



Holocaust and Genocide Education training

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INTRODUCTION



Teacher training in the area of the Holocaust, Genocide is imperative to build a safer society free from genocide ideology. It is in the same line of thought that properly trained teachers help not only their country but also the entire world, making it healthier and more peaceful. Teachers that are equipped with enough knowledge and tools constitute the greatest inspiration to their students; great and well-informed teachers play a pivotal role to also create great students. Therefore, in order to support government of Rwanda efforts going on, it is always important to regularly pay close attention to the amount of support that we provide to teachers especially in the area of the Holocaust and genocide in order to equip them with necessary tools and knowledge to eventually support their students and school communities. This year, 149 teachers from four districts of Rwanda were trained in the area of the Holocaust and Genocide through the collaboration of Aegis Trust, Educators Institute for Human Rights, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Over the next months, there is a real need for similar professional development series to keep going on to sharpen teachers' understanding of these historical events and also their class practices, as well. This is so because teaching is an evolving skill and good teachers are like students who need to always learn new piece of information in order to bring that desired impact. I am confident these training opportunities will also keep teachers –up-to date on new approaches of tackling sensitive issues of the Holocaust and Genocide and turn into a real platform of sharing information, resources and more.

Freddy Mutanguha

**Regional Director, East Africa
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SUMMARY

The Aegis Trust and Educators Institute for Human Rights (EIHR) in partnership with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) worked together to train Rwandan teachers in the area of the Holocaust and genocide history to 149 teachers from three provinces of Rwanda. This series of trainings resulted from the Conference on International Holocaust Education (CIHE) that was jointly organized by the UNESCO and the USHMM, held in Washington, DC from 26 September-3 October 2015.

One of the conference major outcomes was to develop a country team project that will scale up Holocaust and genocide education in the country where the team is based. At the start, the project was targeting 160 teachers from two levels: primary and secondary. Among this targeted number, 149 teachers from Ngoma district (Eastern province), Gisagara (Southern district), Nyamasheke (western district) were trained in the two phases for each group.

In the first phase, teachers met Aegis Peace Education team for two weeks and to supplement this knowledge, they also met EIHR staff mainly for the Holocaust content. In this one-day training, teachers did not only learn the Holocaust but also developed knowledge about additional topics and different efforts going on to build sustainable peace education. Furthermore, they learnt how to resist genocide ideology and discussed the role of educators to eradicate this, etc. Interactive sessions and use of multimedia resources enabled participants to develop better understanding of the Holocaust and its aftermath. Participants explored the meaning of the Holocaust and different forms of propaganda under the Third Reich. In addition, they also appreciated the use of Holocaust memoirs to better understand this historical event that cost over 6 million lives. They went further discussing among themselves why they think it is important to teach and study the Holocaust.

In the Rwandan education system where genocide issues have been made crosscutting, the session enabled participants to understand that different ways and tools which should be used to allow students to realize that genocide ideology should be eradicated. This can be done not only in the history course but also in any other subject, especially in the area of social sciences. The teachers' growing efforts to eradicate genocide ideology have also been focused on.

Participants appreciated the role of Rwanda Peace Education Initiative and their different activities to help teachers understand why it is imperative to combine their efforts to supplement government of Rwanda efforts to combat genocide ideology through different and viable outlets. To concretize this, participants interacted with 1997 Nyange High School survivor to help teachers understand more why they have to always encourage heroism among their students. Participants committed themselves to pass on the training content to their colleagues and also school communities after developing appropriate cascading plan.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Freddy Mutanguha.....2

 Regional Director, East Africa2

 Aegis Trust.....2

I.TRAINING METHODS, OBJECTIVES AND TOOLS5

II.CONTENT OF THE TRAINING5

 II.1. Introduction to the Holocaust.....5

 II.2.Understanding important divisions of the Holocaust through the path to Nazi genocide7

 II.3. why to teach the Holocaust?8

 II.4. The Diary of Young Girl Anne Frank.....9

 II.5. Crosscutting Genocide issues.....12

 II.6. Right choice amidst crisis13

 III.7.Preventing genocide through education.....14

III.CHALLENGES16

IV.RECOMMENDATIONS16

V.CONCLUSION.....17

I. TRAINING METHODS, OBJECTIVES AND TOOLS

In these series of training the following methods were used to effectively deliver the content:

1. Presentation: this was used through the use of Power point that had been prepared. It enabled participants visualize key information to be conveyed.
2. Pair-discussion: This enabled participants to share their different views and concretize, live up the message after each mini session.
3. Plenary discussion: Participants have had time to meet and also share different views on the important topics. They sat together in small groups, brainstormed ideas and eventually summarized them for presentation.

The following were the main objectives of the trainings:

- ▶ Develop better understanding of the Holocaust (1933-45)
- ▶ Use Holocaust memoirs to teach better the Holocaust and for pedagogical purposes.
- ▶ Discuss why to teach the Holocaust
- ▶ Explore the role of education and teachers to fight genocide ideology.

II. CONTENT OF THE TRAINING

II.1. Introduction to the Holocaust

This session was run bearing in mind the following objectives:

- ▶ Analyze the roots of the antisemitism
- ▶ Identify the hatred propaganda under the Third Reich
- ▶ Discuss the different reasons why important to teach the Holocaust
- ▶ Present the different online resources to teach better the Holocaust

In this session, participants were exposed to different definitions according to the different scholars and organizations. The definition of the Holocaust according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was used to guide the next sessions of the introduction to the Holocaust (USHMM). Holocaust means “the *systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators*”.

Participants discovered different ways used by Hitler to exterminate Jews and other groups that were targeted. These included ghettos, transit camps, and concentration camps. The session also enabled participants to understand better the roots of hatred ideology and why Hitler also targeted other groups of population like Gypsies, and also other groups that were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

The session helped teachers to understand better how the final solution was administered in the early years of the Nazi regime and this led to the killing of nearly out of every three European Jews as part of this final solution.

Under this session, participants developed additional knowledge about different Hitler's extermination policies that include a euphemistic term of clandestine murder “*euthanasia*”. They learnt how this program cost lives of 5,000 physically and mentally disabled German children and how T4 extended this program to adults, and it claimed to have made 70,273 people perish.

II.2. Understanding important divisions of the Holocaust through the path to Nazi genocide



Participants carefully watching the film “The Path to Nazi Genocide”.

As recommended by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), it is imperative for both teachers and students to develop better understanding of these important divisions of the Holocaust. These are the period between 1933–1938, the period between 1939–1945 and also the period after 1945.

The film of the Path to Nazi genocide has been very important to help teachers understand different features of these important divisions because the film itself is chronologically organized in consistent ways which can help anybody develop a firm grasp of the Holocaust, its genesis and its devastating aftermath. The film itself has four important parts: Aftermath of World War I and the Rise of Nazism, 1918–1933 (Starts at 00:58), Building a National Community, 1933–1936 From Citizens to Outcasts, 1933–1938 World War II and the Holocaust, 1939–1945 and these are important to understand better these important divisions.

During the rise of Nazism between the period of 1918-1933, Hitler used the political tension under Weimar republic and serious economic challenges that Germany was facing to

manipulate the majority over the minority: some of those challenges include starvation, severe inflation, high unemployment rate, joblessness, among others. During this period, his extremist ideas that include territorial expansion, racially pure state, elimination of European Jews constitute the real warning signs of the Holocaust that should have awakened the entire democratic World before taking away 6 million Jews.

The Period of 1933-1936 constitutes a turning point in strengthening the Nazi ideology and lay ground of the Holocaust using propaganda as a real weapon to coerce people make improper choice, to allow people choose selfishness over sacrifice; In this country where Jews had been scapegoated over all Germany's ills, Hitler became dictator controlling of country's life spheres; Pseudo-scientific theories and 1935 Nuremberg laws left Jews uncertain and extremely threatened though some other people were praising Hitler of economic recovery that Germany was recording.

This growing hatred became more evident especially in the period of 1933-1938. Jews were persecuted and series of anti-Jewish laws were enacted. The Night of Broken Glass that left 250 synagogues destroyed created unimaginable panic among the target group. Many of them sought asylum in democratic countries but heavy quotas to curb migration were being imposed.

The last period of 1939-1945, marks Hitler's invasions of the WWII and an attempt to implement "final Jewish solution" took away many lives of the Jews. Many Jews that perished in ghettos, concentration camps, mass shootings operations constitute accumulation of warning signs and incapacity of human beings to stand against growing danger.

II.3. Why to teach the Holocaust?

In this session, participants were put in the different groups and brainstormed different reasons why, as teachers, they think it is important to teach or learn the Holocaust. These interesting group discussions were facilitated by different educators, and they also constituted a golden opportunity to strengthen their understanding when it comes to this event that cost lives

of 6 million Jews. After group discussion, participants had a chance of making presentations in front of their colleagues. In addition, they hanged their presentation findings on the wall for further reference during their break time. Some of their findings included the following:

- ▶ Understand the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society and how they can help students avoid those prejudices and hatred.
- ▶ Appreciation of diversity and pluralism, and also see this as source of strength rather than a source of friction.
- ▶ This historical event shows the devastating consequences of being a bystander amidst oppression and extreme injustice
- ▶ Think about the use and abuse of power as well as the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations
- ▶ Develop appropriate understanding of how hatred ideology was institutionalized and also discover how modern nation can use its technological capacity to exterminate one group of people.
- ▶ Develop critical assessment of how democratic nations failed to stand for Jews during that time of oppression and what should have been done to prevent this large-scale extermination of Jews.
- ▶ Appreciate how different people during the Holocaust risked their own lives to rescue Jews. These people are clear-cut reflection of heroism and their acts of courage should be taught to all generations in order to allow them follow in their footsteps.

II.4. The Diary of Young Girl Anne Frank

The session on the “Diary of Young Girl Anne Frank” was covered using mainly the film of Anne Frank and gallery walk to understand around the room in order to better understand how this story is connected with the Holocaust. This session had the following objectives:

1. To get to know Anne Frank as a writer;
2. To encourage reading and writing with Anne Frank as an example, using creative exercises;
3. To learn about the history of the Frank family to understand better the Holocaust.

In order to reach these mini session objectives, the transcript of the Film of Anne Frank has been printed out for participants; they read it first at individual level, and then in pair. This activity prepared them to watch the film of Anne Frank in order to develop better understanding of her life in the context of the Holocaust. Before watching the film pre-viewing and post viewing questions were prepared in order to help participants. For the pre-viewing question participants were asked to think about Anne Frank and what made her a powerful Holocaust icon. After watching the film, the following were the post viewing questions:

- ▶ Who is Anne Frank?
- ▶ What happened when Hitler came to power?
- ▶ Why did the Frank Family move to Holland?
- ▶ What happened when German army invaded Holland?
- ▶ What did Anne write about during the Secret Annex?
- ▶ What happened when police office hiding place?

In order to make this session more concrete, the gallery walk followed. Four big banners covering the whole story of Anne Frank had been printed out and displayed on the wall. The information covered on those banners capture the whole life of Anne Frank, reasons why the Frank Family and acquaintances went in the hiding. Furthermore, this information is presented in the context of the Holocaust.

After this gallery walk, participants had time in their different groups to sit and discuss why important to teach the story of Anne Frank, its relevance in the African context and also how it can be used for other pedagogical purposes. Some of the following reasons were advanced:

- The story of Anne Frank is important and also helpful to reflect back and remember those who were murdered by the Nazis
- It is relevant in different settings especially to help students study and understand better the historical context while using wonderful primary sources like her diary.
- The story can help anyone understand discrimination and its devastating consequences.
- The story of Anne Frank will help children understand better about the choices people made especially amidst crisis.



Ngoma teachers explaining reasons why the diary of Anne Frank should be used for other pedagogical purposes

HOLOCAUST ONLINE RESOURCES

Participants that wish to develop their further study were exposed to the following online sources:

- <http://www.ushmm.org>
- www.yadvashem.org

- www.unesco.org
- www.annefrank.org

II.5. Crosscutting Genocide issues

Genocide issues have been made crosscutting and it is important to understand how different subjects should be used to vehicle the message of eradicating genocide ideology. This session had the following objectives:

- ▶ Identify how the new competence-based curriculum helps teachers and students to eradicate genocide ideology.
- ▶ Identify new curriculum areas that emphasize on teaching 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and other genocides including the Holocaust.

The concept of crosscutting issue has been explained. Cross cutting issues are the ones that touch different aspects of the society on general principles. In education context, participants understood that cross cutting issue links the knowledge of that issue to make learning holistic and meaningful. Hence, the objective of this integration is to provide more effective, interactive, unified stimulating ways rather than static and segmented.

For the different subjects, teachers were required to choose the best teaching methods to help learners develop intended knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes. That's how teachers should plan their lessons and integrate genocide issues.

Trainees understood that competence-based curriculum helps teachers to develop their ability to act and also assume responsibility of their action. For that reason, teachers should help learners have a better understanding of Genocide issues through participatory and cooperative teaching methods. These help learners to develop their critical thinking and also reflect on their own situations.



Chantal Bagaye interacting with a small group of teachers on why Genocide issues have been made crosscutting

II.6. Right choice amidst crises

The popular story of Nyange High School has been presented through the testimony of Joselyne Mukahirwa, Nyange High School survivor. This session had the following objectives:

- ▶ Present the general aspect of Nyange High School in 1997
- ▶ Describe what happened by the time when the school was attacked.
- ▶ Identify ways to help students and teachers follow in the footsteps of Nyange High School students.
- ▶ Discuss the mission of Nyange Students Association



Joselyne Mukahirwa, 1997 Nyange High School survivor, interacting with teacher participants.

The participants explored the situation of Nyange High School, its status especially in 1997. The participants were taken through what happened on March 18th 1997 when bloodthirsty genocidaires that were trying to make the country ungovernable attacked the school. When they attacked the school, teenagers chose unity over the division, sacrifice over selfishness.

Interesting session of Ms. Mukahirwa was good stepping-stone for participants to reflect upon their role of encouraging heroism among their students. Joselyne Mukahirwa helped teachers to understand that amidst crisis, it is possible to respond to the call of your conscience and do what is right. In addition, Nyange High School students stand for values that all Rwandans like to identify, and they did not hesitate to pay the greatest price in their defense. That is why next generations will salute their act of courage. That is why they are Rwanda National Heroes and young generations should be encouraged to follow in their footsteps.

III.7. Preventing genocide through education

There are different efforts going on especially among educators that are aimed at eradicating genocide ideology. One of them is Peace Education Initiative; this brings together different Rwandan teachers to discuss how to build sustainable peace in the Rwandan society free from genocide ideology.

This session has the following objectives:

- ▶ Discuss the background of the Rwanda Peace Education: Vision, mission, objectives.
- ▶ Discuss why important teachers should come together through Peace Education Initiative.

PEACEDU Initiative Rwanda (PIR), is a Non-Governmental Organization founded by six Rwandan professional teachers in 2011 with the mission to teach young generation about genocide and its prevention referring to the Holocaust and 1994 genocide against Tutsi. PEACEDU also promotes peace culture, and human rights, as well as helping peace educators in healing from wounds caused by the 1994 genocide against Tutsis.

PEACEDU Initiative Rwanda has different clubs based in secondary schools; these help young people interact and get skills about peace education, genocide prevention as well as human rights through teacher-facilitated discussions and trainings on the above-mentioned topics. Moreover, PIR has also healed and storytelling program that helps teachers to heal from wounds.



Albert Rutikanga, founder member of PEACEDU, interacting with teacher participants.

The following are the core programs of PEACEDU:

PeaceEdu Clubs Program: This a coordination of all activities done in all clubs affiliated to Peacedu Initiative. The program also teaches genocide and its prevention as well as peace and human rights; for genocide studies, the focus is on the Holocaust and genocide against the Tutsis.

Healing and Storytelling Program: Peacedu organizes dialogues activities for peace educators to heal from wounds inherited from our past.

Research and documentation program: In this program stories of peace are digitally documented. In addition, research on genocide prevention is carried out.

III. Challenges

- Understanding the Holocaust requires history knowledge prerequisites; the fact that some teachers studied World History long time ago has constituted a stumble-block to this important knowledge connection.
- A lot of information about the Holocaust is in English and yet all participants do not have the same command of the use of English as a medium of communication.
- Lack of enough training materials like DVDs, books about the content presented. This is a challenge in the sense that participants will have difficulties when it comes to passing on the training content to their colleagues.
- One –day training is not enough to confidently build strong knowledge about that content.

IV. Recommendations

- Number of days of training should be increased; this will help to refresh some background knowledge that will help participants understand better the Holocaust. In addition, they will have enough knowledge that will allow them to confidently pass on the training content to their colleagues.
- There is a real need to translate some documents from English to Kinyarwanda in order to allow a wide audience less fluent in English have a firm understanding of this event.

- Different organizations promoting Holocaust education should work together to compile materials about the Holocaust in order to allow Rwandan teachers have tools to use just for their independent work and study.

V. Conclusion

This series of teacher trainings in four districts of Rwanda played a paramount role to allow teachers re-examined the past and also focus on their role to enable a peaceful society which is empowered enough to eradicate hatred ideology. Different sessions on the Holocaust were designed to help them understand the devastating consequences of hatred propaganda against the minority group especially when it is time of crisis and amidst other different challenges.

In order to understand better this historical event, teachers grasped why to also use the Holocaust memoirs like the diary of Anne Frank; this should not only be used for history purposes but also for other pedagogical purposes like promoting the culture of reading, etc. That is why participants who were trained in that story of Anne Frank in the context of the Holocaust shared among themselves reasons why they think it is necessary to teach the Holocaust and the story of Anne Frank.

This series of trainings were also important to allow teachers realize why genocide issues have been made crosscutting in the new curriculum and in order to support the Ministry of Education commitment and efforts, different teachers have decided to come together through PEACE EDUCATION Initiative. They have partnered with different organizations to better sustain the culture of peace, educate students, education communities about the past while envisioning the most stable future society. The series of trainings constituted a golden opportunity to understand better their activities, vision and mission, as well. Trainings also helped participants realize that all people especially young generations should have role models who's their heroic acts need to be emulated and followed; it is in this context that the most powerful story of Nyange High School Students was included in these series of trainings. The 1997 Nyange High School survivor who interacted with participants allowed them to understand that no matter how worse situation is ,it is always important to stand for values that bring us together as Rwandans. After realizing the importance of these sessions,

participants committed themselves to sharing the content of training with their colleagues and school communities in order to strengthen the culture of knowledge sharing.

ANNEXES

1. Attached Power Point
2. Album
3. Surveys
4. Anne Frank Gallery Walk
5. Attendance lists
6. Cascade form template