

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	1 - INSTYTUT EUROPEJSKIEJ SIECI PAMIEC I SOLIDARNOSC (ESPS)
PIC number:	932308420
Project name and acronym:	Project 101051121 — SiS

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP5
Event name:	Edition IV
Type:	Workshop
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Jasenovac (Croatia)
Date(s):	16.10.2023-23.10.2023
Website(s) (if any):	https://enrs.eu/edition/sound-in-the-silence-2023
Participants	
Female:	45
Male:	38
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Poland]:	8
From country 2 [Germany]:	9
From country 3 [Croatia]:	51
From country 4 [Romania]:	9
From country 5 [Lithuania]:	2
From country 6 [Slovakia]:	1
From country 7 [UK]:	1
From country 8 [USA]:	1
From country 9 [Ukraine]:	1
Total number of participants:	83
From total number of countries:	9
Description	

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

‘Sound in the Silence’ is an intercultural and international remembrance project for youth. In historically challenging locations, students work with artists representing different artistic fields in order to understand how the past is connected to their questions in the present. By doing so, we give young people a chance to find new ways of looking at the history of Europe, of our nations, states and regions, and to work out their own perception of reality and tools for expressing it.

The fourth edition of the “Sound in the Silence” project (workshop) took place in Croatia, in the villages of Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška – the area of former concentration camps from the WW2.

As it was not possible to provide accommodation for such a large group in the Jasenovac area, it was decided to host all participants and organisers in a hotel in the town of Kutina. The educational programme took place in Jasenovac and Stara Gradiška, while the artistic programme and the final performance were held in the Stara Gradiška Cultural Centre.

Students made use of historical site to gain impressions of history through guided tour and workshops in Jasenovac Memorial Site, site visit in Stara Gradiška, educational workshop during the visit in the Roma Memorial Center in Uštica, and historical study before working with artists to connect those impressions of the past to their thoughts and feelings of the present moment. After learning about the history of the Stara Gradiška through guided tours, workshops and discussions, all the participants had the opportunity to meet the child survivor of the Stara Gradiška camp - Mr. Zivko Zelenbrz and take part in commemorative walk to the Anti-Fascism Monument with him.

After a study of the site's history, each student took part in a Creative Writing Workshop. This workshop uses creative writing exercises to create a personal connection to history. Subsequently, this creative writing had been used as the foundation for their work in the artistic workshops where students worked with either dance, voice or performance to create the original material. This material was then woven together to create a site-specific performance that was presented to the public.

Creative Writing Workshop by Dan Wolf

The goal of the workshop was to introduce the participants to the artists they were working with, the various creative methodologies, thinking frameworks, and guiding principles that power the project, and the big questions and themes that were explored together. During this particular edition, participants were asked to consider that poetry is both a form (the way it looks on the page) and a concept (the way we find poetry in the world). The workshop was used as a way to reflect on the historical site visits and workshops in a deeply personal manner. The participants were asked to make lists of 5-10 single words or strong images that came to mind as a reflection of days at Jasenovac, Uštica, and Stara Gradiška. They wrote Haiku poems (a 17-syllable, 3 line poem invented in Japan) as a way to distill their ideas into a potent, concentrated format. They were asked to write a “I come from ...” poem using their five senses to express their unique, individual humanity. Finally, participants wrote a ‘Telephone Poem’, a poem that uses a restricted number of words for each line, based on the question “If the erosion of memory is the act of forgetting, and the rebirth of memory is the act of remembering, where are you right now?” This large, abstract question was meant to inspire them to explore the concepts of erosion, forgetting, oblivion, and remembering, and used the image of the lotus flower (articulated by the flower monument at Jasenovac) as way to express the complex issues we were working with at all of our sites in Croatia.

Dance Workshop by Katarina Rampackova

This choreography workshop was created for all the bodies and was facilitated in the way that every body could follow. In the workshop the principles of somatic work and improvisation to sensibilise consciousness of the body were used. The workshop hadn't had a very fluent development because of the disbalance in the group in the sense of personal characters and movement experiences. However, there were students who were very shy and some who were very expressive, generally the young people were open to new experiences and felt confident even when it came to suggesting changes to the choreography. The location was very inspirative, which gave power to the group. The starting points for the creation of movement material were: location (bus stop, tunnel), haikus written by them during the Creative Writing Workshop (reflection on the place), statues (body construction built on the based of the emotion they had on the location), poems with writers (supporting the poem written by rap group), lotus (as a symbol of hope and new beginning, flower in the lake of memorial site of Jasenovac). Students have learned how to create a movement map which leads them towards their own little choreography. The group needed a lot of emotional support as the insecurity was present. The students made a huge step forward in themselves, they developed confidence in their movements and by the end of the workshop they understood the power of abstract expression in the complexity of the whole performance.

Vocal Music Workshop by Sean Palmer

The vocal workshop, for singers and non-singers alike, allowed students to take part in creating an anti-singing choir. They worked with various exercises and singing techniques including classical, body percussion, beatbox, screams, growls, whispers and vocal improvisation. The songs with or without words reflected the location and how the participants experienced it.

The Stara Gradiška camp today is in an exceptional state of dilapidation, it bares the scars of time. Small woods have risen out of the collapsed roofs. Nature has been slowly eating away and covering the past. This lead us to the first key to our performance - "Erosion is nature's form of forgetting". At the site of the Jasenovac camp which was notorious for its brutal executions, now stands as a vast tranquil expanse of pasture. In the centre stands an enormous flower like, concrete monument. It is said to be a lotus flower - the symbol of rebirth. Here the artists discovered the second part of the key for the performance "Rebirth is nature's form of remembering". Aside from these statements, which were then incorporated into the artistic workshops in the form of exercises, participants also worked with the notion of kindness - the opposite of what this location was remembered for.

The songs were based on the participant's raps and haikus inspired by writing from the Creative Writing Workshop and inspired by the rap group. The songs were woven into the end performance, to compliment the work of the other groups.

Rap and Poetry Workshop by Dan Wolf

During the Rap and Poetry Workshop participants worked on the basics of writing and performing rap, including understanding rhyming patterns, beats and bars. Each participant took their turn writing raps either by themselves (solo) or in pairs. They translated their Haikus from English into their native languages. To counteract the brutality of the history of Stara Gradiška, the participants wrote poems about Kindness. On day three, the workshop turned into an acting class and we rehearsed the Kindness poems like they were monologues. One participant's Kindness poem was constructed as a three act play and was broke up into character parts and rehearsed it like it was a short play. The final day students with the workshop leader created chords and bassline to go with the rhythm that the Vocal Workshop created for the rap. The raps were edited and arranged, and a hook was written for the song called "Tomorrow Today".

Group Dynamic Workshops by Tetiana Kriukovska

During the programme participants were under the supervision of the moderator Tetiana Kriukovska, who organised different activities daily for a better group dynamic.

The journey from the hotel (Kutina) to the historical site (Stara Gradiška) took about 50 minutes each day. During the first three days, this time was used to create a group dynamic: the facilitator created different tandem partners for each person to communicate with during each bus ride. This helped to create space for getting to know each other better and did not interfere with the programme. In the middle of the project, the time spent on the bus was used for the rest. On the last two days there was a dance with hands and songs to wake up in the morning.

The facilitator helped students who wanted to share their feelings but were not confident enough to do so in front of the whole group. Over time, after several one-to-one sessions and working in smaller groups during the artistic workshops, the young people were able to build a relationship that allowed them to openly share their thoughts and feelings. Thanks to so-called ‘opening and closing circles’, participants learnt more about each other in a fun way; they discussed the upcoming activities and possible challenges. Those slots helped them to develop better relationships within the group and establish stronger, more cooperative bonds with the team. Also, meeting with the child survivor Mr. Zivko Zelenbrz had a significant impact on the participants. The survivor was very charismatic and his personal storytelling made process of learning history more emotional for participants.

Workshops (4) for Teachers by:

1. Aleksandra Kalinowska (ENRS)

The workshops were open both to the teachers that came with students as well as to the local teachers interested in the topic.

The workshop focused on educational materials. During the workshop teachers learned about the free educational resources available on the Hi-story Lessons platform, including infographics, lesson plans and animations, among others the educational kit about disinformation and memory conflicts. Participants considered how to use the resources in their teaching work. Teachers also learned about other practical examples of the use of visual language in educational projects as a useful method for tackling challenging historical topics and processing them in a way that suits students' individual sensibilities.

2. Maja Sturm (Art and German teacher at a high school in Osnabrück, Germany)

The block of workshops focused on alternative, in particular aesthetic-research and artistic approaches to the Holocaust. The participants first got to know very different graphic novels in excerpts and received suggestions for use in the classroom, and at the same time they benefit from an exchange in a multinational group of teachers. One focus was on the graphic novel anthology "But I live".

This was followed by interactive and hands-on activities dealing with the location and its abstract history, both alone and/or in teams. With the help of a variety of impulses (creative writing, collage, photography, designing own short comic sequences), the participants were offered a setting of methods from which they can choose what appeals to them - and what they could use themselves for teaching in class. Older and newer artistic approaches (from painting to conceptual artwork etc.) on the subject of the Holocaust, guilt, commemoration and remembrance were also presented and discussed in a final session.

3. Sunčica Nagradić Habus, Croatian Romani Union “KALI SARA”

The workshop was a presentation with a contextual framework of the Roma genocide (Samudaripen), especially in Croatia, Germany, Poland, and Romania. The status of the Roma

in those four countries before WW2 and what happened to them during the war was describe through a comparative approach. The historical and systemic aspects of discrimination and genocide were explained deeper.

Guided by the 2018 manual "Roma in the Second World War in the Independent State of Croatia 1941-1945", published by the Institute for Social Sciences Ivo Pilar and the Berlin Foundation Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft, and the guidelines of the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education and the Council of Europe for teaching about the Holocaust and genocide against the Roma, different forms of teaching about the topic were presented through activities such as setting up temporary school exhibitions, field trips (visits to the Roma Memorial Center and Summer School), but also class workshops. The latter was exemplified by the group's creation of a timeline and a mental map/poster based on newspaper articles before and during the Second World War and testimonies of Roma and non-Roma about the suffering of Roma in the ISC.

4. Nikola Puharić, Serb National Council

The workshop was about the culture of remembrance. It involved a few examples of very important work of Serb National Council. Program of the culture of memory was born from the need to define presentation and interpretation of the traumatic history of the 20th century through various models of commemorative, artistic and activist practices targeting both Serb minority and Croatian majority. In addition to the commemorations at the memorial sites, the Cultural Section, in cooperation with similar organisations, experts and directly interested individuals, conceives and prepares other public events, campaigns and initiatives aimed at drawing the attention of Croatian society to the issues of offensive historical relativism and negationism, as well as to the issues of the Serb minority experience in the fields of education and culture.

The Final Performance

Public Event

The final performance began shortly after 6pm, after the project organisers, partners and artistic director welcomed the large audience. Among the invited guests: Stara Gradiška residents, multipliers, diplomats, representatives of the educational community, there was also a guest of honour - the child survivor of the Stara Gradiška camp, Mr. Zivko Zelenbrz.

The Haikus in five languages (English and the participants native languages), the Kindness poems including the short play inspired by story of Cain and Abel, and the rap acted as the backbone and dramaturgical line for the final performance.

The final performance was a promenade performance which started in front of the entrance to the Cultural Centre building and, after leading the audience through the area of Stara Gradiška, ended with the singing of the final song in front of the entrance to the fort ruins.

The route for the performance was based on the artists' desire to share the emotions they had experienced after knowing the history of the place and the traumatic story of the survivors. Stops along the route were punctuated by micro performances based on creative writers reading their poems, supported by the dance and/or vocal group. Audience members moved from stop to stop, aided by the performers and organisers. Performers used the torches on their mobile phones to illuminate the faces of those speaking, dancers held their torches which twinkled and dazzled during their movements and the vocal group illuminated their mouths during singing. Thanks to this the effect was captivating. The audience was given the chance to experience what the participants had learned, rather than just watch a presentation of their findings. This performance walk took place in an uplifting atmosphere. The audience was

interested and followed with rapt attention the next stops where the students rapped, recited or sang. The final song with the chorus:

*Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow NO
Today is the day to let the world KNOW
This generation will break the silence
Destroy never ending cycles of violence*

and the whole performance was rewarded with a long ovation.

The performance (as well as during the first, second and third editions) was wrapped up with a debate with students, educators, teachers, artists, guests and the audience who discussed the artistic act and the alternative methods of historical education. One of the important topics during the discussion was the technical condition of the buildings and ruins of the former fort in Stara Gradiška. The discussion also considered how to preserve the memory of historical sites such as this and how to protect the historical heritage and memorials of the dramatic history of the 20th century.

The discussion was held in English with consecutive translation into Croatian.



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