



Learning from History...
Planning the Future Together

BEST PRACTISE MANUAL



Contents

AUDIOWALK GUSEN – GUSEN, AUSTRIA.....	2
DENK.STATT Johann Gruber –TEACHING BOX	6
INVESTING IN DEMOCRACY – A Project by the city of Empoli	12
EDUCARE ALLE PACE (The biggest Memorial) – The Project by the city of Vinci	16
PROYECTO ALT EMPORDÀ – MAUTHAUSEN	20
A JOURNEY TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS	20
VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES- Educational Work Guidelines	24
ROUTES OF EXILE AT „MUSEO MEMORIAL DEL EXILIO” (MUME).....	26
Dr. Christian Angerer - Assessment of the Contributions for the Best Practice Handbook	29

AUDIOWALK GUSEN – GUSEN, AUSTRIA

The AUDIOWALK GUSEN is an art project created by Christoph Mayer on dealing with the memory and the life on the grounds of the former concentration camp Gusen I and II (Upper Austria).



In the years between 1940 and 1945, Gusen, a complex of Nazi concentration camps with the camps Gusen I, II and III, was situated on the territory of the townships Langenstein, St. Georgen an der Gusen, Luftenberg, and Katsdorf (district of Perg, Upper Austria). By the name „Concentration Camp Mauthausen / Quarter Gusen“, it was separated only by a few kilometres from the concentration camp Mauthausen. In respect to size as well as number of victims it was definitely comparable to camp Mauthausen. Both camps shared an administrative centre in St. Georgen/Gusen.

As part of the Nazi extermination machinery within today's Austrian borders, Gusen I and II had an extremely high death toll and were known as „camps of no return“.

About 37,000 of the approximately 120,000 camp victims who perished within present-day Austrian territory were killed in and around the camps Gusen I, II & III: Many of the victims were political opponents of the Nazi regime from all over Europe, but during the last two years of the war many Jews who had been deported from concentration camps like Auschwitz, among them many children, died in these camps as well. They were killed by exhaustion caused by forced labour, bad camp conditions, died of malnourishment or diseases, or fell victim to SS-members and their capos. They were left to freeze to death, being drowned, beaten to death, or exposed to poisonous gas.

Gusen is probably the only Nazi concentration camp of this dimension which's area and remaining buildings do not serve as a memorial. Apart from the memorial built in the 1960s by B.B.P.R., an Italian group of architects, and the exhibition space / visitor centre that opened in 2004, there are few reminders of the atrocities committed on Gusen soil. Since the end of the war, those former camp buildings that are still in existence have been used either by companies or privately, being remodelled or demolished. The grounds were dedicated as building sites for homes.

The central theme of the **AUDIOWALK GUSEN** as a walkable „sculpture“ by the artist **Christoph Mayer** is the buried memory of a place where the concentration camps Gusen I and II stood during Nazi dictatorship. Visitors of the AUDIOWALK GUSEN will reconstruct this memory by means of personal recollections of survivors and of contemporary witnesses from the local population, but also from those of perpetrators and former camp guards. They will hear their voices over earphones, and the description of their designation in the Third Reich, as well as the abstract sound of the landscape, while they walk through the compound of the former camp complex.

They hear what they no longer see. Except for the memorial in Gusen, built on the initiative of former inmates, and a few unmarked buildings, the area presents itself as simply residential. Single family homes have replaced the sheds on the camp's former territory and thus have turned Gusen into a post-war Austrian town. Where SS-henchmen and capos used to torture thousands of people to death, children nowadays play on the front yards.

The AUDIOWALK GUSEN seeks out the concealed memory of an area that contained the concentration camps Gusen I and II during the Nazi dictatorship. Following the AUDIOWALK GUSEN, a narrator over headphones will lead the visitor through a pleasant residential and recreational landscape whose surface reveals no traces of what happened here in the past. As a visitor of the project, you'll get a set of headphones and a player, and an audio guide will walk you through the AUDIOWALK GUSEN. Making your way through today's Gusen, you will hear the voices of contemporary witnesses, perpetrators, and victims.



The experience of the radical discrepancy between the visible and the (audible) history brings out the inconceivable - the horror as well as the attempt to forget it – and perhaps that will trigger a productive discussion of this subject.

Visitors will hear what no longer is visible. They will see what there is at present. People will tell stories which otherwise would have remained untold. It is possible to view one and the same place from different perspectives and place it in relation to oneself.

Now after decades of silence, the residents are being forced to confront their village's brutal past, taking a new look at homes that once were, or were built on the foundations of, prisoner barracks, the camp brothel, or even its gas chamber.

That is the result of a multimedia project that has gathered accounts from both victims and killers of a regime that murdered almost 40,000 people.

(Harry de Quetteville, Daily Telegraph, London)

Conceptual approach and methods of the AUDIOWALK GUSEN

SOUND + RECORDINGS OF EYE-WITNESSES

In its realization, the AUDIOWALK GUSEN used different methods of Holocaust Education in order to ensure that visitors get to build a connection to and reflect on the sight's history.. One of these methods is to personalize history for visitors by using eye-witnesses, trying to give a face to the facts. The AUDIOWALK GUSEN is designed to offer a direct experience of eye-witness accounts aimed at historical empathy. There are not many eye-witnesses still alive, as the second and the third post-war generation are already grandparents. Therefore, memory is threatened to fade away. By first-person accounts such as recordings, this memory can be better preserved.

Visitors will listen to original recordings (the international version is dubbed into English) with personal memories of survivors of the camp, contemporary witnesses from the village, as well as the views of current Gusen residents. Retired soldiers of the German air force and former members of the SS who were stationed at the camps Gusen I and II contribute their own personal accounts.

Through the dramaturgy developed together with *Ars Acustica* expert and radio author Andreas Hagelüken, visitors will be systematically introduced to the people and their stories set in this landscape, back then and now. The soundtrack composed by Kai-Uwe Kohlschmidt reinforces the process of the place's all-encompassing experience and the human tragedies connected to it, among others by integrating sound material recorded locally. Composition, reports, and narration combined create a corridor between today's dominating „normality“ and the region's historical burden.

LANDSCAPE – MIXING PAST AND PRESENT

Using the authentic space of the former camp for the AUDIOWALK GUSEN gives visitors the opportunity to link the past to the present. Walking through the residential neighbourhood tells far more about remembrance policy and the collective memory, which acknowledges certain historical narratives at the expense of others, than it does about the mere historical facts. Most of the places that have been important for the functioning of the concentration camp aren't there or aren't visible anymore. They have been replaced by single-family houses with carefully nurtured lawns. Being confronted with the divergence of past and present offers the chance to discuss how and by which motivation remembrance policy was made in Austria.

The 90 min. audio collage of sounds and voices creates a virtual space in the mind of the listener, who will be able to perceive the discrepancy between the seen and the heard. It evokes the reality of the concentration camps, but also the post-war problems of dealing with history and memory. As an art project, it creates space for experiencing radical dissonance by confronting the conflicting identities of the place, the forgotten history and oneself.

The 90-minute audio installation is supposed to „enable recollection and to recall the place's memory with the help of the listening visitor“, Christopher Mayer hopes. The audiowalk Gusen reconstructs the cruel history and its missing recollection with numerous interviews with the few contemporary witnesses that are still alive. These flashbacks recall the topography of the camp for those wandering – wearing headphones – through the region fraught with history. Connecting abstract history to specific places can support a learning process concerning Holocaust Education.

An interesting chance for discussion could be to talk about how lots of places concerning the SS aren't visible anymore since the people who built the memorial didn't want it to depict the perpetrators' side. This could offer a chance to discuss how and with which thoughts the memorial was established and how it changed over time.

PERPETRATORS

Even though hardly any research has been conducted on perpetrators in Austria, the project team succeeded in integrating the perspective of former SS-members and guards who had worked in Gusen.

Using voices of perpetrators of the Holocaust, teaching about their views and responses is fraught with difficulty. There is an inherent danger that the victims' perspectives will be lost. Granting Their humanity and dignity is paramount.

But studying human actions and their motivations, even if they are subverted, and understanding how it is possible for humans beings to become perpetrators of the Holocaust, is a historical burden. Understanding is here by no means equivalent to acceptance, empathy or forgiveness.

The AUDIOWALK GUSEN tries to give some insights into the complexities of human behaviour during the Holocaust, considering the circumstances and the decisions that turned humans into perpetrators.

The audio-collage collects voices of residents who now live on the former camp ground – and there still are smouldering conflicts regarding post-war history, dignified remembrance, and what to do with the leftover buildings of the camp. With listeners following the traces of what happened, connecting the buildings and places of the present to the personal recollections of survivors, they will „once more be able to read, as if the writing hadn't been wiped off properly“, Christoph Mayer says.

Competences needed for the project

In order to make such an artwork come to life, several competences are required. After the initial idea, the following steps have to be taken: concept creation, project planning, and financial calculation. Creativity is helpful for creating the concept, which should already include a design of the project, which can still change within the process. For the concept or at least when trying to realize it, professional help is needed.

In order to develop the idea into an adoptable and historically accurate version of the AUDIOWALK, the best possible scientific advice was crucial.

Historical knowledge and experience in conveying history in an adequate way have been provided by a group of historians. These historians and organisations accompanied the whole project during its development process: Rudolf Haunschmied, Gedenkdienstkomitee Gusen, Bertrand Perz, Lars Labitzke. For some interviews, psychological advice was also required, which was assured by Clava Grimm. Considering this professional advice, the selection process for the voices of eye-witnesses for the audio collage could be managed in a responsible way.

In order to manage the project, one has to have organizational commitment: Professional networking and coordinating was one of the most important tasks for the project to succeed. Besides coordinating with scientists, creating and staying in contact with the local community and eye-witnesses has been challenging.

After all, professional technical help was required for the realisation of the concept. Besides the direction of the art piece, the dramaturgy and the editing process had to be considered. Last but not least, the audio production required technical expertise. *Ars Acoustica* expert Andreas Hagelüken dramatized the audio collage by setting different voices against each other without attempting to pass judgement. Besides the voices in the AUDIOWALK, the soundscape and music had to be composed. Kai-Uwe Kohlschmidt composed a sound track integrating material he recorded on location. This amplified the discrepancy between the prevailing „ordinariness“ and the historical burden of this region.

Finding a speaker and translator in other languages and a literary editor was one of the main goals, which had to be accomplished.

After the opening of AUDIOWALK GUSEN, public relations activities were most important. Without public awareness, there would be no impact of the project. Together with the local community, the press were invited to the opening and the online presence of the project has been strengthened.

The AUDIOWALK GUSEN seeks the confrontation with the people who still live on the former camp's ground and in the few remaining buildings without putting blame on them. They live e.g. in the former camp brothel or in the „Jourhaus“, the entrance building through which thousands of prisoners entered camp Gusen I, only to hear the camp commander announce that the only way out was through the chimney of the crematorium.

The AUDIOWALK GUSEN forces us to face the painful chapter of Austrian post-war history: How come the memory of the camp in Gusen was so completely repressed in public consciousness? Why did Austrian history departments – contrary to their colleagues abroad – avoid confrontation with the camps in Gusen? Why did the memorial in Mauthausen not make sure that Gusen was remembered in a dignified way? Why was the underground mine system at St. Georgen – built by prisoners under unbelievably cruel circumstances - not accessible to the public as a memorial? Why can former camp inmates not enter them even though they were used commercially up until recently? What is life like in a place that is so fraught with history? How can life go on without any consciousness about the history that took place right on these grounds?

DENK.STATT

Johann Gruber –TEACHING BOX

INTRODUCTION and INSTRUCTIONS to all teaching modules

Material for learning, teaching, and reflecting on the Nazi-history of upper Austria and specifically on the region St. Georgen/Gusen, and Mauthausen

INTRODUCTION and Instruction

Starting Point

The memory of the events that took place between 1938 and 1945 have been discussed, taught, and located in various ways in Mauthausen and later on in Gusen/Langeinstein. Contrary to that, the immense significance of St. Georgen/Gusen when it came to the Nazi policies of persecution and genocide has not found its way into the public conscience to a similar degree. DENK.STATT Papa Gruber is an initiative carried by an organization that has set itself the goal to address, discuss, and most importantly to visualize the Nazi history of St. Georgen/Gusen.

“Bergkristall” (“rock crystal”) was a cynical cover-term for a 50.000 m² mine in St. Georgen by the Gusen/Upper Austria. Starting 1944, hundreds of airplane bodies were constructed in this mine. During the brutal Nazi regime, about 80.000 people were incarcerated in concentration camps in the parish region of St. Georgen, 40.000 of which were ruthlessly murdered. Among those victims was the priest and resistance fighter Johann Gruber who up until his death bravely helped many of his fellow inmates to survive. He was the inspiration for this project and should serve as a representative for the thousands of victims of Nazi-terror in our region.

For further information, also consider the following publication (only available in German.):

Wagner Helmut, Dr. Johann Gruber, Priester - Lehrer - Patriot (1889 - 1944), Nonkonformität und ihre Folgen in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus, Linz 2011,

„Mit Dr. Johann Gruber wird eine wenig bekannte Priestergestalt Österreichs thematisiert. Dass dies bisher kaum geschehen ist, wird von seinen ehemaligen Mithäftlingen des Konzentrationslagers Gusen sehr bedauert. Aber das Schweigen in seiner Heimat hat Gründe: Zu sperrig ist seine Persönlichkeit und zu sensibel seine Priesterlaufbahn, als dass die Kirche damit von sich aus ohne Weiteres an die Öffentlichkeit gehen wollte. Die historische Würdigung von Opfern des Nationalsozialismus darf vor der Komplexität einer Biografie jedoch nicht haltmachen. Der Autor geht dem Leben Johann Grubers ausführlich nach und stößt auf einen Mann mit markanten Eigenschaften: auf einen loyalen Priester, einen begnadeten Lehrer und einen glühenden Patriot. Johann Gruber hat es seinen kirchlichen Vorgesetzten nie leicht gemacht. Aber er hat als Priester, Lehrer und Erzieher zugunsten von Waisenkindern, blinden Kindern und Jugendlichen der Blindenanstalt wegweisend gearbeitet und für jugendliche KZ-Häftlinge sein Leben aufs Spiel gesetzt – und mit dem Tod bezahlt!“
Klappentext Buchcover

Connecting Academia and Teaching

The Teaching Box sees itself as a tool for connection, networking, and teaching: In these last few years, numerous efforts in academic research, didactic projects, teachings, and memorial initiatives have contributed to reconstructing and teaching the history of National Socialism in Upper Austria. This box will provide an incentive to further and more deeply engage with the history of the Nazi regime in this region.

TIME-WORD Impulse Module 1

Goal

This module provides an overview of crucial historical events and teaches sensibility for important terminology connected to this topic.

Task 1

What, where, and when?

This simple visualization serves as our timeline. Students receive various cards showing significant historical events and are asked to place them below the correct date of the timeline. The cards describe important events that took place locally as well as across the region from 1938 to 1945 and beyond.

This should help contextualize our local history and integrate it into the European/global chronology of events during National Socialism, World War II, and the Holocaust.

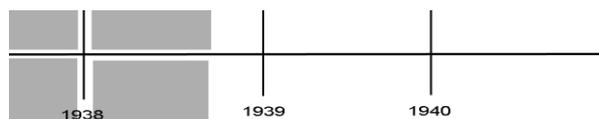
Naturally, these selected events will only touch the surface of these historical developments and are meant as an introduction to more in-depth teachings and discussions.

Task 2

Sensitization for significant terms and their meaning

In this box you will find a short glossary featuring terms used during the time of National Socialism along with short explanations of their meaning. Terms and meanings are in a jumbled order, and students are asked to match terms and definitions in order to learn about historical terminology in a playful manner. You will mostly find terms on it.

As an extension, students may independently find terms featured on the cards on their timelines, research definitions, and thus create their own glossary regarding National-Socialism.



Task 3

Extension of the Glossary:

Finding the broader context of the events featured on the timeline

This is a group exercise: Using their history schoolbooks, the additional reading material in this box as well as the web links provided below, students are asked to research the meaning and deeper context of selected terms on their timeline event cards.

Afterwards, groups will present the results of their research to each other and initiate discussions.

Material in this box

. Timeline with 30 event cards in one box

. GLOSSARY and its solution in one box
. GLOSSARY extension

Literature

Fritz Mayrhofer, Walter Schuster (Hg.): Linz zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur 1918 – 1945, Archiv der Stadt Linz, Linz 2006 (= Linz-Bilder 2). (Publication only available in German)

Links

<http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/nazi/>

<http://www.politische-bildung.de/nationalsozialismus.html>

<http://www.lernen-aus-der-geschichte.de/index.php?site=instructionmaterials>

http://www.netz-gegen-nazis.de/files/buecher/Kammer_Bartsch_Lexikon_NEU.pdf

<http://www.doew.at/ausstellung/chapter6.html>

<http://www.gedenkstaettesteinhof.at/de/index.shtml>

<http://www.ooegeschichte.at/>

<http://www.insitu-linz09.at>

ON THE SCENT OF BIOGRAPHIES MODULE 2

Memories are the most important source when it comes to events that took place during the Nazi regime. History becomes understandable and approachable through the personal stories of those affected. This is especially true when it comes to the voices of victims of Nazi persecution, which have not been documented by the perpetrators. Research shows that students with an immigrant background show special interest and specific knowledge of NS-history.

Task 1

Biographies and reports of inmates of concentration camp Gusen

In this workshop, students acquire historical knowledge through personal accounts and biographies.

This workshop is not recommended for entry-level students as it requires a pre-existing knowledge of topics such as National Socialism and concentration camps.

In small groups, students are asked to read individual biographies – including that of Johann Gruber. In turn, a series of questions will help students get in touch with the aggravating life stories of victims. Then, students are asked to find connections to their own current lives.

Material in this box

. life accounts and biographies of inmates of concentration camp Gusen

. biographies and reports of contemporary witnesses from the region

DVD
Das Vermächtnis

Persecution, displacement, and resistance during National Socialism, Hg. erinnern.at, 2008

Link

http://www.mauthausen-memorial.at/index_open.php

Task 2

Reports of contemporary witnesses from the region

The accounts of seven people who used to live in close proximity to the concentration camps Mauthause and Gusen are the starting points of this module. During this time, these anonymous contemporary witnesses were still relatively young, yet they tell their stories in a compelling way.

This is not an entry-level task. Working with these biographies requires pre-existing knowledge of topics such as National Socialism and concentration camps.

Students are asked to read through these biographies in small groups and then summarize the questions on a flipchart. Afterwards, each group will introduce their contemporary witness. Questions and answers will then be discussed together.

Material in this box

. life accounts and biographies of inmates of concentration camp Gusen

. biographies and reports of contemporary witnesses from the region

DVD
Das Vermächtnis

Persecution, displacement, and resistance during National Socialism, Hg. erinnern.at, 2008

Link

http://www.mauthausen-memorial.at/index_open.php



Task 3

Interviews with contemporary witnesses

The DVD „Das Vermächtnis. Persecution, displacement, and resistance during National Socialism” published by www.erinnern.at, features a collection of interviews with survivors and didactic ideas on how to use them as a valuable teaching method.

A specific lesson could consist of students watching the introduction “Meeting the Contemporary Witnesses”, and follow up with some interviews. Afterwards, students may choose one of the topics provided on the DVD (i.e. Education in 1938 / Child Transport England / Deportation, Camps, Genocide) and do further research in these fields.

Material in this box

DVD

“Das Vermächtnis”, Memories of Contemporary Witnesses Persecution, displacement, and resistance during National Socialism, Hg. erinnern.at, 2008

DVD 1: Videos. DVD 2: Teaching Material. 13 interviews with Holocaust-survivors from the archive of USC ShoahFoundation Institute for Visual History and Education, Los Angeles

„So, I am a murderer“

A film by Walter Manoschek, 2013,65 min.

On the 29th of March 1945, three SS-men murdered around 60 Jewish-Hungarian forced laborers in Burgenland. One of the alleged shooters is SS-corporal Adolf Storms, who was never brought to justice for this crime. 63 years after the shooting, historian Walter Manoschek manages to interview Storms.

Links

<http://www.erinnern.at/das-vermaechtnis>

<http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/biografien/>

<http://austria-lexikon.at/af/Wissenssammlungen/Biographien/>

<http://www.oogeschichte.at/Taeter.1695.0.html>

<https://egov.ooe.gv.at/biografien/BGDBiografieAnsichtExtern.jsp?personId=271¶m=extern>

<http://www.linz.eu/archiv/langoth/index.html>

http://www.dioezese-linz.at/redaktion/index.php?page_new=850

<http://www.insitu-linz09.at>

GO!MEMORATE! MODULE 3

Task 1

Contemporary Memorial Culture

In these last few decades, a new type of memorials emerged: Holocaust memorials reminding us of the victims of the racial genocide during National Socialism. Some of these memorials are said to be among the most important pieces of contemporary art, including the memorials in Berlin and Vienna. Researching these will be a starting point for our discussion:

In small groups, students research a holocaust memorial of their choice and introduce it to their colleagues in short presentations.

Afterwards, students are invited to discuss possible differences between the memorials (i.e. location, size, content,...) and share their personal impressions of them.

Now, after these in-depth discussions, students might have their own ideas for contemporary holocaust memorials. If so, those ideas could be visualized as drawings, collages, or models: What would their own memorial look like? Where would it be located, and who would it be dedicated to?

Material in this box

GO!MEMORATE work material, pictures and short descriptions of contemporary memorials

Link

Holocaust Memorials (overview)

<http://www.demokratiezentrum.org/themen/europa/europaeisches-bildgedaechtnis/denkmale-des-holocaust.html>

Task 2

Walk through St. Georgen by the Gusen

The teaching folder which was developed for this project leads you along a route passing several locations and buildings which were important during the Nazi regime.

Either alone or in small groups, students are invited to make their way through town and closely inspect the locations described in the folder. What to bring: The folder, pen and paper, a camera (phone camera will suffice), and the work sheet in order to answer the questions listed below.

During the walk or afterwards, students reflect on their impressions on what they are seeing.

Material in the box

. teaching folder about the walk DENK.STATT Johann Gruber

. town map of St. Georgen by the Gusen
. PICTURES and MAPS can be found in the role: historical and current aerial photos and maps of the region

Links

<http://www.st-georgen-gusen.at/>

www.papa-gruber-kreis.at



AND WHAT NOW? MODULE 4

Look ahead

The “memorial” is completed, and what now? What can we learn and how can we profit from our research and reflections on the time of German National Socialism? Which actions plans could we derive from our results in regards to our current conflicts and crises?

Task 1

CIVIL COURAGE is a common term with various definitions.

What does civil courage mean?

Civil courage could be translated as “everyday bravery.” It means to be ready to defend your own views even though they might go against the current popular public opinion, and despite the fact that it might be to your own disadvantage.

Civil courage also means not to look away, but to be fully aware of what is happening around you. It is not only about awareness, though, but about becoming active when you witness somebody getting physically or emotionally abused or injured.

Under the Nazi regime, acts of civil courage were quickly seen as acts against the tight corset of an oppressive legal system and they were persecuted as resistance against the government. Such acts bared the risk for people to be denounced, persecuted, humiliated, punished, tortured, and even murdered.

Despite these extreme circumstances, there were still courageous people who would act accordingly.

Two of the most important factors of civil courage are to base your actions on humanitarian, democratic values as well as to possess the bravery to act upon these ideals.

The following sentence should be written on the chalk board and completed by the students:

Civil courage always starts when...

Task 2

Do I have civil courage?

In small groups, students are invited to remember certain situations they were involved in and how they acted.

When do we need civil courage?

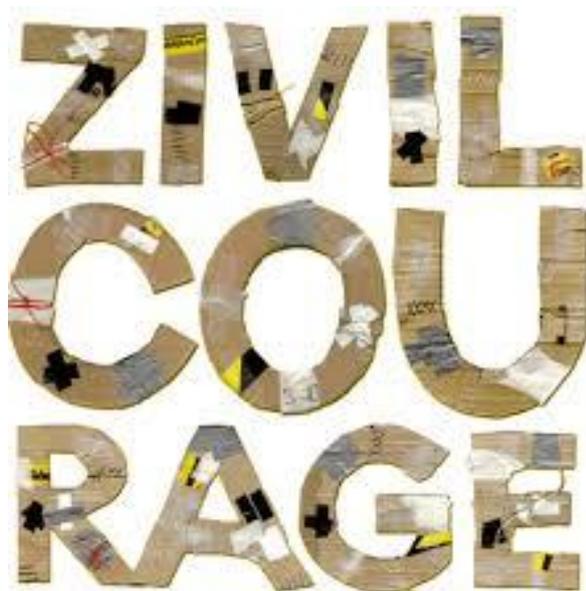
Where do acts of civil courage take place?

The answers given by the students should now be collected, summarized, and discussed.

Task 3

In conclusion, the students should discuss two essential questions:

- What motivates people to intervene, help, express their opinions, and become active?
- What might be a reason why people become reluctant to do just that?



„Now, tell me...“

„Now, tell me...“ is an experimental project aimed at education, documentation, and research targeting the time between 1934 and 1955 in Austria. In the course of this projects, students from local schools interview contemporary witnesses. Their interviewees are mostly grandparents or great-grandparents or other family members and neighbors who have lived through those times themselves or have heard many stories first hand.

This task also aims at teaching students that memories and “oral history” are not static, but selective and tend to change with time.

Task 4

These interviews help students to research their own history – the history of their home town, their family, the person they interview. Additionally, students strengthen their ties with a different generation, and thus deepen their understanding of history. By documenting these aspects of history, they become part of a collective memory.

„Now, tell me...“ is a project which provides a very personal take on history.

Students become familiar with ethnographical and journalistic techniques as well as with video documentation. Equipped with a camera, a voice-recording device, or simply with pen and paper, they ask questions and allow their interviewees to tell their stories.

Material in this box

- interview guidelines

DVD

„So, I am a murderer“

A film by Walter Manoschek, 2013,65 min.

On the 29th of March 1945, three SS-men murder around 60 Jewish-Hungarian forced laborers in Burgenland. One of the alleged shooters is SS-corporal Adolf Storms, who was never brought to justice for this act. 63 years after the shooting, historian Walter Manoschek manages to interview Storms.

INVESTING IN DEMOCRACY – A Project by the city of Empoli

The project „Investing in Democracy“ was established in 1997. Initiated by the Empoli's city government, schools and organizations of the regions have collaborated on this project from the start. They worked on commemorative projects particularly concerned with World War II, meaning deportations, resistance, the defence of our constitutional values and the rule of law.

First and foremost, our goal was to bring our local government and the various organizations, which at this point already worked on political education in our schools, together and to find our common denominator. Our major topics are:

- Commemoration
- Active and responsible civil society
- Education in our rule of law, education on the principal of peace

These topics can be seen as essential instruments for developing a culture rooted in the values of democracy.

The activities of this project were summarized in a collaborative protocol by the following institutions:

- UNIONE DEI COMUNE DELL'EMPOLESE VALDELSA
- PRINCIPLES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
- MIDDLE SCHOOL 1 "BUSONI – VANGHETTI"
- GRAMMAR SCHOOL "IL PONTORMO"
- GRAMMAR SCHOOL "VIRGILIO"
- HIGHER TECHNICAL SCHOOL "G. FERRARIS"/BRUNELLESCHI"
- HIGHER TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOL "E. FERMI-LEONARDO DA VINCI"
- PRIVATE SCHOOL "SS.MA ANNUNZIATA"

- INSTITUT "CALASANZIO"
- ORGANIZATION ANCR – ANED – ANPI – ANPPIA
- CITICENS' INITIATIVE FOR THE DEFENSE OF OUR CONSTITUTION
- INSTITUTION FOR THE HISTORY OF RESISTANCE AND DEPORTATION

Our project was enriched in 1997, when we signed a partnership with the community of Sankt Georgen/Gusen (Austria). This partnership made way for a quantity of initiatives such as mutual visits carried out by private citizens, student exchange, and educational programs by the communal governments. Our communities share the tragic events connected to the deportations of March 1944.

In March 2017, the agreement of our partnership was yet again signed by the mayor of Empoli, Brenda Barnini, and the mayor of Sankt Georgen/Gusen, Erich Wahl, thus strengthening our will to collaborate on these meaningful experiences in the future.

During the last 21 years, our project has „grown up.“ It has become an integral part of our local society and culture, as well as a pivotal element for collaborations between various schools, city governments, organizations, and educational programs in our city and beyond. This way, more and more *current and future* students and citizens get to become active in our cause.

By and by, we managed to live up to our teachers' call for more innovation and experimental didactical methods as well as our students' and parents' desire to update our history lessons.

In these years, the project helped further educate the teachers involved. In addition, it helped shape the personalities of our young citizens by providing various ways of reflection

concerning our history: formal education in classrooms, meetings with contemporary witnesses, visits to memorials.

“Investing in Democracy” has become a meeting point for a variety of pedagogical needs trying to establish and strengthen **democracy and active citizen participation, human rights and legality, to contextualize historical events and world politics, and to give citizens and organizations a platform for ethical commentary.** Additionally, we strive to promote ethics of responsibility and provide instruments of orientation in an ever-changing social reality.

Every participating institution agrees that school should be a place for teaching and discussing values between generations and raising awareness. These tasks are essential to develop a culture based on a democratic rule of law. This basic premise is based on the conviction that there is a close correlation between democracy and education, since an individual who is aware of his/her rights (and responsibilities!) as well as those of others, can play his/her part in strengthening a democratic society and rise up against any form of violence and illegality.



Commemoration plays a strategic role, as it connects the individual elements which make up this project. Raising awareness in civil society is based on accepting the values which established our historical, cultural, and social roots in democracy.

Yearly activities of our partner city St. Georgen an der Gusen, and our commemoration trips to the concentration camps of Mauthausen, Gusen and Ebensee are moments in which we can bear witness to history, and concretely underline the values our project is based on. Planning and execution of those trips for up to 100 students between the age of 13 to 19 from Empelese-Valdesla per year, are based on the

criteria which were agreed upon in collaboration with teachers and organizations (especially ANED, an organization of former deportees).



Goal of the project: „Investing in Democracy” is already found in the statues of the city of Empoli: “The city fully recognizes the values of democracy, solidarity, and civil communal life, which form the fundament of the constitution of our republic, which was derived from the resistance against Nazi fascism. “ (Article 1)

The main elements of the project “Investing in Democracy” can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Teachers’ education concerning history teaching methods, local history, and the Italian constitution
- 2) Individual didactical lessons by experts for students in senior years of various schools (5th grade of primary school, 3rd grade of middle school, and 5th grade in higher education)
- 3) Preparatory meetings for students and citizens invited to partake in anniversary celebrations and memorials of local history: 27 January (Holocaust Memorial Day), 13 February (March of Volunteers for our liberation), 8 March (deportation commemoration), 25 April (national holiday, liberation for Nazi fascism), 24 July (commemoration of the shooting of 29 Empelese citizens), 26 December (bombardment)
- 4) Participation in commemorative trips to concentration camp memorials, which are annually organized for the liberation celebration of KZ Mauthausen together with of the local section of ANED.

- 5) Meeting with contemporary witnesses and visits to memorials (Museum of deportation in Prato, transition camp Fossoli, Museum of Local History Cerreto Guidi, Padule di Fucecchio);
- 6) get to know the places of commemoration within the city (memorials, commemorative plaques, inscriptions)
- 7) City partnership St. Georgen an der Gusen (A) and collaboration with the Region of Awareness.

In those last 21 years, collaboration with the local section of ANED was essential. The voluntary members were committed to organize events and preparatory meetings, and to preserve our connection with survivors of the deportations (who by now are unfortunately deceased) and their family members

EDUCARE ALLE PACE (The biggest Memorial) – The Project by the city of Vinci

The concept of „Educare alla Pace“ (peace education) has existed for 15 years, and is being updated with new content each year. For the school year of 2017/18, which coincides with the 70th anniversary (January 1st) of the Italian constitution coming into effect, we chose the topic “The partisan fight for our constitution.” To quote one of the members of the initial constituent assembly, Piero Calamandrei: *“...but there are also those modest voices which are just being heard now! A lot of blood, a lot of pain brought us to this constitution! Behind every article of this constitution, oh youth, you must see people as young as you are now, who fell in battle, shot, hung, tortured, starved in concentration camps, dying wretched deaths in Russia, in Africa, on the streets of Milan and Florence. They gave their lives so that we could engrave freedom and justice onto these papers. When I told you this was a paper of the dead, it does not mean that this paper is dead. It means that this is a testament drawn up by hundred-thousands of dead ancestors. If you want to go on a pilgrimage to those sights where our constitution was made, go into the mountains where the partisans fell, into the dungeons where they were imprisoned, into the camps where they were hung. Go wherever an Italian had to die so that we could win back our freedom and dignity. Go there, young people, in remembrance. Because this is where our constitution emerged.”* (Piero Calamandrei, Constitution Speech, Milan 1955).

Project example for school year 2017/18 „The biggest memorial“

Target audience: senior year students of the Italian middle school (meaning 8th grade), age 13

People/Groups involved: students, teachers, contemporary witnesses, theatre actors, local politicians and representatives, representatives of organizations such as ANED and ANPI, and indirectly the families of students and the citizens of Vinci.

The goal of the project is to learn about the history of deportation and resistance, using local events as our basis and an experimental approach as our method. In detail, this involves:

- Teaching micro- and macro history
- Strengthening the connection between region – history – school
- Raising awareness for the fact that historical events influence our present situation, and that our daily decisions influence historical developments
- Appeal to our students' curiosity (how did we become who we are today?) and help them express their thoughts
- Develop creative and artistic ways of expression; motivate students to discover new skills and talents

Content: Timeframe World War II in Italy and Europe, especially resistance, deportation, massacres committed by German troops in retreat, the basis and values of the Italian constitution:

- Give knowledge of the Shoah and deportations and how these events influenced our constitution
- Promote knowledge of the content of our constitution
- Showcase the value of democracy in contrast to other forms of government, and explain how a democratic system is still the only guarantee against abuse of power
- Provide young people with an understanding on how easy and dangerous it is to make people submissive and destroy the individual within a dictatorship

Execution of the project

Many of the goals and contents we named will be taught using the tools of modern education with a variety of methods reaching from lectures, interactive lessons, flipped classrooms, independent research to debates and discussions. A specialty of this project is our theatre workshop which will take place by the end of the school year in order to reflect on what we have learned and experienced.

We will use a method of dialogue and research, so that students never take on a passive role, but remain motivated to come up with their own hypotheses, reflect, contextualize their knowledge, and eventually freely and creatively express themselves by the use of theatre language (body language, spoken word, facial expressions).

Why Firenza Guidi?

Guidi is a director and scholar in theatre performance, the so-called site-specific performances. She has been working with local communities for years, often (but not always) using local history and the events of World War II as the framework for her plays. Her family is from Massarella, a small village near Padule di Fucecchio, the wetlands which were the scene of one of the bloodiest massacres, during which some of her own ancestors were killed. Guidi combines empathy (emotional aspect) with a profound academic knowledge of the literature and secondary sources at hand. She is also able to direct large groups of young theatre people to produce a play which inspires an emotional response alongside the motivation to contextualize the human spirit in its historical framework and to rebuild a sense of human dignity which has been destroyed. Here is how she describes her work's philosophy for this educational workshop: *"Is it possible to touch history with your own hands? As if it was Play-Doh, or strong, vivid colors we – children or adults – can dip into. Where, as in Picasso's Guernica, I am placed on a black-and-white canvas only to dissolve on it. Directly touching history might be the dream of every teacher? It is the possibility to retrieve the faces of unknown people from the dark void of our memories, thus giving a shapeless, lost mass body and voice once again."*

The Planning Process – Architecture of the Project

The project is executed by teachers of our local middle school, who are planning individual lessons for a timeframe of 3 years – exactly the time it takes for our students to finish the school. While the first two years carefully prepare students for the subject, the actual project takes place in the third school year using lectures, personal research, film- and theatre, and creative writing. Educational material will be organized by teachers prior to this phase. The year is separated into 4 phases, during which we will also collaborate with director Firenza Guidi and her collaborators:

Phase A: Preparation for the school trip: interdisciplinary approach during lessons. Close collaboration with colleagues and the director is required. At this point, we will not go into individual lessons, but focus on the workshop.

Workshop: 2 meetings per class during which the director will present us with first ideas for the performance and motivates students to come up with their own ideas. Additionally, we'll do a first practice round for theatre performance.

Phase B – School Trip to a meaningful place of remembrance. All senior year students take part. They are accompanied by teachers, representatives of the city and volunteer organizations as well as Firenza Guidi and her collaborators. To Guidi, these moments are important to capture students' emotional reactions, in order to refer back to them during the process later on. While we visited Auschwitz in 2016/17, our destination in 2017/18 was Rome: The capital and its state institutions, the historical palaces, the Hebrew quarters, the Fosse Ardeatine (a labyrinth of caves in which 335 men were shot by the SS).

Workshop: Video documentary of the trip alongside an on-site performance (or occasional short workshops, i.e. in the Tadeusz Kantor museum of Cracow for "La classe morta", the edition of our previous performance during our trip to Auschwitz), creative writing on the trip back in order to capture and process our emotions during the visit

Plan C – Processing our experience during the trip and after our return through the theatre workshop. The workshop transforms the emotions and experiences of the trip into words and gestures. The performance is not the work of the director alone, but the content is constructed out of texts produced by students. The result is a complex image (one of Guidi's specialties is the *tableau vivant*, which makes use of a large quantity of performers on stage). The actual public theater performance lets students along with theater people become protagonists who lend their voices to the protagonists of history. This will lead to an identification process which raises awareness of the fact that each individual contributes to history.

D – Dissemination by the means of a public performance of the play "Il più grande monumento" (the biggest memorial) in front of parents and citizens. Each performance features two of the 8 classes involved in the project, meaning there will be four editions reaching hundreds of people. It will all be documented with pictures and videos. Later on, the video – documenting our trip and the performance – will be presented to the public.

Materials will be chosen according to the topic:

Texts: "Vita amara" Memoirs of the Partisan Nada Parri, "Sulle tracce di Oddino" from "L'inutile strage" by P. Malvolti, Terese Mattei (partisan and youngest member of the constituent assembly), "Le battaglie della partigiana Chicchi, la più giovane madre della Costituzione", "Speech for the Youth" by Piero Calamandrei, January 26th 1955 "Costituzione la legge degli Italiani riscritta per i bambini, per i giovani, ...per tutti" published by Mario Lodi;

Movie: "The Night of Saint Lorence" brothers Taviani, "The Open City of Rome" by Rossellini, "The Wave", and the figure of Ron Jones etc.;

Plays: "Auschwitz" by Firenza Guidi, "C'era una volta l'Italia" by and with Fabrizio Checcacci; Video documentary of the stage performance by Roberto Benigni about the Italian constitution "La più bella del mondo" (The most beautiful of the world).

Necessary competences and requirements for the execution of the project

Depending on the role, various professional skills and competences are required.

Apart from their education in pedagogy, teachers will need separate preparations concerning the historical timeframe at hand and the events which took place within the region during that time (guidelines were not published in vain). Additionally, teachers require utmost understanding when choosing methods which should comply with the needs of the class. In this context, we need to highlight that EVERY class incorporates students with a variety of cultural backgrounds and that intercultural learning is to be on the forefront of our teachings. Since this is a process-oriented approach, continual willingness to do check-ups and knowledge-exchange with colleagues will be necessary.



A professional mindset and pedagogical experience in theater workshops for students is important for theater people. The theater assembly possesses all the necessary skills to develop and execute a live performance: actors, musicians, singers, light- and sound technicians, photographers, videographers, and so on. Additionally, they are also able to promote (graphic design, press releases) and administer (SIAE, contracts) the performance.



Even though this project is executed by the school, the city administration of Vinci plays a crucial role: It provides us with competences for coordinating the project, services and personnel for promotion, and last but not least with financial aid, as it sees this project as an investment in the education of future generations.

This way, questions such as the one we discussed in the title will be raised more often, and we will really learn from our past in order to shape our future.

PROYECTO ALT EMPORDÀ – MAUTHAUSEN

A JOURNEY TO THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS

INTRODUCTION

The Cendrassos Institute is an educational center which is situated in the city of Figueras in the Catalanian region Alt Empordà. This institute offers three educational facilities: the ESO (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria), an obligatory middle-school, the science and technical- as well as the social-humanitarian school offering an A-level education, and a higher and mid-level education. In total, the institute counts up to 900 students from the city and the surrounding villages. In addition, about a hundred teachers and professors of various subjects are employed here. One of those subjects is social science, a very active faculty which often takes part in and works on new projects. Accordingly, teachers and professors of the social science faculty took part in the project „*Grup de Treball Exili, Deportació y Holocaust Alt Empordà*” (in English: working group on the subjects of Exile, deportation, and Holocaust in Alt Empordà), GdTEDH, in short.

As the name already suggests, GdTEDH is a working group compiled of social science professors from different faculties at Alt Empordà. The working group was founded in 2014 with the aim of collaborating on projects concerning exile, deportation, and the Holocaust. Over time, the group became bigger and bigger, and started to work more intensely on the following basic principles: funding for education, remembrance, awareness raising and research in regards to the Holocaust, awakening intellectual curiosity in order to inspire critical thinking and personal development; establishing humanitarian, democratic, ethic, and moral values and behaviorisms; creating memorials which honor the victims of totalitarianism of the 20th century and provide a monument to those who suffered from war, injustice, or human rights violations.

Eventually, this project aims at creating a basic conviction to prevent the cruelties of the 20th century from happening again by promoting a culture of peace and pacifism. Additional aims of the group are to strengthen the cooperation between teachers and students of Alt Empordà as well as the participating faculties, which can always count on the support of the Museu Memorial de l'Exili de la Jonquera, as well as the Memorial Democràtic de Catalunya.

In order to reach the goals listed above, the working group organizes various activities each year. The following three can be seen as the most relevant: The first activity is a memorial ceremony which takes place annually on the 27th of January. During this event, A-level students have the chance to exchange their thoughts with contemporary witnesses and experts. A commemoration of those exiled republicans as well as anyone who was sent into exile marks the second activity. Marches will be held in February. 15- to 16-year-old students of the second grade of middle school will walk along various routes of exile. Some march through Portbou, others through La Jonquera, and some through Agullana. They walk in the footsteps of millions of women, men, and children who have taken up this route during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). In the end, the groups meet across the border at the former concentration camp of Argelers, where students, in order to finish the ceremony, exchange their experiences and shake each other's hands. The third activity is a trip to Germany and Austria in order to visit the former concentration camps Dachau, Mauthausen-Gusen, and Schloss Hartheim. For sure, this activity can be the most overwhelming, which is why it is necessary to explain it in more detail.

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

The project „Alt Empordà-Mauthausen“ is seen as a highly progressive initiative in our region. The idea derived from the interest of visiting some of the places where the afore mentioned events of the Holocaust took place. It came from a group of professors which had been trying to improve their lessons on exile, deportation, and the Holocaust for a while. This project now makes it possible to underline the stories and explanations with a trip to these cities.

This innovative project assumes the following pedagogical ideas:

- The journey should build on the curriculum of the subject “Contemporary History”, which is part of the A-levels.
- The content of the curriculum should be linked with real-life experiences.
- It should help get to know sceneries of destruction caused by the Nazis and World War II in general.
- It should broaden the horizon of students in regards to geography and culture and promote interaction and solidarity amongst students from various faculties.
- The content of the journey needs to be prepared and reflected upon in class.

The final idea links the preparation process with the execution and the conclusion of the journey. These steps will be discussed further in the upcoming paragraphs, as it is necessary to understand that the project does not only involve going on a journey, but requires preparation and reflection. Or, to put it another way: This visit to Austria and Germany is a wonderful opportunity to work on content and insights before, during, and after the trip.

THE PREPARTIONS

The preparations for the journey begin before the school year starts, i.e. when professors meet in order to find a date or the trip, estimate the number of participating faculties and students, and plan the route as well as the means of transport.

This is not an easy task as we only work with preliminary dates and prices which do not become concrete before the school year begins. It is the time, though, when the project starts taking shape.

Students who are about one to two years away from their A-levels and who are between 16 and 17 years of age are allowed to take part on the journey. Each faculty decides on its own, though, whether they want to only allow students attending the course “Contemporary History” on the trip, or if they make it available for those in technical classes as well. In order to decide if students get to partake, financial matters have to be taken into consideration. Costs of the journey are also a major concern of professors, who year by year try to find opportunities to lower prices in order to give every student the chance to participate. Ever since our last journey, every participant has the opportunity to raise at least part of the necessary funds by selling T-shirts. In addition, a concert to raise money will be organized in the near future.

Generally, the more students get to attend, the better. 70 students from five different faculties joined our first trip. This number grew and grew throughout the years. The record is at 170 students from 8 different institutions – a great administrative challenge and a huge success! Since they are the main actors and reasons for this trip, students are asked to give their input on the preparation process from the start. They have to consider the “International Day of Holocaust Victims Commemoration”, which should help them to get in touch with the subject. Preexisting knowledge as well as personal motivations shall play into the planning of our journey. In this sense, it is important to us that students know what we will be working on, meaning that before the trip they will work on the subject in class and receive special psychological preparation. This way, students can best interpret what they see during the trip. Last year, for instance, students of the “Institute Cendrassos” prepared a research paper about five neighbors from Figures who were deported to Austria in order to work in the concentration camp Mauthausen-Gusen. The students researched the lives of those formerly completely unknown neighbors and provided the platform “Mobile History Map”, a smartphone App containing a collection of databases and biographies, with this information. This made it possible to get a glimpse into the subject of deportation by working on concrete, real-life case studies. Additionally, students could later search for the names of these persons in the “Room of Names” at the Mauthausen concentration camp memorial.

In conclusion, shortly before the journey starts, students will hold a press conference for local media, during which they present the project and express their expectations before the real experience, which will change them in many ways, starts.



Rueda de prensa de presentación del viaje del curso 2016-2017. Fuente: GdTEDH

THE JOURNEY

After the preparation process, the long awaited moment finally arrives: the journey. Ever since the very first school year of 2015/16, it has been an annual event, usually taking place between Christmas and Easter. The exact dates would differ, as they depended on our curriculum and most importantly the prices for transportation (plane or bus). The route itself was not always the very same either, even though a travel-plan does exist. This plan includes a trip to Germany and Austria, and a visit to specific places with the help of specialized tour guides:

- former concentration camp Dachau (near Munich). Here, students are provided with information about the incarceration of political dissidents and get a chronological overview over the events, as this concentration camp in Dachau was the first one to be installed by the Nazis.
- Hartheim Castle, near Linz, is an obligatory stop for getting to know significant places at which people that were deemed “inapt” by the Nazis fell victim to their policies of racial cleansing.
- former concentration camp Gusen, which is situated in the same complex as the concentration camp Mauthausen.

The crematorium, which nowadays serves as a memorial, is one of the few parts of this camp still in existence today. It is a means of reflecting about the cruelties which took place here.

- former concentration camp Mauthausen. This is the main part of our journey, giving the project its name and meaning. Here, it is possible to enter the barracks and the insides of the camp, the crematorium, the gas chambers, and many other places in which thousands of people died during the Holocaust. Outside of the camp’s grounds, right in front of the memorial for the Spanish republican victims, we will hold our annual memorial ceremony as the closing act of our journey.

The memorial ceremony, during which we remember the victims of the concentration camp and everyone who was brought to Alt Empordà, is symbolically the most important part of our journey. Our students, who organize the ceremony, will read the names and surnames of the victims out loud. It is also on them to place a bouquet of flowers in front of the memorial, to read out poems or sing songs, as well as to mention administrative representatives and Erich Wahl, the mayor of Sankt Georgen and der Gusen, who will be present throughout the ceremony.

In addition to this celebration, students will have more tasks to fulfill, which vary according to the faculty or the professor in charge. A lot of tasks include the collection of written witness testimonies. This closes the final ceremony, but not the project in itself.



Picture of the group after the memorial ceremony in Mauthausen Source: GdTEDH

AFTER THE JOURNEY

Tasks which have to be tackled at home are diverse, and include analyses as well as reflections.

The analysis of the journey, including an organizational as well as a pedagogical part, is a two-level task: Level one will be completed by each professor alongside his/her students. As soon as all the students' texts have been collected, professors will work on level two, which is supposed to reflect on which aspects of the project worked out well, and which aspects will need improvement in the future.

A variety of activities will take place after the return.

One of these is a celebration during which students who partook on the journey will play a

main role. These students will reenact the Mauthausen memorial ceremony in front of an audience, including their families.

Additionally, each faculty provides us with an audio-visual presentation of a place we visited during our trip. By and by, these presentations will complete the route we took. This celebration is a great opportunity to gather every individual member of our school community. As a conclusion, each idea on how to raise awareness will be shared, and reports on our experiences will be made available.

This journey should serve as a means to never lose touch with the traumatic events of the past and to continue spreading awareness.

VIDEO INTERVIEWS WITH CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES- Educational Work Guidelines

A variety of video interviews save the stories of people who survived the genocides of the Nazi regime. Since 2003, we have been working on the question how we could utilize those video interviews for educational purposes. The following guidelines are the results of this intense analysis:

Contemporary witnesses and their stories are at the center of our lessons. Interviews should not be used to illustrate mere facts – they are to be treated as independent sources.

This is why - if possible - we want to use the interview as a **primary source in its original form**, even if we produce shorter versions due to practical reasons. This way, passages will not be interrupted by cuts, and interviewers' questions or reactions will remain part of the video.

Working with interviews with contemporary witnesses takes **time**. This is why we should make use of at least two to three lessons.

Interviews with contemporary witnesses have a **special emotional quality**. This is why we should avoid merely consuming them, but make sure we can provide deep reflection on what we saw and heard.

We do not only consider the content of the stories, but also the **source itself and the context of its production**. The students will be asked questions such as: How can an interview be influenced? What is the role of an interviewer, and what is the significance of the setting?

We will also look at the **style of narration** and ask, why somebody chooses to tell his/her story in the way they do. This will lead to a deeper understanding and allows us to talk about initially irritating scenes, i.e. when contemporary witnesses present painful experiences in a humorous way.

With our educational offers, we want to provide a **contrast to young people's (supposed)**

means of consumption. The format allows us to deal with more complex narratives. The additional teaching material only shows a handful of selected images of the contemporary witnesses. As opposed to quickly scrolling through content, we strive to promote attentive observation.

During our individual lessons, students will be asked to **articulate their own questions**, find their own core points, and utter their opinions. This approach takes students seriously in their development as people who think, feel, and act independently.

Interviews with contemporary witnesses of the time of the Nazi regime help us learn about history and politics. However, when working with the stories of people affected by history, **emotional and social aspects** are of high importance. Students will learn to build up a relationship between themselves and what they are seeing, and experience and name their own feelings as well as the feelings of others. This way, we will strengthen students' **empathy** and social **competences**.

Interviews with contemporary witnesses ask for **historical context**. Contemporary witnesses tell us about their subjective memories. They tell *stories*, not *history* in its whole. Thus, interviews with contemporary witnesses are not a supplement for history teaching, but a valuable extension.

Video interviews with teaching materials which were created according to these guidelines by _erinnern.at_:

The legacy. Persecution, Displacement, and Resistance during National Socialism. Teaching-DVD 2008.

New Home Israel. 13 holocaust survivors from Austria tell their story of persecution and flight as well as their lives in their new home Israel.

Teaching-DVD and Website 2011.
<http://www.neue-heimat-israel.at/home>

Survival. Video Interviews with Austrian
contemporary witnesses. Teaching Platform
2018. <http://www.ueber-leben.at/home>

ROUTES OF EXILE AT „MUSEO MEMORIAL DEL EXILIO” (MUME)

1. **Setting foot in a region: „Ruta de l'exile“. A positive, historical and pedagogical experience.**

In the year of 2001/2002, meaning before MUME would be built in 2008, the University of Girona added a project named “Ruta de l'exili” to its curriculum of pedagogical studies, specifically to the course “History and Education.” Students’ interest in the school- and educational systems of the twentieth century served as a starting point for this project. They wanted to know what teaching looked like, which pedagogical philosophies prevailed, how politics used to influence education, etc. Experience showed us that during a school year, it was hardly ever possible to discuss the twentieth century despite students’ exceptional interest. In order to close this gap, it was decided to put a special focus on education and upbringing in 20th-century Catalonia and Spain: the monarch, the republic at war and in peace, the exile, the dictatorship of Franco, the “cleansing of teachers” by Franco, etc. These lessons also offered visits to archives in order to get to know historical documents and to support research. As part of these activities, one day was devoted to an introduction to the topic of exile of specifically 1939. A special focus was put on exiled teachers who had worked in Catalonia at that time. The aim was to reconstruct history, especially the political history of a collective group: teachers. In addition, the project offered the possibility to set foot in a region in which a significant amount of teachers set off to exile. Another aim is to become aware of the geographical vicinity of the French border and an area full of history and memories of the Spanish Civil War. A younger generation of pedagogues and teachers will get the chance to get to know a part of history on the spot and relive said history by following the footsteps of the republican retreat in 1939.

Our main motivation was to make use of our geographical vicinity and reconstruct this chapter of history. Specifically, it is about a path of around 60 kilometers, reaching from Girona to La Jonquera, where MUME has been open to visitors since 2008. Along the way, historical contextualization, including the first political events during the war of the republic, takes place. The visit to MUME is the time when students become aware of the impacts of the civil war. This awareness serves as a good basis regarding the route students will take after having visited the museum.



Information sheet for guided tours “Routes of Exile” at MUME

The following 12 kilometers will be taken by car. Our goal is La Vajol, where the so-called Mina de Negrin is situated. You will reach the entrance of the mine on foot. There, you will find out about the art treasure and the money of the “Banco de España”, which was stored inside of the mine. Afterwards, you will take a one-hour walk along the mountain saddle of “Coll de Lli”, over which the president of the republic, the president of the republican supreme court, and the presidents of Catalonia and the Basque region entered France. While students will be climbing the hill, statements of witnesses – prepared during lessons preceding the trip – will be read.

After having completed almost half of the march, students will take a country road and mountain pass in La Jonquera in order to reach le Boulou, the first French village. From here on, they continue until they reach the beach of Argelès where the famous refugee camp is situated. Here, they will get to visit the modest but moving memorial of the „Cementerio de los Españoles“ („Spanish Cemetery“). A few meters down the road, in the middle of the beach, a monolith shows you where the entrance to the camp used to be. Nowadays this is a tourist spot with no signs of the former concentration camp left to find. In order to give students the change to become aware of the significance of erecting this concentration camp on a deserted beach in 1939, you can resort to texts written by important republican figures at the time. Reading those letters written in February, March and April 1939 is truly moving. Quite often, students will use this opportunity to tell stories of their own family members who were sent to exile and lived on these camps. After some time has passed, a dossier of graphics and statistics about the exile will be created and made available online for free.

According to the experiences, ratings, and opinions of students, the route will be modified. These modifications are also dependent on the suggestions and feedback of our companions. The first “Route of Exile” has become a norm. We are taking this route during the winter months, since the climate (rain, snow, storm) helps understand the physical and psychological pain people who fled into exile suffered.



Map of the memorials of the republican exile around MUME and the centers of interpretation and remembrance in the border-zone between Emporà (Catalonia-Spain) and the Departamento de los Pirineos Orientales (France). Map: MUME / Generalitat de Catalunya, Casa a Perpinyà, 2007.

2. Routes of Exile and mapping of the paths. Two initiatives by MUME to turn the scenes of the republican retreat into a cultural heritage.

The project which was created for the university course “History and Education” soon expanded beyond its academic framework with the opening of MUME in 2008. From Day 1 the museum took the initiative and modified the University of Girona’s project in order to integrate it into its program. This was the moment when an exercise practiced in “History and education”, researching suppression and exile of Catalan teachers in order to reinstall memories of the scenarios of the republican retreat, became part of a cultural heritage of much grander scope, namely the “Network of Memorials of Catalonia” (Xarxa d’Espais de Memòria Democràtica de Catalunya), was first offered to the public.

Around 45.000 people, especially middle-school students from Catalonia and France, took part in this experience during the last 8 years. This number, though, only includes participants of workshops offered by MUME employees.

Right now, there are 7 workshops on offer, some of which derived directly from suggestions by the University of Girona while others are based on the attempt to complete its work and introduce special yet meaningful exiles such as Pau Casals and Pompeu Fabra in Prades de Conflent, the stay and death of Antonio Machado in Collioure as well as the death of Walter Benjamin in Portbou during World War II. It has to be added that the museum also organizes routes for especially meaningful memorial routes, for instance the 70th or 75th anniversary of the republican retreat or the memorial ceremony for the German philosopher Walter Benjamin, to which the citizens of Portbou as well as the “Chair Walter Benjamin” of the University of Girona contribute.



Information sheet about the memorials which are situated alongside the Routes of Exile and the MUME.

The combination of the initiative of the Faculty for Education at the University of Girona with its process of mapping the places and paths of the Republican Exile has contributed to empower one of MUME's most important missions. This mission is to become the main representative of a region of remembrance, or – to say it differently – to become a museum which is ever-expanding and sensible to the events which took place in its surroundings. This dimension, which goes far beyond the limits of a regular exhibition, is part of a project which teaches and restores a heritage which makes events, buildings, and paths visible in our landscape. In the end, though, a whole history and memory, which fights against oblivion in the 21st century, will be made visible.



Information sheet for the 7 Routes of Exile, MUME.

After the routes had been recognized as cultural heritage, the mapping systems of these paths was revealed in 2009. This initiative is led by MUME with the contribution of „Consell Comarcal de l'Alt Empordà“. It is financed by “Generalitat” (note: *Generalitat is the entirety of political institutions which administrates the Spanish Autonomous Community of Catalonia*). The most significant sights of the exodus of 1939 are put in the forefront. By the name of „Retirada y camins de l'exili“, thirty places were marked with monoliths, flags, pillars and wall charts in order to remember historical events on the spot and at the same time invite people to visit those places for free. This visit does not include an individual guided tour, but visitors will find informational material ready for download on our website as well as material by Salomó Marqués, which is also available online.

Dr. Christian Angerer - Assessment of the Contributions for the Best Practice Handbook

“Educare alla pace: The Biggest Memorial” (Vinci)

This comprehensive project formulates different goals for a historical-political education in order to derive present day political learning from history (particularly about education about democracy). It uses a variety of methods (lectures, research, excursions, writing, and performances) and incorporates the students creatively as well as providing opportunities for research. Due to its long running time and its activity-orientated experience in the theatre workshop, the heart of the project, Vinci’s programme offers the prerequisites for sustainability. However, in the current project description, it is somewhat unclear which activities and results there were for the topic of “The Biggest Memorial” during 2017/2018.

“Investing in Democracy” (Empoli)

In the aims of the project are that the remembrance of deportation will be connected with present day historical-political learning (education about peace and democracy). However, while the memorial work is methodically specified, the didactic approach with which participants would acquire historical knowledge (conversations with eye witnesses and visiting memorial sites) and how contemporary relevance is produced remains unclear (“experimental didactic” and “current” teaching of history were only mentioned, not explained). Therefore, the project description barely proceeds beyond target setting; in practice, this project appears to be mainly orientated towards traditional, national forms of remembrance.

“The Routes of Exile” in “Museo Memorial del Exilio” (Girona und La Jonquera)

The project has the character of a journey of remembrance, or a walk of remembrance in the north Spanish and French border region with the aim of bringing the buried history (particularly the Catalan) of the Franco years to

the surface. The remembrance of the place as well as eyewitness accounts will be methodically combined, in order to allow an understanding of the exile experience. This didactic method is an emotionally orientated way of learning about history. Due to this endeavour, a Catalan historical narrative of the Spanish Civil War will be established and the connection to the present day will be moved into the background.

“Project Alt Empordà – Mauthausen” (Alt Empordà)

This project would be a memorial trip from Catalonia to Germany and Austria with the climax being a memorial service in the Mauthausen, a former concentration camp, for the Spanish (and particularly the Catalan) deportees. The official aim of this memorial trip is “to never break the chain of transmission of the awareness of traumatic events” – with this, emotional, national remembrance is the central aspect. Despite the desire for a democratic and humanitarian way of thinking, there is a lack of concrete didactic methods. However, there is a strong participation component thanks to the biographical research, student-lead press conference about the trip before departure, and a time for reflection after the conclusion of the excursion.

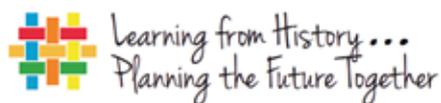
“Audiowalk Gusen”

The Audiowalk Gusen portrays an experimental and cultural way in which to teach history. The collage of voices from survivors, perpetrators, onlookers, and present residents confronts the listener with changing perspectives from the location. By this, discord will be generated, which will provide an emotional as well as cognitive reaction – this will constitute the admittedly intimate, but intensive participation part of the information project. While the history of the concentration camp in Gusen will be constructed through the help of these voices, there will also be a look into the everyday life of the residential complex on the grounds of the former concentration

camp. The historical reconstruction will be accompanied by questions about the culture of remembrance and the responsibility of how history is handled.

“Johann Gruber-Vermittlungsbox” (St. Georgen an der Gusen)

The “Vermittlungsbox” (a box in which there is a wealth of historical material that one is able to use) stands out due to its didactically elaborate concept for present day historical-political learning. The approach of the concept starts with the individual’s opportunity for action. This project consists of four modules and the learning process of historical contextualisation about working with biographies (interviews with eye witnesses) and the examination of the culture of remembrance until the reflection of the courage to stand up to one’s beliefs then and now. With this, Johann Gruber serves as a historical role model. The modules offer diverse materials and methods, in order to encourage the students to reflect, as well as to engage in creative and research activities.



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An diesem Projekt nehmen mehrere PartnerInnenorganisationen aus Italien, Österreich und Spanien teil. Darunter zu finden sind sowohl Gemeinden als auch Schulen, oder auch Einrichtungen zur Erwachsenenbildung. Alle sind bei der Planung und Durchführung des Projekts beteiligt und ohne sie wäre das Projekt nicht möglich gewesen.

Bewusstseinsregion Mauthausen – Gusen – St. Georgen
<http://bewusstseinsregion.at/>

Neue Mittelschule St. Georgen/Gusen
<http://www.ptsgg.at>

Verein für Kommunale Bildung und Integration
<http://www.st-georgen-gusen.at/kultur-freizeit/integration.html>

Gemeinde Empoli
<https://www.empoli.gov.it/>

Gemeinde Vinci
<https://www.comune.vinci.fi.it/>

Liceo Il Pontormo
<http://www.ilpontormoempoli.gov.it/>

Scuola Secondaria Statale di 1° Grado „Busoni-Vanghetti“
<https://www.busonivanghetti.it/>

Erwachsenenbildung ASEV
(Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Empolese Valdelsa)
<http://www.asev.it/>

Institut Cendrassos de Figueres
<https://cendrassos.net/>

Spanien Erwachsenenbildung, Museum
Museo Memorial del Exilio (MUME)
<http://www.museuexili.cat/>

Weitere Informationen zu den Projekten finden Sie unter:

<http://bewusstseinsregion.at/de/eu-projekte/erasmus/>

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