

Report AEJM Museum Education Study Visit Sarajevo

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Our study trip to Sarajevo had two main themes: the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Sephardic Jewish history and the multicultural and multireligious history of Sarajevo. We visited the History Museum and their exhibition on the daily life in Sarajevo during the last war. It was striking to see the creativity that emerged in a situation of no electricity or water. I was also touched by the empathy and solidarity of the Bosnian people during the war. Such a difficult situation could have led to ruthless selfishness, but instead, people helped each other and created solutions to benefit the community.

The War Childhood Museum was particularly interesting. The exhibition displays items donated by survivors from the war, with their personal stories about the items. The stories were interesting to read, and the fact that they have also included stories from current refugees, from Syria, broadened the perspective. I was inspired by the museum's use of personal stories and object. I use this method already when educating about Jewish history, and the exhibition confirmed to me that using personal stories and concrete objects have impact. They are memorable and encourage empathy in the visitor. The fact that the museum's collection seemed to be based on a community effort, gathering objects and stories from Bosnian people, emphasized the importance of engaging the community in the museum. I was also reminded of this at the History Museum: I take with me their experiences of gathering testimonies and museum objects from the community. I think this makes the exhibitions more personal and concrete, and it gives the community a sense of ownership, which may benefit the museum.

I will especially remember our visit to Srebrenica. Listening to Hasan tell his story was intense, difficult, educational and meaningful. His testimony, the following documentary, and reading and wandering through the exhibition made it clear to me how little prior knowledge I had about the genocide there. I found the exhibition well-made and extremely comprehensive. The visit made clear the importance of continued education in citizenship, critical thinking, prejudice, tolerance and communication, and in the ability to expose demagogues, conspiracy theories and opinions based on prejudice.

It was a meaningful experience to wander around the cemetery/memorial as well. The image of the thousands of white tombstones, and especially the newly made graves, was striking. The fact that burials take place every year still, made it clear what impact the genocide has had on the people directly affected, but also on the whole society of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a museum professional, some parts of the program were particularly relevant to me (although many others could be mentioned as well): Inger Schaap's presentation on inter-institutional cooperation through the program *Places That Tell a Story* inspired me to work further on cooperations with other institutions, and to look for ideas to start new cooperations. Using spaces in education was also inspiring, and is something I will take with me to my museum. Polin's exhibition, *King Matt's Poland* was inspiring in that they have created an exhibition with education in mind from the outset. The exhibition also tells a story that goes beyond specific Jewish themes. I take this back to my own museum, and will try to initiate exhibitions related to subjects on citizenship in the future.

I would also like to mention our program on Sephardic culture, from which I learned a lot. In addition to this, the study trip allowed me to network with colleagues. Seeing a new place, meeting new colleagues, experiencing and learning new things and exchanging experiences, motivated and inspired me to continued work on history, religion, traditions, citizenship and critical thinking at my own museum.