



Seminar report

“Teaching Jewish heritage in your class. Using Jewish cemeteries in education”

Within the “Preserving Jewish Cemeteries” project



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Krakow, 12-13 June 2022

Galicia Jewish Museum, Krakow



The EU3 seminar for Polish teachers focused on imbuing Polish educators with the tools and knowledge to use Jewish cemeteries in their classroom. After introducing Centropa materials and how they can be used in the classroom, the keynote by Prof. Dr. Edyta Gawron on Jewish heritage in Poland focused on material and immaterial heritage.

A workshop on reading epitaphs and tombstones by Anna Wencel from Galicia Jewish Museum was followed by a presentation by activist Dariusz Popiela on his foundation's activities related to preserving Jewish cemeteries. The second day included a guided tour and excursion to the Jewish cemetery of the nearby town of Brzesko by Bartosz and Anna Wencel, followed by group work on developing lesson plans on how to use Jewish cemeteries in the classroom.



A final lecture by Prof. Dr. Krzysztof Bielawski on the situation of Jewish cemeteries in Poland, and a presentation of student projects carried out on Polish Jewish cemeteries wrapped up the seminar.



Participants

The seminar showed itself to be relevant among Polish teachers, with almost 70 applications received. The majority of the 29 participants were teachers at Polish secondary schools. Subjects taught were primarily history, Polish languages, and ethics.




According to our post-seminar survey, around half are familiar with the work of Centropa. Around 80% of the seminar participants rated the seminar “very useful” for their work.

The historical lecture by Dr. Edyta Gawron, as well as the workshop on Jewish cemeteries and epigraphs by Anna Wencel were rated highly by participants.

7. Edyta Gawron mówiła o dziedzictwie żydowskim w Polsce oraz o współczesnej historii Żydów w Polsce. Oceń, na ile wykład ten był dla Ciebie przydatny. /Edyta Gawron spoke about Jewish heritage in Poland and modern history of Jews in Poland. Please rate how useful this lecture was for you. Required




Było to bardzo przydatne i wiele się nauczyłem/ nauczyłam. /It was very useful and I learned a lot.	90.9%	<div style="width: 90.9%;"></div>	20
Był umiarkowanie przydatny/It was moderately useful	9.1%	<div style="width: 9.1%;"></div>	2
Nie było przydatne. /It wasn't useful at all	0.0%	<div style="width: 0.0%;"></div>	0
Total respondents			22
Respondents who skipped this question			0

9. Anna Wencel przeprowadziła warsztaty na temat symboli i epitafiów na cmentarzach żydowskich. Czy uważasz, że było to przydatne? /Anna Wencel conducted a workshop on symbols and epitaph on Jewish cemeteries. Did you find this useful? Required

Użyteczne/Useful	100.0%		22
Mało użyteczne /Slightly useful	0.0%		0
Nie użyteczne /Not useful	0.0%		0
Total respondents			22
Respondents who skipped this question			0

Group work, in which participants were asked to develop lesson plans using Jewish cemeteries for their students, was similarly overwhelmingly rated useful.

12. Pracowaliście w grupach nad scenariuszami lekcji, w których wykorzystywali cmentarze żydowskie. Czy te zajęcia były dla Ciebie przydatne? /Participants worked, in groups, on lesson plans that using Jewish cemeteries. Did you find this activity useful? Required

Użyteczne /Useful	95.5%		21
Mało użyteczne/Slightly useful	4.5%		1
Nie użyteczne /Not useful	0.0%		0
Total respondents			22
Respondents who skipped this question			0



Quotes (anonymous survey):

“I am considering organizing a project on my local Jewish cemetery. The seminar helped me organize my thoughts and ideas anew. My project could be about collecting materials and doing something like archiving data about a cemetery and publishing a folder or brochure that could be used as educational material. I would also like to get more people interested in the subject of this cemetery, because it takes people and resources to prevent it from falling into ruin.”

“Thanks to this seminar and (for me), above all, very valuable and extremely reliably prepared lectures by Mrs. Anna Wencel and a guided tour of the cemetery by Mr. Wencel, I have the feeling that I can organize a trip for students to our local cemetery.”

“I was very interested in the epitaphs and symbolism placed on the matzevot, and during the seminar I was working on a script using this knowledge, now I am going to implement the script during classes with young people. I am most interested in the community of human experiences and thoughts, regardless of their origin and culture - cemeteries turn out to be a good point of reference for such issues - they refer to the memory of Jews and their cultural heritage.”

“A cemetery is the base for any work that can be done on Jewish history, because in my city it is the only material object related to the history of the Jews which survived and did not change its purpose. Therefore, it is a very important foundation both in teaching the culture of remembrance, as well as in education about local history and education about the Holocaust and multicultural education.”