

THE WORLD KNOWLEDGE DIALOGUE FOUNDATION

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The gap between the natural sciences and the human/social sciences («the humanities») remains a major obstacle in our global and comprehensive understanding of the world, despite numerous individual attempts by internationally recognized scholars to bridge it. Many signs of concordance and cross-fertilization are nonetheless beginning to emerge, suggesting that the present time is propitious for renewed experiments to bring these «two cultures» closer together. The Swiss university system –with its longstanding international reputation in education and science– is committed to bridging this gap. To meet the challenge it has created the “World Knowledge Dialogue” Foundation and its inaugural project, the Crans-Montana Symposium.

Prof. André Hurst

Former Rector, University of Geneva
President of the WKD Foundation

Prof. Francis Waldvogel

President Emeritus
of the Swiss Federal Institutes
of Technology and
Hon. Prof. University of Geneva
Executive Director of the WKD



Crans-Montana is an elegant golf and ski resort, located in the heart of the Swiss Alps, framed by a panorama of majestic alpine summits, only 2 hours from Geneva international airport.

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www.wkdialogue.ch



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KNOWLEDGE
DIALOGUE

«Towards a modern humanism»

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WORLD KNOWLEDGE

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DIALOGUE SYMPOSIUM

Dialogue Symposium

SECOND EDITION

Second edition

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland

CRANS-MONTANA

CRANS-MONTANA

10-13 SEPT. 2008

10-13 Sept. 2008

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THE FIRST SYMPOSIUM IN 2006: THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PROCESS

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The first symposium took place in September 2006, with the participation of world leading scientists. It was unanimously recognized as a great success, and as the beginning of a process that should continue and be strengthened.

Four main lessons were learnt:

1. There is no common language, no “esperanto” to bridge the culture gap between the natural/technical sciences, the humanities and the social sciences, but a multitude of approaches pertinent to the various domains.

“First listen, my friend, and then you may shriek and bluster” (Aristophanes)

2. There is no common understanding of science without more listening and a humble migration out of one’s own field of competence – a total change in attitude.

“What do we know? What don’t we know? Who can help?” (a member of the scientific board)

3. There is an apparent “generation jump” in a holistic approach to knowledge: the older, established generation of academics, accords high priority and shows a genuine commitment to establishing the Dialogue, as does the generation of young scientists.

“Just a few days ago, I spent almost an entire evening with a few colleagues talking about the 2006 symposium and the fundamental importance of this event. It was one of the most exciting meetings in my career.” (Daniela Finke, young scientist participant 2006, SNF Assistant professor, University of Basel)

4. The role of science and its institutions has to be partly redefined in order to respond to the major questions of our contemporary world.

“The world has problems, the Universities have Faculties” (statement from a workshop participant in Crans-Montana 2006)

Based on these observations and with the help of the WKD International Scientific Board, the next experiment - the second Symposium in September 2008 -, has been designed.

**The goal is to make the 2008 Symposium
(September 10-13 - Crans-Montana - Switzerland)
even more international, transcultural and transdisciplinary.**

THE SECOND WKD SYMPOSIUM IN 2008

The second WKD symposium in 2008

Two main topics will serve as a basis for an interdisciplinary dialogue with the following tentative titles:

**1. Cyberspace/collective vs Human/individual intelligence:
Convergences and divergences**

**2. Cooperative behaviour, altruism and conflict:
From group intelligence to prevention of violence**

The meeting will be moderated by Prof. E.O. Wilson (Harvard), an eminent personality in the field of transdisciplinarity and hailed as one of the most influential intellectuals in the USA.

Keynote lectures will concentrate on the aspects of Knowledge and Responsibility.

One complete day will be devoted to each topic, with conferences from world leaders in the different fields, followed by discussions in the morning and dialogue labs, with invited presentations, in the afternoon. This attractive framework will provide ample time for discussion and exchange of ideas.

A call will shortly be posted for abstracts in the field of interdisciplinary research and education, to be selected for presentation in parallel sessions.

In addition, our Young Scientists Program, one of the great successes of the first symposium, will be reinforced for the 2008 symposium. Promising young scientists will be offered travel grants and reduced registration fees, in exchange for taking an active part in the symposium.

During the last day of the meeting, the various cross-cultural and interdisciplinary approaches developed will be discussed by leading epistemologists and summarized by the Scientist in Residence.

Finally, a series of lectures for the general public will be organised, in order to give them access to the dialogue.

Joël de Rosnay, special adviser to the President of the Cité des Sciences et de l’Industrie and President of Biotics International (FR), has already accepted to give one of these lectures.