



# Most Mira: Building the Bridge of Peace

# What is Most Mira?



Three words: **Bridge of Peace**. We seek to build a better, more peaceful future for the young people of Prijedor and its surrounding areas **in Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

We seek to do this by engaging young people through the creative arts and thoughtful play activities, with crucial help from our volunteers—young people from all over the world.

The concept is simple: carve out a safe environment for the young people of Prijedor to be able to engage with each other, form new friendships, develop sympathy and understanding and become leaders in their communities.

We hope that through such shared experiences, the young people of Prijedor will promote a culture of collaboration and mutual respect. We hope that as a result of working with Most Mira, these young people will better be able to contribute to a stable and peaceful future in the region.



# And this is why...

The Prijedor area witnessed horrendous violence during the war in the early 1990s, including the infamous camps of Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje. The war has left its mark – 20 years on, this is a deeply divided community living in ethnically segregated areas, struggling with high unemployment and a stagnant economy. The generations of young people who were born and brought up after the war are not being given a fair chance in life. Young people of all ethnicities are stuck between a traumatic past, a depressing present and an uncertain future. In 2008, the UN Human Rights Council identified the two main issues affecting the right to education in Bosnia and Herzegovina as being: 1) the excessive fragmentation and politicization of the education system and 2) the segregation between ethnic groups and assimilation processes based on ethnic motives. Recent history of this region is a warning that we cannot afford to ignore this reality, or the threat it poses to peace in the region, and in Europe.

According to the most recent World Bank data (2008), youth unemployment in Bosnia is the 4th highest in the world for males (44.7%) and 5th highest for females (51.9%). According to *The Economist's* 'Pocket World in Figures' (2011), Bosnia and Herzegovina is no. 1 on the list of the countries with "brain drain" — it has the highest rate of emigration in the world.



Most Mira can make a difference. We know how to change attitudes and lives.

We turn challenges into opportunities.

We are making a difference and inspiring the next generation.

Since 2009, Most Mira has delivered this mission through annual Youth Festivals. In 2011, at the most recent festival, 108 volunteers from 17 countries spent a week in creative workshops with 465 children from Ljubija, Hambarine, Kozarac, Omarska, Prijedor and Trnopolje. The young people loved learning new skills and getting to know each other in arts, drama, music, dance, media and circus workshops.

In December 2011, generous support from the Sir Halley Stewart Trust enabled us to employ a Most Mira worker in Prijedor, to provide training and support to a network of young volunteers who will take the ethos of Most Mira forward on the ground, in their schools and local communities, and amongst their friends and families.

In spring 2012, thanks to a grant from the SDL Foundation, Most Mira purchased a 1,200 square metre plot of land at the Festival site, which is at the crossroads between the villages Kevljani and Petrov Gaj.

This is a first step in the development of the **Most Mira International Youth Centre**, an independent cultural and social educational space for all young people in the region.

The Youth Centre will provide local youth with an opportunity to host young people from all over the world, to learn about other countries' history of peace building, to offer and receive training through arts activities, to share their skills and knowledge with others, and to build relationships and networks for a better and brighter future.



## Honours Award

—  
**ERSTE Foundation  
Award for Social Integration  
2011**

In 2011 Most Mira was awarded the ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration. It was a big achievement just to be one of the organisations shortlisted among 1,850 applicants from 30 countries. The award is a true recognition of Most Mira's hard work and an active role in the social integration of fragmented communities.

In 2012 Most Mira piloted drama and arts workshops, which took place throughout the year - volunteers from Prijedor and the UK worked with young people from Ljubija Youth Centre and produced a play about their experiences of family life and the challenges they experience in growing up in one of the most economically deprived areas of Europe.

In 2013 Most Mira brought together 40 young people of all ethnic backgrounds from four schools supported by eight teachers and 20 international volunteers. They staged and performed Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for more than 800 of their classmates and family.

The play premiered at the Prijedor city theatre and toured participating schools in Kozarac, Trnopolje, Omarska and Prijedor and unsurprisingly Shakespeare was a hit with the young audience.



# Building Bridges Into the Future

**Most Mira** is developing exciting ideas and initiatives and strengthening our presence on the ground in Prijedor area. In 2012 we made a major step towards our dream of building the permanent base for our work - **Most Mira International Youth Centre** for local youth and international volunteers to learn, play and work together by purchasing land and obtaining planning permission. We will continue fundraising for the annual Youth Festival but we wish to be more present and supportive all year round in a productive and useful way. Therefore, next year we plan to deliver the following activities for Prijedor's youth:

## Training and Networking

Most Mira will continue to deliver useful training programmes for young Most Mira volunteers from Bosnia and all over the world, to further their skills, broaden their networks and build their capacity to run and govern the Youth Centre in the future.

## Drama and Arts Workshops

Most Mira will continue to work with schools, youth groups and young people on arts and drama projects that will help them to interact, express themselves and develop skills, better mutual understanding and new friendships.

## Youth Festival

A week of creative workshops proved to be very effective in bringing divided communities together. International volunteers, with their skills and enthusiasm, are the key to success. Most Mira continues to fundraise for the future Youth Festivals.

# Most Mira International Youth Centre

Most Mira has to date engaged with 1,500 young people of Bosniak, Croat, Serb, Roma and Ukrainian ethnic origin, as well as their teachers and parents. Young people told us about their disillusionment with the state of Bosnian society and their prospects within it. They told us that they need an independent learning space to interact with each other and with international volunteers, to learn, organise and build a better, more integrated and stable society. We are working on making this happen. Here are some of their practical ideas and **dreams for the future:**

## Be Creative

Young people told us they want a space where they can make music, write plays and poetry, design art, be young and have fun together. They need a safe space, open to all who want to collaborate and have fun.

## Be Smart

Young people told us they want to improve their existing skills and learn new ones. They want to learn languages, practice digital skills, learn more about photography, journalism and the creative arts.



# Most Mira International Youth Centre



## Be Connected

Young people told us that their interactions and friendships with volunteers from different countries are important to them. The volunteers told us how transformative it was to work with young children in Bosnia, to make a contribution and learn first hand about post conflict society and peace building.

## Be Included

Young people told us they feel excluded from processes and structures that effect their lives (economy, politics and civil society). They feel disconnected from each other and the rest of the world. They want skills and the confidence to influence change in their schools, communities, country and the rest of the world. They want to participate in democracy and grow up to be responsible active citizens.

# Why We Need International Youth Centre?

Prijedor is just an hour drive away from the new EU Border and yet for young people it is a world away. If young people are not supported to build bridges between their communities and the rest of the world, if they don't get a chance to come to terms with their past and work on their future together, the peace in Bosnia — and therefore in Europe — will remain under constant threat.



Twenty years ago, Prijedor was a site of terrible war crimes. Neighbours and friends turned against each other and within days detained, tortured, killed and expelled the local non-Serb population, destroying their property.

The peace agreement in 1995 ended the war but the process of reconciliation has been painstakingly slow. Prijedor is the area of highest return by refugees, but different ethnic communities are physically segregated, unable to reconcile.

Their children are educated in ethnically segregated schools, taught different versions of history and taught not to trust 'the other'. Generations of young people are growing up confused, unable to talk about the past and disillusioned about their future.

The lack of independent safe space for young people to come together and interact with each other in a creative way as young people and away from ethnic divisions and identities is an obstacle in moving forward and building long term peace.

# International Youth Centre Activities



Young people told us that the new International Youth Centre should feature a Cinema, a Library, a School of Rock, an Internet Radio Station, Photography Workshops, Live Music, an Arts and Crafts Design Studio, Dance Workshops, a Drama Studio Internet Cafe and a Website...

They also want training workshops in Civic Participation, Dialogue and Collaboration, Protection of the Environment, Social Enterprise, Foreign Languages Classes and a Media School...

They want to have the capacity to regularly host international students and visitors who wish to learn more about post conflict societies and engage with young people of Bosnia in meaningful way, by offering skills and knowledge in return.

This is an opportunity to join **Most Mira** in our mission of spreading the ideas of peace, inclusivity and equality in a very practical way. An opportunity to join our community of dedicated supporters and volunteers and directly contribute to the building of a more tolerant and stable society.

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### To be part of something meaningful

**Most Mira** is helping the young people of Prijedor to deal with humanity's toughest questions: Why did the war happen? Why did neighbours and friends turn on each other? How can we overcome the legacy of war and division? What can we do to help prevent it from happening again? **Most Mira** is answering these difficult questions with innovation, enterprise and optimism. We seek to inspire young people to change their lives, their communities and their world.

### To link up people of Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the world

The **Most Mira** community in Bosnia, London and around the world is an extraordinary breed: open-minded, outward looking, curious, intelligent and hungry to learn more.

**Most Mira** brings the most committed and innovative international volunteers to Prijedor to interact with brilliant and inspiring young Bosnians, to share ideas, have fun, express themselves and build a better future together.

### For more than just a logo

We're not interested in selling one-off ad space; our goal is to create lasting partnerships with individuals and organisations that want to be a part of something bigger and add depth to **Most Mira's** mission and experience.

Each partnership opportunity is crafted to partners' goals as well as the needs of young people in Bosnia. We work very closely with our partners to ensure that they are participating in a way that reflects the values of both organisations.

# What we need now

We want to work with a select group of philanthropists, individuals, trusts and companies that are committed to the power of ideas, and who would be willing to support and share our dream to build the **Most Mira International Youth Centre**.

We need a substantial amount of money to build the International Youth Centre. This is ambitious venture and will take time and commitment.

But money isn't everything. We need support for our mission of peace and equality.

Along the way we need help to raise our profile, organise events, and tell the story of enormous challenges and amazing resilience of Bosnia's youth.



**We need advisors and ambassadors - Friends of Most Mira - to help us make dreams of the better future come true for children of Prijedor.**

**In the meantime, to keep things happening on the ground in Bosnia, we need your donations - we need to raise £15,000 now to help pay for travel costs of our volunteer theatre director, for arts material and transport for children and other costs that will ensure continuous presence and activities to build on the visible creative achievements of all young people working together.**

# Most Mira People:

**Most Mira** is run by a group of volunteers from around the world currently living, studying and working in the United Kingdom.



## **Most Mira Trustees:**

Kirsteen Tait, Kemal Pervanić, Sue Macmillan, Zrinka Bralo, Duncan Stewart, and Laila Sumpton

**The success of Most Mira would not have been possible without the hard work and support of hundreds of Most Mira volunteers and supporters and this year we are especially grateful to:**

Kasim Pervanić, Maja Milatović-Ovadia, Nick Micinski, Sanja Božović, Senka Spasojević and Kristina Hemon.

At heart of Most Mira are the children who open their minds and hearts to new ideas & friendships. They come from the following schools:

Ćirilo i Metodije School, Trnopolje  
Kozarac Primary School, Kozarac  
Vuk Karadžić School, Omarska  
Branko Ćopić School, Prijedor  
Hambarine Youth Group  
Ljubija Youth Group



## Connect

Please contact Most Mira at

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## Find out more

For short films, evaluation reports  
and more about Most Mira, visit  
our website at

<http://www.mostmiraproject.org/>

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**Please support our work: donate online**

<https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/mostmira>



***Lord Paddy Ashdown : "Most Mira has done more for reconciliation in Bosnia than the High Representative has ever done."***

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