





# Culture Hack Method: Toolkit 1.0

Make the radical, common sense.

*The Culture Hack Method as a process in which we intervene and change dominant culture narratives through questioning, analysis (discourse analysis, network analysis, content analysis), de-codification, recodification, and creative intervention.*

## Who?

For those who want to respond to political conjunctures while at the same time want to create sustainable change. For those who imagine and create the inevitable transition to a non-capitalist, non-patriarcal, non-colonialist and non-racist world.

## / CHM - Ask Index

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## / How Does Culture Hacking Work?

Culture Hacking is the act of flipping a narrative on its side, revealing the systems of thought that support it, and intervening in those systems to allow new ones to emerge. Culture hacking happens all the time and all around us, both on the left and right, and on both sides of the political divide between the so called “global north and global south”. It’s essentially a way discourses evolve, and symbols are contested. Many communities and activists have hacked culture throughout the history of resistance. Nobody owns one method of doing so.

Our work on this method is founded on two core insights: power rests in the ability to control language, and humans make sense of their world through stories. The stories we tell shape the way we see the world and guide our responses to the problems we face. The best way to change the world is to change the stories at the heart of our cultures.

The Culture Hack method emerged from all the narrative interventions TR and our allies have been part of throughout our eight years of existence, in the context of a changing world that has seen recent uprisings and protests from Palestine to Standing Rock, to Wallmapu, to YoSoy132. The ways in which communities and activists have responded to crisis have mutated and adapted to new technologies, and new languages. Therefore, this method has seen many iterations and it will probably see more as it is evolving with the spaces that it serves and draws knowledge from: various disciplines, constant experimentation, and most importantly the communities that have engaged with it. It’s to them that we dedicate this work.

## / How To Use These Workbooks?

The Culture Hack method is open source and creative commons. Basically -- do with it what you will, and hopefully, use it to change the rules.

It was created for use in planning and running existing campaigns, interventions in discourse, symbol hacking, meme creation, etc.

The method can be applied to large-scale campaigns but also to more immediate interventions. The contexts of each intervention and issue will determine which parts of the method are relevant, when, and how. We invite you to be creative in using the toolkit!

It is composed of modules which can be followed step-by-step or as discrete units.

The Culture Hacking toolkit is adaptable. It is a series of principles, exercises, suggestions and hopefully “A-ha!” moments. When combined, they foster deep understanding of a dominant cultural narrative and how to dismantle or intervene in it. The method is flexible and adaptable to your context. The method can be followed from start to finish (and back again) as a full curriculum. Each step or module can also stand on its own, depending on its utility.

It brings together analog and digital tools and techniques.

Some technologies have been used by communities of resistance for thousands of years, from braiding hair, to the *nahuatl* numeric system. The notion of technology as wires and screens is restrictive and deeply colonial. Different technologies have been developed throughout the history of the world and they look and feel extremely dissimilar to the digital space we have grown accustomed to.

The Culture Hack toolkit proposes a set of principles that can be applied with the technologies available and acknowledging the needs of different interventions. Narratives are created and promoted in all kinds of spaces, both digital and analog, and people hacking them don't necessarily need to be experts in managing the latest technology.

## / How To Use These Workbooks?

Some groups will find that they are great at creating interventions but they don't necessarily know how to map their performance. Others might need to interrogate their collective motivations for the work. Yet others might be on the brink of producing something but not quite know how to shape it for their audiences. Here you will find five workbooks and some worksheets, one for each stage of the Culture Hacking process. They can be followed "in order" or you can mix-and-match the modules that feel closest to the process you are taking on. You can always go back and forth - culture is not linear and neither is the hacking of it!

## / By The Rules

The Rules (TR) was an activist collective that existed from 2012 to 2019. In its eight years of existence it focused on addressing the root causes of inequality, poverty and ecological break down through narrative and cultural interventions. TR worked directly with social movements to inform the nature of interventions, and worked with journalists, think tanks, independent researchers and others to reframe and amplify alternatives to help midwife post-capitalist realities.

### 2012-2016

The Rules have developed a method and toolkit to help social movements bring about narrative and structural change. We call it Culture Hacking.

### 2017

The Rules tried different tools and methods for creating cultural shift over the course of several years. In 2017 we facilitated a meeting between a group of activists from different parts of the world, to imagine what Culture Hacking could look like.

## 2018

With Atenco and the communities around the ancient lake of Texcoco, we tested for the first time the methodology and tools at its full potential. Culture Hacking proved to be a very powerful set of tools for grassroots movements and activists in the fight to create narrative shift and sustainable change.

## 2019

Together with young people from Guatemala, Culture Hacking took a second chance to demonstrate its power, creating a big narrative intervention in the middle of Guatemala's electoral process, putting in the center of the conversation the defense of life and the voices of indigenous women who defend their territory.

## / Action in the Anthropocene

When TR was formed in 2011, we knew we wanted to focus on a specific challenge, and not to have an organisation that exists for its own sake. In 2015 this instinct solidified into a firm close down date of December, 2019. We hoped that living for a time-bound period would free us from preconceived structures of how we work, play and make trouble together; that it would enable us to develop creative and nimble configurations, and empower us to respond in fresh and relevant ways to the troubles of our time.

**For a brief flavour of all the ways the world has changed in this time, we are leaving this documentary behind.**

*We are also publishing a set of tools and case studies that we will continue to use as individual narrative practitioners, and we encourage others to explore, use and make their own.*

- A method and practical toolkit for narrative campaigning.
- A number of case studies on how TR campaigns were designed and run.
- A media archive of many articles and videos we published over the years.
- An FAQ explaining everything from why we were originally formed to why we chose to die as and when we did.

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### You are Free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format

Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

All The Rules content is Creative Commons Share Alike 4.0. TR is now closed, but we will keep developing Culture Hacking from other places and spaces, any comment or contribution please write us here.

# CULTURE HACK METHOD



1. ASK



2. MAP



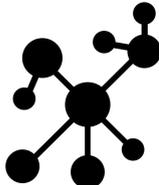
3. UNDERSTAND



4. RECODE



4. INTERVENE



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