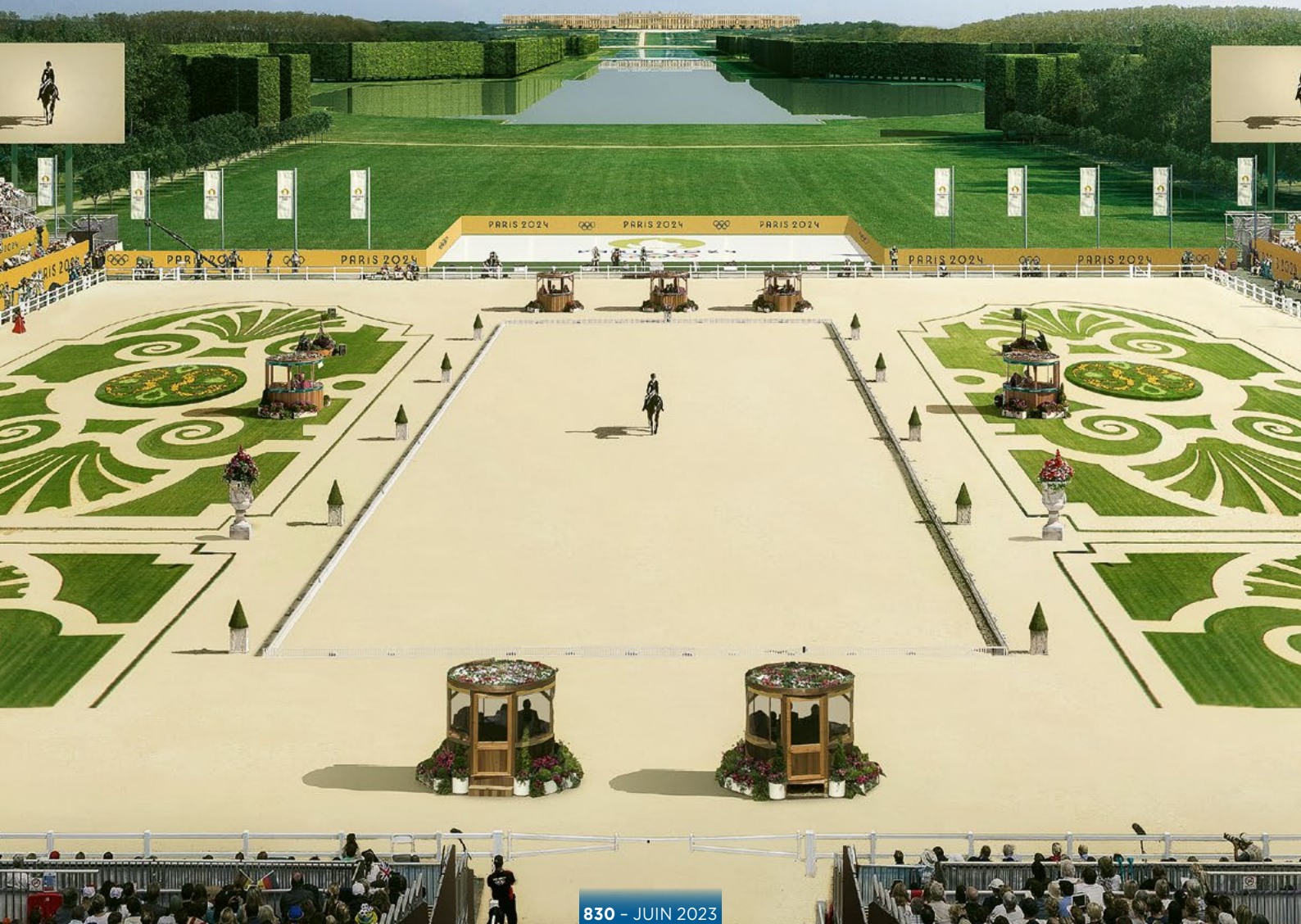


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Le sport rassemble le monde



830 - JUIN 2023

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the more they stay the
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BERNEX (GE)

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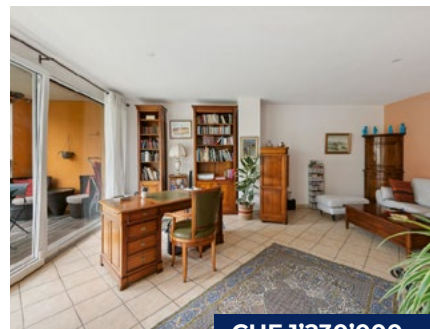


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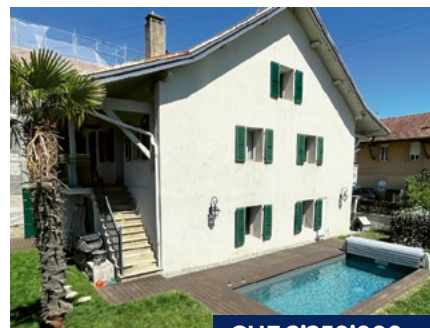


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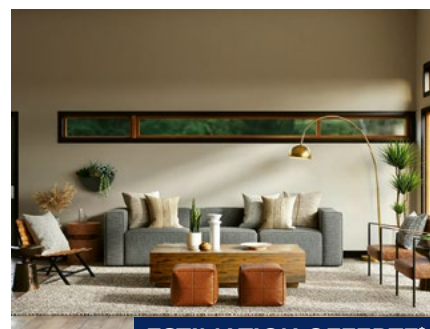


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LE GRAND-SACONNEX (GE)

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Sport bringing the world together

Sport does wield a unifying power. I subconsciously knew that, but nothing demonstrated it to me more than observing my mother's excitement about the XXI Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada in 2010. Far from being athletic or into sports, she watched the games on the television of her living room gave her the sense that so much of the world comes together to watch and participate.

This unifying power of sport is stronger than the forces that want to divide us. You will have an insight into what is planned for the next Olympic games, how various communities are engaged in sports and how our spiritual and physical well-being are connected.

We also have a couple of pieces that provide some insights into how to deal with difficult situations at workplace and suggestions for how to deal with those. We bring you a lot of as usual.

Enjoy this great issue! ■

Le sport rassemble le monde

Le sport a un pouvoir fédérateur. Je le savais inconsciemment, mais rien ne me l'a mieux démontré que d'observer l'enthousiasme de ma mère pour les XX^e Jeux olympiques d'hiver à Vancouver, au Canada, en 2010. Loin d'être athlétique ou sportive, elle a regardé les matchs à la télévision dans son salon, ce qui donnait le sentiment qu'une grande partie du monde se rassemble pour regarder et participer.

Ce pouvoir fédérateur du sport est plus fort que les forces qui veulent nous diviser. Vous aurez un aperçu dans les pages suivantes, de ce qui est prévu pour les prochains Jeux olympiques, de la manière dont les différentes communautés sont engagées dans le sport et de la manière dont notre bien-être spirituel et physique sont liés.

Vous trouverez également dans ce numéro quelques articles qui permettent de mieux comprendre les situations difficiles sur le lieu de travail et qui suggèrent des manières de les gérer.

Profitez de ce grand numéro! Un numéro riche en découvertes, comme d'habitude. Bonne lecture! ■

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Interview with the International Olympic Committee

Paris Olympics 2024, an exciting future

newSpecial had the opportunity to collaborate with the International Olympic Committee for this issue of the magazine. Here are the answers from IOC Member and the Permanent Observer of the IOC to the United Nations, Luis Alberto Moreno.



Mr Moreno, Permanent Observer of the IOC to the United Nations.

LISANNE HOPKIN,
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

What can you tell us about the Paris Olympics 2024?

Paris 2024 will mark a new era of Olympic Games that will set them apart from previous editions, offering new experiences and exciting sports, while staying true to the Olympic values.

Firstly, Paris 2024 will be the first Olympic Games to achieve gender parity on the field of play, marking a significant milestone in the push for gender equality in sports.

The Games will also feature a young and urban sports programme, including four additional sports proposed by the Organising Committee. These include breaking, appearing for the first time at the Olympic Games, as well as sport climbing, skateboarding and surfing.

Additionally, athletes and fans will enjoy new experiences as part of Paris 2024's "Games Wide Open" approach. This includes competitions held at iconic locations, the Opening Ceremony on

the River Seine, and an opportunity for the public to run in a marathon along the same route as the Olympic course.

Technology is also going to play a critical role, not just for the fans, but also for the athletes. For example, next year's Games will see the use of a cinematic approach to the broadcast coverage for the first time, with the use of cinematic lenses. New innovations allow us to build on the success of previous Games, bringing the magic of the athletes'



The Trocadero ephemeral opera 2 - Paris 2024.

achievements to the world on an unprecedented scale.

What are the most significant challenges in 'putting on' the Olympics?

The Olympic Games are the biggest sporting event on the planet. Its mission is to unite the world in peaceful competition. This brings many unique challenges, edition by edition.

The sheer volume, both in terms of people involved and also by the fact that over 300 sports events are staged over 16 days, makes logistical planning incredibly complex. It's comparable to organising a World Championship/Cup for 32 sports at the same time. So you have to consider, for example, things like the number of venues needed to stage the competitions and the transport requirements to get people around. These are common challenges we see across each edition of the Games.

With advances in technology, the use of data and learnings from previous editions, we are facing these challenges head-on. By continually optimising Games preparations, we now make the Games fit into the host region, rather than host regions adapting to host the Games.

For Paris 2024, we have experienced some unique challenges. The ongoing socio-economic environment has increased inflation across the world. Sport is not immune to this. However Paris 2024 has been successful in maintaining a balanced budget, thanks to estimated increased partnerships and ticketing revenue.

With the IOC's help, Paris 2024 has also reduced its projected expenditure by identifying numerous optimisations. For example - reducing the number of days in which the Olympic Village, training venues and competition venues will be operational, and cutting unnecessary energy use at competition venues.

How have the IOC's goals changed over the last 50 years? How have they adjusted as the world moved on?

The IOC's vision to make the world a better place through sport remains as relevant now as it did 50 years ago. To deliver this, we have continued to evolve as an organisation to ensure we remain the driving force of global sport, supporting every Olympic Movement stakeholder, promoting Olympism worldwide, and overseeing the regular celebration of

the Olympic Games. At the same time, we've dedicated considerable resources to promoting sport in society and its contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals through our Olympism 365 Strategy, strengthening the integrity of sport and supporting clean athletes and other sports organisations.

These fundamental responsibilities will continue to underpin everything we do. However, in order to stay relevant, we are conscious we need to remain flexible. That's why we developed the reforms of Olympic Agenda 2020, driven by the saying "change or be changed". This strategic roadmap aims to ensure the long-term sustainability and relevance of the Olympic Games by addressing the challenges facing the Olympic Movement and capitalising on the opportunities that arise.

One of the key changes and adjustments made by the IOC over the years includes a greater emphasis on sustainability and environmental protection in the organisation of the Olympic Games. This includes measures to reduce carbon emissions, promote renewable energy, and encourage sustainable development in host cities.

Notably, Paris 2024 is the first Olympic Games aligned with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. This inspired their goal to cut the carbon footprint of the Games in half compared with previous editions. They aim to achieve this by, for example, ensuring 95 per cent of their venue masterplan consists of pre-existing or temporary venues and aiming to use 100 per cent of renewable energy during the Games.

The IOC has also made significant efforts to promote gender equality in the Olympic Games, including increasing the number of women's events and athletes, increasing the balance of coverage of competitions, and promoting female representation in leadership positions within the organisation. In this context, next summer will be the first Olympic Games where there will be full gender parity on the field of play.

The potential of the Olympic Games to bring about positive social and cultural change is another area the IOC has been working hard to capitalise on, leveraging this global event to promote social inclusion, cultural diversity and human rights.

Over the past 50 years, technology has also advanced. During this period, the IOC has been a pioneer, embracing new innovations to enhance the Olympic Games experience for athletes and spectators alike, including the use of virtual and augmented reality, advanced data analytics and social media. This has helped bring the Games closer to fans while enhancing the experiences and opportunities for athletes.

Despite a continually evolving global context, the IOC remains relentless in its pursuit to deliver the very best environment for athletes to perform at the Olympic Games, while at the same time advancing the mission and values of the Olympic Movement. We must remain determined in our

dedication to innovation, while balancing that with our commitment to promoting excellence, friendship, respect and togetherness through sport in the spirit of Olympism.

How have the transgender rights movements affected the Olympics?

The IOC seeks to promote a safe and welcoming environment for everyone involved in elite-level competition, consistent with the principles enshrined in the Olympic Charter, while also acknowledging the central role eligibility criteria play in ensuring fairness, particularly in high-level organised sport in the women's category. The latest major development in this area was the publication of our new framework in November 2021.

At the heart of this Framework is recognition of both the need to ensure that everyone,

irrespective of their gender identity or sex variations, can practise sport in a safe, harassment-free environment that recognises and respects their needs and identities, and the interest of everyone – particularly athletes at elite level – to participate in fair competitions where no participant has an unfair and disproportionate advantage over the rest.

As part of developing this process, it was really important we listened to the people that this guidance would impact. As a result, we spoke with more than 250 athletes and stakeholders over a two-year consultation period. It was also crucial that the Framework aligned to the IOC's commitment to respecting human rights, and as part of the action taken to foster gender equality and inclusion.

What became clear during this process was that it must be within

the remit of each sport and its governing body to determine how an athlete may be at a disproportionate advantage compared with their peers, taking into consideration the nature of each sport. That's why the IOC is not in a position to issue regulations that define eligibility criteria for every sport, discipline or event across the very different national jurisdictions and sport systems.

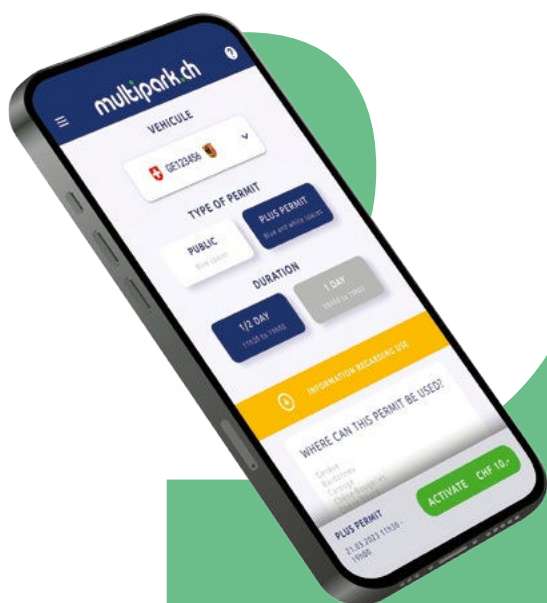
Ultimately, the aim of this Framework is to offer sporting bodies – particularly those in charge of organising elite-level competition – a 10-principle approach to help them develop the criteria that are applicable to their sport. Sports bodies will also need to consider particular ethical, social, cultural and legal aspects that may be relevant in their context.

How does the Olympics deal with inclusivity in sports? Are there sports that are much

more inclusive and more accessible to competitors?

The Olympic Games bring together athletes from 206 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) from across the world, and the Refugee Olympic Team, in peaceful competition regardless of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The IOC, through Olympic Solidarity, redistributes resources generated by the Olympic Games to the NOCs for athletes' development, thereby fostering the universal spirit of the Olympic Games by providing financial and technical support to elite athletes around the world. These programmes ensure the participation of all NOCs, while also contributing to the development of sport worldwide. To provide some perspective, 90 per cent



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Mr Moreno, IOC Member.

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of the IOC's income is re-distributed to the Olympic Movement, including the athletes, the Organising Committees of the Olympic Games, the NOCs and the International Sport Federations. This equals about USD 4.2 million every day, 365 days a year.

The IOC and the Olympic Movement have worked hard for the Olympic Games to become the largest gender-equal sporting event in the world. London 2012 was the first time women took part in every sport on the Olympic programme, and by Tokyo 2020 they represented 48 per cent of the competitors at the most gender-balanced Games to date. At Paris 2024, there will be full gender parity on the field of play.

Key changes have included the opening up of eligibility in the various sports involved; set quota places; an increased number of medal events for female athletes; and a directive that all NOCs must be represented by a minimum of one male and one female athlete at the Summer Games. Multiple new mixed-gender events have also been added to the Olympic programme to further promote gender diversity and equality,

while also providing more medal opportunities for women, and more visibility for female athletes and women's sport.

Working together with the International Federations and the Organising Committees, the Olympic programme has evolved so that more and more sports have gender-equal athlete quotas at the Games. At Tokyo 2020, 24 out of 33 sports were fully gender-balanced. At Paris 2024, this will increase to 28 out of 32 events, with athletics and cycling reaching full gender equality for the first time.

Is there anything that the IOC would like to share?

Given the current global context, it's important to remember the potential of the Olympic Games. As an event, they unite the world in peaceful competition, regardless of cultural and social differences. They offer a unique opportunity to showcase the best of humanity and inspire people to work towards peace and understanding.

As IOC President Thomas Bach has noted, sport is a powerful tool to promote peace and

tolerance, and the Olympic athletes demonstrate it is possible to compete with each other while living peacefully together. But in order for our actions on peace, and also human rights, to be successful, we need the respect of politics for our mission. If this is not respected, then the Olympic Games would become as divisive as so many other areas of society today. The Olympic Games would lose their unifying power, and it would just not be possible for us to bring together the world in peaceful competition.

In this respect, the IOC works closely with partners, including the United Nations, NOCs, United Nations agencies, and international governmental and non-governmental institutions, on initiatives that use sport as a tool for development and social change. These efforts aim to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and promote a more peaceful and just world through the Olympism 365 strategy. In our cooperation with partners, the IOC fosters the cognitive development of individuals, teaches social behaviour, and helps integrate communities. The Olympic Games and the ideals of

Olympism offer hope for a more peaceful future, and the IOC continues to work towards this vision every day.

While those ambitions remain timeless, looking to the immediate future, there will be a lot of key announcements and celebrations in the coming months as excitement continues to build for the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

Plans for the Olympic Torch Relay will be revealed within the coming weeks, while later in the summer, we will mark one year to go until the Olympic Games Paris 2024 begin.

Before then, we will celebrate Olympic Day, an annual global event, on 23 June. This year, we will see numerous mass-participation events taking place at various locations across the world, open to all, with more information due to be published on our website and social channels over the coming weeks. ■

CLASS FOR EVERY DAY.

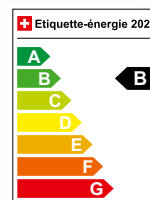
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The golden spirit of sport



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ERIC STENER CARLSON, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, once wrote: [We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.](#)

Then Lemke added, “Sport, however, still faces many challenges to the fulfilment of its true potential. Too often we have seen examples of intolerance, racism, hatred and violence during sporting events.”¹

The games we play in our communities could all be beautiful games – physically, emotionally, and spiritually uplifting. But sport sometimes seems to lose this promise, because of

the negative experiences listed above.

And to these experiences, I would add “humiliation”. We see it in the news all the time, when coaches humiliate players (through ridiculing and public shaming) and when players humiliate opponents (through racist or homophobic comments) and when fans humiliate each other (through intimidation and threats of violence).

A few years ago, I travelled with my son to see a professional football match in Italy. I enjoyed the game, the excitement of the crowd, the saves and goals. Most of all, I enjoyed seeing how much my son enjoyed it. But at the end of that wonderful evening, when we were going through the parking lot, the fans of the winning team shouted such awful things to the fans of the losing team (taunts and jeers, threats of violence), and only soldiers with machineguns kept them apart.

This scene repeats itself over and over in stadiums around the world. The point of this humiliation, apparently, is to rub in the fact that their team won.

I get the competition part – one side wins, another side loses. I also understand players becoming emotional, especially after they’ve trained for years and years, just for a few minutes on the pitch. I even understand friendly rivalries. But where does humiliation fit into all of this?

I did a quick internet search on “sport and humiliation”. Hardly a scientific investigation. But I was surprised to see that very few examples of what I consider humiliation came up. Most examples referred to “humiliation” as losing, losing by a lot – like “It was a *humiliating* loss, 100 to 0.”

That’s odd, isn’t it? For me, losing isn’t humiliation; it’s just losing. It’s part of the rules of the game. Humiliation is something else. We humiliate ourselves when we break the rules, when we do something that runs counter to our values (like cheating or doping). We humiliate others when we degrade them as human beings (like biting opponents’ ears off).

So, maybe there’s something about losing – or the way that we’re taught to see losing – that’s linked to humiliation. It makes me think back to my experience of playing American football in high school. Winning seemed to be the main purpose of the game, or, rather, the main purpose was to avoid losing.

Now, this didn’t happen all the time, and this wasn’t all the coaches. But I remember one coach who, every time we played

poorly, or didn’t run fast enough, or couldn’t do enough push-ups, used to call us “ladies”. And he said it like he meant to say, “weak”, “lazy” and “useless”. I remember a particular jibe of his, “Even my grandmother could do more push-ups.”

My face in the mud, my arms trembling, I got the memo – and I forced myself to do one more push-up.

Back in the locker room, the humiliation continued. Some boys (again, not the majority) would taunt the kids with less muscles, less hair, calling them “gay”. This was back in the 80’s, when anything kids didn’t like was called gay, “That sweater’s so gay”, “That music’s so gay”, “That car’s so gay.” So, you drop a pass or miss a tackle, or you let down your teammates in some other way, and, like all those other objects of ridicule, you were suddenly gay.

I didn’t have the vocabulary back then to express what was going on, but I understood the logic of the abuse. It was a sort of “humiliation by proxy”. We got humiliated based on the humiliating stereotypes of others.

Now, maybe some people will say, “That’s just what happens in the locker room”, or “It’s just a bit of banter”, or “Boys will be boys”. But I don’t think so. This wasn’t accidental; it was structural.

The purpose of this humiliation was to drive us to constantly *prove* we weren’t women, to *prove* we weren’t homosexuals. We were being programmed to think that doing an extra push-up made us less feminine, and showing more aggression on the field made us

less gay. And I can't believe that didn't have a negative impact on us even decades afterwards.

I loved playing on that team. I wasn't a great player, but I loved it. And I hated every single homophobic and misogynistic comment. I hated the fact that they wanted to build us up by tearing other people down. It ruined the game for me. And I've often wondered, if it affected me so much – and I was heterosexual – then what was it like for our teammates who were gay.

Humiliation of this kind is a trap you can't fight your way out of – like Native American fish traps, where the fish swims in a small opening and can't find its way out. It just swims around and around in a confined area, until a hand reaches in and cuts it up for supper.

The way I got out was quitting American football my senior year, and joining a fencing club in another city. Maybe it was the sense of honour and respect I found in fencing, maybe it was the fact we shook hands and saluted each other with the blade every time we started a bout. Whatever it was, I felt a lot better about myself fencing than I had playing any other sport. I even made it to the National Junior Olympics in fencing, and when I lost in the third round, to more experienced fencers, I didn't feel humiliated at all.

But after all these years, I still have a lot of unresolved feelings about my experience in high school, and it upsets me to think other kids around the world are going through the same thing. How can we remove humiliation from sports?

Well, I have a glimmer of an idea of how that's possible.

I really like this TV show called *Spiritual Explorers* on the Japanese news channel, NHK. It's about non-Japanese people living in Japan. They explore certain aspects of Japanese culture, like ikebana and bonsais, calligraphy and the art of drumming.

A recent episode gave me the idea to write this article.² It was on the martial art, aikido, created by Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969) during the first half of the 20th Century.

Maybe you've seen the early Steven Seagal action movies from the 80s, like *Above the Law* or *Hard to Kill*, where Seagal defeats thousands of terrorists and assorted criminals, in fluid, almost ballet-like movements, as if he's just stepping out of the way of their punches. Well, that's aikido. It's true that aikido has to do with using your opponents' force against them and joint locks and throws. But those movies have nothing to do with the spirit of aikido.

According to an aikido sensei from Kyoto interviewed in *Spiritual Explorers*, aikido is not about violence, or winning or losing. In fact, there are no competitions. And that's why it's not an Olympic sport. Aikido practitioners train often, matching themselves up with partners of comparable ability, understanding their energy and movements and pace. It's physical, it's extremely powerful, and it has a lot to do with respect and acceptance. As the sensei says, "True strength is to accept everything around you."

Wouldn't all the boys on my team (including myself) have benefited from the lesson that it was a strength, not a weakness, to accept yourself, and everyone else? That you don't need to make someone else into an enemy, to motivate yourself to succeed?

Ueshiba was said to have developed aikido after having a number of visions, one of which he experienced after defeating a sword-master with his bare hands – and without injuring him. He supposedly saw a "golden spirit" that led him to a moment of enlightenment. He realized that *budo*, which is a philosophy that can be translated as "a way of martial arts" or "path to self-perfection", "is not felling the opponent by our force; nor is it a tool to lead the world into destruction with arms. True *budo*

is to accept the spirit of the universe, keep the peace of the world, correctly produce, protect, and cultivate all beings in Nature."³

Now, just because I saw one show on aikido doesn't mean that I know anything about it. All I can say is that, maybe, we'd be better off if we took that sort of philosophy with us into sports, and politics, and just life in general.

Sure, I know competition is part of human nature. Waiting desperately to see who scores that last point before the buzzer makes our hearts beat faster, our adrenaline flow. And it's much more exciting to have "winners" and "losers", instead of medals for participation. So, I don't think we can get rid of competition altogether.

But maybe how we train our youth, and how we choose to react to winning or losing as adults, can be tempered with humility and kindness and respect. After the match, maybe we can just accept that one side won, and one side lost, and then go on with our lives. If the golden spirit of sport guides us. ■

1 Wilfried Lemke, "The Role of Sport in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals", UN Chronicle (August 2016, No. 2, Vol. LIII). <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/role-sport-achieving-sustainable-development-goals>

2 "Aikido: The Art of Peace", Season 4, Episode 3.

3 This quote appears in "Aikido: The Quaker Martial Art" in Friends Journal, by Michael Lee Zwiers (February 1, 2006): <https://www.friendsjournal.org/2006015/>

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Working together for better health and quality of life

Interview with CURAPROX in Brazil, a Swiss company in South America.



Milton Ramalho, Erik Vidal and Dr. Hugo Lewgoy.

GUILHERME SANCHES LIRA, NEWSPECIAL MAGAZINE AND UNIVERSITÉ DE NEUCHÂTEL

International companies play a crucial role in the global economy and have the power to impact the environment and society at large. With this power comes different types of responsibilities. Companies must ensure that their operations are sustainable and that they promote social development. However, this is easier said than done, as they face various challenges related to their responsibility towards the environment and social projects.

CURAPROX, a Swiss company that prides itself on providing its clients with oral hygiene products of the highest quality. Founded in 1874, the company is currently operating in 48 different countries. Its home is Switzerland, more precisely Kriens in the canton of Lucerne, where all its products are created and developed. The company excels in manufacturing products with great sophistication based on scientific research and effective methods of providing atraumatic care for oral hygiene. The newSpecial magazine had the opportunity to interview Dr. Hugo Lewgoy, Erik Vidal, and Milton Ramalho, CEOs and directors of CURAPROX in Brazil.

First of all, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed, could you please tell us a bit more about Curaprox in Brazil?

In a nutshell, the CURAPROX arrived in Brazil in 2005, when three friends, the three of us actually, Hugo, Erik and Milton, with the same shared ideals and ideas for a new business, founded Curaden Swiss do Brazil. The sudden success of the company caused the need for our stocks to be expanded, and in partnership with CURAPROX's headquarters office, it was possible to start our own headquarters. Its operations began in February 2018. From the get-go, CURAPROX Brazil had a small number of employees and collaborators, however, with great professionalism, motivation, and also with the individual competencies of our employees, it was possible for us to become among one of the market leaders in the country.

One of the biggest challenges that international companies face is their impact on the environment. They must ensure that their operations do not harm the environment and that they comply with environmental regulations. This is especially challenging for companies that operate in multiple countries, as they must comply with different environmental standards and regulations. Not long ago, the eyes of the international community were turned to Brazil, in particular, to how the country protects and develops public policies for the conservation of its natural environments. Thinking about this very relevant agenda, how important is it for CURAPROX Brazil to support initiatives and projects in this realm?

For starters, CURAPROX is the type of company that does not perform any sort of lab tests on animals! We do not use any type of product that represents any risk of toxicity to our clients and the environment. Apart from these two important things, in Brazil, the company has a certain autonomy – and being so, it established partnerships with a few environmental projects. To name one,

the SOS Mata Atlantica initiative that fights to preserve and increase what is left of the Atlantic rainforest in Brazil, which is a very rich biome. So, to support the initiative, we had the idea of creating a special edition of toothbrushes whose packages bring practical information for Brazilians to find out how they can also contribute to this project. In addition, part of the profit made on this edition is reverted to the initiative, that is, the SOS Mata Atlantica project receives a sort of royalty from the attained revenue of the edition.

Another equally important project to be mentioned is Projeto Tamar, which is a non-profit project initiated in 1980 with the main objective to save sea turtles from extinction in the Brazilian coastline. This is not an easy task, considering the fact that Brazil has the ninth-longest coastline in the world, stretching along the eastern and northeastern borders of the country, encompassing 7,491 kilometers boarding the Atlantic Ocean. With this joint initiative, our clients are confronted with information on the preservation of sea turtles, as well as of our seas, when they least expect it, that is, when buying oral hygiene products. On the packaging of our products entitled Amigos do Mar (Friends of the Sea), our customers will also find an invitation ticket to visit the Tamar Project. Besides, part of the profit generated by the products in question goes to the project. This is a simple way to raise and spread awareness.

Now, talking international business – as a Swiss company operating in Brazil, what were some of the challenges you encountered, and what were some of the positive aspects in bringing the company to Brazil?

I believe the first challenge we met in Brazil was the fact that we were bringing an international company to a new country where competition was already very well-established. So,

that was a bit of a daunting task, I must confess! However, to succeed in such an environment, companies must focus on developing a unique value proposition that sets them apart from the inevitable competition, and that is precisely what CURAPROX Brazil did. We decided to explore our forte and project it to our customers and business partners, that is, a company that develops all its products based on clinical research and studies in oral hygiene, thus providing clients with high levels of confidence in the effectiveness of our products. This has become a trend, I would dare say – consumers are increasingly seeking out products that are backed by scientific evidence, and a company that can provide this type of product can gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

This approach, in turn, leads to increased consumer trust, loyalty, and ultimately, success in the market. I like to think this is what happened to us. Just to mention one example of how CURAPROX Brazil was able to impact and to an extent change the national market – the general convention in Brazil when it came to brushing teeth was that toothbrushes had to be hard, and only hard brushes would clean your teeth. Today, we know that hard brushes can damage your gum, causing different medical conditions, the most common one being gum recession. Hence, the company had to develop a business plan, which included informing our Brazilian customers about the fact that toothbrushes should be gentle to your gum and teeth, and at the same time be able to clean them. This change of perception in our clients was only attainable through the spread of awareness via different educational champagnes. Another challenge worth mentioning is that operating a company internationally can bring about a plethora of benefits, including increased market access, revenue, and global brand recognition.

However, one of the most significant challenges that companies face when expanding globally is navigating the complex and ever-changing landscape of international bureaucracy, and for CURAPROX in Brazil,

it wouldn't have been any different. I guess understanding Brazilian import and export rules were particularly challenging. These include regulations related to taxation, customs and trade. In Brazil, failure to comply with these regulations can result in significant fines, legal complications, and even the revocation of a company's operating license.

Thinking about the global pandemic that we went through not so long ago, and in particular the legacies and lessons it has left us. It is almost impossible not to think about the importance of having access to a correct and early diagnosis. Please explain to us the partnership between CURAPROX Brazil and the Jô Clemente Institute.

According to the latest National Health Survey (PNS) released by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), an estimated 2.5 million people in Brazil who are two years of age or older have some sort of intellectual disability. Unfortunately, this group continues to face discrimination and prejudice, often being incorrectly perceived as incapable of engaging in everyday activities, such as education, employment, or socializing. Thus, it seemed only reasonable to join forces with an organization that fights to change the status-quo when it comes to the rights of people living with disabilities. Jo Clemente Institute has an inspiring history.

In 1961, Dona Jô Clemente, a mother and entrepreneur, teamed up with a group of nonconformist parents to establish an organization that aimed to support families of children with intellectual disabilities. These parents shared a common set of concerns and anxieties about how best to educate and care for their children, where to find reliable information and resources, how to ensure their children were treated with dignity and respect, and how to help them integrate into society. Together, they formed a community where they could share their experiences, exchange ideas and strategies, and work together to advocate for the rights of individuals with intellectual disabilities. This organization has since grown

into a leading advocate for disability rights in the community, providing vital support to families and individuals in need.

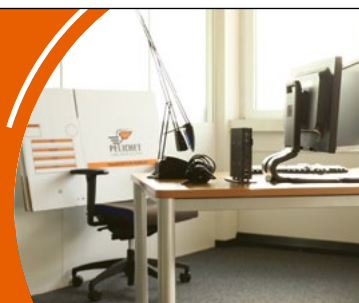
The Institute has done pioneering work in the implementation of the Heel-prick test in the country, which later became a healthcare right of newborns' families. The Heel-prick test, also known as the newborn screening test, or the Guthrie test, is a standard health check for babies that involves taking a small blood sample from the baby's heel. The test is typically performed between 24 and 72 hours after birth, and is used to screen for several rare and serious genetic disorders that can affect a baby's health, growth, and development. The blood sample is usually collected on a special filter paper and sent to a laboratory for testing. The laboratory then analyzes the sample to check for the presence of specific proteins or enzymes that may indicate the presence of a genetic disorder. If a disorder is detected, doctors can provide early intervention and treatment, which can help to prevent serious health problems or disabilities later in life. CURAPROX Brazil is very pleased to partner with organizations that are aligned with our mission to promote people's health and quality of life. Business Partnerships, such as this, are important and can offer our customers the opportunity to purchase products from a brand that has a genuine commitment to social causes and the promotion of health. ■



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The Olympic Refugee Foundation

The Olympic Refugee Foundation on its path to giving displaced people the opportunity to thrive through sports.

YULIA LEMENEZ, UNDP

“Thrive, not just survive.” This is the message that Jojo Ferris, the Head of the Olympic Refugee Foundation (“ORF” or “Foundation”), wants every person who has been forced to flee their home due to a natural disaster, war or other, often extremely violent, events to hear and believe in. An energetic leader in sports and development, she is convinced that sport is an enhancer that can play a crucial positive role in empowering people.

Founded by the International Olympic Committee (“IOC”), ORF is an independent foundation that grew out of some 25 years of close partnership between the IOC and the UN Refugee Agency (“UNHCR”). From the first IOC Refugee Olympic Team at the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro to 15 programmes in 11 countries in 2023, ORF has had quite the journey.

I sat down with Jojo to discuss the many exciting and challenging turns on that journey, key lessons learnt along the way, as well as her vision for the future of the Foundation.

Could you tell our readers a bit about your background? What inspired you to accept the leadership role in the Olympic Refugee Foundation?

I have always played many sports, including competitively. Ever since my childhood in Australia, I have seen sports as a way to connect, find a sense of belonging, and learn skills that can be transferred to other aspects of life. Later, I was thrilled to learn that the Olympic Charter recognizes sport as a human right and emphasizes access for everybody without any discrimination. I strongly identify with this message, and I am committed to putting it into action.

Before joining ORF, I worked with UNAIDS and the Oceania National Olympic Committees, was involved in organizing the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, worked for an international federation and then the Australian government’s sport for development programme. This experience has reinforced my conviction that sport is an agent for positive social change, especially for

those who are marginalized and vulnerable in our society.

What has driven the choice of the term «refuge», as opposed to «refugee», in the name of the Foundation?

ORF supports people who seek refuge in sports and who take it as an opportunity to heal, grow and succeed. We aim to create a safe place where all young people affected by displacement belong and feel protected. We are open not only to refugees – a term which may be understood differently, depending on a legal, policy or social framework – but to all those who have experienced, or have been affected by displacement.

The voice and leadership of displaced people is part of every facet of our work. To give a couple of examples, Benafsha Faizi, the former Media Officer and Spokesperson of the National Olympic Committee in Afghanistan and now a refugee in Switzerland, is working with us on communications. Masomah Ali Zada, an Afghan cyclist that competed in

Tokyo 2020, has been appointed to the IOC Athletes Commission and is working together with the UCI, the Cycling Federation, to help Afghan cyclists. At the field level, we ensure that the needs and voices of a community where our programmes are implemented always come first.

What drives the choice of countries where your programmes are implemented?

ORF is driven by need in every aspect of its work. We try to cover as many areas with the greatest need. Five years ago, we started with four pilot projects in four different countries. We are now running 14 programmes in 10 developing countries, including Jordan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Colombia, Turkey and Kenya.

A couple of years ago, in partnership with the French Sports Ministry, we started discussing the possibility of doing something in the global north. Together with the Ministry, we have developed a new programme which focuses on young people finding their life project through sport.

As part and in addition to this initiative, we are responding to the situation in Ukraine, where we have seen a huge mental health need. More specifically, we coach people to provide emergency psychological aid in the border areas.

In general, we see the role of sport in displacement and mental health growing exponentially in the future. Climate displacement is another challenge that we need to focus on more.

There are numerous challenges facing women refugees seeking to play sports, including cultural barriers, limited access to resources, and discrimination. How does ORF specifically address these challenges, and what more can be done to support gender parity in sports?

The sports sector is a microcosm of society, including displaced communities, where women and girls still face more discrimination, xenophobia and violence. We acknowledge this and are doing our part to address the issue.

Gender analysis is part of every programme design at ORF. It is context-driven, giving us the choice and avenue to address the gender-specific issues that are facing that particular community in that particular context.

Of course, we strive to ensure that every level of participation is equal. While there is always

an intention to reach parity and 50-50 participation, it is not always possible. Sometimes, we need to focus more on women's participation. The ratio of male and female coaches in our programmes globally is 56% to 44%, which is fairly equitable and higher than the global coaching average.

IOC in general is doing a terrific job to shift the representation of women in sports, including leadership positions and the gender team's work.

How does ORF support young people who want to pursue a professional career in sports, including participation in the Olympic Games?

We do all we can to shine a spotlight on talented people who, if given the opportunity, can make an incredible enrichment and contribution to society. ORF works closely with UNHCR to ensure access for athletes to travel to various places, including the Olympic Games, and to pursue their training career. Through the Refugee Athlete Support programme, we support athletes with scholarships which can support them to train and travel to international competitions.

The criteria for athletes to be part of the Refugee Athlete Support programme, and ultimately the Refugee Olympic Team, are that they need to be recognized as refugees by UNHCR and, of course, have a certain

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sporting level that is also required of athletes representing nation states.

The refugee Olympic team is the symbol of resilience, hope, and possibility for 103 million people across the globe. Team members do not represent themselves or any particular country. They embody the concept of supporting anyone who's been forced to flee their home and shine a spotlight on their talents. They also contribute to changing the public perception and rhetoric surrounding refugees, which is important irrespective of the label or title.

What lessons have you learned since the four pilot projects were launched?

The organization is still learning every day, even after five years. We are building on the work of partners and people who have been doing terrific work before ORF was created.

The key lesson is that together, we are more than the sum of our parts. This has been apparent with the Sport for Refugees Coalition, which brought together more than 80 members who pledged to increase access to refugees through sport. The coalition comprised member states, NGOs, sports, and the private sector. This ecosystem approach has underpinned a lot of the ORF's thinking and the way we work. Refugees are now recognized and included in every major sports federation. This is also a key milestone.

What are the Foundation's priorities for the foreseeable future?

We have a very concrete and ambitious goal of providing access to sports for 1 million young

people affected by displacement by the end of 2024. We aim to achieve this through three specific ways: direct access to sports, strengthening the role of sport as a tool to support displaced people, and mobilizing collective support from partners. We will continue to do so through four specific focus projects, supporting the mental health of Ukrainian refugees, managing the Refugee Athletes Support Programme, facilitating the Sport for Refugees Coalition, as well as investing into our existing programmes in 11 countries.

We are looking forward to many things this year that move us closer to our goal, including the premiere of "We Dare to Dream" at Tribeca Festival in June, a documentary about members of the Refugee Olympic Team; the first Refugee Team competing in the European Games, as well as the Global Refugee Forum in December hosted by UNHCR, where we will present a joint sports pledge in collaboration with the Sport for Refugees Coalition.

As a leader in the sports industry, what do you see as the most promising opportunities for using sports to promote social inclusion and empowerment among displaced people?

The pathways and the role modeling that sports offer not only to athletes, but people in general, are countless. Importantly, these pathways are among the most accessible to displaced people.

Sport has a unique power to break all barriers and unite people, irrespective of their background and experience. If you ask a group of

youngsters from different countries who don't even speak each other's language whether they would like to play, the answer will be a yes! Within minutes, you will see unity and positive emotion emerging from a group of recent strangers.

Sport is also a relatively low-cost solution that is available at every community level, from a refugee camp to an Olympic pedestal. This solution can be integrated into every area of life, from a housing project to healthcare and employment. It is also available to everyone, irrespective of age, gender, health or any other criterion or condition.

Sport can enhance and move anyone closer to achieving your objectives, and it is a crucial part of ensuring that displaced people can thrive, not just survive. ■

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UN special programme for research on sexual and reproductive health

A special birthday

In the world of sexual and reproductive health, the United Nations established a special programme 50 years ago to ensure we understood what is needed for our sexual health, that products are safe, effective and can be accessed by all.

PASCALE ALLOTEY¹

There is so much that we take for granted that is critical to our health and wellbeing. But, as you can imagine, there is significant effort involved in moving technologies, drugs and devices from ideas, to products, to testing and then to the pharmacy.

In the world of sexual and reproductive health, the United Nations established a special programme 50 years ago to ensure we understood what is needed for our sexual health, that products are safe, effective and can be accessed by all. Fifty years later, the scope of work has evolved and millions of lives, particularly those of women and girls, have been saved and countless lives impacted for the better.

So in the same year that the WHO is celebrating its 75th anniversary, HRP (the UNDP/ UNFPA/ UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction) is marking 50 years of working toward sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. Established in 1972, HRP is the main instrument within the United Nations system for research in human reproduction and brings together scientists, researchers, health care providers, clinicians, policy-makers, consumers and community



Policy and Coordination Committee's 36th Meeting, World Health Organization Headquarters, Geneva, 25-27 April 2023.

representatives to identify and address priorities for research to improve health.

We can all be thankful that Member States had the foresight 50 years ago to set up HRP, giving it the space to undertake research, generate evidence and create informed guidelines which continue to provide the foundation for and access to safe contraception, interventions for safe and respectful maternity and abortion care, the extent and impact of gender-based violence and harmful practices, screening and treatment of reproductive cancers, sexually transmissible infections and self-care and digital technologies.

A timeline of HRP's achievements throughout the years showcases the many pivotal contributions HRP has made to science and healthcare.

These include:

- **1978** - a large ten-year HRP study provided evidence on the safety of oral contraceptives;
- **1980** - HRP published the first WHO laboratory manual for the examination and processing of human semen - for investigating male fertility issues - which is now in its sixth edition;
- **1998** - HRP confirmed the effectiveness of emergency contraception. This resulted in changes in regulations in many countries as well as its

inclusion in the WHO's Model List of Essential Medicines;

- **2003** - HRP evidence resulted in the first-ever WHO guideline on abortion, supporting provision of quality health services for women and girls;
- **2006** - HRP research appeared in *The Lancet* proving that women who have had female genital mutilation (FGM) have higher rates of adverse obstetric outcomes; this led to a World Health Assembly resolution urging Member States to eliminate FGM;
- **2010** - HRP's work on the Kesho Bora Study showed a combination of antiretroviral drugs during pregnancy prevent perinatal transmission of HIV;



- **2014** - HRP research resulted in a WHO statement on the prevention and elimination of disrespect and abuse during facility-based childbirth, one of the most translated WHO documents;
- **2020** - The HRP Outbreak Working Group (established 2016) continued to explore the impact of pandemics (including Ebola, Zika, COVID-19 and Mpox) on sexual and reproductive health – including issues relating to pregnancy. The Group contributed to WHO research and guidelines;
- **2023** - HRP published the report ‘Infertility Prevalence Estimates: 1990-2021’, the first report of its kind in over a decade, highlighting the importance of fertility care for millions around the world.

Housed within WHO’s Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, HRP supports and coordinates research

on a global scale, synthesizes research through systematic reviews of literature, builds research capacity in low-income countries and develops dissemination tools to make efficient use of ever-increasing research information.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, said recently “For 50 years, the Human Reproduction Programme has played an invaluable role in promoting and protecting access to services for sexual and reproductive health. Its role is now more important than ever. WHO is proud of what we have achieved together in the past 50 years, and we remain steadfastly committed to working with you in the years ahead.”

HRP is also a powerful example of how we are stronger when we work together. As a co-sponsored programme involving UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the

World Bank, we have a unique mandate to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, across – and far beyond – the UN.

For me, I dream of a future where talking about sexual health is not a taboo, is not stigmatized, is not considered inappropriate for any culture. Sexual and reproductive health should be considered part of an essential universal health coverage package. Health is political and sexual and reproductive health is political, but with robust evidence, we can show why these issues are critical to health outcomes around the world. At HRP, we will strive to ensure everyone can realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We were delighted to celebrate HRP’s 50th anniversary in April at the WHO headquarters during our Policy and Coordination Committee meeting which

involved Member States, donors and civil society. A reception was held which the Director-General attended and a timeline of HRP’s achievements was displayed at the WHO as well as the World Health Assembly. ■

For more information about HRP, visit the [timeline](#), its [website](#) and view [this film](#) as well as this HRP [Expert Film Series](#).

¹ Dr Pascale Allotey is the Director of the WHO’s Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) including the UNDP-UNFPA-UNICEF-WHO-World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP). A former midwife and academic, she is a leader in gender, equity, health and human rights.



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CMCOE TEAM AT WHO

Where technology, globalization, and demographic shifts are transforming the workplace, change management has become more important than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the need for change management as organizations have had to adapt to remote work, digital collaboration, and new ways of doing business. It's safe to say that the pandemic disrupted the traditional workplace and forced organizations to rethink their strategies, processes and systems.

So, what is Change Management?

In simple terms, change management is a systemic approach to guiding individual, teams and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. It

involves a set of processes, tools, and techniques that help organizations manage the impact of change on people, processes, and technology. At its core, change management is about managing the people side of change. It's about understanding how individuals and groups experience change and providing them with the the right information at the right time along with the tools and support they need to navigate it successfully.

How can you benefit from Change Management?

One of the key benefits of change management is that it helps organizations to stay competitive and agile. Organizations must be able to respond quickly to changing stakeholder needs, market trends, and technological advancements. Change management enables organizations to be

proactive rather than reactive in their approach to change.

Change management also helps organizations to manage risk and uncertainty. Change can be disruptive, and if not managed effectively, it can lead to resistance, low morale, and unproductivity. Change management enables organizations to identify and mitigate potential risks and to prepare for unforeseen challenges. Effective change management requires a structured and systematic approach.

Change Management ensure effective communication throughout the change process. Clear and timely communication keeps end users and experts informed about the nature of the change, its purpose, timeline, and potential impact on their roles or systems. By actively

Involving the stakeholders in the change process, their insights, concerns, and expertise are considered, fostering a deeper understanding of the change and its implications.

Change management also facilitates training and educational initiatives to equip end users and experts with the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to the change. Change management encourages a feedback loop from end users and experts throughout the change process. By actively seeking their input, change management can address concerns, refine communication and training materials, and continuously improve the change implementation strategy.

Change management plays a crucial role in helping both end users and experts understand what is happening during a period of change. Here are ways in which change management

supports their understanding. By implementing these practices, change management helps end users and experts gain a comprehensive understanding of the change, its purpose, and its impact, fostering a smoother transition and increased acceptance of the change.

What is the importance of Change Management?

Change management brings alignment to the ways of working no matter where people are in the organization. It creates a common language and standardized processes that everyone follows, ensuring consistency and efficiency. Change agents play a crucial role in spreading the word and driving adoption at the local level.

Change is inevitable: In the current fast-paced working environment, change is constant. Organizations that fail to adapt to change risk becoming obsolete or

losing influence and funding to more agile competitors. Change management helps organizations to stay ahead of the curve and adapt to new opportunities and challenges.

Change affects people: Change management recognizes that change is not just about implementing new systems or processes but also involves people. Change can be disruptive and unsettling for employees, and effective change management involves preparing and supporting employees to transition to new ways of working.

Change can be risky: Change can also be risky, and organizations must be prepared to manage potential risks and challenges that arise from change. Effective change management enables organizations to identify and mitigate potential risks and to prepare for unforeseen challenges.

Change can drive innovation: Change management can also drive innovation and help organizations to remain competitive. By embracing change and encouraging innovation, organizations can stay ahead of the curve and develop new products, services, and processes that meet the evolving needs of customers.

Change management is a best practice: Finally, change management is a best practice that has been proven to deliver results. Organizations that invest in change management are more likely to achieve their goals and objectives and to succeed in the long term.

WHO's contribution in Change Management

The Change Management Centre of Excellence (CMCoE) at WHO was established in March 2022 to work with WHO initiatives to help colleagues to adopt new mindsets, tools and practices

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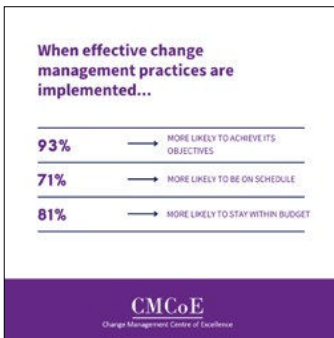
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with ease. CMCoE is a centralized hub that brings together expertise and resources from across the Organization to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to change management.

In celebrating the one-year anniversary of the Change Management Centre of Excellence (CMCoE), the team would like to take a moment to reflect on the importance of change management and our role in supporting our workforce.

In its first year of operation, CMCoE has made significant contributions to WHO's initiatives. It has provided training and guidance to staff members and developed a suite of tools and templates that are used across the Organization.

One of the key lessons that CMCoE has learned in its first year of operation is the importance of leadership support for change management. Leaders play a critical role in communicating the

need for change, setting expectations, and providing resources for success. When leaders are engaged in the change management process, it sends a clear signal to the organization that change is a priority and that success is achievable.

Another critical success factor for change management is effective communication. Communication is essential for building understanding, generating support, and addressing concerns. CMCoE has found that it's essential to approach change management as a process, not a one-time event. Change is an ongoing process that requires ongoing attention and support. By establishing a process for change management, organizations can ensure that they are continuously improving their approach and building momentum for future initiatives.

Change management is a critical discipline for today's organizations. It's essential for achieving sustainable transformations,

improving performance, and remaining competitive. The CMCoE is an excellent example of how WHO can support successful change initiatives. In its first year of operation, CMCoE has made significant contributions to WHO's initiatives, and it's clear that it will continue to play a vital role in the Organization's future. ■



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Population aging

More years to life or more life to years?

Policy decisions and choices made today largely determine whether years added to life will be healthy.



An older couple (or Hai and his wife Diem) in their home in Doi Son village, Ha Nam Province, Viet Nam in 2016.

MEGUMI ROSENBERG,
SARAH L. BARBER

The world's population reached 8 billion last year. Growth in global population masks differences across regions in fertility and mortality – leading to different population age structures in countries across the world. While India's population surpassed China's in 2023, the population in China and other middle- and high-income countries is projected to decline.¹ Older countries, such as Japan, are already managing the economic, social and health challenges of depopulation.

The result is that progressively larger cohorts of people are getting older in all countries across the world – resulting in part from public health successes in reducing fertility and expanding access to public health interventions and services that reduce infant and child mortality.

Population aging poses huge challenges to policymakers across all sectors. Lack of policy action can result in workforce shortages, shortfalls in funding for social and health services, and increases in poverty. Gaps

between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy imply that a large share of people may face disabling problems as they age. As such, a key question is whether people will age as healthy adults – and thus add life to the additional years – or whether people will face additional years of poor health, poverty and loneliness as they age. The response ultimately depends on the policy choices made today.

Population aging is an important contributor to chronic disease prevalence – including

heart diseases, diabetes, and dementia. But poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging. There is a weak correlation globally between the share of the population 60 years or older and levels of disability. Take Japan as an example. Japan has the oldest population in the world, but one of the lowest levels of older age disability in comparison with much younger countries. Japan has invested in primary, secondary as well as tertiary prevention – especially for hypertension and diabetes – and therefore has both high life expectancy and high healthy life expectancy even in old age. Notably, Japan's health investments were initiated in the 1960s – when the country was categorized as lower income and its population was relatively young. Partly because of these early investments, Japan continues to have the highest life expectancy globally, and people are able to remain healthy and active into their older years.²

A series of recent studies focused on how countries are facing population aging in the health sector in their efforts to accelerate Universal Health Coverage.³ These countries – at all levels of social and economic development – are proactively evaluating policies that address how health systems can better respond to the needs of people as they age.



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Chong Yue in her home in Singapore, 2021. The population in Singapore and the Western Pacific Region is ageing rapidly. In order to prepare, society and healthcare systems are evolving to support people throughout their life with long-term care and social services integrated at the community level. As Singapore's only cluster of community hospitals, SingHealth Community Hospitals supports the nation's ageing population by establishing partnerships between community welfare services and its own community health team, including nurses, doctors and allied health staff. This approach takes

various forms, such as healthcare providers directly referring patients to community-based services, or referring them to specialized in-house wellbeing coordinators, who provide referred patients with focused counselling. Wellbeing coordinators can also co-design personalized wellness plans with patients, routinely follow up on patients to monitor their progress, and make use of behaviour change techniques. During COVID-19, this programme has also helped teach older people how to use smartphones, QR codes, Wi-Fi and WhatsApp in order to stay connected.

Low- and middle-income countries have the daunting task of managing both the challenges of high infant and maternal mortality, while also addressing the growing pressures of non-communicable diseases and the need for social care in the community for older populations. As such, health and social service delivery design is essential to improve care for the patients that use the system the most. Yet, such changes require fundamental reforms in how health and long-term care systems are financed and organized. Thailand piloted and rigorously evaluated a novel community-based service model designed to provide care for older people and support for caregivers, resulting in positive health effects.⁴

Key to the success of such models is the identification of workforce needs to achieve the right skills mix. Colleagues in the Philippines and Vietnam pilot-tested an interprofessional education program to enhance the capacity of the active workforce to manage the complex health and social care needs of older people.⁵ Cross-country learning is essential. Researchers in Myanmar⁶ adapted surveys done in Japan to gather basic information about the health and social conditions of older people, finding unmet need for

chronic conditions. A study in Vietnam draws attention to high rates of catastrophic spending for households with older persons.⁷

Addressing concerns about the economic impacts of population aging and the sustainability of public healthcare financing, colleagues analyzed the effects of age and demographic structure on trends in health expenditures and the moderating effect of improved health in the older working-age population. They found that good health at older ages could moderate the potentially negative effects of population aging on economic growth and health spending.⁸

Moreover, while older people tend to have higher utilization of health services, aging is not the main driver of increases in healthcare costs. Technology remains the primary driver of cost escalation – particularly where there is no systematic assessment of whether the cost of an additional technology outweighs its benefit. In addition, the way in which health care is organized and paid for matters. For example, routine health care procedures delivered in hospitals are likely to be far more costly than the same care delivered at primary care level at the same level of quality. Some countries are also providing long-term care services at home.

Countries concerned about cost escalation in the context of population aging could study different options – such as changes in how health care providers are paid, policies to control prices for medicines and services, integrating prevention into care programs, and investing in primary and long-term care systems. Such policies may help ensure that spending on health care translates to well-being for people as they age.

These studies send important messages to leaders who are concerned about decreased revenue and increased health expenditures as populations age. Institutions and policies can promote good health in older ages in a financially sustainable manner that supports economic and social development. Given that population aging is predictable, policymakers should look to the future to manage the inevitable challenges that they will face.

The health of the population in 2050 and beyond, and the social and economic implications, will be determined in part by policy decisions and individual behaviors made today. Those choices largely determine whether those precious years added to life will be healthy and prosperous. ■

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The role of innovation in the global transition of cities

A regenerative approach

Having spent the past decade in leadership roles across sustainability, security, investing, and regenerative practice, I found myself knowing and working with current and former heads of state and regional leaders. I recently presented to ministers and staff from across four ministries in Indonesia.



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PETA MILAN¹

I asked the group if they were aware of how many natural disasters impacted Indonesia between January to March 2021. No one knew, and they began to guess. They were very far from the actual figures of 650², accounting for 270 people killed and 3 million people displaced. This number has continued to rise, and they were shocked.

My interest in improving quality of life led me to an interesting study when exploring the rise of polarization and violence in the US, amid the attack on the US Capitol on January 6th 2021. The findings by Gu and Wang³ indicated that there is a positive and statistically

significant cross-country association between levels of income inequality and political polarization. Data shows climate and social risks like these undoubtedly affect future assets value, so why was I seeing leaders primarily interested in economic and quantitative growth and not these other high-risk areas?

Governments typically work in silos and departments have their own agenda and budgets, and they work from knowledge offered largely from secondary reports on the state of housing in their cities, forecasts for growth in international trade trends and so on. Rarely, did any person I meet have a depth of understanding of the interconnections between the

different elements of the city and why best practice attempts to fix issues like housing, homelessness and violence so rarely garner results. Venture capitalists and impact investors invest in silos; single sectors or types of technologies, and fail to achieve the level of impact and return they seek. In both governance and investing, my experience is we are asking the wrong questions and looking in the wrong places.

We have been taught in our internationally accepted standards of western education to learn empirically, focus on facts and figures, understand something by breaking it up into pieces. However, whilst this mechanistic way of thinking about the world

has helped us advance technologically, we have seen radical impacts on life, now with 75% of species extinction, we are in our sixth mass extinction. The kind of innovation needed to really transform these deeper challenges requires a mindset shift. So how do we view these challenges differently? **FIGURE 1**

Firstly, we need to consider that innovation is not a thing to do. Innovation is the willingness to have ourselves see things anew. This can feel very confronting to our sense of identity and competence. The ego becomes threatened. Einstein said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them", but a lot of our "so-called" innovation does just this. The early thinkers of Fintech solutions would have considered their design thinking innovative. It was disruptive to traditional banking institutions and forced some banks to start thinking in terms of technology, but the main economic drivers of transactions stayed the same. The monetary system in its essence stayed the same, and so has economic inequality. Many designers of strategy, whether it be in governance, product design or investing, lead from knowledge that already exists and has been taught – so where is the innovation if we are essentially operating from the same assumptions and truths? **FIGURE 2**

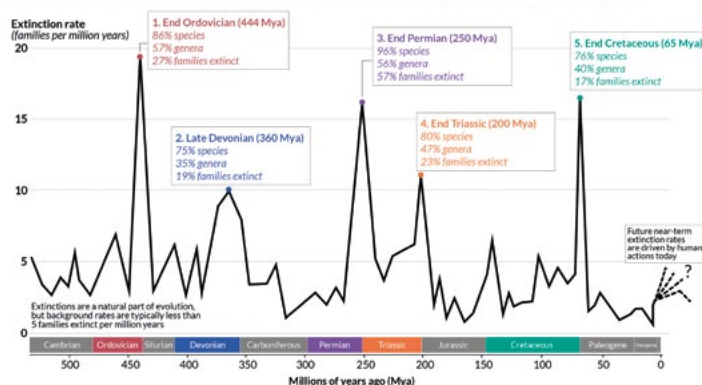
When I came upon regenerative design and development models, I found a way of interpreting the world as an integrated living system that can shift our design thinking and deepen our understanding of both ourselves,

and the systems we live in. Living systems are deeply complex, with all the interactions between participants exiting for mutual benefit. The oak tree doesn't negotiate with its neighbor the fir tree about which nutrients each will take from the soil, they co-exist, benefitting each other. Our current economic models don't support that. We have become inherently extractive. "How can I get as much of something for myself at as low cost as I can, and how can I scale as fast as I can and extract that value for shareholders?" In contrast, regeneration has us understand our unique value adding role in the living system within which we exist. Our lack of deep understanding of ourselves, our role within the natural living system and our extractive thinking is why we are no closer to meeting our climate targets since sustainability was introduced in 1987 and other intractable challenges persist. Regeneration is about understanding deeper interrelationships between things, understanding potential and creating the conditions for life to thrive. **FIGURE 3**

I started investing in companies that could help develop regenerative capabilities in communities and leaders, and the applied systematics work of thinkers such as J.G. Bennett⁴ and David Bohm⁵. Working to understand the reoccurring patterns within relationships in a complex system, we have both wisdom and knowledge. By creating shifts at the pattern level, regenerative design and development generates fundamental shifts to systemic challenges that last over time.

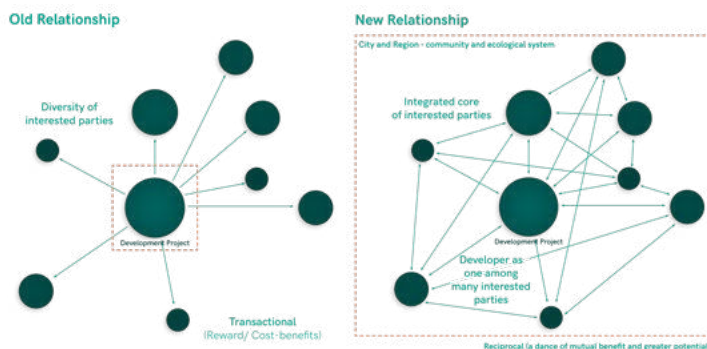
FIGURE 1 "Big Five" Mass Extinctions in Earth's History

A mass extinction is defined by the loss of at least 75% of species within a short period of time (geologically, this is around 2 million years.)



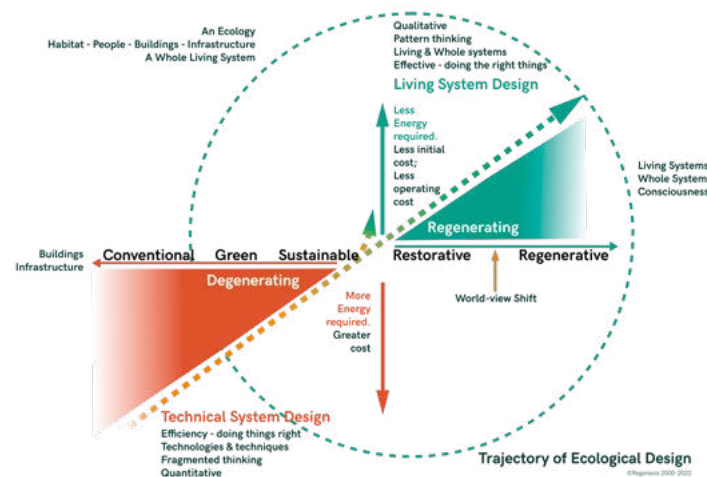
Extinctions are a natural part of evolution, but background rates are typically less than 3 families extinct per million years. Future near-term extinction rates are driven by human actions today.

FIGURE 2



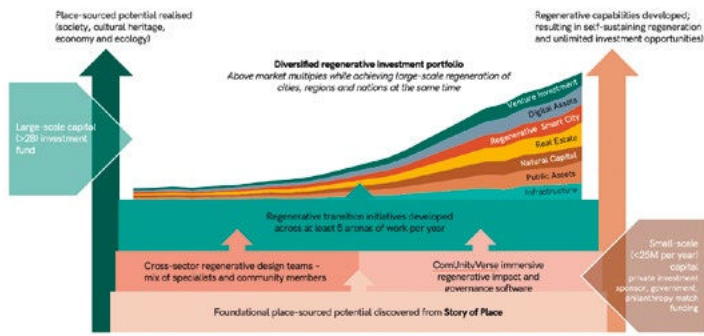
Fintech keeps the traditional transactional model in place, whereas regenerative solutions mirror nature's pattern of mutual benefit.

FIGURE 3



Trajectory of Ecological Design shows how conventional technical design is inherently different to regeneration design and development.

FIGURE 4



JET Group's Regenerative Transition Model which is a key framework for their Well-Being of Cities initiative. Story of Place is the foundation for understanding place based potential and patterns that enable them to shift systems and improve quality of life.

This can all sound very abstract, so let's make it concrete. US based Regenes Group⁶ worked with the villages in Loreto Bay, Mexico, which struggled with social and economic challenges. Located on an estuary in the Sea of Cortez, south of Loreto, this 6,000-unit eco-resort and mixed-use community development was a multi-party project involving private developers (The Trust for Sustainable Development, the Mexican Government, and representatives from the marine park). The regenerative process revealed the site of the development (thought to be a desert beach) was, unknown to all involved in the project, a severely degraded former estuary. The original (unbuilt) master plan that was completed before they invited Regenes into the project, unbeknownst to the developers, sited several of the development phases on top of the estuary, which lay between the mountains and the sea, and in the past had been a pivotal factor in maintaining the health and abundance of both the marine and terrestrial systems.

As it degraded, it became instead a source of deteriorating health. Once discovered, this insight helped drive an entirely new concept for the development, which then aspired to be more than simply a sustainable eco-resort, but an instrument and sole driving

force behind this possibility of regeneration. The estuary, if restored, could act as a regenerator for the health (and fishery) of the entire Sea of Cortez, as well as the local community. It shifted the role of the Loreto Bay Company from a resort developer seeking to demonstrate its commitment to being green, to a principal contributor to the health and evolution of the community, state, watershed, and the sea. Regenes worked with the planning and design teams to ensure that the development both supported and grew the health of the human community (through economic and agricultural development) as well as the natural systems that attracted people to the area.

Once the design team understood the critical importance of regenerating the estuary, Regenes then worked with them to re-masterplan the affected phases so that they served to both restore and enhance the estuary's critical life, while creating a human environment so appealing that sales in these phases soared. The regenerated estuary projected to produce 500 metric tons of fish per hectare in an area where marine life had almost disappeared.

In contrast, I was introduced to Toyota's Woven City in 2020, which is a smart city designed to

be a breakthrough in technology, mobility, and green design. In general, we are seeing growth in the global smart city markets in terms of revenue worth \$511.6 billion in 2022 and expected to grow to \$1024.4 billion in 2027, a CAGR of 14.4%⁷. As a result, many cities are looking to technology in the hopes that it will solve the city degeneration problem. The core focus for smart cities is technology, namely AI, machine learning, cloud, IoT and analytics. However, designers rarely design from an inherent understanding of the unique potential of a place and deep pattern understanding. FIGURE 4

To understand the existing recurring patterns in a place from an economic, ecological, social and culture/heritage perspective, as Regenes did in Loreto Bay, and then combine it with technological innovations that are designed from regenerative frameworks and place-based potential – may just combine the best of both worlds. So, I invested in JET Group⁸, specialists in regenerative transitions for cities. They have developed a program called the “Well-Being of Cities Initiative”, which enables cities to function as “Wise” cities, incorporating the inherent wisdom unique to each place with technology. Their service programs and technology designs

are rooted in regenerative frameworks. This results in deeper systemic shifts, which contribute increasing value to quality of life, as well as investor returns.

It is predicted that they can get cities to net positive in less than a decade, reduce climate risk and resolve some of the more challenging intractable issues facing cities. I have also invested in other companies working to develop regenerative capabilities in education. I personally work to educate other Family Offices to understand regenerative investing, so they can invest in ways that protect their future assets value for their future generations. ■

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Gaslighting at work

What does it sound like and how to respond

Have you ever raised a concern or expressed a need at the workplace, only to be told you are exaggerating?



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PALOMA WRITES

Have you doubted your own perception of a situation because you were told you were blowing things out of proportion?

Have you felt psychologically unsafe at work but unable to pinpoint why?

If you've answered yes. Chances are you were being gaslighted.

Gaslighting is a form of manipulation that involves denying, distorting, or manipulating information to make someone question their own perceptions or memories.

I've compiled ten examples of what gaslighting might sound like in the workplace, followed by some examples of how I respond. Some of these are taken from my lived experience. In those moments, I have often gone into "freeze response" which means I became non-verbal and fearful. I'm now better equipped to identify what gaslighting sounds like and how to respond. The suggested responses can empower you to address the situation in a constructive and assertive way.

1) **"You're being too sensitive. I didn't say that."**

Respond with: "I understand that we may have different perspectives on this, but I feel hurt by what you said. Can we talk about communicating in a more constructive way?"

2) **"That's not what happened. You must have misunderstood."**

Respond with: "I remember the situation differently. Let me give you my understanding of what happened."

3) **"You're overreacting. It wasn't that big of a deal."**

Respond with: "I'm sorry if I gave the impression of overreacting. This issue is important to me and I want to address it."

4) **"You're just being paranoid. I never said anything like that."**

Respond with: "I appreciate that you may not have intended to cause harm, but I feel like I've been dismissed. I want to make sure we're on the same page moving forward."

5) **"You're the only one who has a problem with this. Everyone else is fine with it."**

Respond with: "I understand that others may not share my concerns, but I feel like it's important for me to express my perspective. Also, just because they are not saying anything does not mean the situation doesn't bother them. It's possible they don't feel safe saying it."

6) **"You're not allowed to go over my head. You should defer to me."**

Respond with: "I value your input, but I'm allowed to seek guidance from leaders that are higher up than you. It doesn't mean I don't value your opinion."

7) **"You're just being emotional. You need to calm down and be rational."**

Respond with: "Given the situation, my reaction is valid. I'm feeling frustrated right now. I'd like to take a break and revisit this later."

8) **"You're taking things out of context. You need to look at the bigger picture."**

Respond with: "I think it's important to consider the context of this situation, but I also think we need to address the specific issue at hand."

9) **"You're not a team player. This is your personal issue and not my problem."**

Respond with: "I'm committed to being a team player, but I also want to make sure that my concerns are heard and addressed."

10) **"You're imagining things. You need to get your facts straight."**

Respond with: "I'm confident in my recollection of the situation, and I'm happy to provide evidence to support my position if necessary."

Gaslighting is a serious issue that can cause psychological harm and create a toxic work environment. Gaslighting can be difficult to recognize and respond to, but with the right tools and mindset, you can protect yourself and maintain your psychological safety at work. If you are in a leadership position, it is important that you create a culture that values open communication and encourages your staff to speak up. ■

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In Niger, a COVID-19 vaccination team heads out into the countryside to reach people outside their clinic.

©WHO

COVID-19 vaccination is rising in many vulnerable African communities thanks to EU-funded, WHO-led project

WHO COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

COVID-19 vaccination coverage is on the rise in some of Africa's most fragile humanitarian settings as a two-year project funded by the European Union enters its last four months.

At the start of 2022, the COVID-19 vaccination rate was less than 5% on average in the 16 participating countries. That rate is now closing in on 30% – the continent's average – among the 14 countries whose data was available in January.

The countries participating in the €16 million grant project are

Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Tanzania.

To achieve those rising numbers, national health workers trained by WHO experts have been administering vaccines in urban hubs, remote villages, refugee and displacement camps, workplaces, public spaces and elsewhere.

“We don't wait for the people to come to the vaccination sites. We go to the rural areas, to allow these

populations to be vaccinated without having to travel and abandon their work in the fields, which is very precious to them,” said Daré Rabiou, regional director of public health, population and Social Affairs in Maradi, Niger.

Rachida Ibrahim, a nurse at a health center in Kouroungoussao, elaborated on that way of working: “Every morning we vaccinate people against COVID-19. When there's nobody left to vaccinate, we get on the motorbike and go to a village to vaccinate there also.”

Some of the target countries now have an even higher rate of fully

vaccinated people than Africa's average. These are the Central African Republic, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Mozambique, Somalia and Tanzania.

In Liberia, where about 80% of the population has been fully vaccinated, health authorities and WHO staff worked with community mobilizers on outreach tactics such as home visits and vaccination campaigns in outdoor markets.

“I went from house to house in a community and met each member of the household and told them the importance of the



A vaccination team at work in Liberia, mid-2022. Mobilizing community leaders to dispel myths and misinformation about COVID-19 vaccination has been one of the keys to raising coverage rates.



Funded by the European Union and trained by WHO, vaccinators reached remote areas and camps for displaced people, including the Malika camp in Mozambique, above.



Niger once ranked among the world's least-covered countries. Today more than a quarter of the population has received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine.



«I came from Cabo Delgado to Lichinga to escape the conflict,» said Juliet Jose, above, in Mozambique. «I've had two doses already. The disease continues, and I want to prevent it.»

COVID vaccine,” said Jerry Barway, a community mobilizer in Liberia.

In Somalia, 42% of people were fully vaccinated by the end of 2022. Among these were some of the hardest-to-reach communities, such as nomads, refugees and people living in camps after fleeing drought and conflict. Project teams have so far fully vaccinated almost half of Somalia's internally displaced people.

From its start, the project has prioritized the most vulnerable, such as health workers, older people, and those living through humanitarian crises. In nine of the project countries, 56% of people of people living in refugee or displacement camps, along with their host communities, have been fully vaccinated, according to project data.

Most countries saw the biggest jump in their coverage rates after vaccination campaigns that were held from September to December of 2022. In Cameroon, for example, the number of vaccinated people doubled after a mass-vaccination campaign in November.

Mozambique has been one of the project's success stories; nearly two-thirds of the country's population has been fully vaccinated. Among that group is Julieta Jose, a resident of the Malika camp for internally displaced people.

“I'm very happy about the visit from the team because some people here in the community were never vaccinated,” she said. “It's the best way to prevent COVID-19. I told everyone I know to come and get it.”

The number of health workers trained to administer COVID-19

vaccines rose from about 130,000 less than a year ago to almost 1.6 million at the end of January; about 1000 of these were deployed in South Sudan in late 2022, helping raise the coverage rate from one of the world's lowest to about 20%. The workers had to learn the cold-chain requirements of the vaccines, service-delivery procedures and more. Among those trained was Isaac Chol.

“I know that if they all get vaccinated, my community will be free of this bad disease,” he said. ■

The work described in this story is made possible by a €16 million contribution to WHO from the European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Read more:

[EU European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations website](#)

[European Union funding boosts COVID-19 vaccination in Africa](#)

[Data management reinforces COVID-19 vaccination in Mozambique](#)

A Coruña, the british retreat from Spain

A two-hour flight from Geneva is the pretty port town of A Coruña, in Galicia at the northwest corner of Spain. Steeped in history with a (working) Roman lighthouse and stone age settlements along its coast, it was also the location of a brutal and chaotic retreat of the British, fleeing Napoleon's troops at the start of the 19th century. The loss of the British commander in this action was mourned in poetry and painting as a romantic example of self-sacrifice.

KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

On 16th January 1809, the British Army was fleeing in disarray, hastily trying to leave Spain whilst hotly pursued by Napoleon's troops as part of the Peninsular War (1807 – 1814). Order had largely broken down, and a force some 16,000 strong, including the famous Light Brigade were running for their lives. Some men pillaged and looted villages as they went, drinking themselves to oblivion ready to meet their deaths when the French caught up and dispatched them. It was a race to the coast and an evacuation fleet that was waiting to take the troops back to the safety of England.

In bitter Winter conditions, the British had marched across Northern Spain to the port town of A Coruña in Galicia, pursued every step of the way by the French army under Marshal of the Empire Jean de Dieu Soult. The British red coats were forced into one final confrontation (the Battle of Elviña) to hold the French off and give the men time to embark on the ships that had arrived late.

The leader of the British forces, Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore personally led his men against their pursuers and was killed in this action by cannon shot. He was hastily buried in the ruins of the rampart of the town, with only time for the briefest of ceremonies as French guns continued to bombard the British ships as they left port.

It was a major blow to the British war effort, and the loss of the commander and his hasty burial wrapped in his military cloak captured



Moore's Memorial in A Coruña.

the imagination. It was described by the poet Charles Wolfe whose verses were popular in the 19th century. He wrote:

*Not a drum was heard, not a funeral
note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged
his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.*

And ending after six verses with:

*Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and
we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.*

The rapid burial was also the subject of a painting by George Jones, as the British mourned the lack of time for a proper ceremony for the fallen leader. Moore had given express instructions as a young soldier that he always expected to be buried where he fell, should he die in battle.

Born in Glasgow in 1761, Moore was a highly experienced soldier who had seen action in the American War of Independence and in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. He spent 2 years in Geneva studying when a young man and served as a politician for 6 years representing Lanark Burghs in Scotland. He had also faced the French before, campaigning in Egypt in



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Sir John Moore by Sir Thomas Lawrence oil on canvas, circa 1800-1804.



© HETU / Wikimedia Commons

Sir John Moore monument in St Paul's Cathedral.

It is from this time that the term “guerrilla war” entered English from the Spanish. The word comes from the diminutive of Spanish “guerra”, meaning war. So, guerrilla can be literally construed as a “little war”.

1801, and had notably been given the responsibility of organising the defences of Southern England when an invasion from Napoleon from across the Channel seemed inevitable.

One of his innovations and a legacy that survives to this day was the construction of Martello Towers – small, circular defence points that could provide cannon cover over a wide arc. Moore based their design on the Torre di Mortella which he had seen in Corsica. One distinctive feature of these towers was that their walls were thicker on the sea-facing side than on the land-facing. The logic was that this provided defence for the most likely direction of attack (from the sea) but also meant that the

structure could more easily be destroyed in retreat (from the land side) to stop an enemy force occupying it. These buildings can still be found all around the English coast (and even as far away as Canada) and several were built out to sea to provide a defence in depth strategy.

Moore’s death at 47 brought to the end a long and varied international career and he was commemorated with statues in his native Glasgow and in St Paul’s Cathedral, London which shows his lifeless body being lowered into his makeshift grave, the epitome of self-sacrifice and a humble, hurried funeral.

In Spain also, at the site where he fell, the French leader de Dieu Soult ordered a permanent memorial to be erected in honour of his former adversary. The French raised up a monument which was reconstructed in 1811 and can still be visited today in a park in A Coruña in the ruins of the format citadel. The tomb is surrounded by a formal garden representing different parts of the world and Wolfe’s poem is carved around the walls.

After A Coruña, the Spanish continued a guerrilla war against the French and the British would ultimately return in 1812 under Wellington to push a counterattack that would eventually see Napoleon forced out of Spain and finally exiled to the island of Elba in 1814.

Moore’s old adversary De Soult survived the war in Spain to become Minister of War and eventually Prime Minister in France. He was the French representative at the Coronation of Queen Victoria in April 1838 where, allegedly, his old enemy Wellington grabbed him by the arm and exclaimed, “I have you at last!” ■



The four last songs of Richard Strauss

On Wednesday 24 May 2023 at Geneva's Victoria Hall, Jonathan Nott conducted the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande in the première of Yann Robin's concerto for string quartet and orchestra, *Shadows III*. In the second part of the evening, we heard the Armenian-Lithuanian soprano Asmik Grigorian¹ sing the sublime "Vier Letzte Lieder" of the Bavarian composer Richard Strauss.



© Alfred de Zayas

In 1946 Strauss was residing in Montreux, a refugee from his bombed-out homeland and his confiscated house in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Famous for his tone poems like *Also sprach Zarathustra* (picked up by Stanley Kubrick in 2001 *Space Odyssey*), and operas like *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Elektra*, *Salome*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Capriccio* and *Arabella*, Strauss came to Switzerland to find peace and quiet away from the material and spiritual devastation of Germany.

Besides being a great musician, Strauss was highly educated and a personal friend of major German literary figures including Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Stefan Zweig, both of whom delivered libretti for his operas. Although Strauss had made Switzerland his second home and was comfortably housed in the Palace Hotel in Montreux, with a magnificent view over Lake Geneva, he was suffering from a serious depression. During one of his frequent visits, his son Richard found his father so downcast that he urged him: "Now, dad - cheer up a bit, why don't you do what you like best, why don't you write for me a few Lieder?" One year later, when Richard's wife Anna was visiting at the Palace Hotel, Strauss casually told his daughter-in-law when she was about to leave -- "Say, Anna, here are the songs your husband ordered from me".

Strauss died on 8 September 1949, aged 85, in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The première of *Die Vier letzte Lieder* took place posthumously on 22 May 1950 at Royal Albert Hall in London, sung by the Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad, accompanied by the Philharmonia Orchestra under the baton of Wilhelm Fürtwängler.²

Every great soprano has sung them since – Sena Jurinac, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Lisa Della Casa, Birgit Nilsson, Teresa Stich-Randall, Gundula Janowitz, Lucia Popp, Kiri Te Kanawa, Felicity Lott, Jesse Norman, Renée Fleming, Deborah Voigt, Nina Stemme, Anna Netrebko and Asmik Grigorian. My favourite recording is that of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf under the baton of George Szell.³ But interestingly enough, the "four last songs" are not really the last songs written by Strauss – he still wrote a final song "Malven" (Mallows), with lyrics by Richard Strauss himself. "Malven" was brilliantly recorded by Jesse Norman before her untimely death in 2019. Asmik Grigorian is the daughter of the famous Armenian tenor Gegham Grigoryan (1951-2016) and the Lithuanian soprano Irena Milkeviciute. ■

¹ <https://www.asmik-grigorian.com/>

<https://www.osr.ch/en/about-the-osr/musicians/musicians/people/asmik-grigorian>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-odXYLs-iE4>

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsOvSC9DUhU>

HERMANN HESSE

Frühling

*In dämmerigen Grüften
träumte ich lang
von deinen Bäumen und blauen Lüften,
von deinem Duft und Vogelsang.*

*Nun liegst du erschlossen
in Gleiss und Zier,
von Licht übergossen
wie ein Wunder vor mir.*

*Du kennst mich wieder,
du lockst mich zart,
es zittert durch all meine Glieder
deine selige Gegenwart!*

Spring

*In half-lit hollows long
I dreamt of blooming trees,
your fragrant scents, the song
of birds and azure breeze.*

*Once more in streaming light
you lie revealed for all to see
in splendour and delight,
a miracle to me.*

*You recognize me still,
seduce me tenderly.
Through all my limbs pulsates a thrill:
your blissful presence sings in me.*

JOSEPH VON EICHENDORFF

Im Abendrot

*Wir sind durch Not und Freude
gegangen Hand in Hand,
vom Wandern ruhen wir
nun überm stillen Land.*

*Rings sich die Täler neigen,
es dunkelt schon die Luft;
zwei Lerchen nur noch steigen
nachträumend in den Duft.*

*Tritt her und lass sie schwirren;
bald ist es Schlafenszeit;
dass wir uns nicht verirren
in dieser Einsamkeit!*

*O weiter, stiller Friede!
so tief im Abendrot!
Wie sind wir wandermüde—
Ist dies etwa der Tod?*

September

*Der Garten trauert,
kühl sinkt in die Blumen der Regen.
Der Sommer schauert
still seinem Ende entgegen.*

*Golden tropft Blatt um Blatt
nieder vom hohen Akazienbaum.
Sommer lächelt erstaunt und matt
in den sterbenden Gartentraum.*

*Lange noch bei den Rosen
bleibt er stehen, sehnt sich nach Ruh.
Langsam tut er die [grossen]
müdigewordnen Augen zu.*

September

*The garden lies in mourning,
cooling rain sinks in the flowers.
Summer shudders at the closing,
silently it cowers.*

*Golden fall leaf after leaf
from high acacia trees, a gleam
of summer smiles in awe and grief
upon the dying garden dream.*

*Faithfully it lingers on the roses,
yearns for stillness, mutely lies,
as gradually it closes
wearily its wondrous eyes.*

At Sunset

*In joy and sorrow... how
we wandered hand in hand!
From many journeys now
we pause to view the tranquil land.*

*The valleys fade around us,
as the air itself grows dim.
Alone two larks soar high and toss,
half-dreaming in a scented hymn.*

*Come closer, let them play.
The hour of sleep is near and good.
Take care that we not lose our way
in this suffusing solitude.*

*O vast and silent Peace,
the sunset red so deep.
From travels weary, let us cease
and wonder – is this death or sleep?*

Beim Schlafengehn

Nun der Tag mich müd gemacht,

*soll mein sehnliches Verlangen
freundlich die gestirnte Nacht
wie ein müdes Kind empfangen.*

*Hände, lasst von allem tun,
Stirn, vergiss du alles Denken,
alle meine Sinne nun
wollen sich in Schlummer senken.*

*Und die Seele, unbewacht,
will in freien Flügen schweben,
um im Zauberkreis der Nacht
tief und tausendfach zu leben.*

Going to Sleep

*How this day has tired me...
May now the starry night receive
my urgent longings graciously,
as when a drowsy child receives reprieve.*

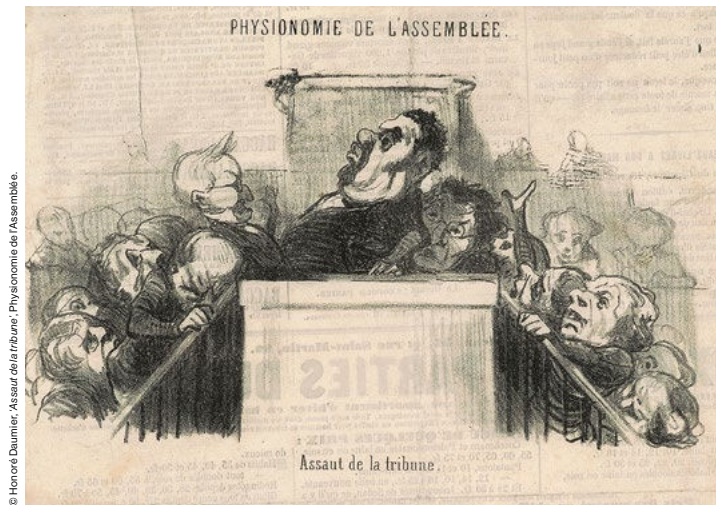
*Hands: let all your efforts cease.
Mind: forget your hectic thinking.
All my senses are at peace,
in slumber slowly sinking.*

*Now my soul escapes its sentry,
as it freely floats in flight –
to thousand lives it earned its entry
in that magic space of night.*

“L’Assaut de la Tribune”

XIX and XX Century cartoons that resonate today

One hundred years ago, two émigré Hungarian artists, Aloïs Derso and Emery Kelen, arrived in Geneva and embedded themselves in the recently established League of Nations.



© Honoré Daumier, Assaut de la tribune, Physionomie de l'Assemblée.

Paris: *Le Charivari*, Aubert, 1849, Boston Public Library.

DAVID MACFADYEN AND STEFAN SLATER

They sketched the organization at work and did so in a unique way, both contributing to each drawing. The first depictions bearing their joint signatures appeared in 1923 in the portfolios, *Guignol à Lausanne* and *Les Gardiens de la Paix*. The former is a set of caricatures and cartoons of an eight-month-long conference at Lausanne that concluded a post-war treaty between the Allies and Turkey; the latter is a collection of 350 caricatures and five cartoons of the personalities and work of the League. A third portfolio, *Le Testament de Genève*, published in 1931, provides an insightful visual history complemented by text, of the wide range of initiatives in international cooperation undertaken during the League's first decade. These were not the type of cartoons seen in

today's newspapers. One, *La Tour de Babel*, features 272 individuals, a great many crammed into Geneva's *Brasserie Bavaria*, 'La Potinière de la S.D.N.' In his superb autobiography, *Peace in Their Time*, Kelen describes this 'Gossiping Place of the League' as: one [where] no statesmen or journalist, certainly no tourist who passed Geneva, would have failed to eat a frankfurter there. Here you might have found yourself sitting at the next table to Briand, Stresemann, Austen Chamberlain, Ramsay MacDonald, Beneš, Litvinov... Above all, the Bavaria was a conclave of journalists [who] need a place, open late, where they can meet, consult, sift gossip, thresh out the latest diplomatic whodunit, and find answers to important questions, such as what do you know, what do you think, and what will you have?

Some 150 Derso and Kelen caricatures of prominent politicians came to cover the walls of the *Brasserie*, located formerly in the Rue du Rhône.

The artists' next publications were bilingual: *Pages Glorieuses - Days of Hope and Glory* (1932), about the disarmament conference, and *Au Banquet des Nations - The League at Lunch* (1937), a collection of 16 menu cards drawn between 1925 and 1937, each illustrated by a cartoon of the political situation of the day. The cards were produced mainly for the annual banquets hosted by the International Press Association for the Assembly President and Council Members, and stimulated revealing after-dinner speeches. Moving to the United States in 1938, fleeing Hitler, they produced brilliant cartoons critical of the Nazis, notably for the fabled US magazine, *Ken*, and went on to record the establishment and nascent work of the United Nations.

Altogether, their artwork provides a visual record of the early endeavours of nations to work together. *The Political Cartoons of Derso and Kelen*, a book which the authors of this article have just published, includes some 100 cartoons encompassing the hopes and despair of international cooperation over three decades.* The present account focusses, however, on a single cartoon *L'Assaut de la Tribune* [Assault on the Rostrum], one of

Alois Derso (left) and Emery Kelen at work on *L'Assaut de la Tribune*, 1936.

several in the book inspired by classical art and that approach fine art in quality.

This particular cartoon pays homage to Honoré Daumier, the 'Michelangelo of Caricature', who published a lithograph of the same name in 1849, depicting the characters of the Legislative Assembly of the Second French Republic (Figure 1).

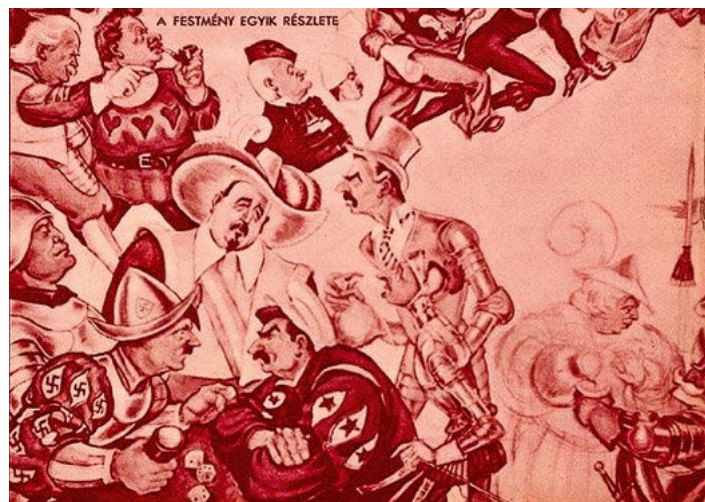
This shows Victor Hugo, his forehead and nose crushed against the left handrail by delegates of the monarchist *Parti de l'Ordre*, pushing past him to mount the rostrum, which is dominated by the massive frame of Antony Thouret, an ardent republican, later exiled. Derso and Kelen's large panoramic tableau depicts an imagined assault on the rostrum of the League of Nations Assembly in 1936 (Figure 2).

Figure 2 is a photograph of them composing the cartoon, which shows 60 politicians of the era climbing ladders, steps and ropes to be the first to reach the rostrum, some with ill intentions for the world, others with good. Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi propagandist, hands outstretched to grab the microphone, is placed at the top of the left-side steps. Below, the rotund figure of Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov reaches out to hold him back. In

contrast, a figure is being thrust forward on the stairs opposite, speech in hand – the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie, who was initially refused permission to address the Assembly after his country had been invaded by Mussolini.

L'Assaut de la Tribune is the masterpiece of Derso and Kelen's cartoon work, for its size, 2 × 3 metres, for the attention they gave to it – Kelen 'for three months eating and sleeping with it' – and, above all, for its imaginative artistic summation of the political situation of the day. Almost all the figures in the cartoon, all named, had been visitors to Geneva, and all are dressed in centuries-old costumes of *L'Escalade*, on which the cartoon is based. They donated the large canvas, in lieu of bills, to the proprietor of the family pension in which they lived in Geneva, for display as a mural in the former Hôtel du Palais, which the lady managed.

A detail of *L'Assaut de la Tribune* (Figure 3) focuses on the three dictators, Stalin playing dice with Hitler, with Mussolini behind him, both dressed for battle. This snippet also shows, with a large hat, the French *homme politique*, Léon Jouhaux, a socialist colleague of the first ILO Director, Albert Thomas, and, in a top hat, British politician Neville Chamberlain,

Detail of painting, *L'Assaut de la Tribune*, 1936.

whom Derso and Kelen repeatedly satirised in later cartoons, one of which forms the cover of the authors' book. To their right is the pioneering female Soviet diplomat, Alexandra Kollontai, for whom Avenue de la Paix was temporarily renamed in 2019 as part of the *100elles* project (Figure 4).

La Tribune de Genève, in its issue of 18 November 1936, published the photo shown in Figure 2, stating incorrectly that it shows the artists working on a decoration for the bar in the new Palais des Nations. The newspaper immediately received a letter of protest from the *Président de l'Union Civique de Genève*, claiming that this desecrated a glorious page in Genevan history. Derso and Kelen responded to the complaint with a mollifying letter, explaining to newspaper readers that no one from the League Secretariat had ordered or seen the panel. It was a private commission (as described above for the Hôtel du Palais). The bar in the new Palais des Nations was decorated, they continued, with original drawings of the menu cards they had produced for the annual press lunches. They invited the President of the *Union Civique* to view the mural, confident that he would find nothing to offend the citizens of Geneva. This diplomatic response and a small adjustment of the artwork, deleting the cross shown on the

breastplate of the figure bearing the ladder, calmed the objections.

The whereabouts of the original mural is unknown, having been acquired from the hotel by a Geneva photographer and later sold to a private collector in Lausanne. The image reproduced in our book is sourced from a 170 × 344 mm photograph of high quality with vivid colours, kindly provided by a private collector, and reproduced with permission of the photographer's widow.

L'Assaut de la Tribune is a fine example of the artistry and political insights that Derso and Kelen display in their cartoons. Characteristically, there is humour, wit and satire, but no heavy-handed moralizing. The artists do however express opinions in their drawings. Here, the tableau is an allegory for the dangerous situation in which the League found itself. ■

* Stefan Slater and David Macfadyen, *The Political Cartoons of Derso and Kelen: Years of Hope and Despair*. London: Lund Humphries, June 2023.



© Carla Edelembos

Cols routiers de Suisse (5) Le col du Grimsel

Le col du Grimsel se trouve à 2164 mètres d'altitude, à côté d'un lac, maintenant un barrage, qui s'appelle *Totensee*, le lac des morts.

**CARLA EDELEMBOS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS**

Dans le hameau de Gletsch, sur lequel nous avons déjà écrit dans l'article dédié au col de la Furka¹, commence aussi la route du col du Grimsel. Après un regard admiratif sur le glacier du Rhône, qui descendait jadis jusqu'à Gletsch, nous bifurquons à gauche pour monter au col qui relie le Valais et l'Oberland bernois. Comme souvent, le ciel est bleu côté valaisan, mais se couvre de plus en plus en montant, et quand nous arrivons après avoir monté les 6 kilomètres qui nous séparent du col, nous sommes dans un épais brouillard.

On dit qu'en 1211, des soldats des troupes du comte Berchtold V von

Zähringen, qui voulait conquérir le Valais, ont été tués et poussés dans le lac du col par les Valaisans. Mieux établie historiquement est la bataille du Grimsel du 14 août 1799, pendant la deuxième guerre de coalition contre Napoléon. Des soldats autrichiens qui gardaient le col, et qui appartenaient à la coalition de l'armée dirigée par le général russe Alexandre Souvorov, y furent surpris par des troupes françaises. Après une bataille de six heures, ils étaient vaincus et beaucoup d'entre eux y laissaient leur vie.

Maintenant le lac et ses environs sont calmes, il n'y a que le brouillard, une petite lueur de soleil qui sort de temps en temps pour faire

briller des vagues tranquilles, et les cimes des montagnes bernoises qu'on devine derrière les nuages. Par beau temps, on peut admirer les reflets des Finsteraarhorn, Schreckhorn et Wetterhorn dans les eaux du lac.

Nous entendons des sifflements typiques des marmottes, qui proviennent probablement du parc à côté de l'hôtel-restaurant *Alpenrösli*, où se trouve aussi un petit musée de cristal de roche. De l'autre côté du lac se trouve l'hôtel *Grimsel Passhöhe*.

La route du col du Grimsel fut inaugurée en 1894. La montée assez raide depuis Gletsch amène au col en lacets réguliers.



De l'autre côté, la route descend doucement en suivant le val supérieur de l'Aar et a besoin de 27 kilomètres pour arriver au village d'Innertkirchen dans la vallée de Hasli, pas loin de Meiringen.

Il est probable que les Romains aient déjà utilisé le col, et au Moyen Age le passage du col était important pour le transport du fromage suisse vers le Piémont, en échange de produits piémontais, notamment du vin, du maïs, du riz et du cuir piémontais. Le transport des marchandises se faisait d'abord par les muletiers de Hasli vers le col du Grimsel, après par les Valaisans vers le col de Gries², et depuis le col de Gries par les Piémontais vers Domodossola, et vice versa. Au 19^e siècle les Piémontais obtinrent le monopole pour le transport; ils passaient toutes les deux semaines avec leurs colonnes de mulets. Après avoir acheté de la marchandise au marché de Domodossola le samedi, ils franchissaient le col de

Gries le mardi pour passer la nuit dans la vallée de Conches avant d'atteindre l'hospice du Grimsel le mercredi. Le jeudi, ils vendaient leurs produits à Meiringen (lieu rendu célèbre en 1893 par Arthur Conan Doyle dans sa nouvelle *The Final Problem* pour y faire mourir Sherlock Holmes), avant de refaire le chemin dans la direction inverse, cette fois les mulets chargés de fromage. Une vie d'itinérance dure, qui fut interrompue après la construction du tunnel du Gothard en 1882, qui entraîna le déclin du trafic muletier et l'abandon de la route Grimsel-Gries.

Sur le col du Grimsel se trouve une jolie chapelle moderne, conçue par l'artiste valaisan Anton Mutter, natif de Naters. Il y a aussi un monument qui marque le point de partage des eaux du Rhin et du Rhône. Depuis le col, en fait, la pluie qui tombe sur le côté valaisan continue sa descente vers la Méditerranée par le Rhône et la pluie du côté bernois

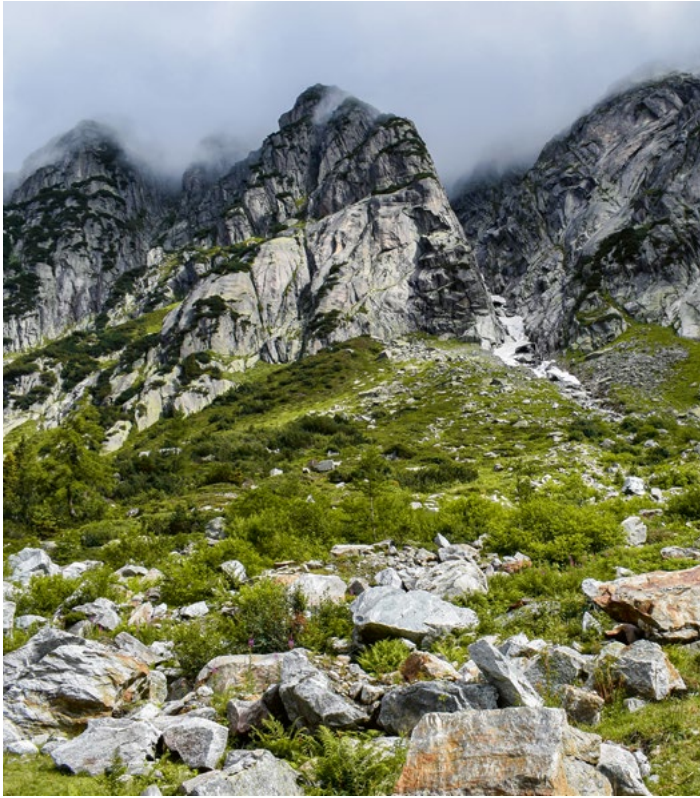
se dirige vers la mer du Nord, en passant par l'Aar qui transporte l'eau sur 290 kilomètres avant de la déverser dans le Rhin doublant ainsi le volume de ce fleuve. En fait, le bassin versant de l'Aar occupe environ 60% de la totalité du bassin du Rhin en Suisse!

La source supérieure de l'Aar se trouve dans le glacier d'Oberaar. Les personnes sportives suivent le sentier qui part du col pour arriver en deux heures à l'auberge d'Oberaar depuis laquelle on a une belle vue sur le lac et le glacier. L'auberge est aussi accessible en voiture par une route panoramique de 6 kilomètres; comme la route est à sens unique, les montées et les descentes s'alternent et ne se font que deux fois par heure. Vous pouvez aussi prendre le téléphérique d'Oberaar depuis l'hospice du Grimsel, qui vous dépose au pied du lac d'Oberaar. Depuis l'auberge, une marche d'environ une heure amène au glacier, donc à la source supérieure de l'Aar.

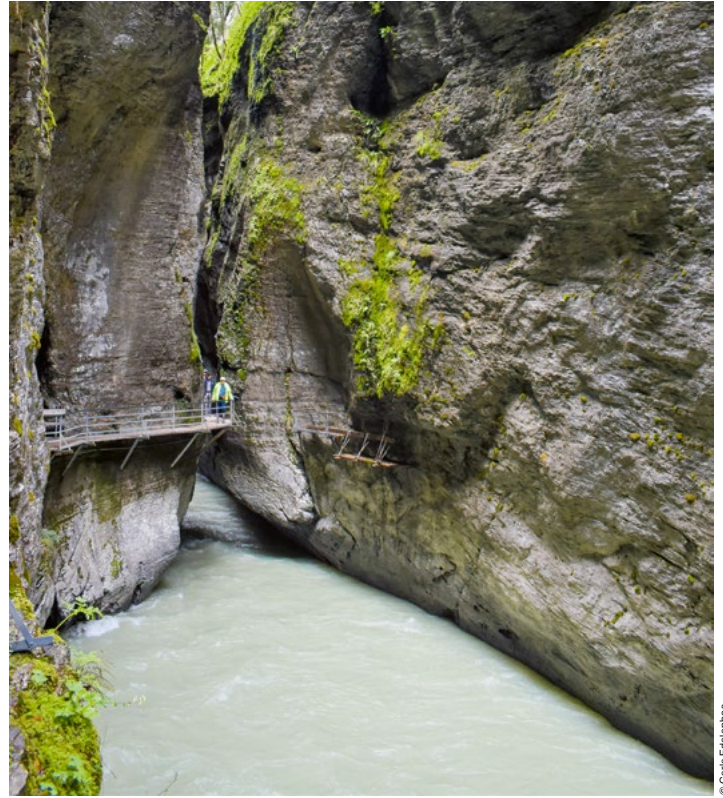
La source inférieure de l'Aar est derrière le lac de Grimsel, au glacier de Lauteraar, où se trouve la cabane de Lauteraar qu'on peut rejoindre en 4 heures de marche en longeant le lac. Autour de la cabane, des amateurs peuvent faire des beaux tours d'escalade. La cabane est gardée pendant l'été et possède 30 places dans des dortoirs. En hiver, elle fonctionne comme refuge et possède 12 lits.

Si vous voulez voir toute la force de cette rivière, il suffit de continuer la descente de la route du Grimsel. Juste après Innertkirchen se trouvent les fabuleuses gorges de l'Aar, où la rivière tourbillonne entre des parois étroites; c'est un endroit spectaculaire, à ne pas manquer! Des galeries donnent accès à la partie la plus impressionnante des gorges dont les parois sont creusées et polies par l'érosion.

En descendant la route, on passe le lac du Grimsel, maintenant un



© Carli Edelbrois



© Carli Edelbrois

barrage, où se trouve l'hospice du Grimsel. L'existence de l'hospice est documentée dès le 14^e siècle, quand elle appartenait aux habitants de la vallée de Hasli en bas du col. Le naturaliste et alpiniste genevois Horace Bénédicte de Saussure a passé la nuit à l'hospice en juillet 1783, pendant ses recherches sur le glacier d'Oberaar. Il n'a pas trop aimé l'auberge: «Le lit que m'offrirent mes hôtes, dans une chambre empestée de l'odeur du vin & du fromage, me causa tant de répugnance, que je préférerais d'aller coucher sur le foin.³» C'est sûr qu'on y loge mieux aujourd'hui!

L'hôtel historique ne s'est pas toujours trouvé à l'endroit actuel. Depuis 1397, où il est mentionné pour la première fois, il a été démoli, reconstruit, et même incendié: en 1852, le gérant de l'hospice qui n'avait pas obtenu la prolongation du bail, mit en scène un incendie accidentel pour pouvoir réclamer des dédommagements de son assurance. Malheureusement pour lui, la fraude fut découverte et il fut condamné à mort! Quelque

temps après, sa peine fut convertie en 20 ans de prison, et après 4 ans d'emprisonnement, l'aubergiste désespéré fut libéré et banni de la Confédération, sous condition qu'il paye pour ses employés complices, eux aussi bannis, les coûts de leur voyage vers l'Amérique du Sud. Une justice pour le moins originale!

En 1928 l'hôtel, qui avait été reconstruit après cet épisode dramatique, fut noyé avec la construction du lac de barrage du Grimsel. En 1932 un nouvel hôtel était prêt pour accueillir les visiteurs: il répondait à toutes les exigences de l'époque moderne et, vu sa proximité avec la centrale hydraulique, était même chauffé à l'électricité, inédit pour l'époque! Depuis 2010, l'auberge ouvre ses portes également en hiver, mais elle n'est accessible qu'avec un guide. Les heureux hôtes voyagent en car postal, montent à bord de deux téléphériques et traversent les galeries souterraines de la centrale électrique pour enfin arriver à l'hospice. Cela promet d'être une belle aventure et j'ai bien envie de le faire un jour!

Pour des touristes intéressés par la production d'énergie, des excursions sont organisées pendant l'été pour visiter des centrales. En fait, la région du Grimsel compte 13 centrales hydro-électriques de différentes dimensions, qui produisent ensemble 2300 gigawatt-heures par an, ce qui répond aux besoins de plus d'un million de ménages en Suisse.

Tous les téléphériques dans les environs du Grimsel ont d'ailleurs été construits d'abord pour les besoins d'entretien des centrales. L'entreprise d'électricité qui les gère est actuellement en train de construire un nouveau mur de barrage au lac du Grimsel pour remplacer l'ancien mur, bâti il y a cent ans. En été, des visites guidées du chantier sont proposées.

Un autre projet, pas encore entamé, est celui de la construction d'un tunnel sous le col. Comme la ligne de haute tension qui traverse le Grimsel doit être renouvelée, le projet prévoit d'enterrer les câbles haute tension par

le creusement d'un tunnel de 22 kilomètres, depuis Innertkirchen, dans le canton de Berne, vers Oberwald, dans le canton du Valais. Les initiateurs veulent profiter du creusement pour prévoir un double usage, incluant un tunnel ferroviaire; la galerie de câble fonctionnant comme galerie de sécurité accompagnant la voie de train. Au moment où j'écris cet article, le parlement à Berne doit encore décider s'il veut accorder des crédits pour la construction du tunnel ferroviaire; les travaux devraient commencer en 2027. ■

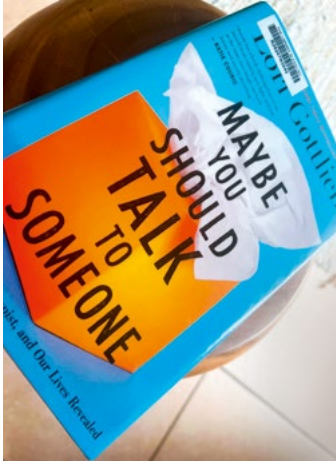
Pour plus d'informations:

- Hotel Alpenrösi: <https://www.grimselfpass.com>
- L'auberge Oberaar: <https://www.grimselfwelt.ch/fr/hotels-du-grimsel/berghaus-oberaar/>
- La cabane de Lauteraar: <https://www.lauteraarhuetten.ch/>
- Les gorges de l'Aar: <https://aaeschlucht.ch/>
- Le Grimsel en hiver: <https://www.grimselfwelt.ch/fr/hotels-du-grimsel/havre-de-paix-hivernal/>
- Centrales d'électricité: <https://www.grimselfstrom.ch/>
- Centre d'information à Innertkirchen: <https://www.grimselftor.ch/>

1 *New Special*, mars 2023
 2 Voir l'article dans cette série sur le Nufenen, *New Special*, avril 2023.
 3 Horace Bénédicte de Saussure – *Voyages dans les Alpes*, 1786-1796, chapitre V.

Book review

“Maybe you should talk to someone”



DEBORAH RANDOLPH TALON, WHO

I have read my fair share of self-help books and wanted something different so when my librarian suggested I read “Maybe You Should Talk to Someone” by Lori Gottlieb which is more of a novel as opposed to a self-help book, (but somehow you still learn so much about yourself and the world of therapy), I was intrigued.

“Maybe You Should Talk to Someone” “is a thought-provoking and emotionally powerful book that explores the intricacies of the human mind and the complexities of the therapeutic process. The book tells the story of Lori, a therapist who finds herself in need of therapy after a sudden breakup with her boyfriend. Through her sessions with her

own therapist, Wendell, and the stories of her patients, Lori offers readers a candid and insightful look into the world of therapy. One of the book’s greatest strengths is the way it demystifies the therapeutic process. Lori skillfully explains how therapy works and what patients can expect from their sessions, while also showing how difficult it can be to be vulnerable and honest with oneself and others. The book highlights the importance of seeking help and the transformative power of therapy in the face of life’s challenges.

Another notable aspect of “Maybe You Should Talk to Someone” is the way Lori interweaves her personal story with those of her patients. Through their stories, she explores a wide range of

human experiences, including love, loss, addiction, and mental illness. Lori’s patients are vividly portrayed, and readers will undoubtedly recognize themselves or someone they know in their struggles and triumphs.

As a friend to whom I recommended the book told me, “its makes one smile, cry and think”. Overall, “Maybe You Should Talk to Someone” is a beautifully written and deeply affecting book that offers readers a new perspective on the human condition. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the human mind and the transformative power of therapy. I would highly recommend it. ■



DECOLONIZATION, LOCALIZATION AND WHO

HISTORY MATTERS PART I

with your host,
GARRY ASLANYAN



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Au Caire, comme dans toute l'Égypte, le même accueil toujours aussi chaleureux de la population.

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ÉGYPTE (1/4)

Le berceau de la civilisation

L'égyptologue français Jean-François Champollion découvrait en 1822 le principe de déchiffrement des hiéroglyphes égyptiens. Un siècle plus tard, en novembre 1922, l'archéologue britannique Howard Carter mettait au jour le tombeau de Toutankhamon qui ne cesse depuis de fasciner. L'occasion de repartir en Égypte sur les traces de son plus célèbre pharaon.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

L'Égypte, c'est un mélange passionnant d'aventure, de culture et de mystère. C'est un pays unique, une destination surprenante pleine de magie et d'histoire, qui offre à ses visiteurs une expérience inoubliable. Pour organiser cette nouvelle aventure j'ai fait appel à mon ami et guide égyptien Mohamed Ibrahim* avec qui j'avais notamment sillonné la péninsule du Sinaï en 2008 (voir *UNSpecial* janvier 2009). Maintes fois nous avons évoqué l'organisation d'une expédition entre Égypte et Soudan, au fil du Nil. Mais les aléas de la vie, les périodes d'insécurité et les conflits militaires n'ont jamais permis de concrétiser ce projet complexe à monter. Et une fois

encore il a bien failli échouer; nos visas pour le Soudan ne nous ont été délivrés que la veille de notre départ, et seulement quelques jours après avoir quitté la capitale Khartoum, le Soudan sera en proie à une guerre civile et ses frontières seront fermées.

Natif du Caire, Mohamed connaît bien entendu l'Égypte comme sa poche pour l'avoir parcourue de long en large à plusieurs reprises. Les pyramides, les temples, le désert et la vallée du Nil n'ont plus de secrets pour lui. Fleuve mythique, créateur de vie en plein désert, le Nil est, avec l'Amazone, l'un des deux plus longs fleuves au monde. Il traverse dix pays au cours de son voyage avant de se jeter dans la mer Méditerranée.

Notre périple va tout d'abord nous emmener aux pyramides, en périphérie du Caire; ensuite nous emprunterons le train pour nous rendre à Louxor puis à Edfou où nous attend notre sandal afin de remonter le Nil jusqu'à Assouan. Ce type d'embarcation ancestral et typique de l'Égypte aux élégantes voiles latines était autrefois destiné au transport de pierres.

D'Assouan, c'est par la route que nous rejoindrons ensuite le temple d'Abou Simbel construit sur les berges du lac Nasser, la plus vaste étendue d'eau artificielle au monde. Situé à la frontière entre l'Égypte et le Soudan, sa superficie représente 11 fois celle du lac Léman. Nous le traverserons pour rejoindre le Soudan que

nous explorerons en véhicule tout terrain. Rare guide francophone ayant plusieurs fois exploré cette république d'Afrique du Nord-Est, Mohamed se fera un plaisir de nous faire découvrir toutes les richesses et beautés de ce pays au passé multimillénaire longtemps mystérieux et encore méconnu.

Plus de cinq mille ans d'histoire

Seulement quelques heures après avoir quitté la paisible cité de Calvin, le changement est radical. Le Caire, capitale de l'Égypte dont l'agglomération héberge près de 23 millions d'habitants, nous accueille avec ses gigantesques embouteillages rythmés au son des klaxons. La plus grande métropole du monde arabe, ville



© Claude Maillard

Fleuve mythique qui s'étend sur presque 7000 kilomètres, le Nil donne vie aux zones arides et inhospitalières du désert qu'il traverse.



© Claude Maillard

Situé au centre de la ville authentique du Caire, le pittoresque souk Khan el-Khalili date du XIV^e siècle.



© Claude Maillard

Natif du Caire, notre guide Mohamed Ibrahim (Altaï Travel) sera à l'origine de cette exceptionnelle aventure vécue en Égypte et au Soudan.

tentaculaire, bruyante, vit 24 heures sur 24. On peut y trouver tout ce que l'on veut, n'importe où et à n'importe quelle heure. Les Cairotes sont par ailleurs d'une gentillesse surprenante et vous reçoivent très chaleureusement.

Située à un endroit stratégique, au carrefour du Moyen-Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord, l'Égypte est le troisième pays le plus peuplé d'Afrique derrière le Nigéria et l'Éthiopie. Elle est divisée en quatre régions: la Basse-Égypte, la Moyenne-Égypte, la Haute-Égypte et la Nubie. L'Égypte étant essentiellement recouverte par le Sahara, le Nil qui la traverse du sud au nord accueille sur ses rives la majorité de sa population estimée à plus de 104 millions d'habitants.

Considérée comme le berceau de la civilisation, l'Égypte a l'une des plus longues histoires du monde. Des monuments emblématiques tels que les pyramides de Gizeh et la vallée des Rois reflètent cet héritage et demeurent des sources importantes d'intérêt scientifique et populaire. Pendant la période de domination romaine, l'Égypte est devenue l'un des premiers centres du christianisme avant d'être islamisée par les conquêtes arabes du VII^e siècle. Elle demeure un pays principalement musulman avec une minorité chrétienne importante.

L'Égypte est gouvernée en tant que province ottomane entre le XVI^e siècle et le XIX^e siècle avant d'obtenir son autonomie en 1806

sous le règne de Méhémet Ali. Pendant la Première Guerre mondiale, le pays devient brièvement un protectorat britannique avant d'obtenir son indépendance en 1922 en tant que royaume. La dynastie de Méhémet Ali est renversée par un coup d'État en 1952 et la république est proclamée. Depuis, le pays connaît un schéma récurrent d'instabilité politique, de conflits religieux et sociaux et de dérives dictatoriales; plusieurs conflits avec Israël ont eu lieu avant les Accords de Camp David en 1978.

Le pays fait culturellement partie du monde arabe; la langue officielle est l'arabe, utilisé dans tous les documents et dans l'éducation. En revanche, la langue

parlée est l'arabe égyptien (arabe dialectal). Le siwi, une langue berbère de l'ouest du pays, est parlé à Siwa. Le copte n'est utilisé que comme langue liturgique des chrétiens. Le nubien est parlé par les habitants de Haute-Égypte, au sud d'Assouan, qui fait partie du nord de la région de Nubie.

Pyramide de Khéops, le grand mystère

«Du haut de ces pyramides, quarante siècles vous contemplent!» s'exclamait le général Napoléon Bonaparte lorsqu'il s'adressait à ses officiers de l'armée française au début de la bataille des Pyramides le 21 juillet 1798.

Les silhouettes des trois pyramides de Gizeh se profilent à



© Claude Mallard
Demeures éternelles des pharaons, les pyramides de Kheops, Khephren et Mykerinos s'élèvent sur le plateau de Gizeh.



© Claude Mallard
Sublime et emblématique statue de l'Égypte antique, le Sphinx de Gizeh a été érigé sous le règne du pharaon Khephren.



© Claude Mallard
Le nouveau Grand Musée égyptien ouvrira bientôt mais l'actuel recèle encore des trésors comme les masques de Yuya et Thuya.



© Claude Mallard
Avec les églises Abu Serga et de la Vierge Marie, le vieux Caire islamique est une étape incontournable de la capitale égyptienne.

l'horizon dès qu'on dépasse la banlieue du Caire. Situé sur la rive ouest du Nil, le plateau désertique de Gizeh accueille les imposantes pyramides de Kheops, Khephren et Mykerinos. Érigées à la gloire des pharaons mythiques de l'ancienne Égypte, elles constituent les vestiges d'une richesse archéologique inégalée. Leur construction ingénieuse, dont tous les secrets ne sont pas encore connus, force l'admiration.

Haute de 139 m, la grande pyramide de Kheops est la plus gigantesque construction de l'Antiquité et la seule des sept merveilles du monde antique encore existante. À l'origine son sommet culminait à 147 m, mais elle a été décapitée lors du tremblement de terre de 1300 apr. J.-C. Ses dimensions colossales et la perfection de sa réalisation ont attiré les voyageurs depuis des

temps immémoriaux. Tombeau du pharaon Kheops, deuxième roi de la IV^e dynastie de l'Ancien Empire, elle fut édiflée il y a plus de 4500 ans et le nombre de blocs de pierres qui la composent est estimé à 2,3 millions. Début mars, Zahi Hawass annonçait que la pyramide de Kheops venait de dévoiler l'un de ses secrets avec l'extraordinaire trouvaille d'un couloir caché de 9 m de long et large de 2 m qui, d'après le charismatique archéologue égyptien, pourrait permettre d'accéder à la véritable chambre funéraire du roi Kheops jamais découverte à ce jour. Plus petites, les deux autres pyramides de Gizeh sont dédiées aux rois Khephren et Mykerinos, fils et petit-fils de Kheops auquel ils ont succédé.

Gardien de la plus grande nécropole royale de l'ancienne Égypte, le sphinx de Gizeh qui se dresse

devant les pyramides est la plus grande sculpture monolithique du monde. D'une longueur de plus de 70 m, l'ouvrage dont la période de construction remonterait aux environs de 2500 av. J.-C., serait, d'après les égyptologues, attribué au pharaon Khephren. Doté d'une tête humaine et d'un corps de lion, le sphinx symbolisait pour les anciens Égyptiens à la fois l'intelligence et la force.

Proche des pyramides, le Grand Musée égyptien, initié par le Président égyptien Hosni Moubarak il y a 20 ans, ouvrira bientôt ses portes. Il remplacera l'actuel devenu trop exigu construit en 1902 sur la place Tahrir. Ce sera le plus grand musée au monde consacré à l'Égypte antique. Il regroupera près de 100 000 œuvres, dont la totalité du trésor de Toutankhamon.

Après une immersion dans le vieux Caire islamique avec la découverte du souk Khan el-Khalili et la visite des églises coptes Abu Serga (IV^e siècle) et de la Vierge Marie (IX^e siècle), plus connue sous le nom d'église suspendue du fait qu'elle a été construite au sommet des murs de la forteresse romaine de Babylone, direction Louxor sur les rives du Nil, étape incontournable de tout voyage en Égypte, à vivre dans le prochain numéro du *newSpecial*. ■

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