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THE EDUCATORS' INSTITUTE  
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# EDUCATORS' GUIDE TO HOLOCAUST & MASS ATROCITY EDUCATION AND BUILDING PEACE

**Democratic Republic of Congo**





## Introduction

Developing this educators' guide is an idea from the Congolese participants of the workshop *“Teaching about the Holocaust, Genocide and Mass atrocities: Learning from the Past to Shape the Future”* organized by Educators' Institute for Human Rights (EIHR), a U.S. nonprofit organization, in partnership with the Program of Actions for Sustainable Development (PADS), a Congolese based non-governmental organization. Two distinctive workshops took place across provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) successively in 2021 and 2022 involving teachers from primary and secondary schools, university professors, human rights activists, youth opinion leaders, journalists, and education sector officials.

We are very grateful to speakers from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Anne Frank House, Educators' Institute for Human Rights (EIHR), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (I-GMAP) at the State University of New York in Binghamton, and other independent speakers for their rich presentations. All of these elements gave rise to the participant's desire to generate classroom materials on these subjects. This guide has been created by educators for educators as an international partnership.

**EIHR and PADS express gratitude to the Department of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Keene State College and the Woven Foundation of San Francisco, California, US for their support of this initiative.**

## Purpose of the guide

This guide will provide Congolese educators with guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust, genocide, and mass atrocities as well as other concepts such as antisemitism, ethnic hatred, tribalism, xenophobia, etc. with the aim of fostering peaceful inter-ethnic cohabitation, thus making Congolese society resilient, inclusive, and diverse. This manual will provide a starting place for educators to consider how, through education, students can make a considerable contribu-

tion to the prevention of the commission of new mass atrocities and to the consolidation of peace by improving their knowledge of the history of the Holocaust and effective pedagogy in the classroom.

## **Rationale**

Human rights violations and atrocities have been a part of the Congolese history. Forgiveness and peaceful cohabitation cannot come on their own. Transformative initiatives are needed and education remains an indispensable tool because it is the most powerful weapon for human transformation. Holocaust and mass atrocity education and building peace is an important pillar for the development of the country. It is our hope that this will build peace in our nation and foster understanding between different communities. This education will foster trust and a desire to live together among members of different communities.

In the DRC, the use of this guide will leverage some of the opportunities offered by courses at the primary, secondary and university levels aiming to increase a sense of peace, understanding, and new citizenship by learning how other groups of people have responded to acts of genocide and human rights violations in the past. We know that by equipping our educators with the skills and resources to teach our children, we can examine problems in our society today. As we look at our past in the DRC, we understand all too well the consequences of not exploring the role of silence and indifference to the suffering of others. We understand the need to reflect on the roles and responsibilities of individuals, groups, and nations when confronting the abuse of power, civil and human rights violations, and genocidal acts. As we help our educators understand how to teach this, our students will better understand how to help build a stronger and more peaceful country where all citizens can thrive.

The Holocaust was not an accident in history; it was not inevitable. It occurred because individuals, organizations, and governments made choices that not only legalized discrimination but also allowed prejudice, hatred, and ultimately mass murder to occur. This is an important point for educators to demonstrate so students will understand that the action and inaction of individuals, groups, and nations

led to this genocide. Democratic institutions and values are not automatically sustained, but need to be appreciated, nurtured, and protected by its citizens. The role of silence and indifference can exacerbate the suffering of others, or the infringement of civil rights in any society, as a factor that can—however unintentionally—perpetuate these problems. As such, educators can assist their students in the reflection of the roles and responsibilities of individuals, groups, and nations when confronting the abuse of power, civil and human rights violations, and genocidal acts. As educators learn how to teach their students how to examine these questions, they will help their students make connections to situations in the Congo and how they can act for change.

## Objectives

- Provide educators with tools to customize learning experience in connection with learners' identities, home and communities.
- Develop the educator's ability to encourage listening and action in the students.
- Develop critical thinking and analysis among learners to identify peaceful means for conflict resolution and peace-building.
- Help the educator to explain to the learners the origins and contexts of mass atrocities that have occurred around the world.
- Teach both educators and learners the culture of non-violence as an effective method in the peaceful resolution of human conflict.
- Improve educators' ability to develop in students the understanding of daily situations in their context in order to become resilient and respectful of human rights and dignity.
- Supporting educators and learners in engaging with difficult topics and participating in culturally sensitive learning activities.

## Guidelines

It is not easy to approach a conversation regarding genocide, human rights violations, and the Holocaust. It is therefore essential that the educator demonstrates a high level of sensitivity and awareness of the complexity of the subject matter. This must be a part of the preparation. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) has developed the following guidelines which we have adapted for use in the DRC. They are internationally recognized and are appropriate for any topic related to atrocity education.

Guideline	Explanation
1. Define terms.	The educator is called upon to use the legal definition of concepts to help people understand the meaning and the historical context of each term they use to explain the lessons.
2. Mass atrocities are not inevitable.	Mass atrocities take place because individuals, groups, governments, and institutions make decisions to act or not. When the educator focuses on how decisions were made and considers the humans behind each decision, students will develop critical thinking.
3. Avoid simple answers to complex questions.	The educator will carefully begin to explain the complexity around the cause of the disappearance (killing) or relocation of millions of people in DRC while keeping in mind the age and maturity of the class and each student. Questions will arise that will be difficult to answer about human behavior and how decisions are made. Educators should be careful not to simplify their answers to students but should look for nuances in the history. This will help students develop thinking skills about the many factors that lead to decisions and the historical context.

<p>4. Accurate use of language.</p>	<p>The educator should master the language of instruction or local language to better transmit knowledge to learners. They should also consider the stereotypes and context of their community. For example, although members of a group may share common experiences and beliefs, generalizations about them, without the benefit of modifying or qualifying terms (e.g. “sometimes”, “usually”, or “in many cases” but not “all”) tend to stereotype group behavior and distort historical reality.</p>
<p>5. Seek balance by determining the perspective that informs your study of mass atrocities.</p>	<p>Educators will make an effort to encourage students to always make sure that the source of their information is safe and credible, and to carefully verify the origin and authorship of all materials, especially those found on the Internet. In addition, educators should not only focus on one aspect or viewpoint of the mass atrocity.</p>
<p>6. Do not compare the pain experienced by the victims.</p>	<p>Educators should avoid making a comparison between victims based on the level of suffering that each of them experienced; every person’s experience remains unique. Avoid saying that this is the “worst” mass atrocity or comparing one to another.</p>
<p>7. Don’t romanticize the story.</p>	<p>Instead of overemphasizing heroic tales, priority should be given to factual accuracy and a balanced perspective on history. Accuracy of fact, together with a balanced perspective on the history, is necessary.</p>
<p>8. Contextualize the history.</p>	<p>The behaviors of individuals and organizations must be placed in a historical context (for example, the occurrence of the Holocaust must be studied in the context of European history as a whole in order to give students a perspective on precedents and circumstances that may have contributed to it). Make sure students understand the cultural contributions and achievements of the victims.</p>

<p>9. Individualize the story by translating statistics into personal stories.</p>	<p>Use case studies, survivor testimonies, letters and diaries from the time to show the human experience and make students understand that each “statistic” was a real person, an individual with a life before the atrocity, including friends and family.</p>
<p>10. Make responsible methodological choices .</p>	<p>Educators should carefully consider all images, readings, media, etc...to ensure that these materials do not exploit students’ emotional vulnerability or that could be interpreted as disrespecting the victims themselves. In addition, educators should take care to ensure that the goals and objectives along with the topic, the lesson, the materials, and presentation match the age level and maturity of the class and students.</p>
<p>11. Create clear Rationales and Objective</p>	<p>Educators must consider their students and only teach this to students ages 12 and older. Educators consider the following: Think about why you are teaching this history before deciding what and how to teach about the Holocaust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the most fundamental topics/ aspects of the Holocaust and why do you consider them important?</li> <li>• Why is the topic relevant to your students today?</li> <li>• Why are you focusing on the Holocaust?</li> <li>• In addition, your rationale(s) should consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your knowledge of Holocaust history</li> <li>• Your unique student population</li> <li>• The particular course you are teaching</li> <li>• Time available for study of the Holocaust</li> <li>• External curricular requirements</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>When you take time to consider the rationale for your lessons on the Holocaust, you create a personal framework that helps you select content that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matches your course goals and objectives;</li> <li>• Speaks to your students’ interests;</li> <li>• Provides a clearer understanding of a complex history.</li> </ul>



## Vocabulary words

- Antipathy
- Atrocity
- Antisemitism
- Belief
- Bias
- Cohabitation
- Empathy
- Equity
- Feeling
- Genocide
- Hate speech
- Hate
- Holocaust
- Hospitality
- Identity
- Impartiality
- Live together
- Mass crime
- Massacre
- Nonviolence
- Posture
- Prevention
- Racism
- Racial supremacy
- Regionalism
- Storry
- Trauma
- Transformation
- Tribalism
- Violence
- Xenophobia

## Educational tools

The content of the lessons should be thought - provoking as the instruction is designed to increase awareness of how mass atrocities and genocide occur. Only with effective instructional tools in the hand of the educator can pave way for collaborative and engaging instruction in the classroom. Acquiring knowledge is not easy. It is even more difficult to facilitate learning that leads to engagement. To make a good link between pedagogical support and the process will be essential to this end. Pedagogical support remains only a means to the service of the approach or the educational strategy, meaning the path pedagogical support makes the mind leading to knowledge or understanding. Teaching tools vary according to age and level of education, but anything can be a teaching tool in the right circumstances to transform passive learning into active exploration. Below are some suggested tools intended for educators to consider when preparing the lesson. Not all suggestions must fit into each lesson; some of them could be incorporated into a specific lesson.

- Academic Publications
- Academic research
- Audiovisual media (films)
- Audio media (songs)
- Approaches to changing individual mindsets
- Audiovisual archives on peace
- Books of proverbs
- Brochures
- Brainstorming
- Campaigns for peace
- Case study
- Communication Circle
- Community dialogues
- Cross-border dialogues
- Dances
- Debates
- Diagrams
- Digital tools
- Drawings
- Duo interview
- Group chats
- Group work
- Illustrations
- Knowledge exchange visits
- Library specialized in peace
- Manual training modules
- Media
- Narration
- Participatory action research
- Peace education house with library
- Pictures
- Poems
- Posters
- Prayers for peace
- Proverbs
- Radio or television broadcasts
- Regional exchanges
- Round table
- Sketches

- Story
- Storytelling techniques
- Theater
- Visual aids

## FEEDBACK

Thank you for reading this guide! We are in the beginning stages of working on a project to create a larger project in the DRC. Please provide feedback to [drc@eihr.org](mailto:drc@eihr.org) and EIHR/DRC Facebook page. We would like to know:

- How was this guide helpful? Why or why not?
- What's missing that you would like to see included?
- We are thinking of creating training for educators.
- What would be helpful in that training?
- What else?











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