

## **Agreement on the "Basic principles for Youth Exchanges between Hamburg and Ashdod"**

### **Foreword**

Aided by the coordination centre for German-Israeli youth exchanges ConAct and the Israel Youth Exchange Council, Hamburg and Ashdod have developed a partnership to establish and to promote bilateral youth exchanges since 2006.

Youth exchange between Ashdod and Hamburg is based on the "Joint provisions for the organization and promotion of German-Israeli youth exchanges" (first agreed between the German Federal Ministry for Youth and the Israeli Ministry of Education and Culture in 1974). The cities of Hamburg and Ashdod are not twinned.

The partners are the "International Department" and the "Youth Department" in Ashdod and the "Ministry of Social, Family Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection / Department of Family" in Hamburg.

### **General objectives**

Hamburg and Ashdod are linked by trade relations through their respective sea ports. Youth exchange partnerships are an appropriate means of developing a network of social contacts and relations above and beyond the trade relations. Within the context of political education for young people, youth exchanges provide ideal conditions for friendly relations today and tomorrow.

The youth exchange scheme between Ashdod and Hamburg promotes the willingness of young people in both cities to develop social responsibility and to acquire a better, in-depth knowledge of the other country, its social and political conditions, as well as its history, culture and religion. Youth exchange promotes the ability to act together.

The youth exchanges are organized in full awareness of the two countries' history. Knowing of the difficult and ineradicable events which occurred during the National Socialist dictatorship, the exchange offers young people in Germany and Israel an opportunity to establish and develop a sense of mutual respect and friendship.

Israel's and Germany's modern societies are characterized by international relations and international networks. Migration and the challenge of integration characterize not only Israeli society, but also German society especially since Europe has ceased to be divided into two competing blocks of states. Globalization and migration give rise to a need for intercultural learning, particularly for young people. Today's young people develop their identity in the context of multicultural societies. Young people in Hamburg and Ashdod can learn from one another here.

Intercultural exchange and communication beyond national borders are a central motif of international youth work. At the beginning of the 21st century, the peaceful coexistence of nations, side by side and also with one another beyond continental borders is a fundamental objective for the entire community.

Youth exchanges between Ashdod and Hamburg can contribute towards this goal.

### **Task of the authorities involved in Ashdod and Hamburg**

The youth exchange scheme between Hamburg and Ashdod links up with the existing structures of youth work in both cities.

Once a year, the authorities involved organize a joint meeting of youth workers to plan youth meetings between young people and to reflect on experiences following such youth meetings. The meetings are attended by youth leaders who participate in the youth exchanges either within the framework of their voluntary social commitment or on the basis of their professional duties. These meetings take place alternately in Ashdod and Hamburg and are attended by up to ten people from each side. The program is prepared by the host country and jointly agreed.

The authorities responsible in Ashdod and Hamburg help one another to the best of their ability to arrange suitable exchange partners in the case of individual requests for partners, to incorporate these into the common network and to prepare the leaders responsible for the youth groups for the youth meetings.

The responsible authorities make a significant contribution to establishing the financial conditions allowing the partner organizations to invite one another to exchange programs.

Youth meetings are agreed for one or two years in advance between the responsible authorities, together with the community centers, youth centers and youth organizations involved. Their realization is supported by the responsible authorities.

The community centers, youth centers and youth organizations involved in Ashdod and Hamburg are responsible for planning and organizing the youth meetings, which are prepared in accordance with the guidelines mentioned below.

### **Financial and organizational conditions**

The host side (community centre, youth centre or youth organization) organizes and finances the visit and the program for a youth meeting. The cost of travel is borne by the visiting group. The special opportunities permitted by the "Joint provisions for the organization and promotion of German-Israeli youth exchanges" are used to subsidize the cost of travel for Israeli groups visiting Hamburg.

Accommodation and food for the guests are agreed between the parties involved. Individual wishes and cultural as well as religious norms must be respected in the same way as the organizational and financial conditions for a youth meeting on the host side. Groups can be accommodated in guest houses for young people, with multi-bed rooms, or in shared accommodation suitable for young people. Accommodation in host families can also be agreed between the exchange partners. Comparable standards are aimed at for the youth meetings in both countries.

Possibly some Partners in Hamburg will have difficulties to provide kosher food if this is requested by the Israeli side. The necessary conditions are lacking in many cases. The question of food is agreed at an early stage while preparing the youth meeting. Both parties strive to reach a compromise. The group from Ashdod offers its support, while the Hamburg group seeks the support of the Jewish community in Hamburg, if appropriate.

Colleagues from Ashdod are going to prepare a list with information about kosher food colleagues from Hamburg can deal with.

## **The youth centers and youth organizations involved**

The community centers, youth centers and youth organizations which take part in Hamburg and Ashdod are municipal or private organizations (NGOs / Non-Governmental Organizations).

The community centers, youth centers and youth organizations in Hamburg participate in the exchange on the basis of their own focal topics or interests and their own commitment.

The aim is to involve youth groups or associations from Hamburg and youth movements from Ashdod. Both youth groups or associations and youth movements are based on the principle of "youth leads youth". They undertake youth work on their own responsibility, organize the work themselves and are guided by democratic principles. International youth work is traditionally rooted in the youth organizations' efforts to establish international connections and to organize youth meetings. This tradition is to be maintained by the youth exchanges between Hamburg and Ashdod.

The following community centers, youth centers and youth organizations are currently participating in the exchange:

### In Ashdod

Community Centre I (Pnina)  
Community Centre II (Alona)  
Community Centre III (Yanif)  
Hafuch Al Hafuch (deferred)  
HaShomer HaZair  
Scouts (enquiry launched)

### In Hamburg

Jana / Evangelische Jugend (Siegmar, Sarah)  
FZ Nöldekestrasse (Angelika)  
KIZ (Anette)  
Die Motte e.V. (Siegrun, Mahmut)  
Die Falken (Rosa)  
Pfadfinder / PBN (Lisa, Arno)

Present and prospective future partnerships are developed further with the participating community centres, youth centres and youth organizations on the basis of experience.

## **Special projects**

### a.) Joint history project

In addition to partnerships between community centers, youth centers and youth organizations, the authorities involved in Ashdod and Hamburg are also start a joint history project. The idea first arose in September 2009 during a visit to the Neuengamme memorial site in Hamburg within the framework of the meeting of youth workers.

The purpose of the project is to enable young people from Hamburg and Ashdod to research their history together. In the first phase of the project, the young people will find out more about Jewish life in Hamburg before the National Socialists seized power and then by way of

example reconstruct the fate of Jewish families from Hamburg during the National Socialist dictatorship. The project can actively contribute towards a culture of remembrance in Hamburg (e.g. setting up a memorial plaque or laying a "Stumbling-Stone"). Findings are to be published in the Internet.

In the second phase of the project, research will be conducted in Israel – preferably in Ashdod – on Jewish families who emigrated from Germany to Israel.

#### b.) Joint Internet platform

The respective partners in Ashdod and Hamburg intend to set up a website on which the projects and the experiences of leaders and young people can be presented and discussed.

### **Guide for agreeing on youth meetings**

When agreeing on and planning a youth exchange, the community centers, youth centers and youth organizations involved are guided by the following principles:

Each youth exchange comprises two visits, one to each country, within a period of 12 months, preferably with the same participants in both cases.

- The youth meetings are attended by 11-13 young people (maximum age 26) and two teamers or youth leaders from each side.
- Each visit is agreed for a period of usually 10 and at the maximum 14 days.
- The partners involved agree at an early stage on the goals, target groups, special topics, and dates, use of media during the youth meeting, the programme and the basic organizational conditions. The date is fixed usually latest 6 month before the meeting.
- The Israeli group is bound to special security instructions.
- The partners agree on suitable accommodation for their respective guests.
- Binding agreements are reached between the partners with regard to the guests' food, taking into account the customs arising from religious norms in particular. Agreements are reached within the scope of possibilities available to the host.
- The young people participating in the youth meeting are actively involved in preparing and agreeing on the programme and are also responsible for it.
- The programme always presupposes that it is agreeable to both sides. Any wishes seeking to avoid visits to certain places or events during the youth meeting will be respected.
- The necessary rules for the youth meeting are agreed between the group leaders involved and with the young people taking part. If special rules apply for a group, these will also be respected by the other group.
- All Participants on the host side should spend as much time as possible with the visiting group during the youth meeting in order to promote a common group process.

- The two groups' holidays do not always coincide. Outside of school holidays, the partners will seek to obtain leave from school or arrange for the visiting group to attend school for a day if the host group's school term has not yet ended.
- Each youth meeting should be devoted to a particular topic, such as a practical project.
- The partner organizations are responsible for ensuring that the leaders and young people can communicate and understand one another. The normal language for communication is English. At least one of the leaders on each side, but preferably all leaders speak English fluently. The young people normally have at least a basic grasp of English. Interpreters are called in if necessary.

Discussed and agreed about in Ashdod 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2010