Academic Engagement NETWORK

# *Empathy and Innovation:*

## Using Design Thinking and Raoul Wallenberg's Legacy to Combat Antisemitism

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*Design thinking* is a problem-solving method that regularly focuses on empathy, creativity, and iterative processes to create innovative solutions. This user-centered approach promotes collaboration, open-mindedness, and adaptability, making it effective for addressing complex social issues and driving meaningful change.[1] While design thinking is a powerful tool for fostering empathy, creativity, and innovative problem-solving, it is important to recognize its potential misuse. The Holocaust, a tragic period in history, also exemplifies how design thinking principles were applied for destructive purposes. This stark contrast highlights the necessity of harnessing design thinking for positive change, particularly in combating antisemitism and promoting a more inclusive society. This paper will propose how, by incorporating Raoul Wallenberg's story with design thinking education, scholars and students can develop the skills and mindset needed to address complex social issues like antisemitism and other forms of hate.[2]

During the Holocaust, six million Jews, including one and a half million children, were murdered, wiping out entire communities. Survivors faced immense physical and psychological trauma, losing their families, homes, and livelihoods. The Holocaust aimed to annihilate Jewish culture and heritage, resulting in the destruction of synagogues, libraries, and cultural institutions. The "Final Solution" was the Nazi plan for the systematic genocide of the Jewish people during World War II, and it used design thinking. Albert Speer (1905-1981), Adolph Hitler's Minister of Armaments and War Production, was also an architect by training, having designed the means for utilizing enslaved Jewish labor for supplying the German war effort.[3] Thus, extreme antisemitism has, on occasion, used design thinking in its own effective ways. It is highly relevant and timely to explore further how design thinking approaches can be employed to combat antisemitism.[4] In this paper, I argue that understanding the historical context of antisemitism, the Holocaust, and other genocides is crucial for comprehending the significance of Wallenberg's actions, especially in relation to design approaches. His legacy exemplifies how empathy, creativity, and problem-solving can make a profound difference in combating hatred and saving lives. Through Wallenberg's seminal work, we can learn valuable lessons about the importance of standing against injustice and protecting vulnerable communities.

## *Who was Raoul Wallenberg, and what did he "design"?*

Raoul Wallenberg is well known in Jewish and Holocaust/Genocide studies circles as a Swedish-born hero who saved thousands of Jews in German-occupied Hungary during the later stages of World War II while serving as Sweden's special envoy to Budapest in 1944. While in Hungary, Wallenberg designed and distributed protective passports that enabled Jews to be sheltered in buildings declared as Swedish territory, similar in status to an embassy. These brave and selfless acts likely contributed to Wallenberg's disappearance in July 1947 (and possible death at age 34). Before this, Wallenberg had attended the University of Michigan, where he completed his architecture degree in 1935, and not in international diplomacy or social work (which is curious considering what he did professionally).[5] Today, Wallenberg is touted as a distinguished alumnus of the University of

Michigan's School of Architecture for what he did to save so many Hungarian Jews, after which the Raoul Wallenberg Institute at the University of Michigan was named.[6]

After completing his studies at the University of Michigan, Wallenberg returned to Sweden to begin his career in architecture. However, much to his dismay, Wallenberg discovered that his degree was not considered sufficient for practicing architecture in his home country. Therefore, he never practiced architecture professionally in Sweden. Many scholars have studied Wallenberg before, such as biographers Tom Streissguth, Emma Simon, Kati Marton, and Lisa Idzikowski, but their focus was on Wallenberg in Europe in relation to his diplomatic work and saving Jews from the Holocaust and then his mysterious disappearance.[7] Wallenberg's experiences and knowledge growth in southeastern Michigan has been generally glossed over as a small step to the larger, epic episode in his life that made him famous.

Design thinking is far more than drawing or conceptualizing aesthetics. Regarding the sub-areas of human-centered design and universal design, which design for addressing antisemitism and other forms of hate could incorporate, there is a significant social work component. More specifically, human-centered design prioritizes the needs, experiences, and perspectives of users, involving research to create tailored solutions. Universal design aims to make places accessible and usable by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or other factors, promoting inclusivity. Both approaches emphasize creating user-friendly, inclusive, and effective solutions that meet the diverse needs of all users. For example, Sasha Costanza-Chock's work has focused on designing for justice through community-led practices, though she does not discuss antisemitism specifically.[8]

***More specifically, human-centered design prioritizes the needs, experiences, and perspectives of users, involving research to create tailored solutions.***

The social worker, Sandra E. Boland, has also focused specifically on Wallenberg and what lessons he can provide the social work profession. Boland believes that "through his work, Raoul Wallenberg gives us a perspective, a framework, and a model of both best practices and delivery of it."[9] Among the elements of social work practice that Boland identifies as intersectional with design thinking were Wallenberg's approaches to "task-centered" and "practiced strategic management."[10] This paper builds on Boland's insights by exploring how these social work methods can be integrated with design thinking to address antisemitism. By combining task-centered practice, strategic management, and design thinking, social workers and others involved with community-level work can develop innovative and effective strategies to combat complex social issues.

As early as an architecture student, Wallenberg demonstrated human-centered design thinking through his class assignments and projects that addressed social work-related objectives in fine detail.[11] One such example of this early in Wallenberg's life was an affordable "Housing Problem" assignment in his architecture program that "required

over ten weeks of study and draughting [sic]," and which was all communicated in design form on a single sheet of paper, representing a very deep understanding of the work at hand.[12] He earned a grade of "excellent" on it (equivalent to an "A"). In another instance, according to his former professor, Jean P. Slusser, so "competent a draughtsman and painter was young Wallenberg that in his last class with me, I encouraged him to create a large mural painting in pastel and crayon on the corridor wall across my office…. He worked on it for… weeks."[13] Later, after finishing his studies, Wallenberg was bestowed the American Institute of Architects' silver medal in 1935 as a student with the highest scholastic standing in an academic program.

Design thinking lacks a single, universally accepted definition because its interpretation varies across disciplines and contexts. For some individuals, elements of design thinking might already feel intuitive or second nature, providing an advantage when tackling complex problems. Human-centered design thinking involves creating actionable plans to improve situations, blending situational awareness and empathy into idea generation. It combines analytical and creative thinking to address problems, considering context, stakeholder needs, logistical challenges, and costs. This approach draws inspiration from diverse and sometimes conflicting sources, building on these ideas to develop progressively better solutions. It is an iterative process where problems are defined, researched, and analyzed so that ideas are proposed, critiqued, and refined, often looping back to improve upon initial concepts. The process often involves gathering information, analyzing and defining problems, generating ideas, synthesizing through modeling, and conducting critical evaluations. While design thinking is not a strict algorithm, it shares a strong connection with social science methodologies.[14]

The "design" product, as tangibly manifested for saving Jews in fascist Hungary by Wallenberg, was the protective *shutzpass* passport he developed (see Figure 1). According to Wallenberg's colleague, Per Anger (1913-2002), "the protective passports… were furnished with the [Swedish Foreign] minister's signature and explained straightforwardly that the holder and his property were under the protection of the Swedish legation until such time as his [/her] emigration to Sweden could be arranged."[15] The success of the passports that Wallenberg designed was supported by the preparations, rapport, active listening, critical thinking, and focused observations he made, which are also part of design thinking. As Andrew Pressman, a pedagogical developer of design thinking, has observed, a "leader who applies design thinking is someone who has a vision, understands where he or she is going to direct the process, but is not confined by the boundaries or preconceptions of what a solution could be."[16] Anger witnessed this as well, recollecting how Wallenberg "was the driving force behind the agreements with the [Hungarian] Arrow Cross regime that compelled them to respect not only the five thousand Swedish protective passports but also corresponding documents of the other neutral legations." [17]

SCHUTZ-PASS

Nr. 28/69.

Name: Lili Katz
Név:

Wohnort: Budapest
Lakás:

Geburtsdatum: 13.Sept.1913.
Születési ideje:

Geburtsort: Budapest
Születési helye:

Körperlänge: 164 cm.
Magasság:

Haarfarbe: blond Augenfarbe: grau
Hajszín: Szemszín:

Unterschrift:
Aláírás:

SCHWEDEN

SVÉDORSZÁG

Die Kgl. Schwedische Gesandtschaft in Budapest bestätigt, dass der Obengenannte im Rahmen der — von dem Kgl. Schwedischen Aussenministerium autorisierten — Repatriierung nach Schweden reisen wird. Der Betreffende ist auch in einen Kollektivpass eingetragen.

*Bis Abreise steht der Obengenannte und seine Wohnung unter dem Schutz der Kgl. Schwedischen Gesandtschaft in Budapest.*

Gültigkeit: erlischt 14 Tage nach Einreise nach Schweden.

A budapesti Svéd Kir. Követség igazolja, hogy fentnevezett — a Svéd Kir. Külügyminisztérium által jóváhagyott — repatriálás keretében Svédországba utazik.

Nevezett a kollektiv útlevélben is szerepel.

*Elutazásáig fentnevezett és lakása a budapesti Svéd Kir. Követség oltalma alatt áll.*

Érvényét veszti a Svédországba való megérkezéstől számított tizennegyedik napon.

Reiseberechtigung nur gemeinsam mit dem Kollektivpass. Einreisewisum wird nur in dem Kollektivpass eingetragen.

*Budapest, den* 25.August *1944*

KÖNIGLICH SCHWEDISCHE GESANDTSCHAFT
SVÉD KIRÁLYI KÖVETSÉG

Kgl. Schwedischer Gesandte

*Figure 1: A letter of protection (*Shutzpass*) issued by the Swedish legation in Budapest to the Hungarian Jew, Lili Katz. The document bears the initial "W" for Wallenberg in the bottom left corner. August 25, 1944. U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Lena Kurtz Deutsch.*

Together, between the shutzpass he devised and the design thinking leadership acumen he demonstrated, it is estimated that 25,000 Jews in fascist Hungary were saved by Wallenberg alone in this manner (in addition to another 70,000 through other interventions). Rachel O. Haspel, chairwoman of the Raoul Wallenberg Committee of the United States, believes "there must be a strong connection between Wallenberg's training as an architect and the precision behind the planning of his rescue mission in Budapest."[18] Besides Anger, Wallenberg's cousin, Gustaf Söderlund (1890-1979), observed that the "years Raoul spent in America, studying at the University of Michigan and traveling around, were critical to the development of his character."[19] A former classmate of Wallenberg, Sol King (1910-1978), reflected on how, as "a classmate of mine, I remember Wallenberg to be a very talented yet modest person who showed great insight in finding simple solutions to complex problems…. Wallenberg was selected as one to be honored by the College of Architecture and Design, not merely because he was an architect who happened to be a great humanitarian [but because of his…c]oncern for human beings is fundamental to the creation of good architecture…."[20] Thus, design thinking, which involves creating actionable plans to improve situations, played a significant role in Wallenberg's efforts (despite the fact that he was color-blind).[21] His protective passports were a product of this approach, combining empathy, critical thinking, and strategic management. Wallenberg's training in architecture contributed to his precise planning and execution of rescue missions, saving thousands of Jews from the Holocaust.

## *Defining Design Thinking that is Human Centered in Relation to Addressing Antisemitism*

Design thinking education can be a powerful tool to address antisemitism and other forms of hate. Indeed, the work of Esther Han has found that design thinking's "purpose is to provide all professionals with a standardized innovation process to develop creative solutions to problems—design-related or not."[22] As a problem-solving method, human-centered design thinking focuses on understanding the needs of people and their experiences. Addressing antisemitism must begin with empathy-building activities so that there is a greater understanding of the lived experiences of those who were harmed. Human-centered design thinking then combines empathy with creativity for innovative solutions and problem-solving which can be evaluated within a curriculum through iterative testing, ensuring effective user-centered outcomes. For example, a course could have an assignment that starts with understanding the demographic of concern by researching and observing their difficulties, such as the problem of "Why are Jews experiencing discrimination from another group?". Next, the problem is clearly defined, followed by brainstorming a range of ideas and potential solutions for addressing antisemitic discrimination. Proposals are then developed to tackle specific issues of antisemitism within this assignment's scenario, whether real or simulated, such as stereotyping, systemic social exclusion, vandalism, hate speech, and/or violence. These proposals are tested with users to collect feedback, and the solutions are refined accordingly. This people-centered approach encourages innovation, especially if it can have more universal applications to similar

situations. In an educational setting, students would implement their solutions through community projects, educational campaigns, or policy recommendations and measure their effectiveness.[23]

Using Raoul Wallenberg as a case study in design thinking education can therefore be a powerful way to address antisemitism. Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who saved tens of thousands (possibly more than 100,000) Jews during the Holocaust, exemplifying the principles of human-centered design thinking. Students can start by learning about Wallenberg's life and the historical context of his actions. For example, Wallenberg's creative solutions for saving Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust can be linked to his design thinking education in architecture at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. This connection thus suggests that design thinking is integral to architectural education and is worth investigating further.

In this regard, it is worth also considering the value of studying the work of Oskar Schindler (1908-1974). Known for his courageous efforts to save Jews during the Holocaust, Schindler attended a technological school where he studied machinery and engineering, which included some design thinking principles.[24] Motivated by a profound sense of empathy, Schindler recognized the urgent need to protect Jews from the Nazis. He devised innovative strategies, such as using his factory to shield Jews from deportation by claiming they were essential to the war effort. Schindler's methods evolved as he adapted to changing circumstances, continually refining his strategies to ensure the safety of his workers. He worked with various stakeholders, including Nazi officials, leveraging his charm, influence, and resources to secure necessary permits and protections. Schindler's approach was not too different than Wallenberg's and deeply human-centered, focusing on the immediate needs and safety of the Jews he was protecting. Schindler's factory served as a prototype for his protective measures, allowing him to test and refine his strategies. His actions are another demonstration of how design thinking principles can be applied to address complex and life-threatening situations.[25] More research is necessary to understand the educational backgrounds and training of other significant rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust, as well as individuals who saved many lives during other atrocities.[26] Design thinking can also accommodate various learning styles, making it accessible to a diverse group of students who are eager to contribute positively to society, especially considering the different background experiences of Wallenberg and Schindler. Such diversification of access is an aspect of the subfield of universal design.

While the specifics of Schindler's educational curriculum at the technological school he attended could not be located, those for Wallenberg at the University of Michigan were. According to the College of Architecture's 1931-1932 statement on "The Nature of Architecture," architecture is "more circumscribed as a medium of expression by utilitarian and technical conditions than is any other of the fine arts" and "it must function at once practically and artistically."[27] Course subjects within the curriculum from when Wallenberg attended included (general) design, architectural design (distinct from general design), construction, (architectural) history, drawing, science, mathematics, and modern language (such as English, French, or German), among other specialization or elective topics. Wallenberg occasionally shared his personal experiences and reflections in these courses

in correspondence with friends and family, which appear in *Letters and Dispatches, 1924-1944: Raoul Wallenberg*, edited by Timothy Bent.[28] Of particular interest within the design courses, Wallenberg learned that the "aim throughout these courses is to develop the imagination, [and] creative power… [as well as] to encourage freedom of expression… of the various solutions of which each problem is capable."[29] While the University of Michigan's architecture program was focused on challenges more directly tied to buildings, such as the previously mentioned affordable "Housing Problem" assignment, these same learned skills played a role later in Wallenberg's work on saving Jews from the Nazi-friendly regime in Budapest. This gives pause for educators of design as well as Antisemitism and Genocide Studies in the present to imagine how many more professionals could have been like Wallenberg (as well as Schindler, for that matter) if there had been more educational curriculums at the time that integrated design pedagogy with objectives to address antisemitism and other forms of hate.

***Collaboration is also essential, particularly for those from diverse backgrounds, as teamwork helps students value different perspectives and work together towards shared goals.***

In summary, design thinking enhances critical thinking by encouraging students to explore multiple solutions instead of settling for simplistic or biased views. Collaboration is also essential, particularly for those from diverse backgrounds, as teamwork helps students value different perspectives and work together towards shared goals. Additionally, design thinking is action-oriented, meaning students are not just learning about antisemitism in the past and present but are also actively addressing these issues in their communities for the future. This approach thus promotes proactive and thoughtful engagement.

## *Contemporary Applications for Combating Antisemitism*

Design thinking approaches can help develop innovative and practical solutions that address the root causes of antisemitism and effective means for addressing it. For example, under the Biden administration, the U.S. Department of Education launched new tools and resources as part of the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, supporting students, educators, and communities to create safer and more inclusive environments. The U.S. State Department's Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism has engaged in global efforts to fight antisemitism, focusing on education, law enforcement, coalition-building, and combating online hate.[30] The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has shifted its approach to combating antisemitism by addressing it as a digital literacy problem and developing programs to educate the public on recognizing and countering online hate and misinformation. This change reflects a broader understanding of how antisemitism manifests in the digital age. The ADL develops programs and initiatives that educate the public on recognizing and countering online hate and misinformation.[31] In another example, the "Stand Up to Jewish Hate" campaign by the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism (FCAS) exemplifies the implementation of design thinking to combat antisemitism on social

media. The campaign began with empathetic research to understand the experiences of Jewish individuals, ensuring solutions were tailored to their needs. FCAS collaborated with various stakeholders to brainstorm innovative ideas, created different types of content, and iteratively refined their strategies based on feedback. They used data analytics to measure the campaign's impact, ensuring it made a tangible difference. This case study highlights how design thinking's principles of empathy, collaboration, prototyping, iteration, and data-driven decision-making can effectively address complex social issues.[32]

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) provides specialized resources and training sessions to help educators, students, parents, and community members thwart and respond to hate-based intimidations, discrimination, and harassment.[33] Programs like the ones identified develop innovative and effective solutions by deeply understanding the experiences and challenges of affected communities. Engaging various stakeholders ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, and continuously refining interventions based on feedback leads to more impactful and sustainable outcomes. Ultimately, these efforts contribute to creating a more inclusive society where the needs and voices of all individuals are acknowledged and respected. The European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) collects data on antisemitic hate crimes and incidents, as well as the perspectives of Jewish communities. This data is essential for developing effective strategies to counter antisemitism, and the FRA's efforts include the development of a standardized methodology for recording antisemitic incidents, which helps in understanding and addressing the issue more effectively.[34]

Design thinking has been shown to be an effective approach in various educational and social contexts, including combating antisemitism. A study published in the *International Journal of Instruction*, for example, examined the effectiveness of improving student creativity skills and entrepreneurial alertness. The results demonstrated a positive relationship between design thinking practices and learning outcomes, including the acquisition of new skills and knowledge. This relationship was mediated by psychological empowerment, highlighting the role of design thinking in fostering a sense of agency and capability.[35] The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) conducted a study on the rise of antisemitism online during the pandemic, commissioned by the European Commission. The study found significant increases in antisemitic content on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. By understanding the patterns and trends of online antisemitism, organizations can develop targeted interventions to counteract this content. This approach aligns with design thinking principles of empathy and iterative problem-solving.[36] The Raoul Wallenberg Institute at the University of Michigan also seeks to develop strategies to combat antisemitism, divisiveness, and discrimination through teaching, research, and public engagement.[37] These programs utilize design thinking principles to craft innovative solutions that tackle the changing landscape of antisemitism, showcasing how design thinking can be effectively applied for impactful and sustainable strategies in combating social issues. Through understanding the experiences of affected communities, engaging diverse stakeholders, and continuously refining interventions, these initiatives contribute to building a more inclusive society.

## *Applying Empathetic Design Thinking to Antisemitism and Genocide Studies for Proactive Interventions*

Presently, no specific degree programs in design thinking explicitly focus on addressing antisemitism. Therefore, programs on antisemitism-related studies may more effectively combine design thinking within their curriculums.[38] Design thinking could significantly enhance higher education programs in Antisemitism Studies, Holocaust Studies, and Genocide Studies by fostering innovative and practical approaches to combating contemporary issues. This methodology emphasizes empathy, which is crucial for understanding the experiences and challenges faced by affected communities. By developing deeper insights into the root causes and impacts of antisemitism, students can create more effective strategies. Empathy is a foundational element of design thinking, as highlighted in the work of Wallenberg. His efforts to save thousands of Jews during the Holocaust were driven by his deep empathy and understanding of their plight. Wallenberg's ability to empathize with those he was helping allowed him to devise creative and effective solutions, such as issuing protective passports and establishing safe houses. These actions exemplify how empathy can lead to innovative problem-solving in the face of complex social issues. Additionally, since design thinking encourages creative problem-solving and iterative processes, students can apply these skills to develop effective strategies and interventions to address antisemitism in various contexts, from educational settings to public policy. Wallenberg's approach to problem-solving was iterative and adaptive. He continuously refined his strategies based on the feedback and changing circumstances, demonstrating the importance of flexibility and adaptability in design thinking.[39]

The collaborative nature of design thinking can also benefit these educational programs by bringing together diverse perspectives from history, sociology, psychology, social work, and other fields, leading to more comprehensive and innovative solutions.[40] Wallenberg's success was partly due to his ability to collaborate with various stakeholders, including other diplomats and local communities. This interdisciplinary collaboration is essential for developing holistic solutions to combat antisemitism. Moreover, design thinking involves creating actionable plans and prototypes. Students can use this methodology to design and test educational programs, advocacy campaigns, and community initiatives to reduce antisemitism. Wallenberg's protective *shutzpass* passports were a tangible product of his design thinking approach.[41] By creating and testing these passports, he was able to protect thousands of Jews from persecution. This hands-on approach allows students to see the real-world impact of their solutions and refine them based on feedback.

Human-centered design ensures that solutions are tailored to the needs of those affected by antisemitism. This approach can help create more impactful and sustainable interventions by focusing on the real-world experiences of affected communities. Wallenberg's work was deeply human-centered, as he focused on the immediate needs and safety of the Jewish community in Hungary. He created effective interventions by prioritizing the needs of those he was helping.[42] Overall, integrating human-centered design thinking into higher education programs in Antisemitism Studies and related fields can equip students with the tools and mindset needed to tackle these issues innovatively and effectively. From a design thinking

perspective, educational programs on Antisemitism Studies in higher education may face several potential shortcomings. While the programs emphasize theoretical knowledge and research, students could benefit from more hands-on, practical experiences. Design thinking thrives on real-world application and iterative testing, which could be enhanced through more fieldwork, internships, or community-based projects. Although many programs boast interdisciplinary faculties, there may be room for deeper integration of diverse fields such as design, technology, and social innovation, fostering more comprehensive and innovative approaches to combating antisemitism.

Present curriculums might also not fully leverage the empathy-driven aspects of human-centered design thinking. Incorporating more people-centered design methodologies could help students better understand and address the needs and experiences of those affected by antisemitism. Design thinking involves iterative prototyping, testing, and refining solutions.[43] These programs could incorporate more opportunities for students to engage in this cycle, allowing them to develop and improve interventions based on feedback and real-world impact. While current programs encourage collaboration, there could be more emphasis on co-creation with stakeholders, including affected communities, educators, and policymakers. This approach ensures that solutions are developed with direct input from those who are most affected by antisemitism. Additionally, some programs might benefit from a stronger focus on how to scale and implement successful interventions. Human-centered design thinking emphasizes creating solutions and ensuring they can be effectively deployed and sustained over time. By addressing these potential shortcomings, higher education programs in Antisemitism Studies, Holocaust Studies, and Genocide Studies could further enhance their impact and effectiveness.

***Integrating human-centered design thinking into educational programs addressing antisemitism can create engaging and impactful learning experiences.***

Integrating human-centered design thinking into educational programs addressing antisemitism can create engaging and impactful learning experiences. For example, students can create empathy maps to understand the experiences and emotions of individuals affected by antisemitism. This involves educators introducing the concept of "empathy mapping," with students researching historical and contemporary instances of antisemitism, filling in sections about what the affected individuals might see, hear, think, feel, say, and do. Another project might involve students identifying specific problems related to antisemitism and brainstorming solutions. This includes identifying issues such as stereotypes, hate speech, or lack of awareness; conducting interviews with community members, experts, or survivors; using brainstorming techniques to generate a wide range of ideas; and evaluating and selecting the most promising ideas for further development.[44]

Lastly, students can develop prototypes of educational tools or campaigns to combat antisemitism. This process involves creating low-fidelity prototypes such as posters, videos, or interactive activities, presenting and revising them based on constructive feedback, testing them in real-world settings, developing a plan for implementing resolutions and

measuring their impact, and assessing if there may be more universal applications for addressing other forms of hate beyond antisemitism. Storytelling can also be used to foster empathy and reflection on the impact of antisemitism. Students can collect stories from individuals who have experienced antisemitism, learn effective storytelling techniques, present their stories through various mediums, and engage in discussions on the impact of these stories and how they can inspire action against antisemitism.[45]

Collaborative projects with local organizations can result in community-based projects addressing antisemitism. This involves establishing partnerships with local Jewish organizations, museums, or advocacy groups, collaboratively planning projects that raise awareness and educate the community, implementing these projects, assessing their effectiveness, and gathering feedback. Finally, organizing design challenges focused on creating solutions to combat antisemitism can be highly effective. This includes defining specific challenges, forming diverse teams, guiding teams through the design thinking process, and having teams present their solutions, with the best ideas being recognized and potentially implemented.[46] By integrating design thinking into educational programs, educators can empower students to actively combat antisemitism in ways that may also have more universal applications, fostering a more inclusive society.

## *Concluding Thoughts: Human-Centered Design Thinking is Not a Silver Bullet for Ending Antisemitism, but it Can Help*

Wallenberg's legacy serves as a powerful example of how design thinking can be applied to address complex social issues. While integrating design thinking into educational programs to combat antisemitism and other forms of hate holds great promise, several challenges and limitations must be considered. One significant difficulty is the implementation of human-centered design thinking in educational settings. Most educators lack the training or resources to effectively facilitate design thinking activities, which can be complex and time-consuming. Additionally, the iterative nature of design thinking requires a flexible curriculum and sufficient time, which may not always be available given rigid school schedules. Another challenge is possible opposition from stakeholders, including parents, administrators, and community members. Some may question the relevance or effectiveness of design thinking because of a lack of understanding about it. There may also be concerns about the appropriateness of discussing sensitive topics with students, leading to pushback against such programs.

Measuring the impact of design thinking initiatives can also be challenging. Unlike traditional educational methods, the outcomes of human-centered design thinking are often qualitative and are not always easily measured or replicable. This can make it difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs to stakeholders who prioritize measurable and quantitative results and run the risk of superficial engagement. Without a deep understanding of the issues at hand, students may produce well-intentioned solutions that lack depth or sustainability. Ensuring that students have a comprehensive understanding of

antisemitism is crucial for meaningful engagement.[47] Finally, addressing antisemitism and other hatreds through human-centered design thinking requires a supportive and inclusive environment. Schools and communities must be committed to fostering open dialogue and addressing biases. Without this foundational support, design thinking initiatives may struggle to gain traction and achieve their intended impact. Despite these challenges, however, with careful planning, adequate training, and a supportive community, human-centered design thinking can be a formidable tool in educating students about antisemitism and fostering a more inclusive society.

Inspired by Wallenberg's innovative methods, such as issuing protective passports and establishing safe houses, students can brainstorm creative solutions to modern-day issues of antisemitism. Students can be encouraged to think outside the box and consider various approaches to protect and support Jewish and other vulnerable communities. The integration of human-centered design thinking into curricula encourages students to engage deeply with the experiences of those affected by antisemitism, identify and define related problems, brainstorm innovative solutions, and implement these solutions in real-world contexts. This approach enhances students' critical thinking and collaboration skills and promotes a more inclusive society, especially when universal applications for the benefit of all people are considered.

The example of Wallenberg serves as a powerful case study in this context. His actions during the Holocaust, driven by empathy and innovative problem-solving abilities, exemplify human-centered design thinking principles. His creative solutions, such as issuing protective *shutzpass* passports and establishing safe houses, highlight how innovation can lead to impactful interventions in the face of extreme adversity. By studying Wallenberg's legacy, students can learn valuable lessons about the importance of creativity and adaptability in combating hatred and protecting vulnerable communities. To integrate human-centered design thinking into programs against antisemitism and other hatreds, governments, schools, and non-government organizations can take several steps. Governments should fund these programs, train educators, create supportive policies, and raise public awareness. Schools should include human-centered design thinking in their curricula, partner with local organizations for real-world projects, foster inclusive environments, and measure program impact. Nonprofit organizations should build networks and alliances, engage communities, advocate for supportive policies, and invest in research. Following these recommendations can create a supportive environment to combat antisemitism, effectively fostering a more inclusive society.[48]

In conclusion, this paper has explored the significant role that human-centered design thinking can play in addressing antisemitism and other forms of hate through educational programs. Integrating design thinking into educational programs can potentially create lasting positive change. It equips students with the tools and mindset needed to address antisemitism and other hatreds proactively, fostering a generation of innovative problem-solvers. The broader implications for society are profound, as this approach can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions to social issues, ultimately contributing to a more just and inclusive world. By embracing the principles of human-centered design thinking and learning from the example of Raoul Wallenberg (see Figure 2), educators and students alike can make meaningful strides in the fight against hate, including antisemitism.

*Figure 2: Raoul Wallenberg Plaza and the Ann Arbor [Michigan] Holocaust Memorial. Photograph by the author.*

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## ENDNOTES

1 See Andrew Pressman, *Design Thinking: A Guide to Creative Problem Solving for Everyone* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

2 The subject of this paper on addressing antisemitism through design thinking may have applications for confronting other forms of xenophobic hate, such as skin color-based racism and Islamophobia, substituting antisemitism for these other topics that students and scholars may want to address.

3 Tanja Shult, *A Hero's Many Faces: Raoul Wallenberg in Contemporary Monuments* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009), 195.

4 While the Holocaust is a well-known genocide, other genocides have occurred throughout history. The Armenian Genocide (1915-1923) saw the Ottoman Empire exterminate 1.5 million Armenians. In the Rwandan Genocide (1994), approximately 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by Hutu extremists in a hundred days. During the Bosnian War (1992-1995), Bosnian Serb forces committed genocide against Bosniak Muslims, including the massacre at Srebrenica.

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6 Raoul Wallenberg Vertical Files, *Raoul Wallenberg Collection*.

7 See Tom Streissguth, *Raoul Wallenberg: Swedish Diplomat and Humanitarian* (New York: Rosen Publishing, 2001); Kati Marton, *Wallenberg: The Incredible True Story of the Man Who Saved the Jews of Budapest* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2011); Emma Simon, *Raoul Wallenberg* (New York: Rosen Publishing, 2016); Lisa Idzikowski, *Raoul Wallenberg: Swedish Diplomat and Hero of the Holocaust* (New York: Enslow Publishing, 2018).

8 See Sasha Costanza-Chock, *Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2020).

9 Sandra E. Boland, "Raoul Wallenberg: His Lessons for the Social Work Profession," *Social Work*, 59:1 (January 2014), 87-89.

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14 Pressman, *Design Thinking,* 1-12.

15 Per Anger, "Dispatches from Budapest, July 18-December 12, 1944: Introduction," in *Letters and Dispatches, 1924-1944: Raoul Wallenberg,* Timothy Bent, ed., Kjersti Board, trans. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1995), 213-32.

16 Pressman, *Design Thinking,* 16-17, 67.

17 Anger, "Dispatches from Budapest," 213-32.

18 Rachel O. Haspel, "Afterword," in *Letters and Dispatches, 1924-1944: Raoul Wallenberg,* Timothy Bent, ed., Kjersti Board, trans. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1995), 279-84.

19 Gustaf Söderlund and Gitte Wallenberg, "Introduction," in *Letters and Dispatches, 1924-1944: Raoul Wallenberg,* Timothy Bent, ed., Kjersti Board, trans. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1995), 3-8.

20 Sol King, "In Tribute to Raoul Gustaf Wallenberg," in Vincent Scully: 1996 Raoul Wallenberg Lecture, Ann Arbor.

21 Bengt Jangfeldt, *The Hero of Budapest: The Triumph and Tragedy of Raoul Wallenberg*. Translated by Harry D. Watson and Bengt Janfeldt. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 56.

22 Note: part of this paper was copy-edited for grammar using AI technology. The ideas within the paper are entirely the authors. Esther Han, "What Is Design Thinking & Why Is It Important?" *Business Insights* (18 January 2022) at https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/what-is-design-thinking (accessed August 25, 2023).

23 See Pressman, *Design Thinking*.

24 Schindler is credited with saving around 1,200 Jews.

25 See Fremon, *Schindler, Wallenberg, Miep Gies*.

26 This is in comparison to another well-known rescuer of Jews, Miep Gies (1909-2010), who bravely hid Anne Frank, the Frank family, and four other Dutch Jews, totaling eight people. Tragically, they were eventually discovered and perished. While Gies's actions were undeniably heroic, the scale of her efforts was limited in the context of the vast number of people needing rescue during the Holocaust. Gies did not have a background in design thinking.

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28 See *Letters and Dispatches, 1924-1944: Raoul Wallenberg,* Timothy Bent, ed., Kjersti Board, trans. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1995).

29 "Colleges of Engineering and Architecture, Announcement: 1931-1932," 241.

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