

# CONFERENCE SPEECHES

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## Jewish Association CZULENT

**Ela Jezowska, Poland**

CZULENT: The advocacy association of experts from various fields, which are connected by their Jewish identity. We form a team of active members of the Jewish community in Poland and Europe.

The Jewish Association Czulent is a non-governmental organization operating since 2004, which has the status of national minority organizations. The association gathers experts from various fields, which are connected by their Jewish identity. We form a team of active members of the Jewish community in Poland and Europe. The Association creates a space for projects answering the contemporary challenges of the Jewish community.

The Association's priorities include:

- **ADVOCACY AND WATCHDOG ACTIVITY:** We operate through political, social and legal advocacy, creating and implementing innovative systems of educational solutions. By building a coalition for spreading tolerance, shaping attitudes of openness towards national, ethnic and religious differences, with particular emphasis on actions condemning anti-Semitism, racism and discrimination.
- **STRENGTHENING THE JEWISH COMMUNITY:** The association aims to strengthen the local Jewish community by building a coalition, implementing advancing, educational and cultural projects.

Our past activities include:

- In 2019 we organized Nationwide Conference of Jewish Organizations: "The Contemporary Challenges of the Jewish Community in Poland." The aim of the conference was to gather representatives of the Jewish Religious Community and CSO's from Poland.
- In 2018 we start project "Institutional Development of Jewish Organizations. Cooperation with public administration". We organized workshops to raise the competence of Jewish organizations
- In 2018 we published a report "The Book of Good Practices of Actions for National and Ethnic Minorities and Foreigners", which promotes cooperation and coalition building. Its goal is to encourage further cooperation in building an open and tolerant society.
- In 2017/2018 Jewish Association Czulent was a partner in project "Interfaith / Interethnic Coalition-Building to Combat Xenophobia and Religious-Based Discrimination". The aim of the project was to help civic leaders develop skills and relations.
- In 2016 Jewish Association Czulent co-organized a conference "Jewish Women in Europe: Creating Alternatives. 8th International Bet Debora Conference of European Jewish Women, Activists, Academics and Rabbis".

Our main future activities:

1. Jewish community today and tomorrow. Comprehensive activities for the development of the Jewish community in Poland:

- A. CONTEMPORARY JEWISH COMMUNITY IN POLAND - QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH
- B. CREATION OF A NATIONWIDE PLATFORM/FORUM OF JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
- C. EDUCATION - A GUIDE TO FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION ADDRESSED TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY
- D. TRAINING FOR JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS
- E. TRAINING OF LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS

2. Inclusive Diversity - Empowerment of Women Leaders:

Empowerment of minority women leaders by increased knowledge and skills in public advocacy and facilitation of the network creation. The best leadership development programs do not stand alone but are closely aligned and integrated with the strategic objectives of the local community. Therefore, our project will initiate the process of building a strategy for development and support for young women leaders in their advocacy activities. In addition, this will increase the representation of minority women leaders in social dialogue bodies, and in an expert's consultative groups. Through the increased participation of the minority women leaders; and minorities participation in the decision-making process on building an open society significantly increases the efficiency and effectiveness of decisions taken.

3. Nationality, Ethnicity, and Coalition Building: Agenda Setting as a Mechanism for Cooperation Among Minority Groups in Poland:

This Project is crafted according to the principle from detail to the general. From grassroots to the national recommendation. We will start from local activities, to focus on the minorities organizations, networking, and the empowerment of those representatives, in order to increased their competence, knowledge and skills. Then we will focus on creation of a network with the local authorities. The goal is for the minorities organizations to be perceived as an equal partner ready for cooperation. At the end of the project, nationwide conference will be organized to exchange experiences, good practices and to present on the national level that minorities organizations as a credible and equal partners The innovative goal of the project is to focus on the process of moving from a network to the minorities' coalition, which involves minorities' NGOs in decision-making processes to combat discrimination, to identify and give them a possibility to express their needs and concerns.

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## **Jews in Rijeka (1441-2019) New Projects and Changing Communications in Post-Communist Countries: Croatia**

**Rina Brumini** (brumini@gmail.com)

### **History**

The Jewish community of Rijeka (Fiume) was established before 1781. In that year it gained imperial protection (Protocollum) by Maria Teresa of Austria. It was first situated in a Free port (Porto franco) and then in an autonomous organism (Corpus separatum Regni Hungariae). It then survived WWI, a period of municipal autonomy, a period of occupation by the Italian poet D'Annunzio, Italian occupation since 1924, WWII and the German occupation. It was then Yugoslav and finally Croatian. In 1911 another Jewish community was established in Rijeka, the Orthodox community. The Reformed and the Orthodox community lived side by side until the end of WWII when Rijeka's Jews vanished and the Community was closed in 1946. In 1947 it was rehabilitated by Jews coming from all over the Balkans and the new state of Yugoslavia, with very few local Jews. It owns a beautiful small synagogue (the former Orthodox one) and uses a part of the municipal cemetery on which there is also a pair of monuments dedicated to the victims of the Shoah and a mortuary that we are currently restoring.

### **Members**

The membership of the Community is scarce and mature, there is about 150 members but a lot of persons gravitate around the Community and identify as Jews but didn't take up the membership.

From the 2011 census, according to the national statistics (<https://www.dzs.hr>) the population of Croatia is 4.284.899: 3.874.321 (90,45%) Croats and 509 (0,01%) Jews.

### **Activities 2019**

Rijeka community is literally held by our women, although we have a male president who cares dearly and is very dedicated to the Community. From our female rows came the idea of celebrating our existence and our culture once a year, so we first acted autonomously and then joined the celebration of the European days of Jewish culture that we marked this year for the third time in a row.

- For the initiative of the celebration of the European days of Jewish culture we had so far concerts, exhibitions, book promotions and film productions, there is always for each gest a gift we make and a degustation of kosher wine and food our women make. They are great hosts!
- We prepare and invite all the members and friends to celebrate in the Synagogue our holidays, we celebrated Rosh Hashana at the attendance of about 50 people.

- We care for our youth and organize and respond to invites by preparing guided tours of our synagogue and Jewish places in the city. We, as Jewish women, give guided tours in different languages to interested guests both domestic and foreign. This is an activity we exercise once every two to three days and it's very engaging as we are a mature community and members are hardly mobile. This is an ongoing activity.
- In January we hosted with the municipality various programs to commemorate Shoah victims: a movie in ArtKino Croatia, an exhibition on our main street Korzo about Jewry in Rijeka and Italian Racial laws of 1938 (by Sanja Simper), the book "Jasenovac" by Ivo Goldstein was presented, Safran project by an elementary school was held on the cemetery (by Nevenka Ilic), the conference of dr. Vjekoslav Bakasun was held in Town hall on locals who saved Jews during WWII. Sanja Simper, who dearly cooperated on many projects in our community presented her book on Italian Racial laws and their terrible effects in this region. As we do every year, we joined the commemoration of concentration camps of Kampor (Island of Rab, near Rijeka) and Jasenovac).
- In February went on the preparation of the Interreligious congress to be held in 2020. The Jewish community is represented by its president Ranko Špigl and by dr. Vivian Špacapan. Dr. Špacapan will contribute to the congress with a conference on the Jewish immigration in Rijeka in the XVIII-XIX century and the establishment of the two communities in the city.
- In march, the community, but arranged by our women, cooperated with the municipality on the initiative of the Stolpersteine we laid down for the family of the Bucci sisters. Also had the projection of their biopic in ArtKino Croatia, one of the largest movie theatres in Rijeka, opened for public and full to the roof!
- In May we joined the filming of a documentary series for the national television HRT about minorities in Croatia before WWII to present day.
- In June we promoted the Italian reprinted and extended version of the book "The Jewish community in Rijeka" sponsored by the Italian minority council of the City and of the Region as well as by the City, and in September we published the English translation of the same book, sponsored by City, Region and Community.
- In October we joined a series of interviews about D'Annunzio occupation of Rijeka and the position of Jews in that period (1919-1921) and under D'Annunzio ruling.
- The community actively cares for the Jewish municipal cemetery that changed owners according to new law dispositions and now belongs to the State. The Community held a meeting with the cemetery administration and the mayor of Rijeka, Obersnel, and agreed to admit only Jewish burials, as it was custom so far.
- A few distinct Hebrew-speaking visitors offered their competence (free of charge) in translating from Hebrew the inscriptions in our synagogue and the books we own as inherited by the formerly extinct community.

### Future activities

Under the motto “Port of diversity”, Rijeka is about to become European Capital of culture in 2020. A Jewish community founded in 1781 and extinguished by WWII reconstructed with new members from former Yugoslavia in 1946.

The community is small (150 persons) and ran mostly by women who are the project proponents and participants.

The main activity and future projects regard shows, exhibitions, printed literature and historical research, workshops, school projects and academic projects, commemoration of victims, education about Jewry, cultural preservation, monuments (especially cemeteries), contrasting antisemitism, attending inter-religious encounters and panels, all in very close cooperation and with the support and patronage of the local Municipality and the administration of the region Primorsko-goranska županija.

We are few but very active Jews in Rijeka. We established great cooperation with institutions, other communities, artists and the civil society and have therefore a lot of opportunities while programming future initiatives.

We lack manpower to do what we desire but each time we hold an event a lot of new people come to meet us and introduce themselves as descendant from a Jewish ancestor.

We would greatly appreciate if we could find the means and experts to assemble a small kitchen to use in our spaces (the bottom floor of mikveh), so the women wouldn't have to prepare the complete meal at home and then travel with it to the Temple, for the occasional guests that visit us and also for the celebration of the European day of Jewish culture, as we now offer one of the best programs in the Country for this manifestation.

Our doors are always open and the Women always greet each newcomer and member with joy and warmth.

The main projects, as Rijeka is about to become European capital of culture 2020, are the renovation of the mortuary on the municipal cemetery for cultural purpose (exhibitions), adaptation of the documentary we produced in September with the testimony of our three main women of the Jewish women in our Community (Anika Aladić, Agica Bezinović and Zlata Šestak of which only the last one is still alive). We want to adapt the film and distribute it to schools.

We are making a new web site for the Community and have inaugurated a Facebook page that is visited a lot and has very nice comments.

Sporadic antisemitism incidents are reported to authorities (a graffiti on the wall of the courtyard of the synagogue in 2017) or ignored (a comment on google maps and a gif on fb).

Thanks to the cooperation, the warmth of our women, the welcoming community that we are and the good cooperation we cherish with our partners nourish my hope that the number of members and friends of our community will eventually renew and (maybe) even grow.



# AdvocaShe -How Can She Impact a Male-Dominated Jewish Advocacy World?

Alina Bricman, Director of European Union Affairs, B'nai B'rith International

## A bit about me



## What's the gender Status Quo?

European Jewish Communities  
42 Jewish Communities - 3 Female Presidents



## What's the gender Status Quo?



**World Jewish Congress  
Leadership**  
45 Male - 11 Female\*  
Male President  
Male CEO

\*Also because of  
community leadership

## What's the gender Status Quo?

### B'nai B'rith International Leadership

Charles O. Kaufman, President  
Seth Riklin, Chairman of the Executive  
Brad Adolph, Senior Vice President  
Scott D. Knapp, Senior Vice President  
Roberto M. Nul, Senior Vice President  
**Rebecca Anne Saltzman, Senior Vice President**  
Stéphane Teicher, Senior Vice President  
Morris Tobias, Senior Vice President  
A. Michael Gellman, Treasurer



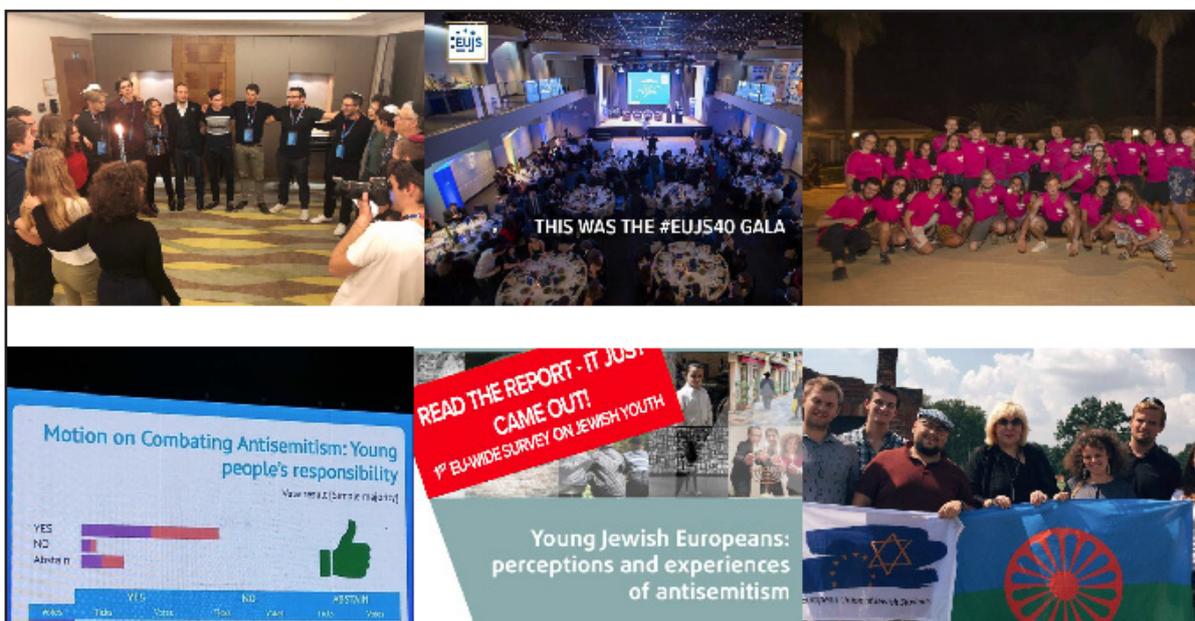
## What's the gender Status Quo? - Best paid CEOs

1	Marvin Hier	Simon Wiesenthal Center
2	David M. Schizer	American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
3	Howard Kohr	American Israel Public Affairs Committee
4	Ari Berman	Yeshiva University
5	Alan Kadish	Touro College
6	Marc Terrill	The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore
7	Gerrald Silverman	Jewish Federations of North America
8	Barry Shrage	Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston
9	Matthew Brooks	Republican Jewish Coalition
10	Izzy Tapoohi	Birthright Israel Foundation
11	Steve Nasatir	Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metro Chicago
12	Stephen Hoffman	Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland
13	Jonathan Greenblatt	Anti-Defamation League
14	David Harris	American Jewish Committee
.....	<b>29 Naomi Adler</b>	<b>Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia</b>

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## So how does this Status Quo impact Jewish Advocacy?

Your 3 priorities



## Main pillars/guiding principles

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Community-building

Coalition-building

Education

Positive Jewish identity

Empowering diverse individuals and being inclusive

## Similar goals, different focus

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Security, security, security

Top-down style

Very few pro-active steps to address lack of diversity

Less focus on education

No youth representation

...and clearly very little representation of women

## What were your priorities?

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1.

2.

3.

Thank you!



## eLearning Programs as a Gender Balancing Mechanism in Developing Countries

**Sandra Cohen**, Professor of Accounting, Department of Business Administration, Athens University of Economics and Business

The topic of my talk will be related to how elearning programs could balance the gender gap in developing countries and how they would assist in developing gender equality.

### EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality means that men and women have equal power and equal opportunities for financial independence, education, and personal development. Thus education is one of the main pillars of gender equality and that holds true for both the developed and the developing countries. Especially, in the EU, education is a strategic development priority. More specifically, in the EU a high priority goal is the widespread access to quality education and training that could act as a driver of economic growth, social cohesion and research and innovation that would dramatically increase citizens' prospects for personal development.

The ET 2020 program that focuses on education, pursues the specific EU objectives:

- To make lifelong learning and mobility a reality
- To improve the quality and efficiency of education and training
- To promote equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship and finally
- To enhance creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

In this realm it is clear that education can act as mechanism that could mitigate gender imbalances. Gender imbalances take different forms under different circumstances. Based on statistical data retrieved by the sustainable development goals 24% of national parliamentarians are women and women represent 39% of the workforce but only the 27% of managerial positions. Gender imbalances are even more important in developing countries with risks related to physical and/or sexual violence and the possibility of marriage at early age to be very high.

### BENEFITS OF EDUCATED WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Education is a strategic development priority for developing countries. Especially for women. Better educated women have higher self-esteem and self-advocacy. They have fewer children, marry at a later age, and enable better health care and education for their children, should they choose to become mothers. They tend to be healthier and earn higher income. All these factors combined can help women lift households, communities, and nations out of poverty. Women strengthen the workforce and create new forms of entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship. These benefits are transmitted from generation to generation and across communities at large, making girls' and women's education one of the best investments a country can make.

Based on a survey conducted by the world bank under the title Returns to Investment in

Education (2002), one additional school year can increase a woman's earnings by 10% to 20%. Thus education not only during the school years but also at the adult life can provide multiple benefits. Lifelong learning becomes relevant. However, while the goal of education is undisputable the means of giving access to education and training can be multiple and multifaceted. eLearning is a modern, cost-effective and efficient means to provide education and training to all people by lifting several barriers that are related to traditional means of education provision. Thus, it provides an excellent opportunity for women in developing countries to have access to knowledge and skills.

### **WHAT IS eLEARNING?**

The model of education has been until the early '00s pretty straight forward. We are all aware of the traditional way of teaching where tutors and students are physically located in the same classroom and the tutor leads the process by employing more or less sophisticated teaching tools. From just lecturing to ppt and interactive presentations. eLearning has changed this educational setting.

eLearning is an umbrella term that encapsulates several levels of interactions that range from synchronous to asynchronous. In the synchronous setting students follow the electronic course real time and they have the option to virtually raise their hand through platform facilities and ask questions that the tutor can answer on the spot. On the other end of the spectrum, in the asynchronous setting, specific material is available on the platform and students study it at their own pace. In both cases, communication with teachers, professors or other students in the class is achieved through chats, emails, forums etc. As in traditional studies, the eLearning process is monitored through assignments and tests. Nevertheless some of them can be electronic tests, quizzes or self assessment exercises that provide feedback about the correct or the wrong answers. In eLearning learning can become a lot more fun and interactive. Of course technology plays a major role here. Students in order to attend eLearning courses need internet connection and a suitable IT device such as a laptop, a desktop, a tablet or even a smartphone.

### **WHY eLEARNING?**

eLearning can become a valuable asset in the push for gender equality especially in developing countries. Studies consistently report that girls who face multiple disadvantages —such as low family income, living in remote or underserved locations, disability or belonging to a minority ethno-linguistic group— are far behind in terms of access to education and completion of their studies.

Thus for these girls and women eLearning based education could be a suitable way to achieve their educational goals. It can be especially useful in challenging circumstances:

- It alleviates time barriers –access to the material can take place whenever the student has free time to do so, not only during working hours and working days but also during the weekends. The material is available without any time restrictions.
- It vanishes location barriers. As there is no need to access a physical classroom that might be away from the place of stay or work, distance is not important any more. A person may follow a course that is offered by a university or an organization outside the country, outside the continent or in the same city. The location of the education provider becomes

totally irrelevant. This is highly important for geographical areas that are isolated or sporadically populated.

Elearning is the definition of flexibility. Learning progresses at a pace that is suitable for the intellectual aptitude of the individual. Learning can adapt to the family commitments of the women that may decide when and with what intensity they want to study. Of course it is gender neutral as the material is developed and delivered without any gender discriminations.

As technology is a sine qua non in elearning and developing countries show a significant growth in the use of new technologies and the internet, elearning can flourish under such circumstances. More people may access to the same material without any extra cost and by overcoming the limitations placed by the capacity of the classrooms and the tutors.

Last but not least elearning permits education in the safety and privacy of homes in areas in developing countries that are dangerous and contested

### **CONTENT OF eLEARNING COURSES**

The content of elearning courses could be different based on needs and age. This discussion goes beyond grade school material that could however, be also included in this elearning idea. The list presented on the slide is of course indicative. For example:

- Courses or programs that include knowledge related to business skills to benefit women entrepreneurs. The curriculum could include educational and entrepreneurial training as well as financial related material. How to develop their own company either a physical or an electronic one. Which are the basic skills and competencies of a new entrepreneur.
- IT skills such as coding – STEM (Science, Technology, Education, Maths) for which there is a high demand in the job market all around the globe.
- Case studies of women success stories that could motivate women and boost their ambitions.

According to UNESCO estimates, 130 million girls between the age of 6 and 17 are out of school and 15 million girls of primary-school age—half of them in sub-Saharan Africa— will never enter a classroom.

### **DEVELOPERS AND FUNDERS OF eLEARNING**

Until now, the discussion has been concentrated on the side of the users of the elearning educational material. But it needs two to tango. In order for the project to be successful apart from women willing to attend elearning courses high quality curricula need to be developed. These syllabi can be developed by universities and research institutions in collaboration with: Successful businesswomen, Local operations, Non Governmental Organizations and Global organizations (e.g. UN). While universities and research institutions know how to build and properly structure educational and training material the latter mentioned contributors can provide useful input in order to make it topical and relevant to the circumstances. University degrees or certificates of attendance, thus typical education and non typical education can be offered through these courses.

The cost for setting up these courses and programs is a very important issue as well. Keeping

the programs updated and modern is costly too. Asking students to pay in order to register and attend may become an obstacle in the take up process and expansion of this education potential. Therefore, funding provided by National governments, Supranational organizations (World Bank, UN) and donors could be directed to this type of projects. Special fund raising campaigns would be set having the development of elearning platforms and courses as their ultimate goal.

### **FACTORS THAT FACILITATE eLEARNING**

There are some facilitators related to the expansion of elearning education in the developing countries.

- The depth and breadth of the use of technology is one important issue. Fast internet connections are needed not only to support access to the material but in order to watch videos and participate in virtual classrooms. Ownership of mobile devices or similar equipment is also a prerequisite. In this realm the signs from developing countries are encouraging. Smartphone ownership is on the rise in developing countries. It rose from 21% to 37% between 2013 and 2015 alone (World Bank - Open Learning Campus). Finally, young people and young women become more technology literate and are able to use and operate technology devices more efficiently.
- There are several global organizations that could support and sponsor these programs. This would, apart from achieving high quality, make sure that their dissemination is adequate. These organizations would use their communication channels to promote and advertize elearning programs. Global partnership for Education, The World Bank and Sustainable development goals may fall within this category of organizations.
- Of course, as mentioned in the beginning, education has to be set high enough in the national strategy agendas of the developing countries and international educational strategies should be sought.
- People can learn more easily in the mother tongue. Thus, successful educational programs should be translated and provided in several languages. The use of technology makes this much easier now days.
- Finally, the fact that the development of an elearning course may have a high set up cost should be analysed in tandem with the fact that the same material can be disseminated and used by a large number of people. The ratio of tutors over students in elearning courses are totally different compared to traditional teaching modes. In elearning there is a high potential of scaling up that ends up in having a low cost per student.

### **UN WOMEN TRAINING CENTERS eLEARNING CAMPUS**

I would like to conclude this presentation with an example from the UN Women Training Centers eLearning Campus.

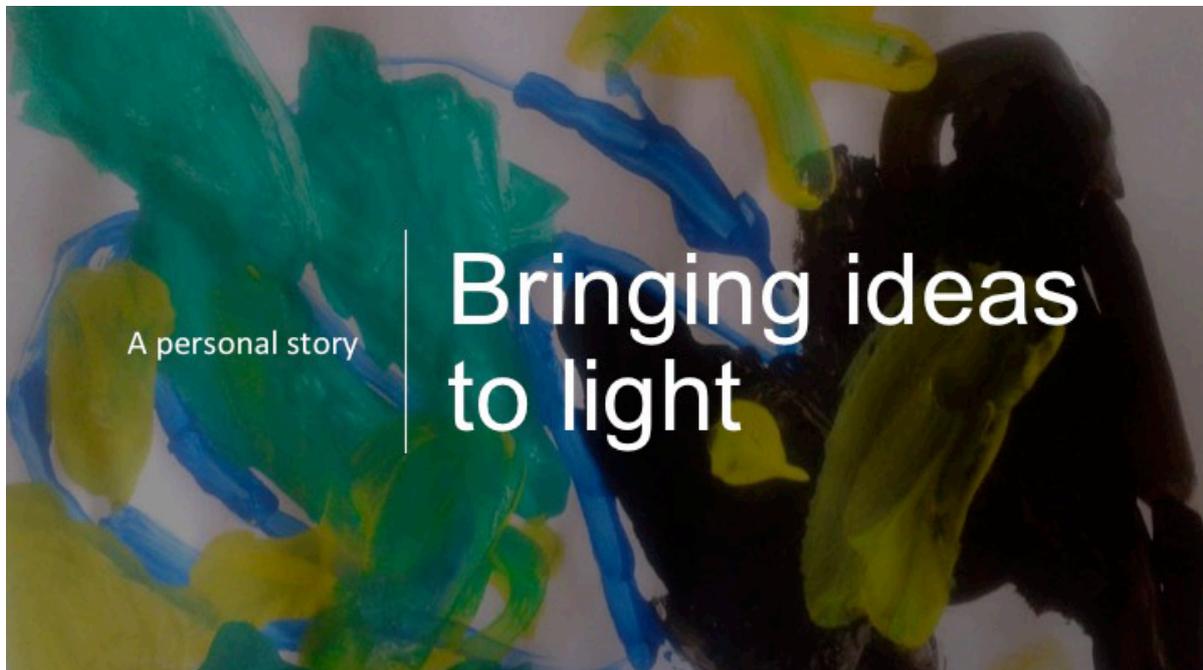
This is a training hub on gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment all around the globe. It was launched at the end of 2014 and it includes an online global platform for training for gender equality that uses several types of elearning methodologies. Thus it offers self-paced, moderated, blended, face-to-face courses. The courses are available in several languages that range from English, Spanish, French to Arabic. This platform has showed an exponential growth. In just one year it had 154% increase in members. Apart from that, it shows important signs of inclusiveness as it has 16,868 members from 183 countries.

This is a real life example that the use of elearning could make a difference in education and training and could prove to be a gender balancing mechanism in developing countries. It is not easy, it cannot be achieved overnight but it seems like a interesting way forward.



## BOROUME “WE CAN”: Saving Food-Saving Lives

Xenia Papastavrou, Head of the Organisation of Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity



E-learning is a very effective way of providing women with new stimuli, giving them easy and affordable access to learning opportunities, and the possibility of making up for education they missed and wish they had received. It exposes them to what is new -ideas, knowledge, sounds, images and values which they receive and filter in a unique way according to their stories, backgrounds and experiences.

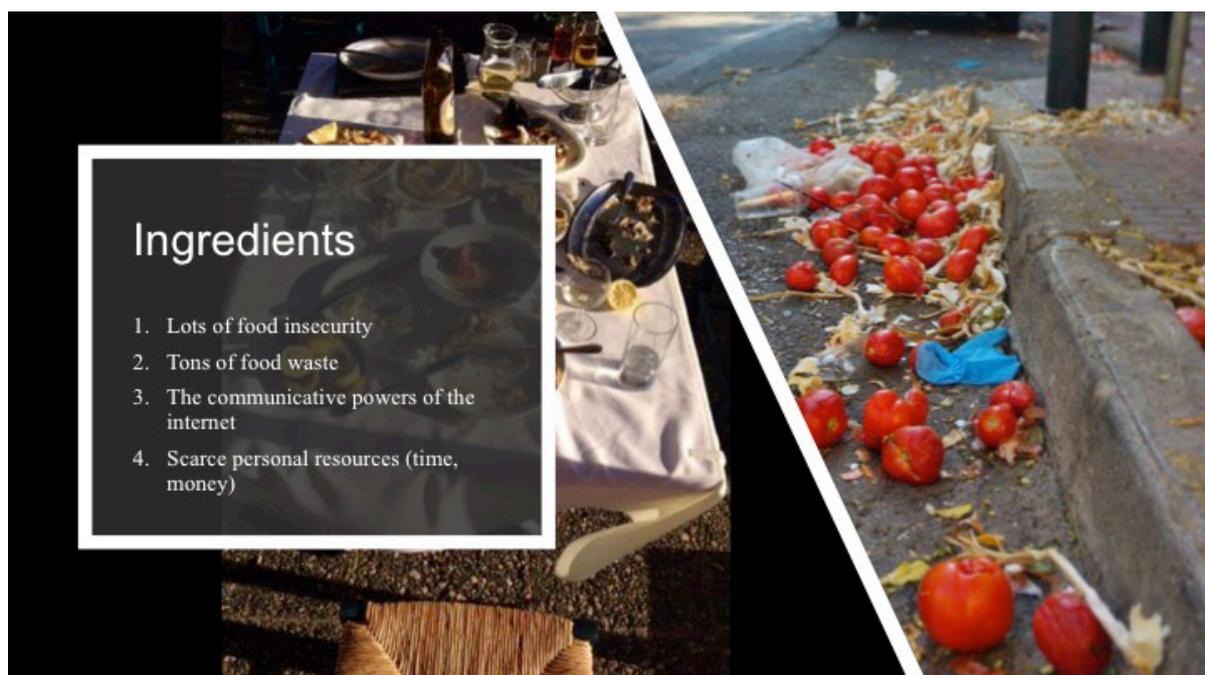


Today I would like to talk a little bit about **ideas** and how I see them as **recipes**. **Every idea is a recipe** - a recipe we can try out, cutting and slicing on our mind's kitchen table.



To illustrate this, I would like to share my story, an idea I had during the Greek economic crisis. It is called "Boroume", which is Greek for "we can".

So if you cut up Boroume what you will find is a recipe. A simple recipe I happened to piece together faced with the realization of growing food insecurity and terrible food waste in Greece. The ingredients for it were there, but at first I was too numbed by them to see how to put them to good use:



1. Lots of food insecurity
2. Tons of food waste
3. The communicative powers of the internet
4. Scarce personal resources (time, money)

More than anything, I wanted to find a new and positive way to combine them. The different ingredients had been with me but I couldn't at first see how to combine them.

For example, food rescue had been on my mind since my student days in London where I was constantly taking note of local food-saving initiatives.

Later, in 2005, I became a volunteer at the Greek Food Bank. My experiences there taught me a great deal. I became aware both of the growing need for food in Greece and of the difficulties of convincing companies and individuals to donate food when they themselves face challenges and have to survive.

All my experiences - started reacting with each other, almost chemically.

What could be done? I was convinced something could be done. If there is a problem, there must also be a solution. As Wittgenstein says "if a question can be framed at all, it is also possible to answer it."



If there is a problem, there must  
also be a solution

There must be a "recipe" to tap into the resource of surplus food before it is thrown away so that it can help meet the growing demand for food. Regardless of the level of affluence in a society, it is absurd and inconceivable to tolerate wasting valuable resources. And at a time when sustainability is on everybody's lips and green ethics have become part of the every day lexicon, waste is unconscionable.



By putting the ingredients together, I came up with a simple, cost-efficient, and sustainable recipe to connect people in need of food with those who have food they do not need. And

it was then that the idea of Boroume, on the 3rd May 2011, my youngest son's birthday was born.

I truly believe that if you have your mind and heart set on improving something in the world, the rest will follow. "Our glass is always full," as the Greek poet Nikiforos Vrettakos says and once you see things in this light the possibilities of adding meaning and bringing value to life are endless.



Ideas come to light because of love. Vrettakos, the poet, also says “I love, therefore I am” and this I think is true of ideas. They exist because they are generated by love.

Love is of the essence, because it motivates you, spurs you into action.



If you love your street, your neighbourhood, if you are passionate about what you believe in, you will not be indifferent.

You will make the time to take part in a community project. You will find the channel, the way that suits you to take action in support of your beliefs.

Every person takes to action in a way that reflects their own personality and character.

Today Boroume is going strong and is one of Europe’s preeminent food rescue organizations. It has been credited to date with saving and donating more than 25.000.000 meals worth 37.500.00.

Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to share my story.



## Lauder Athens Jewish Community School

**Iakovos Atoun**, Jewish Educational Programs Director, Athens

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to talk to you about the “diamond” of our community, our school of course, and all the relevant Jewish educational programs that are connected to our school and extended to all the members of our community.

As mentioned in the Talmud, only in one case it is allowed not to build a Synagogue in the ruins of a Synagogue that operated and collapsed: In case of the erection of a School. So much importance is attached to the School and the education it provides!

On October 1, 1957, the Athens Jewish Community Council approved the acquisition of a land plot in Psychiko and proceeded to sign a pre-agreement. Additional resources had been raised by foreign organizations, other Jewish Communities, donors and by the local community’s reserve. Once the preparations had been completed, the date for the foundation ceremony of the building works of the new school was set for Sunday, 24 May 1959.

With the new School... a dream becomes reality. Sixteen years after the Holocaust the Jews of Athens regrouped, creating a new cell of life, a breath and a hope for a Community, leading the next generation in the path of progress. The Athens Jewish Community School is a nursery, kindergarten and elementary private school.

Our Goals:

- To provide excellent educational standards and follow the curriculum set by the Greek Ministry of Education.
- To develop and sustain the Jewishness of the children by teaching Jewish history, culture and Hebrew.
- To create lifelong friendships among our students and alumni.
- To develop ties to Israel and other Jewish Communities.

The location, the architecture, the orientation and the quality of the building, make the Jewish School exemplary. The clean air and the abundant light, the quiet environment– in complete opposition to the noisy capital– the proximity to the city center, are an advantage over other private schools.

Jewish education is the main element that makes this school special and it is based in two sectors: Jewish Education and Jewish Life.

- Jewish Education: Includes Jewish Language and Jewish History and tradition in a balanced distribution. Jewish History and Tradition is taught in all classes and concerns religious education of the student, learning of the history of Judaism, initiation in the rituals of Jewish feasts and religious events, as well as the teaching of customs and the preparation of the children for the celebration of the Jewish feasts at school as well as at home.

- Jewish Life: is experiential and therefore crucial. It includes tradition in practice, in the form of customs, religious holidays, Jewish songs and dances, Jewish Decoration and handicraft on topics of Jewish feasts, symbols, letters and names found in the surroundings and Jewish atmosphere and education in general.

The Jewish school needed a boost in order to continue providing high level services. In order:

- To improve education using the most up to date methods, people and tools.
- To interconnect with other schools and join a recognized educational network.

This boost came from the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation absolutely at the right time. Bringing with it the well-founded hopes for an uninterrupted continuity of Community life and, above all the Community's future.

After a long negotiation process, in January 2015 our School came under the auspices of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation whose "mission" is to revitalize Jewish Life at the Central and Eastern European Communities through educational and cultural initiatives. Our school is the first non-Eastern European school that operates under the Lauder's foundation umbrella. It was then renamed Lauder Athens Jewish Community School.

Cooperation with the RSLF ment:

- Strengthening and securing the future of our school.
- All our teachers can attend training seminars in Israel and Europe.
- Prestigious cooperation for our School, by joining the elite umbrella of the Jewish Schools of Europe.
- Jewish Curriculum has been boosted with new programs and activities.
- Connection with other schools abroad, having excellent and passionate educational professionals, who strive to support us through honest dialogue that constantly tends to create best results among the two parties.
- Permanent support of our school.

## **PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOL CHILDREN**

How to create an excellent High school program for Jewish children in a small Community?

- Our School operates offering educational services to more than 100 children from all over Attica, till the age of 12 years.
- No possibility to continue this education in the High School ages.
- Number of Children, do not favour for a Lauder JCA High School, even if the money was not an issue.

The solution:

- Cooperation with the American College of Greece – Pierce College which is one of the top-rated high schools in Athens.
- Opportunity for our students to continue in a High School (12-18y) where Jewish Studies and the Hebrew Language are taught twice per week during afternoon programs.

- Keeping in this way the chain from Kindergarten to University uninterrupted for all our Lauder School children.

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### **A DREAM CAME TRUE...**

- Following a special agreement between the Jewish Community of Athens Lauder School and the American College of Greece – Pierce in March 2017, the 6th Grade graduates can, after exams, continue their secondary education at the prestigious Pierce College, while continuing their Jewish Education with favorable economic terms, continuing the bonding with their peers in the Lauder School of our Community. Thanks to the Lauder Foundation, a dream of many decades became reality. The community is now able to provide Jewish education to students from Kindergarten until the age of 18!
- Introduction of Tal AM Hebrew Learning Method : The Tal AM curriculum was introduced to our School. The most appropriate comprehensive method of Jewish studies for the children of the Diaspora. In Tal AM, lessons in small groups are complemented interactively by an electronic platform (iTal AM) and ChromeBooks. Thanks to this method, students are learning both language and traditions effectively and their progress is already outstanding.
- E-Lauder Platform: Lauder Foundation has also provided the Jewish Community of Athens with an online tool (Google Classroom & Zoom Video Conferencing) that could be used for providing Jewish children with an understanding and excitement for Jewish heritage. Executives and Volunteers from the Jewish Community of Athens, in collaboration with the RSLE, managed to find and appoint appropriate Greek speaking Hebrew Language teachers. This was when the Lauder E-learning Greek Community started to build, back in 2017. Today, 179 students are registered to the Greek E-Lauder Platform.
- Networking between E-Lauder students: It is very important for the students of Online Classes to also interact with one another and for this reason Shabbaton are organized twice per year, to let the students have this interaction.
- Educating for impact: Our school has joined the EFI Initiative, designed to support Jewish communities in Europe through increasing the impact of their Jewish Schools. It promotes change in Jewish Schools to secure and strengthen Jewish Communities in Europe. EFI Projects designed for the School & the Community:
  - Shabbat in a box: Shabbat meals delivered to several Jewish families
  - Curriculum Development for Pierce Jewish Studies Program
  - Seminars for the Hebrew language and Jewish education teachers
  - Speakers from abroad - participating in seminars held in or outside of Athens
  - Enhancement of the educational program of the Athenian Jewish Youth
  - Creation of Jewish Educational videos
  - Shabbat afternoon school clubs' Jewish Enrichment

During the last years, Greece is facing a financial crisis. It has been difficult for our school to maintain the high-quality offered services without burdening the school-children families. We are constantly struggling to cover the tuition fees for children that are coming from families facing financial problems. Thanks to our donors, some of those tuition fees are covered through scholarships.

