

## **Preface**

In recent years, society has evolved and moved forward regarding to scientific, technical, health and social areas. These advances have translated into various organizational and interactive aspects in social, political, economic, demographic, and biological spheres.

However, there are still important challenges to be met, in particular one of a constant and permanent nature, which is the care of people from a holistic point of view, focusing on the need to offer human and humanizing care.

Social care is still a current affair. Whilst people are referred to in a compartmental fashion so as to facilitate the understanding of our environment, the response to their needs must be a work of complete and holistic nature. For this reason, it is difficult to understand responses to health and medical needs without taking into account the social, economic and environmental aspects of the people involved. Even today, health care and social care frameworks appear to be too distant from one another.

Obra Social de Caixa Catalunya wants to contribute to a discussion to put forward recommendations to integrate both health care and social care activities taking into account the individual as a whole. What is more, we aim to facilitate knowledge transfer across the various fields of action.

Therefore—with the collaboration of European organizations like the London School of Economics, the EASPD Association, the AGE Platform, the University of Vienna, PSICOST and the Executive Agency of Health and Consumer (EAHC) of the European Commission—the Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Policy and the Generalitat de Catalunya, Obra Social de Caixa Catalunya organized the 1st International Conference on Bridging Knowledge in the domains of senior and disabled people in Barcelona, March 5–7, 2009. Over 60 experts from 19 countries attended this conference and provided a broad perspective of the many facets related to this new and exciting field of knowledge.

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