

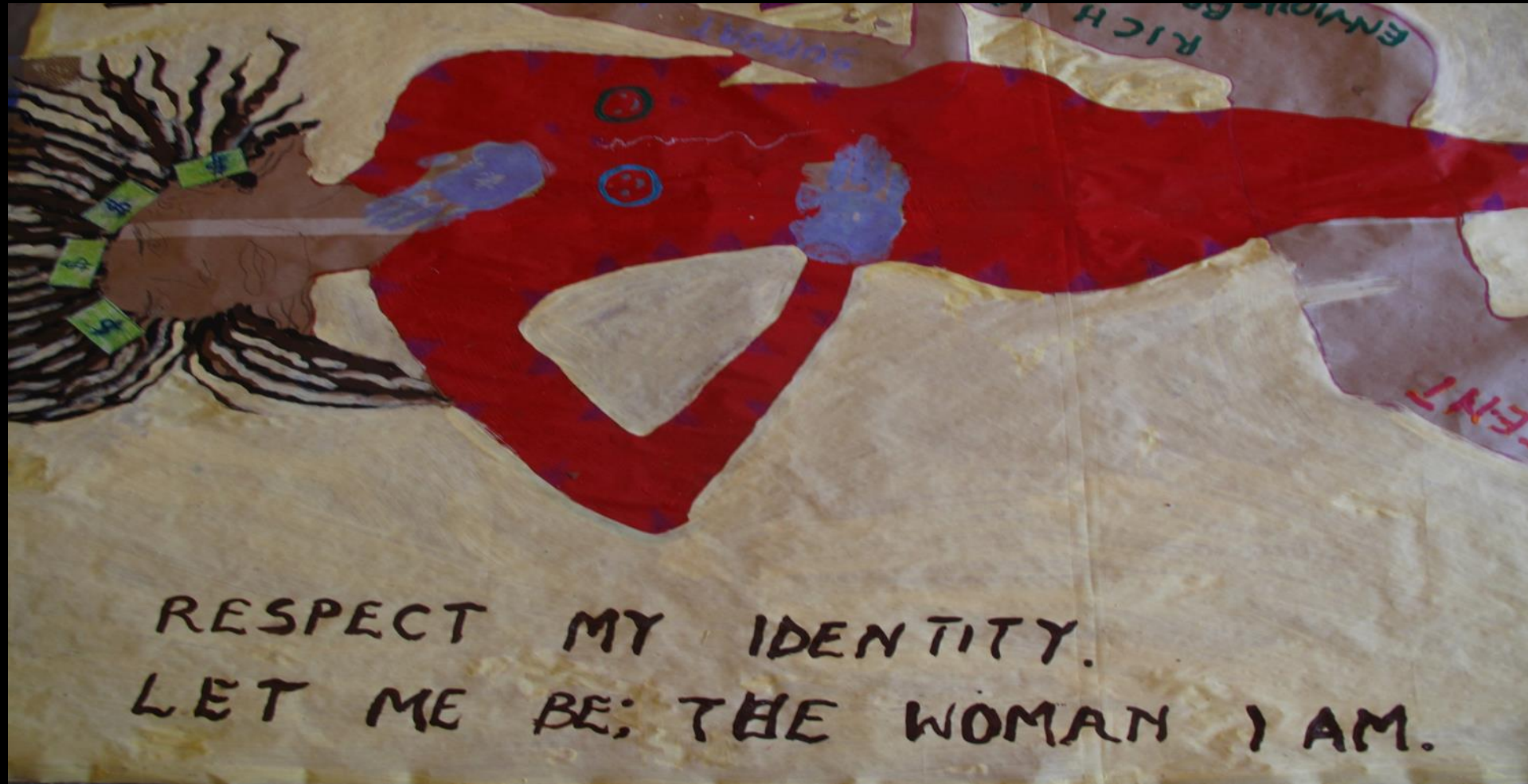
'Nothing about me without me'

An introduction on Body Mapping



Art for Positive Living and Social Changes

“In order to have a voice, you first need to find it, then build and trust it. Only then can you stand in a chosen place and use it.”





As a very adaptable method, B M has been applied in many contexts to a wide variety of target groups (IDP's, refugees, migrants, women victim of violence, LGBTiQ, Political prisoners, Commercial Sex Workers, Organ transplants, cancer survivors, and as well as a professional tools for Health and psycho-social workers, or with diverse groups in the context of national identity/belonging/civic responsibilities etc)

Pioneered in South Africa in 2002, the Body Mapping process was originally created for people living with HIV, to enable them to better understand the virus, its treatment, to combat stigma as well as improved personal coping strategies.

It is a process of empowerment drawing on the therapeutic disciplines of art therapy, narrative therapy and bodywork.

CISP (the international committee for the development of the people). CISP has engaged in Mali, Kenya, Somalia, Mozambique with innovative approaches such as the Body Mapping that offer new ways of working and respond to the challenges people are facing with.

HOW DO WE USE BODY MAPPING?

Therapeutic
tool

Biographical
tool

Advocacy
tool

Inter-
generational
dialogue
tool

Team
building tool

Research
tool

BODY MAPPING WORKSHOP

Body Maps are created in a 3-5days intensive workshop in a safe and confidential place. The painting is done within a group of 10-12 participants, and is made of various activities that leads to the creation of the artwork and it is interwoven with personal story telling, guided meditation and visualizations, body and touch work, and group discussions.

It involves multiple drawings in response to questions focused on understandings and experiences depending on the topic/objectives of the project. The drawings are then catalysts for discussion and becomes part of a life size painting.





The approach taken is more a celebration of the person, finding the inner and outer resources despite going deep into the expression of difficult event or challenges facing people. The final art works can support individuals after the workshop in reconnecting with friends, family and community, and possibly coming out where it has been difficult to do so before.

On a more public and often political level, participants use their body maps for awareness raising and campaign purposes through exhibitions during community events, exhibitions, and conferences.





GLORIFIED
UNIVERSITY
PEACE - JUSTICE - CHANGE
NEED TOPS
LEAVING
POVERTY
83-2013
IGNORANCE
CORRUPTION
TOLERANCE

1984
Wagalla
Kandare
1990
Civil war
Somalia
2007
Post election
violence
2010
Mogadishu
2011
Mogadishu
Mogadishu
Mogadishu

Where do you come from? How is it to be a woman in your culture?

How do you see yourself today? **What is your dream for you and your land?**

How would you represent your land in a drawing? Find four words that would describe you?

What was the most difficult time in your life? What do you like about yourself?

What makes you similar to others? What makes you different from others?

How do you think people perceive you? **Who decides in your land?**

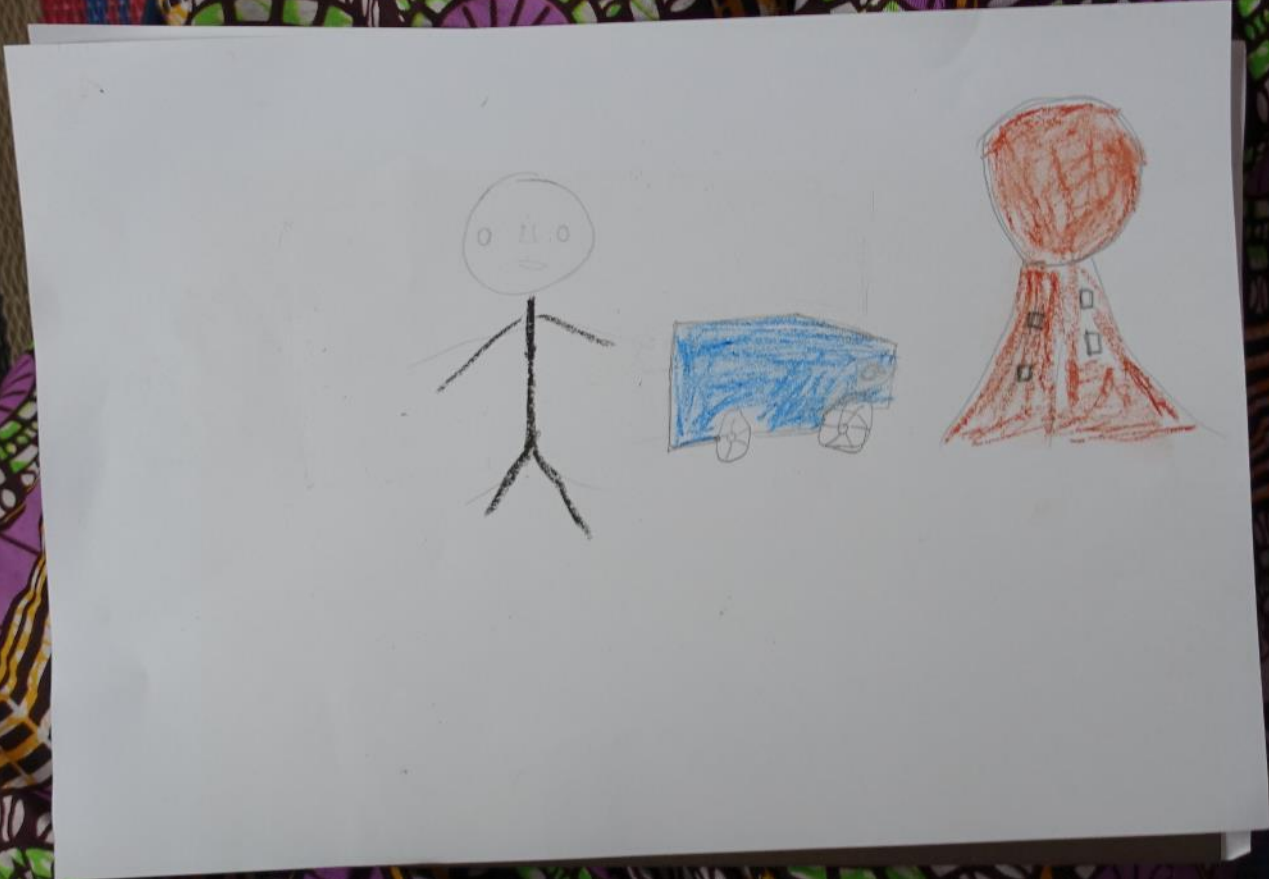
Where is your responsibility as a citizen?

What is the most important moment in your history? **How do you see yourself today?** What support do you get?

Are you free? What makes you proud about you?

How do you see yourself in 5 years?







'The position of my body looks more towards the future even if I face the violence. My position is like I am running away from the violence and look at a better future'





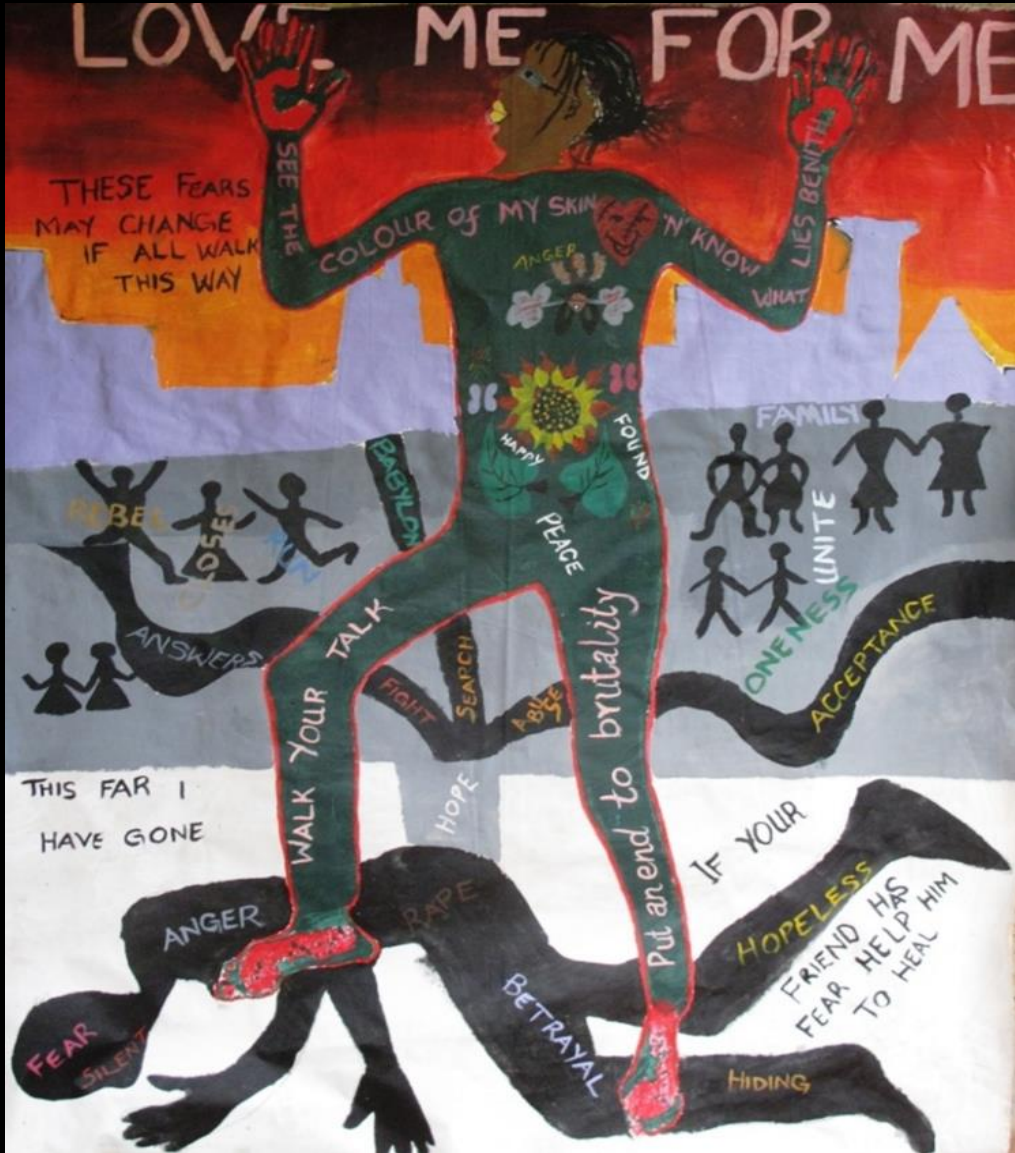




'I felt liberated, as me, as a woman could express myself here'.



“I feel the void and emptiness associated with exclusion. I have to do something about it and heal ourselves. I am not alone. When we sat down, I realize that there is so much experience here that I have not shared yet. This B M gives me confidence and a space to heal”



IMPACT OF THE BODY MAPPING

Deep emotional release , release an expression of Pain, Longing and Joy.

Recognition and appreciation of personal expression. I have a voice

Stronger Sense of Self, direction in Life and visions for the future (Role as a citizen/ Sense of responsibility/Self agency).

The non-verbal quality allowed complex combinations of ideas and assist some of the participants to access personal expression despite verbal / written difficulties and being able to communicate with others.

Engaging with the outside world, (Re-)connecting with family, friends and the community at large and.

Body Maps break down barriers. Appreciation of Diversity. Expression of the cultural attachment

Sensitization on issues affecting the community/their environment

Question social and cultural norms that can lead to behavioral changes

Laboratory: allows to work with everybody (culture, background, education etc). Democratic space/dialogue

Body Mapping Attributes

1. Social justice

Body-mapping has partly its roots in political activism, privileging and making visible otherwise oppressed or obscured perspectives. As it is often combined with story telling and a written testimony, it renders visible the experiences and perspectives of people whose views are often not sought or marginalized in society.

Body-mapping can be used to advocate for people on a political level and for social change because the process itself creates a respectful space where participants' views and experiences are privileged.

Body mapping facilitates participants reclaiming or creating a preferred view of the body and their life experience thus bringing into question negative assumptions inherent in dominant narratives or ways of seeing others. You are much more than how you are portrayed.

“The BM is a journey that you make alone, but you make it as well together with the group, sharing is very strong in this methodology, a way of giving birth, of going through stages, the painful ones and the beautiful ones, it's a discovery, for everyone, there are so many things hidden, repressed, our culture, our norms, how can we adapt to each others, it was very intense, and so beautiful”.



BODY MAPPING ATTRIBUTES

2. Ownership

Participants have an active role in this process, making decisions about how to represent their experience in a highly personalized manner.

As the process of producing artwork typically takes long (out of time), it also encourages participants to linger longer, reflecting more deeply on themselves and their path into their lives.

The use of arts allows dissemination and more accessible to the broader community.

'As a man, culture has always told me to keep things inside myself, not to reveal myself, and here you're asking us to open up. I feel this part of myself very present since Body Mapping'.



BODY MAPPING ATTRIBUTES

3. Body-mapping as therapy/healing

It encourages participants to consider themselves in a positive light and to recognize the strengths and resources inside them and within their communities which can strengthen self-esteem and increase personal connectedness. The participation in body mapping workshops “can be an important tool out of victimization, passivity and silence”.

In a therapeutic context, body-mapping is a useful therapeutic tool for treating people suffering the psychological effects of trauma emphasizing the need to establish a safe environment and therapeutic relationship.



“[The body mapping] taught me to find myself, to resist and to share with others. I had stuff inside me, taking them out on the canvas, felt like life changing. I feel so alive, like a new person. This is my strength, I have a pyramid inside me with a treasure inside. This is me.”

BODY MAPPING ATTRIBUTES

4. Embodiment

Body-mapping draws participants' attention to their bodies, encouraging awareness and reflection on that embodied experience. It allows the bodily or sensory dimensions of experience that can offer access to self-discovery and personal and collective information.

It is not only the view from inside but the resonances of places in the physical space, the outside world. For example on women's experiences of violence, fear and safety in their environments. Where do I go, where can I not go, why ?

As a form of embodied storytelling, body mapping allowed participants to reflect on their experiences and feelings relationally through their connections with each other's in the safe space created of the workshop.



“During this week, I managed to explore what was in me which has been really haunting me for quite a while. It is a form of relief. It helps me to be in a position to stand on my own, not to depend on anybody”

5. Knowledge production and translation

Body Mapping facilitates deeper reflection that allows access to aspects of experience not readily accessible through other means.

Participants have an active role because they make decisions about how to represent their experience in a highly personalized manner.

Body-mapping lends itself well to knowledge translation not only because it involves the production of artwork that is readily available to display, but also due to participants' desire to communicate their stories to others.