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Premise

This text on the process of Systematization represents just the beginnings of work still in progress, open to any contributions and comments from all activists/delegates, and aims to prepare a document from this collective effort for the FUM/FUS meeting of Rio de Janeiro.

Most of the ideas, intuitions and proposals have been taken from two main sources:

“Systematization, a New Look to Our Practice. A guide to the systematization of experiences of social transformation” and “The Adventure of Systematization: How to look at and learn from our practices” (edited by ALBOAN, Human Rights Centre Pedro Arrupe, and HEGOA, Centre for the Studies on Development and International Cooperation, University of Pais Vasco).

Moreover, many notes and material have been taken from works by the Centre of Studies and Publications ALFORJA, with the help of its director, Oscar Jara, educator and sociologist.

Why a guide to systematization?

The aim is to work together to elaborate a means that will help us better understand and critically analyze both the social processes and the current practices which we activate through our work in organizations and popular movements, and, above all, in order to learn from our experiences in order to start new knowledge. What can we say about political proposals such as initiatives or struggles translated into renewed models of political representation and socio-economic support? Also a critical analysis of the processes and of the actual social and economic logics is necessary in order to pinpoint and propose new trajectories and actions focusing on the reasons for our new campaigns and/or for other specific actions.

Systematization is a methodological proposal that makes possible:

- a collective and shared revision of our practice,
- its appropriation by those who have direct experience,
- a new way of learning,
- suggestions for new proposals and agendas.
- To generate a new kind of knowledge through which the reflective and academic aspect and real practice may be combined.

Systematize in order to create the Inhabitants World Assembly

We consider the systematization of experiences as a fundamental part of the process for the creation of the Inhabitants World Assembly in 2011, that is as the result of a collective and participative work which invites inhabitants organizations as well as other social movements to act. To systematize means to learn from our practices of struggle, resistance and alternative proposals; that is why we strongly feel we should not undervalue our conquests and should continue, in a systematic way, sharing our experiences so as to increase exchanges, to expand the net of relationships and the initiatives of organizations and popular movements, while relating the local

problems and objectives to a global dimension and connecting the struggle for the right to housing with higher and broader claims for inhabitants' social, economic and cultural rights.

To systematize also means creating a new shared space of elaboration towards the collective construction of the 2011 Inhabitants World Assembly; a space open to all groups, organizations and inhabitants networks, regardless of geographical, cultural, gender differences, as well of the different ways of struggling for emancipation. A united space, respecting the principles of solidarity, and social justice, valorising diversity and with the common aim of struggling and creating alternatives to the devastating effects of the neoliberal globalisation.

An organized space, where together we can define progressive phases of work, common methodologies, and share experiences and proposals through languages understandable by everyone and, at the same time, rich and different due to exchange through technological means and to the computer resources available which allow the circulation of information and new collaborations with other subjects pursuing similar objectives and methodologies (Powos, Coredem, Museo de Pessoa, Alforja, Universities and local authorities).

What do we mean by Systematization for the Inhabitants World Assembly? We mean making some contribution to the construction of shared memories and long-term connections, which are the fundamental common basis of the collective intelligence of a network of inhabitants at local and international level.

Systematization consists of a collective work of:

- Documentation: to start recollecting and spreading the initiatives of struggle, resistance, formation and experiences of new models of coexistence and development made by groups and movements operating at local, regional, national and global level.
- Creating collective knowledge: starting from actions/experiences already realized, it is possible to open a space for comparison, reflection and for the immediate elaboration of new forms of knowledge and of efficient work methodologies, used by all to improve the process of social change for a more equal and just environment.

In this perspective, it is necessary to provide for theoretical and organizational means for impeding, stopping neoliberal logic and, on the other hand, to be innovative and able to progressively change the public policies of our cities.

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What is systematization?

It is a process allowing us to look at, recollect, analyze and learn from our practices. It gives us suggestions and criteria on how to do it but it also allows room for flexibility and creativity.

This proposal of systematization of experiences has always in itself the idea of change. We do not systematize to find out about what is happening while keeping on doing the same things; on the contrary, we systematize in order to improve, enrich and transform our practices.

1.1 The definition of systematization

There is no shared definition of systematization; this can create confusion at a conceptual level, but, on the other hand, it can also open the door to many “schools of thought” or social movements which have used this methodological proposal.

The word “systematization” is commonly used with two sets of meanings:

- a. Systematization of data and information
- b. Systematization of experiences

The first meaning is the most common and used to systematize data or information. In certain disciplines the term “systematization” refers to the classification, recording and organising of fragments of data and information.

The second option is less common and more complex and is used within the context of popular education. In this case, it involves the idea of going further, looking at the experiences as historical processes, i.e. complex processes, in which different agents intervene and which **develop within a certain socio-economic context** and **within an institutional moment** we all belong to.

To systematize experiences, therefore, means to understand the reasons why this process is developing in a certain way, to understand and read what is happening, starting from a phase of recording and of reconstruction of any such process. So, when systematizing experiences, we must start from the reconstruction of what has happened and the recording of the different elements, both objective and subjective, which have been part of the process, if we want to understand it fully and learn from our own practice.

1.2 The historical background

In Latin America, Systematization methodology began to develop in the 1970s within organizations active in the area of popular education. After many years of work, these latter realized that they had faced some interesting educational challenges but that, with the passing of time, little trace of them was left in such a way as to recollect and learn from these experiences directly as well as from shared critical analysis by the people involved.

In this period, this methodology and way of understanding Systematization were highly successful in Latin America and was found in University Social Work courses, in the CEAAL (*Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina*, the Council for the Education of Adults in Latin America), and also within the methodology of IAP (Investigación Acción Participativa, Research on

Participatory Action).

In the late 1990s, interest in Systematization began to increase again, following the experiences in both North and South, when education practices and cooperation for development began to be questioned and when not only industries, but also NGOs and social groups began to take quality and improvement processes into consideration.

Nowadays, the debate is mainly focused on the relationship of systematization with other processes and means such as research and the monitoring of any activities to be evaluated. There are many aspects entwined here, some are complementary and others are completely different: it is important to find the links and divergences between Systematization, evaluation, research and monitoring. In any case, it is not the way in which systematization differs from other practices that is important, but its specific aim. The systematization of experiences, no matter how it is done, will always focus on **the critical interpretation of the real process**, rather than on the results of the evaluation or on any topics such as research. In this way it will help the experience to be continued, as it is not simply **a way of monitoring the process, but rather it makes a critical contribution to the process itself**.

1.3 Focus of systematization

There are many approaches or schools of systematization whose content depends on the aims, the target it is addressed to, its usefulness, etc. The three main fields using this kind of methodology are:

- Popular education
- Research Participatory Action
- Schools of Social Work

For those involved in social work, to systematize means to understand, record and make clear the knowledge of the social service in order to give it a scientific value. The Permanent Seminar of Systematization in Peru has done most work with this methodology and its proposal emphasises producing knowledge from and for practice. However The Group for Research and Popular Education at the University of Cali (Colombia) have focused on Participatory Research, on analysis of experiences and on the people involved in it.

From its own perspective, the methodological core lies in constructing accounts based on experience and organizing interpretative readings of such accounts with the aim of elaborating a "shared macro account". This research is based on quality, hermeneutics and participation. The connection between systematization and popular education has been developed especially by Red Alforja, a network of popular educators in Central America.

The main focus is on learning from practices relating them to a specific context rather than elaborating knowledge. In this text we have been pursuing this kind of model in particular.

1.4 Characteristics of systematization

Let us take into consideration this definition of systematization:

Systematization is **a participatory process** that makes it possible to put in **order** what has occurred and to recover **historical memory, to interpret it, to learn new information** and to share it with other people.

According to this definition it is possible to identify some common characteristics found within all systematization practices.

a. Process

Systematization implies that the itinerary is already settled in order to fulfil a process upon which work in progress will be developed. Systematization does not consist of the results or the impact obtained, but of the process itself, its dynamics, its problems, of its going forward or backward. This process of systematization is as important as its own result. Thus systematization must be considered to be:

- work in progress following an itinerary
- based both on the process and on the result
- Because of this, it is a process open to the contribution and development of the group
- It helps us discover the logics through which this process, as well as the activity which is systematized, occurred (elements, causes, relations, etc.).

b. Participation

Systematization is, by definition, a method proposing participatory dynamics. This implies the need to create a space of work where the opinions of those participating can be shared, compared and discussed on the basis of mutual trust.

This is one of the most important challenges, as makes one reflect on how the different agents participating in the experience are involved in the systematization process. The subjects of the experience, all of them, can participate in its systematization contributing to critical analyses, not only providing information for other people to study.

It is certainly necessary to find modalities that make it possible to work efficiently as regards aspect of participation and this implies spreading the work out amongst many different agents, or even looking for external contributions, for methodological help.

The most important thing is to guarantee that those who involved in any experience will be able to play an important role in its systematization without leaving it in the hands of some “expert”, who systematizes for the rest of the group. We must remember that participation is not only fulfilment, but that it also implies levels of involvement in choices.

The participatory aspects of systematization are possible when:

- those participating in the experience are the subjects of the systematization
- you create a space of work based on people's trust
- there is a space where the subjects' own opinions can be shared, compared and discussed.

The process of systematization is therefore a process of dialogue between people, through which theories and cultural constructions are negotiated.

c. Ordering

Systematization implies the practice of organizing, putting in a logical order, facts/data and knowledge of an experience. An order designed in such a way as to facilitate, enable critical analysis of the experience. This requires:

- an accurate record of the facts/data
- an ordered reconstruction of the experience
- a record of any “unordered” fragments of knowledge and any impressions that have come to light during the experience.

d. Historical Memory

The practice of systematization makes it possible to rediscover the history of the experience and renew or restore memory of it:

- it implies efforts to reconstruct historical memories and allows access to memories as a way of normalized work
- it restores historical memory
- it critically analyses practices
- it makes it possible to perceive concrete practices as historical and dynamic processes.

e. Analysis and Study

This is one of the basic elements of systematization. Once historical memory has been recorded and ordered it must then be analysed in order to make it objective and to learn from it. Critical analysis in systematization is not simply a summary of what has happened in order to justify it, on the contrary, it means to understanding how the different elements and factors in the experience have combined so as to examine it from a perspective of change.

To do this, analysis cannot be limited to a specific part of what has been done directly, but will have to account for concrete practice within the context, the challenges that have been faced, the other elements that came into play, etc. This makes it possible to identify the most important aspects of our experience.

Critical analysis implies the following:

- every person is the subject of knowledge and has a perception of life deriving from his/her own experience
- one must make one's experiences as objective as possible: turn one's experience into a topic for study and theoretical analysis and, at the same time, make it the subject of change
- it implies thinking about practice
- it means considering experience within its specific context: critical analysis of a practice inserted in a particular environment

- it analyses processes of development through study of concrete spaces
- the experiences and analysis of those participating in the process cannot be ignored
- it has to find and keep balance between theoretical and practical aspects
- it develops a technical and professional combination with change and substantial democracy, including scientific, quantitative and qualitative variables.

f. Further knowledge and learning

The main benefit offered by the practice of systematization of experiences is obtaining further knowledge and learning. The knowledge derives from one's own practical experience, and the more it is useful, the more one can learn from it. One of the aims of extracting further knowledge from our practices is to be able to continue our work of social transformation.

This process of learning must allow us to:

- Conceptualize our experience and learn from reality
- reveal what “we do not know yet that we already knew”
- give some useful information
- give further knowledge in order to understand what is going on and find out whether it is possible to make general what is particular
- learn from our practice and from that of other organizations
- improve our practice.

g. Sharing and Spreading

As it in most processes that lead to further knowledge, the possibility of sharing it with all those who work in the same field of the systematized experience is highly useful, since:

- the organisation of information simplifies passing on an experience to others for them to use some time.
- its aim is to share but also to challenge learning
- it can reinforce the identity of an organisation and the sense of belonging to it.
- it makes it possible to share one's own experiences with those of other organisations.

1.5 Why do we systematize?

- We systematize mainly to learn from our practices, but also because we are trying to:
- recognise what has already been done
- recover the memory of what has been started
- analyse and acknowledge not only the failures but also the successes and the critical situations we have had to face
- analyse concrete processes within a wider context
- learn from practice
- get further knowledge from our experiences

- improve our practices
- move forward in our work in the field of social change

1.6 What do we systematize for?

- In order to improve our practices
- To get further knowledge
- To learn
- To communicate our knowledge to and share it with other people and organizations.

1.7 With whom do we systematize?

Systematization is a collective process carried out by those participating directly in the experiences, be they the beneficiaries, the promoters or those responsible for its dynamics. These people play different roles in the experience but all of them must have something to say in his/her own critical analysis and study. Participation of people external to the experience or the institution can either be an enriching or a limiting element in terms of the systematization of the situation of the working team. This phase can be led by an external facilitator, whose task is to

- propose and facilitate the process
- stimulate analysis and study of the experience
- contribute from his/her own perspective to help participants examine some elements which might not be clear to them or which gone unnoticed.

CHAPTER 2: Phases of the Systematization

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2.3 Step 3: Recovering direct experiences

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2.6 Step 6: To communicate and share what we have learned

2.7 Step 7: To fulfil and elaborate knowledge

The proposal to put to practice systematization presented here is a version of the methodology of Red Alforja which, for many years, has been recording experiences and organizing seminars and meetings. This is a suggested path through the necessary phases of a systematization process: this is not a 'recipe', on the contrary, it is an open and flexible proposal which has to be adjusted and adapted to the group to suit its experiences, time-tables, resources, etc., but it may improve not only our practices, but also the learning and knowledge of all the people involved in the action. Every phase highlights some key elements, suggestions, doubts and comments.

2.1 Step 1. The starting point

Living:

Even though it might seem obvious, the key-element is that of having had the experience. Without this, we cannot possibly systematize it. On the other hand, it might be that the starting point is an experience that we want to systematize, something which has not happened yet, which we have not yet experienced and during which we can prepare the process of systematization we will use later. Whatever, the experience is fundamental if we want to systematize it.

Showing interest:

Recounting an experience which, for some reason, we find interesting or which might increase our knowledge, is another key element. The desire, interest, of the majority of people to learn from their experiences is fundamental both for the more 'technical' aspect of the experience and for motivation in the process of systematization.

Approaching the topic:

We need to know what a process of systematization is. It is important that those who are going to

systematize get in touch with the idea of systematization, so that they can all think about what they mean, what steps are to be taken throughout the process, what expectations a person participating in the systematization has and contrast them with those of the rest of the group: all this is fundamental in order to contextualize the people, to get to know and recognize each other.

Make a choice:

Once the group's doubts have been cleared up and expectations agreed, the time has come to make a choice. This might be to systematize, to record the memory of our history, whatever, what is important is that all should realise what consequences the choice may have for the organisation. The systematization process needs time and people, along with institutional commitment and the will to learn and question our own practices. If the choice is positive, it should be accompanied by:

- the creation of a team promoting the process, stimulating and encouraging other people to participate
- a deadline, even approximate, indicating the length of time we want to dedicate to the process.

Key elements

- To have participated in the experience
- To want to learn from it
- To want to set up a systematization process.

Suggestions

- Remember the expectations and always keep them in mind throughout the process
- This is the right time to motivate and to participate in the process: we can give a name to it or to its different phases.
- Create the team promoting the systematization and set up some time-tabling
- Set deadlines.
- Keep a record of what happens throughout the systematization process.

2.2 Step 2. Questions to be answered first: what for, what, and, from what perspective?

Direct experience is the starting point upon which we set the Object, the Objective, the focus of Systematization: coherence between these three elements and a clear definition of the process is fundamental as it outlines the steps of the systematization.

1. What do we systematize for? (defining the focus)

The aim of the systematization helps us define the focus of such systematization. We must be clear, direct and concrete when defining the focus of the systematization. The focus depends on the group, the expectations, the circumstances, the time...

Key element

- Why do we want to have this experience?
- Be sure of the usefulness of this systematization.

Suggestions

- Take into account the mission and general institutional strategy
- Take into account personal and institutional interests and possibilities.

2. Which experiences do we want to systematize? (fixing the object)

Key element

We need to set the time and space for the experience that is to be systematized. What is set will depend on objectives, experiences, specific contexts, etc.

It is better to fix a start and end date for the experience that is going to be systematized. This is called the “object to systematize”.

Key elements

- Choose what experience we are going to systematize
- Set time, decide subjects and the context of the experience.

Suggestions

- The entire experience does not have to be covered.
- When defining the object, it can be useful to remember the most important moments, the essential facts, of the experience or just one crucial moment.

3. What are the central aspects of these experiences we want to systematize? (define a focus of systematization)

It is important to define the focus of systematization, which is also the aim or “the lens” through which we can examine this concrete experience. We have to look at it from a perspective focusing on our object, without feeling bound to cover the entire experience in all its complexity.

Key elements

- To know what aspects, dimensions, factors, elements we are most interested in.
- To define the central focus and avoid dispersion.

Suggestions

- Think about the entire process as a common thread covering the whole experience.

Some of the questions to be asked at this point in systematization could be the following:

- Do I really know the institution and the project: its mission, vision, people, destination, objectives, methodology, results, elements for and against it?
- Do I have access to information: documents, reports, records, plans, evaluations, etc.?
- Can I get information from direct and indirect sources?
- Why choose this part of the experience and not another one? What and who is it useful for?
- What benefits does it offer to practice?
- What information do we need?
- What will the final product be?
- What are the elements of our object of systematization?
- What are the elements of the context of our object of systematization?
- What is the temporal focus of our experience?
- What information is necessary to reconstruct the object of systematization?

2.3 Step 3. Recovering of the process that has been lived.

This is one of the most crucial phases in the systematization process: to reconstruct history, to record and classify information. As we have said before, there are schools, perspectives and approaches that consider this an essential moment. But any focus must consider this reconstruction as a fundamental step for systematization.

Reconstructing history

This consists of recollecting the moments and facts which, in some way, have marked our experience or which has proved crucial. In order to choose these moments we must take into account the objective, the object and the focus agreed upon. We should also remember those elements of the local, regional and global context which have influenced our experience. Written records, or graphics or audiovisuals can play an important role in this phase of systematization.

Memory: we can add to the information in our records through participants' memories and memoirs, in a sort of triangular relationship between reality, records and subjective memory.

In order to reconstruct history we can use different means which allow us to recollect those facts: time-lines, graphs, chronology, records, etc. We can do this in seminars, workshops or team meetings, interviewing those people who have been fundamental in our experience, etc.

Ordering and recording information

After reconstructing history, whatever the technique used, there will be a lot of information which

needs to be ordered, organized and recorded so as to be understood. There may also be a need to analyse any new aspects in depth.

Key elements

- Reconstruct clearly what happened, exactly how it happened.
- Define the steps of the process.
- Order and record all the information you have.

Suggestions

- Use as many records as possible, acts of conferences, 'diaries/notes', minutes of meetings, plans, seminar notes, graphics, maps, drawings ... Using them, we can elaborate models ready for when the information is systematised, depending on the object and the methodology already agreed on. There are many possibilities for people and groups to exploit their creativity.
- Organize information in a clear and visible way and make people who have lived the experience participate. They can fulfil information and even involve themselves in a more active way in this process.
- It is important to remember that anything, be it objective or subjective, is important and useful to the recovering of the memory.

Comments/ Doubts

- You keep finding information gaps or saturation and you ask yourself "why are we changing?" It allows you to raise some questions or to come to terms with unconscious elements. Sometimes this is a cathartic moment, which requires complete trust.
- You can start some phases of the systematization simultaneously from this moment on (it depends on the criteria adopted).
- Historical reconstruction is essential if we want to systematize.

2.4 Step 4. The most important question: why did what happened, happen?

We have finally come to the moment of **critical analysis**. We need to analyse, summarise and critically analyse the process of the experience, comparing the fragments of information gathered in the previous phase: we are neither looking for solutions nor for guilty people, but we are trying to understand why what happened happened, so that that we will be able to answer the most important question.

In order to start, it would be better to revise the work that has already been done. We must consider the questions that we have come across during the experience. Now it is time to add new questions which we want to ask the experience, always bearing in mind the aims of the systematization and trying to understand why what happened, happened. This way we can also be questioned by the experience itself. It is important to organise the questions according to their topics or to different categories relevant to the aim in order to help us understand and seek those

interconnections and relations in particular among the elements involved.

Key element

- Ask for the reasons why what happened, happened: why did it occur?
- Analyze each element separately and then consider possible interconnections
- Take into account the particular and the general, the personal and the collective aspects.

Suggestions

- Try to understand the key factors in the experience.
- Try to understand the logics of the experience.
- Compare what you have with other experiences and theories.

Comments/Doubts

- We must analyse the phases of what happened, what was really useful without looking at what was planned in the project (logics of reconstruction vs logics of planning).
- It is important to be in touch with authorities.
- This way we can refine our theoretical understanding and re-conceptualize part of what we have previously defined. This is the time to consider the theoretical analysis (how can we contribute to it and how / what can it offer us?).
- What is annoying is failing, especially when there sanctions follow. Often someone who does not belong to the group can help us objectify certain things (he/she can ask the questions that have not asked within the group, he/she can help you “look at yourself in the mirror”). An outside person help make expressions and silences objective.

Some elements and questions that may arise in this phase of systematization might be:

- What were the key elements of the strong and weak points of the experience
- Given that the experience is linked to many levels: the local, the micro, the personal, the inter-institutional, the collective, the national - trying to see the individual parts of the experience as well as the experience as a whole, the small things, the single detail and the most complex aspect that have influenced the experience in itself.
- Identifying the objectives: where do we want to take the process?
- Asking questions to localize the main tensions and contradictions of the experience.
- Comparing other texts and other external elements as regards what we wanted to do.
- Defining the relationships between these different aspects.
- What were the causes and the consequences of it?

- Were there improvements or failures?
- Indicate common aspects as well as differences.

2.5 Step 5. The final destination: Conclusions, learning and suggestions

We can learn many things throughout the process of systematization. The most important is that we will be able to elaborate and formulate our own reflections in a way that is understandable both to us and to other people/bodies. This is fundamental if we are to improve practices. Sometimes, depending on how it is formulated, the same reflection can be at the same time a conclusion, a moment of learning, and a suggestion.

Conclusions

It implies presenting some general reflections which go further than mere concrete experience. It is one step further in our own reflections in which, after answering some critical questions, we are encouraged to elaborate information which could then be made accessible and perhaps prove useful to other associations.

Moments of learning

We can learn from any experience. It is therefore suggested we should ask ourselves what we have learned from our experience. These moments of learning can have diverse implications. Sometimes there are just practical things, typical only and exclusively of our experiences, other times we may learn something that we can extend to or generalise to other similar experiences.

Suggestions

- Analysis of our experience allows us to identify some suggestions that we then offer to other people and/or organisations. We could formulate them answering the question: what could we suggest to other people or bodies undergoing an experience similar to ours?

Comments/doubts

- Statements can be theoretical or practical.
- There can be doubts or tensions. They can generate new systematizations and even new practices in our organization, and a new agenda.
- It is interesting that they may also be the starting point of new moments of learning.

2.6 Step 6. Communicating and sharing what we have learned

Sharing knowledge is what generates new opportunities and possibilities, it is important to make the results of systematization accessible.

This way of communicating can be different when it works at an internal or external level of the organization. In both cases we can communicate different aspects and also the way of communicating can be different. Both levels have the same importance and richness which derives from sharing and from the feedback that it brings. This is the solidarity dimension of systematization.

At the **internal level**, when we communicate our improvements in the systematization we can:

- facilitate participation within the entity and cohesion.
- open the experience up to everybody.
- obtain feedback.
- obtain information for our organization about the process of the systematization.

This kind of communication should be going on through workshops, reports and other moments of the organization, etc. We must be very careful during both formal and informal meetings, as communication is important.

At an external level, communicating the results of systematization we can:

- spread and share our experience, our reflections, moments of learning, suggestions... to and with other entities.
- strengthen ourselves and let other people know about us and our work
- help other people to learn from our experience.

Some examples of how to communicate systematization are to publish part or all of the systematization process, hold conferences and seminars, courses and workshops, organize exchanges and visits to the projects, promote publications and both formal and informal networks of relationships, didactic resources, videos, films and slides, leaflets, posters, street theatre or collective theatre.

Suggestions

- Turn what you have learned from the experience into something that can be communicated.
- Elaborate different approaches of communication.
- Share the results with all the people involved in the experience and also with external people and organizations.
- Use different and original ways of communication.

Comments/doubts

- At this phase we have to take into account some practical and ethical issues.
- Systematization must be useful and we must be able to share it.
- It is not always possible to have everybody agreeing upon the entire proposal. We have to look for a balance (prepare a questionnaire and ask people to comment on some points). It is better to look for different solutions and different “products” to be included in debates (there may be no second solution but at least the first one will be included in the debate it has generated).
- Communication is limited by the objective only if this is clearly defined, otherwise we will not know who our communication is addressing. The most important thing is to communicate in order to continue debating.

2.7 Step 7: Fulfilling and elaborating knowledge

Systematization is fulfilled when we come to understand the internal logics of the process and obtain a moment of learning which is important as regards what has happened and, which should become further knowledge which will suggest directions for new interventions.

Therefore the conclusions of a process of systematization should be formulated in terms of learning for future actions or interventions. Similarly, we should also add some lessons representing “seeds of generalisation” so that what we have learned from our experience might be useful to similar experiences as well as at the time of formulating concrete politics or re-elaborating theories and concepts from our own practices or, at least, stimulate more questions for theoretical elaboration. This moment allows us to go further than the practice of analysis and critical interpretation of a single experience, so as to enrich it, share it and generate further knowledge.

Summarising:

Systematization can be a process helping us to know, and know ourselves, better by starting from our own experiences. One of the methodologies we can use in order to improve not only our social intervention practices but also those of other movements. This focus can also allow us to go further in new theoretical and practical proposals within the field of social change if we share our experiences and learn with other people and organizations.

Challenges, advantages and limits of systematization:

What can be done and what cannot be done with systematization?

How can a single experience of systematization contribute to other experiences?

Can the lesson of an experience of systematization be valid or generalised for other experiences?