

TIMELINE ACTIVITY

Timelines are excellent tools for organizing and visualizing historical events over time. They help situate events and individuals in relation to each other. A timeline can be used with a community group or in a classroom.

Tool box:
Pens, small coloured square cards, pins, cardboard panels.

OBJECTIVES

- » To create a visual record of chronological historical details.
- » To reflect on how trends, ideologies, or themes in history develop over time.
- » To promote critical thinking about the construction of history and how that history is not about one past but about multiple pasts.
- » To make history personal by exploring our own connections to historical events.
- » To encourage community building or intergenerational exchange by bringing together collective experiences of a historic event. In other words, to explore a group's collective memory.

MAKE A TIMELINE

- » Divide your participants into working groups and assign a place and a historical time period.
- » Determine the range of time you plan to cover on the timeline, and then divide this into units of measurement or periods. For example, in a community timeline created about the Rwandan genocide, they focused on the following:
 - 1950-1970 (emphasis on 1959, 1st wave of violence)
 - 1970-1990 (emphasis on 1973, 2nd wave of violence)
 - 1990-2010 (emphasis on 1994, the Genocide of Tutsis)
- » Ask participants to fill out a card/s with a memory or a significant event.
- » Have them include the year, month, and day in which the event took place.
- » Explain that they can include their names, initials, or remain anonymous.
- » Have participants pin their memory or event card/s in the appropriate time period.
- » Facilitate a group discussion. Explore new insights regarding the collective events of the timeline.

Exercise adapted from the Rwanda Life Stories working group.