

Empowerment through Living Memory: A community-centred model for memorialisation

by

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Introduction

Memory is the treasury and guardian of all things – Cicero

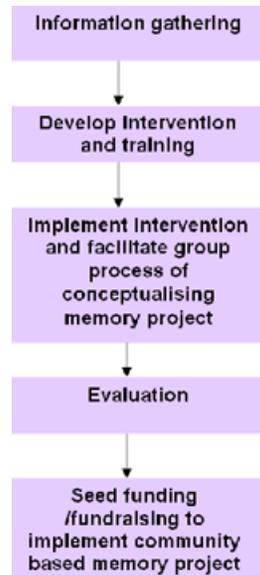
Memory plays various but often significant roles within transitional justice societies. Since memory within a transitional justice society is often a social construct that is mediated between the state and the individuals within that state, memory may take the form of selective amnesia where the state influences collective memory formation. Within this context human rights violations and the atrocities of the past are often 'forgotten' in an attempt to forge immediate reconciliation. However, various studies have shown that such processes tend to hinder reconciliation as well as fuel underlying tensions within a transitional society.

However, if used constructively, memory and memorialisation processes can play a significant role in the reconciliation process as it allows for the recognition of individual victims and survivors of the conflict; allows different generations to understand the conflict and mediate between the past and the present; and allows the society collective spaces for mourning that can promote the process of healing past wounds. In view of the peace-building capacity of memory work and its potential to empower communities by forging reconciliation, CSVr embarked on a community-centred intervention project.

The following report outlines the five phases of the process that focused on a community centred approach to memorialisation. This report aims to give practitioners working within the field of memorialisation a detailed understanding of the process that was undertaken in the different phases of the project so as to enable practitioners and communities themselves to initiate their own memory projects.

The first part of the report, will describe the information-gathering phase, and will outline the methodology, findings and some of the recommendations of the community needs assessment that was conducted in the Vaal. The second part of the report, will describe the actual intervention phase. The intervention focussed on training members of the Khulumani Support group – the training focussed both on conceptual issues around memory as well as basic project development with a specific focus on memory work. The second part of this report will also include a description of the design of the training manual,¹ the selection of participants, the facilitated workshops that culminated in the conceptualisation of a memory project by the group; and finally, the evaluation phase.

Diagrammatic Representation of Process



Phase One: Information-gathering

Following the findings of research around symbolic reparations conducted in May 2003, it was highlighted that there are various challenges regarding processes of memorialisation. In keeping with the key findings of the research, it was recognised that intervention processes around memorialisation need to be community and survivor driven to ensure that memorialisation can achieve its full potential as a form of symbolic reparations.

In ensuring that the intervention process was both survivor centred as well as served the socio-political needs of the community such as reconciliation, healing and civic engagement, it was decided that the site for the intervention would be determined by the historical significance of the area, the community need and the memorial infrastructure development in the area. Following consultation meetings with the Gauteng Department of Sport Recreation Arts and Culture, South African Heritage Resource Agency and Khulumani, it was decided that in meeting these criteria, the Vaal region would be the ideal site for an intervention project. Furthermore, in focussing mainly on a survivor centred approach, it was decided that members of the Khulumani Vaal region would be the key partners in the pilot project.

Objectives

The research for the needs assessment phase was based on the following objectives:

- To understand individual, group and community needs to feed into the development of pilot intervention
- To understand the group's interpretation of reconciliation as well as determine levels of reconciliation within the community
- Generate initial project ideas and develop indicators for evaluation
- To encourage the group's commitment to and enthusiasm for the project
- Encourage community ownership and buy-in

Methodology

To ensure that the objectives outlined above were achieved, a participatory research methodology was used to encourage active participation as well as initiate a process of two way learning. The needs assessment phase was undertaken in a week long period from 13–17 October 2003. Three (two hour) focus groups with a maximum of 10 participants each were conducted with adult men, adult women and youth from the Khulumani group. In using [Freire's](#) concepts of active group participation to encourage collective empowerment as well as theory around motivation linked to emotion, the focus group questions were based on emotional recall through visual stimulation, questions around memorialisation, reconciliation, programmes, as well as individual and collective needs. Participants were also provided with an information sheet that highlighted key concepts around memory, memorialisation and symbolic reparations.

Five interviews were conducted with councillors, local government officials and community members (see appendix one). Interviews were conducted using a semi structured interview schedule that focussed on issues around reconciliation, memorialisation, programmes, and history of the Vaal. In addition to the interviews and focus groups, observation was conducted on site at the Sharpeville Monument and a literature review was undertaken to familiarise facilitators with background information about the Vaal and Sharpeville specifically.

Limitations

While it is acknowledged that such research would ideally include a broad spectrum of community input and participation to fully achieve the above-mentioned objectives, given the limited nature of the research as well as the survivor centred focus there was minimal interaction with the broader community. Furthermore, most of the survivors that participated in the focus groups were based in Sebokeng and while many were able to engage with the overall issues, it was mainly those survivors who were based in Sharpeville that were able to fully highlight issues concerning the Sharpeville memorial site which is the most significant memorial site in the Vaal region that recognises the victims of gross human rights violations of the apartheid era.

While the research aimed at achieving a gender balance amongst the various interviewees as well as highlighting the gendered needs regarding memorialisation by disaggregating the groups according to gender, all individual interviewees were male.

Brief Overview of the History of Sharpeville

Even before 1960 Sharpeville had a history of its own. Initially people were removed from Top Location and placed here. The forced removals from towns and the 1984 boycotts also form part of the events of the history. (Interview Nakana, 2003)

There was a law from the government that we shouldn't be close to the towns Top Location was said to be the black spot and people had to be settled somewhere [else]. The town council then, had this area here ... [so they] felt that we needed to be brought here. Many people didn't like it. (Interview

Leutsoa, 2003)

The signing of the Constitution was done in Sharpeville. (Interview Kolisang, 2003)

Sharpeville was established as a township in the early 1940s and today remains amongst one of the areas whose history continues to be an integral part of the South African political landscape. Developed as a result of forced removals from an area called Top Location, Sharp Native Township which later became known as Sharpeville, developed as a result of Top Location's close proximity to the white business and residential area of Vereeniging.

Most people who were moved to Sharpeville resented the unattractive, regulated life of the township which was both incongruent as well as incoherent to people who were used to the urban vibrancy of life in Top Location. However, as with most South African townships, Sharpeville over the years began to develop its own unique identity that was highlighted through its social, cultural, political and economic activities (Interview Leutsoa, 2003 and Mohapi, 2003). The turning point of Sharpeville's political history and that of the rest of South Africa was a result of the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre in which 69 people² were killed and approximately 300 people injured by police as they participated in a PAC - organised protest against the apartheid Pass Law system. According to the TRC Report,³ the Sharpeville Massacre marked a significant change in the nature of political conflict as the cycle of violence and counter violence, coupled with increasing human rights violations, escalated from that point onwards. The gross human rights violations and the excessive use of force by the police against peaceful protestors are further highlighted in the conclusions of the TRC report that states:

The Commission finds the former state and the minister of police directly responsible for the commission of gross human rights violations in that excessive force was unnecessarily used to stop a gathering of unarmed people. (TRC, 2003)

Apart from the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre, Sharpeville, similar to most townships in the Vaal region during the 1980s, experienced increased political violence. The event that was highlighted by both participants in the focus groups as well as interviewees was The Rand Boycott in 1984 that resulted in the deaths of many people as well as the loss of homes. Mr. Leutsoa exemplified this:

We had a system in the township where the town council was in control. They called it the Urban Bantu Council. Many [councillors] were puppets ... some of them died in the township and many of them ran away It was terrible in 1984 ... many houses were burnt and many people were killed [along] with the councillors. (Interview Leutsoa, 2003)

In a symbolic recognition of the atrocities that occurred in Sharpeville during the apartheid era, the South African Constitution was signed on 10 December 1996 at the George Thabe Stadium in Sharpeville. Furthermore, in recognition of all those people that were killed on 21 March 1960, the United Nations has adopted March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and this day remains a national celebration of human

rights in South Africa. It is within this context of political upheaval and change that the Sharpeville Monument today, has the potential to become a significant marker in recalling the memories of days gone by and the healing of a community that has experienced continued divisions and conflict.

Key Themes

Memory and Emotions

According to [Freire](#), emotion is linked to motivation (Hope and Timmel, 1984). It is only through the observation and the questioning of people's emotions that the true needs for development and change can be identified. In view of this theory, participants within the focus groups were given a picture and were asked to identify their feelings, recall memories, highlight whether they would want their feelings to be known to the rest of society as well as identify possible mechanisms that would enable them to overcome these feelings.

While all participants within the three focus groups identified a list of emotions that were evoked through the visual, the common emotions that were highlighted in all three focus groups was that of anger, trauma and sadness. Participants within the adult male and female group recalled personal memories of incidences of police brutality and massacres during the apartheid era while the youth group highlighted the empathy that they felt for their parents and grandparents who were oppressed by a system that was in fact supposed to be the source of protection but instead "traumatised" and treated Black people like "animals" and "outcasts" (Youth focus group, 2003).

In their discussions about allowing their feelings to be made known to the rest of society, there was consensus amongst the adult female participants that they would want the whole world to know how they felt. Amongst the adult male participants, however, there was a division in that some participants highlighted that they did not want their feelings to be known, as the rest of society did not understand the implications and experiences of being a victim. Other male participants emphasised that their experiences were part of a history that must be made known to future generations.

Both male and female survivors agreed that the ideal mechanisms that would assist them in overcoming their trauma as well as highlighting their experiences to the rest of society was through empowerment projects that focussed on issues of memory; working; and counselling or talking through their feelings.

Memorialisation

In focussing on participants general understanding of memorialisation, all participants in the focus groups highlighted their understanding of memorialisation as a means of remembering the past; recognising activists, victims and survivors of the apartheid struggle; and saw memorialisation as mechanism that could foster reconciliation and encourage civic engagement.

There was general consensus amongst all participants that the example of an ideal memorial would be the Hector Pietersen Museum in Soweto. This was due mainly to the

fact that all participants felt that the museum was aesthetically appealing, encouraged tourism and presents a history through stories⁴ that are both relevant as well fulfils its aim of remembrance. Participants had mixed feelings about Sharpeville Monument. While some argued that the Sharpeville Monument is significant in that it represents the history of Sharpeville and marks the significant event that not only brought political transformation to Sharpeville but also to the rest of South Africa, most participants argued that the Sharpeville Monument is aesthetically unappealing; is not serviced and therefore lacks the dignity of their ideal concepts around memorial sites. Furthermore, participants argued that the site does not accurately represent all the victims of the massacre; is inaccessible;⁵ and continues to be a point of contention between the ANC and PAC.

In focussing on the challenges around memorialisation, there was general consensus amongst participations in all focus groups that there is an inherent problem around consultation. Participants argued that consultation by government only favoured certain members of the community, did not recognise the broader Vaal region and surrounding townships of Sharpeville, and that there is a general lack of clarification of roles and marginalisation of survivors in the consultation process. In addition to the challenges around consultation, participants in the youth focus group identified the general lack of information and access to most memorial sites.

In view of the challenges highlighted above participants identified the characteristics of their ideal memorial site as:

- Accessible
- Aesthetically appealing
- Economically viable and sustainable
- Representative of a broader community
- Encourages active participation and ownership by all members of the community
- Has an engaging programme of activities
- Guided tours that tell the different stories
- Lives on from generation to generation
- Evolves to meet the needs of a changing community

Reconciliation

There is no peace between the PAC and the ANC because the PAC had wished that this monument [would] be its monopoly. The PAC believes that the ANC did not have a part to play in all this. (Interview Mohapi, 2003)

Well, for [reconciliation] interaction is needed. We cannot wait for the 21st of March and then try and meet. [It] is like we are inventing a relationship that we don't have during the greater part of our lives ... Regular interaction and setting up a permanent programme for everybody can make sure that people reconcile. (Interview Kantso, 2003)

With regards to reconciliation, there was general agreement amongst focus group participants as well as individual interviewees that the Sharpeville memorial has been unsuccessful in reconciling the community. While both Mr. Kolisang and Mr. Nakana acknowledged that the aim of the site is to promote reconciliation and recognise those

victims of the Sharpeville Massacre, they both highlighted that the site is still in its development phase and has therefore not been able to achieve its full potential as yet.

Despite these claims, focus group participants and other interviewees highlighted that the lack of reconciliation is a result of political clashes over the representation of the Massacre itself, where both the ANC and PAC claim ownership of the actual event. Mr. Kantso further highlighted this in his description of the separate commemoration ceremonies that the ANC along with government and the PAC host annually on the 21 March. According to participants in the youth focus group, the site has achieved a certain degree of reconciliation amongst families of the victims but as stated earlier, clashes still remain around the recognition of victims. Youth participants also highlighted their concern around the political clashes over memory, acknowledging that they were uninterested in the political issue and that these issues needed to be resolved to refocus on new issues.

In addition to the lack of political reconciliation, women in the focus group highlighted issues around survivor integration and reconciliation with the rest of the community. Survivors pointed out that when they were invited to participate in activities at the site, other community members questioned their "special" treatment. This ostracism coupled with the general lack of community understanding around issues of survivorhood has resulted in the further marginalisation of survivors.

Ownership

My view is that there has been a lack of community initiative to exploit the opportunities. I think that it's high time that the people of Sharpeville come together and exploit opportunities. (Interview Nakana, 2003)

As long as we the residents of the township don't come together to build ourselves so that government can come in and help us, we will go nowhere. (Interview Leutsoa, 2003)

... You can't necessarily count on emotional attachment to the site because it hasn't been well popularised amongst the community. They just treat it as something that's there [which] they cannot identify with. (Interview Kantso, 2003)

Despite the rich textures of social and political history within Sharpeville, there is a general lack of civic pride amongst the residents of the area. According to both Mr. Nakana and Mr. Leutsoa, the inability of residents to 'exploit' and own the rich history of the area as well as the lack of civic pride is viewed in the general lack of ownership or care of community facilities. According to Mr. Kantso the lack of community ownership is a result of a lack of marketing and popularising of such facilities. He further argues that it is only through programmes that are targeted at survivors and the rest of the community, which are exclusive of political influence, that the community will begin to understand the significance of the area as well as take ownership of such projects (Interview Kantso, 2003).

With regards to the Sharpeville Monument, both interviewees as well as participants in the focus groups acknowledged the general lack of community ownership of the site. This lack

was highlighted in claims that the site has been vandalised and is always unkempt.⁶ While participants in focus groups had mixed feelings about the monument many attributed the lack of community ownership to issues of lack of representation, lack of adequate consultation on the part of government and the lack of any emotional attachment to the site.

Programmes

We aren't doing much for the people of this area to take pride in themselves. There are a lot of things that the people in this area can pride themselves upon. Nobody is putting it in their minds that this is a historic place. I think that the projects we are talking about ... can be used in exposing them to [what they] can benefit and [make them] understand what we mean when we talk of a better life. (Interview Nakana, 2003)

All the various methods can be used [but] in books it remains for the future generations. Exhibitions would be a once off thing. (Interview Leutsoa, 2003)

I think mostly practical things will help ... because if there are many practical activities, the more people will learn. (Interview Kolisang, 2003)

In view of the rich history of Sharpeville and the range of stories that highlight the political, social and cultural history of the area, all interviewees and focus group participants agreed that the best method to tell these stories would be through:

- Books
- Music
- Drama
- Dance
- Electronic media
- Storytelling
- Guided tours

Apart from work around memory, most focus group participants suggested programmes that would be linked to skills training, job creation and economic development. Female participants suggested programmes such as ABET; catering classes; sewing; beadwork; and flower arrangement. Male participants suggested programmes such as garden services; sewing; handwork; brick making and traditional arts and crafts.

Mr. Nakana and Mr. Kolisang as well as focus group participants acknowledged that the success of these programmes depended largely upon partnerships, training and funding. Mr. Nakana further highlighted that local government would be willing to promote and showcase projects, as well as contribute the use of local government facilities for such projects to ensure local government's contribution to the upliftment of the lives of the people of the area.

Impact

I for one believe that it can bring back some dignity that was lost by survivors. You know, people who feel that something bad happened to them and they are not being taken care of. (Interview Kantso, 2003)

I feel it is high time that we know our roots so that we can have a strong community. (Interview Leutsoa, 2003)

In focussing on the impact of programmes on the lives of the individual and community at large, participants in the focus groups identified five key areas within which the programmes would impact. These included:

- Reconciliation
- Healing
- Reclamation of history and heritage
- Community ownership
- Economic and educational empowerment

Participants felt that reconciliation would not only occur on an individual level but would also encourage interaction and understanding between survivors and the rest of the community as they would be brought together in a common purpose to work on a common project.

Recommendations

It is clear from the findings outlined above that despite the rich history of Sharpeville, that the community is unable or unwilling to take ownership of this history. Amongst the various reasons for this lack of ownership, are issues around the stagnated process of reconciliation within the community. Apart from the lack of political party reconciliation, there remains a lack of reconciliation among survivors themselves and between survivors and the rest of the community.

In addition to processes of reconciliation, it is clear from the exercise around emotion that many survivors are in a state of limbo – unable to fully overcome their experiences of the past but at the same time wanting the rest of the community to acknowledge their experiences of pain. Any project that seeks to focus on reconciliation would therefore, also assist in the ongoing healing of survivors.

While many focus group participants alluded to the need for economic empowerment and skills development projects, it was recommended that the intervention project focus primarily on issues of memory, reconciliation and healing, as this was where CSVN could make the most effective impact. In facilitating the process of conceptualising a memory project, it is envisioned that such a project while having short – term economic spin-offs, would also enable survivors to conceptualise longer-term projects that could become sustainable economic endeavours.

The role of youth in the research process highlighted the variety of possibilities and contributions that youth could make in any memory project. Not only would the inclusion of youth in the project, ensure the active participation of a segment of the community that is often marginalized in such processes, but will also ensure a certain degree of understanding between youth and survivors. The project should therefore be conceptualised in a manner that seeks to accommodate both youth and survivors either through several mini projects that accommodate both groups or through one memory project that is based on a two way learning process between the youth and survivors. It is therefore recommended that a list of

criteria be identified to select participants for the conceptual phase.

Most of the suggested methods through which stories could be explored are mainly through various arts mediums. In keeping with these findings it is recommended that the conceptual phase focus on creative methodologies that would enable participants to fully explore different techniques that could be included in the final project.

Phase Two: Designing the Intervention Conceptualising the Intervention

Following the findings and recommendations of the information-gathering phase, the team decided that the intervention would take the form of living memory workshops. It was decided that such a facilitated process would serve the individual survivor needs around healing and reconciliation as well as contribute significantly, if only indirectly, to economic empowerment as survivors would be taught overall project development skills.

The training therefore aimed to provide:

- A safe space for the survivors to share their experiences thereby contributing to the healing process
- A basic understanding of conceptual issues related to memory
- Basic skills that would enable survivors to work on and conceptualise their own memory projects within a group

In attempting to fulfil the above-mentioned objectives the manual was designed using a fully participatory methodology. The methodology was to a large extent informed by Paulo Freire's theory around participatory education methods for adults. According to Freire, education, especially informal education, should be a 'dialogical process' in which both the facilitator and the participants should experience a mutually respectful relationship where both groups actively participate in the learning process. Additionally, the process should focus on actions that are linked to values, which aim to empower marginal groups within communities as well as build social capital that could pursue issues around social justice and transform the situations of marginal groups ([Freire, 1997](#)). The primary focus of the manual therefore was based on dialogues amongst participants, and between participants and facilitators. Locating this value based process of social empowerment within a respectful and confidential learning environment ensured that participants were not only able to address their issues around trauma, social marginalisation and experiences of the past, but were also able to gain skills that would assist them to transform their own social marginalisation by reconciling within themselves and within their communities.

Additionally, a central concern in developing the manual was issues around the pitch and language of the workshop. It was noted that most participants were semi-literate and that the majority of the group did not speak English as their first language. In attempting to overcome these challenges as well as ensure that the workshops were accessible to all participants, most of the activities were based on creative and artistic methodologies. In addition a co-facilitator also served as a translator.

The content of the manual was based on issues that emerged during phase one of the process as well as during the initial research that was conducted around memorialisation as

a form of symbolic reparations. While some of the content and activities were newly developed, others were adapted from existing training materials that engaged with a similar participatory methodology. In keeping with the emergent themes as well as with the overall objectives of the manual, the manual was divided into the following modules:

- **Module One: Who are we?** This module was made up of two workshops. The workshops focussed on allowing participants to get to know each other, building trust and understanding issues around identity and diversity within the group.
- **Module Two: Reconciliation** - This module was made up of one workshop. The module focussed on various concepts around reconciliation as well as allowed participants to develop their own understanding around concepts of reconciliation.
- **Module Three: Memory** - This module was made up of two workshops. The first part of the module focussed on allowing participants to understand the role of memory work in healing. It drew on individual and personal memories and practical exercises to contribute to individual healing processes. The second part of the module focused on issues around the contested nature and multiple perspectives of memory.
- **Module Four: Memorialisation and living memory** - This module was made up of one workshop. It was preceded by visits to heritage and memorial sites and focussed on the various purposes of memorialisation including its role as a form of symbolic reparations.
- **Module Five: Developing a memory project** - This module was made up of one workshop and focused on practical project development. This module was central in assisting the group to develop their own two memory projects.
- **Module Six: Advocacy and lobbying** - This module was made up of one workshop and equipped participants with basic advocacy and lobbying skills that could be used in conjunction with their proposed memory project.
- **Module Seven: Mixed Bag** - This module was made up of one workshop. It equipped participants with a variety of skills that might be required to work within a group. Some of these skills included mediation and communication.

Selecting the Participants

While it was decided that the Khulumani group in the Vaal region would be the key partners in the project, given the financial and human resource constraints, it was not possible for the entire group to participate in the process. To ensure that the process provided a fair opportunity to all members who did want to participate, it was decided that specific selection criteria would be used to ensure equitable participation.

The information gathering report of phase one played a significant role in informing the criteria for the selection of participants. A total of 16 participants were to be recruited to participate in the programme. Selection criteria included specific age groups between 20-35 years and 40 years and above; an equitable spread of males and females; equitable representation from all regions of the Vaal; and all participants were to be either survivors or children and grandchildren of survivors where no more than one family member was represented in the group.

Potential participants were then gathered together and given a brief background of the project and the themes that the workshops were to explore. All members were asked to

present a brief motivation around why they thought the project would be significant to them and how they could contribute to the process. This motivation was especially significant; as all members were immediately made aware that as a part of the participatory methodology they would both gain skills but also more significantly share and contribute their own existing skills and knowledge as individuals to the group process. A panel of three members, two facilitators from CSVR and one from Khulumani evaluated the motivation and selected 16 participants. However, while the process aimed at achieving the ideal equitable group, there was a distinct lack of female participants between ages 20-30 years.

Phase Three: Implementing the Intervention

Implementing the Training

The final group was made up of 13 participants, both male and female that ranged between the ages of 23 to 68. The training was conducted over a period of three weeks running from Tuesday to Friday. Facilitators were selected for their community facilitation skills, many of whom had limited content knowledge. However given that the training required special participatory facilitation skills, content took secondary consideration in the choice of facilitators.

Module one - Identity

The very first workshop focussed on participants getting to know each other. The activities in this workshop required high levels of energy. Despite the range of ages, all participants were enthusiastic and felt that the workshops inspired them to think creatively.

In addition the workshop also engaged with the expectations and fears of the group. As outlined in the first phase many participants expected to gain skills; knowledge about their history and heritage; healing; and national and international recognition of their survivor status. The groups' fears focussed primarily around issues of funding and their own inability to transfer their skills to the broader community.

The second workshop of this module focussed mainly on issues of identity. Participants were able to focus and understand multiple notions of identity. However, many participants viewed their identity as survivors in relation to a broader national identity where participants used images of the South African flag to depict their own identity. This to a large extent emphasises the relationship between the past and the present and how the politicisation of present day identities reflects the politicisation of identities that were characteristic of apartheid South Africa.

Module two – Reconciliation

Participants were able to directly relate to the content of this module and were therefore very honest and open about their feelings. Much debate focussed on issues around forgiveness and forgetting the past. While all participants felt strongly that forgiveness was amongst the most significant aspects for reconciliation, there was a general consensus within the group that victims should not forget the past.

Here again the images of reconciliation that emerged were those of the tree and the South

African flag. Other images included religious symbols such as the bible, and more nature orientated symbols such as flowers and fruit. Many participants interestingly problematised the issue of reconciliation. One image was especially significant in that the participant drew an image of a bleeding heart. This specific participant argued that he could not understand concepts of reconciliation because he was unable to forgive since he did not know the perpetrators who had violated him. Another participant drew a symbol that represented white and black toilets of apartheid South Africa. However, the participant drew another image that showed images of male and female toilets of the democratic South Africa. This participant argued that the divide has moved from a race-based divide to a gender-based divide.

Module three – Memory

The first workshop of this module allowed participants to explore creative memory work. One major activity was that of developing a memory box. Participants committed fully to the exercise and were able to identify significant objects to include in their boxes as well as discuss the significance of their objects. This specific workshop was emotionally draining for both participants and facilitators. However, given the trust that was built in the previous workshops and the groups' commitment to talk about their experiences and emotions, participants were able together to assist each other through the process. The facilitator of this session suggested that given the emotional intensity of this workshop, that it should be conducted in a peaceful, relaxing setting such as a park or garden.

The second workshop focussed mainly on issues such as the contestation of memory and the multiple versions of history. Participants were able to understand how their own memories and interpretations of history could impact on their own work within their group projects.

Module four – Memorialisation

Participants understood a memorial as a historic site that was a place of remembrance.

Participants understood the purpose of a memorial as a space of:

- Remembering
- Teach next generation and foreign tourists
- Healing
- Preserve our culture
- Create jobs
- Honour the dead/heroes
- Exhibit a peoples culture
- Skills development
- Multi-purpose centre
- Justice
- Symbolic reparations
- Revelation of the truth
- Embracing other parts of history
- Can create a bridge between the past and present
- Embrace other experiences

In constructing their ideal memorials, participants felt that it should:

- Encourage inter-racial integration
- Caution society against the insidious nature of oppression
- Exchange learnerships with black and white youth
- Promote a schools programmes and inter-cultural festivities
- Use commemorative days to allow youth to interact

Module 5 – Developing a memory project

This module was viewed as central to the overall training as it was within this module that the group was to conceptualise their own project.

In view of their visits to memorial sites and the previous workshops, the group identified the challenges to memorialisation as the following:

- Women are not honoured in the process
- Bias towards men
- ANC bias
- Museum and monuments do not cater for diverse languages
- The regional history of the Vaal is under-represented
- Lack of political representation

In attempting to confront some of the challenges through their own projects, the group conceptualised the following two projects:

Project A:

Goal

We want to highlight the role of the people of the Vaal and capture the memories of the struggle for freedom and democracy in the Vaal. This will be achieved by using multimedia such as documentaries, newsletters and exhibitions. We will show:

- Events in Vaal area that led to many turning points in SA struggle
- Highlight role of victims and survivors

Group B:

Goal

We want to show the world the progress made by women in fighting for liberation. To recognise the role played by the women of the Vaal in the liberation struggle and to allow spaces for them to express themselves and be acknowledged by the community. We will show:

- The role of women at the grassroots level
- Women as the pillars of the struggle yet they were the most oppressed

Module six – Lobbying and advocacy

Many of the youth especially, found this module the most interesting and felt that they would be able to use the information in their future work. Participants were able to debate and discuss key concepts within the module as well as develop a draft advocacy message.

Module Seven – Mixed Bag

This workshop was the most successful in fulfilling its objectives. Not only were participants able to apply the generic skills to their own memory projects but also were able to apply many of the skills to their daily lives. The participants found the conflict resolution skills significant since many of them encountered conflict regularly within their communities.

Phase Four: Evaluation

Both facilitators and participants evaluated the pilot process. All participants felt that they had developed adequate skills to work on the community based memory projects. Many felt strongly about imparting the skills that they had learnt to the rest of the community and emphasised their pride in being able to conceptualise and develop their own memory projects.

All facilitators that participated in the process acknowledged the commitment and willingness of the participants to share their experiences as well as learn from the process. A central concern of most facilitator's was that the manual did not cater for other African languages and some concepts often got lost in translation. Additionally two facilitators advised that the time allocated for their workshops were either too much or not enough.

In view of the facilitator's concerns CSVR has decided to translate the manual into one other South African languages, which will be available electronically. The time allocation for workshops has not been amended as times only serve as a guide and is dependent on facilitation style and technique. It is therefore anticipated that times will be amended at the discretion of the facilitators.

Phase Five: Fundraising

Given that there is no seed funding for the projects conceptualised by the group, CSVR has decided to contract a proposal writer to fully conceptualise and write a proposal based on the themes and activities outlined by the group. The proposal will be written with the advise of the Khulumani Support Group who will then embark on a funding drive to access funds for the two projects. The participants of these workshops will be the primary beneficiaries of any funding raised.

Conclusions

The pilot process has been an overall success. Not only has it allowed the pilot group to understand their own violent pasts but it has also empowered the group with skills that they can apply to a variety of memory projects.

The model itself is one of empowerment and is flexible enough to be expanded and adapted to suit the needs of different groups. Such a model also provides a useful alternative to the challenges that are experienced by state-led memorialisation initiatives. It is envisaged that this model will be accessible to various communities and groups in post-conflict societies – communities that will take ownership of the model and use it for their own development and empowerment. It is only until communities themselves begin to take charge of their memories that communities can begin to make sense of their violent pasts and pave the path for healing and reconciliation.

Notes:

¹ For more information on how to obtain a copy of the living memory manual email info@csvr.org.za

² While these were the official figures that were released, there is still much controversy around the number of victims. This was highlighted both in the focus groups as well as individual interviews.

³ Truth and Reconciliation report, volume 3, chapter 6

⁴ Participants in the youth group felt that it was the ideal memorial since it spoke to the experiences of youth in the struggle for freedom.

⁵ Participants highlighted that the issue of access was reminiscent of the apartheid system, as visitors are required to sign at the neighboring police station to gain access to the site.

⁶ The women in the focus group highlighted that they had approached the local council for permission to clean the site periodically as its state of untidiness was almost sacrilegious to both the victims and survivors.

References

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Freire, P. (1997). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum: New York

Hope, A and Timmel (S). (1984). *Training for transformation: A handbook for community workers*. Mambo Press: Gweru

TRC Report (2003). Volume 3. Chapter 6.

Interviewees

Mr. Kantso. (October 2003). PAC regional organiser. One on one interview. Conducted by author.

Mr. Kolisang. (October 2003). ANC councillor. One on one interview. Conducted by author.

Mr. Leutsoa. (October 2003). Sharpeville historian. One on one interview. Conducted by author and Pule Rampa.

Mr. Mohapi. (October 2003). Sharpeville resident. One on one interview. Conducted by Pule Rampa.

Mr. Nakana. (October 2003). Manager Sport, Recreation, Arts, Culture, Libraries and Information Services (SRACLIS) Emufuleni Local Municipality. One on one interview. Conducted by author.

Focus Groups

Khulumani Vaal. (October 2003). Female focus group. Conducted by Pule Rampa.

Khulumani Vaal. (October 2003). Male focus group. Conducted by Pule Rampa.

Khulumani Vaal. (October 2003). Youth focus group. Conducted by author.