

AEJM, Museum Education Seminar 2015 in Vienna
Report by Grit Keller, Museum Educator at the Jewish Museum Berlin

When my department decided to send me to MES I had to confess that I didn't know much about the work of the AEJM but I was already thrilled by the preliminary program and the participant's list pointing out the names and the various institutions of my European colleagues. I attended the MES for the first time in 2015 in Vienna and I especially wanted to go there and learn about how my colleagues face the challenges of recreating the museum's core exhibition and how they deal with it in their educational program. The curators of Jewish Museum Berlin are currently working on the new core exhibition.

The 4 days of the seminar were very busy but also much diversified. I would like to point out some of my personal highlights. On the first day the participants had a very warm welcome by Eva Koppen and Ardjuna Candotti from the AEJM in the Jewish Museum Vienna where our hosts Hannah Landsmann and Dan Fischman from the Education Department gave us a guided tour through the core exhibition of Jewish Museum of Vienna. In the afternoon, the participants had to present an object from their collection which stands for the (educational) work with whom there are dealing every day. I really liked this presentation because we did not only get the chance to get to know each other but as well to see the various concepts of core exhibitions all across European Jewish Museums.

On the second day, we had the opportunity to see the remarkable Stadttempel Synagogue where Dan Fischman gave us a guided tour and explained us the pedagogical program. In our lively discussion we already anticipated the curricular of the following day. In the afternoon we had a workshop held by Tali Krikler from the Jewish Museum London and Vidar Alne Paulsen from the Oslo Jewish Museum where we asked ourselves how we use Jewish religious objects as educational resources.

One of the highlights was probably the trip to Bratislava where we had a guided tour through the synagogue by Dr Maros Borksy and his colleagues. We could not only learn about the Cubist architecture of the building with the remarkable windows but also about the conception and collection of the Bratislava Jewish Community Museum and their educational program. In the afternoon we discovered the other Jewish Museum of Bratislava. Educator Stanislava Sikulava showed us the core exhibition of the Museum of Jewish Culture (run by the Slovak National Museum) and gave us an idea of the educational program. As soon as the participants entered into the exhibition a lot of questions were raised like: "How much do we learn about everyday life of the Jewish Community of today's Slovakia via a multitude of (historical) Judaica?" or "How important is scenography in a Jewish Museum?". We made a comparison between those two museums and expressed our own mission statements which were of course influenced by our own institutions.

Another highlight was the workshop on the last day where we discussed challenges of our everyday day work. One participant could present a challenge to a group of 3 to 4 colleagues and they gave their advices. After 5 minutes the group of 3 to 4 colleagues went to the next participant and heard about his/her challenges and they gave their advices and so on and so far. There were colleagues who had to develop or execute a program for the very first time and so they really could learn from the experience of their European colleagues. Or they just wanted to find out what kind of methods the others used to make the perfect match between the guides and the groups who visit the museum. We had a very vivid exchange and I want to thank the AEJM so much for it – they made us not only discover new sites and exhibitions, they gave us the opportunity to talk, to learn and to exchange about our educational work on a very high professional and international level.