

Summary of the wrap-up session of BtSM 2015

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The wrap-up session of the BtSM meeting focused on doing a brief assessment of the event and on identifying next steps.

I - Assessment of the BtSM Meeting and implications for further events of this kind

With respect to the assessment of this BtSM meeting, the group identified various characteristics of the BtSM meetings which have contributed to making these events unique. The BtSM meetings have typically:

- Been held at inspiring, unique and highly diverse locations
- Included opportunities to interact with the local environment, which in various cases has resulted in activities being implemented within the local context before and/or after the event.
- Provided a valuable opportunity to meet and interact with professionals from a wide range of backgrounds – the kind of people we might normally not interact with professionally
- Been highly multidisciplinary in nature, pushing the boundaries of the more traditional disciplinary and institution confined thinking
- Been guided by topics that are of relevance across disciplines and that link to the wider challenges and opportunities of a global world
- Attracted exceptional individuals that have played a role in providing inputs into the BtSM meetings

For this BtSM meeting, as has been the case for some of the earlier meetings – participants were asked to prepare short papers to reflect from their perspective on the lead theme of the meeting “Building Peace in the Minds of Women and Men”. There was consensus that this had been a very rich process which has produced a range of interesting and highly pertinent papers.

In terms of format, this BtSM meeting distinguished itself from the previous five colloquia in having convened a smaller group (through circumstance rather than design), and by having followed a less formal and structured program. Participants expressed the opinion that the less formal structure had been an improvement over the more formal earlier meetings with presentations, but that perhaps future events – in following this model – might include short introductory topics to the themes to provide a starting point for the discussion.

II - Next steps

The discussion on next steps focused on moving BtSM into practice, and on keeping the BtSM community vibrant and active. The following key points emerged from this discussion.

a) Moving BtSM into practice

The group identified a number of areas of work which will be carried forward by members of the BtSM community. These areas of work represent efforts of moving the ideas and principles that are related to Building the Scientific Mind into practice.

- Studium Generale at Tilburg University – Arthur Kok
- Exploring issues around refugees and migration and how BtSM can contribute to enhancing understanding of these issues – Ralf Syring
- Music in democracy – Martin Gardener
- Creating augmented realities for people who are facing challenges of Alzheimer's with the purpose of improving their lives and interaction with their environment – Carlo Fabricatore
- Rethinking design as a process of improving the environment in which we live and interact – Benjamin Ohlson
- Influencing the instructional design community and the manner in which instructional design processes are conceived – Jan Visser
- The book project on BtSM which Jan Visser is leading and which he is the lead editor for, collaborating with Muriel Visser.

Action Point: With respect to each of these areas of work, it was agreed that those who are taking the area forward will prepare a short paragraph describing how this area will be implemented and is potentially linked to the central concern of putting BtSM into practice. This paragraph will be circulated to the BtSM group that participated in the meeting in Sao Raimundo and will be part of the Colloquium report. In addition it was agreed that the group would seek to:

- Explore opportunities for working together – formally or informally on these topics, and to include in this relevant other members of the BtSM community
- Keep one another informed on progress and developments, either directly or through means which can include one or more of the modes of interaction outlined under b).

b) Keeping the BtSM community active and vibrant

In addition to the collaborative projects mentioned above, the group expressed a general wish – as had been the case in 2013 in Lembang (Indonesia) – to continue to meet and interact. Jan Visser made it clear that such initiatives would be welcome, but that his direct role in this process as organizer of the past six colloquia had come to an end, and that the responsibility for further BtSM events would have to come from within the BtSM community itself.

Various options were put forward to continue the dialogue among the members of the BtSM community:

- Identifying member(s) from among the broader BtSM community to organize another BtSM meeting in two years time. Martin Gardiner suggests Newfoundland (Canada) as an option and volunteered to serve as a liaison to people there who might be willing to support the process. Jan Visser indicated that he could provide inputs from a conceptual angle, and share experience with respect to the organization, if so asked, but that the decisions and process for organizing the meetings would be up to the organizers of the event.
- Meeting virtually through various forms of interaction which – among other options - can include establishing a Wiki based community, skype conversations, email exchanges, etc.
- Organizing smaller BtSM events at locations around the world, along the lines of what Jan and Lya have done in the past with the Lakeside conversations that they organized in the Netherlands. This would include sharing to the wider group as relevant the summaries of such discussions, in particular to the extent that this reflects efforts to move BtSM into practice.

Given that there were no immediate volunteers from among the BtSM2015 participants to organize a next event, and in line with this discussion, it was felt that it would be important to put in place a process of consultation on the feasibility of organizing a seventh BtSM colloquium in 2017. This process should serve as a sounding board to gauge the appetite among BtSMers to support such an event and commit to attending it. Due to the starkly diminished attendance of BtSM2015 as compared to previous events, the Learning Development Institute suffered a financial loss of €5000. Ways will have to be identified to avoid that such things would happen again on possible future occasions.

Action Point: Ralf Syring volunteered to take forward – in the coming period – a process of reflection with the wider BtSM community (totaling over 300 professionals) on the desirability and feasibility of organizing another BtSM meeting in two years time. The purpose of this process would also be to see whether persons from within the BtSM community might come forward to organize this event.