

Supporting History Education Reform in Kyrgyzstan

Second international workshop to support the history
education reform in the Kyrgyz Republic

PUBLIC REPORT

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
23 - 25 March 2018



Opening of the Stockton-Darlington Railway, landscape painting by John Dobbin. This was one of the sources used as part of the preliminary selection assignment to choose participants, in which potential participants had to create sample learning activities from a given pool of sources.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second international workshop to support history education reform in the Kyrgyz Republic took place from 23 - 25 March 2018, in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. 30 history education specialists from different parts of Kyrgyzstan and different professional backgrounds took part in this workshop. The main focus of this event was related to the development of educational resources. This focus was chosen because participants in the previous workshops indicated that they liked the training, but wanted to learn how to develop their own materials. The workshop was organized by EUROCLIO in partnership with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education, the Global Centre for Pluralism, and the Aga Khan Foundation, with support from the European Union Delegation to Kyrgyzstan.

Aims

- To respond to the wishes of the Ministry of Education in the Kyrgyz Republic and the needs and wishes for continued professional development as identified by stakeholders during the first international workshop.
- To build the capacity of a core group stakeholders that is able to help shape and support the implementation of history education reform in the Kyrgyz Republic.
- To share relevant experiences from Europe with their peers in the Kyrgyz Republic.
- To identify ways to continue the work that has started with the previous workshop.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Day 1: Creating educational resources

Presentation by Iryna Kostyuk: the 1st of May

Iryna Kostyuk provided a workshop about the Workers' Day celebrations on May 1st in the Soviet Union, from the [Crossroad of Cultures publication](#) (available in Russian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Romanian, and Ukrainian). The participants were asked to complete tasks designed for the students, as if they were students themselves.

Iryna asked the workshop participants what information, as students, they would get from a source that shows a 1st of May parade during Soviet times, reminding them that Russian students today have no memory of life during the Soviet Union. She also asked the participants to write down what they associate with holidays, and discussed the difference between official and unofficial holidays. Iryna explained that it is best to always start with an activity that captures the interest of the students, so that their curiosity makes them want to know more about the topic.



Celebrations of 1st May in the USSR.
Image used during Iryna Kostyuk's presentation.

The workshop participants worked further on the activities designed for students. They highlighted the words of a speech that were related to emotions, attempted to determine how sincere the author of the speech was, described what was happening in pictures presented to them, identify the connection between demonstrated sources, and decide



Another image of celebrations of 1st May in the USSR, also used during Iryna Kostyuk's presentation.

what characterizes a set of sources. The sources that were used in the activities were personal testimonies, political speeches, historical photographs, postcards, and historical explanations. At the end of the session, participants were presented with the teachers' material and asked whether the activity they had just completed achieved all the envisaged learning outcomes. The participants were then asked to share where they could see room for improvement in the learning activity.

Catherine Poujol recommended to make the activity

more multi-perspective by including views of people who had more negative attitudes towards the 1st of May celebration during Soviet times. As the activity stands, it is clear that people experienced the celebration of 1 May in different ways, and some people participated reluctantly, but there were also people who did not participate at all.



Greeting cards of 1st May.

Presentation by Yuriy Komarov: Fostering a curiosity on history lessons

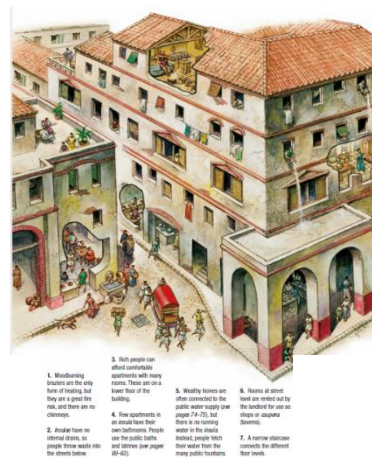


Yuriy Komarov describing a visual during his presentation about Ancient Rome.

The second session of the day was led by Yuriy Komarov, who organized a session about the history of Ancient Rome. The purpose of this session was to demonstrate what an effective history lesson looked like, what strategies and elements it used, and how these types of strategies can be implemented into any lesson on any historical subject. The goals of the session, as voiced by Yuriy, was (1) to demonstrate the ability of learning material to stimulate cognitive activity in students, (2) to show possible strategies for building cognitive paths, such as selecting sources based on visibility, calling on associations with objects and phenomena which students are already familiar with, and (3) to describe how to organise material to be presented as a mini-investigation.

Yuriy Komarov, in his history lesson, approached the topic from different angles. He first described how Rome, as a large city, had to be well-organised in order for its everyday urban life to be efficient. This included the water supply, sewage, roads, and public places like markets. The presentation made use of visuals, such as digitally created birds-eye views of what the ancient city might have looked like to help students visualise the place the teacher is speaking about. This included pictures of the buildings and waterways, as well as an inside view into the bathhouses or latrines, to illustrate what Rome would have looked like to an inhabitant in his/her everyday life.

Next, Yuriy explained the demographic composition of Ancient Rome. Who were the people who lived there and what roles did they play? Were they rich or poor? What did they wear? What sort of houses did they live in? Visuals made it possible to see the difference between a villa of a wealthy landowner and an average city-dweller's apartment. This approach allows students to compare the socioeconomic makeup of Rome to the places they themselves live, and imagine themselves as a member of Ancient Roman society. However, Yuriy also presented facts, because some students like concrete knowledge, such as the number of forums, libraries, and basilicas built under Constantine the Great, or the amount of land that Ancient Rome controlled at its peak.



Cross-section of an average street in Ancient Rome, used in Yuriy Komarov's presentation, along with its explanatory captions.

At the end of the presentation, the participants were asked: How does this lesson differ from the one you usually do? What kind of lesson is attractive to students? What do you need to know to be successful in this lesson? What kind of lesson is attractive to the teacher? What is necessary to know as a teacher to make this lesson effective? What difficulties or obstacles can the teacher encounter in organizing such training?

Joint session: How to design educational resources that are ready for use by others.

In the last session of the day, which was moderated by Steven Stegers, Iryna Kostyuk, and Yuriy Komarov were asked questions about the design of educational resources based on the designs of previously-created materials. In the past, EUROCLIO has been involved in numerous publications of students' and teachers' material, some of which Iryna and Yuriy showed to the participants. Iryna Kostyuk showed the participants two EUROCLIO publications to which she had contributed, [Crossroad of Cultures](#) and [History of the Epoch](#), for which she described the students' material. Yuriy showed the teachers' material.

Students' material in these publications consists of historical sources of various types, questions, tasks, and worksheets. Compared to more traditional approaches, more attention is paid to the history of everyday life, of ordinary people, and of women, making the history more multifaceted and stimulating. By taking new approaches students have not seen before, it avoids the apathy that can arise from students from learning too much overly-similar content over and over again. Teachers' material includes instructions on what to prepare, how to assess, how to time, and, crucially, what the learning outcomes of the activity are. These take into account how the changes made to the material can influence learning patterns, and how the assessment also needs to cater to these differences.



Iryna Kostyuk holding up a publication of *Crossroads of Cultures*.

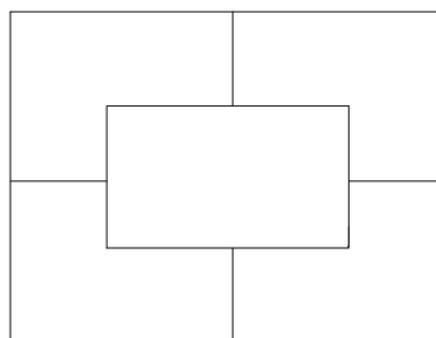
The objective of this session was to demonstrate to participants present what a publication made for Kyrgyzstan's purposes following would look like and what its primary elements would be. Such a publication would be the ultimate product of this project.

Day 2: Teaching methods and local history

Presentation by Bjorn Wansink: the Use of Active History Didactics - Part 1

The second day of training started with Bjorn Wansink's presentation, who gave a workshop focused on the use of active methods promoting historical thinking. The goal of this presentation were to teach the participants about historical thinking, active historical thinking pedagogy, practical skills to activate historical thinking, and multi-perspectivity in history education.

To begin, participants were asked to consider their own definition of historical thinking using the "placemat method." In this method, participants first give their own answer without discussing with their group members, then agree on a common answer with the group, and finally write this answer in the middle. Bjorn explained that he likes this method because it involves all students, and give insights into what each student thinks.



The Placemat Method (above).

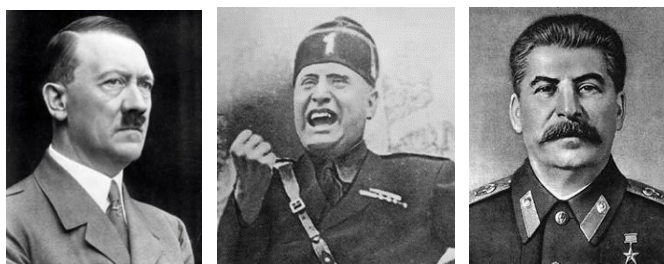


Participants discussing their answers during the session by Bjorn Wansink.

Participants were asked which Cold War-related concepts they believe students should learn. They were then asked to narrow down their choice to three main concepts. The reason for this, as Bjorn explained, is that historians, being passionate about their field, tend to ask too much of students by overloading them with information. The historian believes all the information is relevant, interesting, and necessary, but the student cannot be overwhelmed with too much at once. Making a strategic choice by limiting the amount of

information is thus useful, because students can only learn so much in a given amount of time. To make a good choice for content, Bjorn recommended asking students what they already know when introducing a new theme or topic. If students are being taught something they already know, they will get bored, and if they are being taught with the assumption that they know a lot already, they will get lost when the content becomes too complicated. Thus, knowing how much the student already knows is crucial.

In the next activity, participants were introduced to the "odd one out" method. In this method, three or more items are presented, and students need to debate amongst themselves which item is the odd one out. To illustrate how this method works, Bjorn presented three images of fruits (apples, oranges, and tangerines) and asked which one didn't belong. The point of this illustration was to show that there is no one correct answer; valid choices could be made based on colour, size, taste, origin, or even price. The point is that it stimulated conversation among students to lay out what they already know onto the table, and apply this knowledge in comparing and contrasting each item.



To apply this method, Bjorn asked the participants to decide which of the given historical personalities, the options being Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, and Joseph Stalin, were the odd one out. Please find below a table outlining the various answers and their corresponding arguments.

Benito Mussolini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The least totalitarian and least powerful of the three • The only one without a moustache
Joseph Stalin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only communist • The only one who was not elected into his position of power • The only one who died a natural death
Adolf Hitler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only one not dressed in a military uniform

The participants were then asked to think of examples from their own local or regional history, and share these with others. Bjorn explained that this method, while effective under the right circumstances, only truly works well when students have already acquired enough historical information to engage meaningfully with the activity.

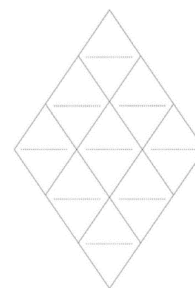
The next activity centred on the process of historical reasoning, and was designed by [Harvey Havekes](#). Historical reasoning is defined as constructing or evaluating a description of processes of change and continuity, an explanation of a historical phenomenon, or a comparison of historical phenomena or periods by asking historical questions, contextualizing, using substantive and second order historical concepts, and putting forward claims supported with arguments, which are based on sources used as evidence. For this next method, participants were presented with a series of photos related to the Cold War, and asked to put them in the right chronological order. One member of each group, the “observer,” was supposed to listen to the discussion of the others and note what kinds of historical reasoning they used to arrive at their conclusions. After the groups were done, they could check with the information on the back of the photos to see if they had achieved the correct order, and see which event each photo represented. This method does not only test the knowledge of the students, but also helps them to see the relationship between different events. This activity was then repeated several times with different questions. Participants were asked to determine which of the set of given events was the most important political, cultural, and military event, and explain their reasoning. Then, they were asked how the average Russian vs the average American would have responded to these events.



Participants engaging with the Historical Reasoning activity.

The final activity was the diamond activity. In this activity, Bjorn told the story of the camel, as originally related by Arthur Chapman in his 2003 article [Camels, Diamonds and Counterfactuals: a model for teaching causal reasoning](#). In this story, a camel born with back problems is exploited by his owner, forced to carry unnecessarily heavy loads to and from the marketplace, little by little grinding away at the camel's health. One day, the exploitative owner takes a break to chew a straw, places the straw on the camel's back, and the camel collapses from exhaustion under the straw. Bjorn asked the participants to determine the factors which led to the breaking of the camel's back.

The participants had to list the different factors mentioned in the story, and organise them in the diamond 9 shape (pictured right), with the most important factor on top, and the least important factor at the bottom. The purpose of the activity was to show how students can understand causality, recognise that historical developments are often caused by multiple factors, and see how valid arguments can be made for any of these factors to be the most or least important. The participants were then asked to think of examples from their own history where this method could be applied.



Presentation by Iryna Kostyk: Practicing to Frame Effective Historical Questions

The next session was prepared by Iryna Kostyuk. In this session, she asked the participants about their experiences in teaching history, and about the attitudes and motivation of the students. What teaching approaches did the participants use? What were the differences between different students? This sparked discussion. One conclusion that was reached, for example, was that it is much harder to motivate older students than younger students.



Iryna discussing her presentation material with Iryna Kostyuk.

Iryna then discussed the use of questions as a method for capturing the interest of students, and how different types of questions will garner different responses. She explained how there exist open questions, closed questions, and reflective questions, for example. The main differentiation that she focused on, however, was the difference between thick and thin questions. Thin questions normally begin with: Who...? When...? Where...? They are looking for a specific fact, a fixed answer, and do not require a lot of reflection. Thick questions normally begin with: Why...? How...? These are looking more into processes and are questioning historical interpretation. They invite

longer, varied answers which require explanation and stimulate the mind to connect between facts' relationships with one another and their implications. Iryna argued that if students are not asked for their own opinion, they lose interest in learning. She therefore encouraged the participants to ask questions to students and take their opinion seriously.

The participants were asked to look at some pages of a textbook that is currently used, and review the questions that are being asked, as well as the historical information that is being presented. The participants checked whether it would be possible for students to answer the question based on the information provided and whether the questions invited students to give their own opinion. They were also challenged to identify which parts of the text could be replaced with sources. Finally, participants were asked to think of thin and thick questions that would make use of the five sources provided to them.

Examples given of thin questions were:

- What happened in Kyrgyzstan in the South in 1873?
- When did the military expedition take place?
- Which tribes participated in the rebellion?
- Who were the Kyrgyz subordinated to?
- How were the rebels punished?

Examples given of thick questions were:

- Why did local people start the rebellion?
- What were the causes of the uprising of 1973?
- What was the situation of the local people during the reign of Kurmanjan?

For each question, Iryna asked whether students would be able to answer them based on the information provided, and which sources were needed to answer the question. She involved the participants in the discussions that followed.

Presentation by Catherine Poujol: Learning from local history

In the last session of the day, Catherine Poujol discussed the history of Central Asia as a starting point for exploring the responsibilities of the historian when teaching local history. To begin, Catherine asked the participants to think about several essential questions related to the study of history. What does it mean to be a historian? What is the responsibility of a historian to a society? Should history tell us everything? Does a single historical truth exist? For whom is history made? In between these questions, Catherine shared her view on the role of history in society and shared her experience of teaching the history of Central Asia in France.

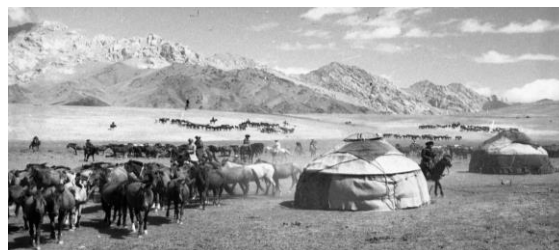
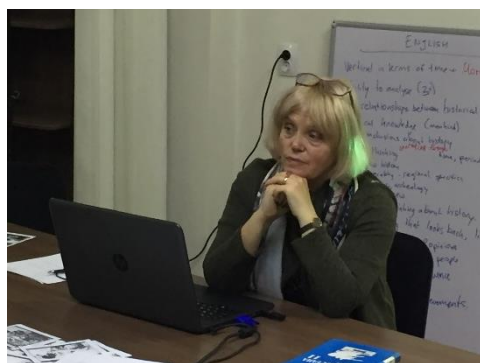


Photo from the National Archives of the Kyrgyz Republic. Used during Catherine's presentation.

The session made the participants think further about their own role as transmitters of historical knowledge. There seemed to be consensus within the session that the historian needed to be honest and responsible, and that their importance stemmed from their role in sharing and transferring historical knowledge. It is, however, not possible to do this for all history. Therefore, historians need to decide what is truly important to study and, above all, should not provide a distorted picture of the past. As part of the discussion, the participants mentioned the obligations of historians to present the past in a correct way, that history is an interpretative discipline, and that historians have the obligation to educate the youth by explaining what happened in the past.



Catherine listening to a question before answering during her presentation.

In her contribution, Catherine shared Braudel's vision of history, who put a strong emphasis on geography and long-term developments. She argued that it is impossible to understand Central Asian history without looking at the geography, resources, economy, neighbouring states (such as Russia and China), or the migration of people and ideas. It is not possible to study national history in isolation, because the events of world history events (such as the fall of empires) will impact national histories to a great extent. Thus, the study of micro-history is a good way of learning about world history itself, because world history is made out of small micro-histories.

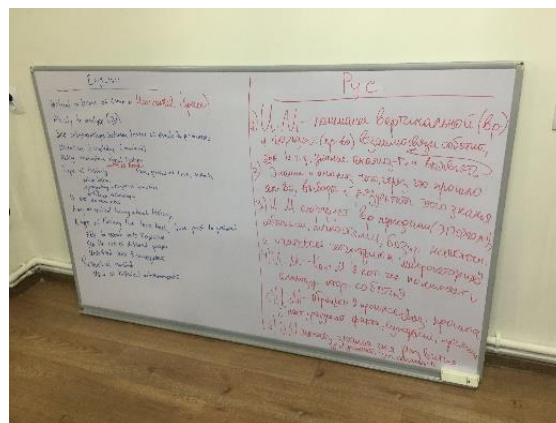
No matter how one attempts to avoid it, history is always more than a mere recounting of the past. And no matter how one tries, it is impossible to be objective. Something will inevitably be left out and something will be highlighted, and this is left to the

interpretation of the person telling the story. Thus history is always a contribution to the past, not simply the past itself, which means one must be careful when dealing with it.

Day 3: More methods and planning ahead.

The final day was devoted to a reflection upon the workshop and what the next steps for the project could be, including proposals for activities for the next workshop and what kind of educational resources could be developed. The participants indicated their need for more opportunities for professional development and ready-to-use educational resources, especially the need to focus on active methods. Several participants explicitly asked for a methodological guidebook for teachers to implement some of these strategies.

During the last day, the title of the project itself was also discussed. The working title, *Supporting the History Education Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic*, though straightforward and easily understandable, was deemed to be too functional and lacking flair. The participants were thus asked to come up with suggestions for a new title, and voted to choose the best one. Interestingly, the original title got the most votes, and *Winds of Change* got the second-most. Thus, it was decided that the title of the project would be changed to *Winds of Change: Supporting the History Education Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic* to reflect both points of view.



The brainstorm board (in English and Russian) of the potential new names for the project.

RESULTS AND FEEDBACK

Generally speaking, the evaluations of the workshop as completed by its participants mirrored what was said at the closing session. The participants were very enthusiastic, saying that they liked all the methods they had been introduced to, and that they would like more of these types of trainings, with the ones they learned at the workshop to possibly be published into a book. Some mentioned that they have started thinking about historical thinking and multi-perspective approaches to studying history and sources.



Gulrano Ataeva leading a feedback session with the participants to determine what the focus of the next international workshop ought to be.

The response to the workshop itself was also positive. Participants spoke about how they had found the content to be interesting and inspirational, with specific mention of how it had been improved since the workshop which took place in December of 2017. One participant stated how they were looking forward to going back to implement what they had learned, saying they specifically had some ideas for the 1st of May. Another stated that “this seminar is different [...] I thought I knew a lot, now I realise I know very little.”

Some suggestions the participants had:

- To study examples of curricula throughout Europe and the USA as examples to model;
- To practice using the CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) method in the classroom, which teaches subject matter to a student in another language, thus teaching the student both the material and a second language;
- To give homework on the discussed topics of the seminar to be able to build on its content outside of seminar time (this was acknowledged to only be possible with a strong level of commitment from the participants);
- To prolong the duration of the seminar;
- To produce a booklet or a volume after each workshop summarizing the presentation, in addition to the electronic version of the materials spread via USB;
- To rearrange the desks so that everyone could see each other;
- To invite more representatives of the Ministry of Education of Kyrgyzstan;
- To continue giving these types of sessions, and perhaps host some in other places (Tajikistan specifically was suggested) as it was mentioned that there were not many participants from far-away regions.



The participants, trainers, and organisers pose for a photo on the final day of the second international workshop in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

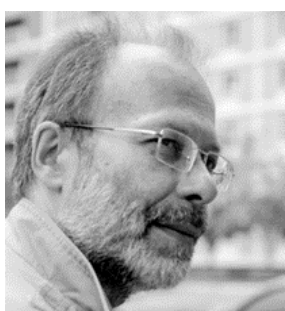
Biographies of Primary Contributors



Gulrano Ataeva is a local expert on Kyrgyzstan education, her research focus being on Central Asia, and she has worked with the Global Centre for Pluralism as a research participant in the past. Throughout her career, she has worked for the Osh office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and as a Coordinator for the Law Agency of Alternative Assistance in Osh. She holds an MA from the University of Tsukuba, Japan and currently works with *Médecins Sans Frontières*, where she has been for the past 2 years.



Iryna Kostyuk is a guidance counsellor and teacher's trainer in Lviv Regional Institute of Post-Graduated Pedagogical Education, Ukraine. She has 25 years of teaching experience as a history and social studies teacher and more than 15 years as a teacher trainer. She has cooperated with EUROCLIO since 2001. From 2001 to 2004 she was one of national coordinators of the European-Ukrainian project *New times, new history*, initiated and supported by EUROCLIO. Iryna Kostyuk was one of international editors of educational manual Crossroad of Cultures in common project of countries of Black Sea Region *Sharing History, Cultural Dialogues* in 2012-2015. During the last 18 years, she participated in numerous Ukrainian and international seminars on issues of historical and civic education, including Council of Europe seminars in Ukraine on standards, curricula, and textbooks problems. She was a member of the history component of the working group of the new standard and curriculum under the Ministry of Education of Ukraine in 2011 and 2012. She has also been involved in project activities of the Anne Frank House and the Institute of the Visual History of USA in Ukraine. Iryna is a co-author and one of the educational editors of several teaching materials and articles. As a teachers' trainer she has held approximately 100 seminars in different regions of Ukraine and is working to share EUROCLIO approaches in history education at the school level.



Yuriy Komarov is a history teacher at one of the best schools in Kiev: Kiev-Pechersky Lyceum "Leader" №171, with about 30 years of teaching experience. He collaborated with EUROCLIO in the project *New times, new history* from 2001-2004 and is the co-author of the textbook *History of the Epoch through the Eyes of the Individual: Ukraine and Europe in 1900-1939*. Yuri is also a co-author of other educational materials, such as the textbook and teachers' guide *European studies* for 15-17 age students (2005), teaching and learning materials on Antidiscrimination studies *Me, you, he, she...* (2009), *My Kiev* (2010) - the manual of local history of the city of Kiev for 10-11 age students, and an interactive textbook of the history of Ukraine and the history of the Middle Ages for grade 7 on CD. Yuriy Komarov is the author of a large number of articles and methodological materials for teachers of history on the methodology of history teaching, Holocaust studies, as well as sensitive and controversial issues of history. He participated in international seminars dedicated to history education in Great Britain, France, Israel, and Russia.



Steven Stegers is the Acting Executive Director at EUROCLIO, where he has worked since 2006. In his time at EUROCLIO, he has focused predominantly on projects in which educational resources are being developed as part of a collaborative process. He has worked for several years as a coordinator of projects seeking to innovate history, citizenship, and cultural education in the Black Sea region, North Africa, and the Middle East. Steven led the development of *Historiana* - one of EUROCLIO's flagship projects, and its first development of online educational resources. He is experienced in managing projects, public speaking, fundraising, and advocacy, and has been involved as an expert for several intergovernmental organisations and the International Baccalaureate. He has an MSc degree in Social and Organisational Psychology from Leiden University, and studied history including an honours class on Environment and Global History.



Catherine Poujol is the regional director of the French Institute for Central Asian Studies. For 30 years, she has been a professor at the *Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales* (English: National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations) and is considered one of the top French experts of her field. Her publications and conference presentations include *L'Asie centrale: Au carrefour des mondes*; *Central Asia 20 years after the collapse of USSR, the French and European school of Central Asian Studies, a point a view from abroad*; *Asie centrale, la dérive autoritaire: cinq républiques entre héritage soviétique, dictature et islam*; *L'aide internationale en question : enjeux d'une résistance coloniale, soviétique et post-soviétique en asie centrale*; *Les Polonais du Kazakhstan entre l'intégration et la Patrie rêvée...*; and *Santé mentale et société en asie centrale postsoviétique aujourd'hui: Comment tenter de diagnostiquer un mal-être social?*



Bjorn Wansink studied history at the Utrecht University and began working as a history teacher afterwards. In 2011, he wrote a PhD proposal and applied for a PhD grant, leading him to combine working as a part-time PhD researcher with being a teacher educator throughout 2012-2017. Currently, he works as a lecturer, trainer, and researcher at the Department of Education, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, at Utrecht University. He is a frequently asked expert, and currently, for example, is working for the Council of Europe, participating in an intergovernmental project named *Educating for Diversity and Democracy: Teaching history in contemporary Europe*. His main areas of interest are history, epistemology, teacher education, cultural diversity, critical thinking, and dealing with controversial issues. His scholarly work is published in journals such as *Teacher and Teaching Education*, *The Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *Research in Social Education*, *International Journal of Educational Research*, and *Teaching History*.

About the organisers



The Aga Khan Foundation (part of the Aga Khan Development Network) is a private, international, non-denominational, not-for-profit organization established in 1967 in Switzerland by His Highness the Aga Khan. Its activities are mainly concentrated on the needs of rural communities in mountainous, coastal and resource-poor areas. The Foundation seeks to develop and promote creative solutions to long-standing global challenges like poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease. AKF is an agency of the

Aga Khan Development Network, a group of development agencies with mandates that include the environment, health, education, architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, the promotion of private-sector enterprise, and the revitalisation of historic cities. For more information, please visit the website at www.akdn.org



The Global Centre for Pluralism was founded by his Highness the Aga Khan in partnership with the Government of Canada, and is an international research and education centre located in Ottawa, Canada. Inspired by Canada's experience as a diverse and inclusive country, the Centre was created to advance positive responses to the challenge of living peacefully and

productively together in diverse societies. For more information, please visit www.pluralism.ca.



EUROCLIO - European Association of History Educators is a membership based international NGO, founded in 1992, with support of the Council of Europe. It is the mission of EUROCLIO to inspire

and empower educators to engage learners in innovative and responsible history and citizenship education. It does so by providing opportunities for professional development, developing (open) educational resources as part of a collaborative process, and facilitating exchange of ideas and experience amongst education professionals. For more information, please visit www.euroclio.eu

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