



## WHAT IT MEANS TO ADOPT-A-JEWISH-CEMETERY

Perhaps you have seen or read about FODZ's new initiative "Adopt-A-Jewish-Cemetery in Poland" and you are interested in saving Jewish heritage in Poland.

What does it mean to adopt?

There are two scenarios: one, your cemetery is already a FODZ project; or two, it is not and would therefore be a new cemetery project.

The first step in undertaking a new cemetery project is for our Foundation to make a visit to the site and assess the condition and size of the site.

In most cases, there is no fence, marker, or sign indicating the place as being a Jewish cemetery. In some cases, the site has been constructed over, partially or fully, and borders no longer clear. In all cases we must verify with the local municipality to learn whether the cemetery is registered as a national monument, and to what extent building permits will be required. This also allows us to gauge the willingness of the local administration to cooperate with and support the new project.

Sometimes these initial first steps are simple and the project can begin as soon as the concept

and design are detailed for us, the funding raised, and the workers hired. In other instances, it is much less efficient and streamlined, especially when a full-blown land survey or professional architectural rendering is required even before a permit will be issued.

Another aspect to think about is how to maintain a cemetery site once initial work (clean-up, fencing, signage, etc) is completed, especially where there is no significant nearby Jewish community. The most successful projects usually need to involve a local person or company for long-term safekeeping and maintenance. In some towns, our Foundation has established relationships with people who can be hired for this purpose; in others, we would need to find local support willing to be hired. In all cases, our Foundation relies upon our partners for funding this recurring expense. On at least one of our cemetery projects, our foreign partner has solved this long-term issue by setting up an annuity which is used for perpetual care.

For all new projects, whether they envision the erection of a fence, gate, sign, memorial, or monument, concept and funding is the responsibility of the "Adaptor" (our new partner); FODZ will handle the mechanics of the project, from hiring a local fabricator, to installation, and where appropriate, organizing a re-dedication ceremony. Our Foundation can also assist with post-event roots travel to other ancestral towns and Jewish sites in Poland. Of course, costs associated with these kinds of projects reflect the materials, size and complexity of design and site, and administrative cooperation.

We appreciate help in covering our travel expenses for making the initial investigative visit; otherwise, on-site assessment by us must wait until we have plans of being in the area on another project.

There are 1200 Jewish cemeteries and only 9 Jewish communities in Poland, plus our organization.

Practically speaking, the perpetual care and maintenance of so many sites is beyond the capacity of these few Jewish institutions. While our Foundation is tasked with re-acquiring and protecting cemeteries from the legal side, we are not equipped to finance all needed renovation and recurring clean-up projects without partners, allies, and friends. Most commonly, we share responsibilities with survivors and their families in specific towns, with the Foundation providing on-the-ground administrative and logistical services and our partners providing the necessary funds.

To find inspiration from past projects involving fencing, gates, signage, and memorials, please check out these examples on our website:

Wysokie Mazowieckie: <http://fodz.pl/?d=8&id=127&l=pl>

Zuromin: <http://fodz.pl/?d=8&id=186&l=pl>

Siedleczka: <http://fodz.pl/?d=8&id=154&l=pl>

Lututów: <http://fodz.pl/?d=8&id=227&l=pl>

Dubiecko: <http://fodz.pl/?d=8&id=228&l=pl>

Głogów Mlp: <http://fodz.pl/index.php?d=8&id=286&zdj=9750&l=pl>

Radoszyce: <http://fodz.pl/?d=8&id=237&l=pl>

Mogielnica: <http://fodz.pl/?d=8&id=295&l=pl>

Myslenice: <http://fodz.pl/?d=8&id=271&l=pl>

Even completed commemoration projects require ongoing and recurring maintenance and clean-up, as clear from this photo from the Jewish cemetery in Radom showing the growth of weeds less than one year after dedication of a wonderful memorial lapidarium.

FODZ loves partners – contact us if you wish to help save Jewish heritage in Poland:

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