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# My Neighbor, My Enemy

## *Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*

*Edited by*
Eric Stover
*and*
Harvey M. Weinstein

# 11 Public education and social reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia

*Sarah Warshauer Freedman, Dinka Corkalo, Naomi Levy, Dino Abazovic, Bronwyn Leebaw, Dean Ajdukovic, Dino Djipa, and Harvey M. Weinstein*

Throughout history, governments of all political stripes have used history and literature curricula to reinforce national ideologies and identities. The promulgation of official memory through the school system can be an effective form of propaganda. The educational setting can become a conduit for the government or leaders' views, presenting political ideas and beliefs as either "correct" or "incorrect." Textbooks and curricula can be used to justify or deny past state crimes, create revisionist history, present on-going injustices as natural, or perpetuate attitudes that replicate the conditions under which injustices are committed. Where school systems remain segregated and unequal, education can be manipulated to perpetuate inequalities that are a legacy of past conflicts, dispossession, or repression.

If public education can function to inflame hatreds, mobilize for war, and teach acceptance of injustice, it can be used also as a powerful tool for the cultivation of peace, democratic change, and respect for others. This premise has been a prominent focus of the United Nations (UN) Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), as well as numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout the Balkans and in conflict zones around the world. If children living in divided societies can come together in the schools, this contact can be used to help them question the prejudices and stereotypes in their surrounding environment.[1] Where authoritarianism in the classroom fosters blind obedience and militarism, such attitudes might be transformed by educational reforms that promote critical thinking, democratic principles, and the examination of competing views and perspectives. Similarly, if incommensurable conceptions of justice and interpretations of traumatic historical events have fueled conflict and mistrust, so schools might alternatively provide an arena for examining the past in a constructive manner.





Such aspirations notwithstanding, education reform in societies after ethnic conflict poses very serious challenges, and children are often caught in the middle of competing ideologies. To begin with, those in power may resist reforms that promote democratic values. For example, in BiH, the Dayton Accords devolved authority over education to the leadership that was in power during the war. The OHR often struggled to implement educational reforms against the wishes of the elected leaders, who advocated divisive school structures and curricular decisions. In addition, reforms that emphasize democratic approaches may actually fuel intergroup hatreds if they are implemented without the active consultation and participation of the local community. For example, when open debate encourages the expression of alternative and competing viewpoints, parents or local authorities may see this as a provocative attack on the resolution that terminated the conflict. Parental resistance might then encourage antagonistic or even violent confrontations both in and out of the classrooms. This has been particularly true when "outsiders," such as the UN, assume the role of a custodial government in post-war countries and, with the best of intentions, compel educational systems to adopt democratic reforms, with little regard for local traditions and culture. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in Croatia and BiH, where internationals and NGOs have devoted a tremendous amount of attention to *ad hoc* educational programs in conflict resolution, human rights, democracy, and civic education, while paying less attention to local attitudes about the role of schools in the process of social reconstruction.

One of the first steps often undertaken is to remove from curricular materials any stereotypes of ethnicity or descriptions of aggression on the part of any group. In 1998, under pressure from the international community, the Sarajevo Education Working Group carried out a textbook review as part of the process of encouraging refugee returns under the Sarajevo Declaration. Leaked reports indicated bland and inaccurate text that obfuscated the facts of the war. The communities summarily rejected the proposed textbook reform, although there may have been some distortions exaggerated by the media.[2] The push to integrate schools across ethnic lines did not solicit the cooperation of parents and teachers, and led to resistance and sabotage that was reflected in the behavior of the children. Focusing solely on curricular material or on which ethnic group occupies a particular building reflects a unidimensional view of important problems.

In 2000, we launched a series of studies to try to understand what role, if any, public education could play in social reconstruction in Croatia and BiH. We had two questions: what do communities think about the role

Table 11.1 *Survey, interview and focus group subjects*[16]

| Town | Language Program | Subject Type | Survey | Interviews | Focus[17] Groups | Total[18] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mostar | Bosnian | Students | 285 | 2 | - | 287 |
| | | Parents | 261 | 2 | - | 263 |
| | | Teachers | 26 | 6 | - | 32 |
| | Croatian | Students | 274 | 2 | 20 | 296 |
| | | Parents | 389 | 1 | 11 | 401 |
| | | Teachers | 40 | 6 | 10 | 56 |
| Vukovar | Croatian | Students | 345 | 2 | 9 | 356 |
| | | Parents | 483 | 2 | 9 | 494 |
| | | Teachers | 50 | 6 | 9 | 65 |
| | Serbian | Students | 373 | 2 | 15 | 390 |
| | | Parents | 470 | 1 | 15 | 486 |
| | | Teachers | 45 | 6 | 4 | 55 |

schools should play in creating a memory of the past through curriculum? And, second, how do they want the schools organized to deliver that curriculum? Our premise was that a better understanding of the aspirations and experiences of those most immediately affected by the education system is a critical component of effective education reform. Over the course of three years, we solicited the views of parents, teachers, students, and administrators in two of the most ethnically divided cities of the former Yugoslavia – Vukovar (Croatia) and Mostar (BiH) – on a wide range of issues, including interethnic relations in schools, the teaching of history, school integration, curricula development, and national identity. Our research team, which consisted of scholars from BiH, Croatia, and the United States, conducted one large-scale survey and one qualitative interview and focus group study in the two cities. The surveys centered on the sixth and eighth grades of elementary school and the second year of secondary school. The interviews and focus groups centered on the second year of secondary school. Table 11.1 provides a breakdown of the sample for the surveys, interviews and focus groups, by national group, and location.

## Educational systems in BiH and Croatia

Before presenting the findings of our studies, we offer a brief introduction to the educational systems of BiH and Croatia, beginning with the organization of the school system in post-war BiH and specifically in the city of Mostar which, prior to the 1991 war, was a multi-ethnic community made up primarily of Bosniaks and Croats with a significant Serb minority (see the description of Mostar in the introductory chapter to this volume). Following the signing of the Dayton Accords in December 1995, the newly decentralized educational system in BiH allowed cantons to establish their own education ministries and, if desired, to set standards, and to develop separate curricula and textbooks.[3] This decentralized system did not, however, foster an atmosphere of cooperation and coordination among the cantonal ministries.

The schools of Mostar are almost entirely segregated. Bosniak children attend schools on the east side of the city, while Croat children attend schools on the west side. Although, in theory, the cantonal education ministry is supposed to supervise the administration of local schools, in practice, administrators of each ethnic group supervise the schools on their side. Until 2002, this separation was accomplished by having a Croat Minister of Education and a Bosniak Deputy Minister who acted as Minister for the Bosniak schools. The Minister's and Deputy Minister's offices and parallel administrations were staffed by members of their respective national groups and were housed in separate locations. Schools in Mostar also use different curricula. Bosniak schools use the curricula developed by the Bosniak pedagogical institute in Mostar, which is based on a framework developed by the Bosnian Federal Education Ministry. Croat schools use curricula from the state of Croatia, modified by the Institute of Education in West Mostar, the institution that most closely parallels the Bosniak Pedagogical Institute. After the first BiH-run elections in fall 2002, the OHR annulled these parallel systems of administration but left the separate curricula in place.

The OHR and the Council of Europe have worked to remove material that is offensive to other national groups from all textbooks in BiH. In 1999, when new textbooks could not be prepared, it ordered the blackening-out of offensive material in existing textbooks, an exercise that was fraught with controversy. In many schools, students were given the task of marking out the offending passages, which only served to highlight the material. In July 2002, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) assumed the OHR's former role in education. By fall of 2003, the OSCE had brokered agreements with the local ministries that led to the introduction of new, inoffensive textbooks and a common core curriculum. In an important and symbolic move, the OSCE also mandated the integration of the old Mostar Gymnasium, the premier institution for secondary education pre-war. By working at both the curricular and institutional level, significant steps were taken toward an integrated, non-ethnically based school system.

Unlike in BiH, Croatia has had little international involvement in its education system since the end of the war. It is highly centralized, and all primary and secondary education is regulated by the Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES), which struggles to balance the conflicting agendas of local political leaders, especially in regions experiencing continuing tensions.[4] The MoES is responsible for drafting legislation, defining the curriculum for all schools, approving textbooks, appointing head teachers, approving the number of pupils and school budgets, and settling all expenditures except those met by local authorities. Simultaneously, the MoES must balance the often conflicting imperatives of meeting the needs of state-building and honoring minority rights by educating minority youth in accordance with the standards of the European Union.

Minority schooling is regulated by a set of laws allowing for three different options for minority education. The first option, which is practiced by some Italians and Hungarians, offers separate schooling that is fully in the language of the minority. The second option involves separate courses in "national" subjects for minority students taught in their mother tongue (eg. Serbian) but with the remainder of the instruction in the Croatian language. These students attend the regular Croatian classes for all non-national subjects. The final option for minority education offers courses as an additional school activity. Minority students attend the regular schools in the Croatian language but have additional classes in their mother tongue relevant to their cultural heritage.

The Erdut agreement, signed by the Croatian government and Croatian Serb representatives in 1995, created a different form of separate schooling for Serb children living in the Vukovar region.[5] The agreement was facilitated by the international community with the political purpose of ensuring the protection of Serb minority rights, and was mandated for a period of five years. During this period the Croatian MoES and Serb representatives agreed that Croat and Serb children could go to schools with joint administrations but be taught separately in different languages. This practice frequently has led to Serb and Croat students attending classes in separate shifts or in different locations. Further, the Erdut agreement placed a moratorium on teaching about the recent war in Serb language programs, but that moratorium is now being lifted, and Serbs were to receive new textbooks and begin learning about the war in fall 2003.[6] However, these plans have not materialized.

## Attitudes toward controversial issues

In this chapter, we present survey results related to the issues of school integration and history education.[7] We compare the responses of parents, teachers, and students of each national group in each town (Table 11.2). For the interviews and focus groups, we examine all discussion about school integration and teaching about the past.



### *School integration*

The surveys reveal that the youth of all national groups in both Mostar and Vukovar are less in favor of school integration than adults. The only exception is Croat youth in Mostar, who respond neutrally, like their parents. The Bosniak youth, although less enthusiastic than their parents or teachers, are the only young people clearly in favor of school integration. The Croat students in Vukovar are more strongly opposed to integration than any group in either town.

The different national groups in these two towns have set themselves in opposition over the issue of school integration. In Vukovar, Serbs are less opposed to integration than Croats, with the exception of the teachers, and Croat teachers are less opposed than Serb teachers. The teachers' responses could be explained by the fact that many Serb teachers report fears that their jobs will be threatened if the schools are integrated.

In the Mostar surveys, the Bosniak groups all favor integration. While none of the Croat groups oppose integration, their opinions are significantly less positive than those of the Bosniaks. On the whole, the citizens of Mostar tend to think more favorably about school integration than the citizens of Vukovar. Significantly, while the old Mostar Gymnasium is set to be integrated (albeit under external pressure), there is no movement on issues of school integration in Vukovar.

When we looked to the qualitative data, we found that many objections to school integration were grounded in two basic, but related, fears: fear of conflict and of loss of identity. In Vukovar, the fear of renewed conflict permeates much of the discussion, although there is also evidence that Serb adults, and especially Serb leaders, fear a loss of their culture and traditions. In Mostar, the Croats, who are least in favor of school integration, are motivated primarily by the threats to their identity.

### *Fear of conflict in Vukovar*

Although more in favor of integration than Vukovar's Croats, the Serbs expressed reservations. They voiced strong fears that integration of the schools would lead to increased violence. The students seemed more afraid than the adults, which perhaps explains why they were more opposed to integration. As one Serb student put it: "The war may be almost forgotten in other parts of the country, but not here. I think that

Table 11.2 *Survey Results*[19]

| Town | National Group | Subject Type | School Integration[20] | History |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vukovar | Croats | Students | 1.89 | 2.91 |
| | | | (.72) | (1.23) |
| | | Parents | 2.43 | 2.72 |
| | | | (1.01) | (1.27) |
| | | Teachers | 2.83 | 3.25 |
| | | | (.80) | (1.06) |
| | | S/P/T F-test | 47.31*** | 5.31** |
| | Serbs | Students | 2.22 | 3.61 |
| | | | (.73) | (.78) |
| | | Parents | 2.78 | 3.79 |
| | | | (.79) | (.62) |
| | | Teachers | 2.28 | 3.84 |
| | | | (.69) | (.56) |
| | | S/P/T F-test | 56.92*** | 7.78*** |
| | T-tests Croat vs. Serbs | Students | −6.17*** | −9.25*** |
| | | Parents | −5.92*** | −16.54*** |
| | | Teachers | 3.45** | −3.64*** |
| Mostar | Bosniaks | Students | 2.87 | 3.39 |
| | | | (.64) | (.92) |
| | | Parents | 3.26 | 3.42 |
| | | | (.60) | (.94) |
| | | Teachers | 3.52 | 3.15 |
| | | | (.25) | (1.19) |
| | | S/P/T F-test | 31.56*** | .9253 |
| | Croats | Students | 2.56 | 3.29 |
| | | | (.70) | (1.12) |
| | | Parents | 2.54 | 3.60 |
| | | | (.79) | (.85) |
| | | Teachers | 3.14 | 3.75 |
| | | | (.51) | (.63) |
| | | S/P/T F-test | 11.56*** | 9.79*** |
| | T-tests Bosniaks vs. Croats | Students | 5.35*** | 1.13 |
| | | Parents | 12.02*** | −2.52* |
| | | Teachers | 3.03** | −2.65** |

*Table entries are mean scores with standard deviations in parentheses.*
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$



there would be a lot of conflicts [in integrated schools and classrooms]. I mean, there are conflicts even now when schools are divided." He explained that he did not feel safe around Croat youth because he could not trust responsible adults to intervene to stop youth violence. He described how he watched a teacher stand by when his younger brother got into a fight with a Croat student. Serb students blamed politicians, the media, and others in the community for inflaming an already tense cross-national situation. They felt powerless to make changes themselves and thought change would take a substantial amount of time.

These fears are not entirely unfounded. The majority of Croat youth in the surveys and focus groups said clearly and unequivocally that they wanted their schools and classes to remain segregated. They voiced a strong dislike of Serbs and a desire not to be forced to associate with them. One student commented: "As far as I'm concerned, . . . let them go elsewhere. I don't care." Croat boys in one focus group voiced even more negative attitudes than individual Croat students did in their interviews.[8] It is clear from the field notes and transcripts that this was a difficult group, because the boys often seemed not to take the task seriously and may have been purposefully provocative. Also, peer pressure to express negative feelings about Serb youth was palpable. For example, one of the boys said: "Children should be taught from the beginning to hate Serbs . . . We saw in the war what they are like. These are not people at all [others laugh]. Well yes, like animals for what they have done." One way of interpreting these data is that the boys were deliberately provoking the group leader and did not mean what they said. Another reading based on the findings from the surveys and individual interviews recognizes that they were being provocative, but that the emotions expressed in the focus group, though extreme, easily could have had some basis in reality.[9] Croat adults also confirmed that a great deal of hostility toward Serbs still prevailed among Croat youth. "Most [Croat] pupils hate Serbs," a Croat teacher said. Another explained: "Children are strictly separating and distancing themselves from one another here. It seems as if those differences are irreconcilable . . . The wounds are still very, very fresh."

Like their Serb counterparts, Croat students feared that integrated schools would lead to increased conflict. A Croat student, who said he avoided Serbs whenever possible, had this to say: "[Segregated schools] work for me, and I think that it should stay like that, because if we go to the same schools, there might be national conflicts. There are already conflicts in the streets, and if we were together in the schools, it would probably be even worse." While Serbs fear the hatred of their Croat neighbors in the present, the Croats base their fear on memories of what happened in Vukovar during the war.[10] Croats feel that they cannot trust

Serb residents because many of them participated in war crimes during the armed takeover of the town. "Before the war, our parents were normal with the Serbs," said a Croat student. "Nobody was insisting on 'Serb–Croat' relations. They all sang together and did things together. But, as the war started, they cheated us . . . and we simply started to kill each other." In this story, the student sees no motivation for the Serbs' perceived betrayal; rather, the killing simply happened. And it happened suddenly. The possibility of sudden and unmotivated violence leaves the storyteller feeling profoundly unsafe.[11]

In spite of the students' fears of one another, there seemed to be some openness to the possibility of changing opinions. For the Croats, the openings are more evident in individual interviews than in the focus groups, suggesting that it is social pressure more than individual opinions that pose stumbling-blocks. One student said that he preferred segregated schools, but he would accept a change in policy: "If I must, I would adjust." He even suggested, "Maybe we should try [integrated schools]." The Serbs were even more optimistic, as one student explained:

> I believe that if children went to school together, after some time, everyone would meet everyone else, and they would become friends. There wouldn't be any problems in the long run.

Both sides in Vukovar think the other wants the schools to remain segregated, and each makes assumptions about the reasoning of the other group. One of the reasons for Serb resistance to integration cited frequently by Croats was everyday Serbs' unwillingness to accept Vukovar as part of Croatia and a corresponding reluctance to identify with the state of Croatia. One mother explained that even though Serbs have lived in Vukovar for many years, they should be treated as an immigrant group that must become part of a new country to survive.

Some, like this Croat teacher, expressed even more strongly their assumption that Serbs did not want to identify with the state of Croatia:

> Since this is the Croatian state, please listen to the lectures in the Croatian language . . . And if you want to go, then please go. No one will stop you! . . . If you don't want to [study in the Croatian language], then please cross [the border] – it is not far away.

These assumptions on the part of Croats about Serb students' views may be based on the public positions of Serb political leaders, given the lack of daily contact across groups. However, our data suggest that ordinary Serbs' views do not uniformly support the views of their leaders. This finding suggests the possibility of an opening where accurate information might influence misguided belief. While the Serbs say they want



to maintain their cultural and linguistic rights, they see this as compatible with a desire to identify with the state of Croatia. In addition, Serb youth express more interest in identifying with the Croatian state than their parents do. In what might be surprising to their Croat neighbors, Serb students discussed the importance of learning the Croatian language and Croatian history, and the fact that they had chosen to live in Croatia, not Serbia. Serb girls in a focus group repeated the sentiments of some of their Croat neighbors, but substitute "I" and "we" for "they." One girl said: "If I don't want to learn . . . according to their program, we can simply go. Why should we live here if it doesn't suit us? We can always go to Serbia." Other students made such remarks as, "We are, after all, citizens of this state, and I can, as much as I want, wish the best for Serbia, but I still live here."

### Fear of losing one's national identity in Mostar

While the survey revealed very little opposition to school integration in Mostar, it did show that Bosniaks were more positive about it than Croats. The interviews and focus groups also demonstrated that integration is divisive. While most Croats we spoke to in Mostar said they did not object to students of different nationalities attending school together, they were quick to assert that members of each group had a right to learn in their mother tongue. The qualitative data reveal that the willingness of Croats to accept integrated schools is predicated on the assumption that Croat students would have the option to attend schools taught in their language. One administrator said, "Anyone can come to the school who wants to, but they must respect the school rules. If it's a school using the Croatian language, they must respect the Croatian language." He went on to say that "the school must be national." The interviews and focus groups reveal that language is a significant stumbling-block to integration, and often is used by the Croats as a proxy for opposing school integration in Mostar.

Underlying the language issue is the fear on the part of Croats in Mostar that if they cave in to pressures to assimilate, they will lose their national identity. "It is true we feel pressure to assimilate," said a Croat teacher. "And we fear that the Croatian language will suffer or be lost in the process. So we have every right to request schooling in the Croatian language." Another teacher exclaimed, "Language is a part of the being, part of the identity of a people!"

In their focus group, Croat girls said they thought segregation was absurd but feared that integration would inevitably lead to curricular biases against Croats. "I think it's stupid the way we all have different

textbooks," said one of the participants. "We all learn different things, but we're all living in the same state." However, she feared that new books produced in BiH would be biased against Croats:

> Songs would be banned, Croatian patriotic songs about the Croatian homeland, about our people. They'd be banned. Why? We need to celebrate who we are. And for sure we'd have to read and learn some of theirs over there, but they wouldn't learn ours.

This student then said: "I personally wouldn't learn Bosnian or Serbian." Another agreed: "Nor would I." A third chimed in: "I'd only learn Croatian. It's my language. I know we live in BiH, and that we're together, but what's mine is mine." Although segregation seems absurd to them, these girls favor it because they cannot envision a workable integrated school system.

Like Croats in Mostar, Bosniaks often revealed internal contradictions in their thinking. Many Bosniaks said they favored Croats having a right to their language and culture and at the same time maintained that the Croatian and Bosnian languages were not very different; thus, language issues should not pose a problem in regard to school integration. Although they did not seem to see Croats' language rights as a threat to state-building in BiH, they said they wanted a united BiH. They did not want a divided country that allowed a separate Serb Republic or any other kind of separatism. One teacher put it this way: "We must build a single state, a single monolithic society, a uniform society." This teacher saw some measure of Croat assimilation and identification with the state of BiH as integral to that process.

The Bosniaks talked with enthusiasm about both the promise and the inevitability of school integration. One student said: "I think everyone is looking forward to the day when we'll all go to school together." Bosniak parents seemed to feel similarly, recalling the days of their youth with nostalgia and associating its integrated ways with a more civilized, modern, European way of life. One of the teachers offered a striking metaphor of interdependence:

> Like the tree that we seed on the other side, it doesn't choose between Bosniaks' and Croats' water, but simply grows. So the student shouldn't just take the knowledge that is related to his nationality.

The Bosniaks were so serious in their desires for integration that many voiced concrete and sometimes carefully thought-out plans for how to integrate the schools. One of the students had attended an event held by a Norwegian NGO on the topic of school integration and from that experience developed a vision for linking students from both sides of the river. One of the parents was attempting to secure funds to begin a private, integrated, technology-rich international school for students from all national groups. One of the school administrators discussed his plan for phasing in integrated schools, first with students in the same school but separate classes, then with half of the teachers from each side teaching students from the other side, then putting the students together for extracurricular activities, and finally moving to fully integrated classes taught by a fully integrated teaching staff.



### *Teaching history*

Survey respondents in both Vukovar and Mostar agreed that history should be taught in ways that are not offensive to any ethnic group. However, there were significant differences between groups about how strongly they agreed (Table 11.2). In every community, except the Bosniaks in Mostar, teachers were the most positive. In Vukovar, Serbs agreed more strongly than Croats. In Mostar, Croat adults agreed more strongly than Bosniak adults, while there was no significant difference between students.

According to the interviews and focus groups, two fears underlie opinions about teaching history. One is the fear that the past will be forgotten. The other is the fear that the way schools officially promote remembering will be inconsistent with the beliefs of some groups and will cause more problems. Vukovar Serbs insisted that history contains multiple truths, depending on one's experiences and point of view. They feared that if a Croatian version of history were introduced into the schools, Serbs would be vilified. This fear explains why surveys revealed that Serbs preferred inoffensive versions of the past. But what they really wanted was to forget the past. Meanwhile, the Croats tended to be more conflicted about remembering and forgetting. Although they recognized that Serbs have their version of the past, most considered the Serb version to be wrong. They seemed less concerned than their Serb neighbors about the importance of an inoffensive version of history, mainly because they were confident that the Croatian version would be the one taught.

In Mostar, the Bosniaks wanted their truth told; they did not want it forgotten. The Croats, on the other hand, expressed concern that their perspective might not be included in new versions of the history curriculum. Although they did not want to forget the past, they worried about how a single curriculum could harmonize the views of the different groups. Most thought it could be done, but some disagreed.

### *Fears of forgetting and remembering in Vukovar*

Most Serbs in Vukovar resisted any mention of the recent war in the history curriculum, since they feared they would become scapegoats. A Serb teacher explained: "It is well known that winners always write history [laughter]. So I'm afraid that . . . [whatever curriculum is developed] would insist too much on blame and guilt."

The Serbs talked a great deal about wanting to forget the past. Some things, a teacher insisted, "should be forgotten as soon as possible." In response to a question asking whether children should be taught about the recent war, another said:

> The best thing to do, if only it was possible, would be to erase [everything about the past] so that all people, from the youngest to the oldest ones, can forget all about it. Grant God that we start living a normal life again.

The Serbs also called for adopting a future-oriented position. The adults, especially, feared that talking about the past would create more "splits" within their already divided city.

The Serbs did not think there was a clear truth about who was a victim and who was an aggressor. A student explained that every side has its own explanation and that what really happened is unknowable:

> Every side has their own explanation as to why the war started. One side claims this, the other that, and it's up to you who you will believe. I don't know. We cannot know why, how, or who fired the first shot.

A Serb mother, while trying to allow for a middle ground between the different truths, eventually doubted the possibility of compromise:

> You know what, everybody has his or her truth. And they are all truths for the one who interprets the truth. However, the truth is somewhere in the middle. I do not know. Now that, too, is debatable. Very debatable.

Another mother noted the limitations of objectivity:

> I think that our brains are not that universal to understand what is actually most correct . . . I don't know what universal truth is. So how could anyone else know?

Serbs, fearing that the Croat version of the war might be forced on their children, expressed anxiety that the new textbooks scheduled for 2003 would have an anti-Serb slant and would blame the war on the Serbs. Indeed, many Serbs felt that Croats blamed them personally for what happened – a burden they were unwilling to assume. A student explained his lack of interest in learning about the recent war and his desire to blame others in the community:



> We shouldn't talk about [the recent war in school]. We should forget everything that was . . . Why should we pay for the mistakes that, I don't know, our politicians, people in high places, have made?

The Croats voiced multiple opinions about remembering the past but were more in favor than the Serbs of teaching the history of the war. They were unconcerned whether what was taught was offensive to Serbs. While most Croats recognized that there were different versions of what happened, many teachers and every parent we interviewed said that "the truth," meaning their truth, should be taught. One teacher, when asked what should be taught, said:

> The truth and nothing but the truth. [The Serbs] should learn what it was like. They should learn that Croatia was a victim that suffered and lost the most, that it was attacked by the aggressor, the then Serbia, with the help of the then Yugoslav army which was disintegrating.

Some Croat teachers disagreed, saying that the war should not be taught in school, because what happened was too complicated for young people to understand, and that young people should not be burdened. They also noted that many young people already knew about the war, both from first-hand experience and from what they learned at home and in the community. All of the Croat students with whom we spoke said that the war should be addressed in schools, and many discussed their resentment of the adults' unwillingness to talk about past events.[12]

### *Fears of forgetting and remembering in Mostar*

The Bosniaks in Mostar, like the Croats in Vukovar, tended to think of themselves as the primary victims of the war. This view led them to stress the importance of keeping the memory of what happened alive, as they feared the past would be forgotten. One teacher went as far as to say that he would teach about the war, even if it were illegal to do so:

> I will tell you, I am free enough to talk about this to my children, regardless of whether I am legally bound to remain silent about history. If I am legally obligated not to talk, I will not stay quiet, because history is universal, and everyone should be aware of these facts. The law shouldn't prevent professors from teaching their pupils about truth and values.

Most of the Bosniak students stressed the importance of learning about the war. As one explained:

> I think the people should know all that and remember it, so future generations don't forget . . . It should never be forgotten. It's always in the subconscious and children should know about it too.

In talking about what parents want their children to be taught about the war, one teacher said:

> Children know who the aggressor on BiH was, who the perpetrators are, [and] what the reasons are for that, why the crimes were committed, why their dearest suffered so much, their close relatives hurt. Parents simply want that memory not to be erased, because it is the same crime, perhaps even bigger, to forget as it is to commit the crime.

Although they recognized the fact that other perspectives exist, many Bosniaks spoke about wanting their truth told. Teachers feared that changes in textbooks could contradict the Bosniak point of view. They mentioned the fact that the word "aggression" had been blackened out as part of the removal of offensive material. One teacher asked, "What other expression [could] replace it?" Such talk is consistent with the findings in the survey, in which nearly a quarter of the Bosniak teachers were unconcerned about offending others when teaching history.

Many teachers were apprehensive about whether multiple truths could be reconciled. They thought their version was the most correct, and they found validation from the international community. One history teacher invoked the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as proof:

> If the International Tribunal in The Hague said that there was aggression on my country, then I cannot say to my pupil, "Wait a minute. I don't know if it was like that, or if it was not." . . . All in all, we should tell the truth to children.

Like the Bosniaks, Mostar's Croats also wanted the history of the war taught. However, they tended to believe that they should be entitled to teach a Croatian version of events. They were less likely than the Bosniaks to think of their perspective as the single, objective truth. Ironically, in Mostar, nearly everybody with whom we spoke, regardless of national affiliation, noted that there are multiple versions of past events, and that objectivity is elusive.

Some Croats felt that each national group should be entitled to teach its own version of the recent war. One school administrator said that the international community's efforts to create "unitarianism [*sic*] in history" were detrimental to BiH's ability to "survive . . . as a democratic, pluralistic, equal state of all three constituent peoples." A Croat teacher felt that any effort at harmonization would be impossible because it would necessarily discriminate against one of the groups:

> All three sides claim that they are the winner. So now, history should tell the truth, and here would be needed three truths. And these three truths no one can unite, meaning that it would always mean that someone would claim that [his truth] is endangered.



Most, however, while noting the difficulty in doing so, thought that harmonizing the various perspectives within one, unified curriculum was important. Many said that the task of reconciling the different versions should fall to those who could attain some measure of objectivity, although they differed on who that might be. The majority felt that, with the passage of time, historical objectivity could be achieved. A history teacher said, "We need a little time to go by before we historians know that the truth could be written about [the past war]." Others thought that it would be unnecessary to wait for such objectivity, that experts, whether historians or politicians, should be able to harmonize the curriculum. One Croat teacher appealed to a higher authority, saying: "It's hard now to satisfy everyone . . . I think that there must be some higher authority that will say what is needed and how."

Croat students tended to think differently from their teachers and parents about the recent past; they expressed feelings of wanting to learn about the war, with less concern about offending other groups. One student noted that the extent to which the war is currently mentioned is not satisfactory, saying that teachers present facts and figures without "really talking about it to us." Another student recommended that students research the war as a school project. In envisioning this project, she said: "It should be considered from all three points of view, and the Internet should be used, to see how other countries saw this war."

## Tensions about school integration and the teaching of history

School integration and the teaching of history have presented school administrators in Mostar and Vukovar with two dilemmas. Underlying each of these dilemmas are tensions between equally desirable but conflicting goals – supporting ethnic culture and language, and developing a common identity. While these tensions are not easily resolved, we propose that a more thorough understanding of these dilemmas as they manifest themselves in each city can generate critical insights that will be useful in evaluating the promise and pitfalls of post-war educational reforms.

### *School integration and conflicts in social identity*

At times of ethnic conflict, the only security often lies in a strong sense of belonging to one's own group. In the midst of chaos, identification with the group offers an illusion that survival is possible. For many, in the face of threat, circling the wagons becomes the only choice. When the conflict ends, the barriers that have been erected are not easily demolished. A tension exists, then, between a state's need to inculcate a state identity among

its citizenry so as to foster peaceful coexistence and the importance of upholding cultural rights that will enable national groups to preserve their identities. Tensions arise because minorities and national groups fear that the promotion of a unified state identity will involve forced assimilation and the subsequent denial of their histories, literatures, languages, and cultural practices. Given the close relationship between social identity and culture, the schools can become a battleground in which the possibility of a common civic identity is challenged. While it may be important to establish and protect separate group rights, over-protection resulting in segregated schools and separate languages might lead to hostile separatism that can hinder the development of a common state identity and undermine the legitimacy of shared institutions. Efforts to integrate schools must address these fears and the conflicting imperatives that underlie them.

In BiH, where there are three constituent peoples, this tension between state and national group identity challenges efforts to protect the rights of all citizens. National groups, such as the Croats in Mostar or the Serbs in the Republika Srpska may identify more powerfully with (respectively) Croatia and Serbia, the states that embody their group origin. Indeed, current stalemates in the process of forming a multi-national state have even led some to question the very viability of the state of BiH.[13] In Croatia, this tension poses a severe challenge for efforts to develop a state identity that is inclusive of minority national groups that live within its borders, particularly of Serbs. The problem for Croatia is that education policies for national minorities make no distinction between the groups. It is hard, indeed, for the Serbs, who may constitute some 200,000 people, to be equated with the Hungarians, who constitute some 15,000. Furthermore, the Serb population has recently fought and lost a war. It can perceive this equation as a denial of its heritage and experience and, thus, as a threat. How to assure minority rights and respond to the specific needs of a vanquished group poses a unique challenge for Croatia, and the stakes are high.

The morass of social identity politics is further confounded by the processes of normal child development. In Eriksonian terms (see Weinstein and Stover, Introduction, in this volume), the challenge of adolescence lies in forming a secure individual identity in the context of peer relationships. The school setting can be a battleground, a forum for teasing, bullying, forming fast friendships, sexuality, codes of dress, experimentation, and moral development. In these critical years, school experiences mold how young people see themselves and how they see others. If ethnic group identification is the most important dimension of who a person is, and if stereotyping becomes the modus operandi for defining people, then the future of the country will assuredly exclude tolerance and integration, and a new generation of bigots will emerge. However, it is similarly dangerous to suppress ethnic group identification altogether. For schools and for the state, the dilemma is how to promote the development of multiple identities. School integration, then, involves far more than mixing people together across ethnic lines. Post-conflict societies will not achieve any form of reconciliation unless the schools as systems of influence on individual and social development are included in the processes of societal change.



### *History, education, and memory*

In a recent book, *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies*,[14] Alexandra Barahona de Brito and colleagues write: "Memory is a struggle over power and who gets to decide the future." Citizens of the former Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia were brought up with an official history that blurred the events of the Second World War – in particular, the actions of Tito's Partizans.[15] There is a profound mistrust of historical documentation as evidence. Historiography more likely reflected choices about the best light to place on events or how to use the culture, traditions, and experiences of specific groups to create the myth of "Brotherhood and Unity." Yet the opportunity exists for schools to provide a forum to combat falsification or amnesia. In the classroom, suffering can be acknowledged and the origins and consequences of past events can be debated and analyzed. Schools must confront the dilemma of deciding which is the lesser of two evils. On the one hand, when there is no consensus on the circumstances or causes of past conflicts, dwelling on the past can be divisive and open to manipulation. On the other hand, attempts to leave the past behind, without any public acknowledgment of responsibility, can be equally problematic. If past crimes are not examined and acknowledged, people may become more vulnerable to manipulative rhetoric and more prone to suspicions and fears.

The greatest challenge facing public education in Croatia and BiH today is the development of unified history curricula that will be appropriate for children of all national groups. These curricula must deal with the facts surrounding the recent wars and with the history of ethnic relations in each country. This task is made even more difficult by the multiple and incongruous perspectives held by the different groups living within each state. While it might be possible to design history curricula taught through multiple perspectives that elicit active student participation, the Communist legacy in the field of education is strong both in Croatia and BiH. As such, there is another barrier to change: the predominant pedagogy in

both countries is didactic and authoritarian, with little room given to discussion. Students commonly expect to learn a singular, unitary "truth" from their teachers. Challenge, debate, and analysis are discouraged and could be seen as provocative. If there can be only one "official" truth regarding past events, the particular memories of each sub-group will be either denied or repressed. When one side's heroes are considered another side's war criminals, a unitary telling of history that is inoffensive to all groups necessarily will be incomplete.

## Conclusions

In spite of their differences, there are important similarities between the Serbs and Croats of Vukovar and the Bosniaks and Croats of Mostar. These similarities provide a foundation that can contribute to reconstructing the societies of these towns. In Vukovar, members of both groups have lingering fears of the other brought on by the war, leading to profound distrust. They fear violence among the youth if the schools are integrated; they care about the education of the youth; they care about preserving their language and culture but also want to be responsible citizens of Croatia; they blame politicians for maintaining and encouraging segregated schools; and finally, members of both groups feel powerless to make change.

In Mostar, members of both groups favor integrated schools and classrooms; they believe that the other group has a right to its own language and culture; and they want to be part of modern Europe, with its prospects for economic advancement. Most importantly, members of neither group feel overtly hostile toward members of the other group.

Based on these findings, we offer the following suggestions.

### *Vukovar*

To make progress with respect to social reconstruction and resolving dilemmas about the school in Vukovar, the Serbs and Croats through public debate and their elected representatives need to reach a consensus on what the concept of minority rights entails. Croats believe Serbs deserve minority rights, but the data suggest that they think these rights can be satisfied by simply allowing the Serbs to live in Croatia and to preserve their culture on their own without interference from the state. Serbs want their culture to be recognized and in some cases supported by the state. Such a consensus is integral to finding a common ground on the structure of public education.

Further, in order for integration to succeed, a series of confidence- and trust-building exercises at the local level must be organized to help the



Serb and Croat populations learn to work together. These are needed for parents, teachers, and students, and should consider the different experiences of each group. These exercises might be led by NGOs (domestic or international) or by specially trained teachers from each ethnic group. Additionally, any plan for integration needs to include ensuring the safety of students. Our interviews suggest strongly that violence remains just below the surface and that students feel unsafe. Adults must take responsibility for the safety of the youth.

A curriculum could be developed to support students in recognizing the importance of tolerance and human rights, and their own barriers to achieving those goals in Vukovar. Such a curriculum would need to include democratic content as well as democratic ways of teaching, such as holding debates in the classroom and the community. The implementation of such a curriculum has implications for teacher education as well as for student learning. Finally, the effects of any new history curriculum that is introduced will need to be closely monitored. It will be important to see how the teachers, students, and parents respond to new textbooks, and to examine what actually is taught and learned.

### *Mostar*

Schools and classrooms in Mostar should be integrated in a timely fashion. Our findings reveal that while the Bosniaks are ready for integration, Croat youth are neutral on the issue of school integration, but their peer culture fosters an anti-integration stance. It would be helpful to build on the neutral or positive orientation of the youth before the peer culture pushes these predispositions in a negative direction.

As part of plans for school and classroom integration, work must be done with the Croat community to help its members feel secure about fostering a Croat national identity outside of school as well as in integrated schools and classrooms. One approach to helping the Croat community feel more secure might involve consultation with educational linguists about options for maintaining a home language in an integrated school system, for example through examining successful programs used in other multi-lingual countries that could serve as models for Mostar schools. Further, increased opportunities for contact are needed that are designed specifically to help break down negative stereotypes. Given the geographic separation for most Bosniaks and Croats, the two groups have few opportunities to interact.

Finally, a curriculum for teaching history could be developed in ways that teach students to explore multiple perspectives and to interpret historical sources. Such a curriculum would need to include attention

to critical thinking and democratic methods of teaching. It also would have implications for teacher education.

Schools in these two cities have become lightning rods for the political and ethnic conflicts that permeate the larger society. As critical settings for socializing the youth during an important developmental period, the conflicts have intense consequences. Finding solutions assumes special urgency.

NOTES

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1. Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Publishing, 1988). According to Allport, the "contact hypothesis" operates if there are common goals, intergroup cooperation, institutional support, and equality of status.
2. See Ann Low-Beer, "Politics, School Textbooks and Cultural Identity: The Struggle in Bosnia and Hercegovina," *Paradigm* 2:3 (2001) for a good discussion of the educational structure in all of BiH.
3. Ibid.
4. Vedrana Spajic-Vrkas, "Visions, Provisions and Reality: Political Changes and Education for Democratic Citizenship in Croatia," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 33:1 (2003): 33–51.
5. See Global IDP Database, "UNTAES Agreements for the Danube Region Provide the Protection of the Serb Minority" (2000). Available on the World Wide Web at http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/1c963eb504904cde41256782007493b8/6083d813ce17671ec1256993003597f1?OpenDocument
6. Drago Hedl, "Croatia: Painful History Lessons," *Balkan Crisis Report* 432 (May 23, 2003). London: Institute for War and Peace Reporting. Available on World Wide Web at http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/bcr3/bcr3 200305 432 2 eng.txt.
7. When the survey results were analyzed, factor analyses yielded a number of scales about varied issues related to schooling. Those results will be published separately.
8. Despite repeated attempts, we were unable to recruit Croat girls to participate in a focus group.
9. In the surveys, the Croat boys hold the most negative attitudes toward school integration of any group (1.78). Another survey item asked students whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "It is not important to me what the national background of my friends is." The Croat boys were the only group that, on average, disagreed with the statement.



10. See Stover, Chapter 5 this book.
11. See Ajdukovic and Corkalo, Chapter 14 this book, for a fuller explanation of issues of trust and betrayal.
12. For a fuller discussion of this tension between the youth and adults in Vukovar, see Sarah W. Freedman and Dino Abazovic, "Growing up during the Balkan Wars of the 1990s." In C. Daiute, Z. Beykont, G. Higson-Smith, and L. Nucci (eds.), *Global Perspectives on Youth Conflict and Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, in press).
13. Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-Building in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2003).
14. Alexandra Barahona de Brito, Carmen Gonzalez-Enriquez, and Paloma Aguilar, *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 38.
15. In a June 2000 interview, a former Yugoslav Communist Party official in Mostar told one of the authors: "There were attempts of pushing away, pushing aside some events. I was not only the witness but also the actor, the protagonist of some of these activities. We did not allow these events to be turned into myths, for the sake of reconciliation and life itself."
16. The teachers were mostly those who teach the "national" group of subjects (particularly national language and literature, history, geography, music and art) and/or religion, ethics, or democracy and human rights. The principals, their deputies, and pedagogues who were in charge of curriculum were also part of the teacher sample.
17. At the time of the writing of this chapter, the teachers in the Bosnian language schools were on strike. These data had not yet been collected.
18. It is likely that subjects were included in more than one sample.
19. The history scores are based upon a single item, whereas the school integration scores are based upon a scale computed by averaging scores from eight items dealing with school integration. All survey items indicate the level with which a subject agreed or disagreed with a given statement, and were scored between 1 (strongly disagree) and 4 (strongly agree). Thus a score of 2.5 represents the neutral point. Survey items are available upon request.
20. The school integration scale reported here is different from those produced in the separate factor analyses of each town's data, as these analyses produced scales that did not include identical items. Rather than use two different scales with empirical bases, we chose to construct a single scale with a theoretical basis to increase comparability between the two towns' data.

# 12 Confronting the past in Rwandan schools

*Sarah Warshauer Freedman, Déo Kambanda, Beth Lewis Samuelson, Innocent Mugisha, Immaculée Mukashema, Evode Mukama, Jean Mutabaruka, Harvey M. Weinstein, and Timothy Longman*

> Rwandans need to talk about their experiences, not just an imagined history, but what actually happened to them. That means they have to tell the truth.
>
> Rwandan professional, May, 2002

Shortly after the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) took power in July, 1994, the Rwandan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) placed a moratorium on teaching Rwandan history in the country's schools until consensus could be reached on how history should be taught. Almost a decade later, this emergency measure remains in effect. There is much disagreement among government officials, intellectuals, and Rwandan citizens about the significance of the events leading up to and occurring during the war and genocide. So there is little agreement about what historical account to teach. In making their case, government officials pointed to the fact that hundreds of highly educated Rwandans, including doctors, lawyers, teachers, and clergy had directly or indirectly participated in the genocide. According to the government, these professionals had been educated in post-independence schools that had taught a virulent form of ethnic hatred toward Tutsi.[1] "The propagandists," as Alison Des Forges wrote in her book on the genocide, "built upon the lessons Rwandans had learned in school."[2]

The difficulty and importance of making decisions about teaching history cannot be overemphasized. Further, the ways in which memory, history, myths, and symbols are used can lead people to develop identities that either promote intergroup conflict or help to draw diverse groups together. Just as distorted collective memories have been used to construct identities around division and differentiation, social identities might be constructed around commonalities in a way that encourages cooperation and cross-ethnic affiliation.

In recent years, the Rwandan government, while not rescinding the moratorium on teaching national history, has come to recognize that





if schools can be used to promote ethnic divisions they can also be used to foster national unity. The MINEDUC, along with several non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has initiated a number of projects to revive the teaching of history in Rwandan schools. These projects have included the development of a provisional curriculum on human rights,[3] national symposia on the teaching of history,[4] manuals, and teacher education for civics curriculum.[5] Despite these initiatives, no new history textbooks or teaching materials had been published in Rwanda by early 2004. Nor had Rwandan officials and policy-makers solicited the views and opinions of local people regarding their schools.[6]

In Rwanda, as in many countries, most attempts to approach curricular change are initiated from the top down. We wondered whether a better understanding of the hopes and fears of those most immediately affected by education would provide greater insight into the complexity of educational reform, and aid in the formulation of more democratic means with which to pursue a reform agenda. In 2000–2002, we set out to fill this research gap by interviewing 376 Rwandans, including teachers, school administrators, students, and parents, about the role of education in the teaching of past history, ethnicity, and reconciliation.[7] During the first phase of our study, we spoke with eighty-four people at six secondary schools, three general secondary schools, and three special schools for training elementary school teachers. The schools selected for study are located in three of the regions of Rwanda that we have described earlier in this volume: Save, Byumba, and Kibuye. Save, located in the southern part of the country near the university town of Butare, has been a region with a high Tutsi population, known for its cultural and educational institutions. During the early weeks of the genocide this region remained relatively peaceful, and many Tutsi from other parts of the country sought shelter there until armed militias arrived, killing thousands of residents. Byumba, in the north-east near the Ugandan border, has a predominantly Hutu population. This region experienced little genocidal violence because the invading RPF forces took control of the area early on in the war. Kibuye, situated by Lake Kivu in the west, experienced some of the worst violence. The area is now majority Hutu because most Tutsi residents lost their lives or fled.

In each school, we interviewed the school director, the head of curriculum, and students of different socio-economic statuses with different experiences during the 1994 violence, parents who represent a similar diversity, and teachers whose courses dealt with social values, including such topics as the Kinyarwanda language and literature; French or English language and literature; religion; and/or political education. We asked about the roles the schools currently play in contributing

to national unity, about the roles the schools should play, about the successes and challenges faced in fulfilling these roles, and about the curriculum.

In the second phase of the study, we talked to 272 people in forty-two focus groups, seven in each of the three towns and an additional seven in each of three other provinces selected by the Rwandan team as somewhat different in experience and geographic diversity. The focus groups included five groups for students, one for parents, and one for teachers. The student groups of mixed Hutu and Tutsi ethnicity included one group each for males, females, and students who had left the country as refugees during the genocide. A fourth student group consisted mostly of Tutsi students who had survived the genocide and were recipients of FARG (Fonds d'Assistance pour les Rescapés du Génocide) scholarships. The fifth student group was for repatriated students who had left Rwanda immediately after the genocide and its aftermath and had recently returned to Rwanda. These students were recipients of MINALOC (Ministry of Administration and Local Government) scholarships and were mostly Hutu.

One of our earliest findings was how local constituencies, often out of the public eye, are themselves finding creative solutions for teaching about tolerance, human rights, and the recent past. In one community in Rwanda, for example, two schools have collaborated to develop extracurricular human rights clubs in which students study major documents, write stories and essays, and create artwork celebrating human rights. The leaders of these clubs have helped nine other secondary schools establish similar human rights clubs. As this initiative demonstrates, and in confirmation of what we have suspected, often those most immediately affected by education are the best positioned to advise educators about the complexity of educational reform. The views of local people can also be instructive to governments that wish to develop a reform agenda in an open, inclusive, and democratic manner.

### Rwandan schools and school policies

During the genocide and massacres of 1994, the educational infrastructure in Rwanda was virtually destroyed. School buildings were demolished, stores of supplies decimated, and most devastating, approximately 75 percent of the teachers were killed during the violence or are in jail for allegedly participating in the genocide.[8] Tens of thousands of pupils were also killed or fled the country. Others witnessed killings, sometimes of their entire families, and remain too traumatized to study. Still others are incarcerated alongside adult offenders.[9]



Soon after the hostilities ceased, the international community began to assist in restoring Rwanda's educational system. A rebuilding campaign, funded primarily by the World Bank, provided schools with many essential needs, including safe and well-built classrooms. UNICEF and UNESCO provided basic teaching materials in Emergency Teaching Kits. By 2000, when we began our study, most of the schools had been rebuilt, but as our focus group participants described, serious infrastructure problems remained. Many schools had electricity, but only 20 percent of the primary schools had running water, and others had insufficient natural lighting and few books. Some schools had only a blackboard.

Today, Rwanda has three categories of schools: government-run public schools, private but publicly subsidized schools, and private schools. Purely government-run public schools are relatively rare. According to data collected in 1997, public schools serve 15.6 percent of the secondary school population. Privately subsidized schools (*libre-subsidé*) comprise the next largest group, with 30 percent of all secondary schools, and these serve 47.6 percent of the student population. They receive government funding to pay teachers, purchase teaching materials, and board students, but the management and administration of the school is carried out by a mission or a private group, such as a parent organization or a local non-profit group. Private schools are the largest group in number (51 percent) and are almost entirely supported by private funds. In 1997, they served 36.8 percent of students.[10] Many are owned by the Catholic Church, which began the national school system and has heavily invested in the educational system. While the Rwandan Government has its Ministry of Education, the Catholic Church also has a department of education that employs a large staff.

In spite of private and parochial assistance, access to education is far from universal. According to 1997 statistics, although a relatively high percentage of the student population begins primary school, approximately 70 percent drop out by age 12 or 13. In 1997, 47.3 percent of the population was illiterate.[11] No more than 19 percent of those who completed primary school in 1997 went on to secondary school.[12] There are places in the National University for fewer than 1 percent of secondary school graduates, although several private universities have been created since 1994.[13] A prominent goal of the MINEDUC, with assistance from UNESCO and UNICEF, is to increase access to schooling for the general population through the program "Education for All." Statistics show that rates of primary school attendance are increasing, from 65 percent in 1999 to 75 percent in 2000.[14]

Such progress notwithstanding, a severe teaching shortage still plagues Rwanda's educational system. By 1997, the percentage of qualified

primary school teachers had fallen from 57 percent in 1992 to 32.5 percent, and the percentage of qualified secondary school teachers had plummeted from 63 percent to 33 percent.[15] To add to the teaching shortage, in 2000 the government summarily fired many uncertified teachers, who were later replaced by teachers from surrounding countries.[16]

Rwanda's schools are also seriously overcrowded, largely because student enrollment figures have risen significantly, while the number of qualified teachers has dropped well below acceptable figures since 1994. By 1997, the student–teacher ratio in primary schools averaged 57:1, while the ratios in secondary schools, which serve only 15 to 19 percent of students who finish primary school, were at 22:1.[17] Many teachers have expressed concerns about the lack of trained teachers, but with few results. Meanwhile, private and semi-private schools have helped alleviate some of the problems of overcrowding.

The cost of schooling is also a barrier for many Rwandan families who live in extreme poverty.[18] In a country where the gross domestic product (GDP) is US $260, many children are needed at home to tend the fields, mind the livestock, and generally help support the household. Many families cannot afford school fees and the cost of uniforms. The government has responded with education support funds; however, some students expressed concerns about the potential for discriminatory policies in allocating funds. Moreover, since 1994 many orphans have become the head of their household. Without adults to support them, they face particularly difficult financial obstacles. These problems are exacerbated by the fact that secondary schools and universities are often located so far from students' homes that students have the extra burden of paying room and board. While the government pays the fees for university studies at the National University of Rwanda (NUR), this is not the case at the private universities. These schools require tuition in addition to room and board, placing college studies beyond the reach of all but the few who gain admission to the national university or whose families have discretionary income.

Conditions in the education sector profoundly affect the progress that can be made on creating a history curriculum and teaching about unity and reconciliation. Experts cite lack of funding as a major impediment to developing curriculum. Insufficient funding for teacher education slows efforts to train teachers to use existing materials. Although many Rwandans told us that they understood the importance of teaching for peaceful coexistence, they also emphasized that schools should be addressing more immediate needs, such as increased assistance for students unable to pay their school fees and helping students develop



skills that would lead to more jobs upon graduation. As a result, reforms aimed at developing a curriculum on Rwandan history and promoting reconciliation are in jeopardy of being sidelined in favor of programs that offer more tangible benefits, including computer equipment and training, improved physical facilities, and science laboratory equipment.

## Teaching for unity and reconciliation

At first glance, the study participants seemed to agree on most issues. They expressed a desire for national unity and reconciliation where all Rwandans would feel that they are one people. Regardless of their ethnicity, focus group participants who were asked to define unity described it as mutual understanding and cohabitation, lack of mistrust, sharing a common Rwandan language and culture, and lack of segregation. No differences were observed between parents, teachers, and students.

Many participants felt that education, particularly the teaching of history and ethnicity, was an important means of achieving this goal. A school director who refused to state his ethnicity said: "The problem of ethnicity will be solved by a good education – education that doesn't separate people, which doesn't favor one group and disfavor another." Most participants said that education should include the teaching of tolerance and human rights. A focus group participant described the importance of teaching unity in this way: "Yes, ethnicity should be taught in schools, because it would help students see themselves as brothers and sisters and as Rwandans who should live in harmony, with love for one another." Many focus group participants suggested that the teaching of ethnicity should move beyond the commonly discussed categories of Twa, Tutsi, and Hutu and include older and encompassing categories with which Rwandans identify, such as clans, of which there are eighteen throughout Rwanda. Participants frequently mentioned the country's clan structure when asked what they thought about the term "ethnicity." Students sometimes said they did not know what the term meant, or that they had learned that it no longer existed. One participant noted:

> I went to solidarity camps. We learned about the origins of the so-called ethnic groups: Hutu, Twa, Tutsi. We were told that these don't really have a historical background; they were brought by Europeans (colonists) in order to rule us. Instead we had the so-called [clan names]: Abasinga, Abanyiginya, Abasigaba . . . which are the real ethnic groups Rwandans have.

Participants also maintained that education for unity and reconciliation should focus on distributing scarce resources and alleviating poverty.

"Personally," a parent said, "I would wish to have the youth discuss . . . the problems our country is facing, so that they can be able to initiate solving these problems . . . In order for this to be possible, such people should have the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing to enable them to carry out their work." These responses indicate an awareness of and a promotion of social justice, and a basic agreement with the philosophy espoused by the current government.

In addition to this consensus over the importance of teaching about unity, most participants concurred in their assessment of ways that the government, schools, and the international community were fulfilling this goal. They felt that their schools were actively engaged in promoting reconciliation but described two problems: a lack of systematic curricula on the topic and teachers' lack of preparedness to teach these subjects, a gap in teacher education programs. Some individual teachers were covering a range of subjects, including justice, gacaca, human rights, ethnicity, democracy, current events, and history. Such topics were also being discussed in professional seminars, workshops, and conferences.

According to the participants, schools were also promoting reconciliation in their efforts to help students cope with the effects of the violence-related trauma, including unpredictable crying, fearfulness, depression, hallucinations, and insomnia. As one teacher explained: "The scars are still open, and they are not healed yet." Schools help students by assigning teachers to keep children with such problems close to them for counseling. When this approach fails, they refer students to specialists in trauma counseling. Some focus group participants worried, however, that the efforts to deal with trauma were generally ineffective and sometimes even punitive. Teachers do not possess the knowledge to adequately respond, leading a student to express concern that so-called inappropriate comments by a troubled student may lead to dismissal rather than assistance. One student, who was a genocide survivor, explained:

> If a child suffers from post-genocide trauma and he seeks some advice from the teacher, the latter won't explain to him how to deal with his problem; and then the student will have to take a disciplinary leave of absence, supposedly because he made inappropriate comments!

The Rwandan government also supports many efforts to promote unity and reconciliation outside the schools, including solidarity camps and other government-organized workshops. Participants reported that campers are taught about unity, reconciliation, Rwandan history, economic development, human rights, and self-defense. Some gave detailed accounts of the lessons they learned:



> We learned that before colonization, Rwandans lived on good terms. Clichés of Hutu farmers and of Tutsi stockbreeders did not exist. The man who owned a lot of cattle, whatever the ethnic group he belonged to, was a Tutsi, and the one who was poor, even if he had been a Tutsi, became a Hutu.

Other efforts include youth programs and conferences run by the National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation, as well as programs organized by national and international NGOs. Although there was some ambivalence about the role of the international community in rebuilding the country, most still felt that international governments and NGOs could assist by providing instructional materials and funding.

A further effort by the MINEDUC to promote reconciliation in the schools has met with widespread approval. Participants pointed to a perceived improvement in merit-based admissions policies as a positive indication that admission to secondary schools and the NUR is now fair and no longer based on political affiliation, ethnic identity, or regional quotas. Participants were pleased with the transparency of the current admissions process, and spoke favorably of the national examination council responsible for developing and administering national examinations and making the results public. A Tutsi student observed that: "I can say that education has progressed, because ethnic discrimination no longer exists as it did long ago when a Tutsi child could not go to secondary school because his spot was given to a Hutu child. But now, this is no longer the case." A Tutsi parent noted:

> One of the major changes in schools is the transparency in the running of the schools, especially in the admission of students. These days your child can be confident enough, on the basis of the previous performance, to tell a parent to start buying secondary materials even before the examination results are released. This implies that if a student is capable of passing national examinations, the admission into secondary schools is assured. Today, admission in schools is based purely on merit, unlike in the past, when it was not transparent but based on one's ethnicity or which part of the country you originated from.

A Hutu teacher who had participated in scoring the exams said: "It is done in transparency, and the best students absolutely pass. There is no partiality."

## Tensions over curricular content: history and ethnicity

Despite general agreement about the importance of promoting unity and reconciliation, and despite the current efforts in the schools, several tensions surrounding the proposed history curriculum emerged in

our interviews. These tensions suggest that basic understandings of the means and rationales for promoting unity vary widely among Rwandans. These tensions also pose a threat to the ultimate success of efforts to promote unity.

When asked to discuss their views about what should be included in a new history curriculum, many participants responded with some discomfort. Much of the anxiety stemmed from continuing conflicts over how to deal with the topic of ethnicity. Despite general agreement about the importance of promoting unity and reconciliation, ethnicity was still very much at the forefront of people's thinking, whether their origin was Hutu or Tutsi. Teaching history and issues of ethnicity are closely linked in the minds of Rwandans.

Discussions of ethnicity in Rwanda are extraordinarily complex, since official government policy denies its existence in the country. This policy, promulgated by a powerful central government, may explain why several participants refused to acknowledge their ethnicity. It is also possible that these participants truly believe that ethnicity is an evil concept that must be dispensed with.[19] However, participants in a number of the focus groups were more inclined to talk about ethnicity than interviewees.[20] Like-minded peers may have enabled that discussion to occur. The comments below from the returnee focus groups gives an example of how much ethnicity is on everyone's minds, and how complicated this issue is for Rwandans:

- "It's not spoken and not expressed in people's identity cards, but I know it is still in their heads, and they express it through sentiments." (Female Tutsi student)
- "Ethnic issues cannot be abolished. They will always be there. The problem is using them in a wrong manner. So the problem would not be ethnicity, but how these groups live together." (Female Tutsi student)
- "The issue has changed form; it is like a volcano that is waiting to erupt in future, so Rwandans might be living together and after some time problems might arise." (Male student who refused to state ethnicity)

When students discussed ethnicity in ethnically homogeneous peer groups, such as those for repatriated Hutu students on government scholarships, they spoke in depth and revealed sentiments that others generally avoided. These Hutu students were frank about the possibility that ethnic discrimination still exists in Rwandan society, as a young woman in one of these groups said:

> If you go and visit a family, you will be welcome; but as soon as you leave, people might say, "He is a pathetic Hutu, his family massacred the Tutsi." Whereas if it were someone else, they would say, "You know that he is one of ours!" Another example is when you are seeking employment. There are places where you can't even get in someone's office, but when someone else shows up, he is welcome and he is hired. Even if you bribe them a great deal, you cannot be hired.



The exchange continued when a male student spoke up: "Another example is where I live . . . To get a taxi, Tutsi make you pay a fare many times higher than the fare others have to pay, or they will make fun of you." Another young man said: "At the bus station, someone gets off, watches the people who already took a seat in the taxi and says, 'I am not taking this cab. This is a cab for Tutsi' [if he or she is a Hutu] or 'This is a cab for Hutu' [if he or she is a Tutsi]."

Although some students who survived the genocide, mostly Tutsi, mentioned issues of discrimination, the mostly Hutu in other groups were far more likely to bring them up. This suggests that the Hutu scholarship students were more likely than the Tutsi scholarship students to be aware of and affected by inconsistencies between official policy, which legislates equal treatment of all groups, and everyday life for people of different ethnicities.

No respondent in either interviews or focus groups said that the topic of ethnicity and its consequences is taught officially in schools. Some noted that it is discussed in political education classes and in extracurricular activities such as human rights clubs. As one student put it, "Some do talk about ethnicity, while others do not. It all depends on the teacher and the topic under discussion at that time." In general, however, the people to whom we talked hoped that if the issue of ethnicity were dealt with in the schools, it would be handled in a way that would serve to advance the cause of unity and reconciliation.

Study participants seemed conflicted about whether schools should recognize that differences in ethnicity exist. While thirty-nine interviewees (48 percent) felt that differences should be recognized, and fifty-five (67 percent) felt that differences should be ignored, 25 percent of these respondents expressed both views in the course of their interviews. Another 7 percent did not voice their views on ethnicity at all.[21] These differences did not appear to be related to the ethnicity of the respondent. While most have clear opinions and while a small minority remained silent, a sizeable percentage seemed to hold internally conflicting views of ethnicity. For example, one of the teachers we interviewed said: "Ethnicity is a good issue, for everyone has his/her origin . . . It is something that makes a person known, that makes him or her the same as or different from others." But at another point in the interview this same teacher explained: "While teaching gospel, we tell students that they are all God's

children, that all ethnicities are the same." The teacher has encapsulated the dilemma of recognizing the need for social identity while at the same time acknowledging its exclusionary limitations that might lead to social inequalities or even violence.

Most focus group participants agreed on the importance of teaching about ethnicity in the school curriculum, but also felt strongly that the curriculum should examine the origins of ethnicity in Rwanda, how the concept of ethnicity had been manipulated in the past, the effects of such manipulation, and how Rwandan youth can avoid the same mistakes. Some participants felt that recognizing and teaching about ethnicity was essential. A Tutsi student presented this point of view:

> I think that we must teach them . . . If Rwandan history is taught and ethnic groups are not mentioned, something would be missing . . . But if we don't explain it, children would always wonder why Hutu killed Tutsi. And also, they would know whether they are Hutu or Tutsi. Maybe they would think about avenging their own people. Ethnic groups should be explained so that we can reveal lies within the truth.

Those who agreed with this position emphasized the early origins of ethnic divisions in Rwanda. Similarly, a female teacher who refused to state her ethnicity felt that it was important to discuss ethnicity in order to move toward unity and reconciliation: "I would propose that each teacher begin his class by talking first about unity and reconciliation. And he cannot talk about unity and reconciliation without talking about ethnic groups." A Hutu parent put it this way:

> The question on ethnicity will be solved if children are taught about it. Children should stop harboring ethnic tendencies. Parents should tell their children that "I am a Rwandese; I have no problem with that Tutsi." A Tutsi should also say, "I have no problem with that Hutu." Let us put our efforts together and build our country.

A Hutu teacher said discussing the origins of ethnicity in Rwanda would help solve society's problems:

> The truth is, keeping quiet over an existing problem does not provide a solution to it. Being a Twa, Tutsi or Hutu is no problem. It's ok, but above all [you should] know that you are a Munyarwanda, a citizen of Rwanda. Let us not be fearful to talk about our ethnicities.

Despite agreement over the central role of ethnic conflicts in past violence, the interviewees and focus group participants held diverging opinions on the history of ethnic groups in Rwanda. Viewpoints varied somewhat by the ethnicity of the participants, and sometimes also by the ethnicity of the interviewer. Some participants expressed more than



one opinion. According to one perspective, the three ethnic groups in Rwanda exist now and have existed from long ago. Thirty-nine interviewees (approximately 46 percent) gave responses that suggest they hold this belief. Hutu were more likely to endorse this position when they were interviewed by a fellow Hutu. The comments of a Hutu teacher reflect this view: "Ethnic groups have existed. Nobody can say that ethnic groups have not existed. They have existed, probably as we have learned in history. Except that, as it is said, to define a certain ethnic group is not simple." Another Hutu teacher suggested:

> Let us talk about them in a different way. [We should] not say that such an ethnic group came to rule over the other, but rather [discuss] the origin of these ethnic groups. I do not even find the importance of erasing someone's ethnicity from his or her identity card. Let us talk freely about ethnicity, but not the way it used to be talked about in the past.

Although Tutsi were less likely to express this view (39 percent of the thirty-one Tutsi interviewees), a Tutsi student echoed the general view: "About ethnicity, we normally know that there exist three ethnicities: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. I think all should not have tension between them but should instead have solidarity without any lying." When asked if she thought students should learn about ethnicity in school, another Tutsi student responded: "It would be good to teach about the different tribes, but not to emphasize that one is better than the other." Adherents to these views often emphasized that when Rwandan history is taught, it should help people understand their ethnic identities but should not be used to promote discrimination or disunity.

According to a second perspective, expressed by fifty-five interviewees (approximately 65 percent), ethnic groups in Rwanda do not exist, because the Hutu, Twa, and Tutsi don't fulfill all the necessary criteria of common definitions of ethnicity. All three groups speak the same language, Kinyarwanda, and all three share the same culture and live together in mixed communities throughout the country. Hutu interviewees were in the majority in this opinion. Most Hutu, 71 percent of all interviewed, spoke in favor of the official policy on ethnicity more frequently than they spoke in favor of recognizing differences and teaching about ethnicity, regardless of the ethnicity of their interviewer. Tutsi interviewees were also more likely to support the official policy, with 58 percent of them speaking in favor of it. Those who expressed this opinion favored forgetting about the history of ethnic groups and emphasizing a common Rwandan identity. They also feared that recognizing differences would encourage future conflicts. When asked if she would support lessons on ethnicity, a Tutsi student said:

> When we consider physical aspects that distinguish a Hutu from a Tutsi or from a Twa, we make a kind of segregation between people. In this context, three parts are made, and Tutsi take their side, Hutu their side, and so do the Twa. That is why [ethnicity] shouldn't be taught and should even be removed and replaced by only the term "Rwandese."

Although this student proclaims the existence, even salience, of ethnicity, she argues that it should be ignored in the schools. Among the mostly Tutsi students supported by FARG scholarships, many expressed fears about ethnicity and similarly adhered to the position that all traces of ethnicity should be ignored. "If ethnic groups were taught, unity would disappear," said one student. "Students' ethnicity would be reflected in all that they own. No, we must not do it." Hutu students supported by MINALOC grants voiced this position too, as represented by this student from Byumba: "I believe that it should not be taught. Because in order to teach it, you have to give examples and say, for instance, this one is a Hutu, that one a Tutsi, when this is the very thing that we must avoid and fight."

Framers of a Rwandan history curriculum will have to decide how to deal with issues of ethnicity and how to present this complex topic to young people. A Rwandan history necessarily involves confronting facts about past ethnic conflicts, perhaps in ways that search for universal themes in situations of ethnic conflict around the world. Although ethnicity cannot be ignored, it must be treated carefully, so that lessons will be learned about the roots of conflict and the importance of equal treatment for all.

## Tensions surrounding teaching methods

Tensions over how best to teach history also threaten to undermine continued progress toward a history of Rwanda that will promote unity. Our data revealed conflicting views over which teaching methods are appropriate for incorporation into the history curriculum. The responses of interviewees and focus group participants were quite similar, with a majority supporting a methodology that encourages open discussion and debate.

Approximately 20 percent (N = 15) of the interview respondents suggested an approach to teaching history that encourages critical analysis and debate. People who supported this approach tended to be Hutu. These interviewees argued that history should be taught in a way that would allow participants to discuss and sift through the pros and cons of the facts under study. A Hutu teacher felt that history should be taught:



> We have students whose parents were killed during the genocide; we also have students whose parents are in prison due to genocide charges, but they must all meet in class and study together. Indeed, they generally all get along well. Very often, however, these students have been given a distorted history of the genocide and of the past from older people that may affect their relationship with their classmates, since the distortions prevent them from analyzing issues clearly.

A student who refused to state her ethnicity advocated debates about the history of Rwanda, noting that encouraging "different interpretations of events" would encourage students to see that history is not a simple, cut-and-dried topic and would perhaps prompt them to take greater interest in the subject. Another teacher, a Tutsi, and one of the few Tutsi who supported this view, pointed out that good teaching should invite students to think for themselves: "We teach our pupils where justice prevailed and where it did not in the history of our country so that they are able to judge for themselves how the history of our country came to be what it is." The leader of an extracurricular human rights club reported using a debate format so that students could discuss and express their opinions. This teacher felt that the methods used in history class – memorizing facts and dates – can promote misunderstanding.

In another example of encouraging critical thinking, a teacher of political education noted that the syllabus for political education suggests that teachers use group discussion in class. Students discuss a teacher-selected theme in small groups, and then present their topics to the class. During the subsequent debates, all students can give suggestions and ask questions. The teacher intervenes as moderator and facilitator. However, the syllabus also asks teachers to contact political leaders to obtain official positions on current issues.

A government education official supported a central role for debates in the history curriculum, stating that "the problem with our school system is that it has not encouraged free thought; it has not encouraged communication." He emphasized that students need to learn how to talk and listen to each other, and tolerate people with opposing views. In addition to this role in teaching history, he felt that in-class debates would be necessary for the development of a solid history curriculum. He also highlighted the need for consensus reached through open communication: "What is important to me is that the Rwandan people can come together . . . sit together, and decide what part of history they should teach their children."

Another 38 percent of those we interviewed (thirty-two interviewees total) felt that encouraging contentious discussion might invite disagreements and new conflicts. Of this group, approximately half were Tutsi

and half were Hutu. A teacher commented that talking about history could make some participants feel uncomfortable, bitter, or angry with an ethnic group, since differing interpretations of events can lead to conflict. She also noted that politicians could use controversy to further their own plans, and expressed skepticism that the government could produce a history that would solve these problems.

For ten adherents of this perspective (12 percent of all interviewees or 31 percent of this group), the solution is to avoid teaching controversial topics and provide students with simple facts about Rwanda's past. Again, the ethnic breakdown was roughly divided equally (Tutsi – four; Hutu – five). One Hutu student expressed this viewpoint in the following way: "History deals with events. When you become a leader, you tell people the truth of all this." A Hutu parent expressed similar views:

> I think students . . . must be told the truth about the events which occurred, because there are some of them who do not understand why. There are some who do not know why such things happened. So, firstly, we must tell the truth about genocide and how it took place. You have to explain it, how it occurred, and why it took place here. Truth first!

A Tutsi student in a focus group did not favor debates because she placed implicit faith in the views of the government as transmitted by the teachers: "They should teach history practically while elaborating how the events happened, identifying the culprits (who did it) and their justifications . . . The teacher . . . will give the reasons, which will have come from the Ministry of Education."

## Implications for educational policy

Fairness and equal access to educational opportunities are crucial for promoting peace and social unity in Rwanda. The Rwandans to whom we talked seemed overwhelmingly satisfied that the current system is fairer than it was before 1994, and that for the elite population that reaches secondary school, there is good access to education for students from all ethnic groups. It is important to note that, since we talked only to secondary students, their teachers, and their parents, our conclusions about how Rwandans as a whole feel about access to education are limited. We did not hear from the approximately 80 percent of the population that never reaches secondary school. Future research is needed to see how those who do not have access to secondary education feel about issues of educational access.

Most participants felt that teaching about Rwanda's past is essential to ensure a safe and prosperous future for Rwanda. And further, while almost everyone linked teaching about history to issues of ethnicity, there was disagreement about what to teach and how to teach it. It is likely that this disagreement arises because those in power have used the history of Rwanda and its ethnic groups to manipulate public opinion and to bestow privilege by acknowledging certain groups at the expense of others. History is tied intimately to one's social identity, and many Rwandans see the distant and the more recent past through different lenses. This applies especially to people from different ethnic groups and to those who lived in Rwanda during 1994. In spite of their differences, Rwandans are searching for ways to use their history to move toward a more peaceful and unified future. They want to understand how different ethnic groups came to Rwanda, how they contributed to the building of the nation, and what was positive about past relations between groups. They also want to interpret the genocide and war of 1994 in ways that will allow them to build the nation. It remains difficult for many to focus on positive memories. It is also true that some official versions of the past do not ring true for all Rwandans.[22] All of these issues will need to be confronted as Rwandans make decisions about a history curriculum for the schools.



On the basis of our observations, we make several suggestions that reflect three areas to which attention might be directed – curricular content, classroom instruction, and teacher training. First, we suggest a national dialogue on history content that involves parents, students, and teachers and not solely academics or politicians. Parents possess great potential to make substantive contributions to the development of curricula. Possibilities for building this capacity should be explored further in future work on curriculum development. For instance, the role of parent boards and parent training programs might be expanded to make it possible for parents to contribute in ways that are helpful to the government and to the schools.

Second, we suggest that a national curriculum for history should ideally include participatory and democratic teaching methods that invite discussion and debate, so students can learn to think critically about competing views of history and ethnicity. An effective curriculum might invite students to examine available facts and draw informed conclusions from them. However, in instituting such a curriculum, it will be necessary to confront the fears surrounding this approach as well as the fears associated with teaching history, particularly in handling issues of ethnicity.

Third, a national curriculum for history should not be released without providing extensive preparation for teachers in its use. In-service and distance learning training to help teachers learn to use the curriculum comfortably should be made available. It will be important to help

teachers not only with the substance of the curriculum but also with using participatory and democratic techniques of teaching in the classroom.

Finally, this is an opportunity to encourage and support the creativity that teachers can bring to unity and reconciliation. Several promising models for teaching history and ethnicity are currently being used informally in Rwanda in out-of-school settings. These models might be studied closely for effective practices that could be incorporated into a national curriculum. The designers of those models might make important contributions to future curriculum development and to the future of the country.

NOTES

1. Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*: Genocide in Rwanda (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 65–95.
2. Ibid., 72.
3. Republic of Rwanda, *Workshop Seminar on Reviewing and Harmonizing the Curricula for General Secondary Education (First Phase, Kigali, from 17 April to 22 May 1996)* (Kigali: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Department of Studies and Pedagogical Research. With the assistance of the World Bank and the Government of Canada, 1996).
4. Université Nationale du Rwanda, Département d'Histoire. *Rapport General du Seminaire sur l'Histoire du Rwanda (Butare, 14–18 Déc 1998)* (Butare: Université Nationale du Rwanda, 1998).
5. Diyoseki ya Kabgayi, Catholic Relief Services, *Integanyamansomo y'ingando z'urubyiruko* (Kigali: Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, 1999).
6. Sarah Warshauer Freedman, *Preliminary Research on Issues of Justice and Reconciliation in Primary and Secondary Education in Rwanda* (Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley, 2001); Beth Lewis Samuelson, *Report on Data Collection Trip for Research on Isssues of Justice and Reconciliation in Primary and Secondary Education in Rwanda* (Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley, 2001).
7. The research project was jointly designed and conducted by researchers from the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley and the National University of Rwanda.
8. The most complete data on civil servants is found in Republic of Rwanda, *Study of the Education Sector in Rwanda* (rev. edn.) (Kigali: Ministry of Education, with support from UNICEF and UNDP, 1998), 13. This provides aggregate data on sectors of the government. We are assuming that the estimates for all public-sector employees apply equally to teachers.
9. "Rebuilding a Shattered System," *The Times Educational Supplement*, August 18, 1995.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., i.
12. Ibid., 76.
13. Ibid., 89.



14. Republic of Rwanda, "Workshop Seminar on Reviewing and Harmonizing the Curricula."
15. Republic of Rwanda, "Study of the Education Sector in Rwanda."
16. Even when teachers are considered to have appropriate qualifications, primary school teachers have only a secondary school education, with the last three years of secondary school the principal source of preparation for primary teaching.
17. Republic of Rwanda, "Study of the Education Sector in Rwanda."
18. For the Rwandan report on the Education for All effort, see Republic of Rwanda, *Education pour Tous, Bilan a l'An 2000* (Kigali: MINEDUC, 2000).
19. Some 14 percent of the interviewees and 30 percent of the focus group participants refused to state their ethnicity.
20. The fact that fewer focus group members identified their own ethnicity may be due to the fact that we asked them to provide the information on a written form. Our intention was to insure their privacy; however, in Rwanda, since identity cards and other written documents recording ethnicity have been outlawed, we now realize that participants may have hesitated because of the written nature of the request.
21. We counted the responses of interviewees to some questions which all answered. These statistics do not include focus group participants, because the nature of the conversations made it impossible to determine everyone's opinion on every issue.
22. See Longman and Rutagengwa, Chapter 8 this volume.