Overview
This tool helps us understand more of the history of a particular community, by thinking through major events, seasonal patterns, common highlights and challenges faced over a certain period. The discussion resulting from this should allow the facilitator and community to analyse a certain context, making more informed decisions together on the best way forward. Alternatively, the timeline can be used as an evaluation tool to look back on the achievements and changes of, or challenges faced, by a particular project.

Instructions
- With your group of participants decide what types of information the group will consider the history of (e.g. disasters in the community, spread of HIV/AIDS, activities of the corps, etc.).
- Then decide with them how far back you will go (1 year, 2 years, 50 years, etc.)
- Either on the ground or on a large piece of paper draw a line with the start date at one end and today's date at the other.
- Now get the community to write or draw symbols for the key events over these years. As they do so, stop and ask exploring questions to find out as much as you can from what they are putting forward.

Top Tips
- Make sure someone takes notes throughout the conversations
- You can use paper, the ground, a chalk board in a classroom, lining up post-it notes, etc. to make your timeline.
- If you are examining a conflict or sensitive event, make sure that the activity is not likely to make matters worse before you start it.
- Make sure you celebrate achievements highlighted!

Go Deeper
- If using the timeline to gather a history, consider how the project will extend the community's future. For example, if there are regular drought periods – what should be considered in project planning to make sure this risk doesn’t negatively affect intended outcomes and efforts or investment of the project.
- If using the timeline to evaluate what has happened in a project, you could go further highlight key achievements and challenges (using the Ranking Tool).
Example

**Key**

- ![Great Storm](image)
  - Great Storm
- ![Rebels](image)
  - Rebels came to the village and killed 55
- ![Bomb](image)
  - Government bombed village looking for rebels
- ![Salvation Army](image)
  - Salvation Army arrive
- ![Reunite](image)
  - Officer helps reunite people to call for elections
- ![Elections](image)
  - Elections take place.