



Facilitator Module 5 Practicing Storytelling - Optional

Materials

- Copies of newspaper articles (max approx 300 words) to be used for story analysis, either as print-out or scan of actual articles
- Selection of 30 colored markers
- Post-it pads
- Flipchart sheet and markers

Preparations

Distribute copies of the newspaper article/editorial, post-it pads and the markers at the start of Part A. Five markers and one post-it pad per group. One copy of article per person.

Time

1 hour (2 hours with optional components)

Description

This exercise challenges the participants to think about what are the key elements and people in the story, and consider how these would translate if they were to document the story using video.

Instructions

Part A (10 minutes) Introductions and questions

- Divide participants into groups of five.
- Explain the participants' instructions
- Distribute the chosen story/editorial – one copy to each participant
- Distribute colored markers (five in different colors to each group)

Part B (50 minutes) Exercise, with optional one-hour additional components

- Give them five minutes to read the instructions and ask if they have any questions
- Provide support as needed as groups work on the exercise

FACILITATORS' PRESENTATION NOTES:

Stories to distribute to the participants in Part A of the session on the next page.

Stories 1 and 2 on next page



WITNESS invites you to use, remix and share this curriculum. All materials are under [Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/). You can also find more video advocacy training materials at [witness.org](http://www.witness.org).



1. A STUDENT, A TEACHER AND A GLIMPSE OF WAR

(Nicholas D. Kristof, New York Times June 21, 2007)

Melehe, Congo.

I'm taking a student, Leana Wen, and a teacher, Will Okun, along with me on this trip to Africa. Here in this thatch-roofed village in the hills of Eastern Congo, we had a glimpse of war, and Leana suddenly found herself called to perform.

Villagers took what looked like a bundle of rags out of one thatch-roofed hut and laid it on the ground. Only it wasn't a bunch of rags; it was a woman dying of starvation.

The woman, Yohanita Nyiahabimama, 41, weighed perhaps 60 pounds. She was conscious and stared at us with bright eyes, whispering answers to a few questions. When she was moved, she screamed in pain, for her buttocks were covered with ulcerating bedsores.

Leana, who had just graduated from medical school at Washington University, quickly examined Yohanita.

"If we don't get her to the hospital very soon, she will die," Leana said bluntly. "We have to get her to a hospital."

There was nothing special about Yohanita except that she was in front of us. In the villages throughout the region, people just like her are dying by the thousands—of a deadly mixture of war and poverty.

Instead of spending few hundred dollars trying to save Yohanita, who might die anyway, we could spend that money buying vaccines or mosquito nets to save far larger number of children in other villages.

And yet—how can you walk away from a human being who will surely die if you do so?

So we spoke to Simona Pari of the Norwegian Refugee council, which has built a school in the village and helped people here survive as conflict has raged around them. Simona immediately agreed to use her vehicle to transport Yohanita to a hospital.

The village found a teenage girl who could go with Yohanita and help look after her, and the family agreed that it would be best to have her taken not the local public hospital but to the fine hospital in Goma run by Heal Africa, an outstanding aid group with strong American connection.

Now, nearly four days later, Yohanita is on the road to recovery, lying on a clean bed in the Heal of Africa Hospital. Leana saved one of her first patients.

What almost killed Yohanita was starvation in a narrow sense, but more broadly she is one more victim of the warfare that has already claimed four million lives in Congo since 1998. Even 21st-century wars like Congo's—the most lethal conflict since World War II—kill the old-fashioned way, starving people or exposing them disease.

That's what makes wars in the developing world so deadly, for they kill not only with guns and machetes but also in much greater numbers with diarrhea, malaria, AIDS and malnutrition.

The people here in Malehe were driven out of their village by rampaging soldiers in December. Yohanita's family returned to their home a few months later, but their crops and livestock had been taken. Then, Yohanita had a miscarriage and the family spent all its money saving her—which meant that they ran out of food.

"We used to have plenty to eat, but now we have nothing," Yohanita's mother Anastasie, told us. "We've had nothing to eat, but now we have nothing," Yohanita's mother, Anastasie, told us. "We've had nothing to eat but bananas since the beginning of May."

Story 1 continued





Story 1

I'm under no delusion that our intervention makes quite a difference to Congo (though it did make quite difference to Yohanita). The way to help Congo isn't to take individual starving people to the hospital but to work end the war – yet instead the war is heating up again here, in part because Congo is off the world's radar.

One measure of the International indifference is the shortage of aid groups here: Neighboring Rwanda, which is booming economically, is full of aid workers. But this area of eastern Congo is far needier and yet is home to hardly any aid groups. World Vision is one the very few American groups active here in the North Kivu area.

Just imagine that four million Americans or Europeans had been killed in a war, and that white families were starving to death as a result of the war. The victims in isolated villages here in Congo, like Yohanita, may be black and poor and anonymous, but that should make this war in Congo no less an international priority.

Story 2 on next page



Story 2

2. FAST-GROWING CHINA SAYS LITTLE OF CHILD SLAVERY'S ROLE

By HOWARD W. FRENCH (New York Times, June 21, 2007)

SHANGHAI, June 20 — There is a certain ritualistic aspect to stories in China like the one this past week about the hundreds of people, many of them teenagers or even younger, who were forced to work under slavlike conditions in the brick kilns of Shanxi Province. First, Chinese readers are horrified by a picture of their country that many say they hardly recognize, then a villain is rounded up, and finally, after a torrent of unusually blunt and emotionally charged news reports and editorials, the matter drops from view, ensuring that the larger issue goes unresolved.

The villain in the case was Heng Tinghan, the manager of the brick works, who was arrested Saturday and promptly cemented his bad-guy image by protesting that it was a “fairly small thing” to beat and abuse underage workers, and to deprive them of pay. With his arrest, and the urging of the Central Office of External Communication of the Communist Party, the story then died away. But Chinese newspapers are constantly peppered with accounts of the death and injury of child laborers, and of disputes that arise because of unusually low wages, or the withholding of pay, with no region of the country exempted.

Just within a week or so of the brick kiln story, there were several reports of labor abuses against children. A 14-year-old boy was killed in an explosion while filling a tank with naphthalene at a chemical factory near Nanjing. A 15-year-old boy was dragged into a cotton gin and crushed to death in Nanchang after working a succession of 20-hour days. And 70 girls from rural Henan Province were brought by their teacher to work at a grape processing plant in Ningbo, where their hands bled from working 16-hour shifts.

From the densely packed factory zones of Guangdong Province to the street markets, kitchens and brothels of major cities, to the primitive factories of China's relatively poor western provinces, child labor is a daily fact of life, experts here say, and one that the government, preoccupied with economic growth, has traditionally turned a blind eye to.

“In order to achieve modernization, people will go to any ends to earn money, to advance their interests, leaving behind morality, humanity and even a little bit of compassion, let alone the law or regulations, which are poorly implemented,” said Hu Jindou, a professor of economics at the University of Technology in Beijing. “Everything is about the economy now, just like everything was about politics in the Mao era, and forced labor or child labor is far from an isolated phenomenon. It is rooted deeply in today's reality, a combination of capitalism, socialism, feudalism and slavery.”

Under President Hu Jintao, the Communist Party has made the creation of what it calls a harmonious society the government's main watchword. As part of that effort, in fact, a major revision of laws governing the rights of children took effect just this month, prompting the country's vice premier, Wu Yi, to call their adoption “a festive present for the mainland's 300 million children.”

Chinese labor market experts say, however, that the country remains far from achieving even the spirit of the new law, which mandates that adequate time be set aside for sleep, entertainment and sports. In fact, many say, an overwhelming emphasis on economic growth directly contradicts it.

This was underscored by another story that emerged the same week the kiln factory abuses were revealed. Students from the Dayin Middle School in Sichuan Province, in China's interior, complained in newspaper reports about a work-study program in which they were shipped to an electronics assembly plant hundreds of miles away, in the industrial boomtown of Dongguan, which is near the coast.

The students told about having to work 14-hour days, with mandatory overtime, and having their wages withheld. In some instances, they said, those who wished to quit the program had no way of telephoning their families or paying for transportation home.

“My daughter promised to call every week, but she's been gone for three weeks and has only called once,” said Zhang Ronghua, the mother of a 15-year-old Sichuan student. “She said that she wants to come home, that she's worked from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and that she's constantly busy and tired.”