Final Report:

Teaching 20th century history and new technologies in the 21st century
the third professional development seminar for teachers
in European Jewish schools

Date: 14-16 March, 2015
Location: Berlin, Germany
Number of participants: 35

Underwritten by:
“I don’t think there is another organization that does what it takes to connect different Jewish communities in Europe like Centropa does. And you understand something vital: teaching history through personal stories isn’t just unique. It works.” – Zsolt Mártha, Budapest
Executive summary

Between the 14th and 16th of March, 2015, 35 educators from 17 countries attended our third annual winter seminar for European Jewish schools. During those two and a half days, participants worked together on cross-border projects, exchanged ideas and best practices, created lesson plans based on Centropa films and our web-based content, and brainstormed on how to strengthen European Jewish identity by connecting Jewish students with each other. With this seminar we made yet another huge step in strengthening CJN (Centropa Jewish Network), the only truly pan-European professional development program dedicated to 20th century Jewish history, digital story-telling and social media.

The majority of schools represented at our seminar (see list below) came into being only after the fall of Communism in 1989. During their first two decades, school leadership rightly concentrated on developing curriculum, showing parents that their schools were placing at the top levels of national testing (important to every parent), and building a team of competent teachers. But until Centropa began bringing teachers from these schools together, most of them had had no contact with each other, and there was no platform that offered them 20th century European Jewish history programs outside the strictures of Holocaust. There is now: ours.

With 99% of the students in these schools on social media (and 95% of their teachers), we are bringing education and Jewish identity to where teenagers live now: to their smart phones and tablets, and we are telling the stories that mean the world to them, because our stories are their stories. Centropa multimedia films (which have been officially selected for 12 international film festivals) are all about those who stayed in Europe. That is why it is so easy for us to work in these schools and expand in to them—and connect them with each other.

Because this was our third CJN seminar, our veteran teachers conducted many of the sessions—teachers who have already used Centropa films in their classrooms. By having them lead the workshops, we had teachers teaching teachers—and that is always the best way to create buy-in. This seminar was also important because those involved with informal Jewish education—in youth groups, museums and JCCs, asked to join in.

After our seminars, we ask teachers to fill in online surveys to share their ideas, suggestions and thoughts with us. Here are the most interesting facts you’ll find in the following pages:

- 60% said it was absolutely useful to write their lesson plans in smaller groups, and listen to the presentations of other teachers;
- 66% said it was useful to brainstorm in smaller groups on how the various schools could cooperate with each other;
- 74% rated the veteran teacher presentation as useful and said they picked up ideas for their own classroom work;
- Except for one school director, and three school administrators, every classroom teacher and informal educator named at least one project partner they’re planning to work with.

We all know that European communities are beset with problems; we read about these problems in the news. But there are other stories to tell: how young Jews are discovering a heritage many didn’t even know they had; how communities are justifiably proud as they turn their schools in top rated institutions; how more and more parents are sending children to these schools. Whatever Jewish future there is in Europe is happening in these schools, and Centropa is playing a vital role. We have made great strides over the past three years and we welcome you to work with us as we continue our growth.

Marcell Kenesei
Director
Centropa Jewish Network
Nine take-away quotes

"It opened my eyes and made me look at European Jewry in a different way. When I think about the lost community of Thessaloniki it makes me sad but also inspires me to work on building a Jewish future in Europe to show that we are strong and alive." – Gábor Székely from Brighton/Budapest

“For me personally, Centropa gave me a hope. I realized that on this planet there are more teachers who shared my opinion when we talk about education of our children. It gives me strength to carry on and go to my school and try even harder and make this world a better place to live.” – Ana Sesar from Zagreb

“It was amazing to see real films created by students, full of creativity and enthusiasm. To find wonderful ideas to be used during lessons. To brainstorm some ideas myself. To learn about useful sites in the net.” – Irina Georgieva from St. Petersburg

“The idea to keep memory based on traditional receipts is very charming to me. Because of having the opportunity to use kosher kitchens in school I would be very pleased to work on that topic.” – Judith Stillman from Berlin

“I like that Centropa is full of good materials available to use and it also connects people” - Paula Ismail from Helsinki

"Centropa educational activities are extremely good! For me and for Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies this is very nice cooperation between our organizations. I hope, that we will be in cooperation to create new projects in Ukraine.” – Anatoly Podolsky from Kiev

“Centropa is different by all means, it’s goals, it’s flexibility, it’s tools. It hold an unorthodox key to teach, a true genuine meaningful learning. It has a beautiful approach to tell the story and it brings people together - always a productive process. (I have been spreading the Centropa concept to colleagues, friends and family for the last month :)” – Roni Zuntz from Berlin

“The most important element: that we as teachers are involved in an active way . That we sit together and elaborate. That we are not in a passive way ” consuming” one lecture after an other making notes and going home with good intentions but not having put into practice anything .” – Rina Lund from Rome

“I have seen teachers meet to discuss ideas and actually come up with some great teaching tools and all this in an extremely motivational environment, following carefully designed lectures, plenary discussions and group work. Working out teaching solutions on location, so to say is priceless.” – Dimitar Dimitrov from Sofia
List of participants
This year 23 European Jewish Schools and educational institutions were represented. The participants teach: 7 Jewish studies, 9 Jewish history, 7 history, 7 social studies, 9 English, 7 Hebrew, 5 primary school teachers, 3 informal educators. The majority of the participants teach in middle or high school, but we also had elementary school teachers, as well as educators in Jewish youth movements, community centers and museums. 55% of the participants stated that this was the first time they participated in a seminar for European Jewish schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Subject taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Dimitar Petkov Dimitrov</td>
<td>Lauder School</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Ana Sesar</td>
<td>Lauder - Hugo Kon elementary school</td>
<td>Elementary school teacher, vice principal</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Eva Wichsová</td>
<td>Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic</td>
<td>manager of kids &amp; youth educational &amp; leisure time projects</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Jiri Ratajik</td>
<td>Lauder School in Prague</td>
<td>Social science</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Katerina Weberova</td>
<td>Lauder School in Prague</td>
<td>Jewish Studies, Hebrew</td>
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<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Jelena Rudjak</td>
<td>Estonian Jewish Museum</td>
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<td>Amnon-Juzef Luvischuk</td>
<td>Estonian Jewish Museum</td>
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<td>Daniel Weintraub</td>
<td>Jewish School of Helsinki</td>
<td>History, Jewish studies, political science</td>
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<td>Paula Ismail</td>
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<td>Tamara Guggenheim</td>
<td>Jewish Community of Düsseldorf - Religionschule</td>
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<td>Moses Mendelssohn School Berlin</td>
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<td>Aaron Eckstaedt</td>
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<td>Gábor Székely</td>
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<td>Asjer de Bruijn</td>
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<td>Maciej Przybylnski</td>
<td>Lauder Morasha School</td>
<td>Jewish History, social studies</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
<td>Ms. Katarzyna Burza</td>
<td>Lauder Morasha School</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>Irina Georgieva</td>
<td>School 550 World ORT</td>
<td>English, foreign literature</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>Svetlana Kutuzova</td>
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<td>Cecilia Lev</td>
<td>Ibn Gavriol School</td>
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<td>Aaron Meitlis</td>
<td>Ibn Gavriol School</td>
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<td>Fredrik Freud</td>
<td>Vasa Real</td>
<td>Jewish studies, Hebrew</td>
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<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Monika Molina</td>
<td>Ulus Jewish High School</td>
<td>teacher of science, financial education, vice principal</td>
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<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Maryna Pysanets</td>
<td>Technological Lyceum ORT</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>Dr. Anatoly Podolsky</td>
<td>Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies</td>
<td>history, Jewish studies, religious studies</td>
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Q8 What grades do you teach?

- Elementary school: 34.29%
- Middle school: 60.00%
- High school: 48.57%
- Other (please specify): 25.71%

Q11 Have you participated in an international seminar specifically for European Jewish schools?

- Yes: 42.86%
- No: 54.29%
- participated in Conference: 25.71%
- something similar: 5.71%
About the schools

The schools represented at this seminar are all Jewish community schools, but different in size, their place in the educational system in their country, date of their establishment, and the structure of their general curricula. But they all share one thing in common: *playing a significant role in building Jewish identity in their countries.*

From the survey results we see that 50% of these schools have seen an increase in enrollment, and only 16% said that enrollment in their school decreased. This shows us the growing importance of Jewish schools in Europe when we are talking about rebuilding Jewish life in Europe. During the seminar we asked every participant to present their schools, organizations – 66% of the respondents said that this was absolutely useful for them.
Learning from each other, working together

The Centropa Jewish Network has a very practical approach when we do seminars. We ask our veteran teachers to present their projects they accomplished in the frames of CJN, or lesson plans they created and used in their classrooms. We have break up sessions where the teachers work in smaller groups to come up with lesson plans, or cross-border project ideas. From the survey results we see that this approach was very useful: 77% said they will encourage their students to do video projects; 74% said they found the teacher presentation very useful; 66% said it was very useful to work in smaller groups to come up with lesson plans or project ideas.
Centropa Films
During the seminar we showed a total of five Centropa educational films. These films were specifically chosen for this audience: they tell stories of Jewish heroes who fought back, and we also showed two films that commemorate our Jewish Sephardic heritage. From the survey results we see that the film that most teachers will use are 1492: El Otro Camino, Centropa’s short educational documentary telling the story of Sephardic Jews from the explosion from Spain until 1992, an Survival in Sarajevo, the story of the Jewish community center of Sarajevo which functioned as a humanitarian aid agency during the siege of Sarajevo.
Continuation of the project

The participants of this seminar are now exchanging their lessons via Centropa’s network, and some of them will present their results at Centropa’s 9th Annual International Summer Academy, which will bring 80 educators and multipliers from Jewish and non-Jewish schools from 19 countries to Poland for an eight-day workshop on Jewish history and new technologies.

In the next phase, director of the Centropa Jewish Network (CJN), Marcell Kenesei is going to continue his visits to Jewish schools that were present at this seminar, organize small workshops, get to know other teachers, and checking on the lessons, or projects that the teachers are carrying out.

The follow-up of the created projects and lesson plans is vitally important for the continuation of our program. This is how we can improve this network, and build on the successes of our partner teachers. We also ask the teachers to document every project, to make photos and videos on the progress they are making. Like this we can make sure that they will stay on track, but more importantly we enable them to share their projects with students and teachers from other countries.

Our future plans are to have our most active teacher get small stipends to act as our coordinators for CJN projects. This way they become our stakeholders and will strengthen our network in the years to come.
Seminar program

14 March, Saturday, Shabbat – discovering Berlin on foot

Arrival in the morning

13:15 – Those staying in the Holiday Inn please meet in the lobby. We will hand out welcome bags which will include a sandwich, bottle of water, and an apple for the walking tour.

Everyone please bring the Centropa photo you printed out for the seminar. *(In case you missed this info: before you come to the seminar please go to the interviews section of www.centorpa.org and choose a country from the list green list in the center. We will assume that you will choose your own country. Since we did not conduct interviews in Western Europe outside of Germany and Austria, feel free to choose any country you wish. Choose a family name from the biographies. Explore the biography and the photos and print a photo from that interview, along with a one paragraph summary of that person. Please bring this with you.)*

We first stop at the ruined Anhalter Bahnhof, the station from which Jewish children on Kindertransports to England departed. We read excerpts from our Centropa Reader on Kindertransports.

14:00 – We walk to Potsdamer Platz, which had been the busiest intersection of pre-war Berlin, then was no-man’s land during the Cold War, and is now bustling once again.
14:30 – We walk to the Memorial for the Murdered Jewish of Europe and visit the information center downstairs. We see how the Holocaust is told through one family story per country.
15:00 to 15:30 – We walk the grand boulevard Unter den Linden (which is not so grand while they are building a metro beneath it). Look west and you’ll see the Brandenburg Gate. We’ll walk east, though, stopping at Bebelplatz, where Jewish books were burned in 1933. We cross over the street, past great buildings by Schinkel and into the Jewish quarter.
16:00 to 17:00 – We point out the sites of the Jewish quarter such as the Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue, the house where Regina Jonas (the first woman rabbi in the world) lived, and the Jewish cemetery and Jewish school.

We’ll discuss ideas on how you can help your students create their own walking tours of their cities and we’ll give you a link the following day on a film students at the Berlin Jewish school made on this neighborhood.
18:00 – You’re free to explore Berlin Mitte on your own and have dinner out.

15 March, Sunday, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Klingelhöferstr. 23, 10785 Berlin)
7:45 – Leave hotel and walk to Potsdamer Platz. Take Bus 100 to Adenauer. (note on your left side as we pass the fascist-era embassies of Italy and Japan).
8:30 – Introduction: who we are and where we came from, by Edward Serotta and Marcell Kenesei
9:00 – What I get out of Centropa as a teacher, Rina Lund, Jewish School in Rome & Cili Horváth and Ági Fenyő from the Lauder School in Budapest
9:30 – Participants introduce their schools, institutions. Short presentations, 3 minutes per school, followed by questions at the end, if there is time. *(In case you missed this: we ask every participant to present their school/institution, please check the email we sent with this program)*
10:45 – Coffee break
11:00 – **Breaking the mold – the Jews who fought back.** Screening our newest film The Mayor Who Worked in Hell, the story of Miksa Domonkos, a Hungarian Jew who worked with Raoul Wallenberg and paid dearly for his efforts.

We will watch The Years Make Their Own, about two Jewish teenagers in the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia who joined the Partizans during the Second World War.
We will also watch Survival in Sarajevo, the story of how an old synagogue in the Bosnian war zone became a beacon of hope for everyone.
12:00 - Break into smaller groups to work on lesson plans based on these films.
13:00 – Lunch
14:00 – Short presentations by each group to larger group. Groups give feedback.

**Cross-border projects** - How to connect your students with each other? Our goal: for you to create a project that brings your students together.
15:00 – Presenting the virtual walking tour project followed by discussion and evaluation. Zsolt Mártha - Scheiber School Budapest, Maciej Przybylnski – Lauder School Warsaw
15:20 – Presenting the virtual cookbook project followed by discussion and evaluation. Rina Lund – Jewish School in Rome, Irina Georgieva and Svetlana Kutuzova – ORT School St. Petersburg
15:40 – Project between Chicago and Vilnius Jewish schools – presented by Raimonda Sadauskiene.
15:50 – Break into groups to work on cross-border project ideas.

Coffee will be available during work session.
During this session teachers will break into 6 smaller groups and discuss what kind of cross-border projects they are going to make happen between their students (the ideas can be based on the presented projects, or they can also be completely new projects).
17:00 – Each group present their project ideas, followed by feedback of the other groups.
18:00 – Day ends and you are free to explore Berlin.

16 March, Monday, Jewish Museum of Berlin (Lindenstraße 9-14. / 10969 Berlin)
8:00 – Meet in lobby and we walk to Jewish Museum.
8:30 – Presentation of Dr. Anatoly Podolsky, Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies
9:00 – Our Sephardic heritage.
Screening - El Otro Camino: 1492. The same week that Columbus sailed west in 1492, the last Jews of Spain were being expelled. Even though they had lived there for a thousand years, religious intolerance threw them out. Where did they go? Who took them in? This documentary covers geography, history, Holocaust, multiculturalism, ethnic tolerance and the war in Bosnia—all in 11 minutes!

We screen A Bookstore in Six Chapters. Renée Saltiel and Solon Molho grew up in the greatest Sephardic Jewish community of them all, Salonika, or Thessaloniki, in today’s Greece. 60,000 Jews lived there in 1942; after the Germans had rounded up the city’s Jews a year later, almost none were left and only a handful returned. This is the story of two Jews who did manage to survive, thanks to a Spanish diplomat and some very brave Greek families. Narrated by their daughter, Nina Molho, in English, Ladino and Greek!
10:15 – Coffee break
10:30 – Break into smaller groups to work on lesson plans based on the film(s) chosen by the group.
11:30 – Short presentations by each group to larger group. Groups give feedback
12:30 – Presentation by Dr. Oliver Ernst, representative of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
13:00 – Lunch
14:00 – Final evaluation and discussion.
- What have we learned?
- Who are you going to cooperate with?
- Which projects will you try to implement?
15:00 – VIP guided tour in the Jewish Museum for those who have later flights.