

A NEW STRATEGY FOR IHRA: THE MULTI-YEAR WORK PLAN

BACKGROUND

IHRA's mandate, derived from the *Stockholm Declaration*, is to strengthen efforts to promote Holocaust education, remembrance and research. Over the years, IHRA has advanced this mandate through the development of online teaching guidelines, grants to civil society, and the exchange of best practices amongst experts working in the fields of Holocaust education, remembrance and research.

NEW DIRECTION

In 2012, IHRA established a Multi-Year Work Plan (MYWP) as a new strategy to advance the *Stockholm Declaration* by focusing the work of delegates in such key areas that require attention and where the unique setting of IHRA as a body bringing together experts and government officials can play a beneficial role. Working Groups should focus their work on the implementation of the MYWP and may devote time and resources to other topics as far as the implementation of MYWP projects allow.

Goal

Advance the *Stockholm Declaration*

Objectives

The Multi-Year Work Plan capitalizes on the convening authority of the IHRA to encourage close cooperation between experts and governmental representatives. It seeks to:

- Develop and establish solid professional knowledge bases;
- Advance the development of a common professional terminology;
- Focus resources on key areas of interest;
- Shape the discourse within the IHRA, its member countries, and beyond; and
- Recommend the implementation of guidelines and future courses of direction.

Each program under the MYWP will be working at the leading edge of Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. The results of the MYWP will generate great interest among policymakers, scholars, educators and the media, and thereby raise the visibility of the IHRA as a leading voice in this field and in the shaping of Holocaust discourse in contemporary society.

Strategy

The MYWP identifies select priorities for the coming years, on the advice of IHRA experts at the Working Group and Joint Working Group Subcommittee levels. Projects are developed on each priority topic. IHRA will seek to demonstrate leadership on these issues within the expert community, raise awareness through publication of project findings and advance recommendations for further work on the expert level and, as appropriate, on the political level.

Activities

Projects involve activities relating to the various expertise within IHRA: research, remembrance, education and political engagement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Experts: Steering Committees of experts from the Academic, Education, and Memorials and Museums Working Groups develop projects to address each issue. They manage the projects, coordinate support staff, coordinate the work of the Working Groups in the projects so as to ensure coherence, and report to the Plenary, including on progress, recommendations for funding and political action.

Government officials: The Plenary considers recommendations for priorities, projects, funding and political action. The Plenary is also responsible for establishing expert working groups/committees to facilitate the cooperation of all delegates in the MYWP.

CURRENT PROJECTS

There are four interdisciplinary issues currently identified as IHRA priorities in the MYWP.

Research on Killing Sites

Remembrance of the Holocaust often focuses on those who have suffered and perished in concentration camps, ghettos or on death marches. But the “killing sites,” places where mass shootings took place, are still relatively unknown. The Multi-Year Work Plan project on Killing Sites is dedicated to the location of these sites, their commemoration, preservation, and education.

The MYWP on Killing Sites will offer insight on different approaches to explore, study and preserve the Killing Sites. It will raise public awareness, serve as a neutral platform for networking, offer support and expertise to local initiatives, and encourage further research.

A symposium for experts working in the field will be held in Poland in January 2014, where experts and representatives of different organizations will be invited to provide information on their work. This in-depth knowledge will serve as the basis for a report that will be published by the project staff. The report will name global and regional actors in the field, summarize past endeavors, and analyze recent approaches to provide a brief overview of the subject. The experts will also work on formulating an academic definition of what constitutes a “killing site”; identifying current projects; developing a work plan to make information available to the public; and preparing a summary report with recommendations for further work on this issue.

Activities: Research, remembrance, education, political engagement with non-IHRA member states

Access to Archives

The Multi-Year Work Plan on Archival Access (MYWP-Archives) will assess the state of access to Holocaust-relevant materials as defined by the MYWP-Archives Working Definition of Holocaust-Related material as held by archives located in IHRA member countries. It will focus on the legal, physical, and material obstacles that confront scholars and researchers who utilize Holocaust-relevant documentation.

The project consists of five phases, beginning with an assessment of researchers’ experiences at archives across the world, including those in IHRA member countries.

The Multi-Year Work Plan on Archives is an appropriate and important undertaking for the IHRA because it will further discussion on archival access for scholars, researchers, governments, and the public. Moreover, it will inform knowledge of those archives and archival collections that remain inaccessible for use by the public and by scholars, as well as promote discussion on legal restrictions that affect the use, copying, and public presentation of the material evidence of the Holocaust.

Activities: Research, remembrance, education, political engagement with countries restricting access

Memorial Days

The Holocaust Memorial Days project of the Multi-Year Work Plan seeks to coordinate a visit of the Advisor to the IHRA to participate in programs related to Holocaust Memorial Day with a view to foster Holocaust education, remembrance and research, promote the goals of the Stockholm Declaration, and raise awareness about the work of the IHRA.

The project aims to:

- Promote the development of solid professional knowledge base within the IHRA community and beyond.
- Highlight the work of the IHRA and the expertise of those affiliated with it within member countries that have already invested efforts in Holocaust education, remembrance and research as well as those countries that chose to buttress this effort.
- Implement the Stockholm Declaration (2000) as articulated in Article 7, "We share a commitment to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to honor those who stood against it. We will encourage appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance, including an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance, in our countries."

In January 2013, visits took place in Spain and Ireland, and in April 2013 the IHRA Chair, Advisor to the IHRA, and the Executive Secretary visited Hungary and Poland for their respective memorial days.

Activities: Remembrance, political engagement on best practices

Education Research Project

The Education Research Project under the Multi-Year Work Plan seeks to develop a review of existing research on Holocaust education.

The project will provide a clear picture of aims, approaches, challenges, and effective practice in Holocaust education across member countries and allow for a strategic and coordinated approach to teaching and learning about the Holocaust. The international reach and cross-disciplinary nature of the IHRA places it in a position to facilitate a rigorous and comprehensive research review across several languages and provides a fascinating opportunity to enhance meaningful collaboration and the sharing of expertise.

The plan is under development.

OUTCOMES

IHRA will seek to demonstrate leadership on these issues within the expert community, raise awareness through publication of project findings and advance recommendations for further work on the expert level and, as appropriate, on the political level.