Newsletter

IFSR

Official Newsletter of the
International Federation for Systems Research

Editor-in-Chief: Gerhard Chroust

Volume 29, no. 1 (September 2012)

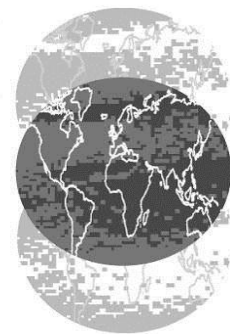*St. Magdalena, Janie Chroust 2012*

Dear Members!

The last 12 months have been exciting for the IFSR:

We held our General Assembly (with the election of the new Executive Committee) during the EMCSR Congress in Vienna in April 2012, followed by a very successful IFSR Conversation, this year in St. Magdalena in Linz Austria.

We were able to establish close relations with two other international federations, the UES (Union Européenne de Systémique) and the WOSC (World Organisation of Systems and Cybernetics). Consequently I attended a meeting at the UES Congress in October 2011 in Brussels. We are reporting about these events and several others in this Newsletter.

I renew my plea for information on your society and its activities to be put into the next Newsletter and/or on the IFSR-website.

With my best wishes
Yours sincerely
Gerhard Chroust

Contents

The New Executive Committee of the IFSR (elected April 13, 2012)

At the Board Meeting of the IFSR on Friday, April 13, 2012 the member organizations of the IFSR elected the Executive Committee for the next 2 years. We welcome two newcomers on the Committee to run the IFSR for the next two years: Yoshihide ("Yoshi") Horiuchi and Stefan Blachfellner

Dr. Gary Metcalf, USA	Prof. Dr. Yoshihide Horiuchi, Japan	Mag. Stefan Blachfellner, Austria	Prof. Dr. Gerhard Chroust, Austria
Präsident	Vice President	Vice President	Secretary General

IFSR President's Message - Gary Metcalf

The year 2012 will hopefully mark a positive milestone in the history of the IFSR. Since its founding in 1980, the governance of the Federation has operated in essentially the same way. Every two years, the board (representatives of each member organization) has gathered in Vienna to conduct the business of the organization. That was not so difficult for the original three members. It continued to make sense even as the Federation grew, primarily with new members in Europe and North America – and with the technologies of the times. Now, with nearly 40 active member organizations spread across five continents, and the availability of easy and affordable means of communication, we need to change.

An amendment to the Constitution was passed at the 2012 board meeting, directing the development of electronic means of discussion and decision-making by the board. (The specific technologies to be used were left intentionally vague so as not to become outdated as new alternatives arise. At present, we expect to begin with one or more Internet, web-based tools.) Importance will be placed on both ease of use and equal access – to the extent possible – by all members. This will hopefully mean full participation in decision-making by members, rather than only those who can afford the time and costs to travel to Vienna. It will also allow for more expedient

decision-making rather than waiting for two years before new issues could be addressed.

Another change was a new location for the IFSR Conversation (historically the Fuschl Conversations). Two years ago we moved them for the first time to a renovated monastery in Pernegg, Austria. While that location was more conducive to meeting than the small hotels in Fuschl had become, it was less than ideal. This year the Conversation was held at St. Magdalena, a small conference center in Linz, Austria. Based on the reactions and productivity of the four teams, it would appear that this is the kind of environment we need to seek. Again, though, there are questions about the timing and location for these events. Should they be only every two years, and always in Austria?

In order to support the challenges facing the Executive Committee, in moving the new initiatives forward, two new vice presidents were elected: Stefan Blachfellner and Yoshihide (Yoshi) Horiuchi. The third vice president role was designated for the Systems Research and Behavioral Science journal (without committing Mike Jackson or Amanda Gregory, or another person individually.)

Stefan has been asked specifically to help with new technology, including the electronic board system and updating the IFSR website. Yoshi (who has attended all but two Conversations since their beginning) will focus on development of the Conversation events, with the intent of expanding access and inclusion for participants. The SRBS VP chair is intended to be supported by a Working Group, to better align our members and their journals with each other, and with SRBS. (Ideally, articles written by

systems scientists should find their way to the best journals for their topics, and cross-referencing by authors would improve the quality and the ranking of all our member's journals.) If you are interested in serving on this Working Group, please contact me directly.

The International Academy of Systems and Cybernetic Sciences (IASCYS) also saw a change in leadership. We are quite fortunate that Robert Trappl (one of the founders of the IFSR) agreed to take the role as President, allowing Matjaz Mulej to devote needed time to his family. Matjaz and I began as vice presidents for the IFSR together in 2002. It would be hard to guess the number of hours he has contributed over the years to the work of the IFSR, and in co-founding the IASCYS with Gu Jifa, and to work in systems science in general. Our thanks, and our very best wishes to you, Matjaz.

I would personally like to thank Kyoichi (Jim) Kijima, Leonie Solomons, and Amanda Gregory for their time, efforts, and support as IFSR Vice Presidents over the last two years. This frequently included poor-quality Skype calls across 14 different time zones, along with the planning and projects involved in these roles. I would also like to thank Stuart Umpleby for his work, along with Leonie, in facilitating our discussion in Vienna about future strategy for the Federation. My special gratitude goes to Gerhard Chroust, who will continue on as Secretary General for the Federation – and without whom it would simply cease to function.

Gary Metcalf, Ph.D.

President, IFSR

gmetcalf@interconnectionsllc.com

IFSR Vice President's Message - Yoshi Horiuchi

My intentions as an IFSR Vice President are:

1. IFSR

I would like to help IFSR to provide better service to its member organizations, as well as stimulating communications among the member organizations. Also, I would like to help improving the presence of IFSR in the systems

academic and practice communities in the world at large.

2. IFSR Conversation: As the record holder of IFSR and ISI Conversations participation (I missed IFSR Conversation only twice since 1990), I would like to contribute to spreading the Systems Design Conversation to the world at large; as well as help holding the IFSR-type

Conversations in new places as well as at the good, old Asilomar. Also, I would like to help bringing a wide variety of participants to the Conversations. Also, I was attending Asilomar Conversations every time from 1990 until 2002, except twice.

A. Mini Conversation Plan: At 2006 Fuschl, our team developed a Mini-conversation model, for the novice to try out the Conversation on weekends. At ISSS2007 in Tokyo, Jed Jones and I co hosted such a Mini Conversation, with a reasonable success.

B. Conversation in non-western settings At 1993 and 1994 ISI Asilomar Conversations we designed the first Japan Conversation, based on the Japanese culture, with English and Japanese as two official languages, using simultaneous translation. This kind of format would be time consuming, but could be interesting.

C. Asilomar Conversation again: ISI Asilomar Conversation held in Pacific Grove, California attracted participants from the American continents and the Pacific rim, compared, and had a unique atmosphere in a nice contrast to the IFSR Conversations with an European atmosphere. I would hope to help holding the Asilomar Conversation again, and Conversations in the Latin America and the Pacific rim. It would be a nice addition to the IFSR Conversations in Europe.

Yoshi Horiuchi

E-mail : horiuchi@sic.shibaura-it.ac.jp

Curriculum Vitae

I lived in the US for ten years where I was getting my Ph.D., and teaching at a US college. Worked in international and high-tech public relations and marketing fields.

1973 B.A. in Law, Waseda University, Japan,

1973 Marketing Executive, Foreign Trade Department, Taisho Pharmaceutical Company Limited, Tokyo, Japan,

1976 M.S. in Advertising, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA,

1980-84 Instructor, MBA Program and Marketing Department, LaSalle University, Philadelphia, USA, 1984 Ph.D. in Social Systems Sciences, The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, USA,

1984-88 Director, Socioatomic Public Relations Company, Tokyo, Japan,

1988-2005 Associate Professor/Professor, School of Administration and Informatics, University of Shizuoka, Japan,

2005 - Present: Professor of Idealized Systems Design and Qualitative Systems Analysis at the Shibaura Institute of Technology in Tokyo.

IFSR Vice President's Message - Stefan Blachfellner

I am very honored for the nomination and the election as one of the Vice Presidents of the International Federation for Systems Research. It is my personal intention to strengthen the so-called systems movement. We must overcome the fragmentation of our own research fields and activities to strengthen the scientific as well as social impact of Systems Research and Action. This task is not trivial. It might take us a long time. But the task became imperative in my humble opinion. The world calls upon us to provide our knowledge and our wisdom for the understanding of complexity and solutions which welcome the given complexity and thus create additional value and benefits for the people and the planet.

I believe that the systems movement, the cooperation of all organizations and individuals in the systems communities, can be a major

player in the scientific as well as political and economic realms. We have already a vast amount of value we can contribute and in cooperation we may co-create even more. But we must communicate and honor our value, overcoming our own resentments in our communities, and we must learn to communicate beyond our own systemic borders. I am not a typical researcher. I have no personal research agenda, no model, no theory, no publications to promote. People refer to me often as an activist, so I have a personal political agenda, even as a social system designer, consultant or university teacher. I hope that this agenda will create value for the members of the International Federation for Systems Research, too.

Is the objective reachable and is the International Federation the appropriate organization? I strongly believe so, if the members of the Federation agree on the political agenda next to their own business and work together, once a suitable infrastructure is in place. Of course we will learn while walking the talk and dancing the path. Learning will include failures. But learning together will also result in shared success and this is my personal intention for all involved stake-holders of the IFSR.

My tasks as Vice President will include the design of a viable business model, the creation of communication channels like an e-voting system, better visibility, usability, and attractiveness of the IFSR Web-site, and networking for all members of the IFSR.

I am looking forward to the next two years of sharing, learning, stumbling, working, succeeding, and celebrating, together.

Curriculum Vitae

I am an entrepreneur, a global knowledge nomad, developer, consultant, change agent, part time university lecturer, researcher, editor, and a life-long student working as a business & communication designer internationally from Europe to China.

Born in 1970 in Innsbruck, Austria – I am founder and Managing Director of Stefan Blachfellner Consulting e.U. - B original Business & Communication Design.

Since 1999 I have worked as a business developer and consultant in the areas of organizational development, corporate communication, knowledge management, strategic management and business excellence with broad experience in Fortune TOP 500 industries, and the service sector as well as in public administration and cultural and educational organizations.

Graduating from the University of Salzburg, I studied Communication, Management- and Social Psychology and Economic- and Social History.

 In 2004 – 2006 I supported the development of the strategic focus "ICT&S – Information and Communication Technologies & Society" at the University of Salzburg, Austria, as the Center Manager.

I am currently part time university lecturer and thesis supervisor at the Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences Campus Steyr and Hagenberg, CAMPUS 02 University of Applied Sciences Graz in Austria, and the Danube University Krems in Austria, teaching 10 subjects in six different curricula, including entrepreneurship, leadership, creativity and innovation, innovation & ethics, future studies, applied systems, complexity, and network theory, large systems interventions, public relations, information and communication technologies, and digital products and markets.

I am one of the co-founders and active ambassadors of the international Change the Game Initiative, where paradigm changers meet. We push boundaries connecting innovation, leadership, and ethics. I am interested in Ethonomics, leadership, innovation, entrepreneurship, social innovation, systems research, and design thinking.

I am an active member in several international scientific communities dedicated to social and technological innovations and systems science and research.

Stefan Blachfellner Consulting e.U.,

stefan@blachfellner.com,

IFSR Secretary General's Message - Gerhard Chroust

I am proud to be trusted with the function of the General Secretary of the IFSR and enjoy the work it entails, a position I hold since 1993.

I think the past two years have been very successful:

▪ Robert Trappl having stepped down as the Chairman of the EMCSR (after 20 successful conferences in Vienna) posed the danger of discontinuing the very successful EMCSR conferences. I was fortunately able to negotiate and convince Wolfgang Hofkirchner to accept the Conference Chair. The 2012 Conference became a great success, partially also due to Stefan Blachfellner, one of our Vice Presidents.

▪ In the week of April 9th to 13th, 2012 (during the EMCSR Congress in Vienna) we held our General Assembly (with the election of the new Executive Committee). A key decision was the introduction of electronic voting for our members in order to enable a continuous influence on the operation of the IFSR.

▪ We cooperated with the EMCSR by sponsoring the Ross Ashby Lecture and by paying the conference fee for several participants.

▪ We held a "Reflective Meeting" organized by Leonie Solomons and moderated by Stuart Umpleby for discussing aspects of the future of the IFSR, in which approximately 20 persons took part.

▪ We participated in the meetings of the IASCYS - which in April 2012 had elected a new President: Robert Trappl

▪ In the following week (April 14-19) we organized and held the 16th IFSR Conversation in St. Magdalena, Linz (Austria). A separate chapter of this Newsletter is devoted to this event.

▪ We have established close relations with two other international federations, the UES/EUS (Union Européenne de Systémique) and the WOSC, (World Organisation of Systems and Cybernetics). Consequently I took part in the UES Congress on October 19th – 23rd, 2011 in Brussels. In a meeting between with Matjaz Mulej (then president of IASCS), Pierre Bricage (Secretary General of IASCYS), Andrée Piecq (Secretary General, now President of the UES/EUS), Raul Espejo (Director General of WOSC), Wolfgang Hofkirchner (President of the Bertalanffy Center for the Study of Systems Science (BCSSS) and Chairman of the EMCSR 2012), and me we discussed cooperation between our organizations. We noted that despite their internationality the organizations have differing language preferences: UES (French), WOSC (Spanish), and IFSR and BCSSS (English). We consider this as a chance for expanding and improving our international cooperation by catering for members with different language preferences.

But I can also observe that the IFSR has to undergo some significant changes again. To me those most crucial for the next two years are:

▪ Reacting to the new challenges of electronic voting ("anytime voting" instead of once every two years), and the establishment of appropriate procedures for handling this.

▪ Intensification of the communication with our member societies: we need easier access and faster interaction between our members. I hope this can be achieved by the introduction of an improved web-site with blogging facilities, in order to improve attractiveness and speed of communication.

▪ Overcoming the 'English-only' interface of the IFSR towards its members and the general public, better catering for the Spanish and the French speaking system communities. I hope that the cooperation with UES and WOCS will help in this area.

▪ Increase of IFSR's visibility due to intense international connections with other international organizations.

▪ Increase of IFSR's interaction and cooperation with the IASCYS and it's new President.

▪ Establishment and strengthening of the IFSR as an archival centre for systems literature and know-how (*see Chroust, G. and Drack, M. and Müller, K. H.: Vienna - The Systems Archive - Dream or More? in: Trappl, R. (ed.): Cybernetics and Systems 2008, Proc. Of EMCSR, OSGK Vienna 2008, pp. 595-599, ISBN 978-85206-175-7).*

▪ Gaining more powerful impact on technical fields of Systems Engineering where the need for knowledge of Systems Sciences is growing. I hope that INCOSE, our new member, will prove be instrumental in this respect. The IFSR Conversation 2012 (Team 4) has already paved the way for closer cooperation.

All these activities need the support of more than only the members of the Executive Committee: It requires involvement from all of our member societies, in order to provide for improved service from which our member societies and the systems community in general will profit greatly.

Gerhard Chroust

Gerhard.chroust@jku.at

Activities of the IFSR in Vienna
April 9 - 13, 2012

During the week of the EMCSR-conference in Vienna (the bi-annual European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research on April 9-13, 2012, www.**emcsr**.net) the I*F*SR organized additional activities, similar to the ones we undertook in previous years.

EMCSR: Tuesday – Friday, April 9 -13, 2012

Participating in the various events of the EMCS and providing support for 9 young scientists by paying their conference fee for the EMCSR.

Thursday April 12, 2012: IASCYS Meeting

See the report on the IASCYS activities, later in the Newsletter

Thursday April 12, Ross Ashby Memorial Lecture

Traditionally the IFSR sponsors a key note lecture at the EMCSR in honor of W. Ross Ashby. This year it was given by Dr. Merrilyn Emery, Concordia University, Montreal, and Fred Emery Institute, Melbourne with the challenging topic: " Open or closed systems – – Bridging the gap". (see below)

Friday, April 13, 2012: Reflective Meeting We decided to hold, like in 2010, an 'introspective' meeting to give guidance and direction to the IFSR. Organised by Leonie Solomons (then IFSR Vice-president) Stuart Umpleby moderated and facilitated a 3-hour meeting of approx. 20 officers of IFSR's member organisations (see details below).

Friday April 13, Board Meeting (early evening)

The official meeting of the membership of the IFSR (see below for details)

Friday, April 13, evening: Informal IFSR Dinner

An informal dinner was organized on the campus of the Vienna University, in a cozy, typical Viennese inn providing local specialties. It gave us, after the strain and pressure of the various meetings, the chance to relay and to exchange informally further ideas.

IFSR Board Meeting 2012
(April 13, 2012, Vienna)

Every two years the representatives of the members of the IFSR meet at a Board Meeting. In 2012 this took place on April 13, 2012, 17:00 – 19:00 at the Campus of the University Vienna, 1090 Wien, Spitalgasse 2, courtyard 1.11 "Aula"

Key topics were:

Membership status:

The following members joined since the last Board meeting in April 2010:.

- No. 46 (INCOSE) International Council on Systems Engineering] (2011-08-15) FULL MEMBER, www.incose.org, James Martin (martinqzx@gmail.com)
- No 47 (METAPHORUM) Metaphorum Group] (2011-11-25) AFFIL. MEMBER, www.metaphorum.org, Leonie Solomons (leonie.solomons@gmail.com), the status was changed to FULL MEMBER on April 29, 2012
- No 48 (BS-LAB) Business Systems Laboratory] (2012-03-18) FULL MEMBER, www.bslaboratory.net Gandolfo Dominici (gandolfo.dominici@unipa.it)

Currently the IFSR has 39 member societies. It does not have any individual members.

Election of the executive Committee (EC) for the next 2-year Period:

President: Dr. Gary Metcalf, USA (Int. Society for the Systems Sciences), gmetcalf@interconnectionsllc.com

Vice-President: Prof. Dr. Yoshihide Horiuchi, Japan (Japan Association for Social and Economic Systems Studies), horiuchi@sic.shibaura-it.ac.jp

Vice-President: Stefan Blachfellner, Austria (Bertalanffy Center for the Study of System Science), *stefan@blachfellner.com*

Secretary General: Prof. Dr. Gerhard Chroust, Austria (Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies), gerhard.chroust@jku.at

Change of the Constitution: Electronic Voting:

An important amendment to the Constitution was passed at the 2012 board meeting, directing the development of electronic means of decision-making by the board. This decision has a special importance as it provides the means to have binding electronic voting in between the Board Meetings, giving IFSR much more flexibility and fast ability to react and for its members more influence on the operations of the IFSR.

Financial Status and Outlook

The IFSR has two major sources of income: membership fees and the royalties from the Journal of Systems Research and Behavioral Science" (published by Wiley Interscience).

The current financial situation is healthy thanks to the great success of the Journal. With respect to administration IFSR has now a PayPal account which makes receiving money (memberships etc.) much easier.

The Board thanked Prof. M. C. Jackson and Amanda Gregory for their efforts in editing and publishing the journal.

IFSR Reflective Meeting
(April 13, 2012, Vienna)

The officers of the International Federation for Systems Research (IFSR) -- Gary Metcalf, president, Leonie Solomons, vice-president, and Gerhard Chroust, Secretary General -- decided to hold a reflective conversation following the European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research, April 10-13, 2012. Stuart Umpleby facilitated the conversation. The participants were officers in the member societies of IFSR. About 20 people participated. The overall title was "A REFLECTIVE EXERCISE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR SYSTEMS RESEARCH".

The objective for this meeting was to think about and discuss IFSR's future direction by sharing concerns, suggestions, and perceptions of the activities of IFSR. " Where lies the balance between our traditional activities and what is needed for the future?"

The original intent was to discuss three topics in three hours:

(1) Exciting new ideas in the systems field
(2) Current activities of the member societies
(3) How IFSR could facilitate the activities of the member societies

These three topics evolved into a discussion of concerns that people had about the systems field and thoughts about what IFSR could do to be helpful. This conversation lasted three hours with a break in the middle. The items brought up by the participants were posted on a "sticky wall" and discussed. The items were regrouped by similarity, not by when the issue was raised. Main groups were

What is our vision?

Who is our customer?

How to mediate IFSR activities with decision-making politicians?

How to link IFSR to political processes at the regional and global levels?

The report will be posted on IFSR's web site.

Ross Ashby Memorial Lecture
" Open or closed systems – Bridging the gap "

Dr. Merrilyn Emery

Department of Applied Human Sciences, Concordia University, Montreal, and Fred Emery Institute, Melbourne

W. Ross Ashby (b. 1903, London, d. 1972) was a psychiatrist and one of the founding fathers of cybernetics. He developed the homeostat , the law of requisite variety, the principle of self-organization, and the law of regulating models. He wrote "Design for a Brain" (1952) and an "Introduction to Cybernetics" (1956).

The commemorative lecture, sponsored by the International Federation for Systems Research (IFSR), is held every second year on the occasion of the EMCSR-Conference in Vienna.

It is an honour to deliver the Ross Ashby Lecture, a memorial to a great man and a great mind. Open Systems Theory (OST) is one of the approaches to social science that includes Ashby's work amongst its foundations. However despite its solid foundations, OST seems to have become almost invisible since Fred Emery [my husband] returned to Australia in 1969. Up until that time, it was well known in the Northern hemisphere, certainly Emery & Trist's 1965 citation classic was well known, as was also just as certainly that subsection of OST concerned with the development of jointly optimized sociotechnical systems.

The reasons for this period of relative invisibility don't matter but as OST has made huge strides since 1969, it seems a shame that such solidly based and reliably successful developments are not widely known to today's international systems community. I hope to start building a bridge across that current knowledge gap.

In overview, this paper firstly outlines the major developments of the OST conceptual framework from its misty historical origins to today. It discusses the basic purpose of OST and how that purpose is embedded in its methods. Finally, it describes the asymmetrical nature of the open and closed conceptualizations and proposes a logical way forward, not only to bridge what is seen as a conceptual gap but also to radically accelerate our practical progress towards active adaptation.

1. Following a chronology of the major developments since the definitive break with closed systems in 1965, the paper describes the current state of the OST art and science. OST adheres strictly to the conventions and methods of science: the art lies in the understanding, skill and human qualities, such as humour, with which it is practiced in the field. The paper describes the foundations on which OST is based, its definitions of system and the social environments within which humans behave and change, its definition of people and their various potentials in terms of ideal-seeking, learning and consciousness, its conceptualization of 'organization' in terms of the genotypical design principles of organizational structures and how we use their implications for decisions about what is ethical scientific research.

2. The development of OST is grounded in the world hypothesis of contextualism and it contrasts starkly with the world hypothesis of mechanism which dominated the history of the planet from about 1793-1950, landing us in the pickle we are in today with accelerating climate change. Since 1950 we have been struggling with a social field characterized by relevant uncertainty, the source of now galloping maladaptions, both active and passive. OST's purpose, framed by this changing causal texture of the social field is the taming or domestication of this field, to be achieved by a return to active adaptation throughout society, to a modern form of the adaptive social field that our ancient cultures maintained for at least 60,000 years.

Understanding OST in this long term context explicates the purposes of the three major methods developed from that framework. The results of these methods, both in terms of practical systems on the ground and empirical data to inform planning, policy making and future research, are promising. It is important that we diffuse OST as rapidly as possible given the similarly rapidly closing time frame in which to cease CO_2 emissions. The Occupy movement needs OST methods right now.

3. Bridging the gap between open and closed systems entails a simple logic leading to a proposition. Whether we look at the relations of the world hypotheses behind these formulations, contextualism for open systems and formism, mechanism or organicism for closed, or the relations between open and closed themselves, we see that the relations are inherently asymmetrical. Contextualism and open systems do not preclude the use of other world hypotheses or closed systems analyses but starting with the use of formism, mechanism or organicism or the assumption of a closed system precludes the possibility of contextualism and an open system.

It is clear, therefore, that the concept of an open system has primacy in terms of a comprehensive social science and consequent enhanced understanding of the human and

social world. In so far as open systems are rooted in synthesis and closed systems in analysis, synthesis covers the synthesis of analyses and the synthesis of levels of synthesis and analysis. This is not a play on words: in any major piece of research, there is always the possibility of different dimensions of the project being approached with synthetic and analytic methods and integrated into an overall synthesis.

Brief examples from the fields of organizational democratization and community planning for the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change illustrate the point. There is no need for a gap in practice any more than there is a need for an either/or distinction between open and closed at the conceptual level.

Dr. Merrilyn Emery

International Academy of Systems and Cybernetic Sciences

Report of the first two years

On April 7, 2010 the General Assembly of the IFSR approved the founding of the International Academy of Systems and Cybernetic Sciences (IASCYS). During the two years of its existence the IASCYS has followed its major aims to create a worldwide frame-work linking both with other systemics and cybernetics organizations and with prominent individuals.

In 2011 and 2012 several meetings (Brussels in 2011, Vienna in 2012) were with the participation of representatives of IASCYS (Matjaž Mulej, Pierre Bricage), IFSR (Gerhard Chroust, Secretary General of IFSR http://www.ifsr.org/), UES-EUS (Andrée Piecq, Secretary General of the UES/EUS http://www.ues-eus.eu/) and WOSC (Raul Espejo, Director General of The World Organization of Systems and Cybernetics). In November 2011, in Brussels, at the International Congress of the European Union for Systemics (EUS-UES), during its International Workshop (http://aes.ues-eus.eu/index.html) the IASCYS has made a link between the systemics and cybernetics federations: the IFSR, the EUS-UES and the WOSC, http://www.wosc.co/). These meetings resulted in an agreement for a closer cooperation and an opening of the Academy to members of all associations and federations working in the field of systems and cybernetics and their applications.

The IASCYS became involved in the von Bertalanffy Award for young talented systemicians & cyberneticians, given at the PhD day of the EMCSR (http://www.emcsr.net/phd-colloquium/).

The IASCYS was a sponsor of the 2012 EMCSR http://www.emcsr.net/ and the sponsor of the next IEEE conference in Morocco (Africa) http://iccs12.org/

One of the services of the Academy was to establish links between the Academicians and other associations or renowned people by announcing and promoting the calls for papers of 38 international Meetings throughout the world.

The central research topic of IASCYS in this 2 years phase was *"Social responsibility as informal systemic behaviour".* The project was not financed, but anyway, under the leadership of Matjaž MULEJ, it was done! It was linking systemic behaviour with the new definition of social responsibility provided by UNO, ISO and EU as well as by groups of enterprises. The most visible postulates are provided in ISO 26000 Standard on social responsibility that defines 7 principles, 7 main topics, and 7 steps of procedure. It links them with 2 crucial notions from systems theory: (1) interdependence, and (2) holistic approach.

On this basis, IASCSY cosponsored 2 international conferences (with no financial obligations, duties or profits), arranged by

IRDO, the Institute for development of social responsibility in Maribor, Slovenia, in March 2011 and March 2012, under the honorary auspices of the President of Slovenia Prof. Dr. Danilo Türk. Matjaž Mulej and Pierre Bricage contributed papers, Matjaž Mulej was vice-chairperson in 2011 and chairperson in 2012.

On the same topics Matjaž Mulej was an active participant, (co-)author and speaker at international meetings and student conferences (in Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, USA). He also worked on special editions of SPAR and JSRBS journals and is preparing a book with Betham Publishers.

During two years it became necessary to make certain amendments to the statutes of the IASCYS, as shown on IASCYS homepage. The changes related to IASCYS relation to systems societies outside of the IFSR, and improvement and clarification of the rules and procedures for appointing members. With respect to its aims the new formulation of its mission is:

The International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences (IASCYS) is supposed to be a body of activity shared by the International Federation for Systems Research (IFSR) and other systems & cybernetics organisations. IASCYS aiming at honouring and activating outstanding members of IFSR member-associations and other systems & cybernetics organizations.

Financing the activities of the IASCYS activities is still an open issue.

Unfortunately, President Matjaž Mulej suddenly was forced to step down from the Presidency due to family reasons. Using an internet emergency procedure to organize a meeting of the IASCYS General Assembly, Robert Trappl, accepted to be the successor of Matjaž under the condition that Matjaž Mulej remains as a Vice-President. Robert Trappl was elected as the new President and agreed to run the IASCYS together with the Executive Committee consisting now of 4 vice presidents.

new IASCYS Executive Committee (Vienna, Austria, 2012)

Robert TRAPPL	Matjaz MULEJ	Jifa GU	Ranulph GLANVILLE	Pierre BRICAGE
Austria	Slovenia	P. R. China	UK	France
President	Vice-President	Vice-President	Vice-President	Secretary General

With deep regret we have to report the passing away of one of our members: Ernst von Glasersfeld, who passed away in November 2010.

The current members of the IASCYS are:
1. Mary Catherine BATESON (America) Cultural Anthropologist, Cybernetics
2. Ockert J. H. BOSCH (Australia) Quantitative Ecology & Vegetation Management
3. Pierre BRICAGE (France) Biologist, Secretary General *pierre.bricage@univ-pau.fr*
4. Pille BUNNELL (Canada) Systems Ecologist
5. Guangya CHEN (China) Operations Research & Systems Engineering
6. Gerhard CHROUST (Austria) Systems Engineering & Automation
7. Charles FRANÇOIS (Belgium) Cybernetics, Systems Theory & Systems Science
8. Ranulph GLANVILLE (Britain) Cybernetics & Design, Vice-President *ranulph@mac.com*
9. Jifa GU (China) Operations Research & Systems Engineering, Vice-President *jfgu@amss.ac.cn*
10. Enrique HERRSCHER (Argentina) Economist & Systems Scientist

11. Wolfgang HOFKIRCHNER (Austria) Information Science, Internet & Society
12. Michael C. JACKSON (Britain) Management System, System Scientist
13. Louis H. KAUFFMAN (America) Mathematician, Cybernetics
14. Kyoichi J. KIJIMA (Japan) Decision Theory
15. Ervin LASZLO (Italia) System's Philosopher
16. Humberto MATURANA (Chile) Neuroscience & Second Order Cybernetics
17. Edgar MORIN (France) Philosopher & Sociologist
18. *Matjaž MULEJ (Slovenia) Systems Science & Innovation Theory, Vice-President* mulej@uni-mb.si
19. Yoshiteru NAKAMORI (Japan) Systems & Knowledge Science
20. Laurence D. RICHARDS (America) Operations Research & Engineering Management
21. Bernard SCOTT (Britain) Educational Psychologist & Cybernetician
22. George SOROS (Hungary) Investor & Social System Analyst
23. *Robert TRAPPL (Austria) Artificial Intelligence & Medical Cybernetician, President* robert.trappl@ofai.at
24. Stuart UMPLEBY (America) Systems & Cybernetics
25. Robert VALLÉE (France) Cybernetist & Mathematician
26. Ernst Von GLASERSFELD (America) Philosopher & Cybernetician
27. Shouyang WANG (China) Operations Research & Systems Engineering
28. Andrzej P. WIERZBICKI (Poland) Decision Theory & Knowledge Science
29. Jiuping XU (China) Systems Engineering, Management Science & Engineering
30. Rainer E. ZIMMERMANN (Germany) Philosopher & Designer

Pierre Bricage
Secretar General of IASCYS
bricagepierre@gmail.com
(Vienna , April 13th, 2012)

16th IFSR Conversation 2012
"Systems and Science at Crossroads"
St. Magdalena April 14 to 19

After the Conversations in 2008 and 2010 where we looked at the status of Systems Sciences and their inner relationships this year we choose to look into the future. We recognized that there are different path into the future and that System Sciences as a discipline have to make some choice.

The Fuschl Conversations were established by the IFSR in 1980, primarily under the guidance of Bela H. Banathy, as an alternative to traditional conferences. A number of systems professionals found that they were disillusioned with a format in which the majority of the time was spent on papers being read or presented to passive listeners, with minimal time for discussion and interaction about the ideas. As described by Bela, they were to be:

• a collectively guided disciplined inquiry,

• an exploration of issues of social/societal significance,

• engaged by scholarly practitioners in self-organized teams,

• on a theme for their conversation selected by participants,

• initiated in the course of a preparation phase that leads to an intensive learning phase.

In 2012 the overarching theme for the conversation was how to reposition systems thinking in a changing world both with respect to scientific research and practical applications, in view of historical roots and the precarious situation of our environment. Hence the title "Systems and Science at Crossroads".

The deliberations of the 4 teams supported the over-all theme in different ways:

Team 1: Revisiting the socio-ecological, social-technical and socio-psychological perspectives
Team 2: Science II: Science Too!
Team 3: Designing Learning Systems for Global Sustainability
Team 4: Towards a common language for systems praxis.

We chose a different location again: the seminar hotel St. Magdalena on the outskirts of Linz, Austria. because we rightly believed that it was even better suited to the purpose of a conversation than the previous locations, and we were right.

The proceedings of the 2012 Conversation will be published both in hardcopy and by making them available on the IFSR Website. The proceedings will contain extensive reports from the four teams together with a few individual position papers detailing some of the deliberations of the team. A short preview of the outcome of the 4 teams are included in this Newsletter.

In addition to the proceedings we will also produce a 'supplement' which will contain additional material pertinent to the deliberations of the teams, additional material and/or more extensive reports.:

References:

Proceedings: Chroust, G. & Metcalf, G., editors (2012). Systems and Science at Crossroads - Sixteenth IFSR Conversation. Inst. f. Systems Engineering and Automation, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria, SEA-SR-32, Sept. 2012 and [http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/$12m$Magdalena-2012-proc.pdf].

Supplement: Chroust, G. & Metcalf, G., editors (2012). Systems and Science at Crossroads - Sixteenth IFSR Conversation - Supplement. Inst. f. Systems Engineering and Automation, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria, SEA-SR-32, Sept. 2012 and [http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/files/$12n$Magdalena-2012-supp.pdf].

	Team 1: Revisiting the socio-ecological, social-technical and socio-psychological perspectives:
IFSR	David Ing, CND (isss@daviding.com)
	Merrilyn Emery , AUS (memery9@bigpond.com)
	Debora Hammond , USA (hammond@sonoma.edu)
	Gary Metcalf , USA (gmetcalf@interconnectionsllc.com)
	Minna Takala , FIN (minliitakala@gmail.com)

The Conversation within Team 1 began around a general triggering question: "In which ways is the Tavistock legacy still relevant, and which ways might these ideas be advanced and/or refreshed (for the globalized/service


economy)?"

The thought at the time that the team was being formed was that the legacy of Tavistock and the material that came out of it were quite well known, but that the ideas had fallen out of use and possibly even currency. Through the contributions of Merrelyn Emery to the team, it became apparent very quickly that there were many gaps in information (at least by the other four team members), and varying interpretations of both the history and the theories. That turned the focus for the first part of the week into clarifying and correcting what was known and understood.

Much of the history of Tavistock, and many articles by its members, can be found in the online version of the Tavistock Anthology: http://www.moderntimesworkplace.com/archives/archives.html. Seeing articles written to capture ideas formally, in retrospect, though, gives little indication about how the ideas came to be, or of the relationships between the people involved. There was, for instance, a great deal of international exchange and collaboration which helped to develop the concepts associated with socio-technical systems, which happened in and around

professional meetings and conferences. This included people such as Russ Ackoff, West Churchman, and Ross Ashby, in addition to Eric Trist, Fred Emery, and others who are typically associated with the work.

In learning more of the history it became clear that much of what was common knowledge for the people involved has been lost along the way since then. Kurt Lewin, for instance, is often associated with the concepts. His main contributions to this work, though, were through his research in the 1930s into principles of democracy, which helped to form the theoretical basis for the design principles of autocracy and self-managing, democratic groups. And while Bertalanffy is the name associated with open systems for most people today, as Merrelyn explained, "everyone had read Andras Angyal, and almost no one [in those groups] spoke of Bertalanffy."

Figure 6. The Future of Sustainable ACT 2020 (2 Stage Model)
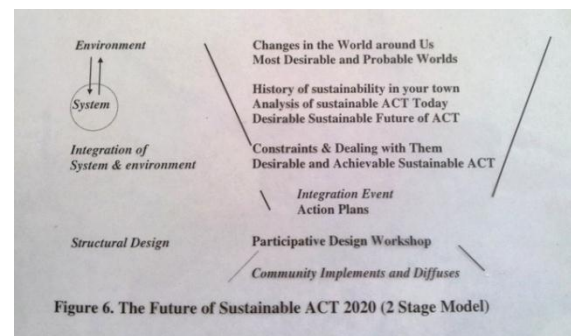
More of the week was spent digging into the basic constructs, understanding, for instance, exactly what was meant by Design Principle 1 (DP1) and Design Principle 2 (DP2), and what distinguished them from each other. There were also questions about how the Design Principles related to the different environments which had been described (Types 1 through 4).

It became clearer through discussion that the term "environment" had a number of different
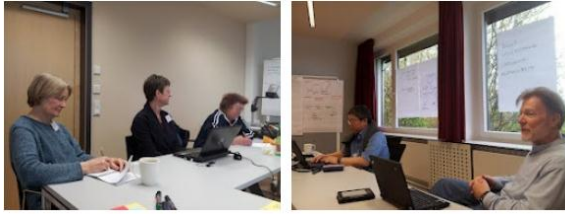
meanings in different contexts. The immediate work environment for an organization, for instance, is usually the "task environment." The primary concept of environment, which comes from the work done by Emery & Trist (1965) is the "global social environment" – those elements which affect the relationships and functioning of the system in question most relevantly. It is explored in the Search conference.

As the week progressed the team moved from a focus on history and theory (though those continued to be revisited) to questions about where and how the principles showed up today, in different kinds of organizations and circumstances. Indeed, many of the early examples where self-managing work groups had been instituted no longer existed. After it was understood that the DP2 structure needed

to be incorporated into the legal structure of the organization, the new structure remained intact and functioning.

This led to questions about transitions of structures within and between organizations. [It seemed probable that] Some work groups (e.g. some kinds of start-ups) began as self-managing organizations and became more hierarchical as they grew and evolved. Sometimes large corporations or projects experimented with such structures in their efforts towards innovation. (A specific example discussed was the building of Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport, which seemed to function as a DP2 structure throughout the construction phase, but then dissolved entirely when it was handed over to operations, which was a DP1 structure.)

By the end of the week there were, as always, more new questions and possibilities than final conclusions and answers. It provided, however, a strong foundation on which more research into self-managing workgroups and organizations can be based.

	0 › DP2	Networked DP2	Temporary DP2	Unofficial DP2
EXAMPLES	Start-ups Aurora mine at Syncrude Aalto Venture Garage Reaktori	Open source communities Linux Iron Sky movie & audience participation Living Labs Entrepreneurial Hubs	Hackcamps / hackathon Skunkworks Search conferences	Communities of practice Voluntary projects Shadow organizations
CONDITIONS for starting & for working well	→ green field for the site, replicated from other unit → new "garage shops" (with no MBAs) → small entrepreneurial team	→ network of equals → new form of legal agreements e.g. CC - creative commons and open source licencing	→ agreement working WITH each other → enough trust to get started → common shared goal / intent	→ common interest → redundancy → motivation → encouragement → regocnition of deficiency in organization → enabling communication platform, social IT

Aalto University

Team 2: Science II: Science Too!

Stuart Umpleby , USA (umpleby@gmail.com)

Jerry Chandler , USA (Jerry_LR_Chandler@me.com)

Allenna Leonard (CND) allenna_leonard@yahoo.com
Michael Lissack , USA (lissack@buy-in-naples.com)

Hellmut Loeckenhoff , D (loeckenhoff.hellk@t-online.de)

Tatyana Medvedeva , RU (tmedvedeva@mail.ru)

Leonie Solomon , AUS (leonie.solomons@gmail.com)

We began by raising issues such as: social science practitioners express frustrations and/or limitations with Science 1, general needs of a philosophy/epistemology of science, specific needs for a hypothetical science II, and what would that science ii include? We then defined frustrations and limitations regarding Science I (as expressed by individual members of the team): methodological misfits, reliable prediction is not always possible. our ability to "see" and "express" certain phenomena is restricted by science in use, the experience of "x" is not the same as the label "x", and ceteris paribus is nonsense.

Our discussion then turned to the philosophy of science as used.   We discussed that articulations of examples are most commonly physics based, despite the claims by physicists, other sciences cannot be reduced to physics or its equivalents without raising issues of both epistemology and ontology, other sciences have unique requirements demanding exact articulations, and that systems composed of thinking elements should not be described using methods developed for systems with non-thinking elements. This led to the idea that deficiencies in the philosophy of physics generate frustrations with the role of observers, the role of emergence, the role of habitus (i.e. the social, cultural, cognitive, historical, contextual milieu) and ambiguity of number symbols (whole versus continuous). We then observed that we saw no place for reflexivity and that "physics envy" was not appropriate for many other fields (e.g. chemistry, biology, social sciences…..).
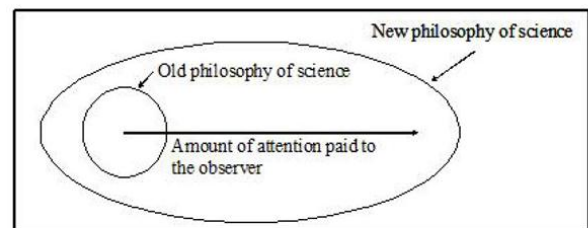
This allowed us to discuss some more general needs:

1. Basis for social sciences and design (pragmatic assumptions)
2. Need to deal with ideas and communication in social systems
3. Philosophy of Science needs expansion
4. Paths to potential logics of social sciences
5. What is the basic unit (individual, group, set, dynamic, environment, etc.?)
6. To separate biomedical concepts from social science concepts (e.g. the patient-physician relationship)

Which, in, turn led to some preliminary conclusions:

- Science II will require different languages than are commonly used in Science I
- Science II will require different frameworks of thinking
- Meta-level thinking as an opportunity
- Need for new strategies of simplification so as to meet requisite variety
- Science needs to change as the world changes
- New ontology and epistemology
- More transparency (to open the action and option space)
- Trans-disciplinarity as a shared basis for cross disciplinary conversations
- Formulate knowledge as methods as well as theories (include the observer)

We concluded that Science II needs to enrich the systems approach and reconcile the Eastern and Western approaches. Science II demands narratives (as shown by example of medical heuristics, e.g. narratives told by physicians to patients). Science II includes reflexive anticipation, and it demands more variety in describing homeostats and balance relationships and in ways to express circular causality. For managers, Science II demands that the very notion of "best practices" needs to be re-examined.

"All statements made are made by an observer." (Maturana)

Our full report is on-line at http://isce.edu/ifsr.pdf

	Team 3: Designing Learning Systems for Global Sustainability
	"R**amping up for the ISSS 2013 Conference in Viet Nam."**
	Stefan Blachfellner , AT (Stefan@blachfellner.com)
	Alexander Laszlo , USA (alexander@syntonyquest.org)
	Mary Edson , USA (maredson.s3@gmail.com)
	Ockie Bosch , AUS (ockie.bosch@adelaide.edu.au)
	Violeta Bulc , SL (violeta.bulc@vibacom.si)
	Leonard Allenna, CND (allenna_leonard@yahoo.com)
	Nam Nguyen , AUS (nam.nguyen@adelaide.edu.au)
	George Por , UK (george@community-intelligence.com)
	Jennifer Wilby , UK (isssoffice@dsl.pipex.com
	George Por, UK (george@community-intelligence.com, via Skype)

Our team worked on the practical design challenge of creating a series of related international events that address issues of liveability and thrivability in terms of systemic socio-ecological innovation. To do this, we focused at two systemic levels of intervention: at one level (which became the meta-level), we focused on *curating the conditions for a thrivable planet.* This was the larger vision – the idealized design objective that allowed us to contemplate a variety of pathways to address this objective. In this sense, it served as a design attractor for our work. We then chose to focus upon one feasible and realizable pathway that could serve as a functional prototype for addressing the meta-level objective. The 57th Meeting and Conference of the ISSS, set for Viet Nam in July of 2013, was selected to serve as the systemic case for our specific contextual design initiative. This became our system in focus, and our design efforts were then concentrated on setting an actionable agenda for the realization of this event.

The working model
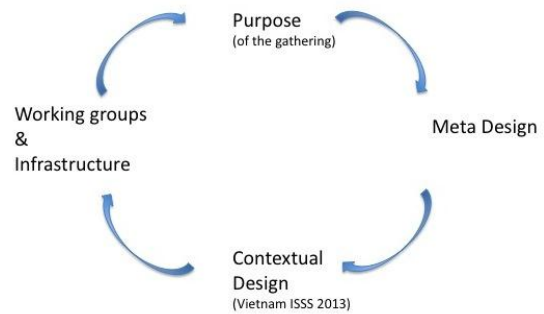
Given that there are numerous pathways to address the meta-level design objective, we set the system level objective for the ISSS Conference based on the theme of *Systemic Leverage Points for Emerging a Global Eco-Civilization.* By setting this focus we intended for ISSS 2013 to provide both a platform for other contextual designs framed within the meta-level objective of *curating the conditions for a thrivable planet,* as well as to catalyze the emergence of a network of such initiatives through the specific system level focus chosen for this event. We considered that the selected conference theme would attract living cases of systemic sustainability – those which demonstrate socio-ecological innovations that span social, technological, economic, agricultural, and infrastructural domains. By focusing ISSS 2013 on the exploration of both real-world cases of systemic sustainability and theoretical models dedicated to their promotion, this event will serve to seed the emergence of a Global Living Laboratory network of such initiatives. The result of this event would therefore be the emergence of an auto-catalytic socio-technical system focused on individual projects of systemic sustainability that collectively contribute to the creation of conditions for a thrivable planet.
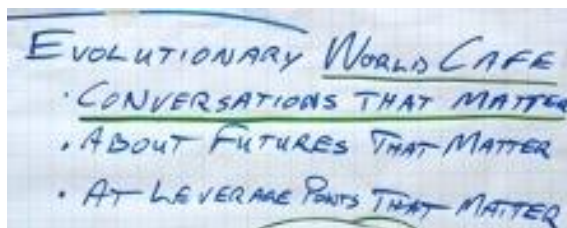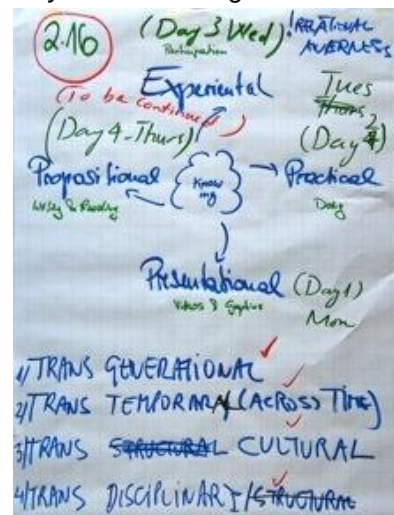
The design we worked out for ISSS 2013 was based on the four ways of knowing described by Heron and Reason in 1997[1], moving from experiential knowing to presentational knowing to propositional knowing to practical knowing. Through both local and virtual conversation-based systemic inquiry, our design offers a key example of systemic socio-ecological innovation aided by collective intelligence.

Heron, John and Reason, Peter (1997). A participatory inquiry paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), p. 274-294.

	Team 4: Towards a Common Language for Systems Praxis

James Martin , USA (martinqzx@gmail.com)

Johan Bendz , SE (johan@bendz.se)

Gerhard Chroust , AT (gc@sea.uni-linz.ac.at)

Duane Hybertson , USA (dhyberts@mitre.org)

Harald ("Bud") Lawson , SE (bud@lawson.se)

Richard Martin, USA (richardm@tinwisle.com)

Hillary Sillitto , UK (hillary.sillitto@blueyonder.co.uk)

Janet Singer , USA (jsinger@soe.ucsc.edu)

Michael Singer , USA (jsinger@soe.ucsc.edu)

Takaku Tatsumasa , JP (takakut@kamakuranet.ne.jp)

Jack Ring, US, jring7@gmail.com (offline support)

Photo by team member Takaku-san.

We took on the challenge of unifying the languages of "systems praxis" to help practitioners deal with the major cross-discipline, cross-domain problems facing human society in the 21st Century. The week provided a remarkable opportunity for systems engineers, systems thinkers, and systems scientists to work together to make progress on really difficult issues. Representatives of INCOSE, a new IFSR member organization, participated in the Conversation for the first time.

Given our goal of a "common language for systems praxis", we explored both the challenges of developing common languages and alternative definitions of systems praxis, including

- "The appreciation of systems by recognizing the quality, value, significance, or magnitude of people or things as they contribute to system behaviors that lead to desirable outcomes"
- "Translating theory into action by thinking in terms of systems"
- "Recognizing, creating, and improving systems"

We used Checkland's CATWOE[2] approach to understand the usage, context and constraints

---

[2] P. Checkland. Achieving 'desirable and feasible' change: An application of soft systems methodology. The Journal of the Operational Research Society, 36(9):pp. 821–

for any "common language for systems praxis" (excerpts):

- Customers: We think primary customers for this work are system practitioners, and possibly tool developers.
- Actors/Stakeholders: Primary actors and stakeholders are those who work in the fields of Systems Science (SS), Systems Thinking (ST), Systems Engineering (SE), Systems Intervention (SI), and the stakeholders who are critical to their success. Benefits: Practitioners, systems integrators, consultants, and their employers will find it easier and faster to work successfully across multiple communities of practice to achieve common purpose. Students will find it easier to integrate a systems perspective into their learning and discipline practice. Managers will have a reduction in their cognitive load due to reduced project complexity. And policy makers will benefit from clarity of exposition of complex systems issues.

- Transformation: We want practitioners to be able to use a "common language" (core concepts, principles, patterns, and paradigms) in an integrated systems approach in order to work with stakeholders to achieve a successful and sustainable transformation of a problem situation into an improved situation through an appropriate set of interventions.
- Worldview: We want the "common language" to be useful to practitioners and other stakeholders concerned with

problem situations that call for solutions involving hybrid systems including Social, Technical, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legal, Ethical, Demographic (STEEPLED) aspects.

- Owner(s): We want the common "language" to be adopted and owned by "The Systems Community" (practitioners, researchers, and educators). Initially it will be owned and curated on their behalf by the group that started this work at the IFSR conversation in Linz in 2012.
- Environmental Constraints: The language will be used by humans and machines accustomed to different languages, "symbol systems", standards, and with different mental models, culture, experience, roles, seniority, status (power relationships), learning styles, neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) modalities, gender, education (scope, discipline, level), belief systems, and paradigmatic silos. Teams using the common language will be multidisciplinary; multi-site; multi-organizational; multi-national; suffering from spread-think and group-think; working under management pressure and complex legal, infrastructure, institutional constraints; sharing (or not) narratives and success stories, inertia, not-invented-here, collaborative/competitive behaviors. Systems developed using Unified Systems Praxis will have to satisfy constraints from the natural environment (hazards, pollutants, resources); social environment (social requirement, public acceptance, increase in population); and engineering and design constraints (laws, specifications, codes, new built & maintenance, intended lifetime, transition strategies, ...)
-

Our CATWOE checklist provided context for understanding how an integrated systems approach could put theories from Systems Science and Systems Thinking into action through technical Systems Engineering and social Systems Intervention. We learned that the best medium for communication across different "tribes" is patterns, and that a common language for "Unified Systems Praxis" could use system patterns and praxis patterns to relate core concepts, principles, and paradigms, allowing stakeholder "silos" to more effectively work together. We captured this vision in a figure that continues to evolve as our final report is being prepared. By using a neutral language and not "boxing in" the

---

831, 1985. See also http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft_systems_meth odology#CATWOE.

domains, we were able to "separate e people from the problem". The result was a neutral map that each tribe can use to explain its own narrative, worldview, and belief system, as well as to appreciate how the various worldviews and belief systems complement and reinforce each other within systems praxis.

Our ongoing conversation is contributing content for the INCOSE Guide to Systems Engineering Body of Knowledge currently under development. Feedback from interested members of the IFSR community is welcome.
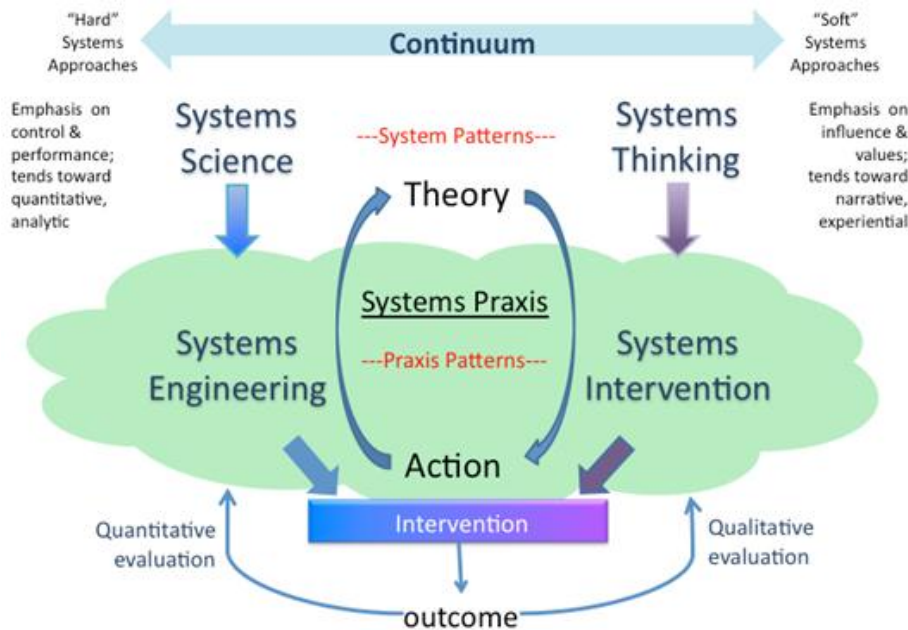
Reports from IFSR member societies

Arne Collen passed away
(February 2012)

In February 2012 Arne Collen left us. We will remember him as one of the high profile participants of the Fuschl Conversations. He attended all Fuschl conversations from 1990 till 2004, always leading a group and selecting topics which looked far into the future and were concerned with issues of betterment of the human conditions.

Team 2 at the Fuschl Conversation 2004: Christian Hofer, Farah Lenser, **Arne Collen**, Ernesto Grün

A virtual memory is available at http://www.saybrook.edu/forum/univ/virtual-memorial-arne-collen-celebrate-his-life-us-here

The last article written by Arne is published in an issue of the journal 'The Learning Organization' titled *Knowledge to manage the knowledge society* as at http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn 69-6474&volume&issue=4&PHPSESSID=6lnia7v14rgk96qor60poloav2

	Charles Francois (* 5. September 1922): 90 years of life in 9 worlds. **Ernesto Grün**

These days, our friend and mentor in systemics and cybernetics turns 90 years. In about 33000 days he has gone through 9 worlds, some of them overlapping.

Let me explain:

He lived on 3 continents

He served 3 different types of activities: commercial, diplomatic and intellectual

And mentally moved in 3 different times: past, present and future.

Gloria and Charles

Born in Europe, more precisely in Belgium, where he had his primary, secondary and university education.

He then moved into deep Africa, the Belgian Congo, where he had commercial activities.

At the beginning of the process of liberation from colonial status there , he came to our America settling in the province of Mendoza, Argentina, where he did also commercial activities with varying luck. This led to diplomatic activities at


Fuschl 2004

the Belgian Embassy in Buenos Aires, as a commercial attaché until his retirement.

Then he dedicated his life to what was, already for many years, his passion: the study and teaching of General Systems Theory and Cybernetics, this knowledge he spread throughout Latin America and beyond it , in Europe and the U.S.

He wrote many works in several languages , also a dictionary in Spanish and the an encyclopedia in English both about systems and cybernetics *(Charles François: International Encyclopedia of Systems and Cybernetics, 2nd edition in 2 volumes, K.G. Saur, München 2004, 740 pages, ISBN 3-598-11630-6).*

He toured many countries , giving courses and lectures, participating in forums and seminars and integrating multiple institutions.
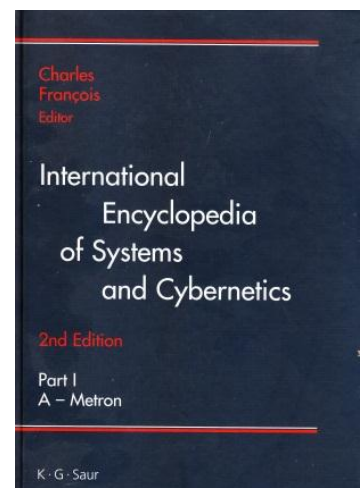
But not only did he dedicate his time to this new paradigm but threw himself into the future with a book on foresight.

That is why I say that he mentally acted on the past, present and future.

All this multi-faceted life experience he offered to us for more than thirty years in "GESI", the Study Group of Systems of Buenos Aires, a hotbed of new ideas and their influence on the intellectual world, particularly in Latin America .

In his own words he once said "for me, Systemics has become a way of life, in the broadest sense of the word. I gradually discovered that the systemic perceptions that I have incorporated into my mind (and even in relation to my own body) have helped me more and more to survive and adapt to life"

Thanks, Charles, for all this!

Welcome Business Systems Laboratory (B.S.Lab)!
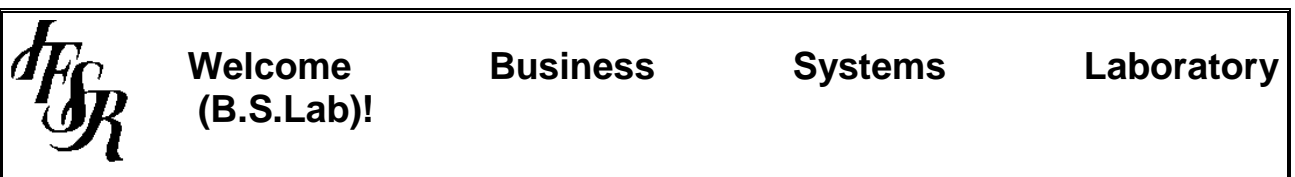
Business Systems Laboratory (B.S.Lab) (B.S.Lab - www.bslaboratory.net) is a non-profit association for the promotion of research and teaching in the field of business and social systems. It joined the International Federation for Systems Research in March 2012.

B.S.Lab was established on December 30th 2011 by a group of Italian young scholars and practitioners in the field of business systems: Dr. *Gianpaolo Basile* (President, consultant and lecturer), Dr. *Gandolfo Dominici* (Vice President and Scientific Board President, Tenured Ass. Prof. of Business Management at the Univ. of Palermo), Dr. *Enzo Scannella* (Secretary, Ass. Prof. of Business Management at the Univ. of Palermo), Mr. *Antonio Vitolo* (consultant and director of StudioStratego), Ms. *Federica Palumbo* (PhD student at Univ. Sapienza of Rome).

Honorary Members of B.S.Lab are: Dr. *Mark Buchanan* (physicist and author); Prof. *Carlo Dominici* (former Dean of Faculty of Economics, Univ. of Palermo and consultant); Prof. *Raul Espejo* (Director-General of the World Organization for Systems and Cybernetics and Principal Researcher at Syncho Ltd); Prof. *Klaus Krippendorff* (Emeritus at The Annenberg School for Communication, Univ. of Pennsylvania); Dr. *Charles François* (Honorary president of GESI and ALAS); Prof. *Gaetano Golinelli* (Emeritus -

Univ. *Sapienza* of Rome and founder of the Italian school of Viable Systems Approach); Prof. *Sergio Sciarelli* (Univ. *Federico II* of Naples).

The Association focuses on the development and dissemination of insights on the systemic approach to business sciences, as well as on fostering contacts and interchange of firms and academia.

The activities started in January 2012 and include, among others, the publication of the scientific journal *BUSINESS SYSTEMS REVIEW* (ISSN 2280-3866, www.business-systems-review.org).

In the near future B.S.Lab will organize two events: the B.S.Lab Discussion Meeting due September 11-12 at University of Palermo (Italy) and the International Symposium- *THE ECONOMIC CRISIS: TIME FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT ~ .TOWARDS A SYSTEMS APPROACH* due January 24-25 in Valencia (Spain) organized together with SESGE (Sociedad Española de Sistemas Generales), IASCYS (International Academy for Systems and Cybernetics Sciences) and the Universitat de València - Facultat d'Economia. The Conference Program Chair of the Symposium is *Josè Rodolfo Hernandez-Carrion* (member of B.S.Lab and SESGE), the Scientific Director is Gandolfo Dominici.

(Link to the event: www.business-systems-review.org/International.Symposium.Valencia.2013.htm)

As premise to the Symposium of Valencia, *Charles François* wrote an article titled: "*Complexity and Systemic Models: Tools to understand and manage crises*", published on

Business Systems Review (link: http://dx.medra.org/10.7350/BSR.A06.2012).

At the event of Valencia B.S.Lab will give awards for their contribution to the advancement of systems thinking applied to management: *Gaetano Golinelli; Matjaz Mulej* (Emeritus Univ. of Maribor and Vice President of IASCYS) and *Raul Espejo.*

The Ushuaia Initiative
Ricardo Frías, Ricardo Barrera, Enrique G. Herrscher

The first "Conversations of the Extreme South" were organized by the National Universities of Tierra del Fuego and of Patagonia and sponsored by The International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences (through the presence of its President Matjaz Mulej of Maribor University) and by several Systems Organizations of the region (GESI – Buenos Aires; FundArIngenio – Santiago del Estero; CESDES – Patagonia, all from Argentina; and the Systems Group of Universidade de Sao Paulo, Brazil). As a result, this "Ushuaia Initiative" is hereby shown to the Latin American community in general and specially to interested parties at Tierra del Fuego

FIRST: Inspired by the "*Conversations*" that have been taking place each two years in Austria for more than 30 years, and by the "*Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity* (signed in 1994 at the Convento da Arrabida, Portugal, by Basarab Nicolescu, Lima da Freitas and Edgar Morin, among others), during four days a group of enthusiastic researchers of systems thinking, complexity and transdisciplinarity have been searching for consensus about the application of transdisciplinarity to diverse areas.

SECOND: The meeting started the March 27th 2012 with the presence of the Governor of the Province of Tierra del Fuego, Antártida and Islands of the South Atlantic, Ms. Fabiana Ríos, and the Rector of the National University of Tierra del Fuego, Prof. Roberto Domecq. Their inaugural speeches stated with great knowledge the importance of interrelation, of harmonization of diversity and of integration of social, economic and political values in order to obtain a better quality of life.

THIRD: The themes subject to conversation during these four days at the premises of the School of Engineering of the University of Patagonia were:
(a) how to introduce the notion of transdisciplinarity concept and practices into the primary and secondary school;
(b) how to introduce the trans disciplinary concept and practice into the Universities;
(c) how to approach the future of complex systems in Ibero America; and
(d) how to cope with the complexity of public policies in the countries of Ibero America.

FOURTH: Beyond the themes dealt with on this occasion, the process of "conversing" about them (as opposed to the speeches and papers of traditional conferences) developed the art of listening, of understanding "the other one", of putting oneself in the shoes of someone else, and of achieving a non confrontative communication searching for points of consensus, thus recovering an ancient natural habit of the human being that helps integration.

FIFTH: The supporting institutions will collaborate to issue a report on the activity performed, and will start soon to organize the "Second Conversations of the Extreme South", to take place at Ushuaia in April 2013, with the theme: "Through Disciplines and Through Generations". As from that year, these meetings will take place in the city of Ushuaia everys two years.

Ushuaia, 30th. March 2012

The ISSS 2012 Conference in San Jose
David Ing

The 56th Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Systems Sciences was held at San Jose State University, California, July 15-20, 2012.

For 2012, 150 systems thinkers from 21 countries participated. The 2012 program included 4 morning plenary dialectic sessions, 13 workshops, and over 70 contributed written works for presentation. A distinct feature, for this year, was a stream of 12 "Systems Basics" sessions, where leading systems thinkers contributed their time to share their knowledge and experiences on foundational topics. These 60-minute "Systems Basics" were intended to familiarize novices, encouraging the extension of inquiries with new colleagues and friends who have deeper insights into systems perspectives. Learning at the ISSS meeting has traditionally been an interactive event, where conversations outside the structured program can be as valuable as those that have been prescheduled.

The theme of "Service Systems, Natural Systems" aimed to direct the attention of the society to look forward. In technological and human systems, a new services perspective shapes the way that we think about interacting with other people in urban and electronic settings. In the ecology, our natural world is being stressed to the extent that geological scientists have declared that we are in the Anthropocene, where the safe operating space for humanity already exceeds sustainability for 3 of 9 planetary boundaries.

Featured speakers included Rafael Ramirez (Oxford U.), Jim Spohrer (IBM), Timothy F. H. Allen (U. of Wisconsin Madison), Stuart Umpleby (George Washington U.), Minna Takala (Aalto U.) and John Kineman (U. Colorado at Boulder). The week began with pre-conference workshops, and a special address by Humberto Maturana Romesín and Ximena Dávila Yáñez. The week closed with an address with the incoming president, Alexander Laszlo, and a welcome to attend the ISSS 2013 meeting in Hai Phong City, Vietnam by Ockie Bosch and Nam Nguyen.

Parties interested in an alternative to "being

there" may enjoy many of the talks through the postings of slides, audio and video at http://isss.org/world/retrospectives .

David Ing

ISSS YPresident (2011-2012),

Some reflections
on ASC/BIG at Asilomar and ISSS in San Jose
Ray Ison

Clearly a good number of Systems folk knew the way to San Jose…and nearby Asilomar, venues for the ISSS conference, *'Service Systems, Natural Systems'* , and the earlier ASC/BIG hosted conference *'An Ecology of Ideas'*.[3] Each of these events had innovative features in terms of their conception and design. From my perspective both events represented a new era in inter-society collaboration that augurs well for the future. The collaborative elements included consultation on scheduling, sharing speakers (ASC and ISSS), joint chairing of the organizing committee and design of an integrated program (ASC and BIG). These collaborative elements all benefited participants; the Society leadership teams are to be congratulated on their initiative.

The ASC/BIG conference at Asilomar - near Monterey, California - well and truly lived up to its name. Those present, the setting and the emergent conversations certainly created a rich and rewarding ecology of ideas. In cool but energizing temperatures due to the sea fret (fog) the site proved ideal, though a little more sun would have revealed more of the magnificent views. BIG Chair Norah Bateson, ASC Chair Ranulph Granville, and conference co-chair Pille Bunnell (working with Norah) and their supporters brought insight, enthusiasm and good humor to the event.

The conference was organized around three themes: paradigm, recursion and praxis. This worked well, though there is always room for improvement in aligning espoused theory with what becomes theory-in-use.

Klaus Krippendorff's 80th birthday was celebrated at the conference. He delivered an insightful and stimulating keynote paper available at: http://asc-cybernetics.org/2012/?page_id=681 . ASC President Ranulph's work that he had specially prepared for the occasion. Copies can be found at: http://asc-

cybernetics.org/publications/Krippendorff/Krippendorff_A_Directory_Linked.pdf

Graham Barnes, a Batesonian family therapist also provided a stimulating keynote in which he started by asking: Is the world loving? He moved on to suggest this was the wrong question, posing instead the question: Do I love the system that I call I, you, we, it? Then in a shift towards responsibility he reframed the question as: Is Graham's world loving? Or, Is the world we are making loving?

I took from Terry Deacon's keynote reminders about the operation of constraints (also addressed by Mauro Ceruti in his book 'Constraints and Possibilities. The Evolution of Knowledge and the Knowledge of Evolution').

Gregory Bateson wrote that information was the news of the difference that makes a difference. This idea was reprised by many speakers but, in my view, these speakers often created a praxis trap of their own making by doing so. In the main the trap arises when information is discussed, non-reflexively as *some thing* - a reification that happens when we use nouns. Following Maturana, who does not use the term information at all, Bateson's key idea could be rephrased as: Experience arises as the difference that makes a difference to me. In this way the concept of 'information' which has a contested semantic history, is not needed. In the process it returns to the speaker and/or the listener the possibility of hearing and appreciating the systemic, relational dynamics that are at the core of this phenomenon.

One of the most entertaining and stimulating presentations given at ASC/BIG was by Susan Rose Parenti in her acceptance speech for the ASC Warren McCulloch Achievement Award, which she impressively reframed as an award for Avoidance. Look at this clip to appreciate her perspective: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HR_Y_bilHXs&list=UUXkoXhr9GGmF5YDPu3_ae_Q&index=1&feature=plcp

I only managed the first two and half days of the ISSS conference before having to return to Melbourne. However, in preparing these

---

[3] ISSS, International Society for the Systems Sciences; ASC, American Society of Cybernetics; BIG, Bateson Idea Group.

reflections I have drawn on comments by Howard Silverman who attended ISSS for the whole week. I have also posted a number of reflections on both events on my blog, which I have drawn upon for this report.[4]

Both events were fortunate to have contributions from Humberto Maturana and his colleague Ximena Davila. At their ISSS session on Sunday evening Humberto and Ximena, with assistance from Sebastian Gaggero addressed four questions; (i) who are we? (ii) where do we come from? (iii) where do we go? and (iv) where do we want to go? Their preconference session was entitled: Cultural-Biological Matrix of Human Existence. My notes on the responses they offered to these questions were:

(i) we are living in molecular autopoiesis;

(ii) in our living we conserve our molecular autopoiesis (transformation implies something is conserved); Darwin had to propose a mechanism to explain evolution - they choose to explain evolution in terms of drift, as a process of sliding or conserving coherence with our circumstances i.e., while we live we drift.

(iii) Birds do not need theories to fly - but we humans invent theories to do what we do even though we do not need theories in our living, yet all theories change our living. Most theories are linear, rather than systemic. We can only stop theories through a human choice. A theory is a system of explanations that one accepts as an explanation. Autopoiesis is an abstraction of the molecular dynamics of our living - laws of nature are abstractions about coherences.

(iv) Three conditions are needed for purposeful action - knowing + understanding + a means of action at hand (without the latter depression arises). There is a need to recover the relationship between the Anthroposphere and the Biosphere - this requires harmony, not equilibrium. Pollution, poverty etc., are all products of linear thinking, but only we can stop this type of thinking and allow wellbeing to arise.

Rafael Ramirez, an ISSS keynote presenter, suggested that the really big contribution Systems could make is to enable people to ask

really, really good questions. I like this framing but would want to add that it only works if we address at the same time the institutional settings which create contexts, or demands for what are acceptable answers. He also suggested two ways forward (i) extending our rationality framework and (ii) developing a meta-rationality based on plausibility, conversation, and multi-framing.

For more detail on ISSS please see immediate past president David Ing's blog (http://coevolving.com/blogs/index.php/archive/rethinking-systems-thinking/) or try the new Facebook site 'Systems Science' for alternative offerings and perspectives. Much of the material presented at ISSS can be downloaded from the ISSS website: http://isss.org/world/sanjose-2012-retrospective .

In offering a reflection, Howard Silverman wrote: '*I appreciate your call at the [ASC] cybernetics conference for greater attention to authentic conversation. That's a high bar -- and by that standard, both conferences fell short. Yet at the same time, I did really enjoy them both, and found them both very welcoming.*

*ISSS seems kind of quirky to me. It can't quite escape the shadow of its founding giants. Somewhat burdened and exasperated by the ambition to develop a system of systems. Missing a process for incorporating fields -- like, say, network theory -- that have emerged since the Bertalanffy/Boulding era. Split between the positivist-leaning system engineering folks and the more interpretive/critical folks. Yet, despite it all, the power of the original vision attracts new participants, and the opportu*nity to share a space in that shadow seems to offer on-going value. It was certainly valuable for me.'

The ISSS organizers offered at San Jose a separate strand of presentations that they labeled Systems Basics. These sessions were well attended and not just by newcomers to the field. Sessions like these help to generate and conserve narratives of identity and purpose. I like to think we are entering an era where Systems scholars desire to share and talk about what we have in common rather than that which divides us (a tendency the ISSS SIGs perpetuate in my view). I hope future conference organizers will create opportunities for more inclusive, authentic, conversations.

In the first half of this year I have had an indulgence of conferences. Those events that have worked best for me are where the event

---

[4] http://rayison.blogspot.com.au/2012/07/an-ecology-of-ideas-reflections-2.html and http://rayison.blogspot.com.au/2012/07/an-ecology-of-ideas-reflections-1.html

is understood much like a theatre performance, which requires a director and front of stage and back of stage personnel who work well together to create a seamless performance right down to the light switches and door noises. It is unfortunate when international keynote speakers have the listening of their audience distracted by lack of attention to these simple yet fundamental matters? This might be a metaphor future organizers could take on board.

Those responsible for both conferences deserve to be congratulated for their hard work and dedication. Taken together ASC/BIG and ISSS are an invigorating interlude in one's intellectual life – something to be recommended as a tonic, and worth sustaining. The next ASC conference is planned for the 29th July to 4th August 2013 in Suzhou (near Shanghai) in China (hosted by the Department of Architecture at Xi'an Jiaotong Liverpool University). As with this year the timing and location will be coordinated with the ISSS conference which will be held 10 days earlier in Haiphong City in Vietnam. This 57th world conference is entitled: 'Curating the Conditions for a Thriveable Planet: Systemic Leverage Points for Emerging a Global Eco-Civilization'.
(see www.isss.org/world/conferences).

Ray Ison

Professor of Systems, The Open University (UK) and Monash Sustainability Institute, Australia.

Bulgarian Society for Systems Research (BSSR)

One of the main aims of the Bulgarian Society for Systems Research (BSSR), since its founding as a national society in 1994, has been to:

- Attract young and not so young researchers, lecturers and practitioners and help their studies by introducing possible benefits of systems thinking, of systemics at all.
- Supply them with news from the systems sciences community and offer possibilities for professional contacts, information exchange, exchange of visits, etc.,
- Help members to start joint research and apply for financed projects, and to
- Inform on current possibilities for further education for a broader audience that may benefit from systems ideas and applications, etc.

During the last several years, the latter has become a focus of activity. We have been aware that systems analysis, systems research, systems thinking, etc. – all those domains that are embraced by systemics usually apply very sophisticated methods and basics of knowledge that only a limited number of people can cope with and use. However, the need of systems understanding and applying its wealth has a much broader audience.

The Fuschl Conversations supported by the IFSR has taught us to what extent "free hand drawings" and other visualizing methods express the inexpressible vague thoughts, while generating new knowledge, methods, tools and visions, which would then be elaborated to concepts and programs for teaching and dissemination. A similar process experiences every person, while learning and allowing to be taught by professionals or by life itself.

Modern information and communication technologies (ICT) offer a vast number of tools for it, which are by no means sufficiently applied by systemic leaders, as the databank of systems publications gathered by the BSSR showed.

We turned to innovative forms of education looking for methodologies to bring systemics to a broader audience. In the meantime, ICT-based educational multimedia have developed a great variety of forms and excellence. For

more than three years we have been taking part as affiliate partners in a series of European projects developing the excellence of ICT-based educational multimedia, evaluating the ones, which are present on European markets, developing criteria for the evaluation of the constantly growing quality of products, developing organizational criteria for teaching professionals how to evaluate their own creations or guide authors to apply the full range of innovations. It is a very accelerating modern process in education, in learning and teaching.

We also cooperate closely with the International Jury (consisting of experts from Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, The Netherlands and Slovenia) from about 20 leading universities for evaluating:

- Didactic Multimedia Products (DMP),
- General Multimedia Products (AMP),
- Educational Management Systems (LMS),
- Computer games with potentials conducive to competence (CKP),

- Educational Media (political, modern historical, and inter cultural education) for Europe.

An International Jury supports the Society for Pedagogy and Information (GPI) and the European Society for Education and Communication (ESEC) to award the Comenius EduMedia Awards to outstanding products in the field of ICT-supported educational media and Erasmus EduMedia Awards to outstanding educational media for Europe. These products are applied for e-learning / e-teaching, blended-learning / blended-education, playful learning and management.

It is time for systemics to focus on and take up with the challenges of modern knowledge dissemination.

Magdalena Kalaidjieva

mk@bitex.com

GIFT (Global Institute of Flexible Systems Management) GLOGIFT 2012

GIFT, the Global Institute of Flexible Systems Management, India, one of IFSR's member societies approached the IFSR for the purpose of organizing GLOGIFT 2012, their annual conference, in Vienna. GIFT's mission (www.giftsociety.org) is to evolve and enrich the flexible systems management paradigm for the new millennium.

In response to this request Gerhard Chroust in his function as Secretary General of the IFSR agreed with the OCG, the Austrian Computer Society, to deal with the organisation of the conference. GLOGIFT 12, the Twelfth Global Conference on Flexible Systems Management, was held from July 30 to August 1, 2012 at the University of Vienna, Austria.

The overall theme was "Systemic Flexibility and Business Agility" and provided a global forum for sharing practical experiences, knowledge and insight in the evolution, formulation and implementation of strategies and models for flexible enterprises to meet the changing requirements of global business.

Approximately 50 participants, to a large percentage from India, attended the conference, which was organized in an excellent professional manner by the OCG.

The chairpersons were Prof. Sushil, Founder President of GIFT, New Delhi, Prof. Gerhard Chroust, General Secretary of the IFSR, and Dr. Ronald Bieber, Secretary General of the OCG. Prof. Renate Motschnig, University Vienna, and Member of the International advisory Committee, provided valuable advice.

Renate Motschnig, together with Gerhard Chroust and Christina Böhm also organized a one-day workshop on "Flexibility in Intercultural Communication": Key topics were cultural differences between nations, especially in view of cooperation in teams and in global outsourcing situations.

International Federation For Systems Research

Secretary General: Prof. Dr. Gerhard Chroust

c/o OSGK – Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies

Freyung 6/6, A-1010 Vienna, Austria

Tel: +43 664 28 29 978, fax: +43 1 5336112-20

E-mail: gerhard.chroust@jku.at

http://www.ifsr.org