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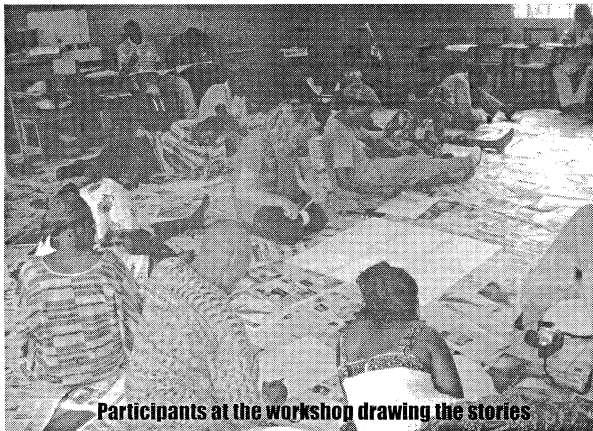


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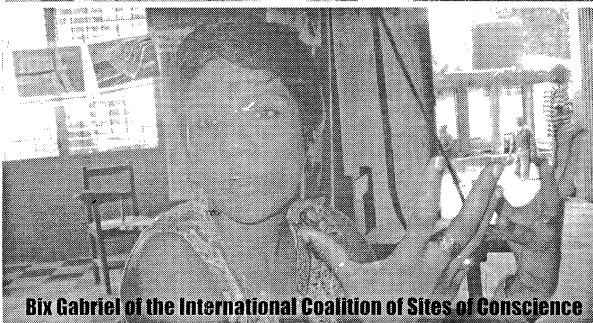
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## War Victims Tell Their Story Through Arts



Participants at the workshop drawing the stories



Bix Gabriel of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

By Alloyicious David

About 30 participants, mostly victims and survivors of Liberia's 14 year fratricide civil war explain and share their life stories about the war through arts.

At a memory workshop, which started on Tuesday on the main campus of the University of Liberia, the participants explained some of the problems encountered during the war.

The workshop attracted 30 persons representing the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) widows, representatives of the Victims and Survivors Association and civil society groups.

The workshop is jointly sponsored by Liberia Media Center, Civic Initiative, The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience and Human Rights Media Center of South Africa.

Liberia Media Center is a non-for profit media and communication firm that fosters local development through the utilization of communication, while Civic Initiative is a Liberian civic society organization whose focal area is the pursuit of democracy as well as the rule of law are Transitional Justice and Security Sector Reform.

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is a worldwide network of "Sites of Conscience"- historic sites like the National Civic Rights Museum in the USA, the Gulag Museum in Russia, and the District Six Museum of South Africa, dedicated to remembering past struggles for justice and opening public dialogue on contemporary legacies.

The Human Rights Media Center of South Africa is a non-profit organization based in Cape Town,

South Africa. Its mission is the documentation and multi-media dissemination of narrative history for human rights awareness, education and activism.

Participants on Tuesday created a reflective painting or drawing that share their recent histories.

About 20 participants would between Wednesday and Friday share their life stories through body mapping.

They would also create a visual, living, personal and public memory of the country's recent history.

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience Deputy Director, Bix Gabriel told The NEWS on Tuesday that the workshop is intended for Liberia to have a public record based on people personal story of the past that can be reflective of the suffering Liberians experienced.

She indicated that the memory workshop is a way for people to reflect on what has happened so that they can decide how they want to act in the present and future.

Madam Gabriel hoped that the art works would stimulate public dialogue on a way forward for Liberians.

She indicated that the drawing would be placed at public places across the country as requested by the participants.

Madam Gabriel observed that Liberians are eager to debate issues relative to the war and that they are willing to tell their stories.

She noted that the willingness of Liberians to tell their stories and debate national issues is healthy for democracy.

Madam Gabriel said Liberians have control over their own destiny and must engage each other in the rebuilding process.