



2015
Education Summit in
Bosnia & Herzegovina
REPORT

The Educators' Institute for Human Rights held an Education Summit in Jahorina, Bosnia-Herzegovina from July 1-3, 2015, which included twenty-nine participants from a variety of regions and a wide range of interests in the future of human rights education. Participants engaged in dialogue to set goals for the summit, learned strategies for Holocaust and mass atrocities prevention education from representatives of EIHR, The Watchers of the Sky Initiative, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Aegis Trust, brainstormed ideas, prioritized essential questions, and create a plan for collaborating to realize the following goals for human rights education in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- *Generate political will and funding*
- *Develop curriculum and materials*
- *Determine teacher training strategies and materials*
- *Support teachers as they work on sensitive topics*
- *Foster networks with other human rights educators and stake holders in the region and globally*

All participants agreed to meet in Sarajevo at a location provided by Dr. Eli Tauber twice in the coming year as they are able, and to work together on an online platform provided and moderated by EIHR to make the ideas a concrete reality, with the essential outcome to produce tangible, concrete results on these priorities for a follow-up summit with a teacher training component in the summer of 2016.

Wednesday, 1 July:

Exhibition: Righteous Among the Nations in Bosnia & Herzegovina
Dr. Eli Tauber, University of Sarajevo

Dr. Tauber met with EIHR staff in Sarajevo prior to the commencement of the summit and offered to share the exhibition he created in partnership with Yad Vashem, *When Neighbors Were Real Human Beings: Righteous Among the Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Set up in a common area outside the meeting room, the exhibition opened with a brief introduction by Dr. Tauber and was available to participants from dinner on the first night through lunch on the second day. The exhibit spoke eloquently to the summit's themes and was very well received.

Formal Welcoming Remarks
Kate English, Associate Director, EIHR

EIHR Associate Director Kate English officially opened the summit by taking a moment of remembrance of Sir Nicholas Winton, a British rescuer during the Holocaust who died on this day at the age of 106 years. She also expressed EIHR's

appreciation to donors and partners, including the Embassy of the United States in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their year-long commemoration, *20 Years of Peace: Together We Achieve More*, Kristin Thompson and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Jan Erik Dubbleman and the Anne Frank House, Dr. Eli Tauber, Gyorgy Tatar and the Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, and Elizabeth and Stuart Bohart of the Watchers of the Sky Initiative.

In setting the tone for the work of the summit, Ms. English emphasized listening as a key modality for constructive conversation, particularly on the part of representatives of international organizations, as the domestic participants are the central stakeholders in the summit's outcomes. She remarked that in preparing for the summit, several contacts had reacted with comments such as "there is too much conflict", or "nothing works". The participants, however, chose to be present at the summit, and even those that were unable to attend expressed their desire to remain in contact to engage in the process moving forward. The teachers' applications expressed realistic, thoughtful goals for their students, schools, and communities. All of the participants' choices as expressed through their actions demonstrate that there is hope for constructive results coming out of the summit. EHIR is committed to supporting a long-term, domestically driven agenda in small steps over time, and has been working with partners in Rwanda using a similar model since 2011 with an eye toward connecting teachers in post-conflict settings globally to learn from one another. "The overarching history of Bosnia and Herzegovina is one not only of tolerating diversity, but *celebrating* it as an example to other countries," Ms. English concluded, "If we chose to focus on past events, let us focus on that history to guide our work here."

Watchers of the Sky* presentation** ***Elizabeth Bohart, Executive Producer

Elizabeth Bohart, Executive Producer of the documentary film *Watchers of the Sky*, presented three film clips prepared for classroom use. The film and the clips illustrated the work and legacy of Raphael Lemkin, innovator of the concept of "genocide" and dogged advocate for its prevention. Toward that end, it highlighted contemporary figures including US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, and a Chief Prosecutor for the US Army at Nuremberg, Ben Ferencz. The central message of the film, according to Ms. Bohart, is that genocide transcends time and culture. Dr. Lemkin's vision cascades into the work of later visionaries, including Mr. Ferencz, who alluded to the work of Tycho Brahe. This early astronomer charted the movements of the stars, and while he didn't discover the meaning of the universe, he offered his work as a foundation on which others could build. Mr. Ferencz, referring to his own work, stated: "I am watching the sky. That's it."

Ms. Bohart offered examples of how the film and its educational curriculum have been used in the US, particularly in urban schools, which prompted questions about US public policy on Holocaust and Genocide prevention education. Participants also asked about the availability of the curriculum. Ms. Bohart invited the teachers especially to provide feedback on the curriculum through an online portal, providing access to hours of film for student and teacher use in developing custom tailored materials. Participants were provided a DVD copy of the film by EHIR and the Watchers of the Sky Initiative, as well as a link to a closed portal for access to these materials.

Thursday, 2 July:

Opening queries and brainstorming discussion: Why are we here? What do we plan to accomplish?

EIHR Staff

The day started with introductions, as all participants shared information about themselves and their work. Following this, participants gathered in small groups to generate goals for the summit outcomes, and shared those goals with the larger group. These goals focused on themes such as building networks, developing curriculum and methodologies, enhancing political will, and providing training and resources to educators. All were written on poster paper, hung on the wall, and photographed for documentation.

How we got here: Overview of the Holocaust and Contemporary Mass Atrocities

Lisa Adeli, Project Coordinator for the Balkans, EIHR

Dr. Adeli conducted a presentation reviewing her research and experience studying Balkan history, particularly pertaining to Bosnia's rich past as a borderland. She also shared her experiences bringing US teachers and university students to the region, including personal anecdotes appreciating the beauty and culture of the area. Dr. Adeli expressed her view of history as complex and overlapping, rather than strictly linear. Participants demonstrated appreciation of this broader view of Bosnia, which recognized the full scope of the country, instead of the oft assumed view through the lens of the recent war.

Teaching Guidelines and Warning Signs of Mass Atrocities: discussion and analysis

Kate English, Associate Director, EIHR

Ms. English shared pedagogy and methodologies in Holocaust education as researched and implemented through the Levine Institute for Holocaust Education at the USHMM. Opening with a recommendation to bear in mind three themes: context, content, and complexity, Ms. English offered a brief overview of the "Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust," as well as "Patterns in Mass Atrocities". Ms. English reiterated that the guidelines are just that: guidelines, not rules or regulations, and she encouraged participants to consider their own context while working with these tools. Participants responded enthusiastically, and referred back to the teaching guidelines in particular throughout the remainder of the summit.

***Some Were Neighbors* presentation**

Kristin Thompson, Program Coordinator, USHMM

Ms. Thompson began by offering context for her presentation, describing the mission of the USHMM, the Levine Institute for Holocaust Education, and the Center for the Prevention of Genocide. The latest initiative from the USHMM considers the traditional description of four familiar categories assigning "roles" to persons present during the Holocaust: victims, perpetrators, rescuers/resisters, and bystanders, in a more complex and sophisticated light. Part of this analysis has led to new thinking, such as replacing the term "bystander" with "onlooker", and focusing on the "grey areas" of individual choices made under specific circumstances over the course of the Holocaust. She shared elements of the resulting exhibition, *Some Were Neighbors*,

which examines collaboration and complicity on the part of individuals during the Holocaust, rather than groups, institutions, or movements. A lesson demonstration involving small-group photo analysis followed. Ms. Thompson then described conversations at the Museum regarding the potential for international exhibition of this work, and presented filmed testimonies from witnesses and perpetrators. Participants were asked to consider how this material might be received in regions where the events of the Holocaust occurred, so that she might share their responses with Museum staff.

Participants engaged in a conversation that started with the content of the film clips and concepts of the presentation, but quickly reflected the synthesizing of this content, previous presentations (particularly the guidelines and *Watchers of the Sky*), and their own experiences in Bosnia & Herzegovina. This segued seamlessly into the next session, reflecting on the strengths and challenges in facing the goals articulated at the start of the day.

Strengths and Challenges in Bosnia

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During this session, participants engaged in whole group discussion considering the realities facing teachers and educational stakeholders in contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina. Several participants endorsed the efficacy of beginning units on human rights by studying other examples, such as the Holocaust or the history of African Americans. Some shared concerns about reactions from parents and communities. Others added that psychoanalytic issues contribute to a fragile climate, observing that other countries with a history of mass atrocities, such as Germany and Rwanda, have taken many years to develop materials due to social trauma on such a large scale. One participant shared frustration with “yes, but...” thinking, wherein one party acknowledges another’s experience, but then counters with their own experience in order to nullify the original statement. This led to a productive discussion of the teaching guidelines “Avoid Comparisons of Pain” and “Translate Statistics into People,” as a means of appreciating the role of personal narratives in history curriculum.

World Café discussion: What to do and how to do it in Bosnia?

EIHR Staff

Traditional World Café discussions revolve around questions created in advance to generate ideas supporting a specific agenda. In this setting, participants were led through a process to generate their own questions based on their self-assessed goals. Over approximately thirty minutes, five questions evolved for consideration:

- How do we develop materials, identify and train teachers, and incorporate them into the curriculum? How do we overcome the limits of the prescribed curriculum?
- How can we secure political will?
- How do we bring together stakeholders?
- Should we teach only the Holocaust, or extend to mass atrocities?
- What are the steps to develop methodology to introduce the Holocaust, mass atrocities, and other sensitive topics?

Five tables, each with one of the questions written on poster paper, formed to

create small group discussion spaces. Participants rotated individually through all of the tables, with one person remaining at each to summarize the ongoing conversation as participants rotated through. Doodling, graphic organizers, and other non-conventional notation forms were encouraged as part of the brainstorming process. The individuals who remained at the table throughout the discussion then shared the outcomes of the total conversation with the whole group, and all of the final posters were hung on the wall and photographed for documentation.

Status Check

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Immediately following the World Café exercise, large group conversation reviewing the day's work and content evoked insights and personal examples in the service of the summit goals. This dialogue reflected trust in the group's respectful ethos, as specific stories of work with teachers and children illustrated the sensitive nature of the educational climate in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Updates of practical information concluded the session. All agreed that an evening of socializing after dinner was in order, and Richard S. A. Newell and Nina Osmanovic agreed to prepare a presentation for the morning addressing educational programming in Rwanda based on the work of the Aegis Trust Peace Curriculum, since, after great effort, a consular error in the visa process prevented EIHR's Director of Education in Rwanda, Aimable Mpayimana, from attending the summit.

Friday, 3 July:

Rwanda: Aegis Trust's Peace Education programs

Richard S. A. Newell and Nina Osmanovic, Participants

Mr. Newell and Ms. Osmanovic recently returned from a research trip in Rwanda observing Aegis' Trust Peace Education program. Both have a long-term relationship with Aegis, with this latest trip reflecting commitment to cross-cultural learning between Rwanda and Bosnia. The presentation highlighted the history of Aegis, a thorough description of the materials created for the Peace Education Program, and Mr. Newell and Ms. Osmanovic's impressions of the curriculum in action. Participants were impressed with the material's focus on individual stories to communicate the history of the genocide that occurred in Rwanda in 1994. In addition, they shared appreciation for the community involvement in this education program, and considered the challenges and possibilities inherent in adapting similar materials for use in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Next Steps: Planning for the 2016

EIHR Staff

Before the summit officially began, several participants started to reference "next year's summit". In this concluding session, participants deliberated on many practical considerations, such as the will to hold another event, what form such an event might take, location, outreach, language translation and inclusivity, networking, and many of the content areas revealed in the Goal Setting and World Café sessions. It became abundantly clear that the will to continue as a group is strong. Participants expressed that the most important considerations moving forward involve domestic sustainability of the spirit of the summit's work. Indeed, the discussion quickly became very specific in the concern that support structures need to be in place for the work of the summit to become practical reality. Significantly, participants agreed to schedule at least two

meetings during the academic year, one in fall and one in late winter. Dr. Eli Tauber offered his offices in Sarajevo as a location for these meetings. EIHR continues to offer logistical support, especially through technology, as well as fundraising and networking.

In response to all of the discussion of the common experiences of teachers in both Bosnia Herzegovina and Rwanda, a second initiative emerged. Teachers and Youth Activist leaders expressed the desire for specific training in programs highlighted at the summit, including training specific to the Holocaust and mass atrocities in Rwanda. Even though efforts to bring Aimable Mpayimana to the summit were thwarted by a consular error in the visa process, all present agreed that an in-person educator's exchange is a high priority.

Specific details of the summit's outcomes appear in the Conclusions and Recommendations section of this report.

Program Evaluation

EIHR Staff

Results from the program evaluation support the observable data reported here. The sessions involved in brainstorming, small group discussion, and discussion garnered the highest ratings, and participants heartily appreciated the content-based presentations. "Realistic enthusiasm" might best describe the sense of the participant's attitudes at the close of the summit. In their comments, many valued the opportunity to meet others with similar goals, and recognized that "a lot of work needs to be done, with patience." A desire for more conversation specific to Bosnia and Herzegovina was apparent, with the desire to follow through with the necessary work to realize the ideals expressed during the summit.

Post-Summit:

Conclusions and Recommendations:

These key areas for focused work emerged:

- Creating curricula, methodologies, and resources on "sensitive topics"
- Generating political will in support of the summit's outcomes
- Work with stakeholders to network content, logistics, and fund raising
- Provide educators with *both*:
 - ✓ high-quality training on content
 - ✓ support for the personal challenges in teaching material that is connected to their own experience of violence

Active balance of respect for professional and personal obligations with the commitment of individuals to follow through on plans from the summit is essential.

EIHR and partner organizations need to work with domestic leaders and participants to identify and procure sources of financial support in Bosnia & Herzegovina for the activities planned during the academic year.

Participants and EIHR staff commit to design a timetable or roadmap to implement the objectives identified at the 2015 summit.

Participants require logistical support to follow up with working groups on the identified areas of focus, such as physical space, and virtual tools for networking productively.

This group worked productively and respectfully on difficult content. Widening this network domestically requires consideration for maintaining the integrity of the “safe space” created by these participants.

Participants wish to reach out to similar initiatives internationally to find other teaching materials, expertise, and support.

Work at this time focuses primarily on Bosnia-Herzegovina, however the group plans to extend its efforts into “the region” [bordering countries from former Yugoslavia].

EIHR and the participants, together with Aegis Trust, are investigating methods and funding to hold an exchange, bringing Bosnian teachers to Rwanda to work together with the purpose of exchanging ideas, insights, and creating partnerships.

A follow-up summit in the summer of 2016 is recommended, including a pre-summit training workshop for educators and youth leaders on Holocaust and human rights education. This event should focus on the content areas listed above, and build on both this summer’s efforts and the work of participants accomplished over the academic year in their meetings and communications. International organizations are called to assist in these efforts with expertise, materials, financial, and logistical support

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