

# GUIDELINE FOR THE FACILITATOR

## Voices in the Void



## RATIONAL

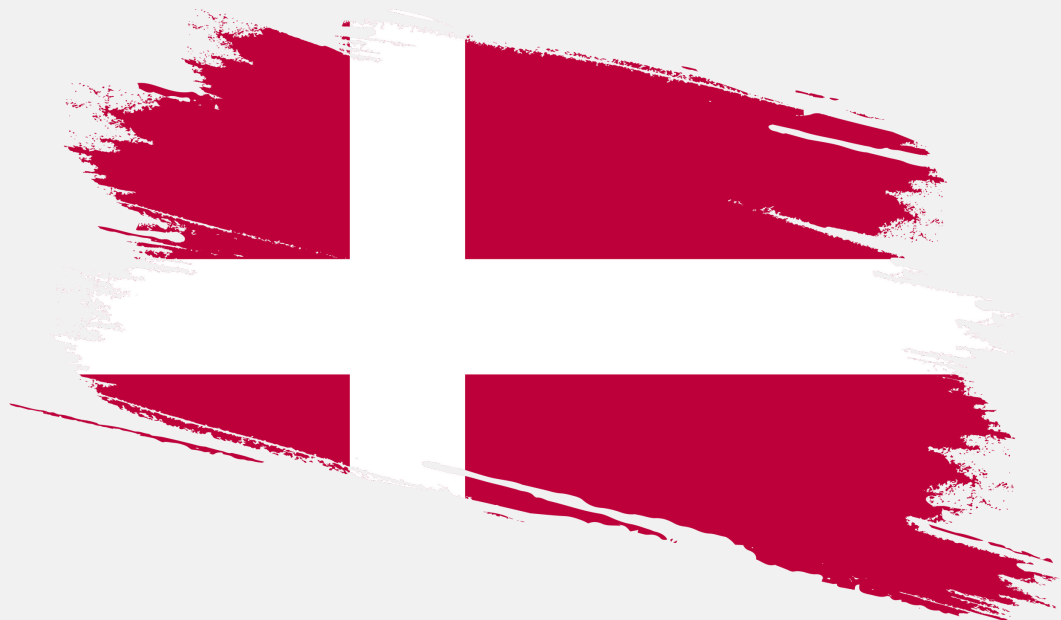
2023 will mark the 80th anniversary of the unique rescue of the Jews in Denmark, which took place in 1943, when, in a short time, more than 7,000 Jews (about 95% of the Danish Jewry) were smuggled on fishing boats to Sweden. Over the past two years, GFH has developed an educational workshop, based on the animated film - "Voices in the Void", produced by 'Humanity in Action'. The film sheds light on the flight and rescue of the Danish Jews in October 1943.

The workshop was developed together with the academic guidance of the Danish Jewish Museum, and with the support of the Danish embassy in Tel Aviv. Throughout this activity, we will explore those events from one child's perspective, Bent Melchior, and of other people during that period. The activity focuses on the values and beliefs that shaped the decisions of those involved.

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## GOALS

- To educate young people about the story of the Danish Jews' flight and rescue, as a significant part of Holocaust memory, as presented by Bent Melchior in the film: Voices in the void.
- To delve within the values, dilemmas, and decisions that stood at the basis of the rescue, both as a society and as individuals.
- To examine and reflect on the relevant meanings of the story, in terms of solidarity, activism, attitudes toward minorities and refugees, etc.



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**The workshop includes activities of guided discussions and independent tasks, both in the plenary and the use of mobile phones. Through out the activity, participants will fill out surveys and share opinions and emotions, which will be constantly updated on the plenary screen.**

## Background

2023 will mark the 80th anniversary of the flight and rescue of Jews in Denmark, which took place in 1943, when, in a short time, more than 7,000 Jews (about 95% of the Danish Jewry) were smuggled on fishing boats to Sweden. The Ghetto Fighters House Museum, together with the Danish Embassy in Israel, developed an online workshop, that sheds light on that rescue story, focused on the tremendous social mobilization of the Jews of Denmark, whom many Danes considered their countrymen. During the activity, we will examine these events through the perspective of Bent Melchior, a child in 1943 who later became the chief Rabbi of Denmark. Behind this story lie values and beliefs that dictated the choices of those who took part in the rescue.



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Before we delve into the story, let us try and map our own values. As we proceed throughout the workshop, we will examine any differences or conflicts between the values that guided the Danes at the time and our own values today.

After clicking on the barcode icon, scan the QR on the screen, which will take you to the first part of the activity on your mobile phones. In the opening screen, fill out a short survey. Afterward, we will check out the results together.



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After the participants have completed the survey, click on the **"Survey Results"** button on the plenary screen, and scroll through the results presented on the screen.

**Based on the results of the survey, what can be learned about your values?**

At this time, we would like the participants to check their values in a theoretical matter. Everyone wants to believe that they would help anyone in trouble, even if it puts them at risk, but this can only be put to test in actual times of danger. We will revisit these values later on in the workshop. After viewing the survey results, click on the **"Optional discussion topics"** button, which brings up several options for discourse. Afterward, close the window and click the **"Back to Plenary"** button.

**Optional discussion topics:**

1. Give an example of how one of the values in the survey can be applied: solidarity, activism, inclusion, equality, or courage.
2. What, in your opinion, is the most important value?
3. When and under what conditions we might act removed from, and even contrary, to our values?

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Relations between Danish society and Danish Jewry did not begin with the outbreak of World War II, or with the Nazi occupation of Denmark. This was preceded by centuries of complex relations, which included trends of inclusion and integration, alongside rejection and exclusion, between a homogeneous Christian Danish majority and a Jewish immigrant minority. Let's get acquainted with the historical background.

**We will now watch a short film describing the process of integration of Danish Jews, throughout the centuries.**

After the film, click on the **"Optional discussion topics"** button which raises several options for discourse.

**Optional discussion topics**

1. What values and concepts arise from the story of the migration and attempts at assimilation of the Jews in Denmark?
2. Do these values and concepts remind you of other migration stories, not necessarily Jewish migrations? How?
3. What are the challenges the host society faces regarding immigration? How can these be dealt with?



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When learning historical events, it is often difficult to remember that these are actual people who experienced it, with all that this implies – feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and decisions that were made. One of those families that experienced the dramatic events in October 1943 was the Melchior family, whose story is told in the film “Voices in the Void”, based on the testimony of Bent Melchior, who later became the Chief Rabbi of Denmark. During the film, try and notice different values that were expressed by the Danes at the time.



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Clicking on the video icon will play the film. Afterward, click on the **“Optional discussion topics”** button which raises several options for discourse.

### Optional discussion topics

1. What emotions/thoughts occurred to you while watching the movie?
2. In Melchior’s testimony, what surprised you? Why?
3. What dilemmas did the non-Jewish Danish citizens face in the testimonial? How did they cope with them?



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Melchior's story is one of the thousands of rescue stories. Each family, man, woman, boy, and girl, has a testimony that reveals more layers and aspects of the dramatic events of October 1943 in Denmark.

How did the Jews act in face of the danger of expulsion? How did the Danes operate? How did the rescue operation unfold?

What can be learned about the moral choices faced by the Danes and Jews at the time?

**Enter the map of Denmark and follow the stories, testimonies, and events that took place in the course of the rescue operation.**

### Activity password: 1943

Following the map activity, which stories/testimonies caught your attention?



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The different points on the map can be opened in the plenary, based on the stories and testimonies chosen by the participants.

After they submit the survey, click on the **"Survey Results"** button and examine together the results. Afterward, click the **"Optional discussion topics"** button which raises several options for discourse.

### **Optional discussion topics:**

1. Give an example of a practical application, based on the values expressed in the testimonies from the rescue story.
2. In light of the testimony you have seen, which cases present a challenge to respond in accordance with our values? What should we do in the "moment of truth" to uphold our values?
3. What lessons or inspiration can be drawn from those events in the present day?



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Bent Melchior made it his life's mission to spread the light, that he felt was reflected during the rescue – A mission continued by his son and grandson, Michael and Yair Melchior.

### **Make your voice heard!**

In the last part of this activity, you will find a number of posts with quotes from the Melchior family, based on their lessons and insights from the rescue story of the Danish Jews. On the Padlet site, comment on a post that you can relate to, and share one value you would apply to our lives today

Afterward, the comments will be presented in the plenary.

### **Activity password – 2023**

## Summary

What makes the rescue of the Danish Jews important and relevant? How does it add to your knowledge about the Holocaust? What lessons and insights can be taken from the story?

During this activity, you were exposed to a unique event in the history of rescue during the Holocaust, when a large number of Danes rose to defend the Jews, starting from King Christian X to the fishermen who risked transporting the Jews to Sweden on their boats. The Danes did not turn their backs on their fellow countrymen, as in the case of so many other countries. As Bent Melchior said: "In the decision of the Danes to be loyal to their Jewish citizens, they saved the vast majority of Danish Jews. It was a popular movement, no one ran it, and everyone participated in it in one way or another."



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