

2. SOCIAL SCIENCES

PHILOSOPHY

For UNESCO philosophy is a “school of freedom”, a key pillar for its activity. Already in 1946, the Organisation was asked to create its own Philosophy Programme. Its aim was to anchor in the public mind a certain number of philosophical and moral notions, to be regarded as a “minimum equipment”, to reinforce respect for human personality, love of peace and solidarity, narrow nationalism and the rule of brute force. Philosophy is seen as dealing with the universal problems of human life. And philosophy helps to develop the intellectual tools to analyse and understand the key concepts such as justice, dignity and freedom. It builds capacities for independent thought and judgement, enhances the critical skills to understand and question the world and its challenges, and fosters reflection on principles. The major issues dealt with by the Organization, such as education for all, Intangible Cultural Heritage and the ethics of science need to have a solid philosophical foundation. UNESCO has therefore worked out an intersectoral strategy for philosophy. Key pillars of action for UNESCO in the field of philosophy are: Philosophy facing World Problems, Philosophy in global Education, Promotion of Philosophical Thought and Research. So far, eleven UNESCO Chairs in Philosophy have been established worldwide.

LONG NIGHT OF PHILOSOPHY

Since 2002, the Philosophy Day is celebrated each year. To mark this day, the association “Treffpunkt Philosophie Neue Akropolis” organised a “Long Night of Philosophy”, which took place under the patronage of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO in Innsbruck, Salzburg, Graz, Klagenfurt, St. Pölten and Vienna on 24 November. There were lectures, presentations and philosophical exchange on the impact of philosophy on society, science, religion and interreligious dialogue, arts, politics and one’s own life. The association published a German convenience translation of UNESCO’s strategy on philosophy.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “DIALOGUE – CULTURE – PHILOSOPHY. PHILOSOPHISING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH TRANSCULTURAL BACKGROUNDS”

Language and culture, questioning the “new” in the present cultural network and global learning and the significance of philosophy in preparing young people for life in a rapidly changing society were the main topics that the conference,

organised by the Austrian Centre of Philosophy for Children, focussed on. It took place on 19-22 October in Graz, under the patronage of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO.

The conference focussed on the function of philosophising, of critical, networked thinking and the relevance for current problems of our times. It wanted to give an up-to-date overview on current research. Friedrich Zimmermann, member of the Advisory Panel “Education for Sustainable Development and Global Learning” of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, read out a greeting by ÖUK at the opening ceremony on 20 October.

