

Dialogue between cultures

The Project | House of religions





Who are we?

We are two organizations:

The **association** «House of religions – Dialogue between cultures» unites the communities of the great world-religions and many other organisations and individuals interested in religion, spirituality and culture. The association developed the vision and is realising it.

The **foundation** «Place of Europe – House of religions» supports the association by funding a building, which enables a space for the association's project.

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What is our vision?

Berne is just the start and the “first” realization of such projects and “houses”. Our practical and concrete experiences shall be spread out and made accessible to people in other countries in the whole world.

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What is our goal?

Our goal is a **house**, a place for inter religious development and dialogue. The house has two functions:

The five great world-religions have their own **rooms for divine services** and other religious ceremonies under the same roof.

The house is a **centre for dialogue** between religions and cultures with the population. All members of the association participate in the dialogue. The dialogue takes place in various forms: conferences, discussions, exhibitions, festivals.

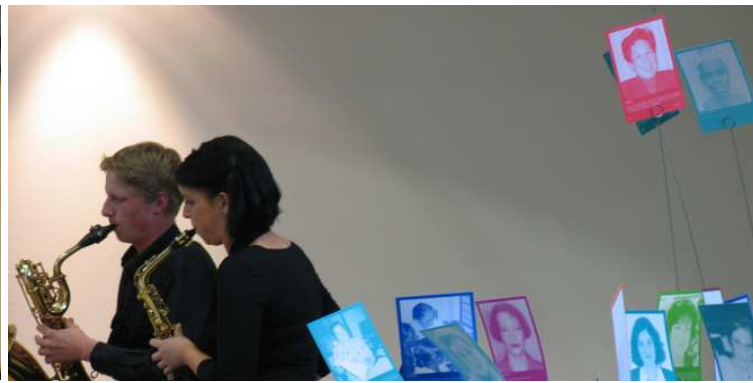
What is exceptional about our project?

Our project is an **experience**. It is **real**. It is in constant development. It is a **laboratory** for the living together of different religions and cultures under one roof – a laboratory for successful integration and an initial learning platform for successive similar projects and “houses” in other cities and countries.

It is a concrete project with a solid administrative structure, thus experiences can be evaluated, decisions analyzed and rules for an inter-religious peaceful and respectful joint “living-together” be derived, which shall be used for a deeper understanding and a model for a better inter-religious dialogue on a larger scale.

The project creates **rooms** for communities and allows them to practice their religion in dignified circumstances and alongside other world religions.

→ The experiences of the project are important and will be made accessible to people and countries in the whole world. Other projects and “houses” shall be developed and formed. People of all over the world can join in and participate.



Where are we?

A programme is designed for a **dialogue** between cultures and their religions. The programme is the result of 8 years of experience. It is already realised: The interreligious and intercultural dialogue exists and is part of our life.

For the house and its religious rooms the **construction** plan is ready. It is part of a building-complex planned at „Europaplatz“ in Berne. The application for the building-permit has been handed in. We expect the permit soon. The construction will begin in spring 2011 and the house of religions can move in by 2014.

Costs and funding?

The construction costs of the building are 10 Million Swiss Francs (CHF). 83% of the sum is already donated by private individuals, institutions and the canton of Berne. For the remaining financing gap the foundation is looking for additional donators.

The **maintenance** cost of the house and the charges for the property amount to approx. 0.37 million CHF per year. These costs will be covered by the foundation.

The **running cost of the house** for the dialogue between religions and cultures are expected to be approx. 0.8 Million CHF per year. These costs will be covered by receipts of the association, contributions from foundations and private persons and a recurrent subsidy from the town of Berne (0.2 Million CHF per year).

The religious communities pay the costs for their own rooms including the rent and the amortisation of the equipment. This is already established.



Who are our partners?

The project **enjoys tremendous support** in the society and by the authorities. The town and the canton of Berne are **associated and committed partners** of the association and the foundation. Both also have already committed to donate considerable amounts to the project.

The **town of Berne** has donated a part of the land and will give a recurrent subsidy to the running cost of 0.2 million CHF per year for an unlimited period. The **canton of Berne** has committed a considerable contribution to the construction costs of the building.



Why in Berne?

Migration is a fact all over the world. In an increasing number people are emigrating from their countries and bring with them their culture and religion into the new land. The immigrants want to cultivate both as a part of their life in our country. How different religions can live together in respect and peace is a question all over the world. It is not a specific Bernese question.

But it is also a Bernese question. Here are we living. Here do we have to solve our problems. And here do we start to find solutions who can be useful in the whole world.



Following steps of the project?

First we want to realize the project here in Berne and gain new experiences. The living together under the same roof, the current dialogue and the finding of solutions make us going from strength to strength.

Later we spread our experiences with other people in other towns and countries all over the world. In this sense the Berne project is also a project with worldwide impact. Our experiences shall be evaluated, documented and published. In seminars and workshops people of all over the world can stay with us. We'll be a living example for the current dialogue between religions and cultures.



Time runs

Let's recapitulate:

In eight years the association **led together** nearly all Bernese or Swiss organisations working in the fields of religion, migration and culture. They all support the project and participate in the dialogue-programme.

The **construction** plan is ready. The application for the building-permit has been handed in. We expect the permit in some weeks.

Our foundation has to **assure the funding** of the building until June of 2011: We have to raise another 1.7 Millions CHF.

We trust on you!

Contact

Foundation "Space of Europe – House of religions" Guido Albisetti
von Graffenried AG, Zeughausgasse 18, 3011 Bern, +41 31 320 59 11

Association "House of religions – Dialogue between cultures"
Laubeggstrasse 21, 3006 Bern, +41 31 380 51 00



construction: www.europaplatz.ch | more: www.haus-der-religionen.ch | Berne | Switzerland