

The Wiener Holocaust Library

Strategic Plan 2021-2025 A Toolkit for Countering Hate



The Library stands ready to provide people with the tools they need to put the past at the service of the future. Our unique collections are crucial for countering the dangers posed by hatred, extremist political ideologies and conspiracy theories.

October 2021

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Letter from the Director



Dear Friends,

I am delighted to present The Wiener Holocaust Library's Strategic Plan 2021-2025. This plan begins with a recognition that the Library provides vital tools for people grappling with the most urgent challenges of the present and the past. It integrates what we learned during multiple national lockdowns about innovative ways of working. While acknowledging the milestones and achievements of the first two years of the plan, we also set out ambitious new goals for the next five years. Our central task of collecting, preserving and sharing is given sharp focus in five clear priority areas for development.

This document provides a unique opportunity to consider the role we will play in building a better future for all. In the wake of unprecedented disruption to society during the pandemic, many might feel the future we anticipated has arrived early, and with many frightening, or even terrible, aspects. Perhaps most worrying for the Library is the alarming spread of conspiracy theories, extreme political ideologies and antisemitic abuse. Hatred of this kind is now not only visible online, but on the streets of London, the Library's home.

Fighting back against hate will not happen by itself. That is why we are so committed to providing as many people as possible with quality resources and reliable information. The record of the Holocaust and other genocides must be vigorously defended against widespread attempts at denial and distortion. There is much work to be done and no time to waste. At the Library, we insist on living in a world where the truth is not only said to matter, but is seen to matter; where the facts of history cannot be dispensed with, dismissed, distorted or denied.

How can we bring about a better world? Of course, we have to work together. We all have a part to play. Our part is as Britain's archive and library of record of the Holocaust and genocide. As the world's first repository of evidence of Nazi crimes we continue to punch well above our institutional weight globally, with our resources reaching 2 million people in more than 200 countries. Our Strategic Plan includes exciting ambitions for developing our international reach. Our priorities are informed by our values of scholarship, approachability, authenticity and respect.

The next five years will be hugely significant for the Library as we embark on an ambitious five-year Digital Transformation Project, having secured funding for the first two years. Our goal is to digitise one third of our holdings, thereby revolutionising access to our outstanding unique collections.

In addition to this, we will focus on: expanding our education and outreach work; increasing our research impact; building our collections; growing our resource base; and nurturing engagement among diverse audiences. We know we can do still more to share the extraordinary stories we collect and preserve, and to bring them to life. I am proud to commend this plan to the fulfilment of our mission, keeping truth alive and placing the past at the service of the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Toby Simpson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Toby Simpson

Director

Mission and Values



The Wiener Holocaust Library is one of the world’s leading and most extensive archives on the Holocaust, genocide and the Nazi era. Formed in 1933, the Library’s unique collection of over two million items is the oldest of its kind in the world, includes published and unpublished works, press cuttings, photographs and eyewitness testimony.

Our **mission** is:

- To serve scholars, professional researchers, the media and the public as a library of record.
- To engage people of all ages and backgrounds in understanding the Holocaust and its historical context through an active educational programme.
- To be a living memorial to the evils of the past by ensuring that our wealth of materials is put at the service of the future.

Our organisation’s values are as follows:

<p>We are scholarly, our work is evidence-based, contextualised and intellectually robust.</p>	<p>We are approachable. We are here to serve and help everyone, regardless of their background or academic achievements.</p>	<p>We are respectful. We value each individual’s uniqueness, worth and dignity, regardless of background, abilities or religious beliefs. We are authentic We stand up for historical truth and its complexities and believe in the integrity of historical evidence.</p>	<p>We are authentic. We stand up for historical truth and its complexities and believe in the integrity of historical evidence.</p>
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Putting our Mission into Action



What is The Wiener Holocaust Library for?

The Library stands ready to provide people with the tools they need to put the past at the service of the future. We provide as many people with high quality resources and accurate information about the Holocaust and other genocides, in as many contexts as possible. Our unique collections are crucial for countering the dangers posed by hatred, extremist political ideologies and conspiracy theories. We help people to find information and resources quickly and easily, as far as possible free at the point of use. We do this so that researchers, teachers, policymakers, community groups, educators, and others can orientate themselves effectively in a rapidly changing world in which the threats of antisemitism, racist violence and genocide sadly remain real and widespread.

What do we do?

We have been keeping truth alive since 1933 by collecting, preserving and sharing. We **collect** comprehensive documentation and personal evidence, **preserving** evidence and memories for future generations, and **sharing** by engaging people of all ages and backgrounds in the most challenging facts of history through the Library's outreach activities and publications. We give a voice to the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides. We support education and confront antisemitism and Holocaust denial and distortion. We work to bring together networks of people from different backgrounds.

The Wiener Holocaust Library is an inclusive organisation that champions and values diversity and makes accessibility a priority in everything we do. We continue to learn about the best ways to foster an inclusive culture and environment. Our goal is to ensure that everyone feels welcome at the Library and able to contribute to or engage with our work.

Our Priorities for 2021-2025

We have identified five key priorities for 2021-25 to enable us to fulfil our mission and work towards the Library's vision. These are:

1. **Enhance access to our collections:** The central pillar of a detailed plan to revolutionise access to The Library's collections is our Digital Transformation Project. This project plan includes multiple elements, ranging from cataloguing our diverse and precious collections, to developing efficient acquisition and cataloguing practices, to making the most of increased outreach. We will work hard to reduce, or where possible eliminate, cataloguing backlogs and work towards the implementation of a new, smarter system for searching our collections. This will allow us to harness, and enhance, our extensive records, finding aids and metadata, bringing them together into a single integrated, intelligent search portal. We will also strive towards achieving archive accreditation and improve our integration with other library catalogues in order to raise our profile.
2. **Expand education and outreach:** We are launching an expanded education programme, drawing upon resources from the Library's unique collections to offer students across the UK, and not just in London, new workshops and educational resources: in-person, online and through *The Holocaust Explained* website. Following the launch of our Refugee Map online resource this autumn, we will be developing an outreach programme, focused on synagogue communities in the first instance, in order to raise the profile of the Library within Jewish communities in Britain. We will also actively promote the International Tracing Service Digital Archive as a vital tool for family research in the UK.
3. **Grow our resources:** For our resources to match our ambitions, we intend to grow our donation income through expanding our supporter base through innovative schemes, such as building our membership programme and our US Friends arm. We will also seek to diversify revenue sources and focus on areas where heritage organisations can offer unique benefits to donors, such as through legacy giving.
4. **Increase our research impact:** We will seek to transform the impact of The Library as an engine of research, helping to shape Holocaust and genocide studies worldwide. With the support of a legacy from the Ernest Hecht Charitable Foundation, we will initiate a fellowship programme. We will build staff expertise and develop programmes in partnership through the Holocaust and Genocide Research Partnership, also supported by EHCF. We will launch a UK-wide activity programme to raise awareness of the International Tracing Service Archive as a resource of unique importance for academic and family researchers. Following the success of *The Fatherland and the Jews* (2021) as our first joint publication, we look forward to continuing our partnership with Granta Books.
5. **Deepen engagement of diverse audiences:** Exhibitions will continue to be a key tool for driving engagement with our collections, but we also aim to increase our use of a wide range of new media (e.g. podcasts, video content, animations, virtual events) to drive engagement with diverse audiences. We have developed a new communication strategy which includes an annual activity plan targeting specific audiences. In the post pandemic environment, we are more aware than ever that developing audiences through digital platforms will be as crucial as engaging with people face-to-face.

Enhance Access to Collections



We will:

- Implement a new intelligent catalogue search system that will allow our collections to be searched faster and more effectively by staff and users.
- Digitise a third of our collection and make as much of our digitised material widely accessible as possible.
- Work towards achieving accreditation for professional archival standards.
- Reduce and, where possible, eliminate, any backlogs of uncatalogued material.
- Improve integration of our catalogue with catalogues offered by other institutions and union catalogues in order to increase visibility of collection and access points.
- Find solutions to storage space constraints to aid the maximisation of 29 Russell Square as an access point for collections.
- Grow our volunteer programme with a view to supporting weekend opening and preservation work.

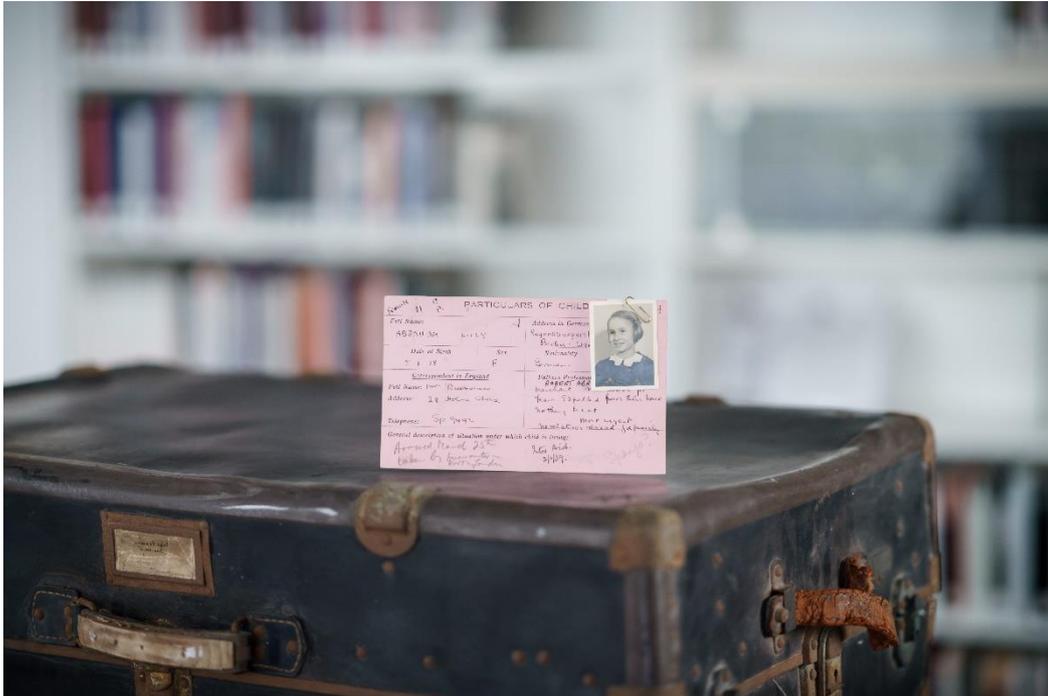
Expand Education and Outreach



We will:

- Expand our existing education programme to include regular online and in person workshops supported by *The Holocaust Explained* website resource.
- As our profile rises, attract a larger number of schools and teachers to use our collections and workshops on a regular basis.
- Seek a solution to space constraints at 29 Russell Square in order to allow more and/or better onsite workshops.
- Modernise the Exhibition Room and Reading Room in order to ensure visitor experience is as impactful, enjoyable and meaningful as possible.
- Integrate our outreach programme with the exhibition programme, our main website, and our digital resources (*The Holocaust Explained*, *Refugee Map*, *Testifying to the Truth*, *Pogrom: November 1938*), including newly digitised materials.
- Develop an outreach programme raising the profile of the International Tracing Service Archive (ITS) as a resource for family researchers throughout the UK.

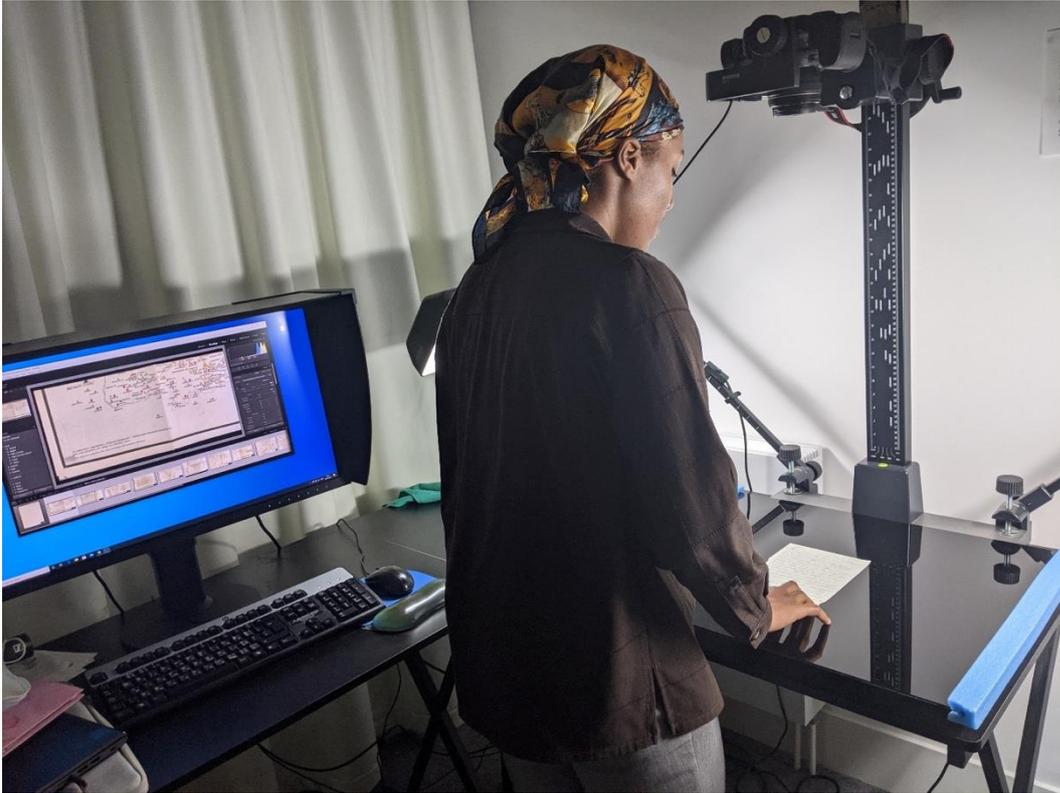
Grow our Resources



We will:

- Significantly grow our membership programme, while continually reviewing its benefits.
- Develop a legacy giving programme to ensure that people are aware of the transformative value that legacy gifts can bring.
- Make use of advances in CRM technology to ensure that our communication with donors and supporters is consistently timely and engaging;
- Deliver successful fundraising events and other opportunities for engagement of potential and existing donors, members and stakeholders.
- Grow our fundraising income from the US Friends of the WHL via the implementation of a strategic approach to profile-raising.
- Continue to develop innovative projects that attract support from leading funders, e.g. the renovation of our Exhibition Room and potential naming opportunities, for e.g. as part of our planned Fellowship Programme.
- Grow revenue from our online shop, from online donation campaigns (e.g. *The Big Give*) and introduce other new income streams, for example through ticketing select online or in person events.

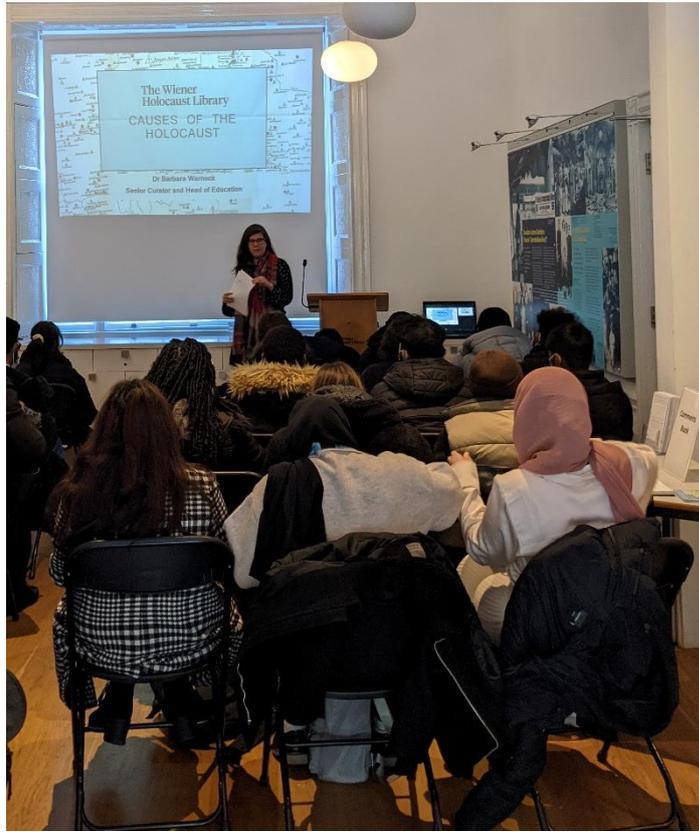
Increase our Research Impact



We will:

- Build a Fellowship Programme with the support of a generous legacy from the Ernest Hecht Foundation Charitable Foundation.
- Enhance our scholarly reputation through participation in or hosting of key events (e.g. conferences) that enhance our reputation nationally and internationally.
- Disseminate new research via partnerships with scholarly institutions in order to improve public understanding.
- Where possible, particularly through partnership with Granta Books, publish lesser-known or neglected writings about the Holocaust, bringing those of outstanding quality to public attention.
- Achieve first milestones on the track to becoming an Independent Research Organisation.
- Develop specialist expertise among staff where appropriate and build strong subject and collections knowledge across all staff.

Deepen Engagement with Diverse Audiences



We will:

- Grow engagement of diverse audiences with digital resources, particularly through developing e.g. online exhibitions of relevance to specific target audiences.
- Develop a wider offering targeted towards audiences outside of London, through educational events, family research events, arts events etc.
- Strengthen our international reputation and reach through developing strategic partnerships, particularly in the United States via our US Friends organisation.
- Work with our Trustees, through The Library's Fundraising Committee, to widen the circle of long-term supporters of our work.
- Develop strong international relationships and partnerships, particularly in the United States, Germany and Israel.
- Further improve targeted outreach based on the range of core and target audiences identified in the WHL Communication Strategy.
- Develop a synagogue outreach programme to raise The Library's profile among Jewish communities across the UK.

Who uses The Wiener Holocaust Library?

People wishing to deposit precious items

“Documents can talk for people who are no longer there to speak for themselves: of courageous decisions, fortitude, heartbreak, loss, privation, faith, determination, perseverance, and hope. I am glad that my family’s papers will be preserved by the Library to show the strength in adversity of those who survived persecution.” **Margaret Gordon, donor of documentation.**

“The Library has for decades been a centre of study, evaluation and conservation of historical documents in connection with the Shoah. That is why I decided to donate for safekeeping the material that I have on Viktor Ullman to the Library.” **Maria Garzon, donor of documentation**

Policymakers and government

“I’m a terrific fan of The Wiener Holocaust Library and so is the British government. They recognise that it is at the very forefront of the best of innovative research. We are grateful that it’s there to tell the story of the Holocaust and to educate people in this country and throughout the world.” **Lord Eric Pickles, Co-Chair of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation**

“We must continue to tell these stories and use the lessons of history to tackle today’s challenges.” **Sir Keir Starmer, Labour MP for Holborn and St Pancras, and leader of the Labour Party**

Historians, researchers and educators

“The Library’s events and exhibitions are a constant source of inspiration, fresh thinking and new knowledge.” **Professor Arthur Chapman, UCL Institute of Education**

“If we are really serious about combating extremism we need to understand what it was like for people to be members of fascist movements.” **Dr Roland Clark, University of Liverpool**

“The Library’s vast collection of documents, books, periodicals and eyewitness testimony is an indispensable aid to researchers on the Holocaust and genocide more generally, as well as providing the basis for its important educational and outreach work.” **Sir Richard Evans, British historian**

“Having the chance to see some of the archival documents was extremely helpful. They are powerful tools which we should use more with pupils.” **Teacher at Harlow Academy**

“I never imagined that I would be invited to talk about my book at the Library. As a non-academic I was quite nervous at the prospect but everyone was so welcoming and supportive and the whole experience was one of my highlights of 2020!” **Debra Barnes, author of *The Young Survivors***

Partner organisations

“I can’t thank the Library enough for standing in solidarity with us this year as we marked the 27th anniversary of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Our two events were special moments of collaboration and a great example of how we can stand together to keep memories alive, learn, challenge distortion and denial.” **Eric Murangwa MBE, founder and CEO of the Ishami Foundation**

“The Library’s policy, and commitment, to prioritise and fast-track enquiries from and about survivors and refugees has been continuously met and is a source of great comfort to our members.” **Michael Newman, Association of Jewish Refugees Chief Executive**

“René Cassin values its partnership and collaboration with the Library in championing a discussion about some of the most pertinent human rights issues in the UK by providing valuable historical evidence from the past and strong messages of solidarity in the present.” **Mia Hasenson-Gross, René Cassin Director**

Visitors, learners of all ages, and interested members of the public

“Have been a couple of times to see exhibitions. I wish every country had a similar institution.” **Exhibition visitor**

“A brilliant resource for furthering knowledge of Roma history.” **Visitor to online exhibition *Forgotten Victims***

“The Library’s workshops demonstrate that in these times when most academic conferences/workshops are being cancelled we can still have insightful discussions and learn from each other virtually.” **Online workshop participant**

“This is a fantastic resource, thank you for making it accessible.” **User of online resource, *Testifying to the Truth: Eyewitnesses to the Holocaust***

“A really brilliant resource for parents homeschooling their kids.” **User of *The Holocaust Explained* educational website**

“It’s such a wonderful idea that the Library makes its talks accessible and public.” **YouTube subscriber**

“This place is a little-known treasure trove of first-hand information – documents, personal memories, photos, artefacts – painstakingly curated and carefully preserved.” **Supporter of the Library**

Building on our Achievements

Whilst we have faced inevitable uncertainty and unprecedented disruption to wider society since last March, the Wiener Holocaust Library has remained focused on delivering its mission throughout. The way in which we have used the strength of our digital resources to continue providing our core public services during a time when we were unable to welcome everyone in person has been a true highlight and testament to our resilience during this challenging time.

The launch of a redesigned website incorporating our new branding and style guide, which was a key part of our strategic plan 2019-2023, has proven crucial to our success during this period. The fundamental goal of the website redesign project was to better serve our users. We wanted to offer a higher quality experience when visiting our site, to increase access to our collections and offer more engaging and educational content. We are satisfied that this goal was achieved, a view which is supported by feedback from users and web analytics.

Since March we have hosted over 40 online events, most of which are still available to view on our YouTube channel. These events received over 4,500 attendees and over 11,600 YouTube views. Our exhibitions have continued to make an impact despite transition to an environment where users are mainly accessing our work online. Our latest exhibitions *Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust* and *Death Marches: Evidence and Memory* both included special short films and gallery walk-throughs. Both have attracted considerable interest in the press, and proved an online success, being the most viewed page on our website since March 2020 and with the online guide to this exhibition having received over 4,500 views. Print catalogues for both exhibitions have also sold well through our beautifully designed new online shop.

We are proud of our new digital resource, *Testifying to the Truth: Eyewitnesses to the Holocaust* which launched on 28th January 2021. This outstanding collection of early eyewitness testimonies collected by Dr Alfred Wiener and Dr Eva Reichmann in the 1950s has been translated, digitised and made machine readable to ensure this extraordinary material is as accessible as possible. The user-friendly design and accessible content gained praise in reviews, for example in *Smithsonian Magazine*. After our exhibitions, this online resource is now the third most visited part of our website. The technology used to power *Testifying to the Truth* will now be a crucial foundation for our Digital Transformation Project, 2021-2025.

The relaunch of *The Holocaust Explained* as a comprehensive introduction to the Holocaust for school age children has also been a major achievement for the organisation. The reach of this hugely popular and well-used resource continues to grow at an impressive rate. The site received more 1.3 million unique users in the first six months of 2021 alone, more than we did in the whole of 2020 combined. Given that analytics does not capture all users, the real number of users is likely much higher.

Future Goals: Our Digital Transformation Project, 2021-2025

The Wiener Holocaust Library holds an estimated two million physical items documenting the fates of victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution. We are the only institution in the world that has been continuously collecting evidence of Nazi activities since 1933. Our unique collections, therefore, have a unique contribution to make to the wider digital economy and learning environment. We can help ensure that accurate, authentic information about the Holocaust is accessible and engaging, and that it is used to counter misinformation and hatred.

Our ambitious five-year digital transformation project is scheduled to begin in the autumn of 2021. It will revolutionise access to The Wiener Holocaust Library’s archive. A far greater number of our collections will be available online, via a dedicated digital library. Digitising collections helps us reach wider audiences, and digitally preserve our most fragile items. We have already secured £310,000 funding for the first two years of the project but now need your help to obtain matched funds to support our planned budget of £355,000. The total project budget over five years is £665,000.

Our Digital Transformation Project will enable us to meet the increasingly digital needs of the 21st century by allowing our users to access our digitised material from anywhere in the world. The project relies on four strands of activities. The first of these will create a digital tool that uses the latest technology to make searching all our collections simple and fast. The second will see us scale up digitisation of documents, books and photos (see table below); the third strand will ensure that our holdings are described fully and accurately to make them easy to discover; the fourth strand will focus on the preservation of our most fragile collections using conservation and preservation techniques.



Our vision for our Digital Transformation Project for 2024 and beyond is:

<p>To become the leading transatlantic digital resource for learning and research on topics related to the Holocaust and other genocides;</p>	<p>To secure the long-term preservation of the Library’s unique collection of material of outstanding significance for future generations and to provide access to the world;</p>	<p>To respond creatively to the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic in the context of a world where antisemitism and racism are on the rise.</p>
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Our full budget and project plan is available on request.

Please contact fundraising@wienerholocaustlibrary.org

Thank you to our Funders and Supporters

The Library would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our wonderful supporters, friends and members, who's continued interest in our work allows us to provide as much as possible of our core services and to reach out so widely to new audiences.

We would like to say a very special thank you to our key funding partners.

- Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR)
- Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Ernest Hecht Charitable Foundation
- Pears Foundation
- Sigrid Rausing Trust
- Wiener Library Endowment Trust



THE SIGRID RAUSING TRUST

We are incredibly grateful for the continued support. Without the commitment to the Library of our funders and supporters, it simply would not be possible for us to carry out our important work, particularly during these recent difficult times.

We look forward to working together to achieve our ambitious goals over the next five-years.