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# Education about the Holocaust and preventing genocide

## A policy guide

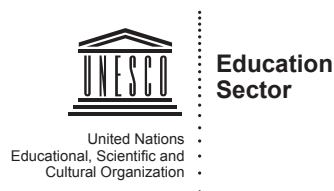


# Education about the Holocaust and preventing genocide

A policy guide

## UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.



## The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



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# Foreword

The creation of UNESCO came in response to the horrors of the Second World War and particularly the crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators. UNESCO's goal, as its Constitution states, is to strengthen the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" against "ignorance and prejudice [and] the doctrine of the inequality of men and races". This "doctrine" had resulted in the loss of millions of lives and included the attempt to murder every single Jew in the grasp of Nazi Germany.

The mandate of UNESCO is embedded in this history. This is why education about the Holocaust in particular, and education about the history of genocide and mass atrocities, stands at the heart of UNESCO's efforts to foster peace and mutual understanding. For UNESCO, quality education, based on knowledge of the social and political dynamics that can lead to mass violence, is fundamental to building stronger societies, resilient to violence and hatred.

Education is, indeed, indispensable to help foster a sense of belonging to a common humanity, to empower learners to become active citizens in crafting a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. This is the spirit of UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education, a pillar of the Education 2030 Agenda.

This Guide provides policy-makers with solutions to introduce education about the Holocaust, and possibly broader education about genocide and mass atrocities, into education systems and curricula. It is the first of its kind, focusing on matters that are relevant to policy, rather than on teaching practices alone. The publication addresses a wide range of essential questions, including: Why teach about the Holocaust? What learning outcomes can be expected from such educational endeavours? How do they relate to global education priorities? How to introduce the subject in the curriculum, train teachers, promote the most relevant pedagogies, and work with the non-formal sector of education?

Based on UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education work, the Guide draws on years of research and experience in the fields of Holocaust and genocide education. Numerous academics, educators and other experts offered insights and suggestions throughout the process. Multiple Holocaust and genocide related organizations – including the United

States Holocaust Memorial Museum – contributed to the content. This creation benefited from the time and expertise of many. I would like to express deep appreciation to all those who made this ground-breaking publication possible.

This Guide raises challenging questions for education stakeholders. It also provides concrete solutions regarding how educators can deal with deeply troubling histories, to build a better future for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Irina Bokova". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Irina Bokova

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# Acknowledgements

UNESCO gratefully acknowledges the time and the effort spent by those involved in preparing, producing and commenting on this important *Education about the Holocaust and preventing genocide. A policy guide*.

This guide was commissioned by UNESCO and produced in consultation with a wide range of Holocaust and genocide related organizations – including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) – and a distinguished international group of academics, educators and other experts.

The publication was developed under the supervision of Soo Hyang Choi, Director of the Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development, and Alexander Leicht, Chief of the Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, Education Sector, UNESCO. Special thanks go to Karel Fracapane (UNESCO) for his lead role in drafting, coordinating and editing the publication.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our rapidly changing, globalized world creates an urgency to ensure that education is helping young people become responsible global citizens. To play a role in shaping the future, young people must have a better understanding of the past. An understanding of history can support efforts to create free and just societies. Such examination is required not only for our greatest achievements - but for our failures as well. The Holocaust was a watershed event in relatively recent history whose legacies still shape our world and whose lessons are relevant to the challenges we face today. To this end, in line with initiatives supported by the United Nations and UNESCO, this guide aims to help key actors in the world's education systems implement effective education about the Holocaust and genocide as well as mass atrocities by discussing approaches for integrating this education into various environments.

Understanding how and why the Holocaust occurred can inform broader understandings of mass violence globally, as well as highlight the value of promoting human rights, ethics, and civic engagement that bolsters human solidarity at the local, national, and global levels. Examination of the systematic persecution and murder of Europe's Jews raises questions about human behaviour and our capacity to succumb to scapegoating or simple answers to complex problems in the face of vexing societal challenges. The Holocaust illustrates the dangers of unchecked prejudice, discrimination, antisemitism and dehumanization. It also reveals the full range of human responses - thereby raising important considerations about societal and individual motivations and pressures that lead people to act as they do - or to not act at all.

Multiple opportunities exist for teaching about the Holocaust. Working to prevent future genocides, for example, requires an understanding about how these events occur, including considerations about warning signs and human behaviours that make genocide and mass atrocities possible. Long before it became a genocide, the Holocaust began with abuses of power and what today would be called gross human rights violations. While most human rights violations do not result in genocide, the Holocaust presents an important case to be explored in a human rights context. Furthermore, the Holocaust and genocide and mass atrocities are topics that demonstrate the ways in which past events can continue to affect the present. Providing learners with tools for critical inquiry that enable an understanding of how human rights violations happen is essential for countering future offences - and can even lead to important conversations about contentious aspects of their own communities' past.



While education about the Holocaust is distinct from “genocide education” which addresses the trends and patterns of genocide and mass atrocities more broadly, the fields are interconnected. Policymakers can encourage the teaching of several cases of genocide that respect the historical integrity of each event, promote sound analysis of genocidal situations that differ from non-genocidal situations, and consider and utilize clear applications of defining terms to frame the studies.

Analysing how the Holocaust happened creates multiple opportunities for learners to reflect on their role as global citizens. Thus, strong opportunities also exist for aligning education about the Holocaust with the goals of Global Citizenship Education (GCED). GCED is a pillar of the Education 2030 Agenda and Framework for Action,<sup>1</sup> notably Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup> on Education, which seeks to develop students to be informed and critically literate, socially connected, respectful of diversity, and ethically responsible and engaged.

Because every country or education system has its distinct context and capacity (institutional, financial, and human), implementation agendas will vary.

While teaching and learning about the Holocaust in formal settings most often occurs in history classes, education about the Holocaust can be and is integrated across subjects such as civics and citizenship, social studies, literature, law, philosophy, religion, science, music, and the arts. Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches can be quite enriching for learners. To maximize learning, the topic is best covered in an age-appropriate manner that scaffolds the content and skills to address more complex themes while reinforcing key concepts as learners progress through their education. In any teaching, it is paramount that the Holocaust – or any other historical case of genocide – be taught in a way that learners can examine the complexity of unique historical factors that facilitated the onset of atrocity. Policy-makers can help to ensure educators are supported with accurate sources of information (such as textbooks with historically accurate content) and reliable methodologies (such as those suggested in this guide) accessed through professional development opportunities made available to pre- and in-service teachers. Given the interconnectedness of these factors, open and collaborative dialogue between policymakers, textbook authors, school leaders and educators nationally and internationally is important to help ensure the quality of education about the Holocaust on the level of curriculum, textbooks, and classroom practice.

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1 <http://en.unesco.org/gced/approach>

2 <http://en.unesco.org/sdgs>

Non-formal educational organizations can supplement the work of schools. Many such organizations provide direct interventions in classrooms, conduct teacher training, produce teaching and learning materials, or host study trips to museums, memorials and historic sites. International days of commemoration - such as the *International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust* (27 January)<sup>3</sup> and the *International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime* (9 December)<sup>4</sup> - can also provide opportunities to engage learners outside the classroom: participation in ceremonies, special school projects in the context of a larger classroom programme, activities organized with local authorities and external stakeholders. No commemorative event should be considered a substitute for an education programme.

A strong Holocaust education programme will include a plan to assess the practices, materials, and experiences of those involved both at the level of the learner and more broadly within the school and community. Assessment plans do not necessarily have to be comprehensive research studies or national surveys, but there should be an attempt made to evaluate when and how programmes were carried out and their impact on those involved.

Examination of this history can prompt students to understand how the Holocaust happened, reflect on their role in society, navigate moral dilemmas, accept a civic duty to their fellow citizens of the world, and act. The powerful potential of this education inspired the creation of this document.

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3 <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/>

4 <http://www.un.org/en/events/genocidepreventionday/>

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>2. THE RATIONALE FOR EDUCATING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 What is education about the Holocaust?	22
2.2 Why teach about the Holocaust?	23
2.3 Common contexts for teaching about the Holocaust	24
2.3.1 The prevention of genocide	25
2.3.2 The promotion of human rights	28
2.3.3 Dealing with the past	29
2.4 Educating about genocide: Recommendations	31
2.4.1 Objectives of comparative approaches	31
2.4.2 Guidelines for comparing genocides and mass atrocities	32
<b>3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Research on teaching and learning about the Holocaust	38
3.2 Overarching learning objectives	39
3.3 Contribution of education about the Holocaust to Global Citizenship Education	39
3.4 Learning objectives, topics and activities for teaching about the Holocaust in a Global Citizenship Education context	41
3.4.1 The cognitive domain: Informed and critically literate	43
3.4.2 The socio-emotional domain: Socially connected and respectful of diversity	44
3.4.3 The behavioural domain: Ethically responsible and engaged	45
<b>4. IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>47</b>
4.1 The curriculum	49
4.2 Recommendations for curriculum developers and textbooks authors	54
4.3 Professional development	57
4.4 Classroom practices	59
4.5 Non-formal education and extracurricular activities	61
4.5.1 Cooperation with memorials, museums and civil society	61
4.5.2 Commemorative activities	64
4.5.3 Adult education	67
4.6 Evaluating programme outcomes	69
<b>5. ANNEXES</b>	<b>71</b>
5.1 Resources for education stakeholders	72
5.2 References	74

## LIST OF TABLES:

<b>Box 1:</b> Resolutions and decisions on the Holocaust and on the role of education in the prevention of genocide .....	15
<b>Box 2:</b> Key definitions .....	18
<b>Box 3:</b> What was the Holocaust? .....	22
<b>Box 4:</b> Education and the responsibility to protect .....	25
<b>Box 5:</b> Genocide and mass atrocities – Key concepts .....	26
<b>Box 6 :</b> Education about the Holocaust in a global context .....	30
<b>Box 7:</b> Genocide and mass atrocities – Resources .....	34
<b>Box 8:</b> Educating about genocide in Rwanda .....	35
<b>Box 9:</b> Core conceptual dimensions of Global Citizenship Education .....	40
<b>Box 10:</b> Topics of Global Citizenship Education .....	42
<b>Box 11:</b> The Holocaust in curricula worldwide .....	50
<b>Box 12:</b> Cambodia’s effort to develop and implement a public curriculum for genocide and Democratic Kampuchea history (commonly known as Khmer Rouge History) .....	51
<b>Box 13:</b> Example in higher learning .....	57
<b>Box 14:</b> Links to memorials, museums and NGOs dedicated to the Holocaust .....	63
<b>Box 15:</b> Relevant international days .....	64
<b>Box 16:</b> Example: Holocaust remembrance days in France .....	66
<b>Box 17:</b> Examples of capacity-building opportunities for professionals .....	68

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Context

Societies today are dynamic, complex, and interconnected. We face new challenges that demand creativity and innovation. Our possibilities for moving forward are deeply shaped by our histories: indeed, the past is never completely past. Memories of it shape how communities navigate relationships and events at the local, national and global levels. How societies deal with history has profound implications for our present and our future. Humanity's worst failings – those instances of mass atrocities, including genocide – thus pose a particularly important challenge for education stakeholders. Educating students to identify the dangers of prejudice and exclusion – individual, cultural or institutional – and the responses of societies can prepare students to recognize and work to counter the trends that have produced history's worst crimes.

The weight of this topic can pose challenges for educators and students. For example, in environments that have experienced extreme violence, such education can stir memories of victimization or guilt. While creating conditions for dialogue, this study may illuminate the potential for further violence. Although some may be inclined to gloss over such controversial and divisive historical narratives, long-term stability and peace may come by not only confronting difficult pasts, but also by understanding the mechanisms that made such crimes possible. Providing students with the skills to engage in critical inquiry about what makes genocide possible can equip them to recognize the role of human rights and active citizenship in today's communities.

Education – especially history and civics education – can play a key role by providing a forum for addressing the past, while promoting the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that help prevent the occurrence, or recurrence, of group-targeted violence. Education about the Holocaust is such an endeavour.

The Holocaust as a topic of study is present to varying degrees in a substantial number of countries, notably European, as well as countries where victims of the Holocaust have sought refuge and others not directly affected. A recent study by UNESCO and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research<sup>5</sup> found that at least 65 countries specifically mention the genocide of Jews and other crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators in secondary schools' social sciences and history curricula. An additional 46 countries provide context (the Second World War and National Socialism) in which the Holocaust can be taught.

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5 Carrier, P., Fuchs, E. and Messinger, T. 2015. *The International status of education about the Holocaust: a global mapping of textbooks and curricula*. UNESCO/Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002287/228776e.pdf>

Teaching about the Holocaust is encouraged by the United Nations, which emphasizes its historical significance and the importance of teaching this event as a fundamental consideration pertaining to the prevention of genocide. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/7 (2005) on “Holocaust Remembrance” urges Member States “to develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future genocides”. Similarly, UNESCO General Conference Resolution 34C/61 (2007) on “Holocaust Remembrance” asks UNESCO to promote “awareness of Holocaust remembrance through education and (to combat) all forms of Holocaust denial” in accordance with previous United Nations resolutions.

### **Box 1: Resolutions and decisions on the Holocaust and on the role of education in the prevention of genocide**

The United Nations General Assembly resolution on “Holocaust Remembrance”, adopted in 2005 (A/RES/60/7), urges Member States “to develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future genocides”. A subsequent resolution on “Holocaust denial”, adopted in 2007 (A/RES/61/255), “urges all Member States unreservedly to reject any denial of the Holocaust, either in full or in part, and any activities to this end.”

UNESCO recalled these resolutions in Resolution 34C/61 (2007) of its General Conference on “Holocaust Remembrance”, asking the Organization to explore how to promote “awareness of Holocaust remembrance through education and (to combat) all forms of Holocaust denial”.

The United Nations Security Council, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, called for recommitment to fight against genocide through Resolution 2150 (2015), and emphasized “the particular importance of all forms of education in order to prevent the commission of future genocide”.

In Resolution (A/HRC/28/L.25) on the prevention of genocide, adopted in 2015, the United Nations Human Rights Council emphasized “the important role that education, including human rights education, can play in genocide prevention, and further encourages Governments to promote, as appropriate, educational programmes and projects that contribute to the prevention of genocide”.

## **UNESCO's strategy**

To implement these resolutions, UNESCO created in 2011 a programme dedicated to education about the history of the Holocaust. Through advocacy, research, guidance and capacity-building for education stakeholders from various regions of the world, UNESCO fosters knowledge about the history of the Holocaust and, more broadly, genocide and mass atrocities in ways relevant to particular national and local histories and contexts. The aim is for young people to become more aware of these important historical events and to understand the dynamics and processes that can lead individuals and societies to commit group-targeted violence.

UNESCO's work in the field is strongly connected to the Organization's efforts to promote Global Citizenship Education (GCED). GCED aims to empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. In this respect, teaching and learning about the Holocaust, as well as other instances of genocide in history, is conceived as a contribution to the implementation of the Education 2030 Agenda, notably Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal on Education, which calls on countries to "ensure that all learners are provided with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

## **Goal**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for policy-makers who seek to implement or substantiate within their education systems the study of the Holocaust and, more broadly, the study of genocide and mass atrocities. It describes how and why teaching and learning about the Holocaust can support global policy priorities through education, including cultivating global citizenship, promoting human rights, and developing a culture of peace and prevention of genocide.

The document focuses essentially on education about the Holocaust and the decades of research, resources and pedagogical practices demonstrating its effectiveness. Guidance is provided for setting clear, realistic and context-specific learning objectives that promote quality education about the Holocaust.



The guide also contains principles and references to policies, pedagogies and practices that may apply to the teaching of other cases of genocide or mass atrocities. It may prove useful notably in cases for which little educational guidance is available. In this regard, it emphasizes the importance of historical accuracy when teaching about each particular genocide and mass atrocity in order to avoid inaccurate comparisons between historical events and to support an outcome that honours historical truth.

The guide also indicates how education about the Holocaust can advance the learning objectives sought by GCED, drawing on research and practice in both fields. The guide therefore relates educational outcomes specifically to GCED and may also be used to build educational programmes in related areas (e.g. genocide education, peace education, civic education, media literacy, human rights education, education for international understanding).

Finally, the guide provides a framework that can be adapted for different national and local contexts, allowing education providers to identify relevant entry points, develop context-specific guidelines, address delivery capacity and support implementation. Suggested topics and learning objectives presented in this guide are not exhaustive; they can and should be complemented by topics and issues that are locally appropriate. They may also serve as a reference for gap analysis when reviewing or seeking to strengthen existing programmes.

## Box 2: Key definitions

**Global Citizenship** refers to a sense of belonging to the global community and a common sense of humanity, with its presumed members experiencing solidarity and collective identity among themselves and collective responsibility at the global level. (UNESCO. 2016. *The ABCs of Global Citizenship Education*.)

**Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** is a framing paradigm that encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world that is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable. GCED has three conceptual dimensions. The cognitive dimension concerns the learners' acquisition of knowledge, understanding and critical thinking. The socio-emotional dimension relates to the learners' sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity. The behavioural dimension expects the learners to act responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world. (UNESCO. 2015. *Global Citizenship Education-Topics and learning objectives*)

**Holocaust Education** or **Education about the Holocaust** refers to efforts, in formal and non-formal settings, to teach about the Holocaust. Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust (TLH) addresses didactics and learning, under the larger umbrella of education about the Holocaust, which also comprises curricula and textbooks studies. The expression "Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust" is used by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

**Genocide Education** refers to education about patterns and trends in the phenomenon of genocide and/or about the causes, nature and impact of particular instances of genocide.

**Peace Education** promotes a Culture of Peace, which according to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/52/13 (1998) consists of "values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity, that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation and that guarantee the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society".

**Human Rights Education** comprises "activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, inter alia, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills, and understanding, and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights". (United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Human Rights Education and Training A/Res/66/137, 2011)

**Reconciliation Education** is a methodology "to promote tolerance, inclusiveness, and ability to deal with conflict nonviolently, and the capacity to think critically and question assumptions that could again be manipulated to instigate conflict". (Cole, E. (Ed.) 2007. *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*. Rowman and Littlefield, p.2).

### **Beneficiaries**

These guidelines are intended to serve as a resource for policy-makers, curriculum developers, textbooks writers and publishers, and teacher educators. Curriculum developers in particular will find here topics and learning objectives that can be adapted to their own local frameworks. Likewise, policy-makers can use the guidelines to evaluate the current situation of education about the Holocaust – or other cases of genocide and mass atrocities – in their national context, and identify relevant educational priorities.

The guidelines may also be useful as a rationale and overview for stakeholders involved in the non-formal sector of education, including memorials and museums dealing with genocide, mass atrocities and human rights abuses, and other human rights and peace education organizations, which often provide teacher capacity-building, and produce guidance and resource support for both learners and teachers.

### **Structure of the guide**

The guide is divided into four sections. After the Introduction ([Section 1](#)), [Section 2](#) explores the value of teaching about the Holocaust in several contexts. Additionally, the document provides guidance to engage in comparative study of genocide and mass atrocities. [Section 3](#) suggests key learning objectives for education about the Holocaust and aligns these with educational frameworks relevant to Global Citizenship Education. Finally, [Section 4](#) identifies key areas of implementation for policy-makers, and explains how the history of the Holocaust can be introduced and taught in formal settings and in non-formal ones such as museums.

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## **2. THE RATIONALE FOR EDUCATING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST**

## 2.1 What is education about the Holocaust?

The term “Holocaust” (or *Shoah*, meaning “catastrophe” in the Hebrew language) is used to refer to the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators. *Holocaust* is a word of Greek origin meaning “sacrifice by fire”. The Nazi regime, which came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were “racially superior” and that the Jews were an existential threat to the so-called German racial community.

During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived “racial inferiority”; among them were Roma (Gypsies), people with disabilities, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological and behavioural grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah’s Witnesses and homosexuals.

### **Box 3: What was the Holocaust?**

In the early years of the Nazi regime, the National Socialist government established concentration camps to detain real and imagined political and ideological opponents indefinitely and outside any judicial or administrative review.

Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, special killing units carried out mass-murder operations against Jews, Roma and Soviet state and Communist Party officials behind German lines. In occupied territory, including the Soviet Union and Poland, German SS, police and military units murdered more than 2 million Jewish men, women and children, and hundreds of thousands of other people without regard for age or gender.

Between 1941 and 1944, German authorities deported nearly three million Jews from Germany, from occupied territories and from the countries of some of its Axis allies to killing centres and murdered them using gassing facilities constructed for this purpose.

In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at more than nine million. By 1945, the Germans and their collaborators had killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the “Final Solution”, the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe.

For more information, please consult the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum online encyclopedia:  
<https://www.ushmm.org/learn/holocaust-encyclopedia>

How did a modern state, mobilizing all relevant segments of the society and institutions of the state apparatus, lead millions of people across Europe to engage in, support or acquiesce to the targeted destruction and mass murder of such magnitude? How could civil servants, doctors, lawyers, educators, engineers, media professionals and other ordinary citizens, across borders, support policies that led to the systematic murder of their colleagues and neighbours? Education about the Holocaust examines not only the events of the Holocaust but also these questions.

In addition, education about the Holocaust provides a starting point to examine warning signs that can indicate the potential for mass atrocity. Systematic discrimination and marginalization of Jews and other minorities, in a climate of extreme nationalism and exclusionary propaganda, preceded the actual mass murders and genocide that occurred during the Second World War. Studying this history can prompt discussion about the societal contexts that enable exclusionary policies to divide communities and promote environments that make genocide possible. This study, therefore, can lead to a reflection on how atrocities happen and the role that individuals, institutions and societies can play in recognizing and responding to the warning signs.

Understanding how and why the Holocaust occurred can inform broader understanding of mass violence globally, as well as highlight the value of promoting human rights, ethics and civic engagement to bolster human solidarity at the local, national and global levels.

## 2.2 Why teach about the Holocaust?

Germany in the 1920s was a fledgling democracy with a highly educated society; it was a country traumatized by the First World War and a severe economic crisis. Teaching how it could gain acquiescence and mobilize its intellectual, social, political and military resources to support and implement policies and actions that resulted in the murder of millions, and enlist groups in other nations, makes it possible to identify important warning signs for all societies. Education stakeholders can consider the following rationales to support the introduction or strengthening of the subject in their particular educational context and to confirm how such inclusion may advance their education policy priorities.

Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust:

- ✓ Demonstrates the **fragility of all societies and of the institutions** that are supposed to protect the security and rights of all. It shows how these institutions can be turned against a segment of society. This emphasizes the need for all, especially those in leadership positions, to reinforce humanistic values that protect and preserve free and just societies.
- ✓ Highlights **aspects of human behaviour** that affect all societies, such as the susceptibility to scapegoating and the desire for simple answers to complex problems; the potential for extreme violence and the abuse of power; and the roles that fear, peer pressure, indifference, greed and resentment can play in social and political relations.
- ✓ Demonstrates the **dangers of prejudice, discrimination and dehumanization**, be it the antisemitism that fueled the Holocaust or other forms of racism and intolerance.

- ✓ Deepens reflection about **contemporary issues** that affect societies around the world, such as the power of extremist ideologies, propaganda, the abuse of official power, and group-targeted hate and violence.
- ✓ Teaches about **human possibilities** in extreme and desperate situations by considering the actions of perpetrators and victims as well as other people who, due to various motivations, may tolerate, ignore or act against hatred and violence. This can develop an awareness not only of how hate and violence take hold but also of the power of resistance, resilience and solidarity in local, national, and global contexts.
- ✓ Draws attention to the **international institutions and norms that were developed in reaction to the Second World War and the Holocaust**, such as the United Nations and its international agreements for promoting and encouraging respect for human rights (United Nations Charter, 1945); promoting individual rights and equal treatment under the law (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948); protecting civilians in any form of armed conflict (Geneva Conventions of 1949); and protecting individuals who have fled countries because of a fear of persecution (Refugee Convention of 1951). This can help build a culture of respect for these institutions and norms, as well as national constitutional norms that are drawn from them.
- ✓ Highlights **the efforts (not always successful) of the international community to respond to modern genocides**. The Military Tribunal at Nuremberg (1945-6) was the first tribunal to prosecute “crimes against humanity”, and it laid the foundations of modern international criminal justice. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948, under which countries agree to prevent and punish the crime of genocide, is another example of direct response to crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany. Educating about the Holocaust, therefore, can lead to a reflection on the recurrence of such crimes and the role of the international community.

## 2.3 Common contexts for teaching about the Holocaust

Multiple opportunities exist for teaching about the Holocaust. The text that follows explores the role that teaching and learning about the Holocaust can play in three specific contexts: the prevention of genocide, the promotion of human rights and dealing with traumatic pasts.

### 2.3.1 The prevention of genocide

To teach about the particularity of the Holocaust is an opportunity to teach about the nature and dynamics of mass atrocity crimes, i.e. genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The *United Nations Framework of Analysis of Atrocity Crimes* states “atrocity crimes are considered to be the most serious crimes against humankind. Their status as international crimes is based on the belief that the acts associated with them affect the core dignity of human beings.” From a human perspective, but also from social, political and economic perspectives, the costs and consequences of these crimes are immeasurable and extend far beyond the limits of territories where they were perpetrated. Prevention has, therefore, been identified by the international community as a necessity for international peace and stability. Prevention requires continuous efforts and awareness in both the short and long term at the local, national and global levels. Such measures may include institutional initiatives that strengthen the rule of law and protect human rights, ensure a better management of diverse societies and reinforce civil society and independent media.

Education can play a vital role in this context because it can raise questions about warning signs, impacts on society and the range of human behaviour necessary for such events to occur. Additionally, education can help to instill awareness and appreciation of diversity and human rights.

Education about the Holocaust, as well as education more broadly about genocide and mass atrocities, provides the opportunity to help build critical thinking skills, to augment resilient and effective responses to extreme and exclusionary ideologies, and to illuminate for students how they see themselves in the context of their country’s past, present and future. Such education is, in fact, an essential long-term investment.

#### **Box 4: Education and the responsibility to protect**

The 2013 Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled *Responsibility to protect: State responsibility and prevention* underscores the role of education in creating a society that is resilient to atrocity crimes and, in that regard, recommends that “education curriculums should include instructions on past violations and on the causes, dynamics and consequences of atrocity crimes”. The report highlights Argentina’s decision to launch in 2009 “an educational programme that includes teaching the Holocaust in a manner that reinforces the notion of accountability, participation and inclusion.”

For more information, please consult the full report *Responsibility to protect: State responsibility and prevention. Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/929–S/2013/399)*: [http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/SG%20report%202013\(1\).pdf](http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/SG%20report%202013(1).pdf)



### **Box 5: Genocide and mass atrocities - Key concepts**

The term “genocide” was coined by lawyer Raphael Lemkin, himself a Polish-Jewish refugee, in an attempt to describe the destruction of a group of people on the basis of their purported race, ethnicity, nationality or religion. “Genocide” became an international legal term in 1948. In 1944, in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin writes:

“By ‘genocide’ we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing). . . Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.”

The terms “atrocities crimes” or “mass atrocities” refer to three legally defined international crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. “Mass atrocities” may also refer to “ethnic cleansing”, which has not been recognized as an independent crime under international law.

#### **GENOCIDE**

Under the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted in 1948, genocide was defined in Article 2 as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

#### **CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY**

Defined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as “Acts that are part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack:

**(a)** Murder; **(b)** Extermination; **(c)** Enslavement; **(d)** Deportation or forcible transfer of population; **(e)** Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law; **(f)** Torture; **(g)** Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; **(h)** Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender... or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court; **(i)** Enforced disappearance of person s; **(j)** The crime of apartheid; **(k)** Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.”

### WAR CRIMES

War crimes can be committed against a diversity of victims, either combatants or non-combatants. In international armed conflicts, victims include those specifically protected by the four 1949 Geneva Conventions, i.e. (1) the wounded and sick in armed forces in the field; (2) the wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of armed forces at sea; (3) prisoners of war; and (4) civilian persons.

War crimes are codified by the 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Additional Protocol I, article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; Article 2 and 3 of the Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia and Article 4 of the Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

### ETHNIC CLEANSING

The *Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 780* (1992) uses the term to describe “a purposeful policy by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas.”

The Office of the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide published in 2014 the *Framework of Analysis of Atrocity Crimes: A Tool for Prevention* which contains exhaustive information about violations of international human rights and humanitarian law and how they can be prevented: [http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/framework%20of%20analysis%20for%20atrocity%20crimes\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/pdf/framework%20of%20analysis%20for%20atrocity%20crimes_en.pdf)

### 2.3.2 The promotion of human rights

The Holocaust began with abuses of power and gross human rights violations by Nazi Germany that over time escalated into war and genocide. While not all human rights violations result in genocide, the Holocaust presents an important case to be explored in a human rights context. The discriminatory policies and practices that dehumanized and marginalized Jews and other minority or political groups (such as depriving individuals of their citizenship) illuminate how human rights violations when combined with factors such as the abuse of power and/or exclusionary ideology can become normalized in a society – even one framed by the rule of law. That these policies escalated over time to a state-sponsored system for murder underlines the dangerous environment that can result when human rights are disavowed. In the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust, a number of international norms promoting human rights were formulated, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. Examining this outcome represents a crucial phase in understanding the evolution of human rights concepts.

Still, education about the Holocaust and human rights education are two distinct fields – each rich and full on its own. How educators can create the space for students to examine the history in a manner that respects the tenets of each field requires some thought. A number of organizations have considered these points of intersection, including the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), in partnership with Yad Vashem<sup>6</sup>, and the German Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” (EVZ). Thoughtfully integrating examination of the Holocaust into a human rights framework can be an important dimension of education that promotes critical thinking about the roles and responsibilities of members of society and their leaders in the context of human rights.<sup>7</sup>

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6 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. 2011. *Toolkit on the Holocaust and Human Rights education in the EU*. FRA and Yad Vashem developed this toolkit to provide insights into Holocaust and human rights education contents and methodology; it can be used for teaching about and from the Holocaust and human rights. <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/toolkit-holocaust-education/index.htm>

7 Eckmann, M. 2015. Is Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust Relevant for Human Rights Education? Gross, Z. and Stevic, E.D. (eds.), *As the Witnesses Fall Silent: 21st Century Holocaust Education in Curriculum, Policy and Practice*, UNESCO IBE/Springer International, pp. 65-53.

### 2.3.3 Dealing with the past

Educating about the Holocaust is primarily a duty for European countries, in which considerable segments of societies either collaborated with Nazi Germany or stood by. After an initial period of silence and/or minimization, many countries have developed an understanding of the need to educate about the Holocaust and the obligation to investigate and face their national past. Nevertheless, national, professional or individual responsibilities remain heavily debated within and among countries where the Holocaust took place. Even more than 70 years after the events, a self-critical vision of history that accounts for the range of responsibilities in the murder of Jews and other groups such as the Roma has yet to emerge in many places. Nationalistic ideologies continue to influence the ways in which history is remembered and taught.

Many post-atrocity communities throughout the world struggle with divided societies. Social cohesion remains fractured and progress is blocked by the country's refusal to deal with its national history of genocide and mass atrocities and the long-term trauma such crimes cause. This challenge increases when conflicting parties or survivors and their tormentors must co-exist in the same society in the aftermaths of atrocity crimes. While some societies opt for an approach of silence, others have found that as a society transitions towards non-violent and humane ways to handle conflict, facing the past can become an important element of the national narrative.

Teaching about a contested history involving atrocities that still affect the present is a particularly challenging task, all the more so because history education is one of the most difficult segments of education systems to reform. Moreover, dealing with the history of past abuses through education often requires a minimal consensus within the society, and therefore institutional support, before new historical narratives accounting for crimes perpetrated can be integrated in curricula and textbooks or tackled by teachers in formal education settings.

Nonetheless, providing learners with tools for critical inquiry that enable an understanding of how human rights violations can come to permeate a society is essential to countering future offences. In sensitive contexts, examining one or more situations of genocide or mass atrocity from another time and place, such as the Holocaust, may help learners engage in important conversations about contentious aspects of their own communities' past. Any comparative approach requires teaching the particular historical and cultural contexts of each genocide or mass atrocity in order to prevent trivialization or distortion of each event.

## Box 6 : Education about the Holocaust in a global context

Due in part to the important visibility of the subject internationally, teaching about the Holocaust has become in certain cases a valuable reference for societies that have experienced atrocity crimes in their own past, allowing them to re-examine those events and how they have been represented and dealt with since they occurred. In such cases, education about the Holocaust is introduced as an “entry point” or a “catalyst” to articulate issues that may have been too difficult to tackle directly at the national level.

A traveling exhibit about Anne Frank toured **South Africa** and Namibia in 1993-1994, and incorporated panels addressing South Africa’s own past human rights abuses. The exhibit’s success led to the establishment of the Holocaust Centre in Cape Town in 1999, with others established in Johannesburg in 2008 and Durban in 2009. Likewise, the new curriculum adopted in 2007 focused upon human rights and explicitly included the Holocaust in 9th and 11th year social studies and history. Students learn first about the Holocaust and then apartheid, which enables them to make appropriate connections (and distinctions) between the two. The introduction of courses about the Holocaust in formal education in South Africa, notably through the leadership of the South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation, has provided a powerful tool to engage with the needs of a post-apartheid wounded society and to challenge enduring racial prejudices, in part because the Holocaust is so removed from South African experience.

With the support of UNESCO and of the Mémorial de la Shoah (France), **Côte d’Ivoire** included in 2016 a chapter about “Genocide and Mass Violence” in the secondary education history curriculum. The purpose is to strengthen teaching about the history of the Holocaust and the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994, thus introducing particularly sensitive concepts in a curriculum geared towards sustaining a culture of peace in the country. The Ministry of Education has in the meantime organized training for education officials to disseminate knowledge about the history of genocide and mass atrocities from an international perspective.

**Argentina** created in 2006, in the context of the 30th anniversary of the coup, a special programme within the federal Ministry of Education entitled “Education and Memory” as a result of National Education Law N° 26.206, stipulating that the purpose of education is “to reinforce the exercise of democratic citizenship, respect of human rights and fundamental liberties”. One thematic focus of the Ministry was education about the Holocaust, in addition to the memory of recent dictatorships. In 2009 a national “Working Plan on Education about the Holocaust” (Resolution 80/09 of the Federal Council of Education) resulted, setting the subject as a priority for ethics and citizenship education, and ensuring the development of actions to support teaching and learning about the Holocaust at national and provincial levels. According to the creators of this programme, “the study, reflection and debate around the Holocaust allows us not only to incorporate into our memory a key historical fact with profound consequences in human culture, but it also allows us to open up a series of questions about the understanding and respect of otherness in our own communities, and the defence and respect for diversity, which are in turn the foundations for the construction of citizenship. In this sense, we consider that the study of the Holocaust as a historical event, can be a ‘bridge’ to question our own experience and to provide answers on how to best participate as active and responsible citizens, how to not be indifferent to the pain of others, and how to demand that societies and governments respect universal human rights, among others.” (Source: UNESCO. 2017. *La enseñanza del Holocausto en América Latina. Los desafíos para los educadores y legisladores*)

## 2.4 Educating about genocide: Recommendations

“Genocide education” deals with the phenomenon of genocide, while education about the Holocaust focuses above all on the causes and dynamics of the genocide of the Jewish people and responses to it. However, both fields are increasingly interconnected. Genocide studies – referring to academic research about the broader trends and patterns of genocide and mass atrocities – and genocide education have become more widespread in universities and schools, as genocide and mass atrocities are recurring phenomena in the world. The studies have expanded to examine theories about how and why genocide happens. Of course, every genocide is a unique historical event. Education about the particular event of the Holocaust includes considerations about the concept, planning and implementation of that genocide, and can prompt reflections as to how what we learn about the Holocaust can contribute to the prevention of mass atrocities today. Each approach holds value. One should note, however, that scholars continue to examine the relationship between the two fields.<sup>8</sup> In any case, to date, the Holocaust has been the most researched, documented and widely taught case of genocide.

### 2.4.1 Objectives of comparative approaches

As more and more historical and educational materials become available about several instances of genocide and mass atrocities in history, policy-makers can encourage the teaching of several cases of genocide, with a view to pursue the following learning objectives:

- ✓ Engaging learners in the analysis of common patterns and processes of genocidal situations that differ from non-genocidal situations, to give insight into warning signs and the underlying dynamics of genocide. This promotes an awareness of the incremental nature of violence that can lead to genocide today. It also allows consideration of what factors and processes may make some societies more resilient, while similar tensions and dynamics have led elsewhere to genocide and mass atrocities.

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8 Insights into this relationship can be found in Bloxham, D. 2013. *Holocaust studies and genocide studies: Past, present and future*. Apsel, J. & Verdera E. (eds), *Genocide matters. Ongoing issues and emerging perspectives*, Routledge; and Michman, D. 2014. *The Jewish dimension of the Holocaust in dire straits? Current challenges of interpretation and scope*. Norman, J.W. G. (ed.), *Jewish histories of the Holocaust, New transnational approaches*, Berghahn.

- ✓ Helping learners to better understand how societies deal with a past of mass violence, how affected communities and survivors live with the legacy of genocide, and how nations devastated by such crimes may be able to overcome conflict and achieve peace and stability.
- ✓ Enabling learners to reflect upon the differences and similarities between various cases of mass violence and to better understand the particular historical significance of each of these events.
- ✓ Providing learners with the time to learn about cases of genocide that may not have received much international or national attention.

### 2.4.2 Guidelines for comparing genocides and mass atrocities

When engaging with the study of genocide as a general historical phenomenon, policy-makers might also take into consideration the following points:

- ✓ Legal definitions form the basis of international understanding, but debates exist on the application of definitions. Scholars and practitioners discuss how broadly or narrowly the terms should be interpreted, and sound arguments can be made for various interpretations. Indeed, this dialogue continues as the international community refines its capacity to wrestle with these complex crimes. Still, definitions matter. Policy-makers can benefit from understanding the evolution in this area even as they model and advocate the clear defining of terms.<sup>9</sup>
- ✓ It is important to incorporate a local or regional perspective into the study of genocide, or more generally of mass atrocities. Many European countries teach about the Holocaust as well as other crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, often have an interest in examining the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda or the 1904 genocides of the Herero and Nama in German South-West Africa (today Namibia). Other regions may examine the genocides and mass atrocities in Cambodia, Darfur or Srebrenica. Learners may feel that examining events from within their own geographic region offers a sense of connection and more commonalities with their own realities and history than cases from other regions.

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9 Straus, S. 2016. *Fundamentals of Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention*. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, chapter 1.

- ✓ It is important to be aware, however, that in countries with a history of genocide or other mass atrocities, addressing one's own case directly may prove too challenging or controversial. Introducing the topic through the lens of another historical case can provide an opening for examining one's own history. One can draw on the body of knowledge, experiences and conceptual understanding that have emerged from genocide studies. A study of the Holocaust, for example, can be a good starting point, due to the wealth of high-quality educational resources supported by extensive pedagogical knowledge regarding learning outcomes.

Because the examination of genocide and mass atrocities can involve emotional, political and pedagogical challenges, these further observations are useful to keep in mind:

- ✓ While common patterns and themes can be detected in the carrying out of genocides and their aftermath, each event has specificities and differences that make each historical context unique. What one learns about one historical case may not be universally applicable. Sound educational approaches address this reality.
- ✓ Educators should be aware that examining and comparing different cases of genocide and mass atrocities requires a thorough historical understanding of all the events considered as well as dedicated curricular time.
- ✓ Finally, particular care should be taken when comparing a case of genocide with historical or contemporary events that may be quite different. Historically contextualized analysis of diverse cases should enable students to better understand similarities and differences and highlight the particular historical significance of each event. Comparison should not lead to minimizing the importance of one or the other event; each should be understood and recognized in its own right and complexity.



### **Box 7: Genocide and mass atrocities – Resources**

Some organizations provide documentation, courses and training on past and ongoing cases of genocide and mass atrocities, specifically or generally, as well as on the subject of prevention. Educators can find online, for instance, various documentation on crimes perpetrated in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Guatemala, the Ottoman Empire, Rwanda, the Soviet Union, and other places. Some examples:

- Aegis Trust <http://www.aegistrust.org/>
- Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) <http://www.auschwitzinstitute.org/>
- Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-CAM) <http://www.dccam.org/>
- Genocide Education Project <https://genocideeducation.org/>
- Genocide Watch <http://www.genocidewatch.com/>
- Institute of Political Studies of Paris Mass Violence and Resistance online journal <http://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en>
- International Crisis Group <https://www.crisisgroup.org/>
- Kigali Genocide Memorial <http://www.kgm.rw/>
- Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (MIGS) <http://www.concordia.ca/research/migs.html>
- NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies <http://www.niod.knaw.nl/en>
- Rutgers University UNESCO Chair in Genocide Prevention <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/unesco-chair-genocide-prevention>
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide <https://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide>
- USC Shoah Foundation UNESCO Chair in Genocide Education <https://sfi.usc.edu/about/unesco>
- Yale University, the Genocide Studies Program <http://gsp.yale.edu/>

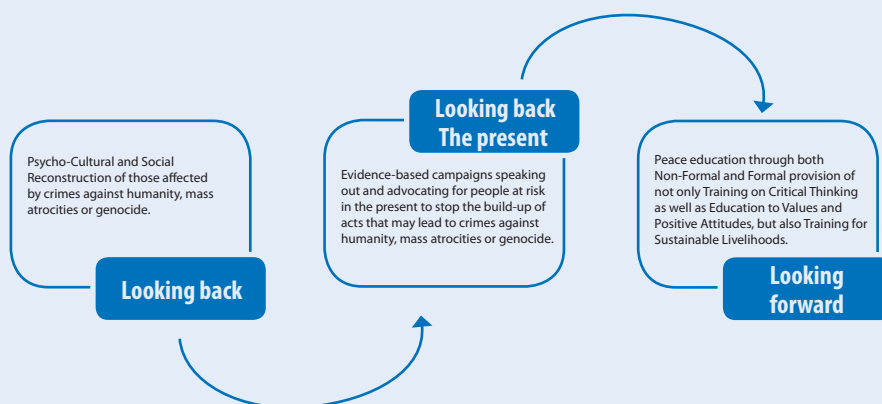
### Box 8: Educating about genocide in Rwanda

Recent Rwanda history curricula explicitly stipulate the teaching of the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi, notably through the comparison “of different genocides” with a view to “suggest ways of preventing genocide from happening again in Rwanda and elsewhere” (2015). A comparative approach has been adopted, which is clearly reflected in the 2015 *Curriculum for Sustainable Development*. The competence-based curriculum framework mentions “genocide studies” as a cross-cutting issue, therefore introducing the study of genocide in a variety of subject areas. It further states that “Rwandan children should know about the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi alongside the Holocaust and other genocides” (Rwandan Education Board, p. 10).

Teaching about the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, and thereby introducing genocide studies in history textbooks and curricula, has been part of a gradual process to promote national unity and peace. This process included a moratorium on some chapters of Rwandan history in 1995, which ended when considerations pertaining to the 1994 genocide were introduced into the 2008 history curriculum. Recent approaches also built on the acknowledgement of the disastrous effects of pre-genocide Rwandan education, which contributed to discrimination against the Tutsi population and constituted a backdrop for the ideology that led to the genocide. In contrast, introducing the history of the genocide in the education system was a recognition that schools, in addition to non-formal and informal learning environments, are crucial venues to impart knowledge about the genocide and to overcome silence, denial and conflict. These changes also correspond to a deeper reflection on appropriate pedagogies to help learners grapple with the legacy of the genocide. According to Jean-Damascène Gasanabo, director-general of the Research and Documentation Center on Genocide at the National Commission for the Fight against Genocide (CNLG) in Kigali, “This change in the curriculum has been supplemented by a shift to transform learning from one based on standard rote memorization to one that encourages discussion and a spirit of critical thinking and analysis. This approach identifies the student as an active participant in the learning experience, not merely a silent recipient of history as ‘evangelical speech.’”

Yet teaching about genocide remains a difficult matter to handle for teachers, in part due to the scarcity of available educational materials and guidance. The Kigali Genocide Memorial and Aegis Trust, in partnership with other Rwandan organizations such as the Educators’ Institute for Human Rights, has, therefore, developed education programmes and in-service training to help teachers build capacity and acquire historical knowledge to deal with genocides and mass atrocities. Such programmes emphasize “critical thinking, empathy and individual moral responsibility.” (Gasanabo, J.D., Mutanguha, F., Mpayimana, A. 2016. *Teaching about the Holocaust and Genocide in Rwanda*). They explore historical examples, primarily the genocide of the Jewish people and the genocide of the Tutsi, through a “Sustainable Peace Model/Framework” which seeks to link genocide education (*looking back*) to genocide prevention (*looking into the present*) to peace-building (*looking forward*).

### Aegis Trust's Sustainable Peace Model/Framework



Source: Aegis Trust

For more information, please consult:

Gasano, J.D. 2017. The 1994 Genocide as Taught in Rwanda's Classrooms. *UNESCO World Education Blog*.  
<https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2017/01/06/the-1994-genocide-as-taught-in-rwandas-classrooms/>

Gasano, J.D., Mutanguha, F. and Mpayimana, A.. 2016. Teaching about the Holocaust and Genocide in Rwanda. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East. Special Issue: Holocaust Education, Volume 3, Issue 3*, pp. 329-345.  
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2347798916654583>

Rubagiza, J., Umutoni, J. and Kaleeba, A.. 2016. Teachers as agents of change: Promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion in schools in Rwanda. *Education as Change, Volume 20, Number 3*, pp.202–224.  
[https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/EAC/article/download/1533/pdf\\_50](https://upjournals.co.za/index.php/EAC/article/download/1533/pdf_50)

Rwanda Education Board. 2015. *Competence based curriculum: Curriculum framework pre-primary to upper secondary*. Ministry of Education, Republic of Rwanda.  
<http://www.tcop.rw/file/2041/download?token=T398Bm6a>

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# **3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Decades of research and practice provide excellent guidance on how to incorporate quality study of the Holocaust in diverse educational contexts. This section provides detailed information about learning objectives for education about the Holocaust. It also shows how the learning objectives align with approaches to Global Citizenship Education. A brief review of what is known about teaching and learning about the Holocaust provides a basis for the definition of objectives.

### 3.1 Research on teaching and learning about the Holocaust

Many educators, scholars and advocates believe that studying the Holocaust can help students develop valuable knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Intended outcomes can range from knowledge acquisition to behavioural change. Of course, the relationship between knowledge acquisition and changing attitudes and behaviours is complex and varies from culture to culture; additional long-term studies would be beneficial to understand outcomes and new challenges. Nonetheless, scholars have explored the impact of studying the Holocaust and its relation to levels of antisemitism, racism and homophobia; its effectiveness for promoting democratic, human rights, intercultural and citizenship ideals; and its relationship to intergroup relations, remembrance and transformative learning.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) mandated a multilingual expert team to collect and review research on teaching and learning about the Holocaust. The team identified nearly 400 studies from more than 600 publications in 15 languages.<sup>10</sup> Among its many findings, the report noted that students and teachers experience the study of the Holocaust as distinctly compelling, and that both teachers and students from a variety of backgrounds are often highly engaged in its study. Learning about the Holocaust can lead to improvements in historical understanding, tolerance and moral reasoning. Effective teaching about the Holocaust could reduce ignorance and challenge passive stereotypes. Students often expressed an interest in learning more about the Holocaust. The IHRA study suggested that the greatest changes in reducing prejudice or stereotypes about the “other” came through facilitated reflection time – a step often bypassed due to time constraints. The research affirmed the importance of defining clear and realistic learning objectives and aligning the teaching methods with the specific goals of the different subjects and disciplines within which Holocaust history is taught.

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10 Eckmann, M., Stevick, E. D. and Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, J.(Eds.) 2017. *Research in Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust: A Dialogue Beyond Borders*, Metropol Verlag, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

## 3.2 Overarching learning objectives

Based on the research described above, learners who study the Holocaust should be able to:

- ✓ Describe how and why the Holocaust and crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators happened. Identify the role of governments, institutions and various members of society during the Holocaust.
- ✓ Explain how the consolidation of power can facilitate oppression and genocide.
- ✓ Analyse the motivations and pressures that influenced peoples' behaviour as the Holocaust unfolded.
- ✓ Analyse how the particularity of time and place influences the unfolding of events in local, national and global contexts.
- ✓ Describe the idea of international human rights and explain how international norms evolved in response to the crimes of the Holocaust and the Second World War.
- ✓ Identify common patterns and processes that led towards the large-scale killing of civilians. Note early warning signs such as impunity for crimes, "us-them" rhetoric, or political instability.
- ✓ Apply knowledge from the era of the Holocaust to make connections to past and contemporary issues.

## 3.3 Contribution of education about the Holocaust to Global Citizenship Education

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) aims to develop students to be informed and critically literate, socially connected, respectful of diversity, and ethically responsible and engaged. There exist strong opportunities for aligning education about the Holocaust with the goals of GCED. Indeed, understanding how and why the Holocaust happened can help learners reflect on their role as global citizens, develop skills in historical understanding regarding why individuals and states acted the way they did in their given circumstances, and possibly take action on civic issues important for their school and society. Teaching about the Holocaust can, therefore, be expected to provide opportunities for contemporary skill-building, decision-making, and critical self-reflection on one's own role in society.

The study of the Holocaust is highly compatible with GCED for at least three key reasons:

- ✓ The Holocaust addresses themes that are central concerns of GCED, including human rights and discrimination.
- ✓ The Holocaust forms the historical backdrop that informed the development of the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which can be understood concretely by linking them to specific violations before and during the Second World War.
- ✓ A review of research about teaching and learning about the Holocaust demonstrates that some approaches (suggested below) can have outcomes that are sought by the GCED framework.

UNESCO recommends three key learning domains for GCED: cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural.

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### **Box 9: Core conceptual dimensions of Global Citizenship Education**

#### **Cognitive**

To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking regarding global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.

#### **Socio-emotional**

To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, with empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.

#### **Behavioural**

To act effectively and responsibly at local, national, and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Source: UNESCO. 2015. *Global Citizenship Education. Topics and Learning Objectives*, p.15.  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf>

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The GCED learning objectives that describe the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that learners will acquire are based in these domains. These domains, outcomes and attributes present a natural alignment with those possible when teaching about the Holocaust.

### 3.4 Learning objectives, topics and activities for teaching about the Holocaust in a Global Citizenship Education context

	Global Citizenship Education	Education about the Holocaust
<b>Cognitive domain</b>	Learners acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national, and local issues, and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations. Learners develop skills for critical thinking and analysis.	Learners understand how and why the Holocaust happened in the context of modern European and world history, including the roles of culture and identity, fear, antisemitism, ideology and power.
<b>Socio-emotional domain</b>	Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity. Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.	Learners understand the violations of basic human rights that occurred during the Holocaust and challenge and complicate their own assumptions about human behaviour, social responsibility and decision-making. They appreciate the importance of personal responsibility and how proactive conduct can influence problematic situations.
<b>Behavioural domain</b>	Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world. Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions.	Learners monitor the emergence of prejudice and discrimination and other precipitates of systematic mass violence, and act against the warning signs of oppression and genocide. They self-reflect on their own motivations and actions and think critically about the ways their behaviours influence their communities.

In order to foster outcomes within the three key domains of learning, UNESCO recommends topics specific to each learning domain, which are discussed below.

For example, in the cognitive domain, UNESCO uses the following three topics: (1) local, national, and global systems and structures; (2) issues affecting interaction and connectedness of communities at local, national and global levels; (3) and underlying assumptions and power dynamics.

The subject of the Holocaust and its historical context of the Second World War directly addresses these topic areas. While it began in Germany, the Holocaust became an international event with global implications. For example, European Jews sought refuge around the world, with limited success, while the genocide and larger conflict claimed millions of lives. This history not only reveals the inadequacy of systems that were in



place to avert conflict; it provides students with a historical backdrop for the evolution of today's international systems intended to address such challenges. Similarly, analysis that examines these dynamics at local or national levels presents important learning opportunities about the Holocaust, since the events varied based on time and place and depended on factors such as occupation or collaborationist status and stage of war.

### **Box 10: Topics of Global Citizenship Education**

#### **Informed and critically literate**

1. Local, national and global systems and structures
2. Issues affecting interaction and connectedness of communities at local, national and global levels
3. Underlying assumptions and power dynamics

#### **Socially connected and respectful of diversity**

4. Different levels of identity
5. Different communities people belong to and how these are connected
6. Difference and respect for diversity

#### **Ethically responsible and engaged**

7. Actions that can be taken individually and collectively
8. Ethically responsible behaviour
9. Getting engaged and taking action

Source: UNESCO. 2015. *Global Citizenship Education. Topics and Learning Objectives*, p.15.  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf>

Below is a list of suggested topics and possible learning activities relevant for education about the Holocaust that connect to key GCED learning areas. As a rule, the primary focus is strictly on the events of the Holocaust. Yet many of the dynamics that made the Holocaust possible exist in other contexts. Eugenics, for example, was not unique to Germany. Understanding its role during the Holocaust benefits from an understanding of its broader influence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Similarly, propaganda or racial ideology are elements that function beyond the particular context of the Holocaust. Concepts below can thus often be connected to broader world developments – and in fact, such connections can enrich the examination.

One note of caution in selecting materials for lessons: much misinformation and distortion of facts about the Holocaust exist. The internet has exacerbated the problem. This reality underlines the importance of fostering critical inquiry skills in students to support their capacity to identify truth from fiction. Additionally, this document recommends links to reputable institutions (see annexes) that are known to conduct accurate and internationally accepted research. In fact, educators may find addressing myths and misconceptions that students hold about this content to be an integral part of the study.

### 3.4.1 The cognitive domain: Informed and critically literate

#### GCED topics:

*Local, national, and global systems and structures*

*Issues affecting interaction and inter-connectedness of communities*

*Underlying assumptions and power dynamics*

Theme and topic of study	Related activities
<p><b>Theme:</b> To examine and evaluate individual and group relationships to systematic mass violence, oppression, and genocide - and how such events are remembered - as a means of critical self-reflection and moral reasoning that prompts more ethical decision-making.</p> <p><b>Possible topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The aftermath of First World War</li> <li>The Nazi rise to power</li> <li>Dictatorship under Nazi rule</li> <li>Nazi ideology</li> <li>Victims of Nazi persecution</li> <li>Propaganda &amp; messaging</li> <li>The Second World War in Europe</li> <li>Ghettos &amp; concentration camps</li> <li>Mobile killing squads</li> <li>Killing centres</li> <li>Justice and accountability</li> <li>Response by other nations</li> <li>Links between history, memory and remembrance policies</li> </ul>	<p>Compare propaganda techniques used by the Nazis in democratic Weimar Germany with the ones used after they take power and create a totalitarian state.</p> <p>Research how the Nazis explained Germany's struggles and scapegoated others.</p> <p>Investigate how democratic institutions (the press, police, judiciary, etc.) responded to the Nazi dictatorship.</p> <p>Investigate how other countries responded to Nazi Germany's actions during the 1930s.</p> <p>Examine the Nazi world view and identify the reasons various groups were persecuted or murdered (racial, political, behavioural, etc.).</p> <p>Examine the role of war in escalating the murder of Europe's Jews and the targeting of other groups.</p> <p>Examine media coverage (speeches, newspapers, radio broadcasts) in countries all over the world to understand what other countries knew about the Holocaust.</p> <p>Research the term "ghetto" and examine its historical trajectory and legal uses over the centuries, including its role during the Holocaust and its applications today.</p> <p>Track the development of antisemitic laws and Jewish efforts to emigrate from Germany and other European countries.</p> <p>Explore how the Holocaust has been remembered over time by governments and civil society; and how the way it is commemorated, researched, and taught today has shaped local narratives.</p>

### 3.4.2 The socio-emotional domain: Socially connected and respectful of diversity

#### GCED Topics:

*Different levels of identity*

*Different communities people belong to and how these are connected*

*Difference and respect for diversity*

Theme and topic of study	Related activities
<p><b>Theme:</b> To examine the roles played by different people and groups during the Holocaust - including perpetrators, victims, rescuers, and witnesses - and reflect on the motivations and pressures that can influence human behaviour.</p> <p><b>Possible topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inter-ethnic relations in Europe before the Holocaust</li> <li>Antisemitism – before, during, and after the Holocaust</li> <li>Building the “national community”</li> <li>Collaboration and complicity (individuals, groups, nations)</li> <li>Early stages of persecution</li> <li>Murder of people with disabilities (“Euthanasia” programme)</li> <li>Persecution and murder of Jews</li> <li>Role of women</li> <li>Plunder of Jewish assets</li> </ul>	<p>Define the term “eugenics” and trace its history in science and culture, especially its relationship to concepts of race and its uses in the Holocaust as a justification for national policy.</p> <p>Chart the creation of laws or development of policies in Nazi Germany related to the treatment of Jews, people with disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Roma.</p> <p>Research the diverse history of Judaism and Jews and study their lives in Europe before, during and after the Holocaust. Consider the ethnic, religious, cultural and national categories that framed relationships between Jews and non-Jews, including the ways different countries embraced or marginalized Jewish communities during these various phases.</p> <p>Examine the motives and pressures that led individuals all over Europe to actively or passively support or act against the persecution and murder of their neighbors</p> <p>Examine the role played by various professional groups (such as educators, doctors/nurses, artists, trade workers) during this time.</p> <p>Research the ways in which the expropriation of Jewish property influenced communities. Who benefited? What can this reveal about the complicity of various segments of society?</p>

### 3.4.3 The behavioural domain: Ethically responsible and engaged

#### GCED Topics:

*Actions that can be taken individually and collectively*

*Ethically responsible behaviour*

*Getting engaged and taking action*

Theme and topic of study	Related activities
<p><b>Theme:</b> In studying the ways that people responded to the Holocaust, learners analyse the factors that shape decision-making, and consider the ways they make decisions to act on issues of importance in their own society.</p> <p><b>Possible topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behaviour of various individuals and groups (including perpetrators, victims, rescuers, and witnesses)</li> <li>Jewish responses</li> <li>Resistance</li> <li>Rescue</li> <li>Liberation and aftermath</li> </ul>	<p>Research sources related to individuals and groups who tried to counter Nazi policies and aid the victims and learn from their perspectives.</p> <p>Examine the actions of various governments before and during the Holocaust and the Second World War and research the role they played by responding or not responding to the events of the Holocaust. Compare this to the voices of citizens (i.e. through newspapers, journals, letters) at the time on the same subject.</p> <p>Research the range of Jewish responses in ghettos and NS camps to explore the range of actions that occurred.</p> <p>Study how international mechanisms and norms addressing human rights and protections evolved after the Holocaust.</p> <p>Work individually or as a group to identify human rights-related issues in the school, community or country that you think benefit from citizen engagement. Outline the historical context of the issue and identify concrete ways to address it at various levels (i.e., contact elected officials, form a civic action group, contact those in the community working on similar issues).</p>

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# 4. IMPLEMENTATION

## Some challenges

Before outlining the main approaches to implementing education about the Holocaust, some specific challenges should be highlighted:

- ✓ Education stakeholders must be aware that informal factors outside the classroom can strongly influence how people learn about the Holocaust. Research has shown that the “cultural curriculum”<sup>11</sup>, or what is learned outside of school, is as important as – or even more crucial than – the formal curriculum children learn in school. Films, museums, cultural events, family stories and national narratives constitute abundant sources of cultural capital that may help students fill historical gaps that schools sometimes leave. On the other hand, the “cultural curriculum” can also convey biases, over-simplified views, political claims, incorrect information or misconceptions that can have a major impact on how people understand and interpret this complex past.
- ✓ The history of the Holocaust – or any other case of genocide or mass atrocity – often evokes arduous ethical questions, and stirs strong emotions, which may be difficult for both educators and learners to manage. This genuine challenge can be more acute in countries struggling with a legacy of conflict or mass atrocity, whether related to the Holocaust or not. For instance, many countries involved in the Second World War face the particular issue of collaboration with the German authorities. The Nazi genocide of the Jews could not have succeeded so thoroughly without the consent and complicity of individuals, social groups and institutions across German-dominated Europe. Teaching about the Holocaust will thus challenge some historical narratives that may still be dominant in some segments of the society. In addition, latent antisemitism or racism among learners and educators alike can further impede the effective delivery of appropriate education about the Holocaust or other cases of genocide and mass atrocities.

## Different contexts

Each country or education system has its distinct context, educational practices, and capacity (institutional, financial and human). Implementation agendas will therefore vary between countries. It is not expected that examples and approaches outlined in this section be implemented as is. They should be considered a catalogue of suggested approaches that can be combined and adapted to address the specific needs of each

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11 Wineburg, S., Mosborg, S., Porat, D. and Duncan, A. 2007. Common Belief and the Cultural Curriculum: An Intergenerational Study of Historical Consciousness. *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 76-40.

country in the most appropriate way. To ensure good educational practice, attention to historical accuracy is essential and a safeguard against misappropriation.

While there is no single best approach to implementing teaching and learning about the Holocaust in a global context, research and experience suggest factors that may contribute to the successful delivery of information in a specific country. Of course, a range of contextual factors, including curricula, the capacity of teachers, the needs and diversity of learners, the opportunities to develop partnerships with the non-formal education institutions, and the wider sociocultural, political and economic arena, will inform policy decisions and teaching practices. This section discusses key issues to consider.

## 4.1 The curriculum

Teaching and learning about the Holocaust creates significant opportunities for educators and offers the prospect of engaging in meaningful, effective and creative pedagogies. The complexity of the subject, however, requires that educators be supported with accurate sources of information and reliable methodologies. Curriculum materials should provide historically accurate content and informed pedagogical guidelines.

### *Learning history, first and foremost*

In formal education settings, teaching and learning about the Holocaust most often occurs in history classes. Logically, the subject is addressed in the context of the Second World War. Study of the Holocaust also occurs at other relevant points in the curriculum, notably when dealing with the aftermaths of the war and the rise of international justice, in the study of genocide and other mass atrocities, through the study of historical memory or, more generally, in the study of human rights. In any teaching, it is paramount that the Holocaust – or any other historical case of genocide – be taught in a way that learners can examine the complexity of historical factors that facilitated the onset of atrocity.

### **Box 11: The Holocaust in curricula worldwide**

UNESCO and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research published in 2015 a report entitled *The International Status of Education about the Holocaust: A Global Mapping of Textbooks and Curricula*, which documents and records contents, concepts and narratives of the Holocaust in curricula in use in 135 countries<sup>1</sup>. The report shows where teaching about the Holocaust is stipulated in curricula and how educational materials reflect local perceptions and understanding of the genocide of the Jewish people and other Nazi crimes.

In Asia-Pacific, the Holocaust is referred to specifically in the curricula of Australia, the Philippines and Singapore. Curricula in Bhutan, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, and Sri Lanka provide context to deal with it, while other countries do not refer to it at all. For example, the 2013 History, GCE Academic Level, Syllabus 2195 of Singapore clearly refers to the “Case study of Nazi Germany [...] controlled society and persecution of Jewish people and other minority groups”. Bhutan’s 2009 History Syllabus for Classes 11 and 12 provides a larger context and refers to “Nazism, Hitler (problems facing the Weimar Republic, rise to power [of the National Socialists], Nazi state from 1933 onwards.)” and “Second World War, Aggressive policy of Germany”.

The report suggests that the Holocaust is also taught in countries where it may not be explicitly mentioned in curricula. The reverse is also true, hence the importance of clearly stipulating, when possible, teaching about the Holocaust and/or other cases of genocides and mass atrocities in policy documents.

1 Carrier, P., Fuchs, E. and Messinger, T. 2015. *The International status of education about the Holocaust: a global mapping of textbooks and curricula*. UNESCO/Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/228776/002287/0022e.pdf>



### **Box 12: Cambodia's effort to develop and implement a public curriculum for genocide and Democratic Kampuchea history (commonly known as Khmer Rouge History)**

Following the final dissolution of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979 and the signing of the Paris Peace Accords at the conclusion of the Cambodian-Vietnamese War in 1991, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) assumed responsibility for governing the country until the 1993 elections. Not until then did government officials begin to confront the challenge of preserving in the public consciousness key details of the tragedy the country and its people had experienced. With nearly two million casualties and countless survivors burdened with psychological trauma and physiological injuries, the challenge was a formidable one. Inadequately trained government officials, many complicit in the regime, implemented a minimalist curriculum. By 2000, the text for 9th grade students stated "From April 25 to April 27, 1975, the Khmer Rouge leaders held an extraordinary Congress in order to form a new Constitution, and renamed the country 'Democratic Kampuchea'. A new government (...), led by Pol Pot, came into existence after which Cambodian people were massacred." From 2002-2004, even that scant curriculum disappeared from junior and senior high school texts. The advancing ages of the regime's survivors and the wholesale massacre during the regime of several generations of teachers exacerbated the challenge of preserving the public memory.

In the meantime, the United Nations worked with the government to create the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia in Phnom Penh to prosecute a small number of high profile leaders. The trials led to growing awareness of the need to educate Cambodia's population (of which some 70% were born after the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror) and to keep alive the collective memory of the genocide. Thinly stretched government resources and insufficient teacher training on subjects such as genocide and mass atrocity crimes, combined with growing attention from the international community, drove the authorities to take further action. It did so by partnering with the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), guardian of the country's archive of original surviving Khmer Rouge era documents, to restore and preserve public awareness and understanding of the genocide.

DC-Cam developed and implemented a broad public education initiative that included curriculum development; teacher training at public, secondary and higher education levels; publication and dissemination of professionally designed student and teacher texts and instructional manuals; and a spectrum of education programmes that extended over the entire country. The initiative has become a standard component of public education at all levels and of continuing adult education. The initiative's vision inspires Cambodians at all levels that their rapidly globalizing country must also embrace the important challenges of sustainable growth, democratic integrity, human rights and the rule of law.

For more information:

[http://www.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/Genocide\\_Education.htm](http://www.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/Genocide_Education.htm)

[http://d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/pdf/DC-Cam\\_Teacher\\_Guidebook\\_EN\\_2014.pdf](http://d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/pdf/DC-Cam_Teacher_Guidebook_EN_2014.pdf)

### ***Cross-curricular approaches and project-based learning***

Beyond the history classroom, education about the Holocaust can be and is integrated across the curriculum into subjects such as civics and citizenship, social studies, law, philosophy, religion, science, music and the arts. These environments can offer expanded “lenses” and pedagogical approaches through which to examine the Holocaust. The arts, including visual art, music, theatre, film studies and literature, for instance, can build a capacity for self-expression, particularly reflection, as well as prompt critical inquiry and analysis of social and other issues. Importantly, the arts allow for creative expression when addressing traumatic events. Additionally, integrating education about the Holocaust across the curriculum can facilitate teachers’ ability to engage in cross-curricular fields such as global citizenship education, peace education or human rights education. Interdisciplinary approaches can also provide more cohesive and dynamic experiences by rallying different subject areas around one key examination. Even in these “non-history”-based approaches, attention to historical accuracy remains vital.

Of course, employing cross-curricular approaches or promoting interdisciplinary studies ties into larger questions about how specific schools approach teaching methods. Introducing education about the Holocaust in connection with global citizenship education, for example, can support a transformation of curriculum content, learning environment, and teaching and assessment practices. School leaders and teachers are, therefore, particularly important stakeholders in the curriculum development process. Using their expertise during the design and implementation process can help to ensure buy-in and commitment for teaching the curriculum in schools and classrooms.

### ***Sequencing the subject over several years and dedicating time***

To maximize learning, the topic is best covered in an age-appropriate manner over several years. The curriculum should, therefore, scaffold the content and skills to address more complex themes and reinforce important concepts as learners encounter the topic at different stages in their education. It should be added that taking sufficient time to study the complex dynamics of genocide has proven crucial for positive results. Many school systems have found it effective to introduce the Holocaust in different grade levels and subjects so students have greater exposure.

### ***Age range***

While often introduced in higher grades, teaching about the Holocaust can also begin in elementary school in several countries. This placement may be due to the importance of the memory of the Holocaust in the public space or in family circles, or simply because young children ask questions about all kinds of sensitive topics like the Holocaust,

thereby making the topic a relevant one for schools to address. As is true for teaching any painful topic, teaching about the history of a genocide in elementary schools requires particular attention. Educators are encouraged to consider a number of important issues: the sensitivity of young children and how to avoid causing harm; the choice of relevant topics and themes; and the development of pedagogical approaches appropriate to younger ages, notably through artistic activities and literature. Ensuring that teachers in elementary schools are prepared and provided with specific guidance and materials adapted to their context can be very helpful for engaging students at different levels of complexity corresponding to their age and development.

Although there have been few studies on how old children should be before they learn about the Holocaust, most tend to recommend that school systems introduce this topic when children are 11 or 12 years of age, and give the topic greater attention when learners are older. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for example, notes that older learners “demonstrate the ability to empathize with individual eyewitness accounts and can attempt to understand the complexities of Holocaust history, including the scope and scale of the events. While elementary age students are able to empathize with individual accounts, they often have difficulty placing them in a larger historical context.” Encouraging educators to be thoughtful about their students’ emotional state and developmental readiness remains relevant even with older children. The guidelines presented in Section 4.4 provide some suggestions for educators to consider when engaging students regardless of age.

### ***A gender approach to the fields of Holocaust and genocide education***

Scholars and educators are increasingly recognizing and exploring gender as a dimension of genocide and other mass atrocities.<sup>12</sup> Educators may wish to consider how gender influences, affects, and manifests itself in genocide, from the strategies of its perpetrators to the experiences of its victims.

Historically, most atrocities have been committed by men. Genocide scholar Adam Jones, however, notes that “when women, along with men, are *mobilized, forced, encouraged, allowed* to participate in genocide and other atrocious violence, they generally display no more reluctance than (often reluctant) males”. Wendy Lower, for example, studied the role of German women during the Third Reich and found that relative to their role in German

12 The United Nations define gender as “the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes”. Source: [www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm)

society and their professional positions, women participated in the perpetration of crimes “as zealous administrators, robbers, tormentors, and murderers”<sup>13</sup>

Gender can shape and dictate both the experiences of victims and the methods perpetrators employ when committing genocide and mass atrocities. Roles often relegated to the female sphere can influence the fates of women. As traditional caregivers, for example, women who provide direct care for children or elderly relatives may inadvertently hinder or eliminate their own ability to survive genocidal violence. At the same time, perpetrators often differently persecute men and women. During the Holocaust, pregnant women and mothers of small children were consistently labeled “incapable of work”. Consequently, women often found themselves among the first sent to the gas chambers.<sup>14</sup> Aggressors’ intent on a symbolic and physical disruption of group reproduction often target women and girls for sexualized violence, such as mass rape or forced sterilization. Cases also exist in which boys and men have been systematically sexually victimized. Transgressions of gender norms such as homosexuality and transsexuality have also served as grounds for the targeting of both men and women.

From an educational perspective, analyzing the relevance of gender to the dynamics of genocide and mass atrocities highlights the distinctive experiences of hetero-, homo-, or transsexual women and men. Acknowledging the importance of gender lends insight not only to the mechanisms and beliefs that underpin genocidal violence, but also to the responses of victims themselves.

## 4.2. Recommendations for curriculum developers and textbooks authors

1. If the Holocaust is to be taught, it should be explicitly mentioned in the curriculum. Additionally, it can be linked to more general issues of genocide. This means that it should appear in official state or ministry education policy as a required or encouraged topic.
2. In addition to naming the Holocaust in the curriculum, the developers should include a rationale for teaching Holocaust-related concepts and content that align with teaching and learning outcomes appropriate for the discipline in which the Holocaust may be taught.

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13 Jones, A. 2017. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 3rd edition, Routledge.

Lower, W. 2013. *Hitler’s Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

14 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Women during the Holocaust,”

<https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005176>

3. Education about the Holocaust, and more generally the issue of genocide, can be maximized by enabling students to encounter the subject in a coordinated and age-appropriate manner throughout their academic career.
4. The history curriculum should stipulate the importance of historical learning about the Holocaust, i.e. encourage historical enquiry. This will prevent the risk of distorting or simplifying historical facts to make them correspond to contemporary agendas or simple moral lessons.
5. The history curriculum should highlight the importance of exploring how the past is remembered and how competing historical narratives have been negotiated over time in post-genocide societies moving towards stability and peace. In some cases, it may also be beneficial to underline how the way in which events have been remembered has led to further conflict and violence.
6. Open and collaborative dialogue between policy-makers, textbook authors, school leaders and educators nationally and internationally is important to help ensure the quality of education about the Holocaust on the level of curriculum, textbooks and classroom practice.
7. To ensure historical accuracy, official curricula and textbook developers should pay particular attention, as a minimum, to the following historical elements, which may affect how the event is subsequently taught and understood:<sup>15</sup>
  - **Spatial and temporal scale.** Be sure to address both the chronological and geographic expanse of events. Acknowledge the long-term escalation of exclusion and persecution that ultimately facilitated the implementation of systematic mass killings. Be specific about the policies, practices and identification of the various geographic territories involved, beyond simple references to “occupied Europe” and “Germany”. Address the short- and long-term causes and consequences in local, national and international contexts, including the aftermaths of violence and how societies emerged from conflict and approached the reality and consequences of genocide.
  - **Protagonists.** The event of the Holocaust involved millions of people. Move beyond Hitler and the Nazi elite to represent an array of perspectives that also includes lower-level perpetrators, victims, onlookers, rescuers, resisters, collaborators and allies. Incorporate the broad array of motivations and

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15 Adapted from Carrier, P., Fuchs, E. and Messinger, T. 2015. *The International Status of Education about the Holocaust*, UNESCO/Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, pp. 181–160.

pressures that influenced various members of each society to act or not act in response to the unfolding dynamics in their communities. Include quotations that provide insight into the motivations and pressures that drove the behaviour of individuals, institutions and nations.

- **Interpretative paradigms.** Confirm that historical information is accurate and comprehensive and avoids euphemisms. Identify the historical context (including time and place) of terms and concepts used to describe people and events. Identify whether defining terms were created before, during or after the event. The use of glossaries can help. Avoid misleading juxtaposition of terms and ensure that any comparison is systematic and historically precise.
- **Narrative structure and point of view.** Encourage enquiry-based learning by presenting varied points of view drawn from the multiplicity of fact-based historical narratives. Use the active versus passive voice to confirm agency; avoid emotive language; and be aware that the use of collective nouns such as “Germans” or “Jews”, while to some degree unavoidable, can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes. Employ a narrative that accounts for varied individual and group experiences that developed at different times and in different places.
- **Didactic approach.** Provide opportunities for students to engage in critical analysis and reflection; tap prior knowledge – which can include misinformation – through reference to influential out-of-school media. Ensure appropriate context for illustrations, so that it clarifies the relationship between included illustrations, the source and intent of each illustration, and the context in which the illustration is understood today. Where relevant, define human rights so that students understand what they are, how they relate to this specific historical example and how students can promote them.
- **National contexts.** Address the local significance in a historical context that presents the broader dates, places, events and protagonists of the Holocaust. Explain the historical connections between concepts and events critically rather than suggesting connections passively through the use of visuals or vague references. Ensure that terms are defined and their origins and use explained – glossaries can be helpful.

## 4.3 Professional development

Providing in-service and pre-service teachers with the opportunity to undertake professional development on teaching about the Holocaust and genocide in their own setting can give them the tools necessary to tackle the challenges and complexities involved.

### *The role of higher learning institutions*

Institutions of higher learning have unique access to students on a career path in both local and international professions. In the university context, courses taught on the Holocaust or genocide and mass atrocities can benefit large numbers of 18-24 year olds positioned to participate actively in civic life after graduating. In some cases, these students may become educators themselves. More specifically, universities and institutions engaged in pre-service teacher education can play a fundamental role in disseminating accurate historical information and in promoting sound practices to future teachers who will educate about the history of the Holocaust or of genocide and mass atrocities. Furthermore, provided that minimal research structures exist, universities can make available resources to help initiate curriculum creation, provide guidance for teachers, and even serve as sites for professional development or post-programme assessment. A strong link exists between the capacity to offer professional and resource development and the status of academic research. Education policy-makers dealing with secondary education can benefit by ensuring that institutions of higher learning also develop relevant academic programmes for students and researchers (master's, doctoral and post-doctoral studies; academic seminars; scholarships; university chairs; research programmes; etc.).

### **Box 13: Example in higher learning**

The Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland's oldest university, established a Center for Holocaust Studies in 2008. The Center offers a Master's programme for students and summer institutes for high school teachers interested in the subject. To support this activity, the Center has created a UNESCO Chair on Education about the Holocaust in 2014. The establishment of this programme allowed for more opportunities for teacher training, curriculum development and participation in teaching and learning about the Holocaust throughout Poland.

To find out more: [http://www.holocaust.uj.edu.pl/en\\_GB/](http://www.holocaust.uj.edu.pl/en_GB/)

## Supporting practicing teachers

Successful implementation of education about the Holocaust in schools depends mostly on teachers' capacities. Research suggests that teachers must be relatively skilled in order to encourage and facilitate discussions about such difficult topics, making training essential to ensure quality delivery of the content. Teachers interface directly with learners and their families, and thereby play a significant role in promoting accurate information and analysis of the complex issues related to study of the Holocaust and genocide. They are also on the front lines when students bring misinformation or biases to the classroom. Providing teachers with capacity-building opportunities to reinforce their knowledge of the subject matter as well as their teaching skills is a crucial investment. Additionally, teacher biases and misinformation can negatively influence their ability to educate. Professional development programmes can provide the opportunity for teachers to understand and manage their own biases. When designing the teacher training, consulting skilled professionals or model teachers with experience in the field and knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing participating teachers in their particular school or community setting can help ensure programme relevance. Teacher training and support can occur through official professional development programmes or school-run capacity-building activities, including with stakeholders operating out of the formal education system. Ensuring that teachers have the time and resources to access professional development is critical.

### Tips for teacher training and support

✓ **Stakeholder exchanges:**

*Encourage* discussion with stakeholders (local administrators, educators, content experts) to jointly identify and define reasonable goals for implementing/augmenting education about the Holocaust and genocide.

*Support* interdisciplinary approaches to study.

*Encourage* partnerships that maximize local resources such as memorial sites, universities, NGOs or other reputable resources to augment educational capacity (see 4.5 "Non-formal education and extracurricular activities").

✓ **Research and Guidance:**

*Create* forums where researchers and educators can meet to discuss and share best approaches for teaching and learning about the Holocaust and genocide as a means to build capacity of knowledge and skills, perhaps via annual seminars.



*Support* research and development of teaching tools and educational materials to reinforce existing resources.

*Identify* training needs of teachers.

*Increase* research on teachers' skills and knowledge.

*Create* a web page on the Ministry of Education website with access to relevant guidance and resources.

✓ **In- and pre-service:**

*Introduce* modules on education about the Holocaust and genocide education in pre-service and in-service training.

*Include* the Holocaust as a subject for examination on teacher recruitment exams.

## 4.4 Classroom practices

Given the complexity and sensitive nature of the subject matter, guidelines reflecting good educational practice have been articulated by institutions such as Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, as well as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Though this document does not aim to provide detailed guidelines for educators on how to teach about the Holocaust or the history of genocide and mass atrocities, education policy-makers and teacher educators can benefit from awareness of the following key approaches that enhance teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

### *Some guidelines for teachers and educators:*<sup>16</sup>

- ✓ **Establish an open learning environment** A supportive and trusting learning environment better enables both learners and teachers to be comfortable tackling the difficult topics raised by a study of genocide.
- ✓ **Practice participatory pedagogies** Participatory, learner-centered and inclusive practices are key to teaching difficult histories.
- ✓ **Distinguish “historical” from “moral” lessons** While lessons about discrimination, prejudice or injustice, for example, may emerge from the analysis, root the study in the use of accurate and objective facts that emphasize the specific historical context.
- ✓ **Embrace the complexity** The study of the Holocaust raises difficult and challenging questions for which no easy answers exist. Ensure that students have

<sup>16</sup> More detailed guidelines for teachers and educators can be found at <https://www.ushmm.org/educators>

the opportunity to explore the complex factors and events that influenced the decision-making of so many. Often, more questions than answers may be raised.

- ✓ **Strive for precision of language** Educators will take care to define the terms clearly, identify distinctions between related terms and avoid generalizations.
- ✓ **Strive to balance the presentation of perspectives** Remember the Holocaust involved people in different roles and situations living in countries across Europe over a period of time. Examine the actions, motives and decisions of individuals from a variety of contexts.
- ✓ **Make distinctions while respecting all experiences of suffering** Make distinctions of fact that illuminate the reasons why and the scale to which people were persecuted. Yet do so in a way that avoids elevating the human suffering experienced in one context over the human suffering experienced in another.
- ✓ **Explore acts of heroism and depravity in context** Given that only a small fraction of people helped rescue Jews, overemphasizing heroic actions can lead to an inaccurate understanding of events. Similarly, exposing students only to the worst aspects of human nature may foster cynicism. Accuracy of fact, together with inclusion of different voices from the history, must be a priority.
- ✓ **Contextualize the history** Studying the events that led to the Holocaust, including the rise of the Nazis, and examining how individuals and institutions behaved at the time helps to place the events of the Holocaust in a historical and contemporaneous context.
- ✓ **Translate statistics into people** Show that individual people are behind the statistics and emphasize the diversity of personal experiences within the larger historical narrative.
- ✓ **Make responsible methodological choices** Ensuring that educational approaches and materials are appropriate for the emotional and developmental level of students can help them to navigate the complexity and extreme nature of the events. The examination of primary sources to foster inductive thinking is paramount in that regard. Simulation and simplistic thinking may not foster critical thinking.
- ✓ **Emphasize the Holocaust was not inevitable** Just because a historical event took place and is documented in textbooks, online and on film does not mean that it had to happen. The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups and nations made decisions to act or not to act.

## 4.5 Non-formal education and extracurricular activities

### 4.5.1 Cooperation with memorials, museums and civil society

Non-formal educational settings are central in the dissemination of information about the Holocaust. Indeed, before being a matter of interest for governments, education about the history of the Holocaust and other crimes perpetrated by the Nazis and their collaborators emerged primarily from initiatives of the civil society. In particular, victims' groups and their representative institutions worked to ensure better recognition and knowledge within the mainstream society of crimes perpetrated in the past. Often this move for recognition existed in opposition to prevalent, state-promoted historical narratives. What holds true for Europe and the case of Nazi-sponsored crimes resonates with other parts of the world where atrocities were perpetrated and where the only source of knowledge and education about the troubled past would come from marginal segments of the society affected by these atrocities.

Depending on the context, non-formal educational organizations can often effectively supplement the work of schools through a variety of programmes, such as direct interventions in classrooms, teacher training, or the production of teaching and learning materials.

Museums and memorials can be particularly important spaces for education policy-makers to consider, notably those museums and memorials situated on historic sites of persecution and killing. Such sites can be a powerful component of a learning experience by providing meaningful spaces for commemoration and reflection. Because visitors enter the physical space of the site or encounter tangible artifacts that tell the stories of those who experienced the past, visitors may connect to the topic differently than when reading a textbook or watching a film. These spaces can resonate emotionally because of the power of place. Moreover, besides their primary remembrance dimension, most memorial museums, whether situated on historic sites of persecution or not, often assume a wide range of functions relating to research and documentation, culture and advocacy and, most importantly, education. Thus, these sites can offer tremendous resources to augment this education.

From this point of view, memorials and museums can be essential partners for the formal education system. In many countries, such institutions have multiplied and are strongly embedded in national efforts to reinforce the significance of the subject. This has sometimes resulted in the creation of regional or national networks that combine

non-formal and formal education sectors in ways that build capacity for teachers while providing pupils and students with innovative and alternative learning opportunities.<sup>17</sup>

Policy-makers should, however, be aware of some basic requirements and challenges for bringing learners to such museums and memorial sites, and plan to support educators in addressing them, as follows:

- ✓ As noted above, provide professional development that can help teachers thoughtfully plan such study trips.
- ✓ Visits that occur within the context of careful planning and even partnership with the institution(s) concerned maximize educational outcomes. Encourage schools and educators to embed such visits within pre- and post-visit frameworks.
- ✓ Promote an educational environment that supports site/museum visits financially, logistically and pedagogically. For example, ensure educators have enough flexibility in their schedules to make site/museum visits possible.
- ✓ Contribute to/be supportive of network-building between schools, educators, and museums and memorial sites so as to foster innovative educational potential.

Millions of students visit memorials and museums every year. Wherever they exist, museums and memorial sites can, therefore, become indispensable stakeholders to stimulate, supplement and sustain the work accomplished in a school context. Education policy-makers can play an essential role in promoting educational approaches that include museums and memorial sites as both beneficiaries of public policy and partners in policy design. Appropriate measures to improve non-formal environments, raise the professional standards of educators in non-formal settings, and augment material conditions of museums and memorial sites will increase capacity-building opportunities for teachers, multiply motivating learning experiences, emphasize the links between historical research and historical memory, and reinforce the significance of dealing with difficult pasts within the mainstream society.

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17 Guidelines for visiting memorial sites have been published by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, in partnership with Yad Vashem:  
<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/teaching-guidelines>  
<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2010/excursion-past-teaching-future-handbook-teachers>

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**Box 14: Links to memorials, museums and NGOs dedicated to the Holocaust**

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has created an international directory of civil society organizations and memorials and museums dedicated to education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust in 44 countries:

*<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/directory>*

The German foundation Topography of Terror has created a worldwide database of memorial sites dedicated to the history of Nazi crimes:

*<http://www.memorial-museums.net/WebObjects/ITF>*

The Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO) was established in 1985 to serve as an international network of organizations and individuals for the advancement of Holocaust education, remembrance and research.

*<http://www.ahoinfo.org/membersdirectory.html>*

The International Committee of Museums (ICOM) established in 2001 the International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes (IC-Memo). This Committee gathers memorials and museums from all regions of the world.

*<network.icom.museum/icmemo>*

## 4.5.2 Commemorative activities

International days of commemoration can provide interesting opportunities to engage learners in meaningful education programmes. Indeed, in addition to participating in ceremonies, schools can organize special projects in the context of a larger programme in the classroom, before and after the international day. No commemorative event can be considered a substitute for a structured education programme, but such occasions create possibilities for teachers to launch multidisciplinary projects at school, organize out-of-school activities and partner with local authorities and external stakeholders.

### **Box 15: Relevant international days**

#### **27 January: International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust**

United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/7 (November 2005) on “Holocaust Remembrance”. The date marks the liberation of the concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, a site included on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979.

#### **7 April: International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda**

United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/58/234 (December 2003). 7 April marked the start of the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda.

#### **9 December: International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime**

United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/323 (September 2015). 9 December is the anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Other international bodies have also enacted similar international days, such as the Council of Europe (Declaration by the European Ministers of Education, 18 October 2002) and the European Union (European Parliament Resolution on Remembrance of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and Racism, 27 January 2005; European Union Day against Impunity for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, 23 August). Furthermore, many countries hold national commemorations on other dates. These international days aim to preserve the memory of the victims, promote education about history, and raise awareness about the danger of genocide in today's world. They give rise to commemorative, educational and cultural initiatives throughout the world, in schools, municipalities and cultural communities.

In this respect, policy-makers may consider the following recommendations<sup>18</sup>:

- ✓ Education authorities should officially endorse the international day, expressly prompt schools to participate in its implementation nationwide, and provide clear guidance on learning objectives.
- ✓ In addition to ceremonies, promote education strategies involving the following type of activities:
  - meetings with survivors
  - film screenings
  - theatre
  - travelling exhibitions
  - conferences, talks and debates
  - research projects in local history
  - visits to historical sites, museums and memorials
  - writing and art competitions
  - participating in or initiating social networks communication campaigns
- ✓ Provide school leaders and teachers with resources and guidelines to support the implementation of activities at school level: webpage, school guidebook, toolkit, etc.
- ✓ Promote intersectoral partnerships with local authorities, museums and memorials, archives, civil society organizations and cultural and religious communities, and involve families. If necessary, in the context of international days, engage with UNESCO and United Nations offices to obtain technical support for the organization of special events and education initiatives.
- ✓ Appoint “Education and Memory Focal Points” to coordinate policy implementation at regional or local level, provide support to school staff and teachers, ensure liaison between schools and partners, and enhance communication about the international day and events organized in that context. The focal points can be active on genocide-related remembrance days and also on any other national or international days involving remembrance issues.

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18 The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Yad Vashem published in 2006 a set of guidelines on *Preparing Holocaust Memorial Days*, which can be useful in that regard:  
[https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/ceremonies/guidelines\\_pdf/english.pdf](https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/ceremonies/guidelines_pdf/english.pdf)

### **Box 16: Example: Holocaust remembrance days in France**

The French Ministry of Education organizes every year on 27 January, following a Council of Europe declaration in 2002, a “Day of Remembrance of Genocides and of Prevention of Crimes against Humanity” (before 2008, “Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”). This day was added to the already existing national Holocaust remembrance day entitled “National Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Racist and anti-Semitic Persecutions by the French State and of tribute to the ‘righteous’ of France”, which falls on 16 July.

While 16 July gathers the highest authorities of the State for events in commemoration of the “Vel’ d’Hiv’ roundup” of 1942, 27 January has a stronger educational focus. In this context, the Ministry issues a note for all local education authorities providing them with background information, objectives, instructions and guidelines for the implementation of the day. The day is promoted on the Ministry’s website, and a special web page is set up containing academic and educational resources, links to all official documentation, information about possible partners, and entry points to the national curriculum.

In this regard, a “memory and citizenship adviser”, in charge of dealing with heritage and memory within the regional education administration, is tasked with following up on schools’ initiatives, providing support and ensuring coordination with museums and memorials, archives and other stakeholders.

For more information, please visit the following webpages of the French Ministry of Education:

2017 Ministry “Service Note” [http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin\\_officiel.html?cid\\_bo=111741](http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid285/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=111741)

2017 Education Resources

<http://eduscol.education.fr/cid45608/memoire-des-genocides-prevention-des-crimes-contre-humanite.html>

2017 Ministry’s webpage

<http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid50448/27-janvier-journee-de-la-memoire-des-genocides-et-de-la-prevention-des-crimes-contre-l-humanite.html>



### 4.5.3 Adult education

While much attention is rightfully paid to engaging young people, examination of this history can yield valuable insights for adults as well. As previously noted, while the Holocaust could not have occurred without the leadership of Hitler and the Nazi elite, the path to mass killing could not have been taken without the active or passive acceptance of so many segments of the society. Inviting adults who play various roles in the community to examine the history through the lens of their historical counterparts, for example, can be a potent way to raise questions about professional responsibility and decision-making. This examination becomes especially powerful for professionals in occupations that weigh the security and order of society against the rights of individuals – law enforcement, judiciary, military – and civil servants. Medical professionals, clergy, media specialists and educators are other examples of professionals that influence the tenor of society via access to health, spirituality, information and knowledge. Additionally, examining the history in an atrocity prevention context allows professionals – especially those in government positions – not only to better understand how genocides occur but also to consider how they might employ their professional tools to prevent, mitigate and respond to genocide today.

A common way to invite adults into this examination is by designing and running professional development programmes. Often created with museums or memorials, professional development programmes enable participants to meet with their colleagues to consider the history through a professional lens in ways that prompt reflection about the impact of decisions they make today (suggestions presented in the preceding section on “Cooperation with memorials, museums and civil society” also apply here). Providing opportunities for adults to examine critically the institutional mechanisms that facilitated the progression from social exclusion to mass killing can yield important insights on ethics, leadership, professional decision-making and atrocity prevention today.

### **Box 17: Examples of capacity-building opportunities for professionals**

Since 1998 the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has developed and run educational seminars for an array of professionals, particularly those who have power over the life and liberty of civilians: the military, police and judges. Close to 200,000 individuals from these institutions have participated in Museum seminars that challenge participants to examine the role their historical counterparts played during the Holocaust – and to examine their professional and personal responsibilities today. Building relationships with the various institutional training and education sources often results in these seminars becoming an integrated component of formal career advancement. Beginning, mid-level and senior-level professionals participate in programmes designed for meeting the challenges they face at each stage in their career.

To find out more:

[www.ushmm.org/professionals-and-student-leaders](http://www.ushmm.org/professionals-and-student-leaders)

Another example of such professional development programming is the Global Raphael Lemkin Seminar for Genocide Prevention, offered through the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR). The AIPR convenes government officials from different countries with professional responsibilities in atrocity prevention, human rights, international criminal justice and other relevant fields. Run in partnership with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, the week-long programmes take place at the former Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim, Poland to immerse professionals emotionally and intellectually in the topic of genocide. Participants then become members of the 2Prevent community, a growing network of over 250 professionals representing more than 73 countries for ongoing networking and engagement on atrocity prevention policy development.

To find out more:

<http://www.auschwitzinstitute.org/what-we-do/global-programs/>

<http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/enhancing-capacity.html>

## 4.6 Evaluating programme outcomes

A strong Holocaust education programme will include a plan to assess the practices, materials and experiences of those involved, both at the level of the learner and more broadly within the school and community. Assessment plans do not necessarily have to be comprehensive research studies or national surveys, but an attempt should be made to evaluate how programmes were carried out and their impact.

Regarding assessment, the following points may be helpful:

- ✓ Assessment should go beyond learners' knowledge of the facts to include assessment of skills, values and attitudes.
- ✓ Current practice suggests using a mix of traditional assessment methods and more reflective and performance-based ones, such as self-assessment and peer assessment. These capture insights into personal transformation, deepening student understanding of critical inquiry, engagement and civic agency.
- ✓ When assessing programmes or curricula more broadly, evaluation tools such as end-of-programme surveys, observations of teaching practices and cognitive assessments, as well as standardized tests about history, can provide a wider sense of outcomes.
- ✓ If education authorities intend to use an assessment mechanism, consulting with the local educational stakeholders about design, goals and implementation can boost results.

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# 5. ANNEXES

# Resources for education stakeholders

## United Nations and International Bodies

- Education about the Holocaust (UNESCO)  
*<http://en.unesco.org/holocaust-remembrance>*
- Global Citizenship Education (UNESCO)  
*<http://en.unesco.org/gced>*
- The United Nations and the Holocaust Outreach Programme  
*<http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/>*
- The United Nations Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide  
*<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/index.shtml>*
- Office of the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide  
*<http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/>*
- The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance  
*<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/educate>*
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights  
*<http://www.osce.org/odihr/countering-anti-Semitism-and-promoting-Holocaust-remembrance>*

## UNESCO Chairs

- UNESCO Chair on Genocide Education (USC Shoah Foundation Institute, United States of America) *<http://sfi.usc.edu/about/unesco>*
- UNESCO Chair for Education about the Holocaust (Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland) *<http://www.wsmip.uj.edu.pl/en/centre-for-holocaust-studies>*
- UNESCO Chair in Genocide Prevention (Rutgers University, USA)  
*<http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/unesco-chair-genocide-prevention>*
- UNESCO Chair for Citizenship Education, Human Sciences and Shared Memories (Site Mémorial Camp des Milles, France)  
*<http://www.campdesmilles.org>*

## Educational organizations

- Aegis Trust (United Kingdom/Rwanda) <http://www.aegistrust.org/>
- Anne Frank House (The Netherlands) <http://www.annefrank.org/>
- Centre for Holocaust Education, University College London (United Kingdom) <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/holocaust>
- Facing History and Ourselves (United States of America) <http://www.facing.org>
- Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (Poland) <http://en.auschwitz.org/>
- Project Aladdin (France) <http://www.projetaladin.org/>
- Mémorial de la Shoah (France) <http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/en/english-version.html>
- Museum of Tolerance, a Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum (United States of America) <http://www.museumoftolerance.com>
- The South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation <http://www.ctholocaust.co.za/>
- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum <http://www.ushmm.org/>
- Yad Vashem (Israel) <http://www.yadvashem.org/>

## United States Holocaust Memorial Museum resources

- Resources for Educators <https://www.ushmm.org/educators>
- Holocaust Encyclopedia <https://www.ushmm.org/learn/holocaust-encyclopedia>
- Learn About the Holocaust <https://www.ushmm.org/learn>
- Resources for Professionals and Student Leaders <https://www.ushmm.org/professionals-and-student-leaders>
- The Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide <https://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide>

# References

- A large choice of references and research material on education about the Holocaust and on genocide education is available on the **UNESCO Clearinghouse on Global Citizenship Education**, hosted by the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding: <http://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/>
- **The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance** has also published a set of bibliographies of articles and books dealing with research on teaching and learning about the Holocaust in 15 languages, including abstracts in English: <http://www.holocaustremembrance.com>

## Recent international studies on policies and practices include:

- Carrier, P., Fuchs, E. and Messinger, T. 2015. *The International status of education about the Holocaust: a global mapping of textbooks and curricula*. UNESCO/Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002287/228776e.pdf>
- Eckmann, M., Stevick, E. D. and Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, J.(Eds.) 2017. *Research in Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust: A Dialogue Beyond Borders*, Metropol Verlag, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. [https://holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/research\\_in\\_teaching\\_and\\_learning\\_about\\_the\\_holocaust\\_web.pdf](https://holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/research_in_teaching_and_learning_about_the_holocaust_web.pdf)
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- Kumaraswamy, P.R. (Ed.) 2016. *Special Issue: Holocaust Education, Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, Volume 3, Issue 3. <http://journals.sagepub.com/toc/cmea/3/3>
- Salzburg Global Seminar, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. 2013. *Global Perspectives on Holocaust Education: Trends, patterns, and practices*. [http://holocaust.salzburgglobal.org/fileadmin/ushm/documents/Overview/May2013\\_GlobalPerspectives\\_final.pdf](http://holocaust.salzburgglobal.org/fileadmin/ushm/documents/Overview/May2013_GlobalPerspectives_final.pdf)
- UNESCO. 2014. *Holocaust Education in a Global Context*. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002259/225973e.pdf>



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Education  
Sector

# Education about the Holocaust and preventing genocide

A policy guide

Why is it important to learn about the Holocaust? Can education contribute to the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities? How can we integrate the subject in curricula, train teachers and promote the most relevant pedagogies? Policy-makers and education stakeholders face these challenging tasks. The topic of genocide can raise difficult and unsettling questions about human capabilities and the fragility of our societies. These questions must be asked and their educational potential embraced.

Drawing on the framework of Global Citizenship Education, this publication provides guidance for policy-makers and other education stakeholders seeking to implement within their education systems the study of the Holocaust and, more broadly, of genocide. It describes how and why such education can support global education priorities, including cultivating global citizenship, promoting human rights, and developing a culture of peace that can prevent future mass atrocities.

