



EIHR/AEGIS Rwanda Teacher Corps

**Kigali, Rwanda
March 3-6, 2023**

Background and Summary

The Educators' Institute for Human Rights has worked with Aegis Trust, Rwanda, collaboratively training teachers since 2011. Most trainings took place at the Kigali Genocide Memorial on an annual basis and have been organized in the context of EIHR's efforts to support teachers' understanding of the history of mass atrocities, including the Holocaust, in order to draw important lessons of tolerance, justice, and respect for human rights and apply them in their day-to-day lives.

In March of 2023, EIHR initiated its first Teacher Corps program in Rwanda. Inspired by the Museum Teacher Fellowship at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, a program under which most EIHR's staff trained, the purpose is to create a cohort of Rwandan educators prepared to become leaders in the field of Holocaust education, atrocity prevention, and building sustainable peace.

15 teachers from across Rwanda gathered for intensive training on Holocaust education and teaching practices and classroom best practices in order to share this experience with colleagues in their home school districts.

Applicants were required to meet the following requirements for participation:

- Basic background information in the Holocaust and genocide education.
- Fluency in English and Kinyarwanda
- Being a teacher of any of the following subjects: Social Studies, History, Languages
- Prior discussion and agreement with school administration to implement a cascading plan of the training content to colleagues.

Teacher Corps members were required to choose a capstone project to work on through 2023, which will be presented at the final training in March 2024.

The objectives and agenda of the training content were set in the context of suggestions from the participants' observations at the 2020 training, with a goal to build a common knowledge in Holocaust and peace education for the first Rwanda Teacher Corps.

Achievements:

Fifteen teachers attended all four days of the program, gaining new insight on lessons and materials that they now feel comfortable utilizing in their own classrooms. Three guest teachers participated, one from a UNESCO program and two from a new school for Afghan refugees.

Sessions included a deep dive into the USHMM timeline activity with an extension on Anne Frank and her family’s experience, learning how to use the USHMM video “The Path to Nazi Genocide” in manageable parts with students, and teaching from memoirs and diaries during the Holocaust. Participants worked on rationale statements to ensure a solid foundation for teaching this subject. A focus on pedagogy and methodology was maintained, giving participants fresh ideas for delivering content to encourage critical thinking and to vary teaching styles and approaches.

Listening to the advice of past participants, we were able to provide more content on the Holocaust and more materials for the teachers to use in their own classrooms, modeling lessons and activities as time allowed. In addition, many commented on the value in seeing the lessons in action, with several participants saying they learned skills from the trainers, and many appreciated the time they had to discuss and learn from each other, as they were placed in groups each day to promote interaction and sharing.



Participants engage with Alexandra Zapruder, author of *Salvaged Pages*



Icebreaker activity to discuss rationale for teaching about the Holocaust



USHMM Timeline Activity



Shabbat dinner at Chabad House



Visiting PeaceEdu



Meeting Aegis staff members



Friendship and collegiality



Israel Ambassador Ron Adam

Funding

The Rwanda Teacher Corps was made possible by the generous support of the Woven Foundation and the Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation, with assistance from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Finance.

Media coverage

Daily newspapers: *The New Times*, "Teachers Tipped on Role in Documenting Genocide History." Saturday, March 11, 2023.

<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/5676/news/rwanda/teachers-tipped-on-role-in-documenting-genocide-history>

Television: Rwanda TV. "Exclusive: Holocaust and Genocide Teaching." Monday, March 6, 2023. <https://youtu.be/DF4vbwTNIM8>

Feedback

Evaluation forms were completed on the last day of the program by all participants, with the following results:

What did you appreciate about this training?

- Flexibility of trainers to listen to participants
- Books, materials, and content
- Testimonies from the field
- Learning skills from the trainers
- Great content, knowledge, and delivery of trainers
- Visit to PeacEdu
- Presence of Israeli ambassador
- Visiting and sharing with the Jewish community

How do you hope to change your practice as a result of this training?

- Sharing with students and fellow teachers
- Everybody I meet will receive knowledge about the Holocaust
- Use diary excerpts with my students
- Use the skills, methods, techniques, and new materials I acquired
- Encourage the use of Anne Frank's diary
- Being an agent of positive change in my community
- Work hand-in-hand with neighboring school community leaders to build sustainable peace
- Put more effort into teaching peace at my school



EIHR The Educators' Institute for Human Rights
Where the world's teachers partner to end hate

15

Teachers from across Rwanda

3

Guest Teachers from partner organizations

TRAINING OBJECTIVES CLEARLY DEFINED

100%

Of participants strongly agreed

TRAINING OBJECTIVES WERE MET:

7%

Of participants agree

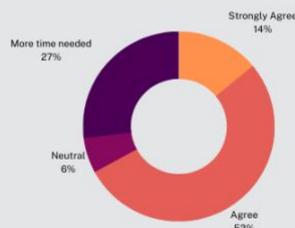
93%

Of participants strongly agree



8 WOMEN

7 MEN



Time allotted for training was sufficient

27 % would like *more time*

97%

Content was relevant to me and my students.

- 14 teachers strongly agreed
- 1 teacher agreed



Recommendations

As we are continuing this program in March 2024 with the same participants, we are taking their advice in the planning of those sessions. A few items we are taking into consideration:

- Having printed materials for each session
- Visit a school or program that institutes anti-genocide or a successful peace club
- More time for reflection
- Possibly visit another genocide memorial

We also planned for flexibility and programmatic revisions based on participant feedback, and implemented suggestions as we communicate online with participants:

- Finding the most effective way of communication
 - We tried implementing Slack and facilitating brief conversations and providing links via this app.
 - It was difficult for many of the participants to navigate on their phones.
 - We moved to utilizing What's App to communicate instead.
- Giving information in smaller chunks and not giving too many materials at one time.
 - We started with weekly posts on Slack.
 - Currently are sharing every two weeks
 - One resource at a time.

Actions

- Continue follow-up with each participant on their capstone project
- Solicit teacher recommendations for speakers and topics at the final workshop
- Consider viability of making this a yearly program

*Respectfully Submitted by
Aimable Mpayimana and Kim Klett*