

## **Feedback on the Yad Vashem Seminar 2017**

First of all, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to have a very important educational experience but also to get to know another country and its culture. I learned a lot of things that I did not know about the Holocaust. All lecturers and workshop coordinators were very well prepared and willing to answer all of our questions. Equally interesting were the educational tours at the old city of Jerusalem, at the Holocaust History and Art Museums as well as throughout Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center. The most moving moment for me was the testimony of the Holocaust survivor Moshe Aelion, who spoke to us in Greek. It would be very important if Yad Vashem could make a video recording of his testimony, as this would be an excellent source that could be used in our teaching interventions. We all have a responsibility to Mr Aelion, to all the fallen and to all Holocaust survivors: To make whatever we can so that such an atrocity never happens again. Historical memory and education are the best tools for such an attempt, especially for the educators. I would like to thank you again, and I am looking forward to future collaboration.

**Educator from Attica**

The seminar met fully my expectations and it was of great learning value. Concerning the overall organisation I could say that it was very well structured.

- The hotel was good, as well as the meals offered there.
- The schedule of the seminar as well as the breaks during the sessions were detailly planned.
- I enjoyed the Dead Sea and Masada excursion. It was a very clever idea to realise this tour on Saturday (Sabbath day for Israelis – everything is closed).
- The hospitality on behalf of Mr Yiftach Ashkenazy was more than excellent.

Concerning lectures and workshops

- There were perfectly arranged in the schedule.
- They encouraged discussion.
- During the sessions participants could work in small groups and discuss each other based on some questions and share thoughts with each other and the speaker.
- The speakers were well organized and their points were clearly connected. They were self-confident and assured. They were lively and energetic.

Concerning the material

- It was top notch.
- It was very helpful and understandable.
- It gave me confidence to teach the holocaust at school.

## Comments – suggestions

- More workshops and less lectures
- More survivor testimonies

## **Educator form Northern Greece**

After completing the seven-day seminar for Greek Educators at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, I am sharing with you some useful feedback.

### A. Organisation and structure

The organisational procedures were excellent both prior to the beginning of the trip to Israel and also during the whole training experience there. Communication was continuous and information-packed. There was flexibility in the pre-arranged activities to accommodate as many participants' needs as possible. Residence and commuting facilities were really very good. Despite some slight changes in the seminar programme, all teaching periods were re-organised in such a way that there was no gap in between and time was allocated to alternative sessions and activities.

### B. Lectures and workshops

The qualified and motivating lecturers and workshop conductors, the quality and inherent interest of the topics discussed, as well as the highly engaging pedagogical practices used throughout the seminar not only created the best impressions, but also facilitated the storage and consolidation of the knowledge gained. They also provided ample inspiration for further dissemination of the issues raised in a variety of contexts.

### C. Materials

All the materials used for the seminar activities, including the ones hosted at the Yad Vashem site, reflected accurately its aims. Their extent, quality, variety and multimodality provided clear ideas for the design of related educational material and established sound criteria for the implementation of teaching practices that promote the issue of the Holocaust in an appropriate way in school settings.

The same positive feedback can be provided concerning the materials offered to the participants by the Yad Vashem organising team and also the ones that are produced by Yad Vashem and appear on its website.

### D. Hospitality

Throughout our stay in Israel, the organisers' hospitality was admirable. Considering the fact that both the historical sensitivity of the thematic focus and the religious differences between hosts and hostees, personally I experienced a civilized educational and cultural atmosphere, which actually proved the well-developed intercultural communication competence of the organisers. All thorny issues were tackled gently with plenty of tolerance and will for sincere dialogue.

The trips to Masada, Dead Sea and Jerusalem included in the seminar activities, as well as the one to Tel Aviv were deeply fruitful experiences that enabled us to grasp a better idea of the Israeli people's history and culture.

## E. The Yad Vashem site

Definitely it is the specific site that can promote decisively the seminar aims. Situated on a hill with a panoramic view of Jerusalem, Yad Vashem visitors get immediately tuned in the historical connotations, an affective factor that plays an important role in learning to teach about the Holocaust. The multi-dimensional structures of the site (museums, archaeological places, school, learning centres, etc) create a sense of completeness to the learning visitors there and provide them with the facilities and materials they need to investigate further. What amazes the visitors too is the modernity and exceptional quality of the resources, all multimodal, which raises Yad Vashem to a very high level as a contemporary education provider.

Overall, the experience was unique and therefore strongly recommended to the educational community.

### **Educator from Peloponnese**

The seminar was extremely interesting and very well organized. We had the opportunity to deal with interesting issues, such as Jewish lifestyle, anti-Semitism in the period before the Second World War, the "Final Solution", modern forms of anti-Semitism. We also had the opportunity to understand the pedagogical philosophy Yad Vashem has on the Holocaust and we learned ways of teaching about it at Primary and Secondary Education. We also learned how to teach about the Holocaust through personal stories.

Both lectures and workshops were very interesting. Lecturers were very qualified and they provided us with knowledge of their topic in a very effective and interactive way, especially Dr. Noa McKayton.

Our meeting with Holocaust survivor Mr. Moshe Ha'Elyon was unique and very touching. In addition to that, testimonies of Greek Holocaust survivors presented by video, such as the story of Ovadia Baruch, were not only very moving but also very useful, as they provided us with ideas and educational tools concerning how to use testimonies in our classroom, so as to teach about Holocaust in Greece.

The presentation of Yad Vashem Learning Center from Mr. Yiftach Ashkenazy, was very interesting too. I was quite impressed by Yad Vashem Museums for the Holocaust, especially by The Holocaust History Museum, The Hall of Remembrance and those dedicated to children's memory.

Our visit to the Old City of Jerusalem and the excursion to Masada - Dead Sea were amazing. The tour guide, Mr. Mitch Bertman, was very friendly and remarkably qualified. He made these excursions a really interesting in situ history lesson.

Attending this seminar was a great opportunity to acquire valuable knowledge on several topics. Thus, I would like to express my gratitude to the Jewish Museum of Athens, to Mrs. Solomon for preparing and organizing the journey and, last but not least, to Mrs. Alexandra Patrikiou for being helpful and supportive when needed and in general for her politeness during the whole journey.

I hope that i will use the newly acquired knowledge in my everyday teaching and i cherish as a valuable treasure all that beautiful and unique memories from Israel.

#### **Educator from Thessaly**

Upon the completion of the seminar at the Yad Vashem International School of Holocaust Studies (July 2017), the following reflection is raised:

- The overall organization was excellent both from the part of the Jewish Museum of Greece and the Yad Vashem International School. Mrs Alexandra Partrikiou and you collaborated with us in the best way in order that everything goes well. Our host Mr. Yiftach Ashkenazy was very friendly and answered all the questions posed from the Greek teachers during the seminar. I really enjoyed our tour at the Yad Vashem Museum which had an emotional impact on me. His kindness and hospitality made me a very good impression and of course, I thank him personally for that.
- The hotel and the food during our stay were good and sufficient. The two excursions with Mr Bertman as our guide, were an amazing experience and I believe that both of them played an important role in order to understand historical events discussed during the lectures at the Yad Vashem International School.
- As a teacher, I enjoyed more the workshops than the lectures. The presenters were all qualified, competent, very friendly and very illustrative to subjects raised during discussion. The meeting with the survivor Mr Moshe Ha Elion, was one of the most moving moment I will remember.
- The material given to us by the presenters during sessions and by Yad Vashem was really sufficient. I find it very helpful for upcoming projects we will do with our students.

I would like to propose only the following suggestions for the improvement of the seminar:

- 1) I would personally prefer lectures up to one hour and workshops up to two hours, so that we have the time to work in groups.
- 2) Maybe it would help more, if we had workshops divided into two groups: in those who teach at primary schools and those who teach at high schools. The approach of teaching is quite different at young ages and I think it should be given more emphasis in teaching methods for the Holocaust at children aged 6-12.

I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart the Jewish Museum of Greece that has selected me and given me the opportunity to take part in the seminar for the Holocaust at the Yad Vashem International School of Holocaust Studies (July 2017). It was a great experience for me and a very strong one to remember. I hope I will be able to transmit this knowledge to my students as well.

#### **Educator from Northern Greece**

Upon the completion of the seminar at Yad Vashem International School of Holocaust Studies, the following reflection is raised:

A. Positive reflection

-Very well-organized program and very friendly educational environment

-The educational tour to Yad Vashem's campus (monuments, museum, exhibitions etc.) was very important because through this experience, specific topics during the lectures were enriched.

- The analysis and the highlighting of particular topics/perspectives through the history of Holocaust (Gettos, for example) not only from the historical point of view but with emphasis on pedagogical implementation.

b. Lectures and workshops

- Very good lectures but without much time for further discussion
- It would be very useful during a workshop if we had the chance to work on a given educational scenario for primary and secondary education and to plan new ones.

c. Materials

- It would be very useful if we have the chance to elaborate further on Yad Vashem's educational materials and tool box.

d. Other activities

-Outstanding excursions to Masada and Dead Sea and very interesting tour to the Old City of Jerusalem with an excellent tour guide, very helpful and devoted to his job.

-A significant exhibition about children in Holocaust that we attended which was not included in the schedule.

B. Negative reflection

Pressure of time. During the lectures, the interaction between the participants was rear and difficult.

-Not specific didactical tools for primary education

C. Suggestions - Comments

- A visit to a primary school or a gymnasium in Jerusalem
- A lecture/video/discussion from/with a teacher just to understand the approach of the topic in the classroom.
- Lectures or workshops with teachers from other countries

An outstanding effort!

Congratulations to Yad Vashem's team and to the Jewish museum of Athens for giving us this great opportunity for such a focused educational program. Special thanks to Alexandra Patrikiou for being very positive and helpful to all of us!

#### **Educator from Attica**

I want to express my sincere appreciation for participating the Yad Vashem's seminar. The organizing was great and everything was fine!

First of all, the excursions were excellent. Our tour guide was very informative about the places in Jerusalem, Masada's Park and Dead sea. I really enjoyed them all!

Furthermore, I liked very much all the Yad Vashem campus. Every place was perfect and I'm very grateful for being there. I can certainly tell you, that my feelings were very strong and emotional. I felt that finally the life won the death and I'm very grateful about this. Now I feel like I have a mission: To teach my students about the Shoah.

Secondly, the lectures in Yad Vashem's class were very helpful. The speakers were very clear with their presentations, as they had deep knowledge on the topics they were teaching us. Their lectures were well structured and easy to understand. However, I liked workshops more, because I think they are the main tools for our school programmes.

By the way, as I also suggested in my evaluation in Yad Vashem, it would be better if the workshops are separated to Primary and High school teachers. The topic is the same, but the ages of our students are very different, so we have to approach it differently.

In the end, I want to thank you and Yad Vashem again about this excellent, terrific seminar!

#### **Educator from Northern Greece**

My impressions from Yad Vashem's seminar were totally overwhelming. First of all, Yad Vashem campus was, per se an educational place offering multiple learning opportunities both indoor and outdoor. The seminar consisted both by lectures and workshops and it was well balanced. We had the chance to meet colleagues from Greece and share our experience and worries about the Holocaust. All the educators were friendly and open to discussion offering us the opportunity to clarify our questions. Mr. Yiftach Askenazy was extremely willing to facilitate our staying in Jerusalem and solve any problem. The fact that we had the opportunity to hear live the testimony of the Holocaust survivor Moshe Aelion was for me a

blessing. He shared his experience in fluent Greek and expressed his joy of our meeting. It would be a useful educational tool if his testimony could be recorded, as it has happened in other survivors. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for participating in this seminar, as I feel now more confident in teaching such a delicate subject in a primary school classroom and I am looking forward to future cooperation.

**Educator from Attica**

We've had the chance to attend a very well organized Yad Vashem seminar for Greek teachers on the Holocaust. Highly interesting lectures by University Professors and workshops making clear the Yad Vashem approach to the subject. Very useful material has been displayed and provided. Great hospitality in an exceptional museum in Jerusalem. A very fruitful week of training and touring.

**Educator from Attica**

As far as I am concerned, the seminars in Yad Vashem and the whole experience were a "discovery". Not only did I learn many things about the Holocaust, but also, I enjoyed the lectures, the lecturers and the workshops as well. The majority of the seminars were very interesting and the programme was well organized.

First of all, it was a great experience for me to discover the place and the buildings in Yad Vashem. Not only did I enjoy the visit to the Holocaust History Museum, but also I enjoyed my visit to the Art Museum and the guided tour to the Valley of Communities, to Memorial sites such as the Hall of remembrance, the Children's Memorial, to the sculptures outdoor, to the commemorative sites such as Synagogue, Research Institute with archives, Library, Educational center.

Most of all, I was emotionally moved by Ovadia Baruch story by watching the film which was referred to his life and his experience in concentration camps. Additionally, I was really touched by the story and the discussion with the survivor of Auschwitz who was born in Thessaloniki.

Moreover, I would like to mention the hospitality of Yad Vashem, not only when we were inside Yad Vashem, but also when we had to do something outside Yad Vashem. It's worth being mentioned that the hotel and the food were excellent. Furthermore, I would like to be referred, not only to the excursion to Masada and Dead Sea, where we had a unique experience, but also the organized guided tour in Old City of Jerusalem where we were met with the story and the monuments of three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Last but not least, I would like to mention the pleasure we felt because of the excellent and very rich dinner in Piccolino.

I wish I could go to Jerusalem again and be one of the educators from Greece the next year!

**Educator from Thessaly**

Firstly, I would like to wholeheartedly thank you for your wonderful hospitality, which went beyond the purely educational things, during the July 2017 seminar. The excellent tour of the Old City of Jerusalem and the wonderful excursion to Masada and the Dead Sea will be unforgettable.

Above all, I would like to congratulate your Yad Vashem team. They have managed to turn this Holocaust training seminar into a unique experience filled with knowledge and sentiment. Unfortunately, sometimes words come short when describing feelings. Therefore, I would like to highlight the most important aspect of my week in Jerusalem and stress that the organization of the program was structured in such a way as to give us the fullest possible picture of our subject. The professional expertise and the approach of our Yad Vashem team emerged a valuable educational path which I intend to use this year in my 6th grade class, which I believe was the main goal of the seminar.

I hope to have your support if necessary.

I wish you good strength and good continuity in your great work.

**Educator from Attica**