

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	[Multidirectional Memory: Remembering for Social Justice] – [MultiMemo]
Participant:	[Fundacja JCC Warszawa] ([JCC Warszawa])
PIC number:	886833850

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	WP 13
Event name:	Polifonie pamięci. Inclusive memory of Warsaw
Type:	event
In situ/online:	[in-situ]
Location:	[Poland)], [Warsaw]
Date(s):	[16th to 23rd of April, 2023]
Website(s) (if any):	https://zapomniane.org/en/actions/ https://zapomniane.org/dzialania/ https://centralt.pl/project/multimemo-pamiec-wielokierunkowa/ https://centralt.pl/en/project/multimemo-multidirectional-memory/ https://urbanmemoryfoundation.org/multimemo-pl/ https://urbanmemoryfoundation.org/en/multimemo/
Participants	
Female:	88
Male:	20
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Poland]:	100
From country 2 [Sweden]:	1
From country 3 [Denmark]:	2
From country 4 [Germany]:	1
From country 5 [France]:	4

Total number of participants:	108	From total number of countries:	5
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>"Polifonie pamięci. Inclusive Memory of Warsaw" was an event that aimed at commemorating the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising from a different perspective than the usual one. We wanted to give the voice to those whose voices are usually unheard and whose stories are rather forgotten or treated as unimportant and unmeaningful - to women, but not only to them. We created the event on a big scale - not only in terms of number of participants, which, as for our conditions, was huge, but also in terms of how many meetings actually took place and number of people and organizations we cooperated with during this week. The number of participants was actually bigger than reported above, because some of them were non-EU citizens: people from the States and Israel came to JCC Warsaw, too.</p> <p>We decided on this form of the event (a week of consecutive meetings of various nature) to provide a real space for many coexisting memories, voices, and narratives. Dividing the event into chapters, each of which was devoted to one of the silenced memories, was therefore very important, not only formally, but above all, substantially. Thanks to this, each of the omitted narratives gained importance, because each of them had its own space in which it could be heard. However, the most important thing that needs to be mentioned in this report, was the impact which our festival has had. We strongly believe that we have set new trends regarding the approach towards commemorating practices and, because of that, we would like to continue organizing "Polifonie pamięci" every year.</p> <p>The first part of the festival took place on the 16th of April, 2023</p> <p>Meeting about the "Question of Character. Women fighters from the Warsaw ghetto" was led by Shana Penn with some of the authors of the book: Sylwia Chutnik, Patrycja Dołowy, Zuzanna Hertzberg, Natalia Judzińska, and Karolina Sulej. The authors told the stories about their archival and emotional work on chapters they were asked to prepare. Each chapter concentrates on a personal story of a Jewish girl or woman who took part in the ghetto uprising in April 1943. The work that the authors had put into unraveling these stories was enormous – female ghetto fighters were previously known only by their first names and were only described as those who accompanied their male friends but not by their individual, heroic actions.</p> <p>After (and also during) the talk the audience was able to ask questions and discuss the matters described in the book. The meeting was attended by 27 people altogether: members of our community (including representatives of the oldest age group) and people who came to Warsaw especially on that occasion. There were also local tour guides (one person), employees of other Jewish institutions operating in Warsaw (two people), and academic scholars (two people). The majority of the event's attendees were women.</p> <p>The second part of the festival took place on the 18th of April, 2023</p> <p>We think that there are many different ways in which a person or a community can remember and commemorate its predecessors and past events. One of them is by familiarizing ourselves with the cultural production of our great ancestors (e.g. music pieces, art works, literature) and devoting our time to them. Hence, we</p>			

decided to invite Michał Michalski who is an outstanding Polish pianist of the young generation to come to the JCC and play a piano concert. Pieces composed by musicians such as Fryderyk Chopin, Ignaz Moscheles, Władysław Szpilman, et. al., were included in the program. The concert was a tribute to the inhabitants of Warsaw ghetto.

The third part of the festival took place on the 19th of April, 2023

The third day of our festival consisted of three different elements. It is a tradition that JCC Warsaw is one of the bases for the volunteers of the Daffodils Action organized every year by the POLIN Museum. The aim of the Action is to familiarize Polish society with the history of the uprising in Warsaw ghetto. In order to achieve this goal, the Museum gathers dozens of volunteers who then are trained to tell the story of the uprising to the pedestrians and hand them a paper daffodil which, thanks to Marek Edelman, became a symbol of this event. JCC's building serves as a place where the volunteers can take rest, drink tea, and take more daffodils if they run out of them.

On the same day, a grassroots commemoration of the Ghetto Uprising took place on Szmul Zygielbojm square and on surrounding streets. The commemoration concluded on Umschlagplatz from where during the war hundreds of thousands Jews were taken to the death camp in Treblinka. During this event testimonies and fragments of diaries of the people who survived were read out loud. A choir formed by pupils of one of Warsaw's high schools signed songs in Yiddish – in language in which every third person on Warsaw's street was speaking before the second world war.

The third event on that day was not organized by us, but by a friend of ours, Gabi von Seltmann with a cooperation with an organization called Otwarta Rzeczpospolita (Open Republic). It was a multimedia spectacle projected on the Blue Skyscraper - a building which stands in the exact same space where The Great Synagogue stood before the Nazis blew it up on the 16th of May 1943.

We decided to include this event in the program of our festival because we think that it is another example of how one can remember and learn about local history and, apart from that, it is also a contemporary show which uses both art and technology to create something of a great emotional and artistic value.

The fourth part of the festival took place on the 20th of April, 2023

On that day we had an utmost pleasure to host in our walls Józef Hen - Polish-Jewish publicist, film scriptwriter, playwright, and author of many books, including biographical ones. We titled this part of the festival "Personal Memory". Mr Hen will be celebrating his 100th birthday this year and, therefore, he is a person to listen to and to learn from. The meeting was held by Marta Saracyn, JCC's Director of Program and Communication. During the talk Marta asked Mr Hen several questions but also he found a great pleasure in reading out loud some excerpts from his books.

What was really heartwarming about this event is the fact that it was attended by an audience consisting of people in both very young and not so young ages. We had a whole high school class in the room - people who probably did not hear about Józef Hen before but also adults who were clearly his fans and admirers.

During the meeting Hen's books were being sold and he himself was signaturing them.

The fifth part of the festival took place on the 21st of April, 2023

On Friday two different events were organized. At noon, a guided walk led by Paula Sawicka and in the evening a shabbat dinner with a poet Irena Klepfisz. The two were intertwined: Sawicka was telling a story of Michał Klepfisz, who was a member of the Jewish Combat Organization (he did not survive the war) and Irena's father. He was also a good friend of Marek Edelman, one of the JCO's founders and the commander of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Paula Sawicka is Edelman's heir. She was talking about the Uprising's stages, from its outbreak to its defeat; Warsaw's architecture (for example, we were able to see the basements of buildings that used to stand on a well-known Jewish street, Nalewki Street), and personal stories.

The meeting was translated simultaneously into English. It was a very touching and powerful experience for the audience.

In the evening we had the utmost pleasure to host (virtually) Yiddish poet, feminist, and lesbian Irena Klepfisz. Among the event's audience were translators and scholars who translated the author's poems and/or wrote essays about her work. The poems were read out loud both by her and them. Ms Klepfisz shared with us her personal stories and her ideas for new books.

We believe that she was an excellent person to invite to attend such an event as "Polifonie pamięci" not only because she is a direct descendant of one of the Uprising's fighters but also because of her own identity - of a Jewish woman, lesbian, artist, and a migrant whose literary work is so much immersed in language of her "old world" - Yiddish.

We consider this event to be extremely successful because of the number of people who attended it but also because many of them shared with us saying it was very interesting, touching, and mind-opening for them to get to know Irena and her work.

The sixth and the last part of the festival took place on the 23rd of April, 2023

This time we left the welcoming walls of our JCC and invited people to a guided walk led by Jagna Kofta. While the week before the program was focused on actual, physical fight, the walk was about a different type of action – civil disobedience. Participants could stroll through Warsaw's city center and listen to the stories of women who were teachers, caregivers, doctors, nurses, and so forth. The guide took us to the places where they lived and worked, and showed us archival photographs. Thanks to the walk, a person could understand that not only being a partisan is a sign of heroism – dealing with everyday life's chores and obstacles, helping others survive in the times of turmoil and despair is also something of great value, something that is worth remembering.

Again, the majority of people who took part in the walk were women (12 people altogether).

The last part of the event took place just after the walk and that was a conversation of JCC's CEO Patrycja Dołowy with members of the Children of the Holocaust Association: Inka Sobolewska-Pyz, Matti Greenberg, and Anna Liro. That was a very touching meeting during which the audience could hear a story of three families whose paths had crossed before and after the war. The story that was almost impossible to believe to be true. Once again, we were able to see how

memory is entangled and how it can be schucked if only we wish to listen and to remember.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).