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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici

GEDENKDIENST

SISSA Medialab

in collaboration with eucunet
European Children's Universities Network

CHILDREN'S UNIVERSITIES, OPEN SCHOOLING, AND THE FORMATION OF LOCAL MEMORIALINKS FOR EUROPEAN REMEMBRANCE

CU REMEMBER

Guided tours through Science and Remembrance in Trieste

Description of the visits and instructions for use

English version

Co-funded by the European Union

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CU REMEMBER – Children's Universities, Open Schooling, and the Formation of Local MemoriaLinks for European Remembrance

This Guided Tour Handbook was created as part of the CU REMEMBER project (co-funded under CERV-2024-CITIZENS-REM-HOLOCAUST; reference number: 101196567; Coordinator: Kinderbüro Universität Wien gGmbH)

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Website: www.cu-remember.eu

Trieste 2026

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1. Introduction

This handbook **brings together materials, tools, and reflections designed to replicate two guided tours through significant sites in the city of Trieste**, developed and implemented within the European project **CU REMEMBER**. The two proposed itineraries explore themes connected to historical events and to the people who played a central role in them, closely linked to the **history of scientific Trieste and to the persecutions carried out under the Nazi-Fascist regime**. The first itinerary tells the story of the Jewish community in the city and focuses on the role of Trieste in the spread of psychoanalysis in Italy. The second itinerary shows how mental health has long been a key issue for Trieste, with important references to the struggle for civil rights. The visit is also an opportunity to recount the betrayal of medical institutions during the Nazi-Fascist period, when Jewish patients were handed over to Nazi forces, deported to extermination camps, and killed.

The tours were conceived as pilot activities and are intended t**o accompany students, teachers, and educators in an active exploration of local history, connecting memory, science, rights, and citizenship**.

CU REMEMBER is a project co-funded by the European Union that addresses a particularly urgent challenge: the gradual disappearance of direct witnesses of the Second World War and the Holocaust, alongside the re-emergence of nationalisms, extremisms, and discriminatory discourses that call fundamental democratic values into question. In an increasingly interconnected and multicultural European context, the project aims to develop additional forms of Holocaust education capable of engaging younger generations through languages, practices, and contexts close to their experience. The project partners are: Vienna University Children's Office, SISSA Medialab (Trieste), the University of Vienna, the Association GEDENKDIENST (Vienna), and the Department of Humanities of the University of Trieste.

The two guided tours presented here fit within this framework and share a common underlying theme: the relationship between Nazi-Fascist persecutions and Trieste as a scientific hub. Today, Trieste can be considered a **"City of Science,"** hosting numerous internationally renowned research centers, but this role is the result of a complex history marked by persecutions, borders, and reconstruction. Many of the protagonists of the city's scientific and cultural development between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came from the Jewish community and were directly affected by racial laws, Nazi occupation, and war. In general, reflecting on these events makes it possible to understand how discrimination, exclusion, and violence impact not only individual lives but also the scientific, cultural and economic progress of a territory.

The **first guided tour** is dedicated to the history of the Jewish community of Trieste and to several key figures linked to the spread of psychoanalysis, in which Trieste played a pioneering role in Italy. Through a walk in the city center, the tour connects places, biographies, and documents, showing how ideas, knowledge, and people crossed cultural and geographical boundaries, and how Nazi-Fascist persecution interrupted or diverted these trajectories.

The **second tour** takes place in the area of the former San Giovanni psychiatric hospital and addresses the relationship between mental health, civil rights, and institutional repression. Starting from the history of the asylum and the deportation of patients classified as being of "Jewish race" by the Nazi-

Fascist regime, the tour invites reflection on how the definition of "deviance" was used to justify exclusion, confinement, and violence. It also reflects on how the work of Franco Basaglia and his group later restored freedom and dignity to institutionalized individuals, contributing to a profound transformation of society. A further point of reflection concerns the therapeutic relationship between doctor and patient and its evolution over time, also considering the dramatic ruptures of the Nazi-Fascist period.

Both visits were offered in autumn 2025 to **final-year classes of upper secondary school,** a key phase of the school curriculum in which twentieth-century history is addressed. The routes are designed as **participatory experiences**, in which students are invited to discover people and places through sites and documents, encouraging direct engagement and critical reflection on the link between past and present.

This handbook is intended as a **tool for teachers, educators, associations, and citizens** interested in exploring these sites independently or in replicating the two routes with classes or other groups, based on the conviction that memory is not merely an exercise focused on the past, but a living practice capable of questioning the present and shaping the future. For each route, this document provides a detailed description of the itinerary, the educational materials used, and, in the concluding section, the reflections that guided the design and the retrospective analysis of the activities.

The materials developed by SISSA Medialab in collaboration with the Carlo and Vera Wagner Jewish Museum of Trieste may be freely used, provided that the source is credited. For any public redistribution, republication, or derivative materials that retain the project name or our institutional affiliation, the content must not be altered, to avoid inaccuracies or misrepresentations of sensitive historical topics. This guide, including the supporting educational materials, is produced in **two languages: Italian and English**.

For further information about the project or the materials, the authors can be contacted at cu-remember@medialab.sissa.it.

2. Structure of the routes and guidelines for using the materials

The two guided tours presented in this handbook are conceived as **narrative walks "in the footsteps of" real people,** in which places, biographies, and documents intertwine to tell a broader story that connects the memory of twentieth-century persecutions with the scientific and social history of the city of Trieste. From a logistic point of view, the tours take place in a way similar to a traditional guided visit: walking between sites of interest and stopping at particularly meaningful locations for the proposed narrative. From an educational perspective, however, the focus is on the active participation of the participants and on the gradual discovery of the persons along the route, to whom the students are invited to relate.

In the following chapters of the handbook, **a detailed description is provided for each tour**, including the itinerary, the individual stops, and the historical figures who are progressively introduced during the visit. To complement these sections, it is possible to **freely download the printable version of the educational materials** developed for the tours: the tour **maps** and the characters' "**passports**" (links at the beginning of each tour description). Finally, Chapter 5 presents a few **considerations** related to the fact that the routes address particularly sensitive topics and that, when proposing them to young people, it is important to be aware of the possible questions and reactions that may arise.

This guide can be used in different ways, depending on needs. Those who wish to **explore the routes on their own** can primarily refer to Chapters 3 and 4, which are dedicated to the description of the itineraries and locations. Those who intend **to guide a class or an interest group** can instead draw inspiration from the operational methods tested during the pilot tours, described below.

A crucial tool used to make the experience more personal and interactive is the **"passport,"** created for each historical figure featured in the narrative. The passports were designed in A5 format, printable on lightweight cardstock and structured with a graphic layout that recalls an actual travel document: on the outside, the name and some personal data are shown, while inside there is a photograph, a short biographical note, and a quotation by or related to the character. In the latter case, the author of the quotation and the context in which it was expressed are indicated below it.

At the beginning of the route, each participant can be asked to randomly draw a passport, which introduces the character who will accompany them during the visit. After distribution, it is useful to allow participants a few minutes to look at their passport and become familiar with their character.

During the walk, as the characters emerge in the narrative, the person who has their passport — if they wish — can read aloud the information and quotation printed on it. This mechanism encourages engagement, helps maintain attention, and contributes to building a personal connection with the stories being told.

To ensure an **inclusive environment**, it is important to make it clear from the outset that no one is forced to read aloud. Some students may have reading difficulties, limited language proficiency, or may simply feel uncomfortable speaking in front of the group. No explanation is required: in such cases, the guide or another volunteer can read the card on their behalf, or the guide can directly tell the character's story without referring to the passport.

There are 16 passports available for the first tour and 15 for the second; in the case of particularly large classes, it is recommended to print multiple copies of some passports, as it is important that each student can feel “paired” with a character and identify with the assigned role.

In the anonymous evaluations completed by participants at the end of the activities, the passports emerged as one of the most appreciated elements of the experience.

3. First route: Men and women of science in the Triestine Jewish community

A walk in the footsteps of the protagonists of Jewish Trieste and scientific Trieste in the early twentieth century

Duration: approximately 2 hours
Locations: Carlo and Vera Wagner Jewish Museum and the city center
Printable map: https://eucu.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2026/01/map-1-tour-eng.pdf
Printable passports: https://eucu.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2026/01/passports-1-tour-eng.pdf

Itinerary overview

The tour takes place in the heart of the city and begins with a historical introduction at the Carlo and Vera Wagner Jewish Community Museum of Trieste. This is followed by a stop in Via S. Lazzaro, in front of the former office of Edoardo Weiss, the psychiatrist who, together with his wife Vanda Schrenger (also a psychiatrist), introduced psychoanalysis to Italy. At this stop, some of Weiss's well-known patients are also mentioned, such as the painter Arturo Nathan and the poet Umberto Saba. The walk then continues to Viale XX Settembre, to the historic building of the Petrarca High School, where the discrimination suffered by Jewish students and teachers following the racial laws is discussed. Here, the Stolperstein dedicated to teacher Maura Morpurgo is also commented on, and the tour concludes by recounting how Trieste, in the postwar period, flourished as a "City of Science," thanks to the construction of a system based on collaboration and dialogue among differences as founding values.

If the visit is carried out with a group and it is possible to download and print the passports, we recommend distributing them randomly to participants at the beginning of the tour. With the passport, each person is entrusted with the memory of one or more characters who will be evoked during the walk. A couple of minutes should be allowed for participants to familiarize themselves with the materials before starting.

3.1. Carlo and Vera Wagner Jewish Museum

Address: Via del Monte 7 – Carlo and Vera Wagner Jewish Museum
Duration: approximately 30 minutes

The route begins at the Carlo and Vera Wagner Jewish Museum. The visit requires the purchase of an entrance ticket (€4 for minors and groups, €7 for adults, free for people with disabilities), and for large groups it is necessary to book in advance. For school groups of all levels, the guided tour service is always free of charge. The museum is accessible and has no architectural barriers.

The museum as a collaboration partner developed a 30-minute guided tour tailored to the theme and objective of this tour.

After an introduction about the Museum's origins, an overview is provided of the history of the Jewish community of Trieste, its transformation from the Middle Ages to the present day, and the persecutions suffered during Fascism and Nazism, which — through deportations and forced emigration — transformed it drastically.

Opening moment at the Jewish Museum

Photo: Francesca Rizzato, SISSA Medialab

At this stage, the stories of several figures are recalled, and references can be made to their passports. All the characters mentioned here are also illustrated on the ground-floor panels of the museum with biographical notes, photographs, and original documents. They were selected because they are representative, in different ways, of key aspects of Trieste's Jewish history.

Carlo (1902–1980) and **Vera Wagner** (1910–1984) are the couple after whom the Museum is named, as they were the parents of Gianna Wagner de Polo, who generously financed its installation in 1993. They well represent the Jewish bourgeoisie of Trieste that prospered between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but was later severely affected by Fascism and Nazism. Having taken refuge in Switzerland during the Nazi occupation, they returned to Trieste after the war and contributed to its rebirth. Carlo directed the large Stock liquor company for many years, while Vera devoted herself to the revival of cultural life.

Lionello Stock (1866–1948), founder of the liquor company bearing his name, came from a family originally from Frankfurt that settled in the nineteenth century between Trieste and Split, and from which Vera Wagner also descended. It was precisely in Trieste that Lionello found the ideal economic conditions to establish, in 1884, a distillery that later moved into a building still standing today in the Roiano district.

Matilde Morpurgo (1869–1961) was the niece of Baron Carlo Marco Morpurgo and lived in a building that later became part of the city's Civic Museums. As an adult, she converted to Catholicism and married the Roman prince Fabio Colonna di Stigliano. Having no children, they left their estate divided among the Episcopal Seminary, the Municipality, and Trieste's hospitals. At the Jewish Museum, students can see a diary she wrote as an adolescent.

Entering the room dedicated to the history and memory of the Holocaust in Trieste, one first encounters **Carlo Morpurgo** (1890–1944). After losing his job as a bank clerk in 1938, he was hired as secretary of the Jewish Community of Trieste and assumed its leadership during the most difficult years. Solidarity was central throughout his life: toward refugees from Eastern Europe fleeing antisemitism, whom the Community housed in the very building where the Jewish Museum now is

located; toward foreign Jews interned in Fascist camps; and toward fellow Jews who remained in the city under Nazi occupation. Although he could have sought safety, he stayed at his post in the office above the Synagogue and was ultimately arrested, deported, and murdered in Auschwitz.

Victims of the Shoah, though survived deportation, also include **Ida** (1929–2011) and **Stellina Marcheria** (1930–1970), two sisters who were only 14 and 13 years old when they were deported with their parents and two brothers to Auschwitz in 1943. They were selected for hard labor in the sector where belongings looted from prisoners were sorted. From Auschwitz they were deported to Ravensbrück, where they were liberated on May 1, 1945. Stellina never recovered from the deportation experience and took her own life twenty-five years after liberation. Ida, who left Trieste for Rome, became a tireless witness to the Holocaust until her death in 2011.

The visit concludes with a remembrance of the contribution made by Jewish men and women of Trieste to the struggle for liberation from Nazism and Fascism, illustrated through two examples:

Rita (Rosenzweig) Rosani (1920–1944) was a qualified teacher who, due to the 1938 racial laws, could work only in the Jewish school. Her fiancé as well as her relatives in Czechoslovakia were deported to Nazi camps. After the Armistice of September 8, 1943 and having secured her parents' safety, she joined the resistance in Veneto and died at just 24 years during an armed clash between her partisan group and Nazi-Fascist forces. She was posthumously awarded the Gold Medal for Military Valor.

A student reads Rita Rosani's passport in a room of the Jewish Museum

Photo: Francesca Rizzato, SISSA Medialab

Samuele Cesana (1924–1944) was also a partisan. Born into a large Jewish family of modest means living in the former ghetto, he decided, at little more than twenty years old, to join the resistance with the Garibaldi Brigade in Istria, where he later died from wounds sustained in combat. His father, three

brothers, and a nine-year-old sister were instead deported and disappeared in the extermination camps.

3.2. Edoardo Weiss's study

Address: Via San Lazzaro 8
Duration: approximately half an hour, plus 5–10 minutes for moving between locations

The doorway of the building that housed Weiss's practice at 8 Via San Lazzaro
Francesca Rizzato, SISSA Medialab

As shown on the map, the route continues by leaving the museum, going downhill to the left from Via del Monte towards Corso Italia, and then reaching Via San Lazzaro (less than a 5-minute walk). In front of the doorway at number 8, participants are invited to look around and identify some names that also appear on the passports: several historical plaques mention Edoardo Weiss, Umberto Saba — who was his patient — and Sigmund Freud.

If the visit is conducted with a group and the passports are being used, participants who have been assigned the passports of these three figures are invited to read aloud the short biographies and quotations to introduce them.

Explain in the front of the entrance that this building housed Edoardo Weiss's private practice, where he applied the principles of psychoanalysis to his patients for the first time in Italy. Depending on time constraints, weather conditions, and how crowded the area is, the explanation can be continued either in front of the nearby Church of Sant'Antonio, sitting on the steps for a more comfortable setting, or by remaining in front of Weiss's former office.

Brief outline for presenting the figures associated with this stop, each of whom has a dedicated "passport" among the educational materials:

Edoardo Weiss (1889–1970) was the psychiatrist who, together with his wife Vanda Schrenger (also a psychiatrist), introduced psychoanalysis to Italy. His life encapsulates many of the major historical events of interwar Europe. Born into a Jewish family with a Bohemian father and a Triestine mother, he felt Italian without embracing irredentist activism (note that until 1918 Trieste was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). He studied medicine in Vienna, where he met Sigmund Freud in 1908. After World War I, he returned to Trieste with his wife — whom he had met at university and married in 1917 — to work at the "Civico Frenocomio Andrea di Sergio Galatti," an institution established to address serious shortcomings in local psychiatric care. In a city marked by poverty, marginalization, and ethnic tensions, Weiss witnessed firsthand the social distress that often led people to institutionalization. He combined two professional approaches: a medical one, which treated mental illness as a biologically based disorder with medication and hospital care, and the Freudian method, which understood mental distress as rooted in personal experience and addressed it through listening and dialogue in private practice. At the hospital, he experienced intellectual isolation and distant relationships with colleagues. As an antifascist, he resigned from his hospital position, also refusing the Fascist regime's 1927 requirement that public employees "Italianize" foreign-sounding surnames. The Weiss-Schrenger family moved first to Rome and, following the Fascist racial laws of 1938, emigrated to the United States, where they lived until their deaths.

It is also important to highlight the figure of **Vanda Schrenger** (1892–1968), Weiss's wife, a personality even more multifaceted than her husband's. She was the first Italian female psychoanalyst and, together with Edoardo Weiss, played a key role in introducing and spreading psychoanalysis in Italy. Due to her work as a pediatrician, she brought an innovative perspective on child psychology into practice. Born in 1892 in Pakrac (then in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, today Croatia) into a large Jewish family, Vanda experienced early economic hardship and suffered from severe asthma throughout her life. Determined to become a physician, she studied at the University of Vienna, where she was the second woman to graduate in medicine. There she met Edoardo (whom she married in 1917) and Sigmund Freud, who encouraged her to pursue her professional career, at a time when women's intellectual and professional abilities were widely questioned and often dismissed. In 1919 she moved to Trieste, working as a pediatrician with particular attention to the psychological aspects of childhood. In 1929 the couple moved to Rome; it was Vanda who convinced her husband to remain in Italy, intuiting that there was room for psychoanalysis there. The Weiss couple opened a practice and contributed to the refounding of the *Italian Psychoanalytic Society* and to the creation of the *Rivista italiana di psicoanalisi*, in which Vanda was the first woman to publish (1932). The racial laws of 1938 forced them into exile in the United States. There, Vanda continued her psychoanalytic practice, eventually orienting herself toward Jungian analysis and died in California 1968. Her life —

marked by the loss of much of her family, both to the Shoah and to pogroms in her hometown of Pakrac — tells the story of a pioneer who combined clinical rigor, cultural commitment, and personal courage. Without Vanda Schrenger, the history of psychoanalysis in Italy would have been profoundly different.

A key figure for both Weiss and Schrenger was **Sigmund Freud** (1856–1939), who spent some time living in Trieste, a little-known aspect of his biography. He was nineteen years old — possibly around the same age of the students involved in the tour — and enrolled at university. His earliest studies were in the natural sciences. He worked at the zoological station, where he was tasked with dissecting hundreds of eels, trying to solve the mystery of their sex (eels are hermaphroditic, but become male only during the reproductive period). Freud spent months searching for male eels, while enjoying his first period of independence away from his family. Upon returning to Vienna, he changed faculties and enrolled in medicine, a key step in his life that would lead to the birth of psychoanalytic theory. Weiss and Schrenger met Freud later in Vienna, when he was already middle-aged, and they maintained a lifelong friendship with him.

Among Weiss's most famous Triestine patients was **Arturo Nathan** (1891–1944), one of the most original voices in twentieth-century Triestine art of painting. A self-taught artist close to Metaphysical painting, he created suspended landscapes, statues, and deserted beaches (Scoglio incantato, Malinconia). Returning from World War I in deep crisis, he entered analysis with Weiss, who encouraged him to use painting as a therapeutic path, helping him reach artistic maturity. Persecuted as a Jew, Nathan was subjected to internal exile - forced relocation within Italy - and later deported first to Bergen-Belsen and then to Biberach, where he died in 1944.

Another renowned patient of Weiss was **Umberto Saba** (1883–1957), one of the central voices of twentieth-century Italian poetry. His *Canzoniere* recounts, in a clear and musical language, the city, personal relationships, and human fragility, turning everyday life into poetic material. Born in Trieste to a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father, in 1919 he became the owner of a bookshop. The shop later became famous as the "Umberto Saba Antiquarian Bookshop" and is now restored and once again accessible. During periods of psychological distress, particularly depression, he turned to psychoanalysis. Weiss helped him seek balance and discipline in his work. Saba's poetry holds together classical and modern elements, intimacy and civic engagement.

Although there is no evidence that **Italo Svevo** (1861–1928) was a patient of Weiss, the two had significant interactions. Svevo, one of the key figures of twentieth-century Italian literature, frequently refers to psychoanalysis in his works — often with irony and a demystifying tone — and in Trieste he frequented a circle of writers and intellectuals for whom Weiss served as a psychoanalytic point of reference. Educational and critical sources indicate that Svevo came into contact with the Triestine psychoanalyst and discussed his theories with him. Cesare Musatti, a prominent Italian psychologist and one of the leading features in the introduction of Psychoanalisis in Italy, recalls a conversation between Svevo and Weiss after which the writer scaled back the idea of "doing psychoanalysis" in a clinical sense: for Svevo, psychoanalysis was more a matter of human relationships than a form of treatment. Svevo donated to Weiss a copy of "Zeno's Conscience" (*La coscienza di Zeno*) - the most

famous among Svevo's novels, with a dedication alluding to the role of psychoanalysis. Weiss also treated Bruno Veneziani, Svevo's brother-in-law.

3.3. Historic headquarters of the Petrarca High School

Address: Viale Venti Settembre, 26
Duration: approximately half an hour, plus 10–15 minutes for transfers/moving between locations

From Via San Lazzaro, the walk continues to Viale XX Settembre, where the first headquarters of the Liceo Classico Petrarca once stood; today the building houses a middle school. This stop provides an opportunity to return to the fascist racial laws of 1938, announced by Benito Mussolini precisely in Trieste, during a well-known public speech held in Piazza Unità. These laws marked the beginning of a period of "persecution of rights," with dramatic consequences for people's lives. One of these consequences was the exclusion of students and teachers classified as being of "Jewish race" from public schools, a measure decided as early as the beginning of September 1938.

The Liceo Petrarca, in collaboration with the Jewish Museum and the University of Trieste, carried out research in its archives to uncover the impact of these infamous laws on those who studied and worked in that school, as in many others in Trieste and throughout Italy. This research resulted in a public exhibition in 2018, which recounts this story in detail. The catalogue of the exhibition, with texts also in English and German, is available free of charge at the following address, https://www.openstarts.units.it/collections/68546b29-5b34-47be-983c-479fe56c52dd together with the documentary 1938 Vita amara (with English subtitles) produced alongside the exhibition. These materials are very useful for enriching the reflections at this stop and can also be taken up later in the classroom.

In front of the entrance of the former high school, the passports related to the school itself, to Bruna Levi, and to Maura and Bianca Morpurgo can be read.

Bruna Levi (1921–2010) was one of the 69 students expelled in 1938 because of the anti-Jewish laws, while she was successfully attending the Liceo Petrarca and was only two years away from graduating. After her expulsion, she continued her studies at the Jewish middle school organized by the Community and managed to obtain her diploma as a private candidate. After the war, she devoted herself with great commitment to teaching at the same Jewish School and served for 25 years as director and a central pillar of the institution.

A student reads Bruna Levi's passport in front of the original headquarters of the Liceo Petrarca

Photo: Francesca Rizzato, SISSA Medialab

Bianca (1906–1996) and **Maura Morpurgo** (1908–1944) belonged to a Jewish family from the upper bourgeoisie and due to this background, were able to pursue higher education: Maura became a teacher of classical literature at the Liceo Petrarca, while Bianca became a physician. Both lost their jobs because of the racist laws and were deported together with their parents and another sister in 1934. Only Bianca survived, as her professional skills led to her being assigned work in the concentration camps. She never spoke publicly about her experience. She referred to it only in private contexts, such as a letter written in November 1945 to another survivor, Luciana Nissim, a doctor like herself. Part of this letter is quoted in the passport.

The stumbling stone dedicated to Maura Morpurgo at the entrance of the historic headquarters of the Liceo Petrarca

Photo: Francesca Rizzato, SISSA Medialab

A Stolperstein (stumbling stone) placed in front of the former school building commemorates Maura and bears not the inscription "Here lived," but, more significantly, "Here taught."

When showing Maura Morpurgo's **stumbling stone**, it can be explained that these stones are part of an artistic project aimed at promoting awareness of the Holocaust and, more broadly, of the effects of Nazi-Fascist persecution. They are small brass plaques embedded in the pavement in front of the homes or, in some cases, workplaces of people who have suffered persecution: Jews, Roma and Sinti, political opponents, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and people with disabilities. Each stone reports the person's name, date of birth and arrest, the route of deportation, and their fate. Conceived by the German artist Gunter Demnig, they are meant to make passers-by "stumble" symbolically over memory, bringing the history of persecution back into the everyday spaces of cities. Each stone commemorates a single individual, restoring that person's identity and dignity. Stumbling stones were installed in more than 31 European countries.

The Jewish Museum has mapped the stumbling stones in Trieste; the map is available on Google at the following link:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1lfryz3kA0_AnnS4SM15uZTKlZfdSFvw&ll=45.652347000000034%2C13.781946000000008&z=18

The guided tour can conclude by noting that today **Trieste is a "city of science"**, an international hub of scientific research that emerged from the ruins of the city after World War II, with the aim of reuniting a world deeply wounded and divided by conflict and Nazi persecution through science. Starting in the 1960s, alongside institutions already present in Trieste (such as the University, the Astronomical Observatory, and OGS – the National Institute of Oceanography and Applied Geophysics), new research centers were founded: the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), the International School for Advanced Studies (SISSA), the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), Area Science Park, Elettra Sincrotrone, The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), and others.

In this part of the visit, it is important to emphasize that Trieste's scientific research hub is grounded in the strong conviction that **science can thrive only where there is freedom of people and ideas**, and that it **benefits profoundly from their mobility**. Every year, thousands of people from all over the world come to Trieste to meet and conduct research together.

4. Second route: Psychiatric institutions and the deportation of patients "of Jewish race" during the Nazi occupation

A walk in the footsteps of Edoardo Weiss, Evelina Ravis, and other figures connected to mental health in Trieste

Duration: approximately 2 hours
Locations: San Giovanni Park (former psychiatric hospital), starting from the Rose Garden
Printable map: https://eucu.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2026/01/map-2-tour-eng.pdf
Printable passports: https://eucu.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2026/01/passports-2-tour-eng.pdf

Itinerary overview

The tour takes place within the grounds of the former San Giovanni asylum, which has become a public park hosting some university departments and healthcare services. The visit traces how this place of care was soon transformed into a site of segregation and detention. This shift affected people considered "deviant" in various ways, including unmarried mothers, individuals living in extreme poverty, people with mental disorders, and "migrants" from different parts of the Empire. In the second half of the twentieth century, many Istrian, Fiuman, and Dalmatian exiles — often deeply traumatized by historical events — also arrived here.

The visit also provides an opportunity to discuss the work of Franco Basaglia and his psychiatric reform. Particular attention is given to the deportation of patients classified as being of "Jewish race" by the Nazi-Fascist regime. Finally, the tour recalls several figures from Trieste's scientific community whose lives and work are connected to this context.

Opening moment of the second route at the San Giovanni Rose Garden
Photo: Francesca Rizzato, SISSA Medialab

If the visit is carried out with a group and it is possible to download and print the passports, we recommend distributing them randomly to participants at the beginning of the visit. By receiving a passport, each participant is entrusted with the memory of one or more characters who will be evoked during the walk. It is advisable to allow a couple of minutes to become familiar with the materials before starting.

In the following paragraphs, the different stops and the associated characters are described:

4.1. Starting point: the San Giovanni rose garden

Address: Via Niccolò Bottaccin
Duration: 20 minutes

Arriving from the upper entrance of the park (terminus of bus 17 and stop for several other buses), visitors briefly follow the pedestrian path that leads toward the rose garden (2–3 minutes on foot). Once in the rose garden, the group can gather, possibly sitting on the low access wall. Here, the guide briefly recounts the history of the establishment of the Trieste Mental Asylum and may refer to the corresponding passport.

The **Civic Asylum "Andrea di Sergio Galatti"** (later known as the Trieste Mental Asylum) was inaugurated in 1908 to address the severe shortcomings of the Trieste healthcare system in the treatment of mental health. It was conceived as a cutting-edge asylum, a modern institution for its time. It introduced ergotherapy (work as therapy), the open-door principle (patients spent much time outdoors), and an organization by levels of custody (patients were not allowed to leave the facility). Within a few years, though, conditions deteriorated, turning it into a place of neglect and abuse. The asylum was closed in 1979 following Franco Basaglia's psychiatric reform, which put an end to the existence of mental asylums in Italy. The closure is only briefly mentioned at this stage, as it will be addressed in more detail at later stops.

A clarification regarding the terms used to refer to this place: in the downloadable materials and in the following explanation, the terms psychiatric hospital, asylum, and *frenocomio* (an older and now largely obsolete term, used mainly between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) are used interchangeably, as they essentially refer to the same institution. These three terms do not indicate any official change in status, as the institution remained substantially unchanged until its closure in 1979 following the psychiatric reform.

4.2. Former Pavilion M (minors) and social cooperatives

Address: Via de Pastrovich 1
Duration: 20 minutes + 5 minutes for walking/transfers

From the rose garden, walk along the church and go down beside the café/restaurant "*Il posto delle fragole*". Then turn right towards the building that now hosts several social cooperatives (such as the Lister social tailoring workshop) and the radio station Radio Fragola.

People sit on the concrete benches in front of the building, and its original use is explained: this is the pavilion where children and adolescents were institutionalized, some of them born inside the hospital itself from unmarried mothers also confined here. **Evelina Ravis** worked in this building, since caring

for children's mental health and psychological well-being has often been a female specialization. Other important female figures connected to Trieste and to the care of children's mental health include **Emmi Pikler** and **Vanda Schrenger**. Although neither worked at the asylum, both will be discussed later in the visit.

Seated in front of the former Pavilion M, with one of the slogans

of Basaglia's reform in the background: "Freedom is therapeutic."

Photo: Francesca Rizzato, SISSA Medialab

Below are some biographical notes that can be used to illustrate the three figures mentioned (corresponding to three "passports").

Evelina Ravis (1888–1977) was a pioneer of child neuropsychiatry. Born in what is now Ukraine to a family of Polish cultural background and Jewish origins, she arrived in Trieste in 1890. In 1929, under pressure from the Fascist regime, she Italianized the family's original surname Rawicz to Ravis. After her father's death in 1910, Ravis, already studying in Vienna, was able to complete her studies thanks to a scholarship granted by the Municipality of Trieste. She graduated with top marks in 1912, becoming one of the first female psychiatrists to graduate from the University of Vienna, which had allowed women to enroll only since 1904. In 1914 she began working at the Civic Asylum "Andrea di Sergio Galatti" in Trieste, where she later became head of the women's department (the first woman to hold this position in the institution). In 1928 she founded the Medical-Pedagogical Institute within the psychiatric hospital, which remained active until 1972, focusing on the care of "problematic" children and adolescents. Following the racial laws, in 1938 she was dismissed from her hospital post. She continued to practice medicine clandestinely and was hidden, thus escaping deportation, by the families of the children she treated. After the war, she returned to her position at the hospital.

Emmi Pikler (1902–1984) was a pedagogue of Hungarian origin. She spent about a year in Trieste in the early 1930s with her husband György; in 1931 their first daughter was born here. On Trieste's beaches, Pikler closely observed the relationship between parents and children, recognizing the importance of care and affection at a time when education was often rigid. She also noticed how adults frequently forced children's motor development by anticipating movements such as sitting or walking. From these observations emerged her idea that allowing time and freedom fosters spontaneous motor development. The family moved from Trieste to Budapest, where Pikler faced Nazi persecution. After the war, she directed a center for orphans, applying an innovative educational approach.

Vanda Schrenger (1892–1968) is considered the first Italian female psychoanalyst. Trained as a physician and also working as a pediatrician, she developed an innovative approach centered on child psychology. Born in Pakrac, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, she studied medicine at the University of Vienna, where she was the second woman to graduate. There she met Sigmund Freud and Edoardo Weiss, whom she married in 1917. She moved to Trieste in 1919 and began her clinical practice. From 1929 onwards she lived in Rome, contributing decisively to the founding of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society and the *Italian Journal of Psychoanalysis*, in which she published in 1932. The racial laws in 1938 forced the family into exile in the United States, where she continued to practice until her death.

Today, the former Pavilion M is an important and symbolic site. It hosts several **social cooperatives**, including the Lister social tailoring workshop, which produces bags from recycled materials, and La Collina, which provides social and cultural services. These cooperatives were created after the psychiatric reform to offer employment first to former patients and today to people living with or having experienced mental health conditions. The building also houses Radio Fragola, an independent

radio station likewise founded after the psychiatric reform, with the aim of providing information, telling stories about mental health, and helping to reduce stigma.

4.3. Franco and Franca Basaglia Theatre

Address: Via Edoardo Weiss, 13
Duration: 20 minutes + 5 minutes for walking

The group gathered behind the Franco and Franca Basaglia Theatre

Photo: Francesca Rizzato, SISSA Medialab

Walk down for about one hundred meters, reaching the **Franca and Franco Basaglia Theatre**, where the group can sit on the steps. At this point two streets intersect, one named after **Guglielmo de Pastrovich** and the other after **Edoardo Weiss**, which provides an opportunity to introduce both figures. When mentioning Weiss, it is possible to also discuss some well-known figures associated with him: **Italo Svevo** (a friend within the same intellectual circle, also featured among the passports of this route), **Umberto Saba** and **Arturo Nathan** (both patients of Weiss, whose passports and further details can be found among the materials of the first itinerary). There is also the option to introduce Sigmund Freud here, who spent part of his youth in Trieste and later maintained a close relationship with Weiss and Schrenger. Below are some brief biographical notes that can be used to illustrate the figures mentioned (all of whom appear in the passports distributed at the beginning).

Guglielmo de Pastrovich (1876–1927) was a Triestine psychiatrist, chief physician and later director of the city asylum and a key figure in the founding of the "Andrea di Sergio Galatti" asylum (1908). After graduating in Vienna, he also trained at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, acquiring expertise in hysteria, hypnosis and neurology. After returning to Trieste, he worked first at the Ospedale Maggiore and then at the new asylum, a modern institution for its time. It introduced ergotherapy (work as therapy), the open-door principle (patients spent much time outdoors), and an organization by levels of custody (patients were not allowed to leave the facility). Known for his rigor, meticulous character and

irredentist positions, he signed the expert report declaring the "Roiano Ripper" mentally sane in 1908, a highly publicized criminal case. He served as President of the Trieste Medical Association from 1922 until his death in 1927. Some scholars suggest he may have inspired the character of Doctor Coprosich in *Zeno's Conscience* by Italo Svevo.

Edoardo Weiss (1889–1970) was the psychiatrist who, together with his wife **Vanda Schrenger** (also a psychiatrist), first introduced psychoanalysis to Italy. His life encapsulates many of the key historical events of interwar Europe. Born into a Jewish family with a Bohemian father and a Triestine mother, he felt Italian without embracing irredentist activism. He studied medicine in Vienna, where he met Sigmund Freud in 1908. After World War I, he returned to Trieste with his wife — whom he had met at university and married in 1917 — to work at the "Andrea di Sergio Galatti" Civic Asylum, an institution created to address severe shortcomings in local psychiatric care. In a city marked by poverty, marginalization and ethnic tensions, Weiss witnessed firsthand the social distress that often led people to institutionalization. He combined two professional approaches: a medical one, which treated mental illness as a biologically based disorder with medication and hospital care, and the Freudian method, which understood mental distress as rooted in personal experience and addressed it through listening and dialogue in private practice. At the hospital, he experienced intellectual isolation and distant relationships with colleagues. As an antifascist, he resigned from his hospital position, also refusing the Fascist regime's 1927 requirement that public employees "Italianize" foreign-sounding surnames. The Weiss-Schrenger family moved first to Rome and, following the Fascist racial laws of 1938, emigrated to the United States, where they lived until their deaths.

Italo Svevo (1861–1928), one of the key figures of twentieth-century Italian literature, was not a patient of Weiss, but the two had significant interactions. These contacts may have influenced Svevo's work, which frequently refers to psychoanalysis, often with an ironic and demystifying tone. In Trieste they frequented the same circle of writers and intellectuals, for whom Weiss was the point of reference for psychoanalysis. Svevo came into contact with the Triestine psychoanalyst and discussed his theories with him. Cesare Musatti, a prominent Italian psychologist and one of the leading features in the introduction of Psychoanalisis in Italy, recalls a conversation between Svevo and Weiss after which the writer reconsidered the idea of "doing psychoanalysis" in a clinical sense: for Svevo, psychoanalysis was more a matter of human relationships than a form of treatment. Svevo donated to Weiss a copy of "Zeno's Conscience" (*La coscienza di Zeno*) - the most famous among Svevo's novels, with a dedication alluding to the role of psychoanalysis. Weiss also treated Bruno Veneziani, Svevo's brother-in-law, as a patient.

Not many people know that **Sigmund Freud** (1856–1939) — whom Weiss and Schrenger met later in Vienna — had earlier lived for a period in Trieste. He was nineteen years old — possibly around the same age as the students involved in the tour — and enrolled at university. His earliest studies were in the natural sciences. He worked at the zoological station, where he was tasked with dissecting hundreds of eels, trying to solve the mystery of their sex (eels are hermaphroditic, but become male only during the reproductive period). Freud spent months searching for male eels, while enjoying his first period of independence away from his family. Upon returning to Vienna, he changed faculties and enrolled in medicine, a key step in his life that would lead to the birth of psychoanalytic theory. Weiss

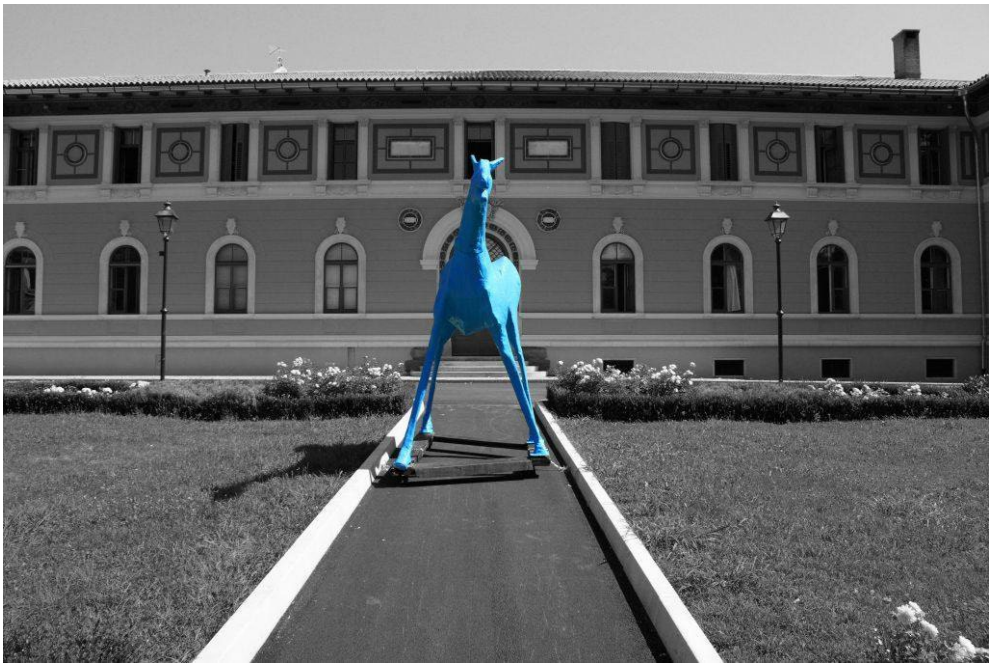
and Schrenger met Freud later in Vienna, when he was already middle-aged, and they maintained a lifelong friendship with him.

4.4. Marco Cavallo (staircase)

Address: Via Edoardo Weiss, 5
Duration: 20 minutes + 5 minutes for walking between stops

From the Theatre, you walk down to the staircase overlooking a building that currently houses Mental Health services. From here, you can see a bronze statue of a horse. It is a tribute to Marco Cavallo, whose original blue papier-mâché version is sometimes displayed on the very staircase where the group stands (though it is often taken around the world to tell the story of the psychiatric reform promoted by Franco Basaglia, but also to support the fight for civil rights). At this stop, the tour focuses on **Marco Cavallo** and **Franco Basaglia**, both of whom have dedicated passports. The opportunity is also used to mention **Franco Panizon**, who in the same years as Basaglia led a revolution in **pediatric healthcare** that closely mirrored Basaglia's approach to psychiatry (Panizon also has his own passport). Below are some notes on the three figures.

Marco Cavallo: In 1973, the poet and playwright Giuliano Scabia, created with patients and staff of the Trieste psychiatric hospital the large blue papier-mâché sculpture of Marco Cavallo, named after a real horse that lived and worked in the asylum. With the closure of the hospital, the real Marco was freed from the exhausting labor and became a symbol of the liberation of the "mad". The sculpture carries the patients' wishes inside its "belly." When it first left the asylum gates, it "lost its head"- just like when someone goes mad - because the gate was too low. The head was quickly reattached. Paraded through the streets, Marco Cavallo became a powerful symbol of freedom and of the dignity restored to institutionalized people.



The original papier-mâché sculpture of Marco Cavallo

Photo: Itinerari Basagliani CC BY-SA 4.0

Franco Basaglia (1924–1980) was the psychiatrist who promoted the reform of mental health care in Italy, culminating in Law 180 of 1978, which initiated the closure of psychiatric hospitals and the recognition of the civil rights of people with mental disorders. After training in Padua and participating in antifascist activities, he first directed the psychiatric hospital in Gorizia and then the one in Trieste. There, he launched a radical process to overcome the asylum system, abolishing the use of restraints, opening wards, and creating alternative community-based services. In Trieste, he experimented with a new model of care based on social inclusion, work, and the active participation of patients. The "Trieste Model" became an international reference and is recognized by the World Health Organization. Basaglia died in 1980, shortly after the approval of the reform.

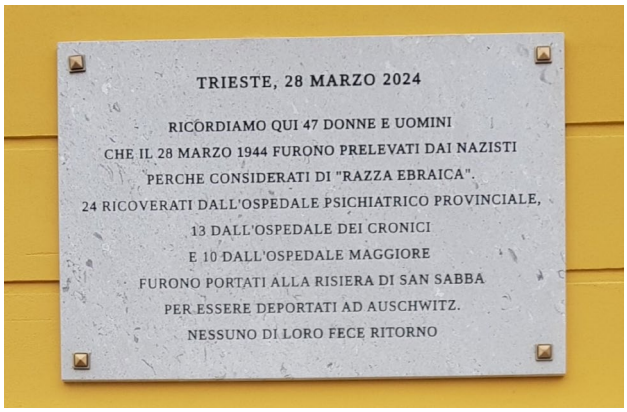
Franco Panizon (1925–2012) was the pediatrician who profoundly renewed Italian pediatrics by placing the child at the center of care, rather than the disease. From 1968 he directed the Burlo Garofolo Children's Hospital in Trieste, transforming it into a national and international center of excellence. He ended the separation between children and parents during hospitalization, opened wards to families and promoted play and emotional well-being even in cases of serious illness. He introduced a multidisciplinary approach and participatory teaching methods. In 1980 he established the first pediatric day hospital in Italy, reducing unnecessary hospital stays. He was also active in research, scientific publishing and public outreach, contributing decisively to a lasting cultural and healthcare transformation.

4.5. General Directorate – Plaque commemorating deported patients

Address: Piazzale Canestrini 1
Duration: 20 minutes + 5 minutes for walking between stops

From the staircase, the route continues down Via Weiss to the building that now serves as the main headquarters of the local Health Authority. The stop is at the main entrance, at Piazzale Canestrini 1, where a commemorative plaque has been installed to remember the deportation of patients considered "of Jewish race" by the Nazis from the psychiatric hospital and other healthcare institutions to concentration camps.

At this point, the events are recounted as they have emerged in recent years due to historical research carried out prior to the installation of the plaque. This research also led to the conference *"La Cura Tradita. Trieste 1944–2024"* ("Betrayed Care. Trieste 1944–2024"), held at the Basaglia Theatre on 27–28 March 2024, for which a full recording in Italian is available.



The plaque commemorating the deportation of Jewish patients to Auschwitz

Photo: Annalisa Di Fant

This stop also provides an opportunity to recall some of the deported patients connected to these events, whose stories are included in the passports: **Vittorio and Elda Menassé, Vittorio Acco, Ida Vele**, and **Egon Brunner**.

The quotes reported in many of their passports are taken from the medical records preserved in the hospital archive, now held at the State Archives of Trieste.

Vittorio Menassé (1908–1944) was a musician and taught piano at the Trieste Conservatory. Of Jewish origin but Catholic from birth, he was affected by the racial laws and lost his teaching position. He suffered a psychological breakdown in 1942 and was admitted several times to the psychiatric hospital, where attempts were made to “cure” him of his homosexuality. He was arrested on March 28, 1944, together with his mother **Elda Morterra Menassé** (1882–1944), who had come to the hospital seeking refuge during the Nazi occupation. Both murdered in Auschwitz.

Vittorio Zaccaria Acco (1886–1944) arrived in Trieste at the age of 14 from Corfu, fleeing antisemitism. A shopkeeper and widower, he was first admitted to the psychiatric hospital on November 25, 1943, diagnosed with “anxious depressive state,” after witnessing the arrest of his two sons and the destruction of his shop by Fascist squads. He was arrested on March 28, 1944, and deported to Auschwitz.

The same tragic fate befell **Ida Vele** (1885–1944), an unmarried elementary school teacher born in Vienna to a Catholic father and a Jewish mother, who had lived in Trieste since the age of 11. Her medical records reveal the deep distress caused by losing her job because of the racial laws.

The final story is that of **Egon Brunner** (1888–1944), a long-term patient of the psychiatric hospital, where he had been admitted in 1936. From a prominent Jewish family, he was a lawyer and writer who had served in the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I. While the others arrested with him were deported to Auschwitz, he was deported to the Risiera di San Sabba, where he was murdered on site.

In conclusion, it is recalled that deportations from Trieste, including those from hospitals, were carried out by the same Nazi authorities who had previously managed the so-called **Operation T4** in Germany,

aimed at “purifying” the Aryan race of all forms of physical or mental disability, using systematic killing techniques later implemented in the extermination camps.

Studying the connections between medicine, Nazism and the Holocaust is particularly important, as recently highlighted by *The Lancet*. This helps address complex issues in modern biomedical ethics, such as the relationship between the state and health professionals, health equity, the care of vulnerable populations, protecting patients’ rights, and promoting public health while fighting all forms of discrimination.

5. Final remarks and recommendations

With these itineraries, history is told through stories of real people in which participants may recognize themselves. During the period in which the CU REMEMBER project is carried out, the last living witnesses of the Holocaust and the Nazi-Fascist persecutions are progressively passing away: these tours are also intended as an invitation for each of us to **take responsibility for a fragment of this memory** — for a story, for a person — by continuing to give it space and keeping it alive.

In working with students, the idea of entrusting each participant with a passport also has a symbolic value: during the Nazi-Fascist persecutions, when some people managed to survive, it was often thanks to others **who took care of their lives**, frequently at great risk to themselves. Recounting details of these lives allows students to become familiar with historical figures and, through shared memory, helps prevent them from falling into oblivion.

The themes addressed are deep and complex and touch **the very essence of those who take part**, as individuals who are bearers of rights, but also of fears, prejudices and mistrust. It is essential to keep this in mind, especially when the itinerary is proposed to a school class: this applies both to the students and to those leading the group. Whenever possible, it is very helpful to have an idea of the specific characteristics of the group, to be aware of any family connections to the stories being told, migratory backgrounds or particular sensitivities related to issues of health and mental well-being.

By way of example, one of the individuals deported to Auschwitz from the Trieste psychiatric hospital had been institutionalized in order to “cure” his homosexuality. It is the guide’s responsibility to contextualize this account, making it explicitly clear that homosexuality is not an illness and does not require any cure. One can point out that this understanding is the result of a cultural and social change that has taken place over time — also due to the work of people such as Franco Basaglia, who placed humanity and the rights of those once considered “deviant” back at the center.

It is also important to consider the potential **emotional overload** that certain passages may generate, which can lead to withdrawal or rejection. Giving space to emotions, acknowledging them, and when necessary offering the possibility to “take a step back” or not to actively participate in certain moments is an act of care and respect. This applies both to participants and to facilitators and educators: these topics can be emotionally demanding. Taking time to process what has emerged, to discuss it with colleagues, or to dwell on what was most impactful can be an integral part of the educational work.

Similarly, attention should be paid to **practical and inclusive aspects**: possible reading difficulties when participants are invited to read a passport (always offering simple alternatives), physical disabilities that may make walking or standing for long periods challenging, or difficulties in accessing certain locations.

Particular care should be devoted to the second itinerary, which addresses themes that can resonate deeply with students, such as mental health, its provision in society and the inclusion of diversity. It may be useful to encourage reflection on the fact that there are not two separate categories of people — the “healthy” and the “ill,” — neither physically nor in terms of mental health, but rather a

continuum of conditions and situations that any individual may experience at different moments in life.

While among younger generations the stigma surrounding psychotherapy as a support tool appears to be diminishing, a perceived distance may persist toward those who experience more severe forms of distress and are sometimes still labeled as “mad” and viewed with suspicion or fear. Contemporary society continues to struggle to fully recognize these individuals and to place them at the center of care pathways that respect their needs, rights, and dignity. During the tours, strong positions, simplifications, or problematic statements may emerge. In such cases, it is important that the discussion does not become a frontal confrontation, but rather an opportunity **to introduce complexity, historicize categories and broaden the scope of questions**, instead of seeking immediate or definitive answers. The role of those leading the visit and guided tours is not to provide univocal solutions, but to facilitate a respectful and informed exchange.

It is also advisable to **pay attention** to any **current news events** involving people with mental health issues. Such episodes can raise in participants questions about how psychological distress is addressed in modern societies with a greater level of intensity and urgency. During the pilot itineraries, one visit took place the day after a serious news event near Trieste, involving a person initially described by the media as being under the care of mental health services (information later shown to be incorrect). This event sparked an intense discussion at the end of the meeting, demonstrating how urgent and meaningful these themes were perceived to be by the students.

Finally, the itineraries presented in this handbook are grounded in the conviction that **memory is not a static exercise focused on the past, but a living practice that takes shape in places, stories and relationships**. The materials presented here are intended as open tools that can be explored, adapted, and expanded in context-specific ways — for example by designing new walks, adding contemporary perspectives, or engaging with local histories — while maintaining the accuracy of the historical information.