Prof. Klaus Schwab receives Reinhard Mohn Prize

Today in Theatre Gütersloh Prof. Klaus Schwab was awarded the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Reinhard Mohn Prize 2016. The founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum in Geneva was honoured as a thought leader in the field of responsible entrepreneurship. The keynote address was given by World bank president Jim Yong Kim.

Prof. Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the Geneva-based World Economic Forum, today received the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Reinhard Mohn Prize. Schwab accepted the €200,000 prize from Liz Mohn, vice-chairwoman of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board. In awarding the prize, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is recognizing the economics professor as a thought leader in the area of responsible entrepreneurship. The keynote address was given by World Bank president Jim Yong Kim in Theatre Gütersloh to an audience of some 500 guests.

"We need entrepreneurs, who contribute to the common good. Foresight, a clear adherence to values and outstanding diplomatic skills are the qualities that Prof. Klaus Schwab uses to realize his vision of a better world."
Prof. Klaus Schwab was one of the first to recognize that, in light of globalization and our increasingly networked world, businesses have a special economic and social responsibility to society, emphasized Liz Mohn, vice-chairwoman of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board in her laudation. Therefore the Bertelsmann Stiftung also honors him as a bridge-builder between the political arena, business community and civil society – across cultural and national border.

By the beginning of the 1970s, Schwab had already developed his approach, according to which businesses need to assume social responsibility and consider the interests of all social groups – from employees, customers and suppliers to society at large. When implementing his approach he has always emphasized dialogue and an exchange of knowledge and ideas. With the World Economic Forum, he created a unique platform for addressing the global challenges of our time. He has thus been successful in putting highly topical subjects such as globalization or, most recently, digitization on the forum’s agenda.

"Prof. Klaus Schwab has shown how politics, business and society can set their compass in the direction of a shared understanding of a better future."

Aart De Geus, Chairman and CEO of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board

Many notable initiatives in which companies work together with policy makers and civil society to implement solutions to social problems have come into being as a result of Schwab’s ideas and efforts. The World Economic Forum was, for example, the birthplace of the UN Global Compact, which was first announced there by Kofi Annan, then secretary-general of the United Nations and recipient of the 2013 Reinhard Mohn Prize. Today, the UN Global Compact is considered the world’s most extensive network for promoting responsible entrepreneurship. The World Economic Forum was also a key catalyst for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the smallholder initiative Grow Africa, and the vaccine alliance Gavi, which has vaccinated more than 200 million children around the globe since it was first established. These examples show the degree to which the forum has succeeded in transforming
cooperation among politics, business and civil society into effective partnerships.

Schwab has also facilitated numerous historic meetings. At the World Economic Forum's annual conference in 1989, for example, then German Chancellor Helmut Kohl met with Hans Modrow, chairman of East Germany's Council of Ministers, to discuss Germany's reunification. The meeting between Nelson Mandela and then South African President Frederik Willem de Klerk in 1992 was a milestone in South Africa's political transformation process.

Prize money will be used to fund further research in the area of technological change

Under Prof. Schwab's leadership, the World Economic Forum is currently concentrating on examining the political, social and economic consequences of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (known in Germany as "Industrie 4.0"). Schwab will be using the prize money to fund further research in the area of technological change, with a focus on the increasing fusion of the physical, digital and biological worlds and the subsequent implications for individual identities and society at large. The results of this research will be made available to the public.
Further information

The Reinhard Mohn Prize is given in memory of the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s founder, Reinhard Mohn († October 2009). It is awarded annually to an internationally renowned individual, who has played a key role in developing forward-looking solutions to social and political challenges. To award the prize, a global search is carried out to identify innovative approaches and exemplary solutions to challenges that are of critical importance to Germany’s future. This year's prize is dedicated to "Responsible entrepreneurship", which was also the topic in several of our studies and addressed at the international Reinhard Mohn Symposium held in May.

Publication

Responsible Entrepreneurship

› read more

Mediathek
VIDEO

Jim Yong Kim’s Speech at the Reinhard Mohn Prize 2016

› view

PROJECTS

Reinhard Mohn Prize