

# STRENGTHENING MEMORY, JUSTICE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BRAZIL AND THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

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THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

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The publication, published simultaneously in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, aims to disseminate and reinforce the Latin American experience in the transitional justice field—especially on memorialization and its techniques—and serve as a comprehensive guide for developing sites of memory.

The texts presented here are the exclusive responsibility of their authors and do not represent the plurality of public policies and academic thinking about the region, they also do not represent institutional opinions of any of its organizers, except when expressed in contrary.

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## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

As the role of memorialization gains support in the fields of transitional justice and human rights, there is an urgency to provide specific tools and strategies that can help memory initiatives around the world to develop projects that contribute to remembering the past and working toward a goal of “never again.”

This publication will be such a tool. It will provide memory initiatives, civil society organizations, and scholars and experts in museology, human rights, and transitional justice around the world with practical examples of and tools to use Sites of Conscience methodology.

The publication opens with an overview of the role of memorialization in transitional justice and human rights as a framework for readers. The focus of the publication is nine case studies from a variety of contexts around the world: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, El Salvador, Serbia, Sierra Leone, and the United States. Each case study will highlight specific methodologies, tools, and tactics that have been used in that specific context toward the broad goal of promoting human rights.

Within this diversity of methodologies and regions, the publication includes a section focused on Latin America—specifically on initiatives undertaken in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and El Salvador.

## PUBLICATION PARTNERS

The **Brazilian Amnesty Commission** was established in 2001 by the Brazilian government under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. Its mission is to evaluate pleas for reparation from those persons who were unable to work or carry out other economic activities for political reasons, or were in some way persecuted by the dictatorship due to their opinions, during the period from 1946–1988. This includes the two decades of the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964–1985). The Commission is composed of twenty-six members. To date the Commission has received seventy-three thousand requests for reparation. Of these, forty thousand were approved, meaning that they were granted political amnesty, thus constituting an official apology for the violations committed by the State. In approximately fifteen thousand of these cases, the Commission also recognized the right to economic compensation.

The Amnesty Commission collection of documents is the most comprehensive documentary collection about the background of the Brazilian dictatorship. It is constructed from the narratives of those who claim to have had their rights violated by state repression. It combines official documents with numerous testimonials and aggregated collections from victims. This collection will be available to the public through the Political Amnesty Memorial, an initiative of the Amnesty Commission of the Ministry of Justice. Currently under construction in the city of Belo Horizonte this will be the first federal site of memory with international coverage honoring victims of State dictatorship.

Since 2007, the Commission has carried out various projects focused on education, citizenship, and memory, further expanding the concept of reparation that underlies its work. For example, through the Caravans of Amnesty project, the Amnesty Commission led sessions of evaluating reparation requests at places where the violations occurred. With the Marks of Memory project, the Commission promoted public calls for funding social initiatives on the subject of memory. From this project, two other important projects emerged: the Trails of Amnesty, dedicated to erecting monuments at sites where political persecution was acknowledged to take place, and Testimonial Clinics, an innovative project devoted to psychological care of victims of state violence.

Along with its projects, the Amnesty Commission considers international cooperation a powerful tool for fostering transitional justice initiatives regionally, for learning from past successful experiences from abroad, and for determining what is possible through its Project BRA/08/021 developed with UNDP.

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** is the global development network of the United Nations, present in 166 countries. Its core mandate is to combat poverty and promote human development in the context of democratic governance. Working together with governments, private sector and civil society, UNDP connects countries to knowledge, experi-

ence, and resources to work with people in order to build a dignified life. This is accomplished by working together on solutions drawn by member countries to strengthen local capacity and provide access to human, technical, and financial resources through external cooperation and an extensive network of partners.

**The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC)**, which is a part of the structure of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Itamaraty), works to negotiate, coordinate, implement, and monitor programs and technical cooperation projects in Brazil, operating on the basis of agreements signed by Brazil with other countries and international organizations. To fulfill its mission, ABC's foreign policy is guided by the SRM and the national development priorities, as defined in sectoral plans and programs of the government.

**The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience** is the only worldwide network specifically dedicated to transforming places that preserve the past into spaces that promote civic action. The Coalition recognizes that the power of sites of memory is not inherent; it must be harnessed as a deliberate tactic in the service of human rights and citizen engagement. This conscious effort to connect past to present and memory to action is the hallmark of the Sites of Conscience movement. As a network of more than 190 Sites of Conscience in 53 countries, we engage tens of millions of people every year in using the lessons of history to take action on challenges to democracy and human rights today. Through powerful participatory programs that bring people together across difference, the Coalition is building the global movement to connect past to present, memory to action.

The partnership between the Brazilian Amnesty Commission and the International Coalition Sites of Conscience dates back to 2010 when the Amnesty Commission hosted the Coalition's 2010 and 2012 Board Meetings as well as the Annual Regional Meetings of Latin American Sites of Conscience in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. These meetings brought together leaders from the Brazilian Ministry of Justice and National Archives along with international Coalition leaders to contribute to the transitional justice process and to launch the conversation on memorialization as part of reparations following the Brazilian dictatorship.

In August 2012, the Coalition joined the Amnesty Commission of the Ministry of Justice of Brazil to participate in the 61st Caravana de Anistia (Amnesty Caravan). At the Caravana, a panel of Brazilians from all walks of life—teachers, government officials, activists, and human rights leaders—heard victims' testimonies alongside community events designed to build public memory, including a book release of literary works on the dictatorship, a film festival, and a visual exhibition of period objects, works of art, and photographs.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

---

1.1	Foreword <i>Paulo Abrão and Doudou Diène</i> .....	11
1.2	Transitional Rights and the New Brazilian Transitional Agenda <i>Bruno Scalco Franke, Dario de Negreiros, and Paulo Abrão</i> .....	17
1.3	Memorialization in Post-Conflict Societies in Africa: Potentials and Challenges <i>Ereshnee Naidu</i> .....	27
1.4	Sites of Conscience: Memory and Human Rights <i>Bix Gabriel and Zachary McKiernan</i> .....	41

## SECTION 2: SITES OF CONSCIENCE CASE STUDIES

---

2.1	The Making and Use of a Historic Site: Activating the Special Court for Sierra Leone into a Peace Museum <i>Zachary McKiernan</i> .....	51
2.2	Action Stations at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum: Interactive Methods for Community Engagement in the United States <i>Bix Gabriel and Zachary McKiernan</i> .....	67
2.3	History Based Outreach: Activities to Ease Religious and Political Discord at Bangladesh's Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram <i>Bix Gabriel and Zachary McKiernan</i> .....	79
2.4	European Sites of Conscience Engaging the Public through Storytelling <i>Maja Čečen and Silvia Fernández</i> .....	91
2.5	Intergenerational Dialogue: Connecting Past and Present in Cambodia at Youth For Peace Long Khet .....	101

## SECTION 3: FOCUS ON LATIN AMERICA

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3.1	Transitions: An Example of a Network's Collective Exhibition <i>Valeria Barbuto and Ariel Caniza</i> .....	113
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3.2	Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo: Paths of Constructing and Solidifying Sites of Conscience <i>Kátia Felipini Neves and Maurice Politi</i> .....	121
3.3	Interactive Guided Visits at Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 <i>Zachary McKiernan and Bix Gabriel</i> .....	139
3.4	Traveling Exhibits at Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (MUPI): Making Off-Site History in El Salvador and around the Globe <i>Bix Gabriel and Zachary McKiernan</i> .....	153

#### SECTION 4: IN CONCLUSION

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4.1	Conclusion <i>Bix Gabriel and Deborah Gardner</i> .....	167
4.2	Contributors .....	173
4.3	References .....	179





## 1.1 FOREWORD

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*Paulo Abrão and Doudou Diène*

This work is an exchange of experiences, knowledge, and theory about memorialization processes, with special emphasis on South-South cooperation. The goal of the book is to serve as a specialized reference guide for academic and social actors in post-conflict contexts.

Published in four languages—English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish—this work is the result of a partnership between the Amnesty Commission of the Ministry of Justice of Brazil and the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, which seeks, through a series of multi-dimensional activities, to strengthen the political memory processes underway in Brazil and to deepen regional and international dialogues, articulating not only the efforts of individual institutions, but also those of local networks based in Africa, Latin America, North America, Asia, Europe, Eastern Europe, Oceania, and the Middle East.

From the case studies and theoretical discussions presented, the publication allows the reader to understand how memories experienced after repression and violence can lead to the evolution and solidification of new democracies. The work thus encourages reflection on the link between the past and the present, and on the pursuit of active citizenship to secure justice and human rights.

Memory is the best human weapon against atrocities, due to the necessity of discussing the importance of their non-repetition. Memory projects are actions of collective learning and redress. They have the clear purpose of allowing an entire society to meet, reflect, understand, and then generate critical awareness and moral condemnation of such errors.

As Paul Ricoeur<sup>1</sup> sagely teaches us, the verb “remember” implies not only to accept or receive a message passively from the past but also to search for it actively, to do something. Memory can serve to remind us of severe human rights violations so they are not repeated. But it also serves as a challenge to formulate policies with a critical social awareness that morally condemns repression of freedom, whether in the past, present, or future.

Since the post–World War II period, an accelerated global movement has forged an ethic of memory. From the Nuremberg trials stemmed a reinvigorated sense of humanitarianism that is reflected in the modern philosophy of the universality of humanity and human dignity. In a way, these values ensure communality and establish a moral order. They have been incorporated into legal systems as well as into political and social structures.

Thus, a serious and systematic injury to the rights of any individual citizen or social group— injuries such as torture, genocide, massacres, or forced disappearances, for example—equally offends humanity as a whole, regardless of the territory in which it is committed. To ignore these facts would be to dehumanize us.

In combination, transitional rights and the new international agenda of human rights bring forth new achievements and legal challenges. Transitional justice, a set of concrete mechanisms to deal with the legacy of violence by authoritarian states or by states unable or unwilling to preserve the integrity of their citizens, seeks to establish or re-establish the rule of law and to acknowledge and recognize human rights violations, as well as the victims, and perpetrators of these violations.

Memory of and knowledge about what took place during societies’ violent authoritarian periods are powerful instruments for impelling states to take responsibility for having committed severe human rights violations and to fulfill their obligations for redress.

## Challenges and Ambiguities of Memory

Silence and invisibility are the two fundamental pillars that enable the continuation of human rights violations and impunity. The truth about human rights violations is silenced, and victims of these violations are made invisible. Perpetrators of violations of human rights have, at all ages and in all regions of the world, very carefully instrumentalized these two forces. Breaking the silence on human rights violations and giving face and voice to victims are thus the most powerful weapons in combating violations of human rights. Memory is the instrument that links these two factors to combat human rights violations. It breaks the silence by uncovering and keeping alive the truth and knowledge of the facts of human rights violations. It strengthens the quest for justice for victims through the power of that knowledge and through preservation of the realities of rights violations. Memorialization is thus a perennial intellectual, ethical, and political challenge.

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1 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 56.

Truth—as an expression of knowledge about the reality of violations that occurred—is a fundamental basis for justice, which is a key pillar of human rights. The fight for respecting human rights is grounded in the fight for memory. Memory, however, is both individual and collective. Individual memory is perennially made fragile by the present-day material and emotional challenges of life. At the individual level, the struggle to live and survive often overtakes and sidelines an interest in the past.

Traditionally, collective memory has been monopolized by the state. Collective memory is at the core of the national writing and teaching of history, which in turn is deeply influenced by the political ideology and values of the dominant forces of society. The process of writing national history is structured around the dual principle of promotion and discrimination: promotion of the facts and faces to be known and remembered as models for both right and wrong, and discrimination in order to make certain individuals and communities—often those who have been victimized—invisible within the national narrative. Human rights are, in this context, linked to the highest values of national identity, unity, security, social cohesion, and stability. These highest national values provide the framework through which decisions are made about *which* events, facts, and individuals should be included as models or references in the national narrative, the official memory of a nation.

Political powers are incessantly devising strategies and instruments to control or influence the reading and perception of facts and events that shape the consciousness and imagination of their people. Erasure or omission within history books is a traditional ideological practice to this effect. Elie Wiesel, philosopher and survivor of the Holocaust, summarized it as follows: “The killer kills twice. First, by killing, and then by trying to wipe out the traces.”<sup>2</sup>

In this struggle for memory—which is a defining element of public awareness and is therefore able to connect the social with the political—voices of victims may challenge the status quo of states and create alternatives to the monopoly on the exercise of memory.

Societies that have experienced periods of direct state violence, or people who have had their human rights violated because of a lack of protection by their own state, can begin to make efforts to reconstruct their histories from the perspective of victims. Such unofficial memory initiatives, which are manifold and heterogeneous, challenge the official version of memory and awaken a desire for recognition among those directly affected by conflicts. Accordingly, listening to the voices of victims is a necessary part of conferring legitimacy on social memory initiatives.

## Avoiding the Instrumentalization of Transitional Justice

The process surrounding nearly every call for transitional justice follows a similar pattern:

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2 Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel made this statement on the witness stand on June 2, 1987 at the trial of Klaus Barbie, the notorious “Butcher of Lyon.” “Courtroom Sketch of Elie Wiesel at the Trial of Klaus Barbie,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Website, accessed September 17, 2014, [http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media\\_da.php?MediaId=5627](http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_da.php?MediaId=5627).

Civil society identifies the human rights abuse or abuses, documents this abuse, and analyzes existing mechanisms for redress. When those are found lacking, civil society demands other instruments for justice and redress, often from international agencies such as the United Nations. Member states then seize upon the concept and decide the framework over time, often while the human rights abuses continue. Eventually, once the norms for the mechanisms have been drafted, implementation of the transitional justice process begins. This is where the greatest challenge lies. Governments, more often than not, rather than implementing the mechanisms for transitional justice within the prescribed framework, place politically motivated interpretations, restrictions and limitations on the process. Thus, government control of the creation, mandate, and composition of institutions of transitional justice, as well as control of the follow-up and implementation of institutions' final recommendations, can restrict truth-telling about violations of human rights and the representation and memory of facts and events related to these violations.

It is imperative that neither investigation of the deep root causes—political, social, and ideological—of these human rights violations nor identification of responsibility be omitted from the mandates of these institutions and mechanisms. Doing so puts at risk the legitimization of truth and memory and the potential for reconciliation, and enables the disconnection of truth and memory from criminal justice.

**Change in the ethical context:** Human rights violations, which are at the core of memorialization processes, must be reevaluated through new paradigms of political and ethical values. Today's dominant ideology of liberalism has a powerful impact on the ethical basis of human rights. Liberalism, based on the laws of the market, promotes the values of competition and consumption, and the materialistic dimension of life. The preservation of memories of past human rights violations is not made relevant as a value for the full enjoyment of the benefits and comforts of material living.

The growing global economic crisis is also creating new priorities of survival. New technologies of information and communication are—behind the veil of social networking—fragmenting communities and isolating individuals from one another. Culture is being confined to its aesthetic dimension of forms and objects, which fits the free market's paradigm of consumption. Here, ethical dimensions, which include human rights, are considered irrelevant.

**Ideological transformation of the political context:** The priority given to the global fight against terrorism and the defense of national identity against the cultural or religious changes brought by immigration are slowly eroding the human rights values of justice, equality, and tolerance. Rising political forces of nationalism and intolerance, legitimized by the new theory of the "clash of religions and culture," are instrumentalizing factors of race, religion and culture, de-valuing diversity, and emphasizing the ethnic aspects of immigration, thereby promoting exclusion and hatred. Governments that are against the concept of harnessing memory for hu-

man rights are openly combatting and challenging the legitimacy of memorialization of human rights. Instead, such governments exploit the need for memorialization as an ideological tool to fuel social discontent and destabilize the homogeneity of present societies. In this context memory is no longer a value worth fighting for.

**De-legitimization of Transitional Justice:** The issue of Truth Commissions, which constitute a main institution or expression of transitional justice, raises other concerns. It is necessary to avoid their disconnect from an ethical basis and their instrumentalization for political purposes.

Transitional justice is losing its finality as a step toward the exercise of full and complete criminal justice, and instead is being practiced as an end in and of itself. In many cases, conducting a transitional justice process, however flawed, becomes a substitute for deep and wide truth-seeking and truth-telling processes. In many recent post-conflict situations, transitional justice—and truth commissions in particular—is becoming an instrument to legitimize impunity and justify general amnesty.

Aspects of the following institutions illustrate such types of instrumentalization: The Truth and Reconciliation Commissions of South Africa; Côte d'Ivoire's Commission on Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation; and Tunisia's Truth and Dignity Commission. The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Togo is a recent transitional justice institution that does not conform to such aspects. The failure of many transitional justice processes to bring justice, social and ethical transformation, and reconciliation must be recognized. Transitional justice has not uprooted racism in post-apartheid South Africa, nor has it promoted social equality. In Togo, political polarization still prevails precisely because the government has blocked implementation of the Commission's recommendations. In Cote D'Ivoire, the Commission on Dialogue, Truth, and Reconciliation is in the process of overcoming the absence of justice in its mandate by placing high priority on identifying victims and promoting reparations.

The success of transitional justice as an instrument not only to memorialize violations of human rights but also to bring about justice, equality, and the uprooting of its causes, ultimately calls for a systematic linkage between justice, the fight against impunity, social progress, and the promotion of democratic values and practices.

## Beyond Transitional Justice: Recommendations for Strengthening Memorialization for Justice and Human Rights

By its very definition and nature, transitional justice is a transitory process, one that cannot last forever. Though transitional justice processes may lay the foundation for long-term justice mechanisms and promote valuing human rights as a fundamental tenet of a society emerging from conflict, how can states and civil society actors build on these ideals so that respect for human rights is not confined solely to either the short term immediately following the transitional justice process or the legal or judicial realm?



Memorialization is one of the strongest means to do so. Memorialization should be conceived and practiced as both a value and a tool for raising consciousness and for nourishing the will and determination to combat violations of human rights.

To be effective, memorialization should link time and ethics. Presently, in many cases, the societies in which memorialization is being sought are not necessarily the ones in which the violations of human rights occurred. A society profoundly transformed and structured not only by economic and social forces but also by ideological and philosophical forces has slowly and fundamentally changed and redefined its value system, sensitivity, and mindset. The judgment of good and bad, the meaning of human rights, and the perception of what should be considered a violation of human rights have changed. So too have what is to be recollected or remembered.

Memory—in its dimension of preserving knowledge of the past—should go hand in hand with promoting understanding and reflection on the root causes of past violations of human rights, along with ways to take action in the present to uphold human rights and justice. The process of memorialization should thus link preservation of the facts and events, reflection and uncovering of the deep causes of the violations of human rights, and present-day action to eliminate or combat new and existing threats to human rights.

Such types of memorialization can lead to the transformation of individual and collective consciousness, resulting in an active, empowered citizenry that demands and ensures that “never again” is more than a slogan—that it is an actuality.

With this publication, actors within and outside state institutions—indeed communities and even individuals in societies across the world—can find a theoretical and practical guide to enact memorialization, and to move from memory to action.

*Doudou Diène*

Paris June 2014

*Paulo Abrão*

Brasília June 2014

## 1.2 Transitional Rights and the New Brazilian Transitional Agenda

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*Bruno Scalco Franke, Dario de Negreiros, Paulo Abrão Pires Jr.*

It is said that once, while attempting to dine at a famous restaurant in Buenos Aires, the Argentine dictator Jorge Rafael Videla was forced to leave the establishment; the angry customers did not want him there. On May 17, 2013, in the Marcos Paz prison, where he was serving his life sentence, Videla passed away at the age of 87. His body was taken to the city of Mercedes, where the population expelled his remains. The residents took to the streets to prevent the dictator from being interred in the public cemetery of his city of birth. The funeral, according to local papers, only took place days later, in the city of Pilar. The family was forced to hold a secret ceremony in a private cemetery.

For decades, situations like this sounded strange to anyone here in Brazil who was used to the Brazilian reality. Here, the situation had been quite different for some time. We were used to crossing over bridges and overpasses named after Artur da Costa e Silva and crossing avenues and highways named after Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco. Not even an official, public tribute to the civil-military dictatorship (1964–1985), such as the one depicted on the coat of arms of the São Paulo Military Police,<sup>1</sup> seemed enough to provoke significant reactions of surprise or indignation.

But there is no doubt that now, only half a century after the coup that plunged us into over

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<sup>1</sup> According to the São Paulo Military Police website, the eighteenth star on its coat of arms is a tribute to the “March Revolution” in 1964.

two decades of powerlessness, the tide is starting to turn. The vocabulary of the rights to memory, truth, justice, reparation, and institutional reforms has spread beyond just the realm of transitional justice specialists. These ideas have been transformed into the causes of various social movements and Brazilian governmental public policies. However, it would not be enough for those of us who hold democratic values as the foundations of our actions to celebrate only that the state and new activists have adopted the guidelines of the pillars of transitional justice. There could be no greater act of disremembering, lying, and carrying out historical injustice than to forget those who continued to support this cause over the years.

And so, first and foremost, if today in Brazil we see a significantly expanded debate on the legacies of the dictatorship and the need to adopt transitional measures, the merits of this enormous achievement belong to the movements created by the victims of political persecution and the families of the men and women who were killed or went missing for political reasons. When both the government and civil society did not seem to understand the relevance or social and historical importance of this struggle, it was those who were persecuted, along with the family members of those who were killed or went missing, who did not falter. Nor did they give into a particular form of violence, the only type that can be inflicted on both the living and the dead: the systematic forgetting of their struggles and suffering, and thus the symbolic murder of their existence.

Therefore, it is because of those victims and families that we have been able gradually to expand our scope of understanding of the violations the dictatorial state committed. We now know that various indigenous tribes and thousands of farmers also suffered these violations. To this day, violence continues to affect Afro-Brazilians and the poorest segments of the population, who are the victims of daily and systematic abuses committed by Brazilian public security forces, whose culture and institutional architecture are unequivocally legacies of the military dictatorship's "Years of Lead."

The Brazilian reparation process was born during the authoritarian regime.<sup>2</sup> With a gradual implementation continuing to the present day, the transitional justice process primarily features reparation measures as the structural axis of an agenda that aims to address the civil-military dictatorship's legacy of violence. The practice of reparations for those who suffered political persecution is a legal achievement that has existed since passage of the Brazilian Amnesty Law (Law 6.683) in 1979, which served as a founding legal framework for the Brazilian political transition. It is crucial to understand that the Amnesty Law in Brazil is the result of citizens' widespread demands, and its creation is also an act of reparation.

Reparation in Brazil is not limited to economic aspects. The transition included reparation measures such as forgiveness for political and related crimes, restitution of political rights, and,

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2 For more detailed explanations of and reflections on reparation in Brazil, see Paulo Abrão, Marcelo D. Torelly, *Justiça de Transição no Brasil: a dimensão da reparação*, in *Revista Anistia Política e Justiça de Transição*. (Brasília: Ministry of Justice No. 03, Jan/June 2010), 108–139.

for civil servants who were removed arbitrarily from their jobs, the right to return to work. Laws guarantee other rights, such as a record of time passed for retirement purposes, free return to undergraduate courses at public universities, registration of university degrees obtained abroad, and location of the remains of missing persons. Since 2007, the Amnesty Commission has held public events with official apologies to former victims of political persecution.

Based on the cornerstone of reparation, at least three unique features of the Brazilian transitional process stand out. The first is that the reparation commissions' work has revealed stories and raised awareness about the necessity of making violations known and promoting the right to truth.

The second is that these commissions' official acts of recognizing grave human rights violations committed by the state have served, along with probative evidence, as the factual basis for internal and external legal actions, such as bringing the cases of victims to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Such action provides a way to promote the right to justice in a context in which evidence of significant crimes has already been destroyed.

Third, the reparation process has contributed to a sustained advancement in memory policies, whether through the publication of basic works, such as the *Right to Truth and Memory* report, which officially documents the admission of state crimes, or through actions such as the creation of Amnesty Caravans, the development of the *Marks of Memory* project, and the implementation of the Amnesty Memorial. These individual, collective, moral, and symbolic reparations also have a well-defined dimension of memory formation.

In November 2011, there was a substantial advancement: the sanctioning of Law 12.528, which created the National Truth Commission. The law's first article affirms the right to memory and truth.

Reforming institutions has also been a constant task in the country's political and institutional agenda. Reforms have included structural changes implemented during more than twenty-five years of democratic governments. Political participation and political power are institutionalized in society and in the government, with effective alternation in power between different political groups, increasing control mechanisms for public administration and transparency, and significant reforms in the justice system. Nevertheless, citizens still await changes such as a widespread reform of the armed forces and of public safety and police systems.

Thus, there have been advances in providing the truth and promoting memory. However, specific files from centers of investigation and repression directly linked to the armed forces have not been provided to the general public.<sup>3</sup> To date, the structures used for committing human rights violations cannot be identified and made public, nor can their ramifications in various parts of government and society. Practices of torture, death, and disappearances have

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3 These centers used for repression linked to military command were: the Aeronautical Safety Information Center (CISA), the Army Information Center (CIE), and CENIMAR (Naval Information Center). Only part of CISA's files were submitted to the National Archives.

also not been explained. Their perpetrators have not been identified and sent to the appropriate government agencies. Family members have yet to receive information about the remains of their missing loved ones and the circumstances of their presumed deaths.

## Public Memory Policies in Brazil

Brazil has gradually strengthened its public policies related to memory and legal transitional concepts. At the institutional level, the Amnesty Commission's memorialization work is particularly visible through specific projects such as Marks of Memory, Trails of Amnesty, the Marks of Memory Film Screening, Amnesty Caravans, and the Political Amnesty Memorial.

The Marks of Memory project began with the goals of fomenting civil society initiatives in the local, regional, and national spheres and expanding the scope of human rights education policy to include connecting victims of the dictatorial regime through their memories. The initiative, as described in the 2008 Annual Amnesty Commission Report, emerged through the Amnesty Memorial project:

The Political Amnesty Memorial in Brazil, through a partnership with specialists in the History departments at federal universities in Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Minas Gerais (UFMG) and Bahia (UFBA), is developing the "Marks of Memory: Oral History of Political Amnesty in Brazil" project. This project aims to compile a collection of oral and audiovisual sources, with their own theoretical and methodological criteria for registration and organization, of the life stories of people that experienced the period of repression, especially those included in Law No. 10.559/02. At the end, collections of organized oral and audiovisual sources will be made available for public consultation and research at the Political Amnesty Memorial Documentation and Research Center in Brazil.<sup>4</sup>

The initiative's initial intent was very popular in civil society, especially in sectors that identified with the topic of political amnesty and felt encouraged to contribute to the recovery of national historical memory. The Marks of Memory project, which combines multiple initiatives, has four different types of activities: public hearings at which the public can listen to those who were politically persecuted speak about their pasts and their relationships with the present; oral history, in the form of interviews with victims of political persecution; publications, including memoirs of victims of political persecution, dissertations and doctoral theses on the dictatorial period, reprints of reference works, and records of proceedings for political amnesty and transitional justice events; and public calls for initiatives to foment civil society, with public bidding processes to select projects for preservation, memory, disclosure, and dissemination. The projects include documentaries, publications, art and photography exhibits, lectures, con-

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4 Comissão de Anistia. Relatório Anual da Comissão de Anistia de 2008. 58–59.

certs, film restoration, collection preservation, sites of memory, theatrical productions, and educational materials.

As a result of these public calls to foment civil society initiatives, from 2010 to 2013 selected organizations signed over forty agreements to create varied projects about political amnesty. The selected initiatives include a film series, documentaries, exhibits, and publications that have significantly contributed to the construction of a Brazilian historical memory regarding the most recent authoritarian regime. Among these was the film *Repare Bem* by director Maria de Medeiros, which won the Best Foreign Film award at the 2013 International Film Festival in Gramado. In another initiative, Cinema for Truth, a project of the Culture in Movement Institute (ICEM), Brazilian universities held a small film festival with the goal of creating widespread national mobilization about the importance of the Amnesty Commission's work.

Two other large projects that emerged from Marks of Memory have started to be treated autonomously. The first, Trails of Amnesty, organized by the Free Agency for Information, Citizenship and Education (ALICE) and inaugurated with the Amnesty Caravans (described below), aims to create and install ten totems in high-circulation public locations. The goal is to recover memories of repression and of popular struggles against the authoritarian regime's human rights violations. This project will leave permanent marks on the history of every place it goes. By the end of 2014, the project had installed monuments in seven different states, in the cities of Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Ipatinga, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre, and Florianópolis.

The Marks of Memory Film Screening, the other large project that emerged from Marks of Memory, consists of widespread distribution of thirteen films produced in the context of a larger project. The films all focused on political amnesty and the Brazilian dictatorship period, thus disseminating information about these memory initiatives.

The Amnesty Caravans initiative, in existence since 2008, is the Amnesty Commission's second-largest creation. As the word "caravans" suggests, this is a traveling project, with public sessions for assessment of political amnesty requests, as well as for educational and cultural activities promoted by the Ministry of Justice's Amnesty Commission. This constitutes a public policy of human rights education, with the goal of recovering, preserving, and disseminating Brazilian political memory, democracy, and transitional justice. By traveling to different locations in Brazil where political persecutions have taken place, the project ensures widespread civil society participation in official reparation acts. This permits reappropriation of the concept of amnesty, as well as reconnection to memories from the period of far-reaching societal mobilizations that preceded redemocratization. The caravans generally take place in partnership with civil society and agencies in the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches. By the end of 2014, eighty-eight caravans had taken place in twenty different states, with 1,804 requests assessed and a total of sixteen thousand people participating. This project's wide scope and the applicants' accounts both demonstrate the potential of this public policy and the importance of this project for national memory.

The Ministry of Justice oversees the Political Amnesty Memorial project in partnership

with the Federal University of Minas Gerais and Belo Horizonte City Hall, with the mission of preserving the memory of political repression in Brazil from 1946 to the first years of redemocratization. The memorial is still under construction and is scheduled for completion in 2016. The goal is for it to become a place for Brazilians to reunite with their history, affirm democracy and human rights, and overcome the traumas of the past. Over seventy-three thousand cases have been submitted to the Amnesty Commission and will be available for public consultation. Additionally, relevant files that governments, institutions, and private organizations have donated to the Ministry of Justice will be stored there. The content available at the memorial will make memory accessible as both an individual experience and a diverse package of social experiences. The memorial will be a place for remembering past actions and gestures, as well as the words, histories, music, images, and narratives of a recent past.

At the federal level, another Brazilian reparation commission, the Special Commission on Political Deaths and Disappearances, is undertaking two main projects, “Right to Memory and Truth” and “Places of Memory,” in an effort to recover and preserve the historical memory from the dictatorship period. The first project, “Right to Memory and Truth,” aims to recover and disseminate stories of resistance to the dictatorship. The resulting publications will include the *Right to Memory and Truth* report, which represents a large part of the compiled data on the authoritarian period. The second project, “Places of Memory,” is dedicated to identifying structures, locations, and institutions that the repressive regime used in human rights violations, through a georeferencing system and a virtual tool. This information will then be made available to the general public.

The work happening at the Vala de Perus (Perus Graveyard) for identifying and cataloguing bodies is also important. While this is not exactly a memory project, there is no doubt that the results obtained will contribute to the formation of a national memory and, in the long term, will bring to the surface stories of lives interrupted by repression.

Last but not least, the National Truth Commission submitted its final report to the President of the Republic on December 10, 2014. Though this commission has dedicated itself to—as its name suggests—elucidating the truth, the final products of its work about the period of the civil-military dictatorship are also a true legacy and a priceless memory record for the nation.

Memory initiatives are not limited to the federal level. Numerous projects happen at the state and municipal levels and even outside of the institutional level, often in direct dialogue with aforementioned federal initiatives. This dialogue, however, is not obligatory, which shows the great advances Brazil has achieved in the last decade in strengthening memory policies.

## The Rights of the Transition and the New Brazilian Transitional Agenda

The struggle for memory, elucidation of truth and fact, justice and judgments for criminals, reparations for victims, and reforms of institutions has stemmed entirely from the work of

victims of persecution under the dictatorship and relatives of those who died or went missing. It has been both impressive and encouraging to see how in the last few years these causes have cohered into a variety of social movements involving a range of political actors. Not only have older actors taken on these causes, but new groups and movements—with many members who were not even alive during the period of the authoritarian government—have also emerged and taken up this cause as the focus of their activism.

In October 2010 in Fortaleza, during the arrival of the remains of political persecution victim Bergson Gurjão Farias, a group of young people decided to found the group *Coletivo Aparecidos Politicos* (Political Appearances Collective). Focusing on the relationship between art and politics—or, as they call it, “urban guerilla aesthetics”—the *Aparecidos* curates exhibits, organizes a variety of events, and creates graffiti, posters, film screenings, radio broadcasts, and other urban installations.

In May 2011, young activists began to circulate *real* (BRL) bills in the city of São Paulo stamped with the words: “Who tortured Dilma Rousseff?” It was a reinterpretation of one of artist Cildo Meirelles’ most famous works; in the 1970s he put the phrase “Who killed Herzog?” on *cruzeiro* bills. The young activists responsible were a part of the *Coletivo Político Quem* (Political Group “Who”), which used the interrogative pronoun in its name to bring light not only to the serious human rights violations that were committed during the dictatorship, but also to the interests that motivated those violations and gave perpetrators something to hide behind:

If it is necessary to clearly state *Who* tortured, we must also name *Who* published and continues to publish newspapers that collaborate with the regime, and that lent their cars to take political prisoners to torture cells. It must be stated *Who* killed, *Who* governed and continues to govern. It is necessary to state *Who* hid bodies, but also *Who* profited and continues to do so with the maintenance of the economic order guaranteed in the past by the lead of the Armed Forces and in the present by real or rubber bullets shot by the police, who also happen to be military.<sup>5</sup>

The following year, two groups in Brazil initiated a practice that was already well known in other Latin American countries: *esculachos* or *escraches*, a type of protest involving publically confronting those responsible at their workplaces or homes. “If there is no justice, there will be a general *esculacho*,” the members of the *Frente do Esculacho Popular* (People’s *Esculacho* Front) shouted in April 2012 in front of Harry Shibata, coroner and ex-director of the Legal Medical Institute. He was accused of producing fraudulent autopsy reports that covered up the dictatorship’s torture and murders. A few days before that, *Levante Popular da Juventude* (People’s Youth Uprising) organized an *esculacho* that brought together hundreds of protesters in front of the house of David dos Santos Araújo (aka “Captain Lisboa”). Shibata and Araújo are both

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5 The text is signed only with the group’s name. “Verdade e Justiça para Quem,” Brasil de Fato, July 19, 2011, Available at: <http://www.brasildefato.com.br/node/6877>. Accessed April 20, 2015.



named on the list of 377 dictatorship criminals in the National Truth Commission's final report.

Among all these movements' approaches and actions, a crucial consistency stands out: In all of them, without exception, remembering violations in our authoritarian past is accompanied by remembering the systematic manner in which violations are committed by public safety institutions today.

What is the true scope of state violence in modern-day Brazil? Unfortunately, the extent of the problem worries even those used to seeing the data on a daily basis.

In the span of nine years (2003–2012), the Rio de Janeiro Military Police killed 9,646 people. That is over one thousand people per year. In the span of five years (2005–2009), the São Paulo Military Police killed 2,045 people. For a clarifying comparison, the combined number of police force killings in the United States during those same five years was 1,915 people. Thus, the police force of the state of São Paulo, a state that has a population of forty million inhabitants, kills more people than do the police forces of the entire United States, which has a population of three hundred million. Rio de Janeiro, with sixteen million citizens—five percent of the US population—has a police force that kills in two years the same number of people that all US police forces combined kill in five years. Luiz Eduardo Soares summarizes the seriousness and tragedy of the problem:

A true genocide is happening in Brazil [...] it is especially young, black men between 15 and 24 years old [who are being killed] [...]. The problem has reached such a serious point that there is a deficit of young men in Brazil's demographics. A deficit that is only seen in societies that are at war.<sup>6</sup>

Any future historian, geographer, or social scientist who decides to analyze the Brazilian demographic structure of our times will see this deficit. There is no doubt that we are facing an unequivocal and indelible historical tragedy. It is above all an ethical imperative that the state's current violence be included in the most basic topics of discussion on the new agenda for transitional justice in Brazil.<sup>7</sup>

Such an imperative would also include meeting the demands of the *Mães de Maio* (Mothers of May) movement, one of the most important social movements dedicated to addressing police violence in Brazil. Composed mostly of mothers of young people killed by the São Paulo Military Police, *Mães de Maio* has for years defended the need for a democratic truth commission dedicated to investigating crimes committed by agents of the state after 1988. Furthermore, groups such as *Margens Clínicas* (Clinical Margins), a collective of young psychoanalysts who

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6 L.E. Soares, "Segurança Municipal no Brasil sugestões para uma agenda mínima," in J.T. Sentosé *Prevenção da violência: o papel das cidades*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2005.

7 For more detailed explanations of and reflections, see: Dario de Negreiros, "Memory, Truth, Justice and Reparation for the Brazilian Post-dictatorial crimes," Available at: <http://ponte.org/memoria-verdade-justica-e-reparacao-para-os-crimes-do-brasil-pos-ditatorial/>

offer psychological assistance to victims of police violence, have advocated for the creation of public policies to promote memory, truth, and reparation for those affected by present-day state violence.

Indeed, it is important to remember that transitional justice mechanisms were incorporated as state obligations in post-transitional societies. Therefore, they became “rights of the transition.” That is, while they arose from the transition agenda, they were incorporated into the legal order as lasting rights that must be applied to serious violations committed by state agents in the present. This is why they must be called “rights of the transition,” in order to identify their origin, and not just as “transitional rights” or “rights for the transition,” as if they were restricted to transitional periods. Thus, the struggle for memory, truth, justice, and reparation also applies to the victims of violations committed by agents of the state today--violations that are, unfortunately, daily occurrences.

Expansion of transitional rights to victims of the present--which should be a matter of course--does not overshadow the historical struggle of the victims of our dictatorial period in any way. To the contrary, such inclusion strengthens the struggle. Throughout the last century, many of us did not give up; we continued to criticize the gaps in the Brazilian transitional process. In the same way, we have never stopped saying that a country’s failure to be accountable for its past would condemn it to repeat the same mistakes. Unfortunate present-day reverberations of past dictatorial practices--such as the current state’s violence and public institutions committing crimes against humanity--sadly validate the importance of our struggles and demonstrate the accuracy of the reasoning used to justify them.

However, as our causes grow, our voices are amplified and our struggle renews itself with the emergence of new groups and social movements. If the effects of violence produced by a dictatorship have the ability to traverse the years, bringing with them a past that repeats itself in the present, then the addition of new voices demanding provision and expansion of transitional rights guarantees that the struggle for freedom and democracy was not and will not be erased by time.



## 1.3 MEMORIALIZATION IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES IN AFRICA: POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES<sup>1</sup>

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*Ereshnee Naidu*

In January 2012, the African Union Human Rights Memorial (AUHRM) was unveiled as a part of the new African Union (AU) headquarters in Addis Abba, Ethiopia. The memorial forms a part of the new AU precinct built at the site of a former prison, Alem Bekagn, which gained notoriety as a site of massacre and detention during the period of the Italian occupation in 1936 and during the Red Terror period from 1977–1979. The AUHRM, initially built with the goal to commemorate the Ethiopian Red Terror, the Rwandan Genocide, Apartheid in South Africa, colonialism, and the slave trade, aims to expand in the future to include and acknowledge mass atrocities in other countries on the continent.<sup>2</sup> At the inauguration of the memorial, Professor Andreas Esthete, Chairman of the Interim Board of the AUHRM noted:

... [W]hat is being singled out for particular attention are serious crimes for which, above all, we ourselves are to blame...African states and governments collectively resolved to honor the memory of those lost, innocent African lives. What is being

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1 This chapter is reproduced with permission from Intersentia. It was previously published as: Naidu, Ereshnee, "Memorialisation in Post-conflict Societies in Africa: Potentials and Challenges," *Memorials in the Time of Transition*, edited by Susanne Buckley-Zistel and Stefanie Schäfer. Intersentia, Cambridge: Trinity House, 2014, chapter 1. It has been edited.

2 Alex DeWaal, "Remember Alem Bekagn," *London Review of Books* 34, no. 2 [2012], 16. accessed September 21, 2014, <http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2012/01/20/remember-alem-bekagn/>.

recognized at this site today is a deep moral fact about ourselves that no emergent generation of Africans can ever afford to forget [ . . . ] In sum, the Memorial is a standing symbol of Africa's commitment to justice.<sup>3</sup>

The AUHRM is just one example of the increased role that memorialization<sup>4</sup> has begun to play in post-conflict societies. Not only does the AUHRM exemplify the increased political recognition of memorialization and commitment to use it as a means to recognize victims of mass atrocity at a regional level, but it also highlights the increased role of memorials in broader transitional justice processes. Memorialization fills in some of the gaps that cannot be fully addressed by formal transitional justice mechanisms such as prosecutions.<sup>5</sup> While memorials have almost always been part of the public landscape, the role of memorialization as a symbol of recognition of suffering and a form of reparations for victims gained political and social support following the Holocaust as the world attempted to come to terms with mass atrocity, the scale of which had never before been seen in modern times. Since then, supported by the growth of the transitional justice field, memorialization has gained salience as a mechanism that not only supports transitional justice processes but is increasingly showing itself as a transitional justice tool in its own right, enabling societies to come to terms with their pasts and past atrocities. In addition to post-conflict governments initiating memorialization projects soon after the transitional period, victims of conflict are increasingly beginning to demand memorialization as one of many forms of reparations. There is a growing trend to use memorialization to fulfill a variety of transitional justice goals. However, the actual success of memorialization to fulfill these goals is varied. What, then, is the role of memorialization in coming to terms with the past? What are some of the factors that contribute to the success—or challenge—of memorialization initiatives in post-conflict societies? How can these factors be mediated to ensure that memorialization fulfills its often-stated goals of re-building society, recognizing victims of conflict, contributing to truth-telling processes, and promoting learning from the past for non-repetition in the future?

This chapter offers reflection on some of these questions, highlighting the significance of me-

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3 Andreas Esthete, "Remarks at the Inaugural of the AU Human Rights Memorial," posted online by Bridget Conley, World Peace Foundation website, accessed September 21, 2014, <http://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2012/01/31/remarks-at-the-inaugural-of-the-au-human-rights-memorial>.

4 For the purposes of this paper, the term memorialization refers to those processes through which memory is perpetuated. As such memorialization may refer to a broad range of memory products that may include memorials, museums, art and memory projects, apology, or the re-naming of public facilities. In transitional justice, these products generally fall into the sub-category of symbolic reparations.

5 According to Louise Hogan, transitional justice processes in Rwanda and South Africa showed that it is almost impossible to prosecute all perpetrators of gross human rights violations. Memorials such as the AUHRM serve to fill the gaps between accountability and justice, providing victims with a concrete symbol that the suffering they were subjected to will be remembered. See Louise Hogan, "Beyond Transitional Justice—Memorialisation in Africa," *Transconflict*, May 24, 2012, accessed September 21, 2014, <http://www.transconflict.com/2012/05/beyond-transitional-justice-memorialisation-in-africa-245/>.

morialization in transitional justice discourse and practice. Fieldwork<sup>6</sup> and research conducted in South Africa, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Kenya support the argument that memorialization after violent conflicts and dictatorial regimes may have multiple outcomes that might not have been anticipated. Therefore, memorialization in post-conflict contexts may have both positive and negative outcomes. It may hold as much potential to contribute to underlying fault lines for violence as it does to contribute to post-conflict reconciliation and sustainable peace.

## Debates in the Field of Transitional Justice

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the emergence of the transitional justice paradigm on the international stage. With the goal to end cultures of impunity and establish the rule of law in societies emerging from violent conflicts and dictatorships, transitional justice mechanisms were established to provide a space for victims to testify, identify perpetrators responsible for gross human rights violations, contribute to uncovering the truth about the past, make recommendations for prosecutions and amnesty, provide reparations for victims of gross human rights violations, and—most importantly—facilitate processes of reconciliation and healing in the aftermath of violence.<sup>7</sup>

The early 1990s saw the emergence of a large body of literature that celebrates transitional justice as a mechanism to address past violence and rebuild societies after violent conflicts. However, only recently has scholarship questioned the assumption that addressing the past can promote peace and reconciliation and asked whether transitional justice does in fact provide justice for victims.<sup>8</sup> While there is some consensus in the field that accountability is important to building sustainable peace, some scholars argue that there is a lack of empirical knowledge to support some of the larger claims that transitional justice mechanisms can deliver justice and promote democracy, prevent non-recurrence of past atrocities, and facilitate reconciliation and healing. Further, some scholars note that goals such as truth telling can only be realized

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6 The chapter draws on work conducted in Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Liberia that was undertaken on behalf of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. Additional research in Liberia was conducted as part of the author's PhD field research. However, the views in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

7 Neil J. Kritz, ed., *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon With Former Regimes*, Washington D.C.: United States Institute for Peace, 1997; Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions*, New York: Routledge, 2010.

8 Claire Moon, *Narrating Political Reconciliation: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2008; Hugo van der Merwe, Victoria Baxter, Audrey R. Chapman, eds., *Assessing the Impact of Transitional Justice: Challenges for Empirical Research*, (Washington D.C.: United States Institute for Peace Press Books, 2009).

if transitional justice initiatives are sustained and institutionalized long-term.<sup>9</sup> Others such as Rama Mani<sup>10</sup> argue that—given the limited scope and often narrowly defined parameters of transitional justice mechanisms—transitional justice mechanisms may be more divisive than conciliatory, as they may fuel divisions between victims and perpetrators. Moreover, their sometimes narrowly defined definitions exclude bystanders and the broader population from the process, reducing the mechanisms' potential to affect wider social change.<sup>11</sup> Despite this criticism of transitional justice processes, it is important to note that most authors do not seek to dismiss transitional justice per se but to contribute to its improvement. Discussions therefore focus on rather technical aspects such as timing and sequencing of activities, their complementarity, their expansion to fulfill broader peacebuilding goals, and their long-term sustainability.

The global increase in transitional justice mechanisms—along with the recognition of international bodies<sup>12</sup> that transitional justice contributes to peace and justice—leaves little scope for assuming it is a mere trend that will vanish in the near future. It is therefore important to ensure that transitional justice mechanisms contribute to peace and reconciliation. The litmus test for whether mechanisms make a positive difference in post-conflict societies depends on how, in practice, they translate into the lives and realities of millions of affected people at the local level in those societies. Focusing on the role of memorialization in post conflict-societies can provide insights about this central question.

## Symbolic Reparations and Memorialization in Post-Conflict Societies

In the transitional justice discourse, memorialization is often discussed as part of symbolic reparations. With the growth of transitional justice, the issue of reparations for victims of gross human rights violations has taken center stage in national and international law and politics. The right to a remedy has been asserted in a number of regional and international human rights documents that have been drafted since World War II's horrific experience of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The compensation to survivors of Nazi-committed atrocities of World War II has set a precedent for reparations programs that followed. More recently, rep-

9 David E. Lorey and William H. Beezley, eds., *Genocide, Collective Violence and Popular Memory: The Politics of Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2002; David Mendeloff, "Truth-Seeking, Truth-Telling, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Curb the Enthusiasm,?" *International Studies Review* 6, no. 3 (2004): 355–380.

10 Rama Mani, "Rebuilding an Inclusive Political Community After War," *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 4 (2005): 511–526.

11 Mani, "Rebuilding an Inclusive Political Community."

12 In September 2011, The United Nations Human Rights Council established a mandate for a Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence. The decision was welcomed by most member states, with seventy-five states supporting the resolution.

arations have been framed as instruments of restorative justice since they seek to improve—or restore—community relations. Reparations can be material, financial, or symbolic, the latter happening through initiatives such as apologies or commemoration and memorialization.

In framing the right to reparation, the *Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law*, a United Nations resolution, draws on international instruments such as the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international covenants on human rights such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The resolution emphasizes victims' right to access to justice, and the relevant state's responsibility to undertake reparations efforts that meet the economic, social, psychological, and political needs of victims. According to the guidelines, reparations can take the form of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction (the category under which symbolic reparations may fall), and guarantees of non-repetition. They are diverse in form and can take both individual and collective forms.

Recently, truth commissions—including those in South Africa, Morocco, Timor-Leste, Chile, Sierra Leone, and Liberia—have recommended a variety of reparative measures such as combining individual or collective compensation, providing social services for specific groups, community reparations, restitution, rehabilitation, and symbolic reparations. Most truth commissions recommend reparations in order to recognize the suffering of victims, to restore their dignity and, potentially, to contribute to the process of individual and collective healing and reconciliation. All forms of reparations have a symbolic element, even when they compensate monetarily, since they can always only be a gesture and never compensate for suffering and loss endured by the person or group. Moreover, it is crucial that they are cohesive and comprehensive, and that they complement other transitional justice efforts such as truth seeking, prosecution, or institutional reform.<sup>13</sup> Memorialization is one of many forms that symbolic reparations can take and it has significantly gained attention with the global spread of transitional justice.<sup>14</sup> A number of truth commission reports recommend memorialization activities such as building monuments and museums, rituals capturing the spirits of victims, renaming public facilities, and official apologies as part of a broader symbolic reparations program. While earlier truth commission reports such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission report

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13 Pablo de Greiff, ed., *The Handbook of Reparations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; Brandon Hamber, "Narrowing the Micro and Macro: A Psychological Perspective on Reparations in Societies in Transition," in Pablo de Greiff, ed., *The Handbook of Reparations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 560; Ereshnee Naidu, *Symbolic Reparations: A Fractured Opportunity*, Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2004. (The latter is also available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/livingmemory/symbolicreparations.pdf>, accessed September 20, 2014.)

14 According to Victoria Baxter and Judy Barsalou, memorialization initiatives occur through all phases of the conflict cycle. However, for the purposes of this chapter, memorialization will focus only on post conflict initiatives. See Judy Barsalou and Victoria Baxter, "The Urge to Remember: The Role of Memorials in Social Reconstruction and Transitional Justice", United States Institute on Peace Stabilization and Reconstruction Series, no. 5 (2007), 1–24.



framed memorialization under the broad banner of symbolic reparations, there has been a significant shift toward framing it as a category in and of itself,<sup>15</sup> one that is complementary to prosecutions, reparations, institutional reform, and truth seeking. The increase in recognition of memorialization as a transitional justice mechanism is in part because it can often be spontaneous, can include a broader part of society, and can be initiated by any social group—often with very limited resources.<sup>16</sup> The spontaneous memorials set up during the 2011 Egyptian revolution in Tahrir Square commemorating the casualties and fatalities of the uprising bear testimony to the significance of memorialization, as do the almost-immediate changing of names of public facilities in Tunisia following the ousting of former president Ben Ali. These also reveal that memorialization is a powerful political tool, invested with meaning and ideology, which serves to mark in the respective countries the end of a dictatorship, the beginning of transitional justice, and the moment of triumph.

In repressive regimes or during periods of protracted conflict, histories are often distorted or silenced. Post-conflict memorialization serves a political function by rewriting into the national landscape a new or revised interpretation of the past. As spaces for celebration and mourning, memorialization projects contribute to the broader project of nation building by portraying and promoting a sense of group cohesion and renewed national identity.<sup>17</sup> In many cases, national memorials seek to portray the triumphs and victories of a nation, provide martyrs for citizens, and highlight the sacrifices that have been made on their behalf. On an individual and broader societal level, memorials may serve as catalysts for healing, since they have the potential to recognize the atrocities experienced by survivors, re-integrate survivors into the social realm, and set the historical record straight.<sup>18</sup>

Much of the success of memorialization initiatives in fulfilling positive post-conflict goals depends on how the initiatives relate to other forms of reparations, as well as on the process-

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15 Both the Liberian and the Timor-Leste commissions recommend memorialization as a separate category of reparations.

16 Brandon Hamber, Liz Ševčenko, and Ereshnee Naidu, "Utopian Dreams or Practical Possibilities: The Challenges of Evaluating the Impact of Memorialization in Societies in Transition," *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 4, no. 3 (2010): 397-420.

17 W. James Booth, *Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity and Justice*, London: Cornell University Press, 2006; Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003; Daniel Bar-Tal, "Collective Memory of Physical Violence: Its Contribution to the Culture of Violence," in Ed Cairns and Micheál D. Roe, eds., *The Role of Memory in Ethnic Conflict*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

18 Jeffrey Blustein, *The Moral Demands of Memory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Vamik D. Volkan, "What Some Monuments Tell Us About Mourning and Forgiveness," in Elazar Barkan and Alexander Karn, eds., *Taking Wrongs Seriously: Apologies and Reconciliation*, California: Stanford University Press, 2002.

es around which the memorial project is initiated.<sup>19</sup> As outlined in various truth commission reports, memorialization is recommended as part of a broader reparations strategy and is thus meant not to replace other recommendations but to complement them. Furthermore, as Brandon Hamber<sup>20</sup> notes, the processes of—and the public discourse around—the granting of reparations or the initiating of memorial projects depends on the success or failure of the initiative in redressing the past and rebuilding social relations. In contrast to other transitional justice mechanisms, memorialization allows for a broader public engagement, which extends over a long period of time.<sup>21</sup> While always open to contestation, it allows for more public debate and discussion than other transitional justice mechanisms, which are often relegated to the realm of the political elite. The 2009 Virginia Conference that took place in Liberia exemplifies this.<sup>22</sup> While participants passionately argued for and against issues related to prosecutions and amnesty, the working group on memorialization—which included survivors, perpetrators who had testified before the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), government officials, and other civil society members—quickly agreed on the need for memorialization initiatives. Even though the working group participants debated what form memorialization initiatives should take, as well which stories needed to be told, there was a general consensus about the necessity of memorialization initiatives to ensure that the conflict remains part of the collective landscape of memory, that the historical record would be set straight, and that future violence would be prevented.<sup>23</sup> The working group discussion further demonstrated that memorialization can play a significant role in moving reconciliation forward: Not only does memorialization provide space for the parties to the conflict to discuss issues—and potentially find some consensus—it may also encourage a dialogue between the different social actors around broader issues related to forgiveness, justice, and accountability. Former South African and Sierra Leone Truth Commissioner Yasmin Sooka reiterates the role of memorialization as a catalyst for dialogue. She notes that memorialization, although an inherently political act, opens up spaces for dialogue and constructive debate because it is viewed as a non-threatening transitional justice mechanism due to a general assumption that issues of justice and accountability

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19 Ereshnee Naidu, *The Ties That Bind: Strengthening the Linkages Between Memorialization and Transitional Justice*, Johannesburg, Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation TJP Research Brief, 2006. Also available at: <http://www.csvr.org.za/docs/livingmemory/tiesthatbind.pdf>, accessed September 20, 2014; J. Blustein, *The Moral Demands of Memory*; Brandon Hamber, “Narrowing the Micro and Macro: A Psychological Perspective on Reparations in Societies in Transition,” in Pablo de Greiff, ed., *The Handbook of Reparations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

20 Hamber, “Narrowing the Micro and Macro”

21 Hamber et al., “Utopian Dreams,” 397–420.

22 The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission hosted the conference before writing its final recommendations. Various stakeholders including victims, perpetrators, local and international NGOs, and government officials came together to discuss the path forward on reconciliation and justice in Liberia.

23 Notes from working group discussion facilitated by author; Virginia, Liberia, 2009.

will not be raised in the process.<sup>24</sup> However, as exemplified by the Virginia Conference, while there is a perception that memorialization may not raise questions of justice and accountability, and is often viewed as a soft transitional justice issue, issues of justice and accountability do emerge through discussion about whose stories should be told, who should be recognized, and how different groups should be portrayed.

Nevertheless, despite the apparent non-threatening nature of memorialization, historical sites of memory—declared or undeclared—can play an important role in truth-telling and awareness-raising processes in the public sphere. This was the case with Nyayo House, a central office tower in Kenya’s capital, Nairobi. Starting in the early 1980s, cells in its basement became the site of severe human rights abuses against politicians, student leaders, and radical university lecturers who dared to voice dissenting opinions to the regime of then President Arap Moi.

Political prisoners reported various forms of torture, which included water boarding, extreme temperature changes in their cells, and suffocation with dust particles. Civil society observers allege that in 2002, the Moi–Kanu regime made failed attempts at demolishing the space. In 2008, following a visit to Nyayo House, survivors and human rights organizations noted that new efforts—framed as renovations—were being made to destroy the evidence at the site. Recognizing the importance of the site as physical evidence of torture and human rights violations for future prosecution and for the then proposed Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), victims groups, supported by NGOs such as the Kenya Human Rights Commission,<sup>25</sup> worked actively to preserve the site. In 2008, the Kenya Human Rights Commission petitioned the Prime Minister of Kenya, Raila Odinga, to stop all so-called renovations on the site, because such actions were viewed as an attempt by the government to destroy evidence rather than preserve the site. The petition was successful in stopping all renovations at the site. In 2004, victims subjected to torture at Nyayo House<sup>26</sup> lodged a case against the state for gross human rights violations and unconstitutional detention without trial. In July 2010, twenty-one survivors of the torture chambers finally won their case at the High Court. In February 2012, Nyayo House again became the center of public attention when the TJRC held public hearings in the basement, where twelve victims publically testified about their experiences of torture and detention at the site.<sup>27</sup>

While Nyayo House continues to serve as a public building, with the basement cells offering

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24 Author’s personal interview, Johannesburg, South Africa, September 23, 2011.

25 For more information see “Kenya Human Rights Commission,” Kenya Human Rights Commission website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.khrc.or.ke/>.

26 Ereshnee Naidu, *From Nyayo House to Godown Arts Center: A Needs Assessment of Memorialization Initiatives in Kenya*, New York: International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, 2010, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/wp-content/uploads/Kenya-Needs-Assessment-Report.pdf>.

27 Dave Opiyo, “Kenya: TJRC Told of Nyayo House Torture,” *All Africa*, February 28, 2012, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201202290033.html>

limited public access, its future as an official memorial site remains uncertain. Following the defeat of President Moi in 2002, current President Kibaki marked a new political era by opening up the basement to the public, noting his intentions to declare it a heritage site. However, shortly after, the site was again closed to the public. From 2003–2007, various government ministers announced the government’s intention to declare the site. According to some civil society commentators,<sup>28</sup> President Kibaki’s hesitation to officially declare the detention space a heritage site may in part be related to a concern that public attention to the site may lead to spin-off truth-telling projects, which could eventually implicate him in Moi’s repressive regime. Heritage site or not, Nyayo House, once a symbol of horror, has through the work of dedicated NGOs and victims’ groups become a site of victory and triumph for constitutionalism and human rights.

Civil society successfully used Nyayo House to promote truth telling and raise public awareness of the atrocities committed at the site. It also successfully used the physical space as evidence for court cases, recognizing the survivors of torture by holding public hearings at the site itself. However, the site’s potential to promote human rights and democracy education—and to recognize survivors—depends greatly on the government’s will to declare Nyayo House a heritage site and allow public access to the space.

The government’s willingness to declare the site a national memorial will not only serve as governmental acknowledgement of the human rights violations committed at the site and validate survivors’ claims of torture, it will also highlight government’s commitment to setting the historical record straight—an issue that remains at the core of transitional justice processes.

The examples thus far demonstrate the political-but-positive role that memorialization can play in allowing previously divided groups to engage in constructive debate and discussion about the past and to reach consensus in working toward a common project. They have also, as in the case of Nyayo House, highlighted the potential of sites of memory to contribute to truth-telling and holding former regimes accountable for past human rights violations. However, memorialization can also be a catalyst for divisions and raising underlying tensions.

## Memorialization: Fueling Underlying Divisions?

Memorials are physical representations of imagined communities and of how these communities envision themselves in the future.<sup>29</sup> According to Kristin Ann Hass,<sup>30</sup> contestations around memorials highlight the tensions regarding what should be remembered and how. Further, as

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28 Author’s personal interviews, Nairobi, Kenya, July 22, 2010.

29 Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998; James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1993.

30 Hass, *Carried to the Wall*

Sanford Levinson<sup>31</sup> notes, changes in political regimes bring about changes in public spaces, in which certain narratives are prioritized over others in an effort to build new national identities. This process, however, is seldom consensual. South Africa's Freedom Park<sup>32</sup> in Tshwane exemplifies the ambiguity of many post-conflict memorial projects seeking to balance the past with an envisioned unified future of peace—while still attempting to recognize victims and set the historical narrative straight. Given South Africa's negotiated political settlement and its post-conflict “rainbow nation”<sup>33</sup> narrative, the project highlights the role of peace processes in shaping and framing memorialization initiatives. It also highlights some of the challenges faced when attempting to rebuild a previously divided nation while still promoting values of multiculturalism and diversity.

The South African government established the Freedom Park project, based in Tshwane, South Africa, in June 2000 as a direct response to the TRC's recommendations for symbolic reparations. Freedom Park tells the story of South Africa's pre-colonial, colonial, Apartheid, and post-Apartheid eras in order to acknowledge people who have contributed to South Africa's struggle for freedom. The fifty-three-hectare heritage precinct includes, among other exhibits, a Gallery of Leaders, which pays tribute to the national and international icons of freedom and humanity, and a Wall of Names, listing the names of everyone who died during South Africa's eight major violent conflicts. However, since 2007, Freedom Park has become a site of controversy and contested narratives. Various—mainly white—civil society organizations have been advocating for the inclusion of the names of South African Defense Force (SANDF) soldiers who fought against liberation forces during the Apartheid years. While Freedom Park upholds its mandate in that it recognizes all South Africans, irrespective of color, who fought for freedom, right-winged groups are increasingly arguing that the pan-African ethos of the site and the exclusion of SANDF soldiers is indicative of the broader national-level marginalization of white South Africans. In research conducted in South Africa, an interviewee warned of the development of a national narrative based on the dichotomy of good (Apartheid liberation forces) and evil (SANDF soldiers), noting that some Apartheid liberation forces, too, were indicted by the TRC as perpetrators of gross human rights violations. He argued that for true reconciliation to happen, it is necessary that human stories—including those about the humanity of SANDF soldiers—be captured in the narratives of Freedom Park.<sup>34</sup> Such a nuanced view of the past would allow all South Africans to empathize with the realities of Apartheid and its impact on black and white South Africa. Questions of inclusion and exclusion are not limited to those South Africans that

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31 Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.

32 “Freedom Park,” Freedom Park website, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://www.freedompark.co.za>.

33 “Rainbow Nation” was a term coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu describing a multi-cultural post-Apartheid South Africa.

34 Author's personal interview, Johannesburg, South Africa, September 13, 2011.

identify with a specific race group. In focus groups,<sup>35</sup> survivors too noted their sense of exclusion from the Freedom Park project. Many argued that while they were asked to submit names for inclusion on the Wall of Names, they were not consulted in any follow-up processes. One survivor expressed that since Freedom Park was a symbolic reparations project, it was necessary for survivors to be included in all phases of the project from beginning to end. As Mamphela Ramphele observes,<sup>36</sup> much of the contestation of South Africa's history more broadly comes from the fact that South Africa's negotiated peace settlement ensured there was no victor and vanquished. Given this, the contestation of South Africa's history is not just contested racially but also contested politically among the different liberation movements.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, by the very nature of South Africa's national narrative of unity and diversity in a multicultural society, public spaces become spaces of contestation as different groups struggle for recognition and validation.<sup>38</sup>

The question of the inclusion of names has moved beyond a local memorial-specific agenda to a broader question of inclusion and exclusion for the nation as a whole. With the re-emergence of race politics and charges of racism and hate speech against the African National Congress Youth League leaders,<sup>39</sup> and recent calls from Archbishop Desmond Tutu to implement a wealth tax on white South Africans as a means to address the ongoing economic disparities,<sup>40</sup> the once-celebrated rainbow nation seems to be at risk of again harvesting the seeds of racial division. Despite criticism that the limited mandate of the TRC failed to address the daily socio-economic realities of Apartheid in the lives of ordinary South Africans,<sup>41</sup> Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson argue that the TRC was nevertheless successful in uncovering a silenced

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35 Focus groups conducted by author with members of the Khulumani Support Group, Johannesburg, South Africa, September 6, 2011.

36 Mamphela Ramphele, *Laying Ghosts to Rest: Dilemmas of Transformation in South Africa*, Cape Town: NB Publishers, 2008.

37 Ramphele, *Laying Ghosts to Rest*.

38 Levinson, *Written in Stone*

39 Alan Cowell, "A.N.C. Official Convicted of Hate Speech," *New York Times*, September 12, 2011, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/13/world/africa/13southafrica.html>.

40 "The great white-tax debate—'Rich should pay wealth tax'—Tutu," *City Press*, August 13, 2011, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://www.citypress.co.za/Columnists/The-great-white-tax-debate-Rich-should-pay-wealth-tax-Tutu-20110813>.

41 Madeleine Fullard, *Dis-placing Race: The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Interpretations of Violence*, (Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2004). Also available at <http://www.csvr.org.za/wits/papers/paprctp3.htm>, accessed September 22, 2014.

and hidden past, addressing denial, and rewriting the multi-layered history of the country.<sup>42</sup> However, the contestation of the Wall of Names of Freedom Park indicates that not all South Africans accepted this new narrative.

How can a site such as Freedom Park work toward revising the distorted history of South Africa and recognize the victims of conflict without fueling racial and other identity-based tensions? In an interview, a representative from Freedom Park expressed his hope that the site will one day become a space for dialogue and discussion about these questions of inclusion, exclusion, justice, and recognition.<sup>43</sup> This, however, is not the case at present and would require carefully designed public education programs in order for it to become a space of engagement. As victims continue to seek justice for some of the tasks that remain insufficiently addressed by the TRC, and as a majority of South Africans who economically and socially suffered from Apartheid remain impoverished, memorials such as Freedom Park will remain contested spaces of underlying, unaddressed tensions and divisions. The Freedom Park example further highlights that much of the success of memorialization in fulfilling post-conflict goals of reconciliation may be largely dependent on timing and on the relationship to questions of justice and truth. While civil society groups and survivor organizations continue to lobby government to revise the government's proposed reparations regulations to be inclusive of all victims who suffered human rights violations under Apartheid—not only the minority who testified before the TRC<sup>44</sup>—broader unaddressed issues such as land restitution<sup>45</sup> and economic inequality<sup>46</sup> continue to remain challenges for reconciliation. For the majority of South Africans impacted by Apartheid, and those survivors who testified in the TRC, social justice has still not been achieved. Memorialization under such conditions therefore remains meaningless, becoming instead a space of contestation to raise other outstanding justice issues.

Memorialization, when in the form of nation-building projects, is largely affected by—and contributes to—the politics of inclusion and exclusion. The importance given to different sectors of society in the transitional justice process is often reflected in who is included in discussions

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42 Deborah Posel and Graeme Simpson, eds., *Commissioning the Past: Understanding South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2002.

43 Author's personal interview, Johannesburg, South Africa, September 9, 2011.

44 Khulumani Support Group, "No Cohesion without Reparations!—The Struggle for Inclusive and Comprehensive Reparations: A View from the South African Coalition for Transitional Justice," July 22, 2007, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://www.khulumani.net/reparations/item/499-no-cohesion-without-reparations-the-struggle-for-inclusive-and-comprehensive-reparations-a-view-from-the-south-african-coalition-for-transitional-justice.html>.

45 James L. Gibson, *Overcoming Historical Injustices: Land Reconciliation in South Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

46 Kate Lefko-Everett, Ayanda Nyoka, and Lucia Tiscornia, "SA Reconciliation Barometer Survey: 2011 Report," 2011, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://reconciliationbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/2011-SA-Reconciliation-Barometer.pdf>.

about meaning, style, and shape of a memorialization activity and who is represented in the final product. This was illustrated in the conflict over the clock tower in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, in 2009. The clock tower at the Eastern Police Station in Freetown, built during British colonial rule, is a landmark of the central Kiskey Street area. In addition to serving as a marker for the history of colonialism, it also serves as a reminder of the more recent war in 1991–2002; it was at this site that some of the fiercest battles took place during the early days of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) intervention and consequent violence. In March 2009, the city mayor from the All Peoples' Congress (APC), which has been in power since 2007, unveiled a newly renovated clock tower. The original sandstone was painted and tiled, and the tower was presented as the APC's commitment to revitalizing and developing the city.<sup>47</sup>

At the unveiling, supporters of the opposition party, Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), verbally abused and attacked the mayor, arguing that they were not consulted about the renovations. In return, APC supporters vandalized SLPP offices and property, giving rise to three days of rioting and political violence, which spread to the provinces. While it is clear that the memorial itself was only the catalyst that brought to the fore underlying tensions around political marginalization, the incident highlights how memorialization can serve as a barometer to measure levels of reconciliation and peace.<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

Memorialization has as much potential to contribute to post-conflict transitional justice and peacebuilding as it does to fuel underlying conflict. Yet, if thoughtfully conceived, memorialization can serve as a reminder of the futility of violence and can continue to build on other transitional justice processes—as exemplified by the Peace Museum at the site of the former Special Court of Sierra Leone (SCSL).<sup>49</sup> During the outreach and consultation process with local communities, the Peace Museum Project Management Team found that many people were willing to contribute previously untold stories of the war. Some acknowledged that they had been fearful of testifying at the truth and reconciliation commission that operated from 2002–2004; however, with the passage of time, they had become increasingly willing to share their stories.

Through conceptualization, development, and ongoing educational and public programs,

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47 Lisa Denney, "Sierra Leone: Wave of Violence or Wake-Up Call?," *Pambazuka* 438, June 18, 2009, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/57073>.

48 Similarly, in South Africa in 2007, the Kiptown Freedom Square, which is the heritage site that marks the signing of the Freedom Charter, became the space for violent political protests. The local community was protesting against the lack of basic service delivery in the area. Here again the memorial space became a space for protest and highlighted that fact that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without the realization of social justice.

49 More about the development of the Peace Museum at the site of the former SCSL can be found in the chapter "The Making and Use of a Historic Site: Activating the Special Court for Sierra Leone into a Peace Museum" in this book. –Ed.



memorialization can offer spaces for dialogue and debate, thereby contributing to the re-establishment of a culture of democracy—which in many cases was silenced by preceding repressive regimes or during periods of protracted violence. In the case of the clock tower, the renovation process had the potential to bring political parties together at the same table. While it might not have resulted in consensus, such a gesture of the current government could have indicated the will to listen to varying voices, including voices of descent. Similarly, debate about the Wall of Names at Freedom Park had the potential to bring contesting groups together to discuss the moral questions regarding the various phases of violence in South Africa and the meaning for justice, reconciliation, and forgiveness today. However, for memorialization to serve as a catalyst for discussing some of the more difficult issues with which post-conflict societies often grapple, it requires a commitment by memorials' initiators to engage as broad a segment of society as possible and to ensure programs or consultations are designed with a goal of having genuine dialogue and engagement that will contribute to the rebuilding of social relations. The challenge for initiators in post-conflict societies is how best to manage the politics of memorialization by consulting broadly and by developing creative strategies that harness the power of memorialization to contribute to reconciliation, healing, democracy-building and—most importantly—the realization of a future that guarantees the non-repetition of the past.

The agenda for post-conflict peacebuilding processes is often influenced by the argument that there is more pressure for security and development than for peacebuilding. These are significant, yet not at the expense of social transition and memorials. As a Sierra Leonean heritage activist expressed, there is a perception that “if you’re poor there is no time for history.”<sup>50</sup> Memorialization initiatives, as part of a broader reconstruction and reparations program, can work toward goals that may not be addressed by mainstream transitional justice programs. While memorialization can contribute to post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding, it is relevant to ask whether it is appropriate to a specific context and whether there is a call from local stakeholders for memorialization initiatives. Is the society ready to engage in issues related to the past? What is the impact of its legacies on the current milieu? How can a future be re-imagined? Finally, how does memorialization relate to other transitional justice activities such as reparations, prosecutions, and institutional reform?

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50 Author's personal interview, Free Town, Sierra Leone, July 17, 2010.

## 1.4 SITES OF CONSCIENCE: MEMORY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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*Bix Gabriel and Zachary McKiernan*

On March 11, 2010, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet inaugurated the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in the nation's capital, Santiago. The momentous occasion marked a major milestone for the country's transitioning democracy. Not only did the new museum symbolize state-sponsored reparations in response to the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet from 1973–1990. But in an official way it also confirmed what grassroots organizations had been advocating for decades: that the memory of human rights violations was essential in order for post-conflict societies to construct stable, just, and transparent democracies. The museum's roots reached back to recommendations from Chile's first truth commission,<sup>1</sup> weaving through the demands of local human rights organizations and the commitments received from successive, progressive governments. The museum's inauguration thus culminated as a collaborative effort between diverse sectors of civil society and the state.

A report from the 2007 international conference "Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action" stated, "In the past few decades public memorials such as historic sites, monuments, and museums; certain public art or conceptual art projects; and commemorative events or performances have become critical elements in current struggles for human rights

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<sup>1</sup> Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation, *Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation*, trans. Phillip E. Berryman, South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993.

and democracy.”<sup>2</sup> Chile’s Museum of Memory and Human Rights personifies this prescription. Its fundamental objective, “to draw attention to the human rights violations by the Chilean State between 1973–1990; to dignify the victims and their families; and to stimulate reflection and debate about the importance of respect and tolerance so that these events are never repeated,”<sup>3</sup> brings together key components to address the past in the present and, in turn, to construct a culture of human rights for the future.

Chile’s unprecedented museum underscores both the link between memory and human rights and the longing for the service of memory to uphold notions of human rights. It also more subtly claims that memory itself is a human right. These now-institutionalized standards in the Southern Cone country, however, are not new to actors across the globe who have suffered from violations to human dignity, bodily integrity, and political consciousness. In one instance, on November 27, 2012, an Egyptian citizen named Ramah Casers drew on the past to take action in the present with a simple yet powerful gesture. She stood defiantly with her daughter in Tahrir Square with a sign that read: “I am an Egyptian citizen and I will not let my country become a dictatorship once again.”<sup>4</sup> Echoes of Casers’s story can heard in countless global efforts to remember and address the past and, at the same time, to call for justice and accountability.

In the case of Chile, Louis Bickford listed common reasons why, according to human rights activists, the country’s famed human rights movement addressed the past with such vigor during the transition to democracy: that there is a moral imperative, that the past is impossible to ignore, that such an effort strengthens democracy, that accountability enhances democratization, that highlighting the past enables building a democratic culture, and that remembering is an essential part of the concept of “never again.”<sup>5</sup> In societies around the world—from Chile to Cambodia, South Africa to Syria—this “urge to remember”<sup>6</sup> manifests in a variety of actions. From simple signs in town squares to state-sponsored museums, the public acknowledgement of past violations stimulates personal reflection or mourning as much as the need for ensuring “never again.”

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2 Sebastian Brett, et al., “Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action,” (Final report from the International Conference Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civic Action in Santiago, Chile, June 20-22, 2007), 1.

3 “Sobre el Museo,” author’s translation, website of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights, accessed September 15, 2014, <http://www.museodelamemoria.cl/el-museo/sobre-el-museo/>.

4 Medea Benjamin, “Egyptians Stand Up to President’s Power Grab” *Huffington Post*, November 28, 2011, accessed September 19, 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/medea-benjamin/morsi-protests\\_b\\_2204988.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/medea-benjamin/morsi-protests_b_2204988.html).

5 Louis Bickford, “Preserving Memory: The Past and the Human Rights Movement in Chile,” in *Democracy and Human Rights in Latin America*, eds. Richard S. Hillman, John A. Peeler, and Esla Cardoza da Silva (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), 9–26.

6 Judy Barsalou and Victoria Baxter, “The Urge to Remember: The Role of Memorials in Social Reconstruction and Transitional Justice”, United States Institute on Peace Stabilization and Reconstruction Series, no. 5 (2007), 1–22.

## Transitional Justice, Human Rights, and Memorialization

The idea of transitional justice emerged from a contest between advocates for truth and justice and apologists who sought impunity for past violations committed by the state.<sup>7</sup> In September 2012, Pablo de Greiff, the United Nation's Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence, urged the full observance of transitional justice as essential to prevent the reoccurrence of human rights violations around the world.<sup>8</sup> There are numerous transitional justice mechanisms. These take many forms and may be governed by any of a variety of different structures.<sup>9</sup> But through judicial and non-judicial measures, truth commissions, reparations programs, and public memorials, as de Grieff described, "The recognition of victims as individuals and holders of rights is essential in any attempts to redress massive human rights violations and prevent their recurrence."<sup>10</sup> Thus, transitional justice highlights the historical relationship between memorialization and human rights violations. Transitional justice's mechanisms mediate competing versions of the past such as, primarily, the contrast between unofficial truths from victims and official truths from perpetrators. In essence, the politics of memory in a post-conflict society is what Thomas C. Wright refers to as "a struggle over how national history will be taught and understood, and thus over how future generations will think and act."<sup>11</sup> As such, many memorialization initiatives from civil society serve to catalyze public demands for truth. For example, Argentina's Memoria Abierta's archiving and documentation efforts<sup>12</sup> and Bangladesh's Liberation War Museum's collection of oral histories and testimonies have been used as forensic evidence to establish truths in

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7 Thomas C. Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America: Chile, Argentina, and International Human Rights* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), xiii.

8 "Transitional Justice is Key to Preventing Human Rights Violations, Says UN Expert," UN New Centre, September 11, 2012, accessed September 19, 2014, [http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42850#.U7b\\_Yajc1yU](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42850#.U7b_Yajc1yU).

9 In some countries such as Brazil, transitional justice processes were nationally organized and commissioned, with internal mandates and bodies, and led by the nation's judiciary. In other cases, international tribunals have been set up, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), a United Nations court of law dealing with war crimes that took place during the conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990s. Finally, in cases such as in Sierra Leone, a special court was established between the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone that blended international and Sierra Leonean law as well as personnel.

10 "Transitional Justice is Key to Preventing Human Rights Violations," 2012.

11 Wright, *State Terrorism in Latin America*, xiv.

12 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the seminar on experiences of archives as a means to guarantee the right to the truth, April 14, 2011, [www2.ohchr.org/2Fenglish/2Fbodies/2Fhr-council/2Fdocs/2F17session/2FA-HRC-17-21.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/2Fenglish/2Fbodies/2Fhr-council/2Fdocs/2F17session/2FA-HRC-17-21.pdf).

official commissions and reports,<sup>13</sup> helping provide justice for the victims by identifying the perpetrators of the violations.

The role of memorialization and its link with human rights is clear. But even in the absence of official truth-seeking and justice mechanisms, memorialization initiatives can help establish the record beyond denial of what has taken place. The truth of what happened during a conflict or under an authoritarian regime may be officially suppressed for years, yet victims continue to make demands against forgetting and to denounce the state for doing so. Memorialization efforts led by victims and civil society actors, in many cases, have been the spur for states to assume their duties.

In societies that have experienced recent ruptures, such as civil wars, state terrorism, or dictatorial regimes, memory initiatives can bring people together across vastly different experiences and perspectives to forge new ways to work together in the process of rebuilding after conflict. But even in societies where conflict might not be a recent event, human rights challenges continue. Indeed, as Héctor Timerman, Argentina's Minister of Foreign Relations, International Trade and Worship, stated, "Establishing democracy hardly means the struggle for human rights is over... threats to human rights take new forms: sometimes the biggest menace is not aggression, but apathy."<sup>14</sup> Within this context, memorialization efforts can be a vital means to engage large numbers of people. Millions of people visit memorials every day and many use these spaces to express their personal connections as much as to engage political issues. Memorials can also reflect the real-life consequences of people coming to terms with the past, taking action, and basing that action on the meaning, value, and emotions that remembering provokes.

Finally, as with memory work, building a broader culture of human rights in an ongoing process. Moreover, it is contingent on local environments and understandings of human rights. Yet—from places as diverse as Brazil and Bangladesh—this culture of human rights can find strong roots in public memorial initiatives. There is no universal blueprint for public memorials, and the construction of each public memorial is a process unto itself. However, public memorials can be creatively designed "to evoke a specific reaction or set of reactions, including public acknowledgement of the event or people represented; personal reflection or mourning; pride, anger, or sadness about something that has happened; or learning about periods in the past."<sup>15</sup> In this sense, public memorials contribute to a culture of human rights by simultaneously keeping memory alive and activating civil society in the construction or reconstruction of society after conflict.

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13 Rashidul Hasan, "War Crime Trial: Evidence collection begins," *The Daily Star*, March 31, 2010, accessed September 26, 2014 <http://archive.thedailystar.net/newDesign/cache/cached-news-details-132301.html>.

14 Letter from Héctor Timerman in International Coalition of Sites of Conscience Annual Report, 2008.

15 Brett et al., "Memorialization and Democracy," 1.

## Sites of Conscience: An Approach to Memory and Human Rights

Can the urge to remember become the spur for action? From Brazil to Bangladesh, through initiatives ranging from grassroots efforts to nationally sponsored projects, individuals, communities and institutions are realizing the power of memory to inspire action and, in the long term, to re-shape national histories and collective memories.

Sites of Conscience are memorialization efforts that use the power of public memory—its emotional value, its collective nature, and its universality—both to embed and to build on cultures of human rights. Sites of Conscience recognize that simply creating a public memorial to past abuse does not guarantee that it will not reoccur. Instead they work from the premise that the best safeguard against human rights abuse is an active, engaged citizenry equipped with the awareness, freedom, and tools to take action and stop abuse before it starts. In this respect, it is the civic action of and mobilization around memory that create and undergird a culture of human rights. The ability for citizens to debate and participate in public processes of memorialization is of equal power to—if not greater power than—the memorial itself. The meanings of the memorial inevitably change over time; it has the ability to transform into a place of encounter, homage, and commemoration.

In a 2011 *New York Times* article about the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum's revision of its core exhibitions to fit its newer goal of teaching to inspire action in the present, museum director Piotr Cywinski said, "To me the whole educational system regarding the Holocaust, which really got under way during the 1990s, served its purpose in terms of supplying facts and information. But there is another level of education, a level of awareness about the meaning of those facts. It's not enough to cry. Empathy is noble, but it's not enough."<sup>16</sup>

The challenge to move from empathy to engagement, from memory to action, is at the core of Sites of Conscience. For more than a decade, Sites of Conscience that form the International Coalition have been working on this question of how to inspire people to take action—and in recent years, specifically to take action as stakeholders in the human rights movement. The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience aims as a network to harness these efforts on a global scale. It works to achieve three core goals: to interpret history through historic sites; to stimulate dialogue on pressing social issues and promote humanitarian and democratic values as a primary function; and to share opportunities for public involvement in issues raised at its sites. These driving mechanisms are interpreted through diverse programs aimed at connecting past to present, memory to action. But how is this best achieved?

One of the ways that the International Coalition helps Sites of Conscience achieve their overall aims and goals is by supporting the development of innovative public programs with the

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Kimmelman, "Auschwitz Shifts From Memorializing to Teaching," *The New York Times*, February 18, 2011, Accessed September 12, 2014, [www.nytimes.com/2011/02/19/arts/19auschwitz.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/19/arts/19auschwitz.html).

Coalition Secretariat's Project Support Fund. The Fund provides holistic support to programs, combining financial support, methodological resources, advocacy, and promotion.

This publication takes one of these tenets—methodological resources—and explains and elaborates on the ideas, approaches, and methods employed by various Coalition members to enhance the effectiveness of their public programs. The case studies presented in this manual draw and describe useful strategies to help navigate the connections between past and present, memory and action. Each case study highlights the use of a particular strategy, or method, by a Site of Conscience (or in some cases, by multiple sites) toward the broad goal of moving members of the public from memory to action. Each case study explains exactly what the particular method or strategy is and identifies the contemporary issue involved, its importance in the overall development of a project, and ways in which it can be implemented based on site-specific contingencies.

Of equal importance is what underwrites these methods: that they represent strategies to engage with contemporary issues. The contemporary issues found in this publication are vast; they characterize the diversity of Coalition members. From confronting xenophobia and neo-Nazism to documenting past and present human rights violations, the wide range of work that Coalition members tackle is a testament to the applicability of history's lessons to today's issues.

Despite the differences in issues raised by Sites of Conscience programs in different parts of the world, there are striking similarities. This existence of similarities has as much to do with Coalition members' shared commitments as it has to do with shared strategies and methods. To be sure, highlighting the human rights commitment of former detainees in Chile, addressing immigration and diversity in New York, and educating youth about genocide in Cambodia all overlap to the degree that they demand public participation, are driven by past injustices and by hope, and draw connections that elicit empathy, emotion, and action in the present. These universalities—public participation, the importance of the past, and emotional-action connections—are connected by the methods employed to produce them: oral history, dialogue across diverse perspectives, and educational programs, to name a few.

## Methodology Versus Method: Making Matters Clear

Methodology and method are terms that are often used interchangeably; however, they are two distinct-yet-similar entities. *Methodology* refers to “a set or system of methods, principles, and rules for regulating a given discipline,”<sup>17</sup> while *method* means “a procedure, technique, or way of doing something, especially in accordance with a definite plan.”<sup>18</sup> The former represents the philosophical or theoretical underpinnings of a discipline, study, or area of concern. The latter

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17 *Dictionary.com*, s.v. “methodology,” accessed September 19, 2014, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/methodology>.

18 *Dictionary.com*, s.v. “method,” accessed September 19, 2014, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/method>.

reflects the practical strategies to solve a particular problem or execute a plan.

For example, on the one hand, this manual represents the methodology or guiding principles that govern Sites of Conscience: the premise of connecting past to present, memory to action. On the other hand, the individual case studies reflect specific methods or strategies to solve a problem or execute a plan through programs that fall within the overarching goals of Sites of Conscience. These methods convert memory to action, help Sites of Conscience fulfill specific commitments, and—at the same time—drive the Coalition’s values and belief system.

Simpler still, a methodology might describe *why* Sites of Conscience do or believe something; a method might describe *how* they do something or complete a belief. For example, in the chapter “Engaging the Public Through Storytelling,” the broader methodology aims to, as the chapter states, “engage the public in order to promote tolerance amid rising xenophobia and discrimination,” while the programs that Sites of Conscience in Europe have developed use aspects of storytelling as methods to fulfill that aim. Similarly, in the Hull-House Museum’s “Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice” exhibit, the broader methodology aims to engage everyday citizens in Chicago in the struggle to repair a broken justice system, while the method or strategy to do this is the exhibit’s use of Action Stations, which are hands-on exhibit features at which museum visitors can take action through means such as letter-writing campaigns.

Thus, in developing and detailing *how* Sites of Conscience do the work—collaboration and planning, reflection and flexibility, defining relevant tools and resources—in short, methods—one inevitably arrives at *why* sites do their work: to interpret history, to stimulate dialogue, and to share opportunities for public involvement in order to build cultures of human rights.

## Conclusion: Planning from the Beginning

When considering Sites of Conscience programs, it is important to keep in mind that methods provide structure and guidance, a clear strategy to achieve a defined goal or objective, and an outline to follow. Every Site of Conscience program uses a method or multiple methods. When the method is clearly defined the program has the best chance of successful implementation. And with successful implementation, it follows that the program will achieve its goals and objectives.

Methods are diverse and ideally are based on a program’s specific contingencies. But they can be adapted to fit each Site of Conscience’s context, which necessarily requires self-assessment and reflection

A simple plan to follow when thinking about a particular method—whether it be collaboration between sites, education programs, building exhibits, or interpretive visits—is to think of its components; that is, as some of the chapters in this publication demonstrate, the who, what, when, where, and why of a particular method. Identifying and establishing these nuts and bolts naturally gives shape to a selected strategy. It also allows comparisons and interchangeability with and between other methods. In other words, a person particularly adept at interviewing for an oral history project may also provide insight into a program aimed at facilitating community



dialogue. In this sense, the basic approach to break a method down into its components both defines the method's shape and potential and gives it room for flexibility and change.

Methods are essential to the work of Sites of Conscience and their programs. They require critical thought and much planning and should not be taken lightly. But they also open space for excitement, creativity, constructive collaboration with colleagues and community members, and opportunities to test new ideas. In this sense, when choosing the methods or strategies to conduct a program, it is just as important to focus on the program's structure as it is to rely on imagination and inspiration.

As the role of memorialization gains support beyond the field of transitional justice to the broader field of human rights, there is an urgency to develop and share specific tools and strategies that can help memory initiatives around the world carry out projects that contribute to remembering the past and that simultaneously build a rights-based future. *Strengthening Memory, Justice, and Human Rights in Brazil and the Southern Hemisphere* serves as such a tool. A methodological manual, it provides some answers to the question of how memory can help build human rights cultures in very different contexts, through practical examples and strategies. Drawing from the experience of Sites of Conscience, especially in the southern hemisphere, this manual provides a set of methods and approaches to navigate the connections between past and present, and between memory and action. Each case study in this manual focuses on a specific method of connecting memory to action on human rights issues in the present and is designed to offer guidance to any memorialization effort that seeks to do the same. It explains the particular method or strategy, its importance in the overall development of a project, and ways in which it can be implemented based on site-specific contingencies. Each case study can be used independently as a stand-alone strategy or in conjunction with other methods.

Together and separately, memory initiatives, civil society organizations, scholars, practitioners, and policymakers in museology, human rights, and transitional justice around the world may use this manual to develop and sustain memory-based programs that actively engage a wide range of people in remembering the past, taking action in the present, and shaping a future based on human rights for all.

SECTION 2  
SITES OF CONSCIENCE CASE STUDIES



## 2.1

# THE MAKING AND USE OF A HISTORIC SITE: ACTIVATING THE SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE INTO A PEACE MUSEUM

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Zachary McKiernan

On January 16, 2002, an agreement between Sierra Leone's government and the United Nations established the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). That same month, the nation's civil war officially ended. The war had raged since March 1991, when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) invaded the West African nation from neighboring Liberia in an attempt to topple the government. Citizens suffered grave human rights violations. The insurgent movement capitalized on the challenges of an already-failing post-colonial state: wretched poverty, political corruption, and a weak civil society. After gaining its political independence from Britain in April 1961, Sierra Leone had struggled through periods of one-party authoritarian rule and human rights violations. Those engaging in political expression or exercising freedom of speech were met with harassment, intimidation, and imprisonment. Those in power enriched themselves while leaving the population's basic needs of healthcare and education rarely met.<sup>1</sup> Faced with these difficult realities at the onset of civil war, everyday Sierra Leoneans were cast into a world of violence, mutilation, and gender-based assaults and violations.

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<sup>1</sup> George Klay Kieh, Jr., "State-building in Post-Civil War Sierra Leone," *African and Asian Studies* 4, No. 1-2 [2005]: 163-185.

The SCSL was established to prosecute the “persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996.”<sup>2</sup> This mandate highlights the SCSL’s innate limitations, since it omitted violations that occurred between 1991 and 1996 and focused on prosecuting only the “most responsible” people. Nonetheless, advocates for historic truth and justice constructed what Dr. Lansana Gberie described as the “Court’s custom-made compound in Freetown . . . a massive fortification of high walls topped with barbed wire, and its own prison house.”<sup>3</sup> While the SCSL was originally scheduled to operate for three years, the court’s tenure lasted nearly a dozen years, until December 2013. The court was not without controversy. Proponents of the court cited as successes the indictments of thirteen war criminals. Detractors suggested that the international scope of criminal justice undermined grassroots concerns for the same. When the court’s doors closed, the Sierra Leone government took control of the compound. An international observer to the closing ceremony noted, “This complex is an internationally recognised monument for international criminal justice . . . It is our hope that this Courthouse will be used as a tool to enhance access to justice for the people of Sierra Leone. It is our hope that the legacy of what this Courthouse has achieved is remembered forever.”<sup>4</sup>

Today, the SCSL compound and courthouse reflect the legacy of international accountability mechanisms, as well as local reconciliation over, reflection on, and ownership of the recent past. What to do with the physical remnants of the powerfully symbolic site is as critical a question for international justice observers as it has been for Sierra Leoneans. The site was handed over to the government of Sierra Leone upon the official closure of the Special Court on December 2, 2013. National institutions including the Law Reform Commission, Sierra Leone Law School, and the Witness Protection Unit of the Sierra Leone Police occupy part of the site. Raising the question of what to do with such a site leads to equally crucial questions about how to do it: How can social actors and institutions activate a site as a tool for justice and remembrance? What type of activities and programs can enhance a site’s historic value? And who is ultimately responsible for sustaining this value and administering a site’s day-to-day functioning?

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2 “Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone and Statute of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, 16 January 2002,” Special Court of Sierra Leone and Residual Special Court of Sierra Leone, accessed September 5, 2014, <http://www.rscsl.org/Documents/scsl-agreement.pdf>.

3 Lansana Gberie, “The Special Court for Sierra Leone Rests—for Good,” *Africa Renewal Online*, April 2014, accessed September 5, 2014, <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2014/special-court-sierra-leone-rests---good>.

4 “Special Court Hands Over Courthouse and Complex to the Government of Sierra Leone,” Special Court for Sierra Leone Press Release, December 2, 2013, accessed September 5, 2014, <http://www.rscsl.org/Documents/Press/2013/pressrelease-120213a.pdf>.

## Defining “activation” of a historic site

Activation refers to identifying, recognizing, recovering, preserving, and opening to the public a significant place, such as the former SCSL. Each step involves the continued commitment of social actors invested in a site, enhancing its present social importance and emphasizing its historical importance. Activation is the ongoing social investment in a site by real people, whether through a museum, weekly commemorations, vigils, guided visits, or other means. It is a process that unfolds over time, yet can be marked by measurable milestones—and even setbacks—at any given moment. A site presents opportunities for engagement and encounter. People interacting with a historic site unleash imagination, creativity, and, most importantly, mechanisms that keep the past alive in the present.

In Sierra Leone, the Peace Museum Project Management Team (PMT) was established as a committee of national stakeholders responsible for designing the Peace Museum and determining its institutional makeup. The members are drawn from government departments and agencies, national institutions—including the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, civil society organizations, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The now-closed United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) had an observer status. The PMT promoted the idea of a museum in order “to preserve the history of the war, tell the story of peace, and erect a monument to the war’s victims.”<sup>5</sup> The museum would “help the people of Sierra Leone to confront their past, learn from it, and use it to build peace, promote human rights, and democracy.”<sup>6</sup> Observers would see the SCSL not just as a monument, but also as a historic site for education, community, and remembrance. The PMT draws on the intrinsic power of place in identifying the unique history of the SCSL site, recognizing its narrative power, helping ensure its preservation, and, ultimately, opening it to the public—for planning and ownership as much as for general visitation.

Historian Randolph Bergstrom argues that, “Places evoking history—historical sites, memorials, and museums . . . hold particular opportunities and social importance.”<sup>7</sup> The PMT is keenly aware of this. This organization has assigned great social and historical import to the SCSL, as have Sierra Leonean citizens. Sites of the SCSL’s magnitude, as this case shows, are meaningful for myriad reasons. They are central to individual stories and collective remembrances. They are containers of experiences and repositories for memories. They are also full of contradictions and paradoxes. Sites such as the SCSL represent both justice and justice’s shortcomings, both the history of conflict and the process of peace. Such sites can conjure up painful pasts and transmit trauma. People attach values to historic sites and to places that evoke history.

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5 Peace Museum Project Management Team, “Engaging Civil Society on the Relevance of the Peace Museum in Building Peace and a Culture of Human Rights in Sierra Leone.” International Coalition of Sites of Conscience Project Support Fund Grant, Sierra Leone, 2012

6 PMT, “Engaging Civil Society”

7 Randolph Bergstrom, “Editor’s Corner: Engaging History,” *The Public Historian* 30, No. 1 [2008] 7–8.

Sites can bring out visitors' emotions and reactions. Diverse stakeholders from all sectors of society visit sites to memorialize, commemorate, protest, connect, or reconnect with the past, despite—or because of—a site's limitations and contradictions. In this sense, sites—however physical and tangible—are hardly static.

## The Peace Museum Project Management Team's Project "Engaging Civil Society on the Relevance of the Peace Museum in Building Peace and a Culture of Human Rights in Sierra Leone"

Recognizing the SCSL's inherent "opportunities and social importance," the PMT has committed to making this historic site relevant, working with Sierra Leone's citizens, who hold varied experiences of the country's brutal civil war. Through a project sponsored by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), entitled "Engaging Civil Society on the Relevance of the Peace Museum in Building Peace and a Culture of Human Rights in Sierra Leone," the PMT incorporated minority voices, especially those of women and children victims. This was a conscious act of national stewardship over an internationally recognized monument for criminal justice. The legacy of justice has moved from an international mechanism of jurisprudence to local actions of peace building. Recognizing that Sierra Leone's weakened civil society contributed to the civil war, PMT reported in its project proposal to the ICSC that it intended to "create a platform whereby local communities across the country engage in dialogue on the importance of the peace museum." Strengthening civil society, through grassroots activity and participation in the peace-building process, would be as much a result as planning a museum.

The Peace Museum aims to honor the war's victims, preserve the history of the war and the story of peace, prevent conflict, and promote human rights. The museum has three defining components: an archive, an exhibition, and a memorial garden. Through these, the former SCSL's transformative power uniquely extends the legacy of judicial justice into a "physical and intellectual space to consider the root causes of the conflict and to discuss the nation's ongoing commitment to preventing future conflicts."<sup>8</sup> To achieve this, the PMT claimed ownership of the site, preserved the site and important wartime artifacts, collected individuals' histories, and included minority voices in the museum's narrative. A variety of actors were involved in the process, reflecting the project's rich social capital in developing an important resource and legacy in post-war Sierra Leone.

## Activating a Historic Site: A Method to Promote Peace, Democracy, and Community Ownership

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8 PMT, "Engaging Civil Society"



VISITORS TO THE SIERRA LEONE PEACE MUSEUM AFTER IT OPENED. PHOTO COURTESY: SIERRA LEONE PEACE MUSEUM.

A place—such as a schoolhouse, boardinghouse, or courthouse—can be understood as a political territory that shapes social experiences.<sup>9</sup> Coalition sites embrace the challenge of making such an understanding clear, using the historical and social import of a place, its history, its power, and both its tangible aspects and emotive characteristics. Sites engage what Liz Ševčenko and Maggie Russell-Ciardi cite as, “the often conflicting interrelationships among people in a society”—a classic dictionary definition of politics that Ševčenko and Russell-Ciardi argue suggests civic engagement.<sup>10</sup> How a place is activated—through a museum, as in the example of the PMT, or even deactivated—through erasure or closure, perhaps, can reflect the strength or weakness of the democratic process as well as the ability of civil society to engage in critical dialogue about the past, present, and future. Throughout history, those in power have countless times razed sacred and historic sites in efforts to curb political discussion and civic participation. The PMT and Coalition Sites demonstrate how stakeholders can achieve an aim of protection and preservation of certain sites, claiming their historic value in the past and present for the future.

Such a heightened sense of awareness about the value of protecting and preserving sites does

9 Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995, 23.

10 Liz Ševčenko and Maggie Russell-Ciardi, “Sites of Conscience: Opening Historic Sites for Civic Dialogue,” *The Public Historian* 30, No. 1 [February 2008] 9–15.



not emerge naturally, but through the commitment and experiences of the social actors invested in a certain site. It is not enough to claim a site is historic in order to use it as a potent tool for peace and democracy building. Rather, it is necessary to maintain the site as an active entity through social and political action, community programming, and a commitment to a culture of human rights. The Peace Museum's three core elements enable it to meet these qualifications through a variety of activities, ranging from historical research at the archive to personal reflection and commemoration at the memorial garden. Moreover, the PMT's ICSC-backed program, "Engaging Civil Society on the Relevance of the Peace Museum in Building Peace and a Culture of Human Rights in Sierra Leone," promotes building a reciprocal relationship between the national institution and the country's local communities. From in situ planning and programming to nationwide consultations and dialogue, activities layer the former SCSL with social and historic import. In post-civil war Sierra Leone, the site serves as a tool for "individual and collective healing and learning."<sup>11</sup>

The work at the site has been historic due to components such as narrative truth telling about the civil war, collection and interpretation of the material culture related to it, and use of the site not as a singular monument but as a cornerstone in the cultural landscape of human rights. "Engaging Civil Society on the Relevance of the Peace Museum in Building Peace and a Culture of Human Rights in Sierra Leone" is an important example of this. Its specific objectives are: to enable communities to discuss the peace museum and its contribution to peace-building, to raise awareness about the peace museum and the need for communities to be involved in it, to allay fears regarding the Special Court's use of artifacts as a pretext to gather evidence, and to engage communities in the identification and collection of artifacts for the peace museum. These objectives promote community ownership and empowerment. These objectives also demonstrate the PMT's sensitivity to the idea that to activate a site as a center for peace and democracy building, it is necessary to include the diverse histories, interpretations, and struggles of understanding of the people who experienced the war firsthand. As much as grassroots communities experienced the hard history of the civil war, so too are they engaged in creating, archiving, and sharing the knowledge of it through the peace museum at the former SCSL.

## Nuts and Bolts: Characteristics and Considerations

Activated historic sites are spaces of encounter. Not only is their development an important step in transmitting memory, their existence reflects social opportunities and political openings in reconciliation processes after civil conflict.

The activation or use of an individual site by social actors is contingent on a variety of considerations. There is not a one-size-fits-all method. Local factors such as access to, designation of, and contestation over a site can impede or propel processes of activation. Activating a site can be a bottom-up, top-down, or collaborative initiative. It is a difficult process, at best. Chal-

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11 PMT, "Engaging Civil Society"

Challenges arise because of the inherent politics of special places, because people with sometimes divergent agendas care about these places, and because places convey different meanings to distinct communities. At worst, serious conflicts can erupt over the meanings and uses of a site, at the cost of productive or collaborative processes. Whatever the case, a high degree of care, caution, and sensitivity must be exercised when approaching the politics of place.

**Who:** Who activates a site? Who are the stakeholders? Who owns the site?  
Who invests it with social and historical importance?

Activating a site involves many participants. Not surprisingly, a process of this sort has potential for problems. People may have competing visions on how best to activate a site, and once activated, how to maintain a site together. Despite this, a process with many participants has potential for close collaboration that benefits from a diversity of experiences and expectations. Greater collaboration can give the site greater legitimacy, particularly if the process enables different perspectives and voices to contribute to decision making. An inclusive process also increases the potential resources available, including human, economic, and political resources. Groups that have activated sites successfully have also demonstrated an ability to unite diverse stakeholders rather than divide them. Certain groups should be considered for involvement, including:

- “ **Grassroots Stakeholders:** It is often the grassroots actors who push for activation of an important site in the community. As the process moves through its natural ebbs and flows, it is important that grassroots groups’ voices and visions remain at the forefront of decision making. These groups represent community interests and, often, the un-official histories and memories intrinsic to a site’s historic and cultural value. Grassroots stakeholders may include:
  - “ Civil society organizations
  - “ Traditional and religious leaders
  - “ Women’s groups
  - “ Youth groups
  - “ War victims
  - “ Human rights organizations
  - “ Former prisoner groups
  - “ Religious committees
  - “ Ethnic minorities
  - “ Student groups
  - “ Elderly communities
  - “ Neighbors of the site
  
- “ **Official Stakeholders:** Official stakeholders play important roles in the development of historic sites. They represent government agencies and professional organizations. They

bring state support and political weight, as well as practical benefits such as professional knowledge and economic resources. Moreover, certain official stakeholders such as government ministries of culture, tourism, or human rights, can guarantee protection of the site with status designations. A site deemed a “historic patrimony” or a “national historic monument” might enjoy greater advantages than a site without official patronage. Official stakeholders may include:

- .. Government ministries and agencies
  - .. National institutions including the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
  - .. National libraries and archives
  - .. Academics
  - .. Architect or artist guilds
  - .. Donors
  - .. City planners
  - .. Universities
- .. **Owners and Administrators:** Ownership and administration of a site can be private, public, or a private-public venture. Accordingly, interests in and the ability to use the site are dependent on who its legal owners are and who controls it administratively, as well as on the visions of its oversight boards.
- ç **The Peace Museum Project Management Team:** The PMT is comprised of a diverse fourteen-member team including representatives from the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, the National Archives, the human rights NGO Advocacy Movement Network, the Amputees and War Wounded Association, the Attorney General’s Office, the United Nations, and even the original Special Court for Sierra Leone. The PMT is charged with the implementation of the museum project and is responsible for engaging civil society on its mission and vision.

**What:** What types of sites can be activated? What are the objectives? What narrative will be told?

Emblematic sites such as battlefields or mass graves evoke immediate associations with remembrance and commemoration, and are often identified for activation efforts. However, more mundane buildings in an urban landscape can also shed light on crucial social histories. Identifying and preserving a former garment factory can illuminate the history and memory of the ethnic communities who worked there. A former five-and-dime store may provide insights into policies of segregation in the southern United States. A critical look at physical environments may reveal histories beyond surface impressions, and reflect or awaken a community’s desire to protect and preserve the place. Types of sites to consider may include:

- Former houses
- Initiation and induction sites
- Battlefields
- Churches and religious sites
- Former prisons and concentration camps
- Cemeteries

Objectives may range from documentation, preservation, representation, and interpretation of the past, to engaging civil and political society about fundamental issues of the present. Objectives can be stated clearly in a site's mission and vision, and achieved through programs and outreach. Objectives may include:

- Archive and interpret historic artifacts
- Share and preserve a site's history
- Stimulate critical reflection for site visitors
- Offer resources for civic engagement
- Extend and advance historical legacy

The narrative to be told normally begins with the history of the site itself and then connects that history to larger historical processes and events. A physical site that has been intentionally connected to the past also has the advantage of engaging multiple senses of seeing, touching, smelling, hearing, and, ultimately, imagining. Site narratives depend on who is doing the telling and what type of artifacts or resources are used. A site itself can evoke emotion and history in a way other historical resources or texts cannot. Sites can tell a variety of historical narratives including:

- Social or political histories
- Traumatic or hard histories
- Narratives of peace processes
- Narratives of human rights and memory
- Local and community histories

ç **The Peace Museum Project Management Team:** The PMT's activation of part of the former SCSL as a museum is both representative and unique. It represents a more traditional approach to activation by preserving the history of a national process. Its uniqueness stems from its use of an internationally emblematic site established to prosecute violators of human rights. The PMT simultaneously preserves and extends a legacy of justice for Sierra Leone's victims while educating younger generations, through survivors' testimonies, artifacts, and experiences.

### **When:** When are sites activated? How long does it take? Is the result sustainable?

When to activate a site may be the most difficult question to answer. If the choice isn't arbitrary, it can be contingent on local political, social, and security factors. Certain sites may prove impossible to recover, preserve, and open to the public during an authoritarian regime, for example. Some sites in similar circumstances can be activated unofficially through ephemeral actions—such as candle-lit ceremonies of commemoration—and only receive official recognition after a regime change. In other cases, decades may pass before actions can be taken to recognize the site publicly or officially. Changes in political and social conditions can even bring about de-activation of a site. In this sense, the nature of a physical site—and what can or cannot be done with it at a given time—often reflects the health of a democracy.

Civil society may hasten the process by pressing the state to activate a site. Many Coalition sites began as grassroots initiatives to recover a site for its historic value, whether a former prison, tenement house, or concentration camp. In some cases, civil society has raised demands to prevent erasure or defilement of sites.

State mandates and reparations also dictate when a physical site can or should be activated. This is especially apparent in authoritarian regime changes to democracies. Truth commissions' recommendations may include preserving a site. When the state recognizes the importance of a physical site as reparation for past wrongs, the site may take the form of a memorial or special commemorative spot.

Timeframe, level of necessary support, and sustainability depend on a variety of factors including political climate, local actors involved, and type and location of the site. Some groups may lobby for years to secure a site, and meet great resistance, although such efforts are meaningful parts of the process. Other processes may be less contentious and may benefit from public-private cooperation from the onset. Sustainability is contingent factors such as access to resources, changes in the urban landscape and its uses, and interest in the site's narrative, mission, and vision.

ç **The Peace Museum Project Management Team:** The PMT benefits from its public-private partnership and a legacy mandate from the SCSL. Although the public began to pay attention to the SCSL when it was established in 2002, the process of recognizing and remembering it as a historic site took shape when it closed more than a decade later. The PMT's project to develop a multi-programmatic museum extended the legacy of the SCSL.

### **Why:** Why activate a site? Why identify, signal, recover, preserve, and open to the public a certain place? Why are activated sites important?

There are many justifications for activating a site. People are universally drawn to physical sites for historic value. Sites convey and preserve the past, and they aid in remembrance. But to use a site effectively in the present, it is not enough to focus on history. Sites are activated not just

because they have intrinsic historic value, but also because they reflect and shape political issues in the present. An activated site not only engages civil society, but also calls attention to critical issues in that society. People, organizations, and governments activate sites for numerous reasons relevant to the present and future, including making claims in the present, mobilizing communities, or deepening democracies. Sites are places to debate the past, create the present, and plan for the future.

ç **The Peace Museum Project Management Team:** The PMT intentionally established a peace museum that would preserve the history of Sierra Leone’s civil war and the story of the peace process. The PMT chose this method because such a museum both provides historic knowledge and awareness of this tenuous moment in the nation’s history, and records the peace-building process that came in its aftermath. Civil society actors, state officials, and international observers all staked an interest in the SCSL. Each stakeholder contributed for different reasons, which is another indication that collaboration was key to the successful activation of this historic site.

## Schematic “How To” Strategies to Activate a Site

### Step 1: Identify the Site

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What type of site is it?</li> <li>2. What are its current uses?</li> <li>3. What is its history?</li> <li>4. What historic narrative will the activated site tell?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distinguish the type of site. This matters for future work. For example, steps for a site of former violence or resistance to violence will differ from work for a former factory or religious site.</li> <li>2. Recognize, consider, and consult the site’s owners. The current use of the site may work with or against historic preservation efforts.</li> <li>3. Research the complete history of a site, including its uses over time. This is necessary to contextualize its narrative. Chances are the site has more than one history.</li> <li>4. Distinguish between the longer history of the site and the historic narrative the activated site will tell.</li> </ol>

## Step 2: Reveal the Plan to Activate the Site

Questions to Consider	Task and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where is the site?</li> <li>2. Who are the site's other stakeholders?</li> <li>3. Is the site in the public's eye?</li> <li>4. Who could be potential collaborators?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Locate the site to determine logistics of access, community contingencies, and types of obstacles or assets that may arise based on location.</li> <li>2. Reveal publically that you are choosing the site for activation, which will also uncover others interested in it and its uses, and how these factors may affect short-term and long-term planning.</li> <li>3. Determine whether the site is already in the public eye. There may be unofficial commemorations, vigils, practical uses, etc. This matters because you may proceed differently in this case versus if the site is abandoned, in disrepair, or otherwise off the public's radar.</li> <li>4. Consider potential collaborators who might also be interested in activation projects.</li> </ol>

### Step 3: Recover the Site

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How can the site be recovered?</li><li>2. What permissions need to be procured?</li><li>3. What does “recovery” mean?</li><li>4. When can recovery take place?</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Secure the involvement of grassroots organizations, government entities, proprietors of the property, etc. Recovering a site depends on collaboration and communication between all of the site’s stakeholders.</li><li>2. Learn what can happen at the site after recovery. How the site will be used—as a museum, a park, a theatre for cultural shows, etc.—will dictate certain requirements.</li><li>3. Since recovery can take many forms, it is necessary to determine if this recovery means transfer of ownership, change of management, new administration, or all or none of these things. This depends on how and in what context the recovered site will be used, and who will be involved.</li><li>4. Recovery will take place when stakeholders agree on the parameters of activation and use. Therefore, ensure open dialogue and participation from a variety of voices. Recovery also depends on the political moment and available resources. This can take months, years, or even decades.</li></ol>



### Step 4: Preserve the Site

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How will the site be preserved?</li> <li>2. What type of designations can ensure its sustained protection?</li> <li>3. What are the resources available to preserve the site?</li> <li>4. Who is involved in preservation efforts?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider choices about how the site will be preserved. The type of site and its condition are important to consider. Some groups will opt to maintain the site in its original state or character to depict a historic period or event. In other situations, preservation paradoxically involves altering a site by transforming it into, for example, a park or place of reflection. Preservation can take various forms, such as preserving the physical integrity of a site, preserving artifacts it contains, or preserving a certain historic narrative.</li> <li>2. Consider official designations. Designations such as “national historic monument” protect a site. Designations also reflect collaboration between private and public interests.</li> <li>3. Determine the limits of preservation, such as what and how much can be preserved. Human and economic resources can determine the extent of preservation.</li> <li>4. Identify stakeholders in preservation efforts. Stakeholders such as the site’s administrators, architects, historians, and volunteers are all responsible for preserving a site. This extends also to the site’s neighbors and local communities, who are often excellent resources and knowledge sources for the site’s preservation.</li> </ol>

### Step 5: Open to the Public

Questions to Consider	Task and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why open a site to the public?</li><li>2. How does the public's participation help at this stage?</li><li>3. What are the parameters of this participation?</li><li>4. When is an activated site ready to be opened to the public?</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Opening a site to the public promotes transparency, historic awareness and knowledge, and opportunities for participation. The public should be invited at all times to participate, review, and debate the activation of a historic site. At all stages, public participation is crucial.</li><li>2. Engage the public. Allowing the public to participate in the process encourages legitimacy and local ownership. Public involvement is crucial to sustainability and success. Local participation is often the initial catalyst for activating a site.</li><li>3. Select the parameters of public participation. It can take many forms: visitors, public input on the site's uses, volunteers and docents, stewards, etc.</li></ol>

## Conclusion

Sites that evoke history and remembrance are important for societies around the world. Whether a former special court backed by the United Nations, or a courtyard that was the setting of a major historic moment for a community or nation, sites of all types, shapes, and settings contribute to memory-making and to the formation of local, regional, and national identities. When sites present opportunities for engagement and encounter, stakeholders can frame potential projects and programs as ways to activate a site. While activation may take many forms, and there is no one-size-fits-all method, a place isn't truly a *site* until it is the subject of stories, memories, commemorations, songs, or other markers and activities of personal investment. A site becomes activated as stakeholders invest it with historic, social, cultural, and political value.

The Peace Museum Project Management Team used an already-symbolic site in new ways to extend a legacy of justice and national ownership. In developing a museum at the site of the former SCSL, the PMT preserved the history of the nation's civil war, told the story of the ensuing peace process, and commemorated the war's victims. A multi-programmatic approach with diverse stakeholders not only enabled the PMT to achieve shared goals in establishing the museum, it also helped ensure the museum will continue to function and benefit from social and political investment at the site. A locally owned and activated site, Sierra Leone's Peace Museum—like the former SCSL before it—now stands as an international example for people interested in activating a site for historic purposes.

## ACTION STATIONS AT THE JANE ADDAMS HULL-HOUSE MUSEUM: INTERACTIVE METHODS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

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*Bix Gabriel and Zachary McKiernan*

In 1931, Jane Addams became the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She was also labeled “the most dangerous woman in America” during World War I for her unflagging pacifist stance, and for her “radical” concern for and position of solidarity with immigrants and the poor.

Today, the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum memorializes this lasting—and complicated—legacy at the very site in Chicago, Illinois where she established the nation’s first and most famous settlement house. Settlement houses were the locus of research and activism that advocated for a more inclusive democratic society and aimed to “uplift” poor people by exposing them to knowledge, culture, and a better standard of living. At the same time, by locating the houses in middle-class neighborhoods, those establishing settlement houses attempted to build social cohesion and bring rich and poor people together in the same community.

Reformers founded Chicago’s Hull-House in 1889. Many, including Addams, also lived at these progressive places. By 1920 Hull-House had become the standard bearer for the settlement movement in the United States, where the number of settlement houses had grown to almost five hundred. Hull-House became a beacon for social justice and, according to the organizers of the Hull-House Museum, “played a key role in redefining American democracy

in the modern age.”<sup>1</sup> The Hull-House reformers, many of who were women living at the site, worked tirelessly to influence public policy and opinion concerning labor rights, immigration reform, and women’s suffrage. This pioneering work combined research, education, and social engagement to develop alternative strategies to confront community issues, an approach the Hull-House Museum continues to foster today.

The Hull-House Museum is a dynamic memorial to Addams that, in its website’s own words, “preserves and develops the original Hull-House site for the interpretation and continuation of the historic settlement house vision.”<sup>2</sup>

## Jane Addams Hull-House Museum’s Exhibit *Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice*

In 1899, Hull-House reformers helped establish the Juvenile Court of Cook County, the first juvenile court in the United States. During the same year, passage of the Illinois Juvenile Court Act allowed the state to intervene in cases of child neglect, homelessness, and delinquency. As reformers made strides to protect children, new professionals such as social workers and probation officers emerged alongside social welfare programs. As the original Hull-House did, the Juvenile Court of Cook County would also become a national model.

Presently, the rate of incarceration in the United States is higher than in any other country in the world. The United States is also home to a multi-billion dollar prison industrial complex (PIC), defined by one organization as, “the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social, and political problems.”<sup>3</sup> In 2013, *The New York Times* published several reports on the PIC, finding what economist Paul Krugman subsequently described in a *New York Times* column as “an understaffed, poorly run system, with a demoralized work force, from which the most dangerous individuals often escape to wreak havoc, while relatively mild offenders face terror and abuse at the hands of other inmates.”<sup>4</sup>

Against this backdrop and in response to museum visitors interested in learning more about a criminal justice system that appears to fail people of color, the poor, and juveniles, the Hull-House Museum created the exhibit *Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice*. The exhibit ran

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1 Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, “Unfinished Business-Juvenile Justice Exhibit.” International Coalition of Sites of Conscience Project Support Fund Grant, United States, 2012

2 “Welcome to Jane Addams Hull-House Museum,” Jane Addams Hull-House Museum website, accessed September 16, 2014, [http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/\\_museum/visitors.html](http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/_museum/visitors.html).

3 “What is the PIC? What is Abolition?” Critical Resistance website, accessed September 10, 2014, <http://critical-resistance.org/about/not-so-common-language/>.

4 Paul Krugman, “Prisons, Privatization, Patronage,” *The New York Times*, June 21, 2012, accessed September 10, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/22/opinion/krugman-prisons-privatization-patronage.html>



VISITORS TO THE “UNFINISHED BUSINESS” EXHIBIT AT THE JANE ADDAMS HULL-HOUSE MUSEUM. PHOTO COURTESY: JANE ADDAMS HULL-HOUSE MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO.

from September 2010 through August 2011.

The exhibit interpreted the longer history of the Hull-House’s involvement with juvenile justice, the Juvenile Court of Cook County, and the Illinois Juvenile Court Act. Museum staff collaborated with community groups to tell this story within in a contemporary framework. The exhibit also challenged museum visitors to bring their voices to current juvenile justice and prison reform debates. At action stations throughout the exhibit, visitors engaged with this issue through tangible and unique tools that invoked empathy and empowerment.

At one action station, museum guests listened to testimonies of incarcerated youth, as well as to commentary from probation officers. Next, they approached a blackboard, where they were prompted to write an offense they might have committed as a youth, and to approach the writing task with “critical generosity.”<sup>5</sup> They were subsequently invited to erase what they had written and start with a clean slate. They were also informed that many of today’s youth are unable to expunge criminal records for lack of legal and financial resources. The feeling of being able to start anew with a clean slate encouraged museum visitors to advocate the same ability for incarcerated youth.

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5 The Hull-House Museum uses the term “critical generosity” to describe the approach it invites visitors to take in order to express diverse opinions and viewpoints in a constructive fashion. Similarly, the term “sensitive criticism” has been used by other groups—such as the National Council on Public History—to describe the type of well-informed, respectful feedback these groups invite.

At another action station, museum guests could communicate with prisoners in solitary confinement at the Tamms Supermax Prison.<sup>6</sup> Provided with pens, paper, and a wide range of poetic means, visitors wrote poetry and letters of encouragement to jailed youth. Museum staff reported that such personalized letters helped the adolescents know that advocacy was in motion and that people on the outside cared about their conditions.

The *Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice* exhibit educated visitors on the history of juvenile justice. Through the action stations, it also presented personalized stories of incarcerated youth and allowed people to take action in the present, whether they had just a moment or more time to spare in order to do so. These tailored, interactive opportunities, which were made possible through community collaboration, added to a sense that the exhibit—aptly named—helped complete unfinished business in juvenile justice.

## Action Stations as a Methodological Tool

An action station is a methodological tool used to enhance the effectiveness of Sites of Conscience by increasing the potential for visitor participation. The tool prompts exactly what it professes: action.

An action station provides guests at Sites of Conscience with the opportunity to participate in



AN ACTION STATION WHERE VISITORS ARE INVITED TO SEND POSTCARDS WITH POEMS TO JAILED YOUTH. PHOTO COURTESY: JANE ADDAMS HULL-HOUSE MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO.

<sup>6</sup> Tamms Supermax Prison was shut down in 2013 as a result of advocacy from activists against its human rights violations.

a contemporary issue in a specific way. It is a vehicle for citizens who are armed with historical context to act on local, regional, and national matters. Action stations—whether marked as such or not—are tools to empower citizens with knowledge and resources for civic participation. Giving visitors the means to act can enable them not to feel powerless in the face of complex issues and complicated histories.

An action station may take many forms, ranging from a simple-yet-powerful letter writing campaign to the more complex coordination of protests and sit-ins. Its role is to give voice to citizens on any number of causes. At the Hull-House Museum, for example, action stations transformed passive observers of an unjust criminal justice system into active participants against it. These action stations came with the added benefit of bringing together a diverse array of stakeholders: museum staff, local organizations and experts, and the public.

While action stations typically provide opportunities for on-site actions, they can also inspire action at a later time long after the visitor has left the museum. Follow-up activities to engage visitors can range from providing information about conducting family interviews to creating curriculum programs at schools or hosting off-site community projects. While museums or historic sites provide particular resources, the visitor, with some creativity and imagination, can decide how far to take them. Therefore, an action station may launch the first step in a longer march of activism.

## Nuts and Bolts of Action Stations

The nuts and bolts—or components—of an action station vary according to several factors: the needs and abilities of a museum or historic site, the contemporary issue at hand, and visitor demographics. Below are universal categories—who, what, when, where, and why—that make action stations easily adaptable to any Site of Conscience. Using these categories offers museums and historic sites an action station blueprint that identifies local actors (who), resources (what), opportune moments (when), effective places (where), and why (pressing issues).

First and foremost, the Site must identify the issue at hand. The Hull-House Museum tackled the issue of juvenile justice and prison reform based on the site's specific history and on visitor feedback. Sites of Conscience must decide the issue or issues that will resonate most with their visitors and reflect their mission. Following this, site staff must decide if action stations are the appropriate method for that issue.

Providing an easy and relevant set of tools for the visitor to use is the crux of an action station. But doing so takes planning and coordination. The following are tenets that serve as a guide to developing an action station.



## Who: Who are the stakeholders in an action station? Who and how many will use it?

- **External Audience and General Public:** Perhaps the most important component of the action station is its audience: the visitors to the museum who will use it. It is critical to identify and develop a profile of who in the public is projected to attend. For example, will school students be the primary users of particular action stations? Or will it be a senior generation that has close ties to the history of the site? This identification will determine many aspects of the action station including the content, the placement within the museum exhibit or the site, and most importantly, the tools provided at the action station. For example, digital postcards might work well for teenagers, but providing physical postcards might be a better option for a more senior audience.
  - **Community Collaborators:** Sites of Conscience should consider collaborative partnerships with experts or professionals working on the contemporary issue at hand. These collaborations can consist of community members helping to co-curate the action station or being “test users” to determine whether the tools, content, and even placement of the action station is appropriate for the visitor. In addition to assisting museum staff in developing the most effective tools to address the issue, such collaborators also have the potential to reach out to the general public including those who may have an interest in the contemporary issue but little knowledge of its history.
  - **Museum Staff:** These personnel are responsible for the overall coordination of the action station. They collaborate closely with community organizations and professionals. Together, they provide the content, resources, and knowledge or tools available at each action station based on a critical assessment of the site’s exhibition, project, goals, and projected audience, as well as on the action itself. Though it may seem obvious, it is important to identify the team members and their roles at the outset, thinking ahead about who will take on particular tasks such as coordinating with the community collaborators, for example.
- ç **At the Hull-House Museum:** The *Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice* exhibit at the Hull-House Museum involved many collaborators. They included advisory experts from the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle, currently incarcerated youth, and Chicago organizations such as Project NIA,<sup>7</sup> Free Write Jail Arts,<sup>8</sup> and Chicago Freedom School.<sup>9</sup> For example, Free Write

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7 Launched in 2009, Project NIA is a Chicago-based advocacy, organizing, popular education, research, and capacity-building center with the long-term goal of ending youth incarceration. Its website, accessed September 10, 2014, is <http://www.project-nia.org/>.

8 Free Write Jail Arts and Literacy Program leads formal creative writing and poetry workshops every day inside Chicago’s Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. Its Facebook page, accessed September 10, 2014, is <http://www.facebook.com/freewritejailarts/info>.

9 Founded in the spirit of the original freedom schools in Mississippi, the Chicago Freedom School provides training and education opportunities for youth and adult allies through the study of the history of social movements and their leaders. Its website, accessed September 10, 2014, is <http://chicagofreedomschool.org/>.

Jail Arts provided the audio testimonies from incarcerated youth; Project Nia educated the museum about expungement laws in Illinois and helped to develop the blackboard “clean slate” activity; and Tamms Year Ten<sup>10</sup> created the postcard and poems writing station. This collaboration was a deliberate choice by the museum, which envisioned the action station as having “value for the whole community—activists, scholars, students, cultural workers, artists, families, and the casual observer.”<sup>11</sup> Other Sites of Conscience should consider the role of the action station both within and beyond the site or exhibit, as an action station may have multiple audiences with multiple roles and goals.

**What: What are the action station’s tools? What are the content and resources? What is the action?**

- “ **Intellectual Tools:** Any action should be based on learning that takes place at the site. Therefore, an action station must be equipped with relevant information about the contemporary issue and its history. Docent-led or self-guided tours of the site, an exhibit, or facilitated conversations are all common strategies to accomplish this. Using artifacts, first-person stories, photographs, and audio-visual components can help convey a particular (hi)story, providing visitors with intellectual tools that will inform their actions.
- “ **Practical Tools:** The tools for action vary according to the desired action. They represent the physical aspect of the interactive experience. For example, if the action station is meant to inspire letter writing to lawmakers, then pens, paper, and legislative information must be on hand. Whatever the desired action might be, the components to help a visitor take that action must be readily available, along with enough instruction that the visitor is not left wondering what to do. For instance, an invitation to join in or coordinate a popular protest or to follow up with a community organization requires that the posters, pamphlets, or other mobilizing devices be on hand along with details about how the visitor can coordinate with the organization.
- “ **At the Hull-House Museum:** Visitors are provided with the historic narrative of juvenile justice and then given a variety of tools to get involved. The tools range from sending postcards to incarcerated youth to re-envisioning prison reform. Museum guests participate in facilitated conversations which help prepare them to form opinions about the issue of juvenile justice, to take action on site, and, hopefully, to continue to take action off site.

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10 Tamms Year Ten is an art activist collective that was founded in 2008 to protest the misguided and inhumane policies at the Tamms Supermax Prison and to end the use of long-term isolation in Illinois. Its Facebook page, accessed March 17 2015, is <https://www.facebook.com/tammsyearten/>

11 Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, “Unfinished Business”

## When: When is the best time to use an action station? Why does when matter?

- “ **Timing:** The timing of an action station will depend on site-specific contingencies. An action station is typically used when guests visit the site, whether for general visits or as part of specific programs or activities such as school-visits. Though action stations can share information about opportunities for off-site and future actions—such as signing a petition online—it is critical that introduction of such tools and resources to visitors takes place during a site visit, when visitors’ experience is fresh and uppermost in their minds.
- “ **Contemporary Concerns:** Action stations can be extremely effective when the actions relate to existing public awareness of the issue at hand. When an issue is present in public debates, action stations provide a direct pathway for community members to act on the issue. It is often difficult to assess when an issue will be in the public eye, but planning action stations around particular anniversaries or anticipated events (such as elections) can help to set agendas, persuade public opinion, and inspire change.
- ç **At the Hull-House:** The Hull-House Museum’s action stations were activated during the *Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice* exhibit. The exhibit received thousands of visitors, all of whom had the opportunity to engage the past and present, and to take action. Prior to the public’s interaction at the action stations, the museum held various workshops and meetings with community partners and professionals “to fully develop context, action modes, urgent questions, a range of differing viewpoints, and other aspects of the project.”<sup>12</sup>

## Where: Where are action stations located? Must they be front and center? Why is the power of place(ment) important?

- “ **At the Exhibit, After Interaction:** Action stations are designed for public involvement and should be employed after visitors are armed with the necessary intellectual tools to make informed decisions. Thus, it is optimal that visitors use action stations after having experiences—such as meaningful interactions with interpretive devices or constructive conversations with other visitors and museum staff—that give them historical and contemporary background on the issue, and a chance to reflect, form opinions, and confront differing viewpoints.
- “ **Location:** An action station should be placed in a prominent or high-traffic area of the exhibit or site, guaranteeing an opportunity for public involvement. An action station could also be located near or in coordination with powerful or moving artifacts. Explicit visibility and accessibility are key to action station location, but it is also important to remember that action stations must be rooted in or surrounded by the historic narrative.

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12 Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, “Unfinished Business”



DRAWINGS BY ARTIST JOSH PETERS ILLUSTRATED THE FOUNDING OF THE NATION'S FIRST JUVENILE COURT. TO THE RIGHT WERE ACTIVIST POSTERS BY CRITICAL RESISTANCE, A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO OPPOSING THE EXPANSION OF THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. PHOTO COURTESY: JANE ADDAMS HULL-HOUSE MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO.

ç **At the Hull-House Museum:** The action stations were central components of the exhibit *Unfinished Business—Juvenile Justice*. Because the museum provided four stations at different locations, visitors could choose from a variety of action options. The Hull-House Museum also used the “power of place”—the site’s own history replete with examples of people taking action—to invite visitors to participate in making this history alive for them today.

### Why: Why use an action station?

“ **Why Not?** An action station’s purpose is self-evident: to inspire and engage visitors, and promote audience participation. By combining intellectual and practical tools at strategically timed and placed stations, action stations give visitors concrete ways to participate actively in shaping the present-day legacies of historical issues. In essence, action stations provide a way for anyone visiting the site to participate in building democracy.

ç **At the Hull-House Museum:** The action stations provide a way for the thirty thousand visitors annually—including schoolchildren, youth, and immigrants—who come to the museum to take action on juvenile justice, one of today’s critical issues. Enabling such a broad array of voices to get involved on this issue is a victory for all.

## Schematic “How To” of an Action Station

This is a basic schematic that provides three steps with questions to think about when developing an action station. The schematic is by no means comprehensive and is at all times flexible. It serves primarily as an outline or checklist to help develop programs using action stations as a strategy for community engagement.

### Step 1: Identify the Issue, Determine Actions, and Consider Logistics

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the contemporary issue?</li> <li>2. Why an action station?</li> <li>3. What will the action be?</li> <li>4. What is the desired outcome of the action?</li> <li>5. How does the action station relate to the site’s mission and history?</li> <li>6. Who is the projected audience? Who will be taking action? Who else will be involved?</li> <li>7. What are the material, human, and economic resources available?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the issue and why it is relevant.</li> <li>2. Identify how the action station method will be used within the larger context of the program or project.</li> <li>3. Identify the actors who will be involved, such as target audience, in-house staff, or collaborators.</li> <li>4. List relevant community organizations, professionals, and stakeholders.</li> <li>5. Identify the program’s resources and limitations.</li> <li>6. Develop a road map or plan for implementing action stations.</li> </ol>

### Step 2: Collaboration and Preparing the Station

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the planning stages and the needs for each stage?</li> <li>2. How does the action station connect the past to the present?</li> <li>3. What are types of actions will take place?</li> <li>4. What resources are required to complete the actions?</li> <li>5. Does the action station involve other activities, exhibitions, or workshops?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the physical parameters of the action station.</li> <li>2. Map out and implement collaborations with internal and external actors for training, brainstorming, and preparation. Collaborate with Sites of Conscience employing similar strategies.</li> <li>3. Describe how visitors will interact with the action station. How will they be prepared?</li> <li>4. Clarify the use of tools to sharpen the action station's focus.</li> <li>5. Order and organize materials and resources to be used.</li> <li>6. Prepare corresponding actions and any necessary follow-up.</li> </ol>

### Step 3: Implementation and Execution

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When will the action station be used?</li> <li>2. Where is the action station located?</li> <li>3. Are the actions on site or off site?</li> <li>4. How are the visitors interacting with the action station?</li> <li>5. How will the action station be evaluated? Is it meeting the desired outcome?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Describe actions. Practice actions, including with a test group.</li> <li>2. Implement action stations as planned.</li> <li>3. Provide instruction and interpretation.</li> <li>4. Observe visitor interaction and make any necessary changes.</li> <li>5. Provide space for visitor feedback.</li> <li>6. Refine action tools when possible.</li> </ol>

## Conclusion

An action station is a creative strategy or method that concretely helps move visitors to action. The overall goal—getting the public involved in a contemporary issue—is complemented by the community collaboration needed to plan, develop, and implement the action station. Through this shared opportunity, issues can be explored from diverse perspectives. But challenging visitors with critical issues and questions is not enough. Providing the public with opportunities to take action on these issues is what sets the Hull-House Museum and other Sites of Conscience apart.

The Jane Addams Hull-House Museum recognizes that there are still great challenges with the US prison system and, more specifically, that Chicago's Juvenile Court is plagued with problems. Curing questionable incarceration conditions and the inability of youth to expunge criminal wrongdoings requires the historic knowledge and contemporary means to confront such issues. It also requires empathy and understanding. Through action stations, the museum creates opportunities for both, inviting people to get involved, to take a stand, and to raise their voices. These tools are empowering and give agency to people, enabling any of us to be historic actors.

Action stations with explicit calls to action may not be an option for every Site of Conscience. This is true for a variety of reasons, both political and institutional. In such cases, the action station as a method cannot be dismissed. Instead, its application must be carefully considered and its use appropriately tailored to the relevant context. For example, a single action station or multiple action stations within an exhibit can offer multiple and diverse opportunities for visitors to take the actions with which they feel comfortable and aligned. Thus, Sites of Conscience across the spectrum can use the principles of action stations to provide opportunities for people to get involved in a range of ways, inspiring visitors to do something both in the moment at the site and long after.

## 2.3

# HISTORY-BASED OUTREACH: ACTIVITIES TO EASE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL DISCORD AT BANGLADESH'S JAMALPUR GANDHI ASHRAM

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*Bix Gabriel and Zachary McKiernan*

“The key difference is that we want a Bangladesh for all Bangladeshis, and they want a Muslim Bangladesh,” said Asaduzzaman Noor, a member of parliament who was attacked by allies of the largest Islamist party in Bangladesh in 2013. The attack on Noor was among hundreds of political clashes in Bangladesh that year that led to the death of almost five hundred people—the highest death toll outside a conflict zone, according to Dhaka-based human rights group Odhikar.<sup>1</sup> Though economic and political instability are key reasons for the violence, the religious conflict that Noor identifies, between Islamist and secular forces, is also an undercurrent. The violence in 2013 is one indication of such tensions that move against a tradition of religious tolerance and ethnic harmony. Citizens in Jamalpur, Bangladesh, a region that once was home to people of diverse religious beliefs, have witnessed the development of their region into a stronghold for fundamentalist organization and activity. Given these circumstances in the Jamalpur region and in other areas of the world experiencing similar social

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1 Nilanjana Bhowmick, “Four Things You Need to Know About the Chaos In Bangladesh,” Time, (November 6, 2013) accessed September 15, 2014, <http://world.time.com/2013/11/06/four-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-chaos-in-bangladesh/>.



discord, Sites of Conscience such as the Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram are seeking ways to promote human rights and democratic values. What tools can they use and actions can they take in order to reach broad constituencies facing distinct—though not dissimilar—issues?

The Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram identifies the use of history—and, specifically, history-based outreach—as a method to foster dialogue and to promote peace and religious harmony in the region of Jamalpur, a district about ninety miles from Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. Founded in 1934 as a community center, under the Gandhian principles of non-violence, passive resistance, and non-cooperation, the Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram advocated and practiced these ideals to stand against the imperial yoke of the British Empire. Today's Ashram members recall that, "a few stalwarts of the Swadeshi<sup>2</sup> movement... made it as a center of anti-colonial struggle and multifarious social works aimed at self-development and self-reliance."<sup>3</sup> Through this experience, the Ashram flourished as a cultural center, reflecting the long legacy of other Hindu ashrams that focused on religious and musical instruction, personal reflection and introspection, and physical and mental exercise. By the 1940s, the Indian independence movement succeeded in driving Britain from the subcontinent. However, the Bengal region of India, recognized for its strong cultural and linguistic identity, was partitioned, and Jamalpur fell under the new geo-political delineations that defined the new nation-state Pakistan.

Geographically, ethnically, and politically isolated from the dominant West Pakistan, Pakistani nationalists unleashed violence against the Hindu Ashram in East Pakistan leading up to Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971. The Ashram's "school, vocational training centers, health facilities, and other infrastructures...were demolished,"<sup>4</sup> leaving only the administrative office cottage standing. The Ashram, however, continued its operation in precarious conditions and remained steadfast in self-development.

Today, the Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram is experiencing a rebirth with an increased public presence and international support. It harnesses its historical roots as well as messages of nonviolence and religious harmony to address today's challenge of religious fundamentalism against minority religious and ethnic communities. By employing a strategy of history-based outreach aimed at establishing relationships with people of different backgrounds and shared

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2 The Swadeshi movement, meaning the movement for self-sufficiency, was part of the Indian struggle for independence from the British. An economic strategy that included the boycott of British products, picketing shops that sold such goods, and in general, moving to using only products made in India, it was a key principle of Gandhi's concept of self-rule, known as "swaraj" that aided in India achieving independence. For more on the specific development of the Swadeshi in West Bengal and East Pakistan (later Bangladesh), refer to Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement In Bengal, 1903-1908*.

3 Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram, "Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Tolerance." International Coalition of Sites of Conscience Project Support Fund Grant, Bangladesh, 2012.

4 "Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram (Bangladesh)," *International Coalition of Sites of Conscience*, accessed September 18, 2014, <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/members/jamalpur-gandhi-ashram/>, accessed September 18, 2014, ites of Conscience, lly and so it is not awkward.. Argentina), and she suggested "more about it, l'thttp://www.sitesofconscience.org/members/jamalpur-gandhi-ashram/.

histories, it fulfills its civic and social responsibility as an ashram as much as it does as a Site of Conscience. As a historic site and as a witness to and active agent in the historic processes and events that have defined the Jamalpur region since the 1930s, the Ashram is in a strategic position to strengthen existing relationships and establish new ones. And as a socially responsible site, the Ashram is sensitive to the needs of the communities around it, and thus tailors ways to bring together diverse stakeholders to discuss issues—including religion—that threaten to divide the community.

The Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram's community work today can be described as history-based outreach. History-based outreach is a method used to promote peace, harmony, and tolerance by establishing relationships with diverse communities, identifying communities' needs through these relationships, and, working to meet the needs while enabling dialogue and providing educational and cultural programs. The Ashram has established on-site and off-site activities based on Gandhi's principles and the Ashram's unique history. Modeled by the Ashram's successful project "Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Tolerance," the principles of history-based outreach as a method are applicable to Sites of Conscience around the world.

## Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram's "Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Tolerance."

The Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram established its project "Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Tolerance" because of the "rise of religious extremism and militant fundamentalist [that]... have posed a serious danger to the thousand-year-long heritage and traditions of religious and ethnic harmony of our pluralistic society."<sup>5</sup> The Ashram is thus an active agent in a contemporary issue, drawing on its own unique history to promote humanitarian and democratic ideals as well as peace, harmony, transparency, and awareness. At the Ashram, activists have opened a museum to commemorate Bangladesh's independence movement, and a library for the community. They have also established healthcare, educational and vocational programs. The Ashram used its historic role during colonial rule and after Bangladesh's independence as the centerpiece for "Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Tolerance." The outreach program employed a wide range of activities to activate historical awareness and agency: workshops with civic and opinion leaders, seminars in schools, and cultural presentations in various communities. According to Ashram Director Utpal Kanti Dhar, "We were optimistic that if we could engage a large number of people like religious and community leaders, community representatives, opinion leaders, catalyst agents in our society, and especially students and younger generations in simulative interactive dialogues on inter-religious harmony and tolerance, it would be very

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5 Utpal Kanti Dhar, Director and CEO of Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram, "Closing Report of the Project 'Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony & Tolerance,'" submitted report/unpublished manuscript, 2010.

helpful to our project.”<sup>6</sup>

To accomplish this, the Ashram committed to history-based outreach as a sustainable method, and employed this method over an entire year. During the sustained outreach commitment, the Ashram brought into its dialogues religious leaders, teachers, students, cultural activists, human rights activists, journalists, and lawyers, among others. Ashram leaders succeeded in reaching over one hundred fifty thousand people through three activity programs: dialogue sessions led by political and religious leaders; cultural shows in the community; and debates, essay and quiz competitions, film showings, and poster and photo displays in educational institutions. Moreover, some forty thousand students visited the Ashram to learn about its history and discuss its contemporary implications. The Ashram reported that these groups had become more aware of Bangladesh’s reality as a multi-religious and pluralistic society through the Ashram’s promotion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Bangladeshi constitution, and that the latter “guarantees equality and equal privilege in all spheres of life for all religious communities and ethnic groups in [the] country.”<sup>7</sup>

## History-Based Outreach as a Methodological Tool

The best way to think about history-based outreach is as an approach to engage new and seasoned constituencies through history, historical activities and projects, and historical collaboration. With Sites of Conscience, history-based outreach specifically uses the pathway of history as the point of engagement with audiences to shed light on contemporary issues. At the Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram, the specific goal of the outreach program is to ease social and religious tensions through dialogue, cultural events, and debates. Ashram members use outreach to confront religious fundamentalism by highlighting the historic site and region’s tradition of promoting peace and harmony.

Though there are no universal formulas for what an outreach program may entail, there are two fundamental components of reaching out. First, historic sites and museum programs seek to establish community connections. In so doing, they consciously recognize their roles not only as repositories of history in a society but also as key contributors to crucial conversations whose historical knowledge imparts a unique perspective on contemporary pressing issues. History-based outreach is about establishing connections and relationships around shared histories. The first connection can be characterized as the relationship between the historic site and the larger community. The flow of communication moves two ways. While the historic site disseminates resources such as educational material and historical knowledge, it also invites public participation and civic dialogue in which community members can communicate to the historic site their experiences of pressing social issues and everyday realities. A second

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6 Closing Report of the Project, 2010.

7 Closing Report of the Project, 2010.

connection emerges in this process: the connection of community to history. Historic sites engage communities through history, and communities connect with and articulate their own histories. In this sense, history-based outreach fosters room for community-based history and deeper historical consciousness.

Focusing on the history it can share, the Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram has established democratic, dialogue-sharing spaces on site as well as in schools, religious centers, and settings of cultural encounters. In these spaces, the Ashram brings people together around meaningful activities and memory. These activities promote hands-on learning as well as historical agency and “historicity,” from an understanding that the past is very important in people’s everyday lives. That is,

“...Not the past for the past, not memory for memory, but what historicity implies, which is precisely the drama of having to take actions, assess the future, and insert and incorporate the past in it... [Therefore] the historic subject...assumes historicity, has to make decisions, and has to give form to his /her present-future: [he/she] has to construct society from the base of [his/her] historic memory.”<sup>8</sup>

Every public contact can be an outreach opportunity. What makes history-based outreach distinct is that it brings people into the folds of history. Citizens’ actions, decisions, and constructions of reality are shaped on understandings of the past, whether in an individual or collective sense. Outreach activities—whether dialogue sessions, artifact exploration, or story-telling and sharing—help connect people to history by fostering shared inquiry to enhance historical understanding and, moreover, build empathy. Citizens can become aware of their own historicity, as active agents in a historic moment. History-based outreach programs thus uphold history as about both the past and the present.

## Nuts and Bolts: Characteristics and Considerations

What is an outreach program’s general objective? What other goals does it strive for? Where does it fit in a historic site’s overall mission and vision? These are the first questions to consider when designing a history-based outreach program. Though museums and historic sites typically conduct outreach to visitors, history-based outreach activities must be formatted to fit the specific goals and needs of the community that the outreach targets.

At the Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram, the objective of the site’s program was to bring diverse people together to learn about the history of religious tolerance in the region in order to promote religious harmony today. But it identified that the communities to which it was reaching out had other needs, including a need for history-based learning in schools, and a need for cultural activities across religions in the community, due to a dearth thereof. Thus, its “Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Tolerance” project had many moving parts and was designed to

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8 Gabriel Salazar, Mario Garcés, and Pablo Artaza, “La Historia Social: Sujeto social e historicidad en la construcción de memoria para la acción,” ed. Verónica Vives Cofré, *Cuaderno de Trabajo Volumen 1: Memoria, Historia y Derechos Humanos*, (Santiago de Chile: Universidad de Chile, 2011), 67–83.

cover large areas, populations, and themes. Ashram staff and volunteers began with planning, then conducted training and workshops with teachers, human rights activists, and religious leaders, and subsequently implemented the final product of outreach at eighty area schools, twenty community centers, and four public rallies. The Ashram, due to its established activist history, benefits from a continued presence in the community and, according to its leaders, connected with two hundred thousand people through the outreach program.

Whether a site is considering establishing an outreach program for two hundred people or for two hundred thousand people, here are some simple steps that provide a path to follow.

### **Who: Who is involved in outreach? What constituencies receive outreach? Are there limits to who can be involved?**

- .. **Grassroots Communities:** The principal focus of outreach is to engage communities. These communities are diverse. Who they are depends on the specific local contexts and concerns of the Site of Conscience. Thus, Sites of Conscience must determine which local communities and groups facing a specific social concern they will seek out. Immigrants facing xenophobic nationalists? Gay men and lesbians facing hate groups? Indigenous populations facing government repression? Who are the targeted grassroots communities? They might include:
  - .. Women's organizations
  - .. Immigrant groups
  - .. Ethnic and religious minorities
  - .. Victims groups
  - .. Homeless/landless communities
  - .. At-risk youth
  
- .. **Community and Opinion Leaders:** These individuals play important roles in and hold sway over their communities. Reaching out to these leaders helps to make inroads into diverse communities. This list represents groups of people in all societies who could be potential allies in history-based outreach programs:
  - .. Religious leaders
  - .. Journalists and scholars
  - .. Teachers groups and unions
  - .. Political and civic leaders
  - .. Small business owners
  - .. Local law enforcement
  
- .. **Institutions:** Reaching out to institutions with established bases should also be considered. These are some such institutions:

- Other museum and historic sites
  - Universities and schools
  - Cultural centers
- **Historic Site and Museum Teams:** An outreach program director should be assigned to manage the overall logistics of the program. This person is also responsible for outreach teams, groups of staff or volunteers with specific responsibilities within the outreach program. Each team consists of outreach workers. These personnel will have more specific responsibilities to carry out within the context of the outreach team. The outreach team can easily be adapted from already-established departments within the historic site in areas such as education, interpretation, or preservation. The structure may include:
- Outreach team
  - Director or manager
  - Outreach workers
- ç **At the Ashram:** The Ashram's ambitious project focuses specifically on reaching out to youth. But because of the complexity and gravity of the contemporary issue, activists also reach out to religious leaders, human rights activists, lawyers, and teachers to help implement the dialogue program. These actors, along with Ashram agents, help bring awareness of the importance of religious and ethnic harmony and tradition, respect for secularism and pluralism, and tolerance.

**What:** What are the outreach activities? What is the history of the site? What is the contemporary concern?

- **Outreach Activities:** Outreach activities constitute the practical application of outreach. They are designed and developed to establish communication, participation, and collaboration and will take various forms given a historic site or museum program's history and the local issue at hand. They are also contingent on the targeted audience, whether it is youth, women, or other pre-determined groups. Though activities can and will be diverse, here are a few with universal appeal:
  - Facilitating community dialogue programs
  - Participating in workshops and education courses
  - Exhibiting at cultural shows
  - Presenting at schools and museums
  - Providing resources and historic information
  - Working with local governments and organizations
  - Attending rallies and festivals

ç **At the Ashram:** The Ashram's "Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Peace" project centered on school programs. The project held encounters at over eighty schools and colleges, including ten madrasahs. Student and teacher demands dictated the choice of activities, which included student competitions through essays, quizzes, and posters.

**When:** When is the best time to do outreach? Is it an everyday activity or reserved for long-term planning? Are there special times to consider?

• **Timing:** Timing is important; thus, it is imperative that outreach programs implement a schedule. Although every day presents outreach opportunities, a programmatic approach involves short-, mid-, and long-term planning. Planning gives structure to the program. It determines training agendas, workshop times, and times at which to implement planned activities. It is optimal to devise a timeline with corresponding benchmarks and objectives, as this also helps track progress in and give structure to an outreach program.

• Time-line: short-, mid-, and long-range objectives

• **Every Day, All Year:** Historic sites and museum programs should keep a conceptual outreach strategy in their overall missions and visions. This enables consistent community contact, allowing *when* to be *whenever*. However, a specific outreach program needs clear objectives and methods to maintain effectiveness when approaching a contemporary issue.

• **Special Events:** Beyond everyday strategies and specific programs, reaching out at special events can lead to increased exposure and impact. Outreach can also be planned to coincide with other community activities. Consider the following existing events or dates when thinking about strategic times:

- Cultural events
- Commemoration ceremonies
- Seminars and conferences
- Religious meetings
- Emblematic dates

ç **At the Ashram:** Because the Ashram keeps constant vigilance in community relations, it is poised to employ outreach activities at various times and in various forms. In this instance, the Ashram designed "Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Tolerance" as a timely response to the increase in religious intolerance and violence. However, the Ashram's foresight of sustainability—as much as demand for the program—allowed the site's members to employ history-based outreach for "Dialogues" over a one-year period.

**Where:** Where do historic sites and museums conduct outreach? Is outreach always off site or are there on-site strategies too?

- “ **Off-site Outreach:** Off-site outreach is typically at the heart of such programs. Off-site outreach presents nearly limitless possibilities and places, although such outreach is always defined by the relevant community. Broadly and most importantly, off-site outreach is employed in an area where a community works, resides, or both. This can be rural, urban, or anywhere in between. Sites for off-site outreach include:
  - “ Schools or universities
  - “ Government offices and centers
  - “ Cultural or community centers
  - “ Museums and historic sites
  - “ Bazaars and marketplaces
  - “ Social media
  
- “ **On-site Outreach:** Once off-site outreach has been conducted, outreach activities might take place on-site. This becomes an opportunity for the institution to actively engage visitors *in situ*, drawing on the power of place. On-site outreach can also use the site’s features as spaces for dialogue and presentation. On-site outreach activities can include:
  - “ Offering interpretive tours
  - “ Conducting dialogue and education sessions
  - “ Providing pamphlets or other educational materials
  
- ç **At the Ashram:** The Ashram launched the program at the Jamalpur District Headquarters. Dignitaries, scholars, journalists, and laypeople attended the daylong workshop. Later, the Ashram focused efforts in other areas, with a special focus on rural schools. Outreach activities also took place at the Ashram itself.



## Schematic “How To” of a History-Based Outreach Program

### Step 1: Identify Issue, Outreach Objectives, and Strategies

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the contemporary issue?</li> <li>2. Why is outreach necessary?</li> <li>3. What form will the outreach take?</li> <li>4. Who is the target audience?</li> <li>5. Who will do the outreach?</li> <li>6. Where will outreach take place?</li> <li>7. What history will the outreach use?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the objective of the outreach based on a contemporary issue and needs of the community.</li> <li>2. Consider outreach strategies and tools.</li> <li>3. Consider potential collaborators. Take inventory of off-site alliances.</li> <li>4. Identify places to conduct outreach.</li> <li>5. Observe and analyze other outreach programs.</li> </ol>

### Step 2: Designing the Outreach Plan

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the specific goals of the outreach program?</li> <li>2. How does the outreach program use history to engage the contemporary issue?</li> <li>3. What is the outreach plan?</li> <li>4. When will it be implemented?</li> <li>5. What tools and resources are required to implement it?</li> <li>6. When should it be implemented? What is the optimal timing?</li> <li>7. Are there any special considerations?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define specific goals based on community needs and/or the contemporary issue.</li> <li>2. Design mission and vision of the plan and strategy.</li> <li>3. Design activities based on the outreach plan and goals.</li> <li>4. Designate outreach director, teams, and workers.</li> <li>5. Establish and assign responsibilities.</li> <li>6. Develop a timeline with specific goals and objectives.</li> <li>7. Elaborate how history will be used in the outreach process based on selected activities, goals, etc.</li> <li>8. Identify potential opportunities and challenges that the program may face.</li> </ol>

### Step 3: Training, Preparation, and Promotion

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What training or preparation needs to be accomplished? What knowledge already exists among outreach partners and communities?</li> <li>2. How will the activities contribute to collaboration and participation?</li> <li>3. What additional outreach resources will be used?</li> <li>4. Have outreach sites been confirmed?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare program staff and volunteers.</li> <li>2. Prepare materials and content.</li> <li>3. Plan and practice activities.</li> <li>4. Initiate contact with communities, community leaders, and media.</li> <li>5. Conduct outreach workshops, training, and meetings.</li> <li>6. Follow up with community contacts, and confirm activities, off-site visits, etc.</li> <li>7. Promote plan to community leaders, pre-existing networks, new communities, etc.</li> </ol>

### Step 4: Implementation and Execution

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the methods of assessment?</li> <li>2. How many people were reached?</li> <li>3. What were the results of the outreach?</li> <li>4. Are there any new questions or concerns?</li> <li>5. Did the outreach meet its intended objectives and goals?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct outreach activities.</li> <li>2. Assess community participation.</li> <li>3. Disseminate information and materials.</li> <li>4. Answer questions and concerns.</li> <li>5. Update timeline and objectives.</li> <li>6. Assess observed impact. Annotate outreach activities.</li> </ol>

## Conclusion

The Jamalpur Gandhi Ashram activated history in order to conduct “Dialogues on Inter-Religious Harmony and Tolerance,” with a goal of confronting a rising tide of religious fundamentalism. The Ashram’s unique history combines a commitment to Gandhi’s principles and the promotion of peace and tolerance. According to the Ashram’s director, “history is the main strength of our programs.” The Ashram serves the community as a museum, education site, and a space for democratic encounters. In doing so, its activities have reached thousands of students and, moreover, have been led by the region’s distinguished religious and political leaders. Through history-based outreach, the Ashram created spaces for critical conversations based on the region’s distinct history and tradition of religious respect and ethnic cooperation.

Building a history-based outreach program is no easy feat. But Sites of Conscience should keep permanent an outreach component in their overall activities and planning. Outreach, whether off-site or on-site, offers an opportunity to make history relevant to contemporary actors and, potentially, to identify new legacies of old histories. History-based outreach provides a framework to approach new and known communities, identify community issues and needs, analyze current political and social conditions, and establish creative strategies for communities to use history to create history. Whether a historic site or museum program is looking to connect with a few people or many, history-based outreach is an effective method through which to do so. Not only does it help promote humanitarian and democratic values, it also represents the use of history as a community-building practice.

## 2.4 EUROPEAN SITES OF CONSCIENCE: ENGAGING THE PUBLIC THROUGH STORYTELLING

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*Maja Čečen and Silvia Fernández*

What do our stories teach us about one another and ourselves? In February 2014, representatives from fourteen European Sites of Conscience and experts in the fields of museology, storytelling, and oral history met at the historic warehouses of the Red Star Line<sup>1</sup> shipping company in Antwerp, Belgium, to discuss this question and to define how, by using storytelling as a method, Sites of Conscience can become agents of social inclusion, shared understanding, and civic engagement in Europe. The meeting took place under the umbrella of the European Sites of Conscience Network,<sup>2</sup> one of the seven regional and thematic networks that comprise the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. Characterized by its diversity, the European Sites of Conscience Network brings together thirty-one historic museums and civil society organizations from seventeen countries to promote tolerance amid rising xenophobia and discrimination in Europe today. Through its members, the network brings to light a wide range of defining moments of European history including the Holocaust, the Balkans war, and the Northern Ireland conflict, among others.

This chapter comes out of experiences and discussions that took place in preparation for

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1 <http://www.redstarline.be/en>

2 <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/members/?region=europe>

and during the 2014 meeting.<sup>3</sup> These experiences and conversations clarified the theory and practical application of storytelling as a way to engage publics in critical reflection about the past and its contemporary legacies. The following is a brief framework of how storytelling is understood and applied within the European Sites of Conscience Network, showcasing five projects from Belgium, Northern Ireland, Serbia, and Spain that use storytelling to connect past to present, memory to action.

## Storytelling Within the Framework of European Sites of Conscience

As European Sites of Conscience gathered in Antwerp to celebrate the opening of the Red Star Line Museum, they were also celebrating and paying tribute to the story of millions of Europeans who during the nineteenth century left everything behind to search for a better life in the New World. Located in one of the most strategic port cities in Europe, the Red Star Line Museum is built on a foundation of stories. They are stories of high expectations and huge disappointments, joy and sorrow, farewells and new beginnings: universal human stories that resonated in all corners of the European continent yesterday and continue to do so today.

The collection and preservation of personal stories—understood as personal narratives—is a common practice among historic museums and institutions working on memory. Sites of Conscience around the world record and preserve oral, written, and visual human experiences to create permanent records of the past for education, memorialization, and truth-telling or truth-seeking purposes. In Peru, Bangladesh, and Sierra Leone, for example, Sites of Conscience use murals, a mobile bus, and body maps respectively to remember and tell the stories of their countries' disappeared and killed or of the survivors of internal conflicts and war.

Moreover, extensive written work and research on archiving and oral history exists worldwide. The Oral History Association defines oral history as “a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving, and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events.”<sup>4</sup> Author Angela Zusman describes the focus of oral history as “the narrators' memories more than any consolidated idea of Truth.”<sup>5</sup>

However, the use of storytelling with the specific goal of catalyzing positive change is less examined. Indeed, there had never been a conversation among Sites of Conscience on the power of oral histories as a catalyst for social change, or on the use of storytelling to support the Sites

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3 <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/2014/02/the-2014-european-sites-of-conscience-meeting/> Accessed April 30, 2015.

4 “Oral History: Defined,” Oral History Association website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/do-oral-history/>.

5 Angela Zusman, *Story Bridges: A Guide to Conducting Intergenerational Oral History Projects*, (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2010), 19.

of Conscience approach, which taps the power of place and history to open new dialogue on difficult subjects. The 2014 European Sites of Conscience meeting was the first time that these historic museums and memory initiatives reflected on the skills, strategies, and mechanisms needed to use stories as means for stimulating positive action. The European Sites of Conscience Network understands “positive action” as actions that contribute to breaking down stereotypes and changing xenophobic attitudes.

During the meeting, European Sites of Conscience acknowledged that while the power of a personal story is limitless, as Sites of Conscience they share responsibility for and commitment to creating storytelling processes, strategies, and products that

- engage the public in a stimulating dialogue on pressing issues,
- promote humanitarian and democratic values, and
- share opportunities for public involvement and positive action.

It is with this in mind that European Sites of Conscience focused their efforts on two aspects of storytelling with one goal: to help build more inclusive societies. The first aspect of storytelling sites considered was in what forms oral histories and personal testimonies can be collected, curated and disseminated. The second was the use of the story or narrative form as a methodology. This chapter thus showcases both personal stories as well as fictional or invented narratives.

European Sites of Conscience also explored how new forms of media—beyond digital maps, interactive exhibits, or guided tours—are being used as strategies for storytelling and for creating new ways for people to record, express, receive, and engage with the past and present. Sites have explored forms of new media such as web documentaries, web-based graphic novels, and story-based video games.

In addition to exploring the role of new media in storytelling, European Sites of Conscience—as living institutions that are continuously evolving and adapting to new social realities and publics—have recognized the need to embrace more traditional forms of story, such as oral histories. As a result, sites aim to capture the oral histories of the voices of today, since through the collection and dissemination of present-day stories and experiences younger generations can be engaged in addressing contemporary social issues.

The following case studies serve as examples of how five European Sites of Conscience working from different historical moments and contemporary cultural and socio-political contexts are using storytelling strategies to engage their publics on shared social challenges affecting the European continent today.

## Case Studies

What can stories teach us? How does preserving the histories of different men, women and children help us to connect across borders? How can individual stories contribute to breaking down racist stereotypes and changing xenophobic attitudes in Europe today? These are some

of the questions explored by the following projects from Memorial Democratic, Spain; Red Star Line, Belgium; Diversity Challenges and Museum of Free Derry, Northern Ireland; and B-92 Fund, Serbia.

### Memorial Democratic, Spain: The Past, its Voices, and its Representations in the Present

Based in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, the Memorial Democratic works to research, preserve, and make public the history of Spain from 1931–1981, including the democratic struggle against fascism during the Spanish Civil War, the regime of General Francisco Franco, Spanish citizens' fight for democracy against the dictatorship, and the transition to democracy.

As a public institution, the Memorial Democratic has developed the “Memorial Bank of Witnesses,”<sup>6</sup> an archive of oral stories that spans the 1931 proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic to the first democratic elections of the Catalan Parliament, in 1980. These are the years that cover the most traumatic events in Catalonia's recent past—the Civil War, the exile, and Franco's dictatorship—as well as the successes of civil society in struggles for democracy: the Second Republic, the struggle against the dictatorship, and the post-Franco process of transition to democracy.

The archive, which contains 377 interviews, holds more than eleven hundred hours of audio-visual records of testimonies from victims of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship and from those who fought for democratic values and freedom. Wide-ranging in scope and perspective, the Memorial Bank of Witnesses archive is a testament to the plurality of recollections in Catalonia's democratic society. The oral stories are accessible online and serve as an invaluable tool for research and education in the process of Spanish and Catalan societies making sense of their histories.

In recent years, seeking to use the archive as a catalyst to reach larger audiences and spark wider reflection on the past and on present political challenges in Catalonia and Spain, the Memorial Democratic has developed exhibitions based on sections of the archive's oral stories. One example, the virtual exhibit “Catalonia during transition,”<sup>7</sup> uses testimonies to help explain the political transition from dictatorship to democracy. There are also video exhibitions, such as “Memory Keepers,” which narrates extracts from the preface of the Law of the Democratic Memorial through a combination of twelve past and present voices; and artistic performances, such as “El Meu Poble I Jo,”<sup>8</sup> which is based on the works of Catalan poet Salvador Espriu.

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6 “Banc Audiovisual di Testimonis,” Banc Audiovisual di Testimonis website, accessed August 28, 2014, <http://bancmemorial.gencat.cat>.

7 “El Memorial Democràtic,” Memorial Democràtic website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://memorialdemocratic.gencat.cat>.

8 “El Meu Poble i Jo,” YouTube video, accessed August 29, 2014, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsTBn\\_5Qhac](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsTBn_5Qhac).

The development of such projects enables narration of personal stories within an artistic framework that uses a more contemporary language than that found in traditional formats and thus is more accessible to younger generations. As a result, these projects facilitate wider outreach to youth, a key audience for most Sites of Conscience.

### Red Star Line Museum, Belgium: Voices from the Past Come Alive at People on the Move

In September 2013, the Red Star Line | People on the Move Museum in Antwerp, Belgium opened its doors. The museum, a historic site, is dedicated to emigration between 1873 and 1934 from Antwerp to the United States of America with the Belgian-American shipping company, Red Star Line.

From its inception, the Red Star Line Museum was conceptualized to share its history while making that history relevant to visitors today. Its mission is to help the visitor reflect on and understand the experiences of migration, yesterday and today, from an intimate point of view: What are migrants' hopes, dreams, and aspirations when they leave? What are the long-term effects of migration? The Red Star Line Museum enables such reflection and understanding by tapping into the power of storytelling, as described: ". . . we rely on the power of the story to touch our visitors. That story is poignant, relevant, and recognizable and stirs the imagination of people whatever their backgrounds and attitudes."<sup>9</sup>

The Red Star Line Museum is itself a storytelling project. Personal stories are brought to life in the museum's permanent exhibit through a narrative line that juxtaposes the migration phenomena of 1873–1934 to those of today. The exhibit employs a variety of storytelling methods such as first-hand testimonies and reconstructed stories of emigrants' lives; works of art conveying feelings of hope and uncertainty; and an exhibit design scenography that follows the same route as the migrants from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The exhibit is complemented by guided tours designed to amplify the voices of the passengers of the Red Star Line. At the end of the exhibit visitors experience a digital model of Antwerp today, which presents them with an opportunity to reflect on and to leave their views on migration past and present. As staff of the Red Star Line Museum explain:

"We believe the personal experiences of migrants, then and now, are the most meaningful way to link the past with the present. [ . . . ] Migration involves experiences and emotions that many visitors recognize, even those with no migration history: the farewells, the uncertainties, the hazards of the journey, coping with change, hopes about the future, aspirations, etc. The way we tell this universal tale should engage every segment of the public."<sup>10</sup>

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9 Bram Beelaert, Mandy Nauwelaerts, and Luc Verheyen, *Musea en Erfgoed Antwerpen*, "The Power of the Story," *Museums of Ideas: Commitment and Conflict*, [Edinburgh: Museums etc., 2011].

10 Bram Beelaert, et al., "The Power of the Story," 2011.



## Diversity Challenges, Northern Ireland: Balancing the Thin Line Through Storytelling

One of the main aims of the organization Diversity Challenges'<sup>11</sup> work is to help societies deal with the conflict in and about Northern Ireland—the conflict commonly known as the Troubles. Diversity Challenges does so through programs that facilitate dialogue in order to promote healing and reconciliation and to recognize the degrees of hurt and pain that the past evokes in people. In this process Diversity Challenges strives to establish communication between those on differing sides of the conflict, which can only be achieved through developing trust. Understanding the reluctance of former police, army, and prison services personnel and families in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland to risk re-opening wounds from the past, Diversity Challenges turned its attention toward these specific groups, using storytelling and dialogue as means to foster trust.

The stories of those who policed the divided communities on the Irish border had not yet been told, nor had the stories of daily cross-border interaction and collaboration. So in 2013 Diversity Challenges developed the *Green and Blue Across the Thin Line Project*,<sup>12</sup> which gives border police officers from both sides the opportunity to share their experiences and memories. The project reflects the cooperation and interaction between former police officers of the Northern Irish Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and of An Garda Síochána (Garda), a police force of Ireland, along the Irish border, from the establishment of the two police forces almost a hundred years ago until 2001.

Participants in the *Green and Blue Across the Thin Line Project* learn how to gather stories through an accredited training course in storytelling. Participants collect stories from along the border from former police officers and their families. Together the stories cover as wide a number of topics as possible. The project activities foster networking among participants and storytellers, and they facilitate contact between former Garda and RUC personnel. All collected stories—with great consideration to ethical guidelines, confidentiality, and legal issues—are available on a dedicated web page of the project,<sup>13</sup> which also serves as a resource for further dialogue between participants. Diversity Challenges also plans to create an illustrated book of these stories.

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11 “Diversity Challenges Home Page,” Diversity Challenges website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.diversity-challenges.com/home-page/>.

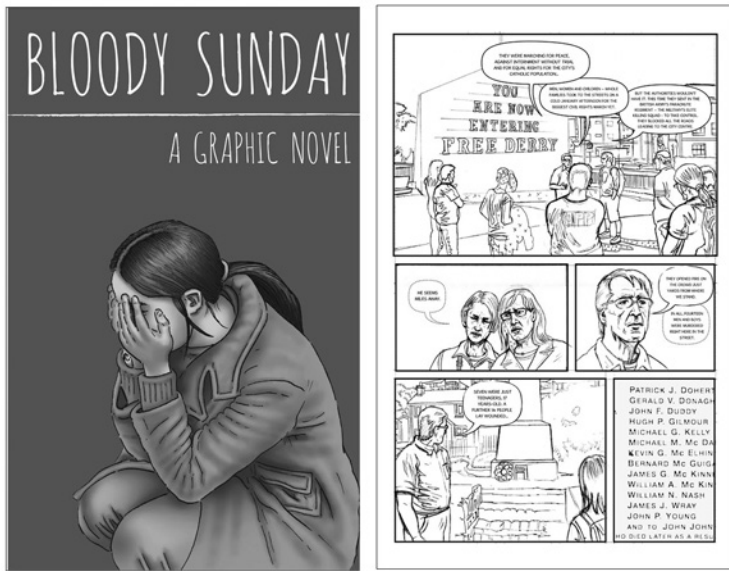
12 Diversity Challenges partners with the George Cross Foundation on this project, which is supported by the PEACE III Programme and managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the Community Relations Council/Pobal Consortium.

13 “Green and Blue—Across the Thin Line,” Green and Blue Across the Thin Line website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.green-and-blue.org>.

## Museum of Free Derry, Northern Ireland: Telling a Traumatic Story Through a Graphic Novel

Another Site of Conscience from Northern Ireland, the Museum of Free Derry<sup>14</sup> deals with specific traumatic events related to the Bloody Sunday massacre of January 1972. But it deliberately widens this story it tells to the entire period of the national movement and makes reference to its international context. The Museum tells this part of the city's history from the point of view of the people who lived through and were most affected by these events. It is the community's story told from the community's perspective.

Using the archives, background information, and expertise at its disposal, the Museum of Free Derry has embarked on a new and exciting endeavor: to tell the story of Bloody Sunday through a graphic novel. The genre of the graphic novel has moved in recent years from being regarded as simply a form of comic to being accepted as a format for serious or difficult subjects. Graphic novels produced in recent years have covered topics such as the Holocaust<sup>15</sup> the



THE COVER AND A PAGE FROM THE GRAPHIC NOVEL "BLOODY SUNDAY" COMMISSIONED BY THE MUSEUM OF FREE DERRY. PHOTO COURTESY: MUSEUM OF FREE DERRY

14 "The Museum of Free Derry: The National Civil Rights Archive," Museum of Free Derry website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.museumoffreederry.org/>.

15 The graphic novel *Maus* by Art Spiegelman tells the story of the author's father during the Holocaust.

situation in Palestine<sup>16</sup> and the civil rights movement in the USA<sup>17</sup>

The Museum of Free Derry has chosen the graphic novel as a format to tell the story of Bloody Sunday for a number of reasons. First, this format allows the story to be presented in a very accessible and flexible medium. Second, the medium enables it to reach a wide range of audiences spanning a wide range of ages and literacy levels. Third, the author and artist are both personally connected to the subject matter and have done award-winning work on it in the past. Finally, the project has the support of the Bloody Sunday families and will thus be regarded as presenting the authentic story of the day and the aftermath.

Once the graphic novel in its initial format is completed it will be widely used in museum educational programs. It can then easily be converted into an interactive digital format, allowing even wider use. In essence, the novel can amplify the Museum's core aim to leave its visitors with questions about why similar situations are still being allowed to develop around the world with the same predictable results, and what they themselves might do about it.

### B92 Fund, Serbia: Re:Generation - Dealing with the Past Through Stories from the Present

Facing the atrocities from the recent conflicts in the Balkans has been one of the pillars of the B92 Fund's work in various media.<sup>18</sup> This work ranges from co-producing documentary films with its founder, the B92 media company<sup>19</sup> to developing educational programs for young audiences. The B92 Fund aims to foster respect for freedom of expression and human rights, and promotes social responsibility and humanistic values in Serbia and other societies in the region.

Realizing that youth in the region are often neglected, demotivated, and stigmatized by traditional media, B92 Fund developed a program in 2013 called Re:Generation. This program gathers both stories and people from five countries in the region once on opposing sides of the conflict: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Three teams work together as a diverse creative group that develops the online stories. The first is a group of eleven young people from around the region who are trained in different aspects of social engagement; the second is a project team consisting of B92 Fund employees; and the third consists of a production crew and actors. By combining the resources of people and stories, FundB92 aims to give younger generations in these countries the opportunity to express themselves with the tool they are most comfortable with: the Internet. As a first step within the Re:Generation

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16 *Palestine* by Edward Said and John Sacco is a graphic novel based on interviews and personal experiences in Palestinian Occupied Territories.

17 *March: Book One* by US Congressman John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell, chronicles the Civil Rights movement through the personal story of Lewis.

18 "B92 Fund," B92 Fund website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://fondb92.org>.

19 "B92," B92 website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.b92.net/eng>.

program, B92 Fund has produced an award-winning web drama series called #SamoKažem (#JustSayin'),<sup>20 21</sup> the first of its kind in the Balkans. The series brings together actors and a production crew from across the Balkans to tell the fictional story of a new post-conflict generation with all their mutual problems, hopes, and dreams.

The young participants in the program<sup>22</sup> drive the series' production and airing on the web. There are also accompanying new-media creative promotional features, such as mini-stories about the characters.<sup>23</sup> This series is part of a wider effort to motivate youth to take action—both in real life and virtually—to help their societies end a vicious circle of conflicts and become better places to live. This effort includes a school of social engagement that teaches young people about campaigning, social networks, social engagement, and related fields. It also includes a plan for a region-wide tour that will bring youth from different societies together to exchange thoughts, develop actions together, and—of course—have fun. There is also a website featuring inspirational stories of successful actions by young people, tools for developing and implementing grassroots activities, and short video interviews with peers from the youth generation across the region.<sup>24</sup>

B92 Fund's Re:Generation seeks to motivate youth to address topics such as their own xenophobia as well as apathy, closeness, and lack of interest in developing a better society. It doesn't deal with political borders. Rather, it offers space for young people to test and cross the boundaries—virtual, mental, or real—that adults have set, as part of growing up and becoming responsible members of society.

## Conclusion

Storytelling has been around from the dawn of civilization for the simple reason that people most easily identify with other people, and thus with the pains, joys, and dilemmas of characters in stories. Harnessing storytelling to stimulate positive actions is much more complex. However, it can be particularly effective when the stories are based in history and in personal testimony.

Sites of Conscience use the narrative framework of stories to engage the imagination of

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20 "SamoKažem," YouTube video, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/samokazem01>.

21 This series has won awards including the 2013 Satellite Award for the "Original Short-Format Program" by the International Press Academy (<http://www.pressacademy.com/project/samokazem/>), the 2014 Gold Medal at the World Media Festival in Hamburg, and Official Honoree in the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Webby Awards (2014).

22 Eleven young people from the participating countries have been trained and engaged to work on further development of the program. More information at: "Re:Generators," SamoKažem website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://samokazem.org/en/re-generation/-re-generators.1.276.html>.

23 Examples of the mini-stories about the characters can be viewed at: "JustSaying," SamoKažem website, accessed July 18, 2014, <http://samokazem.org/en/justsaying/gang.1.122.html>.

24 "Kažiti," Kažiti website, Accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.kaziti.org>.

visitors about the past, the present, and their own lives. In some cases, sites also use personal histories both within a larger story or narrative arc and as stand-alone testimonies. The use of personal story is one of the most powerful methods of presenting a difficult and important matter, whether in the museum, at the site, or via various forms of traditional and new media. The effect a personal testimony has on listeners may be unsurpassed by that of any other means of learning about the past.

But storytelling is not without its challenges. The motivation of storytellers and story-listeners comes under the spotlight when considering storytelling as a methodology used by Sites of Conscience. As Professor Alessandro Portelli,<sup>25</sup> the keynote speaker at the 2013 European Sites of Conscience meeting in Antwerp, pointed out, “Storytelling is about the past but it’s actually about the present—memory is (the) storyteller’s search for the meaning of the experience he or she survived.”<sup>26</sup> Reflecting on this, representatives from Sites of Conscience at the Antwerp meeting concluded that those who collect and present the stories cannot change the storytellers’ motivations or possible misinterpretation of facts. Those who share personal stories with broader audiences can only strive to understand and present these personal histories in the most ethical, professional, and accessible way.

Despite these challenges, whether presenting stories in the form of interactive exhibitions, documentary films, digital sound bites, graphic novels, or web series, European Sites of Conscience aim to engage the widest possible public—intellectually and emotionally—in thinking about the past and acting in the present, in order to shape future generations that are more tolerant and inclusive of all.

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25 Alessandro Portelli is an Italian scholar of American literature and culture, oral historian, writer for the daily newspaper *il manifesto*, and musicologist. He is well known for his oral history work, which has compared workers’ accounts of industrial conflicts in Harlan County, Kentucky and Terni, Italy.

26 Alessandro Portelli, Keynote Address, 2014 European Sites of Conscience Network meeting, Antwerp, Belgium, February 17–19, 2014.

## 2.5 INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE: CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT IN CAMBODIA AT YOUTH FOR PEACE

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*Long Khet*

*. . . [S]haring about the past is a way of reconciliation too.*  
—Tum Lot, a sixty-one-year-old survivor of the Khmer Rouge regime

Cambodia's history is marked by decades of civil war and post-war recovery. Between April 1975 and January 1979, the country suffered under the rule of the communist Khmer Rouge regime. During this time, more than 1.7 million people died from starvation, forced labor, torture, and execution. The immensity of this mass atrocity committed by Khmer Rouge cadres has left Cambodians with deep wounds and psychological trauma. This violent past continues to affect every sphere of people's lives and remains a subject of political controversy and conflict. The legacies of the conflict include dehumanization, deep distrust, stereotypes, and divergent collective memories. Furthermore, despite the high levels of trauma across generations, little attention has been given so far to the practices of trauma work. The post-war generation receives little formal education on the recent past, relying on their parents' accounts, which often transmit trauma, uncertain identities, and victimization. Both children of the former Khmer Rouge and children of victim-survivors have limited knowledge about the root causes and functioning of

the KR regime and about their parents' experiences.<sup>1</sup> Youth are often marginalized; hierarchical social values that place greater value on the knowledge of elders prevent youth from civic engagement. At the same time, many youth are socialized into an environment that is marked by structural—and often physical—violence.

The lack of formal education about the Khmer Rouge regime has resulted in Cambodia's young people experiencing conflicting narratives, primarily between the children of the survivors and those of the perpetrators. These descendants depend largely on family narratives for information. Many of the youth simply do not believe that these large-scale atrocities happened.<sup>2</sup> Such confusion and misdirected anger reflects a dangerous potential for the legacy of Cambodia's transitional justice efforts to be erased.

Within this context, Youth For Peace,<sup>3</sup> a Cambodian NGO actively seeking to promote and inspire young people to develop initiatives for peace and social justice within Cambodian society, initiated a project called Intergenerational Dialogue to promote broader understanding about the history of the Khmer Rouge, to provide a platform for truth telling, and to involve youth in the reconciliation of victim-survivors' memories.

The project raises youth awareness about the importance of history and about the past experiences of survivors. After participation in the project, the youth participants' attitudes and behaviors change due to their improved understanding of the history of the Khmer Rouge, the root causes of the atrocity, and the reality of survivor stories. The young participants play important roles in the process of healing and truth telling during the project implementation. They actively listen to the survivors and acknowledge, learn from, and validate their suffering. The youth feel sympathy and love toward the older generation and praise the struggles they have overcome in their lives.

With the aim of generating healthier relationships and increasing social resilience, the Intergenerational Dialogue project complemented the ongoing retributive transitional justice process happening at the national level—Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)—by providing comprehensive restorative justice at the grassroots level. Combining official and grassroots initiatives helps to bring more comprehensive and long-lasting social reconciliation in Cambodia and increases social resilience against violent mobilization.

The Intergenerational Dialogue project includes activities in areas such as history education, truth telling, and memorialization. It combines individual, relational, and community levels of society and addresses the attitudes and behaviors of victim-survivors of the Khmer Rouge and the post-war generation. Men and women contribute equally to the project, and multiple measures are in place to ensure the safety and dignity of all participants.

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1 Burcu Münyas, "Genocide in the minds of Cambodian youth: transmitting (hi)stories of genocide to second and third generations in Cambodia," *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 3, [2008] 413–439.

2 Münyas, "Genocide in the minds of Cambodian youth"

3 "Youth For Peace Cambodia," Youth For Peace website, accessed September 19, 2014, <http://www.yfpcambodia.org/>.

## About Youth for Peace

Youth for Peace (YFP) started its activities in 1999 and formally registered as a youth NGO in 2001. Cambodian society has culturally viewed youth as inferior and inexperienced, leaving them with a lack of opportunities to participate in social work and social change. YFP's overall goal is to empower youth to become agents of peaceful social change. The organization strategically targets key youth groups and other relevant stakeholders by addressing different levels of change including personal, relational, cultural, and structural change. YFP has pursued its program in peace building, societal healing, and reconciliation through innovative and participatory approaches. These approaches focus on both the inner transformation of individual young people and the transformation of community mindsets to build a culture of peace.

YFP organizes various activities related to peace, leadership, personal development, and reconciliation. The organization encourages youth activism and volunteerism. YFP mobilizes large numbers of youth, and works in close contact with young people through dialogue and participatory approaches. The organization places great emphasis on the participants' creativity, ownership, and self-initiative. YFP has adopted new topics and target groups; today, it deals with a broad range of peace-related issues in society, working with in slums, rural areas and urban areas.

At the same time, recognizing the deficit of memory work around the conflict, YFP has established several community memorial committees that initiate community-owned memory initiatives (legacies of memory) tailored to each community's needs. In this area, YFP also works in partnership with the Peace Institute of Cambodia (PIC), which delivers important background and grassroots research and documentation work on issues of peace, conflict, reconciliation, truth telling, and memorialization. The aim of this work is to promote a culture of peace and a culture of democracy through education, research, and advocacy-driven networking. PIC intends to establish a National Peace Learning Center, which will include a Peace Museum, Research Library, and Resource Center.

## Intergenerational Dialogue as a Means to Connect Past and Present at Youth For Peace

Youth for Peace defines intergenerational dialogue as a dialogue between young and old generations about the history of the Khmer Rouge regime and other Cambodian conflicts during the civil war. It is a way of passing on the memory of historical and traumatic events to another group or generation through mutual understanding. Intergenerational dialogue is a crucial method to bring about social healing in grassroots communities; provide a platform for truth-telling about the past of Khmer Rouge atrocities; and bridge the relationship between victim-survivors, former Khmer Rouge cadres, and post-war generations—all of which can contribute to building democracy and peace.





A YOUNG PERSON INTERVIEWS A SURVIVOR OF THE GENOCIDE AS PART OF YOUTH FOR PEACE'S INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUES. PHOTO COURTESY OF: YOUTH FOR PEACE.

YFP's Intergenerational Dialogue project includes different themes and activities to engage young people in learning about history of the Khmer Rouge. The process uses participatory learning approaches such as performing the stories of victim-survivors, taking field visits to local sites of mass killing, drawing memories of atrocity through art therapy, and attending community concerts and exhibitions. During the Intergenerational Dialogue project activities, YFP invites participants including victim-survivors to collectively organize traditional rituals such as a water ceremony in which past pains are washed away, and almsgiving dedicated to the spirits of the dead. At the end of the program, victim-survivors receive photographs of the drawings they made about their personal memories of the atrocity. Stories of victim-survivors who grant permission to use their stories or photographs are recorded for publication purposes. The process is very meaningful for the victim-survivors to heal as well as for the young people to learn from the memories of the senior generation.

The Intergenerational Dialogue project intends to:

- “ Support the healing of survivors by releasing the pain that has been buried in their memories.
- “ Bridge the gap between the survivor generation and post-war generation in a setting where both generations have a safe space to tell their stories and experiences. Sharing

the survivor generation's experience with the post-war generation is part of the process of transformation from negative to positive. It is also part of the process of breaking the silence about the Khmer Rouge history.

- Encourage youth to better understand the history of the atrocity; to prevent it from happening again; and to participate in peace processes such as memory initiatives, reconciliation, and healing.
- Enable youth and adults to reflect critically about the factors that lead to the social problems and political crisis during the period of the Khmer Rouge regime—and especially how they can learn from the past and apply its lessons today.
- Help youth get involved in social activities to become agents of social change while also building understanding with one another, building trust together, and raising their shared team spirit.

## Components of Intergenerational Dialogue

The Intergenerational Dialogue project at YFP brings victim-survivors and the post-war generation together to learn and share from each other about the Khmer Rouge regime. Victim-survivors above the age of forty-five are invited to participate in the program along with young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two. YFP conducts the workshop primarily in grassroots communities, selecting and working with a group of between twenty-five and thirty young people. Youth and victim-survivors are invited to participate in the whole set of activities. The activities begin with a workshop entitled *Understand, Remember, Change*, and follow with the actual intergenerational dialogue, an arts and memory workshop, field trips, and the water ceremony to wash away the painful memories. The program is conducted in the community around mass killing sites in order to situate the history within specific places. The activities are planned so that they take place when community members have free time, such as when they finish farming and other obligations.

### 1. The *Understand, Remember, Change* Workshop

The interactive three-day *Understand, Remember, Change* workshop provides young people who participate in the program with background information about the history of Democratic Kampuchea, the Khmer Rouge tribunal, reconciliation, and reparation. The first set of activities is designed to improve young people's understanding of the history of Democratic Kampuchea. Youth get exposure to the Khmer Rouge ideology, the cause of the communist takeover, how the revolution attracted its participants, and the major events that led to the genocide. These sessions aim to help youth raise questions and engage in discussions about the sociopolitical, economic, and ideological factors that brought about the Khmer Rouge experience.

The *Understand, Remember, Change* workshops promote holistic understanding of a diversity of historical narratives; they give equal space to stories documenting the experiences of both the victims and perpetrators. A whole section of the *Understand, Remember, Change* workshop focuses on helping youth understand the psychological and cultural factors behind collective violence. Therefore, the workshop generates discussions on how to be critical and analytical about politics and leadership—rather than having blind obedience—and seeks to empower today’s youth to have moral agency.

The last section of the *Understand, Remember, Change* workshop focuses on the future. This section introduces youth to the concept of reconciliation not as “forgive and forget”—which has been the dominant message in Cambodia—but as a term that has different meanings for different people and communities, contingent on cultural contexts. This section introduces other countries’ experiences with mass violence and their ways of dealing with it. The workshop also touches upon the steps taken since the end of the Khmer Rouge to deal with the crimes committed under the regime. In ways that are understandable and relevant to youth, this section of the workshop focuses on the tribunal process, introducing its mandate, procedures, and possible benefits and pitfalls.

## 2. Intergenerational Dialogues

The actual intergenerational dialogues take place at village pagodas (religious centers) in communities that the facilitators visit prior to the *Understand, Remember, Change* workshop. The dialogues include village Achara<sup>4</sup> members, village teachers, older residents, and youth. The dialogues focus on the expectations and perceptions of the Khmer Rouge tribunal. YFP facilitators lead the dialogues and students who have completed the *Understand, Remember, Change* workshops serve as participants. The students are encouraged to listen as well as to ask questions. These dialogues are not presented as older community members teaching the youth historical facts, but rather as an opportunity for youth to be exposed to the diversity of historical narratives and perceptions among rural Cambodians. Each dialogue runs for three to four hours and takes place on consecutive days. The dialogues are led using large and small group discussion tactics and role-play exercises. The program is adjusted according to the needs and interests of the community participants as determined during the preparation.

## 3. Art Workshop and Exhibition

With this activity YFP gives space and provides resources for the community members to integrate artwork into the local memory culture process. In the art workshops, victim-survivors share their painful memories through drawings, a process which enables opening a discussion about the violent past. This, in turn, initiates fruitful intergenerational dialogue and exchange.

The exhibition of artwork of the villagers, the youth, and the monks involves the whole com-

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4 Achara are the religious people in the village, who typically form a ‘pagoda committee’ or religious committee.

munity. It is combined with concerts, youth theatrical performances, and “lucky draw” lotteries to attract the community. Furthermore this exhibition often is shown in conjunction with other exhibitions. One of these is a traveling exhibition about Case 001, the first case before the ECCC.<sup>5</sup> Another, called “Rescuers: Picturing Moral Courage,” is an exhibition created in cooperation with a US-based organization called Proof: Media for Social Justice.<sup>6</sup> The Rescuers exhibition shows examples of people who helped others in times of war in four different countries. It highlights the importance of non-compliance and solidarity. These activities are followed by community concerts and performances by trained youth, thus reinforcing a strong relationship between memory and culture.

#### 4. Visit to Local Mass Killing Sites

The purpose of this visit is to give participants the chance to learn about the history of the local mass killing and memorial sites and to inspire both generations to have an active discussion about the past events at these places. Using the site as a tool of history allows the participants the opportunity to remember in a deeper way. It enables youth to better understand the specifics of life under the Khmer Rouge. Being at the places instead of just talking about them generally leaves a much greater impression and ensures an authentic experience of history.

YFP includes schoolteachers—especially history teachers—and assists them in linking this activity to the school curriculum. During these visits, YFP staff and students organize a Buddhist ceremony of offering food for the monks. This is a healing concept that helps in remembering and praying for the dead. Additionally, after visiting the local mass killing places, the elderly and students are invited to join a “water ceremony” in which the youth wash their elders in a river, symbolically washing away the bad luck and pain that the victim-survivors experienced. This ceremony induces a closer relationship between the different generations.

### Impact on Victim-Survivors and Youth

After their participation in the project, youth participants changed their attitudes and behaviors. These changes came about through understanding the history of the Khmer Rouge, understanding the root causes of the atrocity, and facing the reality of survivor stories. The young participants play important roles in the process of healing and truth telling during the project implementation. They are the ones who actively listen to the survivors and the ones who acknowledge the survivors’ past suffering. The youth feel sympathy and love toward the older generation and praise them for overcoming the struggles in their lives. As one youth said,

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5 “Case 001,” Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) website, accessed September 3, 2014, <http://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/case/topic/1>.

6 “Proof: Media for Social Justice,” Proof website, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://proof.org/>.

“I heard the Khmer Rouge (KR) history from my grandfather and my uncle. They spent . . . time to tell me their experience. I really pity my grandfather because his brother was killed at Phnom Khiev Mountain at Pailin province. Then he was moved to the jungle where the KR forced him to do hard work, and he faced health issues. I had many questions rise up in my mind. For instance: Who created this regime? Why do they kill innocent people? Why do other countries support Khmer Rouge? How can I be involved in reconciliation and memory culture process? And more. I did not know how I could find answers. Fortunately, I was selected to join the Understand, Remember, Change workshop. It is a great workshop, in which I learnt more about Khmer Rouge history: for example, how the KR came to power because of two factors—external and internal. The external factors were China and North Vietnam’s support of the KR by offering technicians and weapons. Within the country, there were many reasons, such as bombing by the USA, corruption, land issues, KR ideology, and so on.

The Khmer Rouge killed more than three million people innocent people throughout the country. I really hate the war. Learning about the past is a way to prevent genocide from happening again in my country and in the world too.

Regarding these activities, I am very happy because I have a chance to be involved in the process of reconciliation and to build memory culture for the next generation. I will bring what I learnt from this program to share with my relatives, neighbors, and friends.”

*—Hun Mary, fifteen-year-old female student of Anlong Vil High School in Battambang province*

Victim-survivors are also pleased to participate in the project. They express relief when they tell their stories to members of the next generation who actively listen to them. These are moments when young people see the real feelings and suffering of the survivors and they want to share the sadness of the survivors. The survivors wanted to honor the dead in a variety of ways. Some wanted to prepare stupas<sup>7</sup> to honor the remains of the dead. Some wanted to create symbolic memorials and compile testimonies for new generations to learn from. Others wanted

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7 Stupas are Buddhist commemorative monuments that usually house sacred relics associated with the Buddha or other religious persons. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, many stupas were built to preserve the skulls and bones of those killed by the Khmer Rouge in order to worship the spirits of the dead and reunite their remains with their spirits.

to preserve the canals<sup>8</sup> built by the Khmer Rouge. One elder reflected,

“I feel happy to see the young generation curious to learn about my past. I was sixteen years old during the Khmer Rouge time. I was in a female mobile brigade<sup>9</sup> at Aumorny Village. Then Angka<sup>10</sup> transferred me to Thmor Korl and Samrongkhong where there was a prison. Many innocent people were killed in this place—about ten thousand. I was really sad because my nephew and relative died at that time. In the mobile brigade, Angka ordered me to work more than eight hours per day. I lived in a frightening situation and did not get enough food. During the rainy season I received rice soup and in the dry season I only got a small bowl rice.

I did not forget what I experienced in the past. I feel sad when I talk about it but it is better [than remaining silent]. I expect that the ECCC will provide justice to me and other victims. I am very happy when the judges decided to sentence Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch,<sup>11</sup> to his whole life in the jail.

Regarding memory culture, I think we should build a local museum, compile victims’ stories, and conserve the mass killing sites as a way to educate young people about the Khmer Rouge history and prevent genocide from happening again in Cambodia.

It is great that YFP creates space for young people to learn about Khmer Rouge history from survivors. It’s not only the ECCC that can find justice and reconciliation; sharing about the past is a way of reconciliation too.”

—*Tum Lot, sixty-one-year-old survivor of the Khmer Rouge*

Finally, the project contributes to building ongoing cooperation among adults, youth, schools, communities, and local authorities. It encourages youth to ask adults—including parents—questions about their experiences, and it encourages adults to share their own past experiences with young people.

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8 Many people were evacuated from the city and other places to dig canals, which were part of the irrigation development during the Khmer Rouge regime. Canals are widely known by and associated with people who survived the Khmer Rouge regime.

9 Female adults and youth units comprised of mostly healthy and fit workers were set up by the Khmer Rouge regime to fulfill the need for rural labor.

10 According to the glossary of terms related to the Khmer Rouge regime provided by the Documentation Centre of Cambodia, Angkar or Party refers to the leadership organization within the Khmer Rouge. It cannot be used as a term for individuals.

11 Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, the former chairman of the Khmer Rouge S-21 Security Center in Phnom Penh.

## Lessons Learned from the Intergenerational Dialogues

YFP learned that documenting the testimony of the survivors for use in future dialogues would improve the project and create sustainability for the program. The testimonies could help youth feel compassion and empathy for the survivor generation. The young generation could also use the stories of survivors in public performances as part of putting themselves in the survivors' shoes. Therefore, the plan to document the project process in the future will be beneficial to Cambodia and will serve as a model of reconciliation in other contexts. Filming the process can also be used to engage the young generation in the classroom.

Through the dialogue process, the youth heard the stories of the survivors. In return, they organized the water ceremony for the survivors—which was very important for creating a sense of give-and-take and of sharing. YFP leaders observed that young people are curious about and want to understand survivors' lives and experiences. However, YFP also noted certain negative effects of bringing survivors and post-war generations together. In some cases, the dialogue reinforced the trauma of the survivors as they spoke about their painful memories. The staff of Youth For Peace discussed this kind of negative impact critically in order to reduce the risks it might pose in the project in the future. [Other sites considering a similar project might proactively discuss whether this or any other type of negative impact—such as the transfer of trauma to the next generation—is a potential concern, how often the negative impact might be an issue, and strategies that might mitigate trauma or negative effects in the relevant community.—Ed.]

## Conclusion

The survivors' stories form the core of the Intergenerational Dialogue project. The project contributes to truth telling, healing, and building better relationships between survivor generations and post-war generations. Through this approach young people actively engage in reconciliation efforts at the grassroots level and the victim-survivors are relieved of their painful memories, although this may not be permanent relief. The experience brings empathy and compassion to survivors. It also builds community spirit through collective activities such as the community festival, water ceremony, and art exhibitions.

The Intergenerational Dialogue project is a very meaningful way for Cambodian people to deal with their own past, and the issue of trauma especially. The project breaks the culture of silence and fear within today's society. Through this process, young people and old are empowered to reflect and speak out, and thus to build democratic processes—from the grassroots and beyond.

SECTION 3  
FOCUS ON LATIN AMERICA





## 3.1

# TRANSITIONS: AN EXAMPLE OF A NETWORK'S COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION

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*Valeria Barbuto and Ariel Caniza*

The Latin American Network of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience emerged as an idea in 2005. At that time, the Coalition—made up of institutions from all over the world—was relatively new and had been established in Latin America in only a few locations. Looking to consolidate common work, and by virtue of their similarities regarding historical procedures and problems, among other things, institutions in these locations formed regional or themed networks. These networks opened up another level of depth in the work of—and the exchange of resources between—institutions.

The countries of Latin America have in common not just cultural backgrounds, similar histories of their formations as nation-states, and suffering due to the conquest of the Americas, but also similarities in having suffered grave violations of human rights during specific periods between the 1960s and 1990s. The execution of these crimes did not take the same form, nor did it happen during the same period; there are significant qualitative and quantitative differences. However, coordinated repression between governments, international solidarity against this repression, and the fight against impunity all link these recent histories.

Today, thirty-five Sites of Conscience in eleven countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay) make up the Latin American Network. In order to promote democracy and guarantees of non-recurrence, these institutions work together on the reconstruction of collective memory of human rights

violations that took place in the region during the periods of state terrorism and internal armed conflict. Memoria Abierta, Coordinated Actions of Argentinian Organizations on Human Rights<sup>1</sup> has coordinated the network since its inception, as a founding member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, and by virtue of Memoria Abierta's historical links in the region.

The network's members are historic sites, memorials, archives, territorial organizations, museums, and educational institutions, each with its own specific focus. The great diversity in institutional format, as well as in scope and size of the sites, makes this network a special space to carry out collaborative work, and one in which a combination of different points of view enables dialogues.

The work done cooperatively during these years has allowed us to gain knowledge of the experiences that arose and evolved in the region. In addition, it has allowed us to develop and share work strategies, trainings, and specific methodologies. We have developed practices and gathered substantial information on the creation, organization, and accessibility of archives, as well as on the experiences of recovery of sites where grave human rights violations were perpetrated. We also have advised on or collaborated in the construction of monuments and memorials, conducted topographical research, designed exhibits, produced content for projects in museums, created interactive materials, and carried out public impact campaigns, among other activities and projects.

## *Transitions: From Dictatorship to Democracy*

In 2010, the Latin American Network began the work of creating a collective exhibition aimed at encouraging discussion of the process of political transition. The network chose photography as the principal medium due to its richness, force, and capacity for examination and transmissibility. The design of the work methodology was intended to generate agreements between different sites within one country, and later to repeat this result cooperatively across all the countries. The network sought a result that was adaptable to different target audiences, that took into account the different goals of each of the cooperating institutions, and that had a high level of accessibility and possibility for reproduction as an in-house exhibit at low cost.

On this premise, all the Sites of Conscience, grouped by country, selected between three and five photographs representative of their recent histories, using as a criterion representation of key moments marking their countries' experiences of transition. At workshops during the 2010 annual meeting,<sup>2</sup> each country's site representatives exhibited photographs they had selected, and encouraged discussions about the content of the photographs. The involvement of many

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1 Website of Memoria Abierta, English version, accessed September 1, 2014, <http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar/eng/index.html>.

2 *The Fourth Regional Seminar: Transitions to Democracy in Latin America: Stories, People, and Conflicts* was held in Buenos Aires in 2010.

participants in the discussion around the presentation of *Emblematic Images in Recent History* (the original name of the *Transitions* activity) was the most productive part of the seminar. The representatives from the sites gave a brief explanation of why each selected photograph was meaningful in that moment. Although the processes were different in each country, one could see through the images the passage from authoritarianism to democratic regimes, pushed forward by intense processes of internal conflict between political forces, the power of change, and social movements.

One of the most interesting and central aspects of this discussion was the internal debate among representatives from various sites within a country as a result of different institutional characteristics, sizes, member backgrounds, or ideological positioning. In some cases, the site representatives were able to contemplate alternative perspectives from which to approach the past, creating new consensus about and modifications to the representations of historical landmarks. Colombia remained outside this debate, since the ongoing armed conflict in that country prevented its representatives from being able to affirm that a process of transition has developed. However, they were integrated into the discussion and planning process, reflecting on the possibility that they might disseminate the exhibit to show the experiences of other Latin American countries.

Latin American Sites of Conscience began to write explanatory texts about the context of each photograph and to review other meanings and significance of the photographs, particularly from the opinions expressed in the workshop. One member per country was in charge of these explanatory texts. Memoria Abierta, in its role as coordinator, was in charge of energizing the work and organizing the exhibition.

### Example from Paraguay

The process in Paraguay illustrates the debates that arose while selecting images. At first, network members in Paraguay selected three photos. However, days prior to the exhibition launch, a representative was invited from the Office of Truth, Justice, and Reparation, a unit within the Paraguayan Ombudsman's Office that had not been involved in the selection of images. Evaluating them from a different perspective, the representative noted that one of the photographs in the exhibit hid a much more complex history, especially in relation to the other photos on display. The photograph showed the former *de facto* president Alfredo Stroessner ascending the steps of an airplane by himself, departing into exile. This image, the representative pointed out, did not illustrate the fact that the regime was not comprised of a single person, and that—on the contrary—the regime had broad military, political, and civic support. This commentary led to the suggestion of including representation of key moments, such as the 1985 March of Silence during the Pope's visit. Representatives from the Paraguayan sites decided to modify the exhibit based on these discussions. The modified exhibit included images



THE FINAL PHOTOGRAPHS SELECTED BY THE MEMBERS TO REPRESENT THE PARAGUAYAN TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY. PHOTO COURTESY: ALICIA GALEANO.

from the march that occurred prior to the fall of the dictatorship and images from the submission of the final report of the Truth and Justice Commission in 2008, which are considered important steps for democracy in Paraguay.

Once network members had agreed on which pieces to include in the exhibit, they focused on how to make the exhibit a reality. One of the simplest options would have been to create a traditional traveling exhibit<sup>3</sup> that would have circulated among different network member sites. However, since its inception, the exhibit had been a horizontal, collaborative effort; centralized management of *Transitions* would have been contradictory.

Therefore, members decided to use a platform that would grant *Transitions* greater accessibility and circulation. They uploaded it to Flickr,<sup>4</sup> a website that allows sharing, storing, ordering, and searching photographs and videos online. This digital platform not only provides people with the opportunity to access the exhibit from anywhere in the world with an Internet connection, but also allows the exhibit to reach a wider audience through social media, the network's website, and other

3 Memoria Abierta has experience doing this, including with its exhibit *Images for Memory*. <http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar/im/>

4 "Transitions: From Dictatorships to Democracies," an album on Flickr, accessed September 1, 2014, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/latinamericantransitions/sets/72157644967789013/>.

The original gallery in Spanish is: "Transiciones: De las dictaduras a las democracias," an album on Flickr, accessed September 1, 2014, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/transiciones/sets/72157627958361889/>.

The gallery in Portuguese is: "Transições: de ditaduras para democracias," an album on Flickr, accessed September 1, 2014, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/transicoes/sets/72157631309432024/>.

similar websites. That wider audience might not have been able to visit one of the sites of memory. A digital platform also allows each of the thirty-five member sites to disseminate *Transitions* through its own communication channels. To make this process easier, the exhibit was translated into Portuguese and English.

But, the exhibit is not only a digital exhibit; a physical sample is also exhibited at the Sites of Conscience and at other venues relating to the theme.

Neither is *Transitions* a traveling exhibit. That is, there is not a single piece that circulates from one Site of Conscience to another. Instead, the exhibit can be shown simultaneously in different spaces. To this end, Memoria Abierta curated and designed panels, together with a catalogue that each site of memory can print, put together, and adapt to its spaces, possibilities, and style as necessary. This allows the exhibition to be produced in the country in which it is shown, thereby reducing costs.

The web version of *Transitions*<sup>5</sup> was disseminated throughout all the sites in the network in December 2011. On November 16, 2012, it was presented for the first time at a Site of Con-



THE FIRST EXHIBITION OF TRANSITIONS WAS HELD AT THE MUSEO DE LA MEMORIA, ROSARIO, ARGENTINA ON NOVEMBER 6, 2012. PHOTO COURTESY: MEMORIA ABIERTA.

5 "Transiciones: De las dictaduras a las democracias' photostream," accessed September 1, 2014, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/transiciones>.

science: the Rosario Museum of Memory in Santa Fe, Argentina. In December of that year it was shown at the Memorial of Resistance in São Paulo, Brazil. In 2013, it was shown at the National University of General Sarmiento in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and at the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago de Chile.

At each site, the exhibit was displayed in unique conditions and with unique characteristics, adapting to the space and resources of the institution. The minimum criteria included an introductory panel displaying the title and producers, and the other panels displayed in such a way that the series of photographs from each country would remain correlative and in the pre-established chronological order. The suggested order of the countries is alphabetical, although they also can be ordered by other criteria. The catalogue of the exhibition completes and contextualizes the motive for selecting the event represented in each image, the importance of the photograph, the context of the image, and the photograph's implications. In this way, the catalogue shows the value of each photograph exhibited, and the catalogue itself is an integral part of the exhibit.

### *Transitions* Lessons: Best Practices

The experience of creating the *Transitions* exhibit collectively has enabled the network to develop some lessons and best practices that may be useful to those planning similar projects in the future.

- .. The first thing to consider is the central idea and focus for the project.
- .. A collective exhibition requires the commitment of the co-authors/participants, and the leadership role of a coordinator to mobilize the work.
- .. The fixed costs of an online exhibition are not high, but it is necessary to have the technological and human resources necessary for the task of editing and uploading the photographs. In the case where these resources are not available, one can turn to external collaborators. *Transitions* had virtually no additional costs; everything was carried out thanks to volunteer work, peer-to-peer collaboration, and free Internet platforms. Although, of course, these were only possible thanks to preexisting human resources.
- .. Keep in mind the permissions and copyrights of images that are put on the Internet. It is necessary to be cautious about this because the downloading and reproduction of these images may violate copyrights and offend photographers with whom your institutions have ties.
- .. There are various platforms that allow for the creation of photo albums—not just Flickr—which may be better suited to the characteristics and needs of an album. Another option would be designing one's own gallery. The motive for choosing a preexisting free platform is that it can build on the traffic one already has in order to reach a wider and non-traditional audience.

- “ If the web platform allows comments, as in the case of Flickr, it is necessary to have a policy of respect. We chose to moderate comments, deleting the offensive ones but leaving those that respectfully express an opinion, including those contrary to the ideas that the exhibit and our sites encourage.
- “ One way of finding new and unexpected audiences—considering average web users—is to link the events of the past with the present, because users may find the photo exhibit unexpectedly while searching for something about the present. A good way to do this is through major anniversaries, which bring past events to the present with a specific date. Another way is to link present processes with past events. Using these two tools—and using social networks as a springboard—can be useful for attracting a new audience that, while perhaps still small, would expand the reach of the exhibition beyond the expected specialized audience or those already interested in the exhibition’s topics.
- “ Development of the exhibit should be sufficiently economical and flexible in order to permit the majority of institutions to be able to show it. Memoria Abierta created a single document outlining minimum criteria that must be respected in order to show the exhibit, including authorship, catalogue numbers, an appropriate space, and representation from all countries. From this, Memoria Abierta built an agreement with the exhibiting institutions regarding the manner in which *Transitions* would be shown.
- “ The greatest share of the cost is the printing of the exhibition catalogues, which should be accessible to each exhibition visitor because the catalogues provide text explaining the significance of each of the photographs. In one particular case, a more economical option for the exhibit was to print the texts of the catalogues to be exhibited along with the photographs. Although this is not ideal, it was a concrete solution to a problem of scarcity of resources.
- “ An issue to keep in mind is the ownership of the exhibit once it is finished. Even though each institution pays for the printing, the contents of the photographs are the property of the network. It is necessary to clarify this issue before launching the exhibition. All parties should agree on what to do with the panels once the exhibition is finished.

## Conclusions

*Transitions: From Dictatorship to Democracy* is a fruitful experience of cooperative work in the context of a network. The dynamic with which it has been carried out is of particular interest as a case of dealing with institutions that are very diverse but also united in a common goal of promoting human rights in the present.



The key components of this dynamic were:

- .. **The existence of a common interest:** The member sites of the Latin American Network expressed their interest by carrying out an activity that would establish a dialogue around recent histories of their countries. A shared desire is essential for the development of a cooperative project, since the beginning of the project depends on initial agreement in commitment to the task, and since such an activity guarantees the project's future use.
- .. **Development of a common focus and clear framework:** The guiding principle of the project was simple, and it was set in motion with executable recommendations and under realistic expectations. A guiding framework enables all sites to participate, feel integrated, and think about a positive result of their daily work.
- .. **Spaces for shared discussion:** The regional meeting provided an important forum for discussion, and highlighted the importance of working collectively on a shared project. Attendees benefited from talking openly about their varied perspectives on the work. This conversation deepened attendees' mutual commitment, and enabled them to address the issue of the project's feasibility.
- .. **Delegation of some steps:** Once network members reached a basic consensus and created the general criteria for producing the exhibit, it was essential for member participants to be able to delegate final execution of logistics to one representative.

*Transitions: From Dictatorship to Democracy* demonstrates some shared lessons about Latin America. Among these is that all of our countries have placed importance on democracy, peace, and dignity in life. The periods of grave human rights violations have ceased thanks to the struggle of activists, social organizations, political parties, and an enormous number of people committed to the validity of human rights. The struggle continues today, however, in the form of demands for an end to impunity based on pardons or privileges for those responsible. In some countries, these goals have been achieved through public policy.

Sites of Conscience work for the procurement of truth, execution of justice, recognition of victims, and social reparations. They do so by creating discussions that link the past and the present. In this manner, *Transitions* shows that the boundaries of transitions from repressive systems in Latin America go beyond the times of change in the political system and include an idea of substantive democracy. Transitions will be completed only when there is an end to impunity and when the valuing of human rights constitutes the main feature of our political, social, and cultural life.

## 3.2

# MEMORIAL OF RESISTANCE OF SÃO PAULO: PATHS OF CONSTRUCTING AND SOLIDIFYING SITES OF CONSCIENCE

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*Kátia Felipini Neves and Maurice Políti*

*Sites of memory—even though they are documented monuments, having witnessed human rights violations—are not able to communicate by themselves. It is through musealization<sup>1</sup> that they can become agents of social transformation, since they can establish a dialogic relationship with visitors who fit a variety of profiles and come from a wide range of backgrounds. For this, it is necessary to have as the basis for action a procedural museological perspective, enhanced by collective, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary work, and to have the involvement of social actors from implementation to development.*

*The Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo, an exemplary Site of Conscience, is an illustrative case study of such a museological perspective and process, from initiation through development. Central to this case study are certain fundamental guiding documents, the history of the building, and some conceptual, methodological, and managerial issues that were intertwined with choices, prioritizations, and numerous challenges throughout the process.*

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1 Muzealization is a direct translation of *musealização* in Portuguese. It means, roughly, the practice or concept of preserving and transforming a setting or structure to show its significance, by developing a museum or elements of a museum. —Ed.



FACADE OF THE OLD STATE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORDER OF SÃO PAULO (DEOPS-SP) BUILDING. PHOTOGRAPH BY PABLO DI GIULIO, MEMORIAL OF RESISTANCE OF SÃO PAULO COLLECTION, 2009.

The Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo is an institution dedicated to the preservation of memories of the resistance and the political repressions of the republican period of Brazil, from 1889 until the present. The Memorial of Resistance is located in a former prison in a building that belonged to the State Department of Political and Social Order of São Paulo (DEOPS-SP). Now a Site of Conscience located in the former headquarters of one of the most brutal political regimes of the Brazilian Republic, it began with the political will of the government of the State of São Paulo, through the Secretary of State for Culture; demand of the citizens, especially the Permanent Forum of Ex Political Prisoners and Persecuted of the State of São Paulo (Ex Political Prisoners Forum); and multi-disciplinary and multi-professional work that the State Pinacoteca of São Paulo museum coordinated. In developing a unique relationship—which continues to evolve—between these diverse entities, the Memorial of Resistance has established itself as an institution increasingly necessary for critical knowledge about the recent history of the country, and committed to the development of a culture of human rights.

It was the first place of memory in Brazil to be transformed into a Site of Conscience, during a period in which the country had just begun to feel the first winds of transitional justice and to talk about the importance of the right to memory, truth, and justice. In 2007, the year the museum project was conceived, and for many years after the inauguration of the Memorial

of Resistance, opinions on the preservation were divided—including among the social actors themselves—as to whether the past should be forgotten or recovered. Many social actors were afraid to have their names associated with the institution, and there was little mention of it in the media.

Not that this has been entirely overcome, but for some time now the Memorial of Resistance has been a source of pride for those who fought against the dictatorship and for those who believe in the need to promote the values of respect and of defending human rights. It is a resource for educators, for whom the Memorial of Resistance provides one of few opportunities to teach their students about the military dictatorship. It has also become a place for parents and grandparents to bring their children and grandchildren to teach them a little more about their history.

As its imperative is being recognized, the Memorial of Resistance has been serving as an incentive and catalyst for the creation of similar institutions in many other states of the country. And so, the institution has sought to cooperate in varied ways with the creation of other memorials and museums. This cooperation is inspired by the knowledge that, given the fear of talking about the past, the search for a more humane, just, and decent society is only possible when many museological institutions are addressing the subject.

## Successes and Challenges of the Memorial of Resistance

The Memorial of Resistance is a success because it made a political commitment by developing a museological project proposal,<sup>2</sup> and because it has sought to develop and solidify six lines of programmatic action: a reference center, places of memory, regular collection of testimonies, exhibition, educational action, and cultural action. Its purpose also includes research and communication, establishing it as a place for production of knowledge and information democratization. Its public has grown each year. In 2013 it received around seventy-three thousand visitors, of whom approximately thirty percent were guided through educational tours.

Musealization, as this case study suggests, enables such places of memory to become agents of social transformation, because musealization favors, through the dynamics of actions, a dialogical relationship with different communities.

The Memorial of Resistance faces many challenges. One of these is sharing the building with an art museum, the Pinacoteca Station, which is a unit of the State Pinacoteca of São Paulo museum. Another challenge is that the space available for long-term exhibits and temporary exhibits is smaller than ideal, as is the staff size; more physical space and workers are needed. Despite such challenges—and because of the process that is being developed at the Memorial of Resistance—we believe that we will overcome not only the current challenges, but also new

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2 The museological project proposal—which may be called, later in the process, the museological project document or museological project outline—is the first comprehensive document of the new institution. It is scientific and structured, and will justify the creation and existence of the museum.

ones that arise. This is the dynamic of museological institutions.

The fact that the above examples of challenges relate specifically to the building itself reflects the complex ways a physical site can shape the process of musealization. To comprehend these challenges and to extrapolate from the concepts and methodologies behind the Memorial of Resistance, it is useful to understand the history of the building.

#### Short History of the Building

The building in which the Memorial of Resistance and Pinacoteca Station are located was the stage for many occupations. Built in 1914 to serve as a warehouse and offices of the Sorocabana Railroad, it was occupied by the State Department of Political and Social Order of São Paulo (DEOPS-SP) from 1940 until 1983, when this agency of repression was extinguished. The building still hosted the Precinct of Consumer Affairs until 1997. The building, which until then was under the administration of the Secretary of State for Justice and Citizenship, was passed to the Secretary of State for Culture with the aim of creating a space dedicated to culture. Many types of occupation were envisioned, such as a school of theater, a music school with a concert hall, a library, or a museum. The restoration of the building started in 1999, and it was concluded in 2002 with the dedication of a previous project called the Liberty Memorial (a project with symbolic designation and with no musealization process) in the prison space, and with two exhibits on the second floor.

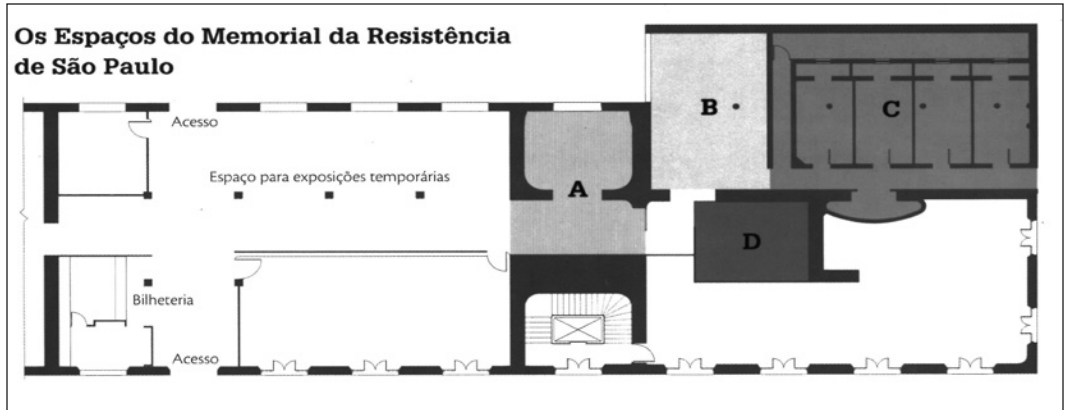
With the reform, however, many activists and former political prisoners had grievances, because not only did the plans erase the memory of the place, they also provided no opportunity to include information about the building's history. There were no planned educational and cultural activities to explore the history of what happened in this place or the history of the repressive period of the dictatorship. Further, the Liberty Memorial never quite worked as it should, since the need for musealization and research was not foreseen at a time.

Since there had been no permanent occupation of the building, in 2004 it was passed to the administration of the State Pinacoteca of São Paulo to install an art museum unit there, the Pinacoteca Station. The Liberty Memorial continued under the management of the Public Archives of the State until 2007, when the administration of the Liberty Memorial was also passed to the State Pinacoteca and a new chapter began in the history of this place of memory.

## Conceptual and Methodological Reflections

For an institution of this sort to succeed, a combination of three main factors is necessary: demand from social actors, support of government bodies, and committed museological action. These three factors combined to shape the initial steps leading to the creation of the Memorial of Resistance. The three factors in this case were as follows:

- **Social actors:** The militants, former political prisoners, and formerly persecuted people demanded from the state government that the site have a more appropriate name and its educational and cultural potential be further explored.



THE LAYOUT OF THE EXHIBIT SPACES AT THE MEMORIAL DA RESISTENCIA INCLUDES SPACE FOR LONG-TERM EXHIBITS AS WELL AS SPACE FOR TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS. PHOTO COURTESY: MEMORIAL OF RESISTANCE OF SÃO PAULO.

- “ **Support of government bodies:** The government of the State of São Paulo sponsored the idea financially and conceptually.
- “ **Museological action:** Developing a museological project proposal meant reflecting on what this new institution would be. Through this reflection, it was specified that the museological project should not be conceived by only one person, but by a group, and that the project was more than a long-term exhibit, but in fact an institution concerned with the production and communication of knowledge.

When the administration of the Liberty Memorial was transferred to the State Pinacoteca of São Paulo, the State Pinacoteca’s director at the time, Marcelo Araujo, solicited an interdisciplinary team of consultants to form a museum project. The team consisted of museologist Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno, of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of São Paulo; historian Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, of the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences, University of São Paulo; and educator Gabriela Aidar, of the State Pinacoteca of São Paulo. They delivered the proposal document, “Museological Project of Occupation, Liberty Memorial,” in August of the same year. It presented a project with a new museological perspective. The proposed project assumed a commitment to clarify what happened in the building during its occupation by the DEOPS–SP, and, especially, to reflect on the contemporary problems of society.

## What Is the First Step to Conceive an Institution Such as This?

Development of a museological project proposal is the first step. But what is this document and what is its importance?

The museological project proposal is designed from various inquiries and searches into factors such as the history of the place of memory, the surroundings, the possibilities and types of collections (museological, archival, bibliographic etc.), and the potential audience. One must ask: What is the social function of this institution? What is its main subject? In other words, from what idea it should operate? Who is the target audience? Which potential programs should it develop? What activities should it create? From the analysis of responses to these and other pertinent questions, a *museological diagnosis*<sup>3</sup> is then conducted, which will be the basis for the design of the museological project proposal.

This museological diagnosis document is, therefore, of the utmost importance, because it is the result of a collective reflection, and it should guide all future dynamics of the institution. However, it is not set in stone, since the dynamics of the institution and systematic reviews may show later that some programs and activities do not work or are not as suitable as had been thought.

In the case of institutions located in places of memory, the central concept from which the institution is generated—which we call the founding concept—should reflect the problems or message the organizers want to communicate, as should the institution's long-term exhibition and programs. As an example, in places where human rights violations took place, the main focus of the museum might be the repression and control methods used. Where immigration is the primary focus of the museum, the exhibition might focus on the specific problems immigrants have endured. A museum may focus on intolerance or racism practices, if that is its main subject. Therefore, specific points about the history of the place shape the subject for the central theme. It is from those points that the programs and projects will be designed.

In the case of the Memorial of Resistance, we chose resistance as the founding concept. This occurred for several reasons. We believe that resistance is always necessary and, therefore, the experience of those who lived through the period of dictatorship should be an example to the present day. Second, we wanted to give voice to the protagonists of the story, as a contrast to the official history learned in schools.

The Museological Project of Occupation, other than defining the founding concept, indicated a few characteristics that should be prioritized. The priority components were clear because of factors such as the history of the State Department of Political and Social Order of São Paulo (DEOPS-SP), and the trajectory of the building's occupancy, including its current status as the

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3 *Museological diagnosis* is a direct translation of the Portuguese term *diagnóstico museológico*, which is commonly used in the museology field in Brazil. It means a museological strategic planning process that is highly analytical and takes into account research, relevant information, the people involved in the process, the museum's goals and trajectories, and challenges. —Ed.

Pinacoteca Station. The project included components of research, of safeguarding through conservation and documentation, and of communication through exhibitions, educational activities, and cultural action.

The programs were organized as follows:

#### Reference Center:

- “ The Reference Center expanded access to information through a proper network containing documentary and bibliographic sources, such as systematic surveys at universities, or archives and similar institutions, with the aim of establishing direct dialogues between the Reference Center and other similar institutions.

#### Places of Memory:

- “ Identification and inventory of places of memory of resistance and repression located in the state of São Paulo expanded the preservationist reach of the Memorial.

#### Regular Collection for Testimonials:

- “ Collecting and recording testimonies of former political prisoners and relatives of the dead and the disappeared, as well as of citizens who were former employees of the DEOPS-SP, served for the construction of a database on the DEOPS-SP, as well as for use by other places of memory.

#### Exhibitions:

- “ Presenting a long-term exhibition—the resources for which must be systematically renovated, and the concept of which is the basis for generating temporary exhibitions with other approaches—provided new perspectives on issues related to the central theme of the Memorial.

#### Educational Action:

- “ Educational action involves building dialogues between the exhibition and the audience, starting with the development of training processes for educators providing both formal and informal education.
- “ We also conducted guided tours and produced supporting teaching materials.

#### Cultural Action:

- “ Cultural action involves promoting events to update discussions about the practices of control and repression—and the actions of resistance groups in authoritarian and democratic regimes—with multidisciplinary approaches that can renovate interpretations of the recent past. Such events include academic seminars, lectures, movie releases, theatre productions, film festivals, and others.



The project included a proposal for the long-term exhibition in the area where the prison cells once were located, although the proposal also outlined occupation of other areas in the building.

As seen in the case of the Memorial of Resistance, the museological project document is a sine qua non since it serves as the first guiding document of the institution. From it, museum plans and strategic plans must be created and monitored.

Institutions, due to a variety of factors, need different amounts of time to solidify themselves. They can be strengthened through programs and projects that show seriousness and commitment, increasing their credibility in society.

## What Methodology Is to Be Applied for Implementation of a Place of Memory? What Is the Methodology for Long-Term Exposure?

Shared curation is necessary. Working with memory is complex enough that only one or two people would not be enough to develop an institution. It is necessary to have the involvement of social actors and professionals from various disciplines and specialties. Together they can work in an articulated, shared manner, each contributing unique knowledge, skills, and competence.

The first step in implementation of the museological project proposal for the Memorial of Resistance was hiring the team of consultants who prepared the document, as well as three other technicians: a museologist, an educator with degrees in history, and a researcher/historian. The architect and all the workers, including painters, electricians, and the administrative/financial staff, were from the State Pinacoteca of São Paulo team. The Ex Political Prisoners Forum was hired in May 2008 to develop cultural activities and support educational goals. While the work was in progress, including ongoing meetings with technical staff and consultants, the team initiated collection of testimonies from ex political prisoners. These testimonies were much needed for understanding the resistance of everyday life in jail and for understanding the prison space. Concomitantly, the team incorporated other professionals into the process, including officials of the State Pinacoteca specializing in areas such as expography,<sup>4</sup> assembly, civil works, communication, accessibility for members of the public with disabilities, and educational activities. The team also brought in subcontractors specializing in audio and visual design or implementation of the model.

For the collection of testimonies, two representatives of the Ex Political Prisoners Forum,

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4 The Portuguese term *expografia* is translated here as *expography* (or *expographic* when an adjective, from *expográfico/expográfica*). It means a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to exhibit design that takes into account all components together, no matter how small—such as the objects on display, the text, the visual components, or the people interacting with the exhibit—and how those components relate to one another in nuanced and subtle ways. It also refers to envisioning and planning how these interconnected components will shape the ambiance of an exhibit, and determining what to display, what to communicate, and how to do it in a way that balances information with emotion. —Ed.

Ivan Seixas and Maurice Politi, were invited to participate in the process. This was done for two main reasons. The first was to ensure that all representation would be through their voices. Second, it was necessary to know what had, in fact, happened in that place of memory.

There were four sessions of collections of testimonies. Activists from a variety of backgrounds attended. They came from different political organizations, such as the Communist Party of Brazil, National Liberation Action, Popular Action, and others. They also represented a variety of occupations: students, teachers, workers, graphic artists, and journalists. There were: Ivan Seixas, Maurice Politi, Alípio Freire, Elza Lobo, Rose Nogueira, Raphael Martinelli, José Paiva, and Frei Betto. These were accompanied by representatives of the Ex Political Prisoners Forum, who acted as mediators, and by the implementation team.

The extensive preparation for these collection sessions involved developing a script for interviews and locating documents and iconography that would optimize the interviews and assist in activating the memories of the participants. Despite all that it might mean to activate memories of a relatively recent traumatic period, the interviews were facilitated in an environment of enthusiasm, joy, and hopes for the future. From this experience, the initial project underwent some changes, including addition of some new expographic resources.<sup>5</sup>

The participation of former political prisoners was actually much broader in the period before the inauguration of the Memorial of Resistance, when we could count on partners who worked in several areas of activity with the staff and cooperated earnestly to solve numerous challenges and develop resources. Some of the ways former political prisoners assisted the team included: developing the ambiance of—or recording the audio for—some of the former prison cells, supplying the team with documents and photographs as expographic resources, attending educational visits, and implementing cultural activities such as Resistant Saturdays, a program whose purpose is to inspire discussion of socio-political issues of the past and present, through various formats such as lectures, seminars, book launches, films, or theatrical presentations.

The project had a shared authorship; all expographic resources depended on the participation of the staff, whether in the idea, in the challenge, on the proposed solution, or in the implementation.

There were many challenges. There was the challenge of reinterpreting this place of memory in order to attract diverse audiences and ensure they would want to return with family and friends. It was limiting to work successfully in such a small space that was not originally built for visitation, selecting what we wanted to show and communicating what we wanted to express, and ensuring the selection would be exhibited in a way that balances information with emotion. There was the challenge of expressing that the stories told by former prisoners were a necessary stimulus for resistance even today—and not an obstacle. Equally important, there was the goal of ensuring resistance was no longer a thwarted experience to those who

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5 Expographic resources include any tool used to improve presentation of an exhibition. Examples include video projection, photographic displays, wall texts, or interactive computer displays.

resisted. To face the challenges, we thought about, discussed, and carried out with care each element with the respect that such initiatives deserve.

## The Role of the Museological Plan and the Strategic Planning: What Is Expected of the Institution in the Short, Medium, and Long Term?

Museological institutions are dynamic. And although the museological project outline is the first guiding document, and thus directs an institution's activities, a range of variables and factors may divert institutions' routes. These factors may include the dynamics of the institution, the sometimes-misguided understanding of the programs, lack of staff, inadequate funding, lack of understanding or support from management institutions, and direct or indirect intervention of the government body in which the institution operates.

On rare occasions, institutions are inaugurated with an organization chart and annual budget consistent with their profile and needs, and with all their implemented programs. The museum is a process, and the museological design is just the beginning. Hence the importance of strategic planning and what Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno describes as an institution's museological plan:

“The museological processes developed in museums, memorials, memory centers, and other similar institutions have been grounded by a guiding document, recently recognized by the national legislation as the museological plan, which is prepared from a link between institutional diagnosis and the proposition of strategies regarding the consolidation of programmatic lines, according to the circumstances outlined by the management model. On the one hand, this document seeks to clarify and ensure institutional vocation in relation to the uniqueness and potential; on the other, it serves to highlight the needs of realignments and strategic actions, with the intention to overcome the identified problems. Above all, it is expected that such a plan will allow the museum institution qualified insertion into scenarios of heritage policies and education.”<sup>6</sup>

This means that it is extremely important that the institution be able to assess whether what was initially proposed is, in fact, adequate, or whether the institution must redesign some programs or projects. The institution must identify strengths, fragilities, opportunities, and weaknesses that it must confront or take advantage of, as well as what to prioritize and what to save for a later time. Because institutions are dynamic, the initial requirements can take on other dimensions during the operation of the institution.

In the case of the Memorial of Resistance, once it was implemented and communication

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6 Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno, *Plano Museológico do Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo*, São Paulo: Associação Pinacoteca Arte e Cultura—APAC; Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo, 2010.

components such as exhibitions, educational activities, and cultural activities were in full operation—as were some components of an initial research project—it was necessary to establish a museological plan to assess whether what was initially considered for the museological design was adequate. This process involved thinking of the institution in the short, medium, and long term, so that—through strategic planning to establish priorities—the institution could solidify itself.

At this time, it was especially crucial to emphasize the communication-focused activities, to ensure public awareness of the Memorial of Resistance at a time when everything involving the dictatorship was still a subject treated with great fear.

Museological diagnosis is essential for the preparation of the museological plan. In the case of the Memorial of Resistance, one of the analyses concluded that the essence of the guiding assumptions in the implementation of the museological project document was preserved in institutional development after the inauguration. Specifically, that essence included the dynamics of collective, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary work; the participation of the Center for Preservation of Political Memory in many programs; participation of groups through cultural activities; and the development of other programs. As Marcelo Araujo and Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno describe,

“Among the key variables that have consolidated the experience in the design and implementation of this museological program, the activities of the Forum deserve special attention because its presence is noticeable from the political decision already mentioned, it went through all the steps of expographic setting and of many educational and cultural actions, and it is still visible in the dynamics of the development and expansion of the museological program lines. This transversal action in relation to this project basis, often vertical in some activities, brings the work a rare opportunity for museological experimentation, namely living with the protagonists of their own spheres of musealization. This experience, in turn, has consistently shown the importance of dialogue with those who built the ‘memory of resistance’ of that ‘professional territory,’ and has highlighted the potential of museological activities to transform relationships, often painful, of these protagonists with their own spaces of bygone dramas.”<sup>7</sup>

As the Memorial of Resistance underwent such a process, the museological diagnosis was based on documentation the Memorial had already produced, including reports, annual work plans, projects, and publications. It was also based on observation of some educational and cultural activities, including participation of groups in educational visits, meetings with educators, lectures, the Resistant Saturdays project, and exhibition openings. There were meetings

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7 Marcelo M. Araujo and Maria Cristina Oliveira Bruno, Coordinators, *Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo*, São Paulo: Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Memorial da Resistência de São Paulo, 2009, 61.

between the consulting and technical teams and the Board of Managers of the Pinacoteca, as well as online consultations. As with the museological project proposal, the museological plan must be participatory.

Some analysis regarding the diagnosis and proposal will aid in a more global understanding of the museological plan.

The aim of the institutional assessment included evaluating problems and potential for deployment of the museological program,<sup>8</sup> and evaluating the possible impacts—particularly, in this case, in relation to the State Pinacoteca of São Paulo and the Pinacoteca Station, since they are separate and distinct institutions. The assessment also included the management of the Pinacoteca Association of Arts and Culture (APAC), a Social Organization of Culture,<sup>9</sup> the responsibilities of which included evaluating the insertion and admission of the Memorial of Resistance into the realm of other institutions and bodies of heritage preservation in different spheres, and—in particular—assessing whether the museological design and implementation has kept the development relevant to the founding concept.

The diagnosis determined that the museological founding concept was adequate and appropriate, “which allows the institution to develop its vocation and build a museological process.”<sup>10</sup> The diagnosis also confirmed the relevance of the lines of programmatic action, official recognition of the institution, existence of legal frameworks, development of its own personnel and the Council for Cultural Orientation,<sup>11</sup> effective support of the Social Organization of Culture, and participation of the Ex Political Prisoners Forum.<sup>12</sup>

To ensure the museological diagnosis was thorough, several levels of verification were developed. These included building an inventory of characteristics of the Memorial of Resistance, developing a frame of reference for potential strengths and weaknesses in relation to the identified characteristics, assessing the degree of development of the programs, analyzing the insertion of the Memorial of Resistance into the State Pinacoteca of São Paulo, and increasing analysis of documents for which the Board of Managers was responsible.

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8 “Museological programs” include documents resulting from specific studies regarding the institution’s concrete institutional needs. Programs can be both technical and practical, and can help establish priorities, thus helping with the institution’s strategic planning. Programs may include research, exhibition, marketing and communication, education, architectural planning, etc. There may also be various subcategories of projects within each of these programs.

9 A Social Organization of Culture is one of a number of officially designated Social Organizations (OS), civil nonprofit organizations that manage public institutions. Most museums and other institutions linked to the state government are administered by an OS of this type.

10 Bruno, *Plano Museológico*, 2010, 17–18.

11 The Council for Cultural Orientation (COC) is an agency of the Department of Culture that provides consultation, monitoring, and evaluation of activities and functions performed by the Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo, as well as advice and suggestions. It is comprised of seven members, but guests may attend meetings.

12 Bruno, *Plano Museológico*, 2010, 17–18.

The design of the museological plan offers a link between different phases of the project, connecting each to the strategic vision. Such linked components may include structural phases, to ensure balance between lines of programming. They may include pilot experiments—such as the joint program between the Memorial of Resistance and both the Pinacoteca Station and State Pinacoteca of São Paulo—with the goal of preparing for the coordination between phases. Systematic reviews are also part of the design of the museological plan, in order to check the effectiveness of the plan's strategies.

The design of the Memorial of Resistance was organized according to the following structure:

### First Phase: Implementation of Programmatic Lines of the Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo

Implementation of programs focused on sites of memory, on regular collection of testimonies, and on development of the Reference Center. This choice was made in light of a discrepancy that had become evident. Specifically, because the programmatic lines that are focused on communication—exhibitions, education, and cultural action—include a considerable number and variety of activities, it was necessary to seek some balance between these and other programs.

### Second Phase: Solidification of the Founding Concept of the Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo

This phase focused primarily on verifying and evaluating the conceptual consistency and pertinence of the proposed strategic lines of programmatic action for the development of the institutional mission. This evaluation also indicated the need for expansion of the professional staff, as well as systematic review of the profile and opinions of visitors from the general public, and systematic review of the results of pilot experiments. With the results of such an assessment, “it is arguable that the institution will have the conditions to consolidate its assumptions and programmatic lines, and outline prospective routes for its expansion.”<sup>13</sup>

### Third Phase: Institutional Expansion of the Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo

Through studies that the institution performed periodically, and considering that the assumptions of previous stages had been met, it was clear that the Memorial of Resistance, in a prospective way, could achieve institutional autonomy. As Cristina Bruno explained, the Memorial of Resistance's autonomy was evident “since it operates from the appreciation of an extremely relevant thematic approach to education for citizenship; it is located in a ‘site of memory’ key to addressing its political heritage problems; and it has an adequate museological program in regards to the major demands of contemporary museology.”<sup>14</sup>

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13 Bruno, *Plano Museológico*, 2010, 55.

14 Bruno, *Plano Museológico*, 2010, 58.

## Considerations for Creating or Revitalizing Institutions of Memory

For a place to be considered revitalized there is much more to be done than simply refurbishing or restoring it and opening it for visitors. Just as we observed in the Memorial of Resistance, we observed that similar institutions in Latin America working on future prospects have developed numerous projects and actions in areas of research, exhibition, educational activities, and cultural action, depending on the breadth of each project. All have acted primarily in conjunction with communities of interest.

Thus, for the creation or revitalization of institutions, the following must be considered:

### 1. What are first steps in designing an institution? Creating the museological project. Questions to ask include:

- “ Why establish the institution? What is the function of the institution and of the museum or memorial? To what will the institution be dedicated?
- “ For what and for whom is the institution being created? Who are the potential audiences that it may include more actively?
- “ What is the central theme (e.g. founding concept)? What do you want to communicate through this theme? What are the main themes the instruction will touch on in order to influence change in day-to-day reality?
- “ What programs and projects are critical to the institution’s development?
- “ What is the history and importance of the place and its surroundings?
- “ What are the connections to the present? What is its importance today?
- “ To what extent and how will the institution be an agent of social transformation?

#### 1.1 What should be considered for programming?

##### a. Exhibitions

- “ What issues will be addressed in the long-term exhibition? What thematic approaches from the long-term exhibition may also work in temporary exhibitions?
- “ Is there available space for temporary exhibitions? For how many temporary exhibitions do we have the resources per year? What are the goals of the temporary exhibitions?

##### b. Cultural activities

- “ What is the importance of cultural activities? To which audiences will they be targeted? How will we involve different types of audiences?
- “ Explore possibilities of partnering with universities, governmental entities, and nongovernmental organizations to conduct seminars and other events.

- “ How can we transform the institution into a discussion forum? How can we transform the place of memory into a representation space, which different groups can use?
  - “ There are many possibilities that do not always require financial resources. These may include academic seminars, lectures with multiple themes, films, presentation of plays, book launches, etc.
- c. Educational activities
- “ Who are the potential targets of public educational activities? Do they include the general public? Students—and, if so, at what level of education? Higher-education educators? NGOs?
  - “ What would be the target age for educational activities?
  - “ How can we build scripts for educational visits in long-term exhibitions? What roadmaps will be constructed, taking into account factors such as age, or audience considerations such as reaching the general public or school groups based on school level (e.g. elementary, high school, and university)?
  - “ How do we broaden the activities of the institution with the use of key replicators or peer educators, such as professors or NGO workers who receive specific training on a specific theme (e.g. human rights) for the purpose of bringing the subject to others? This may be achieved through including educators from formal and non-formal education settings, conducting trainings, holding thematic lectures, or creating a club of educators.
  - “ How will we involve children under ten years old? How will we create educational games and storytelling opportunities?
- d. Research
- “ What areas of research are important for the study and systematic development of the institution? Are there issues related to the founding concept that may be favored?
  - “ What are the possibilities of coordinating with universities and other organizations?
- e. Safeguarding documentation and conservation
- “ What types of collections does the institution have or will it have, such as museum, archival, or bibliographic collections? What criteria will the institution have for acquisition? How will we design a collections policy?
  - “ What spaces are needed for processing and safekeeping of collections? How will we document and keep collections? What type of professionals or specialties are needed?



#### f. Management

- “ How will the management be structured? Who is the main sponsor? How do we involve other sponsors and create partnerships?
- “ What is ideal for each of the departments? What is possible now and what may be possible for the future?

### 2. Which methodology will be used? What are the requirements for implementation of the institution?

- “ Who are the key professionals who can contribute to the implementation of programs and to long-term exposure?
- “ What can be done to create a participatory environment in which everyone has freedom and confidence to express his or her ideas?
- “ How can we assemble and involve social actors from the beginning of the process? How can their memories and knowledge assist in developing the content of the exhibition script?
- “ What techniques and methods will be used for the selection and organization of ideas and research to build the descriptive discourse?
- “ It is possible to develop educational and cultural activities during the deployment process of the institution. To what extent can doing so bring visibility to the new institution?

### 3. The role of the museological plan and strategic planning

- “ What can be desired or expected of the institution in the short, medium and long term? How will we know if the institution has been successful and/or consistent with its mission and initial objectives? Are there mismatches?
- “ Does the institution have the resources to hire an expert to prepare the plan, or must the team prepare it? How will the research, analysis, and diagnosis of the institution be done?
- “ What has changed in the social, political, economic, and cultural context since the opening of the institution? Are there new needs caused by these changes or by the dynamics of the institution?
- “ Are we pleased with the profile of the public attending the museum, or do we identify absences that should be investigated and remedied?
- “ How will we involve the staff in developing the museological plan? What should be done to make it a participatory process?
- “ Similarly, how can we involve the staff in the preparation of strategic plans?
- “ In strategic planning, what should be prioritized for short, medium, and long term?
- “ How can we expand the team, potentially through effective hiring, temporary staff, interns, or volunteers?

## Conclusion

Places of memory linked to political issues should be treated under a procedural museological perspective so that they can perform a contemporary social function. Therefore, it is essential to commit politically, building institutions together with social actors, and working with professionals from different disciplines and specialties.

Reflecting on the process that has been developed at the Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo, as well as analyses of similar institutions, we find that such a process at a place of memory establishes the kind of dialogic relationship with the visitor needed to generate transformative actions, a relationship which should be at the core of all museological action.



### 3.3

## INTERACTIVE GUIDED VISITS AT CASA MEMORIA JOSÉ DOMINGO CAÑAS 1367

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*Zachary McKiernan and Bix Gabriel*

As unimaginable as it might seem that a modest home in a middle-class neighborhood became a center for torture and detention, equally astonishing is how, despite the house itself being razed to the ground, the house's history is kept alive by neighborhood activists. This is the story of Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367.

On September 11, 1973, when a military coup overthrew the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende in Chile, the unassuming house located at José Domingo Cañas 1367 in the neighborhood of Ñuñoa in Santiago was owned by a Brazilian national. Following the coup, the Panamanian embassy, urgently needing space to house political asylees, used it as a safe house. However, civil-military forces soon appropriated it and converted it into a temporary clandestine detention and torture center. The center operated in 1974 and 1975. Chile's infamous National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) named it "Ollague Prison" and imprisoned in it members associated with the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), an armed political party started by students in 1965 that broadened the appeal of Marxist-Lenin doctrine to workers before the coup. In 1977, José Domingo Cañas 1367, or Ollague Prison, was occupied by DINA's successor organization, the National Center of Intelligence (CNI), until 1987. During its operation as a clandestine torture center in the mid-seventies, fifty-three prisoners were disappeared, their whereabouts unknown to the present day.

After Chile's return to democracy in 1990, the house fell into disrepair. In 1999, as part

of the memory politics in the nascent democracy, activists from the neighborhood began the process to recover the house and convert it into a site of memory. But the then-owner, a toy magnate, razed the house in an attempt to erase history, a goal reflected in actions of many sympathizers of the Pinochet regime. Yet the activists remained resolved. In 2002, ownership of the lot where the house once stood—ceded to the state by the former owner—was transferred to the neighborhood activists as a National Historic Monument. Since then, Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 has been transformed into a public space of encounter that encompasses a historical, cultural, social, and political moment and movement. At the center of this space is Casa Memoria, the “house of memory,” which was constructed on the site after the original house was razed.

The mission of the historic site, which was inaugurated in 2010 as Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367, is to highlight the memory of human rights violations during the dictatorship and to support wider struggles for human rights in the present. As in many societies, a number of contemporary social, political, and economic challenges in Chile stem from its past dictatorship. Recently, the country has experienced increased police repression, political polarization and violence, and arbitrary arrests, particularly against students and indigenous Mapuche people.<sup>1</sup> The activists who manage Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 make the link between the state policies of repression and torture during the dictatorship and present-day tactics exercised by the police and military. Thus, besides investigating the cases of the persecuted people who passed through Ollague Prison and interpreting and announcing the violations committed during the dictatorship, Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 staff foster a culture of memory around today’s violations. On and off site, activists work to reverse the continuation of dictatorial policies in today’s democracy by documenting, recording, calling attention to, sharing information about, and denouncing police repression and violations.

To help with the dissemination of this information and to make clear the past-present link of state policies that violate human and civil rights, Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 uses interactive guided visits at the site of the former clandestine torture center. Facilitators of the tour incorporate the historic narrative of the house into the national narrative of dictatorship, use the power of place to consciously mine historic knowledge and emotional connections, and invite the interpretations, opinions, and ideas of visitors in an effort to clarify past human rights violations with today’s human rights issues. The interactive guided tour is a shared experience in which knowledgeable activists and various publics come together in conversation to connect: with history, with a contemporary concern, and with one another.

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1 “Comisión de Observadores de Derechos Humanos de la Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367,” Observadores de Derechos Humanos website, accessed September 19, 2014, <http://www.observadoresddhh.org> and “An urgent call to action in Aysén, Chile: Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367,” Public History Commons website, March 14, 2012, accessed September 19, 2014, <http://publichistorycommons.org/an-urgent-call-to-action-in-aysen-chile-casa-memoria-jose-domingo-canas-1367/>.

## Interactive Guided Visits at Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367

Developers of historic sites across the world recognize the inherent power of place: the power to evoke emotion about and reflection on what happened at the sites. Sites of Conscience are actively trying to move people from asking, “What happened here?” to asking, “What can I do today so that what happened here doesn’t/does happen again?” Rather than provide neat answers to questions of what happened then and what should happen now, many Sites of Conscience choose to invite visitors to discover the answers themselves, to draw out their own personal connections between past and present. But this search for meaning and the process of linking past and present is not left to chance. Instead, the deliberate approach to stimulate reflection, questioning, and action is a hallmark of Sites of Conscience. One method that Sites of Conscience often use to foster such visitor engagement is the interactive guided tour.

Guided tours are used widely at museums, historic sites, exhibits, and memorials. Interactive guided tours, such as those used by Site of Conscience Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 in Santiago, invite visitors to interpret the site’s history; to share their opinions, ideas, and experiences; and to engage with and make meaning of the narrative—individually and with one another. In short, such tours invite visitors to interact.

In 2012, Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 launched the interactive guided tour as part of an educational program for university students, “*Memories of Political Repression in Chile: Human Rights Across the Disciplines.*” This program examines the history of political repression in Chile and helps students from distinct academic disciplines explore a diverse range of contemporary human rights issues, not only those connected to Pinochet’s violations. The tour was created to help the students understand the impact of human rights violations in preparation for longer workshops that addressed various aspects of human rights study. The staff of Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 found that the interactive tour with the students led to a deeper examination of the site, to an exploration of the site’s history from different perspectives, and to an opportunity for dialogue about the contemporary legacies of the site’s history. In response, the staff expanded the tour and offers it to all visitors.

Facilitators who lead the forty-minute interactive tour stop at six stations along the physical—now mostly vacant—landscape of the site to tell the history of the former torture center. At the first station, for example, facilitators introduce themselves, describe the context of the site, and interpret murals painted on the walls. Another station honors the fifty-three detained-disappeared victims of Ollague Prison by listing their names on memorial floorboards. The activists specifically chose to list the names on the floorboards (rather than on a plaque or wall) because survivors of the prison have shared that as they were moved from one part of the detention center to another they were able to see the ground by peering downwards from their blindfolds. Facilitators of the tour also use material such as the personal stories of the prisoners, photographs, and other resources from Casa Memoria’s library to share what happened

at the site. Although the general objective of the strategy is to make known the history of the house and the various forms of state repression, underlying this objective is the desire to draw people into conversations about what this history means so that visitors can make connections between past and present human rights issues. Thus, the tour covers a range of stories in detail, contextualizes the site in a larger framework of state terrorism, and asks open-ended questions of the visitors throughout the visit. The facilitator also invites questions from the visitors, who, in turn, share their experiences and views. To conclude, the facilitator describes the active role that Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 is playing in current struggles and invites visitors to reflect on their personal relationships to these struggles.

Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367's interactive guided visit differs from traditional museum and historic site tours in at least three ways. First, the aim of the tours is to generate dialogue about historic content and context that is sensitive and still contested,<sup>2</sup> rather than solely to provide a narrative about the past and its legacies. Talking openly about torture and state-sponsored terror requires tremendous sensitivity, particularly in a society where silence about past abuse has been long expected and enforced. The experience for both visitors and facilitators can be emotional and challenging but also deeply rewarding. Second, facilitators consider the audiences' demographics and motivations for visiting the site and tailor the tour to cover aspects that are best suited to create dialogue with and among the different groups of visitors. For instance, tours with university students cover aspects of human rights abuse from different perspectives, whereas tours with family members who might have lost loved ones during the dictatorship focus on visitors' memories of the era and the loved ones they lost. Finally, the visits are not didactic but instead are designed to make space for sharing and questioning. Though the facilitator is a site expert, he or she does not constitute an ultimate authority. On the contrary, facilitators are eager to learn of visitors' experience and knowledge of the site, as official records have been destroyed or hidden. Through conversations with visitors, the staff of the Casa Memoria expands the historic narrative of the site. In some cases, the history of the torture house specifically—and the context of the neighborhood more generally—comes from the neighbors who lived near it during the dictatorship.

## Interactive Guided Visits As A Methodological Tool

The chief characteristic of interactive guided visits is interactivity: between the facilitator and the visitors, between the visitors and the site's history, and among the visitors. Interactivity

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2 As recently as September 2013, on the fortieth anniversary of the coup that toppled Salvador Allende, the broadcast of television programs on this history, such as "Chile, The Prohibited Images" generated controversy with more than one hundred complaints in the first two weeks of airing that the depictions of history were biased. Javiera Muñoz, "Hundreds of Chileans File Complaints Against TV Show on Pinochet Dictatorship," Global Voices, translation posted September 10, 2013, accessed September 19, 2014, <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2013/09/10/hundreds-of-complaints-filed-against-tv-show-about-pinochet-dictatorship/>

between the site’s facilitator or narrator and the visitors has the potential to refine and revise the “official” narrative of the history of the site, since visitors may ask questions that raise alternate perspectives on the site’s history or even on present-day issues. Moreover, if visitors are encouraged to participate in sharing the interpretation of the site’s history, the distance between the visitor and the facilitator’s authority can diminish, which often allows the visitor to feel a greater sense of connection with and ownership of the history. In a sense, by inviting people to engage with the site’s history through interactive means, the guided visit becomes a shared trip through history: stopping at various artifacts, pausing to consider historic photographs, and walking in the same footsteps as predecessors to “feel” the stories of the past.

An interactive guided visit can also foster both intellectual and emotional connections. Visitors gain increased understanding and knowledge of the past: specific social events and political processes, dates and facts, and so on. When contextualized with extensive personal stories and shared at the actual site where the events occurred these intellectual connections can lead to emotional connections. For example, if visitors are looking at a metal-bed frame, are they seeing it in a vacuum? Or are they imagining the young idealist who was tortured while strapped to it? Are guests walking through empty rooms? Or are they envisioning the people who used the space as they fled an authoritarian regime? What will a visitor feel? How does the history provoke empathy, compassion, fear, frustration, and other emotions? Intellectual and emotional experiences provide the visitor an opportunity to connect personally with the site and the site’s history—and to determine how and why it matters to that particular person in the present.

An interactive tour also promotes interaction among visitors. These interactions stem from each visitor’s personal connection to the site’s history as well as present—or past—experiences. Such interactions allow for multiple views, including differing opinions. A skillful facilitator can help steer these conversations to be productive and—perhaps ultimately—to enable both personal and collective understanding of a site’s histories.

## Nuts and Bolts of Interactive Guided Visits

The following is a “nuts and bolts” outline of the basic structure and contents of interactive guided visits. The components can be modified to fit site-specific contingencies, expanded for inclusion in a broader program or activity, or used as a general blueprint.

**Who:** Who participates in interactive guided visits? How many people participate in a single visit? Who can be included?

### “ Facilitators: Guiding and Interpreting

- “ Facilitators lead site visits by guiding and interpreting. Facilitators may be either staff or volunteers who are trained in facilitation and interpretation. In some cases, they may



be people with personal experience of the site or its history. The facilitator is charged with delivering the narrative and interpreting resources as well as asking questions and promoting participation to encourage visitors to interact. It is imperative for this person to assess and get a sense of the group and to allow time for visitors to reflect on what they are experiencing.

#### • Visitors: Public Participants

- People from all walks of life take interest in historic sites for various reasons. Thus, sites should expect people from a range of backgrounds: young and old, student and professional, urban and rural, and of various political and socio-economic stripes. Some interactive guided tours can be tailored and confined to specific audiences, such as students. Some visits may include only a handful of people, while others may have larger groups. It is crucial to prepare and be flexible for this diversity in visitor make-up.

#### ç At Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367

- The guided interactive visit originated with a specific audience of university students working on diverse human rights themes. Next, the site facilitators broadened the audience scope to include the general public, from Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367's neighbors to international visitors.

**What:** What happened here? What is the history the site will tell? And what issue(s)—past and present—is it tied to? Is there a script to follow? What resources can be used?

#### • Script: Stories and Stations

- Typically, in a guided visit, the narrator tells the history through a series of short stories linked to a common theme and sometimes to a contemporary issue. Establishing this narrative—or “script”—is a first step in program planning. Inspired by the site itself or by events at specific places within the site, the script must be sequenced in order to move the visitor through the landscape of the site, stopping at pre-determined places where significant stories are to be told. These stops might be thought of as story “stations” and should ideally be dispersed throughout the site in order to vary the narrative flow.

#### • Historic Resources

- Resources are mostly the physical objects—photographs, artifacts, visual aids, and more—that enhance the script and make opportunities for interactive moments. In many cases, aspects of the physical site itself, such as a remnant of barbed wire or a



AN INTERACTIVE GUIDED TOUR AT CASA MEMORIA JOSÉ DOMINGO CAÑAS 1367. PHOTO COURTESY: INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE.

piece of a window bar, can be resources that prompt reflection and interactive moments. Those moments help the facilitator tell the story and at the same time allow the visitor to see, hear, touch, or listen to historic evidence.

### ç At Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367

- “ The narrative for the interactive visit revolves around six separate stations, with each station offering key evidence of and personal memories of the site’s history. At station one, for example, political murals recently painted on the walls remind visitors of the United States’ complicity in the coup as much as of the political parties that were repressed during the dictatorship. Another station pays tribute to the victims of Ollague Prison, while the final station, Casa Memoria, represents the work that has been done at the site and the work that remains to be done.

**How:** How will interaction take place? What types of interaction are desired? How can they be brought about?

These are the fundamental questions that the designers of interactive guided tours must consider and carefully map out. Interaction begins as soon as a visitor arrives at the site and surveys the environment. It continues as the facilitator, interpreter, or site representative then greets the visitor. Establishing dialogue early through simple “ice-breakers” and introductions works well.

As the visit continues, facilitators should press for more critical types of interaction, guiding the visitor to reflect on the implications of the site’s history. Sensitivity is required, as is sensing how the audience is feeling and responding, but the interactivity should help to deepen understanding of the site’s history and the broader implications. Providing time for visitors’ input and questions at all stages of the visit is crucial, since it promotes a collaborative or shared experience. Some mechanisms to encourage interactivity are:

- Posing questions to the visitor
- Inviting visitors to share comparative experiences
- Asking visitors to imagine the ending of incomplete stories
- Displaying a photograph or object that provokes interpretation
- Engaging visitors’ senses through audio-visual sources
- Posing reflection questions about what visitors learned and felt
- Inviting visitors to share their views during discussion topics or scenarios

#### ç At Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367

- Facilitators continuously promote interaction through asking visitors questions. Facilitators provide opportunities for feedback and reflection at each station stop. They also challenge visitors’ knowledge of the site while imparting new knowledge. “Why do you think it is important to know?” and “What do you think?” are common questions they use to begin conversations with visitors.

**When:** When are guided visits offered? What are the best times to offer interactive visits? Can they be implemented with other programs and activities?

#### •• General Visits:

- Ideally, guided visits are conducted frequently. A planned schedule can show daily itineraries. The extent of scheduled visits will reflect site staffing levels and the availability of knowledgeable facilitators, but impromptu tours can benefit spontaneous visitors. Having trained staff available at all times to lead visits—either planned or impromptu—is an asset. However, this may be unfeasible due to staffing constraints. In such cases, establishing a scheduled guided tour as an option on certain days or at specific times allows visitors to plan their visits. One benefit of scheduling tours is that visitors who choose to participate in an interactive guided tour might be more willing to engage in conversation than others who might prefer a silent exploration of the site.

#### •• Special Visits:

- Interactive guided visits can complement other on-site activities. If visitors are using the site for a cultural show or performance, then it is beneficial to make a tour available to enhance their understanding of the historical context. A commemorative event also

presents an opportune time to offer guided visits. Making a guided visit an explicit part of a larger on-site program or activity enhances the effectiveness of both the program and the tour.

### ç At Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367

- “ The staff offers guided visits in various contexts. The site follows a daily schedule of times at which visitors are invited to tour the site. Additionally, as with the education program for university students, guided visits are used to engage and prepare visitors for subsequent workshops. Finally, when staff members are available, Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367 offers impromptu tours to visitors who come outside of the appointed tour times or scheduled activities.

**Where:** Where should the visitors go? Where are the best places for interactivity? Should visits always follow the same route?

#### “ The Route:

- “ Interactive visits typically follow a pre-planned route. This route includes stops at different points or stations, giving the facilitator the opportunity to interpret various resources and make time for components of interaction, such as questions, connections, and transitions. Each station corresponds to a part of the script of the site’s history. Though a visit should follow a planned pattern and narrative, each station can be seen as a stand-alone section. Therefore, if visitors ask questions or wish to explore tangents that relate to other story stations, the facilitator has the option to advance to a relevant station in a different order than in the narrative. In addition, although doing so is not optimal, station visits can be broken up for shorter visits or re-worked due to unforeseen conditions.
- “ Station stops may include:
  - “ Entrance to the historic site
  - “ Specific markers of events or activities that took place at the site
  - “ Physical and symbolic aspects of the site, such as a prison cell or a meaningful tree
  - “ Exhibitions and informational signs
  - “ Spaces where visitors can read former visitors’ impressions and/or leave their own marks on the site, such as through memory canvases or booths in which to record visitors’ comments

### ç At Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367

- “ Six stations, each providing different interactive opportunities, comprise the stops along the route of the guided tour. Each station includes resources—including aspects of the physical site—that the guides use to illuminate aspects of the site’s history. For

instance, at the first station, facilitators interpret the political murals painted on the walls. The final station, in the Casa Memoria, explains the uses of memory and the challenges that confront the site. Other resources include photographs, remnants of the torture house, and instruments of torture.

**Why:** Why do sites offer interactive guided visits? Why do visitors benefit from them? How is an interactive guided site visit different from a non-guided one?

Although unaccompanied site visits and traditional guided tours are beneficial for visitors, interaction at the site with trained facilitators offers additional benefits. Interaction promotes a sense of shared history and stimulates intellectual and emotional connections. Interaction may lead visitors to ask and try to answer for themselves, “What can I do today to prevent what happened here from happening again?” Moreover, during a guided visit, visitors have an opportunity to confer with other members of the public. Interaction may include the following components:



A MURAL AT CASA MEMORIA JOSÉ DOMINGO CAÑAS 1367 MEMORIALIZES 1974 TORTURE VICTIMS. PHOTO COURTESY: ZACHARY MCKIERNAN.

- “ **Asking, “What happened here?”** Answering this is central to a site’s mission. It establishes historical awareness and opens avenues to explore contemporary issues. Interactive guided visits ask, “What do you think or imagine happened here?” This provokes visitors to participate in making the site’s history their own.
- “ **Intellectual Connections:** These connections are based on establishing history’s objective facts for visitors. Objective facts in this case include that the historic site was used as a clandestine torture site in 1974 and 1975; that electrocution, sleep deprivation, and psychological torment were the specific methods of torture; that the victims’ names are —; that the perpetrators responsible are —. Establishment of these facts is important for historical records. In addition, visitors learn through presentation of these facts about the range of contemporary legacies related to the historical roles of certain individuals or groups. In some cases, histories provide the antecedent to present-day laws and policies.
- “ **Emotional Connections:** These connections are much more subjective and are meant to conjure up emotions that the site and the site’s interpreted history evoke: sympathy, fear, confusion, and hope. Each visitor will experience his or her own divergent and unexpected range of emotions.
- “ **Collaborative Connections:** Guided visits turn individual visits into collective experiences. Visitors have a chance to express their opinions, ideas, and emotions and to learn of others’. Through their interactions, visitors might also be moved to revise their existing views of history or present-day issues.

### ç **At Casa Memoria José Domingo Cañas 1367**

- “ The tour aims to share the history of the site in the context of state-sponsored terror and to elicit understanding about today’s conception of human rights. Given the increase in police repression and political polarization, the interactive visits establish dialogue about the extension of dictatorial policies in democracy.

## Schematic “How To” of an Interactive Guided Tour

### Step 1: Getting Started

Questions to Consider	Task and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What is the history of the site?</li><li>2. What happened at the site?</li><li>3. How will the history be told?</li><li>4. Who will be involved in telling the story?</li><li>5. What are other sites and museums doing?</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Know the full history of the site, including when it came to be, how it was used in different historical periods, and who have been the relevant actors in the site’s history over time.</li><li>2. Conduct research about the event or events that are most relevant to a historic site’s mission.</li><li>3. Identify principal resources and devices to be used during the interactive visit, such as physical remnants, photographs, and material culture.</li><li>4. Identify potential facilitators/interpreters. Assess audience demographics. Identify collaborators for research and education outreach.</li><li>5. Take the time to visit other guided tours. Analyze their strengths and weaknesses. Talk to facilitators to gain experienced insight.</li></ol>

### Step 2: Getting Set Up

Questions to Consider	Task and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What will the narrative consist of? Will it be chronological, thematic, or governed by some other approach?</li> <li>2. What is the script of the guided interactive visit?</li> <li>3. Where will the facilitator/interpreter guide visitors?</li> <li>4. What type of training will be necessary for the staff?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Streamline or organize the longer history of the site—and the specific events to be highlighted—into a narrative that can be delivered to diverse audiences within a specified time period.</li> <li>2. Create a general text for all facilitators/interpreters to follow, based on research and objectives. Use this text to train staff. Revise accordingly.</li> <li>3. Identify the route. Select stations that correspond with the script.</li> <li>4. Practice the interactive guided visit with staff; test various interpretive techniques and resources.</li> </ol>

### Step 3: Getting it Going

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What interactive tools and techniques will be used?</li> <li>2. Who will be narrating the guided visits?</li> <li>3. What types of connections will be made?</li> <li>4. How will visitors interact with one another?</li> <li>5. What questions can the facilitator anticipate from visitors?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalize material resources to be used. Construct a list of open-ended questions to pose to visitors.</li> <li>2. Identify trained, knowledgeable, and confident staff ready to begin guided visits. Continue to practice even after the launch.</li> <li>3. List what it is hoped visitors will learn and remember, such as a site's facts: dates, important people connected to the site, its relation to larger processes, etc. List the types of emotional response desired, such as empathy, pride, passion, etc.</li> <li>4. Plan and role-play various potential tour scenarios.</li> </ol>



## Step 4: Getting Interactive

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How will facilitators greet visitors?</li> <li>2. How is history shared?</li> <li>3. When will visitors engage in dialogue?</li> <li>4. What about "off-script" and difficult questions?</li> <li>5. How will the guided interactive visit be assessed?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create "ice-breakers" and a list of expectations for visitors. Ask visitors to introduce themselves.</li> <li>2. Assess interactions of guides and visitors. Link personal experiences to collective experiences.</li> <li>3. Ask questions to visitors and invite visitors to ask questions of one another. Identify stations, resources, and questions that are particularly effective in stimulating conversation.</li> <li>4. Anticipate "uncomfortable" encounters; keep attention on shared history and respect for a diversity of opinions. Re-state expectations.</li> <li>5. Enable visitor feedback in both written and oral formats. Hold meetings with facilitators to share experiences. Revise guided visits as necessary.</li> </ol>

## Conclusion

An interactive guided visit is an excellent method to harness the power of place, to enhance visitors' experiences at a historic site, and to create deeper understanding and awareness of a site's history and corresponding contemporary issues. The guided visit allows for historic sites to showcase and use resources—whether an on-site library or the vestiges of a razed building. The intellectual and emotional connections that visitors can make to these resources are almost limitless.

Ensuring that the tour is replete with questions and provides frequent opportunities for visitors to ask their own is essential for successful interactive visits. When a tour is interactive, visitors participate in the experience and feel a sense of shared information about and investment in history. By promoting interaction among visitors, historic sites also become active spaces for public dialogue across diverse views. And when interactive guided tours connect with contemporary issues—and visitors are invited to discuss and take action on these issues—the tours and sites become vehicles for enabling civic action, and thus for promoting democracy.

## TRAVELING EXHIBITS AT MUSEO DE LA PALABRA Y LA IMAGEN (MUPI): MAKING OFF-SITE HISTORY IN EL SALVADOR AND AROUND THE GLOBE

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*Bix Gabriel and Zachary McKiernan*

Lucio Atilio Vásquez Díaz—or “Chiyo”—was eight years old when he witnessed the murder of his mother and pregnant sister by military forces in El Salvador’s civil war. From 1980 to 1992, the military government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), a coalition of five guerrilla groups, battled, killing more than seventy-five thousand people and causing unquantifiable destruction. Like thousands of others, Chiyo fled to escape death. He went to Honduras and later returned to work with the opposition radio station *Radio Venceremos* (We Will Win Radio). Today, Chiyo is an activist who uses the history and memory of the war to help build of a culture of human rights and peace.

Chiyo’s story is the centerpiece of “A Tale to Learn,” a traveling exhibit of the Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen (MUPI) (or Museum of the Word and Image). Established in San Salvador in the wake of El Salvador’s civil war, MUPI is dedicated to the investigation, preservation, and dissemination of El Salvador’s historical and cultural patrimony, as well as to creating spaces for societal reflection. Beginning with efforts in 1992 to preserve archives—including audio files about social movements that emerged both during the civil war and more recently—MUPI works to document the historical memory of indigenous and peasant communities, and organizes youth workshops on topics such as memory and human rights. In addition, MUPI launched the campaign “Against the Chaos of Forgetting” (Contra el caos de la desmemoria), which invites

the public to donate or lend objects or documents of cultural, historical, or artistic significance. This is a means not only of collectively conserving history but also of making history truly of and by the people.

## “A Tale to Learn”

In recent years, violence has been a major societal concern in El Salvador, first from the residual effects of the civil war, and second, due to the importation of gang culture from the United States. During the national conflict, many Salvadorans immigrated to Los Angeles and acculturated to that city’s gang culture. Once repatriated, Salvadorans carried that culture back to their country of origin, mostly in the form of the infamous street gang Mara Salvatrucha, or MS 13. The result was that, despite the signing of El Salvador’s Chapultepec Peace Accords treaty in 1992, street violence and criminal activity has continued. Recent estimates cite between thirty thousand and fifty thousand gang members in the tiny Central American nation; it has one of the highest murder rates in the Americas. As one Catholic priest working on the streets told National Public Radio (NPR) in 2009, “We had a civil war, and now we are having a social war.”<sup>1</sup>

MUPI’s mission of educational and cultural development through societal reflection led it to create the traveling exhibit “A Tale to Learn.” The museum selected the traveling exhibit as a method to counter the scars of civil war and stem the tide of extraordinary gang violence by reaching young people most affected by these legacies in the communities where they live. “A Tale to Learn” traveled to nine different cities, aiming, as described in MUPI’s grant proposal to the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, “to sensitize the new post-war generation . . . on the respect for human rights and dignity”<sup>2</sup> by exploring the past-present connections embedded within the country’s ongoing violence. MUPI’s administrators and staff targeted children as the most vulnerable, while also reaching out to parents and local community leaders.

MUPI’s “A Tale to Learn” used a wide range of exhibit strategies to convey the historical narrative of violence—and solutions to stop it. The centerpiece of the exhibit, “Chiyo’s Story,” came together through Chiyo’s personal testimony, interpretive signage, photographs, and a testimonial book of child wartime experiences. Along with these artifacts, MUPI members and Chiyo conducted workshops on the historic memory of the civil war; led debates about present-day violence, and trained local volunteer-docents to interpret the traveling exhibit.

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1 Jason Beaubien, “Extortion, Gang Violence Terrorize El Salvador,” National Public Radio, March 12, 2009, Accessed September 10, 2014, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=101426190>.

2 Museo de la Palabra y Imagen, “A Tale to Learn: Chiyo’s Story.” Project Support Fund Grant International Coalition of Sites of Conscience Project Support Fund Grant, El Salvador, 2012.



SCHOOLCHILDREN VISIT THE MUSEUM, AND EXAMINE PHOTOGRAPHS AND OBJECTS FROM THE SALVADORAN CIVIL WAR (1980–1991). PHOTO COURTESY: MUSEUM OF THE WORD AND THE IMAGE.

## Traveling Exhibits as a Methodological Tool

A Site of Conscience invokes the power of place as an instrument of conscience. People visit these sites for their historic value, to feel they can touch history, to remember the past, and to make connections to the present for the future. But what happens when the permanence of place becomes a limiting factor? How can a Site of Conscience make historical claims outside of its physical parameters? What if distance or location impedes people from visiting? To overcome these challenges, many Sites of Conscience—indeed museums of all types—have launched traveling exhibits.

A historic site's traveling exhibit functions in much the same manner as a permanent or on-site exhibit. It connects visitors to the past by using material objects, artifacts, photographs, and other interpretive devices. Through these objects, an exhibit conveys historic concepts, themes, and ideas to visitors—a history or historical narrative. But it also offers visitors opportunities to imagine, to express ideas, and to foster new or alternative outlooks. According to expert museum planner Barry Lord, "The purpose of a museum exhibition is to transform some aspect of the visitor's interests, attitudes, or values affectively, due to the visitor's discovery of some

level of meaning in the objects on display.”<sup>3</sup>

An exhibit of any kind is an excellent resource for historic sites and museums wishing to engage visitors. But a traveling exhibit executes what an on-site one cannot: it can bring the place to the people. In societies and communities in which taking a trip is difficult or expensive, or in which a location is inaccessible to certain communities, the traveling exhibit is ideal. It can be used as a tool to reach new audiences and establish new institutional and community relationships. A traveling exhibit can extend the history of a Site of Conscience to other museums, cultural centers, schools, libraries, government agencies, and more. This creative method is a solution to the challenges of distance and permanence as much it is as a tool for outreach and engagement. In the words of MUPI’s representatives, a traveling exhibit is a “museum without walls.”<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, a traveling exhibit allows a museum to reach not only a wider public but also specific, pre-determined publics. MUPI’s goal to challenge societal violence through “A Tale to Learn” led the team to look to El Salvador’s most vulnerable citizens—children—and thus specifically focus the traveling exhibit on schools. MUPI also installed “A Tale to Learn” at community centers, libraries, and cultural events.

Another advantage to using the traveling exhibit as a method is that a traveling exhibit offers the ability to advance a multi-programmatic mission. MUPI’s mobile exhibition did more than tell Chiyo’s story. It also served as a medium to train docents, establish community dialogue, and distribute books and resources. School children, parents, and administrators used the traveling exhibit as a point of encounter. Such points of encounter can be crucial for Sites of Conscience, because encounters facilitate collaboration among a variety of people and institutions who collectively and individually can confront pressing issues.

A final advantage to the traveling exhibit is the potential for a site to establish new or build on existing relationships within a community, whether on an individual or institutional level. A museum without walls can find partnerships with non-profit, private, and public organizations. The ability to share knowledge in distant or disadvantaged places is at the heart of the traveling exhibit.

## Nuts and Bolts of Traveling Exhibits

A traveling exhibit is dynamic, as it includes components, people, and places outside of a historic site or museum’s traditional orbit. It also requires transportation and coordination between various institutions. Thus, it is essential to establish the mission of the traveling exhibit, define its expected audience and outreach potential, assign museum staff accordingly, and, finally, create the exhibit before it travels.

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3 Barry Lord and Maria Piacente, eds. *Manual of Museum Exhibitions, Second Edition*. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 12.

4 Museo de la Palabra y Imagen, “A Tale to Learn”

**Who:** Who is the audience for the exhibit? Who are the hosts? Who interprets the storyline?

- “ **New Partners, New Publics:** The traveling exhibit engages new publics and establishes new partnerships. Having a sense of who these people and institutions are helps the planning, execution, and success of the exhibit. Museum staff need to identify potential host institutions and possibly conduct site visits beforehand. Similarly, museum staff need to identify the demographics—gender, age, ethnicity, etc.—of the projected audience for the traveling exhibit, such as:

  - “ school children, young adults, or senior citizens;
  - “ at-risk, marginalized communities; and
  - “ non-profit, private, and public institutions.
- “ In some instances, these target audiences will be pre-determined, such as youth and teachers at a school. In other cases, if the traveling exhibition is displayed at a cultural event, the audience will be much more heterogeneous. However, traveling exhibits can cater to multiple audiences at the same venue by offering special programs for a target audience while a more general public is invited to experience the exhibit.
- “ **Historic Site and Program Planners:** The logistics and planning of a traveling exhibit demand delegation of responsibility. Depending on available personnel, responsibilities will vary. One person should be identified as the primary point-of-contact and made responsible for external communications, public relations, and schedule coordination. Then a team should be designated for the design, accountability, transporting, set-up, and breakdown of the exhibit. Trained museum staff also must be available for technical and interpretive/thematic assistance. One way to effectively administer and manage a traveling exhibition is to establish teams and assign responsibilities along the following lines:

  - “ Management and administrative team
  - “ Exhibition team
  - “ Interpretative/education team
  - “ Communications or promotion team
  - “ Supporting staff
- ç **At MUPI:** The exhibit targeted youth ages 11–17 who live in communities with high rates of violence are the target audience. MUPI members worked in collaboration with diverse institutions such as the Ministry of Culture, local schools, and civic organizations. Chiyo trained—and was aided by—guides to interpret the exhibit. Together they led workshops on historic memory, human rights, and the Salvadoran civil war.

**What:** What does a traveling exhibit involve? What are its material parts? What is the content of a traveling exhibit?

- “ **Exhibiting History:** An exhibition usually entails a story line or a central narrative or theme. This narrative arc, or history, is told and supplemented by content. Content may include historic evidence, such as photographs or firsthand accounts of a historical event or process. Using a variety of historic evidence is a constructive way to keep the viewer engaged. Comparing and contrasting the exhibited resources can also engage audiences effectively. The following are tools that help convey historic concepts, themes, and ideas:
  - “ Artifacts and objects
  - “ Signage and storyboards
  - “ Photographs
  - “ Audio-visual devices
  - “ Educational materials
  - “ Guides or interpreters.
- “ **Traveling History:** Traveling entails transportation. A museum must procure a means of transportation and ensure that the exhibition can be transferred safely from one location to another.
- ç **At MUPI: The “A Tale to Learn” exhibit consisted of eighteen panels or storyboards,** chronologically guiding the viewer through Chiyo’s life. Chiyo’s story was woven together and contextualized within the recent national history of El Salvador. It included photographs of popular protests during the civil war and testimonies of survivors. Chiyo often further complemented the exhibit by singing and playing the guitar at exhibit venues.

**When:** When is the best time for a traveling exhibit? Is it sustainable? How long should it be displayed?

- “ **Optimal Timing:** A traveling exhibit is best timed: in coordination with a pressing and relevant contemporary or social issue; when the exhibit’s historic narrative, theme, or contemporary issue corresponds with a community need; or when a program identifies a relevant outreach opportunity.
- “ **Special Considerations:** It is useful to display traveling exhibits during a special anniversary, commemoration, or cultural event. Exhibits can also be incorporated into other public projects or programs. Consider:
  - “ Festivals and holidays
  - “ Cultural and commemorative events
  - “ Hot historic topics or current issues.



LEFT: SCHOOLCHILDREN OUTSIDE OF THE MUSEUM IN SAN SALVADOR. PHOTO COURTESY: MUSEUM OF THE WORD AND THE IMAGE. RIGHT: CHILDREN READ AN EXHIBITION ABOUT COLLECTIVE MEMORY. PHOTO COURTESY: MUSEUM OF THE WORD AND THE IMAGE.

- “ **Everyday Concerns:** It is crucial to consider logistical concerns about the availability of the exhibit and about the schedules of the museum and host site. Advance planning and coordination are critical to avoid time, date, and schedule conflicts. Typically, a traveling exhibit is planned at least a year in advance of its launch. Other logistical concerns such as an appropriate level of financial and human resources as well as the aforementioned access to a mode of transportation must also be considered.
- “ **Sustainability:** An advantage of a traveling exhibit is that it has a potentially long, sustainable life. Depending on the content (which can become dated or less relevant) and the durability of the materials used in the exhibit, once an exhibition is created it can be employed when demand arises. It can also be re-used for future or recurring special events and activities.
- ç **At MUPI:** MUPI’s traveling exhibit was typically on display at pre-determined sites for periods of two weeks. In addition to this rotating schedule, it was also displayed at festi-





YOUTH WITH THEIR CERTIFICATES AFTER PARTICIPATING IN A WORKSHOP ON HUMAN RIGHTS, SAN SALVADOR. PHOTO COURTESY: MUSEUM OF THE WORD AND THE IMAGE.

vals and religious gatherings. In one instance, “A Tale to Learn” was displayed in conjunction with an exhibition about Anne Frank. In this case, the exhibit offered local youth the opportunity to write their histories modeled on the journal format of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

**Where:** Where is a traveling exhibition displayed? Where are optimal places for exhibition?

“ **Off-Site Locations:** The location is the distinguishing component of the traveling exhibit. It is also the most varied. Determining where the exhibit will be will depend on the exhibit’s specific aims and objectives, as well as on the projected audience, whether pre-determined or undetermined. Institutions that host the exhibit, such as schools, museums, and NGOs, often have a vested interest in the subject matter. In other instances a place such as a public park, plaza, or library might be desirable simply because this type of space reaches a diverse group of people. It is always important to consider the physical space, its size, whether it is an indoor or outdoor space, and other considerations that could potentially facilitate or complicate access to the exhibit. Such consideration also matters in keeping exhibit material safe, secure, and undamaged.

High-visibility places include:

- Schools and universities
- Community and cultural centers
- Faith centers
- Civic organizations and institutions
- Historic sites and museums
- Parks, town squares, plazas, and markets

- ç **At MUPI: Chiyo and company traveled to areas with high levels of violence. With** the help of the Ministry of Education, MUPI identified schools in these locales to display “A Tale to Learn.” In another instance, MUPI established an alliance with the Tecleno Municipal Museum, a former jail for political prisoners converted into a cultural center, to share the exhibit, since the content of the exhibit was likely to complement the municipal museum’s history.

**Why: Why do traveling exhibitions make sense?**

- **Bringing Place to People:** As Grace McCann Morley described in UNESCO’s *Manual of Traveling Exhibitions*. “. . . they bring to remote places the possibility of knowledge and enjoyment of the arts, sciences, and history.”<sup>5</sup> In addition to bringing knowledge to remote places, a historic site’s traveling exhibit brings the place to the people. Within this context, the traveling exhibit provides: a point of encounter, an intellectual and educational exchange, resource sharing, and opportunities to establish new relationships, among much more. Traveling exhibits can be used to:
  - bring a Site of Conscience’s history and mission to the people;
  - reach out to and engage geographically diverse and specific publics;
  - establish new institutional relationships;
  - connect people to history via interpretive devices, and
  - complement or promote dialogue and educational initiatives.
- ç **At MUPI: “A Tale to Learn” sensitized at-risk Salvadoran youth to historical legacies** and connected that history to present day realities of violence in order to cultivate a culture of peace and respect for human rights. The exhibit stressed the importance of dialogue as a means to resolve problems rather than armed conflict. Educational activities, debates, and music also marked the interpretive experience of the exhibit, while discussions and dialogue programs offered the public an opportunity to share knowledge, voice opinions, and talk openly about sensitive subjects.

5 Elodie Courter Osborne, *Manual of Traveling Exhibitions*, UNESCO, 1953.

## Schematic “How To” of a Traveling Exhibit

This is a basic and clear schematic to use when thinking about developing a traveling exhibit. It reflects two essential components in the traveling exhibit. The first is the development, design, and implementation of an exhibit. The second is the planning of the exhibit and collaboration between the historic site or museum and the places to which the exhibit travels.

### Step 1: Develop and Identify Questions

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the core reason for the traveling exhibition? What challenge will it address?</li> <li>2. Where will it be exhibited?</li> <li>3. Who is the target audience?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and define the objective or mission.</li> <li>2. Identify the target audience.</li> <li>3. Identify places to exhibit.</li> <li>4. Establish responsibilities and teams.</li> </ol>

### Step 2: Create the Storyline and Historic Narrative

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What story will the historic narrative tell?</li> <li>2. What contemporary issue(s) will it address? How?</li> <li>3. How is the past connected to the present?</li> <li>4. What is the research involved? Who is going to do it?</li> <li>5. Is the exhibition part of a multi-programmatic mission?</li> <li>6. What other methods will be used?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a narrative.</li> <li>2. Collect artifacts, photos, and other historic evidence.</li> <li>3. Conduct research.</li> <li>4. Establish specific ways to connect past to present.</li> <li>5. Define a holistic program strategy with complementary activities such as outreach, education, workshops, etc.</li> </ol>

### Step 3: Design and Produce

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How will the content be displayed and used?</li> <li>2. How will visitors interact with the exhibition?</li> <li>3. What are the interpretive devices and strategies?</li> <li>4. Who will interpret the narrative?</li> <li>5. How will it be transported?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Visit host institutions and, accordingly, design the exhibition.</li> <li>2. Consider content order, including whether it is logical.</li> <li>3. Define questions for visitors.</li> <li>4. Train or teach docents on-site and off-site.</li> <li>5. Describe the exhibition in relation to other activities and programs.</li> <li>6. Procure modes of transportation.</li> <li>7. Confirm host sites.</li> </ol>

### Step 4: Implement

Questions to Consider	Tasks and Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where, when, and for how long will the exhibition be on display?</li> <li>2. What museum staff participated in the exhibition?</li> <li>3. Who visited the exhibition?</li> <li>4. How is the exhibition evaluated?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish timeline for the loan period.</li> <li>2. Travel, display and interpret the exhibition.</li> <li>3. Conduct programmatic or educational activities.</li> <li>4. Establish rapport and new community relationships.</li> <li>5. Create and implement an evaluation plan, questionnaires, visitor feedback, public comments, etc.</li> <li>6. Record planned and unplanned visitors.</li> </ol>

## Conclusion

When civil war raged in El Salvador from 1979–1992, few would have guessed that in future years a cultural and artistic medium, the traveling exhibit, would one day be used to confront issues of violence. The case of MUPI’s “A Tale to Learn” demonstrates that the value of a traveling exhibition extends well beyond its mobility. It opens up other avenues for engagement and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, including historic site and museum staff, various publics, teachers, and politicians. Thus, a traveling exhibit’s success lies with determining both where it will be displayed and—equally important—for whom.

SECTION 4  
IN CONCLUSION



## 4.1 CONCLUSION

*Bix Gabriel and Deborah Gardner*

In a 2014 article, Ram Bhandari, coordinator of the National Victims Alliance in Nepal, quotes the wife of a disappeared citizen: “I do not understand the notion of transitional justice as discussed in Kathmandu where experts teach and lecture the victims. To me, justice means continuing my family life with full dignity and fulfilling my daily needs. I need respect and acknowledgement from the government that my innocent husband was forcibly disappeared during the conflict.”<sup>1</sup> Bhandari’s article examines how class and caste dynamics in Nepal are derailing the country’s transitional justice process. He elaborates on the ways the transitional justice process is leaving out the voices of traditionally marginalized groups, including victims and survivors. Almost every transitional justice process in history has been similarly criticized for leaving out such voices. Such an omission frustrates a central goal of transitional justice as identified in the foreword to this publication—namely, to give voice to victims as a means for combating human rights violations.

While a key intention of transitional justice processes is to achieve justice for victims, it is generally impossible for every group or category of victim or survivor—let alone every individual—to have a voice in the process. This is just one of the gaps that memorialization can fill during the transitional justice process as well as for years or even decades after. The

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1 Ram Bhandari, “Class and Justice,” Kathmandu Post, July 29, 2014, <http://www.ekantipur.com/the-kathmandu-post/2014/07/29/oped/class-and-justice/265548.html>. Also published as: “Class and Justice in Nepal,” International Coalition of Sites of Conscience website, August 2014, accessed September 21, 2014, <http://www.sitesofconscience.org/2014/08/class-and-justice-in-nepal/>.



chapter “The Making and Use of a Historic Site: Activating the Special Court for Sierra Leone into a Peace Museum” outlines how a variety of stakeholders, including victims and survivors, families of victims, disappeared or missing people, former prisoner groups, former military and/or guards, human rights organizations, religious committees, ethnic minorities, student groups, elders of communities, and others can have a voice and decision-making power in memorialization processes.

Memorialization projects that fall within official transitional justice processes are not the only such efforts with potential to give voice to victims. Many grassroots memorialization efforts provide a space for hearing and transmitting the voices of victims and survivors, even if these voices rarely reach larger publics. For example, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience partnered with several groups—Civic Initiative and Liberia Media Center in Liberia, and the Kenya Human Rights Commission and TICA (Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health) in Kenya—to host experiential workshops for survivors of violence. These participants mapped their experiences of conflict on life-size maps of their own bodies. Through the maps they told their particular stories of trauma and shared their visions for the future. In both countries, these body maps were exhibited in public spaces, which helped to bring marginalized experiences to the public eye and to re-shape how atrocities were understood. In many cases, memorialization forums and activities such as these are the only opportunity for poor, rural, and otherwise-marginalized people to tell their stories in a public space and to receive national or international recognition of their experiences.

But as the chapter “Engaging the Public through Storytelling” demonstrates, the stories of victims, survivors, and other groups take on a life of their own when they are experienced by new audiences, some of whom may have no knowledge of the human suffering wrought by historical events. In this sense, memorialization plays a critical role in the quest of connecting present-day audiences with past events. A student who visited Villa Grimaldi Peace Park in Chile, a site of detention under the Pinochet regime and now a Site of Conscience, said, “Sometimes one sees it as something that has already happened, that is far away as history and that’s it. But being there [at the site] one sees that there are people still involved because their children are still missing and they seek the remains of them . . . it makes me reflect more and put myself in the place of those families.”<sup>2</sup>

Walking in the shoes of those who came before at a place of memory can be a visceral experience. In the chapter on Intergenerational Dialogue in Cambodia, author Long Khet identifies how visiting sites of mass killing is part of the dialogue methodology because, as he puts it, “Being at the places instead of just talking about them generally leaves a much greater impression and ensures an authentic experience of history.”<sup>3</sup>

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2 International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, “Past to Present, Memory to Action,” International Coalition of Sites of Conscience brochure, 2011.

3 Chapter 10, “Intergenerational Dialogue: Connecting Past and Present in Cambodia at Youth For Peace, Cambodia.”

Yet, as authors Maurice Politi and Kátia Felipini Neves demonstrate in “Memorial of Resistance of São Paulo: Paths of Constructing and Solidifying Sites of Conscience,” simply preserving places of memory is not enough. They, like other members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, argue that it is the transformation of a site of past conflict into a site of living memory that makes a site of memory into a Site of Conscience.

Although this process varies in different contexts, a common thread is that Sites of Conscience ask their stakeholders and themselves critical questions about the past, such as: What are the multiple experiences of what happened here? How should we remember these experiences? Whose stories do we tell, and how? At the same time, the sites keep an eye to the future and ask questions such as: What do we see for ourselves as a society today and in the future? How can we prevent the repetition of past atrocities? And how can we continue to build on legacies that uphold justice? Staff at Sites of Conscience ask such questions during the process of developing places of memory. But in many cases—as exemplified by the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum’s “action stations”—this type of questioning continues on an ongoing basis, long after the doors are open to visitors.

That sites integrate this type of questioning into their ongoing work is indicative of a larger methodological pattern: Sites’ processes often reflect the values they seek to engender in the communities in which they work and in society at large. These are values such as critical questioning, understanding multiple perspectives, or coming together across differences. Thus, the processes tend to bring together a variety of people who work together under democratic, collaborative, and egalitarian principles. The Latin American Sites of Conscience Network’s online exhibit, *Transitions*, is an example of memorializing across widely different experiences and through inclusive and democratic processes such as debate and collaborative decision-making. As the chapter describing the project explains, Sites of Conscience in several countries chose to change the photographs they had initially selected for inclusion in the *Transitions* exhibit upon receiving new feedback from a different perspective.

But working together in a democratic manner is not without its challenges. Sometimes the development of places of memory can stall due to political, economic, or social factors, such as victims’ groups disagreeing on who is to be remembered—or how. For instance, although the Northern Ireland former prison known as Long Kesh or the Maze<sup>4</sup> closed in 2000, the question of the site’s fate is still unresolved.<sup>5</sup> Contention around memorialization is not uncommon and often reflects the realities of a post-conflict society in which—even when transitional justice

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4 The name varies depending on which group is referring to it.

5 “Inside the Natalie Lindo, Inside the Maze prison – the first public tours,” BBC News Northern Ireland website, September 12, 2011, accessed September 23, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-14871213> and Laura McAtackney, “The Negotiation of Identity at Shared Sites: Long Kesh/Maze Prison site, Northern Ireland,” (Paper Presented at the Forum UNESCO University and Heritage 10th International Seminar “Cultural Landscapes in the 21st Century,” Newcastle-upon-Tyne, April 11–16, 2005), revised July 2006, accessed September 23, 2014, [http://www.academia.edu/459520/The\\_Negotiation\\_of\\_Identity\\_at\\_Shared\\_Sites\\_Long\\_Kesh\\_Maze\\_Prison\\_Site\\_Northern\\_Ireland](http://www.academia.edu/459520/The_Negotiation_of_Identity_at_Shared_Sites_Long_Kesh_Maze_Prison_Site_Northern_Ireland).

processes are underway—lasting divisions among groups of stakeholders remain. By creating spaces for open dialogue on the nature of these divisions, and by bringing together groups who may be in opposition to one another, Sites of Conscience can be instrumental in reconciliation and in re-building of societies fractured by past conflicts, and may play a role in maintaining peace.

Even when Sites of Conscience are not functioning in post-conflict contexts with specific goals of reconciliation or re-building, they often enable and encourage visitors to become active citizens<sup>6</sup> who take responsibility and action to uphold human rights. Many Sites of Conscience view active citizenship as a fundamental tenet of democratic societies in which human rights abuses are resisted, punished, and—whenever possible—prevented. Among other traits, active citizens show tolerance for difference, question and fight injustice, and take action to promote equity at the community or societal level. At almost all Sites of Conscience, stories of active citizens in history provide models for how visitors may act today. At the same time, by inviting visitors to ask what roles they see for themselves in shaping the future, Sites of Conscience promote the personal responsibility of each human being in building a culture of human rights. This is especially important since memorials often celebrate figures that fit the “exceptional hero” archetype; such celebration could have the paradoxical effect of reducing visitors’ likelihood of playing more active roles if they feel unable to imagine, for example, taking steps so extraordinary as those of the revered historical figure.

In order to help visitors make sense of the past and see themselves as actors making history in the present, Sites of Conscience require methods. Specifically, they need methods that both reflect and propagate the values they promote. The methods described in the preceding chapters are diverse: they include intergenerational dialogue programs, storytelling, interactive tours, and other participatory means of public engagement. Such diversity reflects the fact that these methods are being applied in vastly different contexts and in settings where conflict may have ended recently, a generation ago, or even in a bygone era with lasting legacies. Yet even with the differences in application contexts, the methods share core principles and characteristics. Among these are:

- **Audience:** In choosing methods, sites consider the audiences they seek to engage and how they hope to engage those audiences. Thus, the target audience informs the methods. Such considerations matter because, generally speaking, museums, Sites of Conscience, and memorials aim to reach the widest possible audiences. Yet, the case studies discussed in this publication are tailoring their programs to specific audiences. Specificity and scope both matter, and they matter for different reasons.

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6 Katalin Széger, “Active Citizenship Can Change Your Country for the Better,” Open Society Foundations (OSF) website, February 25, 2013, accessed September 23, 2014, <http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/active-citizenship-can-change-your-country-better>.

- “ **A link between past, present, and future:** A stated hallmark of Sites of Conscience—the intentional connecting of past and present in order to envision and shape the future—is also reflected in sites’ methods and program choices. In some cases, visitors are invited to draw those connections for themselves—linking their contemporary experiences of past legacies with the present and determining ways to shape the future—while in other cases, the links between past and present are stated explicitly by the site itself.
- “ **Dialogue:** In order to engage visitors and community members, sites consciously create spaces and opportunities for dialogue and questioning about the past and future. Such dialogue includes an exchange of ideas across different points of view. This town hall–style setting for conversation on often-sensitive histories is far removed from traditional ideas of museums or memorials as spaces for quiet contemplation and learning. Instead, many of the methods described encourage not just reflection on the past, but open dialogue on what individuals can do now and in the future to create rights-based cultures.
- “ **Tools for commitment and action:** While not every method presented in this publication includes a specific tool or strategy to encourage individual participants to take action, the methods all aspire to provide, at the least, a means for participants to consider their commitment to ensuring human rights. In some cases, the methods are built around, or are themselves concrete means for, participants to take action, whether on site in the moment or off site at a later point.

Two aspects of the above commonalities are particularly striking. The first is that such ideas and activities at memorials, especially those honoring past tragedies, might in many places have been unheard of or perhaps even criticized as recently as a few decades ago. Indeed, even today some public memory sites are considered sacred shrines where critical discussion about the past is deemed unacceptable, particularly if the discussion challenges accepted or official narratives. Yet, contemporary exploration of the issues raised at a site, including those raised by visitors who express differing perspectives on the past indicate how valuable and compelling the experience of visiting a memorial can be. Victims’ groups and other human rights defenders seek to harness the impact of such an experience toward achieving their goal of “never again”.

Second, as the scope of this publication suggests, many innovative memorialization methodologies are evolving in the Global South and elsewhere. As survivors of atrocities who come from varied backgrounds and have a wide range of experiences lead and participate in memorialization efforts, memory work is becoming ever more varied, collaborative, and inventive. In many countries creative and entrepreneurial memory projects have emerged despite—or perhaps, due to—the lack of local models for memorialization. Grassroots efforts that may or may not include professional historians or museologists are pushing the boundaries of memorialization, often creating new models and methods, some of which are examined in this publication. At the same time, as new technologies emerge they are being applied and used by

both traditional museologists as well as people everywhere seeking to preserve and engage with memory in public spheres.

The methodologies compiled in this publication make clear that public memory projects tend to be unique and complex, as well as diverse in goal, scope and scale. The methodologies also make clear that there are relatively new aspects to both the study and the practice of memorialization. In practice, the idea of memorialization is being applied in new ways and with specific goals in mind that reflect the past, present, and future, such as honoring victims and survivors respectfully, sparking civic engagement, or protecting human rights. As with anything burgeoning, there may be challenges and gaps in how memory projects are implemented and experienced, due to factors that may be—for example—financial, practical, knowledge-related, political, or social.

Although memorialization has likely been taking place since the beginning of human civilization, the more extensive academic study of memorialization, including the effort to document the methodologies of memory work, is relatively nascent. As innovative memory projects proliferate all over the world, the study of memorialization is also expanding and seems poised to continue growing. The field is multi-disciplinary, which reflects both the complexity of the work and the nuances of the societies in which memory projects operate. As with memory projects themselves, there are gaps and opportunities in the study of memorialization. For example, documenting and examining memorialization efforts that span the spectrum from being hailed as highly successful to those considered ineffective is an important and growing area of work. Such documentation needs also include analyzing what factors are essential for success, identifying potential threats to memorialization efforts, or measuring how such efforts transform societies.

This publication is one step in the documentation of memorialization. The selected projects and methodologies in this book reveal a shared goal: to use the lessons of the past to advance justice in the present and build cultures of human rights in the future.

## 4.2 CONTRIBUTORS

**Paulo Abrão** is the Brazilian National Secretary of Justice and president of the Brazilian Amnesty Commission. Dr. Abrão holds a doctorate degree in law from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and a Master of Law degree from the University of the Sinos Valley. A specialist in human rights and democratization processes, Dr. Abrão is a professor at the graduate law program of the Catholic University of Brasília. He has published dozens of articles and books about transitional justice and public law and has produced research at several Latin American universities, such as the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil and the University of Chile. In 2006 he joined the Brazilian mission for the implementation of the University of Cape Verde. Dr. Abrão now serves as advisor to the Reference Center for Revealed Memories Project of the Public Archive of the Chief of Staff of the Presidency of Brazil. He is also the coordinator of the implementation of the Political Memorial project and is a member of the Council of Cultural Guidelines of the Resistance Museum of São Paulo, a member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

**Valeria Barbutto** is Director of the organization Open Memory [Memoria Abierta] in Argentina and a member of the Executive Board of Memory Space and Human Rights [Ex ESMA]. She has developed various projects on archiving, access to information, and human rights, and has participated in research on issues of collective memory and transition processes in Argentina. She was an anthropology major at the University of Buenos Aires, with post-graduate studies in Cultural Administration at the Institute of Higher Social Studies (IDAES)—National University of General San Martín (UNSAM) and in Democratization and Human Rights at the Center for Human Rights in the Law Department at the University of Chile. She is a member of the Political and Legal Anthropology faculty in the Humanities Department of UBA.

**Ariel Caniza** has a degree and teaching certification from the University of Buenos Aires in communications and journalism, specializing in international affairs. He has been part of the international work of Open Memory [Memoria Abierta] since 2009. Specifically he has participated in various projects related to communication, research, and production of contents from an international network of museums and memory sites in Latin America, through the framework of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. He has been a columnist in radio and other graphic media since 2011. He is currently a columnist for FM Boedo, a Buenos Aires radio station, and has in the past worked for Mundo Sur FM and FM Universidad. He is the founder of Urban Journalism, a news website active from 2008–2011. He has been a middle school teacher of speech and communication since 2004.

**Maja Čečen** is Director of the B92 Fund in Belgrade, Serbia. She was formerly a journalist with media outlets such as Borba, Demokratija, and Telegraf, as well as a Project Manager with B92, a media house. The B92 Fund was established by the B92 media outlet in 2004 as an independent foundation to promote social responsibility, development, and public awareness on a wide spectrum of issues relevant for Serbian society and other societies in the region. The mission of the B92 Fund is to contribute to the development of a tolerant and responsible society and to improve social and cultural circumstances of marginalized social groups. Working at B92 Fund, Maja has been a co-producer of documentaries on the past, as well as part of the initiative to establish an educational-memorial center at the location of Staro Sajmište, a former Nazi concentration camp in Belgrade. This center is intended to collect and preserve memories of Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution in WWII, and to be a research and educational center for the study of history, the causes of violence in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, and the history of fighting for a more tolerant society. Currently B92 Fund is implementing a series of educational projects connecting past and present, for school children in Serbia.

**Doudou Diène** Born in Senegal in 1941, Doudou Diène holds a law degree from the University of Caen, a doctorate in public law from the University of Paris, and a diploma in political science from the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris. After serving as deputy representative of Senegal to UNESCO (1972–77) and, in that capacity, as Vice-President and Secretary of the African Group and Group of 77, he joined the UNESCO Secretariat in 1977 and was appointed Director of the Liaison Office with the United Nations Permanent Missions and departments in New York in 1980. From 1985–1987, he was Deputy Assistant Director-General for External Relations, spokesperson for the Director-General, and acting Director of the Bureau of Public Information. After a period as Project Manager of the “Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue” aimed at revitalizing East-West dialogue, he was appointed Director of the Division of Intercultural Projects in 1993 (now called the Division of Intercultural Dialogue). In 2002 he was appointed by the Commission on Human Rights as Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, a mandate that was later extended by the Human Rights Council. He has chaired and been the distinguished guest on many panels, radio programs, and television programs. He is co-author of *Patrimoine culturel et créations contemporaines*, and “UNESCO and Communications Research and the New World Information Order” in the *Journal of International Affairs*. He has also published articles on intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in journals such as *Archeologia*, *Historia*, *Sciences et Vie*, and *Actualité des Religions*. He was editorial director of *From Chains to Bonds* (UNESCO, 1998) and wrote the preface to *Tradition orale et archives de la traite négrière* (UNESCO, 2001) as well as the editorial of Newsletter No. 2 of “The Slave Route” (UNESCO, 2001).

**Kátia Felipini Neves** has a background in Museology, with a BA from the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences, Federal University of Bahia (1993); a specialization from the Specialization Course in Museology of the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology of the University of São Paulo (2002); and an MA from Lusophone University of Humanities and Technologies (2012) in Lisbon, Portugal. She is currently a student of the Economic and Strategic Project Management MBA from Fundação Getúlio Vargas.

She is also coordinator of the Resistance Memorial of São Paulo, where she has worked since August 2008, when she participated in the institution's implementation process. Since then she has researched and sought to contribute to museological institutions devoted to issues related to human rights violations. Among other actions, since 2013 she has participated in the construction of museum plans for the implementation of the Museum of Sexual Diversity (State Secretariat of Culture of São Paulo) and the Museum of the Struggle for Justice (Center for Preservation of Political Memory and the Bar Association of Brazil). She is the representative of the Resistance Memorial of São Paulo for the Rubens Paiva State Truth Commission in São Paulo.

**Silvia Fernández** Originally from Spain, Silvia Fernandez is a consultant with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience working primarily with the Coalition's European Regional Network. In this capacity, she manages key aspects of the Network's programming in Europe. A former program director with the Coalition, Silvia is a seasoned program manager who has years of experience in design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of numerous educational human rights and social justice programs around the world. Within the various programs and tools that she's developed, she is most interested in the use of media, art, and culture to shape public perception and advance positive social change. She holds a MA in International Education with an emphasis on Human Rights and International Development Education from New York University (USA) and a BS (Social Sciences) in Politics and International Relations from University of Southampton (United Kingdom).

**Bruno Scalco Franke** holds a degree in law from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, with his thesis: Hybrid Courts: The Case of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. He is a judiciary analyst at the Regional Labor Court of the 4th Region. He is working on a Master's in International Law at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. He is a member of the research group Constitutionalism and Transitional Justice in Latin America.

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**Long Khet** is a founder and Executive Director of Youth for Peace (YFP). He founded Youth for Peace in 1999 and has gained more than a decade of practical experience in peacebuilding work. He has been instrumental in the development of the peace, leadership, and reconciliation program for young people in post-conflict Cambodia. He holds degrees from the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the Faculty of Pedagogy. During his study in university he became involved in a peace discussion and peace walk to stop the violent conflict during the national election in Cambodia. After university graduation, he taught secondary school in a rural province of Cambodia for two years. He holds a Master of Applied Conflict Transformation from Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia’s and the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPCS). He is primarily interested in memory initiatives and post-conflict recovery, as well as ASEAN integration. He wrote his action research on the legacy of memory in Cambodia. Today, he is involved in a peace education research project in Cambodia as well as other engagements in regional initiatives for peace and community memory. In addition, he participated in the fellowship program at the Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability at the Institute for the Studies of Human Rights of Columbia University in New York City. He has also participated locally, regionally, and globally in networks and conferences on social justice, peace, and democracy.

**Zachary D. McKiernan** is a professor of history at Hampton University Virginia in the United States. He received his graduate training in public history at the University of California Santa Barbara. While living in Chile, his fieldwork focused on human rights memory sites and museums. His current research involves African-American sites of memory in Hampton Roads, Virginia. Zachary is passionate about how ordinary people mobilize around history to make change and create community.

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**Dario de Negreiros** is Coordinator of Reparations and Psychological Research for the Amnesty Commission in Brazil. He is a member of Margens Clínicas, a group of psychoanalysts offering assistance to victims of police violence. As a journalist, he was a reporter for the *Folha de São Paulo*, and also worked in other media. In 2014, he was the Brazil-based Coordinator of the Strengthening Memory, Justice, and Human Rights in Brazil and the Southern Hemisphere project for the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. He has a degree in Psychology, Philosophy, and Journalism, and is currently a graduate student in the Department of Philosophy, University of São Paulo.

**Maurice Politi** was born in Egypt and immigrated as a child with his family to Brazil. He studied journalism in 1967 at the School of Arts and Communications at the University of Sao Paulo. He participated in the student movement against the military regime with the revolutionary group ALN (*Ação Libertadora Nacional*). He was arrested in March 1970 and convicted to serve four years as a political prisoner, passing through thirty-six cells in nine jails in the state of São Paulo. After his time in prison, Maurice was expelled from the country in 1975 and considered "stateless." He spent five years in exile in Israel and returned to Brazil in 1980 after amnesty was declared and his Brazilian nationality restored. He began a twenty-seven year career working for a multinational firm specializing in export and quality control, during which time he lived in Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Kenya, Switzerland, and Argentina. Since 2007, he has worked primarily in the field of human rights and advocacy for truth, memory, and justice. He founded and is president of the NGO *Núcleo de Preservação da Memória Política*. In February 2010, Minister of the Secretary of Human Rights Paulo Vanuchi, summoned him to coordinate the Project for the Right to Memory and Truth (*Projeto Direito à Memória e à Verdade*). He coordinated book editing, exhibition development, and building twenty memorials paying homage to the dead and disappeared. His other responsibilities in the field are as advisor to the professional team responsible for the Memorial da Resistência, member of the Counsel of the Civil Society to the Amnesty Com-

mission of the Ministry of Justice, and member of the Educational Council of the Memorial da Resistência. Maurice is a lecturer in several seminars and author of the book *Resistance Behind Bars* and other works.

## 4.3 REFERENCES

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