

BiHMe

BOSNIAN AND HERZEGOVINA MEMORIES

An initiative to create a collection of video-recorded testimonies on a wide range of war experiences in Bosnia – Herzegovina

www.bosnianmemories.org



HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO



UNIVERSITEIT TWENTE.

Data Archiving and Networked Services



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We are happy to present the first newsletter of **Bosnian and Herzegovina Memories** (BiHMe).

Outline of the project

In this project citizens of BiH from all social layers and regions are interviewed about their personal experiences in violent situations. The project is covering the war of the 90ies but also the Yugoslav period and WWII is subject of attention, in total 85 narratives will be recorded. The overall objective is the stimulation and empowerment of the social and individual processes of "dealing with the past" in order to improve mutual understanding in BiH and adjacent regions. The project will build a platform where the general public as well as professionals can find information about remembrance of the past told by individuals in a balanced representation of the people currently living in BiH. BiHMe is more or less a copy of a project carried out in Croatia, the Croatian Memories project.

Kick-off

The BiHMe project is carried out by a consortium of organizations in Bosnian and the Netherlands.

Partners are: Center for Investigative Reporting (Sarajevo) and The Human right Centre of the University of Sarajevo, Erasmus Studio of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, The University Twente, Data Archiving and Network Services (The Hague) and Noterik B.V. Amsterdam.

Just before summer 2011 the consortium received the news from the Netherlands Embassy in Sarajevo about the positive decision for a grand. BiHMe

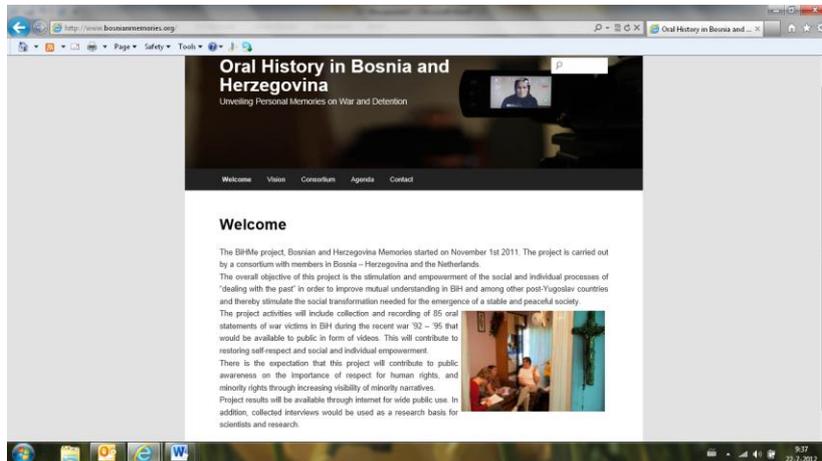


started on November 1st 2011. On December 19th a BiHMe kick-off meeting took place in Sarajevo at the office of CIN. During this meeting the Consortium Agreement which was prepared in the weeks before was signed by the project partners.

Project progress

A wiki-platform was introduced as a communication platform between the project partners and for the transparent sharing of documents, agendas, proposals, minutes of meetings and documentation. In a couple of meetings, partially on-line by using Skype conference facilities, a set of detailed requirements was made. This process took about the first four months of the project. Noterik BV, responsible for the designing and implementing of the open Internet platform adjusted the for the Croatian Memories project developed platform for the BiHMe project. This platform was made accessible in March 2012.

The first interviews were uploaded on the Noterik FTP server and implemented into the platform. Next to the open website, an index and research platform, developed for the Croatian Memories project had to be adjusted. This task is in hands of a programmer of the University Twente. This database, Collective Access, Open Source software, was updated with new functionalities and an interface. An important part of the platform is a metadata set (including a key wordlist) as designed by the Human Right Center of the University of Sarajevo.



The Noterik Springfield platform was introduced in April 2012, after some adjustments in the production version it was tested. The actual annotation and index activity did not start in this reporting period.

The metadata and index platform Collective Access had to be more structurally redesigned. The metadata used in Croatia was not usable

in the BiHMe project. At the end of the reporting period the first draft of the platform was accessible. The implementation of the research and indexing platform was closely coupled to the development and implementation of the open web platform. (www.bosnianmemories.org) There will be an exchange of data stored in the Collective Access platform, such as transcriptions and translations of the interviews into the Noterik platform. Also crucial index tables as keywords in Collective Access will be used in the search functionality offered through the Noterik website.

Training activities

Training of the project staff in CIN and the HRC took place in February 2012. Experienced staff members of the CroMe project were invited to give a three days training course in Sarajevo. In total 6 members of the BiHMe staff were coached in the field of Oral history, specific interview training and the use of the software for transcribing and translating was given.

The training was implemented by Maja Dubljević and Tanja Petrović of Documenta Zagreb.

Recruitment of candidates

To get a well-balanced representative collection of interviews, CIN made a careful selection of candidates assessing the right balance of ethnicity, gender, age, background, geographical representation etc.

The recruitment of potential interviewees was seeded by contacts with specific associations of citizens, contacted by CIN representatives during the reporting period. Associations contacted are the following:

Association of civil war victims FBiH and RS

Association of war invalids of FBiH and RS

Association of victims of detention of FBiH and RS

Association of veterans of FBiH and RS

Association of families of missing people in FBiH and RS

Association of women victims of rape in FBiH and RS

Additional contacts were made with people that were recommended through contacts with association and / or representatives listed above.

Recording interviews

Although the BiHMe project started on the first of November 2011, due to winter conditions, training of the staff and other preparations, the factual recording started the first of March 2012.

All interviews were recorded with high quality digital camera and meet the appropriate technical



standards for high quality audio-visual recording as defined by Noterik. CIN

used a semi-structured list of questions.

Most of the interviews lasted between one and two hours, some even longer, depending on experiences and memories of the interviewee.

Then the interviewer starts asking questions using the list of questions. This list is conceptualized in such a way that at the beginning more general questions are asked: interviewee usually needs some time to relax and gain trust. The interviewer follows the chronology of

the interviewee's experience and determines those experiences which take the central place in the life of that person.

For all of the interviews a permission for public broadcast are given.

On 15th of July 30 interviews were recorded, 21 of them were transcribed. For transcribing special transcriber software was used, this was a necessary condition for the alignment step. In this technique the audio, video and text are linked together in timeframes. 14 interviews are fully translated in English. It is very time consuming, since interviewees speak in a confusing way or don't finish their sentences; they often don't mention something which in Croatian is obvious but not in English. In other words, what interviewees don't say or say in between lines, has to be expressed in translation otherwise the recording is not understandable to viewers and the meaning is lost. For translators this is more time-consuming than translating literate text.

New funds

The Erasmus University, successfully applied for a project fund at the Institute for Global Justice in The Hague (founded in June 2011). In the project proposed, the interview collection resulting from the CroMe and BiHMe projects will be used to conduct 3 pilot studies with justice and reconciliation in the region as a main focus. This series of pilot project is meant to define a long-term multidisciplinary research agenda for the interview collection.