice breaker. This could be either:

a personal icebreaker - which helps participants to relax, to get to know a little about each other and to begin to build relationships. For example, share with the group your name, where you are from, and one achievement in this past year.

a conversational icebreaker - which helps participants ease into the workshop and become comfortable with the subject matter or theme and with each other. For example, take ten minutes at the start of the session to explore what people already know about the subject or the theme being addressed.

Good practice in closing a conversation or workshop might include providing all participants with an opportunity for final thoughts, taking five minutes to undertake a plus/delta activity on the workshop i.e. outlining as a group what worked well and aided the conversation (plus), what could be better (delta), or simply considering what would help in future conversations.

### A Facilitative Approach to dealing with the past

Facilitation skills are critical to enabling meaningful conversations on dealing with the past, including: setting the scene and pace, observation of participation, active listening to participants, paraphrasing, and feeding back what is being said.

It is likely that facilitation of conversations on dealing with the past will involve the imparting of information as well as the facilitation of conversations and discussion. The most effective approach is one which draws on participants' existing experience and knowledge. This can be supported through the use of non-confrontational and open-ended questioning.

In developing an approach to facilitating conversations on dealing with the past whilst remaining within your role as a facilitator, it is important to be authentic. Pointers on an authentic facilitative approach might include:

**appreciate lived experiences** - it is important to value and validate individual experience and knowledge. Facilitators ought to be attentive to the sensitive nature of this work i.e. allow time for individuals to speak freely and in their own words. It may be necessary to structure an opportunity to hear aspects of people's lived experiences - formally or informally (See Development Material section).

**allow emotions to exist** - recognise that some of the subject matter relating to dealing with the past can be difficult and can be emotive. Where emotions such as feelings of anger, sadness, and loss exist, allow and enable them to be expressed safely, responding genuinely.

**plan how to handle "hot" topics** - recognise that multiple views exist as to how to deal with the past and therefore any conversation may be "controversial" and may also become impassioned and heated. Therefore it will be useful to consider how to approach "hot" topics. One suggestion for this is to establish ground rules (See an introductory session).

**encourage discussion** - the creation of a culture which respects personal safety and differences of opinion enables the kind of discussion which will be useful to dealing with the past. To help create a culture of safe and open discussion it might be useful at the setting up or clarifying stage to explore with the group the difference between debating and holding a discussion. Debating is often about the presentation of arguments and positions and the goal of debate is about winning an argument, whereas discussion is about exchanging ideas, listening to others' views and engaging with these. The goal of discussion is exploration and engagement, where agreement is not necessary. Open and safe discussions involve an atmosphere of respect where "the issue" and "the person" are not confused with one another i.e. issues do not become personalised. It may be useful to consider the use of the Chatham House Rule<sup>1</sup> designed to assist openness and the exchange of information, and to discuss the meaning and importance of confidentiality within the group.

<sup>1</sup> See [www.chathamhouse.org.uk](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk) The Chatham House Rule reads as follows: "When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participants, may be revealed".



**explore differences of opinion** - the expression of opinion and differences of opinion are informative to group learning and can provide a focus for discussion and exploration. A facilitator can take on a non-confrontational and neutrally provocative role which seeks to delve behind issues. This might involve asking someone to say something more about why they hold to the expressed view. Another useful technique for asking a difficult question is to write the question on a flip chart thereby creating distance from the question and the speaker. The facilitator may also discuss with the group ways to introduce diversity, e.g. watch a section of a film documentary, invite others in or organise a joint workshop with another group.

**use self awareness and be clear about intent and outcomes** - dealing with the past is an everyday reality which means that participants bring with them lived experiences, emotions, perceptions and perspectives and so too does the facilitator. It is important that facilitators develop self awareness and the ability to leave one's own experiences, perceptions, and positions aside in order to facilitate open discussion within the group. Developing self awareness includes being able to set aside one's own reactions. It may be helpful to consider one's intent in undertaking the workshop and to ensure this dovetails with the group's intent. It will be useful to establish with the group the group's desired outcomes for the conversation or workshop.

**establish trust** - good facilitation itself contributes to the building of trust between the facilitator and participant. Because of the complexity and sensitive nature of the subject of dealing with the past the facilitation of conversations may also often depend on the existence of a good relationship and track record with the group. It will be important to be attentive to the relationship and to maintain the necessary boundaries required to fulfil the demands of the facilitation role in an open and trustful manner.



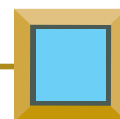


# Assumptions





# Assumptions



## What is Dealing with the Past and Remembering?

### Dealing with the Past

For societies emerging from conflict involving protracted violence there is in general a need to address “what happened”. Dealing with the past could be defined as an active process of engagement with the past which endeavours to make sense of the past, to provide redress to those who suffered the consequences, and to resolve the social, economic, and political causes for the conflict in ways which transform relationships and structures at all levels of society, bringing long term individual and societal change.

Dealing with the past as a concept also can include processes which enable a coming to terms with the roles that were played by different “actors” in the conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Dealing with the past can also in time include remembering the ways in which individuals survived conflict, remembering the ways in which individuals acted to minimise loss and pain, and the ways in which conflict was brought to an end, transforming relationships, structures, processes and systems into a more normal and functioning society.

### Remembering

Remembering, in a society coming out of conflict, is about actively and responsibly engaging in the process of memory.

It requires remembering the lives lost, reflecting upon and asking difficult questions about “what happened”, why, and what are the lessons that can be taken from what has happened. Remembering processes may also actively ask what and who do we forget and why? In this way, “remembering” is about being future-facing whilst being mindful of all that was affected by and contributed to conflict.



“To remember is also to find the freedom to ask more questions, to let the unspeakable, both then and now filter in, to disturb, to open our consciousness”.<sup>3</sup>

## Introducing Issues

### Opportunities, Risks and Tensions

The political contexts for communities, regions, and countries coming out of conflict are often fragile. There are fears and dilemmas, opportunities and risks involved in dealing with the past and remembering. As a result tensions may exist.

<sup>2</sup> Stubbs, P (2003) Dealing with the past in Bosnia - Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro. Regional Synthesis Report.

<sup>3</sup> Telling “free” stories? Memory and democracy in South African autobiography since 1994” Sarah Nuttall (in) Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa. Edited by Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee. Cape Town. Oxford University Press Southern Africa (1998). Quoted by Ali Hlongwane at joint Healing Through Remembering/QUB Living Memorial Museum Conference “Should we put history behind glass?” Queen’s University Belfast. April 2008.

Tensions may emerge between the need to address the hurts of the past and to leave the wrong-doing of the past behind.

Tensions may emerge between the opportunities to address the wrongs of the past and to learn lessons from the past and opportunities to create a new image and to create a “feel good factor” and move on with current priorities.

On one hand, leaving the past untouched could help a society make an artificial break and truly move into a new order. On the other hand, leaving the past untouched may result in it continuing to surface in the future, particularly during times of political tension.

There can be a tension between the politically destabilising effect of remembering and the importance of learning lessons to create a stable future at the institutional and macro political levels.

There can be a tension between the pain of remembering and the relief forgetting can bring, at the personal, individual, community and societal levels.

### Opportunity outweighs the risk?

Healing Through Remembering supports discussion around the what, why, when and how of dealing with the past and remembering in relation to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. It does so endorsing the idea that it is better to attempt to deal with the past, preferably in a structured manner, than to leave it untouched. This does not preclude choosing to leave the past untouched. A decision to leave the past untouched or to do nothing more should be an informed decision. Doing nothing more should only be taken because it is the option which enables society to move forward rather than the option taken as a result of a fear of the discomfort or fear of facing history.



- Healing Through Remembering (2002) Report on the Healing Through Remembering Project. Belfast.
- This Guide's Case Studies section on Forgetting.



## Group Conversation - What is “Dealing with the Past” and “Remembering”?

**Purpose:** to provide an opportunity to discuss the meaning of the concepts of “dealing with the past” and “remembering”.

**Time:** 45 minutes.

### Part 1

**Task:** read the definitions of “dealing with the past” and “remembering” provided by Healing Through Remembering. Turn to the person next to you and discuss your views about the definitions (5mins). Ask participants to return to the larger group and call for volunteers to summarise some of the group’s understandings of the concepts (10 minutes).

### Part 2

**Task:** break into small groups and ask the following reflective questions (15 minutes) then re-assemble and ask for feedback (15 minutes).

- Q:** what do you regard as some of the consequences of conflict for you (for your community? for society?)
- Q:** what are the opportunities that dealing with the past might provide you (your community? society?)
- Q:** what do you consider to be the risks?





# Assumptions



## Why Deal with the Past and Remember? When, Who, Where and How?

### Why Deal with the Past and Remember?

The following are some of the motivational reasons and arguments which are presented for dealing with the past and remembering.

#### Promoting healing for victims (healing)

Dealing with the past and remembering processes can bring healing and provide some form of closure for victims and those most affected by conflict. Many victims have been isolated and ignored in the past and assurance that society has not forgotten them can go some way to restore their dignity. Dealing with the past and remembering processes can ease suffering of victims, address distortions within relationships, systems, and structures and any remaining grievances and causes of conflict. It should be recognised that the needs of survivors vary from individual to individual and group to group. It is unlikely that any one approach, mechanism, or process will adequately address all needs or be attentive to all “unfinished business”. Complete closure may be impossible.

#### Reckoning with the past and taking responsibility (accounting)

The past may never be fully addressed if some sort of reckoning with the past does not take place which requires the taking of responsibility. This may also involve the provision of generosity in granting to others what one asks for oneself. For some, providing accountability and taking responsibility may also include addressing the needs and demands for compensation and justice. If accountability is provided, a level of trust may be established which may contribute to the chances of a repetition of the conflict being decreased.

#### Learning the lessons so that the past is not repeated (“never again”)

It is argued that if the past is not examined and the lessons extracted, awareness of the conditions and factors contributing to conflict and the impact of conflict on individuals, on groups, and on society cannot be passed on to a future generation. Therefore society’s need to deal with the past could be described as “future generations need to know”. History itself demonstrates that history can be repeated if the lessons are not learnt. Learning the lessons is the precursor to instructing future generations. Learning the lessons may be the only way of insulating future generations from a repeat of the pain and loss associated with conflictual societies, hence “never again”.

#### Creating new beginnings (starting afresh)

Acts of owning and taking responsibility which may occur within dealing with the past and remembering processes may go some way towards setting the situation right. They may also develop a capacity for different forms of relationships and different ways of relating, enabling society to be re-constructed or transformed and to create and shape a new beginning. This may require a blame culture to be replaced by a social and political culture which is committed to rectifying the shared hurts of the past. This will involve the broadening out of both responsibility and participation within the process of social reconstruction or transformation.



History, despite its wrenching pain cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.<sup>4</sup>

### When is the time to deal with the past and remember?

For many victims it is impossible to forget, as they live with the memories everyday. For some individuals the past remains painful and raw. For others there is a continuing perceived threat of violence preventing engagement with and dealing with the past. For others “now” is not soon enough. It could be argued that individuals, communities, and governmental structures are dealing with the past in one way or another, albeit in a series of unconnected and *ad hoc* actions and initiatives.

### Who has a contribution to make to dealing with the past and remembering?

Dealing with the past and remembering should be victim-centred. Dealing with the past and remembering is also about the wider societal factors of conflict which contributed to and caused conflict, as well as addressing the consequences and impacts of conflict. Therefore it can be argued that dealing with the past and remembering is about everyone, including those who regard themselves as unaffected or uninvolved and those directly and indirectly affected and involved.

### Where in society does the need and responsibility lie for dealing with the past and remembering?

The need to deal with the past and remember emerges within different spheres and at different levels of society and as a result multiple needs and responsibilities exist, although parallels may be drawn between the needs and responsibilities across different spheres and levels. The existence of multiple needs and responsibilities also means that dealing with the past may require different approaches.



Responsibility for dealing with the past and remembering should be society-wide.

The following is a brief outline of the various spheres and levels to dealing with the past within society.

**personal sphere** - dealing with the past in the personal sphere is about the personal lived experiences of conflict. Dealing with the past at this level may involve personal memory, reflection, storytelling, personal and inter-personal acknowledgements, and may include the individual’s need for closure.

**community sphere** - dealing with the past in the community sphere is about collective experiences of conflict. Dealing with the past at this level may involve collective memory, collective reflections, collective storytelling and acknowledgement, and may include the group or community’s need for closure. Dealing with the past at this level often brings individual and collective experiences into the public arena.

**organisational sphere** - dealing with the past at an organisational level is about the

<sup>4</sup> A quote from 'On The Pulse Of Morning' : An Inaugural Poem by Maya Angelou

role of organisations within a conflictual society. Dealing with the past at this level may address the actions or inactions of organisations within a conflictual society and may involve the need for internal organisational reflection and analysis which could culminate in public statements of acknowledgement, organisational change, or a change in direction of policy and practice.

**“state” and state institutions (national)** - dealing with the past at state level will be about the role of the state and state institutions and the actions and inactions of state or national bodies in conflict. Dealing with the past may involve internal analysis, which may culminate in public acknowledgements, redress, change in direction, policy and practice. Dealing with the past at this level involves the “public purse”, be that at local or national level. It can be argued that the role and responsibility of the state differs by virtue of a state’s responsibilities as protector and guardian of all its citizens.

**international sphere** - dealing with the past at the international level is about addressing the international dimensions of conflict or international relations.

**societal sphere** - dealing with the past at a societal level is about considering all the needs in their entirety. Dealing with the past at a societal level is about recognising the wider societal consequences of conflict, the impact of conflict on all citizens, and it is about addressing consequences across all levels of society. Dealing with the past at this level will address the specific experiences and future needs of individuals and groups as well as the common and wider consequences and impacts across groups and experiences.

### How should one engage with dealing with the past and remembering?

The question of “how should one engage” may raise many questions about the technical, legal, social, and political dimensions and approaches to dealing with the past. The section entitled Basics addresses a number of approaches for dealing with the past. This section briefly considers “the spirit” of any approach to dealing with the past and remembering.

### The spirit of any approach to dealing with the past and remembering

Dealing with the past and remembering processes need to be informed by guiding principles or commitments if they are to lead to social reconstruction or transformation. The guiding principles and commitments may include:

- commitment to a better future - to easing the pain of the past rather than renewing and inciting future conflict. This may include a commitment to restoring fractured relationships and to resolving outstanding injustice and inequalities
- commitment to participation and inclusiveness - to enabling the involvement of the widest cross-section of society. The approach should empower and create a shared sense of purpose whilst being realistic about the difficulties an inclusive process will involve

- recognition of the strength of diversity and a commitment to tolerate that which you disagree with. In this way commitments are made which regard “difference” as a matter for discussion and debate for political forums and negotiation rather than for conflict
- commitment to “do no harm” - to restore a common humanity to a central place including a commitment to restore humanity to a previously dehumanised enemy.



- Healing Through Remembering (2002). The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project. Belfast.



## Group Conversation - Why remember the past?

**Purpose:** to provide an opportunity for participants to consider and discuss with one another the reasons why society should deal with and remember the past.

**Prepare:** before the workshop prepare four cards for each participant with the words “healing” “accountability” “never again” and “starting afresh” written on each card. Give each participant one each of the four cards. In setting up the activity place two cards on a wall labelled “Agree” and “Disagree” about 6 metres apart.

**Explain:** that the person does not have to say they absolutely agree or disagree but rather say where their opinion is closest to on the continuum.

**Time:** 30 minutes to 45 minutes (depending on the size of the group).

### Part 1

#### The Agree/Disagree Continuum on Why Deal with the Past?

**Task:** summarise the four reasons why we should remember and present them to the group. Then ask participants one at a time to come up and place their cards on the agree/disagree continuum. Once this has been done invite the group to reflect on the clusters of the cards and for individuals to explain their reasons for placing their cards where they did.

### Part 2

#### Reflection on the past, present, and future

**Purpose:** the activity above may lead to an excitable discussion where participants may express strong viewpoints and positions. The purpose of the next session is to slow the pace down and get people to reflect on where they stand personally in relation to the issues discussed.

**Prepare:** build the necessary reflection time into this exercise.

**Time:** 45mins to 1hr.



“If you want to know your past, look into your present conditions.

If you want to know your future, look into your present actions”.

Buddhist saying

**Task:** using the above quote ask people to take ten minutes to reflect on the presence today of past conflict within their own lives, within the community, and within society. (Invite participants to undertake this exercise on their own and to go for a short walk if possible). Once the group has reassembled ask a further two reflective questions.

**Q:** as I move through the present and into the future, what do I need to leave in the past?

**Q:** what must I bring with me from the past and into the future?



## Group Conversation - Who do you consider as having a contribution to make to dealing with the past and what might this contribution be?

**Purpose:** to provide an opportunity for participants to discuss who has a contribution to make in enabling society to deal with the past.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Task:** using the list below as a guide give one or two examples to start the group discussion. Ask the group to consider the question as to who has a contribution to make, and to discuss the reasons and what the contribution might be. It might be useful to create a list and to explore a number of those suggested below if not suggested by participants, for example, “statutory agencies?” “me?” and “who else?”.

- *Those elected and appointed to leadership positions?*
- *G.P's, nurses, ambulance drivers?*
- *Organisations and individuals who were actively involved in conflict?*
- *Those who feel the conflict had 'nothing to do with them' or consider themselves to be untouched by the conflict?*
- *Those bereaved and affected by conflict?*
- *Everyone (as everyone has been affected indirectly in some way or another)?*
- *Young people (who have no, or little, lived experience of conflict)?*
- *Older people (who may have memories of community life before recent conflict)?*
- *Ethnic minority groups?*
- *Churches?*
- *Media?*
- *Statutory agencies e.g. a health board or trust, or a housing organisation*
- *Solicitors, lawyers and judges?*
- *The business community?*
- *Trade unions?*
- *Civil servants?*
- *Teachers?*
- *Me?*
- *Who else?*



## Consensus Building Activity

### - The important dimensions to any approach

**Purpose:** to provide an opportunity for group discussion establishing where group consensus exists in relation to the spirit of any approach to dealing with the past. Prepare: piece of paper (A3) and markers, or post-its and pens. The number of pieces of paper required will depend on a) the group size and b) how many agreed ideas are requested. For instance, a group of 16 people will require 16 pages for individual reflections; if split into four small groups and requested to present four agreed ideas a further 16 pages will be required. Additional pieces of paper will be required for the naming of any clusters. A sticky wall or flipchart will be required in order to gather, cluster and name the groups suggestions.

**Time:** 1hr to 1hr 30minutes.

### Part 1

**How would you approach remembering the past?**

**Task:** take a piece of paper and pen and on your own consider and make a note of the two or three elements you regard as most important to any approach to remembering the past.

### Part 2

**Developing Agreement**

**Task:** in groups of three or four discuss how you would approach dealing with the past. Agree four shared ideas which you regard as important elements to any approach. Write down four agreed ideas, each idea on a sheet of paper (or post-it notes), using one to three words and only one idea per sheet.

### Part 3

**Building Group Consensus**

**Task:** ask each group to share their ideas by placing them on the sticky wall or flip chart stand.

*Ask first for*

**the most important element to dealing with the past**

*The facilitator will read out the post-it notes and ask if anyone requires clarification from the group which wrote the post-it. Then the facilitator will ask the group to "group" similar ideas removing from the board any duplications.*

*Repeat the above by asking for*

**the element important to dealing with the past that is most different from that already suggested**

*The facilitator will read out the post-it notes, and ask if anyone requires clarification from the group which wrote the post-it. Then the facilitator will ask the group to "group" similar ideas removing from the board any duplications.*

*Repeat the above by asking for*

**any remaining ideas for an approach to dealing with the past, that are not already on the board.**

*The facilitator will read out the post-it notes, and ask if anyone requires clarification from the group which wrote the post-it. Then the facilitator will ask the group to “group” similar ideas, removing from the board any duplications.*

There should now be a number of clusters of ideas as to “the important dimensions to approaching dealing with the past”.

**Complete the exercise by**

- a) asking the group to name each cluster if possible, and
- b) asking the group to reflect on the consensus reached by the group - is there anything they have left out which should be added in?





# Basics

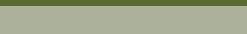
Basics







# Overview to Approaches





## Basics



### Overview to Approaches to dealing with the past and remembering

#### Introduction

There are many different ways to deal with the past and many different forms of remembering. These can include a range of activities and processes from self examination, public memorials, legal processes, private artefact collections, public centres of remembrance, research and policy development, truth recovery processes, and financial responses.

The following seven sections of the Guide provide information relevant to the five approaches Healing Through Remembering has been focusing on to deal with the past and remembering. These approaches were agreed upon as a result of a public consultation and conversation which asked the question below:

How should people remember the events connected with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and in so doing, individually and collectively, contribute to the healing of the wounds of society?

This overview section provides a working definition of each and commentary on the degree of inter-connectedness between the various approaches.



#### Working definitions

The following definitions are provided by Healing Through Remembering for the purpose of debate, discussion, and dialogue.

#### Commemoration

Commemoration can be defined as: “the act of honoring the memory of a person (or event) with a ceremony” or as an act which “commits to memory” a person (or event).

#### Day of Reflection

A Day of Reflection can be defined as: an activity emphasising the need to reflect on why? and as a way of affirming a commitment to a different future.

#### Storytelling and a storytelling process

Storytelling can be defined as: a way in which individuals, groups, communities and societies give voice to the story and experience of conflict. A storytelling process can be defined as: enabling the expression of, listening to and the collecting of, personal, communal, and institutional stories relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

#### Acknowledgement and an acknowledgement process

Acknowledgement can be defined as: recognising the “harm done” as a result of conflict. An acknowledgement process can be defined as: one which enables individuals and organisations to take responsibility for harm done and this may then accumulate in the form of public acknowledgements.

### Truth Recovery and a Truth Recovery process

Truth recovery can be defined as the uncovering and revealing of “what happened” as part of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. A truth recovery process could be defined as: that which systematically and methodically attempts to uncover, research, record, and validate as much as is possible of “what happened”.

### Living Memorial Museum

A living memorial museum can be defined as: a dynamic memorial to all those affected by the conflict which keeps the memories of the past alive and provides a diverse chronicle of the history of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

### The inter-connecting nature of Approaches

Each approach is distinct in and of itself, however, it is not entirely unrelated to another and as a result there is potential for overlap which may make one approach work easily alongside another or one approach may link into or feed into another approach.

Storytelling and recording a person’s story (in whatever form this takes i.e. using visual images or spoken or written word), is a form of commemoration as it honours that person and creates a memory.

People’s lived experiences and stories are invaluable resources and can be used as tools for remembering and reflecting on the past as well as instructing the future.

A living memorial museum might include a commemorative space which allows people to consider the events of the past and to express emotions of understanding or to simply remember and reflect.

A living memorial museum could present and curate stories, narratives, and histories of conflict which require acknowledgement.

Individuals reflecting on their acts of omission and commission may raise the issues of acknowledgement and truth recovery.

Truth recovery by revealing the truth may lead to public acknowledgments.

Acknowledgments by organisations may lead to demands for more substantial truth.



## Group Conversation - The opportunities offered by various approaches to dealing with the past

**Purpose:** to consider the opportunities and any limitations presented by each option.

**Prepare:** copies of the Working Definitions may be required.

**Time:** 20-40 minutes.

**Task:** encourage discussion by asking the following reflective questions.

- Q:** which approach do you regard as offering you something OR as being most useful for you, and why?
- Q:** how and what might you contribute?
- Q:** what and how might others contribute?
- Q:** what might you and others require to take forward your preferred approach?







# Commemoration





# Basics



## Commemoration

### What is commemoration?

Commemoration can be defined as “the act of honoring the memory of a person (or event) with a ceremony” or “to be a memorial to someone or something”.  
(Chambers English Compact Dictionary).

Commemoration is a way of marking out the special from the ordinary, or the extraordinary from the everyday. Commemoration activities are ways of giving meaning to events, occurrences, and the lives of individuals and groups.

Acts of commemoration are about retaining in the memory, or committing to the memory, events and people. An act and process of commemoration is itself a form of “memorialisation”.

Commemorations may also perform a broader beneficial role within society by reminding civic society of its past, and in so doing, be instructive for the future.

### Functions of Commemoration in and about Northern Ireland

People involved in commemoration events and practices do so for a number of reasons and the acts of commemoration may perform a variety of functions, some of which will:

- inspire awe and pride in an individual or action
- provide a shared focal point for a community which has experienced or undergone hardship and thereby counter the corrosive effects of conflict
- excite the senses and encourage reminiscing with friends
- enable the making of statements and expression of beliefs, convictions, and ideology
- offer an opportunity to moderate or reduce grievance
- confront the past by advocating a healing of the wounds and/or humbly offer healing, redress, and reparation
- provide a space or platform for the articulation of feelings and emotions, or of testimony.

### Commemorative forms in and about Northern Ireland

There exist many commemorative practices relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and these take many forms, including:

- fixed or semi fixed physical memorials
- memorial services and timed remembrances
- marches and parades
- murals
- music and song
- the arts - artwork, storytelling, drama
- endowments/commemorative organisations
- memorial books
- web-based archives
- physical spaces for the collection of commemorative materials
- memorial awards, medals, and foundations.

### The nature of commemorative events and practices

Commemoration events and practices relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland<sup>5</sup>:

- have increased in number since the 1998 Agreement (the Good Friday Agreement also known as the Belfast Agreement)
- have largely been communally specific and intra-community in nature, reflecting the divisions within society
- by far the largest category of people commemorated are ex-combatants - either as part of individual commemorative acts or as part of larger, communal forms of commemoration. In contrast only 30% of civilians who were killed during the conflict in and about Northern Ireland are commemorated
- do change in nature and form over time. This reflects that what is being remembered and commemorated is also informed by present day needs.

## Introducing an Issue

### The extent to which commemorations mirror and mould society?

Commemoration events and practices, as forms of expression, have portrayed the realities of lived community experiences of conflict, and the opportunity to remember through commemorative expressions has provided important spaces to those with a personal, cultural, or social connection to such memories. Many commemorative activities and events in and about Northern Ireland represent particular civilian, military, and paramilitary casualties of one group or another which played a part in conflict and were therefore communal in nature, **mirroring** the divisions and conflict within society at large.<sup>6</sup>

This raises a question: do commemorations reflect only the status quo or do commemorations structure an ongoing status quo and therefore **mould** patterns of relationship within society?



- AT THE END OF THE DAY...Commemoration - Forward thinking into the Past. A Report of the Healing Through Remembering Round Table Event on Commemoration (2008).
- This Guide's Case Study Material section on Commemoration.

<sup>5</sup> AT THE END OF THE DAY...Commemoration - Forward thinking into the Past  
A Report of the Healing Through Remembering Round Table Event on Commemoration (2008)

<sup>6</sup> AT THE END OF THE DAY...Commemoration - Forward thinking into the Past  
A Report of the Healing Through Remembering Round Table Event on Commemoration (2008)



## Group Conversation - Commemorative Activities, Now and in the Future

**Purpose:** to identify what commemorative practices are taking place within community and wider society and what is not being commemorated and why. And to provide an opportunity to consider how commemorative practices have changed or may change over time.

### Part 1

#### What or who is being commemorated today?

**Task:** using the question above ask that participants take a couple of minutes on their own to consider the commemorative events and practices that they know about. Ask each participant to make a list of these, making a note of what is being commemorated, and by whom, through each event. Ask the group to share some of these with one another within the group, making a note of these on a flip chart.

**Time:** 20 minutes.

#### Explore:

- the kind of activities that are taking place and who is involved
- the function of these commemorative activities
- the importance of these activities to you (your community, to society)
- other forms of commemoration taking place
- other lived experiences and realities of conflict that are not visibly remembered or commemorated.

### Part 2

#### The changing nature of commemorative activities

##### (A) A Community Audit

**Prepare:** an option may be preferred whereby time is provided enabling participants to undertake the research questions asked below.

**Time:** one week to prepare. 45mins to 1 hr for discussion.

**Task:** ask the group to select a commemorative event/activity/product from the list so as to undertake research around it using the following questions:

- Q:** how was this person or event commemorated ten years ago in comparison to today?
- Q:** who was involved ten years ago; and today?
- Q:** what is different, and in what ways?
- Q:** why do you think this is so?

OR

## B) A Mural Audit

A mural audit is only one way of undertaking an audit of the changing pattern of commemorations.

**Prepare:** if time is not available Option B may be the preferred option, assuming participants are familiar with mural walls. If not, the facilitator may be required to undertake research on mural walls.

**Task:** identify a gable wall which has for some time been a mural site

### Explore:

- what has been portrayed or commemorated within the mural?
- how has what is portrayed or commemorated changed over the past five or ten years?
- what is different, then and now?
- why might this be the case?

## Part 3

### Commemorations in the future

**Task:** use the following two questions to explore what participants think about how commemorative practices may change and what their role may be in the future.

**Time:** 20 to 30 minutes.

- Q:** what is the role of commemoration in a society coming out of conflict?
- Q:** what are the needs facing communities and societies coming out of conflict and how might these impinge upon what is commemorated and how commemoration takes place?



# Day of Reflection







# Basics



## Day of Reflection

### What is a day of reflection?

A day of reflection is an approach which emphasises a need and provides an opportunity to reflect upon the conflict in and about Northern Ireland as a way of affirming a commitment to a positive and a different future.

### Why reflection?

It is recognised that those who have lost loved ones do not need to be reminded to remember and that there are already well-established events and occasions which are focused specifically on remembrance. However, the word “reflection” implies reference to a societal need to reflect upon the bigger questions, such as the “how’s” and “why’s” of what happened.<sup>7</sup>

### A day of reflection offers an opportunity to:

- acknowledge the deep hurt and loss caused by the conflict and to remember those who on a daily basis live with the consequences
- reflect on our own attitudes and how they might impact on others and society
- reflect on what more each of us might have done or might still do to uphold and enhance all other people’s right to life and to quality of life
- make a personal commitment to endeavour to ensure that such loss and pain should not be allowed to happen again.

## Introducing Issues

### Private and personal OR public reflection?

A private and personal day of reflection emphasises the act of reflection as a personal and voluntary action. A day of private and personal reflection should not exclude anyone nor should it demand or coerce participation. A personal and private reflection could be described as a civic response underpinned by personal commitment and endeavour.

In comparison, a public day of reflection would lend itself to be more of a political or symbolic gesture. The creation and the existence of a public day would make a public statement in itself. A public day of reflection would involve or invite public reflections, public statements, public representation and public group action.

A private and personal day could however lead to a public day and a public day could include elements which would enable private and personal reflection.

<sup>7</sup> Healing Through Remembering (2006) A Day of Private Reflection: Discussion Paper and Proposal. Belfast.

### A specified day for reflection?

A specified day is not required for personal and private reflections as the nature of reflection is that it can occur at any time. Reflection is not necessarily something that takes place on a specific day but rather takes place in its own time and often over a period of time. Reflection can be part of something one does whilst carrying out an everyday routine activity, or be provoked in response to something said or done.

There are benefits (as well as limitations) to a society in having a specified day for reflection.

A specified day for reflection may enable:

- greater recognition of the “commonality” of loss and grief regardless of religious or political aspiration
- greater inclusiveness i.e. respecting differing views, political aspirations, and perspective on the conflict
- support and resources to be made available, enabling individuals to participate



### Choosing a date

Healing Through Remembering in considering a day of private reflection turned its attention to choosing a date. In so doing the first response was to identify a date on which no one had died as a result of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. However research, based on the book “Lost Lives”, the CAIN website, and other sources revealed that there is no day in the calendar year that is not the anniversary of the death of at least one person who died as a direct result of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. This in itself is a stark expression of the extent of the decades of violence in and about Northern Ireland.

### Why 21 June?

Research concluded that 21 June, the longest day (in the Northern Hemisphere), might be an option and the 21 June was proposed as the date for an initial day of reflection in order to ascertain the interest, need, and impact of a day of reflection.

This date was proposed for a number of reasons:

21 June as the longest day of the year was regarded as a symbolically important day. The hours of light and dark could be seen as a symbol of hope and pain. It is a day that is forward looking and backward looking at the same time. It is a day which represents a pause in the cycle of nature and therefore a moment to reflect. The day’s significance is related to a naturally occurring event of nature making no distinction between race, religious belief, and political perspectives.<sup>8</sup>



- Healing through Remembering(2006) International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection. Belfast.
- Healing Through Remembering (2006) Day of Reflection: A Scoping Study. Belfast.
- This Guide’s Case Study Material section on Day of Reflection.

<sup>8</sup> Healing Through Remembering A Day of Private Reflection Promotional Leaflet 2008



## Group Conversation - A day of private and personal reflection?

**Purpose:** To consider the purpose of a day of private reflection and the contribution it could make to dealing with the past.

**Time:** 20 minutes.

**Task:** Ask all or some of the following reflective questions to initiate discussion on a day of reflection:

**Q:** what do you perceive a day of private and personal reflection involving?

**Q:** what is your response to the idea?

**Explore:**

- the support required in order to engage with private and personal reflection





# Storytelling





## Basics



### Storytelling

#### What is storytelling?

Storytelling is a way in which individuals, groups, communities, and societies *give voice to the story and experience of conflict*.

A storytelling process may be described as:

*that which allows the space needed for reflection, expression, listening, and possible collection of personal, communal and institutional stories related to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.*<sup>9</sup>

Storytelling can also be referred to as “narrative work”, which is often relation based and encounter based.

Storytelling which deals with the past may involve both “telling” and “recording” of experiences and incidents relating to conflict. Storytelling is also a form of “extraordinary communication”.

“Monumental lessons can be learned from ordinary people engaged in extraordinary communication.”<sup>10</sup>

Storytelling can enable powerful transitions to take place. These transformations have been possible between highly motivated individuals who have been involved in a deeply personal process of engagement that includes honest, painful reflections and deep-reaching dialogue. Whilst dialogue, reconciliation, transformation, or forgiveness are not necessarily the stated, explicit, or agreed goals, such storytelling and encounter work has led to communicating that which is often not comfortably revealed by people affected by the conflict. This genuine engagement in turn has led to the development of an appreciation of dialogue and engagement on other levels within society.

#### Forms of Storytelling in relation to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland

There are many forms of storytelling projects and processes which deal with the experiences and incidents of conflict in and about Northern Ireland. These can be categorized in the following way: verbal and oral storytelling (relational-based), written forms (a common form for collecting stories), and visual, creative arts and multimedia (including murals, television, film, drama, performing arts, exhibitions, new technologies such as website and interactive DVDs).<sup>11</sup>

Some stories about the conflict in and about Northern Ireland may focus on pain and other stories may focus on pride, humour and survival etc.

<sup>9</sup> Refers to the possible collection of stories as the collection of stories can be beneficial to dealing with the past, depending on how they are collected, presented and used.

<sup>10</sup> Samson Munn, Healing Through Remembering, Storytelling as a Vehicle? Conference Report 2005. (Pg 32)

<sup>11</sup> Healing Through Remembering Storytelling Audit 2005

Some stories will be personal, others may be shared community stories, or organisational and institutional.

### How Storytelling contributes to Dealing with the Past

Giving voice to stories by individuals, groups, communities, organisations, and institutions can take place in many settings and within different types of processes and contribute in a number of different ways to dealing with the past.

Storytelling can be undertaken in ways which:

- **afford empowerment** to the person telling their story through giving voice to their story
- provide an account of the suffering, pain and loss associated with the events of the past and in so doing **provide testament to survival**
- **provide acknowledgement** through active listening and empathy shared with the person telling their story
- **develop the understanding** of an audience or the listener. Whilst acknowledgement is something that can be given to the storyteller, understanding is gained by the listener
- can be a **therapeutic tool** for victims and survivors of conflict; thus enabling a cathartic telling and recording of individual experiences of the conflict
- form a core element of **dialogue and encounter** work. This requires **honest engagement, listening, and open communication**. This type of engagement can aid new understandings and potentially have the power to **transform fractured relationships**
- create a public record of lived experiences of the conflict, whereby stories are brought together through a public or collective process. The telling of stories within a public and/or a **collective process** can provide a **fuller account** of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. In providing a fuller account, a public or collective storytelling process may contribute to developing, deepening and **broadening understandings** about the past, and address the **“future generations need to know”** element
- can provide public accountability and explanation when undertaken by organisations and institutions. This may contribute to understanding and healing, and also provide acknowledgement
- be a **form of truth telling** and therefore can be a part of other mechanisms and approaches to dealing with the past and remembering.



## Introducing Issues



### Good practice within a storytelling process

Storytelling projects at all levels need to be underpinned by guiding principles and values. Good practice within storytelling processes at a personal and community level may place the needs of the storyteller as central. It is important that individuals retain the choice to tell their own story and are given control in the telling of the story as well as the process and context within which the story is told, or the context within which the story is located. Good practice at this level is underpinned by values which empower and engender respect and trust, uphold equality, uphold personal safety, and represent a commitment “to not intentionally do harm”.

### Taking responsibility and the need to hear the other’s story

The need for storytelling raises a question about the listener’s motivation and the need of the audience, the listener, and wider societal needs. What is the motivation of the listener to the story? What is required to actively listen? What motivates the listener or society in listening to and hearing the story? Is there a need to take or share the responsibility for what happened and in so doing hear the story? In societies coming out of conflict is there a responsibility to elicit stories and to have stories preserved?

## Introducing an Idea

### A collective storytelling process/mechanism

A collective approach and activity could create new opportunities and may address some of the societal needs in relation to dealing with the past. However, stories will have to be told first, possibly recorded and heard within a proper process, if the telling of stories is to contribute to any longer term societal goal.

Storytelling in relation to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland is taking place within a number of settings and contexts.<sup>12</sup>

The potential may exist to link or network various storytelling projects OR to create a common or collective archive of stories relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland (or to develop another mechanism which would enable a collective approach to be developed).

### The opportunity

The opportunity afforded through a collective project or process could include:

- providing “first hand” accounts rather than mediated accounts
- increasing understandings of what happened, where, and to whom
- making public the cost of conflict
- assisting with the making sense of history
- the provision of more full accounts of the past.

All of which may lead to greater understanding, enable personal healing, and prevent replication in the future, as well as facilitate the opportunity to co-construct a different future.

<sup>12</sup> Healing Through Remembering Storytelling Audit 2005

Collective action could address the following societal needs by:

- giving equal opportunity and affording a voice to all so that all stories may be told, and
- creating a new culture of liberty, equality, and inclusiveness which acknowledges multiple views, experiences, and perceptions.

### A central/collective archive?

A central and collective archive is one example of a collective activity and process. The creation of such an archive would encourage the recording and archiving of stories from a wide range of spheres and sectors in society through a variety of mediums, for example, spoken word, audio, video/dvd, text, and art.

Records and archives would be available to all and could be available (under proper practice and guidelines) to be integrated into educational programme modules thereby assisting instruction on a recent period of history.

Such a record could be an informative tool and enable younger generations to learn about the past and, by being made available worldwide via the internet, inform people in other conflicts of the experiences of the local context. Such an archive could also lend itself to encounter and dialogue work.



- Healing Through Remembering Storytelling Audit: An audit of personal story, narrative and testimony initiatives related to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. Belfast (2005)
- Healing through Remembering Conference Report. Storytelling as the vehicle? Belfast (2006)
- This Guide's Case Study Material section on Storytelling.



## Group Conversation - the role and value of storytelling in dealing with the past

**Purpose:** to explore a variety of issues relating to storytelling including which narratives participants are aware of and how storytelling and narratives inform society.

**Time:** 30 minutes.

"Stories are the secret reservoirs of values: change the stories individuals and nations live by and tell themselves and you change the individuals and nations. Nations and peoples are largely the stories they tell themselves."<sup>13</sup>

**Task:** read out the above quote and ask the following reflective questions to enable exploration and discussion.

- Q: how have stories informed your understanding of the history of the conflict?
- Q: how do stories and narratives inform the making of history?
- Q: what stories do you think have been told publicly? Have not been told publicly?
- Q: how has this impacted on our society?



## Group Conversation - The Personal, Community, and Societal Goals involved in Storytelling

**Purpose:** to provide an opportunity to explore the reasons and goals individuals, communities, and society might engage in storytelling and related good practice issues and outcomes.

### Part 1

#### Personal goals for storytelling

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Task:** read out the following quote and ask participants to consider what might be some of the personal and individual goals for storytelling. Ask participants to volunteer their thoughts to the whole group.

"Survivors bring completely different expectations to the process (of storytelling). Some of them want to be listened to by someone who cares and who takes note of their suffering. Some of them want to tell their story to their community. Some of them want to tell their story because by telling it they can emphasise the need for justice, the need for further investigation. It's a form of presenting the demands and needs."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Quote by Ben Okri. Source unknown.

<sup>14</sup> [A participant in US Institute of Peace conference, cited in Barsalou, 2005, p.10). Cited Healing Through Remembering 2006 Conference Report. Storytelling as the Vehicle? Belfast

## Part 2 Community Needs and Goals for Storytelling

**Time:** 15 minutes.

**Explore:** what other goals for storytelling might exist, by asking the following reflective questions:

- Q:** what might be the goals, needs, or motivations at a community level for storytelling?
- Q:** in what way, if any, are community goals different or similar? What parallels exist between them?

## Part 3 Societal Needs and Goals

**Time:** 15 minutes.

**Task:** use the following reflection to get the conversation going.

“Simplistic demands that reconciliation is what is needed are indeed sometimes followed .... by exhortations that in order to reconcile, one must heal, and to do that, one must forget, and then in order to forget, one must forgive (or vice versa). These links may be not only impossible for an individual or a group, they may be damaging.....The goal needs to be the development of a means to be able to live with and alongside each other, to be able to work together, to engage in business ventures together, to study together, to debate one’s own group as well as another and so on.”<sup>15</sup>

## Part 4 Good Practice Issues.

**Time:** 15 minutes.

**Task:** use the following reflective questions to enable discussion about good practice.

- Q:** what might be some of the risks or concerns in relation to storytelling?
- Q:** how could good practice be undertaken to address these concerns?

<sup>15</sup> Samson Munn extracted, from Healing Through Remembering (2006) Conference report. Storytelling as a vehicle Conference Report. P 32.



## A Focused Conversation - on a collective archive storytelling project relating to conflict in and about Northern Ireland



**Opening:** The purpose of this discussion is to consider the idea of a collective archive storytelling project in relation to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. (Explain: that a set of ORID i.e. objective, reflective, interpretative and decisional questions will be used to create discussion).

### Objective

what do you understand a collective storytelling action or process to involve?

### Reflective

what is your first response to the suggestion?

### Interpretative

what do you regard as being the opportunity or benefit to having an inclusive and fuller account available?

would accessing this or contributing to such a project present challenges to some? If so, what are these and are any beneficial?

are there risks for anyone? How might these be reduced?

are there any other obstacles? If so how might these be overcome?

is there any aspect of the idea of a collective archive project that you would change or add to?

### Decisional

what do you wish to do with the information you or your group have provided around this idea?

### Closing

in closing you may wish to discuss and agree if and when the group wishes to come back to the discussion or to review progress on any actions identified.





# Truth Recovery and Acknowledgment



truth, recovery & acknowledgment





# Basics



## Acknowledgement

### What is acknowledgement?

Acknowledgement is the recognition of harm done as a result of or linked with a violent conflict. Acknowledgement is about taking responsibility in acknowledging the role and impact of one's actions or inactions.

An acknowledgement process is one which enables society to mark the transition from a violent political conflict to a peaceful society, by recognising the impact and costs of conflict. An acknowledgement process may then accumulate to take the form of public acknowledgements.

An acknowledgement process may also result in acknowledgement of those actions that were good i.e. contributed to a minimising or lessening of the impact of the conflict, and the positive acts which contributed to the bringing of an end to the conflict.

### Engaging Organisations

Acknowledgement can take place in different spheres and levels in society including within the personal and organisational spheres or levels. However, an acknowledgement process which engages organisations is one way to mark a transition to a peaceful society and to bring acknowledgements into the public domain.

Providing the opportunity for organisations to engage enables them to develop an internal critical analysis around the role of the organisation and for this critical analysis to be told.

Therefore, the development of organisational acknowledgement may contribute to dealing with the past by:

- providing an opportunity for honest reflection over their role, actions, or inactions
- providing an honest account of the decisions made and actions that followed
- enabling a record to be created in relation to an organisation's role and the lessons for the future.

“If we see acknowledgement as one of those processes that mark the transition from a violent political conflict to a peaceful society then now is the time to make plans for living in and contributing to that society”.<sup>16</sup>

“Organisations might ask themselves what the pressures and distortions were during the conflict, and what good and bad choices were made. They might then reflect on what opportunities peace (or relative absence of violence) has brought and how they might contribute to strengthening it”.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Quote from “Acknowledgement and its Role in Preventing Future Violence”. Belfast, Healing Through Remembering 2006, Pg 5.

<sup>17</sup> Quote from “Acknowledgement and its Role in Preventing Future Violence”. Belfast, Healing Through Remembering 2006, Pg 5.



“The next generation can be romantic and naïve about the past. A realistic narrative can expose those now in a safe environment to the horror and pain and tragedy. It was realisation of mutual pain that brought people to the peace process so it would be useful for an acknowledgement process to deal with the past in the right context”<sup>18</sup>

## Introducing Issues

### **The ability of organisations to be self critical and self challenging.**

The quote below demonstrates the difficulty of becoming self critical:

“The posture of the last 30 years has been defending and justifying so it is asking a lot in this context for any self criticism?”<sup>19</sup>

Within an organisational acknowledgement process, where organisations will own responsibility for its own process and statements, a readiness to engage in a way which is genuine and which establishes credibility will be required.

### **Political generosity - an essential ingredient**

If an acknowledgement process is to be established it will be dependent upon overcoming fears that acknowledgements could be regarded as admissions of weakness and exploited by political opponents.

Political generosity will require the need to apportion blame to be replaced by the need to take responsibility.

Political generosity will be required in order for the necessary critical mass of participating organisations to be established.

### **Acknowledgement of “Harm Done”**

It is an understandable desire of victims to have what happened to them recognised and named as being wrong. And it is likely that organisations will be reluctant to refer to individual cases of death or injury. However, organisations might be encouraged to make reference to victims and any people their actions have or may have harmed.

<sup>18</sup> Quote used in “Acknowledgement and its Role in Preventing Future Violence”. Belfast, Healing Through Remembering 2006, Pg 7.

<sup>19</sup> Quote used in “Acknowledgement and its Role in Preventing Future Violence”. Belfast, Healing Through Remembering 2006, Pg 7.



## Group Conversation - The merits of an acknowledgement process?

**Purpose:** to consider who and what might be involved in an acknowledgement process and how such an approach might contribute to dealing with the past.

**Time:** 45 minutes.

**Prepare:** there are two discussions proposed. Read both and decide upon one with the group. Copies of the interactive handout will be required, and possibly post-it notes and flip chart paper, paper and pens.

**Task:** read through the interactive handout which outlines some ideas developed by Healing Through Remembering around an acknowledgement process. These are not all agreed and are therefore only the basis for discussion on acknowledgement.

### A) Outcomes of an acknowledgement process.

The ideas listed have been developed for discussion.

Use the following reflective questions to discuss and identify:

**Q:** what you agree and disagree with

**Q:** how would you amend or add to the section on Outcomes?

### B) The “who, what and how” of an acknowledgement process.

This exercise is in several parts as outlined below.

#### Part 1

**Task:** ask participants to write down one idea per post-it note in answer to the following question, then ask participants to post these on a front flip chart stand.

**Q:** which organisations could contribute to an organisational acknowledgment process by making a public statement in regard to their role in the past?

#### Part 2

**Task:** invite the group to come up and read the post-it notes. Having viewed the group’s suggestions as to the organisations to be involved, invite the group to divide themselves up into smaller groups and to choose one or two organisations they wish to consider further. Use the following reflective questions to enable discussion:

**Q:** what might the role of acknowledgement be for this group?

**Q:** what might be some of the incentives for organisations to participate?

**Q:** what might be some of the barriers and challenges?

**Q:** how should acknowledgement take place?





# Acknowledgement





## Acknowledgement: A discussion document



It is difficult to fully define acknowledgement and what it might look like. One suggestion that Healing Through Remembering has developed for discussion is that there should be a wide process of acknowledgement for what happened in the past. This is built on the idea that all institutions have some, albeit different, levels of responsibility for what happened.

### An overview

Organisational acknowledgement would entail organisations and institutions within civil and political society engaging in a process of internal reflection and acknowledgement which may result in a public statement. This would include: churches, political parties, the media, the business community, trade union, voluntary and community sectors, health services, judiciary, police, educational bodies, and republican and loyalist organisations as well as the UK and Republic of Ireland governments, engaging in a process of acknowledgement.

### The aim

The overall aim of such a process should be to help prevent the re-emergence of violent political conflict. The process should seek to:

- produce a diverse but realistic and practical series of commitments to building a new, peaceful society
- increase self-confidence for participating organisations in moving forward to a new society
- produce narratives that are realistic and explicit about the impact of the violent conflict and that emphasise the need to avoid it in the future
- encourage the two governments and paramilitaries to give a realistic and sensitive account of their roles during the conflict
- mark definitively the end of the violent conflict
- increase knowledge and understanding of the range of perspectives on the conflict and the desired nature of future society.

### The outcomes of a process of acknowledgement

A process of acknowledgement might be regarded as:

- separate from any possible truth-recovery process (some say it could go before and some say it could come after, some say during and some say it is completely unrelated)
- organisations and not individuals within organisations taking responsibility for their actions during the conflict
- establishing a record of the distance travelled by the organisation on its journey through the history of the past few decades
- not necessarily involve confessing guilt or making an apology but rather an opportunity for moral or political generosity to those who might be perceived to be opponents, competitors, or those harmed by an organisation's actions
- taking responsibility as an act that, in itself, does not necessarily imply culpability but does imply recognition of the consequences, negative as well as positive, that flow from judgements and decisions consciously made

- disclosing the acts and omissions and positions taken by organisations in relation to the conflict; it might be about accepting that alternative choices were available and taking responsibility for the ones that were made
- organisations owning and recognising their own history.

### How organisations could engage

Practically, the process would involve some internal discussion or consultation within an organisation designed to produce a brief or summary narrative of its actions and policies during the conflict. Organisations could appoint a facilitator of their choice who would join with those from other organisations for training and agreeing common principles. The extent to which organisations wish to express any criticism, regret, remorse or to express their conviction that all their past actions were fully justified would be a matter for them. There is likely to be a public statement taking responsibility for all the actions described. The resulting narratives would be collated on a website and released publicly. Organisations would be encouraged to make reference to victims or any people their actions may have harmed.

### The organisation of the process

The process would be organised by a dedicated, broad-based organisation, funded by, but independent of, government. It would carry out the following functions:

- a publicity campaign
- a central point for advice, information and support
- the collation of narratives and maintenance of a website
- training of facilitators
- the public release of organisation narratives

Funding would be made available to organisations participating on the basis of application to either the central organisation or another non-governmental body.





# Truth Recovery





## Basics



### Truth Recovery

#### What is truth recovery and a truth recovery process?

Truth recovery can be defined as the uncovering and revealing of “what happened” as part of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

Truth recovery is already occurring and can take different forms.

There are questions about who truth recovery might benefit and what a process might be used for. Some advocate that truth recovery is a principled issue primarily about accountability (and also for some justice), and that victims have a right to know, and the society should meet these needs, at a minimum.

It is also maintained that truth recovery needs to be part of a wider process and that truth recovery can and must also be about the betterment of society.

A formalised truth recovery process usually entails a systemic attempt to uncover, research, investigate, record and validate (as much as is possible) “what happened”.

A full truth recovery process would look at the causes, nature and extent of a conflict, recording “what happened” but also who did what to whom and why. In conflictual societies where competing versions of what happened often exist, a truth recovery process seeks to increase society’s understanding and potentially acceptance of the facts.



#### Political generosity and the myth of blamelessness

One of the features of engagement in truth recovery in other contexts has been that individual and national engagement was as a result of and contributed to, a greater spirit of political generosity amongst the political protagonists. It can be argued then that full truth recovery will decrease absolute moral certainties i.e. thinking you were right and others were to blame concerning past actions. This could lead to a greater willingness to see beyond the victimhood of one’s own community and see the suffering of the “other”. This goes some way to expose the myth of blamelessness and in so doing may provide both a context and a framework to build upon and embed the notion that political generosity is required for the good of society.

### Societal benefits of a truth recovery process

It can be argued that a number of reasons have emerged from international examples for engagement in some form of a truth recovery process, in the wake of violent conflict.

These include:

- to make known the truth about the conflict (in all its forms)
- to take seriously the needs of victims (from all sections of the community) who often desire the truth
- to increase understanding of the conflict and the systems which underlay it
- to increase the understanding for the consequent need for political processes which accommodate different and competing political and national traditions
- to broaden ownership of and responsibility for the process of conflict transformation
- to hold accountable those inside and outside the jurisdiction who played a part in the conflict
- to explore conditions under which political actors can nurture greater trust, confidence and generosity towards each other.



## Introducing Issues

### A tapestry of activity or a wider process approach?

There are a number of initiatives and activities, recent and ongoing, which have had or potentially have a bearing on truth recovery.

The 1998 Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement) in Northern Ireland did not include a singular and comprehensive mechanism which could apply equally to all actors in conflict. However, it has been argued that many of the mechanisms introduced as part of the Agreement could be described as “dealing with the past” and many could be understood as aiding truth recovery.<sup>20</sup> In addition to these mechanisms, there are a number of other ongoing and recent initiatives and activities which have a bearing on truth recovery.<sup>21</sup>

The following is a listing of activities which taken together do not add up to one comprehensive structured process but which could be described as a tapestry of truth recovery activity. The list is not exhaustive.

#### Inquiries

e.g. the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, Cory Collusion Inquiries, Inquiries Act, Independent Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings.

#### Legal Challenges

e.g. private prosecutions, civil actions, “right to life” cases under European Convention for Human Rights (ECHR).

#### Victims Initiatives

e.g. victim centred projects, the Bloomfield Report “We will Remember Them” 1998 , appointment of Interim and Victim(s) Commissioners.

#### Community Initiatives

e.g. New Lodge Six Community Inquiry, The Ardoyne Commemoration Project.

#### Release of Information

e.g. the yearly release of official government/state files.

#### Policing Initiatives

e.g. the Stalker/Sampson Inquiries, the Stevens Inquiries, the Patten Commission, Historical Enquiries Team, the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

#### “On the Runs” Legislation

e.g. whereby individuals who had fled Northern Ireland and suspected or accused of political offences, would be tried and if found guilty would be released on license rather than sent to jail.

#### “Autobiographies”

#### “The Sunday World”

<sup>20</sup> Christine Bell (2003) Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland. Fordham International Law Journal, 26, 4, 1095-1147).

<sup>21</sup> Healing Through Remembering 2006 Making Peace with the Past: Options for Truth Recovery regarding the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. (Ch 3).



## Principles within a truth recovery process

There are similarities and differences between international examples of truth recovery processes and activities in relation to the underpinning principles. Various underpinning principles which may inform and shape a truth recovery process are briefly outlined below.

**Prioritising the needs of victims** - those who have been most harmed should be central to any process. This serves as a reminder that “moving on” is not the priority, at least not until victims’ needs have been addressed. Victims should be given a voice in any process.

**Recovery of truth** - the aim is the recovery of truth and accountability, not the imposition of a false or forced reconciliation. For example, victims should not be under pressure to forgive, nor can ex-combatants be required to be contrite.

**Right to remedy** - the broad legal principle is that individuals have the right to a remedy; that is, the right to have wrongs reversed or replaced if possible, and to have grievances addressed and injustices ended. Some actions that have been used internationally have included seizing the property of offenders, or the revoking of citizenship.

**Reparations** - international courts consistently order or recommend reparations, usually in the form of financial compensation to victims. Increasingly, international bodies are recommending additional forms of reparations, including public apologies or appropriate commemoration of the dead and injured. Broadly there is acceptance of a variety of forms of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, and “satisfaction” to recompense victims, knowing that such measures can never make up for what happened to victims.

**Right to truth** - international legal standards reflect the notion that there is an arguable right to truth. That right is often expressed in order to ensure both that perpetrators are held accountable and that the rights of victims are protected. This right is seen to be both an individual and a societal right; that is, individuals have the right to know the truth about their individual cases, and society has the right to know about the patterns and systems which permitted or fostered victimisation and violations of human rights.

**Amnesty** - while some form of amnesty has often featured as an element of peace processes, in recent years such amnesties are increasingly circumscribed by international legal standards. This means, for example, that blanket amnesties of specified groups of actors over a particular timeframe of conflict are not lawful under international law. That said, where states are involved in “genuine” efforts at national reconciliation or reconstruction which may involve forsaking prosecutions in lieu of truth recovery, considerable latitude may be permissible, providing such efforts are not a mask for an unwillingness to prosecute.

**Independent** - any truth recovery mechanism or process must be, and be accepted as, independent of the state, combatant groups, political parties, civil society and economic interests.



- Healing Through Remembering (2006) Making Peace with the Past. Executive Summary.
- Healing Through Remembering (2006) Making Peace with the Past: Options for truth recovery regarding conflict in and about northern Ireland. Belfast.
- This Guide’s Case Study Material section on Truth Recovery and Acknowledgement.



## Group Conversation - A tapestry of activity or a wider process approach?

**Purpose:** to consider some of the recent and ongoing activities and their bearing in relation to truth recovery and whether a wider truth recovery process may be required.

**Time:** 30 minutes.

**Prepare:** provide, or read out, or transfer the list onto flip chart paper of ongoing truth recovery activities and initiatives.

**Task:** discuss the range of recent and ongoing initiatives and their bearing on truth recovery. Use the following reflective questions to enable discussion:

- Q: who is driving or controls the output of information and hence the recovery of truth?
- Q: what might be some of the other characteristics of a tapestry approach to truth recovery?
- Q: in what ways do these activities address individual needs for truth, and wider societal needs for truth?
- Q: is the tapestry complete? Is there a need to do more?
- Q: what more is required?



## Group Conversation - A Truth Recovery process as a balancing act of rights, principles and benefits?

**Purpose:** to enable discussion around the rights, principles, benefits and balances which may be required for a truth recovery process.

**Time:** 1 hour.

**Prepare:** set up the activity by placing two cards on a wall labelled "Agree" and "Disagree" about 6-10 metres apart. The activity should be presented as a continuum meaning the person does not have to say they absolutely agree or disagree but rather say to where their opinion is closest.

**Prepare:** prepare a set of cards which correspond with the statements that follow, for each participant. There should be one card each that states:

- "opportunities and risks"
- "betterment of society"
- "needs of victims"
- "truth will out"
- "support other approaches"
- "traded with justice"
- "not as important as justice"
- "right to remedy and reparations"
- "shared responsibility"
- "political generosity is a requirement".

**Task:** read out the following statements and ask participants to agree or disagree, or to place the card where they are closest to along the agree/disagree continuum. Ask that after each statement is made and participants have placed their cards, that they reflect on any clusters and explore differing opinions.

## Agree/Disagree Statements

- A truth recovery process offers both opportunities and risks to wider society
- A carefully constructed truth recovery process containing all the necessary balances can lead to a betterment of society
- A truth recovery process must give utmost priority to addressing the needs of victims
- Truth will out - regardless of an official truth recovery process. Aspects of the truth are already known and will continue to emerge over time
- A truth recovery process could have dimensions which involve different groupings such as victims and organisations. Therefore useful consideration might be given as to how the mechanisms of a truth recovery process can support other approaches such as personal stories and experiences and organisational narratives to be included
- Amnesties to perpetrators of violence may be the only way to get to some of the truth; therefore the inclusion of amnesty within a truth recovery process will mean truth is traded with justice
- Truth recovery is not as important as justice
- The right to remedy and reparations are the most important aspects to any truth recovery process
- We all have shared responsibility for what happened and a truth recovery process could expose this
- Truth recovery processes require political generosity and political generosity is a requirement for the betterment of society.





# Living Memorial Museum





## Basics



### Living Memorial Museum

#### What is a living memorial museum?

The idea and term “living memorial museum” includes and brings together a number of concepts and practices, namely “memorialisation”, “memorials”, “museums” and “living memorials”. If a museum or memorial is “living” it does not only refer to the past but belongs to the present and could adapt to the future. A “memorial” and a “museum” are traditionally thought of as separate structures although they can be and are sometimes combined. A living memorial museum also suggests that a museum could be part of a wider process of “memorialisation”.

By way of developing an understanding to the idea of a living memorial museum, the following are brief introductions to key concepts alongside a key question in relation to the need to deal with the past and remember.

**Memorialisation** - processes and acts whereby people or events are committed to memory. Traditionally, the memorialisation acts relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland have been exclusive to one community, organisation or institution.

*For the future* - will memorialisation enable the commonality of loss and suffering to be remembered? How will we commemorate our history of conflict in the future?

**Memorials** - Traditionally, memorials are physical structures, formal spaces or sombre and reverent events.

*For the future* - will memorials, whilst retaining a reverence, also represent a new dynamic enabling reflection as well as remembrance, inspiring hope and demonstrating a society actively dealing with the past and remembering?

**Museums** - museums traditionally are regarded as buildings filled with artefacts, often curated in a single neutral, objective voice telling a finished story.

*For the future* - will museums bring together skills in curating and the display of objects with the voices of lived experiences, the plurality of perspectives, and also present the continuing ‘story’?

#### A Living Memorial Museum - the idea and purpose.

The living memorial museum would serve as a dynamic memorial to all those affected by the conflict and keep the memories of the past alive. It will also provide a diverse chronicle of the history of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, increase public awareness of the impact of the conflict, disseminate information and provide educational opportunities ensuring lessons are learned for the future.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project (2002), P46.

### Purpose of a Living Memorial Museum.

A living memorial museum could serve a number of purposes. Some of the key elements that a living memorial museum could seek to deliver might include:

- promoting understanding and appreciation of different perspectives of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland
- actively demonstrate that different perspectives can be housed together in a sensitive and tolerant way, preserving dignity, strengthening existing forms of remembering, and increasing respect for all
- provide an informal space in which to learn about the past and each other, in a way which affords each individual choice
- remember the past and our conflicted history in a measured way so as to learn the lessons and to guard against violence and conflict in the future
- provide a commemorative and reflective space.



### What a Living Memorial Museum might do

The above question was asked in an Open Call for Ideas facilitated by Healing Through Remembering in 2006, responses to which are recorded and presented in fuller detail in text and with images in the *Without Walls* Report and Display

Books entitled *Open Call: A catalogue of ideas for a Living Memorial Museum of the Conflict in and about Northern Ireland*.

The following are a number of suggestions and possibilities outlined in the Open Call for Ideas and shared here for consideration and discussion. A living memorial museum could:

**tell the people's history** - be developed along the lines of a people's history project. This would prioritize people's stories and memories relating to historical events, creating and archiving oral history. People's own words, experiences and interpretations could take the place of silent objects and artefacts or could be available alongside them.

**present diverse perspectives and multiple histories** - support the telling of the story of conflict in and about Northern Ireland from different perspectives and experiences, recognizing that there are different views and multiple histories.

**educate about conflict** - provide an opportunity to learn about the history of conflict in and about Northern Ireland, documenting events and experiences in a neutral manner and as indicated above, in a manner which presents the plurality of accounts and perspectives.

**enable a journey** - involve undertaking an actual journey with family, friends, school or community group. It could also be an educational or symbolic journey of facing the past or to a place that offers encounters with different experiences and perspectives.

**educate about conflict-resolution** - become a space for dialogue between people and communities, for constructive debate and discussion about all the issues of the conflict, its underlying causes and its legacy.

**enable reflection** - provide a public space for reflection.

**enable engagement** - be a single-site permanent museum accompanied by continuous programmes of outreach, satellite projects, travelling exhibitions. The museum space would become part of a larger project, outreach being a core part of the museum's mission.



- Healing Through Remembering “Without Walls” Report (2008)
- Healing Through Remembering Display books “Open call: a catalogue of ideas for a Living Memorial Museum of the Conflict in and about Northern Ireland”. (2008)
- Healing Through Remembering Artefacts Audit. A report of the material culture of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland (2008)
- This Guide’s Case Study Material section on Living Memorial Museum.



## Role Play Activity - Consideration of the practicalities of a Living Memorial Museum.

**Prepare:** assign group participants into a role, splitting up the group and creating two or more task groups if necessary, depending on numbers. Provide each group with information on the Brief. (Encourage individuals to participate by taking on a role which they would be unfamiliar with).

**Time:** 1 hour 30 minutes.

**Note on Timing:** this activity is best undertaken towards the end of a conversation schedule or workshop programme which has also afforded time to consider some of the other approaches to dealing with the past.

**Task:** see The Living Memorial Museum Task Group Brief and the Gray Roles provided. Provide up to 50 minutes for sub group discussion and call back each group to feedback their ideas to the entire working group. Bring the group back and ask each group to present their key points. In the feedback slot it might be useful to also explore the interconnections between a living memorial museum and other approaches to dealing with the past e.g. reflection, storytelling, commemoration etc



## The Living Memorial Museum Task Group - Brief

Following extensive community discussion, consultation and engagement with the idea, a decision has been taken to establish a living memorial museum to deal with the past and remember. A working group has been set up with a brief to set out proposals for a living memorial museum, which respectfully remembers the common losses in the conflict relating to Northern Ireland from 1968 - 1998 and details the events and experiences of conflict in a way which gives credence to all perspectives and demonstrates tolerance for a multiplicity of views.

You are a member of this working group made up of community representatives, civic leaders, government representatives, museum curators, educators and curriculum advisors.

You have been tasked with examining the following key areas of a living memorial museum with a view to outlining proposals for public consultation:

- A living memorial museum's **Aim/s and Objectives**
- The dealing with the past **Outcome** measures
- The **Key Events** to be curated
- **Involvement of community** - How will community be engaged, and when?
- Options for **location**
- Options for **linkage** with other Museum sites e.g. if you propose a new museum, how should the new museum relate to other museum sites or sites of conflict?

Discuss and outline key points for consideration in relation to the above for feedback to the wider group.

## Group Roles

### Community Leaders

You are a community leader, tasked with voicing your community's experience and you are regarded as bringing an insight and understanding of that community experience and community forms of dealing with the past and remembering. Your priority is to ensure that the product and the process links with, includes and relates to the community experience.

### Civic Leaders

You bring an insight into the pain and suffering of conflict because you have provided support for individuals, families and communities over the period of conflict. Your priority is to ensure that responsible leadership is provided, and that the product and processes employed validate your personal experience and the wider communal experience. You think there is the need for a public space for reflection and would like to see this included in a living memorial museum.

### Government Representatives

You are an elected member of government representing your constituency and its particular lived experiences and perspectives of conflict. You accept that no one perspective will dominate the curation of museum displays. However, your interest is in ensuring that key incidents and events relating to the conflict are addressed and that these are inclusive.

### Museum Curators

You have experience in curating history including the identification of authentic sources of information and artefacts. Your priority is to ensure that the conflict in and about Northern Ireland is told in a way which both provides safety and also strives to ask questions and to leave room for further consideration of the conflict.

### Educators and curriculum advisors.

You are an educator working within a lifelong learning centre within an area which has suffered dearly as a result of conflict. You are experienced in reaching out to the wider community as well as having substantial experience in constructing learning materials and programmes. You recognise the difficulty in teaching about the recent contested past and can see the value of material and exhibitions which are informative, respectful and inclusive.

### Health Professional

You have had many experiences of providing support and intervention during the years of conflict. You can see the value of such a space. However you are concerned that a living memorial might be too traumatic for some victims of the conflict.

### Tourism Officer

You have experience of attracting a significant number of people into the region and you are interested in the potential of this proposed development being a key visitor site. You are also aware of the need to balance this with a need to acknowledge the sensitivity of the site locally, and respectfully value the importance of the site for local people.





## What is a Living Memorial Museum?

It is the opposite of a Dead Memorial Museum.

It  
is:  
alive;  
growing,  
evolving,  
educating,  
developing,  
challenging,  
transforming,  
changing,  
maturing,

It is distinctive.

A beacon.

An inspiration.

Iconic.

Envisioned,

created,

resourced and staffed

by Living Memorials;

people who are committed

to keeping alive the memory

of all those who died and

suffered as a result of the conflict

in and about Northern Ireland.

It is not place which nurtures blame,

guilt, accusations, judgements, comparisons,

stereotypes, prejudices, ignorance, denial, sectarianism,

racism, bitterness, hatred, resentment, revenge and fear.

It is a space where, as difficult and painful as it may be,  
staff and volunteers are committed to healing for all. (27.1)<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> "Without Walls: A Report on healing through Remembering's Open call for ideas for a Living Memorial Museum of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. p12.



## Community Audit of Material Culture relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland

**Purpose:** to assist participants to establish and consider what artefacts and materials exist within their own homes, streets, buildings, and communities which relate to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland.

**Prepare:** discuss with the group if they would like time to prepare and to bring an artefact (or two) to the discussion. It may also be useful to provide some information on Healing Through Remembering's Artefact Audit. For example, an existing audit contains 424,395 items.

**Time:** 1 hour 30 minutes for discussion. An option may be to provide this exercise one week in advance of the discussion and allow participants preparation time. This option could further provide participants the opportunity to bring to the discussion one or several personal artefacts.

### Part 1

**Task:** identify what conflict related materials you know about and which exist in your own homes, streets, buildings you use, and wider community space. Make a list.

### Part 2

**Task:** explore the range and diversity of existing material and some of the meanings associated with artefacts by asking the following reflective questions;

- Q: what categories might artefacts fall under?
- Q: how many categories are there?

### Part 3

Pick a selection of artefacts and discuss the following:

- Q: what does each artefact mean to you?
- Q: does it mean the same to everyone in the room?
- Q: how might it be viewed by others?
- Q: what importance it might have to telling the story of conflict?
- Q: whether it should be included in a living memorial museum space and of so why?



## Community Curation for a Living Memorial Museum

**Purpose:** to enable discussion between participants as to what a living memorial museum might do and what artefacts it might contain.

**Prepare:** write the following headings on a large piece of paper *“Tell the people’s history”, “Present diverse perspectives and multiple histories”, “Educate about conflict”, “Enable a journey”, “Educate about conflict-resolution”, “Enable reflection” and “Enable engagement”*. Provide plenty of flip chart paper and pens for the group to detail out their considerations which will be presented back to the group.

**Time:** 1 hour - 1 hour 20 minutes (depending on the size of group). If the group is large it may be useful to split into two for this exercise. Please allow an extra 20 minutes time for presentation back of considerations around a living memorial museum to the other group.

### Part 1

Choose group task A or B

**Task (A);** the Local Council Authority has dedicated space to a living memorial museum for the County. You are a member of a working group and your task is to decide the following: the key purpose or purposes and how the museum might go about addressing the purpose. You will also need to consider;

**Q:** what will be told?

**Q:** what dates, key events or artefacts to include giving an explanation as to why and why?

**Q:** who will be involved in the curation?

**Task (B);** space has been provided by the Local Authority for your community to tell its story of conflict. You are a member of a Local History Group, and your task is to decide the following: the key purpose or purposes and how the museum might go about addressing the purpose. You will also need to consider;

**Q:** what will be told?

**Q:** what dates, key events or artefacts to include, giving an explanation as to why?

**Q:** who will be involved in the curation?

### Part 2

**Explore:** In what ways the proposed collections are:

- inclusive and/or exclusive
- safe, challenging or contentious.





# Case Studies

Case Studies





## Case Studies

### Background

During the three decades of recent conflict in the local context, there was a sense that the conflict was unique to here regardless of one's interpretation of the conflict there seemed few examples, especially in Europe, of similar upheaval. That was before the Balkans imploded: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, the massacre of 8000 Muslim civilians in Srebrenica while UN soldiers stood aside, the concentration camp in Omarska vividly captured in ITN footage, the ethnic cleansing, the use of rape as a weapon of war. And beyond the Balkans was the genocide in Rwanda, the killing fields of the Congo and numerous other examples which reveal that perhaps the uniqueness was not as real as it seemed. Even in Iraq there is the similarity of two sections of ostensibly the same religion engaged in sectarian massacre.

And if we were not unique then, neither are we now. In the last two decades there have been numerous examples of societies coming out of protracted periods of violent political conflict. All these societies have had to deal one way or another with the legacy of the past. Initially such societies were often on their own as they struggled with questions of truth recovery, prosecutions, amnesties and reparation. Increasingly the international community has become involved, to the point that there are now global expectations and methods in relation to such issues. At best, transitional societies can now learn from the examples of others who have gone before.

Since the republican and loyalist ceasefires of 1994, there have been many developments in relation to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland which have related directly or indirectly to dealing with the past. The direct developments include the following:

- Bloody Sunday Inquiry: this initiative, also known as the Saville Inquiry, was established by the British government in 1998 in order to look afresh at the killing of 14 Civil Rights marchers in Derry/Londonderry in 1972.<sup>24</sup>
- Other Inquiries: as a result of a report by former Canadian Judge Peter Cory, a number of inquiries into disputed killings were proposed. Three - those into the deaths of Billy Wright,<sup>25</sup> Rosemary Nelson<sup>26</sup> and Robert Hamill<sup>27</sup> - have already begun, while one - that into the death of Pat Finucane - has not yet commenced.
- HET: the Historical Enquiries Team was established as a separate unit within the Police Service of Northern Ireland in 2005 to 'to re-examine all deaths attributable to the security situation here between 1968 and 1998' and thereby 'help bring a measure of closure' to the families of the dead.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.bloody-sunday-inquiry.org/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.billywrightinquiry.org/>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.rosemarynelsoninquiry.org/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.roberthamillinquiry.org/>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.serve.com/pfc/#murderpf>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.psni.police.uk/historical\\_enquiries\\_team/het-background.htm](http://www.psni.police.uk/historical_enquiries_team/het-background.htm)

- The Consultative Group on the Past: co-chaired by former Archbishop Robin Eames and Denis Bradley, the group aims 'to consult across the community on how Northern Ireland society can best approach the legacy of the events of the past 40 years; and to make recommendations, as appropriate, on any steps that might be taken to support Northern Ireland society in building a shared future that is not overshadowed by the events of the past,<sup>30</sup> and to report by the summer of 2008.'
- Victims: dealing directly with the needs of victims of the conflict has led to the production of the Bloomfield Report, *We Will Remember Them*, in 1998,<sup>31</sup> the appointment of an Interim Commissioner on Victims and Survivors,<sup>32</sup> and finally the appointment of four Victims Commissioners. Detailed legislation to enable the Commissioners to carry out their task is being considered by the Northern Ireland government.<sup>33</sup>
- Prosecutions: although the HET's deliberations can lead to prosecutions, no such developments have occurred to date. However, some of the relatives of the Omagh bombing of 1998 have begun a private prosecution against five named men allegedly linked to the organisation responsible for the bomb, the Real IRA.<sup>34</sup>
- The Disappeared: the government appointed an Independent Commission for the Location of Victims' Remains in 1999 to attempt to locate the bodies of nine people disappeared and killed by the IRA. Since then, four bodies have been recovered.<sup>35</sup>
- Prisoner releases: under the Belfast Agreement of 1998, all serving politically motivated prisoners were released from prison by July 2000.<sup>36</sup> Although not an amnesty such as has occurred in other transitional societies, it was an unusual if not unique move in British terms.
- "On The Runs": there were a number of republicans - between 70 to 400 - who had fled from Northern Ireland on the basis that they were suspected or accused of political offences. Legislation was introduced in October 2005, which proposed that OTRs (On The Runs) would have their cases heard before a special judicial tribunal but, if found guilty of an offence, would not have to go to prison, but would be released on licence. Under severe opposition from unionists and others, the legislation was withdrawn.
- Storytelling: as Healing Through Remembering's audit reveals,<sup>37</sup> there have been a number of attempts to collect and archive a systematic and comprehensive range of stories from those, victims and others, who have lived through the conflict. These include: 'Legacy', a two-minute slot each morning on BBC Radio Ulster,<sup>38</sup> the initiative by An Crann (the Tree) in the mid-1990s, and 'Epilogues', a project involving the collection of stories in workshops which were later used in a DVD to aid conflict transformation.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.cgpni.org/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/violence/victims.htm>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.cvsni.org/>

<sup>33</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern\\_ireland/7259007.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/7259007.stm)

<sup>34</sup> David Sharrock, 'Omagh bomb victims begin civil action', *The Times*, 7 April 2008;

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article3700327.ece>

<sup>35</sup> Billy Briggs, 'Nightmare goes on for the families of Ulster who still must search for peace', *Yorkshire Post*, 22 April 2008; <http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/features/Nightmare-goes-on-for-the.3936926.jp>

<sup>36</sup> This was made possible through the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Bill 1998. For the full text see

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/hmso/nisent98.htm>

<sup>37</sup> Grainne Kelly, 'Storytelling' Audit: An Audit of Personal Story, Narrative and Testimony Initiatives Related to the Conflict In and About Northern Ireland, Belfast, Healing Through Remembering, 2005: 28.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/troubles/legacy.shtml>



Many of these developments mirror occurrences in other post-conflict transitional societies throughout the world, and so there is a value in broadening the focus to look at the international experience. Moving to the international scene can allow distance to look at the issues afresh and this allows us to draw upon the lessons learnt and experiences of others. This is not to imply that there is some simple read-across possible - 'they did this, so we should too'. Rather it is to examine why they did what they did, what the successes and failures of their approach were in their society, and then debate whether it would be reasonable to try something similar in Northern Ireland and to attempt to predict the possibilities of success.

These are the reasons for an emphasis in what follows on the experiences of societies outside Northern Ireland. Although local examples are given, the focus is on the rest of the world. This will hopefully allow for an informed debate in relation to similar developments or suggestions in our society.

- Should we try what they tried or are our circumstances so different as to preclude going down specific paths?
- Are there factors here which mean we are likely to have more or less success than other places if we attempt in similar ways to deal with the past?
- And are there unique characteristics in our society which will enable us not only to deal successfully with the legacy of the past but also to provide a lesson from which others elsewhere in the world can learn?

The initial report of Healing Through Remembering<sup>40</sup> identified five areas of focus and established five sub groups to further advance these areas. They were: Commemoration, Truth Recovery and Acknowledgement, a Day of Reflection, a Living Memorial Museum, and Storytelling. The case studies below will be grouped within these same five areas.

The format of each of the case studies is as follows:

- an explanation of the rationale behind this mechanism of dealing with the past, along with the hopes and expectations of those who support this mechanism
- a brief snapshot of some of the ways in which this approach has been enacted throughout the world
- a brief but in-depth look at some international examples of how this approach has been enacted
- a brief but in-depth look at some local examples of how this approach has been enacted
- a consideration of the pros and cons involved in choosing this as a mechanism of dealing with the past.

First, it is necessary to point out that some societies seek to deal with the past by officially forgetting it.

<sup>39</sup> <http://epilogues.net/Introduction.asp>

<sup>40</sup> The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project, Belfast, June 2002, pp. v-vii





# Forgetting





## Case Studies

### Forgetting

#### Rationale

Although there are many reasons for silence about past human rights abuses - fear, shame, guilt, intimidation, the inability to find the words to describe horror, some societies have gone further by officially ruling mention of the past, or aspects of it, out of bounds. It could be argued that this is a clear move by powerful forces to retain power and to avoid being called to task over their past behaviour, on the other hand, a rational retort could be that to dwell on past division is to encourage and reproduce current division. In this sense, forgetting can be presented as a way to create a space for reconstruction.

#### Snapshot

There are numerous examples of societies where governments have refused to deal with the past and its legacy.

- In Spain, the dictator General Franco, who won the brutal civil war held on to power between 1936 and 1978, did not seek to deal with the brutality of the war.
- In Cambodia, which was ruled by the Khmer Rouge between 1975 and 1979, during which period between 800,000 and 2 million people were killed, however the successor government did not seek to deal with the traumatic recent past.
- In Russia, the governments in power after the collapse of the USSR chose not to deal with the issue of Stalin's brutal regime which led to the killing of approximately 3 million citizens.

None of this is to say that everyone in the societies concerned chose to forget. In Russia, for example, a group called Memorial was formed in the late 1980s, the first non-governmental organisation (NGO) not organised by the state in Russia's recent history.<sup>41</sup> Part of its self-chosen brief is 'to promote the revelation of the truth about the historical past and perpetuate the memory of the victims of political repression exercised by totalitarian regimes.' In some cases, so great is the pressure from within and outside the society, to deal with the past, even if belatedly, that formal mechanisms have finally been instituted. Thus in Cambodia, the last remaining five men who led the Khmer Rouge are currently being tried in the courts. They include the man known as Duch who was in charge of the Tuol Sleng torture centre in Pnomh Penh.<sup>42</sup> And in Spain in October 2007, the government enacted the Historical Memory Law. Among its main objectives were the condemnation of Franco's dictatorship, a ban on symbols and references to the dictatorship and the removal of plaques, street names, statues and monuments honoring Franco, and the obligation on town councils to facilitate the exhumation of thousands of bodies.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.rightlivelihood.org/memorial.html>

<sup>42</sup> See the website of the Cambodian government's Khmer Rouge Trial Taskforce, set up in collaboration with the United Nations; <http://www.cambodia.gov.kh/krt/english/>

<sup>43</sup> 'Main points of Spain's Historical Memory Law', *International Herald Tribune*, 31 October 2007

## International examples of forgetting

### a. Turkey in relation to Armenia

'In April 1915 the Ottoman government embarked upon the systematic decimation of its civilian Armenian population. The persecutions continued with varying intensity until 1923 when the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist and was replaced by the Republic of Turkey. The Armenian population of the Ottoman state was reported at about two million in 1915. An estimated one million had perished by 1918, while hundreds of thousands had become homeless and stateless refugees. By 1923 virtually the entire Armenian population of Anatolian Turkey had disappeared.'<sup>44</sup>

This was a genocide over which a veil of silence seemed to be drawn rapidly, so that Hitler could later refer to this silence as an element in justifying his invasion of Poland. 'I have issued the command ... that our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly, I have placed my death-head formations in readiness ... with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space which we need. Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?'<sup>45</sup>

Mention of the Armenian genocide is taboo in modern Turkey, to the point that it can lead to prosecution. Thus in 2006, Hrant Dink, managing editor of the Turkish-Armenian weekly newspaper *Agos*, was given a six months suspended jail sentence for referring to the Turkish treatment of the Armenians in 1915 as 'genocide'. He was subsequently assassinated.<sup>46</sup>

### b. Legislation in Rwanda forbidding reference to Hutu or Tutsi ethnicity

In 100 days between early April and mid-July 1994, members of the Hutu majority in Rwanda systematically massacred between 80,000 and 100,000 members of the Tutsi minority and moderate Hutus. Ten years later, on 9 April 2004, the mainly Tutsi Rwandan government instituted a public ban on all references to ethnicity. '... the crime of "divisionism" has been added to the penal code: besides providing the government with a convenient weapon to ban almost any type of organised opposition, it offers the new nation-builders a unique opportunity to legislate ethnic identities out of existence.' Among other things, 'what is being thwarted is the memory of those generally referred to as "Hutu moderates"... The official history of genocide makes no reference to Hutu victims or Hutu survivors, or those Hutu who saved Tutsi lives at their own peril.'<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, the legislation proves a great disadvantage to the minority indigenous group in Rwanda, the Twa. 'The ban on divisionism has made it difficult for Twa associations to protect their interests. The Community of Indigenous Peoples of Rwanda (CAURWA) - which has worked for more than a decade to address persistent societal inequalities against the Twa, including insufficient access to land, education, and employment - was denied the right to register on the grounds that its name and purpose promote divisionism and are contrary to the constitution.'<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Rouben Paul Adalian, *Armenian Genocide*, <http://www.armenian-genocide.org/genocide.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Kevork B. Bardakjian, *Hitler and the Armenian Genocide*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Zoryan Institute, 1985; <http://www.armenian-genocide.org/hitler.html>

<sup>46</sup> Nicholas Burch, 'Outspoken Turkish Armenian editor shot dead in Istanbul street', *Guardian*, 20 January 2007.

<sup>47</sup> René Lemarchand 'The Politics of Memory in Post-Genocide Rwanda', [http://www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/occasional/Lemarchand\\_Memory\\_in\\_Rwanda.pdf](http://www.chgs.umn.edu/histories/occasional/Lemarchand_Memory_in_Rwanda.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Freedom House, *Country Report: Rwanda*; <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=140&edition=2&ccrcountry=105&section=58&ccrpage=8>

## Benefits and limitations of forgetting:

Benefits	Limitations
<p>Forgetting can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impose a sense of calm; it may be the space the society needs in order to stop the slide into renewed conflict</li> <li>• prevent a costly, lengthy and divisive period of conflict over opposing interpretations of history, especially the history of the conflict</li> <li>• provide a breathing space for peace and reconstruction.</li> </ul>	<p>Forgetting can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that the human rights abuses of the past are swept under the carpet and perpetrators go unpunished</li> <li>• mean that nothing is done to solve the substantial issues that are the legacy of past conflict</li> <li>• provide a false sense of security and contentment; unless dealt with, these issues may emerge at a later point, perhaps in a very violent form of retribution.</li> </ul>







# Commemoration





## Case Studies

### Commemoration

#### Rationale

Commemoration can take many forms, from preserving the sites or buildings associated with past conflict, through the erection of new museums or memorials, to the production and display of various artefacts. In addition, many societies have special days set aside for remembrance which are usually accompanied by parades or other memorial ceremonies. Days of remembrance, memorials and museums will be considered elsewhere in this document. Here we will consider other forms of commemoration: artefacts and cultural practices which serve to keep memory alive.

#### Songs

Songs exist in most societies telling the stories of past atrocities. Often they can be community specific, and may rehearse the grievances of one or other of the ethnic groupings in a society. At the same time, songs such as Sting's 'They Dance Alone',<sup>49</sup> about the mothers of the Disappeared in Argentina, can spread the story of the disappeared worldwide. There is widespread scope for examining the role that songs play in our society in this regard.<sup>50</sup> Folk artists like Christy Moore ('The People's Own MP' - about Bobby Sands<sup>51</sup>), James Simmons ('Claudy' - about the IRA bomb on 31 July 1972, which left nine people dead<sup>52</sup>) and Tommy Sands ('There Were Roses' - about sectarian killings in the border area<sup>53</sup>) have sung about the conflict, as well as pop and rock stars such as U2 ('Sunday Bloody Sunday'<sup>54</sup>), Bananarama ('Rough Justice' - which refers to the death of their roadie, Kidso Reilly, shot dead in his native Belfast<sup>55</sup>) and The Pogues ('Streets of Sorrow/Birmingham Six'<sup>56</sup>). In addition, and perhaps more prolifically, both republicans and loyalists have produced songs throughout the period of the conflict, and indeed before, and many of these are related to deaths or incidents of conflict.

#### Quilts

During the military dictatorship in Chile, women made quilts which not only depicted their daily lives but also spoke about the horrors of the military regime - torture, disappearances, house raids, etc. These quilts are called arpilleras.<sup>57</sup> Often the military missed the significance of these quilts, regarding them simply as 'craftwork' produced by women, although as the 'Art of Survival' exhibition in Derry/Londonderry in 2008 revealed,<sup>58</sup> they were often powerful and emotive statements. As such, they served as communal therapy and solidarity, as well as getting the message of repression out beyond the villages and "barrios" where the women lived. Quilts have been a popular medium through which to

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.seeklyrics.com/lyrics/Sting/They-Dance-Alone.html>

<sup>50</sup> See Bill Rolston, 'This is not a Rebel Song: the Irish Conflict and Popular Music', *Race and Class*, 43(3), 2001: <http://rac.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/42/3/49.pdf>, and "'Pack up your troubles": Politics and Popular Music in Pre- and Post-Ceasefire Ulster', *Popular Musicology Online*: <http://www.popular-musicology-online.com/issues/04/campbell-01.html>

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.christymoore.com/lyrics\\_tabs\\_detail.php?letter=t](http://www.christymoore.com/lyrics_tabs_detail.php?letter=t)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.mysongbook.de/msb/songs/b/bofclaud.html>

<sup>53</sup> [http://www.6lyrics.com/music/tommy\\_sands/lyrics/there\\_were\\_roses.aspx](http://www.6lyrics.com/music/tommy_sands/lyrics/there_were_roses.aspx)

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.lyricsfreak.com/u/u2/sunday+bloody+sunday\\_20141428.html](http://www.lyricsfreak.com/u/u2/sunday+bloody+sunday_20141428.html)

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.sing365.com/music/Lyric.nsf/Rough-Justice-lyrics-Bananarama/F26712037BF2264248256C94001099B9>

<sup>56</sup> [http://www.lyricsfreak.com/p/pogues/streets+of+sorrowbirmingham+six\\_20109737.html](http://www.lyricsfreak.com/p/pogues/streets+of+sorrowbirmingham+six_20109737.html)

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.case.edu/pubaff/univcomm/chileart.htm>

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/Press%20Releases/040308-quilt.htm>



commemorate and to raise awareness. For example, the AIDS Memorial Quilt was initiated in the United States in 1987 when a small group of people gathered to commemorate the lives of loved ones who had died of AIDS.<sup>59</sup> There are examples of quilt making in our society also. Most prolific have been the people working at the 'remembering quilt' of Relatives for Justice<sup>60</sup> where frequently articles of clothing of a dead relative have provided material used in the panels. The Wave Trauma Centre and its users have also been involved in producing quilts, as well as, in the same vein, a stained glass window with personalised panels.<sup>61</sup>

It is worth emphasising in relation to quilts that it is in this form of memorialisation where women's work and concerns, often missing or submerged in other forms of memorialisation, come to the fore.

### Murals

The painting of political wall murals is common worldwide, especially in conflicted societies such as Palestine<sup>62</sup> and the Basque Country<sup>63</sup> currently, and Chile in the 1970s<sup>64</sup>. Transitions from conflict or from previous repressive regimes often lead to an upsurge in mural painting; this was the case in Nicaragua in the 1980s when the Sandinistas took over from the dictator Somoza,<sup>65</sup> and in Portugal in the 1970s when the dictator Salazar died<sup>66</sup>. Murals can act as memorials in various parts of the world, whether honouring murdered gang members in New York<sup>67</sup> or depicting the cruelties of the colonisation of the Americas by conquistadors<sup>68</sup>. They can perform similar functions in our society, whether in terms of memorials for dead members of republican or loyalist military organisations, or victims of the activities of various armed factions. Thus in Derry/Londonderry there is a mural portraying the 14 victims of Bloody Sunday<sup>69</sup>, while on the Shankill Road in Belfast, a mural depicts various IRA bomb attacks in the area which have led to fatalities<sup>70</sup>.

### Drama

Drama can be a powerful way to explore questions about past conflict and there are numerous examples from conflict and post-conflict places worldwide. For example, South African playwright Athol Fugard wrote many plays attacking the system of Apartheid, among them the 1972 drama 'Sizwe Banzi is Dead', which explored the injustice of past laws.<sup>71</sup> In relation to South America in the 1980s, Chilean playwright Ariel Dorfman wrote plays such as *Death and the Maiden*, about a woman who believes that a stranger who comes to her home is the doctor who, under a military dictatorship, tortured and raped her years before. Faced with the chance to turn the tables and torture him, she undergoes a severe moral dilemma.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.cadre.org.za/node/185>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.relativesforjustice.com/the-remembering-quilt.htm>

<sup>61</sup> For illustrations and an account of the origins and development of the project, see *Don't You Forget about Me*, Belfast, Wave, 2003

<sup>62</sup> <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article3524.shtml>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1884/ehmural.jpg>

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.graffiti.org/santiago/brp.html>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.stanford.edu/group/arts/nicaragua/murals/index.html>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.socialistworker.co.uk/art.php?id=425>

<sup>67</sup> <http://www.bigshinything.com/rip-new-york-spray-can-memorials>

<sup>68</sup> See in particular examples of the murals of Diego Rivera; <http://fbuch.com/murals.htm>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk/bogsideartists/mural4/>

<sup>70</sup> <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/cgi-bin/murals.pl>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.enotes.com/sizwe-banzi/>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.enotes.com/death-maiden>

Locally, there have been playwrights such as Graham Reid, Christina Reid, Martin Lynch, Martin Galvin, Gary Mitchell and Marie Jones who wrote of the conflict while it was happening. Post-conflict, issues relating to the legacy of the past have been explored by other playwrights. The plot of Laurence McKeown and Brian Campbell's 'A Cold House' centres on a former RUC officer and his wife who discover that the man working in their kitchen is an IRA ex-prisoner who killed a policeman. The play 'addresses difficulties in the Northern Ireland peace process and asks what truths must be faced if people are to move forward in a society riven with conflict'.<sup>73</sup> Truth recovery is also at the core of Dave Duggan's play 'AH6905'. It centres on one hospital patient who, 'waiting to undergo the "operation" of delivering his testimony to a truth and reconciliation committee in Northern Ireland, [he] expresses a misgiving about the value of a truth recovery process. Does the endless scrabbling about in the past really help people to move on? When his turn comes to bear witness, he asks: "What have I gained? It has to be more than just telling stories."' <sup>74</sup>

### Other

There are many other ways in which societies have commemorated the past - parading, poetry, dance, fiction film-making, documentary film-making, fine arts and sculpture, memorial lectures,<sup>75</sup> bursaries.<sup>76</sup> All of these have resonances, real and potential, in our society.

<sup>73</sup> [http://www.irishplayography.com/search/play.asp?play\\_id=1090](http://www.irishplayography.com/search/play.asp?play_id=1090)

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.irishtheatremagazine.ie/home/fringeArchive.htm>

<sup>75</sup> In the Irish context, for example, republicans have an annual Bobby Sands memorial lecture, while the Progressive Unionist Party holds the Billy McCaughey memorial lecture. See [http://www.irlandinit-hd.de/sub\\_misc/ubuen.htm](http://www.irlandinit-hd.de/sub_misc/ubuen.htm) and [http://www.pup-ni.org.uk/party/article\\_read.aspx?a=51](http://www.pup-ni.org.uk/party/article_read.aspx?a=51).

<sup>76</sup> For example, the murdered Black London teenager Stephen Lawrence aspired to be an architect. A bursary has been created in his name which provides financial support for young people, especially from more disadvantaged backgrounds, who, like Stephen, aspire to be architects. <http://www.stephenlawrence.org.uk/content/view/38/67/>

**Benefits and limitations of commemoration:**

Benefits	Limitations
<p>Commemoration can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• produce artefacts and practices which provide a focus for reflection and memory</li> <li>• ensure that past suffering is not forgotten</li> <li>• especially if done thoughtfully, let others see how the group behind the display has experienced the conflict.</li> </ul>	<p>Commemoration can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep people focused on the past, rather than working for the present or building a different future</li> <li>• be divisive, by displaying cultural artefacts which by definition exclude others in society</li> <li>• encourage intergenerational violence, by socialising the young in the fears and biases of the older generation.</li> </ul>



# Day of Reflection







## Case Studies

### Day of Reflection

#### Rationale

In its 2002 report, Healing Through Remembering recommended a Day of Reflection for Northern Ireland which would serve as 'a universal gesture of reconciliation, reflection, acknowledgement and recognition of the suffering of so many arising from the conflict in and about Northern Ireland'.<sup>77</sup> In a subsequent report Healing Through Remembering considered a range of examples of such national days of remembrance in other societies.<sup>78</sup>

#### Snapshot

Healing Through Remembering was unable to find other days of reflection per se internationally.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, this section will explore days of remembrance, including days of commemoration and days of acknowledgement in various other societies.

Most, if not all, societies have a day or days when there is an official acknowledgement of some important historical event - a war, revolution, liberation, declaration of independence, catastrophe, disaster, atrocity - or process - slavery, genocide, etc. Often such days are accompanied by parades and other celebrations and are marked as public holidays. Often the event is inclusive, open to involving every citizen in the memorialisation, for example, Bastille Day in France, Independence Day in the United States. Sometimes the event can be more partisan, of value to the section of society which has the most power and control over major institutions but often excluding minority ethnic or other marginalised groups. A change in political regime or ideology can result in changes in days of remembrance; the date itself can be kept as a national holiday, but the reason for official memorialisation changes. Thus, while 11 September was and continues to be a national holiday in Chile, during the military dictatorship it commemorated the overthrow of the democratic government of Salvador Allende in 1973, but with the return of democracy it was renamed as National Unity Day in 1999.<sup>80</sup> In the former Soviet Union, November 7 was declared Revolution Day, commemorating the Bolshevik Revolution of 1918. In 1996, President Boris Yeltsin changed the focus of the holiday. 'In his opinion, Revolution Day was too negative as it focused on the countless victims of revolution. He also believed that the holiday split Russian society rather than unifying it. Wanting to promote the ideal that the Russian people have a common past and future, Yeltsin changed the name of the holiday to *Day of Accord and Reconciliation*.'<sup>81</sup>

Perhaps most imaginative of all was the change in South Africa, when two events, exclusive respectively to whites and blacks, were officially merged into one holiday for the whole society. 'Afrikaners traditionally celebrated 16 December as the Day of the Vow, remembering the day in 1838 when a group of Voortrekkers defeated a Zulu army at the Battle of Blood River, while ANC activists commemorated it as the day in 1961 when the ANC started to arm its soldiers to overthrow Apartheid.' Under President Mandela it was

<sup>77</sup> *The Report of the Healing Through Remembering Project*, Belfast, June 2002, p. 44

<sup>78</sup> Healing Through Remembering, *International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection*, Belfast, January 2006

<sup>79</sup> Healing Through Remembering, *International Experiences of Days of Remembrance and Reflection*, Belfast, January 2006: 74

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.whichday.com/articles/index.php?article=542>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.russianlife.net/article.cfm?Number=187>

retitled the Day of Reconciliation ‘a day to focus on overcoming the conflicts of the past and building a new nation’.<sup>82</sup>

In short, despite the wide range of such days of remembrance worldwide, there are common themes which are apparent: such days are about remembrance, acknowledgement, apology, reconciliation, paying tribute, and ultimately a thread of reflection runs through them all.

One element which may or may not figure in days of remembrance or reflection but is closely tied to the theme is that of apology or regret for historical abuses. Thus in 2000, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt while visiting Kigali offered a formal apology to Rwanda for his country’s inaction in the 1994 genocide.<sup>83</sup> Often there is a very long gap between the initial issue and the subsequent apology. Thus the Japanese government apologised in 1995 for the damage and destruction its troops inflicted during World War II,<sup>84</sup> while it took until 1997 for French Catholic bishops to issue an apology for the silence of the church in relation to the deportation of 76,000 Jews from Vichy France to Nazi death camps.<sup>85</sup> An interesting variation on the theme is the ‘silent apology’ of German Chancellor Willie Brandt in December 1970. While attending a commemoration of the Jewish victims of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943, he spontaneously dropped to his knees before the commemoration monument. Later he said: ‘On the abyss of German history and carrying the burden of the millions who were murdered, I did what people do when words fail them.’<sup>86</sup>

Attempts by African Americans to acquire an official apology for slavery in the United States have to date been unsuccessful. In 1997 President Clinton established a Special Presidential Advisory Board on Race to consider the issue. And during a visit to Uganda in early 1998, he spoke to a gathering of schoolchildren and expressed ‘personal regret’ for the role that the United States had played in slavery’. He did not offer an official apology on behalf of the United States. As one commentator pointed out, the reason for this was obvious: ‘There is a simple reason American presidents will not apologise for slavery. An apology for the past means asking white Americans to take responsibility for the present... An apology would acknowledge that slavery’s damage still requires repair.’<sup>87</sup>

In 1997 Prime Minister Tony Blair apologised for Britain’s role in the Great Famine in Ireland in the mid-19th century. Blair wrote: ‘The famine was a defining event in the history of Ireland and Britain. It has left deep scars. That one million people should have died in what was then part of the richest and most powerful nation in the world is something that still causes pain as we reflect on it today. Those who governed in London at the time failed their people.’<sup>88</sup>

<sup>82</sup> <http://africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/a/SAHOLIDAYS.htm>

<sup>83</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1375603.stm>

<sup>84</sup> Sheryl Wudunn, ‘Japanese Apology for War Is Welcomed and Criticized’, *New York Times*, 16 August 1995; <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/08/16/world/japanese-apology-for-war-is-welcomed-and-criticized.html>

<sup>85</sup> Roger Cohen, ‘French Church Issues Apology To Jews on War’, *New York Times*, 1 October 1997; <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/10/01/world/french-church-issues-apology-to-jews-on-war.html>

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.facinghistory.org/Campus/Memorials.nsf/0/DC396F572BD4D99F85256FA80055E9B1>

<sup>87</sup> Derrick Z. Jackson, ‘Where is the apology for slavery?’, *Znet*, 12 July 2003;

<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=3902>

<sup>88</sup> Kathy Marks, ‘Blair issues apology for Irish Potato Famine’, *Independent*, 2 June 1997;

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/blair-issues-apology-for-irish-potato-famine-1253790.html>



Ireland also figured in an apology which, unusually, was bottom up, community-led rather than state-led. It related to the life of Philip Sheridan, born in Albany, New York, to parents from Killinkere, County Cavan. Later, as a General in the United States Army, he was centrally involved in the massacre of many Native Americans and is purported to have stated that 'The only good Indian is a dead Indian'. In 1992, Joanne Tall, a member of the Oglala Sioux nation and a descendant of those who had been on the receiving end of General Philip Sheridan's actions, came to the ruined remains of the cottage from which Sheridan's parents had emigrated. There, in a formal ceremony, she planted a tree and was offered an apology by local people.<sup>89</sup>

## International example

### Sorry Day, Australia

In Australia in 1997 a report called *Bringing Them Home* looked at the removal of Aboriginal children from their families.<sup>90</sup> 'One of the recommendations of the report was that a National Sorry Day should be declared. Sorry Day offered the community the opportunity to be involved in activities to acknowledge the impact of the policies of forcible removal on Australia's indigenous populations.' Subsequently, on 26 May 1998, the first Sorry Day occurred. 'A huge range of community activities took place across Australia on Sorry Day in 1998. Sorry Books, in which people could record their personal feelings, were presented to representatives of the indigenous communities. Hundreds of thousands of signatures were received. People could also register an apology electronically.' The annual practice continued. Thus, on Sunday 28th May 2000 more than 250,000 people walked across Sydney Harbour Bridge as part of the day's event. In 2005 Sorry Day was renamed the National Day of Healing for all Australians.<sup>91</sup>

Overall 'some 100,000 Aboriginal children were taken from their families on the territories, and raised in homes or adopted by white families. This was Australian state policy between 1880 and 1960, but was concentrated around the 1930s. At the time, the policy was seen as benevolent - rescuing Aboriginal children from the "aimless and immoral" life on the territories, and giving them a better start in life'.<sup>92</sup> Demands from Aboriginal activists and their supporters for an apology for these 'stolen generations' failed to move Australian Prime Minister John Howard, in power from 1996-2007. But in 2008 the new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, in one of his first public acts after his election, apologised unreservedly. Rudd said: 'The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future. We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.'<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Robbie McVeigh, *The Racialization of Irishness*, Belfast, Centre for Research and Documentation, 1995, pp. 44-45.

<sup>90</sup> Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, 1997; [http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social\\_justice/bth-report/index.html](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/social_justice/bth-report/index.html)

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.culture.gov.au/articles/indigenous/sorry/>

<sup>92</sup> Josie Appleton, 'Australia's 'stolen generation' and the extinction of Aboriginality', <http://www.culturewars.org.uk/2002-12/stolengeneration.htm>

<sup>93</sup> For this and the rest of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's speech, see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 2008; <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/kevin-rudds-sorry-speech/2008/02/13/1202760379056.html>

## Local example

### Day of Reflection

In 2006 Healing Through Remembering produced a proposal for a day of reflection in relation to the Northern Ireland conflict.<sup>94</sup> Such a day, it was argued, 'could make a valuable contribution to enabling society to deal with the legacy of the conflict and to move forward to a better future'. In the first instance, the proposal was to have a private Day of Reflection, while leaving open the possibility 'to hold the Day publicly in future years and move towards public, shared events over time'. On this basis, the first private Day of Reflection was held on 21 June 2007. Healing Through Remembering conducted an evaluation of the Day of Reflection and concluded that, 'given the short time span available - less than a year between the decision to run the initiative and the actual day - a considerable amount was achieved' and proposed that the event be repeated.<sup>95</sup>

## Benefits and limitations of days of reflection

Benefits	Limitations
<p>A day of reflection can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be a powerful symbolic gesture, marking a watershed in national political culture</li> <li>• advance the acknowledgement of the suffering experienced in conflict on an inclusive basis</li> <li>• contribute towards creating the space and climate to look critically and seriously at the past, thus leading possibly to justice, truth and reconciliation.</li> </ul>	<p>A day of reflection can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoid addressing the current consequences of past misdeeds, such as poverty and discrimination</li> <li>• be a low-key, politically non-threatening event which avoids addressing substantial issues of truth and justice</li> <li>• end up as a gesture which may deliver in terms of emotion but not in terms of substantial change.</li> </ul>

<sup>94</sup> Healing Through Remembering, *A Day of Private Reflection: Discussion Paper and Proposal*, Belfast September 2006

<sup>95</sup> *Healing Through Remembering, Summary of the Evaluation of the Healing Through Remembering Day of Private Reflection 2007*. For an example of a public day of reflection in Northern Ireland, see the experience of Omagh. 'One week after the Omagh Massacre was designated a day of reflection. Vigils were held all around Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, but by far the largest was held in Omagh itself. Between 40,000 and 60,000 people filled High Street, the open part of Market Street, Bridge Street, Scarffe's Entry, Foundry Lane Car Park and Drumragh Car Park to hear the service which took place on the steps of the Courthouse. Ironically, it was the courthouse which was the target, according to the bombers. For a town of 25,000 such a massive crowd was at once terrifying and comforting.'

<http://www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/past/omagh/reflection.html>



# Storytelling





## Case Studies

### Storytelling

#### Rationale

Superficially, storytelling seems a simple and straightforward response to dealing with the past. However, there are many reasons victims find it difficult to recount what happened to them - shame, guilt, fear, loss of confidence or identity, continued intimidation and marginalisation, the lack of a sympathetic audience. Certain crimes against humanity can produce a feeling in the victims of 'unspeakability': victims of torture and rape during conflicts are among those worldwide who are most frequently locked into silence after the event. The silence can be intergenerational with parents protecting their children from the full story of the horror they experienced, and children unable or unwilling to enter the taboo territory of asking their parents about the past. On the other hand, there are many advantages of storytelling. For the individual it can be a means of acknowledgement of their suffering. For the community in which many people have suffered it can be a form of collective solidarity and a challenge to dominant interpretations which exclude their experience. And for the society overall, it is argued that there cannot be a genuine coming to terms with the past unless and until everyone is willing to listen to the stories of everyone else, especially those people whose experiences are on the other side of a wide racial, ethnic or national gap.

#### Snapshot

Internationally people have told their stories of experiences of conflict in many ways - from counselling sessions, through intimate gatherings and large conferences, to writing books or agreeing to be interviewed by those who seek to preserve the memory. Increasingly the archiving of these stories has moved beyond the traditional form of book publishing to video, DVDs, internet sites, etc. The ability of people to preserve their individual stories has been greatly enhanced by the availability of blogs (online journals).

Storytelling has played a central role in some truth commissions, such as South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. And the stories of victims and survivors have been the inspiration for fictional accounts, whether in print, drama or film.<sup>96</sup>

Storytelling as part of conflict resolution is internationally widespread. It can be part of the community-based process of seeking justice - as in the gacaca courts of Rwanda.<sup>97</sup> It is used in many societies as a method to introduce school children to the difficult issues of recent past conflict. Thus a Seattle-based programme, BRIDGES to Understanding, uses 'new interactive communication tools to help students learn not just *about* the world, but to engage *directly* with the world. In addition to reading about the Tibetan conflict in their textbooks, for example, children in BRIDGES classrooms can engage directly with students in the Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala, India'.<sup>98</sup> In Norway, a former Gestapo

<sup>96</sup> See for example the 2004 feature film 'Hotel Rwanda', based on the experiences of hotel manager Paul Rusesabagina during the 1994 genocide.

<sup>97</sup> Toran Hansen, 'The Gacaca Tribunals in Post-Genocide Rwanda', Centre for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, 2005; <http://www.restorativejustice.org/articlesdb/articles/7422/>

<sup>98</sup> Cheryl Crow, 'Digital storytelling connects youth across cultural divides, October 11, 2006; <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/prophoto/bridges.mspx>



torture site has been turned into a place where children not only get an introduction to what happened in the building but also hear the stories of those who survived. In addition, former prisoners from places like Robben Island in South Africa are invited to tell their stories to the children.<sup>99</sup> In the digital age, face-to-face contact is no longer necessary for telling and listening to stories such as this. There are countless examples of digital archives, such as the 9/11 Living Memorial which contains over 1,000 individual stories about the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States.<sup>100</sup> The American Veterans Center website has an oral histories section, and also links to magazine articles with personal accounts of US soldiers in WW2,<sup>101</sup> while the Widows of War Living Memorial is a website where widows of all armed conflicts can record and share their stories with others around the world.<sup>102</sup>

## International examples

### a. Shoah Virtual History archive

The Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education is a strong example of a storytelling process. Based at the University of Southern California, it has an archive of nearly 52,000 videotaped testimonies from Holocaust survivors and other witnesses, including Jewish survivors, homosexual survivors, Jehovah's Witness survivors, liberators and liberation witnesses, political prisoners, rescuers and aid providers, Roma and Sinti (Gypsy) survivors, survivors of eugenics policies, and war crimes trials participants. Interviewees came from 57 separate countries and gave their testimony in a total of 32 different languages. Financially underwritten by the film director Steven Spielberg and a by-product of his successful film 'Schindler's List', it has branched out to archive testimonies from victims of conflict in Rwanda and Darfur, Sudan. The archive is at the centre of an ambitious global interactive education programme to underline the horrors of genocide.<sup>103</sup>

### b. To Reflect and Trust

An initiative begun in 1992, To Reflect and Trust (TRT), provides an alternative example of a storytelling process. Begun by Israeli and Palestinian academic psychologists, it brought together a group of four descendants of Holocaust survivors from Israel and five from the United States with eight descendants of Nazi perpetrators in Germany. Over the next five years the groups met six times for a number of days at a time, beginning by telling their own stories solely within their own groups and expanding to tell their stories to each other. TRT claims small but significant success in enabling people to listen to stories they might otherwise have been closed to and thereby coming to some human understanding of the people telling the stories, even if they are traditional antagonists.<sup>104</sup> In 1998 the membership of the project was expanded to bring in Palestinians, South Africans and people from Northern Ireland.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Kjetil Grørdum, 'The Instrumental Values of Storytelling about Past Conflicts', [http://www.stiftelsen-arkivet.no/arkivet\\_representertt](http://www.stiftelsen-arkivet.no/arkivet_representertt)

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.911livingmemorial.org/>

<sup>101</sup> [http://www.americanveteranscenter.org/AVC\\_Pub\\_Chronicles.html](http://www.americanveteranscenter.org/AVC_Pub_Chronicles.html)

<sup>102</sup> [http://www.ideum.com/portfolio/widows\\_war](http://www.ideum.com/portfolio/widows_war)

<sup>103</sup> <http://college.usc.edu/vhi/archiveataglance.php>

<sup>104</sup> For an interview with one of the members of TRT, Professor Julia Chaitin, see

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/audio/10068/>

<sup>105</sup> <http://www.beyondintractability.org/audio/10188/>



## Local examples

### a. An Crann/The Tree

Founded in 1994 by, among others, poet Damien Gorman, An Crann/The Tree was 'dedicated to providing a space in which people can tell and hear the splintered, complex, often contradictory stories of the 'Troubles' as part of a process which contributes not only to the ethos of peace, healing and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, but also to building a more inclusive, rounded story of the conflict'.<sup>106</sup>

An Crann conducted workshops to provide a space for people to tell their stories as well as seeking to create a multimedia archive of these stories. Although the process of storytelling was seen as paramount, there were also products which resulted in most notably a book, which included contributions from a variety of individuals, including British soldiers, political prisoners, relatives of victims of the conflict, police, politicians, community activists, members of ethnic communities, young and older people.

### b. Legacy

During 1999, on each weekday morning, BBC Northern Ireland presented a series of brief stories. Each story in the 'Legacy' series involved the actual voice of one victim or survivor.<sup>107</sup> Even though the allocated slot for telling the story was only two minutes, the victims and survivors were allowed to speak, uninterrupted by other voices. The effect was often highly emotional. Some of these stories are available for listening online. They include:

- 'A former Prison Officer talks about the attack that left her permanently disabled at the age of 27'.
- 'An Irish man talks of the impact of the Birmingham bombs on attitudes towards Irish people in England.'
- 'A woman tells of the loss of four members of her family during the course of the Troubles.'
- 'A widow talks of the death of her husband, shot in front of their home.'
- 'A man talks about the murder of his cousin on the day of his brothers wedding.'
- 'A PE teacher talks of the effect of the Troubles on school life and the lives of the young people.'
- 'An Ambulance Service Supervisor talks about the impact the Troubles had on his work and life.'<sup>108</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Grainne Kelly, 'Storytelling' *Audit: an Audit of Personal Story, Narrative and Testimony Initiatives Related to the Conflict In and About Northern Ireland*, Belfast, Healing Through Remembering, 2005: 28.

<sup>107</sup> [http://www.nio.gov.uk/victims\\_liaison\\_unit\\_newsletter\\_issue\\_2.pdf](http://www.nio.gov.uk/victims_liaison_unit_newsletter_issue_2.pdf)

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/troubles/legacy.shtml>

## Benefits and limitations of Storytelling

Benefits	Limitations
<p>Storytelling can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be a route to healing for individuals, communities and society overall</li> <li>• stand as a reminder of past abuses and a spur to ensure that they are never repeated</li> <li>• lead to understanding, empathy and acknowledgement.</li> </ul>	<p>Storytelling can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appear to be an easier option, as storytelling is unlikely to address challenging questions of justice</li> <li>• be confined to an audience of those who already agree with the storyteller</li> <li>• depending on the process and motivation involved may continue to open old sores and confirm old prejudices.</li> </ul>



# Truth Recovery and Acknowledgement





## Case Studies

### Truth recovery and acknowledgement

#### Rationale

Truth recovery has been approached systematically in many societies coming out of conflict. There have been dozens of truth commissions globally in the last two decades. Such commissions are formal, legally established, official affairs which are set up by national governments (reluctantly or enthusiastically), usually with the backing or at the prompting of the international community.

In addition there have been numerous other examples of truth processes which have occurred without or despite the blessing of state authorities. In some societies, churches and NGOs have been at the forefront of enabling informal truth recovery to occur, often providing the space within which human rights activists, trade unionists and community activists can gather the information to be used in a final report.

Finally, truth recovery in some instances has been handled through 'bottom-up' mechanisms. For example, in some, usually more traditional societies, the imaginative transformation of local rituals has helped in dealing with the past.

#### Snapshot

In Northern Ireland the most frequently mentioned example of a formal truth mechanism is the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1995-2000). Headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu it had a strand known as the Human Rights Violations Committee which provided victims with the space to tell their stories. In addition, perpetrators could tell what they had done in return for amnesty from prosecution.<sup>109</sup>

There have been over thirty truth commissions globally, and therefore a number of different models exist and the South African model is unique not least because of the relationship between amnesty and truth. Although the exact mandate of each truth commission varies, the common denominator has been to produce an assessment of the reasons for, and effects of the conflict. Thus, in Chile, one of the earliest truth commissions, established in 1990, the Commission's mandate was to investigate "disappearances after arrest, executions, and torture leading to death."<sup>110</sup> In Sierra Leone, one of the more recent examples of a formal truth commission resulting from a peace agreement in 1999 between the government and the rebel Revolutionary United Front, the commission was given the task of investigating human rights violations over the previous decade. It reported in 2004.<sup>111</sup>

In some societies, state reluctance to establish a formal truth recovery mechanism has led other people in the society to establish their own mechanism. Some would not have succeeded to the extent they did without the support of one of the most powerful institutions in the societies concerned, the churches. Thus in Guatemala, the Recovery of Historical Memory Report blamed 'the army for at least 90 percent of the massacres,

<sup>109</sup> For the final report of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, see <http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/trc/rep.pdf>

<sup>110</sup> <http://www.usip.org/resources/truth-commission-chile-90>

<sup>111</sup> <http://ictj.org/en/where/region/141.html>

killings and other human rights violations during the war'. The investigation preceded the official Truth Commission in Guatemala and would not have occurred without the backing of the Catholic Church, and in particular of Monsignor Gerardi, Auxiliary Bishop of Guatemala City. Two days after the launch of the report, he was assassinated.<sup>112</sup>

## International examples

### a. Peru: formal truth commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Peru was formed in June 2001. Its mandate was to provide an official record of human rights violations committed between 1980 and 2000, analyse their causes, and recommend ways to strengthen human rights and democracy. As an official body, it had unprecedented access to military documents. It concluded that 69,000 people had died or disappeared during two decades of conflict, finding that Shining Path, the Maoist guerrilla group, had been responsible for killing half of the victims, while government security forces had killed about one third.

Examining the period of 1980 to 2000, the commission interviewed some 17,000 people affected by the violence and was given unprecedented access to military documents. The report blamed the start of violence on the Shining Path, which launched an uprising in 1980. However, the report also accused the army and police of playing a part in 'crimes against humanity' in their response to the rebels. Some killings were blamed on smaller rebel groups and militias, and others remain unattributed. Most of the victims were from Quechua-speaking indigenous groups, the poorest sector of Peruvian society.<sup>113</sup>

### b. Brazil: church-backed truth recovery

The failure of the Brazilian state to institute a truth recovery mechanism did not prevent the documentation of the abuses of the previous regime. The lawyers and others who carried out the work clandestinely had the powerful backing of the Catholic Church in the form of the Catholic Archbishop of Sao Paulo, Cardinal Arns. The church gave them not only financial support but also legitimacy when their work was finally made public. '... a team of investigators was able to secretly photocopy all of the official court papers documenting political prisoners' complaints of torture - some one million pages in total.' This was done while the military dictatorship was still in existence. These photocopies were transferred to microfilms which were smuggled periodically out of the country and kept safely by the World Council of Churches. Finally, a report was produced, *Brasil: Nunca Mais (Brazil: Never Again)* which provided a vast amount of intimate detail on the military regime's torture practices over a fifteen year period. The Report was the biggest selling non-fiction book in Brazilian history.<sup>114</sup>

### c. Rwanda: truth the community way

In Rwanda, the massacre of Tutsis, moderate Hutus and others by the Hutu militias in 1994 led to the imprisonment of over 120,000 people. Five years later the judicial system had only managed to deal with the files of 6,000 prisoners; the rest languished in overcrowded, inhumane conditions. It was estimated that dealing with the prisoners in a formal manner

<sup>112</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/~virtualtruth/gerardi.htm>

<sup>113</sup> <http://www.hrcr.org/hottopics/peru.html>

<sup>114</sup> Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity*, New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 21. See also the riveting report of the investigation, which reads almost like a thriller, by Lawrence Weschler, *A Miracle, A Universe: Settling Accounts with Torturers*, New York, Penguin, 1990

would take over a century to complete. The government decided to clear part of the backlog by modifying a traditional ritual - known as gacaca - whereby people with grievances and those whom they had the grievance against could be heard by village elders who would rule on the issue. It was an effective form of restorative justice. Those accused of involvement in the genocide were categorised according to the gravity of the offence and the extent of their involvement. Planners and organisers of genocide, along with torturers and rapists, were in category one whose cases could not be heard by the gacaca courts, but were assigned to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Other offenders could appear at gacaca courts. The purpose of the proceedings was to reach some sort of resolution acceptable to all parties. Thus, if the offender confessed, the judges would decide on the recompense which must be made to the victim. If the offender pleaded innocence, the proceedings took on a more formal air, but at the end the judges again decided on the recompense to be made or penalty to be inflicted. One major benefit of the system was claimed to be that it gave people the chance to speak out about the atrocities they have suffered or witnessed without the procedure being dominated by lawyers.<sup>115</sup>

### Local examples

In relation to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland over the last decade there has been a great deal of discussion of the applicability of the truth commission model to deal with the past. The benefits and limitations have been widely rehearsed with some convinced that a truth commission would not work in Northern Ireland and others equally convinced that there is a formal truth process is necessary if Northern Ireland is to come to terms with its violent past. Although the debate has been dominated by reference to the South African experience, many proponents of a truth commission for Northern Ireland have been at pains to point out that it does not have to imitate the South African example, especially in such matters as trading truth for amnesty.

The possibility of a truth commission for Northern Ireland has been tentatively broached by official bodies such as the Bloomfield Report and a number of Secretaries of State. The most that has been possible at an official level to date is the establishment of the Consultative Group on the Past, co-chaired by former Archbishop Robin Eames and Denis Bradley, and tasked to sound out the range of opinions on ways of dealing with the past. Given the debate to date on a truth commission some evaluation of that debate is bound to be included in their future reports and discussions.

All of which means that to date, that many of the attempts at truth recovery have been unofficial and community-based. Such proceedings have been instigated in cases where communities felt that there was little or no hope of a fair official inquiry in relation to some incident of violence which affected them. In most cases such inquiries involved nationalist communities, a fact which is perhaps not surprising given the history of a differential relationship to the state and its security forces on the part of nationalists on the one hand and unionists on the other. Thus there was a local inquiry into the death by plastic bullet of John Downes on 12 August 1984,<sup>116</sup> and the killing by Royal Marines of local man Fergal Caraher in Cullyhanna on 30 December 1990.<sup>117</sup> Through the peace process, such inquiries have continued: for example, residents in the New Lodge area of north Belfast held an inquiry in 2002 into the deaths of six local men on 3 February 1973.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>115</sup> [http://www.rwandagateway.org/article.php?id\\_article=112](http://www.rwandagateway.org/article.php?id_article=112)

<sup>116</sup> [http://www.conwaymill.org/cway\\_then.html](http://www.conwaymill.org/cway_then.html)

<sup>117</sup> <http://www.relativesforjustice.com/fergal-caraher.htm>

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.anphoblacht.com/news/detail/3292>



### a. Ardoyne Commemoration Project

One of the more ambitious local grassroots truth recovery exercise to date has been in Ardoyne. The Ardoyne Commemoration Project did not involve an inquiry. The process involved the collection of interviews with people in the area regarding the deaths of 99 people.<sup>119</sup> As the introduction to the book put it: 'This book tells the story of 99 ordinary people, living ordinary lives, who became victims of political violence in a small close-knit, working class, nationalist community in north Belfast. The deaths occurred between 1969 and 1998 and the victims were from Ardoyne. Because of the ongoing nature of the conflict, victims' names and the traumatic circumstances of their deaths were often forgotten or overshadowed by further tragedy and loss. Most of the people who have given testimony in this book are the relatives, neighbours and friends of the 99 victims. Almost all have never spoken publicly about the death of their loved one and the personal costs to their family, friends and community. Their very moving accounts of loss and pain have up until now been private, unspoken and "silenced"'.<sup>120</sup>

The Ardoyne example could be seen as an instance of story-telling rather than truth recovery. However, it can be categorised as truth recovery for two reasons. First, a key purpose in the project was, in the words of the book's title, to tell 'the untold truth'. Secondly, in seeing the telling of the stories as a means to an end, namely, seeking acknowledgement and justice in relation to the deaths, the publication of the book led to an unprecedented debate in the local area. The truth being demanded was not merely of state forces and loyalists, but, as one of the Ardoyne Commemoration Project, Tom Holland, put it: '... the IRA in particular have a moral responsibility to ensure that all unresolved issues aired by the families of their victims are tackled. It is important the IRA and all other republican groupings are open to the same truth and justice demands as the British Government and loyalist paramilitaries'.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Ardoyne Commemoration Project, *Ardoyne: the Untold Truth*, Belfast, Beyond the Pale Publications, 2002

<sup>120</sup> <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/victims/ardoyne/ardoyne02a.htm>

<sup>121</sup> <http://www.horizon-magazine.com/download/publications/2002/09%20-%20September%202002.pdf>



## Benefits and Limitations of Truth Recovery

Benefits	Limitations
<p>Truth recovery can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• present, in the words of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 'as complete a picture as possible of the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights committed' during the conflict<sup>122</sup></li> <li>• provide formal acknowledgement of the suffering of victims</li> <li>• lay down a powerful marker indicating the aspiration to move society from a culture of human rights abuses to one of respect for human rights.</li> </ul>	<p>Truth recovery can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fail because of the refusal of dominant forces e.g. governments, security services, and others, to fully and willingly cooperate</li> <li>• provide a forum for the telling of victims' stories but fail to provide recompense or restitution for victims</li> <li>• fall short of the full sense of justice that some may feel can only come through judicial prosecutions and formal court proceedings.</li> </ul>

<sup>122</sup> Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995; <http://www.doj.gov.za/trc/legal/act9534.htm>





# Living Memorial Museum





## Case Studies

### Living Memorial Museum

#### Rationale

Museums can devote space temporarily or permanently to exhibits about past conflict. Museums frequently have a poor image; they are said to be full of dusty old exhibits which no one can touch and which interest only very few people. But this stereotype does not match the changes in running museums in recent years, where there are frequently interactive exhibits and programmes of education and outreach. Some museums exist solely or mainly to preserve the artefacts of past suffering in a society, and in doing so to preserve memory. Arguably, the best of such museums are not sterile, anodyne spaces; they become, in effect, memorials to the conflict. Moreover, in as far as they engage the public in commemoration, education, reflection and debate, they become living memorials.

Sometimes these museums are site-specific. Where and when human rights abuses have occurred in specific places, there has been a motivation when the war or conflict is ended to preserve the site - the prison, torture chamber, mass graves, area where a massacre occurred - as a symbol of the past and a reminder to prevent repetition in the future.

Physical memorials, in contrast, whether site-specific or not, are frequently constructed as a place for reflection, memorialisation, ceremony, prayer, etc.

#### Snapshot

Some of the most powerful living museums in the world are site-specific.

- Villa Grimaldi, on the outskirts of Santiago, Chile, was used as a prison between 1973 and 1978; an estimated 4,500 men and women were held and tortured there, 220 of whom were disappeared. The site is now a national park.<sup>123</sup>
- In Cambodia, the killing fields have been preserved and a glass-fronted tower contains the skulls of victims who were buried in mass graves.<sup>124</sup> In Vilnius, Lithuania, the Museum of Genocide Victims is housed in the building which was formerly the KGB headquarters; the torture cells and execution room are also preserved.<sup>125</sup>
- In France and Belgium, tens of thousands of white crosses mark the graves of allied soldiers on the actual battlefields where they died; there are 410 such cemeteries at the Somme alone.
- The Somme also has cemeteries for American war dead as well as 13 cemeteries with the graves of 26,000 German soldiers.<sup>126</sup>
- At the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar, India, there is a memorial to the 1000-plus people killed at the spot by British Indian Army troops on April 13, 1919. The well into which many people jumped and drowned attempting to save themselves is preserved as a monument.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.pww.org/article/articleview/11204/1/375/>

<sup>124</sup> <http://www.killingfieldsmuseum.com/>

<sup>125</sup> [http://www.muziejai.lt/vilnius/genocido\\_auku\\_muziejus.en.htm](http://www.muziejai.lt/vilnius/genocido_auku_muziejus.en.htm)

<sup>126</sup> <http://www.somme-battlefields.com/en/remembrance/cemeteries.aspx>

<sup>127</sup> <http://wikitravel.org/en/Amritsar>

- At Little Bighorn, Montana in 1881 the US Cavalry, led by General Custer, was defeated by Lakota (Sioux), Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors. In 1881, the US government erected a memorial to the soldiers. One hundred and ten years later, a further memorial was erected to the native Americans who died in the battle.<sup>128</sup>

Some museums which exist to preserve the memory of past conflict are grouped together in an organisation known as the International Coalition of the Historic Site Museums of Conscience. There are 17 such museums, including some, such as Villa Grimaldi, mentioned above. In addition, there is:

- the District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa, near the scene of forced removals of population during the 1960s
- the Gulag Museum in Perm, Russia, a former Stalinist labour camp
- the Liberation War Museum in Dhaka, Bangladesh
- the Maison des Eclaves (Slave House) in Île de Gorée, Senegal, and
- the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York, USA the site of the first Women's Rights Convention in 1848.<sup>129</sup>

The range of physical memorials worldwide and the reasons for such memorialisation are too wide to be considered in great detail here. However, some relevant examples follow. A common form of memorialisation in most societies relates to commemorating soldiers.

- In London there is the Cenotaph, which commemorates British Empire and Commonwealth servicemen who died in the two World Wars. The Cenotaph is central to the commemoration of war dead on Remembrance Sunday each November.<sup>130</sup>
- In Moscow there is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, dedicated to the 'Soviet' soldiers killed during the 'Great Patriotic War' of '1941-1945'.<sup>131</sup>
- Massacres, are key historical events for memorialisation, thus the Sharpeville Memorial in Johannesburg honours those who lost their lives in the Sharpeville Massacre on 21 March 1960.<sup>132</sup>
- Commemoration also relates to important political figures; for example, there is the Martin Luther King National Memorial in Washington D.C.<sup>133</sup>
- Another issue which has often led to the need for memorialisation is genocide; thus in the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, an installation of 200 hollow log coffins from Central Arnhem Land stands as a memorial to the destruction of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia during colonial expansion.<sup>134</sup>
- Disappearances of arrested people were common in Latin America during the period of military dictatorships in the 1980s, and many memorials to the disappeared exist. In Chile there are many such memorials, including one in the General Cemetery in Santiago which displays the names of all the disappeared.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>128</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/archive/libi/indmem.htm>

<sup>129</sup> <http://www.sitesofconscience.org>

<sup>130</sup> <http://www.britishlegion.org.uk/remembrance/the-nation-remembers/remembrance-sunday>

<sup>131</sup> [http://www.newmusicclassics.com/moscow\\_tomb\\_unknown.html](http://www.newmusicclassics.com/moscow_tomb_unknown.html)

<sup>132</sup> <http://migs.concordia.ca/links/MemoryandAtrocityCrimes.htm>

<sup>133</sup> [http://www.mlkmemorial.org/site/c.hklUL9MVJxE/b.1187203/k.8826/The\\_Memorial.htm](http://www.mlkmemorial.org/site/c.hklUL9MVJxE/b.1187203/k.8826/The_Memorial.htm)

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.aboriginalartonline.com/forum/links.php>

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.wri-irg.org/photo/index-en.htm>

- Nor is the memory of the disappeared from Latin America preserved solely in Latin America; thus, in 1995, a forest with young trees was planted in Spain, each tree representing a disappeared person from Argentina and carrying his or her name.<sup>136</sup>
- Nor were disappearances - and hence their commemoration - confined to Latin America. In Manila, in the Philippines, there is a monument, the Flame of Courage, to remember all those who have disappeared since 1972 - in all, 1600 people. A committee of relatives of the disappeared, FIND, 'emphasises the importance of this monument by clarifying that this is the only place for the remaining relatives where they can visit their disappeared relatives and meet with fellow-sufferers'.<sup>137</sup>

## International examples

### a. Tuol Sleng, Cambodia

A former school in Pnomh Penh used by the Khmer Rouge as a torture chamber is now a museum replete with photographs of some of the 17,000 or more people who were tortured and killed in the building.<sup>138</sup> Only seven people who entered Tuol Sleng for interrogation emerged alive.<sup>139</sup>

One visitor has written emotionally about the site: 'Tuol Sleng, more commonly known to the Khmer Rouge as S-21, was at the hub of a sophisticated network of jails, prisons and extermination centres spread across the country. In just three years, eight months and twenty days, in excess of 1.7 million Cambodians died under the regime of Pol Pot. In Tuol Sleng alone, more than 17,000 people are believed to have been systematically imprisoned, interrogated, tortured and murdered by a group of sadistic captors, hell bent on extracting fictitious confessions to imaginary crimes, eventually devouring their own kind in a killing frenzy of frightening proportions.'<sup>140</sup>

### b. Auschwitz, Poland

Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Dachau, Ravensbruck, Auschwitz<sup>141</sup>: these are the names of some of the concentration camps created by the Nazis during the Third Reich. Some were forced labour camps, but many became extermination centres. Auschwitz, and adjoining Birkenau, became the centre for extermination of 'lesser races', in particular the Jews. Today it is a museum, with many of the original buildings preserved or rebuilt, including the crematorium. There are numerous artefacts and belongings from the time to be viewed, including the suitcases taken from people as they arrived at the train station, their glasses, shoes, and gold removed from the teeth of the dead. The former camp also serves as a place of pilgrimage and prayer, especially for Jews, as well as having an important educational function.

<sup>136</sup> <http://home.planet.nl/~loz/maneng6.htm>

<sup>137</sup> <http://home.planet.nl/~loz/maneng6.htm>

<sup>138</sup> Many of these chilling photographs can be viewed at <http://www.tuolsleng.com/>

<sup>139</sup> For the story of one survivor, the painter Vann Nath, see <http://www.cbc.ca/sunday/cambodia/>

<sup>140</sup> Andy Brouwer, 'Tuol Sleng: Revisiting the Past', <http://www.andy.brouwer.co.uk/tuolslen.html>

<sup>141</sup> For a listing of all the concentration camps, and further details about them, see <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/cclist.html>

'The camp was established in mid-1940, more than a year before the Germans embarked upon the "Endlösung der Judenfrage" (Final Solution of the Jewish Question) - the plan, systematically carried out, to murder all the Jews living in the countries occupied by the Third Reich... It became the center of the mass destruction of the European Jews. The Nazis marked all the Jews living in Europe for total extermination, regardless of their age, sex, occupation, citizenship, or political views.' 200,000 Jews were forcibly sent to the camps, and in addition more than 140,000 Poles, approximately 20,000 Gypsies, more than 10,000 Soviet prisoners of war, and more than 10,000 prisoners of other nationalities. 'Over 50% of the registered prisoners died as a result of starvation, labor that exceeded their physical capacity, the terror that raged in the camp, executions, the inhuman living conditions, disease and epidemics, punishment, torture, and criminal medical experiments.'<sup>142</sup>

### c. The Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem.

'Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, was established in 1953 by an act of the Israeli Knesset. Since its inception, Yad Vashem has been entrusted with documenting the history of the Jewish people during the Holocaust period, preserving the memory and story of each of the six million Jewish victims, and imparting the legacy of the Holocaust for generations to come through its archives, library, school, museums and recognition of the 'Righteous Among the Nations.'<sup>143</sup> Among the most moving exhibits is the Children's Memorial. 'This unique memorial, hollowed out from an underground cavern, is a tribute to approximately 1.5 million Jewish children who perished during the Holocaust. Memorial candles, a customary Jewish tradition to remember the dead, are reflected infinitely in a dark and sombre space, creating the impression of millions of stars shining in the firmament. The names of murdered children, their ages and countries of origin can be heard in the background.'<sup>144</sup>

One further feature of Yad Vashem is the planting of trees to acknowledge the contribution of non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust; they are known as 'Righteous among the Nations'. As of January 2007, 21,758 people had been so recognised.<sup>145</sup>

### d. The Vietnam Wall in Washington, D.C.

The Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, completed in 1982, is a long, shiny, black marble wall on which are inscribed the names of 58,256 American casualties of the Vietnam War, including approximately 1200 missing in action, prisoners of war, etc.<sup>146</sup> It was designed by a young student at Yale University who won the competition held for that purpose. There were many controversies surrounding the design, not least about the ethnicity of the designer, Maya Ying Lin, a native born American whose parents were emigrants fleeing from China in 1949. The black marble design was seen by some veterans as being too funereal, looking like a gravestone rather than a commemorative icon. In time the

<sup>142</sup> <http://www.auschwitz.org.pl/> For photographs of the concentration camp as it exists today as a museum, see <http://remember.org/educate/intro.html>

<sup>143</sup> [http://www1.yadvashem.org/about\\_yad/index\\_about\\_yad.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_yad/index_about_yad.html)

<sup>144</sup> [http://www1.yadvashem.org/about\\_yad/index\\_about\\_yad.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_yad/index_about_yad.html)

<sup>145</sup> [http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous/index\\_righteous.html](http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous/index_righteous.html)

<sup>146</sup> <http://thewall-usa.com/information.asp>. There is no acknowledgement of Vietnamese regular and irregular soldiers and civilians who died. However, there are such memorials in Vietnam itself, as one US ex-Marine discovered on a later visit to the country; Peter Davis, 'Vietnam Thirty Years on', <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20050509/davis>



Memorial has come to be widely accepted. The simple listing of names in order of date of death is seen as an understated but powerful symbol, and the fact that the shiny marble surface is reflective brings images of the living in among the names of the dead. Nearby is a lifelike sculpture of three US soldiers looking towards the Memorial, added in response to criticisms that the original design was merely abstract. And lastly, there is also a memorial to the US women who were in Vietnam during the war, mainly working as nurses.

### Local examples

In addition to official memorials, such as the Ulster Defence Regiment window in Belfast City Hall,<sup>147</sup> or the memorial to the victims of the Omagh bomb,<sup>148</sup> there are numerous local and unofficial examples where the memory of the dead, whether civilian or combatant, is preserved: plaques, memorial gardens, statues, shrines.<sup>149</sup> In addition, there have been local museums begun for specific communities - such as Fernhill House in Glencairn, with its displays of the various uniforms of British soldiers and loyalist paramilitary members,<sup>150</sup> and the Irish Republican History Museum on the Falls Road with its numerous republican artefacts and documents.<sup>151</sup>

### Local museums

#### a. Somme Heritage Centre

The Somme Heritage Centre commemorates the involvement of the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Irish) Divisions in the Battle of the Somme, the 10th (Irish) Division in Gallipoli, Salonika and Palestine and provides displays and information on the entire Irish contribution to the First World War. Its attractions include: displays and exhibits, a re-creation of the trenches, taped interviews with veterans and a computer database allowing visitors to search for ancestors who were killed, as well as learn about 'The Front Line Experience': 'The Front line experience is shaking with the noise of the tremendous artillery barrage of the Battle of the Somme. Make your way along the trenches in the early light of 1st July 1916. Look out across "No Man's Land" with the troops, before they go "over the top". Experience the events of the battle through the eyes of the soldiers who took part.'<sup>152</sup>

<sup>147</sup> A stained glass window dating from 1992. See Jane Leonard, *Memorials to the Casualties of Conflict: Northern Ireland 1969 to 1997*. Belfast, NI Community Relations Council, 1997

<sup>148</sup> The 'Garden of Light' in Omagh was designed in time for the tenth anniversary of the bombing which took place on August 15, 1998; see [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/northern\\_ireland/7266367.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/7266367.stm)

<sup>149</sup> For a comprehensive survey of such sites throughout Belfast, including photographs, descriptions and details of location, see Elisabetta Viggiani, 'Public Forms of Memorialisation in Belfast', <http://cain.ulster.ac.uk/viggiani/index/html>

<sup>150</sup> <http://www.fernhillhouse.co.uk/>

<sup>151</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish\\_Republican\\_History\\_Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Republican_History_Museum)

<sup>152</sup> <http://www.irishsoldier.org/>

### b. Museum of Free Derry

The Museum of Free Derry sets out to tell the story of the Northern Ireland conflict with a particular focus on the experience of the people of Derry/Londonderry, and in particular of the Bogside, where the museum is situated. The location is highly evocative 'because it is central to most of the events that will be covered inside the museum. The main battleground for the Battle of the Bogside was only yards away, at the front of Rossville Flats. The area around this block was also one of the main killing grounds on Bloody Sunday, with two killed and five injured directly in front of the building. In fact, the building still holds the last remaining physical evidence of Bloody Sunday in the area, in the form of two bullet strikes on the face of the building, and was the subject of a preservation order laid down by the Saville Inquiry to preserve lines of sight as closely as possible to what they were on Bloody Sunday.'<sup>153</sup>

The intention is that the Museum tells 'the community's story told from the community's perspective, not the distorted version parroted by the government and most of the media over the years'.<sup>154</sup>

As a result, many of the artefacts relate directly to the experience of conflict in the area. There are currently over 25,000 individual items in the Museum, most of them donated by local residents. Some of these artefacts, such as the handkerchief waved by Father Edward Daly as the body of Jackie Duddy was carried out, are of immense historical importance.

## Local monuments

### a. The Bloody Sunday memorial

Situated near Free Derry Corner, a grey granite obelisk commemorates 'Bloody Sunday', 30 January 1972, when British paratroopers shot dead fourteen civil rights marchers in the immediate vicinity. The memorial contains the names of those who died.

### b. Memorial at Teebane Crossroads, near Cookstown

This is a memorial to those who were killed on 17 January 1992. The IRA exploded a bomb killing eight Protestant civilians who had been travelling in a minibus past Teebane crossroads between Cookstown and Omagh, County Tyrone. The names of the victims are the focus of the monument.

<sup>153</sup> <http://www.museumoffreederry.org/introduction.html>

<sup>154</sup> <http://www.museumoffreederry.org/introduction.html>

## Benefits and limitations of museums and memorials

Benefits	Limitations
<p>Museums and memorials can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether site-specific or not, offer a tangible point where reflection can take place</li> <li>• through their emotional impact lead people to explore further the history of suffering</li> <li>• act as a beacon to society urging it not to repeat the mistakes of the past.</li> </ul>	<p>Museums and memorials can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• serve as exclusive badges of victimhood, excluding those who are not connected to the victims by ethnic or other ties</li> <li>• speak only to the converted while being ignored by most people who pass them by</li> <li>• serve to confirm the viewer's worst prejudices about the evil of the perpetrators.</li> </ul>





# Development Material



## Developmental Material

### Lived Experiences

Sharing and listening to the lived experiences of conflict is one way of developing an understanding about the past. It may also go some way to establishing a level of connection with one another.

The following are two suggested activities which may be integrated into a conversation or workshop programme.



### Introductory Activity - "Who I am and a personal perception of the impact of conflict"

**Purpose:** the purpose of this exercise is to create space for participants to get to know something about each other's experiences of the conflict. It can help people to begin to know if and how they have connections with others, and begin to understand something of individual experiences of conflict. In addition, this exercise can assist in developing understanding around a number of issues, for example, what personal narratives and stories can tell us about conflict, and something about the processes involved in the sharing of stories to a wider audience. This exercise may be usefully applied to other activities which consider approaches to dealing with the past e.g. Storytelling.

**Time:** 20 minutes to one hour (depending on the option taken).

#### Part 1

##### Pair up and share

**Task:** ask participants to pair up with someone they do not know. Each is to take five minutes to talk to the other person and to tell the other person about themselves. They should share:

- their name
- something about their family
- something about where they are from
- where they live now, and
- something about the way in which the conflict impinged on their life, and one thing they hope to get from the workshops on dealing with the past and remembering.

#### Part 2

##### Present the other person to the group.

**Task:** ask the group to come back together as a whole. Each person should present the other person to the group.

A second option for this might be to present the other person in the first person, i.e. my name is "... " (the name of the other person). I am from "... "( the place where the other person is from. This should be discussed within the group and group participants may need to be prepared to accept the degree of discomfort this option may introduce. This option can draw out the realities of conflict and emphasise the different experiences,

making these more real by asking participants to momentarily “step into another’s shoes”. If this option is taken, after everyone has spoken and everyone has been presented to the group provide an opportunity to explore by asking people to return to being themselves and to discuss the exercise:

- ways in which the information is informative about conflict or informative about conflict
- what was it like to present the other person as yourself or to hear yourself being presented to the group through another person?



## A Storytelling Activity - Lived Experiences of Conflict

**Purpose:** this exercise enables participants who wish to engage in a fuller and deeper discussion within the group about the lived experiences of the conflict. The exercise enables individuals:

- to place themselves inside the local context of conflict,
- to reflect on one’s own experience (or memory), and
- to identify one impact or consequence of conflict.

The activity can help participants to begin to know if and how they have connections with others, and begin to understand something of individual experiences of conflict.

**Time:** this depends on the size of the group. An approximate time is 2 hours.

**Prepare:** this exercise should be discussed in advance and participants should be given time (which might involve a couple of days or a week) to consider the activity. Plenty of time will be required for the session to properly hear everyone’s story and to properly acknowledge each story. Allow time also for comfort breaks particularly after long and difficult stories. Ensure ground rules within the group have been well established. Ground rules might usefully include: do not interrupt the telling of another’s story - even and particularly when you disagree with their version of events. Be attentive to the **closure** of the session, by going around the room, checking in with every one that they are alright, providing the opportunity if anyone wishes or needs to make any final comment or say anything by way of closure. Ensure the space in which you will conduct the storytelling activity is conducive i.e. it has comfortable seating, good day-light, and refreshments (water, tea and coffee) are available. Set up the space or room for the storytelling exercise in a format which ensures that everyone is able to see and hear the person presenting their story.

**Explain:** emphasise to participants that the purpose of the exercise is to enable each to share briefly with the others something of an experience (or memory), and one impact or consequence of that experience or memory on their lives. Explain that this is one way to begin to acknowledge the individual and possibly collective experiences and impacts of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland. The purpose is to listen, and agreement with the storyteller’s point of view is not a requirement. Explain that participants may tell a part of their story however they choose. This may be verbally, using a picture or a symbolic item which that person connects to the experience (or memory). Explain that the activity is about providing an opportunity to consider and discuss with each other something of their experience of the conflict and its impact in a way which seeks to do no intentional harm. For this reason it is important that the exercise is undertaken within the ground rules agreed and that the ground rules include: each person is respectful of each other; each individual decides for themselves what to share as each person has control over their involvement. Participants taking part do so on the basis of “free and informed consent”.



**Key Task:** read out (or provide) the following paragraph by way of instruction:

*Identify one conflict-related experience personal to yourself, something in relation to the impact or consequence of conflict; then share this with others.*

*This could be a first memory or a particular memory, a specific incident or event which happened to you, an activity you had involvement in, something you witnessed which had a big or small impact on others close to you, an image or an emotion associated with the conflict.*

*You may wish to share something about what happened, who was involved, why you were or weren't there, what its impact was on you, or on others, both then and now. If possible identify one impact of the experience.*

## Part 1

### Preparation

**Task:** each person identifies the one experience relating to the conflict they wish to share and prepares how they wish to present this to the group.

## Part 2

### Presentation

**Task:** time is allocated to each person to present something of their one experience and a consequence relating to the conflict to the group. After each person has shared their story, express thanks for their contribution and for sharing their story with the group before moving on to the next person.

## Part 3

### Group Discussion

**Task:** at the end when everyone has presented their story, open the session up to group discussion. Remind everyone that ground rules continue to apply to the discussion. The purpose of the discussion is to explore with the group, what the personal lived experiences and the stories tell us about:

- what we already know about the conflict
- the depth and breadth of the impact and consequences of the conflict
- remembering and memory i.e. how easily participants remembered, what participants remember and what participants may have forgotten
- differences in experiences and perspectives of the conflict that emerge
- any risks which come with giving voice to one's own lived experiences.

## Part 4

### Closure

**Task:** close this session by asking each person to pair up with one person in the group whose story they connected with or they appreciated hearing. Ask each person to share with the other person:

One thing I appreciated about your story is.....

or

One thing I connected with or have in common with your story is...



## Developing an Inclusive Approach: Diversity and Language



### The phrase - “the conflict in and about Northern Ireland”.

In setting out to discuss approaches to dealing with the past as a diverse group of individuals, it became clear within Healing Through Remembering that holding meaningful conversations would not only require active listening but also attentiveness to difference. It also became clear that to hold meaningful conversations, inclusive approaches or accommodation would have to be found.

Individuals involved in Healing Through Remembering brought to the conversation wide-ranging perspectives and lived experiences of conflict. Such differences could not be left at the door, avoided or glossed over, rather differences were a critical dimension of the conversation, being invited in to inform the discussion and debate.

As a result of such an approach, new possibilities which work with existing differences and diversity open up, without forcing accommodation and without dismissing or diminishing different realities.

### The importance of language

Language is an indicator of diversity, as the use and choice of words can reveal or imply experience, perspectives and beliefs. The fact that despite all violence has led to the same outcomes in terms of death, loss and suffering, the number of ways to which violent conflict in and about Northern Ireland is referred to, demonstrates the diversity of opinion that exists as to the cause, effect, impact and meaning of the conflict.

The creation of the phrase “the conflict in and about Northern Ireland” is an example of the use of accommodating and inclusive language. It was a phrase that Healing Through Remembering as an organisation adopted in order to refer to the conflict.

Devising a new term for specific purposes did not mean that everyone involved had to replace the term previously used with a new one. This was not the expectation. However the creation of an inclusive term meant that individuals were able to engage with one another without offending or excluding one another, and the organisation had found a way to promote its work, and to engage with others in a way which minimised the risk of exclusion.



## Group Conversation - Language and an inclusive approach.

**Purpose:** to explore the ways in which language reflects diverse meanings and perspectives, and issues of exclusiveness and inclusiveness.

**Time:** 30-40 minutes.

**Prepare:** have flip chart paper and open and as the group call out the words write these down for the group to see.

**Task:** use the following reflective questions to explore a number of areas:

- Q: what words do you use to refer to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland? Why?
- Q: what meaning do these words convey that others do not?
- Q: why are these words important to you?
- Q: what other words might you use? In what circumstances or why?
- Q: what other words exist to refer to the conflict? Who might use these words? Why are these words important to them?
- Q: are all of the words mutually exclusive?
- Q: what words do you think might offer inclusiveness?
- Q: what might be the value of inclusive language?
- Q: where else might an inclusive approach be useful to the discussions?
- Q: how important is an inclusive approach to dealing with the past?





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