

Learning activity

Reflections on identity:

What movement history makes our own activism possible?

TIME: 90 mins

LEARNING AIMS:

- Identify significant moments in movement history relevant to personal or organizational activism.
- Reflect on the relevance of movement history in informing our organizing efforts.
- Identify questions aimed at learning from movement history to enhance our organizing work.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 5-20

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS: Write the activity instructions and questions on a flipchart or print them for participants.

FRAMING:

In this activity activists reflect on the historical movements that shaped their activism, identifying significant moments. They explore the relevance of past events, organisations, and struggles, considering their inspiration, learning, and connection to current activism. They are invited to reflect on how history informs and guides organising efforts.

FACILITATION:

Step 1. Identifying moments in movement history that matter to us

Please find up to 3 moments in movement history that matter for you. These could be:

- Events, struggles, organisations that are part of your own movement or organisation's past history
- Events, struggles, organisations that are part of movement history in your city, region, country, part of the world
- Events, struggles, organisations that inspire you / people in your movement
- 10 years ago, a generation back, 50 years ago, 100 years ago...

Step 2. Reflecting on why movement history matter to us

With at least one of these, can you think through why the history matters for you?

- What do you find inspiring or what do you learn from it?
- How do activists talk about this today? (Do they talk about it at all?)
- Is there any wider popular memory around this – and is that helpful?

- How does your own organisation / movement connect to this past history (e.g. previous organisations, key figures, important ideas, lessons learnt...?)

Step 3. Learning from movement history

Can you think of a question you'd like to ask people involved that might be useful for your organising work today?

Conclusion and take aways

Participants share the movements histories they have selected, why they matter to them and the questions they would like to ask that could help their activism. The facilitator concludes the session by reminding of the importance of locating our own activist experience within a wider movement history and on learning from movement history to inform our organizing work.

SOURCE: Laurence Cox