

Participants' feedback on the seminar, 1-8/7/2018

The seminar at Yad Vashem surpassed my expectations! Firstly, I learned many things about the Shoah that helped me draw a clearer picture not only about what happened but also why and how it happened. Visiting the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum and relevant sites enriched further this experience.

The seminar was prepared in a very thorough way, each unit following logically from its previous and complementing it. The workshops provided further understanding on the material previously presented and gave some ideas on how they can be applied to Greek curriculum.

We were presented with a teaching methodology that can be applied to teaching the Holocaust but is a very powerful tool that we can apply to teaching difficult subjects of our own national history, like the Asia Minor catastrophe or the Pontus genocide.

All of the lecturers had very deep knowledge of their subjects, were excellent teachers, answered politely all of our questions and were very lively and engaging speakers.

I got acquainted with the culture and history of the Israelis. I got a more detailed picture of one of the oldest civilizations and through lectures on Judaism and antisemitism, I understood why some things happen the way they do. Touring the old city of Jerusalem and visiting Masada and the Dead Sea with an amazing tour guide, provided a better and deeper knowledge of Israeli life.

An interesting aspect of the trip was talking to a journalist from "Jerusalem Post" about the crisis in Middle East. Very enlightening discussion!

Christina Meri was another excellent addition to our group, always proving for us with the most polite and gentle way.

I am grateful for the opportunity that you gave me, to learn, to enrich my teaching methodology, to meet amazing people and to get acquainted with one of the oldest civilizations. I hope that we can host a similar event in our country and I offer to help you in anyway I can. Thank you.

Sincerely yours

Educator from Attica

I am particularly grateful that I have been able to attend the Yad Vashem's Holocaust Seminar from 1 to 8 July 2018. It was an unforgettable, valuable, unique and interesting experience that combined the educational purpose with respect to the needs of adult education, the hospitality and the exploration of modern Israel and its multiple social and ethnic identity.

Yad Vashem is an organization with a very high scientific and organizational level. The methodologies which followed were excellent. The high-level lecturers-trainers are ready to respond to each of our observations. I think a special mention is worth to Birte Hewera, who was responsible for our group, which was really flawless both in her lectures and in the

coordination of the whole process. The material that we have access was also at very high quality. The pace of the seminar was particularly intense and the schedule really tight.

The most moving moment for me was the testimony of the Holocaust survivor Moshe Aelion, who spoke to us in Greek. I look forward to reading his book.

The conditions of accommodation and food were absolutely satisfying, we felt everywhere welcome and safe. Also very important was the part of our tour in the old town of Jerusalem but also the excursion to Masada, which contributed to the better understanding of the region's culture.

Thanks again to Yad Vashem's team and to the Jewish museum of Athens for giving me this great opportunity for such a focused educational program and having a unique experience which is strongly recommended to the educational community.

Educator from Eastern Macedonia

The experience I had through Yad Vashem's seminars and activities was really great! As I expected I was able to advance my knowledge regarding the Shoah on different aspects. I improved my knowledge about anti-Semitism and how this finally led to the Holocaust itself. I got a lot of ideas on how I could better teach about it in the classroom using several pedagogical methods and educational material. All our educators, instructors and guides performed great in a high scientific level and I feel very lucky of being able to take part. I built interpersonal contacts and relationship with other teachers from my country, communicated and shared ideas with them. I took a lot of informations about life in Israel, about history and religions too. I advanced my knowledge through the guided tours and visits and I learned a lot of things I didn't know.

A lot of thanks to the Jewish Museum of Greece and Yad Vashem institute for giving me the opportunity to participate to this life time experience and I will strongly recommend it to other colleagues of mine!

With regards

Educator from Western Macedonia

To begin with, I would very much like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in such an interesting and well organized seminar. I really feel I gained a lot from both educational and cultural aspects. I came across with new teaching methods as well as teaching practices which can easily be integrated in my teaching plans. We, as participants of the seminar, got involved in interesting topics, had access to many historical facts, testimonies and archives, which, I believe, helped us deal effectively with any missing or obscured points concerning Shoah. There was an excellent choice of lectures which were perfectly presented by experienced lecturers who willingly shared their expertise with all participants. The workshops contributed in defining the educational concept of the seminar and provided us with ideas, material and teaching practices in order to organize our own teaching projects in

our classes. Furthermore, I would like to express my appreciation concerning the guided tours and excursions. They were really enlightening in the aspect of cultural, religious and political information. Finally, I would like to add a small recommendation concerning the “length” of the daily program of the seminar. Although the topics were undoubtedly interesting, there were a couple of days that I found it difficult to participate as actively as I would prefer to, because of the amount of information I had to deal with in one day and the great number of the presentations in those days which made me also feel physically tired. Nevertheless, I feel really lucky that I participated in this seminar. It was an excellent experience!

Yours sincerely

Educator from Crete

To the Jewish Museum of Greece,

I feel thankful to the Jewish Museum and the International School of Yad Vashem for the opportunity that was given to us to travel to this troubled land and gain insight into the mentality and perspective of Jewish people.

The seminar was well-organised, focused on its aims and all Yad Vashem’s partners / educators/ researchers / lecturers were very qualified, professional but also friendly.

From the pedagogical aspect the whole seminar is well-structured and covers the subject of the Holocaust from many different aspects. It is a well-developed material supported by an effective method that is ready-to-use. The material: books, cards, film etc. that we were given are excellent for being used in our classrooms and make our students understand the Shoah. It can also be used as a benchmark for teaching other historical events through using testimonies, diaries, literature, photos etc.

I mostly appreciated the scientific, yet humanitarian approach to the Shoah, trying not to victimize the victims, and not to persecute the perpetrators – a way of understanding human nature avoiding melodramatic peaks.

As a historian, I really loved the lectures related to Judaism, the Evolution of the Shoah, Middle-East conflict and Anti-Semitism.

As a visitor to Israel, it was a great experience to come back after many years and trace all the differences that have happened over the time, the economic growth, the sprawl of Jerusalem, the environmental issues of the Dead Sea etc. Our tour-guide was excellent at making understand the modern life in Israel based on such a rich inheritance.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Ms Mary Christina for her understanding, patience and pleasant personality. She was a perfect companion in a very well organized educational experience.

To sum up, I am really grateful for your generosity and hospitality and for the opportunity to live a week full of knowledge and experiences and to make new friends. It was one of the most successful seminars I have ever attended.

Educator from Attica

It was an extremely unique experience at a so high-level organized seminar, these are few words I would say about it. Even though the everyday schedule was sometimes tight, all the workshops or the lectures attended by us, were very well prepared by the organizers, who tried to cover in one week all the basic aspects of the Holocaust.

It was a fruitful and stimulating experience, as it provided me with all the necessary historical knowledge in order for me to deal with World War II and the Holocaust in class. Furthermore, it gave me the opportunity to engage in new practical methods concerning the teaching of the Holocaust and the years before, during and after the war, and be familiarized with the theoretical basis of the educational approach of the Holocaust. The seminar gave me the opportunity to meet and work with colleagues from my country, share our experiences and cooperate in workshops.

The excursions to the Dead Sea as well as the tour of the old city of Jerusalem were amazing because we were met with the story and the monuments of the big three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Returning back to my school, I will try to implement the teaching materials and the ideas I gained from the seminar in my classroom. Also I intend to organize a celebration memory for my pupils on the 27th of January [the remembrance day of the Holocaust], in order to discuss afterwards in small groups and possibly motivate them to feel the empathy required in every society, especially nowadays when social phenomena like racism and violence are topical again in our country.

Overall the organization of the whole trip was fantastic. A big thank you to the Jewish Museum of Greece, Athens, for all the support and help before and during the trip and seminar. A big thank you to Ms Eliza Solomon, Ms Meri from Jewish Museum and Dr. Birte Hewera Seminar Coordinator Yad Vashem who very professionally organized everything perfectly. They were very supportive, discrete, genuine and polite. Just fantastic. Thank you for that richly rewarding experience.

Educator from Eastern Macedonia

As a descendant of refugees from Black Sea region (Pontos) which came in Greece early in the 20th century, after they survived from the Pontian Genocide and as a teacher in primary education in Greece, I'm strongly interested in genocide studies especially those which can be implemented in education. More specific, I focus on how we can educate students in the perspective of prevention of radicalization and crimes against humanity.

Regarding to the Holocaust, after having participated in two seminars organized by the Council of Europe – project Pestalozzi in Strasbourg and Gratz and in one that took place in Auschwitz Museum, I was interested in attending the training course for educators which carried out every year by Yad Vashem, hoping that I will be more efficient while I try to achieve my educational goals relative to genocide/Holocaust studies.

Now, after I have participated in the training course in Yad Vashem, I can say that it completely met my expectations. All the arrangements concerning the room, the schedule, the facilities we had in our disposal were successful.

The educators/trainers had communicative competences, they were very well prepared and they present, discuss and accomplish their lectures/workshops in a very efficient way. The educational material they provided to us during the course is an indicative example in order to shape a very specific idea on how the related to the genocide/Holocaust material can be.

Now I have in my mind a very clear picture about the pedagogical framework that can be, or must be, implemented in teaching about genocide and Holocaust.

The group's intellectual level was very high, facilitated and enriched the teaching/learning process. I am very happy that I met educators from my country with the same sensibility and the same interest. I believe that we can establish a kind of distance - learning community in order to exchange experiences, ideas, educational material, etc.

Finally, I would like to say that the guided tour in the old city of Jerusalem and the daily excursion in the Dead Sea and Masada archeological site, allowed me to shape a very vivid picture of the land of Israel and its people. I felt very comfortable and safe during the days I stayed in Israel.

Thank you for selecting me to participate in such an interesting course/trip. I will always mention and distinct it.

Educator from Western Macedonia

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to both the Jewish Museum of Greece and the Yad Vashem International School of Holocaust Studies for giving me the opportunity to attend the Yad Vashem seminar since the overall experience was very fruitful for me as an educator and a human being. Special thanks to Mrs. Eliza Solomon in Athens and to all the Yad Vashem team members as our hosts in Jerusalem for the collaboration and the hospitality, and especially to Noa and Birte.

The seminar exceeded my expectations. The program was very well organized in both academic and cultural terms in a balanced way. The structure and the time table of the seminar were planned in detail during the whole training experience given it was a focused educational program. Even though the long hours made it intense, personally I did not mind it since I am used to this kind of pace.

Concerning the lectures no need to say that valuable theoretical knowledge was provided by qualified lecturers (Drs, Rabbis, journalists etc.) on several topics, such as contemporary anti-Semitism, the Middle East conflict and the Jewish culture. I feel extremely content that emphasis was given to the pedagogical implementation and the methodological framework provided by the Yad Vashem specialists during the workshops dividing us in small groups and working in an interactive way. The most moving and unforgettable part of the seminar for me was indeed the meeting and the discussion with Moshe Ha Elyon, a Holocaust survivor from Greece, who shared with us in greek his lifelong experiences and the triumph of life over death in the concentration camps.

In addition to the lectures and the pedagogical principles, the educational materials that were used during the workshops and were given to us as a gift as well, due to their quality and variety, make me feel more confident in teaching about the Holocaust at junior High School.

I had been anticipating and I really enjoyed the Yad Vashem campus tour (sites, museum) on foot, which confirmed my impression of the Yad Vashem International School of Holocaust Studies as both a center of education, motivation, respect and memory.

Hotel facilities, food and commuting were excellent. The well organized guided tours in Jerusalem, Masada and the Dead Sea were of great learning value since they gave me the

opportunity to fully connect historical and cultural aspects. I especially thank our tour guide, Noah Yatsin, for playing a big part in that. In my opinion though I would prefer not to visit the Dead Sea in such a sunny day but Tel Aviv in order to fully grasp modern Israel and to connect the past, the present and the future via the town visit.

My closing remark, what a remarkable experience!

I will strongly recommend my fellow colleagues to attend the seminar next year.

With respect

Educator from Aitolokarnania

It was a unique opportunity for me to participate in the Yad Vashem professional development seminar for many reasons.

I gained a detailed and in depth-understanding of the Jewish history and the meaning of the HC and the Jewish resistance for the present and the future from leading historians and expert educators.

I was provided with resources and pedagogical approaches to teach about the HC, deepened my knowledge and strengthened my ability to implement holocaust activities in my classroom.

I was provided with newly-developed materials and practical approaches to teach HC and had the opportunity to consider and explore how I can use different texts, including popular fiction, film and testimony to enrich my student's learning about the HC.

I acquired the necessary skills to teach my students according to innovative age appropriate and interdisciplinary methods, so that they will know, understand and never forget, as a matter of respect for human life.

As a special value of the seminar I found the opportunity to network with other professionals, which was an exceptional opportunity for horizontal exchange of experience.

I also explored the modern city of Jerusalem as well as the old city with its diverse features and unique atmosphere.

Educator from Attica

We respond to your request to write down our experience from the Yad Vashem seminar.

First of all, we want to thank both Jewish Museum of Greece and Yad Vashem for the chance they gave us to participate in this seminar and for the hospitality in Jerusalem.

As it concerns the seminar itself, we came back excited. We feel that we deepened our knowledge in matters such as the history of Jews in Europe, the Holocaust, the immigration and creation the state of Israel.

But, since we already knew many things on these subjects, the main benefit for us occurred in the field of teaching and instruction with experiential methods. This was provided by the deep work made by all the educators, specially these who prepared and organized the workshops. This pedagogical benefit is proved by the fact that some of the participants started thinking not only on the teaching of Holocaust but also on how they could apply such methods in teaching other matters of greek and international History.

All the educators were from “good” to “excellent”. We could distinguish two of them, maybe because they have done many lectures and workshops to us: Ms Birte Hewera (the coordinator of our seminar) and Ms Noa Mkyaton.

We were also deeply impressed (and we can say that on behalf of all the participants) by the live witness of Mr Moshe Ha'Elyon from Salonica and the dramatization made and presented by Ms Fabiana Meyohas.

In another field, we must say that everybody was absolutely satisfied with Mr Noam Yatsiv, the tour guide Yad Vashem gave to us for the tours in Old Jerusalem and Masada & Dead Sea. He was the best tour guide we ever had: He had deep knowledge of the subject(s), willing to answer to any question, friendly and never tired!

Many thanks, also, to Ms Christina Meri, who accompanied us on behalf of the Jewish Museum. She was always with us (at the hotel, in the lectures and workshops, in the tours etc), eager to answer to all questions and to solve any problem.

Educators from Attica

The seminar in Yad Vashem is a unique opportunity for greek teachers to learn more about the Shoah. Not that much in the academic historical facts of the event, but more on the modern perspectives about it and the ways of teaching about such a dramatic issue. The seminar was perfectly organised, the lectures were absolutely to the topic and the lecturers were really into every topic and well prepared. We felt welcome from minute one in the facilities of Yad Vashem, which was our house for the week. Every person there was welcoming and helpful even in matters of everyday life. The level of the lectures and the material provided to us during the lectures or at the end of the seminar was really high. It was also a pleasure to talk with my fellow greek teachers and exchange views in every aspect that was brought up during the lectures. I felt free to express every idea or question that came to my mind. The hospitality was also of high level. The hotel and the food provided was really good, the excursion to Masada was a dream come true for me, and the tour in the old city absolutely a pleasure due to our guide Noam. My only concern could be that some days the schedule was too demanding, and I would love some workshops about Shoah greek experience to be included in order to get some examples from our country, so to pass them on to our students. I highly recommend the seminar to fellow greek teachers. Thanks again for the fabulous experience.

Educator from Crete

During the first week of July I attended an intensive course on the Holocaust exclusively designed for Greek educators. The program had been known to us a short period before our arrival in Israel; therefore, we were aware of its contents well in advance. We were surprised in a positive way by the punctuality, the thorough presentation, our speakers' profound knowledge of their subject, their fluent English, the charisma in communication, their quality of being good listeners. Our tutors have always been there for us to give answer to any question, to stand by us to every difficulty we might have encountered while in Israel. I would like to thank individually all those people I met in Yad Vashem: 1) Yad Vashem director, Richelle Budd Caplan, for her warm welcome as well as for being always next to us, 2) Dr Birte Hewera for her sweet character, the comprehensive presentation of her topics, her will to teach despite her injury, 3) Rabbi Yeshaya Balog for presenting us in a cheerful way aspects of Judaism, 4) Dr Rob Rowett and Dr Daniel Uziel for their analytical and scientific speech, 5) Mr Angel Chorapchiev for all the interesting things he mentioned about the Holocaust in Greece, 6) Mrs Fabiana Meyohas for the stirring monodrama "Why didn't you come before the War?".

I will mention separately all the workshops and presentations of the educational concept of Yad Vashem, since I consider them to be the most crucial part of our training; we were equipped with material, ideas; we were given the spark for commencing our own projects together with our students. For the aforementioned reasons I would like to thank Mr Yiftach Meiri, Mrs Esther Rachow, Mrs Sheryl Ochayon, Dr Noa Mkyaton; special credits to Mrs Anna Stocker for the wonderful 3 (!) hours tour of the Historical Museum of Yad Vashem as well as to our guide, Mr Noam Yatsiv, for his broad spectrum of knowledge and his pleasant character. Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Moshe Ha' Elyon, who despite his old age shared with us the most sensitive parts of his life – in fluent Greek and in the most captivating way. He delivered us the greatest lesson- the will to live; we were all swept of our feet by the details of his confession.

I would like to thank all for the hospitality in Israel , the safety we felt, the love we received, the true caring, the bonds of friendship developed towards the participants. I returned to my hometown with the best memories thanks to the organizers at Yad Vashem as well as to the people in charge of the Jewish Museum in Athens (Mrs Solomon, Patrikiou, Meri).

Thank you once more. We will definitely keep in touch as I have already started to plan the projects undertaken together with my students next September!

Educator from the Dodecanese

My experience at Yad Vashem was a life-changing one. First of all the seminar helped me to eliminate some of the prejudices I had heard about the "Shoah" and Jewish people. My understanding about this period of history became deeper and now I have all the arguments to answer many of the false ideas and perceptions about Jewish history and culture. As a teacher impressed me the objective, hate-free, dispassionate, human-centered approach to how to teach the Holocaust. The biggest benefit was the principle of Yad Vashem pedagogy : we emphasize on the survivors' life and not to death. I cannot forget the words of one facilitator: "There is a pornography of death around the Holocaust". Also the multifaceted and multiperspective approach to Jewish civilisation helped me, as a person and teacher, to find

the common elements and bonds that has the european culture with the israeli. The intense , fruitful seminar about almost every aspect of the “Shoah”, the wide resources that were provided to us (pedagogical, historical, personal story of a greek survivor) , the unforgettable tour to Yad Vashem Memorial/Museum and historic places made it a unique educational, spiritual, mind- and soul broadening experience!

Educator from Attica

I would like to express my gratitude to the Jewish Museum of Athens for giving me the opportunity to participate in the Yad VaShem seminar. Though I had attended the Seminar of the Jewish Museum of Athens, I think that the seven days spent in Jerusalem were more than enlightening. I had the chance to get a glimpse into the Israelis way of life of which I had no previous knowledge. Jerusalem proved to be a very fascinating city full of surprises and contradictions, a melting pot of different religious and cultural directions. The Israeli people were very hospitable and polite.

The seminar itself was beyond my expectations. All the lecturers were very informative and communicative. I had the chance to see how you can work with photographic material as well as texts. If I had to pick my personal favorites I would go for “Introduction to Judaism and Jewish Life in Pre-war Europe” which gave me the chance to understand the cultural background to a lot of Jewish decisions during the war and the holocaust, Workshop: A street in Poland, the lecture on “Who Gave the Order? Key Stages in the Evolution of the Holocaust” and finally the lecture on “Israeli Society and the Middle East Conflict” . All these, in accordance and with the assistance of the rest of the workshops and lectures, enabled me to built a case of tools to work efficiently with my classes.

All in all, I consider my attendance of the seminar to be a well worthy experience and I am looking forward to a future cooperation with the Jewish Museum Of Athens.

Educator from Peloponnese

I would like to express my gratitude that I was given the chance of participating in this excellent seminar held at Yad Vasem from 1st to 8th July 2018.The whole experience was invaluable as far as both the lectures and the guided tours were concerned. The organization conducted by the Director of Yad Vashem was amazingly effective and the lecturers were extremely competent and knowledgeable. The latter did their best to present us a well-rounded and in-depth insight on the core subject, the Holocaust, as well as the ways we may use this knowledge to teach our students during the coming academic year and the next ones. I felt enlightened during the seminar and delighted to have had the opportunity to meet excellent lecturers and highly educated colleagues at the same time.

Last but not least, I found the guided tours and the trip to the Dead Sea really informative and entertaining for me and also the rest of the group.

For all the above reasons, I feel vastly indebted to the Jewish Museum of Greece and, of course, Yad Vashem, that I was given the opportunity to have such a unique time in Israel.

Educator from Peloponnese