Responsible History Education, a Tool for Reconciliation?

Joke van der Leeuw-Roord
Executive Director of EUROCLIO
The European Association of History Educators
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EUROCLIO ASSOCIATION

- Established in 1993
- In 2011 63 Associations of History and Citizenship Educators and 15 Member Organisations from 46 countries
- EUROCLIO represents approximately 25 000 history educators!
- Next General Assembly 9 April, 2011, Krzyżowa, (near Wroclaw) Poland

EUROCLIO MISSION

EUROCLIO supports the development of Responsible and Innovative History and Citizenship Education by promoting Critical Thinking, Mutual Respect, Peace, Stability and Democracy.

RESPONSIBLE HISTORY TEACHING

Making students understand that historical narratives

- Are based on evidence, supporting evidence and cross-references
- Are multi-layered/multiperspective narratives
- Are interpretations

www.euroclio.eu
History education helps students understand the world they live in and supports their orientation for the future.

“History is a rear window mirror, you must always check back but unless you keep focussed on the way ahead you’re going nowhere”
- Mural in Belfast

What would I like to address?

- What is understood by reconciliation through history education?
- The traditional nation orientated historical narrative
- EUROCLIO identified 4 key-requirements
- Does EUROCLIO’s approach qualify for reconciliation through history education
- Who are the other agents responsible?

Articulated requirements in academic literature for reconciliation through history education

- Enhancing critical thinking;
- Willingness to question simplistic models;
- Need to challenge the dominant national narratives;
- Ability to disagree about interpretations of the past and their implications for present social issues without resort to violence;
- Emphasis on more positive experiences of living together;
- Presence of Emphatical skills
- Friendly relations between the members of the different ethnic groups.

A traditional historical narrative
Example Croatia, flying Croatian Air

Characteristics:
1. Victim hood
2. Pride
3. Little self reflection
EUROCLIO Educational publications

The Four Points
- Professional Approach
- New Historical Paradigm
- Innovative Methodology
- Project Environment

From experience: Professional Approach

- Capacity building
- Collaborative Work
- Local Ownership
- Responsibility
- Equality
- Cross-Community and Cross-Border Focus
- Dialogue and critical reflection
- Process-Oriented
- External Monitoring

A Desire for Life Long Learning

Professional Approach
**From experience:**

**New Historical Paradigm**

- Improved balance political, cultural, economic and social perspectives
- Gender
- Interpretation
- Environment
- Diversity
- Improved balance between geographical dimensions
- European to a Global perspective
- Global Perspective
- Democratic Attitudes
- Migration
- Everyday life
- Human rights

**New Historical Paradigm!**

**New Content**

- Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia, Understanding a Shared Past – Learning for the Future

**Dimensions**

- Aiming at a New Historical Paradigm
  - Widening Perspective
  - Alternative Themes and Topics
  - Controversial and Sensitive History

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**History Teaching in Conflict and Post-conflict Areas**

Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly

Recommendation 1880

Adopted on 24 March 2010

.....activities implemented under bilateral and regional co-operation projects in post-conflict situations are geared not only to developing strategies for history teaching vis-à-vis sensitive, tragic and controversial subjects, but also, as recommended by the Assembly, to highlighting other dimensions in this context, such as cultural history, the history of lifestyles, of positive interactions, etc.
From experience: Innovative Methodology and Pedagogy

- Critical Thinking
- Multi-perspectivity
- Use of Evidence
- Democratic values and beliefs
- Independent Attitudes
- Skills and Competencies

Multiperspectivity

BEGINNING OR THE END OF DEMOCRACY?
What Was the Meaning of Democracy in Yugoslavia after WW II?

Sources used in the workshop reflect three different perspectives: the opinion of Yugoslav communist leaders, the opinion of Yugoslav opposition leaders (abroad) and the opinion of foreign politicians.

Sources:
- Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Country. Yugoslavia between East and West - Every Day Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia 1945-1990
- The Role of the Churches in the Democratic Transition in Eastern Europe

New Pedagogy

Innovative communication tools

HISTORIANA – Gateway to the Past
An Online educational resource that goes beyond borders

www.historiana.eu
Time!

From experience:
Last but not Least Project Environment

Ability to peacefully disagree
Relative Silence
Impartial Language
Stable and Responsive Conditions
Civic Courage
Trust

Impact of Collective, Cross-community EUROCLIO Work in Macedonia

- On 16 March 2011, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. Volebaek has invited the History Educators Association of The Republic of Macedonia to join their OSCE project Steps Toward Integrated Education in the Education System of the Republic of Macedonia as result of the EUROCLIO project Retelling the History

Impact of Collective, Cross-community EUROCLIO Work in Bosnia

- The OSCE in Bosnia invited EUROCLIO-HIP to become Associated member for the project called History for the Future with focus on establishing common outcome-based competences. In addition 2 other EUROCLIO-HIP members are invited as official representatives of the Pedagogical Institute from Serbska and the University of Sarajevo
- EUROCLIO-HIP is invited by the Open Society Institute Bosnia-Herzegovina to join a working group of the Sarajevo Canton that aims to develop teaching material for primary education.

DECLARATION

"History for the Sake of Reconciliation,"
Lviv, Ukraine, January 14-15, 2011
Organised by NOVA DOBA

Ukrainian history gives testimony to our culture’s richness, joy, and tragedy. Ukraine’s story has been used as a means of reconciliation and social consolidation as well as source of division and conflict. Unfortunately, in recent years, we have observed an alarming tendency for history to become simply a political battlefield. Ukrainian politicians use memory to mobilize the electorate, and to divide a society already divided and destabilized.

We historians-researchers and history teachers would like to suggest a new model: historical reconciliation. This model has dominated postwar Europe and has contributed to the establishing of the EU. By advancing this successful model, we are consciously working to integrate Ukraine into Europe.

We resolve not to place our past or future solely in the hands of politicians. We believe that citizens’ social initiatives should play a crucial role in historical reconciliation. We are ready to bring our own victories, achievements, and international knowledge into a unified effort.

The participants of the Ukrainian historians’ meeting
Which other agents are also responsible?

- Dependent on new high quality research, distancing itself from the traditional and often stereotypical grand national narrative.
- Need for transfer of the new research.
- Political will to take responsibility!

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EUROCLIO SECRETARIAT
Laan van Meerdervoort 70
2517 AN, The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel. +31 70 3817836
Fax. +31 70 3853669
info@euroclio.nl
www.euroclio.eu
Are we still able to digest it? Do we need better transfer strategies?
Source NRC 12/3/2011

Some European answers to produce trans-border histories.
- Academic History Commission and Textbook Germany/Poland
- Common History Books Germany/France 2008
- The History of Europe, 1992 (a common European Textbook)

Sectarian Differences in the Narratives of Lebanese History Textbooks with Special Regard to the Naissance and Early Years of the Lebanese Republic
Magister der Philosophie (Mag. phil.)
http://othes.univie.ac.at/10746/1/2010-08-10_0607415.pdf