



## INTERACTING > EDUCATING > ENGAGING making a difference

Written By: Ioannis Styliandis, Dominika Burakiewicz, and Bethanie Martin

While there are so few Jews living in Poland today, the growth of discrimination, anti-Semitism and xenophobia continues to strike fear in the eyes of Poles across the country. Many believe the Jewish community is much stronger and much more prevalent than statistics and numbers reveal.

We are of the opinion that it is our duty to address such social exclusion we encounter in our everyday lives, both against the Jewish community and other minorities. To do just this, Humanity in Action Polska created a relationship with Cukunft Jewish Association to call attention to such anti-Semitism and create a more positive cross-cultural dialogue.

In collaboration with the President of Cukunft Jewish Association Aleksandra Wilczura, our Humanity in Action team has worked on bringing the Jewish history and culture closer to non-Jews in Polish society. This has been achieved through promoting the Lower Silesia Festival of Jewish Culture and raising awareness of the presence of Jewish monuments, buildings and cemeteries.

# >> THE ORGANIZATION

*Cukunft Jewish Association*



Cukunft Jewish Association is a non-governmental organization which was established in Wrocław, Poland in 2014 by a group of young Polish Jews. Cukunft, meaning “Future” in Yiddish, represents the goals and aspirations of the organization: to integrate, educate and engage people of Jewish origin within Polish and European civil society, as well as combat anti-Semitism, xenophobia, discrimination and all other forms of social exclusion through innovative Jewish culture and education.

It all started by organizing Rosh Hashanah Seder in September 2014, with a humble attendance of 26 Jewish community members, ages 2-70. Outside of such formal events as Rosh Hashanah Seder and First Tzedakah Day (Jewish Charity), Cukunft also started the Jewish Cultural Club, which organized monthly activities for members of the Jewish community to attend the cinema, theatre, opera, art exhibitions, concerts and trips to the zoo.

Upon officially registering as an NGO in January 2015, Cukunft began immediate work to combat discrimination, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and all other forms of social exclusion within both Jewish and non-Jewish societies in Poland through the co-organization of many local, national and international projects. Some of these projects include: #CookJewishBeJewish summer camp in Lithuania, Together Against Hate Coalition, HateStop! Campaign, Hasmonaea Sports Activities, Chanuka Family Party, Jewish Wrocław on a Plate-Jewish Secular Culture Live! Lecture series, etc. With each of these projects and initiatives, Cukunft aims at integrating and activating the local secular Jewish Community – those often not associated with any Jewish organization – and those without Jewish roots at all. Each new initiative targets a slightly different Jewish and non-Jewish audience, so as to incorporate multiple identities and multiple needs.

The work is far from done, with the goal of involving and expanding activities into the fields of Jewish education, culture, social activism, sports and community building. This is where we, as Humanity in Action Fellows, and the projects we collaborated on with Cukunft Jewish Association come in!

# >> THE TEAM

*Humanity in Action Polska*



## Bethanie Martin

Bethanie, a native to the United States, holds Bachelor's and Masters' degrees in Architecture and Urban Design from Ball State University and Lawrence Technological University. During her studies in Detroit, Michigan, she pursued an interest in the impact of architecture on issues of social and racial justice and how designers place a role in providing services to those architecture and urban environments often leave behind.



## Dominika Burakiewicz

Dominika, a native to Poland, holds a degree in International Managerial Economics from the University of Gdańsk and was an Erasmus Scholar at the University Lumière Lyon 2 in France. She currently serves as the President of the Rotaract Club in Tricity, Poland, where she manages a team of enthusiasts working on a wide range of projects including: bone marrow donation, international exchange initiatives, business workshops, dance classes for disabled children, and helping abandoned animals.



## Ioannis Styliandis

Ioannis, a native to Greece, holds Masters' degrees in Theology and Culture and Jewish Civilization from Aristotle University and Heidelberg University. He has studied and worked in Greece, Germany, Denmark, Israel, Finland and Sweden, acquiring academic and work experience in Education, Middle East studies, Inter-religious dialogue and Holocaust education. He has since worked as a teacher of religion and history.



# >> ABOUT THE PROBLEM

## *Addressing Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia in Poland*

In 1939, before the Second World War, there were 35 million people living in Poland (Lukaszewski). Of those, 3.3 million were Polish Jews (Lukaszewski). Fast forward nearly 80 years to 2018, and there are now over 38 million people living in Poland, but the number of Polish Jews is much more uncertain. As Chief Rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich “a New Yorker who has lived and worked in Poland since 1990 explains: ‘Some people say 20,000, some say 50,000. I say ‘who cares?’ What’s most important is to create engaging, educational, social, intellectual and religious programming to give them a chance to become connected to the Jewish people” (Vasilyuk).

While the Holocaust obliterated over 90% of the Jewish population in Poland, anti-Semitism is still on the rise and flooding the media and minds of Polish citizens. Much of this media and mindfulness of Jewish culture in Poland does not, however, reflect the same sentiments of Poland’s Chief Rabbi Schudrich to give people a chance to connect to Jewish society. Instead, the thoughts resonate more strongly with a continued distaste for people of Jewish decent. A study released in January 2016 “found that 37 percent of those surveyed voiced negative attitudes towards Jews in 2016, up from 32 percent the previous year, while 56 percent said they would not accept a Jewish person in their family, an increase of nearly 10 percent from 2014” (France-Presse).

The results of this survey just scratch the surface of the opinions reflected in Polish society, where Polish citizens believe that Jews still prominently exist in society, secretly gather together and rule the world with a mask pulled over Poland’s eyes. As Poles continue to fear and believe that Jews are a threat to Polish national identity, anti-Semitism will only continue to grow, and a theme of discrimination will be predicated, making evident the inability to create a cross-cultural dialogue. Even further, it would seem even more evident the inability of Polish Jews to feel safe in their cultural heritage in Polish society.

While the statistics above reveal startling percentages of the Polish population who have anti-Semitic and discriminatory tendencies in their words and actions, what they fail to uphold is the presence of Polish citizens who spend time constantly working towards acceptance of the Jewish community, dialogue around the civil liberties and rights of minority groups, and celebration of diversity within Polish society. If 37 percent of surveyed Polish society voiced negative attitudes toward Jews, that leaves a 63 percent majority of the population with a neutral or positive attitude toward the Jewish community. This majority is evidence that while anti-Semitism exists, acceptance exists stronger.

Moreover, there is a significant amount of Poles who support Jews, minority members, immigrants and diverse voices in the country. To be more precise, there are associations and NGOs such as: Nigdy Więcej/Never Again(1), Otwarta Rzeczypospolita/Open Republic(2), Instytut Spraw Publicznych/Institute

of Public Affairs(3), Forum for Dialogue(4), The Marek Edelman Dialogue Center Łódź(5) and The Ocalenie Foundation (6). The above mentioned organizations and associations are some voices among others, which combat any form of xenophobia, discrimination, racism and anti-Semitic prejudice in the Polish public life.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that there is an event entitled “Days of Judaism in the Catholic Church,” which is also considered as a very good example of interfaith dialogue in Jewish-Christian relations(7).

As such, anti-Semitism and discrimination does not stop Cukunft Jewish Association, Humanity in Action and others from fighting for a more productive language and dialogue surrounding the Polish Jewish community and their relationship with non-Jews.

- (1) ‘NEVER AGAIN’ is Poland’s leading anti-racist organization. The mission of the ‘NEVER AGAIN’ Association is to promote multicultural understanding and to contribute to the development of a democratic civil society in Poland and in the broader region of Central and Eastern Europe. ‘NEVER AGAIN’ is particularly concerned with the problem of education against racial and ethnic prejudices among the young. < <http://www.nigdywiecej.org/en/>>
- (2) Open Republic – Association against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia was established in 1999 as an expression of the need to counteract xenophobic and anti-Semitic prejudice reappearing in the Polish public life. The basic goals of the Association include promotion of the attitude of openness and respect for persons and groups of a different ethnic, national, religious, cultural or social identification and counteracting any forms of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and other attitudes harmful to human dignity. <<http://www.otwarta.org/en/>>
- (3) <http://www.isp.org.pl/index.php?id=1&lang=2>
- (4) Forum for Dialogue is dedicated to inspiring new connections between contemporary Poland and the Jewish people.< <http://dialog.org.pl/en/forum-for-dialogue/>>
- (5) Dialogue Center is an open, secular cultural institution acting beyond any political divisions, the primary purpose of which is to undertake educational, research and cultural activity including but not limited to: a) popularizing the heritage of different cultures, b) promoting multicultural and multiethnic legacy of Łódź, with the emphasis put on the Jewish culture c) propagating the idea of tolerance and counteracting any signs of racism, xenophobia and lack of respect for people of different outlooks on the world, different backgrounds and cultures, d) carrying out projects commemorating the Łódź Jewish community, etc. <<https://www.centrumdialogu.com/en/?Itemid=174>>
- (6) The Ocalenie Foundation exists in order to support migrant men and women in integration and individual development in Poland. We work for intercultural dialogue and for strengthening the civil society. We strive to make every human being able to live with dignity and respect for his / her rights. < [https://ocalenie.org.pl/en/o\\_nas/slowem-wstepu](https://ocalenie.org.pl/en/o_nas/slowem-wstepu)>
- (7) XXI Dzień Judaizmu: spotkanie pt. „Historia Żydów w Warszawie, < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bd11hwLs7rc> >

# >> ABOUT THE SOLUTION

*Promoting the Second Annual Lower Silesia Festival of Jewish Culture*

## Project Overview

Our aim as a team in helping push forward Cukunft Jewish Association's agenda and aspirations for generating cross-cultural dialogue between Jews and non-Jews is centered around raising awareness of Jewish culture and promoting events which celebrate this cultural heritage.

This fall, Cukunft Jewish Association will be hosting its Second Annual Lower Silesia Festival of Jewish Culture in Wałbrzych, Poland. Activities to occur during the one-month festival will include: ceramics, Jewish paper cut, Jewish candles, workshops, exhibitions and concerts to name a few, all of which will be led by members of the Jewish community in the Lower Silesia region of Poland. While the festival is largely planned and prepared for the fall, what is missing is the necessary promotional materials to create a collective sense of responsibility and knowledge surrounding the festival.

Thus, our HIA team worked to develop a series of promotional materials to raise interest in the Jewish festival, including: billboard, citylight bus posters, stickers, and canvas bag designs. While these four main promotional materials highlighted the completed work of this HIA and Cukunft collaboration, the graphic content from each of these can be duplicated and adjusted to fit other promotional platforms such as water bottles, bookmarks, flyers, etc.

The project was completed with the following mentality, altered to reflect the dynamics of those involved: one organization [Cukunft Jewish Association], one team [participants of the Academy of Human Rights Humanity in Action summer fellows], one small project [Lower Silesia Festival of Jewish Culture promotional materials], repeat. Behind such mentality is the hope that even through the smallest of interventions, the largest of differences can be made.



## Project Goals

Prior to the development and creation of graphic and promotional materials, Cukunft and our HIA team created a series of short and long-term goals which served as the motivation for the project's direction.

01

### *Short Term - Fall 2018*

To begin, our short-term goal for the Fall of 2018 is to attract people, both of Jewish and non-Jewish descent, to the Lower Silesian Festival of Jewish Culture. Taking on such goal is achieved through creating and placing promotional materials in various platforms and locations, so as to attract all – not just those in the Lower Silesia region – to the festival. Once people have arrived at the festival, they will be able to begin to make the first steps in generating a cross-cultural dialogue between Jewish and non-Jewish community through the various activities featured at the festival. Whether it be the creation of various art forms – paper cuts, candles, and ceramics – or through listening to concerts featuring Jewish music, each available activity has the potential to reach multiple interests and engage all in Jewish culture. Thus, the promotional materials simply need to make people aware and get them to the festival, and Cukunft's work will do the rest.

02

### *Long Term - Beyond Fall 2018*

Our long-term goal, beyond the Fall of 2018, is to raise awareness of Cukunft Jewish Association's involvement in Jewish communities across Poland, so that Cukunft is recognized as a progressive leader in facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and attentiveness between Jews and non-Jews. While the Lower Silesia Festival of Jewish Culture is the first step in establishing such cultural awareness surrounding the presence of Jews in modern Polish society, it is the recognition of their work beyond which will create a longer lasting impact. Such integration of the graphics from the festival promotional materials into the work of Cukunft Jewish Association has the potential to signal a connection back to conversations started during the festival and continued into the future.

# >> PROJECT GRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT

*Executed by Dominika Burakiewicz (HIA), Ioannis Styliandis (HIA) and Aleksandra Wilczura (Cukunft)*

At the onset of the project, one of the main requirements expressed by Aleksandra Wilczura of the Cukunft Jewish Association was the need for the graphics to bridge the gap between local Polish culture and local Jewish culture, so as to graphically portray a cross-cultural relationship between Jews and non-Jews. Therefore, of important consideration were symbolic icons to the Lower Silesia Region of Poland, Wałbrzych as a central hub for the festival, and the greater Jewish community across Poland. After much consideration and deliberation, the graphic symbology decided upon were: the Tree of Knowledge and Wałbrzych Tree Shield, Jewish Paper Cut artwork featuring buildings of Lower Silesia, and the Stara Kopalnia coal mine.

The “Wałbrzych-Tree of Knowledge-Jewish Paper Cut” tree, featured in the billboard, citylight bus posters, bags and stickers becomes the most prominent graphic representation of the Lower Silesia Festival of Jewish Culture, and also exercises the most integration of cross-cultural dialogue. To begin, the tree at the center of the Wałbrzych Shield would make this graphic recognizable to both Jews and non-Jews living specifically in the city of Wałbrzych and the greater Lower Silesia region of Poland. Next, the tree symbology carries further into Jewish culture and also Polish Catholic culture, by being indicative of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, a feature of the Garden of Eden in the biblical Old Testament book of Genesis. Lastly, the Paper Cut graphic within the tree is representative of a Jewish art form, while also representing symbols from Wałbrzych society.

The Stara Kopalnia, featured in sticker and bag designs, serves as a much more direct reference and is largely easily identifiable. A slight painterly effect is utilized, so as to resonate with the Jewish mural artwork featured across the Lower Silesia region.

From all of this, we can conclude that Tree imagery and the Stara Kopalnia and creative universal symbols which promote diversity, pluralism and cross-cultural dialogue in a Jewish and non-Jewish context.

*Wałbrzych Shield*



*Jewish Paper Cut*



+

=

*Final Graphic*





# >> FINAL GRAPHICS

Executed by Bethanie Martin (HIA)



>> Sticker Design



>> Canvas Bag Design

**II Dolnośląski Festiwal Kultury Żydowskiej**  
**The 2nd Lower Silesian Festival of Jewish Culture**  
**פסטיבל התרבות היהודית בשלייה תחתית**  
**נדרשלעזיער יידישער קולטור פֿעסטיוואַל**

29.09.2018

Teatr Lalki i Aktora, Jana Brzechwy 16, Walbrzych

12:00-18:00 Wystawa - Żydzi na Dolnym Śląsku

14:00 Żydowskie wartości od kuchni - warsztaty kulinarne

15:00 Żydowskie wartości a Wellbeing - warsztaty izraelskiego piękna i urody

16:00 Żydowskie wartości w ekologii warsztaty toreb ekologicznych z motywami żydowskimi - prowadzenie: Dariusz Paczkowski, artysta-grafficiarz, performer, działacz społeczny.

17:50 Hawdala - Rytuał zakończenia Szabbatu

12:00-18:00 Exhibition - Jews in Lower Silesia

14:00 Jewish values from the kitchen - culinary workshops

15:00 Jewish values and wellbeing - workshops on Israeli beauty

16:00 Jewish values in ecology - workshops to create ecological bags with Jewish motifs, conducted by: Dariusz Paczkowski - graphic artist, performer, social activist

17:50 Havdala - the ritual of the end of the Sabbath

SZCZEGÓŁY / MORE: [www.cukunift.pl](http://www.cukunift.pl)

ARTYSTA / PAPER CUT ARTIST: Joanna Matyjašek

PROJEKTANT GRAFICZNY / GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Bethanie Martin

Aleksandra Wilczura, DYREKTOR / DIRECTOR OF THE FESTIVAL

Bethanie Martin, Dominika Burakiewicz, Ioannis Styliadis, ZESPÓŁ PROJEKTOWY / PROJECT TEAM



Zrealizowano dzięki dotacji Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji

**II Dolnośląski Festiwal Kultury Żydowskiej**  
**The 2nd Lower Silesian Festival of Jewish Culture**  
**פסטיבל התרבות היהודית בשלייה תחתית**  
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Havdala - the ritual of the end of the Sabbath 17:50

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Bethanie Martin, Dominika Burakiewicz, Ioannis Styliadis, ZESPÓŁ PROJEKTOWY / PROJECT TEAM



Zrealizowano dzięki dotacji Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji

>> Citylight Bus Poster Design

## II Dolnośląski Festiwal Kultury Żydowskiej

29.09.2018

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12:00-18:00 Wystawa - Żydzi na Dolnym Śląsku

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17:50 Hawdala - Rytuał zakończenia Szabbatu

Pokochaj Dolny Śląsk Poznaj jego wielokulturowe dziedzictwo

SZCZEGÓŁY / MORE: [www.cukunift.pl](http://www.cukunift.pl)

ARTYSTA / PAPER CUT ARTIST: Joanna Matyjašek

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Zrealizowano dzięki dotacji Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji

>> Billboard Design

# >> CONCLUSION

## *Lessons Learned and Advice for Future Fellows*

### Lessons Learned

Unique to this collaboration between HIA summer fellows and Cukunft Jewish Association was that the work was being done in two different cities, by two different organizations, but all with one mission and vision in mind. As a result, it became quickly evident that one does not have to be in the same place as the injustice or problem being fought against but can rather be located in a different city or even different nation, as this collaboration continues, and still achieve unified goals.

In this same way, being untouched by the direct results of the injustice at hand does not make one unqualified to fight for equality. Instead, it presents each individual with a unique opportunity to see the potential in their own skills to help those in need. We are all connected at the core because of our existence as human beings and our deserving of being equal. This simple basis is the only starting point necessary to make collaboration possible when fighting for equality and basic human rights.

### Advice for Future Fellows

Start by finding what you see in your project as a limitation and exploit that to be full of your greatest possibilities. Whether it be limitations of group dynamics or limitations of in-person communication, just to name a few, there is an opportunity lying within waiting to unveil the greatest potential. Our group quickly learned that Facebook messenger, although an informal communication tool on the surface, became a lifeline for collaboration across city lines.

Do not let the restraints of time within your HIA summer fellowship limit your continued, fostered relationship with your partner organizations. The Second Lower Silesia Festival of Jewish Culture occurs in the Fall, and our fellowship was completed in the summer, leaving it only realistically possible for one member of our team to attend the festival and support the cause in person. However, across national lines, we are able to continue our collaboration and develop further graphic content which can be used to represent the aspirations and goals of the festival and beyond. Your time in the HIA summer fellowship will never be enough – so make the most of it, but do not see it as the end.



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