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Debate: Documentation of violence [deepening activity]

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This is a deepening **discussion activity** to facilitate discussion around using mobiles to document violence and how this relates to perpetuating violence. This exercise can be used to discuss case studies specifically of activist media aimed at reducing violence to ways in which the same channels and media have been used to perpetuate violence.

Participants will share examples of how they are using mobiles to document violence and will engage in debates around the impacts of sharing documentation of violence online.

Learning objectives this activity responds to

- an understanding of mobile communication safety from the perspective that mobile phones are our tools for both personal, private and public, movement communications.

Who is this activity for?

Groups who are currently or considering using mobiles to document violence.

Time required

This activity will require about **60 minutes.**

Resources needed for this activity

- Printed or linked case studies

Mechanics

In plenary - 10 minutes

Ask participants to share ways they are using mobile phones to document violence.

> **Care Note:** People may share incidents that are activating for themselves and others in the room. When you ask for examples, acknowledge any agreements and norms of your space regarding speaking about violence. You may want to acknowledge that the exercise will discuss acts of violence and that people who are sharing are invited to share and to take care of themselves, to share in a way that they do not exceed their own capacity, to ask people to care for themselves if they are feeling activated to stop sharing or to care for themselves how they need.

Ask:

- What are examples of documenting violences and sharing the documentation that have had a positive impact on your work, advocacy, for your communities?
- What were you documenting?
- What happened?
- How did you share?
- Who did you share with and how did you choose these people?
- What was the response?

Facilitators, you may want to prepare examples of recent and local movements using mobiles to document violence and ask participants to share examples of how they are using mobiles to document violence or to share documentation. Examples may include: documenting state violence, forwarding videos of violent acts, live streaming violence, the implications of having possession of this kind of media.

Some examples are linked in the "**Additional resources**" section below. You may choose to use these for your small group case studies or to select examples that are more current or appropriate for your participants.

Explain that this activity is to facilitate space of discussion and debate around this use.

Small group - case studies - 20 minutes

Give each small group a case study to read and discuss. You can find case studies below – choose from and edit case scenarios, blog posts and articles from the news, or choose or write examples that are more relevant for your participants.

- What is the example?
- What are arguments for using mobiles to document violence in this instance?
- What are arguments not to use mobiles to document violence in this instance?
- What are some ways you could reduce negative impacts of this kind of video documenting violence?

Scenarios

These scenarios are examples of one way to write scenarios for your workshop participants. By writing more than 1, you can raise multiple issues that you know participants will want to discuss. The examples here are designed to spark conversations around linking documentation to movement, consent, impact and perpetuation of violence.

Scenario 1

Your community has been facing violence and harassment. You and others have organized to document specific acts and to share some of these on social media platforms with subtitles and text to explain the incidents and the ongoing violence. You link these to resources including a list of demands of your community is making and support resources for people who are experiencing similar violence.

Scenario 2

You witness an act of violence on the street and begin live streaming it to your social media channel where you have thousands of followers. You do not know the people you are filming and

you do not know the context.

Scenario 3

You and your community have been livestreaming footage from demonstrations in order to both show the power of the demonstrations and to document incidences of violence and harm done to demonstrators. You become aware that the footage is being used by local police and by opposition groups to target demonstrators and edited together to create oppositional media about demonstrators that is also being shared on social media.

In plenary - shareback - 30 minutes

The full group shareback is an opportunity for each group to share their case study and to have a full group discussion about current challenges with documenting violence and sharing this documentation online. Allow for ample time for groups to share and for others to engage.

- What is the example?
- What arguments for and against using mobiles to document this instance of violence came up?
- What does this raise for others? Do you encounter this issue? How are you thinking about it? How are you strategising for the best possible impact and how are you reducing likelihood or negative impacts?

Facilitator, as participants shareback, draw out common themes. What are your participants concerned about most in their work – some issues that may come up and that you can facilitate sessions on more specifically later may include tactical issues of how to document, store, share; issues of verification of media, deep fakes; use media to incite violence and the possibility of sharing documentation of violence as perpetuating violence and harm.

Additional resources

Case studies and blog posts about the impacts of documenting violence

Examples of how people are using mobiles in organizing - we suggest gathering local or relevant current examples of how organizers are using mobiles and asking your participants and hosts for examples in preparation for the workshop.

- Migrant workers documenting abuses
  - Centre for Migrant Advocacy´s OFW-SOS

Live streaming violent acts Case Study: The Ethical Challenges of Live Internet Broadcasting, Irie Crenshaw and Justin Pehoski https://mediaengagement.org/research/matters-of-facebook-live-or-death/

- Australia

The world is turning against live streaming, In the aftermath of the Christchurch shooting, Australia is leading the charge against raw, unfiltered video, Casey Newton, April 4, 2019 https://www.theverge.com/interface/2019/4/4/18294951/australia-live-streaming-law-facebook-twitter-periscope

- Brazil examples

Dispatch from Brazil: If killed by police, guilty by default unless there's video?, Priscila Neri https://lab.witness.org/dispatch-from-brazil-if-killed-by-police-guilty-by-default-unless-theres-video/

- Whatsapp and violence in India

WhatsApp will drastically limit forwarding across the globe to stop the spread of fake news, following violence in India and Myanmar, Kurt Wagner Jul 19, 2018 https://www.vox.com/2018/7/19/17594156/whatsapp-limit-forwarding-fake-news-violence-india-myanmar

- USA examples

C-SPAN's viral video moment, Hadas Gold, 6/22/2016 https://www.politico.com/story/2016/06/cspan-house-sitin-democrats-224696 US Congress members livestream a sit-in demanding a vote on gun-control legislation.

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