In early October the facilitating group met in **Bertinoro**, the hilltop village southeast of Bologna where the 2016 ASD Conference will take place.

The venue is architecturally and historically fascinating, firmly anchored in an old true Italian hill village with views over the surrounding countryside of Emilia-Romagna, good restaurants and... excellent wine!

Bertinoro is in the Forli-Cesena area, not far from the Adriatic and Ravenna with its wonderful mosaics – to be recommended for a pre- or post-conference visit.

The original castle is also a fully equipped conference venue run by the University of Bologna and the facilities are good – even though we will have some consciousness raising to do to achieve our aim of a Green Conference!

---

**2016 – The Act of Balancing**

After many intense dialogues considering areas of conflict in the world, life in Italy, our 2015 theme of shaping social landscapes and the evolutionary purpose of the ASD, among other things, we came to the theme for 2016:

**The Act of Balancing.**

How can we find the balance between our inner and outer lives? How do we develop the eyes to see the many green shoots of new initiatives and new ways of living and working together which are usually hidden by the negative stories focused upon by the media? Can we learn ways to hold and understand multiple perspectives at the same time, and step beyond our habitual ways of viewing the world?

We are all faced with the challenges of our Time and it is a balancing act to be, to stay human. We are bombarded with the atrocities and miseries around us, aware of all the good which is also shining through, painfully awake to our own privilege – simply to have a roof over our heads, food on our tables and to be able to work. We also live on a knife’s edge, between good and shadow, light and darkness..
It won’t get any easier. How do we strengthen ourselves and each other? Can we find the sources for the creative courage we need to be appropriately active?

How do we balance our tasks to contribute to world social development, to bring humanity to the spirit of organisations and yet respond with grace to the realities which confront us?

During ASD 2016 we will spend some time working to understand the language of the Zeitgeist. From building a rich picture of the challenges of our time we will then take up the question together of how we can find the courage to act creatively, holding all the different perspectives in mind. In times of turbulence, when the social structures around us are being shaken and sometimes destroyed, can we retain hope for humanity and the earth, can we develop an inner flexibility and resilience of soul that allows us to do the right thing at the right time – to practice moral technique?

Within this theme of the Act of Balancing lies the theme of Alignment – aligning ourselves more fully with our own life, our own destiny, and, at the same time, aligning ourselves with the challenges in our local environment, and the life of the world at this time.

Josef Beuys, in an interview in 1984 said, „Die Mysterien finden am Hauptbahnhof statt“, The Mysteries of today happen at the main railway station. Many of us are experiencing exactly that today. Here is a link to the interview in german: https://www.dropbox.com/s/am9xxnnznk4tf9n/Beuysinterview.pdf?dl=0

In a poem called ‘What to Remember When Waking’ David Whyte wrote in 2013:

What you can plan is too small for you to live
What you can live wholeheartedly will make plan enough
for the vitality hidden in your sleep

To be human is to become visible
while carrying what is hidden as a gift to others.
To remember the other world in this world
is to live in your true inheritance.

You are not a troubled guest on this earth,
you are not an accident amidst other accidents
you were invited from another and greater night
than from the one which you have just emerged.

WHAT AWAITS YOU?

The programme is taking shape. The venue is unique and the Italian Host Group have many creative ideas for making our time there special too. They will send out the invitation letter and registration early in the New Year.
Before the conference:

**Leadership and Consultancy International Course LCL Wednesday 18, 16.00 – Friday 20 May 18.00**

In Tomar 2015, an initiative group was formed to pursue the possibility of an ASD Leadership and Consultants Course. As first step, Joao Luiz Souza, Bernhard Walzberg and Selim Nigri will offer one full module of Adigo’s Course to all those who are interested in getting a real feeling for their 5 module Course. Next steps will then be discussed with the participants, according to their needs and expectations......more look at Attachment 2

**School of Spiritual Science – Friday 20th May 19.30 to 21.00, Saturday 21st May 9.00 to 12.30.**

For members of the School, we will continue our work to deepen the spiritual understanding of our work. Please contact Elaine at e.beadle@miracompanions.com for further details.

**Lievegoed Impulse – Saturday 20th May 09.00 - 12.30**

Joao Luiz Souza and Silvio Urbano will facilitate this year’s Pre-conference about the sources of our work - more details in the Spring newsletter. If you are inviting a guest, please encourage him or her to attend this session as it is a very helpful way for guests to meet the work and spirit of the ASD.

**The Conference**

Starts at 5 pm on Saturday 21st May. We will set the scene for the conference together with all of you and the Host Group will introduce us to Italy.

Anja Schwarze-Janka will be joining us again to lead the singing each morning and the Host Group is currently searching for a great guest speaker from Italy. We have asked Wolfgang Nährig and Essi Aulanko to host the welcome to our New Members.

In the early evening on Sunday we will have the opportunity to take up the Inner Path of the Consultant in a new way. Robin Blackmore will lead us into the worlds to be found in Dante’s Divine Comedy and we will take these pictures as entries into inner practices. Dante was the guest of the Count of the Castle of Bertinoro during his lifetime and we thought you might like to meet him too!

Monday will see us move further into our theme of 2016 – The Act of Balancing. Adriaan Bekman and Volker von Bremen have agreed to speak to this and we are in the process of approaching other members to share their perspectives. All will lead us in work in pairs or small groups. The first half of each morning has been kept for this, to enable us to have enough time to explore and deepen the theme together.

Open Space time will be from coffee break until late afternoon each day. Feedback from Tomar shows that we need to adapt the Open Space technology more to our own needs for 2016. We will work on that in our next meeting and share some of the key changes with you in the Spring Report.

At the end of each day we will take further steps with Robin through the Divine Comedy. After dinner will be time to meet with colleagues, wander the cobbled streets of Bertinoro and, with the Host Group, enjoy a Cultural evening on Monday and a Social Evening on Wednesday with a distinctly Italian flavour.

Thursday will see us dealing with our ASD Matters, welcoming the new Facilitating Group member and farewelling Elaine. Then we will close the conference together, harvest our fruits and step into our future in Balance!
Guests at Bertinoro

If you plan to invite a guest, this is just a friendly reminder to make sure that you share with them all the information about the conference before they arrive. For example, please send your guest the two FG Reports (this one and the one which we will send in April 2016) and all the information sent out by the Host Group (invitation letter, registration form, and so on). Last year some guests had not received information about the conference prior to arrival, and their feedback was that they missed knowing about aspects such as the Pre-Conference on the Saturday morning, and other details.

Suggested readings & viewings to prepare for the Act of Balancing

One of us came across a remarkable person, who died just recently (23.10.2015): Dr. Arno Gruen.

In my view, no one has documented more thoroughly, or more compassionately, the enormous obstacles that people in modern societies must overcome in their quest to become fully human.

Dennis Rivers, Publisher

Dr. Arno Gruen was born in Berlin in 1923, his parents fled the Nazi regime and so he emigrated to the United States as a child in 1936. After completing his graduate studies in psychology at New York University, he trained in psychoanalysis under Theodor Reik. Dr. Gruen has held many teaching posts, including seventeen years as professor of psychology at Rutgers University. Since 1979 he has lived and practiced in Switzerland.

In "The Betrayal of the Self - The Fear of Autonomy in Men and Women" (Paperback 2007)* Arno Gruen shows that Empathy is an ability that protects people from their own inhumanity.

In his passionately argued psychoanalytic view of the human soul, and what distorts it into pathology, Gruen points out what happens to an infant when it learns that the love it craves from its parents is available only at the price of submission to their will. In paying this price, as Gruen found in many years of experience with his patients, the infant renounces its true, autonomous self and instead easily follows authoritarian persons or leaders. Often they get exploited for all kinds of extremism.

ISIS is just one example of this.

But we can also perceive it in our client organizations, where there is still a high attraction for the traditional hierarchical command and control leadership approach. When co-workers do not have the social space to develop their true self, they easily become obedient to “strong” authoritarian leaders.


Invitation

This is just one offer to prepare ourselves for the theme we will work with during our conference. There is certainly much more material around. For that reason we would like to invite you to make offers to your fellow members which could inspire them on their way to Bertinoro. If you come across something which fits the theme, as described above, please post it on basecamp with the title “The Act of Balancing” – Readings & Viewings. For that use the basecamp project ‘members activities’ https://asd-international.basecamphq.com/projects/9778863-members-activities/

It can also be an inspiring video you want to share, e.g. this one where Nelson Mandela speaks about inspiration in difficult times. https://youtu.be/TQhns5AwAkA
Other reading suggestions:

- Challenge of the Times, Die Rätsel unserer Zeit, – Rudolf Steiner, Berlin 1919
- Social and Antisocial Forces – Rudolf Steiner
- Towards the 21st Century – Bernard Lievegoed
- Man on the Threshold – Bernard Lievegoed
- Stairway of Surprise – Michael Lipson
- The Divine Comedy - Dante Alighieri
  http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasdante.htm
- Third Mystery Drama: The Guardian of the Threshold
  (Der Hüter der Schwelle), Scene 8 - Rudolf Steiner

ASD MATTERS

Members

Two longstanding members have made the decision to resign, for different reasons. Brigitte Pietschmann and Eva Kleber. We wish them both well in wherever their future leads them.

Basecamp

We are still aiming for a new internal platform in 2016. Watch this space!

Future Venues – 2017 and beyond

We are in the process of finding a suitable venue for our upcoming conference in France in 2017. Jean-Pierre Caron, Isabelle Sehl and many others are actively involved in this work. We’ll let you know more about this in our Spring report.

We have East Coast USA in mind for 2018. What do you think? Please give us your feedback on this idea, and if you have any other suggestions please let us know!

Finances

Look out for the Annual Contribution reminders from Christian Lucke before Christmas!

Next FG member

We had an intensive and moving process to find the next FG member to replace Elaine – and thank you to all of you who wrote to make suggestions. We are particularly pleased to be able to tell you that Dina Ushakova from Yekaterinburg, Russia after much reflection, has accepted our invitation. Have a look where Yekaterinburg, one of Russia’s first industrial cities, is geographically: (it is at the foot of the Ural Mountains) https://www.google.ch/maps/place/Yekaterinburg,+Oblast+Sverdlovsk,+Russia/@53.2528008,58.2598912,6z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x43c165eaa062db4b:0xd50243d7f7567f20

Please let us know your reactions. If you have any questions or concerns please let us know before the end of February, so that we can take these into consideration well in advance of the conference.

Applicants & Sponsors

As the FG, we will be in touch with sponsors before the end of January 2016 to hear from you how your
process with your applicant is progressing (for further details please take a look at our Policies document (Para 8.2) “the sponsors and applicants decide together on an appropriate process by which the Applicant can fully confirm his/her intention and the three sponsors, having dealt with any questions raised by members, can confirm the decision...”. ). If as a sponsor you have any particular questions about your role or require support, please do not hesitate to contact us – we are here to help.

In addition, we would like to initiate a discussion about our Policy in relation to the applicant process, particularly as it relates to attending the Conference twice as a guest, the process of finding sponsors and the incoming process thereafter. It is our hope to make this process more transparent, more robust and arises out of experiences that have been shared with us over recent years.

We will present more detail in our Spring Report but will be glad to enter into discussion in the meantime. Please contact Elaine e.beadle@miracompanions.com

In January you will receive Registration details for Bertinoro from the Host Group and we will be back with final details, programme etc. in April.

And so we wish you all a very happy Christmas, a promising New Year and renewal during the Holy Nights.

Elaine, Ulrich, Belinda and Marc

Your FG
Attachment 1

Report to ASD – Tomar 2015

Belo Horizonte, 3rd of September, 2015.

Dear ASD Members,

For me, it was such an honor to participate on the ASD Conference 2015 in Tomar. Since I delved into the anthroposophic teachings, I imagined that the members of ASD were the “worldwide wise in the field”. And I wasn’t wrong.

My journey in Tomar started a few days before the Conference. I was in the group of nine who stood in front of another 100 to facilitate with Shelley Sacks the Earth Forum, and it was such a sensitive experience. I was so anxious to be there, contributing to that community of “the wise”, and feeling so flattered to receive that social technology, directly from its source. My expectations were so high that at the end of my first day I felt a little disappointed with the lack of practical results the Earth Forum had the purpose to bring up.

I went back to my room reflecting about my feelings regarding that first day experience, and went back the next day prepared to participate of a social laboratory, and that changed my perspective and impacted my experience along the conference.

Many times during the sessions I took, I had the same feeling, that people were there experiencing, and exchanging experiences, trying new technics, offering other points of views, reflecting together, meditating together, being helpful to each other, singing, moving, having fun. Trusting at each other as a spiritual community, which strengthens its impulse when they gather together and go back home to put their energy into each one’s unique impact for social development.

I realized that ASD functioned as a laboratory for that “wise people”, and I was there as a guest to be part of their experiments. Only now after the conference, I can see how it opens up a world of possibilities (literally), the freedom to create and share. And that’s why it was such an honor to be part of the ASD Conference for me.

I met so many people that I became curious to know more about. I wanted to know what they do, more about their life story, how they got there, how I could keep in touch and continue to learn from them. I was so curious about everyone. And for my surprise, they were also curious about me! Asking the same questions I wanted to ask them, and suddenly it felt like I was part of it.

Writing to you now, 3 months after the conference finished, I miss this people that were part of such an amazing and important experience for me. I miss the singing lessons with Anja, the readings of the Lievegoed’s verse in different languages every day, the strong experiences sharing with my conference partner every morning and the fun dinners we had each evening.

At first, the agenda seemed to me that it was so light and easy going, but when we started with the activities I didn’t know how everyone, especially elder people as the eurythmist Anne Marie, had the energy to participate of the sessions until the end of the day.

I think the Facilitating Group and the Organizing Group were very successful to maintain the mood of the conference connected to its purpose, also the way the sessions and the agenda were drawn, and some of the energizing activities helped to keep me and the others excited to participate of everything.
I was glad when we had a little time to rest and enjoy the pool of that lovely hotel before dinner. For all of that I’m very grateful to the team that worked so carefully to realize this conference to us. Both Facilitating and Organizing Groups were always very thoughtful and kind.

Another group that was essential for my experience was the “Brazilian delegation”. We were together since the invitation was made. We exchanged e-mails and encouraged ourselves to participate actively and to network as much as possible with people from other countries. A real team!

The role of the Host Member was very important to me, because at some point I realized I couldn’t go anymore, and when I sat together with him to explain my situation, he told me why he made his invitation and offered his support to help me and make my participation possible. I’m very grateful to my host Selim Nigri, without him I wouldn’t have had this amazing experience.

After the conference, I kept in touch with my partners in the Youth Initiative, Gustavo and Nick, and we have also made contact with our hosts, Silvio, Brian and Bernhard, to start our research over the subject and plan our actions to present some results in the next conference.

I hope the members enjoyed my company as much as I enjoyed theirs.

I see so much synergy of my current projects with the purpose of ASD, so I look forward to participate and collaborate each year more and more to the ASD community.

Best regards,

Gabriel de Almeida

gabrielhenriqueap@gmail.com

+55 31 9560-3256

__________________________________________

Attachment 2

Leadership and Consultancy International Course

Dear ASD Colleagues

As you may remember, during our last Conference, Tomar 2015, Bernhard Walzberg and Joao Luiz Souza from Brazil presented the fundamentals of Adigo's Leadership and Consultants Course. Over the last 25 years this course, always kept up to the continued changes in development of organizations, becoming a factor of success both for clients and for Adigo.

The Course is designed according to the principles of Adult Learning: There is learning by discovering in the foreground, stimulated by the presentation of concepts, ideas and questions. Individual and group works, physical activities (light), painting, sculpturing and other exercises all contribute to practical experiences with each subject, thus enhancing learning and understanding.
The Course can be seen as a path of self-development, improving leadership and consultancy skills. Participants have reported improved relations not only with their team or their clients but also with their family and friends.

The basic purpose of this intensive program is to qualify professionals to support and conduct change and development processes, where the assumptions are teamwork, focus on client and new management paradigms, based on an integrated vision of the human being and the company.

Our approach is to offer one full module to all those who are interested in getting a real feeling of what happens in the 5 modules Course. After this one module we will discuss with the participants, which are the next steps, according to their needs and expectations.

A group formed during open space discussions in Tomar has been working on the planning of the presentation. To enable our ASD Colleagues to participate we will be starting this pilot module on May 18, 2016, Wednesday, in Bertinoro in the same place were the 2016 ASD-Conference will be held. From May 18 at 4 PM through May 20 in the evening we will be working together living through the actual experience of the module. We will be working with the content of Module 2 (see outline of content below).

After putting together all costs, we came up with an approximate value of 4000 Euro. There may be small variations, according to number of participants and other factors. This final figure will be divided by the number of participants. If we have 20 participants the contribution of each will be 200 Euro. If more or less will participate up to a maximum of 30, the contribution of each will vary accordingly. Individual costs for Hotel and meals to be covered by each participant.

Module 2: The Essence of Transformation

To introduce participants to the archetypes and structuring principles that act in the human being, in groups and organizations, qualifying them for the practical use of the "diagnostic tools" in the organization's reality. On completion of this module, participants will be prepared to address questions such as:

- How can I look at an organization, understanding their current state, advantages and main improving issues?
- How to recognize the evolutionary stages of groups and organizations?
- How to identify and treat the typical crisis of the organizations and groups?
- How to recognize and deal with the different human temperaments?

We hope we can get your confirmation in writing as soon as possible, so that we can confirm reservations at the hotel. Please contact João Luiz Souza – jlsouza@adigolumo.com.br or Bernhard N. Walzberg – bwalzberg@uol.com.br or Selim Nigri – selim.nigri@adigolumo.com.br