

Bad Arolsen,
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Page 1/1

“Anyone can make a real contribution”

Three questions for Floriane Azoulay, Director of the Arolsen Archives, about the #everynamecounts initiative

Why is digital commemoration important?

Digital commemoration is changing the culture of remembrance. Projects in the virtual realm enable us to reach out to people we haven't been able to reach before. For the past two years, digital commemoration has often been the only way to come together to remember and honor the victims. The pandemic has accelerated the process of digital transformation. We now have a lot more options for developing commemorative events in virtual and hybrid formats that appeal to young people as well. Digital commemoration is more interactive too: anyone can join in, make their own contribution – and make a real difference.

What is special about #everynamecounts?

#everynamecounts is a crowdsourcing initiative of the Arolsen Archives that aims to build a digital memorial to the victims of Nazi persecution. The project links remembrance of the past with civic engagement today. Young people who have no personal connection to the Holocaust are grateful for this opportunity to make a personal and lasting contribution to a meaningful initiative whose aim is to ensure that the names of these victims will not be forgotten, and that their stories will be told.

What are your goals?

We want all the victims' names in our archive to be available online by 2025. This is a huge task, and we need the help of a much larger crowd to help us index all the historical documents from concentration camps and prisons that are held in our archives. We hope that as many people as possible will get involved and take a stand for democracy, respect, and diversity. With #everynamecounts, remembrance of the victims is the link that brings historical documents into the present: racism and exclusion are still with us. So we are using extensive social media campaigns to reach out to young people in particular, and we want to motivate as many students as possible to get involved in #everynamecounts with a new educational campaign.