

Anne Frank video diary Webinar ICOM April 28 2020,

Teresien da Silva, Anne Frank House

My name is Teresien da Silva and I am head of the Collections and Research department of the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam.

The Anne Frank House is closed due to Corona, like most museums in the world. Also for us a major problem, especially because our museum is mainly depending on income from paying visitors. If the measures will ease: to keep 1.5-meter distance in our small Annexe is almost impossible. So it will take some time before we can open our doors again. Anyway, we'll try to survive.

Although preparations have been made before the corona crisis, a new video project has recently been launched, which unexpectedly ties in with certain developments in this Corona-era. **Trailer in English**

The starting point of this project is based on the observation that young people read less than they did in the past. They all watch videos on YouTube instead. To attract young people to the life story of Anne Frank, the Anne Frank House together with video production company Every Media, developed *Anne Frank video diary*: an on line video series airing on YouTube and based on the diary of Anne Frank.

The video diary follows Anne Frank from 29 March 1944 onwards. The format resembles a vlog. The video camera takes the place of the diary. Anne is played by the 13 year old girl Luna Cruz Perez. The story begins when Anne Frank is 14 years old and has been living in hiding for over a year and a half, together with her family and four other people. Anne films herself and the events in the Secret Annex, looks back on the time before they went into hiding (flash backs), talks about the war, and shares her deepest thoughts and feelings. The video diary ends on August 4 1944, when Anne and the seven other people from the Secret Annexe are arrested.

The strength of Annes diary is that Anne Frank speaks to you directly and gives you a poignant glimpse into her life in the Secret Annex. The young actress Luna uses her camera to invite the viewers to connect with Anne in the same direct way.

We can already conclude that this format is a great success among young people. There are already more than 3 million viewers all over the world in a short time. The Anne Frank video diary consists of fifteen episodes – the last one on May 4th -and can be seen in over 60 countries on [youtube.com/annefrank](https://www.youtube.com/annefrank). These fifteen episodes are accompanied by seven educational videos that emphasise the fact that the video diary is based on a true story. All characters, locations, and events in the series are based on the original diary of Anne Frank and on historical events. They deal with themes such as discrimination, scapegoating, making choices, and freedom. One of the many responses from a teacher is: "I think this is one of the coolest ideas I've ever seen. You're making Anne real to a generation of kids who relate to 'selfies' and streaming. I hope of course that this would lead to them reading the Diary."

We've been working on this project for two years. It was planned to be launched on March 16 of this year. Exactly on that day Corona broke through in the Netherlands

and social life was shut down and we felt that we had to postpone the release. Countries in all parts of the world followed and went into the same lock down. Articles in the media almost immediately appeared in which the lock-down situation – with its fear and isolation - was compared with Anne Franks life in hiding. But is such a comparison acceptable? Our own experiences are often the starting point for understanding others. If you are severely restricted in your freedom of movement, as you may currently be, this will make you think about people who were forced to live under similar circumstances. Of course, this does not mean that the background and context from those days can be compared to our present situation. Anne Frank had to go into hiding for the sole reason that she was Jewish; her persecution, life in hiding, and eventual death were the result of deliberate human actions. Still, you will read Anne Frank's diary with different eyes, and the current situation will give you a better understanding of certain extracts from her diary. Some aspects of the story may be even more relevant at a time when quarantine orders are in place around the world because the present situation affords a small taste of what it means to be immobilized by historical circumstances.

All the videos are available in five different languages: Dutch, German, English, Portuguese, and Spanish. Teachers can use the Anne Frank video diary in the classroom and combine it with the educational videos and other lesson materials which you can find on our website. (www.annefrank.org)