

Participants Catalogue

Paideia Project-Incubator 2026



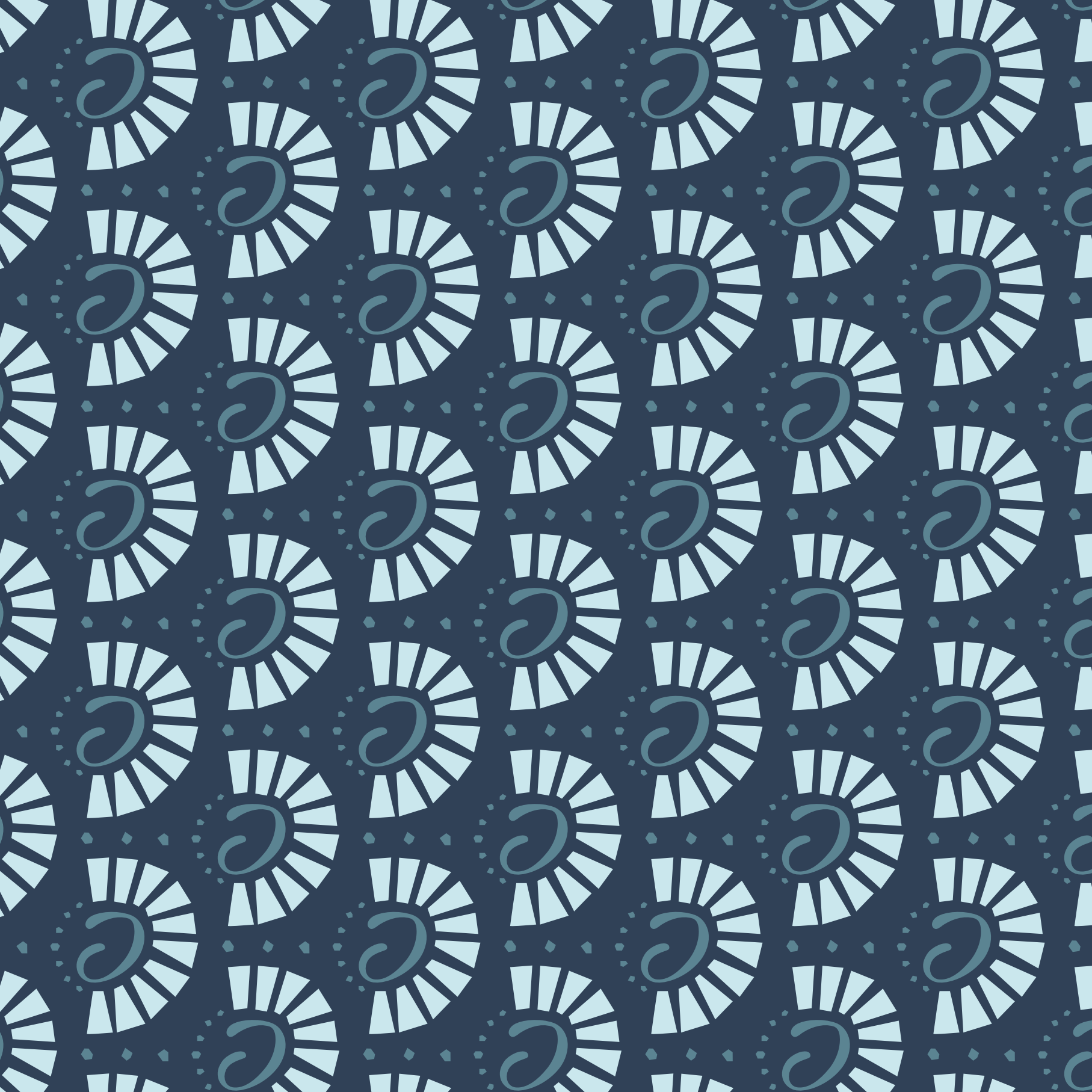


Table of contents

GREETINGS	02
PAIDEIA	03
PAIDEIA PROGRAMS	04
PARTICIPANTS	06
STAFF AND GUESTS	24
THANK YOU	32

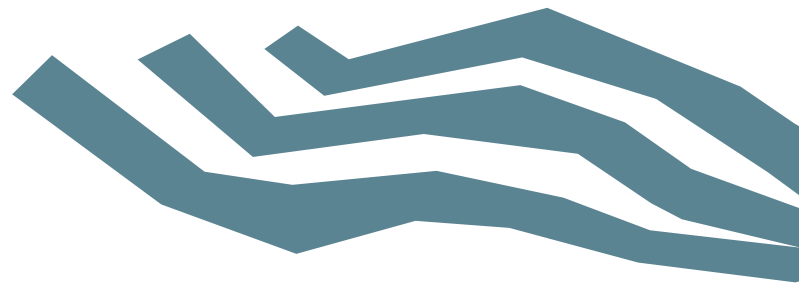
Greetings

We are thrilled to introduce the participants and projects of the 19th annual Paideia Project-Incubator, Europe's leading program for supporting grassroots Jewish life and culture initiatives across the continent. Since the inception of the program in 2006, it has tutored close to 400 projects, more than any other program in Europe, reaching over 300,000 people.

The Paideia Project-Incubator is designed for activists and innovators working in educational, cultural, heritage, communal, intercultural, and institutional fields. Over a dynamic ten-day period, it provides a comprehensive process that guides participants from initial concept to full realization of the project idea. The program offers advanced lectures, workshops, skills sessions, and individual tutoring provided by our extraordinary international staff of mentors and guests, providing the impetus to move projects towards the next level and to work towards the revival of Jewish culture in Europe.

Once the program is over, participants take advantage of the larger Paideia alumni community of over 1,000 graduates from all over Europe and beyond who have gone through various Paideia programs.

The Project-Incubator is a joint program organized in cooperation between Paideia, The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden and its sister organization Paideia Folkhögskola.



Barbara Lerner Spectre,
Founding Director of Paideia

Sarah Frey,
Program Coordinator

Noa Hermele,
Director of Paideia and
Paideia Folkhögskola

Alina Tolok,
Program Coordinator

Agnieszka Baraszko,
Program Director

Paideia

Paideia – The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden (Paideia) is an academic and applied institute of excellence founded in 2000 through foundational grants from the Swedish Government and the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation. The mandate of Paideia is to nurture the renewal of European Jewish culture, to support cross-cultural dialogue and to promote a positive paradigm of minority culture within European societies. Paideia does this through highly intensive educational leadership programs, focusing on in-depth knowledge of Jewish sources and on social entrepreneurship.

Paideia is a non-confessional institution of literacy, innovation and know-how that produces individual leaders and a collective movement of activism. The matrix at Paideia merges academic life with professional and community work, and Jewish culture with the wider European society. Paideia is also the central hub for nurturing social innovation in Jewish Europe and has fostered more new initiatives than any other institution.

During its relatively short period of existence, Paideia has developed into a premier European learning center for Jewish studies and has been able to produce a strong group of leaders for a new paradigm of European Jewish community, culture, and knowledge. Paideia has since its inception been instrumental in putting Stockholm and Sweden on the map as a hub in European academic Jewish life.

Cornerstones in all of Paideia's undertakings are that European minority culture should build upon inclusiveness, critical

thinking, openness and the support of a democratic civil society. It is a unique European institution, which under one roof combines academic teaching with programmatic support to grass roots initiatives and civil society, and the only such institution with a pan-European mission.

26 years after its inception, Paideia has over 1000 program graduates from various programs. The graduates are national and local leaders in education, religion, museums, academia, and community life. Individually and collectively, they are creating a new paradigm of knowledge and activism within Jewish life in Europe, the life that they themselves would like to see.

Paideia Folkhögskola

Paideia Folkhögskola is Paideia's sister organization for free adult education. Paideia Folkhögskola is the first cultural collage with a Jewish profile. The Jewish profile of Paideia Folkhögskola is to a large extent reflected in the specialized courses, which are given in fields such as Jewish Studies, Jewish life, history, culture and languages. The courses make Jewish studies and culture available both for the Swedish Jewish minority and for the general public and have proven to contribute greatly to educational possibilities for Jewish topics in Sweden. These courses have since then grown and today Paideia Folkhögskola gives over 50 different courses, with over 1000 enrolled participants.



Paideia Programs

The **One-Year Jewish Studies Program** is Paideia's core activity dedicated to the study and interdisciplinary interpretation of the textual sources that have served as the wellsprings of Jewish civilization. The curriculum of the One-Year Jewish Studies Program runs chronologically from Torah and Midrash, through Medieval Jewish Philosophy and Responsa Literature to Modern Jewish Philosophy and Literature, with courses taught by prominent scholars, including leading professors from major Israeli, American and European universities.

Since its inception in 2001, the program has graduated close to 900 students from over 40 countries, many of whom have gone on to further their studies and obtained a Ph.D. at different universities, while others have used their skills and knowledge in societal and cultural endeavors in Europe and its Jewish communities and institutions.

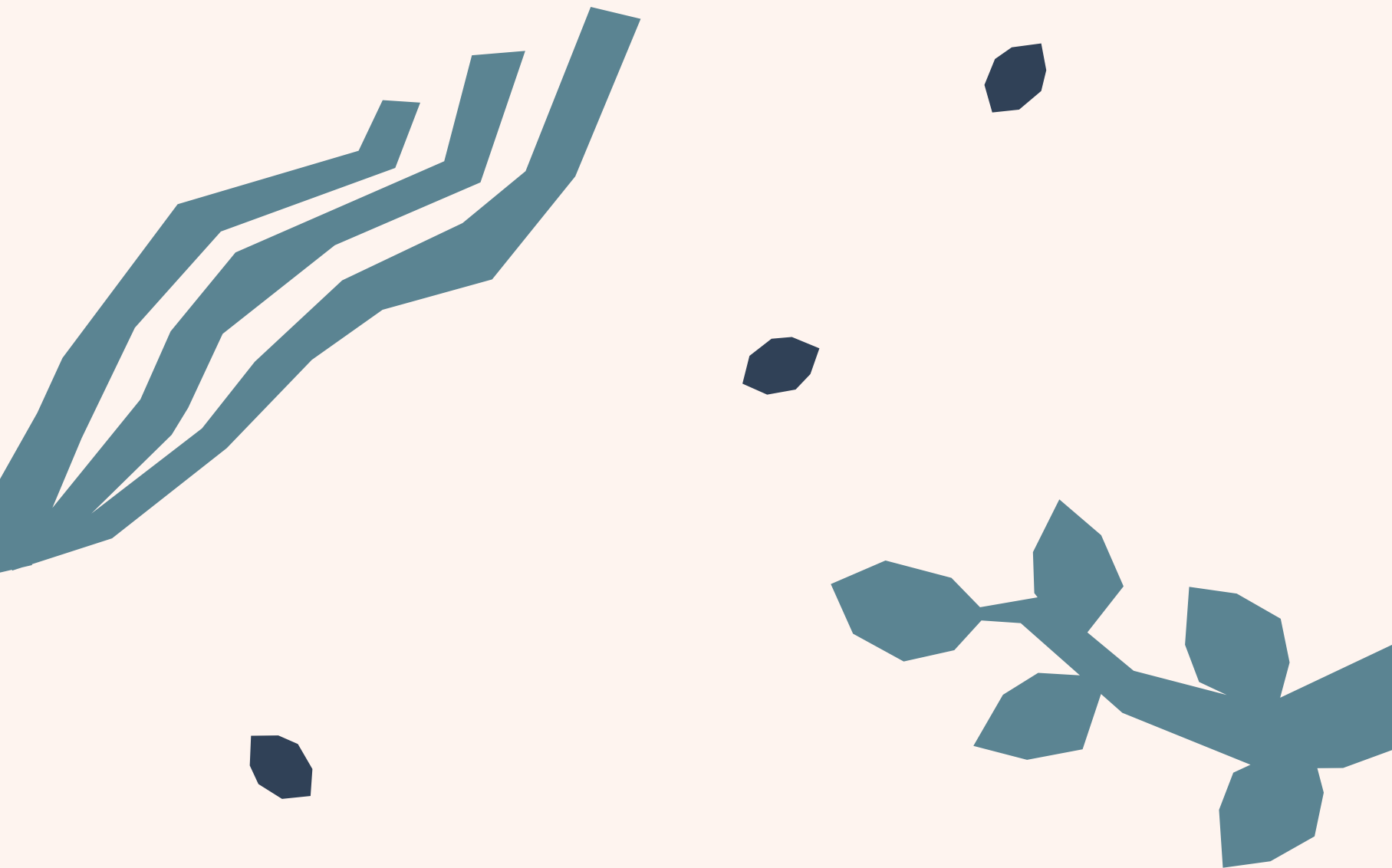


The **Paradigm Program** is Paideia's program for discussing big ideas and creating a new paradigm of how to approach Judaism and Jewish identity. During a week in spring, the institute invites 3-4 major contemporary thinkers to discuss three major questions together with 20 young professionals from the US, Europe and Israel. As an offshoot of the program, in 2016 Paideia created facilitation training of the concept – Paradigm Ideas. The training resulted, so far, in close to 60 various sessions in Europe, reaching over 1000 people.

The Summer Academy for Jewish Educators is an intensive program for European Jewish educators and aspiring educators seeking to strengthen their professional skills and deepen their Jewish knowledge. Hosted by Paideia, the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden, within the Renaissance Hub, the program offers a strong foundation in Jewish literacy, pedagogy, identity formation, and community development. The Summer Academy prepares participants for professional educational engagement and continued study at leading Jewish educational institutions across Europe, while fostering a strong international learning community.

Paideia Alumni Activities, including the yearly alumni conference, gathering over 100 of Paideia's graduates from different programs, a micro grant scheme, Paideia Mifgash – a series of one-day learning sessions dedicated to strengthening the presence of Jewish thought and culture at the local and pan-European levels.

Participants





Noga Amiri, Netherlands

Noga Amiri is a creative and community organizer based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands who seeks to bring together storytelling, culture, and connection within Jewish life. Raised between the United States and the Netherlands, she carries an international perspective that informs both her professional and personal pursuits. With a background in book publishing and marketing, she brings a thoughtful, narrative-driven approach to community-building and cultural engagement. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from University College Roosevelt (Utrecht University), where she majored in Literature and Art History. Alongside her work, Noga maintains a personal artistic practice, primarily exploring oil-painted still lifes and poetry as forms of reflection and expression.

Shabbat at Home: A Kit of Parts

Shabbat rituals are grounded in rest, reflection, and belonging. In today's chaotic world, Shabbat is a weekly invitation to disconnect and be present within one's community. The home plays a key role in many Shabbat celebrations as a safe place to welcome friends and family.

Not all Jewish young adults are active in organized religious groups, but many still value feeling part of a Jewish circle. Hosting Shabbat at home can be a deeply rewarding experience that encourages the development of Jewish micronetworks where they are needed most.

For individuals new to hosting, the logistical and religious barriers of initiating a Shabbat celebration can be overwhelming. This project breaks down the process of hosting Shabbat into manageable steps, encouraging participants to define Shabbat in their own words and spaces.

By empowering Jewish young adults to lead their own Shabbat celebrations, this project shows that Jewish community-building can start at home.



Chen Amram, Israel

Chen is a cultural educator, program director, and writer working at the intersection of Jewish studies, artistic practice, and interdisciplinary learning. Rooted in a deep belief in the power of stories, her work explores storytelling as a tool for learning, inner inquiry, cultural renewal, and conflict transformation. She leads the Learning Department at the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies and has facilitated Jewish cultural initiatives across Europe and Israel. Chen holds degrees from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a certificate in educational leadership from Harvard University.

There is Still a Light of Memories – Re:diaspora

Jewish life is entering a new chapter. The assumptions that shaped Jewish life for the past seventy-five years have shifted. Across Europe and beyond, many Jews are rethinking what home, belonging, and Jewish identity mean in a reality where the cultural frameworks that once sustained them no longer feel sufficient.

Through two multidisciplinary residencies, former Israelis and European Jewish artists, scholars, educators, and cultural practitioners come together to heal and develop new artistic, intellectual, and educational responses for this emerging reality, drawing on centuries of Jewish thought while writing its next chapter.

The Diaspora project reclaims one of Judaism's oldest traditions: the capacity to live with movement and multiple belonging and to transform them into sources of creativity, resilience, and meaning.



Enrique Caradonna Friedberg, Spain

E. Caradonna Friedberg is a Venezuelan-born creative artist based in Barcelona. Raised within a Sicilian and Baltic diasporic family, he began writing through loose pages in his early teens. In 2020, a self-scanned roll of film from a disposable camera unexpectedly became his first photography project, pairing image with personal writing. Today, Enrique works through film photography and writing to explore art, architecture, memory, and identity, while recovering the Jewish heritage of his maternal family and weaving it into a narrative shaped by both inheritance and rediscovery.

Zalmer (collector)

As we resettle and rebuild our narratives across borders and time, we build our homes where we stand. Contemporary Jewish homes might lack objects and stories that bridge ancient tradition with modern domestic life. Some of us unearth our heritage, and some of us have not inherited relics—they were lost before they could reach us. Our identities have followed similar paths.

The living language of our heritage needs to be in accordance with the aesthetics of our present homes. Zamler (Yiddish noun: collector) is a mixed-media initiative that fills the gaps between Jewish tradition and contemporary aesthetics. The initiative works through producing iterations of redesigned Judaica, sourcing and reinterpreting visual archives of Baltic Jewry's arrival to Latin America, and documenting the memorabilia carried ancestrally.

Zamler aims to prototype ritual objects informed by archival pieces and collective practices. It aims to translate ancient forms into contemporary expressions, building bridges between generations of diasporas and the personal and creative process of homebuilding with inclusivity.



Janine Cunea, Germany

Janine Cunea is an educational scientist, social pedagogue, and media designer based in Berlin working at the intersection of research, education, and social practice. She studied in Frankfurt am Main and Tel Aviv and earned her PhD at Goethe University Frankfurt with an empirical study on aging Shoah survivors. Her academic and professional work focuses on trauma, transgenerational transmission, migration, biography, Jewish life, and antisemitism. She is actively engaged in historical-political education, vocational training, work with refugees and migrants, psychosocial counseling.

Jewish Empowerment Space

Across Europe, many Jewish adults have fragmented or limited knowledge of their family histories and few structured opportunities to explore Jewish identity, belonging, and continuity in a meaningful way.

This project responds by offering a structured empowerment programme centred on Jewish family history and biographical exploration. It combines storytelling, identity development, and Jewish learning in a guided process that begins with an introductory group meeting. Participants are then accompanied through a series of individual one-to-one sessions in which they explore their family narratives, migration histories, and generational experiences, followed by further group sessions for reflection and shared learning.

Through this process, participants reconstruct fragmented histories, deepen self-understanding, strengthen resilience, and build meaningful connections within the community. Empowerment emerges through active engagement with personal and family narratives and their integration into contemporary identity.

The project is led by a social worker and educational scientist with extensive experience in psychosocial counselling, migration, trauma, and biography research, combining professional expertise, empathy, and a deep commitment to Jewish life and continuity.



Dina Greenberg, USA

Dina Greenberg is an author, educator, and advocate whose trauma-informed approach seeks to elevate the voices of survivors of war and displacement. As a 2025-2026 US Fulbright Scholar in Prishtinë, Kosovo, her research began with stories of Kosovo's diminished Jewish community and, specifically, the role ethnic Albanians played in protecting native Jews and refugees transiting Yugoslavia during WWII. The project included visits to Jewish heritage sites and interviews throughout the Western Balkans, including Tirana, Berat, Belgrade, Skopje, Ljubljana, Zagreb, and Sarajevo.

Remember the Jewish Quarter!

In the Balkans, evidence of Jewish life and Jewish history is often hard to find. Is the region's rich Jewish heritage hiding in plain sight, or has it disappeared entirely? When Jewish heritage becomes invisible, communities lose an important part of their shared history.

Remember the Jewish Quarter! empowers high school students to rediscover their own city's Jewish heritage through a vibrant work of public art. This two-phased program pairs the site-specific history of local pre-World War II Jewish communities with an overview of the Holocaust in the Balkans. Adapting the ProPeace curriculum into an experiential workshop series, students explore their city's Jewish past before, under the guidance of a professional artist, creating a mural inspired by their own interpretations of this shared heritage.

The mural becomes a lasting public reminder that Jewish history is an integral part of the city's cultural identity, empowering young people to challenge antisemitism while enriching the urban landscape for the wider community.



Anna-Mariia Grinchel, Estonia

Anna-Mariia Grinchel is a linguist, educator, and Jewish community leader originally from Saint Petersburg. She holds BA and MA degrees in linguistics, with a focus on multilingualism, language contact, and intercultural communication. Alongside language teaching, she works with people of different ages, including neurodivergent learners, through informal Jewish education and community initiatives. Anna-Mariia is particularly interested in cultural memory, Scandinavian studies, and creative educational formats that combine language, storytelling, and visual culture.

From Words to Stories

Teenagers and young adults are searching for their connection to Jewish identity, but many struggle to find their way. They don't always know how to find a sense of belonging or how to see the Jewish community as a source of inspiration and support.

My project responds to this need by creating a safe space where young people, aged 14 to 21, can explore their identity through creative tools: storytelling, comics, drawing, and photography. Drawing on my background in education and community work, I lead sessions with a small team of facilitators. Together, we turn Jewish cultural materials, texts, posters, and personal stories into visual work, leading to a collective zine and a small exhibition.

We change how young people experience their Jewish identity—from something handed to them to something they build themselves. By taking part, young people build lasting connections with one another and become the next generation of community leaders and volunteers.



Vladimir Janev, North Macedonia

Vladimir is a full professor at the Institute of National History in Skopje. In 2013, as a part of the international project “Politics of Memory and Memory Cultures of the Russian-Ottoman War 1877/1878: From Divergence to Dialogue”, he researched for two months at Shota Rustaveli University in Batumi, Georgia. In 2017-2018, he spent two months as a researcher at Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University in Russia, two months at Matenadaran in Yerevan and three months at Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences in Baku. In 2019, his book «A History of the Jews in Macedonia» (1700 - 1912), was published.

BRIDGES

This project aims to elevate the profile and relevance of Jewish studies within the academic community of the Republic of North Macedonia. BRIDGES is conceived to address a critical gap: the lack of foundational resources and information on Jewish studies in the country's higher education landscape. To bridge this gap, the project will launch an open-access online platform featuring key texts translated from English into Macedonian. By expanding local perspectives beyond the Holocaust to celebrate the rich, diverse history of the Jewish community, BRIDGES seeks to foster intercultural and interreligious dialogue, promoting tolerance within a historically polarized Balkan society. This platform is designed to serve and connect the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities of North Macedonia.



Magdalena Kowalska-Cheffey, Poland

Magdalena Kowalska-Cheffey is a librarian and educator at the Municipal and Communal Public Library in Błażowa, Poland. She is also a founding member of the Informal Historical Group “To Save From Obscurity,” which is connected to the Library. The group’s primary objective is to research and preserve various aspects of local history, including the care of the Jewish cemetery in Błażowa. Magdalena has been actively involved in cultural and educational initiatives to preserve the memory of the Jews of Błażowa. Additionally, she has co-authored a guided walk that explores the history of the local Jewish community. As a military historian with another degree in Humanities, she is passionate about finding meaningful ways to preserve the past while looking toward the future. At her core, she is a storyteller who enjoys engaging with others. She is a member of the Polish Bibliotherapy Society and the Forum for Dialogue Network.

THEY SAT TOGETHER ON THE SAME SCHOOL BENCH.

**In memory of the Jewish students who
attended the Primary School in Błażowa.**

Like many towns and cities in Poland, Błażowa has forgotten, overlooked, or ignored the memory of its Jewish inhabitants for many years. The Informal Historical Group “To Save From Obscurity” brings together librarians and educators to create opportunities for young people to discover and embrace the shared pre-Holocaust history and heritage of the Błażowa area. The project tells the story of more than 400 Polish-Jewish children who attended the public primary school in Błażowa alongside their Polish classmates before the Second World War. To honour their memory, local teachers and educators will receive training and practical tools to introduce Jewish culture, traditions, history, and art into their classrooms. Primary school children will take part in creative workshops, culminating in an artistic performance for the wider local community featuring theatre, poetry, music, and other forms of expression. Together with the Municipal and Communal Public Library and local schools, we will commemorate the Jewish schoolchildren of Błażowa who perished during the Shoah.



Elena Krasilshchik, Russia

Elena has been active in Jewish life since the moment of its revival in Russia. In 2000 - 2005 Elena took the position of the Jewish Agency Coordinator in Kostroma. With Project Keshet spreading its network in Russia Elena has always been active in Project Keshet programs and events. In 2005 – 2006 Elena was a “Keshet Fellow” at Paideia. After graduating from Paideia she was appointed as a coordinator for Project Keshet “Beit Binah” program (developing women’s activism through studying the Torah texts).

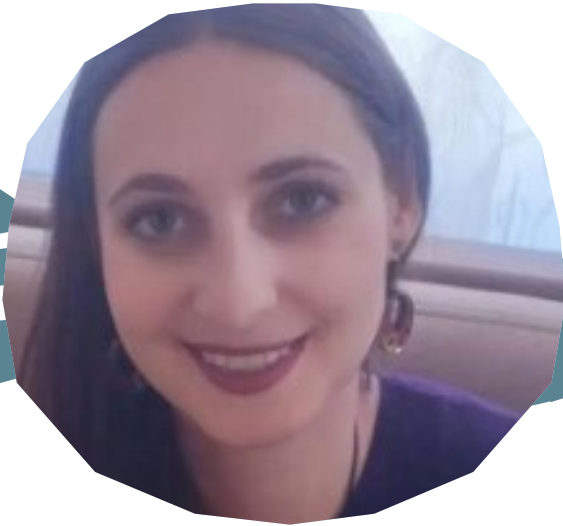
Inspired Jewish Women

Jewish communities throughout Russia face growing difficulty attracting people and involving them in active communal life. Many local leaders lack the skills needed to develop relevant programs that respond to their communities’ needs.

KINNOR has developed “Inspired Jewish Initiatives,” a training program for 40 women from 20 Jewish communities across Russia. The program is based on the study of heroines of the Tanach. It is designed to strengthen these women’s ability to create Jewish activities that will attract unaffiliated individuals and community members who have stopped participating.

KINNOR is a network of 2,000 Jewish grassroots volunteer women from 55 Russian cities, working for three decades to support and develop Jewish communities.

The program will begin with a weekend seminar on community marketing and management, followed by weekly online training sessions in regional peer groups, guided by KINNOR staff. Participants will develop projects tailored to their communities and receive support as they implement them, creating new pathways for Jewish engagement and helping communities remain vibrant.



Gabriella Licsko, Hungary

Gabriella Licskó is a Hungarian-Israeli researcher, lecturer and tour guide. Her research and lectures are focusing on the various subdivisions of Orthodox Jewish society and the history of Orthodox Jewish communities with a particular interest in Orthodox Jewish fashion and dressing codes as well as Polish Hasidic groups. She is the co-founder and historian of Polish Tisch, a unique, international initiative exploring the history, religious teachings and intellectual legacy of Polish Hasidic communities (originating from Central Poland) Gabriella holds a B.A in Cultural Studies from Széchenyi István University of Győr, Hungary, a B.A from Social Work from Ashkelon Academic College, Ashkelon, Israel and an M.A in Jewish Cultural History from Jewish Theological Seminary University of Jewish Studies, Budapest, Hungary.

Reconnecting Roots: Rediscovering an “Almost Vanished World”

The Holocaust shattered not only communities but also the personal connections, memories, and sense of belonging that linked generations of descendants of Central Poland's Hasidic families. Today, many live across Europe with fragmented knowledge of their heritage and few opportunities to connect with others who share similar roots.

Reconnecting Roots creates a meeting point for descendants of Polish Hasidim—from secular to Ultra-Orthodox backgrounds—to rediscover their family histories and reconnect with one another. Through a series of interactive online workshops combining history, shared memories, and conversation, participants explore the world of their ancestors while building new relationships across borders.

Led by Gabriella Licsko, a researcher with over fifteen years of experience studying Orthodox and Hasidic communities and working closely with descendant families, the project transforms fragmented memories into a living network of people, restoring continuity, identity, and belonging through a unique and often overlooked part of Europe's Jewish heritage.



Arnoldas Riekumas, Lithuania

Arnoldas is a teacher of Lithuanian language and literature, dance and life skills. He works at Vilnius Naujamiescio School. He is a 9th grade teacher mentor, he has been teaching Jewish traditions, culture, history and the Holocaust through projects and lessons. There are many refugees from eastern countries at the school. He is very interested in the history of his hometown Vilnius, because before WW2, 60% of Vilnius was Jewish. Arnoldas is the president of the Lithuanian Dance Teachers Association, speaks Lithuanian, English, Polish, German, Russian.

Saved lives and memory

Vilnius was once one of Europe's great centers of Jewish life, yet many young people growing up there know little about this history or how it shaped the streets around them. Saved Lives and Memory helps non-Jewish pupils discover Jewish Vilnius as part of their city's shared heritage.

The project has grown over six years with one class of 25 students, adding Jewish culture, Holocaust history, and human rights step by step as the pupils became ready for deeper learning. Their teacher, Arnoldas Riekumas, believes the Jewish roots of Vilnius belong to the whole city, and that every resident should know and care about them.

As the students enter 10th grade, the project reaches its peak year, with 10–15 sessions on Jewish Vilnius. Each student will research one Jewish resident murdered in the Holocaust, leading to presentations and a Stolperstein – a memorial stone placed near the victim's former home. The model will be shared with teachers in October 2026 for use in other schools.



Dragana Stojanović, Serbia

Dragana Stojanović is a Project Coordinator and Educator at Haver Serbia, where she develops interactive educational programs focused on Jewish culture and heritage, Holocaust remembrance, intercultural dialogue, minority engagement, and the prevention of antisemitism and discrimination. She is also a Research Fellow at ShoahLab - the Holocaust Studies Laboratory at the University of Belgrade. Active across both academic and non-academic spheres, she is committed to building bridges and fostering collaboration among formal and informal educational spaces, initiatives, and professionals.

Jewish LGBTQI+ Cultural Festival

In times of polarization and growing gaps between communities, there is a strong need for safer places committed to dialogue, connection, diversity, and complexity. This is particularly important for people who experience intersectional identities that sometimes bring struggle and isolation, but can also be nurtured as a source of communal and personal richness and joy.

Following this idea and drawing on practices of pluralism, and believing in intercommunal learning as a key to connection between people, six years ago Haver Serbia (<https://haver.rs/>) created the Jewish LGBTQI+ Cultural Festival – an annual two-day creative and exploratory space that celebrates LGBTQI+ and Jewish identities through art and culture. This festival offers an invitation to direct encounters, guided conversations, and mindful learning, aiming at dismantling prejudices, overcoming internal and social limitations, and building spaces for cultural, communal, and personal flourishing. Taking place annually over the last eight years, the festival serves as a model of a space where people from majority and minority communities meet and learn from each other.



Sydney Switzer, Scotland

Sydney Switzer is a Jewish educator and artist based in Glasgow, Scotland. She is the founder of Torah B'Teva, which creates opportunities for nature-based and experiential Jewish learning, making use of land-based skills such as foraging, fermenting, textile traditions and more. She has held a number of senior educational roles within Jewish organisations in Scotland, India, and her native Canada, and now works as a freelance educator, supporting a wide variety of community programming. You can often find her knitting in a cafe, roaming the Scottish hillsides, or swimming in a cold loch.

Torah B'Teva

Torah B'Teva creates opportunities for experiential and immersive Jewish learning experiences, connecting Jewish people in Scotland and beyond with the nature-based, agricultural, and environmental roots of Judaism. Activities make use of traditional Jewish texts, hands-on exploration of ancestral Jewish and Scottish land-based skills, and a lived practice of the Jewish seasonal cycles.

The project speaks to people seeking meaningful, relevant, and inclusive ways to connect with Jewish identity, while building deep connections to nature and the world around them. Programmes open a welcoming path into Jewish learning and community through activities that feel alive, practical, and connected to place.

To date, more than 700 community members have taken part in over 35 workshops, Shabbatons, and special programmes. Founded by Jewish educator and artist Sydney Switzer, Torah B'Teva is now ready to build on this momentum: deepening its educational content, strengthening the community around the project, and preparing for future growth beyond its current reach.



Kinga Szemere, Hunagry

Kinga Szemere is a curator and researcher at the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, where she has managed collections and curated exhibitions for over a decade. She holds degrees in Art History and Political Science from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an M.A. in Cultural Heritage Studies from Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). Kinga's work focuses on interpreting Jewish heritage in urban contexts. Her projects include digital collection initiatives and exhibitions featuring an 18th-century Hungarian Jewish family and long-hidden medieval and Turkish period tombstones from Buda.

Buried Synagogue: Mapping the Invisible Heritage of Medieval Buda

The medieval synagogue beneath Buda Castle was discovered and partially excavated in 1964, then reburied, and has remained inaccessible ever since. As one of the most significant surviving traces of medieval Jewish life and Buda's multicultural history, it represents a hidden national heritage asset beneath one of Hungary's most visited historic sites, leaving an important chapter of the city's past inaccessible to the public.

Our aim is to unlock a process that has been stalled for more than a decade. Led by the Hungarian Jewish Museum, the project will act as a catalyst by developing a strategic roadmap and bringing together decision-makers, heritage authorities, archaeologists, and Jewish organizations to build a shared vision for the site's future.

Success will establish the partnerships and commitment needed to move the project forward, creating the conditions to reveal this hidden layer of Budapest's multicultural heritage and laying the foundation for its future transformation into a place of learning, dialogue, and shared cultural memory.



Eva Vadasz, Israel

Eva made aliya from Hungary after leading the Volunteer team of the March of the Living. She studied at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and holds an MA in Jewish Culture and History from the Jewish University of Budapest. Her academic path weaves through English and Slovak philology at the University of Szeged, media studies in Budapest, and Holocaust memory studies at Western Galilee College. She works as the Olim Coordinator at Tel Aviv University, serves as Editor-in-Chief of Új Kelet, and scans sea turtles on Tuesdays in Tel Aviv.

Rescue and Resistance Learning Center

In 1944 Hungary, a group of teenagers faced some of the most murderous conditions in human history. They had no political power, no army, and no resources. What they had was courage, initiative, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility for one another.

David Gur, then an 18-year-old superb forger, was part of the underground Zionist Youth Resistance Movement, which saved more than 15,000 lives. David and his fellow youth activists did far more than forge papers. They operated children's homes, smuggled thousands of Jews across the border to Romania, and warned communities about the Nazi plan to annihilate Hungarian Jewry. Yet this story of Jews saving Jews remains largely unknown.

The Rescue and Resistance Learning Center is developing this history into a feature film or a mini-series for streaming platforms designed for international audiences (and a documentary novel grounded in rigorous historical research and storytelling).

The initiative is led by a team that brings together authenticity and expertise: Jonny Hudson, a Holocaust studies expert; David Gur, today a 100-year-old living survivor of the Zionist resistance movement; and Eva Vadasz as project manager.

We envision the film or series, together with the book, bringing this little-known chapter of history to life and inspiring young people today to see what teenagers can achieve.



Dragan Zajkovski, North Macedonia

Dragan Zajkovski is a full professor at the Institute of National History, Skopje. He graduated from the Institute of History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje in 2000. He defended his master's thesis titled "Christianity in Macedonia I – IV Century" at the same Institute in 2004. In 2011, at the Institute of National History, Skopje, he defended his Ph.D. dissertation titled "The Christian Church in Macedonia in the Early Middle Ages". He has been working at the Institute of National History, Skopje since 2010. His research interests focus on the History of the Christian Church.

Beyond Differences: Building Bridges Across Faiths

The Western Balkans are home to a rich religious heritage where Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities have coexisted for centuries. Yet many young people today grow up with limited knowledge of other faiths, relying on inherited stereotypes rather than personal experience. This project will bring together 25–30 university students from North Macedonia for a series of interactive workshops, discussions, and collaborative activities led by historians, theologians, educators, and religious leaders. Together, participants will explore the shared history, values, and contemporary challenges of the three traditions while developing dialogue, critical thinking, and conflict-resolution skills.

Building on the expertise of historians of the Balkans' religious history, the project combines academic knowledge with practical intercultural learning. By fostering meaningful encounters and informed conversations, it seeks to reduce prejudice, strengthen mutual respect, and create a new generation of young ambassadors committed to interfaith dialogue and social cohesion across the Western Balkans.



Anna Zakai, Israel

Anna Zakai is an artist and calligrapher based in Jaffa. Born in St. Petersburg, she graduated from the Steiglitz Academy and later moved to Israel. Her work focuses on Hebrew calligraphy and contemporary letter arts. Anna is the founder of HaMictava – The Israeli Calligraphy Community, which she leads through projects, exhibitions, and collaborative initiatives. She maintains an active artistic practice, creates commissioned works, and teaches both privately and within HaMictava. She also teaches calligraphy at the Holon Institute of Technology (HIT).

HaMictava

The Hebrew letter is a core element of Jewish visual tradition and carries deep expressive meaning. At the same time, the art of Hebrew calligraphy is not widely represented—neither in the Israeli art scene nor in European Jewish culture. It is often perceived as a traditional craft or a religious practice and therefore does not always reach a broader audience.

We offer a supportive, non-competitive community, guided by professional calligraphers, creating a space for artists to connect, inspire, and be inspired. Our activities include monthly meetings, an annual group exhibition, occasional printed editions, workshops, courses, and collaborative projects.

We strive to build an international professional network with a home base in Israel, cultivating a community that advances the entire field.

Staff and guests





Liora Asa

Development Tutor/ Curriculum Builder

Liora Asa is a lecturer and trainer specializing in resource development and financial management, with more than 25 years of experience working with NGO executives, social entrepreneurs, and community leaders in Israel, Europe, and Africa. She teaches philanthropy and resource development at programs including Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, the Mandel Leadership Institute, and Partnership Together initiatives of The Jewish Agency for Israel. Since 2012, Liora has served as a mentor in the Paideia Project Incubator, supporting Jewish social entrepreneurs from across Europe. Previously, she served as the Israel portfolio representative for a family foundation. Liora holds an M.B.A. from the University of Haifa, an M.A. in International Affairs from George Washington University, and a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley.



Agnieszka Baraszko

Director of Project-Incubator

Agnieszka Baraszko, born and raised in Gdansk, Poland, is a Program Manager of the One-Year Program and Director of Project-Incubator at Paideia – the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden. She also runs the Paideia Mifgash Project. Agnieszka leads hevruta training sessions and gives lectures on Jewish folklore. She is a Paideia alumna and an active member of the Stockholm and Gdansk Jewish communities. She graduated from the University of Warsaw, the Jewish Open University in Warsaw, and the Autonomous University of Madrid. She holds an MA in Spanish literature and language and specializes in translation.



Eiran Davies

Educator at Paideia and Paideia Folkhögskola

Rabbi Eiran Davies studied for the rabbinate at The Judith Lady Montefiore College at Ramsgate, the rabbinical programme of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' congregation in London, England. Subsequently, he undertook further study at various institutions in Israel, including Yeshivat Hamivtar in Efrat, Midrash Sephardi in Jerusalem, and the Straus-Amiel rabbinical fellowship. Back in the UK, he worked on a number of innovative projects within the Jewish community, including Grassroots Jews, a non-denominational space for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, Bee the Change, an initiative to encourage urban Jews to become beekeepers, and was a founding partner in Ruchot, a kosher vegetarian community cafe. Eiran now lives in Stockholm with his wife Yael, and their two children.



Sarah Frey

**Project Coordinator
at Paideia**

Sarah Frey is a Stockholm-based pop artist, musician, and cultural coordinator with a multifaceted career spanning music, television, and education. Raised in Stockholm's Jewish community, she earned a BA in Jazz Vocals from the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. Transitioning into the pop genre, Sarah writes, performs, records, and produces her own material, while also collaborating with renowned artists and bands. Beyond her musical pursuits, Sarah has worked in various cultural sectors, including television and commercial industries, where she served as a manager and coordinator. She furthered her expertise by studying Cultural Management at Stockholm University. Currently, Sarah serves as the Educational Coordinator for Profile Courses at Paideia Folkhögskola.



Noa Hermele

Director of Paideia

Noa Hermele is the Director of Paideia – The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden and founding Rector of Paideia Folkhögskola. He has been a board member of the Forum for Jewish Studies at Uppsala University and chairperson of the Committee for National Minorities at the Swedish Arts Council. He is currently board member of the Jewish Cultural Magazine in Sweden, board member of RIO – the umbrella organization for the 114 Swedish folk high schools owned by civil society organizations, member of the steering committee for the Yiddish Language Centre at the Institute for Language and Folklore, and member of the reference group to the Government's study for a National strategy for strengthening Jewish life in Sweden.



Patrick Levy

**Project Development
Tutor/ Curriculum Builder**

Patrick Levy is a counsellor for Human Rights and other non-for-profit organizations and institutions on organizational strategy, peer education and fund raising in Israel and abroad. Patrick initiated Alumot- the Center for the Organization of People with Disabilities in Israel and leads multi-sectoral projects and leadership programs for this community. After having been a teacher in Israel, in Jewish schools in France and the United Kingdom, he served as executive director of national and international non-for-profit organizations. His areas of specialization are pluri-sectoral projects, peer education, support of unfavourised communities and health issues.



Lena Posner-Körösi

**Chairwomen of Paideia
Folkhögskola**

Lena was one of the founders of Paideia in the year of 2000 and since then sits on the Paideia board. She is the chairperson of Paideia Folkhögskola and of Amanah, a Malmö based educational project building trust between Jews and Moslems. She was the chair of the Stockholm Jewish Community as well as for the Official Council of Jewish Communities in Sweden. She has been on the executive of European Jewish Congress, on the board of European Jewish Fund, and on the Advisory Council of World Jewish Diplomatic Corps. Professionally, she is a trained psychologist, working in the field of marketing and organization. She was born in Sweden by a Swedish-born mother (Russian grandparents) and a German-born father, who came to Sweden as a child just before the war. Lena is the mother of two sons and married to Andreas, who was born in Hungary.





Victor Sorensen

**Project Development
Tutor/ Curriculum Builder**

Victor Sorensen, has grown up and lives in Barcelona. He worked as director of education for the Jewish ATID Community and as director of the CIB (Comunidad Israelita de Barcelona). In 2010 he founded with a group of friends from the Jewish community of Barcelona, the Mozaika Cultural Platform. The Platform became a Jewish Cultural Center (Casa Adret), where all kinds of projects related to Jewish history and culture (Sefer Barcelona- Jewish Book Festival), research or activism (Salam Shalom Barcelona) are developed. Victor currently works as director of the AEPJ (The European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage), where among others, he coordinates the projects of the European Route of Jewish Heritage of the Council of Europe and the European Days of Jewish Culture.



Barbara Lerner Spectre

Founding Director of Paideia

Barbara Lerner Spectre is the Founding Director of Paideia. She was formerly on the faculty of the Hartman Institute of Advanced Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, where she taught Jewish Thought. She was among the founders of the Seminary of Judaic Studies in Jerusalem. Her area of research is in models of inference in Christian and Jewish post-Holocaust theology, for which she received a research grant from Yad V'Shem Institute. Barbara's publications include "A Theology of Doubt" (Hebrew) and, together with Noam Zion of the Hartman Institute, the two-volume "A Different Light: The Hanukkah Book of Celebration." In 2007, she received the prestigious Max M. Fisher Prize for Jewish Education in the Diaspora and in 2016, the Abraham Geiger Medal. In 2018, she received The King's Medal for her outstanding contribution for Jewish culture in Sweden and beyond.



Federico Szarfer

**Project Development
Tutor/ Curriculum Builder**

Federico Szarfer is a communication professional and cultural project manager based in Barcelona. He works as communication lead at the Barcelona History Museum, developing strategies and content to make heritage more accessible and relevant to diverse audiences. His work has focused on Jewish cultural heritage and European projects. He is co-founder of the Jewish cultural platform Mozaika and has contributed to initiatives such as Casa Adret, a Jewish cultural hub located in the historic medieval Jewish quarter of Barcelona. He also works with audiovisual storytelling to connect heritage and contemporary audiences. Federico is a 2014 Paideia Project Incubator alumnus and a board member of the Paideia alumni association.



Alina Tolok

**Intern at Paideia,
Jewish Educator**

Alina Tolok is a Jewish educator and cultural programmer with over 14 years of involvement in the Jewish community of Lviv, Ukraine, beginning as a volunteer and continuing through leadership roles in informal education. She has extensive experience in developing and coordinating educational programs for youth and young adults, including her work as Director of Educational Programs and Programme Director at Hillel Lviv, where she supervised teams, designed curricula, and led community-based initiatives. She is a graduate of the Paideia One-Year Program 2023–2024 and participated in the Jewish Educators Program for Russian Speakers at The Lookstein Center, Bar-Ilan University (2024–2025). Alina is currently an intern at Paideia.





Bence Tordai

**Project Development
Tutor/ Curriculum Builder**

Bence is a Vienna-based nonprofit consultant and trainer specializing in organizational strategy, resource development, and nonprofit management. He played a key role in launching JDC's Mozaik Jewish Community Hub – a community and social innovation platform in Budapest, which he also led for six years. Over the past decade, Bence has guided a multitude of organizations, social entrepreneurs, and informal groups in their strategic planning and capacity-building endeavors. Among many other programs, Bence is also an alumnus of Project-Incubator's 2013 edition. When not wearing his professional hat, he often wears a regular hat and sunscreen; most likely out on his bike or hiking in the Alps.



Sonja Viličić

**Project Development
Tutor/ Curriculum Builder**

Sonja Viličić, born in Subotica, Serbia, is dedicated to Jewish education and community development. Through her work, she fosters understanding, encourages dialogue, and supports efforts to counter discrimination, both within the Jewish community and in wider society. She is a graduate of the Melton Senior Educators Program at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Adaptive Leadership Lab run by the Jewish Agency of Israel, and is a Schusterman Fellow. As Executive Director of NGO Haver Srbija, Sonja leads educational initiatives exploring Jewish culture, history, and memory, contributing to a more inclusive society. She also works at the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage as a project manager of the "Cities Embracing Jewish Heritage" project, with an aim to leverage cities' Jewish heritage and culture as an antidote against antisemitism, hate speech, and ignorance while promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding. In addition, she serves in advisory roles with the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund and Paideia, supporting initiatives that empower communities and inspire mutual understanding.



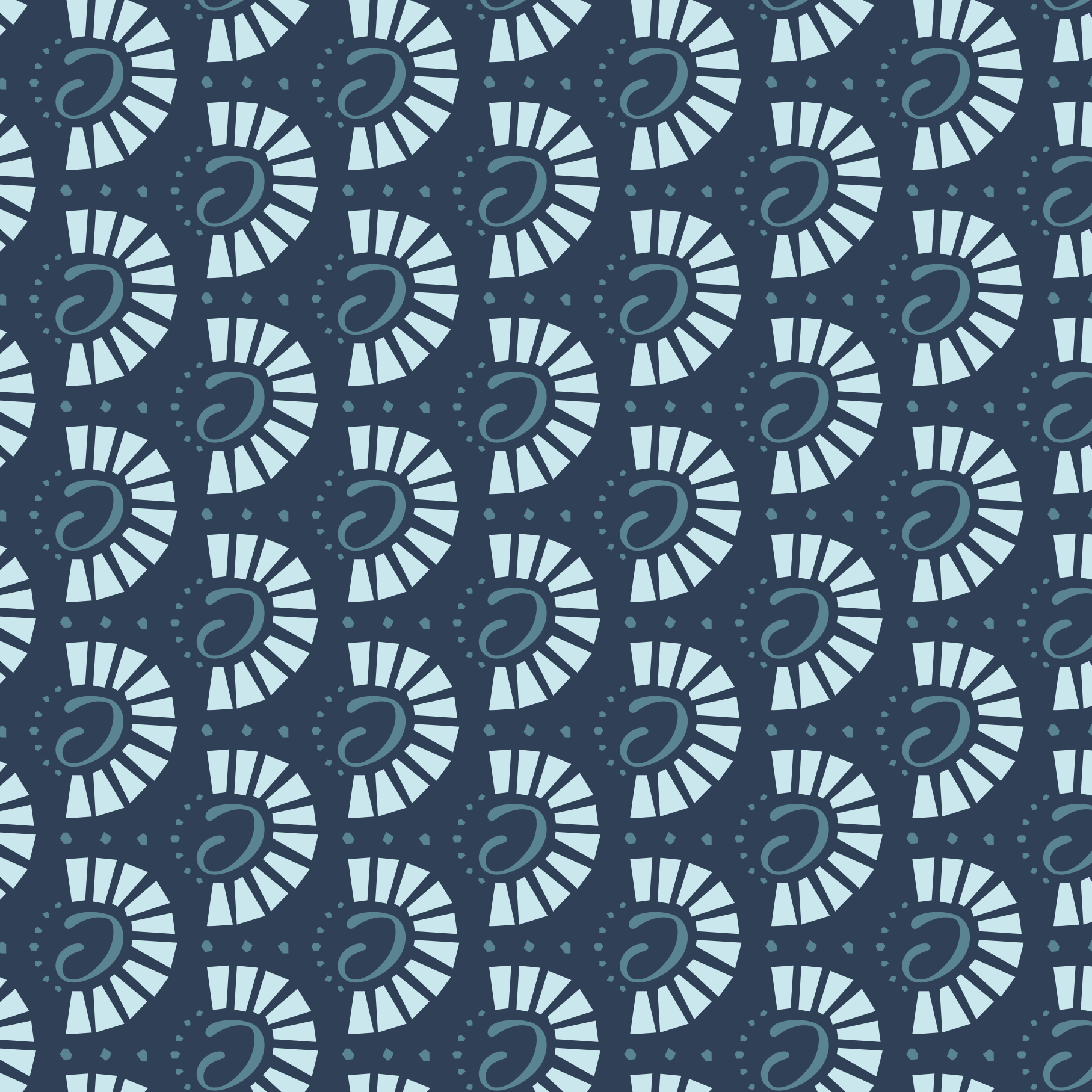
Thank you



Paideia's annual work program is



Co-funded by
the European Union





www.paideia-eu.org
info@paideia-eu.org

 **paideiaFB**

 **paideia.europe**