

# WikiShtetl

## Preserving the Memories of Lost Communities

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SINGAPORE

Herzog  
College

UnitEd



Ministry for Diaspora  
Affairs and Combating  
Antisemitism



יד ושם  
YAD VASHEM  
THE WORLD HOLOCAUST  
REMEMBRANCE CENTER





**Deror Lin**  
(1974–2023)



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# WikiShtetl

Connecting  
past  
heritage to  
future  
platforms



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The WikiShtetl Project was established with the aim of commemorating Jewish communities that perished in the Holocaust in Wikipedia entries and Wikimedia Commons, giving them a memory, a name and a face.



# WikiShtetl\*

\*“Shtetl” is the Yiddish term for “small town”.







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## WikiShetl, since 2016...

- 200 commemorated Jewish communities
- 90 entries as academic assignments
- 3 Wikipedia contests (Hebrew Wikipedia)
- Partners: Herzog College, UnitEd, Yad VaShem, Wikimedia Israel

# 10 Whys of WikiShtetl



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**1**  
**Writing about  
heritage attracts  
interest and  
creates  
involvement.**

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מאת מאיר אור - אלבום משפחתי - משפחת אור  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=90158096>

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## 3 WikiShtetl Contests:\*

- **150** New Entries
- At least **50** first time Wikipedians

\*Winning prizes for different tracks range from \$140–\$850.

**2 Publishing on online universal platforms encourages people to be involved with heritage because it enables stories and images to reach the public.**

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“You put my face in the internet...  
and I want to thank you very much for doing it -  
**so something of me will remain in this world.”**

Shmuel Brim, Survivor from Spishke Podhradie, Slovakia

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**Involvement with  
heritage strengthens  
identity.**





**4**  
**Recording history on  
digital platforms  
strengthens  
intergenerational ties.**

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The entry on the  
Jewish  
community of  
Zakynthos, Greece  
was created  
jointly by a  
student and the  
daughter of a  
survivor.

מאת צאצאית האי - נוצר על-ידי מעלה היצירה  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=92832518>

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Moshe Moisis Matza,  
community leader,  
Zakynthos, Greece

**5** Wikipedia, as a collaborative space, supports preservation of small, unknown and previously unrecorded communities.

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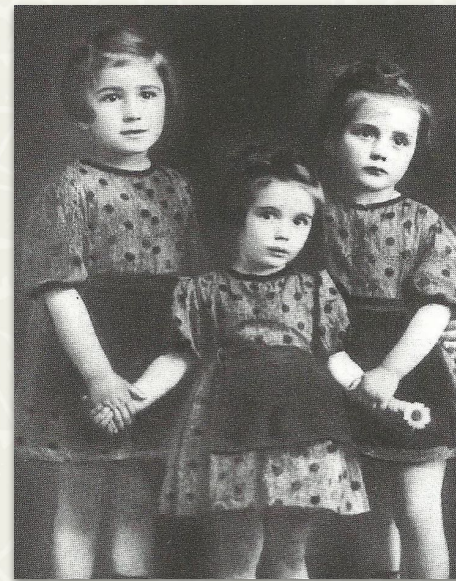
Names and Faces  
from  
**Nagyfalu,**  
Transylvania



Esther Weinberger



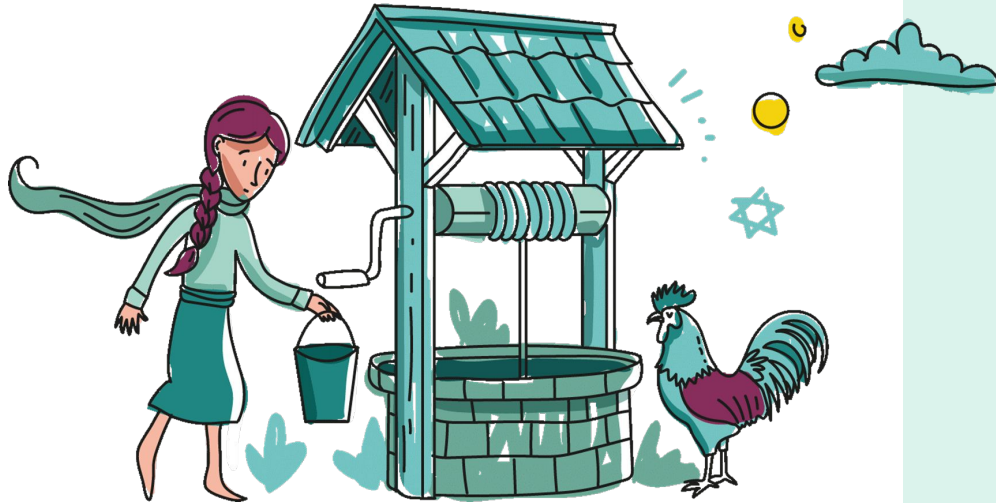
Jozeph and Rachel,  
parents of Menahem  
Zvi and Gimpi



Chana, Gittel and Rivka  
Hurwitz

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**6** Recording the past can create closure, and support the emotional processing of painful memories and experiences.

**Malvina (Malka) Daks**

Wiesbaden, Germany



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**When in an academic setting, Wikishtetl creates involvement of students and teachers in the learning process, as they become knowledge prosumers.**



# Interdisciplinary, Multi-skill Learning



- TEAM WORK
- CRITICAL THINKING
- ENGAGEMENT
- PROBLEM SOLVING
- INDEPENDENCE

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**8**  
**Wikishtetl takes  
learning from  
knowledge  
acquirement to  
service learning.**



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Jewish children celebrating the holiday of Purim with soldiers of The Jewish Brigade, Benghazi, 1944.

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9 **The use of  
Wikipedia in the  
classroom gives  
students an  
opportunity to  
hone their 21st  
Century skills.**

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**10** Introducing students to the inner workings of Wikipedia enables them to appreciate it not only as a practical tool, but as a concept; a perception.

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Israel Sharir (left), from Zhorov, Ukraine, with Vladimira - the daughter of Mikhail Belegai, who hid and rescued Israel and 3 other people during the Holocaust.

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# conclusions

No community is too small, and no history too unimportant to deserve mention in the largest and most visited database of human knowledge.

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17/8/2023

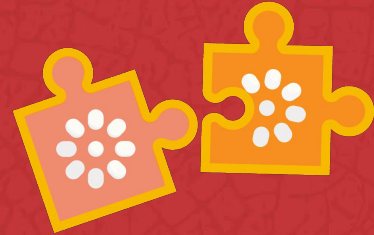




# What's Next?

- International educational program
- Expansion to more languages
- Global partnerships

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# Thanks

To the Wikipedia community for its involvement in the project.

Special thanks to users David Shay (דוד שי) and Bikoret (ביקורת), the contest judges.

And to everyone else taking part, supporting, sharing knowledge and insights and contributing to WikiShtetl.



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**We'd love to  
connect.**

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# Questions & Suggestions



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