



THE CENTROPA 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Social programs for Holocaust survivors

Exhibitions, walking tour apps, and podcasts

Educational programs in the US, Europe, and Israel



IN 2024, WE ...



... held **17 seminars** in 13 countries and 21 cities for 1,672 teachers and conducted 23 online training sessions for 730 educators from 15 countries;

... sent **7 exhibitions** to 21 libraries, schools, and universities in 8 countries;



... received **92 lesson plans** from 87 teachers in 9 countries;

... organized **6 youth encounters** for 520 high school students from 8 countries, along with a youth program consisting of guided tours, workshops, and competitions that reached another 4,254 teenagers;



... and served **850 slices of apple strudel** at our Holocaust survivor clubs in Vienna and Budapest.



Centropa in 2024

It is increasingly difficult to be an optimist these days and there is much to be glum about. But we at Centropa spend most of our time working with three types of people who rarely fail to lift our spirits: the elderly Holocaust survivors we interviewed, the school teachers who use our content, and their students.

Since 2006, we have been meeting with elderly Jews in Vienna and Budapest at least eleven times annually. Every one of them suffered unspeakably when they were young, but in the autumn of their years, they have displayed a warmth and generosity of spirit no one can fail to admire.

What we have learned: put a half dozen teenagers around a table with an elderly survivor who was born in the same city and just watch as the stories, smiles, and laughs spring to life.

Centropa works with teachers in 17 countries. And could there be a vocation more optimistic than being a classroom teacher? Spoiler alert: no one goes into this profession for the money. Yet every fall these people look out over a sea of expectant young faces and plunge right in, challenging their charges and working to inspire and motivate them. Sure it's heavy lifting. But watching as that one kid—who has barely been paying attention—suddenly gets it makes the job so worthwhile.

A few years ago, when we brought our Polish exhibition to Wroclaw, the cool-kid soccer star rushed

up to our teacher, Beata Skuza, and blurted out, wide-eyed: “Teacher! I didn’t know Jews went to the beach!”

When Beata told me that, I said how funny that was. “No,” she shot back. “That is the beginning of learning.”

Surely you’ve heard this: “Today’s kids don’t know anything!” We believe that those who say that have no idea what kids really do know.

Which is why Centropa’s stories based on the Holocaust survivors we interviewed can be found on phones, listened to on podcasts, watched on short videos, read in graphic novels, and used on walking tours that kids make themselves.

Centropa has taken 20th century European Jewish history—from the 1920s, through the Holocaust and up until today—and turned it into something personal and deeply meaningful. And that is why, in 2024, more than 4,500 teenagers used these stories that need to be told, and more teachers every year sign up to join our network.

I hope you enjoy reading through the highlights of 2024 and feel free to be in touch.

Sincerely,

Edward Serotta, Director



Centropa in Germany

our programs cover Lithuania, Germany, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Croatia, Greece

“Of course I can make a walking tour app. I’m young.”

Based in Hamburg and Berlin, our team focuses on programs in the lands where the Holocaust took place. Because we interviewed survivors throughout the region, our films, websites, and exhibitions make Holocaust education deeply personal—and regional.

To combat antisemitism, we believe in turning teenagers into stakeholders in their countries’ Jewish heritage. Whether it is by working with specific high schools or with informal youth programs, today’s European teens are keen to use technology to show what they can do—and compete with others their own age. In 2024, we brought together—through programs like Memory Lanes, iMemory, Building

Bridges, and Herstories—more than 1,000 teenagers who brainstormed together to produce their own apps, videos, and websites, which they made while spending weekends in the Jewish quarters of Berlin, Belgrade, and Krakow.

Working with teenagers, whose understanding of technology is baked into their febrile young brains is one thing. It’s giving them the content that opens minds and touches hearts that keeps them engaged. Which is why we also bring our programs to youth leaders as well as classroom teachers.

In 2024, we held ten seminars and workshops for 320 teachers in Lodz, Kaunas, Belgrade, Chisinau, Berlin, Sarajevo, Krakow, Osijek, Vilnius and Prague.



Special project: Ukraine. Larysa Golovko is engaging with one of her students as they plan their project of mapping Jewish cemeteries. Nothing exceptional in that, except they live in the city of Zaporizhzhia, which is not only on the front line of the current war, it is also the home of a nuclear power plant. Larysa’s students don’t meet in class but study online. Still, they love their mapping project, which we support. We also brought Larysa and her students to western Ukraine for a few days of R&R, just to give them respite from the war. And one of teachers, Maryna Megelbey, was awarded Teacher of the Year for using Centropa in class.

In 2024, we held weekend seminars in Rivne, Lviv, and Chernivtsi for 90 high school teachers.



Centropa in Hungarian public schools

“You have a teacher for life in me.”

Our educational programs are built on the personal stories we collected between 2000 and 2009. In Hungary alone, we interviewed nearly 200 elderly Jews who shared stories that began in the 1920s and took us through the early 2000s.

Our websites, films, and exhibitions bring 20th-century Jewish history closer to students, making our shared past tangible and meaningful.

In 2024, we reached 4,000 young people by engaging them with the traveling exhibition *Stories from a Family Album*, workshops, walking tours, student competitions, and opportunities to meet Holocaust survivors.

A total of 60 teachers attended our two seminars, 27 of whom participated in a Centropa training for the first time.

In the photos on the top row, we see students engaging with Olga Sólyom, a Holocaust survivor.

In the second row, a student is taking her fellow students through our Hungarian exhibition, and bottom right, 20 Israeli teachers are meeting to discuss their Centropa lesson plans.

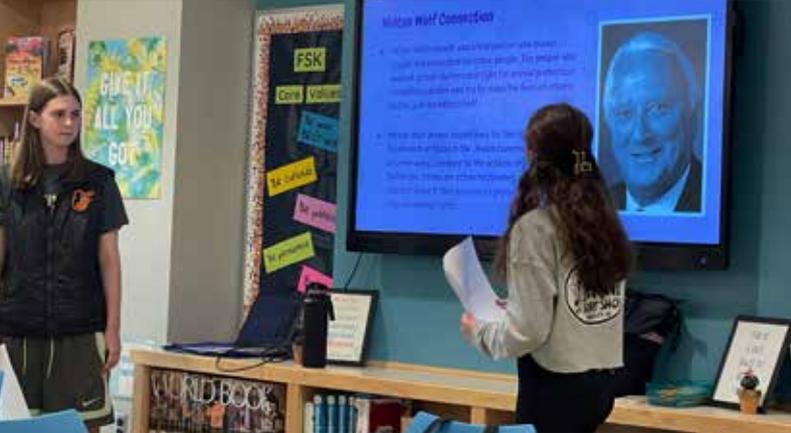
The Centropa Jewish Network of European Schools and our Israeli programs

„It’s not just different, it’s unique. There is no other forum for European Jewish school teachers to share ideas and perspectives about European Jewish history and in that sense also the future aspects of living as a Jew in Europe.” Sheila Weintraub, Jewish School of Helsinki

With 15 years of working with Jewish schools in Europe, in 2022 we began adding Israelis to our network. The highlight of each academic year is when we bring between 30 to 40 educators to cities such as Budapest, Prague, Berlin, and Warsaw. In 2024, we chose the Greek city of Thessaloniki, or Salonica, once the greatest of all Sephardic communities. Almost wiped out entirely by the Germans in 1943, a small but proud community hosted us for walking tours as well as reviewing our award-winning films.

The follow up: in 2024, students from our CJN schools submitted to our student competition 107 projects that ranged from videos to photos and art projects.

Centropa’s success would not have been possible without the dedication of our teachers, whose enthusiasm during our training seminars and commitment to engaging their students inspire us. These seminars provided not only learning opportunities but also a platform for like-minded educators to connect, share experiences, and collaborate on joint projects.



Centropa's US program

“Centropa changed me—expanding my worldview with stories I wouldn’t come across in a textbook, learning history in the great cities of Europe, and through developing friendships with teachers from around the world. And a changed teacher comes back to their students inspired and motivated to help students become agents of change, critical thinkers, and more equipped to identify and fight contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.” Brittany Brown, 8th grade teacher, Greensboro, NC

2024 marked our 17th year of working with American public, charter, and Jewish schools, where we counter antisemitism and expand young minds by engaging students—many of whom will never meet a Jewish person—with stories and photographs of real-life Jews they can relate to and connecting them to students in other countries. Centropa collaborates with school districts, museums, Holocaust education organizations, and universities in 11 states. In 2024, 442 teachers and students attended our in-person seminars and conference presentations, and another 325 attended online programs, reaching teachers, students, and community members in 34 states.

The Milton Wolf Prize in Student Advocacy: 248 students in 8 states participated in this student civics competition where they identified a community problem, researched it, found those helping to solve the problem, created a visual presentation, and then presented their work to others to advocate for

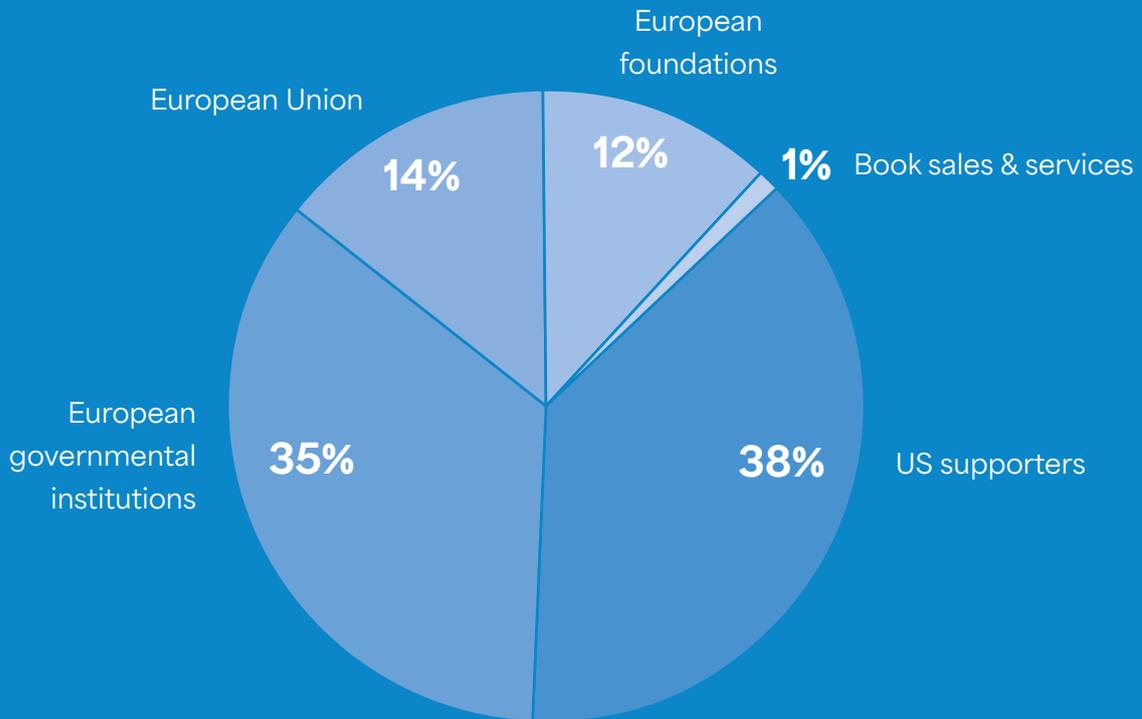
causes they are passionate about. Arkayla, a 10th grade student in Charleston, SC, reflects what many students tell us they learn through the project: *“I learned to keep an open mind about people, be grateful for what I have, and that there are people out there who need help, and I should help.”*

In 2024, 139 teachers from the US, Greece, Lithuania, Israel, Croatia, N. Macedonia, Moldova, Italy, and Ukraine met on weekends over Zoom for our Café Centropa: Teachers’ Edition; 225 students participated in cross-cultural projects in our Border Jumping Program; and 290 students in the US, Ukraine, and Moldova participated in Stepping into the Future with Empathy: A Milton Wolf Project, connecting Centropa’s Holocaust refugees stories while learning about refugees today by conducting interviews with and taking portrait photographs of refugees in their towns.

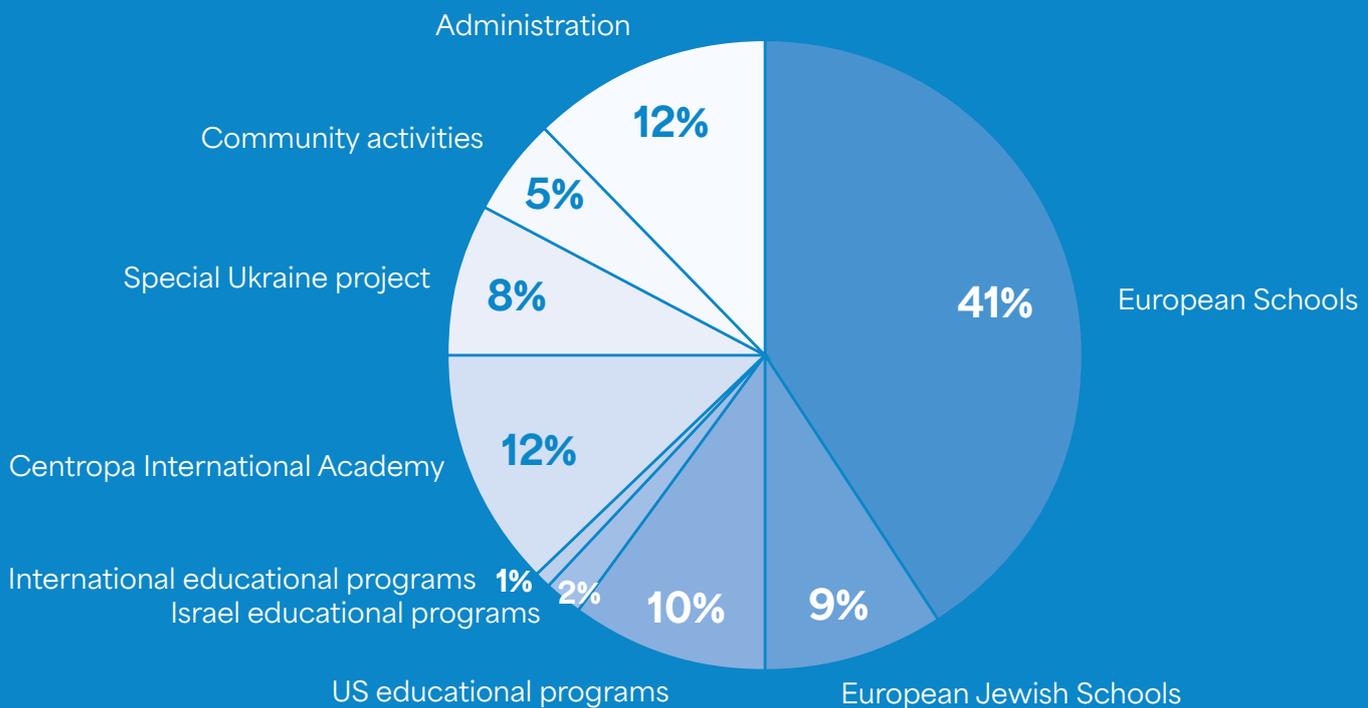
Stories go where facts cannot, and personal relationships reach beyond the mind to touch the heart. That is why our US programs focus on two goals: making 20th c. Jewish history relevant through Centropa’s interviews, photographs, films, and podcasts; and fostering cross-cultural connections among teachers (through professional programming) and between students (through learning projects). By bringing people together to learn about the past we expand worlds, open minds, and break down prejudice.

FINANCIALS 2024

Income 2024: € 1.458.283 / \$1,574,945



Expenses 2024: € 1.576.699 / \$1,702,835





Centropa Summer Academy in Berlin 2024. 65 teachers from 15 countries.

The donors who made our programs in 2024 possible



International grants

International Visegrad Fund, Bratislava
Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund, Amsterdam

Austria

Daniel and Jasmin Kapp, Vienna
City of Vienna Social Fund
The Future Fund of the Republic of Austria
Austrian Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs
Federal Chancellery of Austria

Germany

German-Czech Future Fund, Leipzig
German-Greek Youth Office, Thessaloniki
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Berlin
Olof Hansen, Berlin
Katia Rosenfeld, Berlin
Im Dialog. Evangelischer Arbeitskreis für das christlich-jüdische Gespräch in Hessen und Nassau

Hungary

Austrian Cultural Forum, Budapest
Hungarian Jewish Heritage Public Foundation (Mazsók), Budapest
Hungarian National Cooperation Fund (NEA), Budapest
JDC Hungary, Budapest

United States

The Walter and Robert Kohn Foundation, Seattle
The Erna Viterbi z"l Memorial Fund, Jewish Community Federation, San Diego
Ted Slavin Family Foundation, Los Angeles
Allan and Lynne Reich, Chicago
inSIGHT through Education, Boca Raton
Betsy and Richard Sheer, Palm Beach

Maureen Carter, West Palm Beach
Betty Kane, Boca Raton
Ronne and Donald Hess, Birmingham
Patricia Werthan Uhlmann Foundation, Kansas City
Schilit Family Foundation, Rockville, MD
David and Barbara B. Hirschhorn Foundation, Baltimore
Jim and Hillary Jacobs, Baltimore
JM and Mindy Schapiro, Baltimore
Pearlstone Family Fund, Baltimore
Freida Paskow, Potomac, MD
Massimo Calabresi and Margaret Emery, Washington
Jane Safer, New York
The Kronhill Pletka Foundation, New York
Andrew and Ruth Suzman, Scarsdale
Maimonides Fund, New York and Jerusalem
Mark Solomon, Laura Solomon and The Solomon Family Fund, Philadelphia
Lerman Family Foundation, Philadelphia
Katherine Lukaszewicz, Swisvale, PA
Harry and Carol Saal, Palo Alto
Susan and Alan Rothenberg, San Francisco
Ken and Teri Hertz, Los Angeles
Rafael Monkarsh, Los Angeles
Babbo and Didi Miller Fund, Greensboro
Frank & Shelly Weiner Holocaust Education Endowment, Greensboro
Marilyn and Robert Chandler Family Philanthropic Fund, Greensboro
Stacy and Todd Gorelick Giving Fund, Charlotte
Risa and David Miller, Charlotte
Sandra Brett and Richard Friedman, Charleston
Stephen A Ploscowe and Wendie S. Ploscowe, Metrowest, NJ
Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ