

Hidden Histories: Guidance Notes for Leaders

Notes to Leaders: These are guidance notes only. You may feel that it is appropriate to leave out sections of this introduction dependent on the understanding of your group of young people.

Bring in an item which is special to you. **Explain** to the group that you have recently been tidying and found this item. **Explain** what it is, who gave it to you, how long you've had it, how often you look at it and what you feel when you do. **Tell** your group that what seems like an ordinary object to some often holds many **Untold Stories** and is of great value to the owner.

Ask your group which of their own possessions are important to them. Answers may include phones, mp3 players or items they have been given for recent birthdays. Some may have more meaningful objects, things they have had since they were very young or something which someone who has died gave to them. **Ensure** that you allow time for discussion and that no item is dismissed out of hand as 'unimportant'.

Explain that we all have different ideas on what makes an object important and valuable to an individual. **Introduce** today's activity and **explain** that the group will look at some objects and the hidden histories behind them. **Outline** your choice of case study from Iby, Lily, Kemal, Jack, Martha or Sabina (you may wish to feature more than one story and divide young people into smaller working groups). **Introduce** the story, you may use the actual words from the case study or you could paraphrase using language more suitable for your group. **Explain** that across the UK, many young people are considering these hidden histories and responding to them in a creative way ahead of Holocaust Memorial Day 2011 to ensure that we link the past to the present day and to the future which belongs to young people and their own children. **Tell** your group that the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is asking everyone participating in the project to become part of creating a safer, better future.

Explain that a number of stories have been selected for this project. There are many reasons why we have not been able to provide stories from all of the groups affected during the Holocaust, Nazi persecution or in the subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and the ongoing atrocities in Darfur. **Tell** the group that when we participate in this project, it's essential that we keep in mind that some stories cannot be told because an entire communities and cultures have been destroyed through regimes of hatred or the persecution against particular groups was not recognised until too late, and those who had suffered have passed away before their stories have been heard. *(Please visit the HMD website if you would like more information on those groups affected by the Holocaust, Nazi persecution or subsequent genocides.)*

Ensure that you allow time to explain that the genocide which changed the life of the person you are looking at in this project didn't happen overnight. It was a steady process which happened because ordinary people believed propaganda; they allowed hatred to grow and did not respect the things which makes others different. You could **give** your young people the relevant factsheet on the genocide which you will find contained with this resource.

Allow time for questions and answer these as best you can. **Divide** those attending into small groups of no more than 5. **Give** each of them a copy of the story, the appropriate fact sheet and **explain** that you will be asking them to use this story as a basis for an activity. **Ask** them to think about and **discuss** the story of the object in their groups. **Provide** resources to help them interpret the story in a creative way. You'll find suggestions for activities in the introduction to this activity.

Ask the groups to consider:

How can they make sure that the story of this object does not remain untold?

What materials can they use to create something which represents the story?

What are the main points of the story that they think are the most important to put across?

How are they going to create something meaningful in the time and with the materials provided?

What do they hope that people will think about and remember when they view the creative responses of the group?

What else can we ask people to do to make sure that everyone encounters, responds to and shares **Untold Stories**?

Allow groups time to discuss and then to work on their projects. You may wish to develop the project in more than one session if time allows. You could set thinking or creating these projects as challenges to think of at home.

Conclude the session by telling the group that in thinking about these hidden histories and even simply discussing their responses to them in their groups, they have gone a long way towards being part of an ongoing process of telling stories. We hope that the stories they have heard will be a valuable part of linking the past with the present and the future. We would like everyone on Holocaust Memorial Day 2011 to think about the **Untold Stories** in their communities and families and to commit to learning the lessons of the past to create a safer, better future.