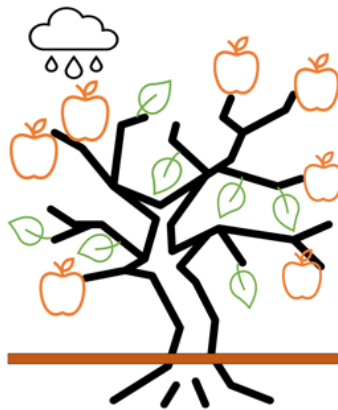

Activity: Tree of Life

Facilitator:

Materials: Facilitator's own Tree of Life, Tree of Life individual worksheets, pens for students, post-it notes, large cut out tree poster



Background: The Tree of Life is a collective narrative tool that aims to help people **speak and re-author their stories about difficult life events** in a way that is **not retraumatizing** but focuses on **strengths** to promote **identity, connectedness** and **hope**.

Objective: To bring to the fore the **skills, resources and knowledge** of the students and their wider community that can help them **cope with** and become **resilient to the challenges they face since the disaster**.

Before the session:

1. Large paper tree stuck on the wall
2. Our poster of the six themes stuck on the wall
3. Ardika completed a tree of life template to model and talk through the activity.

Introduce the activity (*10 minutes*)

- o Hand out a Tree of Life worksheet per student (RAs to handout)
- o Explain that we are going to create a tree that helps us think about all the strengths we have and how we can cope well to overcome the challenges of the 2018 disaster.
- o Tell students that we will be using what they told us helped them to cope during their interviews.
- o Ardika introduces his own tree of life and gives examples of what he has written in each part. Explain that the tree is life **since the 2018 disaster**.

- o Read through the sheet together and discuss with students some examples they may add to each.

For example: *“The roots will represent the past challenges and experiences that we have faced related to the disaster, the trunk will be filled with skills, knowledge and activities that we have or do to overcome these challenges (e.g., empathy). Branches will represent their hopes, dreams and wishes for the future. Fruit will represent gifts given by others. These are not necessarily materialistic gifts. The leaves represent the important people in our lives who have helped us since the disaster. The storm will represent the challenges we continue to face related to the disaster.”*

- o **The storm:** The focus should not be on the negative ‘storm’ for a long time.
- o Acknowledge challenges and what they might find scary, then move on to remind students that even though they face these difficulties, all the people, skills and resources they have in their lives will help them to stay calm, get through difficulties and be resilient!

This is very important!

! **Adding the six themes:**

- o Explain that they will see **six ideas written down** (on their sheet and the poster)
- o These six ideas come from what we found about how they coped with difficulties during and after disaster, as they told us during their interview.
- o It is very important the students know we got these ideas **from them**, not that we have created these without their input.
- o They will add these six themes to the tree of life and can include their own examples.

Six themes:

- o Mutual help (‘gotong royong’)
- o Opening up to support from friends, family and teachers
- o It is ok to cry – you will have good days and bad days
- o Playing with friends to recover
- o Breathing helps to stay calm
- o Palu is strong – Palu rise

Individual Completion (20 minutes)

- o Students work on their individual tree
- o If a student finishes before 20 minutes, encourage them to add more to their tree or share with the person next to them.

Forest of life (10 minutes)

- o Students are told that even though we have our own tree with our individual stories, the trees are **even stronger as a forest** as we all have **shared experiences, skills and hope for the future.**
- o Tell students we are going to look at the trees together and **create one large tree for the group.**
- o RAs hand around tape/bluetac for students.
- o Students stick their individual trees on the wall (half the students at a time) to create a ‘forest of life’ (RAs to help with blue tac/tape for students to do this).
- o Students are encouraged to look at the forest of life and see similarities between the trees.
- o Divide students into four groups of four ready for next activity.









Example of Forest of Life


Group tree of life (20 minutes)

- o Students are given 10 minutes to discuss and write on post-it notes what they noticed most often and think is most important features of the tree.
- o Students are called up (a group at a time) to add post-it notes to the large tree.
- o Ardika reviews the tree and reflects and discusses with the group the amazing sources of strength they have in their lives to cope with the disaster (with particular focus on any connections to the six themes).

Tree of Life elements

Element of the tree	What does the element represent?	Where could our six research themes fit?	What could students be asked during each element?
Roots 	<u>Past disaster experiences.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some may be more positive some may be challenges. • For example, when they were reunited with family, help from friends as well as fear during the event. 		What were the difficulties you experienced during the disaster? Were there any moments of relief? Did anyone help you?
Ground 	<u>The present.</u>		Where are you today? How are you feeling now?
Trunk 	<u>Skills and activities that help them overcome the challenges since the disaster.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, staying calm, empathy, kindness, creativity, writing stories, dancing, playing, taking deep breaths. 	Breathing to stay calm. Playing with friends.	<i>How long have you had those skills? Did you learn those skills from anyone in particular? How have these skills helped you overcome disaster challenges?</i>

<p>Branches</p> 	<p><u>Hopes for the future.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, to attend their new school, it be repaired and make good friends there. 		<p><i>How long have you had these hopes and dreams? Imagine in a year's time, what would you like to have happened? How are these linked to significant people in your life? How have you managed to hold onto these dreams in difficult times? What has kept your hope going since the disaster?</i></p>
<p>Leaves</p> 	<p><u>Important people in their lives who have supported them since the disaster.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, friends, parents, relatives, teachers. 	<p>Opening up to support from friends, parents and teachers.</p>	<p><i>How have these people helped you since the disaster? Why are these people special to you?</i></p> <p>Explain that just because people are no longer alive, it does not mean they are not still very important to us.</p> <p>If a child becomes upset about someone who has died the following questions may help: <i>Did you have a lovely time with this person? What was special about this person? Would this person like it that you remember them in these ways?</i></p>
<p>Fruit</p> 	<p><u>Gifts and resources they have been given by others that have helped them cope with the disaster.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are <u>not</u> material resources. • May have been taught • Examples: another student gave them a fun time playing a game with them, love from a family member, a teacher listening to them, receiving and giving mutual help from a community member, a volunteer taught them breathing exercises. 	<p>Mutual help ('gotong royong').</p> <p>Playing to recover.</p> <p>Staying calm (breathing exercises)</p>	<p><i>Why do you think the person gave you this? How did this help you?</i></p> <p><i>What do you think you might have contributed to their life?</i></p>

<p>Storm cloud</p> 	<p>Current disaster challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, school or home damaged, lack of resources, roads damaged, fear/anxiety. • Students may have triggers that cause them to remember scary parts of the disaster. • For example, small earthquakes, trucks driving past, stormy weather, being separated from family <p>• Remind students that they will have good days and bad days and that it is ok to be sad and cry on the bad ones.</p> <p>• Remind students that storms always pass and the water will make their tree grow stronger!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on all the people and resources in their lives to stay calm, get through difficulties and be resilient. 	<p>It is ok to cry – you will have good days and bad days</p>	<p><i>What challenges do we still face related to the disaster? How can our fruits and leaves help us to overcome these challenges?</i></p>
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