

ICASSI 2002 Potsdam

A stay in Potsdam, which is the capitol of the state of Brandenburg, is particularly rewarding since it was once the Prussian seat of royal power. Potsdam is definitely not just an appendage to the neighbouring German capitol of Berlin and has many things to offer. It is a cultural centre of its own and attracts people from around the world. Visitors can explore the attractive surroundings which include parks, castles, and the river Havel and Lake Templin. The centre of Potsdam is small and clearly structured. It is a town for pedestrians. One can easily get to Berlin by S-Bahn or train.

The main centre of attraction is Sanssouci comprising a park area of 290 hectares and castles in different architectural styles.



Potsdam belonged, just like the eastern part of Berlin, to the former GDR. After the reunion of East and West Germany a huge restoration programme was started. In this context the Ostdeutsche Sparkassenakademie (OSA) was built at the grounds where there used to be an air-ship station in the 1930s. It was here, in these historic grounds that ICASSI 2002 took place.

The Academy was an ideal venue because of its well-designed architecture and modern equipment and its situation/location at Lake Templin in a huge and beautiful woodland, overlooking the lake. Accommodation facilities, seminar rooms and restaurants were located on the same premises. The events of Bloc 1 and 4 took place in the ample and light-flooded auditorium. There were enough modern and well equipped classrooms. The meals were served inside the restaurant or on the spacious terrace. The surrounding park and the view over Lake Templin created a relaxed atmosphere.

From July 21st to August 2nd 2002 ICASSI had almost 180 participants from more than 20 countries. A lot of the participants came from the former Eastern Bloc.

Lectures and practical demonstrations in the plenum were offered by: Eva Dreikurs-Ferguson: Basic Assumptions of IP, Zivit Abrahamson: Family counseling, Frank Walton: Problems of Parents of Teenagers, Gerhard Baumer: Eating Disorders, Eric Mansager and Mim Pew: Spirituality, Betty Lou Bettner and Rachel Shifron: Early Memories, Nanni Wirt: Psycho Drama, Marion Balla: Gender Questions, Yvonne Schürer: Life Style, Roy Kern: Management Style at the Workplace. All events were offered in English and German with Anita Ehlers und Elli Planta working as translators.

The above mentioned and the following lecturers offered seminars in block 2 and 3: Abe Abelson, Hala Back, Joyce Callus, Oscar Christensen, Barbara Custer-Rückl, Renee Dushman, Leo Gold, Helmut Heuschen, Markus Jensch, Bill Linden, Erika Maass-Keibel, Paul Miedema, Edna Nash, John Newbauer, Debbie Owen-Sohocki, Lotte Rosenberger, Samuel Schürer.

One of the highlights of ICASSI is always the program for children and young people. It is a great opportunity for communicating and cooperating with peers from different cultures in an encouraging atmosphere. The ideal room settings and also the competent team added to the success of the conference. They liked the convenience of going for a swim just outside the venue and explore the rich nature.

The summer school was directed by the management consisting of the chairpersons Eva Dreikurs-Ferguson, Helmut Heuschen and Theo Joosten, as well as the administrator Gordon Millar, who ended his successful 7 years of work and passed his tasks on to Mike Balla.

The evening events took place in the modern and well equipped auditorium. These events were well attended and furthered the corporate feeling.

The weekends and Wednesday evenings were free and the participants used these days for cultural excursions and social encounters. Destinations were the sights of Berlin such as the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, the Jewish Museum, the Opera or the old town of Potsdam.

For the final Saturday evening a farewell dinner was helped for about 20 members of faculty and staff in the rowing club next to OSA. The lively and happy group, who behaved themselves but were not so quiet were amused by the rather authoritarian atmosphere reminiscent of the previously autocratic period of the GDR. The waiter seemed unable to cope, and demanded silence to take the orders. This did identify quite a cultural clash. However finally food and drinks were served and the tension eased away.

Potsdam was another wonderful ICASSI, an extraordinary venue, a beautiful surrounding, lots of cultural possibilities, well looked after by the Academy, a wonderful atmosphere and learning spirit. It was truly an unforgettable experience which has enriched us all.