MIND & LIFE EUROPE

Activity Report 2018

Welcome

Dear Friends of Mind & Life Europe,

Throughout 2018 we have continued working to promote the growth of contemplative studies across a range of geographical regions, involving different generations of researchers on a span of topics, from the neurosciences to education. Our mission to convene thinkers, to catalyse dialogue and to build community bonds engaged us in encounters ranging from small invitational meetings to professional events.

We hosted the inaugural meeting of the Community for Contemplative Education, held a deep and timely European Summer Institute on Kinship, Conflict and Compassion, and advanced our efforts to empower the next generation of researchers through the European Varela Awards program. We had a multiplicity of opportunities to exchange with European networks for contemplative studies, and we are profoundly grateful to have been able to participate in several dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

While carrying out these activities, we've also taken more time to look inward and to deepen the conversation amongst our membership on the principles and values behind what we are and do. Reflecting together has strengthened our sense of community, generated new levels of enthusiasm and kindled our creativity in thinking about the best paths forward.

We would like to thank all of you who strongly supported our growing network to make our work possible.

With best regards,

Amy Cohen Varela
Chair of the Board

Cornelius Pietzner
Co-Director

Sander Tideman
Co-Director

Astrid Lunkes
Co-Director

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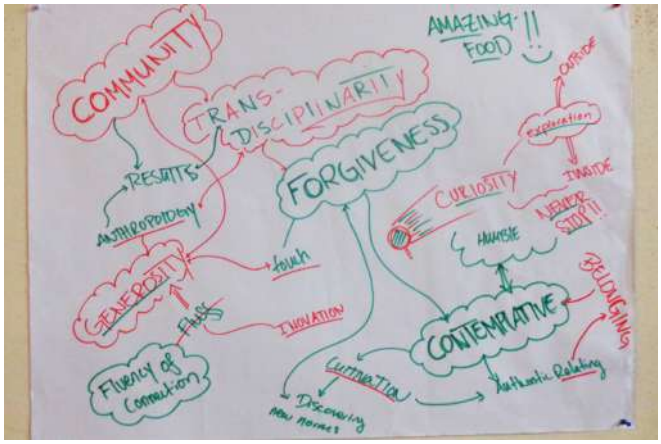
Creating next generation communities...

European Summer Research Institute 2018: 'Kinship, Conflict and Compassion'

August 20 – 26, 2018: Chiemsee (Germany)

Our 2018 European Summer Research Institute (ESRI) concluded successfully, with 90 researchers, 14 faculty and 10 Mind & Life Europe guests. While enjoying superb views of the lake, eating excellent Ayurvedic food, and receiving warm hospitality from the staff of the Frauenwörth Abbey, we dove into this multi-layered theme, combining both theory and practice.

Our six days together were designed as a participatory 'social lab' with regular contemplative moments and practical exercises woven into the schedule of expert presentations and panels. This design allowed participants to become aware of how aspects of our theme were developing not only on an intellectual level, but also as an emerging, evolving, shared reality that we were bringing about through our learning and interactions.



...in an inspiring and open atmosphere

European Summer Research Institute 2018: 'Kinship, Conflict and Compassion'

August 20 – 26, 2018: Chiemsee (Germany)

5

TOPICS

10/56/8/14

Professionals /
Research Fellows /
Senior Investigators /
Faculty Members

«ESRI brought so much value to me, it's hard to capture it by words. Not only did it help me so much with my academic research, it made me meet amazing people and in a way it made me meet myself. I am beyond grateful for this experience.»

22

NATIONALITIES

1144

AYURVEDIC MEALS

«In a beautiful place, surrounded by beautiful people, bringing together practice and research at a very high level. This is a unique chance for anyone interested in contemplative practices and the related research.»

«ESRI is important to my work because it is one of the few places in academic research and education where transdisciplinary discourse on contemplative study can occur in which we can explore new approaches, methodologies and collaborators with ease and from varied perspectives.»

Catalysing tomorrow‘s leaders...

European Varela Awards 2017

Announced January 29, 2018

In 2018, seven young researchers received the European Varela Award (EVA) for research projects focused on the scientific investigation of human experience. The EVA is granted to interdisciplinary studies that incorporate first-person methodologies with established cognitive, behavioural, physiological, clinical or socio-cultural research methods.

Research conducted with the support of the European Varela Awards is the foundation for the emerging fields of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies.

Mind & Life Europe extends its sincere thanks to the **Hershey Family Foundation** for its support of this programme. Mind & Life Europe also congratulates the awardees on their awards and wishes them well in their work.

«EVA is very special to me: it reinforces my identity of contemplative practices researcher and makes me feel a part of the new field of contemplative studies.»

— Liudmila Gamaiunova, EVA 2017 Awardee

«It is in this sense that your support of my work means the most to me - beyond the greater financial and thus decisional independence from my supervisor, it serves as an external reminder to not let go of what I personally deem most important for the quality of my everyday work.»

— Annika Lübbert, EVA 2017 Awardee

«I consider the EVA to be a prestigious award, bestowed by an institution which truly values research into human consciousness, with the ultimate aim of understanding and bettering humanity, which ethical aspect for me provides a deep and meaningful purpose to my research.»

— Willeke Rietdijk, EVA 2017 Awardee

...by fostering contemplative research

EVA 2017: Awardees

January 29, 2018

OUSSAMA ABDOUN INSERM UMR 1028 – Lyon (France)	*Investigating the deconstructive effects of Open Presence meditation on neural representations of perceptual objects and bodily signals using magnetoencephalography*
MICHELLE CARR Swansea University (United Kingdom)	*Dream Work, Dream Yoga: A comparative neurophenomenological study of intentional practices for healing nightmares*
LIUDMILA GAMAIUNOVA Institute of Social Sciences for Contemporary Religion (ISRRC), University of Lausanne (Switzerland)	*Effects of two different meditation-based programs on the dynamics of stress response*
ANNIKA LÜBBERT, Department of Neurophysiology and Pathophysiology, University Medical Centre Hamburg-Eppendorf (Germany)	*Assessing the subjective experience of engaged interaction: How asking questions about experience influences experience and behavior in the mirror game, an interactive coordination task*
PATRICIA MILZ The KEY Institute for Brain-Mind Research, Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, University Hospital of Psychiatry, Zurich (Switzerland)	*Do personality traits and brain electric activity predict how meditation affects individuals' psychological and physical well-being? – a combined electrophysiological and mobile app-based experience sampling approach*
WILLEKE RIETDIJK University of Southampton (United Kingdom)	*A micro-phenomenological exploration of Vipassana and Shamatha meditators' experiential shifts into deeper meditation*
FRANK SCHUMANN School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom)	*Mindful movement and skilled attention: quantifying changes in spatial awareness induced by a mindful sensorimotor intervention based on the Feldenkrais Method.*

Convening across disciplines

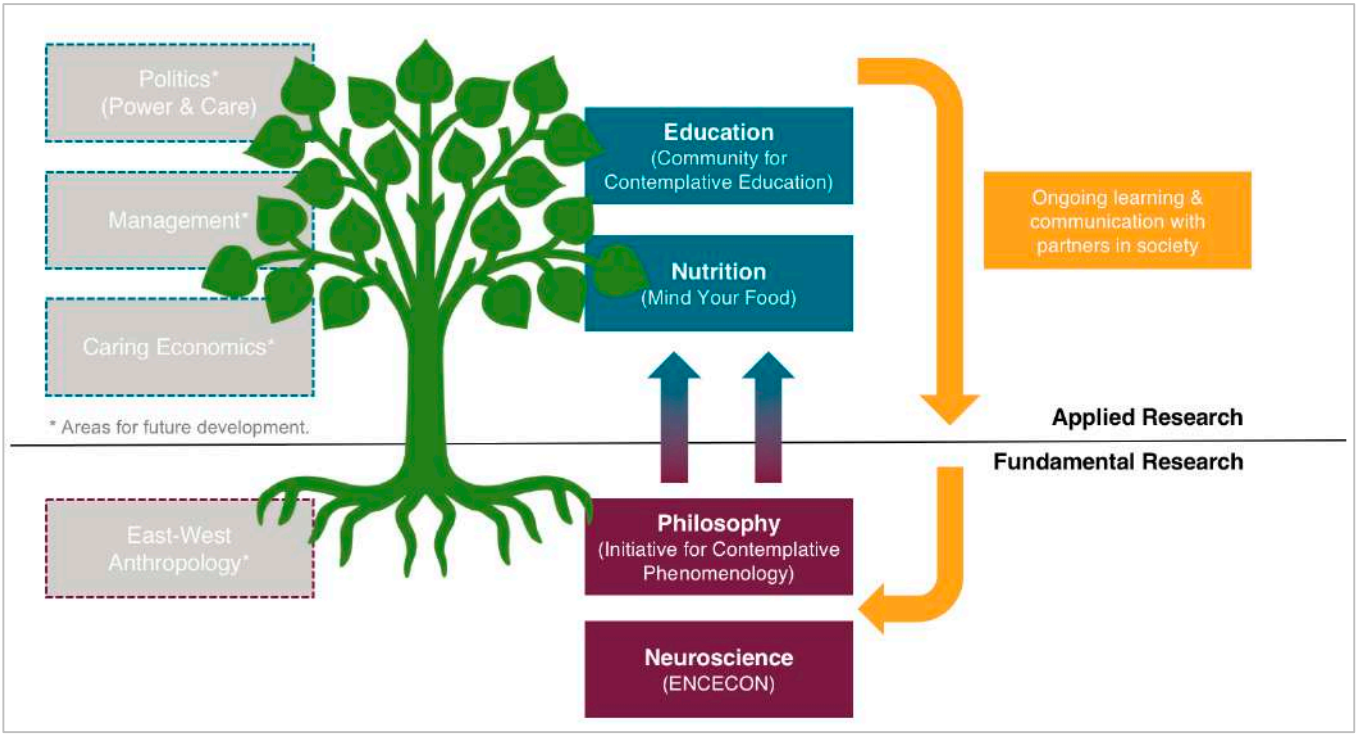
Mind & Life Europe Initiatives

Convene, catalyse, community-build

Mind & Life Europe currently focuses on four research domains: education, nutrition, philosophy, and neuro-science. Each domain has a community of practice that connects scientists, scholars and professionals in the development of contemplative studies.

These initiatives cover both basic and applied research and translate outcomes into regionally and nationally relevant frameworks that professionals and policymakers can put into action.

Pending capacity, further initiatives are planned by Mind & Life Europe in the domains of politics, management, caring economics and anthropology.



Connecting educators across Europe

International Conference on Mindfulness

July 13, 2018: Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Prof. Katherine Weare, Mind & Life Europe Association Member, and **Sander Tideman**, chaired a special interest meeting in mid July at the International Conference on Mindfulness (ICM) in Amsterdam, where they presented the MLE Community for Contemplative Education (CCE). They presented the considerable progress made by the MLE CCE in mapping the field and setting direction for this new community that aims to convene educators and education researchers engaged in mindfulness and contemplative approaches across Europe.

The meeting at ICM was well attended and lively, with strong support for the role of Mind & Life Europe as a 'hub' and resource for the development of clearly secular approaches to ensure acceptability in mainstream schools and universities. The meeting gave both warm support and food for thought, which helped the preparations for the inaugural meeting of the CCE the following September, where we convened about 50 experts in Rotterdam (The Netherlands).

Learning from and with each other

Community for Contemplative Education – Inaugural Meeting

September 14 – 16, 2018: Rotterdam (The Netherlands)

The MLE Community for Contemplative Education (CCE) was launched at a three-day event overlapping with the visit of H.H. the Dalai Lama to Rotterdam. A group of 50 education experts from across Europe came together to discuss the results of a mapping study and to come up with strategies for developing an active and vibrant contemplative education community in Europe. This field encompasses many new practices in education that draw on research in mindfulness, compassion, ethics, value and emotional intelligence.

The aim of the CCE is to actively map, support, coordinate and promote pan-European and diversified approaches to contemplative education that will focus on four areas: (1) teacher education, (2) whole school approaches, (3) research, mapping and open source resources, and (4) advocacy and community building. The CCE mapping study and inaugural meeting were spearheaded by **Prof. Katherine Weare** and **Sander Tideman**.

Education of the Heart

September 17, 2018: Rotterdam (The Netherlands)

Mind & Life Europe hosted an afternoon session entitled "Education of the Heart" at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam for an audience of 175 education specialists from the Netherlands. Keynote speakers included **Prof. Katherine Weare**, **Prof. Rob van Tulder** and **Prof. Lobsang Negi**. **Prof. Negi** explained the Social, Emotional and Ethical Learning (SEE) framework that has been developed upon the request of H.H. the Dalai Lama. The event also highlighted a number of inspiring examples of holistic education in the Netherlands, followed by an interactive dialogue with the audience.

Exploring nutrition based on mindfulness

Mind Your Food Initiative (nutrition)

January – August, 2018

Food and nutrition are at the heart of human and planetary wellbeing and existence. The Mind Your Food Initiative is a response to the growing challenges and rapidly evolving landscape of health, wellbeing and food systems. It addresses the underexplored roles of mind, consciousness and experience in the area of nutrition.

Preliminary findings from over thirty in-depth interviews focus on three initial areas and opportunities for Mind & Life Europe: 1) regularly convening disparate actors in the nutrition and food sectors; 2) interdisciplinary research; 3) training programs. By focusing on the mind-nutrition nexus, and identifying, supporting and distributing research (e.g. the effects of mindfulness training on positive food choices and eating habits), Mind Your Food is in a position to work with targeted groups and multiple partners in the health, consumer, and food businesses.

The development of consciousness as the first step towards personal (behavioural) change is a core driver of broader societal change. In this sense, the theory of change for Mind your Food focusses on elements of mindfulness and consciousness development in the individual as catalysts for development in the overall food/nutrition debate. **Barbara Bulc** served as Principal Investigator from January to August, 2018 for the first phase of the Mind your Food initiative.

Dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama

33rd Mind & Life Institute Dialogue: 'Reimagining Human Flourishing'

March 12 – 17, 2018: Dharamsala (India)

Mind & Life Europe was grateful to be present at Mind & Life Institute's Dialogue with H.H. the Dalai Lama, our 33rd of such dialogues. The discussions were held in the Tsuglagkhang, the Tibetan Temple by the Dalai Lama's residence in Dharamsala, India.

The program, co-chaired by **Richard Davidson** and **Thupten Jinpa**, was carefully designed to fully engage in dialogue western scientists and educators with Buddhist scientists and philosophers. The subject was one very close to H.H. Dalai Lama's – and Mind & Life's – heart: secular ethics and the education of young people to create our common future.

Dialogue with Chinese Scientists on Quantum Effects

November 1 – 3, 2018: Dharamsala (India)

In November, H.H. the Dalai Lama held his first dialogue with Chinese scientists in the main temple in Dharamsala, India. He invited eight Taiwanese and Taiwanese-American scientists to present, with **Thupten Jinpa**, Chair of Mind & Life Institute, as translator and moderator of afternoon discussions between the invited scientists and monastics trained in science.

Susan Bauer-Wu, President of Mind & Life Institute, and **Amy Cohen Varela**, Chair of Mind & Life Europe, were also in attendance. The scientists presented an array of quantum physics material, from concepts like special relativity, quantum entanglement, and quantum theories of light to technologies and applications such as nanotechnologies, solar panels and LED lights. Discussing the relations between science and technology, H.H. the Dalai Lama warned us of the dangers of science taking the wrong path by developing destructive technologies. In this context and more generally, he insisted, negative emotions produce negative outcomes, and research is needed for the reduction of these negative emotions in favour of the compassionate stance.

Fostering understanding through dialogues

Fundamental knowledge: Dialogue between Russian and Buddhist Scholars

May 3, 2018: Dharamsala (India)

In early May, Mind & Life Europe Board and Association members **Elena Antonova**, **Amy Cohen Varela** and **Charles-Antoine Janssen** attended as observers the second in a series of dialogues entitled 'Fundamental knowledge: Dialogue between Russian and Buddhist Scholars' in Dharamsala at the behest of H.H. Dalai Lama. This meeting brought Russian philosophers and scientists from the fields of neuroscience, genetics and physics together with Buddhist scholars under the title "Understanding the World".

Teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

June 16 – 18, 2018: Riga (Latvia)

Amy Cohen Varela and **Sander Tideman** were in Riga to attend the teachings of H.H. the Dalai Lama. These centered around the notions of dependant arising and emptiness, and at many points the Dalai Lama called upon his knowledge of quantum physics to buttress his discussion of the Buddhist view of reality.

H.H. the Dalai Lama makes frequent visits to Riga organized by Save Tibet Russia, Save Tibet Latvia and the Tibet Culture and Information Center in Moscow. Since he cannot give teachings in Russia, the Riga events make it possible for many Russian students to receive his teachings. **Amy Cohen Varela** and **Sander Tideman** met with **Victoria Lysenko**, Head of the Department for Oriental Philosophy Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences at the Institute of Philosophy, and with Buddhist scholars **Prof. Robert Thurman** and **Ven. Tenzin Priyadarshi**, president and CEO of the Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values at MIT, and Director of the Ethics Initiative at the MIT Media Lab.

Expanding our reach across Europe

International Symposium Buddhism in Dialogue with Contemporary Societies

May 20 – 22, 2018: Hamburg (Germany)

At the International Symposium Buddhism in Dialogue with Contemporary Societies, at the University of Hamburg, Germany, **Sander Tideman**, presented a lecture on Buddhist principles for designing sustainable economic systems. He also participated in a panel on 'Ethics and Meditation: Aggression, Violence and Peace', with **Dr. Thea Mohr, Dr. B. Alan Wallace**, and **Sylvia Wetzel**.

Science Art Meditation Conference 2018

June 30, 2018: Strasbourg (France)

In June, **Amy Cohen Varela** held a panel at the Science Art Meditation (SAM) Conference organised by Jean-Gérard Bloch. Together with **Jon Kabat-Zinn** and Mind & Life Europe Association Members **Michel Bitbol** and **Antoine Lutz**, the panel presented the Mind & Life history and Mind & Life Europe projects. The conference convened scientists, Buddhist scholars and performing artists in a lively mix with a common thread: the contemplative experience.

Book launch event: 'The Mind of the Leader'

November 26, 2018: Vienna (Austria)

In late November, **Cornelius Pietzner**, presented in a panel with **Rasmus Hougaard** at the book launch of "The Mind of the Leader" by Hougaard and Jacqueline Carter. **Hougaard** is an author and founder of the Potential Project.

Based on extensive research of more than 35,000 leaders and interviews with 250 C-level executives led by the authors, the results imply that that organizations and leaders aren't meeting employees' basic human needs of finding meaning, purpose, connection, and genuine happiness in their work. The event was well received by more than 150 participants, clearly indicating the increase of interest in science-based mindfulness practices within the business world.

Creating opportunities to spread ideas

Book launch: 'Pouvoir & Altruisme'

October 4, 2018: France

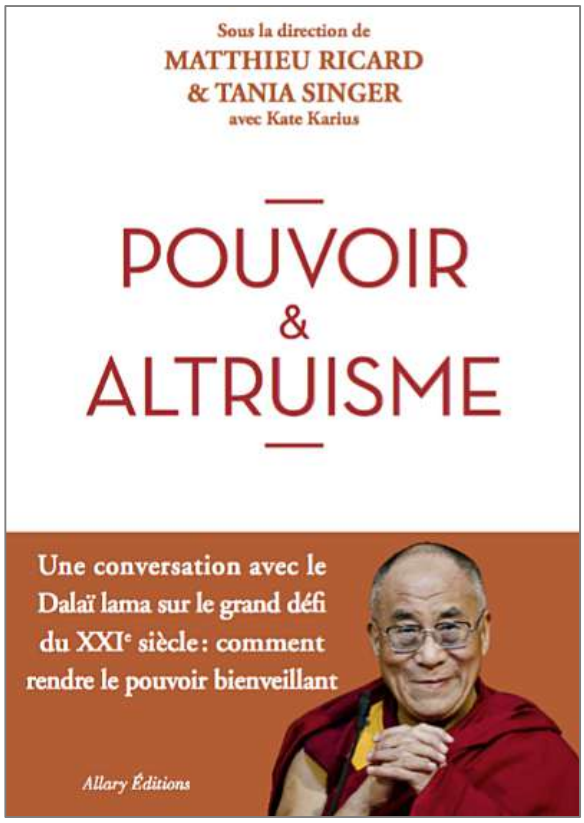
The French edition of the proceedings of Mind & Life Europe's **'Power & Care'** Dialogue with the Dalai Lama (2016), edited by **Matthieu Ricard**, **Tania Singer** and **Kate Karius**, was released in October 2018. The book contains ground-breaking work that deconstructs the widespread notion that power and care are opposing concepts.

«Meditation or prayer alone cannot solve the problems we face on our planet. We must act. This book offers valuable insights on the powers at play, especially with regard to power and care, and how we can—through education and the cultivation of our inner values—effect change for the benefit of all sentient beings.»

— Richard Gere

How can we help to create a balanced common future? How does a more nuanced understanding of the concepts of power and care, and their interactions, contribute to this shared creation? 19 renowned researchers and leaders, including biologist **Frans de Waal**, Nobel Prize winner **Jody Williams**, and Harvard associate professor of psychiatry, **Richard Schwartz**, Ph.D., presented their contributions on these questions to H.H. the Dalai Lama. The English edition of the book, published by MIT Press, will be released in April 2019.

Amongst other events to launch the book, on October 6, 2018, there was an open dialogue in Liège, France between **Matthieu Ricard** and **Steven Laureys**. Their talk evolved around the well-being of sentient beings - humankind and animals ('Bien-être des hommes. Bien-être des animaux').



Encouraging exchange and connections

MLE Board and Annual General Meeting

February 23 – 24, 2018: Brussels (Belgium)

This year, the introduction of new association members highlighted the diversity of our community. **Sander Tideman** opened the meeting by saying that the board is the head and the staff are the hands of Mind & Life Europe, but the members are its heart. Currently, there are 51 members from more than ten different countries.

Amy Cohen Varela welcomed the 31 participants to the gathering and invited all to actively contribute to our evolution. After a brief update on the four existing MLE Initiatives, the rest of the day was spent exchanging ideas on how to develop Mind & Life Europe in the future.

Building and strengthening our network

MLE Association Members Meeting

October 26 – 28, 2018: Brussels (Belgium)

At the end of October, MLE Association Members came together with Board Members and Co-Directors in an informal meeting to experience the growing community, reflect on our history, values and goals and to share reflections on the organization and the impact it can generate.

«For me, it has been both gratifying and encouraging to again experience how engaged MLE Association members are, and with what heart and soul, not to mention commitment and personal identification, our members help carry and shape this growing community. Meeting informally, and through the initiative of some members, it felt like we started on a significant new chapter of our common journey.»

— Cornelius Pietzner, Co-Director Mind & Life Europe

Over two days, more than twenty members from across Europe opened their hearts and minds to share thoughts on how to strengthen bonds and cultivate creativity in the MLE community. We discussed recent developments in the four focus areas of MLE (education, nutrition, phenomenology and neuroscience) and exchanged ideas on how to further develop MLE Initiatives. The free and open dialogue allowed for the emergence of new ideas on Mind & Life Europe's communications.

Managing our resources

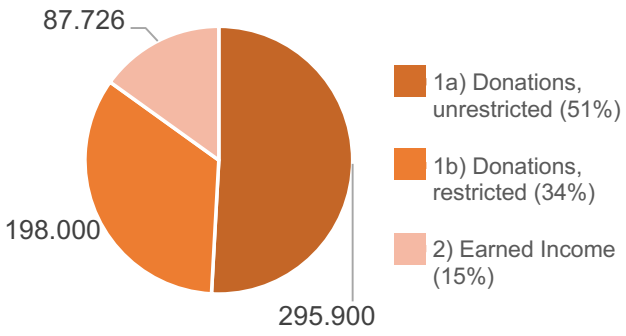
Mind & Life Europe Finances

December, 2018: Winterthur (Switzerland)

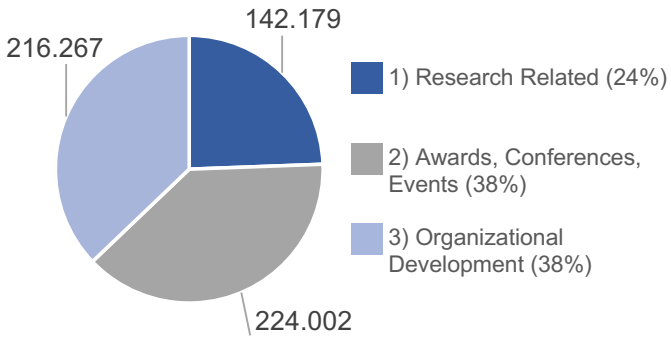
For all its activities, Mind & Life Europe depends on the active engagement from its members as well as from private supporters and institutional donors. A detailed overview can be found on the next page.

** Figures in CHF.*

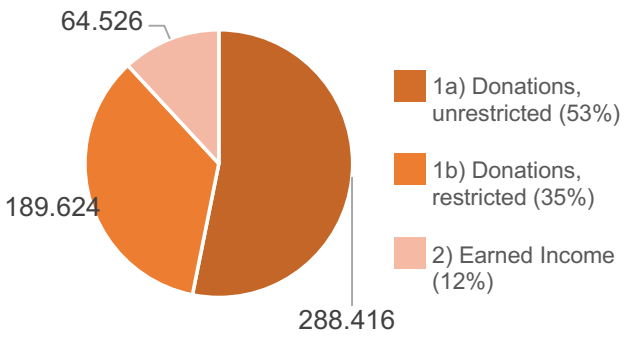
Income: *Budget* 2018



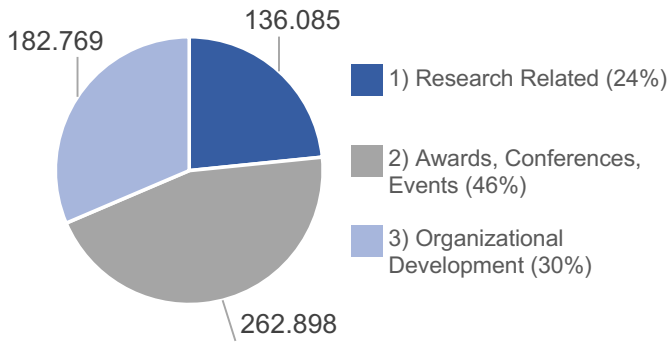
Expenses: *Budget* 2018



Income: *Actual* 2018



Expenses: *Actual* 2018



Managing our resources

Mind & Life Europe Finances

December, 2018: Winterthur (Switzerland)

** All figures CHF*		Budget 2018	Actual 2018
INCOME			
1) Donations			
Unrestricted		295.900	288.416
Restricted		198.000	
ESRI			60.408
Varela			93.327
Education			35.889
2) Earned Income			
MLE Conference 2019	Sales	0	
ML ESRI	Sales	71.226	49.734
Book Power& Care/Royalties	Contract	16.500	14.792
Total income		**581.626**	**542.567**
EXPENSES			
1) Research Related			
Book Publishing		1.540	
R&D / Initiatives Development, incl. education, nutrition, other		47.163	58.942
Operations		21.038	37.229
Support staff		72.439	39.914
	subtotal	*142.179*	136.085
2) Awards, Conferences, Events			
MLE Conference 2019		550	
European Varela Awards			63.417
European Varela Awards Admin		5.500	3.200
ML ESRI		102.531	103.831
Board / Committees		21.945	15.306
Operations		21.038	37.229
Support staff		72.439	39.914
	subtotal	*224.002*	262.898
3) Organizational Development			
Relationship Management / Fundraising		29.315	28.482
Operations		42.075	74.458
Support staff		144.877	79.829
	subtotal	216.267	182.769
Total expenses		**582.448**	**581.752**
TOTAL INCOME / EXPENSES		**-822**	**-39.185**

Pro Memoria: Balance of the bank account of the Dutch Stichting Mind and Life per 31.12.2018 was € 5'848.

Looking ahead

Besides regular events such as the General Assembly, Mind & Life Europe will also continue to strengthen its initiatives through community meetings in 2019. The second pan-European symposium **'Beyond Confines'** will take place in October, 2019 near Munich. Our intention is that this event be a research – sharing and community-building one, gathering students and professionals familiar with contemplative studies as well as initiates.

February 16-17 (France)	**Annual General Meeting (AGM)**
May 13-17 (France)	**Initiative for Contemplative Phenomenology (ICP)** 2nd Workshop, by application
June 11-15 (Germany)	**ENCECON** 2nd Workshop, by invitation
October 25-27 (Germany)	**Contemplative Science Symposium (CSS)** 2nd pan-European symposium (www.europeansymposium.org)
October 27-29 (Germany)	**MLE Retreat 2019** Following the ESRI tradition, by application

Co-creating our future

We are grateful for the support from our Board members as well as from our Honorary Board members.

Board members

Amy Cohen Varela
France

Charles-Antoine Janssen
Belgium / India

Astrid Lunkes
Germany

Cornelius Pietzner
Switzerland
(On leave)

Andreas Roepstorff
Denmark

Wolf Singer
Germany

Honorary Board members

Roshi Joan Halifax
USA

Matthieu Ricard
France

Tania Singer
Germany

Engaging beyond confines

All our activities would not have been possible without the dedication of our Mind & Life Europe Team. We are grateful for their support and engagement.

Staff

Cornelius Pietzner
Co-Director

Sander Tideman
Co-Director*

Astrid Lunkes
Co-Director

Ute Brandes
Executive Assistant

Nina Bürklin
Communications & Event Manager

Herbert Kuhn
Accountant

Katherine Weare
Principal Investigator
Education

Barbara Bulc
Prinicipal Investigator
Nutrition (01–08/2018)

* Sander Tideman has stepped back from his responsibilities at Mind & Life Europe, effective January 1, 2019.

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