

**ANALYSIS OF THE CROATIAN TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOPS:  
ZAGREB, RIJEKA, OSIJEK, DUBROVNIK  
20<sup>th</sup> September 2008 – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

**Summary and background**

The Croatian language edition was printed in September 2007 and was presented to the public on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2007, at a press conference in Zagreb.

Training activities were initiated with the holding of the **Training of Trainers Conference** in Zagreb, 20-21 September 2008. The event gathered 22 participants, 4 trainers from the team of CDRSEE international trainers, and 2 local trainers. The team of international trainers introduced the JHP, the overall project, the Workbooks, as well as the methodology of interactive, participative teaching to participants.

The **first** of 3 Croatian local teacher training workshops held in Rijeka, 29-30 November 2008, gathered 17 participants, 5 teacher trainers, 3 of whom were also trainers at the first conference in Zagreb, while the remaining 2 were participants from Rijeka, at the initial event. The team of local trainers prepared model lessons, based on the JHP materials and utilising the participative method of teaching, which they presented to the participants.

Gathering 22 history teachers primarily from Slavonia, Osijek was the host to the **second** local teacher training workshop for the Croatian language edition, 7-8 March 2009. Present were local language editor and international trainer Kresimir Erdelja, history professor and international trainer Snjezana Koren and director of local partner HUNP and teacher trainer Ivan Dukic. Additionally, history teacher Nikola Damjanovic, one of the participants at the Training of Trainers Conference in Zagreb was present in the capacity of local teacher trainer and delivered one of the model lessons.

The **last** of this cycle of teacher training workshops gathering 19 history teachers primarily from Dalmatia, was held in Dubrovnik 25-26 April 2009. Present were Kresimir Erdelja, Snjezana Koren and Ivan Dukic. Additionally, history teachers Nikola Damjanovic, Sonja Bancic and Kiti Korda were present in the capacity of local teacher trainers and each delivered one model lesson.

Overall, a total of 12 trainers worked with 80 teachers during this Teacher Training phase of the JHP in Croatia.

At the completion of each of the workshops, standardised questionnaires were given to each teacher in order to enable the CDRSEE and its academic team to evaluate the four Workbooks and the quality of the teacher training activities. The teachers, as final beneficiaries, 'owners' and most valuable asset of the JHP, play the most central role in the project's success or failure. It is therefore of primary importance to not only ask for their opinions about the project, but also to ensure that the project is responsive to their evaluation and input, in the inclusive and democratic manner which its content promotes.

**Format of the questionnaires:**

The questionnaires consisted of 17 close ended questions, and 7 open ended questions.

The close ended questions were designed to prompt a 'ranked' response in order to extract quantitative data. The open – ended questions were designed to encourage unrestricted meaningful response. Furthermore, the inclusion of open-ended questions ties into the JHP's overall philosophy and provides a vital mechanism for the assessment of the project as a whole: that the project is an on-going, inclusive process and that just because the CDRSEE

has not asked a question about a specific aspect, does not mean that it is not a valid issue or a non-valuable piece of information. Further to this, not everything that is valuable can be measured in a 'closed-ended' question, even when that question asks for an opinion. The open-ended questions have allowed for the greatest possible qualitative feedback about all aspects of the JHP, thus ensuring that the teachers have an on-going and responsive role in the progress of the project itself-not just as final recipients of a static product.

The following document contains a summary of the most significant responses, taken as an overall view of the 4 Workshops.

### **Analysis of the close ended questions**

Teachers were invited to rank their replies to each question with one of the following:

*strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree*

The reply categories of each question were summarized and converted into percentages. Table 1 presents a brief of some of the most central questions concerning the workshops, while table 2 presents a brief of some of the most central questions concerning the workbooks:

Table 1 – Workshop

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Blank
My decision to attend the workshop was the correct one.	92.31%	7.69%				
The training session provided me with ideas and methods that will be useful in the classroom.	72.31%	27.69%				
The training session was a good opportunity to meet other teachers and share ideas.	87.69%	12.31%				
I believe that the methods will be very difficult to use in the classroom.		9.84%	6.56%	60.66%	22.95%	
Participation in the workshops was valuable to me.	40.63%	59.38%				

All participants agreed that their decision to attend the workshop was the correct one. The training sessions provided teachers with new methods of teaching and were at the same time a good opportunity to meet colleagues from other cities.

Table 2 – *Workbooks*

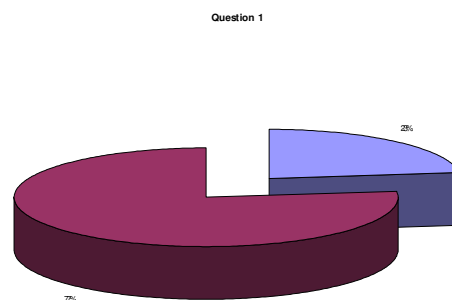
Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Blank
The content of the workbooks will be interesting to my students.	23.08%	73.85%	3.08%			
The activities and methods in the workbooks will be interesting to my students.	26.15%	67.69%	6.15%			
The workbooks will be useful for my students	33.85%	61.54%	4.62%			
I will use these books in class.	32.81%	65.63%	1.56%			
The methods in the Workbooks are useful tools for introducing participative and critically reflective ways of learning.	52.31%	47.69%				

Overall, 96.93% of participants felt that the content of the workbooks will be interesting to students, and 93.84% felt the activities and methods of teaching will also be interesting to students. Only 1.56% of all participants were unsure about whether or not they will use the books in class.

**Analysis of the open ended questions**

Workshop

Overall, 77% of the respondents have participated in other workshops focused on multi perspective and participative learning methods. Most often these were seminars organized by EUROCLIO, HUNP and the Agency for Education and Development. For 23% of participants, the CDRSEE workshops were the first workshop of this kind.



Participants stated that the model lessons were very interesting and that the exchange amongst teachers the discussions and debates that were initiated were quite valuable. Since throughout the workshops, the topics that were covered were topics that are also covered in class, participants stated that they will indeed use the books and the methodologies in their work. It was also pointed out that 'debate' as a technique should be used as often as possible.

### Workbooks

Many of the participants commented that the most important aspect of the workbooks is the variety of sources that nurtures multi perspective, which is an approach that avoids portraying events in black and white, breaks prejudice, stereotypes and develops critical thinking of students. It was also particularly stressed that an important aspect of the books is their study of women's history.

Some of the participants pointed out that certain sources need a better explanation, of the context, date, location etc, as well as naming of the original document where they were found. In addition, the usual argument that there need to be more sources from Croatia, was also mentioned.

Although some teachers agreed that the books are mainly meant for high school students, they pointed out that with the right choice of sources, they can also be adapted for use in elementary school.

### **Conclusions**

As in almost every country where the JHP workbooks have been introduced, in Croatia also, teachers pointed out that there were too few sources from their country. However, they were well aware that the goal of the materials is to make available sources from the countries of the region, not their own.

The workbooks as well as the methodology to be used when working with the materials are most valuable for giving students an opportunity to be fully engaged in class, to think critically and come to their own conclusions. They can learn about their own country, as well as about their neighbours without being subject to the usual stereotypes we all usually have of each other in the Balkans.

Finally, the events were a perfect opportunity to meet colleagues and exchange ideas, a first step toward building a solid regional network of history teachers.

