

# Haus der Namen & Convoi 77



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# „Die Welt liegt zwischen den Menschen.“

*Hannah Arendt*

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## Introduction

The massive massacre of the Holocaust changed families, countries and our world today. First of all, Holocaust education is a short cut for Holocaust or Shoah history education. This detailed formulation is required because, as Patrick Boucheron said „history is the art of reminding men and women of their capability of acting within the society“. It is also required because the mass destruction of the European Jews and Judaism during the second world war is called Holocaust in Austria, and in the anglo-saxon countries, whereas French call it Shoah. Hereunder, the two words will be used.

There is no one new way to teach the story of the Shoah, but rather there are many ways in which educational institutions, museums and other institutions deal with this topic. Multi-perspective, interdisciplinary approaches are extremely important precisely in order to enable the most differentiated possible view of a complex topic. Ultimately, this should also meet the requirement of applying the knowledge gained to the present.

Some approaches seem more historically scientific, while others rely on creativity and artistry. Nevertheless, research centers, places of remembrance, education and art work towards the same goal - “never again!”. To avoid the risk of this becoming just an empty phrase, it is important to recognize the efforts of everyone who has a genuine interest in addressing the issues in this regard. Our sincere thanks go to you. Unfortunately, anti-Semitism, racism and culturalism are still all too present today. Of course under changed circumstances. As the world and humanity change over time, practices, methods and materials of delivery must also adapt.

The biographies of the people involved are as varied as the aspects of the topic itself. The goal of the “New Ways of Teaching the Holocaust” project was to identify innovations and find and discuss practical tools that are promising in communicating the history of the Shoah. This work was created as part of an Erasmus+ project. The “Small Partnership” of the Key Action 2 program in the area of school education came about between the partner countries Austria and France. House of Names - Association for Holocaust Remembrance and Tolerance Promotion acted as the project’s lead partner in Austria and Convoi77 acted as a partner in France. Together with 10 committed and experienced teachers from Austria and France, we faced this challenge. The manual presented here is one of the results of friendly, meaningful and professional collaboration. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts and are happy that we found people with awareness and knowledge.

The first two meetings were held between the partner organizations in Graz and Paris at the end of march and may 2022. We were able to exchange ideas and get to know each other. We gave the background information about the history in Austria and France and discussed insights on how we work

in the particular given context of school education. Also the structure of the expected results and the work with the teachers had to be prepared. In the further course, participant groups in both France and Austria were able to be formed to work together in the two countries.

On the 16th and 17th September 2022 the first Seminar with the 10 participating teachers took place in Graz. Besides giving an example for holocaust education within the exhibition “Bertl & Adele” from Haus der Namen in the museum of history. Furthermore we held workshops to work out three major questions for our project. Motivations and reasons for holocaust education – Academic topics to be discussed in Shoah history teaching – And methods & materials useful for lessons about the holocaust were shared.

Meeting again in Paris on the 3rd and 4th November 2022 we not only had the chance to interview the eyewitness Robert Franck and were given insights in holocaust education in France but also worked along following up on the workshops held in Graz. Working with archives, researching online and the construction/deconstruction of cultural identity were addressed. In additional workshops we identified the most important skills that are to be trained in holocaust education, discussed tools that are capable of promoting bi- or multinational collaboration and designed an exemplary curriculum that we could all agree on.

The following document reflects the results of the workshops held, input given and the fruitful discussion with all of the participants.

## **Who is this manual aimed at?**

The methodological considerations found here provide opportunities for designing lessons about the Holocaust, but can also be used to develop transnational projects. This manual is therefore aimed not only at teachers, but also at those working in the culture of remembrance or employees of memorial sites or other organizations that want to get involved. Regardless, we assume that the proposals formulated here must be viewed for what they represent – specific results that emerged in a specific context. You are an expert in your target group, your organization or your field of activity. You decide whether and to what extent our considerations are applicable to your environment. You can also think of this manual as a kind of toolbox; whatever you need, please take it out and be invited to work with it. Whatever you don't need, just leave it in.

## **Collaborative collaboration**

Transnational cooperation is the key to a strong European Union. It is fundamental both in its founding history and in contemporary political practice. Even in a global sense, it is important to reflect on processes of internationalization and global citizenship as part of our current way of life. When carrying out this project, we also quickly realized that collaboration across borders also has a particular value for teaching, especially when it comes to the history of the Shoah. Many dimensions seem very fruitful when one thinks about an exchange of ideas between people of different nations.

## Biographies bring people together

Right from the start of working with our project partners, we recognized the potential of learning through the exchange of experiences guided by biographies. In addition, the story of the Shoah is a shared story across Europe that continues to influence our lives. Even if this story isn't always told straight away, it has the potential to bring people together.

Before we go into the results in detail, we will tell you how this project was implemented in the first place, as this is crucial to understanding them.

In 1925, a girl was born in the city of Graz, Austria. Her name was Adele Kurzweil and she was the daughter of Bruno and Gisela. Bruno, her father, decided to leave the Jewish community in 1912. It is documented that when Adele was one year old, Adele and her mother also decided to live without formal affiliation with any religious institution. Nevertheless, the Nuremberg Laws made the Kurzweil family's life in Austria unbearable. Like many people, they had to leave the country in 1938. Their goal was to get to the United States, but it was almost impossible to get a visa, so they traveled to Paris via Zurich. Two years later, the city of Graz, now part of the German Empire, was declared "clean of Jews". The world, and Europe in particular, was at war.

Fifty years later, in 1990, some sealed suitcases were found during the renovation of a police station in Auvillar, western France. Telling the story of Adele Kurzweil is only possible thanks to the commitment of Pascal Caila, Jacques Latu and many others, who managed to reconstruct the biography based on the documents, papers and everyday objects found in the suitcases. Almost 100 years after Adele's birth, her story is being told. In the exhibition "Bertl and Adele", the House of Names association conveys the history of the Shoah and supports teachers in dealing with this topic in the city of Graz and throughout Austria.

During the pandemic in 2020, convoi77 from Paris was looking for partners in Austria to find teachers and individuals willing to edit biographies of deported people as part of their project. Because convoi77 has set itself the task of researching and publishing the life stories of the 1,306 people who were deported in the last transport number 77, from Drancy (Paris) to Auschwitz. The organizations quickly discovered similarities: they shared motivation and commitment to teaching about the Holocaust, a biography-oriented approach and working method in teaching, and both organizations were founded by descendants of Holocaust survivors.

Adele, the girl who fled from Graz to Paris, was deported from Drancy to Auschwitz in September 1942 in Convoy No. 30. She shares the sad ending of her story with 6 million others murdered during the Holocaust.

It is thanks to Adele that the organizations came together for this project and that transnational collaboration and friendships were subsequently developed.

While this project was taking place, two young teachers met each other, Laura Cencig from Graz and Gregoire Dujardin from Paris. Both teach their students about the Holocaust. They decided to take up

the spirit of the project and worked together on a biography of the Austrian resistance fighter Anna Sussmann. The students spent their time getting to know each other via the Internet, researching the documents they found and exchanging their knowledge and experiences. The resulting biography, including artistically processed illustrations, is now available to other students, teachers and interested parties. Ultimately, they were honored for their achievements by the French ambassador to Austria on the 28th of September 2023. Not only did they write a biography from historical sources that could not be told without them, they also strengthened the connection between Austria and France and became the model for this paper as an example of good practice in Holocaust education.

## **European Citizenship**

For most people, growing up in post-war Europe means freedom, peace and stability. History shows that this is not something to be taken for granted. Efforts must be made daily at political, institutional and personal levels to maintain the status quo in which we enjoyed growing up. Of course, we have to deal with other problems that arise globally and locally at the same time. It is therefore of great importance to strengthen European identity and the appreciation of European institutions that ensure that the future of our children is as stable as our current lives.

Teaching and learning about the Shoah shows us how quickly things can change and how important it is to stand strong for human rights.

Politics thrives on participation. For a lively and dynamic exchange between nation states, relationships that people maintain are crucial. The European Union and especially Erasmus+ support such exchanges and the building of new relationships across borders. This idea is central to the results of this project.

## **Come to a common denominator**

Despite all the differences between the curricula, textbooks, schools and individual teachers, all project participants came together in Graz in March 2021. 14 people in number, teachers from middle schools and high schools as well as mediators from the partner organizations. First, innovative methods were collected with which the participants had positive experiences in order to be able to discuss them later. The results were ultimately concretized in terms of their usability for a transnational exchange at the European level.

## **Workshop method**

In order not to limit the variety of options that can be used in Holocaust mediation, it was necessary to find a method that was as open as possible and that was suitable for taking different approaches into account and still establishing order.

Kawakita Jiro, a Japanese ethnologist, formulated the idea of the affinity diagram. It organizes ideas, problems and solutions into interrelated groups. It helps organize large amounts of fragmented and

unclear information into logically coherent groups. The goal is to define a limited number of groups whose selection makes a complex problem easier to understand.



This is done in several stages: “Capture - Group - Label”

## Fighting anti-Semitism

The first question we addressed was: Why are we dedicating ourselves to teaching about the Holocaust?

It is tellingly symptomatic that the teachers thought primarily about the fight against anti-Semitism, which was the main motivation for their commitment to teaching Shoah history. This resulted in the overarching goal of combating anti-Semitism as the primary directive for all further project activities, which also reflects the European strategy for combating anti-Semitism. It shows that the dangers of new anti-Semitic behavior or actions are still high and that it is relevant to raise students’ awareness of them.

Current examples of fake information that teachers, pupils or students are exposed to include Holocaust deniers, conspiracy theorists and other, sometimes religiously motivated, extremists who reinforce prejudices against Jews. The increasing influence of right-wing extremist political parties is also mentioned. Their narratives are closely linked to those who also had a major influence in the Holocaust.

An understanding of the processes and background of the Shoah should prevent a possible repetition or future genocides. Our history should not become our future. In order to learn from past mistakes, we need knowledge from the past in order to shape the future. This goes beyond the temporal limits of the Second World War and must take into account its complex prehistory. Education, science and culture of remembrance are ultimately also the foundations of the European Union’s strategy paper to combat anti-Semitism.

Here are some points that are relevant in this context:

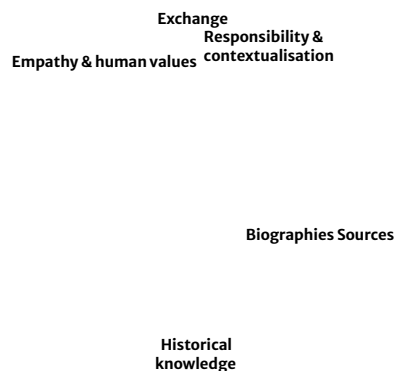
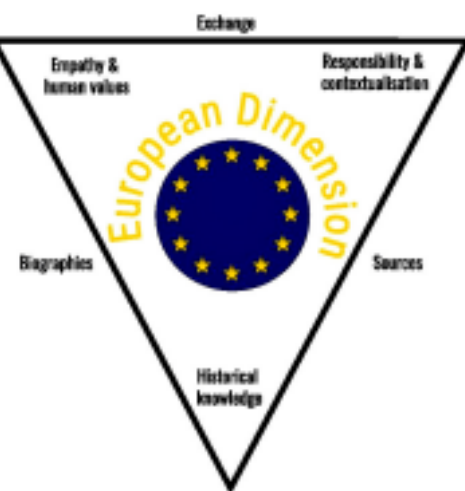
- **Education:** The EU is committed to supporting educational institutions to develop and implement curricula that promote knowledge of the Holocaust and the history of anti-Semitism. Promoting tolerance, diversity and intercultural understanding in schools and universities is of central importance.
- **Scientific research:** The EU supports scientific research on the history of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. This includes the financing of research projects, collaboration between research institutions and the dissemination of scientific knowledge.

- **Culture of remembrance:** The EU promotes the memory of the Holocaust and the preservation of memorials and historical places. It also encourages participation in commemorative events and educational initiatives to increase awareness of history and the importance of the culture of remembrance.
- **Strategy to combat anti-Semitism:** In its strategy paper to combat anti-Semitism, the EU has set out concrete measures to raise awareness, prevent and combat anti-Semitism in various areas, including education and culture.

The EU works closely with Member States, civil society organizations and educational institutions to strengthen the fight against anti-Semitism and ensure that education, science and the culture of remembrance play a key role in these efforts. This is an important step to promote the values of tolerance, diversity and human rights in Europe and to ensure that the atrocities of the Holocaust are never forgotten.

### 3 goals–3 methods

During the workshops in the seminars in Graz and Paris, the following 3 goal and 3 method components of the Holocaust were identified. They are not in any hierarchy as they overlap and influence each other. They should be viewed as a self-reinforcing



We have represented these points as triangles because one never works without the other. Then we thought about the connections that might exist between the elements. Working with biographies, for example, would be one way to achieve the goals of empathy and knowledge, but also responsibility. Either existing biographies or directly told life stories. In order to be able to link knowledge with contextualization, we need sources.

But what needs to be added to obtain a European dimension?

Our focus is to see this as a story that affects all of Europe and not just Germany or Austria. In our



opinion, what needs to be encouraged is exchange.

Holistically speaking, we essentially have the same European history, but we have different local memories of that history depending on the country. This also has to do with trauma and national narratives, in France, for example, with the myth of the resistant country, in Austria with the myth of the victim nation. If we share our stories and memories with one another, we can recognize their blind spots. To this end, promoting exchange is essential.

The graphic above is intended to represent a model that can be used in teaching and illustrates the interaction of the different areas.

Empathy, responsibility and knowledge represent the goals of Holocaust mediation. Biographies, sources and exchange are the methods to achieve these goals. In our view, the combination of empathy, responsibility and knowledge through the use of biographies, sources and exchange is crucial for communicating the Holocaust. These six elements help bring the story of the Holocaust to a personal and tangible level, encouraging learners to engage with the events, the people and the impact in a deeper way. Here are some key ways these elements contribute to Holocaust education:

- **Empathy:** By working with biographies and personal stories of Holocaust survivors, victims, and witnesses, learners can connect with the people who were affected by the events. This promotes empathy and compassion and enables learners to empathize with the situation of those affected.
- **Responsibility:** Dealing with the history of the Holocaust teaches students the importance of responsibility and individual action. You will learn how hate and prejudice can lead to such horrific atrocities and will be encouraged to take responsibility for promoting tolerance, human rights and preventing hate crimes in the present.
- **Knowledge:** Working with sources and researching the history of the Holocaust promotes knowledge about the causes, course and effects of the Holocaust. Learners develop a deep understanding of the historical context and the complexity of events.
- **Exchange:** Exchange between students and teachers, but also between different schools, organizations and countries, promotes understanding of the diversity of perspectives and experiences in connection with the Holocaust. In our opinion, transnational cooperation in particular appears to be particularly fruitful for this purpose. This contributes to making history a common European heritage.
- **Sources:** Working with sources such as diaries, letters, photographs and documents allows learners to examine and understand historical evidence first hand. You will learn to work like historians to reconstruct facts and document history.
- **Biographies:** The use of biographies allows learners to learn the history of the Holocaust through concrete life stories. This makes the abstract historical events tangible and human. This also enables self-reflection by examining one's own biography.

historical knowledge, but also promotes the development of empathy, a sense of responsibility and a strong awareness of the importance of the culture of remembrance. This will help ensure that the lessons of Holocaust history are not forgotten and that similar tragedies are not repeated in the future.

Through the interaction of these six elements, shared histories can become a shared European history - many memories, one shared history.

It's about Europe! Opening up students' perspectives on a common European history, especially in connection with that of other European countries, enables the development of skills that go far beyond history lessons. It lays the foundation for building a common European memory that helps to understand the unthinkable a little more, but also to shape the future of Europe. This model can be viewed on several levels and thus make a contribution in terms of subject, system and time.

In relation to the subject, individual ability to act can be achieved, one's own biography can be illuminated, skills can be expanded and orientation can be provided.

The subject reference in Holocaust mediation helps to promote a comprehensive perception of the historical events. It reminds us that the Holocaust is not just an abstract chapter in history, but an experience that changed the lives of countless people forever.

Systemically, it is about the structures that influence our actions and can contribute to change. The mediation of the Holocaust thus relates to structures and political and social conditions then and now. The Holocaust was not the work of single "evil" individuals, but rather the result of a destructive system that emerged in a particular historical context. It underlines the need to identify the causes and mechanisms that led to the emergence of such a tragedy in order to prevent similar developments in the future and promote a more humane society.

And regarding time, a connection can be made between past, present and future. The reference to time means thinking about historical knowledge in a larger context. The roots of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust lie far back and yet continue to have an impact. Dealing with the Holocaust and its historical background is of great importance; it also makes it possible to recognize the connections to current events and developments in which anti-Semitism and racism still play a role. A deep understanding of history helps to recognize the mechanisms and ideologies that have led to such misanthropic tendencies and raises awareness of the dangers of prejudice, discrimination and anti-Semitism that continue to exist in today's society.

Before the individual goal and method complexes are discussed, we would like to briefly discuss the structure of this work. The related topics are discussed in terms of definition and basic ideas for communication are discussed. In addition, sub-goals are broken down in order to provide final methodological considerations. This can be viewed as a kind of "toolbox" that can represent ideas for designing your lessons.

*“The demand that Auschwitz not happen again is the very first thing in education. It is so much ahead of anything else that I neither feel I have to nor should I justify it.” (Theodor Adorno)*

Empathy is the ability to understand other people's feelings, thoughts and perspectives. Through empathy we can understand the situation of others, consider their perspectives and understand their feelings without judging them.

Human values are the fundamental principles, beliefs and ethical guidelines that influence the behavior and decisions of a person (subject) or a society (system). They form the basis for personal and social behavior, shape the way people interact with one another, and play an important role in how people make moral decisions and shape their actions in society. Values change over time, which is particularly clear when dealing with the Holocaust and its pre- and post-history. Promoting empathy in Holocaust education not only serves to keep the memory of the victims alive, but also to help prevent similar atrocities in the future. If our learners approach the history of the Holocaust with empathy, they will be more willing to actively advocate for human rights, tolerance and an open society.

This approach is in line with the EU strategy to combat anti-Semitism, which emphasizes promoting humanity and developing an awareness of the importance of democracy. It's about highlighting the dark chapters of human existence as well as the opportunities for peaceful coexistence. Role models and positive examples play a crucial role in enabling us to act appropriately in future crises. It is important that Holocaust education aims to promote empathy without overwhelming or traumatizing students. Educators should approach with sensitivity and ensure appropriate support is in place if students exhibit emotional reactions. Remember that you are the expert on your class and your students and can judge what content is appropriate for your students and what is not. Empathy in Holocaust education can help keep the memory of the victims alive and prevent similar atrocities in the future. If learners approach the history of the Holocaust with empathy, they will be more willing to actively advocate for human rights, tolerance and an open society. Holocaust education also aims to combat forgetting so that the words „Never again“ do not remain empty phrases. European culture of remembrance should be strengthened because 6 million people can no longer speak for themselves.

Through Holocaust education and the visible consequences of fascism and racism, prejudices can be reduced, (young) people can be made aware of discrimination of all kinds and current racist/anti-Semitic trends can be better classified. Raising awareness about the dangers of extremism can counteract increasing hatred of Jews and future problems of anti-Semitism. Current anti-Semitic trends can be found on both the right and left of the political spectrum, as well as in radical Islamist extremists. (see European Commission 2021: 4)

requires a concerted effort from all of us, teachers and students alike, to ensure that the lessons of history remain alive and humanity continues to be promoted in our society. Transnational cooperation, such as student participation and exchange projects, not only offers the opportunity to make contacts in other countries, but also enables people to experience commonalities with “others”. Despite different perspectives and backgrounds, partnerships across borders can be established through shared goals.

### **Sub-goals:**

These goals are crucial to Holocaust education and go beyond the acquisition of knowledge. They emphasize the development of values, empathy and the ability to think critically. Here’s how to achieve these goals:

- **Developing an awareness of the value of human life and encountering it on an equal level with tolerance and compassion:** This goal is achieved as learners establish a personal connection with the people affected by the events of the Holocaust through work with biographies and other biographical sources. They learn to value human life and develop empathy for the victims and survivors. Discussions and reflections promote tolerance and compassion.
  - **Recognizing individuality beyond group membership:** Working with individual biographies highlights the uniqueness of each life and shows that people are more than just members of a group. Learners learn to appreciate the diversity of life stories and to question prejudices and stereotypes. The examination of one’s own biography as well as getting to know „others“ can be promoted through exchange and the formation of networks.
  - **Identifying and recognizing prejudice and violent ideologies:** By studying sources and analyzing how authoritarian and discriminatory ideologies operate, students develop the ability to recognize prejudice and extremist thought patterns. You will learn how such ideologies can manipulate people and lead to violence.
  - **Raising awareness of Fascism and National Socialism as ideologies:** Intensive study of the history of the Holocaust enables learners to understand the ideologies of Fascism and National Socialism and how these ideologies were used to justify crimes against humanity. This promotes awareness of the dangers of extremist ideologies in general.
  - **Rejection of violence and anti-Semitism:** This goal is achieved through an intensive examination of the historical events of the Holocaust and the emphasis on humanity in the biographies. Students should recognize the terrible consequences that prejudice, discrimination and hatred can have. This creates awareness of rejecting violence and anti-Semitism and actively fighting against it.
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- **Collaboration between students and teachers:** Collaboration between students and teachers is an important part of Holocaust education. Through joint dialogue, discussions and collaboration on projects, a learning environment is created in which students can benefit from the experiences and

knowledge of the teachers. This promotes understanding and empathy on both sides. Cross-border exchange in particular can help open up new perspectives.

- **Awakening emotions:** Emotions play a crucial role in Holocaust mediation. Working with biographies and individual fates enables learners to establish a personal connection to the events and to develop compassion. Artwork and other creative expressions can also evoke emotions and emphasize the importance of the story.
- **Promote critical thinking:** Holocaust education should encourage students to think critically about the events, analyze sources and understand historical context. This not only promotes historical understanding, but also the ability to recognize and question prejudices and extremist ideologies. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter “Responsibility and Contextualization”.

Teaching about the Holocaust is therefore not just a history education, but also an education for values, empathy and tolerance. It helps to identify the roots of prejudice and extremism and pave the way to an inclusive and fairer society.

### **Methodological considerations:**

Personal experiences and real-life communication are crucial for authentic and effective Holocaust education. Here are some methodological considerations that underscore the importance of these approaches:

- **Emotional Connection:** Telling individual stories allows students to make a deep emotional connection to the events of the Holocaust. The personal experiences of survivors, victims and helpers give the historical facts a human face and make the suffering and strength of people during this time tangible. This can help promote empathy and compassion.
- **Use of contemporary witnesses:** The opportunity to include contemporary witnesses in Holocaust education can be an incredibly powerful experience for students. Listening directly to someone who personally experienced the Holocaust gives the story an immediate and human dimension. These eyewitness accounts enable learners to identify with the victims and establish a deeper connection to the humanity of those affected. These experiences can increase awareness of the need for empathy and humanity, especially in the face of such unimaginable tragedies. Since the options for using contemporary witnesses are becoming increasingly rare, alternative methods will be examined in the biographies chapter.
- **Multimodal approaches:** In order to make the story lively and vivid, it is crucial to use different media and approaches. Photos, documents, videos and audiovisual materials offer different

perspectives and allow participants to empathize with the events. These diverse approaches appeal to different senses and promote greater understanding. Photos can provide powerful images, documents can provide historical context, videos can provide eyewitness reports, and audiovisual materials can capture the atmosphere and emotions of the time.

- **Dialogic learning methods:** Instead of a one-sided presentation, Holocaust teaching should rely on dialogic learning methods. These methods give participants the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and questions and to actively participate in the learning process. Discussions about complex topics, group work to explore different perspectives, and role-playing that recreate historical situations can help deepen understanding and empathy. By actively engaging students in the classroom, they can better empathize with the events and better grasp the human aspects of the story.
- **Reflection and self-reflection:** Dealing with the Holocaust should also include reflection on one's own prejudices, values and actions. Reflection phases enable students to examine their own attitudes and behavior. This self-reflection is crucial to understanding how they can actively contribute to an inclusive and tolerant society. It allows learners to apply the lessons of history to their own lives and consciously choose humanity and respect.
- **Embedded in larger human values:** The Holocaust should not be viewed in isolation, but placed in the context of broader human values such as tolerance, respect, compassion and human rights. Mediation should emphasize how these values are central to preventing similar tragedies in the future. By helping students recognize that respecting these values helps build a more inclusive and peaceful society, Holocaust education becomes a lesson for the present and the future.
- **Sensitivity and empathy:** Holocaust education can provoke strong emotional reactions in participants. It is crucial to be prepared and ensure that students are adequately supported when faced with the difficult content. Educators should create an environment in which students feel safe and can express their feelings. This can be ensured through open discussions, the opportunity to ask questions and access to psychological support. Students should be encouraged to talk about and process their feelings to promote healthy processing of emotions
  - **Involvement of the target group:** The design of communication approaches should take into account the age, previous education and experiences of the target group. It is important to tailor the methods appropriately to the needs and level of understanding of the participants. Younger students may need an age-appropriate approach that contains less detailed or less graphic information. Older students can handle deeper discussions and more complex material. Involving the target group ensures that Holocaust education is effective and that students are able to learn lessons from history that are relevant to their particular stage of development. The combination of sensitivity and empathy with a target group-oriented approach ensures that Holocaust educa-

tion is not only informative, but also appropriate and effective. It creates an atmosphere of respect and support that allows students to cope with the story and their emotions in a healthy way.

- **Creative area and small projects:** Students should have the opportunity to actively engage with the Holocaust by carrying out creative projects. This can be done in the form of small projects that enable the learners to process their experiences and make a direct connection to the reality of the

young people. Project work can include different formats and approaches to take into account the diversity of perspectives and talents of the students.

- **Interdisciplinary teaching:** Holocaust education projects do not have to be limited to the subject of history. Interdisciplinary teaching that includes various disciplines such as literature, art, music, social sciences and ethics can be particularly useful. This allows students to view the Holocaust from different perspectives and delve deeper into different aspects of history.
- **Group work and exchange:** Working in groups and exchanging ideas between students are crucial in order to present the results of the project work. This promotes collaboration and dialogue, allowing students to share their insights and learn from each other. Group projects can also promote empathy and understanding of the different perspectives within the class.

## 2. Responsibility and contextualization

*“You are not to blame for what happened back then. But you have responsibility for what you do with the memory today.” (Elie Wiesel)*

Responsibility and contextualization play a central role in historical studies and educational work. Historians, teachers, and researchers have a responsibility to treat information diligently and to place historical events in their proper context. This is to ensure an accurate representation of the past and to give learners a deep understanding of the complexities of history and society.

Teachers have a similar responsibility when it comes to teaching students historical knowledge. They must ensure that the information they present is accurate and balanced. This often requires the ability to present different perspectives and interpretations of historical events to promote comprehensive understanding. But responsibility also plays an important role for the learners, as it is also about the question of what individual responsibility we have towards our environment, our fellow human beings and ourselves in society.

Contextualizing historical events is crucial to understanding their causes, effects, and significance. Social, political, economic and cultural factors must be taken into account at a certain point in time. This makes it possible to analyze events on a broader scale and capture their complexity. Teachers can help students not to look at historical events in isolation, but in the context of their time. This

promotes deeper understanding and allows learners to recognize the impact of historical events on society then and now. Contextualization also helps to challenge prejudices and stereotypes. The combination of responsibility and contextualization also promotes and challenges critical thinking. By learning to question information and analyze historical events in their context, learners are empowered to make informed decisions and develop a nuanced understanding of the world around them. Overall, the responsibility to provide accurate information and the ability to appropriately contextualize historical events is critical to historical scholarship and education. They help improve

the quality of historical research and teaching, enabling learners to develop a deeper and nuanced understanding of the past and the world in which they live. The critical examination of our history and the assumption of responsibility are an essential part of our moral obligation towards the victims of the past and future generations. It is a step towards a society based on tolerance and understanding so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

### **Sub-goals:**

In Holocaust education, it is crucial to promote a sense of responsibility without students feeling responsible for the Holocaust themselves. Instead, they should feel responsible for what happens in their own time and society. Here are some important aspects:

- **Sense of responsibility and conveying values:** Teaching about the Holocaust should aim to promote the students' sense of responsibility. This means making them aware that they have a responsibility for what happens in their own world. The development of values such as tolerance, respect and humanity should also be emphasized.
- **Promote critical thinking:** Achieving critical thinking is an essential skill that enables us to carefully analyze and evaluate information and make informed decisions. This skill has far reaching implications for our lives and goes beyond teaching about the Holocaust.
- **Awaken interest in other people:** A key goal should be to arouse students' interest in other people. You should learn to understand different perspectives and learn from others without fear or prejudice. This promotes empathy and the ability to put yourself in other people's shoes.
- **Understanding and combating violent ideologies:** Holocaust education should also serve to give students the skills for resilience and resistance to inhumane ideologies. They should learn to recognize and combat violent ideologies. This also includes knowledge of how to assert oneself against authoritarian structures.
- **Promote democracy:** An important aspect is the promotion of democratic values and the motivation to actively participate in democracy. Students should understand that democracy cannot be taken for granted and that they must work to maintain and strengthen it. Students should understand the importance of these values in a society based on the principles of human rights and equality.

- **The role of the European Union:** The European Union should be presented as an example of a political institution that embodies and promotes these values. The students should learn how the EU contributes to promoting peace, tolerance and human rights in Europe.
- **Say no and know the room for maneuver:** Holocaust education should teach students to say "no" when they see injustice and to use the room for maneuver within their society to bring about change. This requires an understanding of democratic processes and the ability to actively participate in them.



- **Europe as the site of the Holocaust:** Students should understand that the Holocaust was not limited to a single country or region, but spread across Europe and that narratives from this time still exist globally. They should learn how European states and societies were involved in these tragic events, whether through active participation or passivity.
- **The importance of peaceful coexistence:** Holocaust mediation should emphasize the importance of peaceful coexistence in Europe in order to prevent the horrors of the past. Students should recognize that Europe's history has been marked by conflict and violence and that the European Union was founded to promote peace and cooperation.
- **Responsibility for the future of Europe:** Holocaust education should also encourage students to take responsibility for the future of Europe. They should understand that preserving the peace and values that the EU stands for depends on them and future generations.

In summary, Holocaust education should highlight the European dimensions of the Holocaust in order to promote understanding of the importance of a peaceful, democratic and humane Europe. This helps to see history as a living lesson for the present and the future. It is about the students' ability to understand the extent of the horrors of the Holocaust from a macro perspective and to apply this understanding to different current contexts without relativizing the Holocaust.

### **Methodological considerations:**

- **Deconstructing Myths:** It is crucial to deconstruct myths. This includes the critical examination of one's own history and national ideas. It is important to first acknowledge that many people and organizations in Europe have played a role in the dark chapters of history. It is recommended that you engage intensively with your own local history and critically reflect on narratives such as the "victim myth" in Austria or the "resistance myth" in France.
- **Sensitivity to the human dimension of history:** The Holocaust is much more than just a number of victims. It is important to teach students to see the human dimension behind the statistics and facts. This helps them develop empathy and take the tragedy to a personal level.
- **Understanding global political contexts:** The Holocaust and its historical responsibility are closely

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linked to global political contexts. A deeper understanding of these connections allows students to better understand the world around them, including current political conflicts.

- **Critical reflection and linking knowledge:** The ability to critically reflect and link knowledge is crucial. Students should not only learn facts, but also develop the ability to analyze, evaluate and integrate information into different contexts.
- **Applying knowledge to other contexts:** Understanding the Holocaust should help students apply knowledge to other historical and contemporary contexts. This allows them to draw parallels and

apply the lessons of history to the present without relativizing the Holocaust.

- **Recognize similarities and differences:** By viewing the Holocaust in the context of other conflicts and genocides, students can identify similarities and differences. This allows them to understand the unique aspects of the Holocaust while drawing parallels to current conflicts.
- **Orientation in a complex world:** The ability to understand historical events and place them in a broader context serves to orientate yourself in a complex world. This helps students to better understand current political developments and to actively participate in discussions about historical responsibility and global connections.
- **Accept responsibility:** Acknowledging and accepting responsibility for past actions and failures are key components of a moral obligation. This includes a willingness to face and learn from the dark chapters of history.
- **Reparations to the victims:** Holocaust mediation and Shoah education can serve as a way to provide reparations to the victims of the Shoah, albeit on a limited basis. This is done by engaging deeply with their history and suffering and ensuring that their stories and experiences are not forgotten.
- **Drawing lessons from history:** Critically examining history enables us to draw lessons for the present and the future. This includes promoting tolerance, respect and the commitment to actively combat prejudice, discrimination and extremism.
- **Imperfect Reappraisal:** It is important to accept that the reappraisal of history will never be complete because the past cannot be undone. Nevertheless, the attempt to critically question history and learn from it is an important step towards reconciliation and understanding.
- **Acceptance of ignorance:** It is also important to accept that no one can know everything. Allowing ignorance encourages you to continue learning and asking questions. It is a sign of humility and openness to new information and perspectives.

In summary, such a way of teaching helps to develop students into critically thinking and responsible adults who are able to recognize the human dimension of history and apply historical knowledge

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to different contexts. This is crucial for educating sensitive and informed citizens who can make a positive contribution to society.

### 3. Historical knowledge

*“It’s not the bullets and generals that make history, but the masses.” (Nelson Mandela)*

Historical knowledge refers to knowledge about the past, especially about historical events, developments and personalities. It is the understanding of the history of a region, a society, a country

or humanity as a whole. Historical knowledge includes facts and data as well as interpretations and analyzes of past events. This allows us to place current events and developments in a historical context. This allows us to better understand how the past has shaped the present. Knowledge of one's own history and the history of one's community or nation plays an important role in identity formation. Historical knowledge can help foster a sense of belonging and cultural heritage. However, it is also important to learn from the mistakes of the past and avoid them. This is especially true of historical mistakes such as wars, genocides and oppression. Values such as tolerance, human rights, democracy and social justice can be conveyed. It shows how these values have been fought for throughout history and why they are important.

Analytical skills are promoted, including critical thinking, the ability to criticize sources and the interpretation of complex information. It also helps preserve and commemorate important events and figures from the past, including those that include tragic chapters such as the Holocaust. The story offers insights into different cultures and societies around the world. It broadens our horizons and promotes understanding and tolerance of other cultures.

When teaching about the Holocaust, the historical knowledge imparted should be based on reputable sources and historical research. The teaching materials and methods should be designed in such a way that they adequately convey historical knowledge while promoting the sensitivity and empathy of the learners. Historical knowledge is crucial to understanding the significance of the Holocaust in a broader historical context and to drawing lessons from the past to shape a better future. It is important that students receive accurate and reliable information about the Holocaust in order to adequately understand the tragedy and complexity of this time. Only on this basis can they adequately appreciate historical events and draw the associated lessons for the present and the future. It is crucial to place the story of the Holocaust in a broader historical context. This cruel chapter in human history did not happen in isolation, but was the result of a complex sequence of historical events and developments. Holocaust education should therefore take into account the pre- and post-history of the Holocaust in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the tragedy and its causes.

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Overall, historical knowledge is a valuable asset that not only offers us insights into the past, but also helps us to better deal with the challenges of the present and shape the future. It is a key to forming an informed and responsible society.

### **Sub-goals:**

- **Develop an understanding of European history:** This aim aims to give students a comprehensive understanding of the history of Europe. This includes not only knowledge of the Holocaust and the Second World War, but also knowledge of the historical context and developments that led to these events.
- **Gain knowledge of the context and spiral of violence of the Shoah and the Second World War:** This is about providing students with detailed knowledge of the Holocaust and the Second World War.

This includes factual knowledge at both a global level and a local level, as the Holocaust unfolded differently in different countries and regions. This knowledge is embedded in a broader historical context.

- **Place the Holocaust in time and connect it to their present:** This goal aims to enable students to place the Holocaust in time and make connections to their own present. They should understand how the Holocaust fits into the history of Europe and the world and how it still has effects today.
- **Recognize different roles:** Holocaust mediation should address different aspects and dimensions of the Holocaust. This includes not only understanding the lives of victims in the extermination process, but also examining the lack of legal prosecution of the perpetrators. It is important to shed light on who profited economically from the Shoah through Aryanization and to understand the role of local individuals, businesses and organizations in this context.
- **Recognize the functioning and effects of concentration and extermination camps:** Knowledge about the different concentration camps and how they function in the extermination process should be conveyed. It is crucial to explain the global impact of the Holocaust and to honor the significance of Jewish life before the Shoah.
- **Identify the intentionality behind the Holocaust:** Another important focus should be on analyzing the intention and planning behind the Shoah in order to explain and understand the causes of this tragedy. This helps create a solid general knowledge of the Holocaust and learn the lessons from history.

Meeting these subgoals will help students develop a deep and nuanced understanding of the Holocaust that goes beyond mere military history and allows them to place the historical events in a larger context. This also promotes critical thinking and the ability to reflect on the meaning of history for the present and the future.

### **Methodological considerations:**

- **Recognizing the roots of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism:** The historical roots of anti-Semitism should be illuminated by examining the emergence and spread of anti-Jewish views from early Christianity. Across the Middle Ages, via Luther's theses on the Jews and German nationalist movements in the run-up to the "German Empire", the development from religiously motivated anti-Judaism to racist and biologically influenced anti-Semitism during the Second World War can be discussed.
- **Visits to places of remembrance and memorials:** A key aspect is visiting memorials and doing remembrance work, which is often seen as a necessary obligation in class. This not only contributes to the teaching and development of more differentiated approaches, but also promotes the students' written and oral expression skills as well as the ability to carry out memory work independently. There are also the following advantages of visiting memorial sites.

- **Communicating the real extent:** Visiting memorial sites enables students to understand the real extent of the Holocaust. You can see the remains of concentration camps, hear personal stories from survivors, and engage with the physical traces of the past.
  - **Fostering Empathy and Compassion:** Personal interaction with memorials and sites of remembrance allows learners to form a deeper emotional connection with the victims of the Holocaust. This promotes empathy and compassion and sensitizes them to the human tragedies that have occurred.
  - **Development of expressive skills:** Visiting memorial sites and actively participating in remembrance work promote the ability to express oneself in writing and orally. Students have the opportunity to record their impressions and thoughts in reports, essays or presentations, which contributes to the development of their written and verbal communication skills.
  - **Empowerment to do remembrance work:** Visiting memorial sites and actively participating in remembrance work enable learners to carry out remembrance work independently. They can help keep the history of the Holocaust alive by sharing their knowledge and experiences, whether through writing texts, conducting presentations, or participating in commemorative events.
  - **Communicate the value of scientific work:** Students should be guided to understand, discuss and substantiate historical contexts. By teaching essential methods and ethics in a scientific context, the students' skills are further developed.
  - **Mature questions about the Shoah:** Including questions about the Shoah in final exams or exams can help promote a more sustained understanding. This encourages students to delve deeper into the topic and deepens their knowledge of the Holocaust.
  - **Current trends such as anti-Zionism:** Introduce students to current trends such as anti-Zionism. Explain how historical prejudices and stereotypes are still present in political and social debates today. Discuss the significance and impact of anti-Zionism on understanding the Holocaust.
- Deconstructing Stereotypes:** Deconstructing stereotypes in the context of the Holocaust encourages

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students to think critically about prejudice and discrimination and to apply the lessons of history to current societal challenges. This helps promote an inclusive and tolerant society and reinforces the values of tolerance, respect and human rights. Here are some thoughts on this:

- **Analysis of propaganda and language:** Examining the propaganda and language of National Socialism enables students to understand the intentions and background of anti-Semitism. The use of euphemistic terms, racist depictions and the analysis of works such as „Mein Kampf“ provide information about the evil intentions and desired violence of the National Socialists. This promotes critical thinking and awareness of the manipulative nature of propaganda.
- **Emphasis on migration experiences:** It is important to recognize that many of the victims and deportees of the Holocaust had migration experiences not only through their escape from the horrors of National Socialism. Many of them were migrants who were already confronted with prejudice and social disadvantage. This opens up the opportunity to make references to current issues relating to migration, racism and culturalism and to question traditional stereotypes. The

students can recognize how prejudice and discrimination against migrants work historically and in the present.

- **Redefining Identity:** Analyzing the Holocaust also provides an opportunity to question the biological and racially motivated definition of “Jews” and other groups. It can be pointed out that identity is not determined by external characteristics, but by self-definition, feelings of belonging and ethnicity. This promotes understanding of the diversity of identities and emphasizes the importance of respect and tolerance for different cultures and their backgrounds.

Materials for teachers and/or students provide context and can lead to further reflection. You can find courses or teaching materials here free of charge and curated by experts. •

<https://www.yadvashem.org/>

- <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com>
- <https://holocausteducation.org.uk/>
- <https://www.erinnern.at/>
- <http://lernen-aus-der-geschichte.de/>
- <https://www.coursera.org/courses?query=holocaust>

## 4. Exchange & Networks

In today's globalized world, networks and the exchange of information and resources are crucial. Companies and entrepreneurs connect worldwide to promote trade and business opportunities. International trade networks enable the free exchange of goods and services, supporting economic growth in many countries. Cultural exchange takes place on a global level, be it through the ex-

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change of art, music, film, literature or through cultural dialogue between different communities. These cultural networks contribute to the enrichment and diversity of society. Social networks, both online and offline, play an important role in creating communities and promoting social cohesion. People can connect to pursue common interests, support each other, and create social change. International political networks and organizations such as the United Nations facilitate cooperation between different countries and governments. They enable dialogue about global challenges such as climate change, human rights and peace.

Academic and scientific networks promote the exchange of knowledge and innovations. They enable researchers and students to collaborate, share research, and address global problems. Overall, networks and the exchange of information help to connect the world more closely and address global challenges. They are an essential part of modern society and help promote peace, understanding and progress.

- In Holocaust education, cross-border exchange in Holocaust education in particular contributes to

enriching the learning experience and promoting the education of committed and open minded citizens who are committed to the values of peace, tolerance and human rights.

- By sharing information and perspectives from different countries and cultures, students gain a broader and deeper understanding of the Holocaust and its impact. They learn not only from books, but also from the experiences and memories of others. Cross-border exchange can help break down prejudices and stereotypes because it promotes direct contact and interaction between people from different backgrounds. This helps promote tolerance and mutual respect
- By bringing together different perspectives and experiences, Holocaust education can contribute to a global approach to the culture of remembrance. It emphasizes the universal values of understanding, tolerance and peace and shows that remembering the Holocaust is a shared responsibility.
- The joint exchange between pupils and students from different countries promotes cooperation and team spirit. You will learn how to work effectively in an international group and learn from each other. At the same time, the independent development of projects can promote the creativity and autonomy of the students.
- Cross-border exchange also opens up a variety of learning opportunities that go beyond traditional lessons. This can make lessons more exciting and interesting for students. These actions help promote Holocaust education across national borders and create broader understanding and compassion for this significant historical event. They emphasize the importance of international cooperation and cultural exchange to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive and learn the lessons of history.
- Biographies not only have the potential to provide a profound understanding of the Holocaust, they can also represent an irreplaceable component as the basis, common thread and result of a transnational exchange about the history of the Shoah.

### **Sub-goals:**

- **Make contacts and establish collaborations:** A joint project between schools or organizations can contribute to sustainable contacts and collaborations. This not only has added value for the participants on an individual level but can also contribute to the development of organizations.
- **Participation at the European level:** Cooperation within the European Union not only promotes cultural exchange, but also strengthens the feeling of European community. This can help reduce prejudice and emphasize the importance of tolerance and cooperation.
- **Joint works and projects:** Collaboration on joint projects and works promotes the exchange of ideas and the development of creative solutions. This can help make Holocaust education more lively and engaging.
- **Changing narratives and memory markers:** The way events are told and interpreted has a major impact on our perception of history. The ability to change narratives and memorials can help create a dynamic and contemporary historical narrative.
  - **Establishing connections to the present:** Analyzing topics such as anti-Semitism, racism and prejudice in the present is of great importance. This allows students to make the connection between

history and current challenges and to play a more active role in shaping a more just society.

## **Methodological considerations:**

### *a. Opportunities for exchange and cooperation*

A variety of partnerships are conceivable for cooperation in the area of Holocaust mediation. In order to deliver ideas that are as practical as possible, we focus on the exchange of students. In order to establish solid partnerships for joint projects, it is necessary to get in touch in advance with people who pursue the same goals. You can find information about the Holocaust through these channels.

- **Cooperation between educational institutions:** Collaboration between schools, universities and other educational institutions from different countries makes it possible to use diverse perspectives and teaching methods. Joint projects and exchange programs promote intercultural dialogue and offer students and teachers the opportunity to learn from each other.
- **Contemporary witness conversations and interviews:** The collection, research and exchange of contemporary witness reports and interviews from different countries is invaluable in preserving the personal experiences and memories of those who experienced the Holocaust. This makes it possible to experience the history first hand and see the humanity behind the facts and figures. People and their stories can also become a link in partnerships.
  - **Biographies & Descendants:** Through biographies, both existing and research projects, cooperation partners can be found whose local history may also be linked to the life stories. Ultimately, as mentioned at the beginning, this is also how the partnership on which this work is based came about.

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- **Digital platforms:** Online platforms and social media provide a global platform for sharing information and experiences. This promotes networking among people from around the world interested in Holocaust education and enables broader access to educational materials and discussions.
- **Translation of materials:** Translating educational materials and documentation into different languages makes information about the Holocaust accessible to a wider audience. This is particularly important to ensure that people in different countries have the opportunity to explore history in their own language.
- **International Exhibitions and Memorials:** International exhibitions and memorials provide a physical opportunity to learn and remember the history of the Holocaust. They attract visitors from different countries and create a shared experience that helps promote understanding and memory.
- **E-Twinning:** E-Twinning is a platform for schools in Europe that enables them to form partnerships and carry out joint projects. This can be an effective way to introduce students from different countries to Holocaust education and promote intercultural exchange.
- **Places of remembrance & extracurricular learning sites:** Visits to memorial sites and other extracurricular learning sites are crucial to experiencing the history of the Holocaust up close. Inter



national sites of remembrance can offer students the opportunity to experience history at the actual locations where it happened.

### ***b. Inclusion of the respective local history***

Local history plays an important role in Holocaust education because it enables students to understand the impact of the Holocaust on their immediate surroundings. Incorporating local history into Holocaust education can help capture the significance of this historical event on a personal and local level. It promotes a deep understanding of the impact of the Holocaust and the role each community plays in maintaining memory. Here are some thoughts on the importance of local history and how it can be integrated into the classroom:

- **On-site research:** Conducting research on the internet, in city archives and libraries, and in family settings is an excellent way for students to explore the history of their own community. This allows them to make a personal connection to history and become aware of the significance of the Holocaust at a local level.
- **Independent perspectives:** Local historical research allows students to develop a nuanced perspective on the Holocaust that is not limited to national narratives. You can understand how local communities were affected by the events and how individual experiences and actions contributed to the story. However, it should also be noted that these of course always depend on the context and must be critically questioned.
  - **Supporting local initiatives:** Students can actively use and support local Holocaust remembrance

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initiatives. This can include participating in projects to document eyewitness accounts, maintaining memorial sites, or supporting educational programs and commemorative events in your region. •

**Analysis of places of remembrance:** Visiting and analyzing places of remembrance, museums, monuments, stumbling blocks, memorials and places of remembrance are crucial elements in working with students. These locations provide insight into the actual impact of the Holocaust and help students connect the story to real events and places.

- **Preparation and follow-up:** Careful preparation and follow-up with the students is important for excursions to places of remembrance. This enables them to place the on-site experiences in the context of Holocaust education and the curriculum and to integrate the findings into lessons.
- **Consultation with experts:** Regional historians, scientists or museum employees can be contacted to add their expertise to the teaching.

### ***c. Interdisciplinary projects and creative approaches***

The integration of creative areas and project work into Holocaust education enables students to go beyond simply providing information and establish a personal connection to history. By actively participating in projects, they can not only consolidate their knowledge of biographies and history, but also develop a deeper understanding of the impact of the Holocaust on humanity. This not only

promotes knowledge, but also empathy and commitment among young people for an inclusive and tolerant society. In order to make Holocaust education even more effective, interdisciplinary projects and creative approaches should be integrated into lessons. Here are some diverse ways students can engage with this important topic.

#### **Examples of interdisciplinary projects:**

- **Writing a biography:** Information about people is collected through research and work with historical documents and then a biography is written. The *convoi77* project in particular can be recommended here.
- **Analyzing films or literature:** Students can analyze and discuss films or works of literature that deal with the Holocaust in order to develop a deeper understanding of the artistic representation of the story.
- **Reflection and continuation of other school projects:** Existing school projects can be taken up and expanded to look at the Holocaust and its effects in a new light.
- **Write fictional letters (or diaries):** Students can write fictional letters or diaries from the perspective of people from the Holocaust era in order to put themselves in the shoes of those affected.
- **Creating a piece of music:** Creating a piece of music that expresses the emotions and experiences of the Holocaust can be a creative way to convey the story.
- **Playing and attending plays:** By performing or attending plays that deal with the Holocaust, students can experience the topic from a different perspective.

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- **Analyze psychological experiments:** Studying psychological experiments such as the Milgram Experiment or the Stanford Prison Experiment can help understand human nature and ethics during the Holocaust.
- **Use & Design of Apps:** Students can create or use apps to provide multimedia information about the Holocaust and present the story in a contemporary way.
- **Social Media Pages:** Creating social media pages or actively participating in discussions about the Holocaust on social media can allow students to raise awareness of the issue in the digital world.
- **Create (explanatory) videos & films:** Producing explanatory videos or films about the Holocaust can be a creative way to convey information and promote understanding.
- **Create presentations:** Students can create presentations to share their research and findings about the Holocaust with others.
- **Designing graphic novels or comics:** Creating graphic novels or comics allows students to present the history of the Holocaust in a visual and narrative way.

Integrating these diverse approaches allows students to view the Holocaust from different perspectives and use their creativity to grasp the story in profound ways. By working together in groups and sharing their projects, they can deepen, process and share their knowledge and empathy for the victims and survivors of the Holocaust with others.

## 5. Dealing with sources

Sources play an important role in communicating the Holocaust in several ways. First, one thinks of historical work with sources as historical fragments. In addition, learning about the Holocaust also offers the opportunity to adopt a source-critical attitude, which currently seems particularly relevant with regard to social media, conspiracy theories and fake news. By working with a variety of sources, you can learn how to distinguish between them, place them in a context and analyze their content and authorship.

The combination of these different sources makes it possible to paint a comprehensive picture of the Holocaust, conveying both the historical facts and the human experience. Holocaust mediation aims to use these sources to promote understanding and empathy for the victims and to ensure that facts and evidence about them are secured and so that history is not forgotten.

The most important types of sources will be listed here and discussed with regard to transnational exchange. Here the exchange offers the opportunity to share and compare local sources. He also ensures that the validity of the sources can be checked or that they can be translated. The following sources are particularly suitable for exchange.

- **Contemporary witness reports:** Reports from survivors who provide first-hand testimony to the

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events of the Holocaust. These personal experiences are extremely valuable in understanding the humanity and individual stories behind the numbers.

- **Photos and Images:** Photographs and images taken during the Holocaust provide visual insights into the events and living conditions in concentration camps, ghettos and other locations. In most cases, no translation is necessary, which makes transnational cooperation easier.
- **Documents:** Official documents, papers and records from governments, Nazi authorities and other organizations that document the Holocaust and show its planning and implementation.
- **Films and recordings:** Historical films and documentaries offer moving images and sound recordings that tell the story of the Holocaust in a haunting way.
- **Diaries and Letters:** Personal diaries and letters from victims and survivors provide intimate insights into their thoughts, feelings, and experiences during this dark time. However, it should be borne in mind that these types of sources require a lot of effort to translate.
- **Research and Studies:** Historians and researchers have conducted extensive studies and analyzes based on extensive research and documentation. These works provide important context and interpretations.
- **Museums and Memorials:** Museums and memorials around the world preserve artifacts, exhibitions, and information about the Holocaust and serve as important places of remembrance and education. The objects and content found there are usually closely linked to local history, which can be very interesting for comparison/exchange.

Digital places of remembrance: Visiting a museum or memorial site can take up a lot of time and financial resources. Nevertheless, visiting such places is considered central to understanding the history of the Shoah. Online exhibitions can be a good opportunity to get additional input and make comparisons. Each exhibition has its own background, national narratives vary as do the defined storylines and exhibits.

- **Accessibility:** Online exhibitions are often freely accessible and allow students to access information and materials from anywhere in the world. This increases accessibility for students who may not have the opportunity to visit physical locations.
- **Diversity of resources:** Digital platforms offer a wide range of resources, including text, images, videos, audio recordings and interactive elements. This allows students to absorb and process information in a variety of ways.
- **International perspectives:** Online exhibitions can present different national narratives and perspectives on the Holocaust. This helps students develop a broader understanding of the story and compare different interpretations.
- **Interactive elements:** Many digital exhibitions offer interactive elements that allow students to actively participate in the learning process. This can include quizzes, virtual tours or multimedia presentations.

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- **Time Flexibility:** Students can learn at their own pace and have the opportunity to revisit or delve further into materials if they wish.
- **Teacher support:** Teachers can integrate online resources into their lessons and assign targeted materials to students. You can also organize online discussions and activities to promote learning. • It is important to emphasize that online resources cannot completely replace the physical experience of visiting a museum or memorial. Nevertheless, they provide a valuable addition to deepening understanding of the Holocaust, regardless of geographical limitations.

### **Yad Vashem**

<https://www.yadvashem.org/exhibitions.html>

### **Auschwitz**

<https://panorama.auschwitz.org/tour1,en.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwC5d75iTcA> (DE)

### **United States Holocaust Memorial**

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/bwVReA5AY3zn9g>

<https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions>

You can find an **overview of memorial sites in Europe** here:

Through access to authentic sources such as diaries from survivors, letters from family members, and Holocaust-era photographs, students can create a deeper connection with the people who lived through these events. This allows them to put themselves in the shoes of victims and survivors and develop empathy.

Working with authentic sources ensures that the history of the Holocaust is not distorted or denied. It provides clear and verifiable evidence of the atrocities committed during this period and refutes revisionist views.

Source work promotes critical thinking as students learn to analyze sources, evaluate their credibility, and recognize possible bias or manipulation. These skills are critical at a time when disinformation is rife.

The ability to research effectively and analyze complex information is crucial in today's knowledge society. It enables informed decisions to be made and informed points of view to be represented. By working with sources, students learn respect for information and the importance of copyright and source attribution. This promotes ethical and responsible research practices. These skills are important not only for Holocaust education, but also for the personal and profes-

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sional development of students. They help to form critical and informed citizens who are able to actively participate in and shape society.

#### **Sub-goals:**

- **Examining Sources and Evaluating Credibility:** This goal aims to teach students the critical thinking skills needed to analyze sources and determine whether they are trustworthy. Given the wealth of information online and the potential for misinformation to spread, it is crucial that young people are able to distinguish credible sources from questionable ones.
- **Getting to know and trying out a scientific way of working:** Dealing with sources and classifying them in a context is the basis of the scientific way of working. Students can acquire the skills of historians as part of lessons about the Holocaust.
- **Better understanding of historical contexts:** Working with sources enables learners to recognize and understand historical contexts. They can better understand the causes and consequences of the events of the Holocaust by analyzing authentic documents, letters, photos and reports. This helps convey the complexity of the story and avoids bias or stereotypes.
- **Authentic insight into the events of the Holocaust:** Through direct contact with contemporary witness accounts, diary entries and other sources, students gain an authentic insight into the experiences of the victims and survivors of the Holocaust. This allows them to grasp the story on a personal level and develop deeper empathy.

Source work in Holocaust education thus contributes to promoting historical education, developing critical thinking and raising a generation that understands the importance of remembering the Holocaust and preventing hatred and discrimination.

### **Methodological considerations:**

- **Authenticity:** It is crucial to ensure that the sources used are authentic and reliable. This often requires verifying the provenance of the source, its historical accuracy and its credibility.

**Contextualization:** Sources should always be viewed in a historical context. This means understanding the circumstances in which the sources were created in order to grasp their meaning and relevance. It is important to take different aspects into account.

- **Historical Context:** Sources should be viewed in the context of the period in which they were created. This means taking into account the political, social and economic conditions of the time. For example, it is important to understand how the political situation in Europe before and during World War II made the Holocaust possible.
- **Cultural Context:** The cultural norms and ideas of the time can influence the interpretation of sources. A term or action that is considered unacceptable today may have been acceptable, or at least tolerated, at that time. The analysis should take these cultural differences into account.

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- **Political context:** Political decisions, laws and ideologies played a crucial role in the Holocaust. Sources should be interpreted in the context of these political developments, including Nazi ideology and racial politics.
- **Social Context:** The social structures and dynamics of society at the time influenced the events of the Holocaust. This includes aspects such as discrimination, prejudice, collective behavior and the role of the civilian population.
- **Contextualization of testimonies:** Especially with eyewitness reports, it is important to take into account the personal background, experiences and emotions of the witness. How did their experiences influence their memories and narratives?
- **Historical connections:** Analysis of sources should help to establish connections to other historical events and developments. The Holocaust was not isolated, but embedded in the totality of world history of the 20th century and before.
- **Diversity of sources:** Different types of sources should be used to get a comprehensive picture. These can be eyewitness reports, documents, photos, diaries, works of art and more. Combining different types of sources can help develop a deeper understanding.
- **Critical Analysis:** Students should be instructed to critically analyze sources. This includes assessing perspectives, biases, intentions and possible biases in the sources.
- **Empathy and respect:** When working with sources, students should be encouraged to develop empathy for the victims and those affected. At the same time, they should show respect for the people and events in the sources.
- **Interdisciplinary approach:** The use of sources can be interdisciplinary and link subjects such as

history, literature, art and ethics. This promotes a holistic understanding of the Holocaust. • **Ethics and Sensitivity:** Due to the emotional and ethical challenges of working with sources about the Holocaust, it is important to take students' sensitivity into account and encourage an ethical approach to the sources. This also means checking the sources used in lessons to ensure they are age-appropriate.

- **Reflection:** Students should be encouraged to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings in relation to the sources. This can take the form of diary entries, discussions or essays.
- **Research skills:** Working with sources promotes the development of research skills, including research, analysis and presentation of results.
- **Contemporary witness interviews:** If possible, contemporary witness interviews should be integrated into lessons as they offer a unique opportunity to share and understand personal perspectives and experiences. Alternatively, offspring may also be considered.
- **Exchange:** Working with sources should provide opportunities for reflection and dialogue. This can be achieved through discussions, group work, question and answer sessions and other interactive methods. Through dialogue, participants can share their thoughts, clarify their questions and develop a deeper understanding.

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**Well-founded collections of sources for teaching can be found here, among others:**

**The Wiener Holocaust Library** (Map searchable by place)

<https://www.refugeemap.org/map/search>

**USC Shoah Foundation** - Visual History Archive Online & Curated testimony videos

Video testimonies

<https://vhaonline.usc.edu/> & <https://iwitness.usc.edu/home>

**The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names** (and other archives)

Search by last and first name or by place to access documents.

<https://yvng.yadvashem.org/>, <https://photos.yadvashem.org/>

**Arolsen Online-Archive**

30 mio documents related to 17,5 mio people persecuted by nazi perpetrators

<https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/de/search>

**Institut Terezinské iniciativy**

Database of Victims with digitised documents (Terezin)

<https://www.holocaust.cz>

**Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes**

Database of austrian Victims with digitised documents and photos

<https://www.doew.at/personensuche>

### **Digital library USHMM**

~200,000 digital records

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/>

### **Mémorial de la Shoah – Library and Sources**

<https://www.memorialdelashoah.org/en>

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## **6. Working with biographies**

Biographical work is a methodological approach that deals with a person's life story. It is an educational, therapeutic or social method that aims to explore, understand and reflect on a person's biography. Various aspects of a person's life are considered, such as family background, educational background, career, relationships, life crises, successes and challenges

In education, biography work can be used to enable students to engage with historical topics in a more intensive and personal way. This can help promote empathy and understanding and make learning more tangible.

Biographical work in Holocaust education is a pedagogical method that focuses on the personal stories and life experiences of people who experienced the Holocaust or were affected by it. By examining individual biographies, an attempt is made to deepen the understanding of the history of the Holocaust and to bring the events to a personal, empathetic level. By including biographies, teachers can also establish a connection to the young people's lives. This can help clarify the importance of the history of the Holocaust in relation to contemporary issues such as tolerance, human rights and prejudice. Biography work can help internalize these values by encouraging students to think about the human consequences of prejudice, racism, and intolerance.

Working with biographies contributes to the culture of remembrance by preserving and passing on the stories and experiences of Holocaust survivors and victims. This is crucial as witnesses are slowly disappearing and their memories need to be preserved.

In the context of transnational exchange projects, biographies can serve to establish contacts, find commonalities, but also represent an important result as a result of fruitful cooperation. In our view,



they should be an essential part of mediation projects. In our opinion, a deeper understanding can be gained by intensively examining the micro-perspective of the Holocaust and its context. As a supplement to the barely tangible macro story with its myriad of victims and concrete aspects, individual stories about real people, children, women and men offer opportunities to promote dimensions of humanity. They counter the Nazi dehumanization by saying that people are not just numbers. Overall, biographical work helps to make Holocaust education more personal and meaningful. It allows learners to explore and understand history at an individual level, which can lead to a deeper commitment to genocide remembrance and prevention.

### **Sub-goals:**

- **Personal and empathetic connection:** By engaging with the life stories of Holocaust survivors, victims and perpetrators, learners can establish a personal connection with these people. You are encouraged to approach these people's situations, even though understanding their feelings and experiences is impossible.

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- **Deeper understanding of historical events:** Analyzing individual biographies enables learners to gain a deeper understanding of the historical events of the Holocaust. Using concrete examples, they can understand the impact of the Holocaust on the lives and families of individuals, which makes the abstract nature of the story more tangible.
- **Preservation of memory and commitment to a better world:** Examining individual life stories helps learners maintain the memory of the Holocaust. They recognize the importance of the culture of remembrance and can work to ensure that such atrocities are not repeated in the future.

### **Methodological considerations:**

- **Analyzing Diversity:** Analyzing diversity aspects of one's identity and selected biographies is an important exercise in developing a deeper understanding of the diversity of people affected by the events of the Holocaust. Such an approach allows students to go beyond the historical facts and explore people's individual stories and identities.
- **Ethnic and cultural identity:** What ethnic and cultural backgrounds did victims or perpetrators have? How did these identities influence their experiences during the Holocaust?
- **Religious Identity:** What religious beliefs did they have? How did these beliefs shape their lives during the Holocaust?
- **Gender:** What role did gender play in your experiences? Are there gender differences in their stories?
- **Social status and marital status:** What social status did they have? Were they married, did they have children? How did this influence their experiences?
- **Geographical origin:** Where were they born and raised? How did her birthplace influence her experiences?

Comparing victims, perpetrators and resistance fighters to identify commonalities despite differences

rences is also an important exercise. This can help overcome stereotypes and prejudices by allowing students to recognize that people from different backgrounds and identities were in similar situations during the Holocaust. Such a comparison could focus on similarities such as living together at the same time, in the same place or as family members.

- **Eyewitness Conversations and Recorded Interviews:** Meeting survivors of the Holocaust allows students to hear first-hand about the experiences and suffering of those who lived through the horrors. The personal stories of contemporary witnesses can evoke a strong emotional resonance and create a deep understanding of the human impact of the events.
- **Biographical sources:** For example, diaries and letters from victims and survivors provide insight into their thoughts, feelings, and fears during the Holocaust. Studying such sources can enable learners to better understand the perspectives of those affected.
  - **Family research:** Researching one's own family history allows students to establish a personal

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connection to historical events. They can learn how the Holocaust affected their ancestors and understand this on an individual level. Students will be able to better understand how the events of the Holocaust shaped their families and their own identities. This promotes awareness of the importance of history on an individual level.

- **Pedagogical materials:** Teaching materials and teaching resources that focus on individual biographies can be a valuable classroom support. They offer structured approaches for analyzing and discussing life stories. They are offered by educational projects, memorial sites and remembrance culture organizations. For example: <https://www.yadvashem.org/de/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/tommy.html>
- **Writing biographies:** The biographical documentation of researched life stories offers the opportunity to focus teaching about the Holocaust on a micro perspective. As our example attached here shows, this also offers the ideal basis for European cooperation in a shared project.

## Opportunities for implementing a transnational project

In order to put the considerations made about methods and skills into practice, an exemplary curriculum for teaching design was discussed and developed during the seminars. As described above, the various elements and steps can be adapted to the local conditions.

We assume that the methods are used in high school and the target group is older than 16. However, the model is also conceivable for younger target groups if the content is adapted to the skills of the students. As an educational specialist, you are the expert for your school class and your students.

When writing this example, care was taken to think pragmatically and set realistic goals. Particular attention was paid to financial resources and translation problems were taken into account.

- **Planning with the class:** Before the work begins, you and your students should roughly agree on the cornerstones of the project. The topic and the general conditions should be discussed dialogically at eye level. From our point of view, a local biography is particularly suitable for editing. Since these life stories are often characterized by migration, escape routes can, for example, serve as a basis for finding a partner. This makes information visible and accessible that goes far beyond what is available locally. The emphasis on transnationality in the biographies is an important opportunity to build on current migration experiences and phenomena. Ultimately, the exchange project should match the interests of the students as well as the available resources.
- **Be aware of language barriers:** Even though digital translation tools are getting better and

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better, it is important to pay attention in advance to what resources are available for translations. For example, teachers of foreign languages or multilingual students can be very helpful here. The language options can also be used to narrow down potential partner countries.

- **Looking for a partner:** Now you can start looking for a suitable partner school. Etwinning is an excellent platform for finding partners for international projects. It enables collaboration with schools across Europe and facilitates the exchange of ideas and resources. But direct contact via telephone, email or social media is also recommended.
- **Getting to know each other:** Before a successful collaboration begins, the students involved should get to know each other, regardless of the topic of the Holocaust. The personal encounter between students from different countries is an important part of the exchange. This allows them to get to know each other, exchange ideas and work together on their projects. Erasmus+ offers excellent opportunities for this. However, if funds are not available, a digital exchange can also be planned. This can be done online using meeting software or by introducing each other via letter, as in the best practice example given.
- **Joint planning:** Now you have to consider which sub-steps the project should include. As soon as it is clear which tasks need to be completed, they can be distributed. This offers the opportunity for students to experience self-efficacy and autonomy with teachers taking on a moderating role. This in turn ensures orientation towards the interests of the class. However, a resource-oriented approach is essential here.
- **Sharing Existing Documents:** Providing documents is crucial to accomplish such a project. It is recommended to set up a cloud in which shared folders can be filled by each other. In shared documents, you can also work collectively, which makes creating results much easier.
- **Exchange and research:** Working with archives and local sources is crucial to prepare fruitful exchanges. Information can be shared, interpreted and discussed through regular exchanges. In this way, findings can be critically questioned and each other can gain insight into the respective local history. The differences in the reception of the Holocaust should also be reflected and possible

causes should be found. Digital messenger tools such as Whatsapp and Co. also offer optimal options for quickly sharing and discussing information. This can also promote the development of critical thinking skills and the ability to collaborate.

- **Creative processing:** In our view, the creative area is very important for processing the insights, experiences and stories about the Holocaust. This also consolidates the knowledge gained and makes the results of joint research visible. The possibilities here are diverse and there are no limits to your imagination. Biographies can be presented literary, visual, but also through theater, film or other artistic projects. The results can be presented as part of exhibitions and commemorative events on the topic. The development of various forms of presentation, such as podcasts, sociological networks and comics, allows students to use their creativity and present biographies in an engaging way.

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This approach to shaping transnational exchange is very comprehensive and offers students a variety of opportunities to explore history in a personal and meaningful way. This can not only provide historical knowledge, but also increase awareness of the importance of cooperation, dialogue and tolerance in a European community. It is an inspiring initiative that has the potential to deepen students' understanding of history and the world around them.

The idea of creating biographies together and incorporating creative elements such as artwork is extremely enriching. This allows students to not only gain historical knowledge, but also to use their own creative skills and imagination. Creating a „living monument“ or place of European sharing is an inspiring vision that positions students as active creators of their history.

This could serve not only as a symbolic memorial, but also as a resource for future generations of students and researchers who wish to learn from the stories and biographies created as part of this project. This could be a lasting reminder of the importance of tolerance, dialogue and the common European heritage.

By participating in this process, students can develop a deep sense of self-efficacy and experience that, as Europeans, they can work together to shape history. This not only promotes their historical awareness, but also their identification with the values and principles that unite Europe. It is inspiring to see how education can help build bridges between people and create a deeper understanding of the past and the present. Their approach to Holocaust education and creating a shared European heritage is exemplary and demonstrates the potential of education to have a positive impact on society.

## Best practice example

Laura Cencig (Akademisches Gymnasium Graz) &  
Grégoire Dujardin (Lycée Galilée - Combs la Ville)

### Biography project on Anna Sussmann

Text: Laura Cencig

In September and November 2022, we, Gregoire Dujardin and Laura Cencig, had the opportunity to take part in a seminar on Holocaust education organized by Thomas Szammer with other teachers from France and Austria. The seminar was created through a collaboration between the Austrian association House of Names. Holocaust and Tolerance Center Austria and the French association Convoi 77, which have set themselves the goal of an active Holocaust remembrance culture with particular attention to young people.

During the two seminar weekends in Graz and Paris, the historical context of the Shoah was discussed with a special focus on Austria and France and the different approaches to Holocaust education in the Austrian and French education systems. Based on this, concrete ways of communicating this important topic were developed. As part of the seminar, the idea of an Austrian-French cooperation was born, in the course of which some of our high school students would jointly write the bilingual biography of a resistance fighter who was deported to Auschwitz in Convoy 77 in 1944. In the 2022/23 school year, 6 students from the Academic High School Graz (Xavier Bodenlenz, Em meline Bruere-Ngo, Levi Herrich, Andrea Jernej, Fanni Ratkai, Hans Stettner) worked under my direction together with 5 students from the Lycée Galilée Combs-la-Ville en Seine-et-Marne (Carla Iozzia,

Ray Le Bars-Gauthier, Damien Mandon, Lou-Ann Mournetas-Fievez, Lina Saber Chérif), led by their history and geography teacher in the Abibac program, Gregoire Dujardin, on the biography of the Austrian resistance fighter Anna Sussmann.

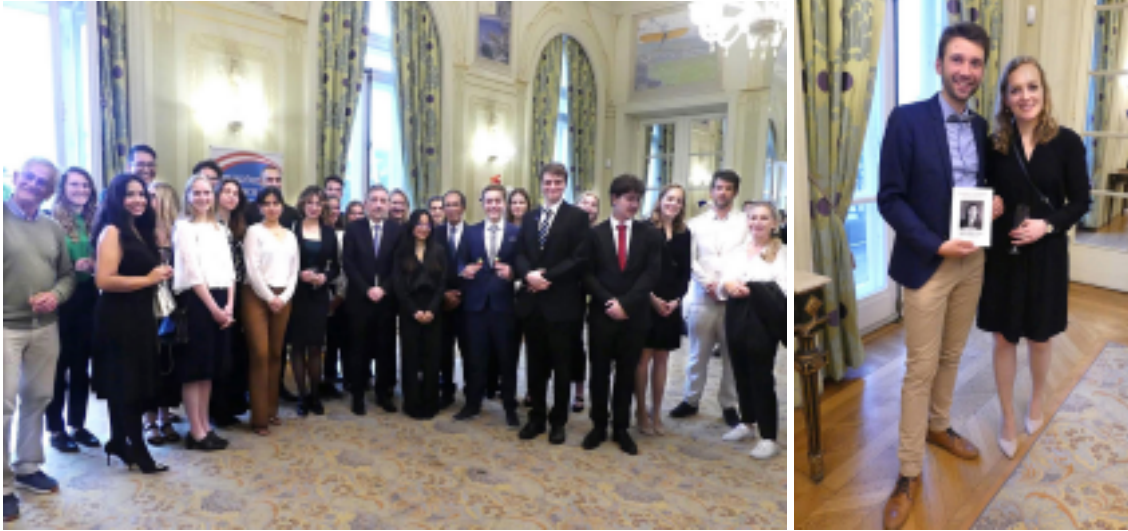
Gregoire Dujardin and I received access to large amounts of digital data (photos, certificates, documents, etc.) from French and Austrian archives on Anna Sussmann via Convoi 77, which we sent to our students. At an initial digital meeting via Zoom in autumn 2022, the approximate procedure for the cooperation was discussed. In addition, it was agreed which group should deal with which parts of Anna Sussmann's life. As a result, the French and Austrian students networked and mostly worked on the biography independently. Occasionally there were meetings between me and Gregoire Dujardin or with our respective student groups or in the large group.

After intensive months of research and writing, the time had finally come and we were able to present our joint project at the French embassy in Vienna. During the presentation, the students took a closer look at three formative moments in Anna Sussmann's life. They accompanied their statements with three drawings that were made by the German artist Ka Schmitz and the student Andrea

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Jernej, who took part in the project (the drawings can also be found in the biography). The collaboration was a challenge and enrichment for all of us (students and teachers). The students had to sift through, organize and utilize huge amounts of sources without losing the common thread. There was also the challenge of communication and collaboration taking place exclusively online; The first personal meeting of the students only took place on the day of the project presentation in Vienna. It was all the nicer for everyone involved to finally be able to hold the result of the collaboration in their hands and present it in such a worthy setting (note: Convoi 77 kindly agreed to cover the costs for the printed copies of the biography). Through this cooperation, the students were not only able to learn something about historical research, they also experienced, using Anna Sussmann's example, that this always includes a deeply personal, human component. As teachers, this project made us once again aware that teaching about the Holocaust cannot do without looking at individual life stories. If this takes place at an international level, as in the case of the cooperation described here, it is probably all the more impactful.

We are all grateful for the opportunities that have opened up to us over the last year. Starting with the two seminar weekends, through the collaboration between the two schools and ending with the presentation in Vienna, we, students and teachers alike, were able to learn a lot.



Laura Cencig (Akademisches Gymnasium Graz) and Grégoire Dujardin (Lycée Galilée, Combs la Ville)  
The Austrian and French Students and teachers as well as the

Representatives of the associations “House of Names” and “Convoi 77” at the honoring of the Erasmus project by the French ambassador in Vienna.

## Imprint

### Texts:

Thomas Szammer & Ruth Kaufmann

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