



The Mandela Dialogues on Memory Work

A collaboration between Global Leadership Academy, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF)

REPORT ON THE DIALOGUE SERIES (26 November 2014)



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The dialogue: an overview

Between November 2013 and August 2014 the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Global Leadership Academy¹ brought together 26 participants from ten countries² to engage in a three-part dialogue series on memory work. The first dialogue took place in South Africa 6 - 10 November 2013, the second in Cambodia 3 - 6 March 2014, and the final dialogue in Berlin 28 - 30 July 2014.

These 12 days of active dialogue, and the individual and collective exchanges that took place in the periods between dialogues, offered a space to discuss the complex personal, collective and professional challenges facing those engaged in reckoning with the past. Through different layers and modes of engagement the process reinvigorated debates about memory work and how we do it; and offered new approaches, new questions and challenges to existing paradigms.



Through the three Mandela Dialogues on memory work the convening organisations intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- To engage critically with transitional justice discourse internationally and deepen understandings of memory work
- To foster a global network of peers
- To create an opportunity for personal development and solidarity for leaders in their fields
- To invigorate and enable leadership and guide participants through an exploration of individual lines of inquiry
- To foster innovation

¹ The Global Leadership Academy is an international programme in the framework of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

² The participants came from Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Canada, Croatia, Germany, Kenya, Serbia, South Africa and Uruguay. Not all participants were able to attend all three dialogues. See Annexure A for a list of participants.

As is evident from this report, all five outcomes were achieved.³

The participants were activists, analysts, and functionaries, with many straddling (over time or at the moment) these somewhat artificial categories. Many participants were also survivors or descendants of survivors of human rights violations and brought this experience to the dialogue process. Despite their different national contexts, experiences and professions, at the outset of the dialogue process the participants shared with the convening organisations a sense of having reached an impasse in their personal and professional capacities – with there being more questions than answers about memory work. This was intentional as the convenors and designers of the process sought to include people who had questions or felt they had reached a crossroads since this would enable exploration of doubt, senses of failure and despair which in turn allows for ‘out of the box’ thinking rather than a celebration of achievements. The participants thus shared a common desire to grapple with the difficult questions they face in their daily practice and to learn from each other.

In locating the dialogues in three countries (South Africa, Cambodia and Germany) with very different pasts and very different approaches to dealing with the past, the convening organisations sought to offer participants an opportunity to immerse themselves in each country, engage with a diversity of experiences, and explore the complexity of how each country has reckoned with, and represents, its past. Through immersion in sites of memory the participants were offered a chance to reflect both on the similarities and differences between these contexts and their own regional, national and local experiences. In doing so, it was expected that the difficult, perhaps as yet even unidentified, global questions about memory work would emerge.

Content development through process

Unlike conventional workshops, seminars or conferences, the dialogues took place almost without formal presentations. Rather, the bulk of the content was created by the participants and enabled by a skilled team of facilitators.

Dialogue 1: South Africa

During the first five-day dialogue, participants learned to know each other personally and professionally, through sharing their biographies and discussing the issues that inform and trouble their work. Building trust and openness was critical to the process and was arguably the primary objective.

In this dialogue the participants and hosting team (comprising the convening organisations and the facilitation team) struggled to find a balance between different methods and modes of engagement. A tension emerged between the need for analytical and intellectual

³ See Annexure B for the concept document that framed the project.

discussion and debate, on the one hand, and on the other the need for more experiential, artistic forms of learning and observation.⁴

In relation to memory work itself, many areas of both tension and consensus emerged during the first dialogue's many sessions. The key questions, propositions and lines of enquiry are grouped thematically below. They provided the basis for further deliberation in the second and third dialogues.

Healing and preventing a repetition of history

- How can memory work deal with and resist righteous self-victimisation – the assumption of identity as victim that sows the seeds of a repetition of violations? How do we resist the temptation of falling for collective righteous self-victimisation?
- What is regarded as important to remember, and what is not, is shaped by today's interests and powerful groups within societies. How do we determine what we need to remember in order to heal? And what should be forgotten?
- Is there a healthy forgetting; equally, is there an unhealthy remembering?
- How are the often conflicting imperatives for collective and individual healing reconciled?
- Is it possible to realise sustainable development without exorcising the demons of the past? Is it prudent to move on? Can peace exist without justice?
- Dealing with the past is regarded as essential to building a sustainable peace, yet how can we be certain we do no harm by pursuing and advocating for our work?
- What is the role of memory work in ending a culture of impunity and building democracy?

Inclusivity and exclusivity

- Every society emerging from oppressive rule or conflict to a stable democracy is faced with the difficult task of fulfilling the needs of justice and healing. We also face the task of recording and representing the past in ways that fulfil the need for social justice. Yet, very often how the past is represented and dealt with is influenced, if not controlled by those holding political power, and/or past elites. We are troubled by the fear that the way in which we do memory work makes us complicit in the creation and reinforcement of a master narrative.
- If there is to be no punishment for perpetrators, then impunity is a great danger. But how do we manage the risk of punishment undermining reconciliation? And if there is to be punishment, does it become a question of numbers and categories? How many, and who, should be punished?

⁴ See Annexure C for a statement of intent for the dialogues drafted by the convening organisations and facilitation team generated after the first dialogue.

- How do you use representations of the past to create inclusive futures?
- Is it possible, or even desirable, to tell the stories of those responsible for or complicit in acts of violation?
- How do we use evidence that exposes the culpability of oppressors without legitimising new forms of oppression?
- Any public process also produces new silences and exclusions. Cross-societal dialogue is often missing, and archives can be slow to link to civil society memory work. How do you diversify the voices represented and draw attention to marginal voices?
- Remembering the past is not simply healing and restorative but also painful and divisive. Does memory work need to be subversive to master narratives in order to promote and achieve social justice?
- Being conscious of the way in which memory work is gendered is essential to overcoming marginalisation and exclusion.

Timing and the need for trans-generational work

- Is there a 'right' time to deal with the past?
- What are the costs and benefits of rushing or proceeding too slowly?
- How is memory work enabled outside of formal transitional justice interventions, both before and after such interventions?
- How do you sustain the interest of young people who do not feel that the period of violations/violence/conflict /injustice is their past?
- How can representations of the past avoid taking a didactic approach, but instead reflect the interests and needs of the generations that come after a period of conflict, oppression and injustice?
- How do we balance the need to find local solutions with the value of international discourses, structures and expertise?

Archives

- Ensuring access to archival information is essential to resisting the institutionalisation of memory.
- When archives are destroyed after a period of injustice/oppression/conflict and only some remain in personal collections can you have a plural interpretation of history?
- Can memories replace archive?
- Is there an ethical conflict if the documents collected for purposes of archive are used in legal processes?

- How do official archives relate to new forms of collective online recording of narratives?
- How do we ensure that transitions are documented in ways which will enable future generations to interrogate processes which will have shaped them profoundly?

Two cross-cutting areas for reflection emerged in the course of the first dialogue. They can be imagined as part of a 'canvas of practice' onto which the above questions about memory work are scripted. The questions sketch the quest that this group of leaders is engaged in. Reflecting on the nature of this quest led the group to contemplate the implications for self and for those being asked to remember:

Sustaining the Passion – Caring for Self

- This work cannot happen without practitioners engaging intensively and in the long-term. Often memory work is experienced as a life-long 'calling', both professional and personal. Attending to past harm means longitudinal exposure to the shadow side of the human condition – atrocity, violations, wounds of war - and the consequences of trauma, social fragmentation, loss of livelihoods and of life itself. While this work is most often experienced as deeply meaningful, it also comes at a cost. Practitioners were asking themselves:
 - How do I maintain a balance while engaged with generations of painful grief?
 - How do we get away from the exhausting feeling of not doing enough?
 - How do we work towards change in our societies, especially with a responsibility towards the future, while taking care of those we work with and for, and also of ourselves?

Grappling with the Ethics of Memory Work

While many practitioners feel called to this work, they were also aware of their own limitations and power in many situations. Who gives the right or licence to represent the past in a particular way? Remembering certain stories and bringing them into the public sphere inevitably leaves other stories untold, creates silences and exclusions, despite the best efforts at including marginal voices. Awareness existed also of the painful nature of memory recall that was already so evident in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. Remembering the details of past harm comes at a price for those asked to remember, may mean re-living through narration some of the horrors experienced and being left to deal with the emotional consequences of such processes. Questions that stood out for participants in this regard were:

- How do we work with victims in ways that are ethically responsible?
- How do we make sure we are not doing further damage with memory work?
- What do we mean by – 'ethical memory work'? How do we improve the ethics of memory work?

Dialogue 2: Cambodia

The experience of the first dialogue informed the structure and nature of engagement during the second dialogue. Over the four-day dialogue in Cambodia the facilitators emphasised the responsibility of participants to co-create the process, and make choices between the types of activities and modes of engagement offered. Participants were looking to ‘dig deeper’ into the issues they face in their work; share knowledge and find where the differences and similarities between their contexts lay.

To allow for these substantial conversations to emerge, the facilitation team offered participants a range of formats from café-style conversations to ‘open space’ sessions where participants themselves hosted small group discussion about issues they wished to explore.



The ‘open space’ discussions allowed participants to explore in greater detail issues that were of particular interest or concern to them.

The four primary and two cross-cutting themes from the first dialogue re-emerged in Cambodia through conversations about the purpose, nature and practice of memory work.

During this second dialogue, the importance of context and intent behind memory work emerged as additional themes. This broadened the discussion and focused participants on why and how memory work is done to achieve the often quite diverse goals of a range of stakeholders. In addition, participants spoke of the need for recognition of the power relations between state and non-state actors in the field of memory work and to make visible the motives behind memory work, since power relations and motives influence, and even define, practice.

During the three days of dialogue participants shared a number of underlying beliefs about the purpose of memory work, and questions about what it could or should be. In different contexts and at different times the purpose of memory work might be:

- To recognise the suffering of victims by providing justice.
- To facilitate inter-generational relations (e.g. one Cambodian participant said that “the younger generation don’t believe their parents’ stories – this is...why the ECCC⁵ is important.”)

⁵ Extraordinary Chambers of the Courts of Cambodia, established to try the most senior members of the Khmer Rouge responsible for large-scale human rights violations and deaths.

- To ‘build a bridge for the new generation to move forward.’
- To break cycles of violence, intolerance, injustice, war and hatred.
- To bring understanding about atrocities.
- To heal through narratives (e.g. participants said “Through telling their stories the survivors feel a relief and that narrows the gap between them and their children”; and “You can’t live without memory – traumatic memories live with you, and form your identity.”)
- To ensure that justice is done through arresting, prosecuting and punishing offenders.
- To forget and move on (“The more I think, the more I think memorials are about forgetting. We need to go on with daily life without the burden of remembering every day and so we create memorials to contain memory so that you can go on and then come back for reminding.”)
- To reveal untold histories (“There was no history about my people and culture in my history books”).

But just as these might be the stated or unstated purposes of memory work, participants raised a number of questions about the expectations associated with memory work, including:

- Does memory work prevent history from repeating itself?
- How does memory work prevent conflict? Is it strong enough to prevent new conflicts?
- Is it worth investing in inter-generational memory work?
- “How can we avoid being memory terrorists and forcing things down people’s throats? If the work of memory is to counter singular narratives – in doing that work we create other narratives that vie for dominance.”

Throughout the dialogue participants returned to the difficulty of, and the need for, doing memory work that includes, rather than excludes, all sectors of society affected by injustices or atrocities of the past. Yet, taking an inclusive approach to memory work is not necessarily the primary concern of those who fund, or have the power to define, the forms of national transitional justice processes.

Through an even deeper sharing of biographies, contexts and practices than there had been time and space for in the first dialogue, participants began to reflect on and reveal the power relations at play within the field of memory work. This work came to be understood as being inherently value-laden; and those values can either serve to entrench power in the hands of a few; enhance hatred and difference; or, work to secure an inclusive future.

It was stressed in discussion that “memory destabilises systems” and, when memory work is inclusive, it does not necessarily support the interests of those in power. “That is why even



democratic states will resist memory work. Political interests and memory work are diametrically opposed.” This recognition went some way towards answering the question that arose about why ‘pro-poor’ memory work is seldom, if ever, funded. Participants began to ask “who is dominating memory work?” They noticed that in many contexts when governments own and create dominant narratives about the past that are supported by capital and international donors, the result does not always favour a resolution of injustice, support inclusivity or result in a reduction of hatred between former enemies. This kind of memory work can be regarded as ‘unconscious’ or ‘unconstructive’. The question became: “Who helps to resist that?”

As important as resisting negative memory work might be, participants also recognised the necessary role that states and donors have to play both in the formal processes of transitional justice and in the work that

follows such processes. Since many of the participants themselves were involved in state-based processes, or came from donor organisations, this discussion was also about the challenges and opportunities that arise for people working within formal transitional justice processes.

The role of blaming in reinforcing societal divisions (within and between nation states) was a recurrent theme. The idea emerged that for as long as memory work reinforces blaming and the creation of a group of righteous victims it will not be able to prevent a recurrence of past injustice and hatred. In the words of one participant: “if the purpose of transitional justice is only to blame, then it leads to intolerance and a repetition of violation - it contradicts the acceptance of responsibility...a blaming narrative is like a preparation for another war, because that is how it starts for us. We start blaming our neighbours. When we accept responsibility for what happened we are allowing for it to get better.”

Highlighting one of the dilemmas facing memory practitioners, a participant from Cambodia said: “We have to strike a balance between the past, present and future. We want to move into the future but we don’t want to forget the past. But, if we focus too much on the past we will not focus on the future so we need to determine what we want to remember and what we want to forget.”

Another tension to emerge was how to balance the need for punishment for past injustice and offences with the need to enable people to take responsibility for what has been done in their name. This tension emerged again strongly in the final dialogue in Berlin.

In the first dialogue in South Africa participants began to link their personal biographies with the work they do. They identified how their own experiences have shaped their practice, informed their commitment, and motivated them to continue. This emerged even more strongly in the second dialogue.

Engagement with both 'perpetrators' and 'victims', and their narratives, impacts memory workers and often leads to vicarious trauma. Since memory practitioners have often experienced trauma themselves, the effect is perhaps even more pronounced than in other types of work. Practitioners assume the burden of responsibility for the healing of victims, for realising justice and for giving voice to those who have no voice, such as is expressed in these two statements from participants:

I spoke about the people who have been killed and have no voice; and,

I work with silence. The people I work with cannot speak because others can't hear them. My job is to help them speak about it. All the time I hear secrets I cannot tell. I am the little 'public' for them to speak to.

The highly emotional nature of the work led to discussions about how to balance empathy and emotional well-being. Empathy was identified as being essential to remaining compassionate and to doing the work of memory effectively, yet memory practitioners require support and recognition of their own trauma. Introducing this kind of support into the working environment became an objective for a number of the participants.

The loneliness of memory work was a common theme to emerge from the second dialogue, with statements like these being shared by participants:

I have been sinking in an ocean of memory and now I am learning to swim. Often I feel alone and need someone to hear me.

Loneliness. One of the most important things to bring from Johannesburg is not to be so lonely in our daily work. It is a good sensation to have a community of peers fighting for memory, justice and democracy.

Towards the end of the dialogue participants began to articulate the need to maintain perspective and tend to their own well-being. This is not only because it will enable them to continue doing the work – but also because it is impossible to achieve healing and overcome hatred in society while traumatised. Some distancing from responsibility for the harms of the past is essential. As one participant said: "We are all responsible for telling what happened in our country, but we are not all responsible for what happened." And yet, at the same time, the notion of collective responsibility is fundamental to the building of a shared future.

Another participant said, "the challenge is for us to find the moments of lightness and joy in what we are doing."

Dialogue 3: Germany

The final dialogue in Berlin was both an opportunity to delve deeper into the issues identified as important in the previous dialogues, and to find shared interests to be translated into practical ideas for collective projects in the coming years.

Next to shared projects and intentions, a significant result from the final dialogue was a deeper understanding of the differences between national and regional contexts that inform and define approaches to memory work. This sharing of difference, disagreement and discomfort seemed as significant as the identification of shared issues and concerns had been in the first and second dialogues.

The agreement to seek to understand and elucidate those differences was an important breakthrough in the process, that took participants and the hosting team beyond the questions outlined at the start of the journey. Identifying where our differences lay, and the diverse meanings our contexts have lent to the lexicon of transitional justice - reconciliation, democracy, social justice, enemy, healing, reparations and punishment - led us towards a conversation that strongly highlights the shortcoming of 'ready-made' systems, structures and processes for dealing with past conflict and injustice.

One of the participants reflected on the importance of identifying and exploring these differences if we are to move forward: "I just recognised in the last month that the discussions we have often have to restart if we don't take them to the point where things are difficult." Another recognised the importance of timing – returning to a theme that had emerged in the first dialogue: "I want someone to theorise memory time... The questions of punishment, reparation, justice have different temporality in different societies."

Three themes that had already emerged during the first dialogue re-surfaced even more prominently and became more nuanced:

- Archive: negotiating the difficult ethical and policy questions about making documents available to the public, and how to do that more effectively.
- Inter-generational transfer of trauma. This arose from a concern in the first two dialogues about how to interest new generations in the past, without transferring the hurt and trauma of the past to them; and the recognition that next generations are inevitably affected by the experiences of their parents or grandparents. First generations tend to protect the next ones through silence. Next generations also try to protect their parents from the pain of remembering through silence. The silence between the generations however leads to cycles of transfer of emotional pain that hinders the life potential of future generations.
- Intended outcome of memory work, and how best it can be achieved with a particular focus on the complex interplay between justice, reconciliation, reparation and healing in different contexts. This included a strong reflection on the limits of the notion of reconciliation and the often flawed assumption that reconciliation refers to returning to a previous state of relations, whereas most often what is needed is an entirely new way of relating.

The discussions about archive and memorialisation took place in the context of detailed descriptions of the work of the Stasi archive and the Robert Havemann Association Archive

of Opposition in the German Democratic Republic (GDR); discussion about how to give effect to the vision of two participants to establish centres for memory in Kenya and Canada; and discussion about a concept for an on-line interactive archive or exhibition about the South African apartheid chemical and biological warfare programme.

In small groups participants who shared an interest in these issues were afforded the opportunity to explore their subjects in more detail, share experience and perspectives and resources, and in some cases identify next steps towards their goals.

The nature and consequences of the transfer of trauma between generations after the experience of war, conflict or extreme injustice became a very strong focus for discussion and interaction in Berlin. This began on the first day when two small group discussions focused on the effects of the inter-generational transfer of trauma. The first discussion was centred around the experience of one of the participants in stimulating German war children and grand children to speak about the effects of having parents who directly experienced the war – either as ‘victims’ or as ‘perpetrators’. One of the issues to emerge from this discussion was the difference in approach required between seeking individual healing and community and societal healing. In some contexts, such as in Cambodia, community-level facilitated story-telling has had positive results, while in other contexts, the same mode of engagement may not be possible.

In a second small group, participants continued this discussion, but with an initial focus on the effect of the two world wars and the war in the Balkans on young people in Croatia. This discussion concentrated on the effects of trauma that are not acknowledged or recognized, even by those who have suffered trauma, including the inability to create meaningful long term relationships with partners and children: “the worst is having the trauma without knowing it.” Another effect, experienced both in Cambodia and Germany, is that parents tend to overprotect their children, don’t take risks and lack confidence. In some cases “if young people do not hear the history they feel bad. But they also protect the parents by their silence, they don’t want to harm them by asking,” thereby reinforcing the silence about the past in families.

On the second day a number of participants took part in a family constellation process, a deeply emotive and experiential engagement to explore the manifestations of trauma on generations of families. This took place while another group of participants engaged in a discussion about the centrality of formal justice and the importance of holding perpetrators to account. Like in the first dialogue, these engagements emphasized two components of memory work: the one component characterized by an intellectual engagement with principle and practice; the other characterized by emotional engagement with the effects of conflict and injustice.

During all three dialogues the participants deepened their personal interactions, establishing close friendships and finding solidarity in the engagement. Through these relationships the dialogue process realised the objective of creating a global network of peers. In the third dialogue this culminated in the creation of shared projects across countries and continents; and a commitment by all participants to seek means to continue meeting as a group in the future.

The country engagements

While stimulating debate, discussion and sharing practice is central to the dialogue, engagement with the history and current landscape for memory work in the host country is an essential part of the process. Visits to sites of memory informed many of the thematic discussions and kept participants grounded in the complex realities of the negotiations and compromises that are made in each country when reckoning with and representing their pasts. These complexities are most stark in choices about how ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’ are identified and represented, or not, in memorials; and in the recognition that metanarratives are constructed for all eras, notwithstanding transitional justice processes.

South Africa

Over the five days participants were offered an immersion in South Africa and the way the country has attempted to reckon with its past. They engaged with South Africans, saw and visited a range of spaces, landscapes and memory sites: the Nelson Mandela Foundation’s Centre of Memory in Houghton, Johannesburg; Nelson Mandela’s Alexandra and Johannesburg homes; Alexandra township (Johannesburg); the Cradle of Humankind; the Sterkfontein caves; the Voortrekker Monument (Pretoria); and Freedom Park (Pretoria).

This immersion was intended to surface the tensions and questions about how South Africa has chosen to represent ‘the past’ for present and future generations, and to offer participants an opportunity to reflect on the similarities and differences between the country of immersion and their own contexts. The intention with this complex and challenging process is to encourage and enable new insights, new ways of seeing and doing.

The dialogue concluded at the NMF’s Centre of Memory with an interaction between participants and a group of South Africans who reflect a broad range of perspectives. The latter comprised:

- Dorothy Khosa (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation)
- Elinor Sisulu (author and activist)
- Fana Jiyane (Freedom Park)
- Frank Meintjies (author and activist)
- Kindiza Ngubeni (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation)
- Leon Wessels (former government minister and post-apartheid human rights commissioner)
- Lisa Vetten (gender activist)
- Nomancotsho Pakade (Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action)
- Ramarwaneng Bodibe (former member of the TRC)
- Sibongiseni Mkhize (Robben Island Museum)

- Sonja Lombard (Voortrekker Monument)
- Yasmin Sooka (former Truth Commissioner)
- Vonani Bila (poet)

The South Africans were asked by the participants to respond to one overarching question, namely, “when South Africa marks twenty years of democracy in 2014, what will you be celebrating and what will you be mourning?” Four subsidiary questions, that emerged from a collective process of intense reflection by the participants, defined the terrain of the dialogue more precisely:

- Visiting the two memorials, Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park, we were struck by the exclusivity of the national narratives represented in both places. The two monuments stand in opposition to one another, staring each other down, without any apparent effort to reflect each other’s voices, or other marginal voices and experiences. How did South Africa arrive so quickly at this point where one dominant narrative was replaced by another? What would it take to change that?
- Many countries look at the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a model, or for inspiration. It is hailed as a success. What was achieved through the TRC? In what ways did it fail and why? And what has been left undone?
- Why is it that the current post-apartheid government has held so tightly to the secrets of the apartheid government? Is it important to force these open? Why, and who could do that?
- What cannot be said, and by whom, in South Africa now?

Through this interaction participants were able to assess their own experiences of, and responses to, the way in which South Africa has engaged with its past, against the views of a broad range of South Africans.

Cambodia

The immersion in Cambodian memory work took a slightly different form. Seven Cambodian guests joined participants on the second day of the dialogue when they spent time discussing their work and experiences with the group. Following this engagement participants could choose one of three site visits – a city tour led by history students; a tour of Tuol Sleng detention and torture facility; or a visit to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). Some of the Cambodian guests joined them on these visits.

Immediately after the site visits, having had very little time to absorb and reflect on their experiences, the participants engaged in a round of exchange with the Cambodian memory practitioners to share insights from the visits and deepen the participants' understanding of memory work in Cambodia. The Cambodian guests were:

- Ms Vannath Chea – A survivor of the Killing Fields and freelance researcher with many years of experience in reconciliation and memory
- Mr Youk Chhang - Executive Director of the Documentation Centre of Cambodia
- Mr Savourn Doung – Head of the Cambodian's Defender's Project on gender-based violence
- Dr Helen Jarvis – Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia and former head of the ECCC Victim Support Section
- Mr Long Khet - Executive Director of Youth for Peace Cambodia
- Mr Va Nou – Director of the film “We want you to know” and formerly a member of Youth for Peace Cambodia
- Mr Chea Sopheap – Archives project co-ordinator, Bophana Centre
- Mr Sarath Youn – Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation

Through discussions during the dialogue several participants expressed concern about institutionalised silences. They felt that despite transitional justice processes and other memory work having been undertaken, silences remain. This was in part a recognition that memory work often excludes and conceals, because certain silences are necessary to reinforce power. Yet, it was also a reflection of how participants felt about their work – that whatever they did was never enough. A clear example of this emerged during the dialogue with the Cambodian guests.

Participants had spoken about the silence about the past in Cambodia. Yet, in her introductory presentation, Dr Jarvis identified this as one of the two important misconceptions about Cambodia. One of the misconceptions, she said, “is that that we need to ‘break the silence’. People believe that until the establishment of the ECCC there was silence. But that is not true. From the moment of the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge there were strong documentation and memorialisation projects/processes as well as justice processes. Tuol Sleng was established very soon after the end of Khmer Rouge rule. 1979 was the first genocide trial in the world, and that was in Cambodia. There are documents from that trial and a book produced in English by the University of Pennsylvania. But

because the government was not recognised internationally, and the Cambodian representative to the UN was Khmer Rouge until 1993, what was going on here in Cambodia was covered up. There were a lot of activities in the 1980s, but they seem to be forgotten.”

Using art as a way of doing memory work emerged as a strong theme in relation to the practice of memory work in Cambodia. This is in part a response to the high rate of illiteracy and the need to find ways to encourage communication between generations and between communities. One Cambodian guest explained, “it is a way for people to visualise their future and plan their lives.”

Discussions about the practice of memory work also led to the identification of several of the themes discussed above, as well as to the identification of the specific challenges of memory work experienced by participants. These included:

- That with the increasingly privatised and capitalised nature of memory work, it grows in complexity, and becomes a frightening terrain.
- There is a fine line between presenting a realistic picture of the past and causing disengagement if the content is traumatising (referring to Tuol Sleng and other memory sites in Cambodia it was said “Once local people visited the museums they were discouraged from going again because it was too painful and there was not enough explanation. This creates a passive victim and doesn’t encourage further engagement.”)
- That memory work can be complex, challenging and exhausting (“To do this work you have to have a lot of multi-disciplinary knowledge: psychology, history, economics and so on. There is no curriculum for ‘memory work’.”)
- That activists who join the state after transition to take part in, or even drive, transitional justice processes and build archives, face particular challenges as they balance their activism with their roles as functionaries.

Germany

Like in Cambodia, participants' immersion in German memory work was embedded in the three-day process. However, unlike the two previous dialogues, participants were also offered a two-day exploration of Berlin led and hosted by the German participants in the two days prior to the start of the final dialogue. Guided tours were offered to the Federal Foundation for the Study of Communist Dictatorship, Sachsenhausen concentration camp and Soviet special camp, the German parliament, the Holocaust Memorial, the Topography of Terror, Potsdamer Platz, the Memorial for German Resistance, and Potsdam.

The dialogue took place in the Jewish Museum, designed by the architect Daniel Libeskind. During the course of the dialogue participants were able to explore the museum and its gardens, and make use of the venue's interior and exterior spaces to hold their discussions.

During the first day of dialogue participants were immersed in the reality of the practice of memory work in Germany as the German participants shared the detail of their work and the focus of their institutions. This was followed by in-depth discussion in small groups about the challenges and complexities of memory work in Germany with each of the four groups being led by one of the German participants. Key issues to emerge were the similarities of experiences in different contexts in relation to the inter-generational transfer of trauma; the challenges of archival work in contexts where policies are yet to be created; and political realities and complexities associated with the way in which Germany has dealt with its World War 2 past and the GDR dictatorship.

On the second day participants visited the Berlin wall memorial, the North Station memorial to the 'ghost' stations of the Metro and met with the Deputy Director of the Berlin Wall Memorial Foundation, Maria Nooke and the architect who headed the project to conceptualise and create the memorial, Günther Schlusche.

Maria Nooke and Günther Schlusche were asked to address two issues:

- factors influencing the decisions about how to define and represent victims at the memorial; and
- how the institution negotiated the conflict between memorial space and private development space, since the memorial occupies a large area in the middle of desirable central city real estate.

Maria Nooke explained that the main function of the Berlin wall memorial is to commemorate 'victims'. She explained that in 1989 it was not known how many people had died at the Berlin wall. While the institution's research provided the names and circumstances of death of 138 people, it remains unknown how many more may have died, or who were victims through having been separated from their families or who had to flee. This is despite the trials of border guards that took place in the 1990s.

In describing the difficult decisions that had to be made about who could qualify as a 'victim', and therefore have a place at the Berlin Wall memorial, Maria Nooke explained that there were border guards who had deserted and tried to flee and who were shot by other guards in the attempt; and other cases where guards were killed while on duty. It was necessary to decide whether guards could be considered 'victims' in such cases. This was

controversial because victim organisations opposed commemorating guards as victims at the memorial site. Ultimately, it was decided that guards who were shot whilst on duty and who did not attempt to flee would not be named at the site, while those who deserted would be named at the site. A separate memorial was established for guards who died on duty.

At the time of the visit the conflict between Israel and Palestine was intense. This prompted participants to draw attention to the apparent similarities between the Berlin Wall and the controversial wall recently built by Israel. This gave rise to a difficult and emotionally charged discussion that highlighted the difficulties Germans face in dealing with the conflict between Israel and Palestine, with many Germans believing that it is not their place to comment on the issue.

Günther Schlusche spoke about how the memorial is linked to the residential neighbourhood in which it is located. He explained that the neighbourhood was severely hit by the building of the wall, with many social relationships being severed as a result, and many homes having been destroyed to allow for the wall to be constructed. When the wall eventually came down, the social relations that had previously shaped the area were no longer in place. After ten years of stability the area that was formerly in East Berlin underwent gentrification. Most of the old buildings were renovated and the area was in high demand. In contrast the area that had formerly been West Berlin was characterised by low incomes, high unemployment, and empty shops. The memorial was realised at a time of sharpening contradictions between these two areas. As such, the steps towards memorialisation involved a significant investment in community consultation.

During discussion participants questioned the extent to which the memorial was able to reflect positive experiences of GDR. Again, this gave rise to an emotive exchange that highlighted how difficult it is for memorials to reflect the complexity of social issues.

After the dialogue, participants who had not visited the Sachsenhausen concentration camp had a second opportunity to visit the site. They were also offered the opportunity to visit the Robert Haveman archives.

The Berlin dialogue concluded with a meeting on 31 July between a select group of participants and representatives from a range of external stakeholders from Germany and South Africa, to share the experience and insights from the dialogue process. Taking part in this event were, among others, State Secretary Thomas Silberhorn of BMZ, the South African ambassador to Berlin, Rev. Makhenkesi Arnold Stofile and, representing GIZ, Vice-Chair of the Management Board Christoph Beier, as well as representatives from the Robert Bosch Foundation and FriEnt Working Group on Peace and Development.

Personal and professional growth during the dialogue process

“We are creating a community of memory.”

Participant in the Mandela Dialogues

In Cambodia David Graf and Jan Wesseler (GIZ) shared with participants the insights about leadership that inform the approach of the Global Leadership Academy. These included that leadership requires an awareness of meaning-making, which means being conscious of what is happening and why. It also requires vision and to allow space for new possibilities. Finally, leadership is about focused action. Leadership is about enabling your social system to realise social change.

A systemic view of social impact, or taking responsibility for social good, requires that leaders are aware of their own attitudes and institutional roles; while enabling collective learning to inform change and fostering and facilitating dialogue beyond one’s own institutions and across conflicting interests.

Through the dialogues participants shared examples of how they had been inspired by the process and insights they had gained about their own roles.

One participant found inspiration from his experience in South Africa: “I heard about Nelson Mandela long ago but when I went to South Africa and read his book and then looked at his achievements, and what can be achieved I saw **what can be achieved by teamwork and what can be achieved by an individual.**”

Others were inspired by being surrounded by peers who share their interests, passion, commitment and experience of memory work. They were also inspired by learning from the experiences of different national contexts:

When I got to South Africa I was happy to be surrounded by peers. It was an important experience. I am a little disappointed because in my field people are struggling with little things, and with ego – we blame each other and can’t navigate our difference. As a functionary I am thinking about how we can handle our differences and how much we blame.

From Johannesburg I felt like I learned from everyone. It was a great opportunity – these dialogues. I have been inspired by how to deal with your enemies, to create space for enemies.

The experience of another country lets me think about my own reality and how to deal with the pain of the past. It lets me reflect on the question of personal commitment. I have been working on memory for 28 years. I feel renewed commitment since South Africa.

There is constant learning through our different stimulations and this makes us do a better job.

During the second dialogue participants spoke of their personal growth, or shared revelations that they have had as a consequence of participation in the dialogues. Several

participants also spoke of the value of the individual coaching that takes place between facilitators and participants through the dialogues.

Personal revelations included:

“I was struggling before Johannesburg. I was at a personal crossroads. I liked how we dug and talked. I kept digging and it has helped me to take decisions. I am harmonising my inner beliefs and outcomes.”

“There has been a crystallisation that my work is about the future. It is about trying to make sure that our gains are not rolled back.”

“I can now articulate what I am doing. I have inspiration for a paper.”

“How can I transfer my experience of memory work to a future generation? These are questions for my future, and that changes the focus of my future work. Now I need to consider new models and methods. Because if I cannot transfer [my knowledge] it is lost in time and space.”

“When you dig together you learn a lot. Now I will be bold, I have understood what is happening on six continents and so I can speak with confidence in forums about memory work – this is powerful collaborative learning.”

In Berlin personal transformations, and the depth of connection made between participants was apparent. For some the transformation was characterised by increased confidence, clarity about their purpose, and the role they would like to play in memory work in their own country. For others the process led to a clearer focus for their work.

Beyond Berlin: Outputs and outcomes

Between the second and third dialogue a declaratory document was drafted and shared with the participants. It drew on insights and reflected themes that had emerged during the first and second dialogue. The purpose of this document was to identify and articulate principles relating to the purpose and practice of memory work as they emerged from the dialogue process; and to offer participants, their institutions and stakeholders a concise, clear statement of new insights into the purpose and practice of memory work.

The dialogues began with an impetus to engage, establish personal connections, find areas of agreement and understand the differences that context brings to the way in which we do memory work. But, by the time we had reached the final dialogue the relationships between participants were sufficiently close for it to feel safe to robustly challenge each other about our differences in relation to the practice and the purpose of memory work. These differences emerged most clearly during the final discussion about the draft of a declaratory document. The areas of agreement and disagreement are set out in the table below.

Table: The purpose of memory work – areas of commonality and difference

Participants agreed substantially that the purpose of memory work is..	Participants agreed somewhat that the purpose of memory work is...	Participants disagreed substantially about whether the purpose of memory work is...
To achieve a just society	To provide education for future generations	To judge actions and not people
To reflect and promote multiple narratives	To understand how injustice occurs	To show that we are all capable of committing justice and injustice
To know and understand the past, personally and collectively through documentation and investigation	To bring healing	To achieve a society without ideology
To achieve a more peaceful and just world	To demonstrate that atrocities are unacceptable	To secure democracy
To [be able] to live with those whose values differ from mine	To create an inclusive future	To achieve peace
	To honour victims, understand the past and release society from human rights violations	To remember how easy it is to oppress and kill others
	To know who we are [I am] and who others are – to see each other	

From this it is clear that while all participants could agree on the basic principles of inclusivity and justice, our differences related to how that should be given effect and the desired outcomes. There were also differences of language and meaning. While in South Africa, Serbia, Croatia and Kenya ‘reconciliation’ may refer to societal processes to overcome prejudice and hatred, in Argentina the word was used to entrench impunity and as an argument against justice. Reparation too was a word that was used differently in different contexts, with different meanings and intentions. The absence of a common language contributed to highlighting the contextual differences. The perspectives participants brought to these discussions were naturally informed by their own roles and positions.

For example, for participants from South America, whose countries had experienced relatively short, but extreme periods of autocracy characterised by brutal and extensive human rights violations, followed by long periods of democracy, during which perpetrators had been protected by impunity laws, amnesty or powerful social forces that opposed a juridical process to call them to account; truth telling and justice are of critical importance. These are viewed as fundamental to securing democracy, countering impunity and preventing recurrence. Any healing or reconciliation that may take place as a consequence of the process is of secondary importance to society, and is within the domain of individuals.

For some participants from the Balkans, that had experienced long and brutal wars, justified by prejudice and hatred – peacebuilding, overcoming prejudice and seeking reconciliation is as important as justice. Indeed, justice may, in their experience, deepen division and hatred and so may lead to a recurrence of war.

For countries like South Africa, Cambodia and Kenya, democracy has not delivered the freedom from impunity, inequality and prejudice we might have hoped for. Thus, our emphasis might be on societal healing, through truth telling and reconciliation – while both social justice (characterised by a respect for human rights and equality) and juridical justice is considered to be desirable and important, but possibly unattainable.

These examples, which are not exhaustive, demonstrate the complexity of memory work, and emphasise how important context is to how memory work is done and which elements of transitional justice (truth recovery, justice, reconciliation, storytelling and reparation) are emphasised. Adding to this complexity is timing. Countries like Canada, Argentina, Cambodia and Uruguay waited many years before dealing with past human rights violations. Others, like South Africa and Kenya, acted swiftly, but none of the formal instruments for reckoning with the past have secured more than a semblance of resolution.

Whether a society acts swiftly, or takes many years to deal with past conflict, injustice or rights violations, is a product both of political, psychological and social forces. Activists, functionaries, survivors and analysts have some influence over the form these processes take, however they are only players in a process that is often determined by the more powerful national and international political players. Thus, there can be no prescription, no formula, no ‘best practice’, no manual, for how a society should deal with its past – neither in terms of the form such reckoning should take, nor in its timing.

This outcome reminded us that we started with a clear collective recognition that blueprints, manuals, models and prescripts are not helpful in designing processes to deal with past conflict, injustice or human rights violations. Rather, the sharing of ideas and contexts, and

how the elements of transitional justice have been applied in different contexts with quite different results, brought us to recognise that the project to seek simple, clear principles for transitional justice processes across different contexts is deeply flawed, since the needs, priorities and imperatives, and power relations between different sectors of society are to a significant degree context-dependent.

Our shared vision for a future free from the violence and conflicts of the past should determine how, when and for how long we reckon with those pasts in each context. In sharing the experiences, struggles, contexts, successes and failures across national experiences we were able to come to new insights, new practices and to challenge our own thinking in ways that would have been unimaginable without having been through this dialogue process.

This sharing felt incomplete for the participants who have already embarked on, or planned a number of initiatives separately and collectively to continue the dialogue and share the insights gained through this process with diverse audiences.

Outcomes

During the three part dialogue process participants began to identify and develop ideas for cross-regional collaborations; regional-specific projects and projects that would take their own work forward drawing on inspiration and insights gained during the dialogue. While some of these projects have already been carried out, others are still being conceptualised, or are in the process of being realised. These projects and their status at the time of writing are detailed below.

Continuing the dialogue

On the basis of this dialogue series, The Nelson Mandela Foundation will be promoting and using the dialogue format to encourage engagement about memory work around the world. The Foundation views dialogues, such as these to be a key component of their work in the future. Participants in this dialogue series have also initiated processes to hold dialogues in their countries and regions, and to engage new stakeholder groups about memory work.

- On 14 August 2014 Verne Harris convened a panel at the Institute for Security Studies' (ISS) 5th International Conference on Criminal Justice and Crime Reduction. The panel included Mbongiseni Buthelezi (South African dialogue participant), Undine Whande (facilitator) and Judge Daniel Rafecas (Argentine participant). The premise of the discussion was that the levels and nature of violence in a society recovering from periods of oppression are not unconnected to the ways in which that society has reckoned with its past.

See: <http://www.nelsonmandela.org/news/entry/violence-and-the-weight-of-the-past>

In two short films Undine and Mbongiseni offer insights about memory work

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCJFa5jZEMQ&list=UU5uZT5Wt_pDbdghC_xyllMQ, and

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOtvCViWVnM&list=UU5uZT5Wt_pDbdghC_xyllMQ)

- As an outcome of the dialogue series Verne Harris was awarded a honorary doctorate by National University of Cordoba, Argentina. Between 8 and 17 October 2014 he travelled to Argentina to take part in a number of events and to speak both about the dialogue process, and share insights from the process about memory work. During these engagements he, along with Daniel Rafecas, Maria Cristina and Mariana Tello Weiss (participants in the dialogue process) lays the foundation for a regional dialogue about memory work in South America.
- Verne Harris was also been invited by Tanja Florath to present a seminar at the University of Galway in November 2014. There he will reflect on the Mandela Dialogues process with reference to South Africa. He will also facilitate a workshop on the Mandela Dialogues at the University of Ulster in the same week.
- A panel discussion about the dialogue series was scheduled to take place at the Nobel Peace Laureate Summit in Cape Town on 15 October 2014. The panel was to be facilitated by Rebecca Freeth with participants Mbongiseni Buthelezi, Shirley Gunn, Bongani Mgijima and Jabu Mashinini. This event had to be cancelled at very short notice after several Nobel Laureates withdrew when the Dalai Lama was not able to attend because he was not granted a visa by the South African government. Despite this, the Nelson Mandela Foundation did host a youth dialogue about memory work that included Mbongiseni Buthelezi.
- On 9 August 2014 the Nelson Mandela Foundation hosted a small roundtable discussion with Chilean President Michelle Bachelet titled “Reckoning with oppressive pasts, making laboratory futures: The questions of economy and inequality”. Chandre Gould, Shirley Gunn and Mbongiseni Buthelezi participated in this event.
- The Nelson Mandela Foundation is using the documentary “1994: The Bloody Miracle” as a provocation for dialogue with University students on memory work. These discussions have taken place at the University of Johannesburg (three discussions), the University of Cape Town and Durban University of Technology, with Mbongiseni Buthelezi, Verne Harris and Yase Godlo on the panels.
- The Canadian participants in the dialogue series have initiated a process to convene a series of dialogues about memory work in Canada starting in 2015.
- Participants from the Balkans, Kenya and Cambodia are all committed to hosting memory work dialogues in their regions.
- Mirsad Tokača (Bosnian participant) is organising a conference to signify the passing of 20 years since the signing of the Dayton Agreement and the genocide at Srebrenica. It was proposed that Emina Bužinkić convene a panel on the inter-generational transfer of trauma at the conference.
- Anna Kaminsky has founded an international exchange programme for memory workers funded by her Foundation as a result of the dialogues.
- Bongani Mgijima attended a leadership development training programme in Germany as a consequence of participation in the dialogues.

New projects

- As a direct consequence of the dialogues, The Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Stellenbosch University Museum have collaborated to curate two exhibitions at the museum. The Director of the museum, Bongani Mgijima was a participant in the dialogues. The exhibitions titled “Black man in a white man’s court: the forgotten trial of Nelson Mandela”, and “For Madiba with love” were opened in August 2014.
- Participants in the dialogue process are collaborating to contribute to an edited volume of personal and professional stories challenging dominant transitional justice assumptions and conclusions. Their stories will make transparent, on the one hand, the unique challenges every society has to face in reckoning with oppressive pasts; on the other hand, they will demonstrate the similarities and the commonalities across countries and regions. The book will consist of 15 commissioned 5,000 word essays, under three theme headings: Personal is Political, Power is Personal, and Purpose is Professional. Each chapter will draw on and reflect the personal experience of the authors in contributing to efforts to deal with the past in their countries. They will offer compelling narratives that in turn inform deep reflection about the purpose and practice of ‘memory work’. These are not academic articles. However, through their critical analysis and use of evidence they will contribute to the scholarly literature on transitional justice.
- A number of participants have been inspired by the dialogues to delve deeper into understanding how the inter-generational transfer of trauma affects societies and families. Arising from the third dialogue was a proposal to create a global platform to continue discussions about this dimension of memory work.
- Jamie Bourque (Canada) has established a web portal dedicated to expanding the dialogues and taking them to audiences around the world. The portal (<http://jointhedialogue.ca/>) currently includes reports and images from the dialogues. He is collaborating with Emina Bužinkić to develop the site that is intended to ‘facilitate the sharing of resources, initiate social change and connect an international audience on memory work’.

Annexure A: List of participants



Implemented by



The Mandela Dialogues - Dialoguing Memory Work: Participant List

No	Name	Surname	Country	Organisation	Position
1	Aideen	Nabigon	Canada	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada	Director General of Settlement Agreement Policy and Partnerships
2	Alice	Nderitu	Kenya	National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC - Kenya)	Commissioner
3	Anna	Kaminsky	Germany	Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur	Executive Director/Head of the Office
4	Ariela	Peralta Distefano	Uruguay	National Institution for Human Rights	Co Director

5	Bernd	Florath	Germany	Robert Havemann Gesellschaft (Stazi archive commission)	Voluntary Collaborator and Consultant
6	Bongani	Mgijima	South Africa	Department of Arts and Culture, Stellenbosch University	Head: Cultural Heritage
7	Daniel	Rafecas	Argentina	Judiciary Power of Argentine	Federal Judge, Criminal Court
8	Emina	Bužinkić	Croatia	Documenta - Centre for Dealing with the Past	Programme Coordinator
9	Hassan	Hassan Omar	Kenya		Senator Mombasa County
10	Isabel	Wschebor	Uruguay	Archivo General de la Universidad	Researcher Assistant
11	Ivana	Franovic	Serbia	Centre for Non-Violent Action (CNA)	Team Member
12	Jamie	Bourque	Canada	Acimostakewin Productions/Square Pixel Inc.	Television and Digital Content Producer
13	María Eleonora	Cristina	Argentina	Archivo Provincial de la Memoria de Córdoba / H.I.J.O.S	Investigation Area/Military
14	Mariana Eva	Tello	Argentina	Espacio para la Memoria ex CCDTyE "La Perla" - H.I.J.O.S	Researcher at de Espacio de Memoria "La perla"/member of H.I.J.O.S
15	Mbongiseni	Buthelezi	South Africa	Centre for Law & Society, University of Cape Town	Senior Researcher
16	Michael	Parak	Germany	Gegen Vergessen - Für Demokratie e.V.	General Manager

17	Milly	Odongo	Kenya	National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC - Kenya)	Commissioner and Vice Chairperson of the Commission
18	Minea	Tim	Cambodia	Kdei Karuna (KDK)	Executive Director
19	Mirsad	Tokača	Bosnia	Research and Documentation Centre	Director
20	Monica	Ittusardjuat	Canada	Inuktitut Language & Culture Nunavut Arctic College	Senior Instructor
21	Nenad	Vukosavljević	Serbia	Centre for Non-Violent Action (CNA)	Team Member
22	Panhavuth (Vuth)	Long	Cambodia	Cambodia Justice Initiative	Program Officer
23	Sabine	Bode	Germany		Freelance Journalist and Author
24	Shirley	Gunn	South Africa	Human Rights Media Centre	Executive Director
25	Vannak	Hang	Cambodia	Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)	Head of Victims Support Section
26	Wachira	Waheire	Kenya	National Victims and Survivors network	Leading member

Annexure B: Concept document



Implemented by



The Mandela Dialogues: Dialoguing the Archive

A co-operation between the Global Leadership Academy
and Nelson Mandela Foundation

The Context

Every society emerging from oppressive rule or conflict to democracy is faced with the difficult task of re-shaping and re-liberating societal memory and promoting cooperative views on the common history. Countries have tended to reckon with the pain and the damage of the past through formal instruments, like ‘the truth commission’ and ‘criminal tribunals’. At the heart of experience with these instruments have been the overlapping processes of recording and remembering. Establishing a dialogue on the past within and between societal groups has, for some countries, meant seeking a balance between information transparency and reconciliation. But experiences around the world have shown that the processes of reconciliation and rehabilitation are complex and require far more than a reliance on formal records. A crucial element in any transition to democracy has to be respect for, and the provision of space for, the interrelated dynamics of remembering - storytelling, silences and . People, especially the victims of oppression, feel the need to tell their stories and the need for someone that listens. Records must be allowed to disclose their truths and their lies. And freedom of information must be nurtured.

Experiences have shown *in the context of post-oppression or post-conflict, that archives and memory regimes tend to alienate voices that are potentially important for a resilient and sustainable society* – whether the reckoning takes place immediately or many years later. Formal transitional justice interventions like ‘the truth commission’ may play an important role for the new society in shaping societal memory and filling the gaps that the old memory paradigm from before the transition has left. But at the same time, they tend to be entrapped into introducing new dominant meta-narratives to societies - in other words, what is regarded as important to remember and what is not is shaped by today’s interests and powerful groups within societies. Serious cross-societal dialogue on memory is missing, and archives often are slow to link to civil society memory work.

Experiences have also shown that the more difficult memory work often happens outside of formal transitional justice interventions. This more difficult work is important to sustained democratization. It becomes vital to support, inspire and inform those engaged in such work, and to find innovative ways to access and tell the stories of the past. Equally vital is that

memory work undertaken in countries that have implemented formal interventions relatively quickly be compared and contrasted with countries that have delayed or avoided such interventions. What are the factors that constrain, limit or enable the work of memory both inside and outside of formal interventions?

From this analysis, a number of issues arise around the lead question of *What should the work of memory be in post-oppression and post-conflict transitions?*

- How is memory work enabled outside of formal transitional justice interventions, both before and after such interventions?
- How does memory work, both inside and outside formal interventions, avoid adopting new meta-narratives and modes of knowledge construction which exclude voices perceived as compromised by the past?
- Is it possible, or even desirable, to tell the stories of those responsible for or complicit in acts of violation?
- How do we ensure that transitions are documented in ways which will enable future generations to interrogate processes which will have shaped them profoundly?
- How do we use evidence that exposes the culpability of oppressors without legitimising new forms of oppression?
- How do formal state-sponsored interventions relate to the networks and energies of civil society, community action and social media? How do official archives relate to new forms of collective and real-time online recording of (unchecked) facts through social media, Wikipedia, WikiLeaks etc.?
- How is the human right to forget respected in the work of memory?
- How are the often conflicting imperatives for collective and individual healing reconciled?

This is where the cooperation project between the Global Leadership Academy and the Nelson Mandela Foundation comes in, offering a cross-sectoral and transnational multi-stakeholder dialogue process for leaders and change agents involved in formal and informal memory work. The project seeks to address the issues above, motivated by the need to develop innovative solutions for current challenges, and framed by the following question:

How can I, as a leader or change agent in the area of remembering and recording, contribute to liberating societal memory through dialogue?

The Objectives

The dialogue process will inspire, support and inform participants. In doing so, it will build individual leadership skills. The focus is on facilitating learning through the sharing of experience and the questioning of one's own understanding. Participants are active in the area of recording and creating dialogue on social memory in their respective countries. They are, or were, active in promoting memory work either inside or outside of formal transitional justice interventions. They see high potential in international dialogue and exchange of experience in order to leverage the positive social impact of societal discourse on archives and memory. The project has three major objectives:

- i. To develop leadership and methodological capacities of the participants.**

The process enhances leadership skills and social techniques for creating multi-stakeholder dialogue within and across organisations, communities and societal groups. It supports participants to acquire a systemic understanding of change processes in organisations and societies.

ii. To deepen the understanding of the functionality of recording in shaping and liberating societal memory.

Through extensive dialogue between participants, on-site learning journeys in South Africa and two other countries (as determined by the participants), as well as stimulations and provocations from external voices, the project fosters deep understanding of the dialogue-creating function of recording and its relation to justice, reconciliation and healing. The particular challenges of memory work outside of formal transitional justice interventions are focused on.

iii. To enable participants to enrich and develop change projects in their own institution or country

Participants receive substantial impetus to help them solve current problems in their own institution or country. The joint learning process enriches understanding and energises participants to develop change projects under way in their home contexts.

Additionally, an online platform will be offered, through which participants will be able to engage in moderated online discussions between the group meetings. Participants will be encouraged to share on-going or newly created change projects, provide each other with collegial advice, and expand co-operation beyond this project.

The Format

The multi-stakeholder dialogue process lasts for 16 months and is geared towards leaders or change agents from different societies that have experienced oppression or conflict in the past, living now in relative political stability. It will bring together around 25 people from different backgrounds, nationalities, and sectors of society. The participants will come from at least eight countries in different parts of the world and will represent a variety of experiences with oppression and with approaches in dealing with such experiences. There should be at least three participants from each country.

Potential participants will be invited to participate and offered an opportunity to discuss the process with the organisers to ensure that this dialogue project will benefit them.

The project will include:

- **Large group meetings: “Lekgotla”⁶**. The participants will meet three times in different places for 3 days each. Each Lekgotla will have three elements: extensive dialogue and reflection between participants, external stimulation from high ranking voices, and site visits to experience different approaches to societal memory.
 - o 1.Lekgotla, November 2013 in South Africa for three days.

⁶In South Africa the term “lekgotla” is used to describe consultative dialogue forums and interventions.

- 2. Lekgotla, February 2014 (place to be discussed).
- 3. Lekgotla, August/September 2014 (place to be discussed):
- **Online-work.** Between the physical meetings, moderated online conversations will enable participants to reflect on lessons learnt from the meetings and reflect how these insights apply in their home systems. Additionally, an online platform to share and discuss change projects in small groups will be offered.
- **Change project support.** Participants who wish to develop projects for their home context, or share experiences about on-going projects will be able to draw on support from their peers in the dialogue process

Cooperation Partners

The dialogue process is co-hosted and co-facilitated by the Global Leadership Academy and the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory.

Questions might be directed to David Graf, Global Leadership Academy (david.graf@giz.de) and Verne Harris, Nelson Mandela Foundation, (Verne@nelsonmandela.org).

Facilitation Team

Undine Whande, Rebecca Freeth, Sebastiao Guerra, Jabulani Mashinini

(As of November 2013; updated November 2014)

Annexure C: Statement of intent by convening organisations and facilitators

This document was drafted after the first dialogue to inform the nature of the engagement during the second and third dialogues

Mandela Dialogues: Dialoguing Memory Work

Stating intentions afresh after the first encounter in South Africa

This document arose after the first dialogue held in South Africa in November 2013. Participants expressed a desire to understand more deeply the intentions and objectives of the two convening organisations, and to have more insight into the facilitation approaches. As the dialogues continue and these intentions, objectives and approaches evolve, the hope is that they will become jointly held with participants, and that a sense of ownership over this process and its outcomes will spread.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), through its Centre of Memory, and the Global Leadership Academy at GIZ (commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)) each offer a renewed statement of intent below. NMF outlines three specific intentions – to strengthen ideas and discourses, foster productive relationships between participants for the longer term and support personal development. GIZ has three intentions rooted in promoting understanding, invigorating leadership and enabling innovation. The dialogue arises at the meeting point between the conveners' intentions and participants' own interests, dilemmas, challenges and questions about their memory work.

The facilitation team draws on a range of dialogue methods, underpinned by a set of principles, towards realising these intentions. These approaches and principles are outlined in this document too, endeavouring to make what is often implicit in the design of such a process more visible, more available for discussion, and hence, for co-creation.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Mandela Dialogues

Organisational mandate

The Foundation's vision is a society which remembers its pasts, listens to all its voices, and pursues social justice. Its mission is to contribute to the making of a just society by keeping alive the legacy of Nelson Mandela, providing an integrated public information resource on his life and times, and by convening dialogue around critical social issues. Its core work, then, is positioned within a memory-dialogue nexus.

This nexus draws on fundamental elements of Nelson Mandela's legacy. It was under Mandela that the first post-apartheid government embraced an approach to reckoning with the past which would simultaneously address the damage done by that past and reach for reconciliation and inclusivity. Three interlinked and overlapping strategies were implemented: nation-building, through the deployment of symbols and metanarratives (big explanatory stories); the putting in place of special instruments to effect redress and reparation for past injustice (including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)); and

the longer-term restructuring of the state and the economy to ensure the sharing of wealth and the effecting of equal access to opportunity.

Dialogue as an instrument for finding sustainable solutions to intractable problems is also fundamental to understanding Nelson Mandela's legacy. In mandating the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), he insisted on one of its core objectives being the creation of a space which would bring together those who think they have little in common and who might have no desire to listen to one another. Such a space has to be a safe space. A space safe enough for the unsayable to be said in it. This is the space in which sustainable solutions can be worked out.

Experiencing the terrain

The NMF has been working in the memory-dialogue nexus for nearly a decade now. It has been wrestling with the challenges posed to successful implementation of South Africa's strategies for reckoning with the past. It has convened forums to explore the issue of post-oppression memory in all its complexity. It has taken up specific issues like access to the archive of Nelson Mandela in state custody, the use of the TRC archive, the documenting of victims of state oppression, state secrecy, and so on. It has also been engaged in dialogues with individuals and organisations from other countries which have had similar experiences. Over a quarter of a century now countries emerging from oppression and embracing democratisation have routinely reckoned with the pain and the damage of the past through formal instruments, like 'the truth commission' and 'the criminal tribunal'. At the heart of experience with these instruments have been the overlapping processes of recording and remembering. The NMF has contributed to dialogue on these processes in a number of countries – for instance, Argentina, Burundi, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Uruguay.

Through all this work the NMF has developed a range of analyses around the central question of: *What should the work of memory be in post-oppression and post-conflict transitions?* These analyses have thrown up troubling questions, ones which the NMF and many of its institutional partners wrestle with:

- How is memory work enabled outside of formal transitional justice interventions, both before and after such interventions?
- How does memory work, both inside and outside formal interventions, avoid adopting new metanarratives and modes of knowledge construction which exclude voices perceived as compromised by the past?
- Is it possible, or even desirable, to tell the stories of those responsible for or complicit in acts of violation?
- How do we ensure that transitions are documented in ways which will enable future generations to interrogate processes which will have shaped them profoundly?
- How do we use evidence that exposes the culpability of oppressors without legitimising new forms of oppression?
- How do formal state-sponsored interventions relate to the networks and energies of civil society, community action and social media? How do official archives relate to new forms of collective and real-time online recording through social media, Wikipedia, WikiLeaks, etc.?
- How is the human right to forget respected in the work of memory?

- How are the often conflicting imperatives for collective and individual healing reconciled?

Envisioned Outcomes

The NMF's overarching aim with the Mandela Dialogues is to explore these troubling questions collaboratively. We wish to co-convene a dialogue space in which the exploration can take place in three modes simultaneously:

- That of ideas, concepts, idioms. We would like to contribute to impacting meaningfully on global transitional justice discourses.
- That of professional space, experience and process. We would like to contribute to fostering a network of like-minded people around the world who share best practice and generate solidarity more widely.
- That of self-reflection and self-development. We would like to contribute to all participants in the Mandela Dialogues benefitting at personal levels.

The NMF's experience suggests that in the field of memory work, in South Africa and elsewhere, there is a need for more hard research and analysis, on the one hand, and on the other there is a need for more soft reflection and exploration. Arguably, it is in the space between these two that new solutions to problems will emerge and new energy will be generated for the struggles ahead. With the Mandela Dialogues the NMF is hoping to contribute to making that space bigger.

The Global Leadership Academy and the Mandela Dialogues

Organisational Mandate

The world is increasingly complex and in constant change. People, organisations and groups are wondering how the societies of tomorrow shall look like. There are no easy answers. Effective solutions depend on innovation capacity and leadership skills that break with conventional patterns and make room for new ways to shape our global future. This calls for leaders who are capable of driving fundamental change in their areas of responsibility.

With its international, cross-disciplinary and practice-oriented dialogue processes designed to strengthen leadership skills and innovation capacity, the Global Leadership Academy targets those in positions of responsibility from the North and the South. In this way, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is supporting individuals and organisations worldwide as they work through change processes. GIZ has been commissioned to carry out this task by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The Global Leadership Academy brings together high-ranking participants from the worlds of policy-making, business, academia and civil society who might otherwise have never entered into dialogue with each other. The Academy provides a safe space for them to explore one another's perspectives, look at things in new ways, be inspired and invigorated, and initiate changes where they are needed. Participants develop specific change projects that they implement in their home countries, providing impetus for positive transformation. The Global Leadership Academy focuses on the specific problems and challenges faced by participants rather than employing ready-made concepts, and attaches great importance to values such as transparency and equal opportunities. The

experiences and perspectives participants bring with them promote a creative exchange across continents and strengthen cross-sectoral thinking. Through networking, participants are empowered to expand their sphere of influence and their opportunities to effect change.

To provide its services, the Global Leadership Academy works with international cooperation partners such as the Presencing Institute, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, the Deep Democracy Institute and the World Bank Group.

Experiencing the Terrain

The Global Leadership Academy has initiated three major dialogue processes so far:

- The “Global Wellbeing and Gross National Happiness (GNH) Lab” brings together key leaders from a range of relevant sectors, to generate new leadership capacities and sites of innovation around models that go beyond GDP, to promote broader principles of global wellbeing and sustainability. It draws from, and expands on models such as GNH, which encompasses sustainable economic development, cultural resilience, environmental conservation, and good governance. It aims to generate a set of evolving new projects in “living laboratories” that participants will put into practice jointly or with other stakeholders.
- The “Passion and Politics Lab” is a cross-sectoral and transnational multi-stakeholder dialogue process for leaders and change agents to help build leadership skills and at the same time develop innovative solutions for current challenges of participants. The guiding question for this dialogue is: How can I, as a leader or change agent, shape policy and society without losing sight of my passion and ideals?
- The Mandela Dialogues: Dialoguing Memory Work.

In all these efforts, the overarching objective is to bring together change agents that wish to contribute towards a more sustainable and just future, by supporting changes of perspectives and strengthening the leadership and innovation skills of the change agents.

Objectives for the Mandela Dialogues

The Global Leadership Academy overarching aims are

- **To deepen the understandings of the functionality of memory work in shaping and liberating societal memory and building a democratic future.**
Through extensive dialogue between participants, on-site immersion, as well as engagement with others in the field of memory work, the project fosters deep understanding of the dialogue-creating function of recording and its relation to justice, reconciliation and healing. The particular challenges of memory work outside of formal transitional justice interventions are focused on. The questions of how to nurture plurality of voice and foster society-wide conversations on how memory shapes power, politics and social realities will be key to the collective inquiry undertaken. Participants bring their own experiences and perspectives on this to the table and reflect on the experiences in the three countries visited in the dialogue.
- **To invigorate and vitalise leadership and support participants in their individual lines of enquiry.**

The process allows leaders to ‘go back to source’ and ‘re-energise’ themselves and their work. It enables leaders to re-visit their deep questions and motivations, share and build their skills and encounter new social techniques for creating multi-stakeholder dialogue within and across organisations, communities and societal groups. It supports participants to acquire a systemic understanding of change processes in organisations and societies. The process works with peer learning and coaching methods that animate and illuminate one’s own quest and underlying collective questions about memory work and the (often invisible) fieldwork that underpins large-scale social transformation.

- **To enable participants to enrich and develop change projects in their own institution or country**

Participants receive substantial impetus to help them solve current problems in their own institution or country. The joint learning process enriches understanding and energises participants to re-focus existing change projects in their home contexts or develop individual or collective new change projects.

All these factors will contribute to the overarching goal of the Global Leadership Academy, which is to move towards a sustainable form of living together which is desired from all groups and stakeholders of society.

The Process of the Mandela Dialogues

Notes on Design and Facilitation

The facilitators are rooted in different theoretical and practical homes. This means that we do not follow a particular method but work with a high degree of emergence, working with participant and process needs and potentials as they arise.

The dialogues create opportunities for participants to explore individual and collective questions, to discover new insights and to access inherent contextual wisdom. Based on participants’ experiences and decades of professional practice, the dialogues create space for both left brain modes of inquiry (the ‘harder’ analysis and debates) as well as right brain methods of inquiry (enabling ‘softer’ reflection and exploration).

Dialogue as an overarching approach

David Bohm defined dialogue, based on the two Greek roots *dia* and *logos*, as ‘meaning flowing through.’ Bohm advocated dialogue as a way of cultivating “a new kind of intelligence ... because we have created a world that requires it”. Through dialogue, we slow down and express our beliefs, bedrock assumptions, experiences, fears, aspirations and possibilities. This renders them available for deeper exploration, of what we know and what we don’t know. Through dialogue, we can re-examine the assumptions that perhaps obstruct our progress. We can learn from the insights and experiences of others. We can find our way forward, singly and together, when we articulate possibilities for the future and connect with the sources of energy and inspiration that will help us realise them.

In the context of the Mandela Dialogues, dialogue – the flow of meaning – is encouraged to take place through each person (pursuing a line of inquiry, reflecting), through connections with one another (on shared lines of inquiry, to build solidarity, to explore ideas and understanding, to innovate together) and through the places and people we visit in each

country. “Dialogue does not require people to agree with each other. Instead it encourages people to participate in a pool of shared meaning that leads to aligned action.” (Jaworkski, 1998:111). This echoes Mandela’s own description of dialogue, as something well beyond a cosy chat with the like-minded.

By implication, we understand that dialogue is not easy. The experience can be uncomfortable, frustrating, and can bring underlying tensions to the surface. This has direct implications for the practice of memory work. If we can pay close attention to our experiences of dialogue, it can be a source of learning, not only when it is energising and we feel inspired by the process, but also when we are challenged by the process to learn from some of the uncomfortable, frustrating and tension-filled aspects of memory work. What do we mean? Dialogue is a lived, in-the-moment experience of diversity and the complexity of a group process. Giving space to all the voices, and co-creating, is often a messy process. As it is with memory work. Furthermore, a deep democracy approach to dialogue means discerning between what is in the best interests of the individual and what is in the best interests of the collective. As it is with memory work. By tracking our own experiences of dialogue, we gain insight about memory work that otherwise may elude us.

The dialogue works with questions (which stretch into lines of inquiry across time), sites of memory, processes of reflection and innovation. Each is explained in brief below.

Working with questions

In our work, we find that questions open up a space for alternative possibilities, a stimulus for thought and imagination. Questions are alive, they resist fixing things into one truth. This doesn’t mean we refrain from answering, but we do not rush there. Once I have an answer, new questions arise right in front of me, guiding my next step. The modus of inquiry allows me to see the points forming a line that extends towards my own horizon; it is like a telescope through which to see my guiding star more clearly. This is how the questions, asked again and again over time, stretch into a line of inquiry.

These two quotes may illustrate what we mean:

“In the word question, there is a beautiful word - quest. I love that word. We are all partners in a quest. The essential questions have no answers. You are my question, and I am yours - and then there is dialogue. The moment we have answers, there is no dialogue. Questions unite people, answers divide them. So why have answers when you can live without them?” - Eli Wiesel

“Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language. Do not now look for the answers. They cannot now be given to you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything. At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer, some distant day.” — Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet

Evolving a ‘line of inquiry’ begins with posing a key question that holds enough energy and zest to sustain a longer-term process of discovery, learning, witnessing, initiating personal and collective shifts and pursuing aspirations in the coming years. It offers an entrance to work on deeper levels of motivation to keep up our endurance for driving change initiatives.

Memory Site Immersion

The dimension of memory site immersion is key to the process of getting to know the context and work done in the place of encounter. Through the site immersions there is a mirror effect of reflecting on my own work and quest and at the same time, giving back to the context we are in through intensive engagement with the colleagues more closely connected to the site and country. The detachment from my own societal background can be eye-opening for new pathways for the impact I am having on memory work in my society.

Reflection

The observation-reflection-learning processes offer a fresh encounter with one's own work through and beyond the lens of the contextual encounter with the local sites. Observing myself and my own process creates a chance to reflect on my broader life and purpose as a leader, to contemplate my societal role(s) and impact over the years. Peer engagement inspires and allows ideas that leaders have been carrying over time to come to light and 'seed'. Time away from daily grind and responsibilities-in-context can open up a spectrum of new possibilities previously not considered.

Innovating change projects

As the dialogue process deepens, our intention is to support participants in organically evolving peer initiatives and in taking them further into 'lines of action'. This has already begun to happen, as various constellations of participants have met, either in country-groups or across borders based on interest and inspiration after Dialogue 1. These lines of action bear great potential as they can rely on the support and feedback of our entire group.

Four Principles

Four principles guide this approach: co-creating, creative expression, self-organizing and the combination of personal *and* professional development.

Co-Creating

Methodologically, working with inquiry means there is space for a range of methods that allow for deepening into exploration of a topic, theme or question. The principles of co-ownership and co-creation mean that, increasingly, we wish to hold, host and shape the dialogue space together with participants.

Creative Expression: Writing, Storytelling, Singing, Drawing

Sometimes words fail us and spoken dialogue is inadequate for expressing particular ideas, observations, memories or feelings. In those moments, the flow of meaning can be unblocked once more by drawing on other forms of creativity. Facilitated writing exercises will be part of the dialogue processes. Emerging written insights can be shared through the website and, ultimately, through a publication. Leaders will be encouraged to keep observation journals between encounters, to work with when we meet. Sometimes we will tell stories and link our biographies to our work. Sometimes we will sing, and find a different connection to each other through shared melody. Sometimes we will draw or sculpt or use other artistic means to get underneath the words and access other ways of seeing and

knowing. From here spaces for freshness and novelty can unexpectedly open. Some of us love creative expression, some of us don't. This will be another opportunity to navigate the tension between individual and collective interests.

Self-organising

We invite participants to draw on what works best for them and realise their own intentions. This involves exercising agency and following your own interests while remaining sensitive to the interests of others. In particular, the modus and form of support for peer groups as innovation incubators is self-chosen and jointly shaped with, or without, a member of the hosting team.

Professional and personal development

Integral to Nelson Mandela Foundation and the Global Leadership Academy's intentions is the assumption that both the personal and professional dimensions of the self are interconnected when enriching ideas, solidarity, actions and leadership in the field of memory work. We will engage both dimensions through the dialogue process. Individual support can take many forms, such as regular conversations, coaching sessions, strategic advice, and writing support. The intention is to accompany participants as they pursue their line of inquiry, address leadership dilemmas, and work on more substantive issues inherent in their memory work.

The professional and personal meet at the point of practice. What is a practice? If we were for a moment to give memory practice the same solidity as an artisan's or ponder it like the craftsmanship of a blacksmith, then what are our principles and prerogatives? What are ways of doing that have proven worth over time? Are there 'traditions' in the work of memory? What is evolving at present based on what has been learned? What does our 'forge' look like? How is it equipped? What are the daily disciplines and the special virtues that govern our doing and being, explicitly and implicitly? How do we hold each other to account? How do we pass on the knowledge of the craft? Participants are invited to explore these questions through the dialogue, at the same time sharpening their own lens and deepening their practice.

The personal professional practice will be a major focal point of the second and third dialogue. Jointly with the previous and newly made personal experiences it will form a core of inspiration for new and innovative practises. The Mandela Dialogues will be a success if these practices are brought into the world by numerous applications, firstly by participants and later by others to follow.

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