



## HEIMATSUCHER e.V.

Schoah-Überlebende heute

### ABSTRACT

TEDx Ruhr University Bochum // April 21st, 2017

### HEIMATSUCHER - Building a better world by preserving memories of the past.

#### Six years ago I became a second witness.

In this TEDx-Talk Ruth-Anne Damm, co-founder and boardmember of HEIMATSUCHER, will give an insight into the work of HEIMATSUCHER and the reasons why this award-winning and growing organization of young individuals chose to preserve memories of the holocaust and to share these with future generations.

The time which is left to speak with survivors of the holocaust about their memories and experience is becoming more and more limited. Human nature is going its own inexorable way and the youth of today live in a dilemma. There are only few people left today who can describe in their own words what they had to live through and endure, and what deep and lasting pains have marked them until the present time. Soon these voices will be silent and we will be left without personal testimony.

Some of us might believe to be familiar with the history of the victims and their suffering under the horrible dictatorship of the Nazis – some even have personal ties to what has been done. But the question is how this can replace the authenticity and depth of the actual personal experience?

We do see a chance: Thus we understand the Nobel Peace Prize winner and survivor Elie Wiesel who pointed out, that those who listen can become witnesses as well.

*„When you listen to a witness , you become a witness.“ (Elie Wiesel)*

In this TEDx-Talk Ruth-Anne will explain how HEIMATSUCHER presently has held 26 very personal and in-depth interviews with holocaust survivors and the impact these insights have on those young people who are invited from HEIMATSUCHER to become witnesses – second witnesses. She will talk about the chances of providing not only a story of facts but a personal and intimate insight into the survivor's fate. She will show how HEIMATSUCHER found a way to explore the space between past and present, a space beyond oblivion and trivialization, which focuses on the individual.

HEIMATSUCHER' s goal in it's educational program called „Zweitzeugen/Second witnesses“ is to enable the youth of today to become witnesses through listening and achieving a personal insight. The goal is to gain a perception and an age-based understanding of personal survivor accounts and to understand their important lessons for today. Current troubled times and developments, such as wars, terror, questionable elections and (br)exits underline the importance and need to act. To not turn a blind eye, but to talk to each other and to listen; so that walls of hate and prejudices have no chance to even rise in the first place.

History has many lessons for us. To learn from it we believe that it is up to us to remember and to preserve. It is up to us to listen; to broadcast the testimony, to insure that it will not be forgotten and especially to do everything we can so that this will never happen again.

Mankind cannot afford ever to forget.