



ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

USC Shoah Foundation develops empathy, understanding and respect through testimony.

By recording and preserving audiovisual testimonies of eyewitnesses to genocide and crimes against humanity, we give voice to survivors and share their life histories and experiences with the world.

While the witnesses guide us through the darkness of humanity, they also shed light on the possibilities for every individual to counter hatred. We are inspired by their hard-fought hope. We believe testimony has a positive influence on people to be more kind, empathetic and humanistic.

We listen deeply, consider carefully, and place testimony in context. Through academic programs and research at our Center for Advanced Genocide Research, we build knowledge and insight. Our education programs deliver practical digital tools and resources via our award-winning website IWitness for our partners and their audiences from primary through university-level instruction. We evaluate our work.

The Institute's efforts are rooted in the Visual History Archive, a repository containing 55,000 testimonies of survivors and witnesses to genocide and crimes against humanity. The vast majority of the documented experiences are about the Holocaust. The Archive also includes hundreds of eyewitness testimonies of genocides in Armenia, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Guatemala, and Rwanda, the Nanjing Massacre, and most recently anti-Rohingya violence in Myanmar and current antisemitic violence in Europe.

Conducted in 63 countries, the testimonies average a little more than two hours each in length. The Archive contains more than 115,000 hours of testimony — the equivalent of 13 years. Its powerful search engine enables users to key in on specific moments of interest.

The Institute has also pioneered how history can be preserved and experienced in the digital age, inventing an interactive biography project called Dimensions in Testimony. The project enables people to have question-and-response sessions with pre-recorded video testimonies of genocide survivors. Dimensions in Testimony offers a way to preserve the ability to have real-time conversations with witnesses to history. To date, 19 testimonies have been recorded in this manner. The Institute also has produced several award-winning documentary films, including two filmed in 360-degree virtual reality.

Ultimately, our work centers around a worldwide effort to bring testimony to light, to preserve the faces and voices of the people who witnessed history, allowing their firsthand stories to inspire action to build a more positive world for generations to come.