



Student video competition
September 2017 – April 2018

My Community Project guideline

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General Overview: The Centropa Jewish Network Student Competition

For the third year, the Centropa Jewish Network (CJN) announces a cross-cultural video competition for students. This is an opportunity for students to discover and share their experiences of Jewish life and culture in their countries. Students in Jewish schools in the US, Europe and Israel are invited to compete in any of the four categories, and by sharing their own projects, connect and learn from each other.

The best videos of the competition will receive valuable prizes. For each category, we reward the first place video with a 400 EUR gift card, the runners-up with a 150 EUR gift card, while honorable mentions and the Audience prize winners will receive cinema tickets.

Project Goals:

- Connect students from the US, Israel and various countries of Europe, so they can learn about their own Jewish community, and from each other.
- To develop students' skills in the areas of research, presentation, cooperation/teamwork, ICT (info communication technology) systems, narrative writing and video editing. This project brings together many subjects: History, Computer Studies, Jewish Studies, Media Studies, and last but not least English Language.
- Produce high quality videos or presentations which are historically accurate, creative, and tell us an interesting story about some aspect of Jewish life or culture in the students' community.

Requirements:

All material submitted to the competition must meet the following criteria. Please note that the videos not meeting these criteria will not be accepted.

- The project must be a visual presentation of a topic: a video, PowerPoint, or Prezi.
- Students have to create the videos on their own. They might get professional support, but the final film has to be their own work solely. Students can work individually or in groups, where every student is responsible for a different task according to their interests and skills.
- The final product should not be longer than 5 minutes.

- All videos or presentations must have English narration or English subtitles.
- To submit your videos, upload them to Youtube, and then to the [Centropa Border Jumping](#) page. Upload the video until the deadline, which is the 27th of April, 2018.

The My Community Project

Synagogues, schools, communities – they didn't just appear out of nowhere. People created and built them - people who had visions of what they wanted for themselves, their children, and their children's children.

In this project, you have the opportunity to tell various stories:

1. The story of your town's Jewish history (possibly by creating a virtual walking tour)
2. The story of your local synagogue
3. The story of your school
4. The story of your local Jewish community, or a famous person from the community
5. The story of any other famous Jewish building or community in your town.

You will research the historical context and show how these communities and places were shaped during history.

Step-by-step instructions: how to plan, organize and create the film

1. First, look at good examples!

As a first step, we recommend you to watch Centropa videos to have an idea about what a good short film looks like. Your goal: think about what makes a good story. While you will be telling the story of a community, the same general rules apply if you were telling the story of a person: you have to make it beautiful, make it true, and make people care. What is important about the story you are telling, and why should people pay attention to it? And you have to provide the historical context. If you have time, here is an [assignment about analyzing a Centropa film](#), which can help you to design your own project. We also recommend you to look at the winning videos of last years' student competition. You can watch the [winners here](#), the [runner ups here](#).

After watching the films and answering the questions, you should see how the individual's story helps tell the larger history, and the larger historical context helps us understand what was happening to the individual. The same will be true of a community – the larger historical context will help viewers understand the story of the community, and the community's specific history will help them understand the larger historical events.

2. Find the Story

The first thing you need is a focus for the story you are going to tell. The story of a community will involve many people and events, so what will you focus on? You will need to find a core concept or theme relevant to the history of your community that you can follow. For example, survival (how did the community survive despite challenging circumstances?), or change over time (how did the community change in response to values in the larger culture changing over time? What factors were primarily responsible for that change?). As

you know from watching the Centropa films, it is not enough to state the facts, a good story is about the *meaning* of those facts for the people who lived them. That is what makes us care.

Decide on your topic: students should discuss which thematic they would like to focus on, time limits, title of the project. Set your goals and try to make a detailed plan on all the aspects on how to work on this project and also on how to face problems if needed. Assign different tasks to each student or a group of students and try to work a part of the project every week.

In order to figure out the theme or thesis of your film, you will need to do research – you can't know what the most interesting aspect of the story is until you know the information about your synagogue, school, or community. So, the first step is to get to work doing research.

Research the history of the community, as well as any relevant historical events important for your story. You might start with the archives of your community (a historical society, library, or museum), and you will probably also want to interview people involved in the community to get personal points of view, and personal stories you might not get from the archives. However, you will need to check any facts about other people or community events the people tell you because people don't always remember events and dates accurately. In other words, you don't have to check out personal stories, but if the person makes a claim about another person in the community, or an event, you should check it out.

Sources: Using the Internet to search for historical facts is not a problem, as long as you *make sure your sources provide accurate information and are reputable*. You must follow your school's guidelines for citing those sources.

For historical dates and numbers, especially regarding the Holocaust, you need *two sources for every fact*. **Students and teachers in other countries will see your films so be sure to give them accurate information.** For historical information about the Holocaust and Jewish life before the Holocaust, we recommend [Yad Vashem](#), the [US Holocaust Museum](#), the [Virtual Jewish Library](#) – but there are many other respectable sources in each country and language.

3. Collecting the material for your film

A) Photographs and documents

Community photographs and documents

Be sure to gather and scan photos important to history of your community, and if you interview people you might ask them if they have personal photographs that help tell their story about the community that would be appropriate for the project. If so, be sure to use the photographs in the interview: Who is in the photograph? Where was it taken? What was happening just before or after the photograph was taken? Are there any memories that the photograph evokes for them? Choose photos that visually tell the story you will narrate – if you're researching your school, and can get photos of the school building at different periods, then you can use them at the appropriate times during your presentation. And if your grandfather remembers being bar mitzvah in the synagogue you are researching, ask him what

it was like (Who was there? What did he have to do for his bar mitzvah? Was it meaningful for him? What does he remember about the community when he was a child?)

If you scan a photo with several people in it, be sure to write down the names of the people in the photograph on a sheet of paper so that you remember. Usually, when people share a photograph they say, “this is so-and-so, and that is so-and-so.” If you are recording the interview only with audio this sort of description will not help you remember who is who. In addition, by writing the information on a separate sheet of paper you can ask for the correct spelling, and remember who each person is in the photograph. For example, “Tibor Kertesz is on the left, Roszi Kenesei is in the back row, on the left, Miksa Nemeth is standing in the back, middle.” Otherwise, you will likely forget all of the names and who is who, which might be a problem when writing the script for your film.

Websites

You will also need photos that convey historical events and context. You can search particular sites – such as Yad Vashem or the United States Holocaust Museum, to find these images. If you search Google and type in the name of a town + Jewish, you may get lots of photos. High resolution photos, at least 1084 x 824, will look best on video. Be sure to properly cite the source of every photo.

Libraries, museums or archives

Local museums or archives will have photos specific to your town's history, so they are important resources for this project. Scanning the photos in their collections may cost money. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to call them first to find out what is available – it's possible they have some materials on their website.

Another option is to use your camera or phone to take a photo of a photo sitting on a desk. However, it is important to make a good quality photo. Take your picture in high resolution!

When using a photograph or document, always check for copyright permission!

B) Interviews

The best films tell stories learned from the very people who lived them, so you might want to interview several people who can tell the story of the community you are researching. If you want to get the most out of the interview, you need to be prepared and we suggest the following:

Think about what you really want to know from the people you interview and write up a list of questions that will help you get that information. We recommend starting a week or two ahead of time to think about these questions because some questions might not occur to you until you've starting really thinking about what you want to learn from your interviewees.

You will learn much more interesting information if you ask about your interviewee's experience in open-ended questions that allow the person you're interviewing to share as many memories as possible. For example, “What did it feel like when X happened? What did you think was happening when X happened? What was Rabbi So-and-So like as a leader of the congregation?” An open ended question does not require an answer of “yes” or “no,” but rather creates a space for any possibilities that you might have imagined. Asking questions that begin with the word “what” is a good start.

As a thank you for their time and sharing their personal stories, consider bringing flowers or chocolate or a small gift to show your interviewee that you appreciate their time and their willingness to share their memories with you.

C) Shooting photo and video

Whether you are recording the interview with a camera or only an audio recorder, you need to find a nice, quiet place for the interview. If using video or a camera, the space must have excellent light so that the interviewee is not in shadows, e.g., a garden or a room with a window. If using a camera, use a tripod! [Here you can find a video with some very useful tips about how to make a good video – even with a phone.](#)

Sound: this is arguably the most important part of an interview because if the viewer (or you, later on, when you listen to the interview) cannot hear what the interviewee is clearly saying you might as well not have done the interview. It's also a little tricky because you will be able to hear the interviewee during the interview because you'll be in the room - but that doesn't mean the microphone is picking up his or her voice clearly. We advise you to use a sound recorder, as the microphone on the camera usually won't be good enough. Smart phones usually have a good sound recorder. Place it close to your interviewee, but make sure it is not visible for the camera.

When shooting video, here are a few basic rules:

- If the thing or person you are shooting is moving, then hold the video camera and shoot it. If the person is sitting, or standing in one place, use a tripod!
- If you want to show us a building, slowly pan the camera up or down.
- Each shot should last a minimum of 20 seconds.

4. Creating a storyboard, writing the script for the film

Once you have gathered your family story, photos, and video, you need to create a storyboard or script - in English. What is a storyboard? It is the story you will tell – in words *and* in images. Next to each sentence you place the images that will be on screen when you read that part of the script.

We suggest you follow several guidelines when creating your script:

- Make it true. Everything must be historically accurate, fact-checked.
- Make it beautiful. The images must draw people in and make people want to watch (and how you put them together to tell the story must do the same).
- Make us care. Tell us more than facts. Why is this story important? What makes it interesting? Most people like stories that they can relate to, so you might ask yourself is: what is the human part of this story that anyone can relate to?

When working on the script there are two options:

- a) writing the script and making the video in English
- b) making the video in your mother tongue and creating English subtitles

Important: when you finish your script, be sure to show it to your teacher to check for grammar and storytelling. Your teacher will be able to show you where you should add more information, or perhaps another photo. Your teacher can also check your historical facts.

5. Instructions how to edit, cut, save, and upload the film

Since every school and student has different equipment, there are two options for making your film:

a) For those who don't have the time or equipment to make a full-fledged film we recommend that you put together a PowerPoint (PPT) or Prezi (www.prezi.com) presentation and record it with Screencast-o-matic (www.screencast-o-matic.com), which will allow you to capture your computer screen as you run the PPT slideshow or Prezi and add narration. If you haven't used Prezi before, we recommend that you visit their webpage and watch their short tutorials. Prezi is easy to use, and it is great for the visual representation of various topics, especially because of its zooming function that allows you to "zoom in" to the most important things in your story.

b) Those who have the time and resources to create a video that you will edit together, this can be done in many programs now - Microsoft Movie Maker, Sony Vegas, Apple iMovie, etc. If your school has an IT department or a teacher that specializes in video or film, then please have them help, too. You can find some help on the [Centropa website](#) as well.

As some basic tips, consider the following steps, regardless of your choice of software:

1. Collecting

- a) Collect your materials and place them into a single folder in your computer:
 - a. Images
 - b. Video Clips
 - c. Audio Files
 - d. Sound Effects (If you use background music, make sure to use non-copyrighted material so that you can upload your video to YouTube.)

2. Importing

- a) Open your software and make sure you have access to "import" the materials you collected into your software.
- b) Import all materials so that you can arrange them into an organized film.

3. Arrangement

- a) Your software will have a "timeline" or "project area" where you can arrange your materials to create your film.
- b) Consider performing your narration first, at the speed and tone you wish, and then add the materials.
- c) Once narration is complete, add your images, audio files, video clips and sound effects.

Remember to save frequently during this process!

At the end of the film, list all the names of the students who participated, thank anyone you interviewed, whoever helped you find information, and whoever worked with you to put together your project. Don't forget to cite every source in your credits!

4. Converting

- a) Finalize your film into a .MOV or a .MP4
- b) Save the finalized version to your computer

5. Sharing & submitting

- a) Share the saved file online on Youtube
- b) Ask your teacher to upload your film to our [Border Jumping website](#) so that students around the world can watch and comment on your film.
- c) After uploading your film to our Border Jumping page, write to the coordinator and let her know that you submitted the video!
- d) **Submit your video to our competition until 27th of April, 2018!**

Important note: Think of some ideas on how you can share your project outcome inside your community!

Got more questions?

Do not hesitate to ask us at Centropa (Borbála Pál: pal@centropa.org or Sofija Pavinskaite, My Community Project Coordinator (sofija.pavinskaite@gmail.com))