

## 9th Worldwide Biography Conference - Report 3rd to 5th November 2017

Trusting in our being in resonance with the destiny of the Worldwide Biography Conference © (WBC), we as colleagues responsible for organising WBC 2017, met near Dornach for our final review and closure of our work. The following is a brief outline of our conclusions and the initiatives we enacted in preparation for transmitting organisational responsibility for the next WBC.

Basically we tied all loose ends together and prepared for a meeting in February with our 'Budapest Group' colleagues, who cooperated with us in carrying WBC 2017, and who are now ready to carry the flame towards WBC 2019. We also met with Paul Mackay for an exchange about the last conference, the worldwide representation of biography work through the *General Anthroposophical Section* and the question how to further develop the connection between Biography Work and the *School of Spiritual Science* at the *Goetheanum*.

### Fellowship? ... Worldwide Biography Conference!

The theme of 'fellowship' was very present, before, during and, as a work in progress, inevitably in our consideration after the conference too. We concluded that continued use of this term to describe our professional community is not sufficiently resonant across language and cultural boundaries. In coming to recognise that the title "Worldwide Biography Conference" encompasses all we are striving for, as well as all we have achieved so far, we agreed unanimously to let go of all aspirations connected with the term 'fellowship', together with all the organisational associations attributed to it since October 2013. Our journey through the last conference has shown us that the WBC is already very much a living entity through which we can all collaborate collegially to serve our need for international networking and development of professional practice of biography work in the striving spirit of the Michael School. So far this entity does not seem to long for more collective structure or earthly form, other than just being called into manifestation every two years. For sure all of us will continue working with the challenging question: how much form and structure does this entity actually need in order to fulfil its potential and continue its biography?

In this context we found it important to recognise that since 2001 the titles "Worldwide Biography Conference" and "Weltweite Biographie-Konferenz" are copyright protected for the exclusive purpose of organising international meetings for practitioners working professionally with biographical development. We will continue upholding this copyright collectively in trusteeship until such time as we transfer this responsibility by mutual agreement, whether collectively or individually, to other named colleagues. Any failure to uphold use of these titles for the above stated purpose will automatically result in the *International Trainers Forum* in the *General Anthroposophical Section* of the *School of Spiritual Science* at the *Goetheanum* (ITF) being asked to take over trusteeship of this copyright.

### International Networking and Online Representation

The WBC is an independent platform dedicated exclusively to serving international networking which promotes professional exchange of research and development carried by individual practitioners working with biographical development on a spiritual scientific foundation. The process of organising the WBC is of itself an international networking service, whose contact database is maintained solely for this purpose. In alignment with international data protection laws, we are asking the ITF to take on trusteeship for preserving administrative governance and maintenance of the WBC contact database and web domain until other arrangements are required.

Responsibility for maintaining the online presence of the *International Forum for Professional Biography Work based on Anthroposophy*, i.e. [www.biography-work.org](http://www.biography-work.org) and [www.biographie-arbeit.org](http://www.biographie-arbeit.org) was formally transmitted to WBC coordinators in October 2013. After careful consideration, we see no viable basis for making a financial and temporal commitment to the complex task of developing, maintaining and administering a permanent state-of-the-art, interactive online presence for the WBC. Rapid changes in technology and social media networking may require future organisers to embrace new ways for promoting the digital continuity of the WBC. Since the above named website will be taken offline, we are asking the ITF to help with archiving important reference materials, including the historical record of the WBC.

## Next Steps

Towards the end of February we will be meeting with the 'Budapest Group' at their location in Hungary, in order to take next steps towards the WBC 2019. Inspired by ideas a WBC 2017 research group shared in plenum, we will promote "guiding light principles", which incorporate our collective organisational experience to date, an integral part of this process. The exact formulation of the "guiding light principles" will be finalised in consultation with our 'Budapest Group' colleagues, and then be published for all to witness in due course.

We will pass on a synopsis of feedback and evaluations which some participants shared with us since June 2017; including looking at how provision can be made for enabling further training opportunities, like seminars or master classes, in connection with future conferences. We will also continue to uphold that an abiding archetype for the WBC is that of being a vessel in which the content is created by participants sharing their professional experience freely with each other; rather than being a congress of experts, organised by consultants, and funded by consumers.

Transmission of organisational responsibility will also involve sharing our experience about the financial management of budgets and resources of conferences, including for the last conference. Absent any precedent, we want to bear witness to a new phase in the development of the our conferences by giving here a brief financial overview for WBC 2017:

Opening Balance 01.01.2016	€ 4.388
Donations	€ 7.491
Registration Receipts	€ 38.218
Conference Expenses	€ 38.743
Travel Bursaries	€ 3.950
Closing Balance 31.12.2017	€ 7.405

It is our experience and conviction that the continuity of the financial viability of the WBC requires considerable financial management skills. We have learned that this involves practising due diligence when differentiating between commitment, sacrifice and service. Enabling a continual flow of 'gifts' is vital; however, these come in many forms, such as time, energy, experience, competence, devotion and tolerance, in addition to financial resources and facilities. Establishing and maintaining clear boundaries between 'organisation' and 'content creation' is also essential.

## Gratitude

We want to thank everyone who participated in the last conference, particularly those of you who took up the considerable challenges we created, intentionally and unintentionally ... :-) We also want to thank everyone who could not take part, for following the whole process and supporting your colleagues, inwardly and outwardly, locally and regionally, in their preparations, travel and contributions. We have already conveyed our communal gratitude to the hard working team at the Goetheanum. Finally we want to highlight how much we enjoyed and appreciated the cooperation with our 'Budapest Group' colleagues. It has been a real help to experience the power of being witnessed and supported on all levels, both before, during and after the Conference. Thank you all!

*Christopher Bee*

*Leo Beth*

*Fumiko Chikami*

*Joop Grün*

*Josien de Vries*