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## History and Philosophy

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**Hostelling  
International**  
[www.HIhostels.com](http://www.HIhostels.com)



## Our Mission

To promote the education of all young people of all nations, but especially young people of limited means, by encouraging in them a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside and an appreciation of the cultural values of towns and cities in all parts of the world, and as ancillary thereto, to provide hostels or other accommodation in which there shall be no distinctions of race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, class or political opinions and thereby to develop a better understanding of their fellow men, both at home and abroad.

This is our mission, as stated in Article 2 of the Constitution of the International Youth Hostel Federation.

## How Hostelling began with Richard Schirrmann



*Schirrmann.*

Originally created to help young people of limited means to experience the countryside and cities of the world, hostels are now at the heart of international tourism for a wide age group. Hostellers contribute up to US\$1.4 billion to tourist revenues world-wide every year.

Since 1909, when hostelling was born out of the excursions of German schoolteacher Richard Schirrmann and his pupils, it has become one of the world's biggest international membership organizations for youth, with over 3 million members and a philosophy that has never been more relevant.

## Hostelling's Global Growth

Hostelling International currently provides 35 million overnight stays a year through more than 4,000 hostels in over 80 countries. Advance online reservations are a cinch on this site.

Today's hosteller is just as likely to be in his thirties and bring his family by car, as to arrive alone on foot with a backpack, or be part of a school group. Nor is hostelling an end in itself. All ages use hostels as their gateway to cultural exploration and the appreciation of nature.

The economic, social and political environment surrounding hostelling has changed dramatically during the last century. The hostel movement has expanded from its European core to embrace the world and fulfil the expectations of today's young people who have more money, more free time and greater mobility than ever before.

## Hostelling and Young People

The hostel network enables young people of differing nationalities, cultures and social background to meet informally, share experiences, learn about themselves, each other and their surroundings. Hostels foster a remarkable international awareness about current issues.

Hostelling also has a fundamental, but unofficial, role in the development of young people as future employees in a global market. The hostel environment encourages social awareness and the importance of living in a community, plus it develops the kind of self-discipline skills that result from experiencing different situations, having to make individual decisions and learning from them.

The young have become the spearhead of environmental concerns on this planet and they expect us to join them. Through the continuing vigour of the youth hostel movement, we are living up to their expectations. And we will continue to do so as new generations are born, and as today's youth become the hostelling families of tomorrow.

## Hostel Developments

Hostelling International fosters the growth and effectiveness of Youth Hostel Associations world-wide. Our mandate is to expand the network to new areas, establishing the same practices and high standards everywhere, and stimulate the hostelling ethic by international promotion and co-operative activities.

All revenue generated by our activities is reinvested, and in this way, the most profitable hostels help maintain those in more remote locations which might not otherwise be financially viable. Operating surpluses are also used to promote physical and intellectual activities and improve general environmental awareness among hostel users.

Through these endeavours, Hostelling International continues to open up the world to youth and ensure a service that is consistently matched to contemporary needs.

The name Hostelling International and our blue triangle sign are synonymous with quality budget accommodation around the world. We have implemented a quality assurance programme under which only hostels that meet agreed international standards may display the sign and appear in the International Guide.

New hostel developments, as well as renovations to existing hostels, feature updated designs - including: smaller dormitories and family rooms with en suite facilities, open reception areas to provide more welcoming atmosphere, and attractive common areas for meetings, dining and relaxation.



German castle, Manhattan brownstone or log cabin in Ontario: youth hostels come in all shapes and sizes, reflecting the special character of the host country. They may be new buildings or converted buildings. They may have 20 beds or 600. They are a home away from home, at a lakeside or by the seashore, in the mountains or a city centre.

Wherever they are, whatever their form, youth hostels are at the heart of tourism today.

## The Future of Hostelling International

Hostelling International works with governments and voluntary agencies everywhere to open up world-wide travel. Together, we encourage education in its broadest sense and enable everyone to experience new cultures in the most fulfilling way.

Commercial organizations also play a part, and reap the benefits of our ideals. By becoming corporate partners and supporting our work, they help us to develop our blueprint for continued success without compromising our fundamental principles or losing sight of our objectives.

In the modern world, demands on young people increase daily. The pursuit of the IYHF's objectives has never been more important or relevant, nor has there been a better time to ensure they continue to be met. With its unique structure and philosophy, and the support of corporate partners, government and young people themselves, the IYHF is ideally placed to do so, and keep the world open to youth.

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International Youth Hostel Federation  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Gate House  
Fretherne Road  
Welwyn Garden City  
Hertfordshire  
AL8 6RD  
England

Tel: +44 (0) 1707 324170  
Fax: +44 (0) 1707 323980  
Email: [iyhf@hihostels.com](mailto:iyhf@hihostels.com)  
[www.hihostels.com](http://www.hihostels.com)