

REVIEW OF “LEARNING FROM THE PAST – 20 YEARS AFTER THE BOSNIAN WAR: EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION AND LASTING PEACE IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES” SUMMER SCHOOL¹

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The importance of the summer school and its topic can be seen from the location for the official opening ceremony: the Bosniak Institute in the old town of Sarajevo. Indeed, this institution was one of the sponsors of the summer school, along with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany (Sarajevo), the International Relations and Diplomacy Institute, Cultural Heritage Without Borders, and the International University of Sarajevo. The Bosniak Institute was built in 2001 and is a cultural center that has focus on Bosnian Muslim culture, having a library with oldest manuscripts from Bosnian history and contemporary paintings from a variety of famous Bosnian artists. In the welcome note, the organizers thanked participants from fifteen countries and mentioned that the selection process had not been an easy task. Dr. Hariz Halilovich, who was one of the organizers and also one of the keynote speakers, emphasized the importance of organizing such summer schools, and stated that through such events one can learn from the past and move forward towards reconciliation. On the other hand, Dr. Hariz also emphasized that reconciliation and remembering are like two sides of the same coin when it comes to understanding and meeting goals for post-conflict societies. The welcome ceremony was attended by the director of the Bosniak Institute and vice rector of the International University of Sarajevo, who highlighted the importance of bringing together young researchers and students from different parts of the world. The speaker emphasized that such

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events signify the importance of the topic and also the growing interest of different scholars around the globe in topics such as genocide. The summer school was designed in a way that learning took place not only inside the classrooms but also during on-site trips to places such as the UNDP, OSCE, the Embassy of Federal Republic of Germany, the town of Srebrenica, Potočari and through visits to survivor families in the small village of Klotjevac.

Dr. Hariz Halilovich gave the first lecture: 'Global in the local: People, Places and Memories'. He started from scratch by developing an understanding of the word genocide by describing what it means in the context of the war in Bosnia before and after the years 1991-1995. He referenced the events which occurred in Srebrenica which are recognized as a 'genocide' against Bosnian Muslims by the Serbian Army. Dr. Halilovich is better known for his work on forced migration, politically motivated violence, memory studies and genocide, but his research interests also include anthropology, mainly focused on Bosnia and Herzegovina. He comes from a small village on the river Drina that separates Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia called Klotejvec, where he lost most of his family members during the war. He moved to Australia directly because of the impact of these events. He is also the author of the book 'Places of Pain: Forced Displacement, Popular Memory and Trans-Local Identities in Bosnia War-Torn Communities'. During his lecture he talked about the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and mentioned that this was one of the major reasons behind the war. Ethnic cleansing is generally understood as the practice of removing or killing people who belong to an ethnic group that is different to the ruling group in a country or a region. In this case it referred to the killing of Muslims, which resulted in the Srebrenican genocide by the Serbian Army.

Ms. Elmina Kulašić, who is affiliated with the Cinema for Peace Foundation, showed us some interviews with survivors who talked about the events which happened during 1991 and 1995 in Bosnia; the project is entitled 'The Genocide Film Library'. The main object of this project was to make a substantial contribution to currently available oral history of Bosnia & Herzegovina and the events of 1992-1992. As stated on the project website, with the support of Angelina Jolie and the German Federal Ministry of Foreign Relations the Genocide Film Library conducted (over a period of three years) more than 1300 interviews with survivors and eye-witnesses of the massacre in Srebrenica in the summer of 1995. The interviews constitute the largest collection of oral history in Bosnia and are now accessible in an online library and form the basis of the documentary 'Voices of Srebrenica'. It was interesting and emotionally moving to listen to the stories of the survivors – mostly women – who had lost their loved ones during the war.

The participants appeared now to be living in different European countries with their families and mentioned that their children, who were very young at the time the war was unfolding, are still traumatized. Through watching the different interviews it became clear that it would be very difficult for the survivors to forget or to erase the memories of the horrors of the events that had happened during the war, and indeed that these interviews will play a vital role as a source of information for youth as they look back on what actually happened.

Mr. Nerkez Opačin and Ms. Aida Salketić conducted a workshop on the 'Pedagogical Tool MemorInmotion on Culture of Remembrance'. This pedagogical tool helps people to recall memories and is of importance to the lives of individuals and groups. The tool is actually the fruit of a collaboration of a number of organisations, including forumZFD, the Anne Frank House (The Netherlands), the Youth Initiative for Human Rights and EUROCLIO-HIP Bosnia & Herzegovina – based in the City Hall/Vijećnica Sarajevo. MemorInmotion (which reads as 'Memory In Motion') was developed with the help of academics, historians, pedagogues, artists and activists who carefully analyse memory and events. The organizers of the workshop sorted participants at the summer school into pairs and gave them eight minutes to ask each other a variety of questions. The questions consisted of; participants' age, country, occupation, favourite childhood game, most exciting thing that had happened to the participant in the last thirty days, ideal vacation place, world famous monument. After eight minutes participants returned to their seats and were told to present their answers to the questions discussed during the eight minutes. It was an interesting workshop in the sense that it not only tested the memory of participants but also because it showed how difficult it can be to describe events that had just occurred. The later part of the workshop consisted of a discussion about the importance of monuments in different places, guided by questions such as 'what does the word 'monument' mean to you?', and 'what particular memories are connected to particular monuments?' Sticky notes were given to participants to capture information from brainstorming and to help with identifying as many words as possible that could better explain references to the monuments. Later, the sticky notes were collected from the participants and organizers then tried to identify similar words, or words with similar meanings, and then to organize these words in order to explain their similarities and the importance of monuments.

Ms. Aida Salketić, who works with Cultural Heritage without Borders, conducted a workshop about monuments and described the work she has been doing with her organization. Cultural Heritage without Borders is dedicated to rescuing and preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage that is

affected by conflict, neglect, human and natural disasters. The organization works with cultural heritage, seeing it as an active force for reconciliation, peacebuilding and social and economic development. Their work can be used to create capacity, awareness, and opportunities for preserving and rescuing cultural heritage in societies affected by conflict. Ms. Aida started her discussion by asking ‘who creates monuments?’, then explored the meaning of cultural heritage from different angles. She declared that heritage is a human right and is of universal value. For example, anyone’s house can become part of national heritage or a monument to an individual, and it is then up to local communities to reserve the right to protect that heritage. Monuments signify the importance of the memories to which they are connected. Later, Ms. Aida showed a short movie entitled ‘One Monument - Ten Opinions Workshop’ in which artists painted roses on different parts of the city in Sarajevo and then asked people what they the paintings meant to them. It was interesting to see how people – mostly senior citizens – could talk about their memories of the war, and associated seeing the roses and the spreading of the leaves around them with bloodshed and the victims of the war, while youth sometimes had different opinions. The main goal of making these paintings was to allow people to remember what had happened during the war. At the end of the workshop, a short movie was shown to participants so they could see the different roles played by different individuals in history in different parts of Europe during conflict situations. Later, participants at the summer school were asked to list and analyse the roles that any individual (male or female) could play during conflict or war.

A visit to the UNDP Headquarters in Sarajevo was also part of the summer school. Mr. Thomas Osorio, Head of the UNDP mission in Bosnia & Herzegovina – accompanied by representatives of other education and transitional justice missions – moderated the events, to which UNESCO was also invited. It was interesting to hear the different representatives of the United Nation from different agencies discussing how to bring peace and stability to the post-conflict societies of Bosnia & Herzegovina. Later, summer school participants were given the opportunity to ask questions of the representatives of the different missions in the form of an interactive platform. Here, participants from different backgrounds addressed their questions on the topics of education, segregation in educational systems, challenges to educational systems and the agencies led by UNDP and UNESCO. Some participants also raised questions about the role of the trust of locals in the missions and agencies of the UNDP, and reference was made to the failed UN peacekeeping mission which led to the massacre in Srebrenica of almost eight thousand Muslim boys and males in July 1995 (Srebrenica had been declared

a safe haven by UN peacekeepers in 1993). The question was answered by the head of the mission who said that, indeed, it was a big challenge for the UNDP and its agencies to regain and build trust. Mr. Osorio made reference to the existence of the UN-ICTY (United Nations - International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) where perpetrators of war crimes (such as genocide) are being prosecuted. It was repeatedly emphasised by the representatives that the foremost priority of the UNDP is to implement missions in post-conflict societies which further its goals of promoting a peaceful existence for all. The activities in which the UNDP has been actively involved include rural and regional development, social inclusion and democratic governance, energy, environment, justice, and security and flood response. The UNDP is also incorporated into all the agencies of the government of Bosnia & Herzegovina at a macro and micro level, and actively cooperates with other international organisations such as the OSCE.

Later that day, a visit to the OSCE head office in Sarajevo was organised for the summer school participants where we had an opportunity to meet the head of the mission: Ambassador Mr. Jonathan Moore, and his colleague Ms. Aleksandra Krstović. It was interesting to meet Mr. Moore, who told us about the key areas in which OSCE is active in Bosnia & Herzegovina. The issue of governance and educational systems were key focal points of the discussion and participants were asked to ask questions of the head of the mission. Bosnia & Herzegovina indeed face challenges when it comes to governance issues at different levels, and also with education, where creating a common curriculum has always been a challenge. Mr. Moore praised the valuable support and cooperation of other international communities that are active in the country. OSCE provides significant support for parliamentary activities and elections and also analyses carefully development at the societal level when it comes to politics and power. OSCE – like any other international organization – produces reports about different issues; in their case on topics such as hate speech, international protocol for the documentation and investigation of sexual violence in conflict and the legalization of minorities in different parts of Bosnia & Herzegovina. Later, a visit to the German Embassy in Sarajevo was also on the list for participants, where there was an opportunity to meet the German Ambassador Mr. Christian Hellbach, accompanied by Cultural Attaché Mr. Jens Wagner. It was interesting to listen to both representatives of the embassy talking about the situation and the role of the international community in post-conflict society in Bosnia & Herzegovina, although Mr. Hellbach was quite pessimistic about the political situation in the country and emphasised that hardly any constructive change is occurring. He mentioned that corruption and the economy were creating serious challenges, but that

the country must keep pace and modify its values if Bosnia & Herzegovina is to become a full European Union member state. This opinion was in stark contrast to that of the OSCE and the UNDP's mission heads and also of some participants from Germany who could not agree with Mr. Hellbach's opinions. According to the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with other Balkan countries, were considered to be potential candidates for membership in the European Union during the EU Council Summit in 2003, and a number of agreements have already been made between the European Union and Bosnia & Herzegovina on this topic.

The next day, Dr. Nicholas Moll, an independent researcher based in Sarajevo and a historian and trainer in the field of intercultural cooperation for historical and civil society development gave a lecture entitled 'Are Reconciliation and Dealing with the Past Complimentary or Contradictory Processes?' He started his lecture by asking participants to make note of the words that come to their mind when they hear about dealing with the past and reconciliation. He then listed words that are typically used when talking about dealing with the past: identity, memories, remembrance, acceptance, future, grief, recovery, power struggle, forgiveness, knowing, and hope. The corresponding words when it come reconciliations were narrative, trust commission, peaceful coexistence, negotiations, mediations, acceptance, tolerance, forgiveness, transitional justice and dialogue. He explained the similarities and differences between the two concepts, which are not complex in nature, and are like two sides of one coin, being present simultaneously. For example, concerning memory and forgiveness, it can be hard for someone who has been through a conflict and witnessed hardship to forget in order to forgive. Dr. Moll based his lecture on providing an understanding of reconciliation through five case studies based on which he created a system of categorization according to the nature of the conflict. The cases included: i. Reconciliation without dealing with the past (e.g. Spain after Franco), ii. Reconciliation and simultaneous dealing with the past (South Africa after apartheid), iii. Reconciliation and then dealing with the past (France and Germany in 1945), iv. Neither reconciliation nor dealing with the past (France after the Algerian war), and v. dealing with the past without reconciliation (Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1995). He expressed his concern that it might now be difficult for Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve the goals for reconciliation because of the need to deal with past at the same time. He further mentioned that twenty years has passed and that 'war' is still continuing in terms of who controls the narrative which takes place when it comes to using certain words to describe events or incidents that occurred during the war.

In addition to the visits and learning that took place outside the classroom, one day was reserved for a short trip to different sites of religious interest, including a mosque, a church and a synagogue, where participants were orientated about the role and the history of the places during and after the war, with a special focus on discussing how these traditional institutions helped to usher in peace and harmony during the conflict. A short visit was also organized to monuments in different parts of Sarajevo. During the next three days, participants visited Srebrenica, Potočari and Klotjevac in order to attend the sites of wars, a memorial centre and a village to which some of the survivors of the war had returned. The short trip to Potočari involved visiting a memorial site where the graves of almost eight thousand boys and males can be found, and a bunker memorial site for UN peacekeeping forces located where the massacre took place. The situation was very emotional for some participants, especially the Bosnians participants of the summer school, some of whom were able to identify the names of close relatives that had been massacred at Srebrenica. The guided tour involved a visit to a UN memorial centre where we saw different video clips of incidents which had happened during the war and also clips of the UN-ICTY trials of those who had committed crimes. This trip to the site of thousands of graves, located right next to where the atrocities had actually occurred, was indeed an emotional experience.

During the three-day stay we had the chance to stay with survivors and their families. We met with Abdullah Mešanović and his family in a small village called Klotjevac. The village has less than two dozen inhabitants and is located next to the River Drina, which is on border of Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia, thirty kilometres to the south of Srebrenica. The village, according to Mr. Abdullah, was originally home to more than one hundred people who mostly depended on farming. They lived peaceful lives and were happy with what they had before the war started in 1991. He recounted that when the war started he had left his home with his two sons and barely one kilo of apples. He lived in a dense forest for almost two months. At the start of the events which unfolded in 1992 he had stayed at home and hoped that things would get better, but when he realized that the village was constantly being attacked he decided to leave for Srebrenica and then for other places. Mr. Abdullah explained over dinner that he was very happy to see that people from more than fifteen countries were interested in coming to talk to him and to listen his stories, and that he was honoured to host the participants. The host families were very accommodating and welcomed us with open arms and provided food, shelter and also accompanied us on visits to different homes which had been attacked and abandoned during the war. The survivors had lot to say.

They shared recollections about how hard the war had been, and how it took a long time for them to adjust when they returned, and how some surviving family members had remained abroad, not having found the courage to return. Abdullah, who is now in his seventies, believes that he has made the right decision to return to his village. He says he likes the life there and was quite optimistic about the work of the UN-ICTY, although he noted that some of those who were found guilty of war crimes are still walking around freely in various countries. At the end of the stay he expressed that if participants such as us could visit him, he would be a happy man. These events gave participants an opportunity to learn first-hand about events, and for awareness to be raised about the situations in which such small villages exist in different countries. The local municipality, even through the federal system used in Bosnia and Herzegovina, could take more steps to support basic infrastructure in such places.

Assistant Prof. Dr. Goran Šimić gave one of the last lectures on 'Transitional Justice in Bosnia & Herzegovina: Dealing with Human Rights Abuses and Social Reconstruction in the wake of widespread Violence'. Dr. Šimić's has expertise with criminal law and the analysis of transitional justice cases, mainly from the UN-ICTY. He was very critical about one form of punishment meted out by the UN-ICTY justice system: if an individual is found guilty of a war crime, then he or she may economically support the victim instead of being imprisoned. He suggested that individuals found guilty should spend a minimum of five years in prison and should pay at least 35% to 40% of their income to the victim. He also raised an interesting fact for discussion: one million euros are spent (on average) to imprison a person found guilty of war crimes for two years: is this the best way to administer justice? He mentioned that the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina represents the best possible platform for studying transitional justice. He talked about statistics – for example, for the period 1992-1995 there is no official record of human losses, and there is only institute (known as the Research and Documentation Centre, Sarajevo, which is funded by Norwegian agencies) that collects data about genocide, war crimes and human rights violations. In other words, it is difficult to find accurate data about the conflict. He further mentioned that a total of 1600 war crimes had been reported, out of which 400 had been satisfactorily dealt with, while there are 700 mass graves in Bosnia and Herzegovina, almost 30,000 people missing, and millions were displaced. Dr. Šimić was pessimistic about the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, although twenty years have already passed. He concluded that a generation of people conditioned to hate is being raised, and on a final note mentioned that many people consider another conflict to be the best final settlement, so

they can return to their former homes. Dr. Zarije Seizović shared the same pessimism in his lecture 'Rethinking Post-Conflict Mindset Reconstruction, Ethnic Diversity and Political Dis-integration'. Dr. Seizović said that Bosnia and Herzegovina display certain post-war features: society, people's mind sets, people's futures and their souls are divided along ethnic lines, and these lines cannot easily be erased. Potentially disastrous social 'multi-realities' exist, such as three ethno-histories, three ethno-politics, three ethno-ideologies, three ethno-political representations, three ethno-mass graves, three ethno-parents, three ethno-educations, three ethno-hatreds, and three ethno-truths. This concept of 'three co-existing ethno phenomena' is a clear sign of the division between individuals in society in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In conclusion, the summer school involved not only learning inside the class but also outside, including the few days' stay with families to experience life in a post-conflict society and the role of the past in survivors' lives. The main objective of the summer school was to teach participants about conflict, and to cause them to interact with organizations and people who work in post-conflict societies about the challenges that are faced by these organisations, and for the participants to be educated about the situation with reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was interesting to see the perspective of the Bosnian side about the war crimes committed against Bosnian Muslims, and the fact that there is international recognition of the events that happened between 1992-1992 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Promoting education for reconciliation to bring peace in conflict-hit societies is no easy task. Learning to coexist peacefully is a slow process at an individual and a group level. The main challenge to reconciliation is remembrance, or the memories of persons or groups who witnessed the events that took place during the war. Moreover, there is clear trade off between dealing with the past (which can be directly linked to remembrance of incidents that happened in one's life) and reconciliation. Reconciliation is only possible when individuals, especially victims, are ready to forget that certain events occurred. Dialogue is indeed the most plausible option for bringing different ethnic groups together to work on reconciliation. There were no participants from Croatia or Serbia at the summer school and also no speakers from Serbia. A much better platform for debate would have included all three ethnic groups interacting as participants and speakers. The major focus of the summer school was to focus on the genocide, and on dealing with the past, and the situation of Bosnian Muslims was strongly emphasised.