



Remaking Rwanda

*State Building and Human Rights
after Mass Violence*

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Teaching History in Post-Genocide Rwanda

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[Hutu extremist] organizers of the [Rwandan] genocide, who had themselves grown up with . . . distortions of history, skillfully exploited misconceptions about who the Tutsi were, where they had come from, and what they had done in the past. From these elements, they fueled the fear and hatred that made genocide imaginable.

Des Forges 1999, 31

History is often a central concern after violent, identity-based conflicts. Citizens of countries that have experienced such devastation often recognize how political leaders distorted and then exploited national history to incite violence. As countries seek social repair, many people believe that a new and more truthful history must be transmitted to the next generation through revised history curricula in schools. In such disparate places as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Northern Ireland, and Rwanda, the reteaching of history has been expected to lay at least part of the foundation for social reconstruction, a better future, and a lasting peace (Cole and Barsalou 2006; Hodgkin 2006; Cole 2007a, 2007b).

In this chapter, we focus on secondary schools in Rwanda, where we have

been working on educational issues since 2001. An initial study by the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley, asked Rwandan educational stakeholders what they felt was needed to reconstruct their society after the 1994 genocide and wars. Most responded that teaching history was essential to social reconstruction and that they were losing patience with the slow process of official decision making on the issue (Freedman et al. 2004; Weinstein et al. 2007). Stakeholders objected to the fact that a moratorium on teaching history placed by the Ministry of Education immediately after the genocide had remained in effect for over a decade. That study prompted the Ministry to seek assistance in developing materials for teaching history in secondary schools, which, in turn, led to our next project. We explored such questions as: How can material for a history curriculum be developed to avoid propaganda and to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills? What tensions surface for teachers working in an increasingly repressive political climate? What opportunities can encourage and support democratic teaching and debate about multiple perspectives?

Our project revealed tensions related to the government's political goal of teaching history to promote a unified Rwandan identity—a goal that allowed for the transmission of only one official historical narrative. This goal conflicted with another set of official goals for education reform in Rwanda—to learn to evaluate historical sources and evidence through embracing so-called modern, democratic teaching methods that foster skills (such as critical thinking and debate) thought to be essential for successful participation in an increasingly global economy. A further complication resulted from the fact that the official narrative, with its goal to unify Rwanda, denied the modern-day existence of ethnic groups, while the social reality is that ethnic identification remains strong in Rwanda.

Two Dilemmas: What History to Teach and How to Teach It

Most who write about teaching history after ethnic cleansing, genocide, or massive human rights abuses focus on how states deal with the problem of content selection. If nations are “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983), then historical narratives are key to shaping how communities understand themselves. In the aftermath of violent conflict, revising the content of history curricula presents states with an important means of conveying new narratives of the past, which influence the national identity of citizens, particularly those of the next generation.¹ A new collective national identity is

often placed in opposition to group identities that were central during violent conflict.²

Decisions about what history to teach are based on two contrasting approaches. The first, which has a longer timeline, claims that accurate and sound curriculum can be developed only after historians resolve or at least narrow disputes about politically charged and historically contested events (Emmert and Ingrao 2004; Barkan 2005). The second, more pragmatic approach pushes for new materials to be created in a timely fashion because teaching and learning in schools is ongoing, and perspectives on contested events can be resolved during the materials creation process or left open and be framed for classroom deliberation.³ For either approach, however, there are few studies evaluating impact. Indeed, determining the influence of history education presents a significant challenge in the context of other societal influences.

Cole and Barsalou (2006) explain that approaches to teaching are as important as content but often receive less attention. They write that “helping history teachers promote critical inquiry may be more urgent than reforming history textbooks” (1). In particular, they suggest that teaching critical thinking and exposing students to multiple historical narratives can promote democratic participation and contribute to the development of a peaceful society. However, the challenges to teaching are inevitably complex, and little is known about how best to prepare teachers to manage them. Even when contested issues are not so emotionally loaded, they are still difficult to teach. Students and teachers bring unofficial histories to the classroom—histories transmitted in the home or in the community—that may well conflict with official histories and with historical evidence (see Wertsch 2000).

The Rwandan History Project and the Official Narrative

Our long-term project on teaching history in Rwanda combined the development of new teaching resources and the promotion of democratic teaching.⁴ It included a plan for institutionalizing our work and studies of the effects of our process and its relationship to official political agendas. The project consisted of two phases. The first focused on materials development and was anchored by two workshops. Participants included government officials and other educational stakeholders such as parents, students, and teachers, who took part in the sessions. The second focused on teacher education, materials refinement, and materials elaboration.

The materials development phase centered around two, week-long work-

shops. During the first workshop, in June 2004, Rwandan educational stakeholders and Rwandan- and U.S.-based academics divided into four small working groups of approximately ten each, balanced as much as possible by ethnicity, geographical region, gender, exposure to the genocide, and experience with history teaching and curriculum development.⁵ The working groups held separate meetings during which they developed materials for a specific historical period. Each group chose a controversial historical case that was central to its period, compiled resource materials about the case, and finally created a plan for teaching it, including sample lessons (see MINEDUC 2006). We conducted a supplementary seminar on teaching methods to help the small groups move in similar directions with respect to pedagogy. By the time of the second workshop in June 2005, draft materials were ready, and we focused on testing sample lessons by having a representative of each group facilitate a lesson using the materials. We then began revising materials from each group. These cases were meant to provide a set of models; in future curriculum development, we expected Rwanda's National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC) at the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to support the development of other cases to fill out the study of each period, and of full sets of lessons for each case.

The second phase of the project, teacher education, centered around four seminars, each three to five days long, designed to introduce teachers to new ways of teaching associated with the materials and handling the challenging issues they would face in their work. By using Rwandan resources in conjunction with resources in *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* (Strom 1994), participants were able not only to confront their past directly and wrestle with how to teach it but also to safely make connections—not comparisons—through another historical case: the breakdown of democracy in the Weimar Republic. By studying the sociohistorical context; the rise of a totalitarian state; the role of propaganda, conformity, and obedience in turning people against each other; and stories of courage, compassion, and resistance, participants were able to discuss ideas and events and raise feelings that were too threatening to approach directly. The external case study helped teachers and their students begin to connect out from their history, to not view their history as “exceptional,” and to see patterns that contribute not only to better historical thinking, understanding, and interpretation but also to prevention.

To study the process of introducing new materials and ways of teaching history, we conducted evaluations at the end of each workshop and seminar in the form of written questionnaires. For some, we conducted interviews

and held focus groups to understand more fully participants' views about the materials development and implementation processes. In addition, the U.S.-based team members produced a final trip report after each workshop and seminar, and we had access to the transcribed interviews and focus groups from the 2001–3 study. To allow for closer study of implementation issues, the first author tape-recorded an entire seminar in June 2006 and interviewed participants about the materials and their implementation. We also interviewed government officials and policymakers, as well as historians and other educators, on their understandings about the history of Rwanda and particularly about the events that led to the genocide.

The Official Historical Narrative

Before describing the project results, we sketch the larger political context for teaching history in contemporary Rwanda since the current government's official narrative of Rwandan history created a backdrop for the tensions that participants experienced as they talked and wrote about teaching history. The official narrative denies the historical validity of ethnicity, leaving no room for any kind of ethnic identification. It also stymies a main goal for teaching history—that students learn to think like historians by using historical evidence to construct narratives (Holt 1990). As it leaves no room for multiple points of view, debate and discussion are discouraged.

The official narrative claims that colonial administrators and missionaries invented ethnicity and promulgated a false belief that the different ethnic groups came to the territory that is now Rwanda in successive, distinct waves of migration. It further asserts that these false teachings set the stage for the genocide, because the post-colonial, radical Hutu government used them to characterize the Hutu as sons of the soil and Tutsi as foreign invaders who persecuted the Hutu, threatened their survival, and therefore did not deserve to live in Rwanda. The perpetrators of the genocide extended this reasoning to argue that the Tutsi did not deserve to live at all. As a correction to these false teachings and to support the political goal of Rwandan unity, the official narrative explains that, before the colonials arrived, Rwandans were a peaceful people who lived together in harmony. Social groupings consisted not of ethnic groups but of fifteen to eighteen clans that cut across ethnic groups. The hope is that, if Rwandans would abandon ethnic categories invented by the Belgians and learn about and identify with this pre-colonial harmony, they would have a positive model for peaceful coexistence and would replace pride

in their ethnic identity with pride in their national identity (Longman and Rutagengwa 2004).

Historians agree that the Belgian colonial and radical Hutu post-colonial versions of Rwandan history magnified and racialized the divisions between Hutu and Tutsi, paving the way for violent conflict and eventually making genocide possible (Newbury 1988; Vansina 1998; Newbury and Newbury 2000). At the same time, many historians disagree with much of the current official narrative. Most historians do not characterize Rwanda as a nation-state in pre-colonial times. No idea of a Rwandan national identity was tied to political institutions (Prunier 1995). In addition, recent historiography has argued that clans were not as important as other pre-colonial identities, such as lineage and region (Newbury 1980). Finally, several prominent historians argue that ethnic categories already existed in late pre-colonial times and were even used then to divide the population (Newbury 1988; Vansina 2001).

Developing History Resources

Our project focused on supporting the development of history materials—not a full curriculum but rather teaching resources.⁶ The main questions surrounding the official narrative that led to palpable tensions were related to issues of ethnicity and its origins. This tension was foreshadowed in the earlier Berkeley study in that 46 percent of the interviewed education stakeholders expressed beliefs about the origins of ethnicity in Rwanda that were inconsistent with the official narrative. Generally, they believed that ethnicity existed in pre-colonial times (Freedman et al. 2004, 259).⁷

In the history materials that our project produced (MINEDUC 2006), this tension remained evident. The Rwandan writers were unclear in their characterization of whether colonials introduced ethnic categories. When seminar leaders asked participants to reflect in their journals about how they might use materials about earlier identities within Rwandan society with their students, the sensitivity of the topic became clear.⁸ A number of the participants voiced insecurity about positioning students as historians and critics on this issue. Although they never explicitly expressed fear, they found a number of excuses to avoid teaching this topic. They said that they were bothered that so little was known and that what was known seemed to raise some questions about the official narrative. They worried that origin stories about the clans seemed to lack factual basis. Their comments reflect a more general, obsessive concern with origin stories and how to deal with them. The stakes seem especially high because the propaganda that helped move the country to genocide included

emphasis on who came to Rwanda first and therefore had the most right to be considered Rwandan.

Subtle efforts to include politicized material in the resources created additional tensions. For example, one of the teams created a piece on Felicien Muvara, a Tutsi priest whose promotion to bishop was derailed by false allegations that he had fathered a child. The piece claimed that a leading figure behind that smear campaign was the priest and human rights activist André Sibomana, who was an implacable critic of the current government's human rights abuses up until his death in 1998. The piece also linked Sibomana to Théoneste Bagosora, who had been recently convicted for genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The U.S.-based team questioned the inclusion of these unproven allegations in a history resource. We also pointed out that Sibomana, who was himself targeted in 1994 for his criticisms of the genocidal government, described in his memoirs how Muvara was "an upright man, with great integrity" and how "a plot was hatched against him" (Sibomana 1999, 11). Weeks later when we read the final draft, the allegations against Sibomana remained. This example illustrates the challenge of developing learning resources in a politically charged environment. It also highlights a challenge for outside consultants. The attack on Sibomana in this case is relatively subtle and indirect. Relinquishing control of the material is a double-edged sword, placing the consultants in the role of evaluating what is propaganda and what is fact, but leaving them without control over what ultimately is included.

Promoting Democratic Teaching

Teaching students to think like historians means that the students must be free to construct their own well-documented historical narratives. Some of the skills that the teachers and their students needed to construct such narratives included the ability to read historical sources critically; the ability to explore an event from multiple points of view, which could lead to competing narratives; and the opportunity to craft and support arguments for discussion and debate (Holt 1990). Since government officials wanted Rwandan citizens to have these tools so as to better compete in the global marketplace but also feared their potential consequences (Freedman et al. 2004), we faced a dilemma. We could introduce tools commonly associated with what we call "democratic teaching," but we would have to be careful about how we handled these tools. Participants remained aware of the political context and the official narrative, and so there were implicit limits to such teaching.

Democratic Teaching

We introduced democratic teaching methods, which were new for the teachers. As in many countries, education in Rwanda has traditionally been teacher-centered, with extensive lecture and little discussion. Democratic teaching methods opened the possibility of thinking of history as multiple and contingent rather than as a single received truth. It moved us away from direct confrontations with highly contested content, such as the topic of ethnicity. It fulfilled the need for students to have space to communicate and for that communication to be open and honest. The teachers accepted the desirability of new ways of teaching that would be more interactive, but many of them expressed concern about the feasibility, given the institutional constraints of large class sizes, the limited availability of teaching materials, and the need to prepare students for traditional examinations.

As we began our July 2006 seminar with the Rwandan educators, we characterized the discipline of history as a process, not a set of facts: "We're not going to look at history like it's a march through time, like this [draws line on board]. We're going to look at a process [laughter over difficulty translating the word 'process' into Kinyarwanda]." The lack of an easy translation for the word "process" indicated the foreignness of the idea. The leader then challenged the idea of a single history by introducing the concept of agency and examining the past from the varied points of view of individuals who made different choices: "We aren't going to look at history as something that just happens to people. We are going to look at history as a series of choices. . . . We'll look at the decision to be a bystander. We will look at the decision to be a perpetrator. We will look at the decision to be a rescuer. And we will look at the decisions of everyday citizens to make a positive difference." The room filled with excitement as participants thought concretely about what they might be able to accomplish by teaching history through the eyes of those who, in similar circumstances, chose to act differently.⁹

The teachers were accustomed to thinking about themselves as transmitters of information for students to memorize to pass examinations. This transmission model was consistent with the government's goal of promoting a single official narrative but not with the more democratic approach we were introducing and that the government also claimed to want. We connected the success of a democratic state with democratic teaching. The seminar leader stressed freedom of speech and freedom of ideas, both in the wider society and in the classroom: "In order for a democracy to be strong, citizens need to exchange ideas. . . . Democracies require public spaces for the exchange of ideas where citizens can try things out with each other. This [seminar] is our

civic space. . . . And we have to tell the truth; we come from a difficult past." Still, seminar leaders appreciated the fact that this civic space was necessarily confined in many ways given the complexity of the wider sociopolitical context, and the participants knew this as well.

In Rwanda, issues of safety for free speech are serious, and in some cases free speech may be impossible to guarantee. We emphasized the importance of providing a safe and confidential space for talk on difficult topics in the classroom, talk that could include debate about conflicting points of view. We tried to model the creation of a safe "civic space" for enacting democratic principles, one that was viable within the Rwandan context. Often we used resources that were non-Rwandan and noncontroversial to help the participants understand adolescent development and the concerns of the youth. In doing so, we hoped that teachers would see how to create safe spaces for their students where they could grow into becoming ethical civic thinkers. In thinking about the safety needed for honest communication, the leader emphasized the importance of having rules of confidentiality for classroom talk: "One thing I'm going to ask is that the conversations we have here stay here." As in any context, but especially after violent conflict, each individual has to decide for himself or herself how much to reveal and what can and cannot be said, particularly where freedom of speech is constrained. Also, in the seminars, we consistently offered participants an alternative to public participation, the private space of their journals. The leader explained: "So I ask you two things. To take the risk if you feel you can. Take the chance. And if you're not sure, write it down in your journal. But allow yourself to continue the questioning with yourself. Don't turn that off."

Distancing and Making Connections

With these ideas about democratic teaching in place, we created additional space for thinking through important issues using the technique of distancing. By using the case of the Weimar Republic, the seminar participants examined human motivations, decisions, and responsibilities in violent times by looking at others in similar contexts. Talking through another history proved particularly important in Rwanda since honest and direct discussion of Rwandan history potentially was fraught with danger. We also included a series of activities to frame the concept of identity as more complex than ethnic or national identity, moving beyond Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, Francophone, and Anglophone to such questions as, "Who am I? How do I see myself?" On seeing that people are members of many identity groups and that these groups

overlap in varied and complex ways, the teachers interrogated the essentialized categories of ethnicity. We decreased tension by focusing first on the more universal aspects of adolescent identity development rather than more contentious issues such as the group dehumanization underlying the genocide. We then explained how and what parts of students' identities may remain invisible, tailoring our explanation to the Rwandan context: "For a kid it could be because they don't speak the same language. It could be because they are a refugee. Maybe they're an orphan. Maybe their parents have AIDS. Maybe they are very poor." We hoped teachers could distinguish between the experiences that shaped them and those that were shaping and might shape their students.

We then asked the teachers to introduce themselves by contrasting how they see themselves and how others see them, encouraging them to reveal multiple aspects of their identities. This approach prompted the seminar participants to discuss times when aspects of people's identities are invisible, when they see themselves one way but others see them differently. This led to a discussion of stereotyping. Most participants talked and wrote freely, and seemed to feel safe talking about identity in general and about works of fiction and distant historical events, even those that contained themes and illustrated processes that were obviously similar to the Rwandan identity-based violence. As participants shared their thoughts, they were also able to experience what they had in common with those they thought of as "different." The leader then was able to ask participants to ponder, "Why is it that we and they become we versus they?" After reading a series of documents related to Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, the participants began to see how peoples' identities affect their behavior during violent identity-based conflict.¹⁰

The readings engendered debate about how different people act out different identities and how they do so for complex reasons. Distancing through the Weimar case and through more general discussions of identity took some pressure off the topic of ethnic identity, while the focus on making connections helped the participants move closer to their own context in a way that gave them agency over which connections they felt comfortable drawing. Our goal was to model building a safe community, one bracketed off from the everyday world, where all participants would make commitments to speak honestly and would consider what others said as confidential. The purpose was to move participants from a focus on "facts" to legacies of different choices individuals make in the face of violence. We further hoped to decrease fears that the productive conflicts of opinion associated with learning might erupt into the more violent and destructive conflicts that had plagued the larger society. Distancing allowed for a universalizing of human evil and frailty, and opened a space for imagining a better future.

Political Constraints

The political climate during our research affected how teachers perceived the possibilities of introducing certain issues in the classroom. From the start, teachers were reticent about introducing productive disagreements, such as those that result from thinking from different points of view or from examining contradictory historical narratives. Productive disagreements could stimulate the kinds of conflicts that are integral to critical thinking and that are necessary for learning. In addition to a fear of entering into debates about when varied groups migrated to Rwanda, the teachers expressed a strong need for "truth" about any narratives that entered the classroom. Concerns remained about how to teach the less codified and more controversial aspects of Rwandan history. Across the board, tensions emerged mostly around thinking critically about issues of ethnic identity that were central to the highly contested historical narratives.

Fear of discussing ethnicity in the classroom derived from at least two concerns. First, some teachers accepted the idea promoted by the government that continuing to focus on ethnicity could reignite violent, destructive conflict in Rwanda. This concern remains one of the formidable barriers to restoring the teaching of history. Second, our interviewees and participants were wary of possible negative consequences that might accompany speaking freely about ethnicity. Even in our 2001–3 interviews and focus groups, people said that they talked about ethnicity only when they were with members of their own ethnic group whom they felt they could trust. Two-thirds of our interviewees (67 percent) said, at some point in their interviews, that they felt the topic of ethnicity should be ignored in the schools, while about half (48 percent) said it should be addressed, and 25 percent voiced both points of view (Freedman et al. 2004, 257).¹¹

Recent government actions have made Rwandans even more fearful of discussing ethnicity.¹² The government has conducted well-publicized campaigns against the vaguely defined crimes of ethnic "divisionism" and "genocide ideology." Accusations of divisionism and genocide ideology have been used to ban the two most prominent opposition political parties, to crush the only remaining independent human rights organization, and to imprison a number of government critics, including the former president, Pasteur Bizimungu (HRW 2003, 2007; ICG 2002; Reyntjens 2004). In late 2004, MINEDUC dismissed thirty-seven secondary school teachers from their posts and expelled twenty-seven secondary school students on allegations of divisionism and genocide ideology (Front Line 2005, 24–25). Three years later, in 2007, a parliamentary commission was established to investigate genocide ideology in

schools, and a March 2008 article in *New Times*, a pro-government newspaper, said that the commission report offered “damning revelations on the extent of genocide ideology in some schools, with some secondary schools registering 97 percent cases of the ideology” (Buyinza and Mutesi 2008). The article reported further that “lawmakers, at one time, insinuated that [the minister of education] could herself be harbouring genocide ideology” because of her inaction on the accusations (ibid.).

This change in the political climate affected our project in two significant ways. First, in the seminars, we saw increasing resistance to discussing ethnicity or identity or to deviating from the government line of unity and reconciliation. Seminar leaders who had been enthusiastic participants in the original process became increasingly hesitant to confront the issues directly. They began to caution against discussing specific areas of fact or interpretation. By the time of our 2007 summer seminar, the Rwandan participants considered ethnicity and stories of origin a “taboo subject.” This was reinforced by one of the senior historians who suggested to the U.S. leader that the group was not being “prudent” and that the conversation was approaching genocide ideology. Those familiar with Rwandan history will recognize the way that ethnicity is encoded in the official story. Attempts to highlight this fact or to offer counternarratives that recognize the role of ethnicity in Rwandan history are increasingly not only contested but also criminalized through charges of genocide ideology. Importantly, the U.S. and Rwandan team leaders were aware of and appreciated the changing political climate, and were cautious about how particular resources might be interpreted and potentially misused.

Second, at the policy level, we saw the government beginning to distance itself from the ongoing development of Rwandan history materials while continuing to support the ongoing professional development of Rwandan teachers. In fact, concomitant with the official handover of the created history cases, the minister of education was replaced and the director of NCDC, with whom we had collaborated closely, was also replaced when he was promoted. The new director had no stake in our project, and while giving assurances about further development of the historical cases, he refused to use the allocated funds for printing the training materials; many of our Rwandan colleagues backed away from confronting these changes. The new director ultimately released the funds for printing but began his own project that may or may not incorporate the work of our forty participants.

What do we make of the above changes in support for our project? As we had received nothing but positive feedback about our work over a two-year period, we fear that the Rwandan cases, with their emphasis on openness and

individual choice, democratic classrooms, and primary source review, may have become unpalatable for a government increasingly focused on control.

Conclusions

In this study, we saw how the victory of one political side—a group that represents a minority population in the wake of genocide—created a set of tensions that inhibited curricular reform. The inability to discuss issues of ethnic identity, the distortions of a history that the government wishes to tell, the constraints against teaching students how to be critical thinkers, and, above all, the fear of productive conflict have profound implications for the establishment of a progressive history curriculum and a healthy democracy. When one identity group has power and others are subject to that group’s policies and practices, history reform becomes an almost impossible task. The danger remains that the party in power, if unopposed, will create a history that structures a civic identity in its own image. If no single party is victorious, each group will struggle for its story to hold sway unless external pressures (as in Bosnia and Herzegovina) or consensus governance (as in South Africa) facilitate curricular transition. In fact, our research suggests that teaching a critical approach to history may be fundamentally at odds with the political effort to re-create the nation as a new, imagined community (Anderson 1983).

Another important conclusion is that external intervention, no matter how well-meaning or thoughtful, will always be subject to the existing political context. Curricular reform is often controversial, regardless of the setting. However, progressive curricular development is more likely in political contexts that support openness and transparency, for example, where mass conflict has ended and a consensus exists that a healthy state is more important than the parochial vision of any one group. This kind of change is possible only where there is rule of law and citizens do not live in fear. Curricular reform must occur thoughtfully and with deliberation as part of a package of post-conflict institutional changes.

The development of a history curriculum after mass violence reflects in microcosm the forces that drove the country’s conflict. Political manipulation, ethnic stereotyping and rivalries, economic competition for scarce resources, and the power of collective memory influence how a history curriculum develops in the aftermath of massive violence (Stover and Weinstein 2004; Weinstein and Stover 2004). The inability to discuss issues of ethnic identity, the distortions of a history that the government wishes to tell, the constraints

against teaching students how to be critical thinkers, and, above all, the fears of productive conflict have profoundly depressing implications for the establishment of a healthy democracy in Rwanda.

Was this project a failure or a success? An all-or-nothing conclusion would mean falling into the trap that underlies much of international aid. Expectations for concrete, immediate results are often dashed in the developing world, especially in post-conflict transitional periods. The tasks are to institute a process, to introduce possibility, and to create opportunity; we feel that we have accomplished these goals. Educational reform is problematic at best in the Western world, and it is even more so in resource-constrained, politically turbulent societies. However, despite the constraints, we succeeded in building capacity among Rwanda's history educators. After ten years with no history courses taught in secondary schools, our project helped move the country closer to reintroducing the subject into the classroom. Through our project and the publicity surrounding it, the government publicly embraced not only the importance of teaching history but also the adoption of new teaching methodologies. Through our workshops, 40 individuals, most of whom are in positions to influence the future teaching of history and other subjects, were introduced to new types of curriculum and new methods of teaching. An additional 250 teachers have been trained in our seminars on democratic teaching methods, which they can apply regardless of the curriculum that is ultimately implemented in Rwanda's schools. Many of the teachers who have worked with us understand that in any inclusive society, multiple points of view, which are related to the complex identities of its citizens, must find their way into the nation's history.

Notes

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1. The contestation of history as reflected in curriculum design is not limited to post-conflict societies but is also found in pluralistic democracies where advocacy groups based on ethnicity, race, or religion vie for their views to be reflected in what children are taught. A recent example occurred in Texas where conservative members of the Board of Education have mandated changes in history and economics textbooks to reflect a conservative perspective on recent U.S. history. The intrusion of politics defeats the goals of critical thinking wherever it occurs but is more dangerous in countries where massive violence, genocide, or ethnic cleansing has left a divided society filled with enmity and fear. See <http://www.examiner.com/x-15870-Populist-Examiner-y2010m3d14-Texas-school-board-revising-curriculum-creating-controversy>.

2. The literature on collective memory and identity construction on which our work is grounded is extensive and rich. See, e.g., Halbwachs (1980, 1992); Anderson (1983); Gellner (1983); Connerton (1989); Gillis (1994); Nora and Kritzman (1996); Barahona de Brito et al. (2001); and Bell (2003).

3. In weighing the relative effects of these approaches, one must keep in mind that political goals often determine curricular decisions, regardless of the scholarly record. Such effects are noted by Ann Low-Beer (2001) in her review of the volatile and highly political nature of decisions about textbooks in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4. This project involved collaboration between the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley; the National University of Rwanda (NUR); and NCDC. Also central to our efforts was a U.S.-based nongovernmental organization (NGO), Facing History and Ourselves (FH), which offers "support to educators and students . . . in a critical examination of history, with particular focus on genocide and mass violence" (<http://www.facinghistory.org/campus/reslib.nsf/sub/aboutus/historymission>).

5. Participants included officials, whom we interviewed and who interacted with us during the planning and implementation of the project; workshop and seminar leaders; and educational stakeholders such as parents, students, and teachers. The materials development workshops included forty to fifty participants, eight of them U.S.-based consultants and the remainder Rwandan consultants, education officials, and local educational stakeholders. We relied in part on carefully selected participants from our initial study sample (Freedman et al. 2004). One of the Rwandan consultants, a distinguished Rwandan historian, assumed the role of chief writer. Eight of the initial participants emerged as working group leaders, either as writers or as group coordinators to create materials for different periods in Rwandan history. The teacher seminars included from one to two U.S.-based coordinators; two Rwandan coordinators, one each from NUR and NCDC; and two to four other Rwandan leaders. Collectively, the seminars involved 250 teachers from across the country, who together served approximately 30,000 students. All interview or survey data were collected anonymously, and data were kept at Berkeley. All participants both in the curriculum design process and in the subsequent trainings were assured of confidentiality and no records were kept of names of participants.

6. From the start, MINEDUC made clear that only Rwandans would be allowed to write an official version of Rwanda's history or develop an official history curriculum.

7. Importantly, these interviewees were careful to express their belief in the importance of a unified Rwanda. See Eltringham (2004) for an analysis of the occurrence of these narratives among Rwandans living in Europe and those living in Rwanda. He found no disagreement with the official narrative in Rwanda but found consistent disagreement among the Rwandans living in Europe.

8. Journals were used extensively throughout this work to help teachers to "think about their thinking" and to provide another tool for thoughtful, critical reflection and for capturing ideas that might not be safely articulated in the full group.

9. The approach taken here is consistent with the work of Scott Straus (2006), who suggests that the Rwandan genocide was not solely a top-down event with an obedient population; rather, at a local level, individuals made decisions to participate. Such decisions usually reflected some calculation of benefit. While we do not accept his argument fully, we agree that local-level decision making at both an individual and community level is a critical component of ethnic conflict.

10. Readings included an interview with a professor who was a bystander; an interview with a perpetrator, a commandant at a death camp; and a story of rescuers, the people of the French community of Le Chambon who saved Jews.

11. These numbers add up to more than 100 percent because we counted all times a subject voiced an opinion; some subjects voiced different opinions at different times during the interview.

12. While teacher-participants in the training were selected by their schools, no minutes were kept of the discussions nor records of "who said what." As we have noted, participants are well aware of what is acceptable in this discourse.

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