



Annual Report 2008

Foundation Goals

The Hirschmann Foundation is based in Zug, Switzerland, and has been operating in its present form since 2001. It aims to support of basic and advanced education, to support scientific research and the accomplishment social goals.

Three Main Goals

The Hirschmann-Stiftung has also been active in the year under review 2008 and chiefly in three areas:

1. Support of Scientific Research

The Foundation supports knowledge research by donating a three-year CHF 1,000,000 grant.

For this purpose the Foundation has formed a partnership with the Collegium Helveticum in order to achieve this goal. The Collegium Helveticum is an institute at the University of Zurich and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, which promotes the exchange between natural sciences and engineering, as well as between humanities and social sciences.

The project that is sponsored is directed by Prof. Dr. Gerd Folkers. Dr. Priska Gisler is responsible for managing the project and for project administration.

He focuses on the basic elements of interdisciplinary knowledge research by means of four case studies:

- Prof. Dr. G. Folkers, ETH Zürich, and Dipl. natw. Martin Boyer: *"Unmet medical needs"* as a challenge for drug development and design,
- Dr. des. Rainer Egloff: *"Culture and Personality"* – development of an interdisciplinary field of research in US social sciences,
- Dr. Priska Gisler: *Algorithms of Knowledge*: biobanking as a way of collecting living materials
- Dr. Beatrix Rubin: *Dynamic brains in a flexible society*: scientific and social concepts of neural plasticity

The interdisciplinary research team has been involved with the observation that certain methods and techniques which drive science forward can be made to be fruitful, whereas other projects fail to meet with a response.

In the first year under review the specific focus was on how mankind itself is made "usable" and "manageable". How is mankind shaped in science on the basis of historical configurations and social coherency? How can such configurations

change again?

The organisation of labour, co-operation and the development of specific scientific techniques for the production of knowledge play an important role. Scientific approximation to mankind can be understood by means of the observation of (inter) disciplinary changes in direction.

The concept of the Rational Drug Design is based upon the vision of crystal balls, which have a healing effect upon the cause of an illness. In the next phase of the project more work is to be conducted to identify the manner in which this concept is applied today in the development of medications.

The practice of collecting and analysing blood and tissue samples has changed. As a result of this the view of people has changed as well. What happened exactly is illustrated with the example of the Museum of Serology, which was established in the USA in the 1940s. The relevant historical documents will be subjected to a detailed historical analysis in the next year under review.

The concept of the capacity of the adult brain to change has altered. In the dispute over this the view that the human brain has a special position is of crucial significance. The second phase of the project is devoted to a detailed analysis of the changes in the concept of plasticity.

The development of the "culture and personality studies" in the USA from the 1920s onwards shows dispute about racist and eugenic concepts. Anthropology, hitherto concerned with primitive tribes, began to become interested in the person as an individual and modern, western societies. On the other hand psychiatry intended to restrict itself less and less to the individual and his pathological emotional state. A record should be made of the historical drive in the investigation into such interdisciplinary interactions.

Interfaces between the parts of the project are identified in particular with regard to the way mankind is viewed. There are very great differences in this depending on the discipline involved. As a result inferences may be drawn from specific over-subscription to ideas and possible distortions of concepts about mankind in scientific circles.

2. Support of Integration Projects at Swiss Vocational Schools

The Foundation supports integration projects at Swiss vocational schools by donating a three-year CHF 1,000,000 grant.

It has therefore formed a partnership with the Swiss conference of vocational school directors (SDK-CSD). The conference operates on the levels of higher secondary education and third level professional education and consists of 130 members all over Switzerland such as vocational schools, apprenticeship workshops, and training and further education centers. Its members teach over 200 professions registered by the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (BBT or OPET).

Specific projects involving teachers and students from different ethical, cultural and/or religious backgrounds are supported. The goal is to overcome different values, cultural misunderstandings, linguistic barriers and prejudices among vocational students of various origins.

Examples for potential projects: shared media projects about the school and its students (internet, school newsletters, video production, music production, etc); organization of athletic competitions; shared charity projects within the community (organization of a soup kitchen, organization of excursions for the elderly, etc); shared environmental activities (e.g. fostering of lakes, ponds, brooks or forests, rebuilding of dry-stacked stone walls, maintenance of footpaths, etc), shared training weeks.

It is the shared activity that is crucial in order to achieve a shared goal.

The SDK prepared its first annual report for the foundation board in November 2008.

The SDK has assigned a responsible management team to pre-select projects with the principals of the vocational training college in Rapperswil, Mr Werner Roggenkemper, of the vocational training college in Neuenburg, Mr Claude-Alain Vuille, and of the vocational training college in Lugano, Mr Francesco Franchini.

The web site went online in January 2008. This was followed by presentations before various panels of the Swiss vocational training system. The first applications were submitted as long ago as March 2008. The proposal submitted by Hirschmann-Stiftung provided the boost in many instances to get to grips with actually planning a project because the finance had been secured.

The aim of the projects is to build up a feeling of self-worth. The "Check-in" theatre project may be quoted as a specific example of this. Initially there was much nervousness. But this subsided as the theatre work progressed. The applause in the performance was a great encouragement for all involved.

Only the shared experience of mutual respect and reciprocal tolerance moves the students at the vocational training college at an emotional level and can result in actual results at an everyday level.

Altogether 23 projects have been staged at the following Swiss vocational training colleges: Uzwil (2), Bern (5), Geneva (4), Luzern, Basel (2), Wädenswil, Zürich (2), Bellinzona, Chur, Treviso, Locarno, Posieux, Neuchâtel. A total of CHF 246,000.00 was paid out from foundation funds in contributions. On average CHF 10,700.00 was allocated for each project in contributions.

There is a brief description of the projects supported in 2008 on the web site of the Hirschmann-Stiftung.

3. Hirschmann Scholarships for University of Applied Sciences Students

The Foundation sponsors scholarships for university of applied sciences students by donating a three-year CHF 1,000,000 grant.

It has for this purpose formed a partnership with the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences (KFH). The KFH-Conference involves the rectors of the eight officially recognized Swiss universities of applied sciences.

The objective being that the Hirschmann scholarship program sponsors promising students with extraordinary performances in their Bachelor's program who are about to enter a Master's program at one of the universities of applied sciences that are recognized by the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities. Not only the applicants'

performance, but also their social commitment is considered when awarding a scholarship. Applicants must be recommended by two universities of applied sciences professors in order to be awarded a scholarship.

The conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences (KFH) prepared its first annual report in December 2008.

23 grants worth a total amount of CHF 260,000,00 were granted in the first year. This is the equivalent of an average amount of CHF 11,300.00 per grant.

The Social Work department of the university of applied sciences at St. Gallen has set up a web site for the Hirschmann grant. There those students interested may find out the requirements which have to be satisfied in order to qualify for a grant. The KFH has appointed Mr Peter Wieser to be responsible for actually handling grant applications and awarding grants where appropriate.

He has informed the eight Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences of the grant in Summer 2008. The grant has already acquired a considerable degree of awareness in its first year. This can be seen by the large number of fifty applications received for grants.

Numerous enquired have been received chiefly in the spheres of music, design and art. The deadline by which applications have to be submitted is the 30th April and the 31st October of each year.

The students qualifying for a Hirschmann grant will be presented in the internet on the home page of the Hirschmann-Stiftung.

The Foundation is planning a meeting for those in receipt of a Hirschmann grant early in 2010.

Information about the Foundation's work

The Hirschmann-Stiftung provides information about what it does on its web site at www.hirschmann-stiftung.ch. The website has been up and running since April 2008.

Organization of the Foundation

In the reporting year the Foundation board consists of the following members:

Dr. Eugen David, St. Gallen, President
Dr. Gret Haller, Bern
Carl W. Hirschmann, London
Rita Hirschmann, London
Dr. Ulrich Siegrist, Lenzburg

Mrs Christine Sass-Hirschmann has resigned from the Foundation board.

Zürich, 26th March 2009