

EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION: CREATING A HISTORY CURRICULUM AFTER GENOCIDE

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“The Teaching of History of Rwanda: A Participatory Approach” is a first attempt to develop a model for the teaching of history after genocide that involves a participatory process. Participants included teachers, students, parents, administrators, government officials and non-government organizations. A description of the three year process (2003-6) is found in the following paper and chapter:

Freedman, SW, Weinstein, HM, Murphy K and Longman TL.
Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts: The Rwanda Experience,
Comparative Education Review 52(4): 663-690, November, 2008.

Freedman, SW, Weinstein, HM, Murphy, K and Longman, T.
Teaching History in Rwanda. In Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (eds.)
Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence.
University of Wisconsin Press, 2011.

Background

The work of this project built upon the findings from two prior grants to the Human Rights Center. The first, “Communities in Crisis: Justice and Social Reconstruction in Rwanda and Former Yugoslavia,” funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation was a project to examine the process of social reconstruction in countries that had experienced ethnic cleansing and genocide. The principal focus of the project was to look at the role of retributive justice in the rebuilding of societies. During the course of this three-year study, we increasingly became aware of the importance of the schools, both in the events leading up to the violence and the possibilities inherent in education as one pathway to rebuilding communities that practice tolerance, respect human rights, and contribute to the development of a social identity that transcends ethnic group affiliations. This led to our second grant, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, “Intrastate Conflict and Social Reconstruction: Education for Reconciliation” that focused specifically on how community stakeholders in the same countries – students, parents, teachers, school administrators – viewed the role of schools and the teaching of history. This work is described in detail in our book, *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity* (Eric Stover and Harvey M.

Weinstein, eds.), published by Cambridge University Press in February 2005.

In 2003, we applied to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) to address the challenge of teaching history in Rwanda, a country that had placed a moratorium on teaching its youth about the past. As we indicated in our proposal, “Countries recovering from violence are often unable to reach consensus on how to interpret the catastrophic events that have befallen them. The teaching of history can become a focal point of political conflict and manipulation, as contending groups seek to promote their political agendas through the school curriculum.” The overall goal of this proposal was to initiate a process of restoring the teaching of history to Rwanda’s schools by bringing the voices of the communities to the table with historians, government bureaucrats, international curriculum experts, and representatives from civil society. The principal objectives were:

1. to determine what was most needed for developing an effective history curriculum and for assisting teachers to deliver such a curriculum;
2. to form working groups to gather resource materials and make recommendations for their use in a history curriculum; and
3. to write recommendations for the Ministry of Education and suggest structures for assisting teachers and schools as well as to create curricular guidelines and materials.

Project Partners

We had two project partners in Rwanda. The first was with the Faculty of Education at the National University of Rwanda (NUR), principally Innocent Mugisha, a lecturer with whom we had worked on the Hewlett grant and Deogratias Byanafashe, Professor and Chair of the Department of History, Dean of Humanities, and a senior historian in the country. The second partnership was with the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), part of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) whose director was John Rutayisire. Mugisha and Rutayisire became the in-country project coordinators.

We invited as collaborators, the organization “Facing History and Ourselves” (FHAO), a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based nonprofit group that teaches teachers how to incorporate the lessons of the Holocaust and other difficult histories into the teaching of history. Initially focused on US schools, FHAO expanded to include an international focus on teaching about contemporary conflicts, genocides, and ethnic cleansing. Currently, in their international programs they work in such countries as South Africa, China, Northern Ireland, and Colombia. In the Rwanda project, we worked with Dr. Karen Murphy who directs the international programs. FHAO obtained a follow-up grant from the USIP to train Rwandan teachers to use these materials in combination with

materials from Facing History.

US Participants

In addition to working with our Rwandan collaborators and with Facing History, we sought to bring into the process the expertise of additional specialists in Rwandan history and politics as well as in curriculum development and democratic teaching methods. The following American scholars were able to travel to Rwanda to share their expertise:

David Newbury, Professor, African Studies, Smith College
Catherine Newbury, Professor of Government, Smith College
Jonathan Zimmerman, Professor and Director of History of
Education, New York University
Daniel Perlstein, Professor, Graduate School of Education, UC
Berkeley

Project Development

We employed five strategies to reach our objectives. We focused on first paying attention to and building support in the political arena; second, educating our Rwandan collaborators in the methods of FHAO; third, selecting participants who were broadly representative of the constituencies that we hoped to reach and also who might serve as disseminators of the model; fourth, introducing pedagogies for critical thinking related to the known facts about historical events that would allow for contested interpretations to emerge; and finally, modeling classroom teaching strategies that encouraged dialogue and debate.

Project Results as of June 2006

Education for Reconciliation achieved the following objectives outlined in the initial proposal to USIP: 1) clarifying what was needed for an effective history curriculum and assisting teachers to deliver it; 2) forming working groups to develop the model; and 3) writing recommendations for MINEDUC which included curricular guidelines and materials.

The results included:

- Opening up the process for writing and teaching the history of Rwanda in the country – a process stalled for over a decade.
- Capacity building for teachers, and Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), NUR and MINEDUC staff in

- Introducing new methods for researching and writing history materials preparatory to curriculum writing;
 - Introducing new teaching methods;
 - building a network of teachers, scholars, and other stakeholders for future work in Rwanda;
 - building a network connecting Rwanda scholars and other specialists with international counterparts; and
 - contributing to the interest of participants to go on for higher degrees and further scholarly pursuits.
- Materials development – the first step in modeling a curriculum development process
 - drafted case materials for four periods of Rwandan history;
 - obtained primary and secondary source documents; and
 - developed a model of collaboration among students, teachers, parents and scholars.
 - Modeled teaching strategies for each case, with an emphasis on critical thinking and debate.
 - Created sample lessons for each case.
 - Compiled list of additional lessons for each case.
 - Offered suggestions for further curriculum development.
 - Offered additional training through FHAO.
 - Provided plan for ongoing support for teacher training through FHAO.

A copy of the resource book containing these materials was submitted to USIP in February, 2006. It should be noted that this project did not attempt to create a full history curriculum; the plan was for Rwandan educators and historians to complete that task. The project did attempt to offer a model of curricular design and to initiate and model a process for developing such a curriculum.

The modules are presented as the participants created them. Since English was not the first language of many of the writers, the principal investigators did a small amount of minor editing and then only to correct egregious grammatical errors that affected comprehensibility. While there were several drafts of the modules, these materials should be considered as a work in progress, offering direction but by no means definitive in content. While we did not always agree with the content and made our concerns known, we felt it important not to rewrite these materials but to publish them as written by the Rwandan participants. However, we do wish to point out that in Module 3, there is a statement to the effect that a Catholic priest and human rights activist, Andre Sibomana was involved in a plot against a newly-appointed Bishop Muvara which ended with Muvara's resignation. This has been contested within Rwanda

and Sibomana's 1997 biography notes that "I also owe a lot to Felicien Muvara... I admired his calm in the face of hardship, his wisdom, and his certainty in life. He was an upright man, with great integrity." He describes the antipathy towards Muvara by members of the church hierarchy as well as by the President of Rwanda. He goes on "On the eve of his ordination as an auxiliary priest in the diocese of Butare, a plot was hatched against him- as often happens in Rwanda, unfortunately. He was made to stand down." This vignette illustrates the difficulties inherent in creating materials for the teaching of history in a highly politicized environment.

Future Development

Two distinct but related projects demand further development: 1) creation of additional history materials to develop a full history curriculum and 2) ongoing teacher education, with new history resources using methods that emphasize a student-centered, interactive approach. These methods will be applicable in other subject areas.

Recommendations to MINEDUC

We made the following recommendations to the Ministry:

1. Apply for grants to support future curriculum development using the model designed by this project, including additional lessons for the materials we developed and for the development of future cases that would add coverage of each era;
2. Apply for grants to fund materials development, especially for creation of background materials for students to read;
3. Hire writers to continue the curriculum development work and form a panel of advisors from our participants and the MINEDUC textbook committee;
4. Collaborate with KIE/NUR to pilot a teacher training course based on methods and resources from the project and to assist with additional lesson development;
5. Maintain the community formed by the project by supporting on-going activities. In addition, individuals should be drawn on for their individual expertise in their subject areas and their role in the project. They can be used as mentors.
6. Develop teacher training in other subject areas so that all teachers benefit from the new methods and are in conversation with each other;
7. Develop resource centers to support curriculum development and to provide ongoing in-service support.

On this site, you can download the English version of the resource book developed by the Human Rights Center with its Rwandan partners, the National University of Rwanda and the National Curriculum Development Center of the Rwandan Ministry of Education. These materials benefited from our collaboration with “Facing History and Ourselves.”

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“Education for Reconciliation in Rwanda: Creating a History Curriculum after Genocide,” 2004-2006, United States Institute for Peace, recipient of grant as principle investigator along with Sarah Freedman and Harvey Weinstein of the Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley. Funding also provided by the John D. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation. The reconciliation education resources are produced under the guidance of the “4 Seasons of Reconciliation Indigenous Advisory Circle”™. We work in a spirit of collaboration and co-creation with the Indigenous contributors featured throughout our resources and education units in collaboration with First Nations University of Canada. Advisory circle. The Indigenous Advisory Circle participates in key executive decisions for both the resources and the campaign. They recognize that infusing Indigenous histories, cultures and perspectives into educational curriculum is a way to contribute towards the goal of reconciliation by providing students with an opportunity to learn about the Indigenous people with whom they share the land, and on whose ancestral territories all Canadians currently reside. Don’t start with cultural genocide and residential schools. Indigenous people are not victims first. Take the time to learn about the many proud and resilient people who were impacted by Canada’s residential school system. In the aftermath of the genocide, the Rwandan government has attempted to use the education system in order to sustain peace and shape a new generation of Rwandans. Chapter 2 The Role of Education in Transitional Justice, Peacebuilding, and Reconciliation. (pp. 29-54). <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvscxs76.5>.

Keywords: genocide, Rwanda, reconciliation, healing, educational workshops, educational radio, justice, government. Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 2014, Vol. 2(1), 505-517, doi:10.5964/jspp.v2i1.294 Received: 2013-12-06. Accepted: 2014-09-15. Reconciliation in Rwanda. 506. The genocide was stopped by a primarily Tutsi group, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). It had been fighting the government, stopped fighting when a peace accord was agreed to, and resumed fighting when the genocide began. The government also created a new justice system to address most crimes committed during the genocide. The traditional justice system was destroyed by the genocide. Reconciliation Australia, Australia. 74K likes. Our vision is for everyone to wake to a reconciled, just and equitable Australia. In a year when hundreds of thousands of people walked across bridges for Reconciliation, the lighting of the cauldron helped further ignite a sense of unity. #Reconciliation. See More. +2. The Sydney Morning Herald. September 15 at 4:12 AM. This evening marks twenty years since the cauldron was lit to open the Sydney Olympics. "Reconciliation villages" place homes for those convicted of carrying out the violence alongside those who suffered at their hands. Though the genocide ended a year before Mr. Kwizera was born, it is deeply ingrained in the lives of even the youngest Rwandans. This compulsory work is emblematic of a broader culture of reconciliation, development and social control asserted by the government. Each local umudugudu "or village" keeps track of who attends the monthly projects. Those who fail to participate without being excused risk fines and in some cases arrest. The Louisiana Department of Education has created an online review of instructional materials to determine their alignment with the Louisiana Student Standards.²³ This is the only state of which CAP is aware that has created such a comprehensive system to aid its districts in selecting high-quality instructional materials, but its curriculum reform efforts go far beyond just rating materials. After completing its review process and identifying high-quality instructional materials, the Louisiana Department of Education facilitated statewide contracts and state-authorized professional developmen