

# The United Nations, Human Rights, and you: challenging racism, prejudice and bigotry

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Resource Pack

# *Letter to educators*

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Dear Educators,

We are delighted to share with you some resources and teaching suggestions related to the three mandated outreach programmes of the United Nations: history of the transatlantic slave trade, the Holocaust, and the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. We hope you will find the resources find useful for your students. Please feel free to use elements that will be suitable for your students in their context.

Please be aware that some of the material is not suitable for younger students, and contains descriptions of graphic violence.

We have placed trigger warnings where we think appropriate.

Ultimately, you know your students best, so we ask you to please use your discretion.

The history of the transatlantic slave trade, the Holocaust and the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, are challenging histories to teach – and students will need to be supported throughout. We include a few suggestions about approaches that you may find will be helpful in this regard. As challenging as teaching about gross human rights violations is, they can serve to illuminate exactly the values that underpin a rights-based society.



# Index of contents

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Orientation and Context matters: Timelines & Maps

Create a watchlist

Words matter: Dictionary tree; The words of those who were there; Speaking for those who were silenced

Journalling

Webpages of three mandated programmes

Identity flower exercise

Activities drawn from the history of the Holocaust

- Who wore the shoe? Artefacts and history

- The power of propaganda

Activities drawn from the history of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

- Genocide never happens overnight: Propaganda

- Failure of the international system

- Impact of genocide: Survivor testimony

- Choices

- Women and the genocide

- Never again?

- After the genocide: Justice and Reconciliation

# Orientation and context matters:

## Timelines & maps

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### **Timelines:**

Using timelines are very useful strategies in helping students have a clearer understanding that no event happens “out of the blue”. Timelines can help to illustrate the point that genocide is a process, that gross human rights violations have precedents, and moments when interventions to prevent would have been easier.

For each history, students can be given key dates for that particular history, and add these to a general timeline, and in this way begin to have a visual representation of concepts like change and continuity.

# Orientation and context matters:

## Timelines & maps

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### **Maps:**

Working with maps helps students that atrocities can happen anywhere and that no society is immune.

Maps can help students understand where they physically in relation to the place where the events took place that they are learning about.

Maps remind students that geography needs to be considered when trying to understand what happened, as sometime the physical geography of a place can explain why certain decisions were made, impacting on chances for survival, or likelihood of atrocities going unchallenged.

Having students refer to a map of the world first to “place” themselves, and then the country/ies impacted by the history would be the first step.

Making historical maps available to students will help them remember that borders change, for example, and with that, people’s sense of identity and of belonging.

# Create a watchlist

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Students can compile a class watchlist of countries they think are in danger.

The watchlist can be based on the world map, with students showing where the country is they're watching and then using the UN framework, and Stanton stages, as evidence of why the country is in trouble.

They can use a timeline to add to as events happen to be able to judge whether there is a pattern of human rights abuses over time.

# Words matter – Dictionary Tree

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Dictionary aids can play a significant role in building literacy skills and confidence in students – empowering them to engage with the world around them.

**Where dictionaries “live”** depends on the context of your classroom – for example, some teachers may have a growing list of terms on a board visible to the class, which gets new terms added to it with each module. **Students might have a dictionary “corner”** in their books: perhaps it is at the back of their books, and gets added to as the students encounter and learn new terms.

Students can be encouraged **to personalize their dictionaries** add the words or phrases that they found challenging or new, even if the remainder of the class did not. Students could be encouraged to add phrases or words that are particularly meaningful to them or inspiring, that they encounter in the Module they are studying.

Students can also **select a phrase or word to act as a “Chapter heading”** for the section of work they have been learning about.

# Words matter – Dictionary Tree

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These are some of the key words or phrases that we identify for the three historical case studies – transatlantic slave trade, the history of the Holocaust and the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

**Enslaved person**

**Dehumanizing**

**Genocide**

**Stereotype**

**Othering**

**Propaganda**

**Equity and equality**

**Justice**

**Reconciliation**

**Prejudice**

**Racism**

**Antisemitism**

**Hate speech**

**Discrimination**

**Human Rights**

**Human Rights violations**

**Survivor**

**Identity**

**Crimes against humanity**

**Stigma**

**Incitement**

**Divisiveness**

**Disinformation**

**Misinformation**



# The words of those who were there

The words of survivors and witnesses to the events are powerful – they have a particular resonance because they serve to remind us of the real humans whose lives, hopes, dreams were impacted by the laws, actions, and decisions taken by state actors, bureaucrats, civil servants, neighbours, fellow citizens, strangers and family.

Without diminishing the usefulness of witness testimony, through asking students to place the testimony within the historical context, and providing secondary sources that relate to the testimony, students can be reminded that the voices of those who were there can contribute to the building of history.

# “Speaking” for those who were silenced

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**What of those whose voices were never recorded, or written down?** We may find traces of their “voices” in official documents. For example, why pass a law forbidding reading? This suggests that there were teaching enslaved peoples to read; there were enslaved peoples who could read and wanted to read. It suggests that enslaved persons were not simply helpless or accepting of their fate.

Why, for example, pass a law that insists that certain people had a “J” stamped in their passports and identity cards? If people were so markedly different, there would have been no need to do this. It suggests that people were more alike than they were different.

We have an activity that you may choose to use with your students.

# “Speaking” for those who were silenced

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**Working with artefacts** can help to encourage students to ask, what is there? What is not being said? Who is speaking? Who has power? We have activities that engage students with how propaganda functions as a facilitator of gross human rights violations, even genocide. We may find evidence in letters written, in notices placed in newspapers, that suggest agency and a will to live with dignity against all odds. We provide a suggested activity that facilitates students exploring this.

We also find traces in artefacts of the voices, or lives lived before they were murdered. We have included a suggested activity that illustrates how a small shoe can help us learn more about what was lost, and who was lost when genocide was committed.

# Journalling

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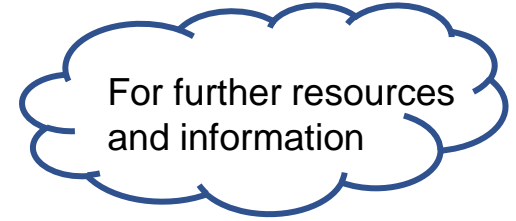
This is a strategy to assist students (and teachers!) in processing the emotional impact of studying challenging histories such as the transatlantic slave trade, the Holocaust and the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Teachers can use their discretion when journalling should take place. It should not last longer than two-three minutes at the very most: the idea is that it provides a safe place for the student to respond immediately. Journals are not sources of evaluation or assessment – students can choose to share what they've written with teachers, but teachers should not correct for spelling – rather it's an opportunity to encourage communication.

Depending on the resources available to the students, and whether students are in class, journals could be a separate book; a folder, or a regular and secure document in which students write.

# Webpages of the three mandated programmes

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The outreach programme on the transatlantic slave trade

<https://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/index.shtml>

The outreach programme on the Holocaust

<https://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/>

The outreach programme on the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

<https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/index.shtml>

# Identity flower activity

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**Objective:** Students engage with the concept of identity and the interplay between self and society.

**Outcomes:** Students have a greater understanding that aspects of identity can change over time, through experience and can be affected by individuals, groups and the State.

**Grade/age:** this activity is a non-threatening ice-breaker for any age group.

# Identity flower activity: Part 1

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1. Ask students to draw three medium-sized circles on a page, allowing space around each circle to draw and write.
2. Ask students to write in the middle of the centre circle, “me, today”.
3. Ask students to draw six large petals around the “me, today” circle.

# Identity flower activity: Part 1 cont.

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4. Inside the first petal, students write the heading: “Interests”, leaving enough space around it to write something else in the petal
5. Explain to students that they should choose one or more activities or subjects that they find most interesting or that matters most to them and write that under the heading on the petal
6. Students then move to the next petal and write inside the petal, “Relationships”, and then the relationship they value most – example, their family: that they’re someone's son; someone's best friend
7. Inside the following petal, write, “Fears” and their greatest fear
8. Inside the following petal, write, “Hopes/Dreams”, and their main hope/dream
9. Inside the following petal, write, “Values”, and their core value e.g. honesty
10. Inside the following petal, write, “Groups”, and the most important group to which they belong, e.g. their circle of friends or their sports team



# Identity flower activity: Part 1 cont.

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11. Now ask students to write in the middle of the first circle, “me, at seven”
12. Ask students to draw six large petals around the “me, at seven” circle and complete as they had done for the “me today” circle, only this time, what they would’ve answered when they were seven.
13. Finally, ask students to write in the middle of the last circle, “me in ten year’s time”. Ask students to draw the six petals around the circle, and write what they imagine what their answers will be in the future.

# You, Me, Us, Them, We...

**We're going to be drawing  
three circles**

In **centre** of first:



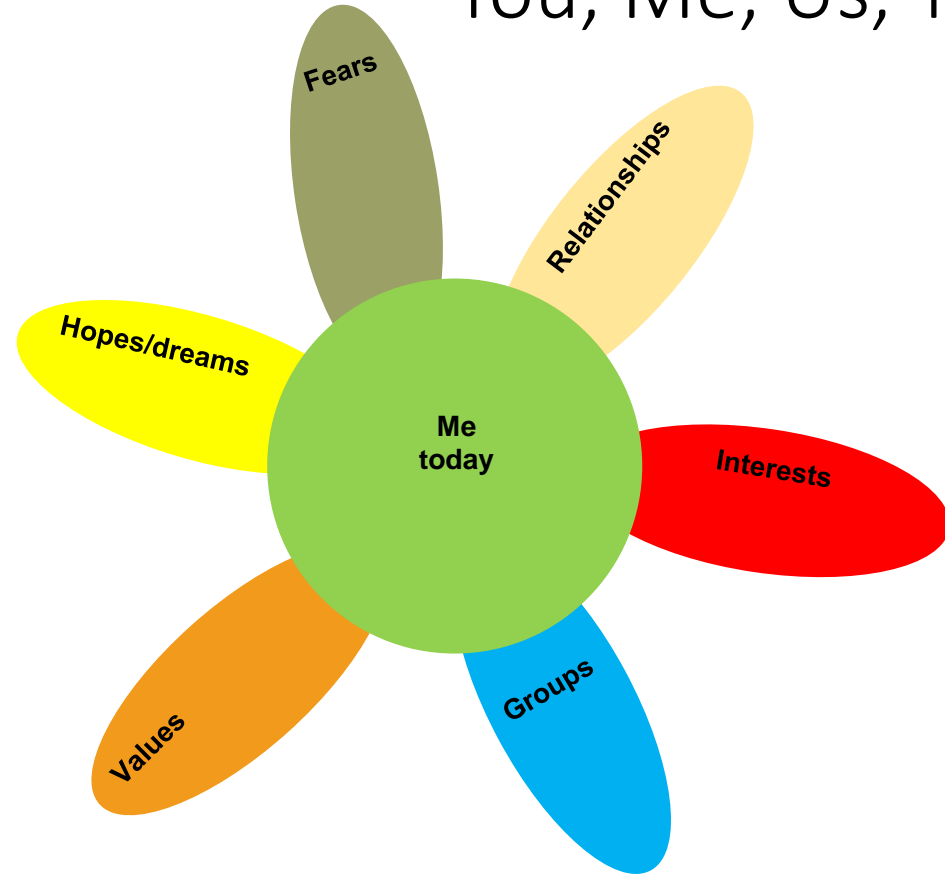
**Me today**



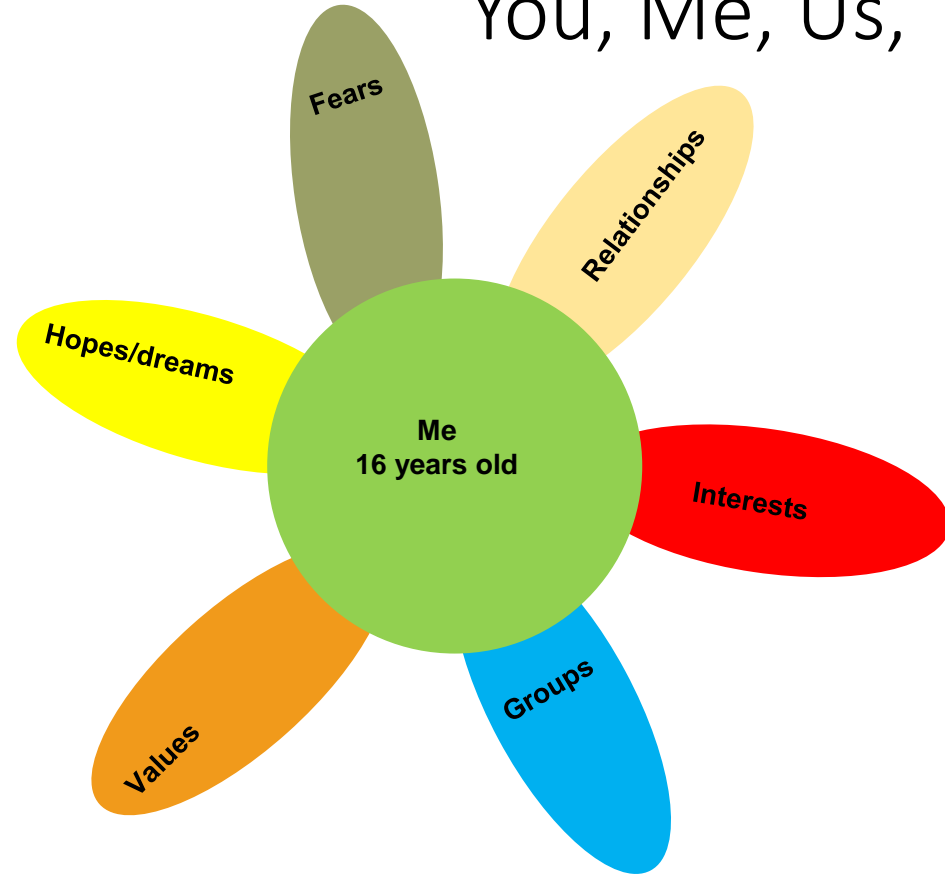
# You, Me, Us, Them, We...

**We're going to add six petals** that describe you, that are the most essential:

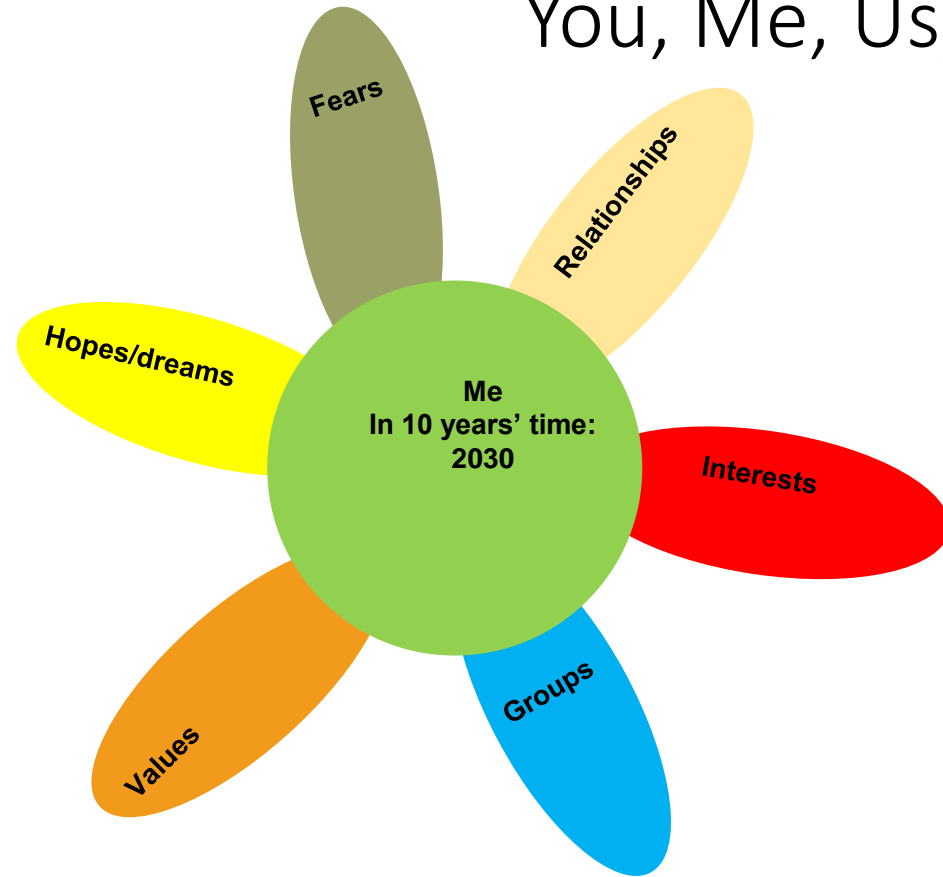
# You, Me, Us, Them, We...



# You, Me, Us, Them, We...



# You, Me, Us, Them, We...



# Identity flower activity: part 2 - Discussion:

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## What can we conclude about identity?



Some suggested answers:

- ❖ It is fluid – some aspects of our identity are “core”; some change, some are left behind
- ❖ What shapes who we are? Are we shaped by how we think people see us, and how we hope people see us?
- ❖ What shapes how we perceive each other?
- ❖ What do we do when we don't know another? “What do we do with a difference?”
- ❖ Sometimes we rely on an assumption – perhaps a prejudice, a bias or a stereotype?

# Prejudice and stereotypes

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## Discussion questions:

What is a stereotype?

Students could begin with solo work by writing down their own definition, then sharing it with their work partner. Then the class can collaboratively compile a definition with the teacher facilitating.

What's the problem with a stereotype?

Encourage students to consider how stereotypes limit individual possibility, and how this is a loss for everyone.



# Identity influencers in your life

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## Discussion questions:

What are the main influences that shape who you are?

Any influencers?

What role does the state play in shaping and influencing your identity?

Does the state tell you what kind of person you can be, who you might love, who you should fear, to what groups you may belong, what you might become, what you might choose to believe, what religion you may be, how you may behave?

Should the state ever have the right to do this?

# Laws and identity

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Discussion questions:

- 1) Why do we need laws?
- 2) Are laws always just and fair? Can you think of any examples when laws have treated some people unfairly? Why were these laws passed? How did people respond?

These questions lend themselves to a **research activity**. Students, working either in small groups, or individually, can be asked to develop a case study and present their findings to the class under the following headings:

- (1) A timeline – when did these events take place? Does this explain why certain actions could not be taken for example, was social media an option to call people to protest? Or was there a war at the same time and what impact did this have on how people responded?
- (2) Who did not benefit from the laws?
- (3) Who had the power to change the laws?
- (4) How did people respond to the laws?
- (5) What was the outcome?

# Activities that draw on the history of the Holocaust

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**Propaganda:** When states use laws to try to shape, control and manipulate identity ...

**Who wore the shoe?** Learning with artifacts

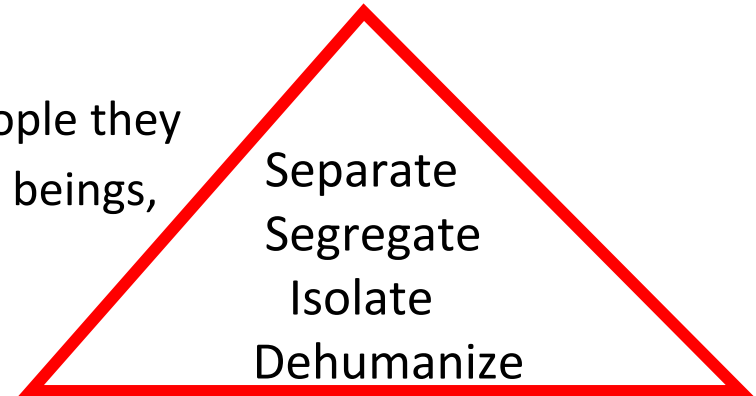
# When states use laws to try to shape, control and manipulate identity ...

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, they introduced laws that made racism and antisemitism legal.

- 1) What does “racism” and “antisemitism” mean?
- 2) What is the difference between “prejudice” and “discriminate”?
- 3) How did the Nazis use the law to create an "us" and "them"?

We call this "Othering".

What did the Nazis do to exclude people they falsely believed to be inferior human beings, unworthy of rights, even of life?



Propaganda:

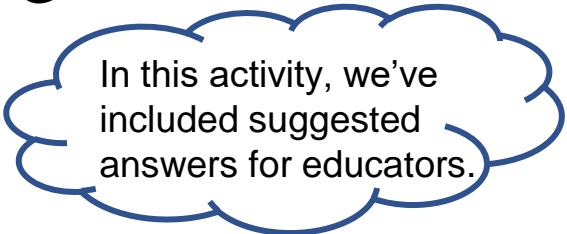
*A technique states can use to get people to believe and accept the abnormal as normal, the unjust as just, the immoral as moral*

How would you define propaganda?

One of the techniques of propaganda is to use stereotypes. What other techniques are used?



# Nazis and Propaganda: spreading lies and disinformation



In this activity, we've included suggested answers for educators.

**Objective:** Students work with examples of Nazi propaganda to identify the techniques of propaganda, and to consider what the message was that the Nazis wanted to spread, how they did it and the impact it might have had.

**Outcomes:** Students strengthen their critical visual literacy skills and consider actions to counter misinformation and disinformation.

# Lies, Misinformation and Disinformation: what's the difference?

In pairs or on their own, students identify the main difference between misinformation and disinformation.

***Suggested answer:***

***Disinformation*** means information that is not true and deliberately spread by someone who knows it is not true.

***Misinformation*** is not true, but is spread without knowing that it is not true.

Students discuss whether the difference matters, and if the impact or consequences are the same.

# Nazis and Propaganda: spreading lies and disinformation

- ❖ Students can work in small groups or in pairs, depending on time and size of student group.
- ❖ Each group is given one of the three Nazi propaganda posters viz.
  - ❖ “Image of idealized “Aryan” Germans”
  - ❖ “Youth Serves the Leader: All 10-Year-Olds into the Hitler Youth”
  - ❖ “Our Last Hope: Hitler”
- ❖ Display two questions
  - ❖ What techniques does the propagandist use? For example, stereotyping.
  - ❖ What were the propagandists hoping the audience would feel, think and do?
- ❖ Ask students to discuss their poster by answering the two questions displayed.
- ❖ Depending on the size of the entire group and time, each group could report on their analysis to the class.
- ❖ Ask students to consider the impact the propaganda would have had on the German population. Consider the impact on Jewish Germans, Germans of African descent, Germans who were not able-bodied, German women, men, young people.



# Some suggested responses for the activity:

## Poster 1: Image of idealized "Aryan Germans"

### What techniques does the propagandist use?

- ❖ *Stereotyping – not every person can, or did, look like the people in the drawing*
- ❖ *Uses half-truths or lies about what people look like*
- ❖ *Oversimplifies complex issues: the propaganda suggests that looking a certain way and behaving a certain way is an indication of moral value. Good people do not always look like this or behave like this*
- ❖ *Plays on emotions: in this instance through the use of image e.g. Image of the baby and mother; the muscular man suggesting strength being protective; the blue sky suggesting hope.*

### What were the propagandists hoping the audience would feel, think and do?

- ❖ *Idolize and worship people who looked like the images on the poster*
- ❖ *Idolize "white Aryans" and exclude and marginalize those who did not look like "Aryans"*
- ❖ *Wish to belong to the group called "Aryans" represented in the poster*
- ❖ *Hoping that people would believe in the false idea of "racial purity"*
- ❖ *Hoping that people would be inspired to have more children so that there would be future generations of "pure Aryans"*
- ❖ *They would believe that to have a better world, they need to be "Aryans"*

# Some suggested responses for

## Poster 2: “Our Last Hope: Hitler”

### What techniques does the propagandist use?

- ❖ *Oversimplifies complex issues: possible solutions to the social and economic woes brought about by the Great Depression were complex*
- ❖ *Plays on emotions using words like “our”, “last” “hope”; connecting Hitler to “hope”. The colours used emphasizes the despair of the people.*
- ❖ *Advertises a cause: Hitler and the Nazis*

### What were the propagandists hoping the audience would feel, think and do?

- ❖ *The people would see Hitler (and the Nazis) as their only way out of economic troubles.*
- ❖ *Hitler alone could bring about a better Germany.*
- ❖ *The people would believe that no other political party would be able to save them.*
- ❖ *Hitler was their saviour.*

# Some suggested responses for the activity:

## Poster 3: “Youth serves the Leader: All 10-Year olds into the Hitler Youth”

### What techniques does the propagandist use?

- ❖ *Stereotyping: not all boys who were members of the Hitler Youth looked like this*
- ❖ *Plays on emotion: using images: they draw Hitler so large as to suggest he is a god. By having both the boy and Hitler look into the distance, it suggests that they are both the future of Germany*

### What were the propagandists hoping the audience would feel, think and do?

- ❖ *They would see Hitler as their protector, their savior: of god-like proportions*
- ❖ *Idolize Hitler*
- ❖ *Want to be strong and beautiful like the young boy (if the audience is the young boy) by serving Hitler*
- ❖ *Believe that serving Hitler is the right thing to do (“Serving” means that one would do anything that Hitler asks)*
- ❖ *Advertises a cause: Hitler Youth, Hitler and the Nazis*

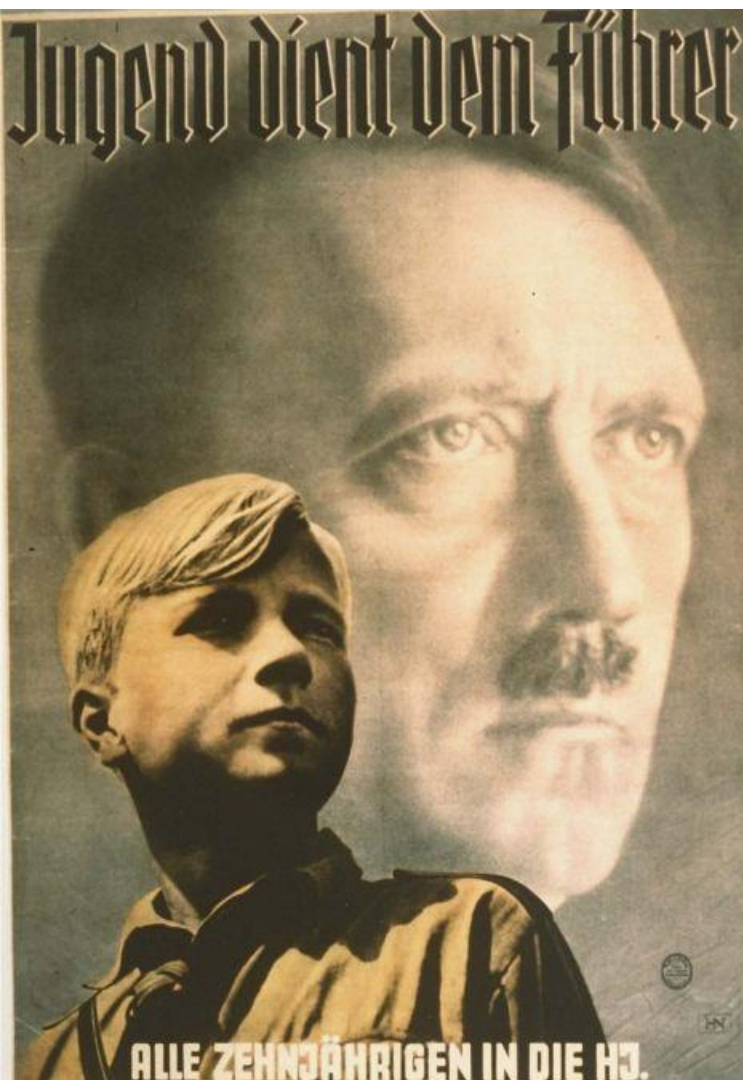


**Poster 1:**

**Image of idealized “Aryan” Germans, from a calendar for the Racial Policy Office of the Nazi Party.**

Ludwig Hohlwein, artist; 1938.

Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, Germany.

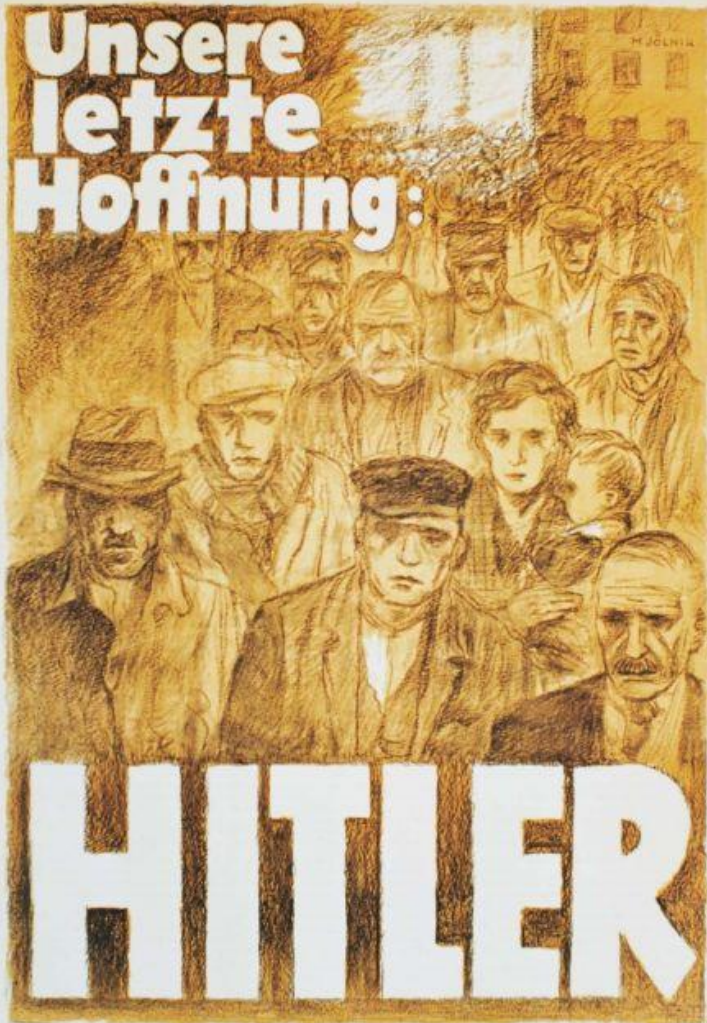


**Poster 2:**

**“Youth Serves the Leader: All 10-Year-Olds  
into the Hitler Youth”**

Unknown artist, 1939  
Bundesarchiv (Plak 003.011.018),  
Koblenz, Germany





**Poster 3:**

**“Our last hope: HITLER”**

Mjölñir [Hans Schweitzer], artist, 1932

Library of Congress,

Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

# Considering propaganda today



## Discussion

### Where do you find propaganda in your life today?

- ❖ Include if not given in feedback: *advertising uses many of the propaganda tools we've discussed. Advertising is designed to influence a person's thoughts and choices. Can it therefore be seen as a form of propaganda?*

### What messages do you feel target you today?

### Why should we care about propaganda?

### When does propaganda become dangerous?

- ❖ Get feedback. Include these answers: *Propaganda is dangerous when it encourages hatred, racism and prejudice, such as xenophobia, antisemitism, islamophobia, homophobia AND makes discrimination and violence appear an acceptable response. Propaganda can make us accept injustice and discrimination as normal and even morally correct.*

### What do you think should happen to people or institutions who use propaganda to incite hatred?

# Considering propaganda today



## Discussion

### What's the best weapon against manipulation?

- ❖ Get feedback. Include: *The best weapon against manipulation is to know when someone is trying to manipulate you. It's harder to be manipulated when you know you're being manipulated. You have power when you can identify propaganda techniques. You can make your own choices about whether to believe the message or not.*

### Why would media literacy (for example, being able to recognize propaganda) be important in a democracy?

- ❖ *Everyone needs to be able to examine critically the aims of politicians and political groupings.*

### How do you think learning about Nazi propaganda can help us today?

- ❖ *The use of propaganda by the Nazi Party to gain support and then justify laws that removed civil rights, reminds us of the dangers of not recognizing propaganda, and the importance of protecting democratic values so that people can challenge propaganda.*



# Considering propaganda today

## What does the United Nations say about ...

disinformation  
misinformation  
and  
hate speech?

Students read through the  
[UNITED NATIONS STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION  
ON HATE SPEECH](#), and then identify three points  
they think are the most important points.  
Then they compare their choices  
with their classmates

“Hate speech is a menace to democratic values, social stability and peace. As a matter of principle, the United Nations must confront hate speech at every turn. Silence can signal indifference to bigotry and intolerance, even as a situation escalates and the vulnerable become victims. “

United Nations Secretary-General  
António Guterres

# Who wore the shoe?

## **Objectives:**

- Through a series of questions about the artefact, students develop an identity profile of the person whose shoe this may have been, including their family's socio-economic position, how large the family was, if they were loved by their parents, during what time period they may have lived, and in what part of the world they may have lived.
- Students strengthen their appreciation of the importance of artifacts in the construction of history.
- Students have a greater appreciation of the impact of the Holocaust on the lives of the Jewish men, women and children targeted for annihilation by the Nazis.
- Students learn more about the Holocaust.

## **Outcomes:**

- Students have learned more about the importance of artifacts in the construction of history.
- Students appreciate the impact of the Holocaust on the lives of the Jewish men, women and children targeted for annihilation by the Nazis.
- Students have learned more about the Holocaust, and the implementation of the policy of genocide at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

# Who wore the shoe?

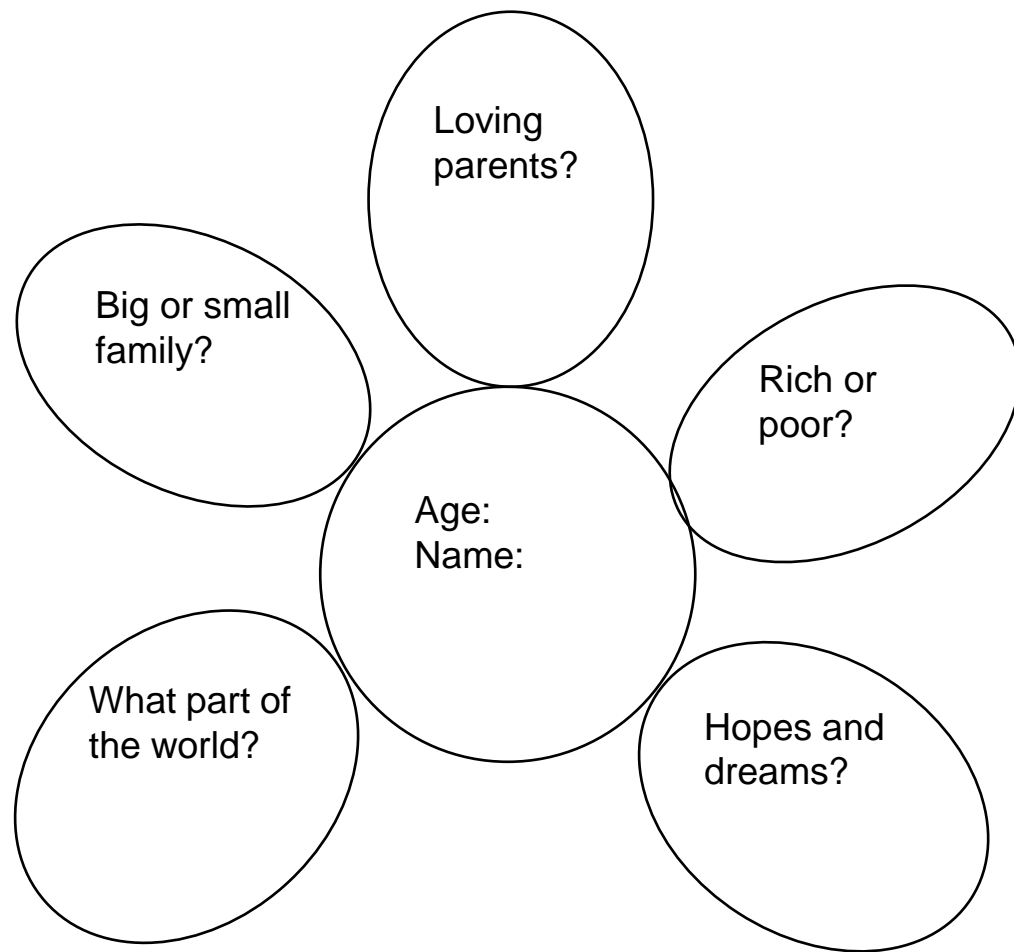
An historian often has to be a detective, working with clues, or evidence, to build an understanding of what happened and who the people were who were involved.

In this exercise, you're going to use evidence to build an identity profile of a person, including if they were rich or poor, if they had a large or small family, if their parents loved them, during what time period they may have lived, and in what part of the world they may have lived.

# Who wore the shoe?

Answer the questions to help you complete the identity flower.

1. Describe what you see in the photograph (This is not a trick question!)
2. Do you think the shoe belongs to a child or an adult? What evidence supports your answer?
3. Is the shoe a modern shoe, or more likely made a while ago? What evidence supports your answer?
4. Was this person the first person to wear this shoe? What evidence supports your answer?
5. What does this tell us about the size of this person's family?
6. How has the shoe been mended?
7. What does this tell us about whether the family was rich or poor?
8. What does this tell us about whether the family cared about the person who wore these shoes?
9. Look closely at the sole of the shoe. What does it tell us about where the person who wore the shoes may have walked?
10. Based on the evidence, would you say that shoes were important to have and keep?
11. In what weather conditions would it be important to have shoes, no matter what they looked like?
12. Based on your answer, in what part of the world might the person who wore the shoes, be living?



Who  
wore  
the  
shoe?

# Who wore the shoe?

Question	Answer – what we know	Evidence from the images – why we know
Age of the person to whom this shoe belonged?		
When born?		
Is this shoe made in the last ten years?		
Was this person the first person to wear this shoe? What does this tell us about the size of this persons' family?		
How has the shoe been mended?		

# Who wore the shoe?

Question	Answer – what we know	Evidence from the images – why we know
What does the mending of the shoe suggest about whether this person was rich or poor?		
What does the mending of the shoe suggest about whether this person was loved or not?		
What was the place like where this person walked?		
Were shoes important to have in this place? What climate would this place have had?		



Image 1





Image 2



Image 3

Image 4



# Who wore the shoe?

What information can't we gain from the images of the evidence?

If we know WHERE the shoe was found, then perhaps we will be able to work out more about the person who wore the shoe.

The shoe was found in a place called Auschwitz-Birkenau.



Watch this short film to learn more about the person who wore this shoe.


Please show the film from 3:21




# Who wore the shoe?

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First, without discussing with your partner or the class, write down in your journals, how you felt learning about what historians can conclude happened to the little person who wore this shoe.



After journalling, write a short paragraph in which you explain how you think artefacts, like this shoe, can help us learn more about the past.



In the second paragraph, explain what information you would need to add to what you could learn from the artefact.

# Activities that draw on the history of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

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Genocide never happens overnight: Propaganda

Failure of the international system

Impact of genocide: Survivor testimony

Choices

Women and the genocide

Never again?

After the genocide: Justice and Reconciliation



## Disclaimer:

This contains sensitive materials describing graphic violence that might be upsetting, particularly to younger audiences.





# Genocide never happens overnight

Genocide is a process, not a spontaneous event



**OUTREACH PROGRAMME ON THE  
1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST  
THE TUTSI IN RWANDA  
AND THE UNITED NATIONS**

# Genocide is a process

- Professor Gregory Stanton identified ten stages of genocide, that are predictable, but not inexorable.
- At each stage, **preventive measures can stop it.**
- **The process is not linear** and stages may occur **simultaneously.**
- **Each stage is itself a process.** Logically, later stages are preceded by earlier stages, but all **stages continue** to operate throughout the process.

Source : <https://www.genocidewatch.com/ten-stages-of-genocide>

- 1 • Classification
- 2 • Symbolization
- 3 • Discrimination
- 4 • Dehumanization
- 5 • Organization
- 6 • Polarization
- 7 • Preparation
- 8 • Persecution
- 9 • Extermination
- 10 • Denial

Stanton's "10 Stages of Genocide"



OUTREACH PROGRAMME ON THE  
1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST  
THE TUTSI IN RWANDA  
AND THE UNITED NATIONS

Warning signs....

## Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes - the United Nations

### COMMON RISK FACTORS

Risk Factor	1	Situations of armed conflict or other forms of instability
Risk Factor	2	Record of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law
Risk Factor	3	Weakness of State structures
Risk Factor	4	Motives or incentives
Risk Factor	5	Capacity to commit atrocity crimes
Risk Factor	6	Absence of mitigating factors
Risk Factor	7	Enabling circumstances or preparatory action
Risk Factor	8	Triggering factors

### SPECIFIC RISK FACTORS

#### Genocide

Risk Factor	9	Intergroup tensions or patterns of discrimination against protected groups
Risk Factor	10	Signs of an intent to destroy in whole or in part a protected group

#### Crimes against humanity

Risk Factor	11	Signs of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population
Risk Factor	12	Signs of a plan or policy to attack any civilian population

#### War crimes

Risk Factor	13	Serious threats to those protected under international humanitarian law
Risk Factor	14	Serious threats to humanitarian or peacekeeping operations





## Activity: Genocide is a process... Case study: 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

Use Stanton's model and the United Nations framework to help you identify the

- 1) the warning signs and
- 2) the different stages

in the history of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda

# Propaganda: "Lies with a purpose"

## Background information:

- Propaganda is defined as information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular political cause or point of view and persuade people to believe it and act upon it.
- Propaganda is often to increase stereotyping, discrimination and divisiveness and to reduce barriers to violence. Propaganda was used very effectively in Nazi Germany and by the pre-1994 Rwanda Government.
- Propaganda encourages people to think of others as less than human, labeling them as animals, pests or diseases, taking away people's humanity and right to be treated with dignity. Nazi propaganda described Jewish people as "vermin" or "rats" and Hutu extremists called Tutsis "cockroaches" and "snakes".
- Political instrumentalization of ethnicity was so focused and effective in Rwanda that Hutus were led to believe that they were doing good by killing Tutsis.



# Propaganda: "Lies with a purpose"

## Activity:

In small groups, students discuss what “propaganda” means, **why** it gets used, **by whom** and what **effect** it has on people.

- How does propaganda contribute to the dehumanizing of people?
- Why is the dehumanizing of people so dangerous?
- Have you ever heard, seen or read someone using dehumanizing language against you or others? How did it make you feel?
- Give one safe response you could give to challenge dehumanizing behaviour?





# In Rwanda before the 1994 genocide...

## Background information:

- Animosity and hatred between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority was cultivated, reinforced and manipulated for over six decades by the colonial powers, then became well nurtured by Hutu leaders who came to power after independence in 1962.
- The lie that was spread by the government and in schools was that Tutsis and Hutus were fundamentally different and incompatible.
- Propaganda encouraged people to believe that only Hutus were "true" Rwandans, and that Tutsis were foreigners wanting to overthrow the Hutu government and retake control of Rwanda.
- The propaganda spread the lie that Hutus were morally superior, and that Tutsis were worthless liars and thieves. Tutsis were even portrayed as subhuman and called "cockroaches".
- This propaganda permeated all aspects of society and was spread by teachers, in textbooks and led to segregation and discrimination of children classified as Tutsi.



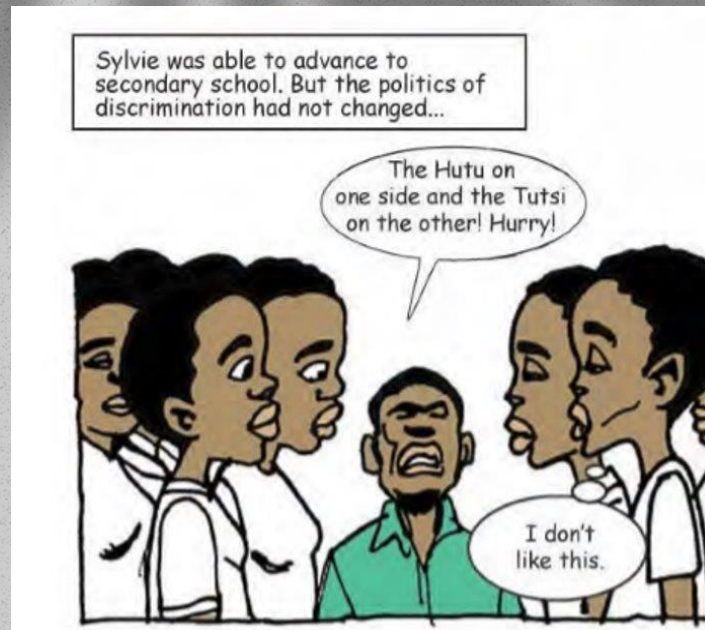
# Schools and propaganda

## Activity:

- Look at this image taken from *Tugire Ubumwe — Let's Unite!*

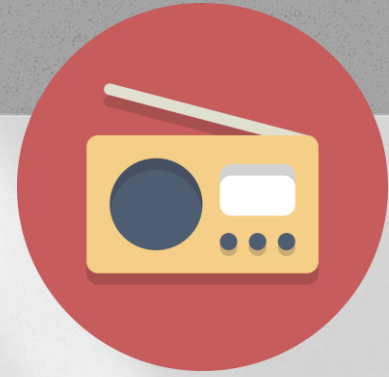
Then discuss:

- How did the teacher's actions affect the way students viewed themselves and others?
- Why is it a problem that the teacher behaved this way?





# Radio and propaganda



## Background information:

### Radio – the soundtrack to genocide

Before the internet, in many countries radios were the most powerful source of information and reached more people than newspapers or television. Radios were cheap and accessible to everyone, including those who could not read or afford a television. With a radio broadcast, people felt like someone was speaking directly to them.

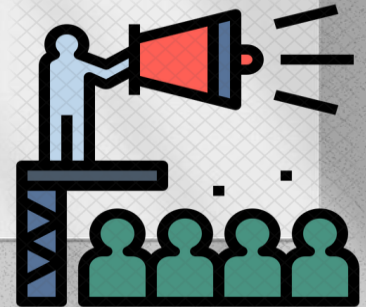


# Role of Propaganda and Media: Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines

## Background information:

Radio was considered the medium of communication with the widest reach, as a source of information as well as entertainment and a focus of social life.

Starting broadcast in July 1993, **Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM)**, a Rwandan radio station was widely listened to, especially in Kigali and among young people.



# Radio and propaganda: Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines

## Background information (cont.):

- RTLM had engaged in **ethnic stereotyping** in both economic and political terms before the genocide, raising hostility and resentment towards the Tutsi.
- Broadcasters called Tutsis by derogatory names, further promoting the idea of “**othering**” e.g. “Inyenzi” (cockroach) while the Hutus are referred to as “Son of Sebahinzi”, the real Rwandans
- After the Genocide began, **militia** at the roadblocks also **listened to RTLM**, which some referred to as the **Radio Machete**.
- On 25 April 1994, the founder of RTLM, talked of the “war of media, words, newspapers and radio stations”, which he described as a complement to bullets.
- RTLM journalist Kantano Habimana on 4 June 1994, said, “**Look at the person’s height and his physical appearance. Just look at his small nose and then break it**”.





## Activity:

- Explain how radio was used to spread lies and encourage and incite the listeners to acts of violence against their fellow Rwandans classified as Tutsi.
- In your experience, on the media platforms you use, have you come across of lies or propaganda that encourage prejudice or even hatred against other people?
- When you use social media, how do you decide whether the information you see can be trusted and is accurate? How do you decide what you share?
- How do you react if a friend shares information you feel is either factually or morally wrong?

**Get involved:** There has never been a greater need for accurate, verified information. **Like a virus, misinformation spreads from person-to-person.** **Verified is an initiative of the UN** to provide content that cuts through the noise to deliver fact-based advice and stories from the best of humanity.



**Misinformation  
is dangerous.  
Take care  
before you  
share.**

# Failure of the International System: Warning signs ignored

## Background information:

- The atmosphere in Rwanda was already tense. There was information that large stocks of **weapons** were being bought and about **training camps** where militia were taught how to kill a thousand people within twenty minutes.
- In January 1994, one of the UNAMIR (UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda) commanders met with an insider who handed in the **details of a genocide plan** in exchange of passport and safety.
- After the meeting, General Dallaire, the UNMID Force Commander, sent a fax to the UN HQ which was then named as “**Genocide Fax**”, asking for reinforcements to deal with possible large-scale atrocities. The fax arrived at the UN peacekeeping department, then run by Kofi Annan. Annan was not fully convinced. In his response, he ordered Dallaire **not to take any action** that might cause UN troops to use force.
- UN Member States could not agree on the approach and Dallaire was told that **he would get no more troops**. After the failed peacekeeping mission in Somalia and the killing of American soldiers, the US and the international community in general were not inclined to sacrifice their resources and people, especially in Africa.

*“We approached about 80 governments, trying to get offers of troops, and they wouldn't give them to us”*

*Kofi Annan, June 1994*

- There was also a **lack of political will**, since Rwanda had no strategic importance to the powers which could intervene.
- On 7 April 1994, 10 **Belgian** soldiers were tortured and killed. Belgium, the primary European force of UNAMIR, ordered the retreat of its contingents, which weakened considerably the already ill-equipped mission.
- The Hutu extremists therefore felt they had free reign to **start the genocide against the Tutsi**.





# Failure of the International System: Warning signs ignored

## Activity:

- Discuss what the international community, including the United Nations, could have done to prevent the 1994 Genocide?
- Were there warning signs? (refer to Stanton's 10 Stages of Genocide and the UN's framework)
- Why do you think these warning signs were ignored?
- Could the genocide have been prevented or stopped if the international community had acted?



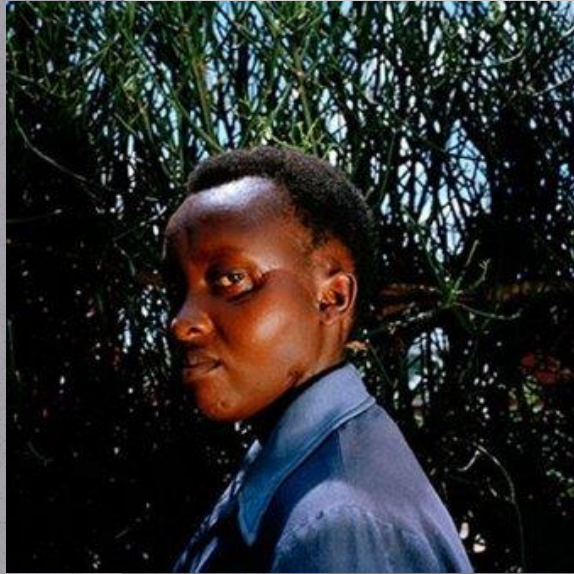
# The impact of genocide: Survivors speak



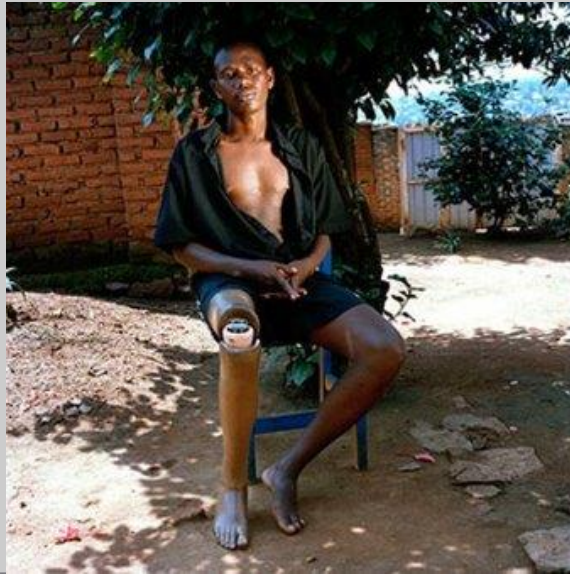
## Activity:

Share these **survivor testimonies** with students. Students should then write down what comes to mind on a big sheet of paper and discuss or reply to the questions they have among themselves with their group.

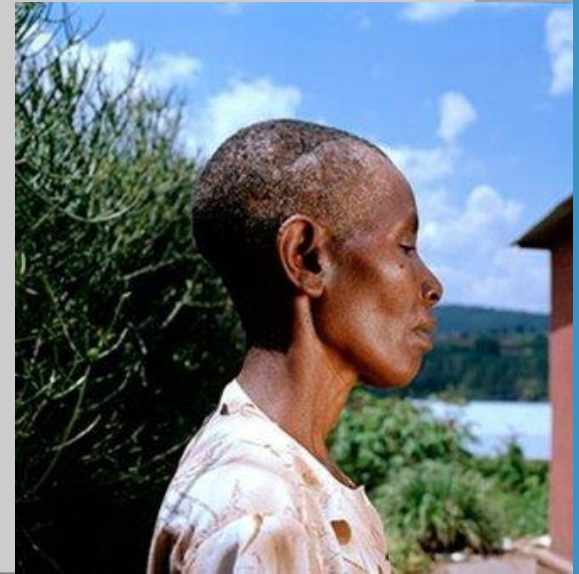
<https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/survivor-testimonies.shtml>



*"I had to hide my wounds as they would reveal my ethnicity. Hutus were everywhere and could finish me off anytime."* Ange-Sandrine Mukayitesi



*"After I lost my leg and my entire family, I lived 4 years all by myself in an abandoned house I had found. I was 13."* Jean Pierre Sibomana



*"In the church they smashed my head with iron sticks and then they tried to split my skull with machetes."* Speciose Mukagihini



# Moral choices during the genocide: Individual Bravery

## Background:

Even in times of genocide, people have agency to **make the right moral choices**. This however comes at the greatest personal risk, including losing their lives. Several individuals attempted to halt the genocide, or to shelter vulnerable Tutsi, at times paying the ultimate prize.

**Roméo Dallaire:** Force Commander of UNAMIR, who provided refuge for thousands of Tutsi and moderate Hutu at its headquarters in Amahoro Stadium, as well as other secure UN sites.

**Captain Mbaye Diagne:** Senegalese Army officer and UN military observer who saved many lives through rescue missions at great peril to himself, until he was killed by a mortar shell that landed behind his jeep.

**Jacqueline Mukansonerwa:** Hutu Rwandan who saved Tutsi Yolande Mukagasana, member of the Tutsi intelligentsia, by concealing her in her kitchen for 11 days.

**Zura Karuhimbi:** Rwandan woman who saved more than 100 people from being killed by Hutu militias by hiding them in her house and deterred attackers by masquerading as a witch.

**Carl Wilkens:** American Christian missionary who saved about 400 people from the Gisimba Orphanage.



# Moral choices during the genocide: Individual Bravery

## Activity:

[Watch the video](#) Hero Honoured: *Story*: As Rwanda was descending into chaos, Captain Mbaye Diagne, a military observer at the United Nations Assistance Mission in the country (UNAMIR), was in the capital, Kigali, driving back to the base when a mortar fell near his vehicle. Just 12 days from finishing up his service, he died instantly.

[Look at the portraits](#) of other heroes in the PowerPoint Presentation who risked their lives to save others.

[Discuss](#) what motivated these individuals to stand up against the "genocidaires" and against their own communities or against direct orders?

- Do you have to be in a position of power, or can an ordinary person stand up against injustice?
- Is it ever morally right to break laws or disregard orders? If yes, when?
- Have you heard of any other famous rescuers who saved others during times of genocide? (e.g. Oskar Schindler, Raoul Wallenberg, Miep Gies, Irene Sendler, The Bielski Brothers, during the Holocaust?)



# After the genocide: Never Again - Lessons learned from failure

## Background:

The international community recognized that it had utterly failed Rwanda in 1994 and stood by during the fastest genocide in history that left 1 million people dead and 250,000 women victims of sexual violence in 100 days.

Since then, an effort has been made to ensure that lessons were learned and that it never happens again. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan commissioned an independent inquiry into actions of the United Nations during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

In 2003, the UN designated **7 April**, the start of the genocide, as the **international Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda**, encouraging special observances and activities in memory of the victims.

The UN established The Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations, an information and education programme to mobilize civil society for genocide victim remembrance and education in order to help prevent future acts of genocide.

**Watch: Video** "Never Again"



“ We must say no to hate speech and xenophobia, and reject the forces of polarization, nationalism and protectionism. Only by recognizing that we are all one human family sharing the same planet will we be able to rise to the many global challenges that confront us – from COVID-19 to climate change. ”

⇒ Secretary-General's Message



OUTREACH PROGRAMME ON THE  
1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST  
THE TUTSI IN RWANDA  
AND THE UNITED NATIONS

In 2004, on the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, the Secretary-General at the time Kofi Annan launched an Action Plan to Prevent Genocide

He also appointed a Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide whose mandate is to raise awareness of the causes and dynamics of genocide, to alert relevant actors where there is a risk of genocide, and to advocate and mobilize for appropriate action.

In 2005, at the UN World Summit, Member States also affirmed their commitment to the 'Responsibility to Protect' principle which means that as States they have the responsibility to protect their own populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. They also accepted a collective responsibility to encourage and help each other uphold this commitment. Moreover, they also declared their preparedness to take timely and decisive action, in accordance with the United Nations Charter when national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations from atrocity crimes.

The UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect works to support the prevention of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, in line with these mandates.



# Women and the genocide

## Background information:

During the 1994 genocide, as many as **250,000 women were raped**. Many were infected with **HIV/AIDS** and **left with permanent physical and psychological trauma**. In the first judgment by an international court it was concluded that **rape and sexual assault constituted acts of genocide** insofar as they were committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a targeted group.

## Activity:

Watch the video on [Supporting Survivors](#). Discuss the many challenges sexual violence during war creates:

- **Shame and stigma** of public rape can force a survivor and her family to flee their community, leaving behind land, property and resources. This leaves women poorer and more vulnerable.
- Women and their families face **lasting psychological trauma**. War destroys the infrastructure to help women, leaving few trained counsellors and psychologists.
- Health centres **lack resources** and personnel to address medical needs, especially for reconstructive surgeries and HIV/AIDS treatment.
- Survivors want **justice** – legal redress to ensure that the attackers are caught and punished.



# Justice and reconciliation after the genocide

## The leaders – Trying the "Big Fish" - The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)

### Background information:

- In the years following the genocide, **more than 120,000 people** were detained and accused of bearing criminal responsibility for their participation in the killings.
- The newly established government of Rwanda reached out to the **UN requesting support for justice**.
- In 1994, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established by the UN Security Council to try the senior people responsible for the genocide.
- Through this act, not only individuals who committed massacres on the ground were to be judged, but also the planners, the masterminds, and the people who were responsible for disseminating hate speech through media.
- The ICTR operated for 20 years and indicted 93 people. Sixty-one were sentenced, 14 acquitted, 8 are on the run, 2 died before the judgement, and two others had their indictment withdrawn.
- The ICTR however was a **vehicle of justice, not for reconciliation**, which is a much more complicated process.
- Watch: Video from the ICTR: <https://www.irmct.org/en/cases/searching-fugitives>



OUTREACH PROGRAMME ON THE  
1994 GENOCIDE AGAINST  
THE TUTSI IN RWANDA  
AND THE UNITED NATIONS



# Justice and reconciliation after the genocide

## The "neighbours" - Restorative justice and reconciliation: Gacaca Court System

### Background information:

- To address the fact that there were thousands of accused still awaiting trial and to bring about justice and reconciliation at the grassroots level, the Rwandan government in 2005 re-established the traditional community court system called "Gacaca" (pronounced GA-CHA-CHA).
- In this system, communities elected judges to hear trials of genocide suspects. Courts gave lower sentences if the person was repentant and sought reconciliation. Often, confessing prisoners returned home without further penalty or received community service orders. More than 12,000 community-based courts tried over 1.2 million cases.
- The Gacaca trials also served to promote reconciliation by providing a means for victims to learn the truth about the death of their family members and relatives. They also gave perpetrators the opportunity to confess their crimes, show remorse and ask for forgiveness in front of their community.

**Watch: Video** [Stories from Rwanda – perpetrator and survivors](#)



# Justice and reconciliation after the genocide

## The neighbours - Restorative justice and reconciliation

### Background information:

- Decades of propaganda and indoctrination converted tens of thousands of ordinary Hutus into a mass of killers, turning on their friends, neighbours and colleagues.
- Much of the killing was not done by coercion, but rather by genuine support of the idea that the Tutsi had to be eliminated. This meant that one was doing right by killing and explains why so many of the killings were so brutal. Significant numbers of Rwandans became killers and an even larger number of people acquiesced in the face of genocide.
- Killings were committed publicly and known to all. Survivors often knew the perpetrators and had to live among them as neighbours after the genocide.

### Activity: Discuss the following questions with your students:

- What caused so many individuals to participate in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda?
- How were Gacaca courts different from courts in the formal criminal justice system? What role did the ICTR fulfill and what was the focus on of the Gacaca courts?
- What were the key elements that led to the reconciliation and rebuilding of Rwandan society?



# Reconciliation and Rebuilding of Rwanda

## Background information:

- Unity and reconciliation in Rwanda have been a very difficult, long, but **successful journey**. Still an ongoing process, reconciliation happened through forgiveness and fascinates anyone who visits the country today.
- In 1999, the Government created the **National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation**, which played a crucial role in the reconstruction process. It has helped create different initiatives aiming at promoting national unity, patriotism and the fight against divisive conceptions.





# Reconciliation and Rebuilding of Rwanda

## Background information:

Since 1994, Rwanda has overcome community divisions and rebuilt the country. Citizens are now referred to as "Rwandans", not members of the Tutsi, Hutu or Twa community. While problems remain, Rwanda now ranks among the top countries in the political representation of women and environmental sustainability:

- Rwanda is currently the country with the most women in National Parliament
- Second safest place in Africa (Gallup 2018)
- Second world top UN peacekeepers contribution country

**Activity:** Watch the [Interview with Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire](#), [from 2015] commander of the UN peacekeeping force in Rwanda in 1994 and discuss the key factors that contributed to the rebuilding of the country.

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