Camp Guide
Cultural Heritage without Borders is an independent organization based in Sweden dedicated to rescuing and preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage touched by conflict, neglect or human and natural disasters. We see our work as a vital contribution to building democracy and supporting human rights. CHwB is neutral when it comes to conflicting parties, but not to the rights of all people to their cultural heritage.
“Gjirokastra” the mysterious city with magnificent white houses climbing the steep stone streets on the mountainside below the old castle. Each building is a unique piece of architecture and heritage that the owners literally live in the midst of.

It is a cultural heritage built by humans and it says something about the people who have built, owned and used it. The Gjirokastra house reveals both wealth and power, information about how people lived and worked, and about the cultures or social conditions that created it.

To understand the spirit of a Gjirokastra house, you need to read the book *Chronicle in Stone* by the writer Ismail Kadare who writes about the Second World War from his birthplace Gjirokastra while describing the daily life of a young boy and revealing the secrets of the three story building where he grew up as a neighbour to the former Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha.

While *Chronicle in Stone* gives you the image of a splendid city, the impression of Gjirokastra today is a city with fading beauty as neglect has destroyed several houses, even more objects are at risk due to lack of funds and knowledge and Gjirokastra could even be at risk of losing its World Heritage status.
This destruction has to come to an end, and I truly started to believe that it is happening when I was invited to a restoration camp arranged by CHwB. At this visit I met with young architects crowding around restoration sites discussing or working hard to bring the old houses back to their former beauty. There were not less then fifty young students from at least ten different countries injecting knowledge and spirit, and my image of a gloomy Gjirokastra changed into hope for tourism and a better future.

It was truly encouraging to see young professionals from all over the war torn Balkans not only rebuilding houses but building bridges between cultures and ethnic groups when working and learning together. To me it seemed as if the camps are a unique method of changing the mindset of young people, as friendship and respect was replacing ignorance and fears.

The camp proved to be an important event not only for the students. The presence of young professionals seemed to give hope back to the house owners. Craftsmen supporting the students brought knowledge about the old techniques. Senior architects from all over the world contributed to a high spirit and safeguarded quality. Local and central politicians were learning and contributing when taking part as lecturers or visitors.

The last image I want to share from the restoration camp is the story of two craftsmen with a jigsaw. It is the story of two ordinary craftsmen that look alike when working hard together. When watching them you cannot see that one of them is Serb and the other Kosovar, and you could not guess that ten years ago their countries were at war. The fact that these craftsmen might disagree from time to time about the best technique to use on the building site is subordinate to the fact that they are participating in this joint project rebuilding the future of the Balkans.

Britta Olofsson
Former Counsellor, Head of Development Cooperation
Embassy of Sweden, Tirana, Albania
The Swedish organization Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) started its cooperation in Albania back in 2007, by organizing the 1st Regional Restoration Camp in the historic center of Gjirokastra, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The initial aim of the Regional Restoration Camps was to get together young professionals from the Western Balkans and provide them with the opportunity to learn about practical aspects of applying traditional materials and techniques to restoration/conservation projects. Having young people from all over the Western Balkans created a unique opportunity to challenge the individual cultural identities in a professional surrounding that was culturally diverse. Mutual respect for cultural heritage is crucial for peace-building in any society. Utilizing cultural heritage as a tool for promoting reconciliation by encouraging mutual respect, understanding and trust in and between people is deeply rooted in the concept behind the Regional Restoration Camps.

Since 2007, CHwB has implemented fifteen Regional Restoration Camps, where the topics explored and studied included local community development, interpretation of historic sites, spatial development aspects and others. The development of these camps has been encouraged and joined by several educational institutions, Swedish and Albanian, and the camps are now being accredited as a part of obligatory studies at several Albanian educational institutions.
Recently the camps have become part of the overall maintenance efforts of Gjirokastra, where the actual repair work is done on monuments in need. The monuments and monument owners are in this way encouraged and reminded of the unquestionable values of the structures they live in and own.

Due to their success in Albania, the CHwB has recently begun to expand the Camps to other countries in the region. Aside from a portion of the 7th Camp that took place in Prizren, Kosovo, all nine Camps held from 2007 to 2012 took place in Gjirokastra, Albania. As of 2013, however, the Camps began to be held around the region, taking place in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, as well as Albania. The new Camps still operate on the successful model of the previous ones, but they are adapted to their unique context, to the needs of the people and the cultural heritage resources in each city and town.
what are the camps?
CHwB’s Regional Restoration Camps are designed to give participants solid theory, active hands-on engagement and life-changing personal interaction in an inspiring World Heritage context.

Smelling, touching and feeling the authentic wood, mortar or stone are necessary for understanding cultural heritage and familiarizing oneself with the tangible value of a building. Only when the sensitivity for authentic material is fully integrated into professional hands and minds can the need to safeguard what remains be recognized and work towards restoring what has crumbled and collapsed begin.

The Regional Restoration Camps are organized with the objective of creating conditions for reconciliation as a prerequisite for peace and democracy with respect for human rights. The camps are planned and implemented in a way that young professionals, both women and men, from the Southeast European region are meeting and learning about each other’s cultural background. In this way, by fostering personal understanding, CHwB is contributing towards the creation of a new cultural politics that is based on dialogue and works towards preventing conflicts like those that the Western Balkans suffered during the 1990s.

“Smelling, touching and feeling the authentic wood, mortar or stone are necessary for understanding cultural heritage”
“Seeing the architects and restoration practitioners in the homes and courtyards of the families, explaining and demonstrating their work, tying it in with their own exposure to local culture and customs, was very inspiring. ... This link, between the “specialists” of the heritage and architectural community with the city’s owners and residents, will be key in the ultimate campaign that will be required to preserve Gjirokaster’s invaluable stock of built heritage...”

Allan Zaretsky, USA
Volunteer, 7th Regional Restoration Camp,
September/October 2011

Kikino House
Kreshnik Merxhani
### Camps by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Countries represented</td>
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<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>Professions represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>Restoration interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440</td>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,139</td>
<td>Est. total hours of hands-on work</td>
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* totals as of January 2014
where are they held?
As of January 2014, fifteen Camps have been held in five historic locations across the Western Balkans, from the stone city of Gjirokastra to the wine villages of eastern Serbia to the mills and bridges of Jajce and Stolac.

The Regional Restoration Camps were first developed and held in Albania, in order to restore the heritage of historic Gjirokastra and bring together people who had been divided by the Balkan wars. As the Camps developed, they became a means not only of restoring buildings, but also of restoring cultural connections in the region and restoring the connection between heritage professionals and traditional materials and techniques.

As the Camps expanded to more countries, organizers took into consideration the context of the city where it was held and worked closely with the local community. In 2013, the Camps were held in five locations in four countries, each one focusing on a different set of restoration and conservations skills:
- **Jajce, Bosnia & Herzegovina** (mills on the Pliva Lakes, maintenance programs & plans)
- **Stolac, Bosnia & Herzegovina** (mills and bridges, mapping)
- **Rogljevo, Serbia** (historic winery/pivnice complexes, tourism development)
- **Mitrovica & Vushtrri, Kosovo** (conservation and storage museum objects) as well as
- **Gjirokastra, Albania** (historic tower houses, site planning)

In 2014, CHwB will hold Camps at all of the above locations, except Stolac.

CHwB has developed the Camps as a model that is relevant and applicable beyond the Balkans, as well. In fact, with participants from Western Europe and the Americas, the Camps have also served to build relations between the Balkans and other regions of the world. As the quality of programming and restoration work reflect the highest standards in the field, the hope is that the Camps will soon be going to even more countries.
Water mills on the Pliva Lakes, Jajce, BiH

The castle in Stolac, BiH
Vanja Jovišić
The heart of the historic bazaar, Gjirokastra, Albania

Kreshnik Merxhani

Wildflowers frame a historic wine cellar, Rogljevo, Serbia

Jonathan Eaton
who are they for?
The camps are aimed primarily at students in their final years of the faculties of Architecture, Art History, Civil Engineering, Archaeology, Antiquities and other related studies, as well as young professionals from Southeast Europe that work in a field related to cultural heritage preservation.

Applicants from other countries can apply, too, as long as their professional interest is based in the field of cultural heritage preservation in the Southeast European region.

CHwB has made continuous efforts to promote traditional practices within the field of architectural conservation. Part of this push has been to bring universities closer to practice and hands-on practical experience. Therefore, CHwB operates the Regional Restoration Camps in cooperation with two prominent academic institutions in Albania: POLIS University’s International School of Architecture and Urban Policies and the University of Tirana’s Faculty of History and Philology postgraduate studies in Cultural Heritage Management. Now that CHwB is implementing the Camps in Serbia, Kosovo and Bosnia & Herzegovina, the number of academic partners is growing to include major universities in those countries, as well.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERS IN ALBANIA:

“Once you understand the importance of the work you are doing you realize how great your individual contribution is. Believing in the abilities of young professionals is, in my opinion, the best way to educate them and make them love their profession.”

Anisa Lloja, Albania
Participant, 6th Camp; Volunteer, 7th Camp
the camp experience
The aim with the camps is to give participants an insight into the conservation/restoration field by combining theory and practice—applying the theoretical background through practical hands-on exercises.

Lectures at the camps are delivered by renowned cultural heritage specialists from the Balkans and across Europe. Among them are Andrew Shepherd from the Architectural Association School of Architecture, UK; Dick Sandberg, palace architect, Sweden; Rand Eppich, Technalia, Spain; Nihad Čengić, art conservator, BiH; Dr. Diana Walters, museum specialist, UK; Prof Dr Emin Riza, Albania; and others!

Their courses are organized around core themes that include:

- Introduction to conservation theory
- Conservation approaches toward stone and wood repair
- Introductory lectures to lime and lime-based mortars and renders
- Historical and architectural context
- Contemporary and traditional survey techniques
- Value analysis and the environmental impact of restoration/conservation
- Spatial potentials and analysis
- Cultural heritage management
- And many others!

Besides delivering lectures, consultants dedicate their time at the Camp to working with participants on activities in their field of expertise.

The practical part of the day is dedicated to actual repair works on monuments in Gjirokastra. The repairs include works with wood, stone, mortar and render, and are led by a group of experienced craftsmen. The practical works include an explanations of the tools, the nature of the material and aspects of its practical applications.

Part of the camp curriculum is also dedicated to field trips, where students visit such locally and regionally significant sites as: Labova e Kryqit, a sixth-century church in the vicinity of Gjirokastra and Butrint, a UNESCO-listed archaeological site and nature preserve.
“During the two weeks, the restoration camps have an important social impact on the museum city of Gjirokastra, because the young participants give a lively spirit to the old historical part of the city. But also by restoring the old monumental houses, the camps have an impact on the lives of the inhabitants of those houses...”

Gearda Demiraj, Albania
Participant, 4th Regional Restoration Camp
Organizer, 7th-9th Regional Restoration Camps

Working together
Kreshnik Merxhani
Since the 4th Regional Restoration Camp, the curriculum has offered several optional courses. These have included drawing, cooking and dancing classes.

DRAWING CLASSES held in the beautiful 18th-century Skenduli House are led by Prof. Albert Kasi, an artist and sculptor from Gjirokastra. Albert has created a spiritual getaway on the house veranda, where talented young people are developing excellent drawings of this monument.

COOKING CLASSES have been held in different households of Gjirokastra. The idea with this class is to engage the elderly generations and preserve the traditions of Gjirokastra by sharing the knowledge of how traditional dishes are produced, such as qifqi (below).
“[Working on site] is of course the fun part of the day. Even though it looks a bit hard, you might be surprised to see how pleasant the work can be… Between the stones, wood, different languages, and the visits to interesting places, two unpredictable weeks can quickly fly by. New friendships are born, and everyone that leaves promises to come back to the ‘City of Stone’…”

Jona Dajçi
Participant, 6th Regional Restoration Camp
Volunteer, 7th Regional Restoration Camp
restoration in action
Exercises may focus on stone, mortar and render, wood or architectural and spatial surveying. Stone works may include both masonry and slate roofs; wood works have focused on the restoration of windows, doors, staircases and floors. Rendering and plaster works are oriented toward traditional mortar and render surfaces. Each of the works involves aspects of conservation, e.g. the render works deal with the consolidation of existing layers of historical render, along with the restoration of missing parts.

Architectural and spatial surveys focus on a specific building and its immediate surroundings. The aim is to get acquainted with the monument that is being surveyed and to gauge the potential for revitalization and development of the building and its entire site. Specific focus is given to the historical interpretation of the site, to tell the story that lies behind its physical structure.
Site: Skenduli House, Gjirokastra, Albania

Project: 9th Camp – Restore the entrance gate, which was near collapse.

Result: Consolidated entry gate, incorporating original pieces whenever possible and gained experience working with both wood and stone.
Site: Babameto House, Gjirokastra, Albania

Project: 8th Camp – This house has been a major ongoing CHwB restoration project. At this Camp, participants worked on the restoration of the wooden window frames and shutters.

Result: Original windows restored with minimal loss of authentic material by seamlessly joining the new to the old.
Site: Small bridge on the Ada River, Stolac, Bosnia & Herzegovina


Result: Created full documentation, restored the fallen side of the bridge, cleaned away vegetation and cleared the cobblestone pavement.
Site: City Museum of Mitrovica (MoM), Mitrovica, Kosovo

Project: 15th Camp – Perform basic conservation on museum artifacts.

Result: In cooperation with experts from Heritage Without Borders (UK), participants conserved the entire numismatic collection on display, several textiles, ceramics, three pairs of traditional shoes and two swords. Conservation treatment reports were completed and left with the Museum.
Site: Wine cellar (pivnice), Rogljevo, Serbia

Project: 11th Camp – Restore the crumbling mud plaster on the exterior of a historic wine cellar.

Result: Strengthened and sealed the cellar facade with a new layer of mud plaster and lime-washed the exterior.
**Site:** Kikino House, Gjirokastra, Albania

**Project:** 8th & 9th Camps – Consolidate the plaster wall on the ‘moon balcony’ by cleaning exterior layers and injecting plaster fill into cracks.

**Result:** Discovered and revealed previously unknown fresco paintings, strengthened wall surface.
...surveying & interpretation.

ANTIGONEA

Alket Islami

May September
Site: Antigonea Archaeological Park, an ancient city located across the valley from Gjirokastra

Project: 8th & 9th Camps – Conduct survey exercises to assess the existing situation and improve the park’s interpretation, organization and integration with other local resources.

Result: Proposed a plan of action for the park and its surrounding area.
what’s next?
In coming years, the Camps will continue to expand to new locations, but a lot of new connections will start happening through the alumni network.

In 2014, the Regional Restoration Camps will continue to be held in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, with the hope that they may expand to new locations in the near future—possibilities include Bulgaria, Croatia and Israel.

However, the most exciting new development will be the launching of a new platform for Camps alumni to connect, learn and share. As of January 2014, there have been an incredible 22 nationalities represented at the Regional Restoration Camps. They have come from locations as distant and distinct as Turkey, Sweden, Belarus and Ecuador, as well as every country in the Western Balkans. This diversity represents a wealth of individual experiences, knowledge and aspirations.

In order to realize this potential, CHwB will launch an alumni network. This will be a resource to help former Camp participants keep in touch with each other, access information about restoration (including lectures/presentations from former camps, articles, e-books, etc.), and learn about other opportunities to stay active in preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

Participants’ countries of origin

- USA
- Canada
- Ecuador
how can you take part?
After filling out a simple application form you are entered into the selection process. From that point, you can either be selected, wait-listed or rejected. However, even if you aren’t accepted the first time, we encourage you to apply again for the next Camp.

Be sure to check out the activities from the last Camps. On our website, you can find news stories from previous camps. And look on Facebook [CHwB Regional Restoration Camps] for dozens of photos from the most recent camps!

We’re on the Web

www.chwb.org/rrc

or Facebook

Cultural Heritage without Borders

CHwB Regional Restoration Camps
how can you support us?
There are many ways you can support the Regional Restoration Camps. Some of them are:

• **Spread the word**
  Let future participants know about the camps

• **Show the Camps**
  Develop visual material about the camp to help us promote it
  [a movie, poster, short video, publications]
  Post it to Facebook, Instagram or Vimeo!

• **Write the Camps**
  Develop written material about the camp
  [short essays, articles, texts of a different kind]

• **Apply to be a Camp Participant / Volunteer**
  Former participants can apply to be volunteer leaders at future Camps

• **Anything else come to mind? We welcome all well-meant efforts!**
“Apparently we need to be reminded of the great heritage we inherit, of the great danger it faces if we keep not doing enough to protect it and mostly, we need to be reminded that we, all together, exchanging our similar experiences can do so much for our countries. It is impossible to imagine how much you understand about your culture by getting to know the one of your neighbor.”

Anisa Lloja, Albania
Participant, 6th Regional Restoration Camp
Volunteer, 7th Regional Restoration Camp
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[Logos of supporting organizations]