



Pestalozzi

From the remembrance of the Holocaust to the prevention of radicalisation and crimes against humanity PREV2

Bystanding - neutrality manifestation or a crime? Teaching prevention of crimes against humanity in the historical context

by

Author: Aija Burkevica - Latvia

Editor: Višnja Rajić

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Brief description

Learning history or evaluating the political and social events in the community, we always evaluate events from the side-lines. We do not investigate the reasons that determined people's actions in different critical situations. When we compare our own behaviour in various situations with the actions of historical personalities, we can better understand why they acted the way they acted. Knowing these decision-making mechanisms, we can influence the peoples' behaviour around us to prevent future crimes against humanity.

This unit includes activities adapted from Mompoin-Gaillard P., Lazàr I., (2015) **"TASKs for democracy – 60 activities to learn and assess transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs)"**, Pestalozzi series N°4, Council of Europe Publishing.

For activities, reading materials are used, offered by organisation **40 Facing history and ourselves**, <https://www.facinghistory.org>

Expected outcomes

- ✓ To understand differences between neutrality rights and liabilities of tolerating crime.
- ✓ Inclination to see things from different perspectives
- ✓ To reflect on how to use historical knowledge in education for the prevention of crimes against humanity.
- ✓ To show the possibility of using case studies and personal stories in teaching about bystander roles in crimes against humanity.

Brief description and context of the unit:

Assessing the crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War, like The Holocaust, the genocide against Roma and Latvian *Balgais gads* (The Ghastly year) in 1940, we have to establish that the crime planners and implementers were only a small part of the society. We must ask how this small part was able to deport, torture and kill millions of people. The history of the Holocaust is not one of only perpetrators and victims. Not everyone involved in this event fell into one of these two categories. Indeed, most of the individuals in Europe and around the world acted as bystanders — people who are aware of injustice but choose to “stand by” while it is going on. Bystanders help shape society by their reactions and can exert powerful influences. They can even define the meaning of events and move others toward empathy or indifference.

Among the most important questions of this topic are: why do Bystanders arise? What can we do as educators to avoid it and to promote civic participation in various public processes to prevent crimes against humanity?

Activities

| | Duration | Methods used |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| Activity 0 Preparation for training | 60 minutes | |
| Activity 1 Grouping | 15 minutes | |
| Activity 2 Learning from unpleasant experiences | 30 minutes | |
| Activity 3 Dealing with difficult knowledges | 140 minutes | |
| Evaluation and impact assessment | 30 minutes | |

Activity 0 Preparation for training

All participants should read chapter 8 “A War for Race and Space” and chapter 9 “Holocaust” from the book “**Holocaust and Human behaviour**” (2016), offered by organisation **40 Facing history and ourselves**.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behaviour/table-contents>

Activity 1 Grouping Mime an animal (Original activity contributed by Madalena Mendes)

Duration: 15 min

Expected learning outcomes:

- ✓ Willingness to work together with others and become actively involved.

Methods /techniques

- ✓ Individual work
- ✓ Mime
- ✓ Game

Procedure

Step 1 (5 min)

- ✓ Each participant receives a piece of paper with the name of an animal on it (e.g. rabbit, snake, cat etc.)

Step 2 (10 min)

- ✓ Each participant has to find the animal or four other participants with the same animal using only mime.
- ✓ The participants with the same animal form a group.

Resources:

- ✓ Cards with the names of different animals corresponding to the number of participants and groups you wish to have

Activity 2 Learning from unpleasant experiences(Original activity contributed by
Katica Pevec Semec)

Duration 30 min

Expected outcomes:

- ✓ Inclination to see things from different perspectives
- ✓ Aptitude to cope with complex issues and avoid one-dimensional answers
- ✓ Self-knowledge and introspection
- ✓ Aptitude to evaluate situations and issues to look for solutions with the involvement of all parties

Methods / techniques

- ✓ Discussion

Resources:

- ✓ A2 posters (1 per group)
- ✓ Table from appendix 1 on A4 paper (for each participant)
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Pens

Procedure

Step 1 Propulsion (10 min)

- ✓ Present the slides with a description of the concepts “victim”, “perpetrator”, “bystander” and “upstander”.
- ✓ Each member of the group is asked to remember: a situation when he knew something was wrong or unfair, but he did not intervene to improve the situation (be a bystander); a situation when he went out of his way to help somebody else — a friend, a family member, a neighbour, or a complete stranger (be an upstander).
- ✓ Ask the participants to identify, what were the reasons of the actions? Compare these two situations! What led them to act in one situation but not to intervene in the other? What were the consequences of the actions for them and for others? Ask participants fill table (Appendix 1) individually.

Step 2 (10 min)

- ✓ Divide the participants into pairs by giving them pieces of papers that are cut out in the same shape. Make sure to have a pair of each, but four pieces in the same colour (do not have to be the same shape)
- ✓ Once the participants find their pair they start working together.
- ✓ Working in pairs: participants discuss with each other their situation and the reasons for their choices. Note the similarities and differences
- ✓ Once finished participants group in groups of four according to the colour of the paper and discuss their behaviour and realise the main reasons why people become upstanders or bystanders and takes notes.
- ✓ Is there a common pattern, how people decide to become a bystanders or upstanders?

Participants turn their notes into posters, then go around and visit each group.

Step 3 (debriefing – 5 minutes)

Hold a short debriefing session to explore some questions, for example:

- ✓ What did you learn during this activity?
- ✓ How did you feel during this activity?
- ✓ How could this activity be made useful for you in your classroom?
- ✓ What learning outcomes would you expect to reach with your students?

Activity 3 Dealing with difficult knowledge (Original activity contributed by Anne Reinersten)

Expected outcomes:

- ✓ Inclination to see things from different perspectives
- ✓ Capacity to face the challenge of doubt and uncertainty
- ✓ Understanding of the subjective nature of all knowledge of self and others
- ✓ Ability to use a variety of languages and registers to express oneself with nuance
- ✓ Understanding of the relativity of knowledge, that theories are social constructs that remain incomplete and unfinished

Methods / techniques

- ✓ Discussion
- ✓ Cooperative learning

Resources:

- ✓ A2 posters (1 per group)
- ✓ Reading materials kit from appendix 2 on A4 paper (for each group)
- ✓ A4 paper for everyone
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ Pens

Procedure

Step 1 (60 min)

- ✓ Divide the participants into groups of four. Use the birthday line to do so. Ask the participants to line up according to the date of their birth. Then ask them to group with the people standing next to them.
- ✓ Each group of participants of four people have four different coloured markers (one marker for every one).
 - Ask participants do they know what is the concept of difficult knowledge?
 - What counts for you as difficult knowledge?
 - What happens to knowledge in times of difficulty?
 - What makes knowledge difficult in teaching and learning?
- ✓ Narrate or describe times when meaning broke down during learning and teaching and times when you attempted some sort of repair in making meaning.

- ✓ Give participants first two textual materials (appendix 2) and tell them, that during the reading, they can record notes about the factors that encouraged behaviour and upstander behaviour. Questions, who could help them:
 - What significant choices are made in these stories?
 - How do you think this individual, group, or nation would explain their decisions?
 - To whom did he/she/they feel responsible?
 - Why do you think all of the members of Le Chambon made the same choice to protect the Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution?
 - ✓ First use the story *What Did People Know?* which is an interview with Walter Stier, the official responsible for the “special trains” that transported millions of Jews and other victims to concentration camps such as Auschwitz. Ask two members of the group to read this interview like a role-play.
 - ✓ Second story to read is *The Courage of Le Chambon*. Each member should read a part of the text. After reading, ask participants in the group to discuss the behaviour influencing factors of both stories characters.
 - ✓ When factors are found, the participants evaluate them in comparison with information, developed on posters in previous exercise.
 - ✓ Ask participants to read the third story *Protest at Rosenstrasse 2 - 4*, about people, who only defended their own family members from the Nazis. Ask them:
 - What examples of protest and resistance does this reading describe?
 - Who were the protesters, and what factors motivated them to speak out or take action?
 - What does this story reveal about community, conformity, and peer pressure?
 - Why do some people stand by during times of injustice while others try to do something to stop or prevent injustice?
 - Under what circumstances do you think it is appropriate to stand by while conflict or injustice occurs?
 - Under what circumstances do you think it is especially important to stand up to injustice?
 - ✓ Participants individually invent a new word related to a difficult knowledge, in this case – related to people from story *Rosenstrasse 2 - 4* who act partly like a bystanders and partly – like upstanders. They should be ready to explain why they created this word.
1. Show on a slide the following question:
“How does this activity raise our awareness of the relation between ‘pleasant’ and ‘difficult’ knowledge?”

2. Each member in turn does three things:
3. offers his/her new word, related to people from story Rosenstrasse 2-4;
4. explains why this particular word was chosen;
5. offers a perspective on the proposed question.
6. In turn, each member to the speaker's right will make notes on the answers to the question on a flip chart using his/her coloured marker. Encourage them to make notes with key words and classify them. Group poster should be finalised with putting on it participants newly created words.
7. End activity with a debriefing using the posters and questions like:
 - Would we be able better understand human decision-making problems in difficult situations?
 - How did this help us open up and discover more about ourselves?

Step 2 (20 min)

- ✓ Participants are asked to write about whatever they want, as long as it is related to the topic, which is **“From bystander to upstander to prevent crimes against humanity”**. They can use all collected information, remarks, posters etc. As a way to structure thinking and as prompts for writing their stories one could use a questions like:
 - What can be learned from this unit that can help guide decision-making in times of conflict?
 - What is your responsibility as an individual who lives and works in larger communities—in a school, a family, a neighbourhood, a nation, a world?
 - Whom do you feel you have a responsibility to care for and protect? How can your answer to this question help you make decisions about how to act and how to treat others?
 - What advice can you give to friends and/or family about their role as individuals living in a larger community?
- ✓ If participants want, they should discuss questions with others. The trainer must be a mentor for them who offers their support if the participants have any questions.

Step 3 (30 min)

- ✓ Ask participants to choose a partner from the whole group and create couples for next step of the activity.

- ✓ Couples exchange their writings and read the text of the other. While reading each one must consider 3 things:
 - one recognition about the written text;
 - one question about the written material;
 - one suggestion, to complement the written material.
- ✓ After reading couples exchange their recognitions, questions and suggestions and discuss about them.

Step 4 (debriefing – 30 min)

- ✓ Have the participants sit in a circle.
- ✓ Ask participants discuss with one on the side what they think now about how difficult is difficult?
- ✓ End with a discussion about how the creation of a new concept and action of writing can help us get closer to an understanding of the theme of education for the prevention of crimes against humanity.

Evaluation and impact assessment

Participants are asked to write a paragraph on the most significant thing they have learned and should include following:

- ✓ How could they use those carried out activities for they own lesson preparing?
- ✓ On what subjects they can build cross-curricular lessons?
- ✓ What they would change in activities in order to improve them?
- ✓ What difficulties may arise when creating lessons?

Homework: to create a lesson plan for the two historical, ethical or social studies lessons (2 x 40 min) using these or similar methods of working with students (feel free to use provided resources) about the topic: “How to prevent a crimes against humanity?” (the topic can be changed while keeping the meaning).

References:

The Holocaust: Bystanders and Upstanders, by **40 Facing history and ourselves**, nonprofit international educational and professional development organization resource library, <https://www.facinghistory.org/>

Mompoin-Gaillard P., Lazàr I., (2015). **TASKs for democracy – 60 activities to learn and assess transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs)**, Pestalozzi series N°4, Council of Europe Publishing

Holocaust and Human behaviour (2016). Ebook by Facing History and Ourselves, ISBN 978-1-940457-18-5

“Le Chambon-sur-Lignon”, The Holocaust, Crimes, Heroes and Villains website, <http://www.auschwitz.dk/Trocme.htm>

Shoah, VHS (New York: Paramount Home Video, 1985).

Appendix 1: Worksheet for activity 2 Learning from unpleasant experiences

| Reasons or explanations for my BYSTANDER behaviour | The consequences of my actions to me and others | Reasons or explanations for my UPSTANDER behaviour | The consequences of my actions to me and others |
|--|---|--|---|
| | | | |

Appendix 2: reading material for activity 3 Dealing with difficult knowledge

Upstanders and Bystanders during the Holocaust

2.1. *What Did People Know?*

(Excerpt from pp. 364–66 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behaviour*)

Below is an interview with Walter Stier, the official responsible for the “special trains” that transported millions of Jews and other victims to concentration camps such as Auschwitz.

What’s the difference between a special and a regular train?

A regular train may be used by anyone who purchases a ticket. . . . A special train has to be ordered. The train is specially put together and people pay group fares. . . .

But why were there more special trains during the war than before or after?

I see what you’re getting at. You’re referring to the so-called resettlement trains. . . . Those trains were ordered by the Ministry of Transport of the Reich [the German government].

But mostly, at that time, who was being “resettled”?

No. We didn’t know that. Only when we were fleeing from Warsaw ourselves, did we learn that they could have been Jews, or criminals, or similar people.

Special trains for criminals?

No, that was just an expression. You couldn’t talk about that. Unless you were tired of life, it was best not to mention that.

But you knew that the trains to Treblinka or Auschwitz were—

Of course we knew. I was the last district; without me these trains couldn’t reach their destination. . . .

Did you know that Treblinka meant extermination? Of course not!

You didn’t know?

Good God, no! How could we know? I never went to Treblinka. I stayed in Krakow, in Warsaw, glued to my desk.

You were a . . . I was strictly a bureaucrat!

Shoah, VHS (New York: Paramount Home Video, 1985).

2.2. *The Courage of Le Chambon*

(Excerpt from pp. 385–87 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behaviour*)

In the summer of 1940, the Germans invaded and took over sections of France. Over the next two years they controlled nearly the entire country. During these years, French Jews were subjected to some of the same treatment as Jews in other areas occupied by Germany. They were stripped of their citizenship and they had to wear yellow armbands. Eventually, around 80,000 Jews, including 10,000 children, were sent to concentration camps. Only 3,000 of them survived.

In Le Chambon, a tiny mountain town in southeast France, people were aware that Jews were being murdered. The people of Le Chambon were Protestants in a country where most people are Catholic. They turned their community into a hiding place for Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution.

Magda Trocme, the wife of the local minister, explained how it all began:

Those of us who received the first Jews did what we thought had to be done — nothing more complicated. . . . How could we refuse them? A person doesn't sit down and say I'm going to do this and this and that. We had no time to think. When a problem came, we had to solve it immediately. Sometimes people ask me, "How did you make a decision?" There was no decision to make. The issue was: Do you think we are all brothers or not? Do you think it is unjust to turn in the Jews or not? Then let us try to help!

Even though the residents of Le Chambon tried to keep their secret from the police, rumours spread about Jews finding safety in this village. In 1942, Magda Trocme's husband, Andre, and his assistant were arrested for helping Jews. After they were released, Andre continued his efforts to help Jews, saying, *"These people came here for help and for shelter. I am their shepherd. A shepherd does not forsake his flock. I do not know what a Jew is. I know only human beings."*

Later, Andre had to go into hiding for ten months to avoid getting arrested again. During this time, everybody in the town hid Andre's location from French and German police. Unfortunately, the Gestapo were able to arrest Andre's cousin, Daniel. Daniel Trocme was sent to a concentration camp where he was murdered.

When they were interviewed forty years later, the people of Le Chambon did not regard themselves as heroes. They did what they did, they said, because

they believed that it had to be done. As one villager explained, “We didn’t protect the Jews because we were moral or heroic people. We helped them because it was the human thing to do.” Almost everyone in the community took part in the effort. Even the children were involved. The people of Le Chambon drew support of people in other places. Church groups, both Protestant and Catholic, helped fund their efforts. From 1940 to 1944, the residents of Le Chambon provided refuge for approximately 5,000 children, women, and men who were fleeing Nazi persecution, including as many as 3,500 Jews.

“Le Chambon-sur-Lignon,” The Holocaust, Crimes, Heroes and Villains website, <http://www.auschwitz.dk/Trocme.htm> (accessed January 22, 2009).

2.3. *Protest at Rosenstrasse 2 - 4*

(Excerpt from pp. 376–78 in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behaviour*)

There is evidence of only one successful protest in Germany against the Nazis. According to historian Nathan Stoltzfus, it began on Saturday, February 27, 1943. It was the day the SS rounded up the last Jews in Berlin—about ten thousand men, women, and children. Most were picked up at work and herded onto waiting trucks. Others were kidnapped from their homes or pulled off busy streets. It was not the city's first mass deportation, but this one was different from any other. This time, two thousand Jews in intermarriages were among those targeted. The Nazis had excluded them from earlier deportations, but now they were to be treated like other Jews.

Aryan relatives of these Jews began to make phone calls when their loved ones did not return home. They quickly discovered that their family members were being held at the administration building of the Jewish community at Rosenstrasse 2-4. Within hours, relatives began to gather there. Most were women. As the women arrived at Rosenstrasse 2 - 4, each loudly demanded to know what crimes her husband and children had committed. When the guards refused to let the women enter the building, the protesters vowed to return until they were allowed to see their relatives. They kept their word. In the days that followed, people blocks away could hear the women chanting. Charlotte Israel, one of the protesters, recalls:

The situation in front of the collecting center came to a head [on March 5]. Without warning the guards began setting up machine guns. Then they directed them at the crowd and shouted: "If you don't go now, we'll shoot." Automatically the movement surged backward in that instant. But then for the first time we really hollered. Now we couldn't care less. We bellowed, "You murderers," and everything else that one can holler. Now they're going to shoot in any case, so now we'll yell too, we thought. We yelled "Murderer, Murderer, Murderer, Murderer." We didn't scream just once but again and again, until we lost our breath.

Nazi officials were worried that the protests would draw attention to the deportation of Jews. In order to silence the protestors, the next day, Joseph Goebbels ordered the release of all Jews married to Aryans. Yet, eight thousand Jews imprisoned at Rosenstrasse 2 - 4 who did not have Aryan relatives were shipped to death camps. No one spoke on their behalf.

Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 243.