

Give Testimony and Act! **Combining History Education & Human Rights Education**

International Holocaust Remembrance Day has provided a unique opportunity for human rights activists and educators, historians, and those working at memorial sites and museums to share ideas about creatively combining history education with human rights education. If you support these initiatives, please let us know about it and join our efforts.

We face a fundamental question: Can we combine education in history and education in human rights to provide deeper and more constructive meaning or must they be addressed in completely different worlds? In our opinion, we must try for the first formulation. The answer is yes--they need go together. There are topics and special fields of social life that justify and even compel us to seek creative connections between these two educational areas. Yes, this is an activity full of challenges – but it is worth trying and it is worth experimenting with!

The effect of such synergies can be helpful in better understanding **mechanisms** that explain 'where do we come from' as individuals, as communities, as nations, and let us realize that the direction in which we are going depends mostly on us – on you and me!

'Never Again' depends on the people. It is your commitment and mine!

Without the knowledge about the past, and without the will to act on human rights, sooner or later 'Never Again' will become just an **empty slogan**. Therefore, we believe that combining history and human rights education should focus on individual experience.

To be able to say **STOP** to violence, discrimination and marginalization at the right time we must understand the main motives of man's actions, in particular the personal choices in the particular circumstances in the local community. We need to show that - regardless of the situation - it is worth it to be proactive and care about human rights as the foundation of our being.

However, it is much easier to take 'the first step' if you understand the motives and consequences of various social phenomena (i.e. mechanisms of prejudice formation or creation of scapegoats). Personal examples can illustrate these mechanisms and give them not an anonymous but 'a human face'. It is hard to be indifferent to injustice if we **know** that someone's dignity is violated and human rights are abused. And it is even harder to remain passive if we **feel** what human rights violations might mean for a particular person.

The history of World War II shows that silence usually means acquiescence in the face of evil. Sometimes just one or two people who dare to oppose, and rebel or resist first, are enough to change the course of events and to overcome passivity. Awareness of these occurrences can sensitize us to the manifestations of passivity and support being **pro-active 'here and now'**. Do not be indifferent to alarming signals. Keep your eyes wide open. **It is worth being active!**

To us, being 'pro-active' also means that people involved in history education and human rights education will attempt to meet each other and exchange experiences, share inspirations and seek common viewpoints. Our experience shows that even if they do not exactly meet half-way, efforts devoted to linking these two areas usually bring new, interesting and valuable quality.

Let's listen to each other, let's experiment and share experiences! Let's learn together how to teach in a better and more multi-dimensional way!

Conference organizing team:
The International Youth Meeting Center in Oświęcim/Auschwitz
Foundation Humanity in Action Poland
The KARTA Center

Contact: Agnieszka Kudelka, phone nr +48 22 844 10 55 / prawa.czlowieka@karta.org.pl (The KARTA Center)

[PRINCIPLES AND THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM](#) (in Polish)

[PRESS RELEASE](#) (in Polish)