MIND FOUNDATION

Five Years of MIND Building a European Psychedelic Research Organisation

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November 26, 2021, marks the fifth birthday of the MIND Foundation. At Year 5, we are incredibly grateful to all those who have contributed to our journey and deeply moved by the joy and support we could provide through our ten programs. Over the years, our organization and surrounding community have grown in both size and reach, now constituting thousands of people across the world who all share the same vision: better mental health and well-being through psychedelic therapies. Today we humbly invite you to join us as we selectively look back at how we've grown over the past five years, starting our count down with Year 5, 2021.

YEAR 5: 2021

MIND is a global, European, and German organization – this involves speaking several languages. The year started with a new volunteer-based project that has been met with great enthusiasm: the MIND Blog Translation Group (BTG). Here, a highly motivated team with a total of over 120 contributors has formed over the span of the year. Together they translate, proof-read, and review articles from the MIND Blog in currently 14 languages including Portuguese, Italian, French, Polish, Russian, Hebrew, Swedish, Finnish and more. The BTG also enabled us to fully translate the MIND Blog into German, and new posts henceforth will be published bilingually! (Find all translations and a gallery of our contributors here). We are working towards more languages, including Chinese, Farsi, and Hindi.

In February 2021, our clinical partner organization OVID opened the first psychedelic clinic in Germany: the OVID Clinic Berlin directly adjacent to the MIND office in Berlin-Friedrichshain – creating an ideal situation for MIND's Augmented Psychotherapy Training (APT) that can draw from a uniquely rich source of case studies and therapeutic strategies.

This month of February marks another milestone, not only for MIND but for psychedelic research and therapies in Germany: the German Federal Ministry of Research and Education (BMBF) approved a 2.4m Euro grant for the EPIsoDE study. MIND donors made it possible to add more than 100.000 Euros to this first large public grant in the history of psychedelic research.

Fast forward, on June 26 we welcomed over 200 attendees online for the first uniMIND x University of Zürich (UZH) Symposium to engage in a transdisciplinary discussion of *Regenerative Structures* in psychedelic research and therapy. The Symposium was co-hosted by uniMIND Zurich and our local host Christoph Benner, featuring renowned speakers from the UZH and beyond, such as Prof. Dr. med. Franz X. Vollenweider and Dr. Katrin Preller. In addition to the senior researchers, we offered a platform for academic talks by 10 juniors. Ioana Ivan, co-coordinator of uniMIND Cluj-Napoca, received a standing digital ovation for her passionate and well-researched talk on empathy in psychedelic therapy.

The success of this public benefit educational event in the promotion of young talents helped us reach the decision to make the uniMIND Symposium a yearly, traveling institution (the second uniMIND Symposium will take place on April 9, 2022, at the University of Maastricht under the theme: *Synergies & Crossroads in Psychedelic Research and Therapy*).

A sweet highlight was the Members Summer Fest at Alte Turnhalle on August 13, which welcomed roundabout 30 MIND members to gather for the second time in person since the beginning of the pandemic. We now have groups of members that wish to start regular local meetings in their hometowns, which we want to encourage and support once the public health circumstances during Corona times allow for it.

To bring our members worldwide into contact, have a platform for storing teaching materials, and initiating the formation of local groups we launched the MIND Community Platform (MCP). It is our genuinely MIND-branded social network for friends, supporters and members of the MIND Members Association, but also for other organizations around the world. It is a wonderful tool to meet people and exchange in both inspirational and critical discussions. The MCP is welcoming and open to anyone who shares the three basic principles: scientific approach, an orientation towards integration, and human development. The MCP is the home for our nearly 900 MIND Members but also place for people who are willing to start a membership (almost 1400 online in December 2021).

On September 9-12, we hosted the second bi-annual INSIGHT conference. This time around, it was a hybrid conference – taking place both online and on-site at the Langenbeck-Virchow Haus in Berlin. Over the course of these 4 days, INSIGHT hosted 67 talks, 14 workshops, 42 poster presentations, 8 panel discussions, and 4 live art performances. With over 1300 attendees participating both remotely via livestream and on-site, this was the largest INSIGHT conference to date. Ticket holders and members have access to the INSIGHT replay series with high-quality content and discussions. The videos can be accessed through the MCP.

On November 17, we welcomed the first APT – Augmented Psychotherapy Training cohort to the MIND office. APT is the key program of the MIND Foundation. It is intended to be scaled globally. Two APT groups are the object of participatory action research. The first APT training consists of 27 medical doctors (psychiatrists and other medical professions), psychotherapists, and complimentary health professionals from all over the world. Aside from five intensive on-site trainings, this group will spend the next two years of the program engaging in online lectures, mentoring sessions, reading group presentations & discussions, and continuous neuromeditation training.

We look forward to welcoming many more groups in the next years, including the first German-language cohort in March 2022 and the second English-language cohort in November 2023.

Some pictures from year 5 below:

2020: YEAR 4

The beginning of 2020 was a difficult time for many with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the first few months were a challenging period for the organization as we adapted to a new way of working and moving through the world, things started to turn around as the sun came out that summer …

We kicked it off in June with another team weekend workshop, which brought the staff together to reflect, dream and strategize how our projects and programs would take shape. In July, thanks to financial support from generous donors like Willy Schweitzer, MIND was able to move from the Betahaus co-working space to its own office in Berlin-Friedrichshain. With this move came a more structured and expanded team – MIND hired further employees and established three departments that replaced and merged our previous structure in Committees: MIND Academy, Research & Knowledge Exchange, and Communications.

By September, we were ready to invite MIND members and the public to our new space, starting with the "Symposium: Progress in Bewusstseinskultur", which took place on the 4th, followed by the first Members Convention on the 5th-6th. We hosted 50 guests at the Symposium on-site and streamed the event for others to follow online. Invited speakers such as Dr. Anna Ciaunica gave inspiring talks, Prof. Dr. med. Gerhard Gründer was closely involved in the curation of the day, and we included everyone in lively discussions around the ethics and means of building a culture of consciousness.

The ensuing MIND Members Convention offered a first-time meeting with talks and discussions for all MIND members. Despite the limitations imposed by the Corona pandemic, we had an inspiring and connecting weekend and enjoyed exchange, inspiration, and dinner together.

The EDGE 2020 Art & Neuroscience exhibition followed on October 15-18. Over the course of these four days, over 200 attendees visited the MIND office to enjoy and interact with art pieces created by this group of neuroscience-artists.

On November 17, the German EPIsoDE study (principal investigator: Prof. Dr. Gerhard Gründer at the Central Institute of Mental Health – Mannheim) on psilocybin-assisted therapy for treatment-resistant depression got approval from the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM).

By the end of 2020, uniMIND had grown to over 20 groups across Europe and Australia.

Some pictures from year 4 below:

2019: YEAR 3

Year 3 marked a transition from a volunteer-run organization to hiring our first employees. Our team grew closer with our first team workshop weekend that November. We continued to make appearances at external conferences like Breaking Convention and continued hosting lectures and workshops in MIND Academy. That year, we organized seven BEYOND EXPERIENCE intensives and 22 lectures and workshops. Our members community tripled that year, reaching almost 400 members.

From the 5-7th of September 2019, we hosted our first INSIGHT conference at the Langenbeck-Virchow Haus in Berlin-Mitte. More than 600 researchers, clinicians, and members of the public jointly participated in discussions with international experts and young researchers. The conference consisted of seven pre-conference workshops, 40 talks and panel discussions, and a variety of interactive performances and workshops exploring and discussing consciousness and therapeutic methods through art and experience. The conference came

with four tracks: Research, Therapy, Philosophy, and Public Health. The first Young Researcher & Poster Awards were also bestowed. INSIGHT 2019 began to set the standard for academic and clinical conferences on psychedelic research and practice.

To bring the team together for a weekend, reflect upon the year's challenges and accomplishments, to discuss and plan together, but also to just laugh, eat, and celebrate, we spent a weekend in November at the first MIND team workshop.

In December 2019, the MIND Members Association, a non-profit supporting association of the MIND Foundation, was formed. Professional Sections were introduced to the MMA, including the Mental Health, Neuroscience, and Philosophy Section, to name a few. In 2019 we also started our fruitful collaboration with Prof. Dr. Gerhard Gründer from the Central Institute of Mental Health Mannheim/University of Heidelberg.

Some pictures from year 3 below:

2018: YEAR 2

Our core grew further in 2018. With ever more qualified and motivated people joining our ranks, we started discussions on our first proper research projects and programs. Published a review on "Positive Psychology in the investigation of psychedelics and entactogens" and also the German language "Handbuch Psychoactive Substanzen" (von Heyden, Jungaberle, Majic) in Springer Publishers.

In Year 2, the MIND Academy was born – we began to regularly host lectures inviting experts in the fields of psychedelic research and therapy, philosophy, and consciousness research. We also hosted the first BEYOND EXPERIENCE intensive that year, which was to become our first significant and scalable harm reduction and personal growth program.

The Quarterly meeting in September also marks the beginning of our now global uniMIND network. Moad abd el Hay, introduced his psychedelic journal club at the University of Heidelberg, which inspired us to start this project. In 2021, uniMIND is represented at over 30 locations in Europe, the USA, and Australia.

Lastly, the MIND Blog really started off in 2018. Though we posted the first article in 2017, only the following year would see regular contributions, and no doubt, the MIND Blog has come a long way since – it is now among the most read psychedelic research blogs worldwide, and it's growing in scale, quality and reachout.

Some pictures from year 2 below:

2017: YEAR 1

From the beginning of the MIND Foundation, and well into the first year in 2017, we organized our activities in committees, projects, and affiliated teams to pursue the vision we had defined shortly after founding the organization. It would read: "Establishing psychedelic experience as a valuable instrument for personal and societal development." In defining this vision, our intention was to represent some of the core tenets that translate into our values today. In detail, this spells out as follows:

- Establishing: a systematic and transparent on-the-ground approach to build resilient structures that outlive the people that build them, and that can change the state quo in psychiatry and psychotherapy to change from a biomechanistic view of treatment to one defined by augmented psychotherapy.
- psychedelic experience: is more than a pharmacologically induced altered state of consciousness. We consider various methods that change consciousness to be potentially meaningful and to possess

"psychedelic" qualities (definition of psychedelic, see e.g. Grinspoon & Bakalar 1979, von Heyden et al. 2018).

- instrument: a complex tool, which to use requires competences; it can be mastered and therefore used in a beneficial and meaningful way. If wrongly used, an instrument can also bring harm, which we needs to be addressed as much as potentials.
- personal and societal development: we address both individuals in their path of self-realization and society at large to tackle processes that concern us all and that need to be dealt with to achieve a sustainable, connected, and healthy human development.

Practically speaking, our small MIND team would have regular meetings, weekly, monthly, and quarterly, with varying size and meeting scopes in our first year. This first year was also a time of negotiation of expectations, motivations, and individual goals among our still on average very young and forming team.

Moreover, we organized regular meetups with others interested in supporting our topics, to discuss public talks we would host. Like our team meetings, these would take place mostly at the Berlin Betahaus, an open co-working space that hosted the "MIND Office" until our fourth year!

In June 2017, a group of us attended the "Breaking Convention" conference in London. The conference represents our first appearance as a united organization at a psychedelic conference, showcasing our logo, materials, and early projects such as the ASC Study Monitor and the integration workshops.

The defining event of our first year marks the #DrugScience2017 conference that took place at the Charité University Clinic Berlin and which was co-organized by our birthing organization, or incubator if you will, FINDER and a Charité team. The conference was a success and an essential step on our becoming of what MIND is today.

Some pictures from year 1 below:

PRE-LIFE

The history of the MIND Foundation surely starts long before the nominal founding of our organization. MIND Director Dr. sc. hum. Henrik Jungaberle kick-started this development with 18 years of medical psychology research at the University Hospital Heidelberg. There he led research projects funded by the German Research Council (DFG) and the European Union. Dr. med. Andrea Jungaberle joined a little later. But that's another story to be told in another blog post.

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