



TEACHING AND EDUCATION ABOUT PERSECUTION AND VIOLENCE

Young audiences and
adapted storytelling



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"Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and in the world at large, by fostering understanding, empathy, and a commitment to justice and human rights."

Foreword

In today's world, where intolerance, discrimination, and persecution are increasingly present, it is crucial to educate the younger generations about the tragic events of the past. The study of persecution is not only a sobering reminder of humanity's darkest moments but also an opportunity to reflect on the importance of empathy, understanding, and respect for human rights.

This handbook is designed to provide teachers and guides with the tools they need to approach the subject of persecution during the Second World War, with sensitivity, insight, and a deep understanding of its historical and contemporary significance. As educators, we have a responsibility to ensure that our students can engage with this challenging subject matter in a way that promotes critical thinking and active learning.

In the following pages, you will find recommendations and guidelines for teaching and guiding students about persecution, including best practices for using multimedia resources, engaging with primary sources, and adopting a multi-perspective approach. We also address the complexities and challenges inherent in discussing these difficult topics with young people, and offer suggestions for navigating these conversations with care and respect.

By providing educators with the resources and support they need to effectively teach about persecution, we hope to empower the next generation of global citizens to confront and address the injustices and inequalities that persist in our world today. We encourage you to use this handbook as a starting point for your own exploration and reflection, and to share your experiences and insights with others in the field.

Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and in the world at large, by fostering understanding, empathy, and a commitment to justice and human rights.

Rémi Praud,

Managing Director
LRE Foundation

“Persecution Through Their Eyes” project



Youth event in Camp Vught National Memorial (NL) within the "PTTE" project. Photo by Thibaud Milissen.

The “Persecution Through Their Eyes” project is an initiative funded by the European Union that seeks to promote a deeper understanding of the international dimensions of persecution during World War II. The project is organized by a consortium of institutions, including the LRE Foundation, Camp Vught National Memorial (Netherlands), Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation (Germany), the National Peace Park of Sant’Anna di Stazzema (Italy) and “Grodzka Gate NN Theatre” Centre in Lublin (Poland).



The project's main objective is to raise awareness among young people of the persecution events under the Nazi regime across Europe, including the perspectives of Jews, Roma/Sinti, political prisoners, homosexuals, prisoners of war, civilians, and resistance fighters. To achieve this, the project aims to engage young people in international dialogue and visits to historical places of remembrance, introducing and reflecting on topics such as post-war justice, reconciliation processes, and the importance of human rights.

The project implementation is underway based on a series of events, including workshops and youth events around an exhibition featuring individual stories of persecuted and perpetrators. These events are aimed at students, teachers, WWII educators, and stakeholders interested in learning more about persecution and the Holocaust.

In February 2023, the project held a two-day guide workshop where participants engaged with the stories of remembrance sites and memorials, including the "Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre" Centre, Sant’Anna di Stazzema, and Max Mannheimer Study Center. The workshop aimed to provide guidelines and advice on how to effectively communicate the horrors of war, particularly to young people, while sharing best practices from several institutions with expertise in teaching and guiding on the topic of persecution. The workshop emphasized the importance of conveying the stories of individuals rather than faceless masses of victims to make the history of the Holocaust, massacre of civilians, and persecution more immediate and interesting to young people, as well as more relevant to their present lives.



Youth event in Camp Vught National Memorial (NL) within the "PTTE" project. Photo by Thibaud Milissen.

Project Consortium

The "Persecution Through Their Eyes" project is a collaborative effort, driven by a consortium of esteemed institutions committed to preserving historical memory and promoting a deeper understanding of the international dimensions of persecution during World War II.

Leading the project is the [LRE Foundation](#), an international and inclusive network connecting individuals and organizations dedicated to preserving and promoting the tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to World War II, with a primary focus on making history relevant and accessible, especially to younger generations.

The project partners include institutions with a shared commitment to commemoration and education. [The Camp Vught National Memorial](#) in the Netherlands is dedicated to preserving the memory of the former Herzogenbusch concentration camp. [The Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation](#) in Germany focuses on commemorating the victims of the former Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora concentration camps, aiming to create a place for learning, commemoration, and reflection. [The National Peace Park of Sant'Anna di Stazzema](#) in Italy serves as a place of remembrance, situated on the site of a tragic massacre in 1944, with the intention of educating and promoting peace values for future generations. In the project, this institution is represented by the LRE Italy. Lastly, the ["Grodzka Gate NN Theatre" Centre in Lublin](#), Poland, operates in the historic Grodzka Gate, symbolizing the meeting place of different cultures and religions. It focuses on uncovering and commemorating the memory of Lublin's Jewish community and promoting intercultural dialogue.

Through the combined efforts of these institutions, the project seeks to commemorate the lives lost, provide insights into historical events, and foster a meaningful dialogue among young people about the injustices of the past. By engaging in this collaborative journey, we hope to build a better future where compassion, understanding, and remembrance lead the way. Together, we believe in the power of education and remembrance to shape a world free from persecution and intolerance.



Detainees from Dachau concentration camp gathering on the former place of roll call after the liberation by American soldiers in 1945, Credit NARA. (Dachau1)

Term ‘persecution’

Persecution during World War II was characterized by the **systematic mistreatment, discrimination, and violence inflicted upon targeted groups by the Nazi regime**. It extended to various communities, including Jews, Romani people, disabled individuals, homosexuals, political dissidents and religious minorities. The Nazis sought to establish a “master race” and sought to eliminate those they deemed undesirable or inferior, based on their identity, beliefs, or affiliations. This involved not only physical harm but also the implementation of discriminatory policies, restrictions, and exclusionary measures.

The persecution during World War II resulted in unimaginable suffering, widespread human rights abuses, and the loss of millions of innocent lives. It stands as a stark reminder of the dangers of prejudice, discrimination, and the abuse of power. Furthermore, as we delve deeper into the historical context of persecution during this period, it is crucial to acknowledge that the understanding of the Holocaust, one of the most devastating outcomes, remains a subject of passionate debates and controversies.

The extensive discourse and literature surrounding the Holocaust have given rise to differing interpretations and perspectives, fueling intense emotional and fiercely partisan conflicts. In recent years, scholars have undertaken the intricate task of exploring the question of culpability, shedding light on the involvement of individuals beyond the core supporters of National Socialism. It is through this ongoing exploration and analysis that we can better comprehend the complex nature of persecution and the diverse perspectives that shape our understanding of it.

Arrival of the first 149 prisoners at Buchenwald Concentration Camp on July 15, 1937. Copyright by the Weimar Criminal Investigation Department / Buchenwald Memorial.





This photograph is part of the PTTE exhibition, featuring the story of Magda Perlstein in 1941. Copyright: The Brown family, granted by the Buchenwald Memorial.

Coping with alternative views of why and how WWII persecution happened and navigating through what we know and understand presents teachers and guides with several challenges, which we strive to address comprehensively in this handbook. Learning about persecution and reflecting on our present-day societies also involves grappling with the different – and sometimes competing – perspectives of all groups involved: victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers.

This handbook focuses on providing examples and exercises that illustrate how visits to memorial sites and museums dedicated to the persecution can offer young people a concrete understanding of the potential consequences of failing to respect human rights. It presents and discusses various questions and tools that can enable youngsters to creatively and critically develop their knowledge of human rights based on an understanding of persecution.

One notable contribution to this ongoing debate is Daniel Goldhagen's book, "Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust". The author presents a thought-provoking argument, suggesting that the participation of ordinary Germans in the Holocaust was driven by deep-rooted and distinct anti-Semitic beliefs, rather than solely following orders from Hitler or other leaders. This perspective challenges traditional notions of individual responsibility and raises important questions about the broader sociocultural context within which the Holocaust unfolded.

Teaching and guiding within historical context

Teaching about persecutions is an essential component of historical education, as these events have had a profound and lasting impact on individuals, societies, and the world at large. Persecutions based on ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or political beliefs have caused immense suffering, loss of life, and social and cultural destruction. **Through the study of persecutions, students can gain a deeper understanding of the complex causes and consequences of these events, as well as their impact on human rights, justice, and peace.**

Establishing a comprehensive understanding of a subject matter requires beginning with factual information, especially when it comes to teaching students. Creating a strong foundation of knowledge through accurate and informative instruction is vital to promoting engaged learning. By educating students about the historical context and occurrences that led to the persecution and Holocaust during World War II, they can gain a more explicit understanding of why and how such atrocities occurred. **Awareness of the elements that contributed to the growth of Nazi power and the targeting of specific groups provides a significant background for discussions about tolerance and prejudice.**

However, it is also essential to **encourage critical thinking and reflection about the societal and cultural factors that contributed to these events.** By prompting students to consider the deeper cultural and societal issues that led to the persecution during the war, they can develop a more nuanced understanding of the underlying causes of discrimination. This can involve exploring topics such as nationalism, anti-Semitism, racism and propaganda, as well as examining the role of collaboration and complicity by other countries and individuals.

Teaching about the persecution during World War II goes beyond educating young people about history. It also aims to promote values such as empathy, respect, and tolerance. By learning about the experiences of the victims, perpetrators and witnesses, students can develop greater understanding of people from different backgrounds. This can help them to become more compassionate and accepting individuals who are better equipped to build positive relationships with others.



Photo of Anna Szternfinkiel-Rajs (Anna Langfus) in 1938, featured in the "PTTE" exhibition.

Copyright: Maria Langfus / "Grodzka Gate-NN Theatre" Centre in Lublin.



The Church of Sant'Anna di Stazzema, the site of the massacre of 130 people, featured in the PTTE exhibition.
Photo by Caterina Di Pasquale.

Another effective approach to teaching about persecutions in its historical context is to **present stories of specific individuals who were victims of persecution**. By doing so, students can understand that these individuals were not just numbers and statistics, but actual people with families, histories and future plans. By studying the stories of individuals who have left a significant mark on history, such as Anne Frank or the Dutch resistance fighter Hannie Schaft, students can develop a more personal connection to the past and feel more invested in learning about the topic. They can also investigate other cases of persecution that may come from their own families or communities.

The multilingual historical exhibition implemented during the "Persecution Through Their Eyes" project is a great example of how to teach young people about this above-mentioned topic. The exhibition uses a substantial group of personal stories of individuals from the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, and Italy to illustrate the wide range of experiences and diverse groups, including both victims, perpetrators and witnesses, who were involved in the tragedies of the Holocaust. These groups include Jews, political prisoners, prisoners of war, resistance fighters, and others. The exhibition aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the events, motivations, and consequences of persecution, as well as the importance of learning from the past to build a better future.

Another powerful approach to teaching about persecutions is **taking students to visit places related to these events, such as museums, concentration camps, cemeteries, and other memorial sites**. In fact, this approach is being implemented as well as part of the "Persecution Through Their Eyes" project. The project partners organize a series of education youth events, in cooperation with other local partners, such as schools. These events are designed to bring young participants closer to the personal stories of victims and eyewitnesses. During these events, students have the opportunity to interact with living historical eyewitnesses or their descendants, in addition to visiting the historical exhibition and place of remembrance.

To create a meaningful learning experience for students, it is **important to ensure a safe and respectful environment during educational events**. Additionally, recording young participant testimonies and reflections can provide valuable insight and perspective, and can be integrated into digital exhibitions for further education and reflection. These educational tools can help promote the importance of human rights protections and emphasize the rejection of all forms of discrimination. Schools can also organize educational visits to museums, historical centers, and other places related to persecutions. Such visits give students the opportunity to learn about history and culture, as well as to develop empathy and sensitivity towards others.

Using various media, including films, documentaries, archival recordings and photographs, as well as literature, poetry, and music related to a particular era, can also help students understand persecutions and provide a broader historical context for the information they receive. These resources can help stimulate students' imagination and provide them with a more immersive and engaging learning experience. By seeing and hearing firsthand accounts and visual evidence of these events, students can develop a deeper understanding of the human impact of persecution.



Youth event in Camp Vught National Memorial (NL) within the "PTTE" project. Photo by Thibaud Milissen.

In addition to these approaches, there are specific actions that can be taken to teach about persecutions. Organizing discussions about persecutions, their causes and consequences, and ways to avoid them in the future, can help students understand and solve problems related to intolerance and discrimination. These discussions can be held in the classroom or with the participation of experts, social activists, and other people interested in these issues.

Using interactive methods such as games, simulations, and others, can allow students to better understand difficult and emotionally demanding topics such as the Holocaust, civilian massacres, and persecutions. **Educational games**, such as board games or computer games, can provide students with interactive experiences that will help them better understand complex historical events and processes. When utilizing these tools to teach about sensitive historical topics, it is essential to exercise caution. The activities should be **tailored to the participants' age and capabilities**. It is crucial to consider the potential impact of exposing young learners to such direct brutality, as it could have unintended consequences. Therefore, it is fundamental to implement these techniques in an appropriate and sensitive manner to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Persecution and historical consciousness

Historical consciousness is the relationship between the past and the present and its implications on our aspirations for the future. Research shows that youngsters generally have difficulty seeing the value of history and how it relates to their lives. Studies suggest that many struggle to grasp the purpose or importance of learning history (Haydn & Harris, 2010), or alternatively, are able to recognize its interest, but feel dismissed or disengaged from the way it is taught in schools (VanSledright, 2011).

It is important as a teacher or guide to connect the past with the present. Here you deal with persecution as a past event and with how it affects us today. For example, you start as a starting point where for example a building stood, the different camps or the meagre number of Jews in areas where they lived with thousands. One may very well start with Nazism or with the issues of fundamentalism, nationalism or discrimination. This may lead back to persecution.



Transport of unemployed workers from Nijmegen to Germany during WWII.
Copyright LRE Foundation.

How to teach and guide about persecution

Educator's and guide's attitude and approach

Traditional methods of teaching and guiding usually involve lecture-type lessons where the teacher or guide is the giver of information, and the student or youngster is literally an empty vessel ready to be filled to the brim. This method may also involve the use of pictures found in textbooks. **In Holocaust education, traditional methods often focus on memorization and facts, rather than critical thinking and analysis.** However, this approach can lead to a lack of engagement and understanding among students.

To avoid such attitudes when teaching about World War II events, **it is important to make use of the innovative methods, such as the internet, films, documentaries, and interviews with survivors.** These methods can help students connect with the material on a personal level and reflect on the importance of individual rights within cultural frameworks. In addition to using innovative methods, it is important to employ challenging and stimulating methods of teaching that cater to individual learning needs. This approach recognizes that children learn in different ways and encourages teachers to use a variety of techniques to engage students.

Moreover, it is also important to avoid limiting oneself to statistics and instead focus on telling stories about individuals affected by the events. This approach helps students of any age connect with the material on a personal level and fosters empathy for those who suffered during World War II. Finally, **it is crucial for guides or teachers to be well-trained professionals who are clear about their objectives and possess certain teaching skills.** By employing these strategies, educators can help ensure that students engage with World War II history in a meaningful way.



The guided tour in the Camp Vught National Memorial (NL). Copyright by the LRE Foundation.

Topics and materials to include



Children's Memorial in Vught (NL). Copyright by Jan van de Ven, granted by the Camp Vught National Memorial.

When teaching about persecution, it is crucial to provide context and background information about the rise of Nazi Germany, as well as the various groups of people who were targeted by the oppressors. The Holocaust was one of the most tragic events in human history, and it is important for young people to learn about it in order to understand the impact of intolerance and prejudice.

One common mistake to avoid is oversimplifying the causes of persecution or presenting it as a purely German phenomenon. **It is important to discuss the role of collaboration and complicity by other countries and individuals, as well as the resistance and survival of many targeted groups. Another important aspect is emphasizing the humanity and dignity of the victims and resisting the tendency to reduce them to numbers or statistics.** It is also important to highlight examples of resistance and rescue, as well as the ongoing impact of persecution on survivors and their descendants.

An example of an effective approach to educating young people about the persecutions during WWII can be an inquiry-based strategy, such as presented in significant work titled “What Shall We Tell the Children? ()”, on teaching history of the Holocaust in Germany and England. According to the authors, German students spend more hours per week learning history than their peers in the UK. Furthermore, in German history education, the focus is on issues related to national heritage and responsibility, while in England, the focus is on more general skills such as developing research studies and highlighting the fate of victims and their suffering. It is worth noting that many European countries tend to focus their WWII education on the suffering and victimization of individuals, rather than presenting a comprehensive view of the conflict. While this approach is important in promoting empathy and understanding, it can also result in a limited understanding of the historical and political complexities of the war. It is therefore **crucial for educators to balance the emotional impact of personal stories with a broader understanding of the events and factors that led to the war and its aftermath.**

According to a study commissioned by University College London Centre for Holocaust Education and published in 2016, historical education can have a positive impact on young people's attitudes towards diversity and tolerance. **The study found that students who learned about the Holocaust showed greater empathy towards members of different ethnic and religious groups and were more likely to reject stereotypes and prejudice.** It also demonstrates that even in an era of widespread access to information, there are still gaps in knowledge and understanding among young people about this critical event in history.

In addition, **tour guides can also play an important role in educating young people** about the history of persecution. They can provide a unique perspective by showing students the actual locations where historical events occurred and by sharing personal stories and experiences. By combining different educational approaches and perspectives, young people can develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the events of persecution and their impact on the world.

Choosing the right textbooks is a vital part of teaching young people about the history of persecution. Textbooks serve as a powerful tool for shaping official knowledge and societal expectations, and therefore, teachers should choose books that provide accurate and comprehensive knowledge about persecution. To do this, teachers should consider the perspectives and experiences of diverse groups who were persecuted during WWII. The textbooks should also provide a nuanced and complex understanding of the causes and consequences of persecution, including the role of antisemitism, nationalism, and other factors. **Textbooks should not be the sole source of information about this period of history. Teachers should engage students in critical thinking and discussion about the information presented in the texts, including questioning assumptions and biases, examining multiple perspectives, and analyzing primary sources.**

Educational objectives

Teaching about the persecution and the Holocaust during World War II is a challenging but important task. Storytelling can be a powerful tool for engaging students and helping them understand the human impact of these historical events. The following storytelling techniques can be used to teach about the Holocaust:

1. Use primary sources

Primary sources like diaries, letters, photographs, and artifacts can help bring the stories of Holocaust victims, perpetrators and witnesses and survivors to life. Incorporating these sources into storytelling can give students a more personal and emotional connection to the events. For example, educators could read excerpts from victim's diary or show photographs of concentration camps to help students understand what life was like for those who lived through the Holocaust.

2. Focus on individual stories

The scale of the Holocaust can make it difficult for students to comprehend. Focusing on individual stories can help make it more relatable and understandable. For example, educators could tell the story of a specific family or group of people who were affected by the Holocaust. This could include their experiences before, during, and after the war.

3. Use age- appropriate language

When teaching about sensitive topics such as persecution and genocide, it is important to use age-appropriate language that does not trivialize or oversimplify the events. For younger students, educators might use simple language and focus on basic concepts like good vs. evil or right vs. wrong. For older students, more complex language might be used to delve deeper into issues like propaganda, racism, and nationalism.

4. Incorporate multimedia

Multimedia such as videos, music, and artwork can help engage students' senses and emotions in ways that words alone cannot. For example, educators could show a video testimonial from a Holocaust survivor or play music from that time period to help set the mood for storytelling.

5. Encourage discussion and reflection

After telling a story, educators can encourage students to discuss and reflect on what they have learned. This can help deepen their understanding of the events and their impact. For example, educators could ask students to share their thoughts and feelings about the story or have them write a reflection on what they have learned.

By using storytelling techniques in teaching about persecution during World War II, educators can help students develop empathy for those who were affected by these events, understand their complexity, and encourage critical thinking and reflection. This is essential for creating informed citizens who are able to recognize injustice in their own communities and work towards creating a more just society.

Youth event in the Bastogne War Museum (BE) within the "EASTory Through Their Eyes" project. Photo by the LRE Foundation.



The importance of motivation



Youth event in the Home Army Museum (PL) within the "EASTory Through Their Eyes" project. Photo by the LRE Foundation.

The success of learning depends on whether or not the youngsters are motivated. It is essential to recognize the fact that motivating learning is a central element of good teaching of guiding. This implies that youngsters' motivation is probably the single most important element of learning. Learning is inherently hard work; it is pushing the brain to its limits, and thus can only happen with motivation. Students' motivation to learn is of special importance because youngsters' mere presence in the class or historical site is of course, not a guarantee that youngsters want to learn. Highly motivated learners are likely to learn readily, and make any class interesting to teach, while an unmotivated audience may likely learn very little and generally make teaching or guiding painful and frustrating.

Since modern education is compulsory, teachers or guides cannot take young people's motivation for granted, and they have a responsibility to ensure youngsters are motivated to learn. Teachers or guides must persuade children and youth to want to do what they ought to do. The first rule is to make the lessons about persecution as interesting as possible using traditional and modern methods of teaching or guiding. **You cannot motivate others unless you are motivated yourself.**

Plan and set goals to keep yourself in the right direction and to persevere in what you want to achieve with your group of young people.

Motivation is what causes a person to want to know, act, understand, believe, or gain particular knowledge, skills, attitude, or values. The following are techniques that the teacher or guide can employ to motivate youngsters during lessons of guided tours about persecution:

• Set clear goals

The learners should be familiar with the aims and objectives of the guided tour or lesson about persecution. The teacher should ensure that learners understand what you are teaching them, and what they have to know and do, as a result of learning. Some techniques for ensuring this success include state the goal for the lesson; provide simple and clear explanations; ask the students to express their comments, questions, and ideas; question the students; provide hand- on activities as often as possible; and assessment tasks should be flexible.

• Show the need for the lesson about persecution

Do not assume that your audience recognizes the importance of the lesson or guided tour. Show the benefit of the lesson or guided tour to the youngsters' needs. Let youngsters' study or do what they can put into practice. The work and the knowledge should be functional and profitable to them.

• Arouse and interest

When the teacher or guide is enthusiastic about a topic, then young people will be more inclined to believe that the topic of persecution has value for them (William & William, n.d [33]). That is, a teacher or guide enthusiasm can motivate youngsters. Add some facts and figures to spice up your lesson of guided tour and before your lesson or tour starts, ask some relative questions to get the youngsters' attention. Be interested in your presentation. Be enthusiastic, illustrative, and exemplary. Use effective teaching aids. Be humorous and reasonably entertaining. But your task is to teach, and not to entertain or chat.

• Provide Necessary Facilities/ Resources

Provide students with the opportunity to do what is expected of them on their own. This instills confidence and increases motivation for the lesson or guided tour about persecution. When the youngsters are offered opportunities, it makes them more responsible, they can learn more about the consequences of their choices. Youngsters should be given choices in subjects, methodologies, and learning processes in their choice of interest. Human beings are naturally curious and self- directed, that is, they want to learn, make choices, and achieve (Truby, [129]). As a result, youngsters will be more motivated when they are given choices. Doing something one chooses rather than what one has been told to do, can be very motivating (Palmer, [26]).

• Challenge the youngsters

Motivational techniques should encourage young people to take intellectual risks. It should give youngsters opportunities to discover the relationship between effort and achievement, incentive and success, and help them develop a better self-concept. A young person should be challenged, and for this purpose, the teacher or guide should give them some tasks according to their abilities. Some students are surprisingly brilliant for their age; therefore, giving them easy tasks will demotivate them.

• Avoid emotional responses

Emotional reactions to youngsters' anger and frighten them. This distracts them from the subject being taught. Emotional outbursts interfere with learning and are demotivating.

• Be a professional during a guided tour

Set an example. Youth emulate instructors. S/he is the model. Be punctual as this will make youngsters feel that they are valued.

• Provide a Conducive Learning Environment

Teachers or guides should create a conducive learning environment where the youngsters are relaxed and participate in their lesson or guided tour. The teacher or guide should create an atmosphere where the listeners are free to express themselves without fear. Young people need to be encouraged to engage and to participate in lessons or guided tours about persecution.

• Use Teaching or guided Methods and Aids that are interesting and stimulating for youngsters

Variety is very important for motivating children and youth. Different forms of variety can be added into the stories via dramatizations, model making, and activities (Palmer, [26]). The use of audio-visual aids directly helps the teachers or guides in motivating the youngsters as well. Revive and maintain interest by using a selection of different methods and aids.

Dealing with specific context and environment



Event at the Freedom Museum in Groesbeek (NL) within the "EASTory Through Their Eyes" project. Photo by the LRE Foundation

In the previous chapter there was an emphasis on motivation. But motivation necessitates the study of the situation, the context and the environment. This will help us, for example, to be more realistic when we take decisions involving the teaching or guiding about persecution. If the teaching aims to focus on the theme persecution, it is important for youngsters to have understood how the relevant site or institution is linked to this theme.

At original sites, as well as at museums, young people will probably be confronted with original documents and historical material, which may contain propagandistic and ideologically laden elements. They need to be prepared for how to critically read and understand such elements – and to distinguish between information about history and historical artefacts.

A teacher, a guide or a listener should decide together how the visit can be incorporated into the chosen teaching theme. The majority of institutions are open to discussing particular needs in advance, but otherwise offer various standard visits. It helps the guide leading a group to know the youngsters' level of knowledge, the role of the visit in the teaching process (as an introduction, middle or conclusion) and what the expectations are.

When the students arrive at the memorial site or museum, their impression will naturally be dominated by what that particular institution has chosen to emphasize. To ensure that youngsters feel secure and informed, it is important for them to understand, in addition to the historical context, the main idea behind their particular visit to the historical site. It may be for them to explore a particular part of this period of history, to follow individual human stories and tragedies, or to link with work done at school before the visit. After visiting such sites, especially former camps, it is important to give the students time for evaluation. To give them the opportunity to talk about the emotional experience, which can be very hard for some of them.

Constraints

Educating students about persecution is a difficult undertaking that requires careful consideration of several challenges. One of the main challenges associated with teaching about persecution is the fact that many general European history textbooks either leave out persecution entirely or only mention it briefly. This can make it challenging for teachers and guides to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of this complex topic.

In addition, documentaries about persecution can be too frightening for some students and must be carefully edited if used in teaching. This can limit the effectiveness of using multimedia resources to engage young people in learning about this topic.

Furthermore, some teachers and guides fear that teaching about persecution may unknowingly provoke mental harm to students, while others worry that it may cause friction between different groups and lead to feelings of hatred or vendetta. This can make it difficult for teachers and guides to navigate a complex topic without imposing their own views or judgments on their audience.

Moreover, there are countries, regions, and provinces in Europe, such as the United Kingdom, where persecution did not take place, which can make it difficult to teach about it on site due to a lack of remains or long distances. Additionally, museums, centers, or foundations that focus on persecution do not exist in every European country. Even where they do exist, certain museums may not be focused on a younger audience, which can make it challenging to engage youth in learning about persecution.

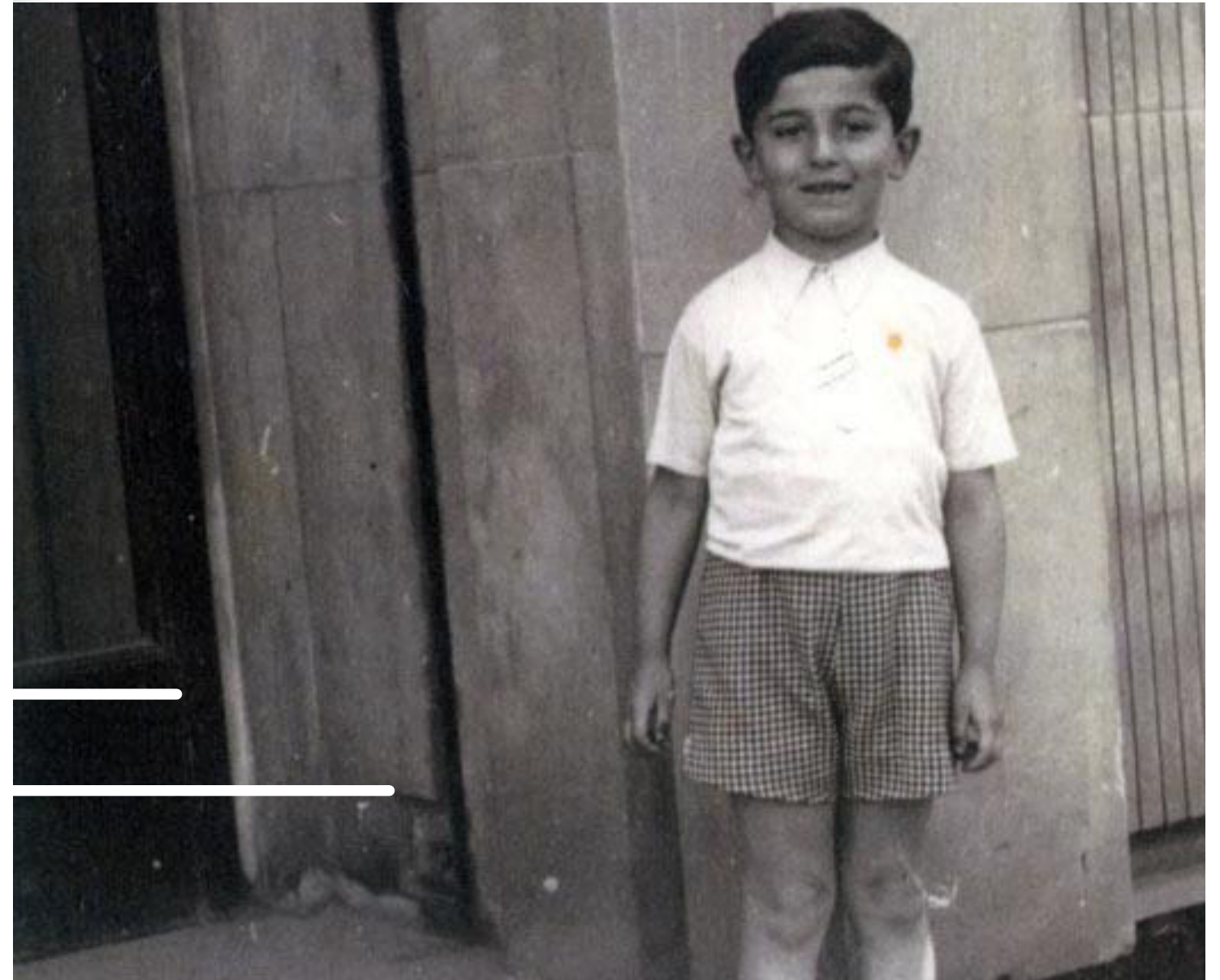
Finally, guiding about persecution is a formidable task for teachers and guides who must deftly steer through multifaceted topics with sensitivity and care. They must facilitate learning without imposing their own beliefs or values, while also providing direction and guidance without making judgments. Ultimately, the goal is to empower students to come to their own conclusions about this important issue. However, this can be a difficult situation for some teachers and guides who may not feel equipped to handle such a sensitive topic. By understanding these challenges associated with teaching about persecution, teachers and guides can develop strategies to engage their young listeners in learning about persecution. For instance, they may need to use alternative resources such as survivor interviews or innovative methods like virtual reality experiences when on-site visits are not possible. They may also need to provide support for students who are emotionally affected by learning about this topic.



To teach and guide about persecution is an opportunity to teach and guide about the nature and dynamics of mass atrocity crimes, i.e. genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Education and guided tours can play a vital role in this context because it can raise questions about warning signs, impacts on society and the range of human behaviour necessary for such events to occur. Additionally, education can help to instill awareness and appreciation of diversity and human rights. Education about persecution provides the occasion to help build critical thinking skills, to augment resilient and effective responses to extreme and exclusionary ideologies, and to illuminate for youngsters how they see themselves in the context of their country's past, present and future. Such education is, in fact, an essential long-term investment. Here are some more recommendations on how to educate in the most effective way, based on guide experiences:

- One of the best methods to teach about the persecution is to **teach about the individual victims, perpetrators and witnesses**. We should not limit ourselves to statistics. If we do so it would mean treating people as mere numbers, stripping them of their identities just as the Nazis did.
- Whenever possible, in teaching and guiding about persecution, we need to **use eyewitness accounts** to support the story. Such as audio fragments, video fragments and photos. These talks should be followed by a discussion with the youngsters.
- Great care should be taken to **ensure that youngsters are not affected psychologically** as a result of guiding and learning about persecution.
- Some educators are hesitant to explore the history of persecution because of the perceived difficulties and sensitivities in guiding about the subject. Some guides wonder how to convey the scale of the tragedy, the enormity of the numbers involved, and the depths to which humanity can sink. Overall, **do not be afraid to approach this subject**. While it may appear daunting, experience has shown that the can be taught to learners successfully and with positive results. Investigate and use the wide range of material describing methods, best practice and specific teaching strategies which can be used to assist in the planning, design and delivery of stories about persecution.
- **Multimedia resources** should be included in efforts to teach about persecution, in large parts because such educational tools are more likely to appeal to today's youngsters as a means for approaching and studying the topic.

- Images and text should be selected with care and for intentional educational benefits. Respect for both the victims of persecution and for the learners in the educational setting demands a sensitive approach and careful thought as to what constitutes appropriate material. Using graphic images with the intent to shock and horrify is degrading to the victims and can reinforce stereotypes of Jews as victims. Images can also be insensitive to the sensibilities of youngsters regarding human trauma or modesty. Persecution can be taught effectively without using drastic graphic photographs or film footage.
- Many young people feel that there is an imbalance between how strongly they become involved in the subject and how active they are encouraged to be when learning about persecution and during visits to historical sites and museums. **Youth want to be active and participate** to a much greater extent than is the norm.
- Asking students to **examine a particular area** or theme of the site themselves is one way of getting them to work using their own level of knowledge and involvement, encouraging them to be active and have some control over their learning. This can be done as a part of a guided tour or after it. The majority of students do this with great interest. Arriving at conclusions for oneself stimulates learning, as the meanings arrived at are 'owned' rather than 'borrowed'.
- Teaching and guiding about persecution raises difficulties and challenging questions for which no easy answers exist. Ensure that youngsters have the opportunity to **explore complex factors and events** that influenced the decision-making of so many. Often, more questions than answers may be raised.
- Persecution can and should be taught with **a multi-perspective approach**. Most textbooks contain sources from both sides, victims and perpetrators. Some also address the attitude of witnesses and the actions of helpers and rescuers. In this case multi-perspectivity does not imply moral relativism. Teachers and guides will encourage youngsters to form their own opinions when they listen to a report of a survivor or analyse documents issued by perpetrators. Doing this, young people are not only obliged to respect the well-established rules of reading sources critically, but are also expected to be aware of the fundamental values of democratic societies.



Last picture of Henio Zytomirski taken in 1939, whose story is featured in the "PTTE" exhibition. Copyright by Neta Zytomirska-Avidar / "Grodzka Gate-NN Theatre" Centre in Lublin.

- It is also important that teachers or guides take into account that certain persecution-related sites, in particular original sites of crime, should not be visited by children below a certain age. Before the visit, young people should have **a pre-paratory lesson** on the history of persecution in order to be able to understand what they see and to reflect on it. Memorial sites and museums usually provide information on the appropriate minimum age of visitors.

- Teachers and guides can be storytellers who educate and inform youngsters. Identifying and considering visitors' expectations and needs requires psychological insight, flexibility and appropriate selection from a wide range of knowledge. **High levels of communication skills, such as using voice, gestures, positioning and group management**, enable guides to present the knowledge they have chosen in a dynamic and pleasing way. Moreover, guides or teachers must:

1. Communicate in an engaging and entertaining manner.
2. Tell a story which gives listeners a broad understanding of what happened.
3. Make sure that they are clearly understood by a range of audiences, adjusting the content and language appropriately.
4. Answer questions in a succinct and appropriate manner.
5. Involve the audience.
6. Project a receptive nature in sympathy with the needs of participants.
7. Set appropriate personal standards that do not distract the audience.

- Finally, particular care should be taken when comparing a case of persecution with historical or contemporary events that may be quite different. **Historically contextualized analysis of diverse cases** should enable youngsters to better understand similarities and differences and highlight the particular historical significance of each event. Comparison should not lead to minimizing the importance of one or the other event; each should be understood and recognized in its own right and complexity.

This documentary film still shows an American G.I. reaching out to outstretched hands of inmates of the liberated Nazi concentration camp at Dachau, West Germany, in April 1945 during World War II. AP Photo (ww2liberators)



Conclusion

If persecution was once considered unprecedented, it is no longer the case because it has occurred in the past. Furthermore, persecution continues to occur in the present day, indicating that it could potentially happen again in the future.

According to a report by the United Nations, there has been an increase in hate speech, discrimination, and violence against minorities in many countries around the world in recent years. For example, in Ukraine against ethnic minorities, including Roma and Crimean Tatars, since the conflict with Russia began in 2014, and has significantly increased in strength since the Russian invasion in February 2022, there have been reports of Russian acts of violence and discrimination against ethnic minorities, including Roma and Crimean Tatars.

The conflict in Syria began in March 2011 and is still ongoing. The Syrian government has been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the use of chemical weapons, torture, and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. Non-state actors such as ISIS have also committed atrocities, including mass executions and enslavement. In the Xinjiang region of China, the government has been accused of persecuting Uighur Muslims and other ethnic and religious minorities. This includes placing them in internment camps, subjecting them to forced labor and sterilization, and limiting their freedom of religion and expression. These actions have been reported since at least 2018. Moreover, in recent years, including in the United States and several European countries, there has been a rise in far-right extremism, hate crimes, and xenophobia targeting minorities, immigrants, and refugees.

The younger generation must learn about the past to avoid repeating it and be aware of the current situation, which, for some people, presents a bleak picture. By considering persecution as an opportunity to reflect on human nature and the freedom to make choices, we can empower students to face reality and act decisively, even in difficult circumstances brought about by persecution.

This handbook is designed to inspire teachers and guides on what to consider when visiting persecution memorial sites and museums and reflect on teaching and guiding approaches. The LRE Foundation regards this handbook as a tool to spark reflection and dialogue among teachers and guides to engage with young people.

Our aim is to move forward debates in the field and support teachers and guides in their efforts to activate and empower young people to visit memorial sites, learn about persecution, and relate this knowledge to our world today. If you found this handbook useful for your teaching or guiding skills, please let us know. Inform us of how it helped you make the best use of visits to historical sites and museums for teaching and guiding about persecution. Please send your feedback to info@liberationroute.com



Roosje (right) and Martha Mozes, whose story is featured in the "PTTE" exhibition. Copyright by Camp Vught National Memorial.

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Bruno Apitz in Colditz Concentration Camp, 1933. Part of the "PTTE" exhibition. Copyright: Buchenwald Memorial.





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