

Michael Britton's and Uli Spalthoff's reactions to the launch of the World Dignity University initiative on 24th June 2011

On 26th June 2011, Michael Britton wrote:

Dearest Launching Team for WDU!!!

How wonderful an experience!!! The community that came together in person and on line was so inspiring, and it was so encouraging and strengthening to experience in real time all these people from around the planet pulling for the success of this great contribution at the moment it is stepping out into the world for the first time!

Dearest Evelin, as always, you are such a genius of seeding a generous, goodness-creating idea into the world, into a real organization! For all the nay-sayers over the years, with the "improper" and "inadequate" techniques of conversation and invitation you have fostered a movement-to-create-together and it has begun in earnest! It is working!!! For real!!! How affirming of your spirit and vision, of the way of making things happen through relationships that is the core of what you and we are about! How affirming that in these soft ways we arrive at vision together, sense where the path of going forward to a better humankind is to be found, and through invitation make it happen!! I too went to a university without walls of sorts for my masters in dance therapy, so this is resonant with many good memories and aspirations -- and now to be part of such a community as has been gathered through HDHS is more than I can find words for! Evelin, You are a blessing to us all, and to this world!!! And, something that is so good, you are now also held and supported and carried forward by a loving community, a community that understands you and respects and most of all wants to support and help make this shared vision real!!! The daughter of war and displacement is now held up on the hands and hearts of a community she has gathered to her heart!!! I am so happy!!! You are perhaps the World's Greatest Inviter!!! And such a gathering you have drawn together!!! And who will forget your gestural dance with Ragnhild, of unity with diversity rather than disconnection or uniformity! Wow!! Now there's a teacher in action!!!

Linda, your presentation created such perspective, clarity, and sense of professional reassurance, somehow it conveyed a feeling of 'Well, yes, of course this is the mainstream, even if the mainstream hasn't quite realized it yet!!!' No defensiveness needed for these daring and good ideas and plans!! You and Evelin together create inspiration and confidence!!! Somehow you impart a sense that of course this will work! Of course this is the way to go and in fact the way that's already happening, so we are so glad to have you on board! You are so good at recognizing and appreciating everyone, and welcoming everyone on board as a greatly appreciated presence!! And you touch base with the larger organizational context, and I find that that gives a feeling of being part of a network of movements, organizations, a sense of being part of a kind of historical community on that level as well as on the individual level, and somehow this is very strengthening of belief in "us," in our going forward effectively! And you yourself, even when you are not singing, the liveliness within you that is manifest in your being a singer, is always present, that heartfelt love of life that sings through you, was so present in your

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smile and your manner! Your heart just radiated out to us all! You are such a gift!!!! I think I could say what I am sure Evelin says often, Thank Goodness you are the organizational director of HDHS. You are not just organizing brains at the hub of activity, you are a good and large heart at its center!!!

Uli, how wonderful you were as a moderator, waiting and encouraging people to speak through the initial period when they were hesitant, and then so graciously echoing the best of each person's contribution, pointing out the significance, the helpfulness: You were the embodiment of the appreciative way at the heart of HDHS, and thanks to your patience and way of encouraging, the community in the room came more and more alive, came more and more to their voices, and it was so wonderful and enriching to be on line listening to them all, I cannot tell you well enough! You so modeled appreciation and regard for the dignity of every person!! And the resulting diverse voices that came to life, adding in to the same intention of making WDU and equal dignity throughout the world, made it so rich, so resonant in so many directions, and like the gathering of many drops in the sea into a growing wave carrying WDU forward! How powerful quiet ways of respect and interest in the contributions of others can be: This you demonstrated by the living of it and the doing of it!!! This was such a blessing, I know for myself, and I am sure for everyone. And your work on the technology/software! As Evelin and Linda have said, you have taken the intentions in our hearts and yours and made them into workable channels for building both HDHS and WDU! I cannot find words adequate for the gift that this is!!!!

Lasse, such a complex communication network you made possible for this event! So many people, moving to center stage in different ways and then stepping back for others to step in, via video, via their actual presence, via being on line, all together becoming a global community, a global celebration and the opportunity to know we are all in on this, we who normally only know of each other one or two at a time: You made it possible for us to experience all-of-us-are-here!!! You made it possible for us to experience ourselves as a community pulling together with shared intention! That was so exhilarating!! "We" are so much richer and stronger together, and you made the "together" possible! You made it work! This was such a gift you have given to us all, and such a lifting up of WDU in its moment of launching!! If ever there was a magnificent launching of a new ship to sea, this was it thanks to your labors!! You were the master ship-launcher of WDU, and for that every generation of WDU to come will be the grateful beneficiaries.

And Ragnhild, I don't have your email but hope this is forwarded to you: I am still transported by your first song!! You sang my heart into song and it is still singing; and I think this is so because you were singing both love and wisdom, and that carries the best in all our hearts, gives voice and at the same time tutoring to all our hearts and spirits! With your words and your so beautiful voice and your so beautiful heart you spoke right into my heart and spirit, and I am sure that is so for every person there and online! Such wisdom and so simply put: in the moment feelings and thoughts come in and recede away, but this is the place to be, forever will take care of itself! Ah, so this is how it all comes together!! With the music, and with your voice, wisdom spoke so directly to our spirits and hearts! So rare and so precious! The other songs were also beautiful and rich, but this has carried me away! And I think gave voice to all our hearts, to all

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our spirits, in a way our words alone could not! The gift you and your associate, whose name I apologize for not knowing, but to whom I would wish to give the same gratitude: the gift you together gave, in my way of thinking about things, is that you allowed the without-words parts of every one of us, Evelin and Linda and Uli and Lasse and everyone in the room and online, to have a voice for all we feel, all we think at our wisest moments, a voice out to the world that could not have spoken any more eloquently of all that our hearts wish to say to the world about why we launch WDU and what we hope it will mean for humankind and for making a future a beautiful as the state we all felt in that moment!

My spirit is so lifted up by all of you, by this community that came together, by so many inspiring words and gestures (unity and diversity!!) and intentions!! By the patience, the kindness, the loving tending of the dignity of everyone involved! My heart is blessed, as I think is so for all of us. May WDU's launch be a seed of blessing that now grows and blossoms in greater kindness and loving tending of dignity around the planet! And of course I cannot fail to add a mention of Francisco's poetic voicing and clarifying of so many things throughout the lead up to this moment, and throughout the ceremonies: Dignity is the music of equality! And let us not, in this moment, fail to mention and so include in all those who are suffering indignities at this very time around the planet. Those words are the guiding voice of wisdom helping us sense the pulse of what is true!!! Many thanks to Francisco!!!

And also I must add, Inga, you have played such a role in making this possible and give such a voice for the role of education in awakening minds and spirits and ultimately hearts to the possibility of equal dignity, to the possibility, and the plausibility, of making life together with a richness and tending of each other's lives that, without being made aware that such thinking exists on the planet, can pass whole generations by as a path that could not be taken because it remained unknown! Dear Inga, you dignify education and its mission and role in our historical lives, in our making of historical life together, and so you do so with such eloquence and clarity and insistence! To be an educator and to listen to you is to feel suddenly a voice that makes enough breathing room for the best wishes in us as teachers to say "yes, that's it, that's what I've always wanted my efforts to be contributing!!" Your words and your actions help educators as a world rise and realize a vision of ourselves and our role in this world that is often not easily come by! Such a gift!

And so, Dearest Evelin and Dearest Linda! So another great step forward! How proud Donald Klein and Jean Baker Miller and Morton must be right now!! You are the next generation carrying the world forward!! If HDHS is a tree of life, you are its Mothers! And now you, together with the wonderful people you have gathered so carefully and generously together, now you and we give birth to WDU and a next step in helping humankind leave behind the ways of hatred, indifference and casual abuse for the ways of tending each other's dignity with something resembling the care you live each day! My heart is so full to be part of this moment and to be on this journey together with you!!

With warmest wishes to you all, to us all,
Michael

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On 28th June 2011, Uli Spalthoff wrote:

Dear Michael,

many many thanks for your detailed appreciation of this event and the people who made it happen! I copy Arctic Queen (known to us insiders as Ragnhild) and Inga to it as you so wonderfully acknowledge their important contributions.

There is not much to add to your account, dear Michael. I just want to repeat what I could tell today Ole Petter Ottersen, the rector of the University of Oslo, when I met him at a reception after a conference: The support of Oslo University was so crucial, as it not only made this event possible. It triggered additional contributions by many. Most organizers and participants were so happy about this that they covered the travel cost on their own expenses. One lady came from South Africa to attend, paying it by herself!

In addition, streaming the event on the Internet triggered activities and contributions by people who otherwise would not have been reached. Here, I am especially thankful to Lasse. You have said it clearly, but I want to repeat: The job done by Lasse was simply amazing. I know how meticulously he prepared and tested everything and how he operated the system like a wizard.

For him, I want to add a quote from Elizabeth Andrew: “Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.”

Let us together keep the momentum of this successful start!

Kind regards,
Uli