

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum.)

PROJECT	
Participant:	4 – Documenta - Centre for Dealing with the Past (Documenta)
PIC number:	942095526
Project name and acronym:	Combating Holocaust Denial and Distortion through Active Citizenship, Remembrance and Education (CARE)

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	6
Event name:	Learning from the Past, Acting for the Future
Type:	Seminar
In situ/online:	<i>In situ</i>
Location:	Croatia, Zagreb
Date(s):	31 October – 4 November 2024
Website(s) (if any):	https://kulturasjecanja.documenta.hr/en/projects/care-combating-holocaust-denial-and-distortion-through-active-citizenship-remembrance-and-education/
Participants	
Female:	19
Male:	10
Non-binary:	-
From country 1 [Croatia]:	18
From country 2 [Bosnia and Herzegovina]:	7
From country 3 [Romania]:	2
From country 4 [Spain]:	2
From country 5 [Italy]:	1
Total number of participants:	29
From total number of countries:	5
Description	
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>	

This 5-day seminar was organised in the framework of the project “Combating Holocaust Denial and Distortion through Active Citizenship, Remembrance and Education”, coordinated by Intercultural Institute Timisoara (Romania), in partnership with Documenta (Croatia), CDEC Foundation (Italy) and The Jewish Museum of Greece (Greece), The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (Lithuania), Big Picture (Poland), Terraforming (Serbia), co-funded by the European Commission through CERV programme. The seminar was co-funded by TOLI – The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights.

A total of 29 people participated in the event, most of them teachers from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and other educators. Lecturers and trainers from Croatia, Romania and USA supported the teachers in their learning process.

The aim of the program was to contribute to increasing the quality of Holocaust and human rights education in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The program provided a rich opportunity to integrate national and international approaches in teaching about these topics and in understanding the contemporary relevance of this important part of modern history.

The objectives of the program were to:

- Develop teachers’ awareness of historical and current dialectical discussions concerning the Holocaust and other instances of social injustice;
- Develop teachers’ understanding of the impact of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination at individual, group and society level;
- Develop teachers’ understanding of the Jewish life before and after the Holocaust;
- Increase appreciation for innovative, student-centred teaching methods, including extra-curricular activities and partnerships between school and other institutions and organizations;
- Promote an interdisciplinary approach to Holocaust, human rights and intercultural education;
- Develop teachers’ competences for democratic culture.

The methodology of the seminar was learner centred, based on the principles of experiential learning and a human rights-based approach in education. A variety of methods are used in order to stimulate the engagement of participants, their reflections and a high level of interaction: presentations, analysis, discussions, reflections, group work, videos, visits, guest speakers, survivors’ testimonies, etc.

The seminar opened with short speeches from the special guests who highlighted the importance of the seminar and commended the teachers for their interest in teaching these difficult topics – Zoran Ferber, Secretary of the Jewish Community Zagreb, Arthur Berger, member of TOLI Board of Directors, and Vesna Teršelič, director of Documenta, the local partner. Oana Nestian-Sandu, as an organizer and representative of TOLI, warmly welcomed the teachers and invited them to introduce themselves. Tena Banjeglav moderated the opening, which also included the presentation of the exhibition “Whom did we forget?”, created by the students of the Vukovar Gymnasium with the support of European House Vukovar and Documenta. The students who worked on the exhibition guided the participants through the exhibition, explaining its content and shared their reflections on the process of creating it. Afterwards, visiting students from UWC Robert Bosch College from Freiburg, Germany, presented their project focused on the stumbling stones. The seminar continued with a session led by Oana Bajka on the role of identity and stereotypes in shaping human interactions, as well as national and international policies. The participants reflected upon the meaning of identity and the ways in which identity was used as a reason for exclusion and murder during the Holocaust. The session ended with a reflection upon the ways in which teachers can work with their students to help them overcome their stereotypes, engage critically with any attempts at discrimination and stand up in front of injustices.

The second day started with a session by Oana Nestian-Sandu and Oana Bajka on the topic of antisemitism and strategies for teaching this topic in the classroom. The participants learned about the main manifestations of antisemitism and worked in small groups to deconstruct myths and prejudices about Jews manifested in our present day societies. The second session of the day was a workshop by Tena Banjeglav on the Holocaust in Europe, in which she presented how the Holocaust started in various European countries and how the process of arresting, deporting, and concentrating Jews during the Second World War was organized by the Nazis and their collaborators. The participants also had the opportunity to reflect on national myths regarding various countries’ involvement in the Holocaust. The following session was dedicated to the topic of the Holocaust in Croatia. In this session, Lovro Kralj presented about the antisemitism in the Ustasha movement before the war and the process of the Holocaust in the Independent State of Croatia. In the last session of the day, Oana Nestian-Sandu presented TOLI’s interdisciplinary approach to teaching about the Holocaust and human rights, which allows students both to learn about the Holocaust and to learn from the Holocaust, in order to apply their learning to present day realities, to address discrimination, injustice, unfair treatment and to promote human rights. This interdisciplinary methodology uses the lens of human rights to help teachers and students understand how an event like the Holocaust was possible, how the propaganda functioned and how the rights of Jewish people – and other groups – were taken away one by one. At the same time, it uses the lens of the Holocaust to understand that today we

need to take action when human rights are violated or at risk of being violated for members of any group living in our societies.

On the third day, a study visit was organized. In the morning, the participants visited the main camp of the former Jasenovac concentration camp system – camp III Brick Factory. They were offered a guided tour through the area of the former concentration camp and afterwards visited the memorial museum. Then, they visited the Roma Memorial Center in Uštica, part of the former Jasenovac system of the concentration camps, where they learned about the Roma Genocide in the Independent State of Croatia. After returning to Zagreb, the participants reflected on the impact the visit had on them, on the value of organizing visits to Holocaust memorial sites with students and the need to properly prepare and debrief these visits in order for them to represent meaningful educational activities.

The fourth day started with the workshop led by Oana Nestian-Sandu on Holocaust distortion, which provided teachers with tools to recognize manifestations of Holocaust distortion, combat this phenomenon and teach their students how to identify and counter Holocaust distortion. This workshop was followed by a presentation by Arthur Berger about the role of diplomats – Americans or others – in the Holocaust. Arthur presented how the process of the Holocaust was seen from the American perspective, who were the main figures that acted during this period, focusing both on the diplomats who were active in different European countries and who contributed to saving Jews during the Holocaust, as well as on those whose actions hindered the process. The presentation was followed by the testimony of Darko Fischer, Holocaust survivor, who shared his story with the participants. Darko Fischer was born in Osijek in 1938 in a Jewish family. When the Second World War started, his father escaped to Hungary, and soon after Darko, who was five years old at the time, went to hiding with his mother and sister, first to Bosnia and Herzegovina, then to Hungary. His father was killed a few days before the liberation of Budapest, but Darko and the rest of the family survived the war. The person who helped them to escape, Mr. Firinger, received the Righteous Among the Nations award in 2020. Besides sharing his personal story, Mr. Fischer offered teachers a historical context and other information about Jews, their position and way of life in the Independent State of Croatia. The final part of the day was dedicated to a guided tour led by Tena Banjeglav who took teachers to several locations in Zagreb connected with Jewish history, the history of the Holocaust, and the resistance during the Second World War period.

On the last day, the participants visited the Jewish Community in Zagreb where they gained deeper insights into the history, culture and traditions of the Jews in Zagreb and Croatia. They visited the small synagogue of the community and had the opportunity to ask questions to the vice-president of the Community, Saša Cvetković. The last session focused on teachers' action plan – how they will put into practice what they learned in the seminar. Teachers were invited to work in small groups to think about individual or collaborative project ideas and then present them in the plenary. Feedback was offered in order to help teachers avoid problematic approaches in teaching the Holocaust and to raise their awareness on risky or sensitive issues, such as using role play as a method of learning about the Holocaust or choosing methods that run the risk of dehumanizing Jewish people, etc.

In the evaluation part, seminar participants filled out a written questionnaire, shared their thoughts and feelings and discussed the best ways to stay in touch with each other and with the other teachers in TOLI Network, in order to share resources and approaches that can be used in the educational practice. The teachers were informed about the possibility to apply to TOLI Impact Grant Program, as well as of the possibility to engage in international cooperation with teachers from other countries.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).