



Eckhardt Fuchs • Steffen Sammler

EIGHT DECADES OF TEXTBOOK COLLABORATION  
FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING  
AND QUALITY EDUCATION

75 80

YEARS OF



With the support of UNESCO



1946

- First UNESCO General Conference

1950

- UNESCO Seminar on textbook improvement in Brussels

1951

- International Institute for Textbook Improvement

1951

- German Commission for UNESCO

1954

- 1st Indo-German conference organized by DUK and GEI in Braunschweig

1954

- 1st German Austrian conference in Braunschweig



## 1957

- ● 1st Indonesian-German conference organized by German Commission for UNESCO and GEI in Braunschweig

## 1962

- ● Conference of Experts on the improvement of textbooks for the objectives of UNESCO's Major Project on Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values in Goslar

## 1964-1974

- ● Georg Eckert President of German Commission for UNESCO

## 1967

- ● 1st German Czechoslovakian conference in Braunschweig

## 1971-1974

- ● Project on "Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks"

## 1972

- ● 1st German Polish conference in Warschau and Braunschweig

## 1972

- ● Agreement between the UNESCO Commissions of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Polish People's Republic regarding Cooperation on Textbook Revision



1974

- ● Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks

1973

- ● 1st German Romanian conference in Braunschweig

1985

- ● UNESCO Prize for Peace Education for GEI

1988

- ● Conference on "Recommending criteria for improving the study of major problems of mankind and their presentation in school curricula and textbooks" in Braunschweig

1991

- ● First all-German general assembly of the German Commission for UNESCO

1992-2003

- ● UNESCO Newsletter coordinated by GEI

1993

- ● Guidelines on Teaching Human Rights



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## FOREWORDS

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

This sentence from the preamble to the 1945 UNESCO Charter always served as the guiding principle for Georg Eckert’s work in support of peace, democracy and human rights. It is indicative of his standing that even today, all activities of the Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) remain committed to this sentiment.

My first contact with Georg Eckert dates back to 1968, when I was working in Heidelberg on the influence of the education system on students during the Weimar Republic. Eckert’s prompt, personal and comprehensive responses to my questions made a deep impression on me at the time. My personal relationship with Georg Eckert and the work of the Textbook Institute in Lower Saxony began in earnest in 1969, working through concepts such as nationalist narrow-mindedness, prejudices, stereotypes and clichés, initially through the German-Polish textbook discussions.

Eckert had established contact with UNESCO soon after its foundation. Even before the Federal Republic of Germany joined the organisation, he was involved in the preparatory work. The breadth of his personal contacts around the world was overwhelming and later proved of great significance in the run-up to the policy of *détente*. Through his connections to the Council of Europe and UNESCO, he, along with the Braunschweig team, became a highly esteemed authority. With broad

support, he became President of the German Commission for UNESCO in 1964, a position he held until his death in 1974. He felt personally committed to creating and maintaining an international interconnectedness within the framework of UNESCO’s peace mission.

Following Eckert’s sudden death, it was entirely natural for me to support the proposal put forward by Alfred Kubel, then Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, to ensure the future of the work already carried out by Eckert and his colleagues towards peace and democracy through education on international understanding and tolerance. I am still gratified that we succeeded, through cross-party cooperation, to transform Eckert’s personal initiatives into a legally recognised institution known as the Georg Eckert Institute. Despite constitutional objections from Bavaria, we managed to reach a compromise with the support of the vast majority of the federal states. I am glad that later, during a dramatic period of crisis in public finances, we were able not only to preserve the institute but even to carefully expand it. Its admission to the Leibniz Association has since created a financially secure foundation.

Equally important, however, is the consistently acknowledged quality of the discussion events and research work – which always followed the spirit of UNESCO’s principles. The German Commission for UNESCO, of which I had the honour of serving

as president from 2002 to 2014, places great value on the institutional ties with the GEI, as they serve to strengthen peacebuilding efforts.

The time has long passed when the focus was essentially on texts in school textbooks and related didactic and methodological questions. The media landscape, in all its diversity, has reached all institutions of education, training, science and culture – including, of course, the GEI. The rapid development in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) also presents new challenges for the researchers at the Georg Eckert Institute. I am certain that they will also master this academic hurdle with aplomb.

The work of the GEI has always been and remains focussed on both the technical and political aspects of historical or geographical facts when they are interpreted in texts and words, graphics and images. The perennial question remains: How can the poisoning of the ‘human spirit’ be exposed and overcome? Unfortunately, this question has lost none of its relevance; rather, it has gained in urgency, partly because new technical possibilities, such as deepfakes and bots, provide fresh fuel for insidious manipulation.

The old core questions present themselves in a new guise. What is fact, what is fake? This was just as difficult, or impossible, to discern for the contemporaries of forgeries such

as the Donation of Constantine in the Middle Ages, as it is today with ‘documents’ produced using digital photography. Research using documentary material must itself employ new methods. The use of AI is becoming the norm, while copyright has become a pawn of economic interests. This will have consequences for all media, including many that are still unforeseeable. The recurring temptation to sacrifice memory to political calculation must be countered through tenacious work towards peace. In this sense, the work of the Georg Eckert Institute is also an important contribution to ‘Education for Sustainable Development’, a key element in achieving UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

Georg Eckert, through his diverse international network, laid a forward-looking foundation for scientifically grounded work towards peace, perpetuating the spirit of UNESCO. Today’s GEI continues his work. I congratulate the highly motivated staff of the institute, to whom the GEI owes its excellent reputation, on their achievements. I am certain that the guiding principle of ‘constructing peace in the minds of people’ will remain a strong bond between the GEI and UNESCO long into the future.

**Walter Hirche**

President of the German Commission for UNESCO 2002–2014

## “Education is the foundation for peace and solidarity, with textbooks serving as a powerful vehicle.”

UNESCO was created on the conviction that the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind, grounded in justice, human rights and human dignity, were essential for lasting peace. Since its inception in 1951, the International Textbooks Institute, now the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute, has shared this same unequivocal commitment: advancing education’s unique potential to shape a safer, more sustainable and more equitable future for all.

This vision is under attack today, as are the international law and the multilateral system that underpins it. This has a direct and long-lasting impact on the right to education and the lives of young people, globally.

The numbers alone are alarming. Today, over 270 million children and young people are out of school, a decline of barely one percentage point over an entire decade. The causes are painfully familiar: poverty, conflict, state collapse, forced displacement, climate disruption, discriminations and gender inequality. These are not isolated crises; they are interconnected manifestations of a global system under profound stress.

At the same time, national education budgets are being squeezed by competing priorities, notably those related to protracted conflicts. Official development assistance is declining. And the result is predictable: as global geopolitical dynamics are shifting, education – the very foundation for peaceful and just societies – is too often sacrificed to manage immediate crises rather than prevent future ones.

This is a dangerous miscalculation. When education systems are weakened, societies lose their most effective long-term mechanism for social cohesion, prosperity, democratic participation, dialogue, and the prevention of violence. The consequences are not abstract: they can be measured in lives lost, rights eroded, inequalities deepened and societies fractured.

This is precisely why education for peace – the core mission of the Georg Eckert Institute – must return to the centre of global policy discussions. Not just as a slogan, but as the backbone of every learning system, from early childhood throughout life.

Member States must therefore take a hard look at how multi-lateral action can more effectively address the root causes of conflict, exclusion and violence today and strengthen the

defenses of lasting peace through education – for peace does not begin where violence ends. Sustainable peace is an active process that is reliant on the daily actions and commitment of individuals, institutions and societies to address injustices, uphold human rights, and resolve conflicts through dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation. Sustaining peace requires a strong foundation of inclusive, democratic and participatory governance, anchored in the rule of law and the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development, adopted consensually in 2023 by all UNESCO Member States, recognizes that education is not only about skills acquisition and employability but is also about dignity, equity, inclusion, sustainability. The Recommendation recognizes education as a transformative process and a public good, capable of addressing the root causes of violence and exclusion. It calls Member States to embed education for peace and human rights across all dimensions of learning; to strengthen the teaching of history – including violent pasts and their legacies; to cultivate empathy, critical thinking, and respect for human dignity; to equip learners with the skills to navigate digital spaces safely and critically;

and to ensure that education systems themselves model inclusion, equity, justice and non-discrimination.

This has been the spirit of the long-standing cooperation between UNESCO and the Georg Eckert Institute: ensuring that textbooks and other educational media promote a more responsible, critical and plural understanding of how our societies function and identities are built. This commitment is reflected, more recently, in our joint publications on Holocaust education, racism and antisemitism.

In a world where political cooperation is faltering, education remains the most powerful, scalable means to effectively build the foundations of peaceful coexistence, international understanding and global solidarity– and textbooks and other educational media can be such vehicles. This has always been UNESCO and GEI’s shared credo and, for organizations created in the aftermaths of the worst of times, it must remain an enduring ethical responsibility.

**Karel Fracapane**, Programme Specialist,  
Section for Global Citizenship and Peace Education, UNESCO



# INTRODUCTION

UNESCO convened for its first General Conference in 1946. Five years later the International Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks<sup>1</sup> was founded in Braunschweig. What unites these two institutions is that, from the very beginning, they have addressed issues of reconciliation, mutual understanding and the improvement of materials for teaching and learning in schools. And they have done so through close collaboration that has now spanned nearly eight decades.

This brochure has been produced to mark the respective 80th and 75th anniversaries of the founding of UNESCO and the Georg Eckert Institute. It traces the joint activities of these two institutions by highlighting key aspects of their collaboration as well as the changes in international textbook work over the past three-quarters of a century.

The first part examines the most important aspects of their cooperation at the institutional level: from UNESCO's involvement in the founding of the International Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks, through the connection between the Institute and the UNESCO General Conference, to the role of the German Commission for UNESCO, the bestowal of the UNESCO Peace Prize on the Braunschweig Institute, and finally the development of bilateral textbook commissions.

The second part focuses on the substantive aspects of the collaboration. It highlights the wide variety of topics that have been the subject of international textbook work over the decades. These include reconciliation and understanding, human rights, inclusion and diversity, racism, Holocaust education, and anti-Semitism.

The third part examines the spaces of joint cooperation. While international textbook activities were initially limited to Western Europe, the scope of joint action expanded to Asia as early

as the 1950s, to Eastern Europe after 1989, and in recent decades to the Middle East and Africa.

The fourth part summarises the products of this collaboration, which have ranged from the *UNESCO Newsletter* and the *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision* to joint guidelines and recommendations. The various guidelines, and the *Guidebook*, communicate the insights gained through practical experience, but have always been primarily based on academic studies that have both reflected and enriched research on the substantive topics.

After a brief look ahead at the future challenges facing international textbook development the last part documents excerpts from selected bilateral textbook commissions, recommendations, guidelines, and reports that illustrate the various types of outcomes resulting from the collaboration between the GEI and UNESCO over the past eight decades.


This brochure does not aim to be a definitive history of UNESCO or of the GEI. Many aspects of the activities of both institutions in the field of education, as well as in textbook development, could therefore not be included here. Rather, the focus is on recounting the history of the cooperation between the two institutions – and thus a history of an international relationship in a field that has lost none of its significance to this day.

We are indebted to the staff of the UNESCO archive in Paris for their support during the research for this publication as well as those at the Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin and the Lower Saxony State Archive in Wolfenbüttel. Our thanks also go to our colleagues at the Georg Eckert Institute, Lenja Gloger, Hannah Salk, Catrin Schoneville, Nicola Watson and Wibke Westermeyer, for their work on the design, editing and translation.

<sup>1</sup>The Institute has changed its name several times since 1951. The most significant of these were the change to the International Textbook Institute (ISBI) in 1953 and the renaming as the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in 1975. Its name today is the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute. For simplification, this publication will use the name International Textbook Institute when referring to the period prior to 1975 and Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) for the period after.

# INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

- The Founding of the International Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks
- Cooperation between the Institute and the UNESCO General Conference
- The Braunschweig Institute and the German Commission for UNESCO
- The UNESCO Prize for Peace Education
- Bilateral Textbook Activities

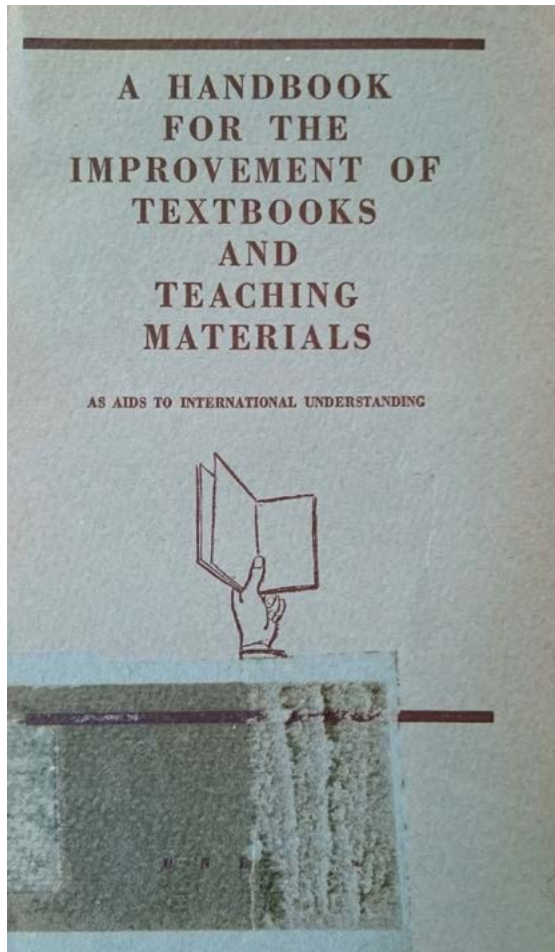


1



## 1.1 THE FOUNDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEXTBOOKS

Europe faced enormous challenges at the end of the Second World War; not only had cities and infrastructure been destroyed, but so too trust, political stability and cross-border cooperation. Education consequently took on central importance, based on the conviction that lasting peace is only possible if people learn to understand other nations and to break down prejudices.

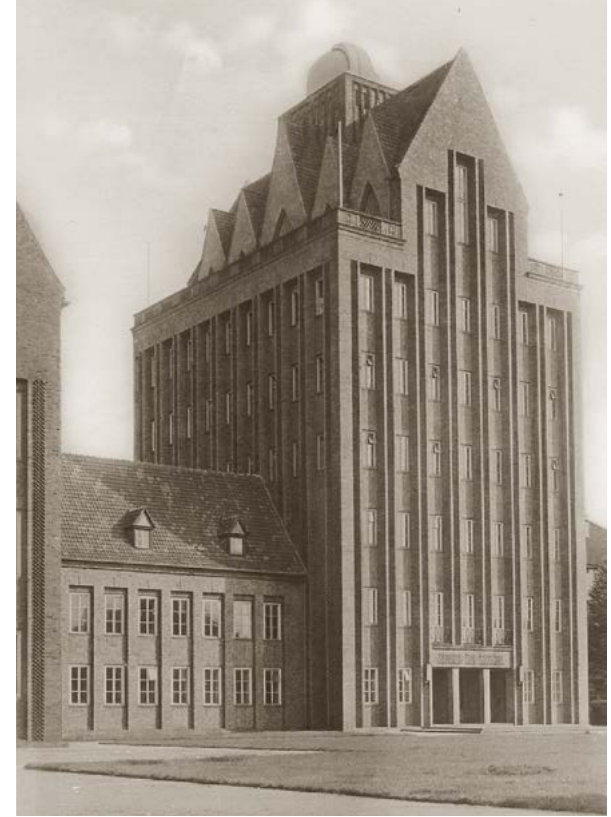


In the interwar period, initial efforts had already been made toward such peace education within the framework of the League of Nations, and UNESCO, which was founded in 1945, built upon this foundation. In the twenty years following the war the organisation was particularly committed to a democratic renewal of education systems. A key concept in this work was international understanding, which for UNESCO meant more than simply formulating abstract ideas but rather implementing concrete measures: teaching materials were to be revised, new content introduced, and teachers trained accordingly. The goal was to convey a view of history and the world that was not distorted by nationalism but which incorporated other perspectives.

The revision of textbooks was viewed as particularly critical because they significantly shape how young people perceive history, politics, and other countries. By 1946 UNESCO had already adopted a programme for international textbook revision at its first General Assembly. It contained specific criteria outlining how teaching materials should be designed in order to promote international understanding and peace among peoples. These included an objective and balanced presentation of history, the avoidance of nationalistic distortions, the consideration of different perspectives and the promotion of critical thinking. UNESCO consequently produced a series of programmatic publications in its early years, such as teaching materials on human rights in 1949 and a 1950 study on 'Tensions Affecting International Understanding', which were intended to ensure that textbooks no longer reproduced enemy stereotypes or prejudices but instead contributed to mutual understanding. A groundbreaking publication for the field of textbook revision was *A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding*, released in 1949, which formulated the goals of textbook revision into guidelines and provided practical advice on the implementation of recommendations for textbook improvement.



UNESCO Headquarters in Paris



Kant Hochschule (Teacher Training College), Braunschweig

Germany, too, soon played an important role in these UNESCO activities. Following preliminary approaches, UNESCO decided in 1949 to include West Germany in its programmes. These efforts focused, among other things, on the exchange of educational ideas, the dissemination of UNESCO materials, the promotion of teaching about the United Nations, and, in particular, the revision of German textbooks. A year later, in 1950, the Federal Republic of Germany officially became a member of UNESCO. They had already formed a committee to regulate work within UNESCO, which later became the German Commission for UNESCO.

The revision of textbooks in Germany at that time was part of the allied 're-education' programme, which aimed to fundamentally reform the educational system in order to overcome Nazi ideologies and anchor the system to democratic values. Responsibility for this process initially lay with the occupying powers and, in the British zone, the educator Terence J. Leonard played a particularly important role. He saw textbook reform as a central tool for promoting democratic thinking and worked closely with German experts from the beginning. Among Leonard's most important partners was the historian

and educator Georg Eckert. Eckert had been working at the Teacher Training College in Braunschweig since 1946 and was deeply engaged in improving history instruction. He was convinced that textbooks must be critically reviewed and coordinated internationally. He joined other teachers in urging for reforms in teacher education and was active in numerous organisations. He was the inaugural chair of a Committee for History Education founded by the Consortium of German Teaching Unions in 1948, which explicitly advocated for international cooperation in textbook revision.

The British occupying authorities were not Eckert's only partners on aspects of textbook revision. As a member of the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) (previously the German Committee for UNESCO Work), he initiated the establishment of the DUK's Committee for Textbook Improvement in 1951.

The principles adopted by this committee were presented by Eckert at a seminar organised by UNESCO in Brussels in 1950. At this seminar, the criteria for organising international book discussions were developed.

*The Group specified certain conditions which it considered essential to the success of mutual textbook activities, such as the following:*

- a) The work must be done by professional groups, quite voluntarily, rather than by government officials or under their control. Such professional groups should be organized where they do not already exist.*
- b) It is desirable that the participating experts have personal contacts, if possible, by means of joint meetings.*
- c) Mutual textbook studies should be carried out not only in history but also in such fields as geography.*
- d) Textbook authors and editors should participate, as well as teachers and scholars.*

*(Better History Textbooks, International Education Seminar on the Improvement of Textbooks, Paris: UNESCO, 1951, p. 14.)*

Such seminars, that brought together experts from various countries to discuss their experiences in textbook revision, were a central component of the UNESCO strategy overseen by Richard Perdeu, head of UNESCO's Textbook Division. Fundamental principles for international textbook revision were established at the Brussels seminar: cooperation should not be directed by governments, but by independent experts. Initiatives should arise from professional practice, they should not



Georg Eckert began work on international textbooks here in 1946

be politically mandated, and professional organisations should facilitate contact among the participants. These principles marked an important policy shift: While UNESCO had originally also envisaged government measures, practical experience had shown independent cooperation to often be more effective. The Brussels seminar led to numerous bilateral textbook discussions between Germany and other European countries such as France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.



The International Textbook Institute on the top floor, Braunschweig 1953

A highlight of these early developments was the founding of the International Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks at the international history teachers' conference, which was held over Easter 1951 in Braunschweig. This conference, which was the follow-up to the Brussels conference, was organised by Eckert on the initiative of the Consortium of German Teaching Unions. UNESCO representative Richard Perdeu and experts from many European countries participated. Its aim was to secure long-term international cooperation and advance concrete projects. The new institute was intended to serve as a platform for the analysis of textbooks, and to develop recommendations, foster international contacts and implement UNESCO's work in practice.

*'I believe that this conference will be of decisive importance for UNESCO's work in Germany. It is very important that UNESCO can demonstrate concrete achievements here. A successful conference of this kind would be a step forward'*

(Translated from: Letter from Georg Eckert to Richard M. Perdeu, UNESCO Department of Education, dated 24 January 1951. Lower Saxony State Archives, Wolfenbüttel State Archives, 143 N, Ref. 2009/069, No. 125.)

The International Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks became the International Textbook Institute in 1953 and developed over the following decades into an internationally recognised textbook clearing house for UNESCO and the DUK. Textbook revision was far more than a technical revision of teaching materials – it was part of a comprehensive project for democratic renewal and peacekeeping. UNESCO played a central role in this by organising international cooperation, developing guidelines and promoting communication and discussion among experts. A key factor in achieving the objectives was the successful collaboration between domestic and international stakeholders – particularly between UNESCO and the Textbook Institute in Braunschweig. For Eckert, the founding of the Institute signified an important step toward ensuring the visibility and effectiveness of UNESCO's work in Germany. He was convinced that such cooperation was crucial to achieving the goals of international understanding.

## 1.2 COOPERATION BETWEEN THE INSTITUTE AND THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE

Resolutions made at the UNESCO General Conferences formed the basis for the implementation of major multilateral projects. From the outset, including at the first General Conference in Paris in 1946, these resolutions regularly included sections aimed at improving curricula and educational materials through multilateral textbook projects.

In order to implement the General Assembly's decisions in the field of school education, UNESCO has, since the 1950s, regularly invited the International Textbook Institute in Braunschweig to help shape major multilateral projects in the field of education through consultation, the organisation of conferences and seminars, and the development of studies, recommendations and guidelines. The first major undertaking of this kind in which the GEI participated was UNESCO's 'Major Project on the Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values'. The decision to implement the project, which was to run for ten years, was made by UNESCO at its General Conference in New Delhi in 1956. The project was intended to strengthen cooperation between North America, Europe and Asia in the fields of science, culture and education, and to discuss how best to engage and involve the general public. A central component of the education side of the project was the analysis and revision of curricula and textbooks, which aimed to lay the groundwork for the production of new teaching and learning materials that would convey a realistic picture of the respective societies and cultures in the West and the East.

The experiences gained from textbook work within the framework of the 'Major Project on the Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values' led the comparative continental perspective to be supplemented in subsequent multilateral UNESCO projects with a variety of different approaches to comparing national developments. Later multilateral projects were to expand beyond an examination of history teaching to include curricula and textbooks for

geography and social studies subjects. To this end, the Institute and UNESCO organised a pilot project which ran from 1971 to 1974 titled 'Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks: Multilateral Consultations on Secondary School History, Geography, and Social Studies Textbooks'. This project brought together researchers from Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe who tested various combinations of reciprocal textbook analysis. The results of this project led to the realisation that future multilateral projects should have a stronger thematic focus and that subject-specific textbook and curriculum analyses should be more closely linked to key competencies in both subject-specific and general school education.

The *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, adopted by UNESCO in 1974 stated that the key task for international textbook work was to identify those central problems of human development that should be at the heart of a future-oriented international education, regardless of discipline. In working to implement this recommendation the GEI has participated since the 1980s in multilateral projects aiming to develop the necessary conceptual and methodological framework to address these global problems of humanity in international education.

This included a project that ran from 1988 to 1991, and which identified central issues facing humanity (human rights, the environment, peace, social and economic development) and developed new ideas and concepts for curriculum development and textbook production related to subject-specific content on these matters. As part of this multilateral project, experts in the field met in Braunschweig and then Brisbane to develop the first criteria covering the transmission of attitudes, values and skills, in addition to knowledge, in curricula and educational resources. These criteria still underpin the four core elements of competency development in the field of



Pioneers of international cooperation in textbook revision: Gerhard E. Neumann (Council of Europe) and Ryon Kwai Kim (UNESCO)

international education. The guidelines developed on this foundation focused on the development of imagination, cooperation, conflict resolution and problem solving. This led to the development of recommendations for research strategies including action research into textbooks in the classroom.

In parallel, other multilateral projects conducted in-depth studies into those topics identified as central challenges for the future development of humanity. These included studies on human rights education, racism, antisemitism, the Holocaust and education for sustainable development.

## 1.3 THE BRAUNSCHWEIG INSTITUTE AND THE GERMAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO

**T**he development of the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) is closely linked to Germany's political and social reorientation after the Second World War. At a time when the country was internationally isolated and had to rebuild itself both materially and morally, cooperation with UNESCO took on particular significance. The goal was for education, science

and culture to contribute to peacekeeping efforts and the promotion of international understanding. Georg Eckert played a prominent role in this process and he had a lasting impact on the work of the DUK, in particular, through his commitment to textbook revision and the founding of the International Textbook Institute in Braunschweig.



Following the admission of the Federal Republic of Germany to UNESCO in 1950, the DUK was designed to be an interface between the international organisation and the public in Germany. It brought together representatives from politics, academia, education and culture and was tasked with implementing UNESCO programmes in Germany as well as promoting international cooperation. In the early years, the focus was on the democratic renewal of the education system. Textbooks, curricula and teaching methods were critically reviewed to overcome ideological influences from the Nazi era. The recognition of the enormous influence teaching materials have on how history is viewed and how other nations are perceived meant that textbook revision became a central area of work.

Georg Eckert became a key figure within the DUK, linking national reform processes with UNESCO's international initiatives. His influence was so significant that the DUK's early work on textbooks was largely shaped by his commitment. An important step was the establishment of a Committee for Textbook Improvement within the DUK in 1951, which stemmed from a proposal made by Eckert. This committee was tasked with developing criteria for the design of textbooks that aligned with the principles of international understanding. These included avoiding portrayals of others as enemies, taking multiple perspectives into account and providing an objective presentation of historical processes. At the same time, under Eckert's influence, the DUK supported the organisation of international conferences and bilateral textbook discussions, for example with France, Great Britain, and later also with Eastern European countries. These discussions were not only academically relevant but also served an important political function: they contributed to bringing former wartime adversaries closer together and fostered mutual trust.

The relationship between the DUK and the Braunschweig-based Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks was close from the beginning and allowed the Institute to carry out the substantive work of textbook analysis and revision while maintaining close contacts within UNESCO and with other national commissions. This collaboration was particularly evident in the organisation of bilateral and multilateral projects. Cooperation with Asian and African partners had been established as early as the 1950s. The conferences between German and Indonesian historians, which took place in Braunschweig in 1957, are an example of such partnerships, where the perspectives of formerly colonised societies were given greater consideration for the first time. The participants emphasised the importance of national liberation movements and called for a nuanced and critical portrayal of the effects of colonial rule. Such projects helped broaden the strongly Eurocentric perspective that had been evident in school textbooks.

The DUK's primary role was that of sponsor and facilitator. It not only supported the organisation of conferences such as those mentioned above but also the translation of their findings into concrete recommendations for textbook authors and for classroom instruction. The Braunschweig Institute served as a research hub, providing research findings and coordinating international collaborations. Eckert's election to the role of president of the DUK in 1964 lent the partnership further momentum. After his death in 1974, the joint work was able to continue with official backing when the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research was founded in 1975 as an independent institution by the Lower Saxony state parliament, with the DUK represented on its board of trustees.

This cooperation remained of great importance in the decades that followed. The DUK played a key role in initiating further



bilateral textbook discussions with countries of the former Eastern Bloc, including Poland, Yugoslavia and Romania. Of particular note is the German-Polish cooperation, which intensified in the early 1970s and culminated in a formal agreement between the UNESCO commissions of both countries in 1972. The resulting Joint German-Polish Textbook Commission is an outstanding example of how dialogue could be fostered even across systemic political boundaries, thereby supporting reconciliation processes. The climax of this process was the publication of the joint German-Polish history textbook series *Europe – Our History* (Europa – Unsere Geschichte), between 2016 and 2020.

With the end of the Cold War and German reunification, Braunschweig once again became an important hub for international cooperation, hosting the first all-German general assembly of the DUK in 1991, for example. During this period the scope of activities also expanded to include global issues. The DUK and the Georg Eckert Institute became increasingly engaged in dialogue with countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Efforts by the GEI to reduce hostile stereotypes in countries shaped by Islam were strongly supported by the DUK as were their attempts to strengthen North-South dialogue, which focussed particularly on countries influenced by Islamic culture. In 1997, the DUK, together with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, organised a UNESCO forum on the topic of 'History Textbooks for the 21st Century'. Numerous other joint projects have been initiated since the 1990s, such as on textbook revision in the Israeli-Palestinian context, where the Institute served as a neutral venue for dialogue between scholars and educators from Israel and

◀ Willy Brandt and Georg Eckert at UNESCO General Conference 1968 in Paris



Palestine. The comparative studies that emerged from these meetings on the portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the history and civics textbooks of both nations culminated in 2006 in a joint Israeli-Palestinian textbook *Learning Each Other's Historical Narrative: Palestinians and Israelis*.

Georg Eckert and the International Textbook Institute he founded in Braunschweig played a key role in the work of the German Commission for UNESCO. Eckert not only shaped the DUK's substantive focus but also created, through the Institute, a lasting institutional foundation for international textbook work. The close alliance between the DUK and the Institute has enabled the concrete implementation of UNESCO's goals and the establishment of long-term collaborations, and the Georg Eckert Institute remains a member of the DUK to this day.

▲ Yersu Kim (Korean National Commission for UNESCO), GEI's director Wolfgang Höpken and Rainer Riemenschneider at GEI, 2001

## 1.4 THE UNESCO PRIZE FOR PEACE EDUCATION

In 1980, UNESCO decided to establish a Prize for Peace Education, which was to be funded by the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation. The inaugural prize was awarded a year later.

In January 1985, the Federal Republic of Germany nominated the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research for that year's award.



*In his letter to UNESCO Secretary-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, the permanent delegate of the Federal Republic of Germany, Nils Grueber, emphasised the 'outstanding contribution to peace education which this institute has made and continued to make since its establishment. More than 30 years of international textbook revision in my country are associated with the name of its founder, Professor Georg Eckert. The German-French and German-Polish textbook commissions have made a significant contribution to the normalization of relations between the respective countries after the Second World War'.*

(Source: Letter from Dr Nils Grueber to Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, dated 22 January 1985, UNESCO Archives SHS/HRS/PP6)

The nine-member jury, which included scholars and politicians from Japan, Yugoslavia, Kuwait, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Senegal and Spain, decided to award the 1985 prize to two candidates: the Indian peacekeeper and president of the International Peace Academy, General Indar Jit Rikhye, and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig.

*The chairman of the jury, the Spanish jurist Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez Cortés, explained in his statement that 'Both General Rikhye at the International Peace Academy and Georg Eckert, the unforgettable founder of the Institute, and his successors have set an example enabling all those following in their footsteps to make an effective contribution to the construction of peace. This includes not only politicians but also scientists, academics, and artists – all those who are called and all of us who are called [sic] to fight the battle for peace'.*

(Source: Joaquín Ruiz-Giménez Cortés, *UNESCO Prize for Peace Education 1985*, Paris: UNESCO, 1986, 15)



Ernst Hinrichs and Amadou-Mathar M'Bow at Award Ceremony, Paris 1985

UNESCO Secretary-General M'Bow highlighted the pioneering role that Georg Eckert and his successors had played through their early cooperation with colleagues from Africa and Asia in critiquing and overcoming Eurocentric perspectives in international educational work. The director of the GEI, Ernst Hinrichs, accepted the prize on behalf of the Institute at the official award ceremony on 18 September 1985, in Paris.

Hinrichs viewed the prize as an emphatic encouragement for the Institute to expand its research; to look beyond history education to include geography and the social sciences, and to focus more intensively on the interdisciplinary dimension of international education. He identified multicultural teaching and education, the role of social minorities in textbooks, the historical and current promotion of literacy and its repercussions on the international production of school textbooks

as issues to be addressed, and emphasised the importance of future research in countering the prejudicial views held by those in European countries of non-European countries and vice versa. He saw ample opportunities to open up possibilities for even closer and more effective cooperation with UNESCO through the planned expansion of research perspectives at the GEI.

The Georg Eckert Institute proposed using the prize money of 30,000 US dollars to establish an international fellowship programme. This idea was enthusiastically welcomed by UNESCO, and accordingly, since the 1990s, the GEI has used the prize money and additional donations from private donors in political and academic spheres to establish a successful fellowship programme for research in the field of international textbook studies.



Georg Eckert and Jean Livescu  
(Romanian National Commission  
for UNESCO), 1968

## 1.5 BILATERAL TEXTBOOK ACTIVITIES

In addition to UNESCO's multilateral initiatives in the field of international textbook cooperation, the bilateral textbook discussions initiated by the national UNESCO commissions made an important contribution to understanding and reconciliation through education. The participation of numerous representatives from national UNESCO commissions in the UNESCO textbook seminars in Brussels and Sèvres in 1950 and 1951 opened the door to a series of in-depth bilateral textbook discussions, through which the national commissions were able to make an important contribution to mutual understanding in Europe after the Second World War.

The GEI initiated textbook discussions with Great Britain in 1955 and with Austria in 1956, and supported the process of fostering greater understanding between Germany and the states of Central and Eastern Europe, which had particularly suffered as a result of the Nazi war of conquest and extermination between 1939 and 1945. By 1953, the Institute had managed to organise initial textbook discussions with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; these were followed

in 1967 by discussions with Czechoslovakia, in 1972 with Poland, and a year later with Romania. These discussions with the states of Central and Eastern Europe on textbooks not only made an important contribution to mutual understanding through the acknowledgment and reappraisal of the crimes committed by Germans and their collaborators in the occupied countries, but also facilitated meetings between scholars and teachers across the borders of the Iron Curtain. The participants in the bilateral textbook discussions critically examined ethno-nationalism, which in the past had led to the perpetuation of enemy stereotypes and prejudices. They stressed the need to view central concepts of history education, such as the nation and the nation-state, in the context of their historical development and to embed the presentation of respective national histories within European and global historical contexts. They scrutinised historical examples of peaceful and productive coexistence and highlighted the potential of themes such as church reform movements, the labour movement, and international resistance against Nazi rule to convey Europe's shared history.

The German-Czechoslovakian textbook discussions had to be discontinued after the suppression by the Soviet leadership and its allies of the country's democratic movement in August 1968 during the Prague Spring. It was not until 1988 that these discussions were successfully resumed. The textbook discussions with the People's Republic of Poland and with Romania, on the other hand, were successfully continued with a clear focus on improving the quality of textbooks and on changes to textbook content. The cooperation with Poland proved particularly successful and the German-Polish textbook talks demonstrate how a project jointly initiated by national UNESCO commissions can be successfully carried out at an institutional level and how the cooperation and dedication of scholars, teachers and publishers leads to its effective and enduring development.

The Institute also contributed to the development of curricula and textbooks in the Caucasus region in 1995, in cooperation with the national UNESCO commissions of Germany and Georgia.

In addition, international textbook seminars organised by UNESCO not only stimulated cooperation in Europe across the borders of the Iron Curtain but also promoted bilateral cooperation between Germany and the states of South and South-east Asia that had freed themselves from colonial rule.

In 1954, the German Commission for UNESCO facilitated the first Indo-German conference of historians, and three years later, in 1957, the first Indonesian-German conference of historians, both of which took place in Braunschweig and adopted recommendations regarding the respective presentation of the history and culture of India and Indonesia in German school textbooks and vice versa. The discussions with Indian and Indonesian colleagues on school textbooks led to a deeper comprehension that the one-sided portrayals of the histories of India and Indonesia, shaped by European colonial rule, had to be resolved, and that school textbooks should reflect the experiences and capacities of both countries prior to colonial conquest and above all their histories since the attainment of independence.

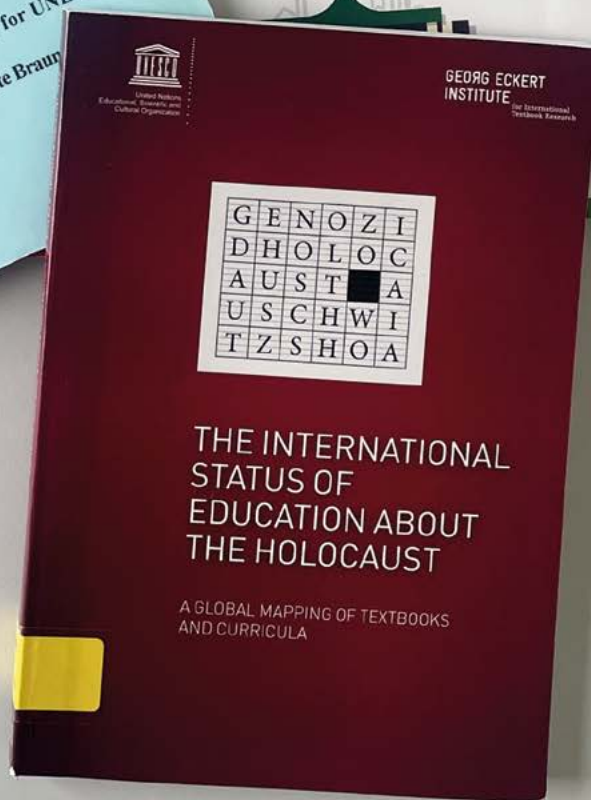
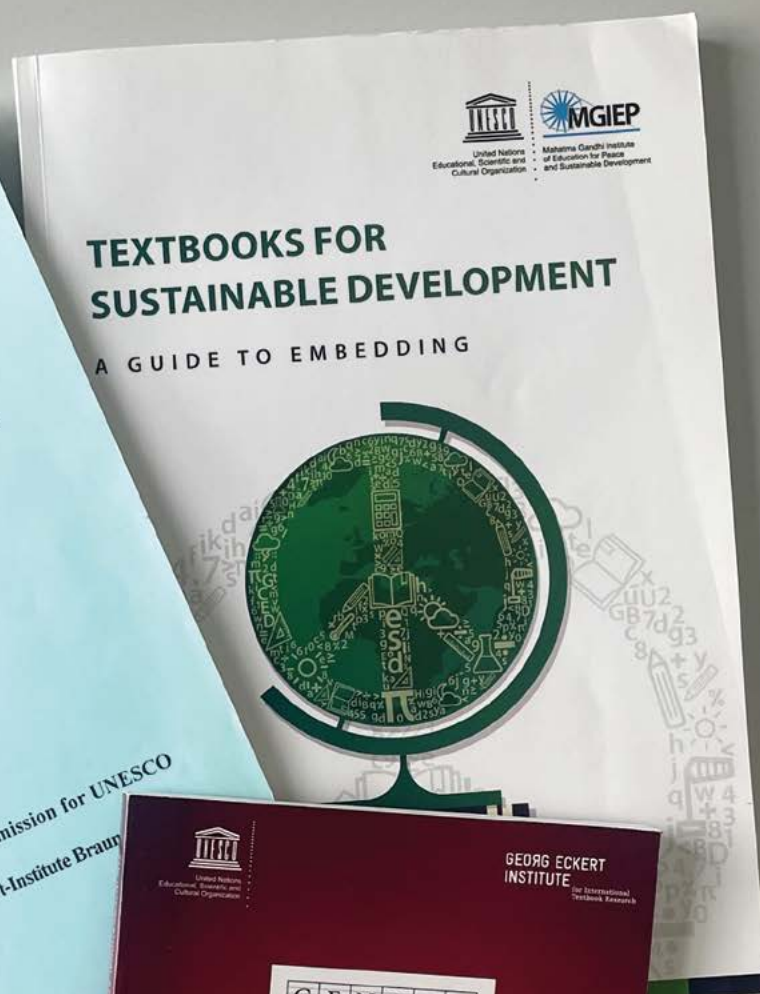
An International Textbook  
Conference at GEI



# AREAS OF COOPERATION

- Mutual Understanding
- Human Rights and Global Citizenship Education
- Inclusion and Diversity
- The Fight Against Racist Prejudices in School Textbooks
- Holocaust Education and Antisemitism

2



## 2.1 MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

After the Second World War, international textbook collaboration evolved into a central instrument of political and social reconciliation. Textbook revision was about far more than correcting textbook content: it became an instrument of peace policy aimed at fostering long-term understanding between nations. Both the Georg Eckert Institute and UNESCO played a key role in this process. The Franco-German discussions that began in 1951 were particularly influential because they served as an organisational template for bilateral textbook discussions within the framework of UNESCO. Historians and teachers worked together to critically analyse contentious topics such as war guilt, nationalism and the Treaty of Versailles. Problematic portrayals were identified in so-called ‘theses’, and alternative, more balanced perspectives were developed. These discussions were an important step toward overcoming historically entrenched stereotypes between formerly hostile nations.

Other bilateral initiatives – such as those with Poland, Czechoslovakia or Israel – also followed this approach. They aimed to jointly address controversial historical topics, reflect on mutual perceptions, and promote representations that offered multiple perspectives.

After the end of the Cold War, textbook revision also gained significance for the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. New conflicts, for example in Southeastern Europe or the successor states of the Soviet Union, made it clear that national narratives remained a source of conflict. The Georg Eckert Institute increasingly assumed the role of mediator and advisor in such contexts, for example in the development of new curricula and textbooks. This was particularly evident in the textbook commissions: despite political tensions, the German-Polish Textbook Commission worked on joint recommendations, culminating in the publication of a four-volume joint German-Polish history textbook titled *Europe – Our History (Europa – Unsere Geschichte)*. The German-Czech cooperation, after experiencing lengthy interruptions during the Cold War, evolved into a well-established partnership at

an institutional level which, after reaching consensus on numerous topics in German-Czech history, now focuses primarily on the practical development of materials for school instruction.

Since the 1990s, international textbook activities have expanded from formulating recommendations for the revision of textbooks to developing bilateral and multilateral teaching materials. The jointly developed teaching and learning materials are based on the principle of multiperspectivity and aim to juxtapose and balance different national viewpoints. Another shift has been the expansion of the range of topics to include migration and cultural diversity, memory culture and identity, as well as human rights and democracy education

The second central pillar of textbook revision, alongside bilateral initiatives, is the work of international organisations. The most important organisations in this regard have been the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The latter, in particular, soon began to look beyond the scope of European revision. As early as the 1950s, UNESCO began analysing and revising textbooks from around the world in order to overcome one-sided, particularly Eurocentric, portrayals. They launched the ‘Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values’ project, which aimed to promote cultural dialogue between Western and Asian countries. The Braunschweig-based International Textbook Institute played a key role in the project’s conception and implementation.

Although UNESCO gradually withdrew from Western European textbook revision after the 1960s and was never able to realise plans to establish national study centres modelled on the Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks in Braunschweig, the organisation continued to play a vital role in expanding textbook work to address global issues. Furthermore, through systematically analysing how other cultures are portrayed in textbooks, it was able to bring new didactic concepts such as multiperspectivity, international comparability, and quality standards into focus.



Japanese "Teachers  
Against War" at GEI 1998

Cooperation between the two organisations remained intensive in the years that followed. Georg Eckert was able to use his role in the German Commission for UNESCO, of which he was made president in 1964, to establish useful contacts and to advance textbook revision internationally. His travels and international networks were central to the expansion of cooperation, particularly with Asian countries. The International Textbook Institute participated in international conferences, studies and the drafting of UNESCO recommendations, such as those aimed at promoting international understanding, peace and human rights through education. Of particular note is the project named 'Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks' (1971–1974), which was initiated and coordinated by the International Textbook Institute. The project analysed and compared school textbooks from various countries, and was the first such project to really focus on concepts such as multi-perspectivity and quality standards.

Textbook revision underwent a fundamental transformation in the 1970s. The focus in the postwar decades had been on correcting errors and prejudices with the aim of reconciling

former warring parties through the revision of distorted historical narratives. The early involvement of UNESCO meant that even by the 1950s the work had been methodologically refined and taken on a global scope. By the 1970s the focus had shifted to one primarily of active cooperation and joint knowledge production with the goal of dialogue-oriented understanding. Despite new challenges – such as resurgent nationalism – textbook revision remained and remains a central means of promoting peace, dialogue and critical historical awareness.

Current bilateral and multilateral activities are primarily aimed at equipping students and teachers with the skills to deal with complex, controversial and globally interconnected historical narratives and societal challenges. However, textbook revision aimed at reconciliation has continued to play an important role especially in conflict and post-conflict contexts, – such as after the end of the Balkan Wars – and will continue to do so in the future, for example following the end of the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine.

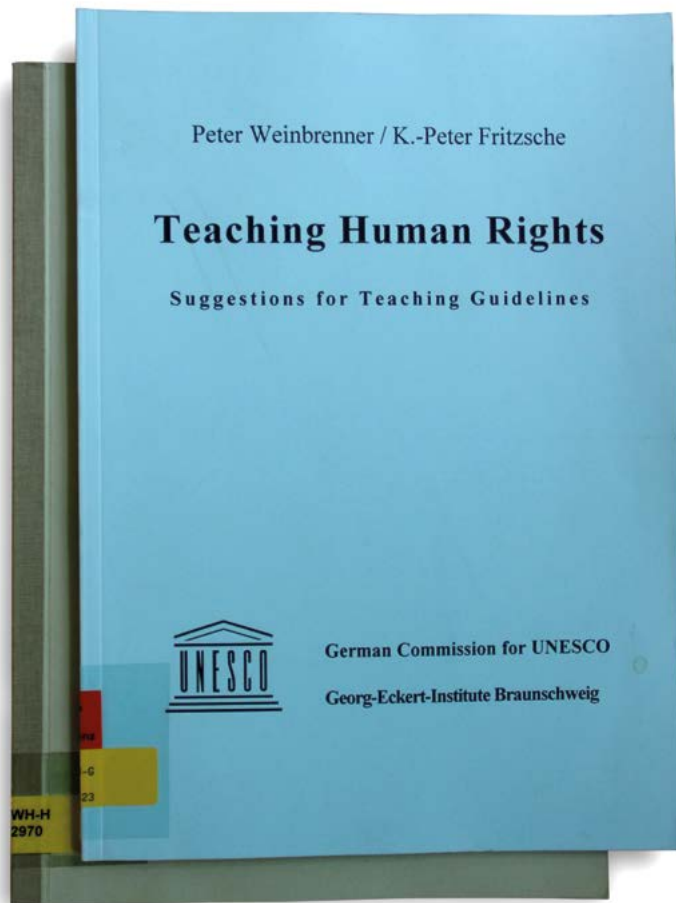
## 2.2 HUMAN RIGHTS AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

With the adoption of the *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* at the UNESCO General Conference in 1974, the issue of human rights took on central importance for UNESCO's work in the field of international education. The General Assembly's Recommendation was built upon at the International Conference on Education for Human Rights and Democracy in Montreal in 1993, and proposals for its application in the field of international textbook research were formulated.

Since the 1990s, the GEI has addressed the topic of human rights in textbook analyses both as a standalone subject and within the framework of work on comprehensive democracy education, in which the *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* was to be applied to curriculum development and the production of educational media. The GEI organised two conferences, the first in December 1992 and the second in February 1993, on the portrayal of human rights in textbooks, which were attended by academics from 18 countries in Europe, the Americas, Australia and the Middle East. In 1994, selected textbook studies were published in the journal *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, and the GEI, in collaboration with UNESCO, developed guidelines for the teaching of human rights, which linked the subject-specific instruction of the topic with the development of attitudes and values, and the cultivation of intercultural and action skills.

Researchers at the GEI developed a list of questions to serve as the basis for future textbook studies on human rights. In guidelines developed on the subject, they emphasised the need to address the various dimensions and levels of human rights – from individual rights, through group-based rights, to international and global rights. It was recommended that the topic be presented in the context of its historical development, with attention given to the different 'generations' of human rights.

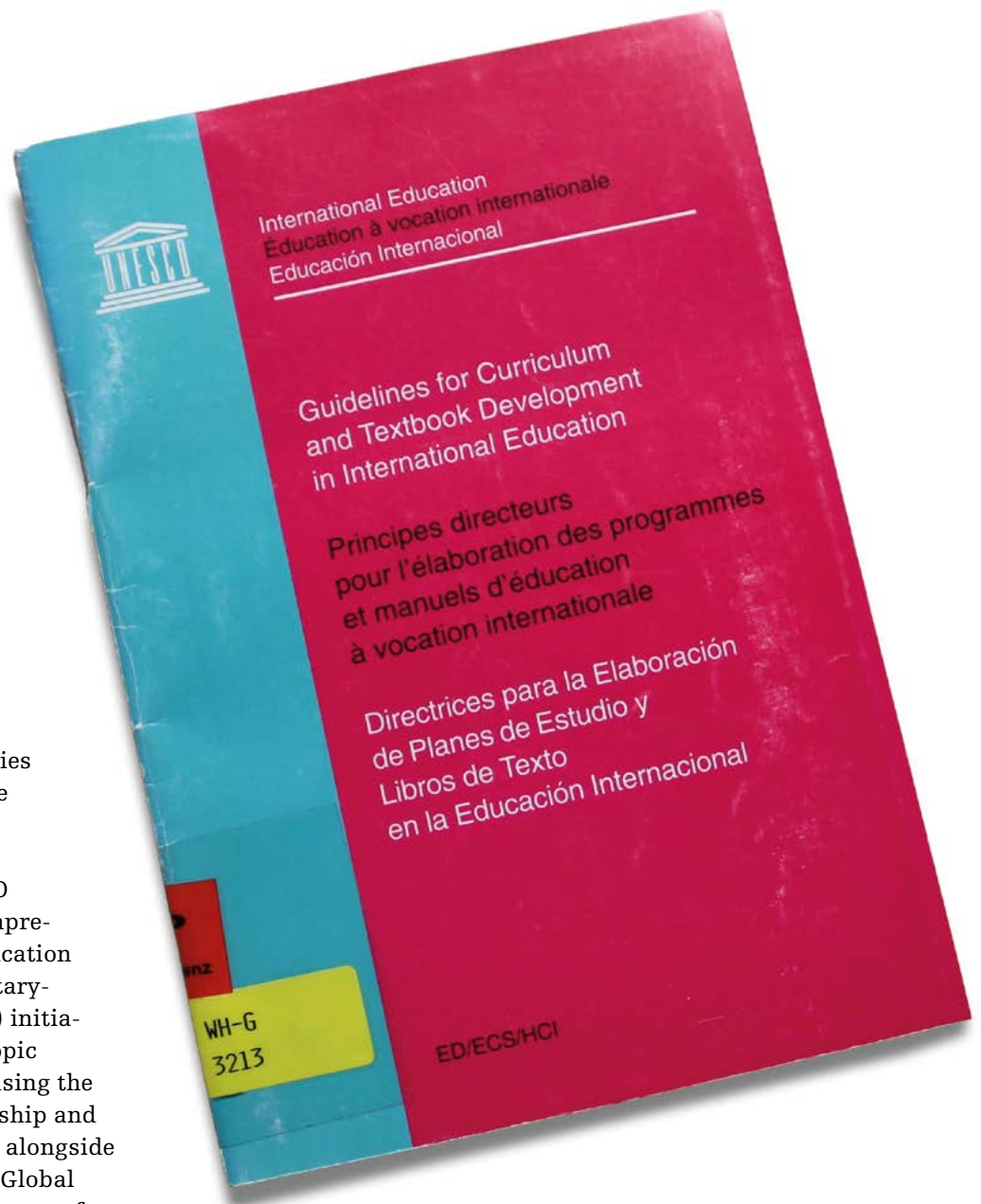
The three 'generations' into which human rights can be divided each developed against the backdrop of specific historical events. When addressing the first generation, the focus should be on citizens' political rights with regards to the state and their participation in shaping the political order. The second generation of human rights expanded beyond the political sphere to include the social, economic and cultural spheres. The third generation then defined human rights that could claim universal validity such as the right to development or to peace. Curricula and educational media should



consider the perspective of others' rights and contrast the portrayal of human rights violations with the work of organisations dedicated to the protection and defence of human rights.

Ultimately, the responsibility of the individual citizen for the protection and enforcement of human rights should be made clear. Following the publication of the *Teaching Human Rights* guidelines, which were developed by the GEI in 1993, subsequent studies contributed to a deeper understanding of how central themes of human rights education – such as racism, antisemitism, or living in a sustainable and liveable environment – are addressed in curricula and educational media. The findings from these studies formed the basis for a series of further recommendations developed by the GEI in collaboration with UNESCO.

At the beginning of the 21st century, UNESCO expanded human rights education into a comprehensive programme of global citizenship education (GCED). The launch, in 2012, by the UN Secretary-General of his 'Global Education First' (GEFI) initiative lent a great deal of momentum to the topic within global education discourse by recognising the role of education in promoting global citizenship and making it one of the organisation's priorities alongside access to education and educational quality. Global citizenship education is now a central component of UNESCO's education programme and draws on work in related fields such as peace and human rights education and education for sustainable development, among others. UNESCO has carried out pioneering and foundational work to promote understanding of GCED and to provide



intellectual guidance and technical support for its implementation. This included organising the first Global Forum on GCED in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2013.

In 2015, the GEI participated in the Second UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education: Building Peaceful and Sustainable Societies – Preparing for post-2015, which was held in Paris. As a result of activities following the conference, the GEI, in collaboration with UNESCO, authored a report in 2021 titled ‘Reconciliation through Global Citizenship Education’, which drew on case studies of various reconciliation contexts in Colombia, South Africa and Canada to illustrate how the principles of GCED can be applied in such situations. Based on academic research and the experiences of educators and policymakers, the report examined how global citizenship education contributes to sustainable peacebuilding in reconciliation contexts, and thereby fosters collective responsibility in our treatment of each other and the planet. By providing both an academic overview and key insights from the application of GCED in specific reconciliation contexts, the target audience for the report was policymakers engaged in reconciliation education within their own divided societies. This is of great consequence because the transition from a violent past to a more just, peaceful and stable society is a difficult and complex process in which education can play a key role. While ending conflicts is clearly part of peacebuilding, it is

equally important to address the legacies of violent histories, to change mindsets and behaviour, and to put in place institutions, systems, structures and cultures that can secure peace. Learning to live together after violent or unjust historical events such as colonialism, genocide, apartheid, war or slavery requires a profound and far-reaching process of reconciliation.

Addressing violence and preventing violent extremism plays a vital role within GCED. UNESCO has been addressing this issue since 2016, following the UN Secretary-General’s ‘Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism’ (PVE), by convening, for example, a ‘Preliminary Consultation on Inter-Agency Cooperation’ in Paris in 2018. In addition, UNESCO has developed guidelines for teachers and policymakers designed to support them in their respective national efforts within both formal and non-formal contexts. UNESCO’s first publication on PVE was the *Teacher’s Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism* (2016). This was followed a year later by a guide for policymakers on preventing violent extremism through education which aimed to assist member states in implementing PVE approaches in schools, teacher training, educational media and the informal education sector.

## Preventing Violent Extremism through Education



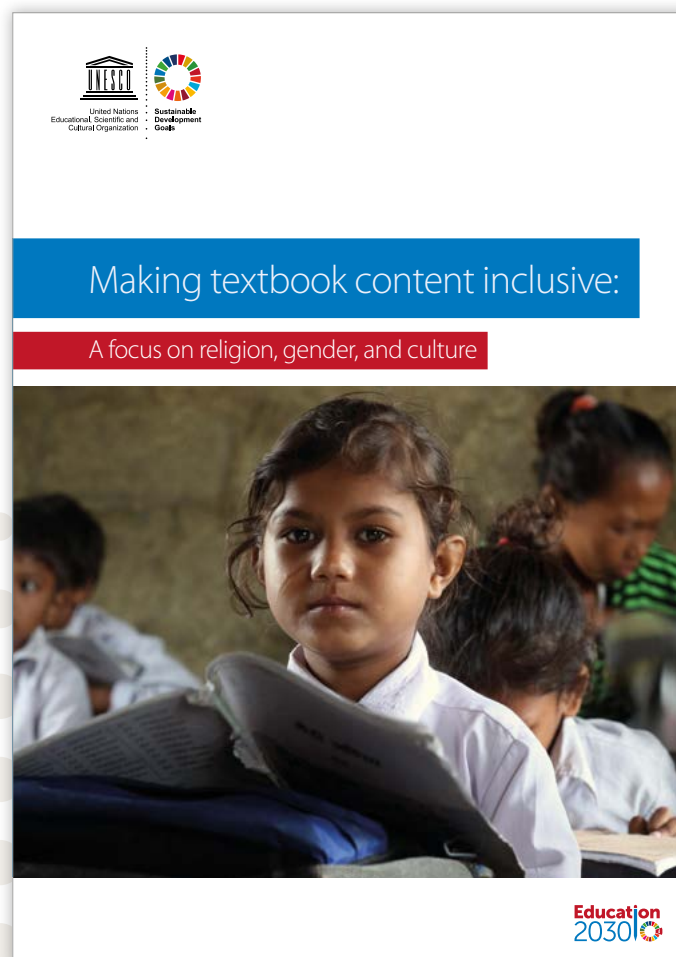
International and German Approaches  
Eleni Christodoulou and Simona Szakács

In 2017, the GEI, together with the Permanent Delegation of Germany to UNESCO, also organised a workshop on the ‘Prevention of Violent Extremism through Educational Media: Sharing Good Practices’ at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The workshop provided a forum in which to discuss practical examples from educational media and brought together organisations and individuals active in the field of PVE. The aim was to inform national debates through the exchange of information and experiences. The workshop identified the need to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of PVE and to use digital tools to build resilience against extremism and radicalisation as well as to promote tolerance. Following the workshop, the GEI launched a study that investigated approaches to extremism prevention in German curricula and textbooks for history and social studies. The aim of the project was to analyse representations of violent extremism and to identify approaches from international discourse on the phenomenon that could be adapted for German educational media. The project sought effective approaches that do not stigmatise religious and other minorities. The results of the research were published in 2018.

## 2.3 INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Given the increasing diversity in classrooms, inclusive education has become a global concept. This topic has been addressed in numerous studies and groundbreaking publications by international stakeholders, which have led to the development of frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Differentiation aims to enable teachers to address the diverse needs of learners. The resulting principles, which focus on overcoming barriers to inclusive learning processes, are particularly relevant for curricula and textbooks.

The GEI and UNESCO carried out a project in this area that ran from 2012 to 2015. It addressed the question of how textbooks can be designed to be free of cultural, religious and gender-based stereotypes. The project's three thematic priorities – religion, gender and culture – were defined during a meeting of experts at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in September 2012. Frequently the subject of stereotypes, these three concepts are among the most significant and potentially most contentious such issues and therefore need to





be examined in-depth in order to ensure they are portrayed in educational materials in a manner that promotes diversity and mutual respect. At the core of the project was the development of a training tool – a kind of toolkit for textbook authors. It consists of three modules that provide practical and theoretical guidance on how to design inclusive textbooks: the first module is on cultural diversity and addresses the portrayal of various ethnic and cultural groups and the promotion of cross-cultural competence. The second module is on religious diversity and offers suggestions for the respectful representation of different faiths. And the third module, on gender equality, addresses the portrayal of gender roles and gender equality in textbooks. This ‘toolkit’, and accompanying guidelines, aim to empower authors, enabling them to develop textbooks that are diverse, non-discriminatory and inter-culturally sensitive.

In May 2013, the three modules were tested in practice at a three-day conference in Rabat, which brought together around 40 people including representatives from ministries of education and publishing houses, textbook authors and academics from Arab countries, Africa, South Asia and South America. After going through a revision process the modules were publicly launched two years later by UNESCO under the title

*Making Textbook Content Inclusive: A Focus on Religion, Gender, and Culture* at a workshop held in Vienna in 2015 in collaboration with The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue.

UNESCO’s 2020 *Global Education Monitoring Report on Inclusion and Education: All Means All*, released in 2019, contained a section written by the GEI called ‘Textbooks can exclude through omission and misrepresentation’ (pp. 125–130). This study, based on the analysis of a sample of textbooks from 28 countries, shows that the topic of inclusion has gained increasing importance both in terms of content and structure, particularly in the context of human rights and civic studies. Social diversity is also increasingly taken into account and reflected upon, albeit with varying emphasis on the different dimensions of diversity, as truly intersectional perspectives that link these dimensions together are sporadic and rudimentary. The analysed sample of textbooks suggested that gender-specific inclusion varied widely and that the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ perspectives remained insufficient. Nevertheless, the textbooks examined showed an increasing critical reflection on discrimination against various groups, and the study observed a clear trend toward greater consideration and representation of various social groups and minorities.

## 2.4 THE FIGHT AGAINST RACIST PREJUDICES IN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS



One of UNESCO's earliest initiatives to draw attention to racial inequality in education took place between 1950 and 1967. During this period, UNESCO published four declarations on the topic of 'race' as well as three major series of publications. Initially, the focus was primarily on academic questions: the aim was to discuss race as a biological or social category. Later, however, the focus shifted significantly. UNESCO began to shed more light on the social causes and

consequences of racism, for example in the 1978 UNESCO 'Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice' or in the 2001 'Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity'. The 3rd World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001 was particularly significant as it led to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which emphasised that education must be free from discrimination for all people – not only in theory but also in practice.

One of the first milestones in the cooperation between UNESCO and GEI in this area was the UNESCO project 'Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks', which ran from 1971 to 1974 and was coordinated primarily by the GEI. The project focused in particular on how other cultures, nations and ethnic groups are portrayed in educational media. The analyses clearly showed that many school textbooks reproduced stereotypical and simplistic images and often contained implicitly racist patterns of thought. For example, non-European societies were frequently portrayed as backward or less developed, while European perspectives served as the benchmark.

The results of this project had far-reaching consequences.

It led to the development, for the first time, of concrete criteria that could be used to identify, and consequently avoid, discriminatory portrayals in textbooks. These criteria included calls for a multi-perspective approach – that is to say, the incorporation of diverse cultural viewpoints – as well as a critical examination of colonial and racist narratives. The *Recommendation Concerning International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* adopted by UNESCO in 1974, explicitly stated that education systems should actively contribute to combating racism and discrimination. Textbooks were identified as a central medium in this regard, as they have a lasting impact on students' understanding of history and on their worldview.

The scope of cooperation between UNESCO and the GEI has broadened further in this century, with an increased emphasis on modern forms of racism. This has included, for example, the portrayal of migration, religious minorities and cultural diversity.

A significant joint project in this area was the study *Unmasking Racism: Guidelines for Educational Materials*, which was completed in 2022 and presented to the public the same year at UNESCO's Second Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination in Mexico City. The study brings together academic findings from international textbook analyses that investigate the forms in which racism is manifested in edu-

cational media worldwide. It also serves as a guide offering detailed recommendations on how to combat racism in textbooks and how to promote anti-racist understanding through textbooks. The study contains concrete recommendations spanning four levels: Firstly, specific recommendations provide guidance on particular discourses; secondly, general recommendations provide a cross-contextual overview of relevant criteria; thirdly, recommendations for addressing racism as a textbook topic aim to foster reflection on racism in terms of its societal scope and impact; the final level contains proposals for framework conditions that enable the development of educational media that are sensitive to racism, beyond the level of material content.



## 2.5 HOLOCAUST EDUCATION AND ANTISEMITISM

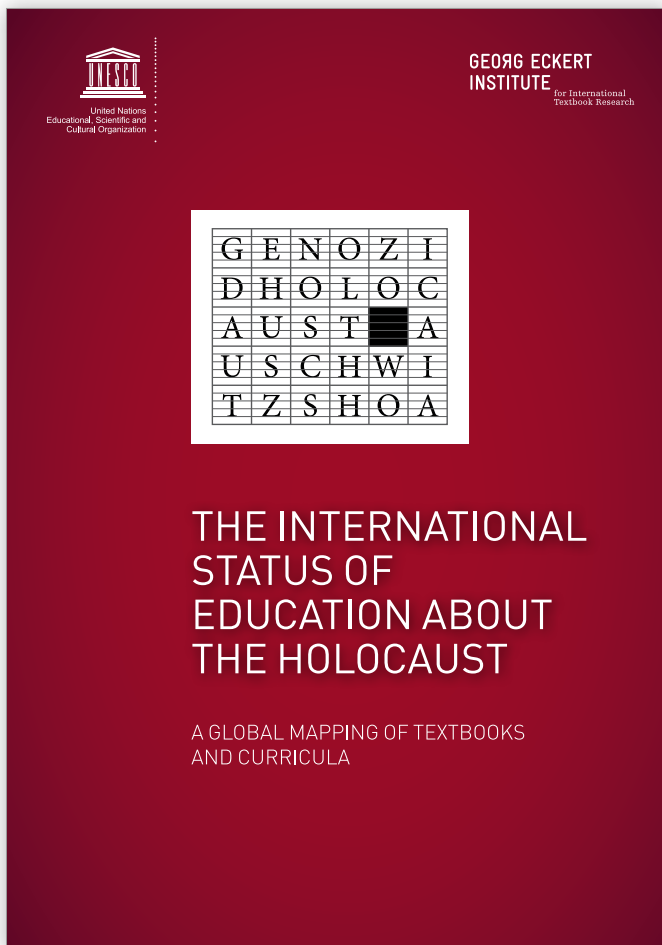
Addressing the issue of antisemitism in education, particularly in curricula and textbooks, has a long tradition for both UNESCO and the GEI. UNESCO has predominantly focused on Holocaust education in this regard; introducing international programmes to support countries in improving teaching materials and teacher training, and ensuring that the Holocaust is addressed in the classroom in a manner that is both understandable and accurate. The organisation has also implemented targeted projects such as the European

programme 'Addressing Antisemitism through Education', which provides continuing education for teachers and reviews textbooks.

The GEI's engagement with antisemitism and Holocaust education dates back to the work of the first German-Israeli Textbook Commission in the 1980s. Since then, the Institute has conducted a series of studies on the depiction of Jewish life, Jewish history, and Israel in school textbooks and curricula across various subjects. These studies have consistently revealed persistent problems in the representation of Jews and Judaism. Jewish history is often only discussed in the context of persecution and the Holocaust, as well as from a limited national perspective. They have also documented the frequent one-sided portrayal of Israel: The country is mostly depicted as a belligerent nation in the context of the Middle East conflict, while aspects such as the society, economy and culture of the Jewish state are barely addressed, if at all.

Between 2014 and 2016, the GEI, in collaboration with UNESCO, conducted a study which examined and compared 272 curricula from 135 countries alongside 89 textbooks, published in 25 countries since 2000, for their historical understanding of the Holocaust. The report demonstrated that the Holocaust is largely portrayed according to common patterns that convey recurring spatial and temporal frameworks and feature persistent protagonists and interpretations with regards to the definition of the Holocaust, its causes, its relativisation or trivialisation, using similar narrative techniques. At the same time, the report revealed how knowledge is de- and recontextualised worldwide, as all countries exhibit narrative idiosyncrasies by emphasising specific information and the regional significance of the event. A key outcome of the study was a set of comprehensive recommendations for Holocaust education.

UNESCO and the GEI further expanded the perspective with another study titled 'The Holocaust and Genocide in Contemporary Education: Curricula, Textbooks, and Student Essays in



Comparison', which examined conceptualisations and visualisations of the Holocaust and genocide. It drew on summaries of 43 curricula, 44 textbooks and 748 essays by students from 22 countries, to examine how the Holocaust and other mass crimes are covered in curricula and textbooks and how it is described by 15-year-old students; most of whom wrote their essays before they had addressed this topic in formal classroom instruction. The study found that while the Holocaust is a central part of the curriculum throughout Europe, other violent crimes are addressed less consistently. Furthermore, many accounts are strongly Eurocentric and there is a lack of consistency across curricula and textbooks, which is reflected in students' knowledge. The study found a central problem to be that students often have only a simplified or incomplete understanding of the events. They typically focus on violence and perpetrators without considering deeper causes or historical contexts. In some cases, they also uncritically adopt the perpetrators' perspectives. The study, completed in 2021, therefore recommends improving instruction through greater comparison of genocides worldwide, more precise historical contextualisation, greater consideration of causes and consequences, and the provision of structured writing and learning tasks that would help students to develop a more nuanced and well-founded understanding of history.

Against the backdrop of the increasingly controversial public debate regarding how Judaism is addressed as a subject in the classroom and how antisemitism is handled within the education system, which has intensified since the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, UNESCO and the GEI completed a further project in this area in 2026. The project, called 'The Presentation of Jews, Judaism and Antisemitism in School Textbooks and Curricula', aimed to identify stereotypical portrayals of Jews and Judaism, as well as implicit and explicit antisemitism, in the curricula and textbooks of eight EU countries. The objective of the project report was therefore to counter the emergence of national narratives that could lead to anti-Jewish stereotypes and antisemitism or that fail to take Jewish history, religion and culture into



account. The study identified misinformation, images and narratives linked to anti-Semitic arguments and conspiracy theories as well as a lack of linguistic and contextual sensitivity. The report includes a series of recommendations that can be used to promote policy measures, institutional developments in the education sector, and teacher training programmes designed to improve the appropriateness, accuracy and representation of Judaism in school education and that can help combat antisemitism in schools.

# SPACES OF ACTIVITY

- Europe
- Middle East and Africa
- Asia



3



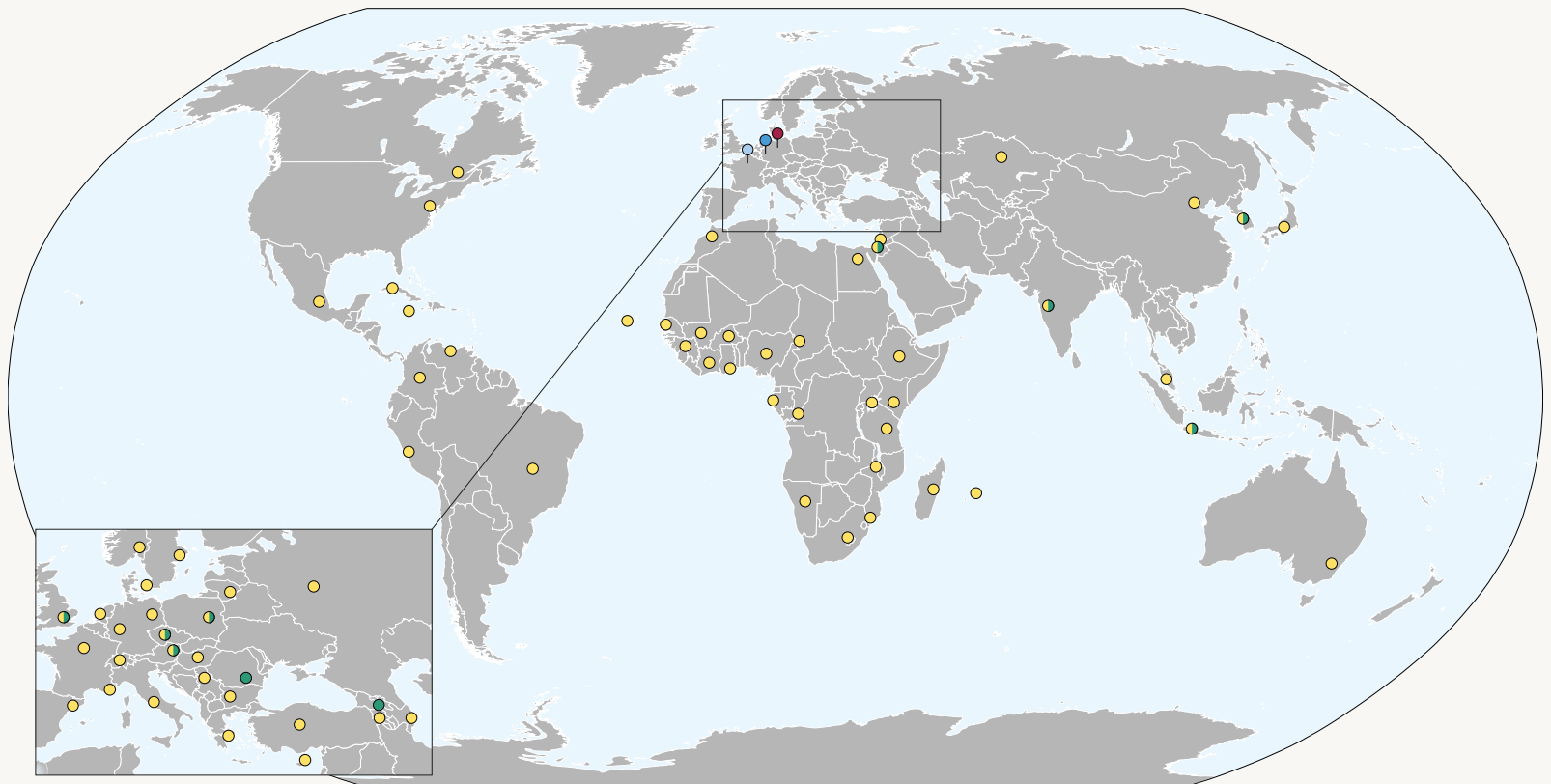
## 3.1 EUROPE

**D**rawing on the experiences of the Second World War, Georg Eckert saw promising opportunities to put into practice his conviction that history education should serve the cause of peace, initially through textbook revisions in Western Europe. To this end, the national UNESCO commissions facilitated textbook discussions with the United Kingdom and Austria.

Beyond fostering understanding and reconciliation with neighbours in Western Europe, the GEI soon also began to

enter into discussions with countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Cooperation with Yugoslavia in the 1950s was followed in 1968 by the initiation of textbook discussions with Czechoslovakia, followed by Poland in 1972 and Romania in 1973.

After the 1950s, the Council of Europe increasingly replaced UNESCO as the organiser of multilateral textbook discussions in Western Europe. UNESCO, however, continued to



play a central role in textbook work connecting Western and Eastern Europe. Consequently, the GEI was able to respond, together with UNESCO, to the need for stronger cooperation in international textbook projects between Central and Eastern European countries and their Western European counterparts after 1989, by organising seminars and workshops in collaboration with UNESCO, for example in the Baltic States and the Caucasus region.



● Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute

● German Commission for UNESCO

● United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Headquarters

● bilateral

● multilateral

● bi- and multilateral

Since the 1990s, the most important regional focus has been on Southeastern Europe. In 1998, the GEI, together with Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the UNESCO Centre for Women and Peace in the Balkan Countries, organised a textbook conference in Thessaloniki that addressed the image of the 'other' / the neighbour in the textbooks of Balkan states. In 1999, the GEI was among the coordinators of the conference 'Disarming History – revisiting the Balkans', which was organised by UNESCO in collaboration with Gotland University College and the Baltic Centre for Writers and Translators in Visby. The participants of this conference adopted detailed recommendations for international textbook work in Southeastern Europe and assigned the GEI a key role in its further planning and organisation. The conference served as the starting point for subsequent conferences and workshops that were conducted together with colleagues from Southeastern Europe. An important outcome of the cooperation with UNESCO, in which the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe were also involved, was the 'Recommendations for the Writing of History and Geography Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina', which were developed in 2005.

The GEI continues to collaborate with UNESCO on studies examining textbook development in the European region, on antisemitism, for example, and on cultural dialogue among the countries bordering the Mediterranean.

## 3.2 MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Denise Bentrovato

### Learning to Live Together in Africa through History Education



UNESCO has been actively promoting dialogue between Israel and Palestine in the field of education since the 1990s. A central focus of this effort has been work on school textbooks: since 1996, the Georg Eckert Institute has provided a safe space for Israeli and Palestinian teachers and scholars to analyse school textbooks and teaching materials and to develop recommendations for their revision. The goal has been to promote a balanced portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in textbooks on both sides through objective, comparative studies and to support peace through education in the long term.

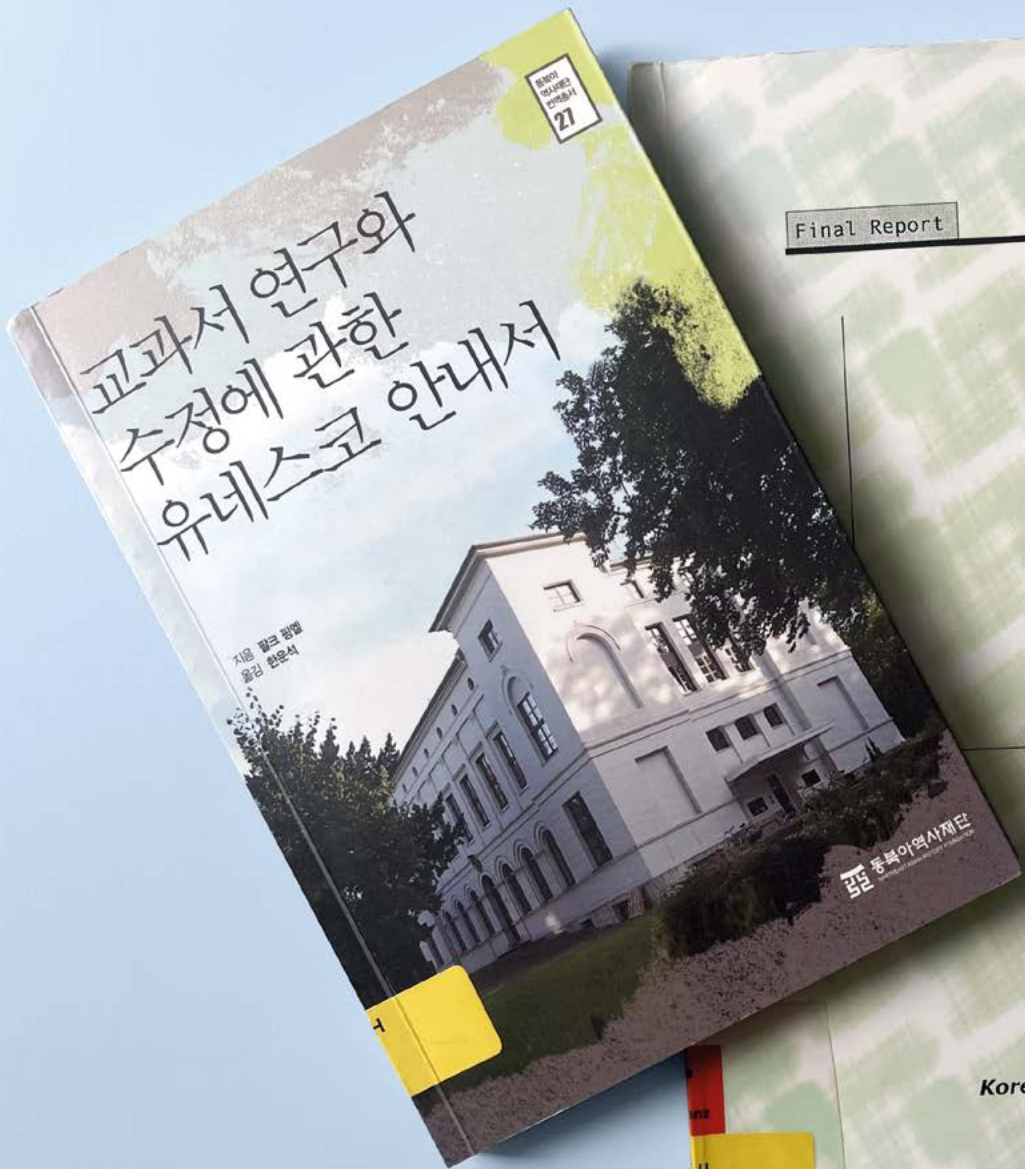
In 1990, the GEI participated in the UNESCO workshop 'Developing a Palestinian Curriculum', held in Paris. The participants discussed the creation of a separate curriculum for the Palestinian Authority, which would represent a significant step toward independent educational planning in Palestine. A year later, in 1991, two participants from the Paris workshop visited the GEI in Germany. These meetings facilitated the establishment of direct contacts between Palestinian education experts and the GEI, in a crucial step for subsequent bilateral cooperation.

The GEI initiated several conferences between 1996 and 1998 as part of the 'From Peace Making to Peace Building' project, which had the aim of systematically comparing textbooks and curricula and collectively developing proposals for a neutral and factual portrayal of the conflict. This work was particularly valuable because it was based on jointly developed academic analyses and took both perspectives into account. Researchers from both sides conducted the analyses together, ensuring that the recommendations were

not only academically sound but also sensitive to political considerations. The results of this collaboration were comparative studies on the portrayal of the conflict in both countries.

In 2017, the GEI published the study *Learning to Live Together in Africa through History Education: An Analysis of School Curricula and Stakeholders' Perspectives*, which was produced in collaboration with UNESCO's Division for Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development. The study followed a workshop on history education that had been held in November 2015 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and which involved participants from 24 African countries. It provided an overview of the state of history education in Africa and identified trends, challenges and opportunities related to history teaching and learning practices. It was based on an examination of curricula as well as an analysis of the views and experiences of education stakeholders from various parts of Africa. The findings point to a number of trends in the processes and outcomes of curriculum revisions in history education across Africa. They revealed significant differences in the frequency and intensity of curriculum revisions across the continent, as well as in the status accorded to history within national education systems. Among the trends revealed by the study was an increasing movement towards incorporating African, as opposed to Eurocentric, perspectives into the study of history and the introduction of more critical pedagogies. At the same time, the report highlighted a number of problematic continuities in teaching practices and pointed to a range of controversial and sensitive historical topics and issues in recent postcolonial history that remain (largely) unaddressed in African history education, particularly the history of recent wars, genocides and coups d'état.





유네스코 보고서  
27

# 교과서 연구와 수정에 관한 유네스코 안내서

지음 김근 광배  
옮김 한운석

동북아역사재단  
www.dongbukya.or.kr



Final Report



## UNESCO Forum on History Textbooks for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

September 24-25, 1997, Seoul

Korean National Commission for UNESCO  
German Commission for UNESCO  
Munhwa Ilbo (Daily Newspaper)

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38

## 3.3 ASIA

In the 1950s, UNESCO and its partners faced two major challenges: the Cold War and the emergence of new, independent states in Asia and Africa. Countries such as Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka and the Philippines had just gained their independence and were seeking their own paths to shaping national identity and education. At the same time, the Non-Aligned Movement met in Bandung in 1955 where it called for equal rights in international organisations and the recognition of its own cultural values.

This environment created tension between Western and Asian perspectives, which UNESCO addressed. Instigated by Japan and India, the national UNESCO commissions in Asia called in 1956 for more work to be done on the mutual recognition of Eastern and Western cultural values. This was part of a broader effort to overcome Eurocentrism and strengthen cultural dialogue between the continents. These efforts gave rise in 1957 to the 'Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values' project – a UNESCO programme designed to promote discussion and communication among schools, universities, museums, youth organisations and scholars.

The aim of the programme was to break down cultural prejudices and foster understanding of other cultures in different regions of the world. The Braunschweig Institute was able to contribute key ideas such as the establishment of international networks of researchers and educators, the creation of national study centres for history and social studies education, and the development of exchange programmes and conferences. Georg Eckert played a central role in this effort from 1961 onwards as a member of the project's International Advisory Committee.

The inaugural conference in Paris in 1956 focussed on the portrayal of Asia in Western textbooks. At the highly successful follow-up conference in Tokyo in 1958, 42 representatives from 25 countries discussed how the West was portrayed in Asian school textbooks. They debated on textbooks, curricula and the principles of a fair representation of history.

Delegates proposed a range of options such as seminars on historical figures or the establishment of exchange centres for teaching materials. Eckert ensured the European delegates were prepared to sensitively address political tensions as well as discussions about colonial history, and the presence of Soviet participants. The objective was to formulate principles for the 'Mutual Appreciation' project and to devise criteria for textbook analysis related to East-West understanding.

The project's fourth conference was organised by Georg Eckert and held in Goslar in 1962. It was attended by 40 experts from 23 countries in Europe, Asia, North Africa, North America and the Middle East, who evaluated the findings and adopted recommendations for future textbook work. The experts identified topics from Asian history to be included in Western textbooks and vice versa. Above all, however, they recommended topics that could link East and West, and they saw potential, for example, in the mutual influence of Hellenism or Islam, the violent encounters during the Crusades, or the course of colonialism. They also identified intellectual currents and guiding social principles that had shaped developments in North America, Europe and Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They pointed out the growing significance of independent African and Asian states in world politics and advocated for them to be portrayed on an equal footing with the states of North America and Western Europe in curricula and textbooks. Curricula and textbooks should allude to the potential of international organisations to further future development, using UNESCO as an example.





During this period, and before, the International Textbook Institute worked to establish a number of bilateral relationships with countries in Asia. Contact with Japan had begun in 1952, for example. Initial meetings in Braunschweig led to exchange programmes and analyses of textbooks. One example being the Japanese history textbook *World History for High Schools* [*Kōkō sekaishi*] which was analysed and translated into German, and led to recommendations for the presentation of German history being developed. Eckert also supported the founding of a textbook institute in Osaka.

Cooperation with India began in 1953 and was supported by the German Commission for UNESCO. The goal was similarly to present a balanced view of the partner country's history and culture. Two years after the German-Indian historians' conference of 1954, 'German-Indian Theses' were published in the *International Yearbook for History Education* (*Inter-*

▲ Georg Eckert (centre) with Professor Suri (right, New Delhi) and Gérald-Félix Tchikaya (left, Brazzaville), Goslar 1962

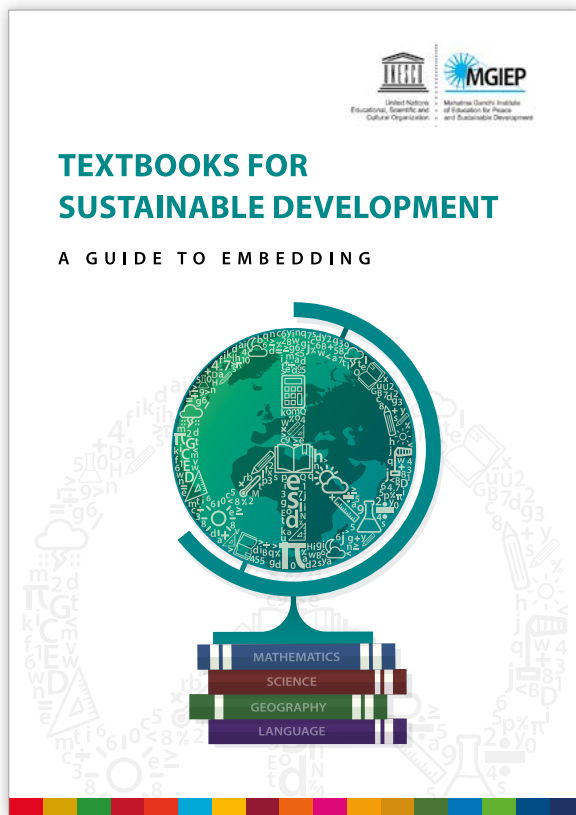
*nationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht*) which was produced by the Braunschweig Institute. In 1958, Eckert strengthened these ties during a trip to India and arranged for 500 textbooks to be sent to the Central Bureau of Textbook Research in New Delhi.

German-Indonesian textbook discussions began in 1955 and culminated in 1957 in the first German-Indonesian conference of historians in the context of the 'Mutual Appreciation' project. Further activities followed, including the translation of Indonesian curricula into German (1962) and the publication of a history of Indonesia for teachers (1963). In 1964, the GEI signed a cooperation agreement with Padjadjaran

University. The 1957 conference stimulated another dimension of activities that far exceeded those carried out within the framework of German-Japanese relations. This stemmed, in part from Eckert's close contacts with the Indonesian publishing house Ganaco, which was not only responsible for the entire textbook exchange but subsequently committed itself to mutual cultural relations, for example by proposing the translation of German children's books and language textbooks in 1959. But the German-Indonesian textbook discussions quickly transcended academic boundaries in other ways too, and expanded into general cultural relations, leading to the cities of Bandung and Braunschweig being officially twinned in 1960.

Cooperation between UNESCO and GEI in the context of Asia continues to the present day. In 2013, for example, experts from the GEI were invited to Bangkok for a meeting on the topic of 'Promoting Intercultural Dialogue and a Culture of Peace in South-East Asia through Shared Histories'. The aim of the meeting, which was arranged in close cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding, under the auspices of the South Korean UNESCO Commission, was to develop a common intellectual foundation for the shared history of Southeast Asia. The recommendations resulting from the meeting of experts guided the development of teaching and learning materials for history classes in secondary schools in Southeast Asia that promote peace and mutual understanding.

In 2016, the GEI participated in a project that was carried out in collaboration with UNESCO and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development in New Delhi. The aim of the project was to write a guide that would support teachers and publishers in integrating education for peace, sustainable development and global citizenship (EPSG) into teaching materials, curricula and classroom practice. The focus was on natural sciences and languages. The guide was published in 2017 under the title *Textbooks for Sustainable Development. A Guide to Embedding*.



# PRODUCTS OF TEXTBOOK ACTIVITIES

- The *UNESCO Newsletter*
- Guidelines and Recommendations
- The *UNESCO Guidebook*

4



History  
Art, culture  
activities  
Heritage

EUROPA  
Nasza historia  
7

EUROPA  
Nasza historia  
8

WSP

WYDZIAŁ NAUK  
HISTORII I  
PRAKTYCZNEJ

## 4.1 THE UNESCO NEWSLETTER

As early as 1946, participants at the first UNESCO General Conference in Paris had expressed a desire to establish a ‘clearing house for the collection and dissemination of data on the analysis and revision of textbooks’ and to facilitate a regular exchange of information on international textbook work among UNESCO member states. Participants in UNESCO seminars and conferences on international textbook work repeatedly expressed this desire for a more institutionalised, sustainable provision of information and opportunities for an exchange of information in the field of curriculum and textbook revision. Textbook authors, teachers and researchers, particularly from post-conflict regions, also frequently voiced their need for regular information on revision projects and the resulting recommendations, products and reports.

UNESCO had begun, in the 1950s, to provide regular updates on bilateral and multilateral textbook projects and, in 1992, started publishing an annual newsletter as part of the UNESCO International Textbook Research Network. This newsletter was printed until 2003 and was aimed at scholars, teachers, textbook producers and education policymakers who were active in the field of international textbook work or who might be encouraged to carry out future projects in this area.

*The goals of the UNESCO Newsletter were to provide information that would ‘promote exchanges of innovative experience in textbook research, encourage international cooperation in this field, activate the improvement of textbooks’, and to initiate new projects in the field of international textbook research.*

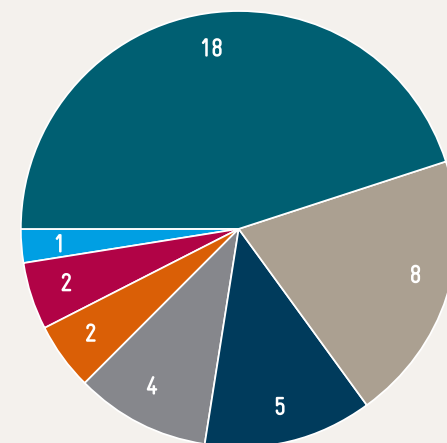
(Ursula A. J. Becher and Kaisa Savolainen, ‘Preface’ in: *UNESCO Newsletter*. International Research Network 1 (1992), p. 3)

The newsletter published information on more than 300 scholars and teachers from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia and Oceania, and Europe who had expressed an interest in

cooperating in the field of international textbook work. It also featured 40 national and international research institutions, professional associations and civil society organisations active in the field.

Above all, however, the newsletter provided a closer look at 40 specific projects in international textbook research, which included research on languages and the natural sciences in addition to the humanities and social sciences. These descriptions of ongoing international textbook research projects, some of which were highly detailed and problem-oriented, offered a wide range of ideas for expanding international cooperation.

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS  
MENTIONED IN THE UNESCO NEWSLETTER  
ACCORDING TO CONTINENT/REGION



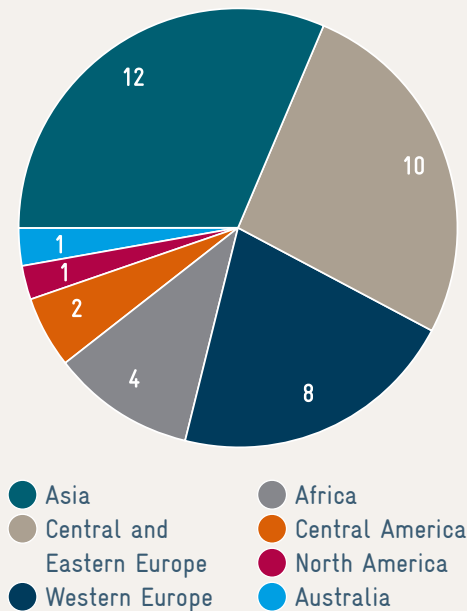
The newsletter was particularly well-received in Southeast Europe. The editorial team therefore heeded the recommendation made at the 1999 International Conference on Combating Stereotypes and Prejudice in History Textbooks of South-East Europe, which asked the GEI to develop a specific section on South-East Europe, inter alia through providing updated information and materials for the website of that network. From 2000 there was consequently a dedicated networking section for researchers from Southeast Europe on the subjects of textbook and curriculum work in the region.

Despite the GEI's efforts, attempts to recreate the printed newsletter as a permanent, online information platform

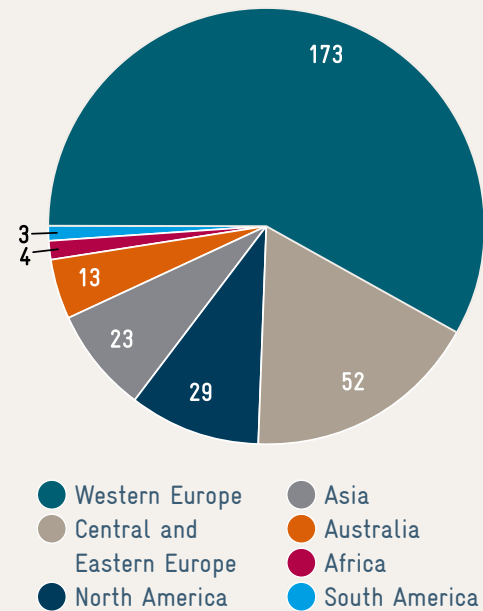
within the framework of an international research network on educational resources were unsuccessful. There is today still no satisfactory solution that regularly publishes or maintains reliable information on individuals, organisations and projects in international textbook research or provides a forum for information exchange or networking among those active in the field of international textbook research.

By founding the European Forum for Reconciliation and Cooperation in History and Social Sciences Education in 2020 the GEI has, however, managed to reestablish aspects of international information exchange.

## EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS MENTIONED IN THE UNESCO NEWSLETTER ACCORDING TO CONTINENT/REGION



## INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED IN THE UNESCO NEWSLETTER ACCORDING TO CONTINENT/REGION



## 4.2 GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since its founding in 1951, the International Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks had been in agreement with UNESCO that international textbook review should lead to concrete and practical recommendations on how to improve the quality of textbooks.

In following this objective, the Institute developed concrete and practical policy recommendations from UNESCO's general recommendations for curriculum development and educational media production. Such recommendations and guidelines aimed to support those working in educational policy, educational practice and textbook production, enabling them to organise their own bilateral and multilateral textbook projects.

The recommendations from the bilateral textbook discussions on history initiated by the national UNESCO commissions in the United Kingdom, Austria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania provided subject-specific guidance on addressing controversies in the mutual portrayal of respective national histories and international relations. Furthermore, the recommendations from the textbook discussions with Romania for the subject of geography led to concrete improvements in the substantive and didactic quality of the portrayals of Germany and Romania through the exchange of statistics and up-to-date visual material and maps.

In contrast to the recommendations from the bilateral textbook discussions, the scope of recommendations developed within the framework of multilateral textbook projects transcended textbook revision to encompass additional areas of action in

international textbook work such as education policy and the production of educational media.

The experience gained from the multilateral projects carried out with UNESCO from the 1950s to the 1970s made it clear that future recommendations needed to be more methodologically precise in order to be effective in the field of school education. The GEI and UNESCO consequently worked together to develop guidelines for curriculum and textbook development in international education, which were published in 1991 in English, French and Spanish. These guidelines provided curriculum developers and syllabus writers, authors and publishers of educational resources, teachers, school administrators and community educators, national commissions for UNESCO, ministers of education and their advisers with the first concrete and practical recommendations that would enable them to implement a comprehensive model of competencies from international education in curriculum development and the production of educational media.

In parallel with the development of criteria and recommendations for action in the field of methodology and competency development, the GEI has conducted studies on selected topics in international education since the 1980s. These studies have yielded recommendations on, among other things, addressing human rights, racism, antisemitism, the Holocaust, gender, diversity and inclusion. These recommendations were accompanied by concrete proposals for the development of key competencies in school education and their implementation in classroom practice.

## 4.3 THE UNESCO GUIDEBOOK

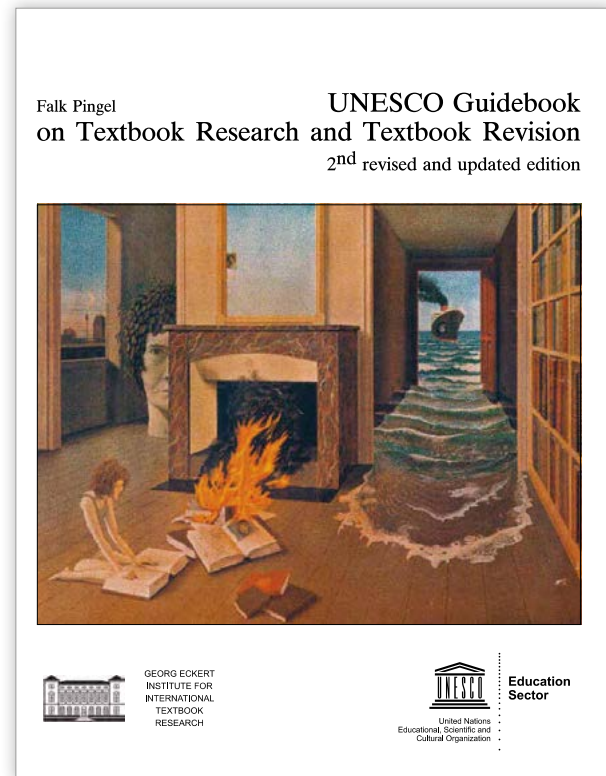
In 1999, the GEI collated the experience it had gained from cooperation with numerous international stakeholders into the *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*. The guidebook traces the historical development of textbook revision efforts, beginning with initiatives started by the League of Nations and later supported and strengthened by UNESCO. These efforts aimed to eliminate stereotypes, promote international collaboration, and ensure that textbooks reflect shared values of peace, diversity and global citizenship. The methodology section outlined practical guidelines for conducting textbook research, including qualitative and quantitative analysis, comparative studies, and consultation processes. It underscores the need for collaboration among educators, historians and policymakers when addressing controversial or sensitive topics.

Since its publication the guidebook has proved to be an extremely useful and sought-after tool in the organisation of international textbook work in Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

*'Incorporating cultural diversity into the education process may rely on improving textbooks so that negative stereotypes and distorted views of "others" finally disappear. In that respect, the "UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision" has played a very useful role'.*

(Source: Katérina Stenou: *UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity: a vision, a conceptual platform, a pool of ideas for implementation, a new paradigm*, Paris: UNESCO, 2002, p. 31)

The first edition was published in English, French, Croatian, Serbian, Turkish and Russian. The book's continued success was due in no small part to the fact that the author, Falk Pingel, released a revised and expanded edition in 2010, which was published in English, French, Arabic, Hebrew and Korean. The new edition responded to the changing conditions and challenges facing international textbook development. These



included shifts in how the role of textbooks was perceived amid the digital transformation of school education, the demands of competency-based education, and the new challenges of textbook development in post-conflict societies, which were increasingly marked by internal social conflicts between social groups.

The *UNESCO Guidebook* established a format for recommended procedures that UNESCO would subsequently apply to other areas of international educational work. The GEI contributed to the development of *Textbooks for Sustainable Development. A Guide to Embedding*, which was developed by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development in New Delhi. As mentioned above, this publication developed recommendations for embedding sustainable development into curricula and educational materials for instruction in modern languages, mathematics and the natural sciences.

# CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL TEXTBOOK WORK

- Then, Now, and in the Future

5

# 現代世界のすがた

山本正三 / 正井泰夫 / 高橋伸夫 / 森田恒秀 / 長坂政信 / 西脇保幸 / 松本繁夫 / 池田隆夫

現代世界のすがた 地理 A

地理 B

地理 B

新詳地理 B

最新版

新詳地理 B

最新版

関西の旅路

東京日本書院

J G-75 (8,56)

日本書院 発行

帝

J G-74 (1,93)B

帝

J G-74 (1,95)B

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## 5.1 THEN, NOW, AND IN THE FUTURE

The GEI and UNESCO have made a significant contribution to multilateral textbook development since 1946 by facilitating meetings between academics and teachers in Europe and beyond, thereby promoting international understanding and peace education. They played an early role in bringing the history and culture of African and Asian nations to the forefront of international textbook development and in enabling scholars and teachers from African and Asian countries to collaborate on an equal footing with colleagues in Europe and North America.

During its long cooperation with UNESCO and the DUK, the GEI has contributed to the success of numerous bilateral and multilateral projects through a multitude of studies, recommendations and guidelines, and spent many years as the clearing house for international textbook work.

*'The German Commission for UNESCO has been supporting textbook research and textbook revision for a number of years as an efficient and concrete means to promote international education and international understanding and it has been cooperating all this time very closely with the Georg-Eckert-Institute Braunschweig in this context.'*

(Source: Wolfgang Reuther, 'Foreword', in: *Teaching Human Rights. Suggestions for Teaching Guidelines*, ed. by Peter Weinbrenner, Karl Peter Fritzsche and Wolfgang Reuther, Bonn/Braunschweig, 1993, p. 2.)

Georg Eckert's vision for textbook revision was always two-fold: on the one hand, to compare and improve textbooks, and on the other, to foster an understanding of other cultures within Germany. He utilised his various institutional connections – as director of the Textbook Institute in Braunschweig and within the context of the German Commission for UNESCO – to implement his ideas. He was able, with the support of the German Commission for UNESCO, to construct a network of experts and, through the Federal Foreign Office,

he established contact with the political representatives of the respective embassies in Germany, and maintained close relationships with cultural attachés and embassy counsellors attached to foreign missions in Germany.

The projects carried out jointly with UNESCO also helped develop new research perspectives for international textbook work within the GEI and strengthened the GEI's expertise and visibility on the world stage. By awarding the Institute its Prize for Peace Education, UNESCO supported the establishment of an international fellowship programme that has enabled researchers from Europe, Africa, the Americas, Asia and Australia to conduct research projects in the field of international textbook studies at the GEI. The *UNESCO Newsletter* and the *UNESCO Guidebook* increased the institute's global visibility and recognition.

Critics of international textbook research, however, argued that many of the recommendations developed with the aim of achieving international understanding and reconciliation through education across political and ideological boundaries, were, due to the abstract and non-binding nature of their wording, unlikely to make an effective or, above all, sustainable contribution to the realisation of these objectives. International textbook work also met with scepticism among academic experts, who objected to the idea that the reconstruction of the past in textbooks should be subordinated to the imperative of international understanding. UNESCO was also not immune from doubts being cast on its effectiveness.

The historian Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf responded to these misgivings in 1967 saying 'If it is queried whether these bilateral and cultural agreements, which UNESCO and the Council of Europe have favoured so strongly, have up to now been of any value, it must be pointed out that they have at least morally committed the Governments concerned to support for all the endeavours undertaken in the field of international textbook revision.' (Source: Otto-Ernst Schüddekopf et al., *History Teaching and History Textbook Revision*, Strasbourg: Council

of Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, 1967, p. 39) However, textbook revision, according to Schüddekopf, should be established in an official capacity outside the realm of politics and ideally take place within the framework of textbook centres established on a scientific basis.

In order to successfully counter the dangers of political (mis) appropriation and disproportionate compromises in 'textbook diplomacy', it was therefore important to breathe life into the generalising formulations of the General Assembly's recommendations and the bilateral textbook discussions and to translate them into concrete recommendations and guidelines that could be applied in practice to curriculum development and educational media production. The researchers working in specialised committees and working groups ensured the independence and quality of the academic work.

The successes achieved in international textbook work over the past 75 years are currently being confronted with increasing tensions, violent conflicts and resurgent nationalism. Added to this are new challenges in the context of the digital transformation, which is fundamentally changing the vehicle of educational media. Consequently, there is a growing need to revise educational media with the aim of improving it in the spirit of international understanding and peacebuilding, taking into account both the new

opportunities offered by digital educational media and the associated risks.

Future cooperation between UNESCO and GEI must address these new contexts. Its central foundation will continue to be the integration of innovative research into an international comparative framework through recommendations and guidelines that are initiated by UNESCO and implemented through policy.



# SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES

- Recommendations from the Conference of German and Indonesian Historians (1957)
- Meeting of Experts on the Improvement of Textbooks (1962)
- German and Polish UNESCO Commission (1972)
- Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding (1974)
- Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks (1974)
- Curriculum Guidelines (1991)
- Teaching Human Rights (1993)
- Mapping the Holocaust (2014)
- Learning to Live Together (2017)
- Making Textbook Content Inclusive (2017)
- Unmaking Racism: Guidelines for Educational Materials (2024)
- The Representation of Jews (2026)

6



## 6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE OF GERMAN AND INDONESIAN HISTORIANS (1957)

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE OF GERMAN AND INDONESIAN HISTORIANS

16–18 May 1957 in Braunschweig

The examination of German textbooks revealed that the cultural world of the Indonesian archipelago and the current Republic of Indonesia are, in general, only referred to incidentally, inadequately and almost exclusively in the context of European history. In order to give consideration to Indonesian culture and the significance of the Republic of Indonesia it is recommended that references to Indonesia be included during history teaching on the following topics:

1. When discussing the Age of Discovery and mercantilism.
2. When discussing national independence movements in Asia and Africa.
3. When presenting the new political order in Asia in the twentieth century.

I. It is important when discussing the Age of Discovery to provide a general overview of the significance of advanced Asian civilisations before the arrival of the Europeans. A detailed description is not necessary so long as pupils are given a general impression of the historic depth and cultural achievements of Asian cultures and peoples. Indonesia should be explicitly and separately addressed alongside India, China and Japan. Reference should be made to the Hindu-Indonesian culture, Buddhism (the Borobudur temple, for example, which is of great historical and aesthetic significance), the Hinduism that continues in Bali and the processes of Islamisation.

In order to facilitate the treatment of this period, teaching materials and visual aids should be created by UNESCO and selected textbooks publishers. For example, maps of Asia with impactful illustrations of advanced cultures; carefully

selected images that can be displayed on classroom walls, slide shows and if possible, documentary films.

- II. When discussing the colonial age, it is important that the following considerations are made with regards to Indonesia:
- a) from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, numerous European states, particularly the maritime powers situated around the Atlantic, attempted to strengthen their economic and political power by acquiring overseas staging posts, trading posts and later, colonial territories. The colonial policies of the mercantile period should, therefore, not be viewed purely from the perspective of individual nation states, but treated rather as a European phenomenon.
  - b) These periods should be presented in a manner that considers the effects of this early mercantile capitalism on the victims of colonial policy. In the same way as many other areas in Asia and Africa, Indonesia was exploited and made to serve the interests of the colonial powers.
  - c) During more than three hundred years of colonial rule in Indonesia, significant cultural influence was limited to the relatively small upper class, however, the Dutch and, more broadly, European influence in the fields of technology and civilisation was considerably greater.

III. The national independence movements of Asian and African peoples in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries should be thoroughly considered, commensurate with their significance in global politics. It is important that there is reference to the specifics of the Indonesian independence movement and the Republic of Indonesia, as well as its fundamental spiritual and ethical principles.

## 6.2 MEETING OF EXPERTS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEXTBOOKS (1962)

### MEETING OF EXPERTS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEXTBOOKS FOR THE OBJECTIVES OF UNESCO'S MAJOR PROJECT ON MUTUAL APPRECIATION OF EASTERN AND WESTERN CULTURAL VALUES

Goslar, 14-23 May 1962

#### 6. General Suggestions

1. Centres are needed in each Member State to provide information about Unesco projects and material available through Unesco. These centres should also work in the field of textbook improvement.
2. More general publicity for the Major Project among ordinary teachers should be given by Unesco, National Commissions and national branches of appropriate international non-governmental organizations.
3. Unesco materials and services which Unesco and Member States can render often could be made better known to teachers, authors and publishers through editors of national educational journals. Materials should be adapted to suit the needs of the readers of each particular journal.
4. University departments or institutes should provide courses for teachers and lecturers for schools or for inter-school organizations on the subject connected with the Major Project.
5. The work of existing textbook institutes and research centres should be further supported and strengthened.
6. More attention should be given to the contents and presentation of primary school textbooks in the spirit of the 'Mutual Appreciation' project.
7. Lists of recommended reading matter – books, booklets and pamphlets – should be drawn up.
8. Suitable methods should be used to make textbooks a means of eliminating prejudices, and an awareness should be created of the different ways in which these prejudices establish themselves in the mind and influence thought and conduct.
9. It is desirable to have meetings between experts from different countries and especially from countries having different economic systems and ideologies, for the purpose of discussing the treatment of history and geography in the school textbooks of these countries.
10. The following criteria should be adopted in the preparation and the assessment of textbooks:
  - a Accuracy from the scientific point of view.
  - b Objectivity.
  - c Treatment of all countries with equal respect.
  - d Use of the latest reference material and statistics.
  - e Selection of essential facts and information for teaching.
  - f Choice of illustrations for geography books that reflect current stages of development.
  - g Scientific interpretation of the facts of history and social geography.
  - h Suppression of all manifestations of hatred and contempt for other peoples or races.
11. Attention should not be given only to history but also to geography, literature, foreign languages, etc.
12. For the teaching of world history in the spirit of the 'Mutual Appreciation' project, the list of some possible topics given in Annexes I, II, III of the report of Group I should be considered.

## 6.3 GERMAN AND POLISH UNESCO COMMISSION (1972)

### AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UNESCO COMMISSIONS OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC REGARDING COOPERATION ON TEXTBOOK REVISION

#### I.

In the spirit of the UNESCO constitution and its recommendations regarding international cooperation in the area of bilateral textbook revision, and in the interests of peaceful coexistence of its peoples, the UNESCO Commissions of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Polish People's Republic have agreed to the following:

The treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Polish People's Republic concerning the basis for the normalisation of mutual relations, signed on 7.12.1970, created favourable conditions for cooperation on the areas addressed in this agreement.

It is to be earnestly hoped that, in both countries, academic and educational institutions, authors and publishers of school textbooks, the teaching profession and its organisations and, not least, the general public, will make the necessary contribution to this end.

#### II.

Numerous historians, geographers and educationalists from both nations have worked for many years to ensure peaceful cooperation in order to work towards mutual textbook revisions. To this end, the UNESCO Commissions initiated the first conferences between experts in February 1972 in Warsaw and Braunschweig. A further meeting took place in Warsaw in Sep-

tember 1972 after the treaty of 7.12.1970 came into effect. These conferences delivered concrete results in the form of mutually agreed recommendations and a plan for future work; they are a good example of objective, realistic and academic discussions held in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

It is important that in the coming years, the textbooks used in both countries reflect the latest scientific and academic knowledge and that negotiations regarding the political relationship between the two countries reflect the spirit of the Warsaw treaty of 7.12.1970.

While this agreement relates principally to textbooks, it also shapes the pedagogic climate according to UNESCO values.

Both UNESCO Commissions are fully aware of the changes to which school systems, textbooks and learning processes around the world are currently subject; the improvement of textbooks should therefore be unceasingly supported by the commissions. The two UNESCO Commissions express their hope that the realisation of these principles will represent an important step in the future development of academic and cultural relations between the two countries.

#### III.

The two UNESCO Commissions recommend the following methods of working in the area of textbook revision:

1. Upon the signing of this agreement, a committee of Polish and German experts will be established, which will continue the work of textbook revision. The two UNESCO Commissions will be responsible for the formation and composition of this expert panel and will do their utmost to support its work within the limits of their capabilities. The committee will meet twice a year, alternating between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Polish People's Republic. It can, if required, convene sub-committees and working groups, solicit additional expert advice from either country or liaise with individuals with expertise in the production, publication or introduction of textbooks. The joint committee should produce reports at regular intervals detailing the progress of its work, in particular the implementation of the joint recommendations, as well as devise and consult on plans for future activities.
  2. The systematic cooperation of textbook publishing houses and others involved in the design of textbooks from both countries should be encouraged. It is particularly important that attempts are made to discuss in expert committees how problems in the other country are represented in textbooks before they are published.
  3. The exchange of information and materials that lead to improvements and updates in textbooks (statistical data, new cartographic material, images, newly discovered source material and suitable texts for reading books based on research findings etc.) should be intensified.
  4. Research stays abroad for academics and study trips for students, editors and publishing experts should be encouraged with the aim of creating an objective depiction of both countries, their history and current problems.
  5. Textbook revision should not be limited to history and geography textbooks, it must also include materials for political education, teacher training and language and literature teaching.
- IV.**  
The UNESCO Commissions agree to communicate this agreement to the governments of both nations (in the case of the Federal Republic of Germany to the respective offices of the central and federal governments). They will attempt to secure the support and assistance necessary to realise its objectives.
- The UNESCO Commissions of the Federal Republic of Germany and Polish People's Republic call on all academics, educators, textbook authors and publishers, on the press, radio and television broadcast media to work towards an improvement and normalisation of the mutual relationship, in the spirit of UNESCO values. The aim is to win over young people to the cause of a peaceful future and good neighbourly relations.
- Braunschweig, 17 October 1972, President of the German Commission for UNESCO (Professor Georg Eckert)
- Vice-president of the Polish UNESCO Commission (Professor W. Markiewicz) PA AA B 93 REF. 603/V4/586.

## 6.4 RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING (1974)

RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING, CO-OPERATION AND PEACE AND EDUCATION RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, p. 8-9

19 November 1974 The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, meeting in Paris from 17 October to 23 November 1974, at its eighteenth session

### VIII. Educational equipment and materials

38. Member States should increase their efforts to facilitate the renewal, production, dissemination and exchange of equipment and materials for international education, giving special consideration to the fact that in many countries pupils and students receive most of their knowledge about international affairs through the mass media outside the school. To meet the needs expressed by those concerned with international education, efforts should be concentrated on overcoming the lack of teaching aids and on improving their quality. Action should be on the following lines:

(a) appropriate and constructive use should be made of the entire range of equipment and aids available, from textbooks to television, and of the new educational technology;

(b) there should be a component of special mass media education in teaching to help the pupils to select and analyse the information conveyed by mass media ;

(c) a global approach, comprising the introduction of international components, serving as a framework for presenting local and national aspects of different subjects and illustrating the scientific and cultural history of mankind, should be employed in textbooks and all other aids to learning, with due regard to the value of the visual arts and music as factors conducive to understanding between different cultures;

(d) written and audio-visual materials of an interdisciplinary nature, illustrating the major problems confronting mankind and showing in each case the need for international cooperation and its practical form should be prepared in the language or languages of instruction of the country with the aid of information supplied by the United Nations, UNESCO and other Specialized Agencies;

(e) documents and other materials illustrating the culture and the way of life of each country, the chief problems with which it is faced, and its participation in activities of world-wide concern should be prepared and communicated to other countries.

39. Member States should promote appropriate measures to ensure that educational aids, especially textbooks, are free from elements liable to give rise to misunderstanding, mistrust, racist reactions, contempt or hatred with regard to other groups or peoples. Materials should provide a broad background of knowledge, which will help learners to evaluate information and ideas disseminated through the mass media that seem to run counter to the aims of this recommendation.

40. According to its needs and possibilities, each Member State should establish or help to establish one or more documentation centers offering written and audio-visual material devised according to the objectives of this recommendation and adapted to the different forms and stages of education. These centers should be designed to foster the reform of international education, especially by developing and disseminating innovative ideas and materials, and should also organize and facilitate exchanges of information with other countries.

## 6.5 PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS (1974)

PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS. THE PROJECT FOR MULTILATERAL CONSULTATIONS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS (1971-1974)

### Recommendations of the project participants

- 1) UNESCO continue to support and develop multilateral textbook studies, in particular by funding studies between groups of nations having distinct linguistic, historical but not necessarily geographical links.... At the same time UNESCO should continue to promote textbook studies between countries of different social and economic systems;
- 2) Textbook studies should consider the problems that arise from particular time periods or themes in history and particular geographical topics and not range widely over long periods, many topics or large areas. Books studied should be those appropriate for particular, fairly narrowly-defined age groups:
- 3) the International Textbook Institute in Brunswick, Federal Republic of Germany, should be asked to continue to act as international collecting centre for textbooks and as a clearing house and organizational centre for multilateral textbook studies planned by UNESCO:
- 4) every effort should be made to encourage, by a pilot project, the preparation and publication of select bibliographies, through UNESCO, suitable for use by school textbook authors writing on the history and geography of one country in another country. Appropriate advisers in contact with researchers, teachers and pupils at school should be asked to carry out the work...
- 5) consideration be given to the fuller development of the preparation and publication of brief history and geography presentations (on limited periods or major themes in history or particular topics or regions) as examples for all countries to follow at a later date, so that through UNESCO there might eventually be gathered together a complete general information service.
- 6) The development of a world network of agencies and/or experts on textbooks be encouraged by UNESCO. UNESCO should make available information on centres and experts able to provide help to authors of history, geography and social sciences textbooks:
- 7) efforts be made to encourage the strengthening of collaboration internationally between textbook authors. It was suggested that UNESCO fellowships might be funded to assist such collaboration;
- 8) Writers of history and geography textbooks should give appropriate attention to contemporary world problems when writing. For example, the problems of the environment could well command more international attention by textbook writers in history and geography as well as social studies;
- 9) UNESCO devote greater resources to bilateral and multilateral exchanges, discussions and projects in relation to the use of textbooks in schools in order to maximize the effectiveness of its programme of education for international co-operation and peace.
- 10) The final report of this pilot study should be published by UNESCO and distributed world-wide to UNESCO Associated schools, UNESCO National Commissions and history and geography specialists and institutions.

## 6.6 CURRICULUM GUIDELINES (1994)

### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Guidelines for Curriculum and Textbook Development in International Education, p. 18-21

#### Strategies for Teachers

31. In the context of curriculum and instruction, international education begins at home. In this regard, it is desirable that teachers utilize local content as the vehicle for international education.
32. Teachers should draw on the local environment and present substantive content in an international context. By doing this, they can show students how principles of international education can be found in many aspects of everyday life. A concept of community should form a basis for influencing the curricula which exists in substantive areas from the perspective of international education.
33. The following guidelines will assist teachers in preparing their students to become members of the international community.
  - (a) Teachers should endeavour to develop an international image and to model this for students by:
    - referring to the above criteria as a guide to influencing or constructing a curriculum or syllabus, especially in social studies;
    - involving themselves in the activities of the various international and national bodies and service organizations which work toward achieving international education; and
    - asking students to write to various organizations seeking information about activities of those organizations in the area of international education, and utilizing this information within the classroom and local community.
  - (b) Teachers should endeavour to bring real-life experiences and situations into the classroom by:
    - utilizing the experience of parents and other members of the community in more prominent ways such as by using them in teaching support roles in the classroom; and
    - utilizing the mass media in the classroom. Television news broadcasts and newspaper articles can be used in a critical way in order to highlight world problems. For example, students might be asked to maintain a diary of news headlines or a record of news broadcasts which have helped them to identify major world problems.
  - (c) Teachers should endeavour to utilize material and teaching methods which specifically promote the ideals of international education in the classroom by:
    - emphasizing in instruction and through curricula and written materials, co-operative goal structures as opposed to individualistic or competitive goal structures;
    - instituting various types of small group investigative models as a dominant strategy of instruction, especially in the social studies;
    - constructing an issues-based syllabus, with its foundations being the principles of international education;
    - utilizing problem-solving techniques and critical thinking approaches to issues under investigation in the social studies;

- utilizing approaches to curriculum and instruction which promote emphatic traits in students and which encourage them to see the idea of solidarity as one of the key factors in human survival; and
- (d) Teachers should be encouraged to utilize approaches to curriculum and instruction which contain a balance between process and content by:
- choosing appropriate methods of instruction, such as the small group investigative approach which implicitly and explicitly reinforces the ideas of co-operation, participation and equality amongst all members of the classroom community.
- (e) Teachers should develop skills which are necessary in order for them to recognize bias and prejudices in textbooks and other educational resource materials they use, and to pass this skill to their students by:
- taking part in in-service programmes which give them the skill to analyse and evaluate textbooks and other educational resources in the context of their own culture; and
  - developing a checklist from which to evaluate written texts from the viewpoint of international education. It might include such categories as stereotypes, assumptions (political, economic, social and cultural), emotive phrases and words, sexism, gender balance, and currency of data. The development of this checklist will be an instructional exercise in itself. Its use when critically reading material, and review following such use, will help in the systematic awareness, understanding and identification of bias.

### **Strategies for Institutions involved in the Preparation and Further Development of Teachers**

38. Institutions involved in the preparation and further development of teachers are encouraged to promote international education as a field of study. While international education may not necessarily be a new discipline, it should, nevertheless, be thought of as a discrete educational practice.
39. In this sense, the theory and practice of international education needs to be clearly identified by educational institutions as a cross-disciplinary body of knowledge which can be applied in an across-the-curriculum approach to the many serious problems presently facing humanity.
40. As such, the theory and practice of international education should be a foundation course in all teacher-training institutions.
41. The following guidelines will assist institutions to prepare their students to become members of the international community.
- (a) All deans of teacher education faculties in universities and other institutions should compare the present “teacher education curriculum” with the guidelines suggested in this document and extend or develop courses in international education.
  - (b) Institutions should be encouraged to provide a foundation course for teacher education students in the principles and practice of international education. Such a course should provide students with the sociology and the social psychology of international education, as well as appropriate pedagogy and curriculum, and skills to integrate international education across curriculum.

(c) In conjunction and co-operation with local and national Departments of Education, institutions should provide in-service programmes which give teachers the skills to analyse and evaluate, curricula, textbooks and other educational resources in the context of their own culture.

### Strategy for Curriculum Designers, Authors and Publishers

42. A number of strategies can assist the process of promoting international education through curricula, textbooks and other educational resource materials.
43. However, it is important to recognize the special relationship that exists among objectives in the materials produced, the process of instruction and the methods of evaluation. These components are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are mutually inclusive and this should be given prominence in the texts of all materials produced.
44. The following guidelines may be helpful for writers and publishers:
- (a) When writers and publishers are producing material, they should refer to the UNESCO Guidelines and Criteria for the Revision and Evaluation of Textbooks, as an essential criterion in decisions on publication.
  - (b) Publishers should reject outright any material which promote dogmatic, parochial or stereotypic images of the world community; writers might address such images in presenting a context for more balanced views of the world community.
  - (c) Writers and publishers should reject outright any material which does not present a fair and balanced representation of culture or society, or of values and attitudes being studied.
- (d) Writers and publishers should endeavour to maintain or develop a publishing programme that delivers a fair number of books each year in the textbooks and educational resource materials market dealing with the theory and practice of international education; and
- (e) Writers and publishers should be encouraged to produce, or extend textbooks and educational resource materials under a specific series titles, which may include such titles as:
- Human Rights in a Global Society
  - Environmental Education for a Global Society
  - World Population and Sustainable Development
  - The Cultural Heritage of Humankind
  - Peace and International Cooperation in a Global Society
  - The Theory and Practice of International Education.
45. If these Criteria are acted upon by writers and publishers, textbooks and other educational resource materials will have the potential to promote:
- An appropriate balance between processes and content in curriculum and instruction;
  - The dissemination of current and accurate information according to the latest United Nations documents;
  - Texts which emphasize the importance of feeling, acting and thinking as intrinsic human rights qualities;
  - The unity of mankind within a global environment; and
  - Texts which provide a proper balance and highlight the desired relationship between the national and international perspectives.

## 6.7 TEACHING HUMAN RIGHTS (1993)

### TEACHING HUMAN RIGHTS – SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING GUIDELINES

Weinbrenner, Fritzsche, p. 3-4

In order to obtain comparable result all experts took the following questions as a guidelines for the textbook analysis:

1. Is the history of human rights presented only as a series of declarations or are the processes and conflicts behind them shown clearly?
2. Is the development of the “generations” of human rights presented and is it shown as an open process?
3. Is the instrumentalisation of human rights as a means of legitimizing power interest (especially during the Cold War) a topic dealt with?
4. Is the recognition of “the rights of others” a topic, and is it linked with the problems of xenophobia and racism?
5. Do the books cover the international dimension of human rights violations and is there any bias in these presentations?
6. What kind of explanations are given for the insufficient realisation of human rights?
7. Do the books inform about the institutions and organisations protecting human rights?
8. Do the books reveal the responsibilities of citizens and their opportunities for realizing the human rights?
9. Is the universality of human rights presented as a problem?
10. How does the “picture rhetoric” in the books inform about human rights?
11. Do the questions and instructions of the book promote an understanding of human rights?

## 6.8 MAPPING THE HOLOCAUST (2014)

### THE INTERNATIONAL STATUS OF EDUCATION ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

#### – A GLOBAL MAPPING OF TEXTBOOKS AND CURRICULA

Carrier, Fuchs, Messinger, p. 176-181

### 7. Recommendations

#### 7.1 Curricula

- Naming the Holocaust in the curriculum does not guarantee that teaching about the Holocaust takes place. Likewise, not naming the Holocaust in the curriculum does not preclude teaching about the Holocaust.
  - > A review of the conceptualizations and contextualizations of the Holocaust in curricula in connection with learning goals in history and their implementation.
- Some curricula either allude or refer to the Holocaust in ambivalent terms (in Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Rwanda and Zimbabwe, for example) or mention the Holocaust as an example of human rights violation without first stipulating education about the historical facts of the event (in Colombia, Mexico and Slovenia, for example).
  - > Assure explicit mention of the Holocaust and assure that the history curriculum stipulates historical learning about the Holocaust.
- Incongruencies between policy curricula (reflected in curricula) and programmatic curricula (reflected in textbooks) exist both within nations and between nations.
  - > A review of curricula conceptualizations and contexts of the Holocaust as well as of related learning goals. Open and collaborative dialogue between policymakers, textbook authors and educators nationally and internationally may enhance the quality of education about

the Holocaust on the levels of policy, programmatic and enacted curricula.

#### 7.2 Scale

- A tendency to confine the main timeframe to the years of intense killing from 1942 to 1944 and/or to the years of the Second World War.
  - > Acknowledge the long-term escalation of exclusion and persecution from the early 1930s onwards, including the long established social and ideological context from the late nineteenth century and far-reaching consequences into the present day. This requires developing understandings of change and continuity.
- A tendency to name the spaces in which the Holocaust took place in general terms as 'Europe' or 'Germany'.
  - > Specify the policies and practices of annexation, displacements of national borders and displacements of populations, in particular in annexed parts of Poland and the General Government as well as in satellite and collaborating countries.
- Incommensurable representation of the multiple spatial (local, national, regional, international) and temporal (short and long term) repercussions of the Holocaust.
  - > Indicate both the individual and collective significance of historical incidents in the context of their short term and long-term causes and consequences and of their multiple spatial (local, national and international or 'universal') dimensions.

### 7.3 Protagonists

- The quantitative and qualitative imbalance of textual and visual representations of protagonists in favour of perpetrators, which not only marginalize other protagonists but also ascribe human qualities to perpetrators while naming victims as objects of others' actions.
  - > Redress the representational imbalance by increasing the space devoted to and by providing insight into experiences of victims, bystanders, rescuers and resisters, while extending representations of them in time (before 1933 and after 1945) in order to provide insight into social relations and agency in all their complexity before, during and after the Holocaust.
- Personalization of Adolf Hitler fuels a bias towards an intentionalist explanation of history, which in turn oversimplifies explanation, and underpins a moral, psychological and ideological explanation of history by pinning responsibility on one person, at the expense of political, legal, economic, geopolitical factors and in the absence of other political and 'ordinary' protagonists.
  - > Reduce the space accorded to Hitler while underscoring multiple (ideological, political, psychological or economic) factors or causes with which the event may be explained.
- A lack of insight into the complex situations and dilemmas faced by protagonists entrenches categories defined by National Socialist ideology and perpetuates dichotomous stereotypes of perpetrators and victims.
  - > Provide insight (via quotations of documents) into the everyday decisions faced by protagonists, including their hopes, fears and doubts as well as the motives underpinning their decisions and actions.

### 7.4 Interpretative paradigms

- Factual inaccuracies and incomprehensive presentations of the history of the Holocaust, where they occur, are misleading.
  - > Maintain historical facticity by ensuring that textbooks contain accurate basic facts, indicating the beginning, end, major turning points and links to developments before 1933 and after 1945; maintain comprehensiveness by naming (local, national, and international) geographical spaces in which the event took place and by naming protagonists while including references to gender roles and relations; avoid (or else explain) metaphors, euphemisms and examples of personification or personalization.
- Conceptual inconsistencies, where they occur, are confusing.
  - > Historicize concepts, that is, place and explain concepts defined by the event (such as 'extermination', 'Jewish question', 'final solution', including euphemisms, and ethnic, gender, national, political, racial or religious categorizations), as well as those concepts which have subsequently been used to define the event (such as 'Holocaust', 'Shoah', 'genocide'), and concepts of agency (such as 'victims', 'perpetrators', 'bystanders' or 'rescuers'), in relation to their historical origins and specific spatial and temporal frameworks. Include extended glossaries to explain and contextualize concepts.
- Misleading juxtaposition of historically distinct atrocities. In place of systematic comparison, semantic conflation of the meanings of such terms as 'Holocaust' and 'genocide', which are often used alternately within text passages as if they were synonyms, and juxtaposition of historically incompatible images (of Hitler and Darwin, or Auschwitz and Nanjing, for example) create semantic allusions if not

(often anachronistic) analogies between disparate historical events.

- > Compare each aspect (aims, causes, visual icons, laws, language, ideology, violence and aftereffects) of the Holocaust in turn with rather than to analogous aspects of other events.

### 7.5 Narrative structure and point of view

- A tendency to confine the narrative voice to that of one single, neutral point of view.
  - > Encourage enquiry-based learning, with reference to different documents, by demonstrating the multiplicity of historical narratives of the Holocaust which have arisen over time and which exist concurrently.
- Frequent recourse to the passive voice, which presents actions without subjects, and essentialization of collective protagonists.
  - > Use of the active rather than the passive voice; and avoidance of emotive language; build awareness of the essentializing and stereotyping effects of collective nouns such as 'Germans', 'Nazis', 'Jews' and 'Roma'.

- The predominant focus on the years from 1942 to 1945 marginalizes knowledge of the gradual process of social, legal, economic and physical exclusion from 1933 until 1945 and afterwards, and of the distinctive experiences of people in different parts of Europe, both within and beyond annexed territories.
  - > Adopt, in addition to the multiperspectival approach (combining viewpoints of different historical protagonists, a multiscaled approach, which takes into account individual and group experiences as they develop at different times and in different places.

### 7.6 Didactic approach

- Meanings generated by the selection and sequences of images and by relations between texts and images are often incongruous.
  - > Whether used to illustrate texts or treated analytically (on the basis of information about photographers, their intentions and the date of the photograph), authors should provide information which determines the relation between images, the purposes for which images were created, and the temporal and spatial context in which they are to be understood today.

- Today, pupils learn about the Holocaust via a variety of different media ranging from the internet, film, literature and stories told within families by non-experts.
  - > Textbooks should (a) incorporate elements of out-of-school media and thereby both accommodate pupils' prior knowledge and misunderstandings of the Holocaust and provide a platform on which to discuss and learn from and about them in the classroom, (b) provide opportunities with which to develop meta-analytical skills required to critically interpret media of historical knowledge and learning, including language, images, narratives, memorials and rituals and (c) provide information about the ways in which narratives of the Holocaust are constructed textually and visually, both in pupils' own countries and in other countries.
- While human rights are frequently mentioned, they are not addressed in history textbooks in such a way that pupils learn to fully understand what human rights are and how to implement them.
  - > Include a section about the history of human rights, including their origins, legal stipulations, violations of them and attempts to implement them, while acknowledging the specificities of the historical discipline, which strives to foster understanding of the entire spectrum of past human endeavour, including heroism, altruism and humanism, but also conformism, thoughtlessness, exclusion, violence and cruelty.

## 7.7 National idiosyncrasies

- Overemphasis of local aspects of the Holocaust detracts from learning about the Holocaust in all its dimensions; conversely, overemphasis of the general aspects may detract from the contested local dimensions of the Holocaust.
  - > Ensure that presentations of the local significance of the Holocaust are complemented by a section describing the history of the Holocaust including main dates, places and sites including protagonists involved.
- Textual and visual allusions used for dramatic effect and to contextualize the Holocaust in words and images familiar to readers who have little prior knowledge of the event lead to a biased understanding of the Holocaust.
  - > Explain critically rather than allude to historical connections between, for example, racism and social Darwinism, or Hiroshima and Auschwitz.
- Inconsistent categorizations of the historical causes and contexts of the Holocaust, in terms of 'dictatorship', 'autocracy' or 'totalitarianism' for example, decontextualize the event and recontextualize it in terms familiar to local readers.
  - > Explain historically and comparatively the origins and usage of terminology used to explain the Holocaust, in multilingual glossaries for example.

## 6.9 LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER (2017)

### LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER IN AFRICA THROUGH HISTORY EDUCATION

Bentrovato, p. 63-65

#### 8.3 Recommendations

In the face of such challenges, African stakeholders made a number of key recommendations aimed at ensuring quality history education while promoting peace across the continent. They suggested the following action be taken:

- Make the nine volumes of UNESCO’s General History of Africa available to curriculum developers in order to further the integration of the GHA into school curricula across Africa.
  - Proceed to more regular and systematic curriculum and textbook revision to facilitate the teaching and learning of history to be adapted to contextual realities.
  - Expand the space allocated to the teaching of recent national, regional and African history in schools in order to help young people understand and meet present-day challenges.
- Preparing Learners for the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century
- Address sensitive issues relating to past violent conflict in order to help younger generations make sense of a difficult past which may have directly affected their lives, while simultaneously helping to nurture students’ critical thinking as an antidote to political manipulation and indoctrination and encouraging them to commit to a peaceful present and future.
  - Strengthen efforts to revise history curricula and textbooks with a view to integrating issues of human rights, social cohesion and a culture of peace. The inclusion of these issues and the use of examples drawn from history were considered especially relevant given the prevalence of conflict in numerous African countries.
  - Invest in continuous professional training for curriculum developers and textbook authors in order to strengthen local capacity to teach history from an African perspective and to more systematically link the study of the past to learners’ day-to-day life and realities, including conflicts they have possibly experienced.
  - Develop a common core curriculum at sub-regional and continental level as a means to promote “living together” through the teaching and learning of history.
  - Organise activities enabling stakeholders to share experiences and good practices in this field.
  - Train teachers in the use of curricula and textbooks that introduce “learning to live together” to the study of history.
  - Organise extracurricular activities for students, such as after-school clubs, to further nurture values relevant to “learning to live together”.
  - Create prizes and awards to encourage teachers and students to become more involved in the teaching and learning of history and of a “culture of peace”.
  - Encourage the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to make the study of history more attractive.
  - Raise awareness among policymakers of the importance of the study of history in citizen formation and of the need to integrate the theme of “living together” into school curricula in order to promote political and social stability.
  - Mobilise cooperation partners around the issue of teaching history and of “learning to live together” in Africa.
  - Secure the engagement and support of international and intergovernmental organisations, notably the African Union and UNESCO, as well as other organisations such as the European Union.

## 6.10 MAKING TEXTBOOK CONTENT INCLUSIVE (2017)

### MAKING TEXTBOOK CONTENT INCLUSIVE: A FOCUS ON RELIGION, GENDER, AND CULTURE

Fuchs, Hues, Niehaus, Nordbruch, p. 15-17

#### Representation of diversity – Suggested recommendations and approaches

- 1 Provide factual information on various groups, both religious and non-religious, offering information that facilitates an understanding of the wealth of different perspectives and their complexity.
- 2 Present various tendencies within religious traditions, since not all believers observe the same rites or interpret them in the same way.
- 3 Discuss individuals' interpretations of their faith and its practice, including those with non-religious traditions.
- 4 Explain the different views of religious and non-religious groups on social issues in order to promote reasoned debate.
- 5 Acknowledge people who do not profess any religion.
- 6 Avoid interpreting people of a given faith as uniform or reducing or assigning individuals and groups to their national or religious backgrounds.
- 7 Connect information about religions, beliefs, and rituals with daily experiences of a religious or non-religious community.
- 8 Give space to religious accounts of history and provide neutral information about related controversies. Encourage multiple perspectives of history.

## 6.11 UNMAKING RACISM: GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS (2024)

### UNMASKING RACISM: GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

Fuchs, Yu, p. 31

#### Recommendations:

**Race as a social construct:** Educational materials should raise awareness of the scope and impact of race as a social category that is linked to political power, inscribed in discursive and material realities.

**Structural racism:** Educational materials should raise awareness of structural/systemic racism as complex, historically evolved, global and societal power relations and disparities that are embedded in concepts and practices.

**Knowledge-based approach:** For a proper understanding of the prevalence and social implications of race and racism, foundational knowledge of race-related history, language, academic and public discourses is required.

**Subjective engagement:** Discussions on race and racism should also provide opportunities to develop subjective perspectives on social issues and personal experiences.

**Intersectional perspective:** The examination of race and racism should be linked to the awareness that identities are context-specific and multifaceted, with multiple differences intersecting.

## 6.12 THE REPRESENTATION OF JEWS (2026)

### THE REPRESENTATION OF JEWS, JUDAISM AND ANTISEMITISM IN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS AND CURRICULA IN EUROPE

Carrier, Sadowski, p. 113-116

#### Recommendations for educational policy-makers

National ministries of education or other bodies responsible for developing curricula and approving textbooks should ensure that:

1. Jewish history and culture are given an appropriate place in history curricula. Where necessary, representatives of the Jewish community should be involved in the curriculum development process, as well as in the approval processes for history and social science textbooks.
2. Jewish history is taught as integrated European history, not as a history separate from general European and national histories. When curricula focus on national history, it is important to show the Jewish community as an integral part of that history and not to establish a dichotomous parallel between Jews and the nation.
3. Jewish history does not appear in the curricula exclusively in the context of discrimination and persecution against Jews. Particular emphasis should instead be placed on themes that demonstrate the coexistence of Jews and non-Jews, or that present Jews as co-creators of social, cultural, economic, and political processes and demonstrate their contribution to the development of their respective nations.
4. In the context of the persecution and extermination of European Jews in the Holocaust, Jewish resistance is given prominence alongside activities carried out by local or national populations.

5. The State of Israel is not presented exclusively in the context of the Middle East conflict, but as part of a broader narrative that includes its historical beginnings, the pluralism of its society, politics and culture, and its relationship to Jewish diasporas around the world.
6. Historical antisemitism, its roots, characteristics, actors, and consequences, is addressed in history and social studies curricula alongside types of present-day anti-semitism and the need to combat them.
7. Curricula and textbook references do not reproduce stereotypes, prejudice and anti-Jewish sentiment.

#### Recommendations for textbook publishers and authors.

##### i. Presentation of Jewish history and culture

Textbook authors and publishers responsible for writing and designing textbooks should ensure that:

1. Jewish history, religion, and culture are presented in all their complexity and variety. Whenever possible, trans-regional and transnational aspects of Jewish history should be considered to complement accounts of national Jewish life.
2. They do not to portray Jewish history exclusively as a history of discrimination and persecution, thereby reducing Jews to mere objects of history. Rather, Jewish agency should be highlighted, whether as communities producing their own cultural, religious and political life,

as co-creators of political, cultural, scientific, and economic developments in society as a whole, or as subjects of active and passive resistance to discrimination and persecution at various times.

3. Jewish history is not presented exclusively from an external perspective. It is necessary to include Jewish perspectives and voices from all periods covered. Wherever possible, visual and textual documents should consider an intersectional perspective, particularly regarding gender and how gender can impact experiences of discrimination and resilience.

In the context of the Holocaust, for example, this might entail the uses of sterilisation, rape and enforced prostitution, the role of female perpetrators, the division of labour in ghettos and camps, gendered anti-Jewish stereotypes and intersections between gender, ethnicity and sexuality (including the persecution of homosexuals in history).

4. Textbooks include information about contemporary Judaism and Jewish life, especially highlighting its resilience after the Holocaust, and its diverse religious and cultural manifestations in the modern world.
5. The State of Israel should not be portrayed exclusively in the context of the Middle East conflict. Instead, textbooks should also focus on the social, political, cultural and economic facets of Israel and its history while acknowledging the pluralistic and complex structure of Israeli society and the relationship between the State of Israel and Jewish diasporas around the world.
6. Representations of the Middle East conflict should adopt a multi-perspective and balanced approach which emphasizes the responsibility of all parties involved for a peaceful, political solution to the conflict. One-sided statements or judgments should be avoided.

## ii. Avoiding stereotypes and (unconscious) prejudices

Textbook authors and publishers responsible for writing and designing textbooks should ensure that:

1. Terms and attributions that associate Jews with antisemitic prejudices (for example, money, power, secrecy) should be avoided. When using the language of perpetrators and racist, antisemitic terminology (such as the Nazi term 'Final Solution' or the racist construct 'Aryan'), these expressions should be consistently placed in quotation marks and deconstructed rather than reproduced uncritically. It is important in this context to highlight the role of language in normalizing discrimination and in euphemizing extermination and genocide.
2. Similarly, the linguistic 'othering' of Jews with dichotomous oppositions between the national ingroup and Jewish communities or individuals or phrases such as 'living with strangers' should be avoided.
3. In the context of ancient Jewish history or the presentation of the roots of Christianity, the reproduction of traditional religious anti-Jewish stereotypes, such as the idea that the Jews were guilty of the death of Jesus (trope of the deicide), should be consistently avoided.
4. Presentations of medieval Jewish history should not focus disproportionately on the practice of money lending for interest but should consider the variety of Jewish occupational structures. Negatively connoted terms such as 'usury' should be avoided or, if they appear in historical sources, contextualised.
5. Jews are neither explicitly nor implicitly blamed for antisemitism, discrimination, and persecution (otherwise known as blame reversal narratives). Textbooks should favour complex and scientific analyses of antisemitism that highlight its systemic nature and its embeddedness in law, culture, beliefs and social practices, rather than unidimensional explanations such as social resentment against wealthy Jewish individuals.

6. Documents or imagery (such as caricatures, postcards, posters, and photographs) conveying antisemitic meaning are contextualised and assessed in their respective social and historical contexts and in relation to who made them and to what ends. Captions or other accompanying texts may be used to situate and deconstruct these documents in their contexts. Depictions of antisemitic content or of violence directed against Jews should be used with the utmost care and sparingly, in order to avoid emotional images 'overloading' the deconstruction in the text.

### **iii. The treatment of historical and contemporary anti-semitism**

Textbook authors and publishers responsible for writing and designing textbooks should ensure that:

1. Antisemitism is not portrayed solely as a historical phenomenon, but that contemporary forms of antisemitism after the Holocaust and its impact of Jewish communities worldwide are also properly addressed.
2. Antisemitism is clearly defined in age-appropriate ways highlighting that antisemitism is a certain representation of Jews as dangerous 'others', that expresses itself both in a hostile attitude toward Jews (ideological dimension) and in acts of violence against Jews. Textbooks should also emphasize its conspiratorial component, which distinguishes it from other forms of racism. Glossary definitions of antisemitism should underscore not emotions such as 'hatred' and 'hostility', but structural long and short term historical, political, economic and social causes.
3. Textbooks acknowledge and address how antisemitism can be present and operates in one's own history and society. In the context of the Holocaust, both local collaboration and participation in the extermination, as well as the courageous actions of resistance and rescue of Jews, should be documented.

### **Recommendations for teachers concerning textbook content**

Teachers who use textbooks in their classrooms should ensure that:

1. They use only textbooks and other teaching materials that are free of stereotypes that promote antisemitism.
2. Stereotypes, found in teaching materials, that promote antisemitism are explicitly addressed and critically assessed or deconstructed in the classroom. Such representations should not be overlooked because students will inevitably encounter them in the teaching materials and may be influenced by them.
3. Antisemitic statements in historical source materials (text or images) that are not adequately classified or deconstructed in the textbook are discussed in the classroom.
4. Blame-reversal narratives in textbooks are deconstructed by referring to the historical and social manifestations and effects of antisemitism.
5. One-sided portrayals of the Middle East conflict in textbooks are countered in class, and that different opinions of students are allowed and critically discussed.
6. Emotions expressed by students in relation to illustrations or accounts of the Middle East conflict, in particular during times of acute conflict between the parties involved, should be allowed, provided that they are not accompanied by antisemitic or racist statements.
7. When dealing with historical antisemitism in class, it is stressed that antisemitism is not just a problem of the past, but that it is present in today's society and that it should be resolutely opposed.

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