

10 Towards a toolbox for future envisioning memory practices

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1 Introduction

One of the cornerstones of the POEM project was engagement with participatory memory practices *literally* in practice. Training and thesis work for the project's PhD fellows were linked to theory development and the shaping of practices. Correspondingly, the development of the Model of Participatory Memory Work¹ was linked to envisioning and designing a 'POEM toolbox' of practical instruments or tools that would support and contribute to the changes inherent in memory work. The toolbox concept was part of the initial project plan and was then iteratively developed in the project's 'knowledge hubs' or combined workshops and training events, as well as in online meetings throughout the project in tandem with the theoretical work on envisioning the POEM model. Work on operationalising the toolbox and producing a definite set of tools started in mid-2020, after two years' work.

The idea of a toolbox plays a twofold role in the POEM project. It was developed to serve as an organised repository of diverse instruments for facilitating and enhancing both arms of the project – the research process on participatory memory practices, and the participatory memory work itself. The toolbox was modelled on a literal, everyday life toolbox, that is, a container of small tools. From the first, however, we understood the tools relevant to our work as transcending the physical realm. The tools we envisioned included an array of methodological approaches and resources that would be useful for effective research and practice within the domain of participatory memory work. Developing from checklists for the various stakeholders, to process descriptions, guidelines, and concept papers, the toolbox became a stockpile of instruments that could help to initiate and enact participatory action and collaboration. As we went further into the digital domain, there were tools for the digitalisation of memory work and for incorporating reflections on the potential of digital applications. As described later in this chapter, the toolbox was supplemented with tools for open knowledge, for science communication, and for negotiating researcher positionality – all essential for a comprehensive approach to participatory research. The POEM toolbox is therefore dynamic and evolving.

Unlike a literal toolbox, however, it now contains not only tangible resources but also conceptual frameworks that can guide researchers and participants in participatory memory work.

After initial discussion of the toolbox concept and after the sixth ‘knowledge hub’ in spring 2021, the PhD fellows were asked to submit proposals for what could eventually be developed into practical tools or instruments. Sourcing the tools in the fellows’ thesis work was a key step in operationalising the project’s empirical and theoretical research findings to make them accessible to nonacademics, and it ensured that the tools we proposed were based on and supported by research evidence. Beyond that, the development of the tool concepts also functioned as an exercise of participatory memory practices in practice within the project – both in the jointly developed tool concepts and in the joint validation of individually envisioned tools for the fellows and the project as a whole.

For the doctoral fellows working in the POEM project, the tools were key practical outcomes of their thesis work as well as means to translate the theoretical insights of their doctoral research into tangible and shareable assets. Some of the tools were integral to the theory and practice of the fellows’ doctoral research; others evolved out of the projects as what are best described as spin-offs.

A subset of initial proposals for tool concepts from the POEM fellows and teams was prototyped during dedicated sessions at a validation workshop organised in July 2021 as a part of the seventh POEM ‘knowledge hub’. Each tool was discussed in individual sessions, to which we invited domain experts and practitioners or in which we engaged in evaluation with a select internal cohort from the project. The validation process showed just how tricky the task of translating research into practical applications and making research findings accessible to nonacademics can be. Determining who would benefit from using the tools also proved to be difficult: a tool originally envisioned for the public might well interest heritage institutions more, or vice versa.

In this chapter, we present a curated selection from the POEM tools, each presented in a short text written by the author of the tools themselves, and their validation process: the *School Memory Work* tool, the *Digital Legacy Booklet*, the *Opening Up Knowledge in an Equitable Way* tool, the interactive board game *Why (Not) Participate?*, the *Digital Archive of Forgotten Memories*, the conceptual framework of *Future Memory Work*, and the decolonial design concept of the *Safe Space for Plural Voices on Contested Pasts, Presents, and Futures*.

2 Tools for future memory work

2.1 *The school memory work tool*

Education is a political project, and so are its futures. Futures in education need to be imagined and designed together with children and young people. Educational affects, or how young people *feel in* and *about* (their) education, are crucial for the imagining and shaping of alternative, possible, and desired futures of education. But children and young people’s feelings about their education and its futures remain a largely overlooked area of attention.

The *School Memory Work* tool, designed by Elina Moraitopoulou,² draws inspiration from the uses of memory as a methodological tool for conducting research in the social sciences (see Keightley, 2010). It is offered here as an affective methodology (see Knudsen & Stage, 2015) for exploring possible and desired futures of education through emotion. The aim is to elicit and capture affective themes and processes, emotions, and bodily senses, then to foreground these so as to create alternative educational imaginaries. The methodology was originally conceived and designed with a small team of secondary school students in England in 2019, then further developed during the first two years of the Covid-19 pandemic in multiple conversations with students and teachers across the United Kingdom about how education can be imagined otherwise.

Taking children and young people's school memories that matter to them as a starting point, this methodology aims to facilitate intergenerational dialogue about education futures through affect. It can be a useful tool for research purposes, and it can also be used as a pedagogical tool for facilitating intergenerational dialogue between teachers, students, and other members within and across educational communities. The importance of paying closer attention to how education feels to young people and to the memories of schooling that matter to them was highlighted by Dave, a 19-year-old research participant and education activist. In his interview, he explained:

I think young people don't often get asked about their memories through education, on our level of 'What did you genuinely love and what did you hate?', like what were just [doing here]: [what's] one memory that sticks out? [...] Young people don't often get that opportunity.

(April 2021).

Taking its starting point in the school memories that matter to young people and the memories that they want future generations to remember, the *School Memory Work* tool can catalyse conversations and potentially mobilise collective action towards more just educational futures.

The *school memory work* (*shop*) can be practiced individually or in small groups. The process can be implemented in three steps, although these are not prescriptive, as explained below:

Firstly the group familiarises itself with the notion of personal memory, discusses its importance, and establishes a shared framework of meaning around it. Each group member is invited to share a personal, narrative-rich object that matters to them, the story of which they are willing to share with the rest of the group. Participants are invited to sit in a circle and take a few minutes to think about the story they wish to tell. When the first person feels ready to share, they go first to describe their object memory in as much detail as possible, focusing on what makes their object important to them. When they finish their story, they are invited to place their object in the middle of the room in front of the rest of the group, if they feel comfortable doing so. The rest of the group are invited to write down keywords, if they want to, for the key themes, impressions, and emotions evoked as they listen. The remaining members of the group then take

turns sharing their stories. By the end of the process, the facilitator opens a round of discussion in which the key themes, impressions, and emotions from all the object memory stories are mapped and discussed.

Now it's time to think: 'What is one school memory that you want future generations to remember?' Choose one of the memories that comes first to mind, and write it down. You can also voice-record it, draw it, or capture it in any other format of your liking. You can use the following prompts when thinking about your memory:

- What is happening in the school memory you chose?
- Why did you choose this particular memory, not another one?
- Can you recall any smells, images, colours, or sounds in your chosen memory?
- How did you feel back then, and how does this memory make you feel today?
- Where and when did it take place?
- Who else was involved?
- Is there anything you would like to change about your memory?
- What message do you want to send to future generations through your school memory?

Now take turns sharing your memory with the rest of the group, as before. After everyone has taken their turn, the group comes together to analyse the memories and ask each other more questions and express opinions and look for possible meanings. The following prompts can be helpful: What does this remind you of? What picture comes to mind? The group continues to identify things that could possibly be missing from the memories and to identify similarities and differences across the different memories.

Finally, it is time for the participants to 'rewrite' their school memories – once again, in the format of their liking (and not necessarily in text). The participants decide whether and in what format they want to make these memories public by sharing them beyond their group.

The complete description of the tool and the steps/prompts for its implementation can also be found at <https://www.poem-horizon.eu/school-memory-work/>.

2.2 *The digital legacy booklet tool*

Today, when people die, they commonly leave behind a digital legacy – on smartphones, hard drives, or in the cloud. Photos, videos, instant messages, voicemails, and social media posts document our daily lives in intimate detail, and for this reason can become treasured memories for bereaved family and friends.

But there are two hurdles that those who have been bereaved need to overcome to unlock the potential of a digital legacy for mourning and remembrance. The first of these is to gain access to the digital data. Encrypted data, unlike a safe in the basement, cannot be cracked if the key is missing. Once access is gained, the

second hurdle bereaved family and friends have to face is not knowing what they are permitted to examine. The digital legacy may contain sensitive information that the deceased did not want to share, or that the bereaved may find distressing to discover. Without knowing the wishes of the deceased and what to expect, many bereaved people choose to leave the data untouched.

Both hurdles can be overcome with the *Digital Legacy Booklet*, a tool developed by Lorenz Widmaier (2020b) in the context of his research on the impact of digital legacies on grief, mourning, and remembrance. The tool provides access to a digital legacy and conveys the deceased's wishes as to how it should be handled. It was published as part of the MEMENTO exhibition (2020–2021) at the Museum for Sepulchral Culture, Kassel, Germany (<https://www.sepulkralmuseum.de>).

The *Digital Legacy Booklet* is a simple set of password sheets, which encourages us to take responsibility for our digital legacy during our lifetime. The password sheets ask us to name a trusted person and, for each digital account, to leave the login details and our wishes as to whether the account is to be kept active, memorialised, or deleted. A field for notes allows us to leave more detailed wishes, such as giving permission to read inherited WhatsApp conversations, but not those that include certain people (Figure 10.1).

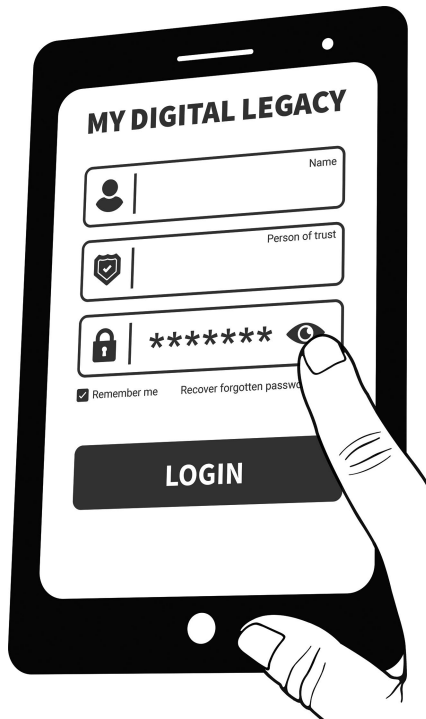


Figure 10.1 Cover of the Digital Legacy Booklet. The booklet is available at <https://www.memoryanddeath.com/my-digital-legacy/>.

The *Digital Legacy Booklet* is accompanied by a manual and two additional publications: an estate planning guide for digital data (which further assists in the preparation of a digital legacy and advocates the integration of precaution as a lived practice into everyday digital life: Widmaier, 2020a), and a digital legacy checklist (which provides checkboxes for preparing a digital legacy and illustrates the steps to be taken when inheriting a digital legacy: Widmaier, 2022).³

Although the *Digital Legacy Booklet* is ready to be used, it was designed with the intention of raising awareness of the need for digital estate planning for future remembrance. It is a stimulus for talking to our loved ones about digital inheritance and for finding our own approach. After the validation session for this tool, Sean Bellamy, co-founder of Sands School Ashoka Foundation Change Leader, and Varkey Global Teaching Ambassador, reflected on digital legacies in an email to us:

I think it will allow us to communicate and be in communion with the ancestors in a way that is more in tune with our hunter gatherer minds than we can believe. A hundred thousand years ago, we did not believe the dead had left us, they sat on the roofs of our huts living off the fat in the smoke from our fires, they watched over us and informed our everyday, and just because they were no longer present in visceral form, they remained everywhere. An intentional use of digital legacy brings the ancestors into our lives and they may influence us in new and better ways, sitting “on the roofs of our huts living off the fat in the smoke of our fires.” And in this struggling world, we need to both celebrate the ancestors and honour their memory, so that we can help design a planet that is fit for those yet to come.

In this passage, Sean Bellamy emphasises the potential of digital legacies not only for remembering the past but also for building the future. The *Digital Legacy Booklet* can help us in this endeavour. Thinking about the inheritance of digital memories is vital for all of us, especially for those anticipating their own or a loved one’s death. The tool can also be useful in end-of-life care and hospice work.

2.3 ***The opening up knowledge in an equitable way tool***

This conceptual tool proposes a model for managing, producing, and disseminating cultural knowledge online. It envisions memory ecosystems driven by openness, meaningful participation, and fairness. The tool has two parts: first, it presents a knowledge stewardship model for how to open up cultural knowledge in an equitable way; and second, it proposes two frameworks within which to implement this prototype – a participatory way, and a collective way. On the one hand, the participatory framework addresses cultural-heritage professionals who wish to integrate participatory governance into their institution; on the other hand, the collective framework addresses communities that seek to advance the digital documentation practices for their community in ways that ensure ethical, equitable, and inclusive participation. The aim of the proposed tool is to bring forward and facilitate

participation in open cultural knowledge production by empowering users to make (good) (re)use of the data and by helping them to treat data that goes beyond the data commodification model, the model currently prevailing in the digital economy (Tzouganatou, 2023). The cultural assets discussed in this tool can vary, from digitised and born-digital cultural assets to assets that have to be collected and documented, such as intangible and living heritage. The model consists of aspects that form a basis, then elements that build on top of them. Forming the basis are the structural aspects of legal questions, privacy, ethics, and technical infrastructure; building on top of that are the modular elements of data rights, control sharing, data sovereignty, and data portability, all issues that interlock with the elements forming the model's foundation layer. Finally, the knowledge stewardship model builds on top of these two layers. The tool was developed through Angeliki Tzouganatou's doctoral work.

The model and its foundational aspects are enacted when they are applied to scrutinising different type(s) of cultural data that determine how the elements into the model unfold. For example, in cases of cultural data from communities that need to protect their data for privacy or ethical reasons, operationalising the elements to do with legal issues is enabled through managing data rights, the privacy aspect through organising control sharing, and ethics through addressing data sovereignty so as to contribute to ensuring fair data (re)use. All the elements of the model reflect and concern different dimensions of the digital workflow of data organisation, management, share, and (re)use. The prototype has integrated all the elements derived from the analysis and synthesis of research data in the doctoral work, as well as the results of a formative evaluation that was conducted to assess the conceptualisation and potential for operationalisation of the model. The formative evaluation of the model took place online on 1 July 2021 with eight experts over the Zoom platform. A further aspect was subsequently added after the formative evaluation of the initial model: ethics were integrated in the model as an independent aspect. Initially, ethics had been included in the legal questions, but all the participant experts highlighted the need to introduce a separate node (Tzouganatou, 2023).

As outlined above, it is proposed that the model be implemented within two contexts, a participatory context and a collective context. Each of the two contexts would address a different audience. Within the first context, the appointment of one or more knowledge steward(s) as an intermediary between cultural heritage institutions would bring about the facilitation of data (re-)use, as well as empower users to make good (re-)use of their data. This process emphasises the collaborative and co-creative aspect of the relationship between the steward and the users. The second context, located within a collective stewardship framework, can be realised by managing data through self-organised communities. These could take the form of collectives and digital cooperatives, contributing to reinforcement and adhering to democratic values, solidarity, and transparency.

A connective element in this tool is that 'openness' does not refer solely to the notion of digitising artworks and making them available online by providing users with access to them. Using 'open', here, refers to the creative reusability and

remixability of a given asset, resulting in an open knowledge ecosystem (Tzouganatou, 2021). Access is one part of the process; but making digital assets accessible and *actually reusable* for the public beyond ‘digital warehouses’ (Tzouganatou, 2022) is a further and crucial part. In the digital heritage landscape, the knowledge stewardship prototype aims, first, to facilitate access, and then, second, to move towards accessibility and reusability for these assets. Tzouganatou’s tool takes account not only of the economic and legal aspects of the digital ecosystem, but also its social, technical, and ethical dimensions. It envisions emerging open avenues in memory making online, focused on data and digital sovereignty. To operationalise this tool, multiple incremental steps are required: participatory practices need to be embedded in current infrastructures; openness and interoperability need to be reinforced on both the data and infrastructural level; documentation of digital processes is needed that is sufficiently good to be accessible to nonexperts; training of knowledge stewards needs to be inclusive; and quality control mechanisms need to be implemented for evaluating the participatory potential.

2.4 *The why (not) participate? card game*

The *Why (Not) Participate?* card game is an output from the combined doctoral research by Cassandra Kist, Franziska Mucha, Inge Zwart, and Susanne Boersma. It translates participant-centred qualitative research across European museums into a practice-oriented tool that provides insights into the potential obstacles and motivations for participants to help practitioners rethink participatory work. The current prototype of the game contains 30 cards printed with quotes from participants that can serve as prompts for discussing the implications of a participatory museum project.

The tool draws attention to the complexities of organising a participatory project, pointing professionals to the multiple aspects that they need to take into account. Rather than expecting practitioners to find the answers (or the right questions) in the recent literature, the game provides a range of prompts from participants and practitioners that can be used in considering many different aspects of participatory memory work. Each card contains two discussion points: one for the planning phase of a project, and one for evaluation with the participants during or after the project. Cards in seven different categories – knowledge, relationships, space, food and drink, roles and responsibilities, relevance and goals, and expectations and results – cover numerous aspects that are important for participatory work with different people. Through the variety of prompts and discussion points, people using the game can learn from their own and each other’s experiences to consider the needs and irritations that may arise when participating in a cultural project.

A prototype of the tool was developed, expanded, tweaked, and validated with museum practitioners; however, as processes change and participatory work becomes increasingly important within memory institutions, the game is intended as a starting point. Institutions are still learning how to ‘do’ participation, which is why evaluation needs to be part of the process. *Why (Not) Participate?* supports

museum practitioners in taking a careful and reflective approach to participation. The tool can be downloaded from the POEM website. Although our research projects have now ended, both the cards and the participatory practices in memory institutions will continue to be modified on an ongoing basis.

2.5 *The digital archive of forgotten memories tool*

The *Digital Archive of Forgotten Memories* (DAFM) was originally developed by Anne S. Chahine and Inge Zwart as a one-stop shop installation to be set up at public and academic events; it was subsequently included in the toolbox validation session during the Knowledge Hub 7 owing to our wish to make it available beyond the term of the POEM project. Envisioned both on- and offline, the DAFM is an installation that facilitates a conversation about remembering and forgetting in our own lives and in society as a whole. The main question we asked ourselves was how to make people relate and connect to research on memory and participation in the grander scheme of things. We approached this as a two-fold challenge; first, we were interested in finding a method that could foster conversation with ‘anyone’ around a rather abstract or theoretical academic topic; and second, we reflected on which theme could best capture the diverse interest of the POEM research network regarding socially inclusive participatory memory practices.

The *Digital Archive of Forgotten Memories* invites different publics to reflect on the concepts of remembering and forgetting by submitting a ‘memory’ to the DAFM, and then reflecting on questions posed by the archival team on site. In practice, it offers two different activities that allow people to engage with the concept of ‘memory’ and what it means in our everyday lives, as well as within an institutional framework. In activity one, ‘Forgetting a Memory’, the visitor is given a coloured piece of paper on which they are invited to draw, write, or visualise a memory they want to forget. We then invite them to physically destroy it by putting the paper through a manual paper shredder. With the permission of the memory owner, we take a picture of the remnants and upload the image to the DAFM’s online archive. Activity two, ‘Reflecting on remembering and forgetting’, invites people to reflect on a more abstract level on the concepts of forgetting and remembering. Here, visitors are encouraged to take one of the postcards provided and reflect on questions that invite multiple answers. One example text is: ‘I think forgetting is either important or unimportant, because...’ Once completed, the filled-out cards are exhibited both on-site and online, functioning as an additional entry point to larger discussions. Throughout these activities, the archival team engages the audience in conversations about memory, forgetting, digital participation, and institutional structures around memory practices.

By offering a physical activity that imitates the process of ‘forgetting’, the *Digital Archive of Forgotten Memories* aims to make rather abstract concepts and applications more tangible. This can serve as a conversation starter in museums and other memory institutions for talking to their visitors about everyday practices.

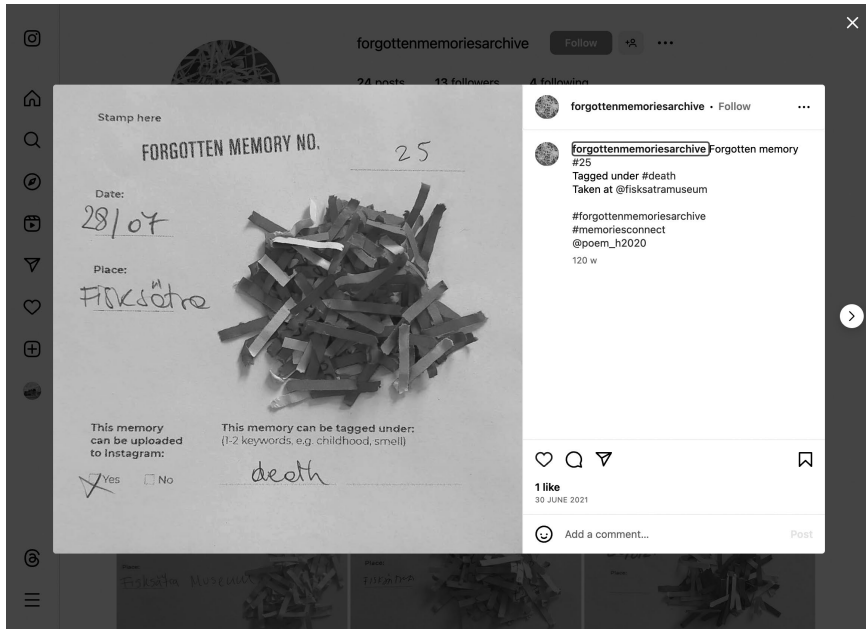


Figure 10.2 Screenshot of Digital Archive of Forgotten Memories' Instagram channel showing a shredded memory from an installation at Fisksättra Museum in June 2021. Taken by Anne S. Chahine and Inge Zwart.

It can function as an entry point to more complex discussions about memory practices – such as sensibilities around sharing or not sharing memories or personal information – in workshops or in a variety of spaces and institutions that engage with questions about memory practices on a regular basis (Figure 10.2).

2.6 Future memory work

Future Memory Work can be understood as a 'conceptual framework and speculative practice to unsettle temporal hierarchies in research that are intrinsically tied to the anthropological project' (Chahine, 2022, p. 1). This tool in the toolbox was developed as part of Anne S. Chahine's doctoral work in Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) and Denmark in 2018–2022. The starting point of the approach is memory work, a methodological tool that allows us to better understand how we make sense of the world around us (Crawford, 1992; Haug, 1999; Kuhn, 2000). The future is then added on to the memory work as an additional dimension so that it can be used to influence the way we (re)construct the past in the now.

As part of the study, young Indigenous people from Kalaallit Nunaat were invited to create 'future memories' for coming generations. They were asked to think about concepts or material things in their life that they considered the

most relevant to preserve for the future. The focus of the concept is on better understanding what matters for individuals and how they position themselves in relation to their communities. *Future Memory Work* is based on approaches from the fields of Indigenous Futurism and Afrofuturism (Cornum, 2015; Nixon, 2016; Oman-Reagan, 2018; Drew & Wortham, 2020); its potential lies in the forward-looking approach that it can empower, embracing the possibility of speculating, thinking, and imagining *otherwise*. It can be understood as a space that pluralises temporalities (Rifkin, 2017) and works towards acknowledging that multiple temporalities coexist, therein unsettling the temporal hierarchies imposed by our colonial/modern world (Fabian, 1990; Deloria, 2004; Fabian & Bunzl, 2014; Rifkin, 2017).

The *Future Memory Work* tool takes Anne S. Chahine's positionality as a researcher into account – as a white, East German, non-Indigenous scholar carrying out a study in a former colony while based at a Danish university. Her positionality is reflected upon, and (temporal) biases are taken into consideration. The approach is rooted in acknowledging the ubiquitous entanglements of the colonial past and present, in which we ourselves as researchers are a part, and aims to contribute to a field that interrogates the status quo of how research in Kalaallit Nunaat and Europe are conducted today (Figure 10.3).



Figure 10.3 Co-analysis of generated ‘future memories’ with participants as part of a focus group in Aarhus, Denmark in October 2020. Photo taken by Anne S. Chahine.

2.7 ***Decolonial design practices: the safe space tool for plural voices on contested pasts, presents, and futures, by Asnath Paula Kambunga***

Kambunga et al. (2023) define the *Safe Space* tool as:

as a consciously developed social environment for thoughts, situated actions, and mutual learning that allows participants to engage in dialogues about their everyday experiences, tensions, and contested pasts and consequently to imagine and co-create alternative and plural futures.

(p. 2)

The *Safe Space* was designed as part of the research project Decolonising Design: Futures Memory Making with Namibian Born Frees (2018–2022). This project aimed to create approaches to decolonising design by applying a lens of collaborative engagement with a group of young Namibians born since Namibia’s independence in 1990. The *Safe Space* is a decolonial design practice that supports alternative ways of knowing and doing in practice (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Smith et al., 2021). It also challenges researchers to reflect on their positionalities within the socio-cultural and historical research context, and their particular adaptations of dominant design methods and approaches (Figure 10.4).

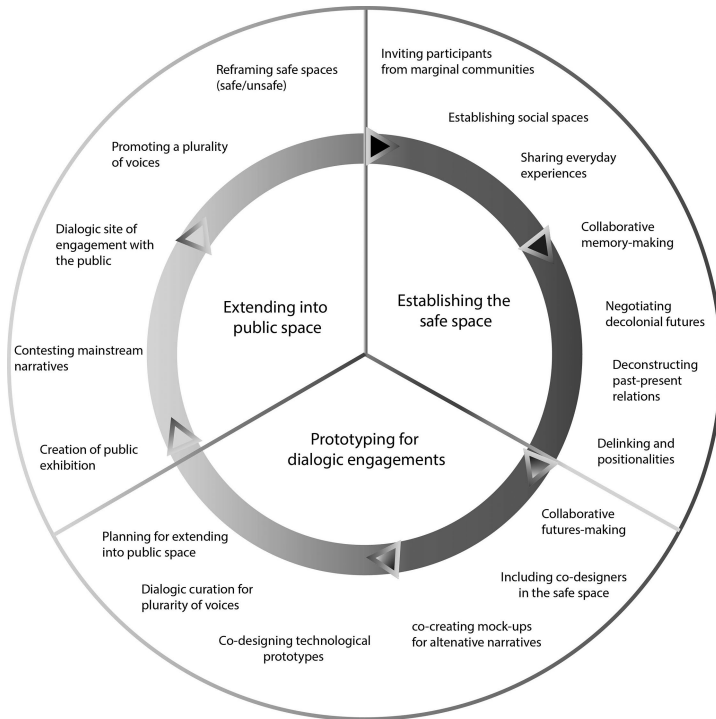


Figure 10.4 The Safe Space framework designed by Kambunga et al. (2023).

Kambunga et al. (2023) proposed the *Safe Space* framework, a framework that allows work with multiple temporalities, addressing pasts, presents, and futures. The framework is composed of three phases that build on each other in a clockwise movement, from *establishing the Safe Space*, to *prototyping dialogic engagement*, to *extending into public space*. Each phase comprises a set of activities practised through design anthropological interventions and participatory design workshops.

In the original research project (*Decolonising Design: Futures Memory Making with Namibian Born Frees*), the *Safe Space* made it possible for the Born Frees and the researchers to engage in dialogues about Namibia's colonial pasts, to discuss contested everyday life experiences, and to imagine pluriversal futures. The Born Frees participated as co-designers, contributing to co-designing different public spaces that amplified their voices through different technological prototypes.

3 Reflections on memory tools and practices

Although this chapter can give only a glimpse of a few of the tools developed in the POEM project, it demonstrates the wide range of ideas, topics, and approaches that were covered. Looking back, articulating these practical and theoretical research tools and shaping practical tools from the POEM fellows' doctoral work was a difficult process, but ultimately productive. Judging by the feedback from the validation workshop, the process of developing the POEM toolbox led to a set of "products" that are relevant to a wider public, something that memory institutions, policymakers, and the wider society can use.

Over and above this, the tools we have envisioned go further. They demonstrate how the entanglement of tools and practices is crucial for the empowerment and agency of those who engage in memory work and for the personal empowerment and agency that can come with individual participation and visibility in public memory. A tool works, and makes sense, when it is intertwined with personal and collective practices of memory making. With the *Digital Archive of Forgotten Memories*, *Opening Up Knowledge in an Equitable Way* and the *Why (Not) Participate?*, the critical contribution of these tools is their facilitation of making and articulating these entanglements by making it possible to discuss and enact remembering and forgetting, openness or participation. *Future Memory Work* starts with the participants' ideas about what is relevant to preserve. The ideas for digital archive, model, and card game serve as starting points for how to practise the tool. The *Safe Space* provides the participants with a social environment to engage in dialogues about their personal experiences with the aim of imagining and co-creating futures. The *School Memory Work* tool leverages the context of school, while the *Digital Legacy Booklet* employs digital media, the experience of loss, and the booklet format as foundational elements. From here, memory practices and the tools come together to form entanglements that make sense as settings for the participants' memory work.

The examples also show the global interconnectedness of memories. Little in the tools is specific to just one hyper-local sphere; perhaps even more obviously, they demonstrate that personal memory making forms the foundation of the

emergence of public memories, and vice versa. Much of the memory making of the tools traverses boundaries – spatially, temporally, and in scale from the personal to the collective and from private to public. This memory making engages with near-universal concepts like school memories, archives, and even death, yet it offers ways to develop common ground through conversation, games, and engagements with tangible objects. Through multiple relational and situated approaches, these tools can evoke and empower people’s capacity to envision futures through memory making.

Furthermore, the development of these tools in the POEM project was actually a form of participatory memory work in its own right. All of the tools discussed above stemmed from intensive interactions with the research sites of the POEM fellows’ doctoral work. All the tools, while more or less tangible (which renders them approachable and actionable), are also deeply theoretical in what they aim to achieve. Rather than being mere instruments for ‘doings,’ what the tools in the toolbox have in common is that they are instruments for ‘thinkings’ as well. They catalyse discussions about memory in a school context, thinking about digital legacy, the pursuit of openness of knowledge, (non)participation, remembering, and forgetting.

Working with developing the toolbox from the first to the final stages of the project was useful, not only because it produced a set of predetermined practical tools, but because we could ideate on what a tool and toolbox might entail in the context of each individual doctoral study and the project as whole. The open-ended approach to the practical outcomes of the research underpinning the toolbox concept aligns with the ideals of curiosity-driven basic research. It might appear to be at odds with the logic of much of the increasingly applied contemporary research in the heritage sector, research that features predetermined methods and expected outcomes. On the basis of the work on the POEM toolbox we are, however, inclined to see major benefits in committing to making a practical impact but not determining the exact measures of how to make it in advance. Our work in POEM points to the advantages of letting these benefits emerge from empirical research work conducted in tandem with rigorous open-ended theory development.

Another aspect of the toolbox work in POEM that we like to highlight is the validation exercise described at the beginning of this chapter. It gave useful insights into the tools, their practical applicability and relevance, the robustness of their theoretical underpinnings, and the development process of individual tools and the toolbox as a whole. The insights varied as much as the tools. In some cases, the validation provided invaluable feedback on conceptual dimensions that the practitioners considered crucial in the particular context of the tool. The questions pertaining to ethics and motivational factors in the Model for Open Knowledge tool exemplify the significance of this type of response. In some cases, the validation provided hands-on practical advice that made the tool work better; in others, the response provided valuable input on the contextual aspects of the tool, like the quote from Sean Bellamy with the *Digital Legacy Booklet* evince.

Our work with the POEM toolbox was not intended primarily to develop a formal process or set of procedures for generic toolbox development. But theorising,

tool ideation, a design and validation cycle, and working towards a toolbox have a wider potential than use in POEM alone. The toolbox proved to be a useful actionable approach for bridging the gap between theory and practice, a gap that is often difficult to cross. As a general approach, we can see potential in toolbox work in forthcoming research and practice in the context of participatory memory work, but also as a method for applying in other fields of research as well. It can be applied as an intellectual what-if exercise to devise potential practical tools based on theoretical and evidence-based research; it can also be used, as we used it, to strive for real tools, validate them, and enact them in practice together with participating communities.

Notes

- 1 See Introduction and Chapter 9 of this volume, which presents the theoretical framework of the POEM Model 1.0 and the Model of Participatory Memory Work.
- 2 The complete description of the tool and the steps/prompts for its implementation can also be found at <https://www.poem-horizon.eu/school-memory-work/>. School memories from the research project can be accessed on the website <https://school-memories-that-matter.com/school-memories-that-matter/>.
- 3 All these publications are available at: <https://www.memoryanddeath.com/my-digital-legacy/>

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