



Call for Participants

International Youth Workcamp – Dealing with the Past and Jewish History in the Balkans

Bitola, Macedonia, Sept. 6th to 17th, 2016



- ✓ *You want to meet and exchange with youth from Germany and different places from Macedonia?*
- ✓ *You would like to use a fun and unique opportunity for intercultural exchange?*
- ✓ *You are interested in learning more about forgotten histories of the Balkans?*
- ✓ *You would like to work for peace?*
- ✓ *You are 18-30 years old and ready for action?*

... then apply until August 1st and join the International Youth Workcamp in Bitola!

What?

We are looking forward to welcome you(th) living in Macedonia and Germany joining us in this exciting project that deals with the complex and often forgotten histories of the Balkans and Europe. Together with our local and international partners and volunteers we want to revitalize the historical Jewish cemetery in Bitola to promote peace, remembrance and understanding. The long abandoned cemetery was destroyed by the German Wehrmacht on their retreat and is today a silent witness of the once large and flourishing Jewish community of Bitola that was wiped out almost completely by German and Bulgarian occupying forces during WWII. The workcamp activities will include workshops, field trips and lectures on Dealing with the Past, (Jewish) History in the Balkans, etc. held by expert trainers and researchers.

Where?

Bitola, Macedonia. All participating volunteers will be accommodated together in a hotel in the city and provided with three meals per day.

When? Sept. 6th - 17th, 2016 (incl. 1 day for arrival and 1 day for departure)

How much?

Costs for direct traveling (incl. return travel) by public transport to Bitola will be reimbursed. All expenses for accommodation, food and travel on site for project purposes will be covered for participants.

How to apply?

Please fill out the application form until **August 1st, 2016**, and send it to the two emails below. Selection of project participants will be made by the organizers based on motivation and interest of the applicants. We additionally seek for balance and diversity within the group in terms of professional, gender, national/religious/ethnic, etc. backgrounds.

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"And it is so essential that these young people [...] spread the word for tolerance and acceptance of all people, regardless of their colour, creed or religion. There is room to improving the future [...] because the future belongs to you, to this generation that has opportunities beyond any dream that anybody has ever had."

- [Emery Jacoby](#), Holocaust survivor and former concentration camp prisoner in Dachau.

What is it all about?

The project will take place in [Bitola](#), in south-western Macedonia. The country's second largest city is a border town with its roots nestled in antiquity. Situated on trade routes which used to link Europe with the Orient throughout many centuries, the city had been a busy intersection in which members with different religious, cultural and national backgrounds have made their homes. The Jewish cemetery, which is considered to be the oldest and largest of its kind in the Balkans, testifies for the large Jewish community that lived here for almost five centuries. At the same time, it testifies for this community's attrition as a consequence of the devastating blows that the city has suffered with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Wars and WWI. The cemetery ceased functioning in March 1943 when the devastation of the Holocaust completely wiped out the local Jewish community. Despite its immense cultural, educational and economic potential, the Jewish cemetery in Bitola is completely abandoned and neglected.



"Now I feel rage and sorrow. So many innocent people were killed. I have learned to forgive those that occupied us, but I will never forget what happened."

- [Jamila Kolonomos](#), Holocaust survivor and former inhabitant of Bitola, Macedonia.

In 2015, a local initiative was started to revitalize the cemetery to create a memorial park named "[Home of the living memories](#)". The overall objectives behind the idea are to transform the neglected and abandoned historical site into a meeting point of remembrance of the past and for perspectives towards the future welfare of all, to revive the cosmopolitan spirit of Bitola and to publically promote values of understanding and peace, i.a. by using artistic and hi-tech means for the design and

(re-)construction. Our youth workcamp intends to contribute to developing an inclusive culture of remembrance and supports the initiative to create a memorial park.

An international youth workcamp?

Workcamps are the most common form of short-term volunteering, where a group of volunteers work and live together on a project which has been identified by a local community or working with that community. International work camps bring together volunteers from different nationalities and backgrounds, aiming at building up international understanding and therefore encouraging peace.

Our workcamp project will involve 20 young participants from Germany and Macedonia, with diverse backgrounds. Together with other local and international volunteers and support of trained staff, the group will jointly engage in daily archeological work to preserve and



renovate a part of the cemetery. In addition, participants will participate in special workshops and excursions, e.g. to the Holocaust Memorial Center in the capital Skopje, to learn more about the (Jewish) history in Bitola and the Balkans, Dealing with the Past a, Nonviolent Conflict Transformation, Intercultural Learning, etc. Moreover, our idea is to produce a short documentary with the help of motivated participants. Last but not least, the youth workcamp intends to stimulate exchange amongst participants about different approaches of remembrance of the past and diversity in general and to connect to youth activists from Bitola.

We will make sure to have enough time for fun stuff, recreation and cultural activities to round up an exciting and rewarding experience for everybody ☺ As a cultural highlight, the famous [Manaki Brothers Film Festival](#) will take place right on time when we are going to stay in Bitola.



Participation requirements:

- Interest to learn more about questions related to dealing with the past and cultures of remembrance, history (of the Balkans), peacebuilding, international youth exchanges, archeological work, or similar. (No particular experience in any of the fields is required)
- Motivation and openness to work in a dynamic environment with other volunteers from diverse cultural, social, religious, etc. backgrounds.
- Age: 18-30 years old.
- Legal resident in either Germany or Macedonia (Nationality/citizenship is NOT a criteria!)
- Ability to communicate in English with other volunteers and team members (No perfect English is required – we will invent our own “workcamp language”!)
- Filled out application form until August 1st, 2016.

Any questions?

Please send us an email or call us and we will be happy to answer ☺

Who are we ?

forumZFD (Forum Civil Peace Service)



was established in 1996 in Germany as a non-partisan peacebuilding organization pursuing the goal of nonviolent conflict transformation. *forumZFD* carries out projects i.a. in Germany, the Middle East and South-East Asia. These include education about the origins and consequences of violent conflict, dialogue between opposing parties, the promotion of civil society and the reintegration of refugees and former combatants. Present in the Western Balkans since 2001, *forumZFD* implements project activities with various stakeholders from civil society, institutions, science, arts and culture to promote Dealing with the Past and Peace Education in Macedonia and wider the region. www.forumzfd.de | <http://westernbalkans.forumzfd.org/> | www.dwp-balkan.org | [forumZFD Macedonia on Facebook](#)

Youth Cultural Center - Bitola (YCC - Bitola)



is an independent, non-governmental, non-partisan and non-profit youth organization established in 1997 and officially registered in 1999. In the long term sustainable development of the center a lot of energy and assets have been invested for effective functioning in the field of youth, volunteering, non-formal education, civic activism and urban culture. Our vision is a developed democratic society in which the young people are the leaders of the progress. Our mission is to unite and develop the creative potentials of young people in South East Europe and to encourage civic activism. We pursue the following short term goals: Sustainable development of Volunteer Center of Macedonia; Capacity building for youth and skills development; Support of civic initiatives and campaign and Support of urban cultural production. YCC - Bitola is a member of these regional networks: SEEYN; SCI SAVA Group; Kooperativa regional cultural platform and has divided its work into three programs: Volunteering and non-formal education; Civil society development; Culture. <http://mkcbit.org.mk/en> | [YCC - Bitola on Facebook](#)

Holocaust Fund for the Jews of Macedonia (HFJM)



The primary mission of the HFJM is to commemorate, to research and to disseminate the history story of Jews in the Republic of Macedonia, with a primary focus on their ghettoization, deportation and destruction during the Holocaust. The Fund exists as a unique legal solution in Europe for protection of property rights of deported Jews who have no living heirs. In parallel with material memory, the Memorial Center shall carry out a long-term mission in presenting, educating and researching multiethnic societies, freeing them from any kind of danger from intolerance, chauvinism, anti-Semitism, aiming to build a society in which ethnic and religious diversity will present a civilization asset and a basis for further prosperity. Our Museum, the largest of its kind in Southern Europe, was built not only to commemorate the destruction of a once-great Sephardic Community, but to research and disseminate findings about discrimination politics, xenophobia and genocide, in order to be recognized and prevented. <http://holocaustfund.org/> | [Holocaust Fund on Facebook](#)

pax christi Aachen



is part of the international Catholic peace movement which is active in more than 60 countries and stands up for justice, solidarity and peaceful conflict resolution. pax christi Aachen is active in peace projects such as voluntary work in eastern and central Europe and projects with peace consultancy in countries of the former Yugoslavia. Besides being a sending and hosting organization for young volunteers, pax christi Aachen works in cooperation with the forum Civil Peace

Service (*forumZFD*) in the field of building up civilian structures and peaceful conflict resolution on the Western Balkans. As part of the German chapter of pax christi, pax christi Aachen works for objectives of peace work on the local and international level. These objectives are conflict resolution without violence, promoting remembrance and reconciliation, information about right-wing extremism and promoting courage to stand up for one's beliefs. On the local level, we accomplish projects such as the "run for peace" (www.run4peace.eu) while, on the international level, pax christi conducts long-term projects with civil peace consultants on the Western Balkans.

<http://aachen.paxchristi.de/> | [pax christi Aachen on Facebook](#)

Funding sources

The project receives funding from forumZFD / BMZ and seeks for additional funds from the EU Erasmus+ Programme and the Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes (KJP).