



# Our Stories

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**Handbook for Enabling  
Art-based Civic Dialogue  
among Youth**



The Asia Foundation

theertha

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## Foreword

‘The world is but a canvas to our imagination.’

- Henry David Thoreau

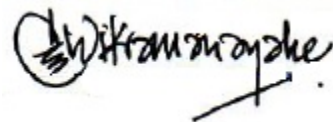
Through *Our Stories*, The Asia Foundation uses intergenerational dialogue and art as tools to foster inclusivity and a sense of belonging across communities and generations. Recognizing the presence of civic dialogue as a pre-condition for social cohesion, the Foundation focuses on fostering intergenerational dialogue through art and storytelling.

Storytelling is the most common means through which dialogue takes place, and through which knowledge and experience is transferred across generations. The wealth of knowledge and experience shared by elders through intergenerational dialogue are a vital resource for societal growth and are rich with lessons for both present and future generations.

Using art to visually interpret the stories of elder generations gives young artists an opportunity to fully comprehend and visually interpret the personal life stories of elders in a manner that could be conveyed to a wider audience. This art is a valuable reminder of past experiences, the present and a reminder of the past’s ability to shape the future.

The Asia Foundation hopes that this module will encourage individuals to explore their own life stories, as well as to engage in conversations that would contribute to creating a better society.

The Asia Foundation appreciates the cooperation extended by its partners, the Family Rehabilitation Centre and the Theertha International Artists’ Collective -especially, Prof. Godwin Constantine, Pradeep Chandrasiri, Koralegedera Pushpakumara, Bandu Manamperi, Thisath Thoradenia and Sivasubramaniam Kajendran- for their guidance and the mentoring support provided to professional and amateur artists engaged through the Our Stories initiative. Their valuable contribution to this initiative has opened a space for arts-based civic dialogue in Sri Lanka, which this module aims to contribute towards.



Dinesha deSilva Wikramanayake  
Country Representative

## **Message from Chairman, Theertha International Artists' Collective**

*Our Stories* is a unique project related to the memories of the war in which Theertha International Artists Collective partnered with The Asia Foundation. This project aimed at bringing together artists from different communities to share the life stories and experiences encountered by the older generation, in Sri Lanka, especially during its protracted war. Many of the participants who took part in this project would have been children at the time of the war. The intergenerational dialogue approach undertaken through this project provided the opportunity for the youth artists to learn about the experiences encountered by the older generation during the war and throughout their life in general, and to express these feelings through their respective artistic work.

This model of intergenerational exchange and multicultural interaction between artists from various communities is a good model to be replicated at different places, and at different levels. This exercise has the potential to contribute towards promoting further inclusivity in our country by bringing various communities and generations together in a shared space.

Thirty years of war has led to social disintegration in our country. This has resulted in a lack of trust among members of various communities, lack of respect for different cultures and segregation of communities through ethnic lines. This disintegration is not purely due to the war which only exacerbated existing disparities. In a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country such as Sri Lanka, any political system that thrives on divisions will promote disintegration. This has to be consciously avoided by a more inclusive political vision and political will, which are sadly lacking in our history.

Therefore, in this country the task of working towards social integration is left to civil society. "Our Stories" is a small step towards achieving this greater goal. People in the border villages and people who could not migrate on either side of the ethnic divide were the ones who were most severely affected by the war. It is this generation of people who have predominantly expressed their experience and struggle for existence through this project. These stories did not have journalistic twist or flavor to them, these were direct stories from people who directly experienced the war. This gave the opportunity for participants to understand the sufferings related to the war and life in general from first-hand experience. Most importantly, it enabled them to understand that human suffering did not differ depending on ethnicity, race, gender, or religion. Suffering is a concept common to all of us.

Sharing and understanding the pain and suffering that resulted from the war is important in building social consciousness. War affects us all, it does not spare anyone. The effects of war can be understood through direct interaction with people who experienced it and by way of expressions

in arts and literature. Arts and literature have the necessary metaphorical approach which transmits messages and feelings in a subtle but powerful way. Exploiting the power of art for social integration; while promoting peace and inclusivity is a novel method in the Sri Lankan context. In this respect, the Asia Foundation has taken a new approach in peacebuilding and social cohesion. This model now needs to be propagated and promoted at the national level.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Godwin Constantine', with a small mark below it.

Prof. Godwin Constantine  
Chairman

# Introduction

Our Stories is an initiative of The Asia Foundation that aims to promote social cohesion and intergenerational dialogue through the use of storytelling and arts.

The project uses real life stories of elders that were collected by the Family Rehabilitation Centre (FRC) in the districts of; Kalutara, Kurunegala, Ampara, Trincomalee, Mannar, and Vavuniya. Working with FRC ensured that necessary psychosocial sensitivity and support was provided to elders throughout the process during which they recounted their personal life stories. These stories were collected using the Guide to Accounts: Individual Narratives and Stories (GAINS) tool developed by the Foundation for practitioners, which ensured that stories were compiled in a psychosocially sensitive manner and that proper care was given to elders as they navigated through their past.

For artistic and technical guidance, the Foundation partnered with the Theertha International Artists' Collective to mentor selected artists through a series of interactive workshops and discussions, on transforming life stories into diverse forms of art; including painting, sculpture, poetry, short films, among others.

Through Our Stories, the Foundation aims to create a shared space among communities where elders are able to pass on their memories to young people, with the hope of creating a better society, one that is based on shared values, resilience, inclusivity, and social cohesion. For youth, this creates opportunities to learn from the past and identify key values and life lessons through which they could enrich their own lives, as well as the lives of others within their communities. For elders, it gives them an opportunity to feel socially included and provides them with a sense of belonging.



# Social Cohesion, Intergenerational Dialogue and Art

## *Social Cohesion*

Social cohesion is the state of a society's convergence, or the 'common bonds' that unify different people and groups that share space or territory<sup>1</sup>. It refers to the strength of relationships and the sense of solidarity among members of a community, thus, is an important determinant of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous nation.

Social cohesion is a very important driver of long-term prosperity and competitiveness. Cohesive societies are politically stable and focus on economic growth and development. It allows every person in the society to share its prosperity, while making competitiveness sustainable. In other words, social cohesion improves economic growth through preventing physical and human capital destruction, and building social capital, cooperation and trust between individuals of a society. The economic cost to be accrued by the absence of social cohesion is high, and Sri Lanka over its history has experienced the destruction caused by a growing lack of social cohesion.

The very discussion of social cohesion often implies its absence and, even more specifically, the decline of social cohesion which can also be termed as 'social erosion'<sup>2</sup>. It is a condition where fewer citizens, in a given nation-state, believing that they share a moral community that enables them to trust each other. In other words, this indicates that social cohesion is a non-material phenomenon to be observed in the cognitions of citizens.

In our day to day lives, we all need to interact with individuals that are known to us and others that are not. This presents us with the idea of interdependence which naturally raises the issue of trust. Trust between citizens is perceived to be a resource that enables societies to overcome the basic problems of collective action<sup>3</sup>; making trust-building, an important aspect of social cohesion. On the brighter side, if acted in good conscience, the increased interdependence found in more

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP Definition of Social Cohesion, see:

[https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SC2\\_Framework-copy.pdf](https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SC2_Framework-copy.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> 'Social erosion' is a term introduced by Prof. Christian Albrekt Larsen, Aalborg University, Denmark

<sup>3</sup> Axelrod, R., & Hamilton, W. D. (1981) and Rothstein, B. (2005)

differentiated societies could develop into a new kind of ‘organic solidarity’<sup>4</sup> among the society we live in.

UNDP conceptualizes social cohesion along two dimensions: *vertical social cohesion*, which concerns relations between citizens and their governments, and *horizontal social cohesion*, which concerns relations between citizens and within and between groups of society<sup>5</sup>.

Among the two, let us pay closer attention to horizontal social cohesion in this section. Horizontal, or society-centered social cohesion, describes the sense of trust, relationships and interactions among citizens across different identities or other social constructs, and in the way that civil society exhibits a sense of interdependency and ‘common destiny’. These horizontal relationships include;

- *Bonding social capital* – the trust and attachment within groups with shared commonalities,
- *Bridging social capital* – the relationships and networks that extend across groups and societal divisions, and
- *Linking social capital* – the cooperation across societal organizations, institutions, and leaders, such as inter-faith/religious organizations.

As per the above, horizontal social cohesion takes an inside-out approach, starting from within and extending it to the outer society. Such approach can contribute to create self-knowledge and can ensure fundamental changes within individuals which inevitably have a positive ripple-effect on society.

### ***Civic Dialogue***

An important aspect for any society aiming at social cohesion is to exercise dialogue among its citizens. Civic dialogue specifically refers to dialogue about civic issues, policies, or decisions of consequence to people’s lives, communities, and society. Meaningful civic dialogue is intentional and purposeful. It seeks insights and empathy in divided places through actively understanding differences and fostering dialogue between both, the most affected and the most connected, on matters of consequence to their lives. Civic dialogue addresses matters of civic importance, and

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<sup>4</sup> The concept of ‘organic solidarity’ was introduced by the French sociologist, Émile Durkheim (1858-1917)

<sup>5</sup> Strengthening Social Cohesion: Conceptual Framing and Programming Implications, UNDP (2020)

provides the opportunity to heal from a conflict, to make changes that will avoid further divides, and/or to prepare how to live differently for the future.

Moreover, civic dialogue can help identify people with similar stories and experiences, to explore commonalities within the community, as well as to explicitly identify and respect the fundamental differences in the community by making them more plainly visible and understandable. This is an important component for multiculturalism and pluralism, where differences are respected as much as commonalities, and unity in diversity is achieved. Civic dialogue can also be a connector between the past, present and future, by linking communities and perspectives across generations. Thus, it provides the communities a platform to understand issues in retrospect and in prospective – which can pave the way for social cohesion.

### *Intergenerational Dialogue*

As explored earlier, civic dialogue may act as a connector between the past, present and future. If the past is represented by elder generations, and the future is represented by younger generations, what connects their experiences in the present is known as ‘intergenerational dialogue’.

Any society stands on the shoulders of the many men, women and others, who have built that society into what it is today. Elders have been the gatekeepers of First Nations’ wisdom, knowledge, and history. They impart tradition, knowledge, culture, values, and lessons using orality and role modeling traditional practices. Elders are the carriers and emblems of communally generated and mediated knowledge.

On the other hand, youth are the future of the society. Younger generations renew, refresh and maintain the society through their leadership, innovations, skills, and exposure to globalization. Youth are expected to shape their communities by advancing the current technology, education, politics, development and peace of the society. Meanwhile, they are also expected to maintain the cultural and societal values that define their communities and their country. This is all the more relevant in South East Asian countries such as Sri Lanka.

Intergenerational dialogue is essentially ‘a conversation’ across generations that seeks to combine various viewpoints across ages. It is a necessary tool to promote experience sharing between the

younger and elder generations. Thus, intergenerational dialogue is a two-way stream which can benefit both elders and youth, among whom these stories are shared.

Ageing is often viewed as a 'burden' on the economy or society, and it is rarely celebrated, thereby making elderly people a vulnerable segment of the society. Escalation of ageism, including age discrimination and stigmatization of elderly persons, aggravates their vulnerabilities. In addition to such challenges, restrictions brought upon by the pandemic further marginalized groups, such as elders, who most often, may not have access to internet-based interactions and provisions. It is important to then consider the toll this could potentially take on the mental wellbeing of such individuals. By ensuring that the severity of the issues and discrimination faced by the elderly are understood by youth, a combined effort to mitigate these obstacles can be enacted. Moreover, for elders, intergenerational dialogue can give them an opportunity to feel socially included and provide them with a sense of belonging. It can also encourage lifelong learning among elderly people, especially retirees, by providing them the opportunity to learn from youth. That is, learning in later life can be enabled where senior generations can profit from young people's knowledge and skills, as well as from their energy and dynamic force.

Within every society, elders are hosts to a vast reserve of knowledge and experiences that youth may constantly learn and grow from. As such, their stories can lead us to find more inclusive solutions to some of society's biggest challenges. For youth, intergenerational dialogue creates opportunities to learn from the past and identify key values and life lessons through which they could enrich their own lives. Moreover, integration of youth into the society can also be achieved by passing down the knowledge and experience of elders to the younger generations.

As described above, intergenerational dialogue plays a significant role by building bridges between generations. It builds collective intelligence by exchange of knowledge and skills, and mutual assistance, where shared spaces among generations can help build more inclusive, peaceful and emphatic societies which are crucial in a post-war context such as Sri Lanka. Furthermore, intergenerational dialogue enables citizens to better target issues, raise awareness, find common ground, reach consensus and promote long-term solutions by considering intersectionalities such as; gender, age, ethnicity, religion, culture and economic background. It also brings together personal experiences across varying age groups to piece together viable trajectories for communal

growth. This can help reduce inhibitions and prejudice between groups and eventually promote respect and solidarity across generations and communities. In simpler terms, creating dialogue in turn, builds solidarity between generations, which in itself is social cohesion.

Further, interwoven into the fabric of the narratives brought about by intergenerational dialogue, we may find examples of resilience, strength, and positive ways to overcome even the harshest of realities, which may provide instances where conflicts were managed through non-violent means. Thus, intergenerational dialogue can facilitate the process of receiving memories of elders passed down through generations, through which young people will have a better understanding of the past, and therefore be better equipped to shape an inclusive future.

### ***Storytelling***

Intergenerational dialogue can take many forms, in which storytelling is the most common and most popular form. Storytelling is a fundamental part of being human. Stories let us share information in a way that creates an emotional connection while making information memorable. Storytelling is an interactive art to reveal elements of a story while simulating the listener's imagination. It creates a participatory and immersive experience that brings learning alive in an entertaining way.

Storytelling was used traditionally to share and transfer knowledge, information, ideas, wisdom, etc. It has the power to connect us, to help us make sense of the world, and to communicate our values and beliefs. A good story makes us reflect and feel and speaks to us in ways that numbers and data cannot. Storytelling also has several other underlying benefits like constructing internal narratives, increasing cultural understanding, and improving social skills.

### ***Storytelling as Intergenerational Dialogue***

Storytelling is especially important for youth as their worldviews are shaped, among other things, by the stories they are exposed to. When they relate to a specific character or refuse to relate with others, and when they consider the challenges the said characters face; then only do they develop their awareness of other people, and seek to understand how other people can be different from them, and from each other. This encourages acceptance and empathy, as well as the realization and sensitivity about the fact that there are many ways to live, rather than just one norm to be

followed. This lays the foundation for pluralism, where diversity is recognized and respected, permitting the peaceful coexistence of different interests, convictions, beliefs, lifestyles and cultures.

The ongoing transformation of digital technologies and social media platforms has shifted human history to one based on information and computerization. This has made the youth of today to be heavily affected by social media; which creates a deeper generational gap than ever before. Senior generations, together with their lived past are becoming an increasingly distant and unrelatable generation for youth. The past contains both positives and negatives, and interpretations of history can be non-linear and multifaceted. Therefore, ensuring that youth understands that the same past can be interpreted in many ways is also essential for social cohesion. The same history can be lived, or interpreted, differently depending on which side of the spectrum we are. Hence, values become important here; values through which we can learn to understand our different viewpoints despite having a shared and common history.

This is where intergenerational dialogue could come in as foundational axes. Intergenerational dialogue in the form of storytelling can shine a light on stories and characters of the past, and factors that have shaped them. This may even bring about characters who have stretched the boundaries of expectations and restrictive roles, challenging the values, customs and laws of their time. It can further raise curiosity on building respectful and equal relationships instead of resorting to violence. Through these stories, we can ask ourselves: What are we learning from this story? How would we feel, and what would we do differently, if we were in the position of each of the characters? We could let these stories stimulate our curiosity and hope, so that we enter into new conversations where we can learn from, and with, one another.

### ***Role of the Art in Storytelling***

Storytelling in itself is an art.

Art tells stories, stories of people, times, places, and emotions. Art is the urge that underpins our human need to communicate with others within our social range. Each piece of art is created for a reason; to share a feeling, to depict a memory or to explore an idea – and this is what makes art universally accepted. Art appeals to all people on some level and it leaves its mark; unconsciously

affecting us on a very personal level by speaking to our mind and inner hearts. Art is the universal language that speaks to all people and is able to evoke emotions, ideas and thoughts. Works of art are valued by generations of past, present and future, making art, timeless.

However, the power of storytelling, like any other form of art, is not always direct and immediately visible, and it does not affect people in the same way. It certainly does not have the same power or effect as political, legal, or economic decisions, but in the long term it remains influential since it reflects, and potentially transforms, value systems on which societies are based.

Nonetheless, in creating art, consciously or not, artists are attempting to communicate at a powerful emotional level. Art is a tool used to document our history by showing us where we were, how we live today, and where we can be in the future. Considering civic dialogue, art is a powerful facilitator for positive dialogue and engagement. It can help us understand something about ourselves and others, and this is especially significant when learning about different cultures and other perspectives. Art can transcend all barriers and speak directly to our common humanity; and this is why art serves so superbly as a universal language — as a means toward understanding the history, culture and values of other people.

Living in multicultural societies such as Sri Lanka, requires a high level of understanding, tolerance and respect towards those from other cultures. In this context, one of the best ways to inculcate such values is through arts. Art is a powerful, pervasive force that helps to shape attitude, beliefs, values, and behaviors<sup>6</sup>. In line with this, understanding multiculturalism through art can help bringing solidarity among diverse groups of society.

Art in multicultural society, can promote cultural awareness, equal opportunity for learning, promoting self-identity, as well as encouraging unity through diversity. In culturally diverse societies, multi-forms of art like music, fine art, drama, poetry, are used as ways of understanding and communicating identities, cultures, values and heritage. Further, by engaging in such art practices, it is hoped that artists can dismantle dominant stereotypical ideas, challenge prejudices, reduce systematic biases and discrimination, change attitudes, promote group identity, and create

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<sup>6</sup> David Chalmers, 1996

understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds by fostering understanding, respect, tolerance and an increased appreciation of ones' own culture, as well as that of others.

Communities in which people socialize with and trust each other have higher livability scores, than communities with lower social trust – and art is a driver in building that trust. The role of the arts in civic processes manifests in many different directions but focuses on the power of the art to bridge gaps in understanding, to offer new and innovative ways of thinking about challenges, and to catalyze positive change. Arts provide a focal point for dialogue, spark individuals to action, and reduce barriers to participation – meaning, art is a powerful facilitator for civic dialogue and engagement.

A multicultural society is comprised of communities which are practicing their own language, religion, traditional values, economical and societal norms, and lifestyles which were passed down from generation to generation. In such cases, tackling ignorance through acceptance, tolerance, and open-mindedness are the core values that make those societies thrive. If people feel accepted and valued, they have an intrinsic motivation to contribute to the society that embraces them and affords them the quality of life they seek.

Further, living in a multicultural society means having direct contact with people with different customs, ideas, and lifestyles. This condition is ideal for creativity and innovation. In such society, we are always exposed to new ways of perceiving and doing things. A mix of perspectives, talents, skills, and ideas fosters innovation and makes space for outside-the-box mindsets. That is, differences in values, opinions, and lifestyles can serve as inspiration for self-growth rather than being a source of conflict. For artists in particular, living in a multicultural society can thus be an enriching experience.

### ***Reflection and Creative Expression***

Art can contribute to building an inclusive, connected, compassionate and equitable society by provoking thought, evoking feelings, and inspiring change on issues of social justice. To do that, the artist has to be exposed to conflicting viewpoints, foregrounding aspects that stray away from traditional social norms, and dive into uncomfortable and maybe even painful topics.



Society values products and outcomes, but often ignores how to get there. But artists grasp the value of the process, which comes from the research, planning, and execution of a piece of work. An understanding of the process not only allows for growth and learning but also for a more authentic presentation of their work and themselves. It is how artists can push boundaries and move beyond the simple reproduction of an object and move into the creation of new works of art – by realizing the process of change is as important as the change itself that one aspires to bring in.

In that process reflection plays a vital role in transforming imagination into a creative expression. The development of an iterative process that looks at where one has been, where one is, and where one wants to go, holds immense value.

### ***Reflection and the Artist***

For artists, creating art can be a joyful and learning-filled process, but to fully comprehend the purpose and relevance of the experience and to build capacity with the skills and their application, artists require time and guidance to reflect on each moment throughout the experience. Learning from direct experience can be more effective if coupled with reflection – that is, the intentional attempt to synthesize, abstract, and articulate the key lessons taught by experience. In simpler terms, reflecting is learning.

Reflecting on what has been learned makes an experience more productive. While artists may achieve satisfying success when participating in a learning experience, it is reflection that helps them not only put their learning into perspective, but also become more cognizant of the new skills and knowledge they have gained and how to apply them to future experiences.

The role of reflection is a powerful mechanism behind learning. Constant reflection upon a meaning can include questions as straightforward as, “What did I learn?”, but so much more is possible as reflection can include<sup>7</sup>;

- Articulating reactions to and about an experience,
- Rethinking initial ideas or opinions considering new information,

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Arts Integration Framework

- Identifying how revisions improved one's work,
- Observing and responding to the work of others,
- Listening to, building on and connecting to the work and ideas of collaborators, and
- Making connections between the arts and other subject areas such as history or even culture.

Through regular and purposeful reflection, artists increase comprehension, build, and extend their skills and most importantly, artists develop their own capacity as learners. Reflection also contributes to self-efficacy – one's confidence in the ability to achieve a goal. With self-efficacy, even if artists encounter obstacles or struggle over a particular task, their confidence in their own ability encourages them to work through the issue, knowing they will ultimately benefit.

Reflection starts with questions that encourage dialogue within oneself, extending it to the dialogue with the outer world. Open-ended questions that contribute to new insights or ideas, which often begin with 'how' or 'why', generally prove to be most productive and beneficial and can lead to new, possibly more in-depth questions. There are many ways to conduct a reflection moment, from self-reflection to groups discussing and sharing out answers in-depth.

Reflection can encourage more than immediate answers. At the beginning of a learning experience, reflection might inspire wonder and curiosity. However, sometimes reflection questions do not always need or benefit from immediate answers and can focus artists on the greater purpose of the coming learning experience or provoke thoughts.

In arts-based civic dialogue, the creative process and resulting artwork and experience can provide a key focus, catalyst, or space for civic participation, whether it is becoming better informed or actively contributing to the improvement of one's neighborhood, community, and nation. It encompasses a range of outcomes, including healing, increased awareness, attitudinal change, more diverse and increased civic participation, movement building, and policy change to name just a few – pausing to reflect helps to guide this journey towards its desired outcome.

# About the Module

The module is created to assist artists to boost their creative genes with interactive experiential learning and reflective activities. As we all know our creative genes, which we all possess, are triggered by stories that we have seen or by stories we have experienced ourselves. We also know that sometimes there are many stories that are well hidden, maybe because they seem insignificant or maybe because they are too personal to share. But the important fact is that every story has its significance and has its interpretation which has the potential to change an entire civilization, positively or negatively. The sensitivity around interpretation of each story is so powerful, where misinterpretations could even sometimes lead to [complete] societal destruction.

This module is a collection of activities that will explore the stories that we have within ourselves, as individuals and as a collective; stories that are based on our feelings, experiences, situations, thoughts, awareness, and knowledge. The module also helps us to connect with others interactively and effectively. It aims to help us explore and observe stories of another person that he/she/they is willing to share with us. This creative process provides us the foundation to create *our* stories that are brightened up with a fusion effect to make it belong to all of us.

## Objective

There is no handy roadmap, shortcut or simple prescription to promote social cohesion. We – each individual in the society – must discover our route to inclusivity as it cannot be imposed from outside, nor can someone else's map get us to our destination. We must draw our own pathway through this journey. This can only be achieved by learning from both our individual and collective pasts, by sensitively engaging with the past and by developing a sense of responsibility towards future generations.

Social cohesion involves a very long and tedious process; addressing the pain, suffering and resilience of our own selves, exploring and understanding the connectors and dividers of the society, bringing together estranged individuals, trying to find a path to compassion, justice, truth, tolerance, inclusivity and, ultimately, peace.

We have to travel a long way down the road of social cohesion. It is a long-term process, and it involves everyday efforts. Art can give us a good start in that regard. Art helps us to build a shared present and future from a divided past – what better alternative way to social cohesion and lasting peace?

Therefore, this module aims to facilitate the reflective process of achieving social cohesion, intergenerational dialogue and community resiliency through arts.

## **Target Audience**

This module is for those who are engaged or interested in arts-based civic dialogue. This would include artists, professionals, amateurs, academics, CSO practitioners and policymakers. In that regard, this module is meant to be used as a participant’s handbook.

## **Module Design**

The framework of the module focuses on social cohesion in three distinct, yet interconnected levels; starting from within oneself, extending it to their relationships with one another, and society as a whole. The user of the module must be comfortable using these activities to explore deep conversations within oneself and others around oneself, as the activities take an inside-out approach.

### **Level 1: Me**

This level attempts to explore our identities, beliefs, perceptions, behaviors and attitudes. There are many conflicts that we have within ourselves which we fail to address, and which has a greater impact on how we form relationships with others in the society. Thereby, this level provides us the space to execute self-exploration and to develop a deeper understanding about our individual self.

### **Level 2: Me-You**

At this level, we explore dialogue between two individuals. Here, we acknowledge the primary level of difference, and try to understand how to build a forum to understand different perspectives on a personal level. As such, this level provides us with the opportunity to understand the

connectors and the dividers that exist between each individual, while realizing the process of building a common ground.

### **Level 3: Me-You-Others**

At this level we explore the concept of community and the complexities that a community brings in. This allows us to explore multiple perceptions and multiple realities which fosters a deeper sense of awareness. Community behavior, culture, and identity is explored at this level to understand why we belong to a community and why we choose community living over individualism.



In each level, the module design is based on four major components: reflection, reminiscence, imagination, and experiential learning. Each component can be used as a significant tool to explore different perspectives, different realities and different truths that ultimately contribute to the conversations we can have to establish a common ground and mutual understanding.

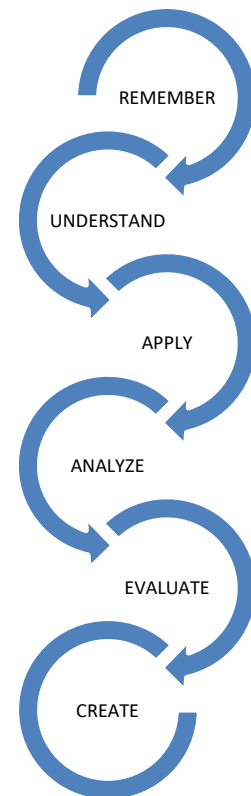
#### **1. Reflection**

Reflection helps us to deeply understand our innermost thoughts, feelings, and personal truths. The process of reflection provides us the opportunity to explore and explain events – not limiting to a

description. Reflection also involves revealing anxieties, errors, and weaknesses, as well as strengths and successes in our lives.

**Levels of Reflections:** An artist may choose to use different levels of reflections in their lives and in their creative expressions. They may thus choose one or all levels of reflections.

- **REMEMBER** – Recognizing and recalling facts: What was revealed? What did I accomplish?
- **UNDERSTAND** – Understanding what the facts mean: What is important about what I found out? What is important about what I did?
- **APPLY** – Applying the facts, rules, concepts, and ideas: Where could I use this? How could I use this?
- **ANALYZE** – Breaking down information into components: Are there patterns in my behavior? How can my creations benefit from this?
- **EVALUATE** – Judging the value of information or ideas: How can I use this in my future work? Is it relevant? Is it beneficial?
- **CREATE** – Combining parts to make a new whole: How do I put these together? What can I create?



*Source: Adapted from Teaching Innovation and Pedagogical Support, University of Arkansas (tips.uark.edu)*

2. **Reminiscence** - This is the process through which we recall past experiences, events, situations, and people in our lives. Sometimes our memories have a deep impact on us, so much so that it may explain some of the root-causes for our prejudices and strong perceptions. However, these memories can also bring us great joys and blissful calmness. Thereby with this process we aim to explore the deepest memories that lie within us in order to convert it to creative expressions.

3. **Imagination** - Imagination provides us the space to understand and explore different realities, while acknowledging that alternative and parallel truths may exist. The process will give us the ability to deeply understand another individual forming firmer and meaningful relationships, all the while contributing to a connected society.
  
4. **Experiential Learning** - This is simply based on learning from experience. Through each activity the participant is exposed to an experience and thereafter, has the opportunity to reflect on the experience that he/she/they is guided through (by the reflection questions) to relate it to everyday life and to understand how this experience relates to real life by drawing from some learning conclusions. What is important to highlight is that this methodology is open-ended, rather than offering a definitive answer. It aims to challenge participants to draw their own conclusions.

# Level 1: Me

## Introduction

Developing self-awareness is a major step in laying the foundation to grow in your creative life and to create the life you desire. Your choice of focus, attention, emotions, behaviors, and your personality will determine where you go in life. Being aware of yourself in the present moment is important as an artist to create an inside-out expression through your creations.

Self-reflection is at the core of self-awareness. Engaging in introspection allows you to objectively, and neutrally, reflect on your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors and recognize how they align with your morals and values. You should be able to take a deep, deliberate, and curious approach, coupled with patience to look at yourself through this practice and come out on the other side with a comprehensive understanding of your thought processes, needs, and tendencies.

Self-reflection is the process of bringing your attention to what is happening in your life in an open-minded way. So many of us focus on getting ahead, that we do not necessarily take time to reflect on what is going on right now within us. Self-reflection is all about creating self-awareness. There are many ways to practice self-reflection, and all of them allow you to process your thoughts, internal dialogues, and feelings. Self-reflection is one of the most efficient ways through which an artist can discover a greater connection to oneself.



## Activity 1.1. Inner Child

<b>Objective:</b>	The objective of this activity is to reach your innermost child in terms of emotions and experiences. This will allow you to understand emotions and experiences that have shaped you, while acknowledging them, rather than shutting them down. Further, this activity will help you understand triggers and influencers that simulate your emotions and creative expressions.
<b>Directions:</b>	<p>You are encouraged to read all of the below steps first, so that you can proceed without looking back at them as you read through.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Curl up like a baby or lie on your stomach or back-find the best position that suits you.</li><li>2. Shift from thinking in your head to feeling emotionally from your body, as a baby does. It will be useful if you can breathe for a full three minutes very consciously from the center of your body, your stomach.</li><li>3. After a few deep breaths, imagine yourself as an infant. You may think that you cannot remember this period of your life, but your body will. Start with an image from your childhood. Or begin with your earliest conscious memory, even if it was from a little later in your childhood.</li></ol>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● What did you grow up around? What were the special events in your childhood? Where were the places you lived?</li><li>● What was your parents' attitude towards your childhood? Did they want you to keep or lose your sensitivity? Did they think of it as an inconvenience, as shyness, unmanliness, cowardice, cute, a sign of artistic ability?</li><li>● What were your relatives' and teachers' responses about your sensitivity? Did they encourage you to explore your sensitivity further? Were they unhappy about the signs of your sensitivity and/or were usually poor at dealing with it?</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Think about the media you were exposed to as a child. Who were your role models and idols?</li> <li>● What was your greatest fear as a child?</li> <li>● When were you at your happiest as a child?</li> <li>● What were you curious about as a child?</li> <li>● What actions or behaviors of yours were admired/ rewarded in your childhood?</li> <li>● What actions or behaviors of yours were punished/ restricted in your childhood?</li> </ul>
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### **Activity 1.2. Inspire Me**

<b><i>Objective:</i></b>	This activity provides us the space to comprehend our identity in connection to the arts and role models that inspire us. In its process the activity will unravel different identities that overlap with each other, ultimately creating the individual that we are today.
<b><i>Directions:</i></b>	<p>As individuals there are many creative expressions (e.g., songs, books, paintings, photos, sculptures, movies) that have moved us and have had a deep impact on us. Sometimes these creative expressions make us aware about the realities of the environment we live in and our own lives. We connect to those creative expressions to recollect our memories about a certain incident that changed our lives. Sometimes it even reminds us about people whom we have an emotional connection with.</p> <p>Further, there are so many people in our lives that have inspired us over the years shaping the person that we are today. Sometimes, we learn from that inspiration. Sometimes, we overcome our struggle through that inspiration. However, we</p>

also know many of these people will not even know the impact they have created in our lives.

This activity helps you identify artists and creative expressions that have inspired you over the years in both great and subtle ways.

**Option 1:**

1. Identify a list of creative expressions, such as songs, books, paintings, photos, sculptures, movies, etc. that represent your experience, growth, and inspiration as an artist.
2. Choose one or few prominent creative expressions you believe have had a great impact on you as an artist or as an individual.
3. Keep the list at the center and develop a piece around it, depicting the impact it had had on you.

**Option 2:**

1. List down the teachers, mentors, celebrities, or any role model who have inspired you over the first 5 years of your life, leaving a remarkable impact on you.
2. Now, continue the same process for the 6-10 years of your life.
3. Likewise, continue the list in groups of 5 years until you reach your current age.
4. Choose one mentor (or more if you wish) from the list based on your own criteria – and write down/ think about why you chose that person as a mentor.
5. Either write a letter to that person, personalizing your experience and the impact they have created in your life, and/or show your gratitude and appreciation using your own creative expression.

	<p>6. <i>Optional Step</i> - If the people you have identified as inspirations can be reached out personally, then you may choose to hand over your letter/creative expression to them as an expression of gratitude.</p>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<p><b>Option 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Think about creative expressions that brought meaning to your life. Why do you consider these important?</li> <li>● How do you feel when you read the book, listen to the song, and watch the movie that you selected above?</li> <li>● How did it change your perspective about life? How did it change the relationship you had with other individuals?</li> </ul> <p><b>Option 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Look at the list of teachers, mentors, celebrities, and role models who have inspired you over the years.</li> <li>● What are the qualities and characteristics that inspired you in them?</li> <li>● What are the qualities and characteristics that you wanted to adapt?</li> <li>● Reflect on the impact these people have created on you over the years.</li> <li>● Try to recall the feeling of inspiration and why it mattered to you.</li> <li>● Observe how your inspirations have evolved over the years.</li> </ul>

**Activity 1.3. Success Story**

<b>Objective:</b>	The objective of this activity is to explore the yardsticks one uses to measure success as an artist and as a person. These benchmarks for success or failure may seem objective but are closely related with and based on our values. Therefore, this activity aims to reveal and explore our truest and deepest values.
<b>Directions:</b>	1. Ask yourself, “When did I feel successful?”

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. If the above seems too difficult, you can ask yourself “Who do I consider as successful?”.</li> <li>3. Try to remember/ note down as many details as possible about that instance/ person – What was the scenario? What were the actions taken? What were the outcomes/ achievements? How was the success achieved? Who else was involved?</li> </ol>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Why do you feel you were successful in that instance? What gave you that feeling of success?</li> <li>● What qualities/ characteristics were projected by you in instances where you felt you were successful?</li> <li>● In your opinion, was that success achieved rightfully/deservingly/justly?</li> <li>● What were the values upon which the success was based on? (E.g., Honesty, Cooperation, Tolerance, etc.)</li> </ul>

### Activity 1.4. Regret Letter

<b>Objective:</b>	A feeling of self-empowerment can be gained from acknowledging your regrets and accepting your vulnerable younger self. Forgiving oneself is a step towards resolving your inner/ personal conflicts. It also helps us to no longer be judgmental of ourselves, which lays the foundation to be non-judgmental towards others.
<b>Directions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are many situations, incidents, conflicts which have happened in our lives that we wish we could have done differently.</li> <li>2. Write a letter to your younger self reflecting on these situations, incidents, and conflicts.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Address your younger self on the impact of that situation and on how you can change the said situation.</li> <li>4. Apologize for any mistakes that you may have made and opportunities that you let pass by.</li> <li>5. Remember to be honest, sincere, and most importantly non-judgmental during this exercise.</li> </ol>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Think about such situations, incidents, and conflicts that you may consider changing, if it did happen in this present situation.</li> <li>● Reflect on how these situations, incidents and conflicts make you feel.</li> <li>● What sort of impact did it have in your life?</li> <li>● Why would you have a different approach to it now?</li> </ul>

**Activity 1.5. Me-Tree**

<b>Objective:</b>	<p>The objective of this activity is to self-evaluate our values, opinions, and motivation towards solving different issues we care about. In this process we try to envision what issues we care about, what values we possess as an individual to bring in change to a deeply divided society, and what/ who supports us in addressing these issues.</p>
<b>Directions:</b>	<p>In this exercise we attempt to use the tree as a symbol to understand our deeply grounded roots, to resolve conflicts that we care about. Think deeply about a ‘tree’, such a common sight in our daily lives. Trees give us shade, food, oxygen, and the calming effect that we need when we seek its sanctuary.</p> <p>Draw a tree of your choice (Refer Annex I for a sample), and label the parts as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Roots - This indicates your values, attitudes, beliefs that influence you.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Branches &amp; Leaves - This indicates the different issues you care about, working towards and aspects you'd like to address/create through your art.</li> <li>● Bark - This depicts the places, experiences, memories, community, network, supporters, etc. that helps you to achieve your creations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflections:</b></p>	<p><b>Roots:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reflect on deep rooted values that you possess and think about why these values and beliefs are important to you.</li> <li>● Reflect on how you adopted these values? Are these values self-taught or were they influenced?</li> </ul> <p><b>Branches &amp; Leaves:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are issues that motivate you? Think about conflicts that you are passionate about and their root causes.</li> <li>● Think about what you can do as an individual to solve these issues? Think about interventions that can bring in small changes.</li> <li>● While you are reflecting on issues/ aspects you care about, think about how the process of bringing in change would make you feel?</li> </ul> <p><b>Bark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Think about everyone and everything that helps you to work up towards the issues/ aspects you have mentioned in the branches and leaves.</li> </ul> <p><b>General:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How did you feel doing this activity?</li> <li>● What was the easiest task and what was the hardest? Why?</li> <li>● As an artist, how important is it for you to address the conflicts you have identified?</li> <li>● How do your creative expressions aim to address the identified issues?</li> </ul>

# Level 2: Me-You

## Introduction

Me and you level, refers to discussions in which two people with different beliefs and perspectives learn and share from, and with, each other. This process focuses on co-learning and sharing, which makes discussion different from other forms of interactions such as debates or negotiations. Here, different ideas and beliefs are highly valued as the objective of the level is all about co-learning.

Multiple perspectives involve a fantastic foundation for learning; through which a greater collective wisdom can emerge. It is based on the principles of interaction and the belief that greater inclusion in the conversation not only contributes to learning but also builds mutual understanding. It helps develop our empathy towards another individual as we begin to see not only actions and words but the beliefs and motivations behind them. Through these conversations we attempt to explore our differences and to find our common ground, which is the base for social cohesion.

Discussion we make may simulate questions which have no conclusive answers. However, these conversations we build here will support us in developing and finding solutions in an inclusive process. Conversation we have here can be planned or even be spontaneous, structured, or unstructured, formal, or informal. The important thing is that we need to have genuine interest in each other's perspectives and to value each other's opinion.

It must be noted that there are many skills, attitudes and behaviors which can support this process of discussion, such as active listening and effective questioning skills. There are also useful methods and processes which can be used to organize conversations in a way that maximizes effective learning and sharing.



## Activity 2.1. Who are you?

<b>Objective:</b>	Exploring visible and hidden identities that you may not even have thought about when considering yourself. Understanding deeply the complexity of the term ‘identity’ and what you choose to associate yourself with.
<b>Directions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Find a partner for this activity - name one A and the other B.</li><li>2. Instruct A to keep asking person B “Who are you?” and person B has to reply with one word.</li><li>3. What will most probably happen is that they will first say obvious elements about themselves (name, age, gender, physical features, etc.), but then they will have to start sharing more personal things (naming things they like for instance).</li><li>4. After two minutes, persons A and B exchange roles. Two minutes look short, but you will see that you and your partner will struggle, so make sure that you and your partner keep asking questions and replying for two minutes.</li><li>5. Ensure that each person does not overthink and just replies with whatever comes first to their mind.</li></ol>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● How do you feel (in one word)?</li><li>● What happened?</li><li>● What did you share?</li><li>● What is difficult? Why?</li><li>● How is this similar to our daily life? How do others perceive us?</li><li>● How do we define/ present ourselves? You can reflect with your partner on how we might tend to first share the ‘visible’ or obvious about ourselves before going more into depth, and on the challenge of defining ourselves with just a series of words (without explaining).</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can also discuss if you and your partner learned anything unexpected about the person they had in front of them when it was their turn to ask questions and how it changed their perspective of the other.</li> </ul>
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## Activity 2.2. The Shoe Story

<b>Objective:</b>	A simple but potentially powerful activity that uses storytelling to support people to share some of who they are and the experiences they have had. This exercise is especially for people that may not know each other very well or may feel uncomfortable talking directly about their personal lives. This activity aims to understand what it means to be someone else – how identities form, are expressed, change, and are connected.
<b>Directions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find a partner and your own space in the room. Ideally, this should be a person you do not normally spend much time with. or do not know well.</li> <li>One person in the pair is to silently walk around for five minutes and their partner is to follow them and copy everything they do, including the details of how they walk; how they move their legs, how big their steps are and how they place their feet on the ground. They are to copy the way their partner moves their arms and hands when they walk, and they are to notice what their partner looks at and what he/ she hears.</li> <li>After five minutes stop and switch roles.</li> </ol>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it feel to be someone else (walk in another’s shoe)?</li> <li>Did you learn anything about your partner?</li> <li>Did anything surprise you about how they walked or behaved?</li> <li>Was it easy to be that person?</li> <li>What did we learn from the differences when the roles were switched?</li> <li>How did it feel when you were just leading?</li> <li>Does the story of ‘our shoes’ tell us anything about our communities, culture, or identity?</li> </ul>

### Activity 2.3. Inner Circle

<b>Objective:</b>	The objective of this activity is to understand the process of forming relationships – how it evolved to be meaningful in our life and how it resolved conflicts. The same process can be used in our lives to address conflicts that we cannot resolve or the conflicts that have gone out of hand.
<b>Directions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Write down the names of your closest friends.</li><li>2. Ideally, try to do this activity with a friend you have identified.</li><li>3. Answer the following questions with your partner about the beginning of each friendship:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Who took the initiative to talk?</li><li>○ Did the circumstances force you to talk?</li><li>○ Where were you? At school, university, work, an exhibition, on vacation, at a party?</li><li>○ What was the situation? Who introduced you? Or were you thrown together by chance? Or did one of you happen to speak to the other about something? What happened?</li><li>○ What was your first conversation about?</li><li>○ What were the first moments/hours/days of your friendship like?</li><li>○ When and how did you know this encounter would turn into a friendship?</li><li>○ What were the most difficult aspects of the friendship?</li><li>○ What were the events of significant disagreements/ arguments like? What was it about?</li><li>○ When in disagreements/ arguments how does it get resolved? Who initiates the conversation? Who searches for solutions and alternatives? Do you agree to disagree?</li><li>○ Were there any issues or conflicts that went unresolved?</li><li>○ Is it important for you to resolve issues/ conflicts between both of you? why?</li></ul></li></ol>

<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What did you both agree on?</li> <li>● Was it easy or difficult to have an open conversation about your existing relationship?</li> <li>● Were you open and honest about your feelings and your thoughts?</li> <li>● Is there anything you want to do, or is there anything you have newly learned about your relationship?</li> <li>● Is there anything that you forgot over the years? Or anything you significantly remember about your friendship?</li> </ul>
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### Activity 2.4. An Important Object

<b>Objective:</b>	This activity can be used to get participants thinking and to positively use the power of questions as a tool to unravel different perceptions and opinions.
<b>Directions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You will need to prepare by choosing an object which has a certain significance to you and which you are comfortable being questioned about.</li> <li>2. The aim of this activity is to stimulate deeper questioning from your partner, moving from simple questions such as; what is it? where is it from? what do you use it for? to questions such as, what does it mean to you? why have you bought it to show us? That will help reveal things about you. Some questions will ‘unlock’ deeper understanding.</li> <li>3. Place the object in the middle of each other.</li> <li>4. Encourage your partner to ask questions to try and learn as much as possible from this object.</li> <li>5. Only respond directly to the questions. Do not reveal any more information than is asked of you. Listen for good questions that reveal more and lead to deeper learning and insight.</li> </ol>

	<p>6. Hopefully, you will begin to share more personal stories and information through the questions.</p>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How did this activity make you both feel?</li> <li>● Which parts made you uncomfortable? Which parts made you comfortable?</li> <li>● How did your body feel when those emotions were triggered? (Refer Annex III for assistance)</li> <li>● How did you feel when the questions were personal?</li> <li>● How did it make you feel when you were sharing personal stories with your partner?</li> <li>● Was your partner receptive to your stories?</li> <li>● Reflect about what kind of questions were powerful and led to deeper learning?</li> <li>● Which were those questions? Why were they powerful?</li> </ul>

**Activity 2.5. Emotional Vocabulary**

<b>Objective:</b>	<p>Expanding the emotional vocabulary will help artists to articulate their creative expressions effectively. This activity will help artists to specifically identify their emotions which are required to be included in their own creative expressions.</p>
<b>Directions:</b>	<p>As humans we thrive on our emotions and we differentiate ourselves from animals by exerting these complex emotions. Unfortunately, sometimes we are unable to understand or distinguish complex feelings or emotions when we feel them. This activity will guide you to explore complex emotions of people and to be responsive to these emotions. Going beyond simply “good” or “bad”,</p>

	<p>artists should be better able to describe their emotions through this activity. Getting more specific to explain how one feels is cathartic for artists.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find a partner to do this activity.</li> <li>2. Select an image for discussion (Refer Annex II for options).</li> <li>3. Keep a voice recorder on before you start the activity.</li> <li>4. Without intense observation, say the first word that comes to your mind as an emotion when looking at the image. Make sure it is a single word, not a sentence.</li> <li>5. Request your partner to do the same.</li> <li>6. Take turns and describe the image in one word.</li> <li>7. Make sure not to repeat any words mentioned by yourself, or your partner.</li> <li>8. Continue to take turns until one of you runs out of words.</li> <li>9. Playback the audio and note down the list of emotions.</li> <li>10. Create a discussion to understand the emotions that were revealed.</li> </ol>
<p><b><i>Reflections:</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As an artist, discuss the importance of understanding complex emotions of oneself, and others, for you to formulate your creative expression.</li> <li>● How did you feel during the exercise?</li> <li>● Apart from your basic emotions such as happiness, sadness, or anger - what else did you discover during this exercise?</li> <li>● What did your partner reveal as emotions?</li> <li>● Was it difficult for you to understand such complex emotions?</li> </ul>

# Level 3: Me-You-Others

## Introduction

It is understood that an individual may belong to, or associate with, several communities. These communities tend to have a strong influence over the values, behaviors and actions of the individual. Thus, the concept of community is, also, often key to understanding the identity of an individual.

Some communities are formed naturally and are affected by changes in the environment while some communities are organized to recognize and protect their interests while influencing change. Communities that are organized are likely to have a strong code of conduct or culture; although culture is more commonly associated with group behavior, and community with group interests.

It is likely that an individual who belongs to a local community may at the same time be part of a global community of interest. Thus, a community can be comprehended in several ways, e.g., in terms of interests, in terms of power, as a protective system. The way in which a community is organized to protect its own interests can be seen as a system. Thereby, this protection of interests by communities may result in conflict that may lead to violent situations. This level helps us to explore the context of a community, and the need to work with multiple perspectives and multiple interpretations of history. The process will help us explore collective identity, culture, and beliefs on a deeper level to enhance our awareness while fostering mutual trust.

### Activity 3.1. My Story Board

<p><b>Objective:</b></p>	<p>This activity will provide the space to create a low-fidelity narrative that focuses on people and their actions, thoughts, goals, emotions, and relationships.</p>
<p><b>Directions:</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think about a significant incident that you consider as a conflict situation that changed your life, or a turning point. It can even be something insignificant. The important thing is to remember what happened, who was involved, and the outcome.</li> <li>2. Think of the flow of the incident - what happened first, then the flow of the events that followed.</li> <li>3. Try to remember the people, objects, and environment of the incident.</li> <li>4. Find a large paper and divide the paper into 6 - 8 cells.</li> <li>5. Draw the incident in 6 - 8 still images clearly identifying the details.</li> </ol> <p><b>Artists</b> - A great step to take for an artist is to storyboard first. If writing/typing the words is too much of a challenge, show what happens using images.</p> <p><b>Poets</b> - After sketching the storyboard you can describe each cell with a few lines of poetry reflecting on the emotions and the concentrated imaginative awareness of experience.</p>
<p><b>Reflections:</b></p>	<p>Take few minutes to explore the following,</p> <p><b>Identify characters</b>, if any. Give them names. What is their relationship? Try to remember physical characteristics, including age, clothing, appearance, and pose indicate anything to you?</p> <p><b>Identify settings</b>, if any. Where was this? When was this? How did the characters/objects get there? Why are the characters/objects there?</p> <p><b>Identify action</b>, if any. What happened? What was the conflict? What was the impact?</p>



	<p><b>Identify mood or emotional feel</b>, if any. Is the setting or situation happy, scary, sad, confusing, uncomfortable, funny, angry? What was normal in this situation, or what was abnormal? What emotions did you possess during this situation? How did others feel? Why did they feel that way? How did they react? How did you react?</p> <p><b>Identify items</b>, if any. What are the things you can identify? Why are they significant? What is missing? What are the items for?</p>
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### Activity 3.2. We Create

<p><b>Objective:</b></p>	<p>This activity provides the space to understand different perceptions in the creative space by being open to other creative ideas and thoughts in collaborative art.</p>
<p><b>Directions:</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find a group of 8-10 individuals who can take part to do this activity with you, where everyone should be encouraged to actively participate in the writing process.</li> <li>2. You may use pens and paper or digital tools such as Google Docs or even Facebook as a platform.</li> <li>3. Use the following prologue to set the tone for the activity;</li> </ol> <p><i>“The year 1999 shattered her, as she found out that her eldest son was believed to have been either captured by an unknown source or gone missing on his way to work. She searched for him in every nook and corner and gave details everywhere, but still could not find his whereabouts or, in a worst-case scenario, whether he is dead or alive. She had registered his details under the ‘missing persons’ category, with the relevant authorities. This had a major impact on her life. When her son went missing, her mother who was greatly aggrieved, became very sick and bed ridden and then passed away. She was further traumatized due to this. While she was suffering from great mental distress due to her missing</i></p>

	<p><i>son and being in sorrow after the loss of her beloved mother, her other sons were also taken away from her. She was now seriously contemplating how she could save and protect her children and was strongly determined that she would not sacrifice them in vain., neither to the armed forces nor to any militant group. With this in mind, she handed over all four of her children at the time to the monk of the ‘Attamma’ Buddhist Temple School where they could continue their studies.’</i><sup>8</sup></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. You may start to write lines exploring what would happen next, invite others to join you</li> <li>5. You can encourage everyone to contribute with their imaginative skills as no exceptional skills in writing is required for this activity.</li> <li>6. Keep writing, drawing, scribbling, for 60 minutes to complete the story.</li> <li>7. You may have different prologues to prompt different scenarios to produce different stories.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Reflections:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How did the process make you feel?</li> <li>● Was the character relatable to you?</li> <li>● How did the character make you feel?</li> <li>● How did your body respond to what was going on in your mind? (Refer Annex III for assistance)</li> <li>● How did you respond to the collective imaginative process?</li> <li>● How did others respond to your thoughts and contribution to the story?</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Extracted from real life stories collected from elders through the Our Stories project.

### Activity 3.3. Cinderella Effect

<b>Objective:</b>	Relative truths divide communities, and the strong sense of opinion that comes with it may be a hindrance for social cohesion. Therefore, this activity provides the space to understand relative truths to a given incident by being open to relative truths and understand different points of views.
<b>Directions:</b>	<p>1. Invite participants to listen attentively to the following story,</p> <p><i>“This is the story of a lady born in 1949. She is 70 years old now and is a mother of three. Her father passed away when she was just three months old, and thereafter her mother had to work tirelessly to bring her up. She passed her ordinary level exam and during this period she fell in love with a Tamil boy, but her mother disapproved of the affair due to the racial difference and got her married to someone else. However, her husband did not have a proper income and she had to sell food items to support the family.</i></p> <p><i>With time her husband fell ill with severe kidney disease, and during this period, she worked at a hospital as a cleaner and happened to meet her first boyfriend who is now a doctor transferred to the same hospital. He was single and he invited her to come with him, but she opposed the idea as she was the sole caregiver for her ailing husband. Upon learning of her decision, the doctor requested a transfer to another hospital.</i></p> <p><i>At present she lives with one of her grandchildren selling food items to make ends meet. She leads a very troublesome life and says that she cannot help but wonder how her life would have turned out had she been able to be with her first boyfriend from the beginning.”<sup>9</sup></i></p>

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<sup>9</sup> Extracted from real life stories collected from elders through the Our Stories project.

	<p>2. -You will be required to have 10-12 other individuals to implement this activity. Invite them to create smaller groups and inform each group that they have to rewrite the story from a different perspective.</p> <p>3. You may re-read the story if necessary one more time and then invite other groups to pick one character per group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mother</li> <li>○ First boyfriend</li> <li>○ Sick husband</li> <li>○ Grandchild</li> </ul> <p>4. -You may take 30 minutes to re-write the story. After 30 minutes, invite other groups to read their stories to the larger group.</p>
<p><b><i>Reflections:</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How did you feel when re-writing the story?</li> <li>● How different is the new story?</li> <li>● How difficult was it to create a new narrative?</li> <li>● How important is to have alternative narratives?</li> <li>● How important is it to explore the invisible narratives?</li> <li>● Did their perceptions of the original version change after the new narrations were developed?</li> <li>● How can they relate this to their life/ own experiences?</li> <li>● You may want to have the group reflecting on the concept of empathy and of different truths/ versions in all stories.</li> </ul>

### Activity 3.4. Free Write

<b>Objective:</b>	This activity provides the space to explore thoughts, feelings and ideas that deeply influence social cohesion. The safe space may also provide an opportunity to explore multiple opinions that fosters mutual trust and understanding.
<b>Directions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. You will be required to have pens and paper to write, draw and scribble.</li><li>2. Use the following words – in 3 minutes intervals after each word for everyone to execute a creative expression. You may write, draw, scribble anything that comes to mind when the following words are announced,<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Peace</li><li>○ Tolerance</li><li>○ Conflict</li><li>○ Gender based violence</li><li>○ Equality</li><li>○ Freedom of expression</li><li>○ Trauma</li><li>○ Discrimination</li><li>○ Betrayal</li><li>○ Mutual trust</li></ul></li><li>3. You may explore and see where their stream of consciousness wanders.</li><li>4. Share each expression with the larger group.</li></ol>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● How did the exercise make you feel?</li><li>● Did you manage to write, draw, scribble for all word prompts?</li><li>● Was the process easy for you? Was it difficult?</li><li>● How did you feel when the expressions were shared?</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel when there were different perceptions on a single word?</li> <li>• Did you change your perception after listening to others? If so, why?</li> <li>• How can this process contribute to your creative expression?</li> </ul>
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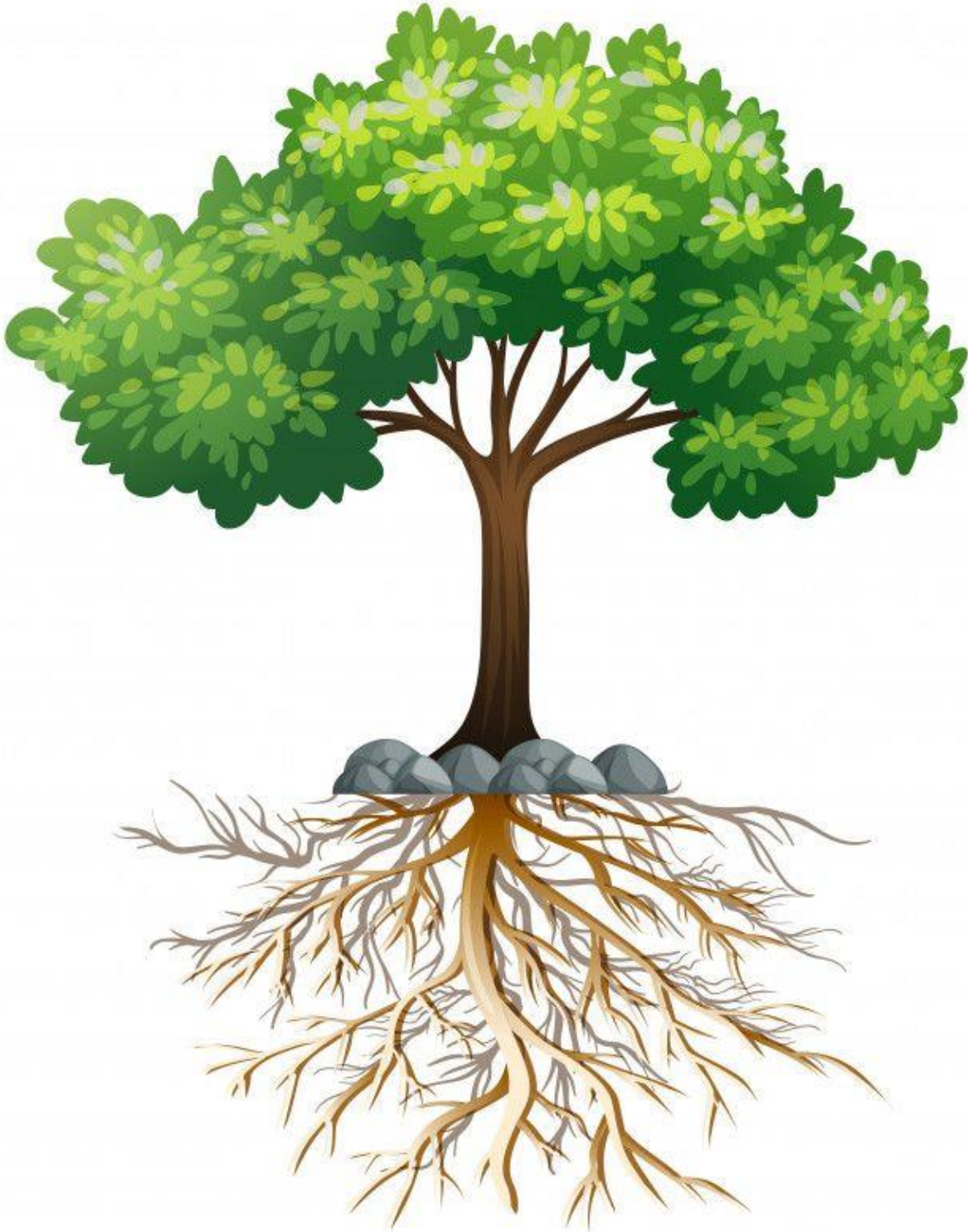
### Activity 3.5. Four Square

<b>Objective:</b>	This activity aims to explore the root-causes for identified issues. This will also provide a space to explore multiple realities that exist in our society
<b>Directions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite a group of 10-12 individuals to do this activity with you.</li> <li>2. Find a room and mark each corner of the room as “Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree” while leaving the middle of the room to be neutral.</li> <li>3. –Refer to the following statement: <i>“Sri Lanka should be a secular country.”</i></li> <li>4. You may find a corner that best represents your opinion and invite others to do the same. Use this to begin a conversation about different perspectives.</li> <li>5. Express your opinion and encourage others who possess different opinions of the subject to do the same.</li> <li>6. You may change your position at any point you feel convinced, and encourage others to do the same.</li> <li>7. You may use other statements of your choice that may trigger different perspectives on other subjects</li> </ol>
<b>Reflections:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you feel after the activity?</li> <li>• Did anyone manage to convince you with their own opinions?</li> <li>• Did you change your perception on the issue?</li> <li>• Do you think it is important to have different perceptions?</li> </ul>

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|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can you bring different perceptions to your creative process?</li></ul> |
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# Annexure

## Annex I: Art for Interpretation





## Annex II: Art for Interpretation



Pablo Picasso, Guernica, 1937



Käthe Kollwitz, War series, 1923



Francisco Goya, Third of May, 1808, 1814



Roy Lichtenstein, Whaam!, 1963



The Mural, Laila Aznar



Devika Bilimoria



Devika Bilimoria



Anthony Rodriguez



Judit Klein



Konrad Lembecke



Tuncay



Thomas Leuthard

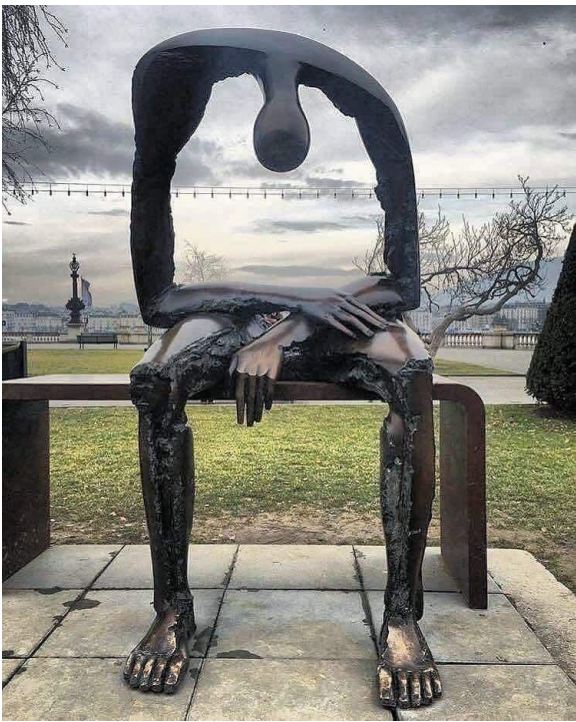




Konrad Lembcke



Jon - Southcoasting

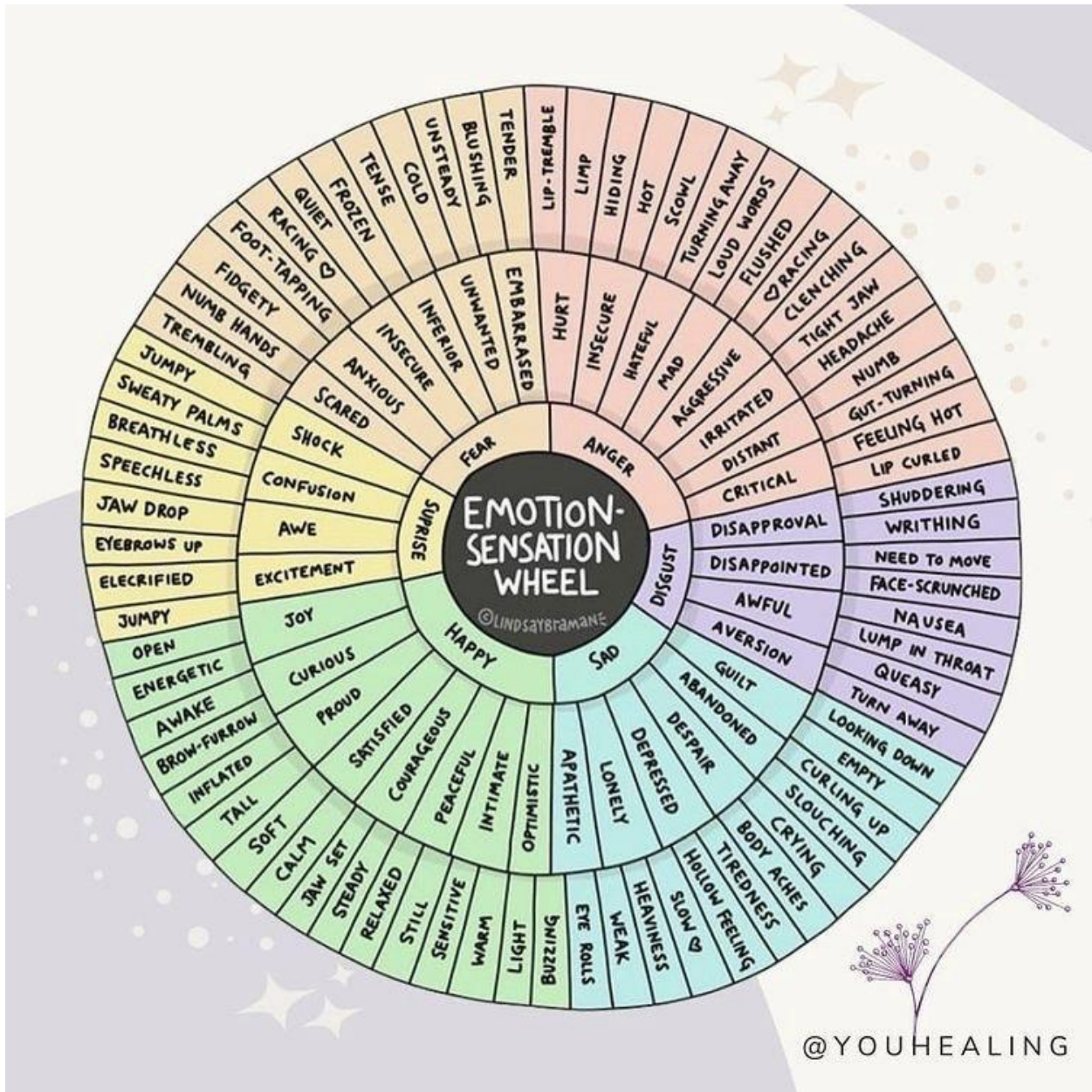


Melancholy, Albert György, Geneva



Big Jihad, Abdul-Rahman Abdullah, Islamic Museum of Australia

## Annex III: Mind-Body Connection



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Source: You!Healing