

newSpecial

Checking in: how are we doing?

808 - APR 2021

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Editor-in-chief/Rédacteur en chef

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**Checking in:
how are we doing?**

How are we doing? We are still dealing with people falling ill and dying all over the world. The innocent “How are you?” in English, is the start of a conversation. This is what we have tried to do in this issue as well, including interviews and conversations with several colleagues who work with us and around us at WHO, UNICEF, UNCTAD, UNDP and elsewhere. The wide range of experiences and developments that are highlighted in these articles demonstrate the resilience of the workforce and continue the discussion on issues of equity, gender equality and global solidarity.

You might well ask – and you, *newSpecial*, how are you doing? Similarly, we are resilient and want to continue to be a model magazine. We have kept going for decades thanks to our loyal readership and our financial model, based on solidarity and volunteerism. These are challenging times, and I can’t predict what will happen in 2022, but hopefully we are on the right track.

Don’t hesitate to let me know how we’re doing... and in the meantime, enjoy this issue! ■

**Prenons des nouvelles:
comment allons-nous?**

Comment allons-nous? Partout dans le monde, des gens continuent à tomber malades et meurent. L’expression anodine «Comment allez-vous?» marque habituellement, pour les anglophones, le début de toute conversation. C’est le fil conducteur de cette édition. Découvrez quelques entretiens et conversations avec plusieurs de nos collègues travaillant avec nous et autour de nous à l’OMS, l’UNICEF, la CNUCED, au PNUD et ailleurs.

Le large éventail d’expériences et d’enrichissements mis en évidence dans ces articles démontre la résilience de notre travail et nous permet de nous interroger sur les questions d’équité, d’égalité des sexes et de solidarité mondiale.

Si vous souhaitez poser cette même question à *newSpecial*, nous vous répondrons que nous faisons face et aspirons toujours à rester un magazine modèle. Nous continuons simplement comme nous l’avons fait depuis des décennies grâce à notre fidèle lectorat et à notre modèle financier, basé sur la solidarité et le volontariat. Les temps sont durs, je ne peux pas prédire ce qui se passera en 2022 mais j’espère que nous sommes sur la bonne voie.

N’hésitez pas à partager votre avis sur la manière dont nous vous informons... et en attendant, profitez de ce numéro! ■

Serving the people of international organizations in Geneva since 1949

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Interview

Catherine Kirorei Corsini

President of the WHO/HQ Staff Association

Becoming the President of not just any organization, but the headquarters offices of the World Health Organization, is in itself unbelievable.



EVELYN KORTUM, OUTGOING FICSA GENERAL SECRETARY, AND A WHO/HQ STAFF MEMBER.

Hello Catherine, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your third term as President of the WHO/HQ Staff Association. How do you feel about that?

It was an honour and something I never imagined would happen. Becoming the President of not just any organization, but the headquarters offices of the World Health Organization, is in itself unbelievable.

However, serving for three terms consecutively is even more unimaginable. It also puts more pressure on you as you realise the confidence and trust the committee members have in you and, therefore, you have to maintain the good work

and do even better. There is also the aspect of relating to management.

After three years in same office and interacting with management on a weekly basis, there may be the perception that you will lose focus and this only adds to the pressure. However, what is reassuring is the level of support and confidence I get from the committee members, which made me realise that I may be the President, but that we (all committee members) are in this together and that I have the much needed support from the Team (I call them the Team).

In the past, staff were quite reluctant to stick out their heads and as far as I remember it was always difficult to get

people to put up their names up for elections to the staff committee. Do you think the current WHO leadership has a bearing on the large number of new faces among candidates who stood for the new staff committee?

The committee has very much ameliorated its communication to staff, with what has happened in the recent past, starting with the pay cut for Professional staff in Geneva and topping up with the recent transformation, and now the Covid-19 pandemic.

The visibility of the staff association has increased and it has almost become part and parcel of staff's daily work life. I must admit that, in addition, the current Director-General is someone who is very close

to staff and, therefore, also to the staff association. One of his leadership styles, which is exceptional, is doing business from bottom to top, meaning that staff (and the staff association) are involved in all discussions, decision-making and processes.

2020 was a challenging year for everyone. Many of us had to change our way of working from one day to the next and as it looks as if this situation will continue far into 2021. What, so far, have been the main issues that have been brought to your attention by the staff of WHO?

The issues we have seen coming to the staff association vary a lot and have evolved as we continue to be in this situation. At the beginning, enquiries



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WHO HQ Staff Association Committee members in early 2020.

coming in were more of how to adapt to working from home, can I get my computer, can I help if needed, can I take my chair home, etc.

Then as we continued, we started receiving enquiries like, can the administration reimburse electricity, can we get WIFI connection (actually, one of the headquarters outpost offices offered WIFI to all of its staff so that they could all get

better connection and therefore effectively work from home).

We also received questions such as, can we give up our parking so that we stop paying for a service that we do not need at the moment, etc. Then most recently, staff have started missing their family members and friends and probably are starting to miss the normal life and the need to have other activities. The enquiries are

now those of staff who need to travel (after using all their annual leave for the purpose of visiting family members).

They are increasingly asking for exceptional approvals for teleworking outside of their duty station. We all know that at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and the introduction of teleworking, the UN met and developed a UN-wide teleworking policy. This policy included asking all staff who were teleworking outside of their duty station to return to it. They also mentioned post adjustment for those wishing to continue teleworking outside of duty stations.

In addition, there is also the aspect of country rules and regulations that should be followed by our organizations in Switzerland. One of these states that if you stay more than six months outside of your duty

station, your legitimation card will be revoked. We are at the moment in discussion with management about ways to allow staff some time with their families, especially because we have seen mental health of staff deteriorate.

You also have the Global Staff Management Council (GSMC) where you meet with management and staff from other regions, as well as the Global Executive Office (GEO) often in preparation for the GSMC together with the WHO regional office colleagues. What were the three main topics that you discussed there? And which issues emerged as pertinent for the regional colleagues?

Yes, true, we have this exceptional platform which is the principal consultative body which annually brings together management and staff association representatives to discuss

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WHO HQ Staff Association Committee members meeting with Director-General Dr Tedros in 2019.

personnel policies and service conditions. The last one was special as it was – like every other meeting nowadays – virtual. The subjects this year were: Flexible Working Arrangements, WHO Contractual Framework, Respectful Workplace, Internal Justice system and Review of the Jurisdictional set-up of the UN common system, Career Development, Staff Health and Well-being and Staff Health Insurance.

As you can see, all the topics were very important and most of them touch on current issues facing international organizations; especially the review of the UN-wide Jurisdictional set-up and the Flexible Working Arrangements. All subjects discussed are of utmost interest to staff associations of all offices. Nevertheless, the Staff Health Insurance always catches the interest of the regions as they do not necessarily have the same access to health care and health facilities as offices in developed countries.

What could you do to address these concerns and how has the WHO leadership supported staff through the staff Committee?

To address concerns, the WHO global staff associations (GEO) meet once a month to discuss pressing and current concerns but also issues of common interest. This same group also holds bi-monthly meetings with the Director-General to discuss these concerns, as well as with any senior management staff, when needed. For example, recently, they met with the Assistant Director-General for the Division of Business Operations and the Head of Staff Health Insurance. There are plans to meet with some senior management staff in a recurring manner so that pressing concerns can be solved in a timely manner.

By agreeing to these meetings, management has shown collaboration and availability to staff and this is something that is very much appreciated by the staff associations. As I said before, one of the leadership skills of the current Director-General is to be there for staff. He has an “open-door policy” where he sets aside an afternoon in a week to meet with staff. All staff can make an appointment and meet with him to discuss any topic; be it a

proposal on how to work better within WHO, an innovation on how to improve pushing forward our projects, or just a concern or a problem touching individual staff or many staff. This has yielded quite a number of projects within WHO and WHO is fast becoming an organization of innovation.

The recent campaign by Lady Gaga that was launched during the pandemic, or the partnership of WHO and FIFA, are results of staff ideas discussed during the open-door hours. In fact, the Director-General always calls out to staff to propose crazy ideas and we have seen many of these come to light.

WHO is one of the highest paying members of the Federation of International Civil Servants (FICSA) What do you see as the greatest asset in being a member of the Staff Federation?

FICSA is the platform where concerns touching staff beyond just any particular organization are raised and brought to the attention of the high-level bodies that FICSA officers attend, which include among

other bodies the International Civil Servant Commission, the Pension Fund Board, the HR Network and the High-Level Committee for Management.

It is, therefore, very important to be part of such a Federation. WHO has been particularly lucky to have its staff in the leadership of FICSA these past years as we felt closer to FICSA and we also felt well represented. FICSA has members from a large number of the UN and international organizations and is well informed about issues touching staff of the UN common system. It is, therefore, in a good position to advise individual organizations whenever they require advice on issues beyond their own organization. FICSA also acts as a link between its member organizations, especially when we want to benchmark on particular but important subjects.

In addition, FICSA provides advice to its members on issues discussed at the UNGA, on legal issues, and it organizes a yearly platform for its members at its Council to discuss all pertinent issues where decisions are taken, resolutions developed, common projects created, among others.

If you had one wish and a genie in a bottle, what would you ask her?

Whoa, can I give like 10 items here? Anyway, I would wish for a UN where discrimination of all kinds is at zero and career development for staff is as swift as it should be.

I wish you all the best of luck for your current term and I am happy to have you as my President.

Thank you so much Evelyn. You know that when I joined the staff association, you were my President – I learnt from the best! ■

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Interview with Uwe Steckhan

“We are in it together”

UNICEF advocates a united public-private response to the Pandemic.



Uwe Steckhan¹

YULIA ANDREEVA, UNDP

The COVID-19 pandemic has crossed country borders with overwhelming speed and no regard for any background checks or due diligence controls. To prevail over this global threat, a proportionate – global and united – response is imperative. A key element of such response is increased collaboration between, and collective action by the public and private sector, argues Uwe Steckhan, UNICEF².

Have the priorities of the portfolio and the team you are leading changed since the pandemic broke out? Have you had to rethink your short-term and long-term strategy?

The COVID pandemic’s impact across all countries and societies has instantly created a global momentum for closer collaboration across sectors, borders, professions and organizations. Partnership – from Governments to the business sector, to international organizations and global platforms – has hardly been more

relevant to the world than in 2020 and even now. The realization that our victory over the pandemic depends on shared values, collective action, and collaboration has struck the core of every system, and first and foremost the UN.

As an organization fully committed to these values, UNICEF has been well positioned to play a key role in the response. We have not only called upon our bilateral partners to dedicate resources to the pandemic, but we have also accelerated our engagement with the “unusual suspects;” the multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) such as the World Economic Forum (WEF) or the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

To start with, we have focused on expanding private-public collaborations. One lesson I hope we have all learned from the pandemic is that a traditional divide between public and private interests is rarely justified. We are now in the ‘Decade of Action,’ the final ten years to achieve

the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unfortunately, the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs, including the targets related to children. Almost a billion children live in countries where the SDGs remain out of reach. On average, 75% of child-related SDG indicators in every country either show insufficient progress to meet global SDG targets by 2030, or lack adequate data³. The impact of COVID-19 is and will continue to further exacerbate this issue.

There is no doubt about the need for increased collaboration between the public and private sector to meet the objectives of the Agenda 2030. The SDGs will actually require a step-change in the levels of both public and private investments in all countries.

More specifically, the issues at the core of the COVID response – global health security, availability of treatment and vaccination – cannot be addressed by the public sector alone. On health and vaccination, UNICEF is the procurement and distribution partner of the COVAX Facility, which is aimed at equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, working with vaccine manufacturers, supply and logistics partners to ensure that all countries participating in the Facility have equitable access to two billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccine by the end of 2021. This demonstrates that a conscious alignment of all interests, commercial and non-commercial, for the global good is absolutely required.

In line with its mandate, UNICEF, including my team, have focused on addressing the challenges of the pandemic not only in health but also in the other key areas relevant to child rights, such as sanitation and education. In the field of education, for example, we have rapidly adjusted our programmes to accommodate the COVID angle and ensure accessibility, connectivity, technological advancements and effectiveness of remote learning.

For instance, Giga, an initiative launched by UNICEF and ITU in September 2019 to connect every school to the internet and every young person to information, opportunity and choice, has been looking at how connectivity can be a gamechanger in this new reality, with schools at the center of communities and the infrastructure to connect to distance learning and essential services.

All in all, UNICEF and our team as part of it are working hard to turn the pandemic into a critical momentum to expand partnerships, bridge the divide between public and private, strengthen the engagement with MSPs and accelerate programme objectives in key areas such as vaccination, education and sanitation for children around the world.

What has been the response of your key external counterparts (MSPs and the private sector) to the pandemic? How would you compare it to the public sector response?

We have seen a quicker, more proactive reaction of the private sector to the pandemic. Commitment to support the COVID

response has been unequivocal and forthcoming. MSPs, which rely strongly on face-to-face meetings (think of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos!), have pivoted and rapidly addressed the demand for increased engagement between their private sector members and the public sector, through large-scale virtual convenings, bringing different stakeholders and agendas together, and being more open and accessible to the public than ever.

For example, as immediate response to the pandemic, UNICEF has been working with GSMA, as the global industry platform of mobile network operators, to advocate for

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free access to educational content when large parts of the world moved to distance learning, or the distribution of COVID-19 information via free text message to individuals in lockdown. For both immediate response and longer-term recovery, the WEF (and in particular its COVID Action Platform) has also been instrumental as a convener, for example in supporting hand washing as a critical first-line response to the virus. Here in Geneva, we are so used to the mundane, everyday availability of soap and water, that it is hard to believe that even today 3 billion people (close to a half of the Earth population!) don't have access to basic handwashing solutions. To address this critical issue, we have launched a new public-private partnership to place hygiene at the heart of strategies to protect global health, and to ensure that affordable products and services are available when needed⁴.

The initiative works to address both the immediate needs under the current pandemic, as well as to create markets to produce and distribute solutions for increased resilience to future pandemics. This issue is a prime example for multi-stakeholder collaboration, cutting across multiple sectors, such as consumer goods, logistics, 3D-printing/manufacturing and others.

A year into the pandemic, now that COVID-19 vaccines are becoming available, the critical challenge of a swift and equitable distribution of these vaccines has been supported constructively through a global 'Charter for Collective Action' by the WEF's supply chain and transport industry group and UNICEF, committing to support

in planning, preparedness and prioritized transportation and distribution⁵.

UNICEF's launch of the "*Call to Action: Reimagining the World We Need*" with ICC in July 2020 is another good example. A call for closer collaboration between the public and private sectors, it identifies eight concrete areas where such collaboration can ensure a fairer, healthier and more prosperous world for all⁵.

Right now, the first action item on "making diagnostics, treatments and vaccines available for everyone, everywhere," has become a test of global solidarity. As of this February, while vaccination campaigns have started in more than 85 countries, nearly 90 percent of the available doses were administered in just 15 countries that control more than 60% of global GDP – more than 100 countries are yet to administer a single dose to their citizens.

Independent research recently published by ICC shows that the current scarcity of vaccines in the developing world risks costing the global economy \$9 trillion this year alone. It is clear that COVID-19 is not a race that can be 'won' by some countries, and UNICEF and ICC are jointly making the case for global solidarity, both for moral and economic reasons⁶.

What have been the biggest challenges in your team's work over the past year? For example, has it become harder to maintain the focus on advocacy for every child, considering the most vulnerable COVID groups? Has everything become COVID plus? It is true that every activity, initiative or

project is now seen through the lens of COVID. The pandemic angle – or edge – is present in all of our engagements with platform partners, may it be the interest of private sector partner of restarting global economies, which links to our equity agenda, or the 'build back better' narrative linked to purpose-driven business models and increased resilience to future shocks. For our team, these challenging times have opened up doors for deeper engagement with the private sector. The business sector is increasingly committed to the SDGs, recognizing its role and the need to engage. With long-standing crises like climate change, as well as 'shock events' like COVID, the business sector sees direct impact on their business strategies and operational modalities, including through impact on their supply chains.

With the realization that these cannot be resolved independently, but only through systemic change and collective action, there is increasing commitment by businesses to engage around and address underlying systemic issues, which require public-private collaboration. Businesses are also facing increasing pressure from corporate customers, as well as employees, clients and investors for more sustainable business models. This is reflected in a move from the corporate social responsibility model to 'purpose' (e.g. from shareholder to stakeholder capitalism), or SDG-based considerations. Importantly, we are looking at e.g. corporations not only as funders but also as powerful advocates and drivers of change.

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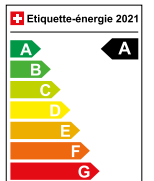
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Davos World Economic Forum, 2020

COVID has been a great equalizer on priorities that are core to UNICEF’s work around vaccination, education, hygiene, as well as mental health. Therefore, COVID has increased the understanding on the needs for further investment and progress in these areas, including those left furthest behind, which is an important step to catalyze action and mobilize support for children and increase equity.

Are you seeing any accelerated use of innovations, new modalities of engagement, new technology?

A common opinion, which I personally share, is that 2020 alone has accelerated the development and use of new technology by at least a decade. While progress and development continue to happen on the ground, in country, it has been eye-opening to see how quickly we adapted in the partnerships space to coordinate and engage in a virtual setting. Not only have private sector platforms filled a gap, by convening their members and partners virtually, but from my team’s perspective we have also seen an opening by platforms and their members for deeper engagement around the systemic issues that UNICEF is prioritizing. This includes technological innovations in the context of universal connectivity, child online protection, governance for artificial intelligence, or the use of blockchain technology, where platforms are convening corporations and public sector to create financial models, develop guidance or issue policy recommendations.

How fundamental are the changes in the agenda and everyday work of your team? Are any of them permanent?

There are more and more changes that we are noticing, and some of them are here to stay. We are all seeing the drastic reduction in travel and face-to-face meetings, remote working/telecommuting and demand-driven and flexible working hours becoming the norm, as well as technology and innovative solutions coming to the fore.

To give a simple example, within weeks of the onset of the COVID pandemic, we have been able to sign document electronically, eliminating a major administrative bottleneck. And there have also been major innovations in the engagement with our partners, for example with the introduction of ‘virtual field trips,’ allowing our partners and prospects to get a direct perspective on our operations and engagement at country level, without the need to travel in person.

This has not only had environmental benefits, but has also significantly broadened the reach and visibility of our work. With telecommuting and technology becoming more common, we also see less geographical dependence, instead allowing more of a focus on the substantive relevance of work.

With continued remote work requirements at this time, and the experience over the last year, we have now learned how to work as a physically-distanced team. As a

result, we have just hired a colleague for our team, who will be working remotely out of Nairobi, with no expectation to move to Geneva. These new realities of how we work, actually provide us more flexibility in building the team we want, without the need to be all in one place.

How does your workday look nowadays?

Like all UN partners, UNICEF’s first response to the pandemic has been to ensure protection of its personnel from the exposure. Telecommuting has been immediately introduced and a contingency plan has been put in place in cooperation with the UN community and the Swiss authorities. As part of it, arrangements have been made for colleagues to pick up any necessary equipment (e.g. computer screens, headsets) from the office, to ease the transition to “home office” and allow them to perform their tasks seamlessly.

Some colleagues have adapted well to telecommuting, and a year in, we have certainly seen that it is possible, surprisingly even in the partnerships space, to advance collaboration also without meeting in person. Personally, I find the office and team environment more conducive and energizing and miss the direct, unscheduled interaction with team colleagues and peers.

I did therefore seize the window of opportunity to come to our new UNICEF Geneva office back in June when the first lockdown was eased by the Swiss authorities and the UN administration, just when we had

moved into the ILO building in Geneva. I must confess that it was a somewhat surreal experience. There were only three of us in the beautiful new office space intended for at least a hundred.

Even now, a year after the pandemic broke out in Geneva, it is hard to say how our office life would look like. What is clear, however, is that it won't be the same as before. And possibly we will never move back to the same way of working in dedicated office spaces, in person, in the same location. COVID has gotten us to understand by trial and error what is possible, juggling family demands and work exigencies. And when we can meet again in person, I expect this to be much more conscious to make the most out of the personal interaction.

Finally, like I said, some people are now used to telecommuting and simply prefer it as a flexible working arrangement, and more virtual teams do provide new opportunities to be more globally present and agile. As long as we remain a team even if we are not physically together, this should not matter.

Are you ready for the “Magic Three” Blitz? I will ask you three quick questions and you will share the first things that come to mind. Jet set go!

Three good things about the pandemic and the global lockdown: Enthusiasm, activism and momentum. Everybody is in it. Everybody can contribute to the solution.

Your wish-list for the UN: Use COVID to strengthen multilateralism. Embrace opportunities for collaboration with the private sector. Strengthen collaboration beyond the office or organizational confines.

The things you would like to disappear in the new reality: Separation between the public and private sectors and agendas. Siloed thinking. Unnecessary travel for projects that can be advanced remotely.

Main takeaway for our readers? COVID-19 has highlighted how interconnected the world is and that we can't address global systemic challenges only in parts of the world. Achieving the SDG and addressing systemic issues requires collective action.

The UN is in a unique position due to its member state representation to facilitate this needed public-private collaboration. ■

- 1 Uwe Steckhan is the Chief of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs) in UNICEF's Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division, based out of Geneva. The MSP team is responsible for UNICEF's engagement with the private sector on global platforms and multi-stakeholder initiatives, to identify and pursue opportunities for collaboration in areas requiring systemic change and collective action
- 2 See <https://data.unicef.org/resources/progress-for-every-child-in-the-sdg-era-2019/>
- 3 See <https://www.weforum.org/platforms/covid-action-platform/projects/mobilizing-hand-hygiene-for-all-initiative>
- 4 See http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_SCT_IAG_Charter_for_Collective_Action_in_Support_of_UNICEF%20_COVAX.pdf
- 5 See <https://iccwbo.org/content/uploads/sites/3/2020/07/unicef-icc-joint-call-to-action-1.pdf>
- 6 See <https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/the-vaccine-scramble-that-risks-leaving-everyone-behind/>



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A conversation with lifelong women's rights defender, Isabelle Durant, Acting Secretary-General of UNCTAD.



SARAH JORDAN, UNOG

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, necessary to build a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Yet it remains unachieved across societies.

While International Women's Day is an occasion to celebrate women's achievements and highlight the remaining barriers on the road to gender equality, one day is insufficient.

Many people and organizations rightly give priority to gender equality on 8 March, but they quickly return to "business as usual" the day after. To ensure gender equality remains on the radar every month, Ms. Durant has launched "Les 8 du mois until we're there". (*Les 8 du mois* is French for "the 8th of every month".) Here, she explains what led her to take this initiative and why she thinks it is necessary.

How did the idea of "les 8 du mois until we're there" come to you?

The idea came to me because although it is important to celebrate the 8th of March each year, this once-a-year acknowledgement of women's rights is somewhat repetitive

and restrictive. An annual approach is too easy. Just one day per year on which people wave banners, repeat slogans or raise issues is not enough. We need a sustainable approach to gender issues. We have to think of them every day.

Thinking of them each eighth of the month will be more effective in bridging the many gender gaps that exist. It's a way of reminding all UNCTAD partners and stakeholders, Member States and the civil society that women's rights are not important just one day per year, but something that we need to have in mind for every action or initiative that we take.

The slogan uses the two working languages of the United Nations and I think it sounds good. Until we are there probably means a long, long time – so let's start now!

So an opportunity to take stock every eighth of the month and see how things are progressing?

Yes, what we will look back at what we did during a given month and at what we are able or would like to do in the months that follow in order to advance.

Can you give me some examples of the unfinished business there is still to tackle?

There is a lot of unfinished business – and at many levels. We have to avoid conflating gender parity and gender mainstreaming. The former is a principle that should be respected everywhere, yet it's not the case. It means that in government, in parliament, in the private sector, in administration, every year, everywhere, we have to have 50 percent women and 50 percent men.

This is normal and it's not only a women's issue; it's a gender issue. When you look at some sectors, for instance, the caring professions, women are over-represented. Yet when you look at other sectors, they are male-dominated.

The second aspect is gender mainstreaming, which is not just the question of the number of males or females in different sectors, but the question of equality between them, for example the wages gap or the question of inheritance in developing countries – a lot of women are not able to own companies or land when their parents die.



© Isabelle Durant

A visitor to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, UNHQ July 2018.

This is totally unacceptable. It's also the case for access to finance in a lot of countries.

A woman cannot take out a bank loan without the signature of her husband or her father or brother and added to all these aspects of discrimination, there is, of course, violence against women. And this too has an impact on everybody's social

and economic life. And it's not acceptable either. So there are a lot of examples where we have work to do. UNCTAD, my organization, works particularly on all aspects related to trade or economic and social development.

Gender also affects the environment: women and men do not approach this crucial issue in

the same way because women are generally more future-oriented and look at the next generation differently. All these aspects have to be addressed through policies, actions, and initiatives which are transversal and where men and women are equally concerned and equally involved.

Now that you have launched the initiative, what are the next practical steps?

At UNCTAD we have started discussions with our in-house gender task force to decide what issues to prioritize for the eighths of the month ahead. We are considering different activities, webinars or campaigns. We have to decide to which kind of audience each action will be directed, for example Member States and civil society or for some aspects, a more introspective, internal approach. For instance, I would like to organize something including facts and figures to support the fact that there are not enough women in STEM or in economic fields. This is indeed the case for a lot of United Nations organizations or organizations working in these fields. But sometimes there is a kind of mantra "there are not enough women", and I know that some researchers, and especially women, have investigated this and shown that it's not always true. We need to be careful about perpetuating

stereotypes. Another internal issue in the same field could be the question of bias in the recruitment of women.

The private sector is another possibility – for International Women's Day – our first eighth of the month – we launched our report on gender policies and practices in multinational enterprises (MNEs). So we'll be adapting our actions to different audiences, addressing the problem through a different lens or angle each month with the aim of trying to raise awareness among all our stakeholders.

Will you be seeking any partnerships to add to the momentum of this movement?

That would be great. It's my idea, but I'm more than willing to share it! If for the eighth of April or May or June another organization would like to join us, they are more than welcome!

Well, good luck and thank you very much for sharing this with newSpecial readers. ■

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Interview

Yves Beigbeder

Souvenirs of the past and message to newly recruited United Nations Staff.



MARKO STANOVIC, UNCTAD, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Yves Beigbeder – born in 1924 (age 96 years), in Morlaix, France, is a retired WHO official and prolific writer on international organizations, international criminal tribunals, French justice and democracy in general. He has written numerous articles and books on the subject including *Management Problems in United Nations Organizations: Reform or Decline?* (1987), *The Role and Status of International Humanitarian Volunteers and Organizations – The Right and Duty to Humanitarian Assistance* (1991), *The Internal Management of United Nations Organizations: The Long Quest for Reform* (1997), *Judging War Criminals: The Politics of International Justice* (1999), and *International Public Health and Business: Patients’ Rights v. the Protection of Patents* (2004), among others.

Yves started his career in 1946, in the aftermath of World War II, as a legal secretary to the French Judge, Henri Donnédieu de Vabres at the International War Crimes Tribunal

at Nuremberg, Germany. His job was to make summaries of records on seven Nazi defendants.

Interested in the work of international organizations, Yves started his career at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1951, before joining the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1995, from which he retired in 1984. During his productive career at WHO, Yves was the Head Personnel Officer in Brazzaville, Copenhagen, Alexandria and New Delhi, as well as Human Resources Assistant to the Director-General at Geneva headquarters.

Passionate about international law and multilateral approaches to solving problems, Yves taught the subject of international organizations at Webster University in Geneva and St. Louis, Boston University, British Columbia University in Vancouver and the Graduate Institute in Geneva as well as in Paris. He also served as a counsel to UN staff, providing them with legal advice and representation at WHO internal appeals boards

as well as at the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Administrative Tribunals. I wanted to interview Yves as an UN colleague whose work experience goes back to the founding of the modern United Nations. I was especially interested in how “things” were done “back then,” and if there were any lessons that we could learn from the past. Aged 96, Yves was a formidable interlocutor, and we held our interview via Zoom from his home in Sauveterre-de-Béarn, Provence, France.

What brought you to the UN family? How did you decide to start working for the FAO and WHO?

Intrigued by working for an international organization, I applied and got a job with the FAO in 1951. My hiring manager was an American, in those days most professional posts were held by the Americans, and I think he liked that I had a Master of Science degree in Education and Psychology from Indiana University Bloomington. At that time, I also worked briefly for NATO in Paris, which I am sure helped.

You are famous today for being one of the last witnesses to the Nuremberg trials. During the trials, did the Nazi defendants come to accept their guilt, or not? Were their families or other invitees allowed into the courtroom?

All Nazi defendants pleaded “not guilty”, although a few like Schacht, Frank, Speer and von Schirach recognized the guilt of the Nazi State, but not their own. They claimed they did not know about the concentration camps, and that only Hitler, who had committed suicide in his Berlin bunker, took decisions. Their families were not admitted into the courtroom but had visiting rights with the defendants.

Explain to us briefly what was it like back then to be working for the UN? How did you communicate, meet? What was the “decorum”?

About 500 people worked at FAO; English secretaries and Italians mostly staffed the General Service, while professional posts were held by the Americans. We socialized a lot, and as I worked in Personnel and knew many people, we often

went out with colleagues. At that time, the office dress code was formal, which meant a suit and a tie for men, and dresses and skirts for women.

What was the average salary for a professional and general service staff back then? In terms of purchasing power, what kind of a life could you afford: how much did it cost to rent a nice apartment and shop for food?

I was hired at FAO at a G4 level with expat, or non-resident benefits. During the next few years, I was successively promoted to a P1 level. This was enough to have a “wonderful” life in 1950’s Rome. I had an apartment and a scooter and lived near FAO. Later on, at WHO Regional Office for Africa, I got a fixed-term appointment for a P2 Personnel Officer position in Brazzaville, Congo. After 3-4 years,

I moved to Copenhagen into a Regional Office for Europe. From Copenhagen I came to Geneva in 1961. Geneva was a much different place in those days, it was wonderful, peaceful Switzerland, headquarters level job. There, I was promoted eventually to P5, and retired in 1984 at the age of 60. Sometimes I went on temporary assignments, for example to Egypt, New Delhi, Cuba and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

What kind of “security” did you have for your buildings? Did you have the security measures like we have today at Palais des Nations?

We had “nothing”. No guards, but you had to go through a reception desk and announce yourself. There were no security measures like we find now in Geneva. There was no concern about terrorism. It was just like entering another

administrative building. You came in, and just went up to your floor. I find today’s security measures at Palais des Nations and even at WHO a bit excessive. ILO seems more reasonable. And now with the COVID-19 virus you really can’t go anywhere.

How about promotions? How often did people get promoted and could you get promoted “in your job” or did you have to apply for a vacant post that was advertised worldwide?

I came in at FAO at a G4 level and then in a few short years was promoted to G5, G6, G7 and eventually to a P1. I had to apply for promotion for advertised vacancies. Normally, you could not get promoted in the post unless it was reclassified. Posts were advertised on the bulletin board inside the organization as well as in newspapers across Europe.

Did “internal” candidates have an advantage over external applicants for jobs?

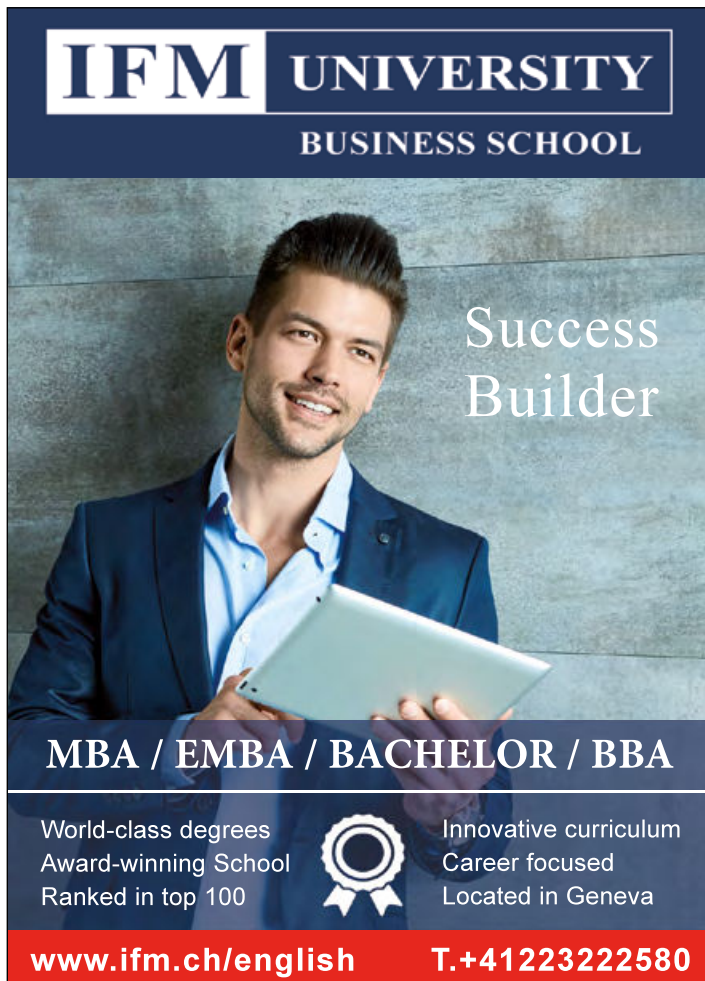
Not necessarily. When I applied for a P1 post in Personnel, somebody from the outside also applied and got the job.

How did you evaluate individual performance? Was there a written record of your performance? Could you complain/dispute your manager’s evaluation?

At WHO, even in 1955, there was a written performance report discussed with your boss and agreed or not agreed by you. This could be used for promotion, demotion or even dismissal.

What were the main challenges the world was facing over your career span? How did the international community respond?

That’s a big question. People




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working at FAO were professionals dealing with issues of agriculture and forestry. WHO was successful in fighting small pox and malaria, and other epidemics. The 1960s were a big period for the UN with decolonization taking place in Africa and the East-West political struggle. For example, when I arrived at Brazzaville in 1955 to join the WHO Regional Office for Africa, Congo was a Belgian colony and not represented as such in the UN organization. The office had only one African professional staff and all the rest were French, British and Portuguese. Ten years later, this situation has significantly changed. Then there was the ideological struggle between the East and the West. For example, the USSR and Eastern European countries left WHO and only came back later on in 1955. When the Russians came back, we organized briefing courses for Russian doctors as most of them did not speak English or French.

You wrote a book on reforming the United Nations in 1987. Reflecting on the past

attempts, how should the United Nations reform itself today to better implement its mandate in the future?

The UN should encourage horizontal/flexible decentralized management, allow lower-level managers to make decisions, suppress some of the cumbersome control processes and allow and protect whistle-blowers.

Compared to when you started your career, was it more difficult or easier to make decisions and implement them? Did work get more “bureaucratic”?

No, it did not change very much. We still had to apply staff rules and regulations, using the staff manual. You are still dealing with political pressures and you are still dealing with illnesses, which are objective issues.

Name one memorable person that has impressed you the most during your career... and why?

Dag Carl Hammarskjöld showed independence and helped with the liberation of

the Congo. There was a lot of confusion in those days, and the UN organized assistance to the newly independent state. Later on, he invented Blue Helmets – peacekeeping – and he tried to stay away from political influence.

The other person that really impressed me was Sérgio Vieira de Mello, a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who was killed in a terrorist bombing in Iraq.

Finally, I personally met Kofi Annan, for whom I organized training at WHO when he joined us as Budget Officer in 1962. Later, he went on to UNHCR and finally became Secretary-General of the United Nations. He took initiatives and was able to listen, not be subservient to big powers, and to keep a degree of independence. He was also a good diplomat that got along with different countries.

Finally, a personal question: how was it raising a family if you had to travel or change duty stations?

I met my wife at the UN while in Copenhagen in the 1960s and we have had four children. It would have been difficult to raise a family and travel at the same time. I founded a family when my work stabilized in Copenhagen and Geneva. My wife was British, and when I went on temporary missions e.g., in New Delhi and Egypt, I went alone. My children first went to local Swiss and then to French schools as we lived in Thonon-les-Bains.

How did you spend your time after retirement?

I did many interviews with newspapers, press agencies, radio and TV channels on my experience with the Nuremberg trials. I made speeches in local schools on my experience in World War II as well as my

work in FAO and in WHO. I also did research and wrote books and articles on personnel management, international organizations and international justice, and taught at universities in Geneva, Paris, USA and Canada. For example, recently I published a book *The World Health Organization, Achievements and Failures*,” (Routledge, 2018). I try to stay active and busy, keeping in touch via Zoom with retirees’ associations in Geneva, and I write every week my Journal, including personal notes and political comments, which I send to former colleagues and family – not published.

What advice would you have for newly recruited UN staff?

Find out exactly what the conditions of employment are and whether you are willing to move around or not. Find out what the requirements of the job are and if this is what you had in mind. Be ready to move around, this is very necessary in the UN, to go to various parts of the world. Prepare to accept to work with people from other nationalities and with different interests. At the same time, it is a wonderful opportunity to work for an international organization. Make the best of it, it is really worth it. The climate of being with other nationalities is wonderful. I miss it.

... and for the soon to be retired UN staff?

Make plans ahead for work, hobbies, sports and links to associations. Check housing, be sure you can enjoy and stay there, and that lodging is accessible for old age. Stay active, see people, join clubs, offer help to young people, stay close to family and friends, travel, and enjoy music, theatre and reading. ■

Challenging diplomacy in women-led trade organizations

All of them took on their new roles at a critical time exacerbated by the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global trade.

OCTAVIA CERCHEZ, GENEVA SCHOOL OF DIPLOMACY

Today, international trade is associated with the image of multinational companies, rivalries between various economic actors and confidential negotiations within the framework of international fora, whose legitimacy and leadership are under scrutiny.

In this context, the heads of the top three international trade organizations in Geneva – the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) left their leadership positions earlier than expected, adding additional elements of uncertainty to trade during the coronavirus pandemic and escalating trade conflicts.

There is no recall of when these top three trade organizations

last witnessed a simultaneous turnover of management, but the selection process has led to an unparalleled leadership rejuvenation as all three organizations have become women-led in the last six months.

The women heads of these organization (Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala for the WTO, Ms. Isabelle Durant for UNCTAD and Dr. Pamela Coke-Hamilton for ITC) were appointed after their predecessors stepped down in what were turbulent times for the world economy. The leadership vacuum lasted for months in the case of the WTO and the ITC and there was a growing and urgent need to appoint skilled and efficient chiefs that could fix the shattered international trading system. All of them took on their new roles at a critical time, exacerbated by the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global trade.

Much has been written about Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Nigerian Finance Minister, who claims to “possess(ing) the courage and passion to work towards undertaking the wide-ranging reforms the WTO needs to reposition itself for the future”.¹ Ms. Isabelle Durant, a Belgian politician, asserts that “there is no other way than multilateralism and dialogue, although both are slow and complicated processes”.² Dr. Pamela Coke-Hamilton believes in “helping the MSMEs in the developing countries to address the more salient issues and maximize the benefits of trade in a dynamic and interconnected globalized economy”.³

Even so, the main challenge of these three exceptional women is to transform international trade into a creator of well-being by adapting the institutions and the multilateral trading system and changing the rules

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Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General, World Trade Organization.

of conduct and the behaviour of the actors involved.

It will not be easy.

Involvement in international organizations has greatly expanded, including nowadays developed and developing countries, states with a tradition of democracy and authoritarian countries, post-conflict societies that barely function and nations ruled by religious decree. Nevertheless, all these states are part of the system of multilateral cooperation that rests on the pretext that everyone must work inside the system. Within this framework, there must inevitably be concessions, but these should be acceptable as they are for the greater benefit of the group.⁴ Still, the membership of organizations represents diverse interests and objectives and has complicated diplomatic negotiations and methods of reaching agreement.

Reaching agreement will be a serious task, namely, to triumph with deals that satisfy the 193 UN Member States or the 164 WTO Members, a highly heterogeneous membership, some of which were previously outsiders or inactive

players in diplomatic negotiations. The international trading system, which was once bipolar, driven by the USA and the EU, has considerably changed to become multi-polar, with the large emerging economies, such as China, India and Brazil, becoming major economic powers in their own right.⁵ The existing impasse in international trade is largely due to the great transformation in international relations taking place in the world today, the rise in trade restrictions and protectionist measures, without real consequences for the Members apart from “naming and shaming”. World trade declined because of the USA’s trade wars with China and the EU, has dropped further since the economic activity ceased in many countries due to coronavirus pandemic, but it is also a result of the characteristics of diplomatic negotiations and the impossibility to build consensus among all Members.

Apart from being slow and complicated, diplomatic negotiations are complex and uncertain. Complexity is created by the number of Members negotiating and by the various issues on the debating table, whereas

uncertainty is generated by the difficulties of communicating preferences and exchanging information among many participants. This impedes the possibility of identifying potential agreements and therefore demands more active conciliation to reach agreement. Diplomatic negotiations are slow and complicated because they take place on at least three levels: firstly, there is the local level of negotiations within the governmental structures of Members together with affected interest groups; secondly, there are negotiations among governments that often form a group of countries that have equal minded interests (intra-group negotiations); and finally, there are inter-group negotiations. The greatest “fight” usually occurs at the inter-group level. Negotiators appear to be insensitive to the problems of their negotiating partners as they have too much trouble worrying about how they will get proposals accepted by their own governments to appreciate fully their adversaries’ political difficulties.⁶ Consequently, unrealistic proposals are tabled, and a frontrunner is needed to communicate with the parties concerned. The Members tend

to delegate their interests to a consensus builder and their choice usually goes towards persons reflecting the capacity and the availability to undertake the special responsibilities required.

Since these top three trade organizations are Member-driven, the power is not delegated to the organization’s head. These organizations are run by their Members and all major decisions are made by the membership as a whole. The Members have only given a limited role to the organization’s heads towards building consensus and progress from deadlocks; they are supposed to continue the tradition of being impartial and objective, ensuring transparency and inclusiveness in decision-making and consultative processes.

Although the heads of these organizations have no “power of change”, through offering convening power, good offices, and a consensus building voice, the new leaders of the three trade organizations have an important role to play in convincing the membership to remodel international trade for sustainable



Isabelle Durant, Acting Secretary-General of UNCTAD.



Pamela Coke-Hamilton, Executive Director, International Trade Center.

development, ensuring that the multilateral trading system responds to new economic realities in the post-coronavirus world and meets the challenges that lie ahead.

The most noticeable diplomatic tactics of the three new leaders consist of observation, diagnosis, and communication. Their main role should be that of moderator between the Members, mediating between conflicting views and thus assisting their respective organizations towards the conciliatory solution of existing problems. In complex diplomatic negotiations, such a role requires a high degree of professional skill and access to the necessary

technical expertise and information that these three new leaders possess in abundance. Leading an international organization demands imagination, skills, technical knowledge and logic. These three female leaders are endowed with vision and intellectual compasses; they must assess the situation and take appropriate decisions. This will help to reinvent, reinvigorate, and rebuild trust in the rules-based trading system and the organizations they are committed to successfully lead. ■

- 1 Statement of Director-General Elect Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to the Special Session of the WTO General Council, https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news21_e/dgno_15feb21_e.pdf
- 2 Interview avec Mme Durant, Les visages de l'ONU, <https://unric.org/fr/les-visages-de-lonu-isabelle-durant/>
- 3 Interview with ITC executive director Pamela Coke-Hamilton, African Business, <https://african.business/2021/02/finance-services/afcfata-will-give-africa-power-to-change-terms-of-trade/>
- 4 Cockburn Andrew Mark, The Unique Challenges Presented by Multilateral Diplomacy, May 10, 2012, p. 3. (available at SSRN: ssrn.com or dx.doi.org).
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EC-UNDP Joint Task Force

on Electoral Assistance for Ivorian and other elections

The Early Warning and Early Response solution is a prime example of how digital technology can help to promote Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.



MARIA THOMSEN¹, UNICC

The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance, have partnered in more than 50 countries and nearly 200 electoral projects to provide technical assistance in the field of elections based on national requests. They strive to provide effective and sustainable support to establish and reinforce democratic institutions and processes world-wide.

The Joint Task Force contracted UNICC to assist in the development of an Early Warning and Early Response web platform and mobile app to allow relevant national authorities to report risks and incidents of electoral violence and allow for prompt and coordinated national responses.

The platform has been utilized in the recent Côte d'Ivoire elections and ongoing planning to implement the project in Ethiopia and Zambia in 2021 are currently on the way. The Early Warning and

Early Response solution is a prime example of how digital technology can help to promote Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (Sustainable Development Goal 16).

The Platform and Mobile App

The platform was developed to ensure it could be used in a variety of humanitarian contexts, from elections to human rights violations monitoring to other incident tracking and reporting. The event monitoring app gives early indicators of risks and incidents that national actors and their teams on the ground can take in hand immediately.

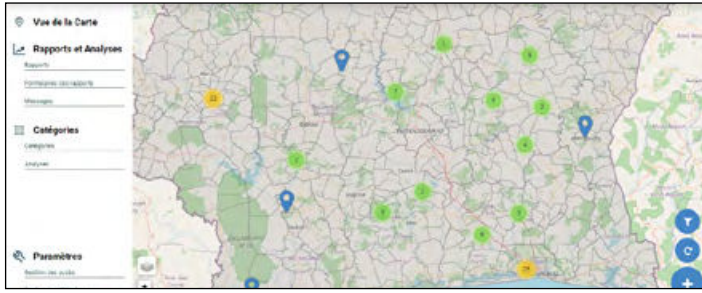
The request originated from the Brussels-based UNDP Electoral Team, which was looking to develop an online Early Warning and Early Response platform that could help national institutions prevent and respond to electoral violence in real time. The Early Warning and Early Response platform has been integrated into the Early Warning Systems, deployed by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) and the National Council of Human

Rights (CNDH) of Côte d'Ivoire.

The purpose of the platform is to provide an innovative digital tool for national institutions to anticipate and monitor risks and incidents of electoral violence to ultimately allow for well-informed and evidence-based responses.

During the second half of October, UNICC worked with the UNDP Electoral project in Côte d'Ivoire to provide an Early Warning and Early Response platform to National authorities of Côte d'Ivoire in time for the presidential elections.

A handy mobile app allows electoral commission members to readily monitor in the field and on the go: national authorities team members located in the field across Côte d'Ivoire could easily report risks and incidents of electoral violence back to their central structures in Abidjan. In the case of low-bandwidth and uneven internet connectivity, national authorities team members could transmit their reports through a call centre as well as an SMS gateway. These



Boundaries and names shown on maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the UN.



The partnership with UNICC in the development and deployment of the EWER platforms in Côte d'Ivoire has been a successful first that has been praised for its utility by all national stakeholders involved in the electoral process. Having proved their worth in Ivory Coast, the EWER platforms will now be an important asset to be deployed in electoral projects worldwide.

– United Nations Development Programme Electoral Team

alternative means of transmission proved important in permitting all members in the field to report regardless of material or connectivity limitations.

The Independent Electoral Commission and National Council of Human Rights will continue to use the platform in 2021 during upcoming legislative elections.

Early Warning and Early Response Platform Benefits

Prior to this solution, Electoral Commissions or other national users reporting was manual: a staff member would report an

event, a central team of analysts would verify the data and the verified data would appear on a map. Analysts now can link multiple observations of a single event, respond to incidents and register their actions digitally on the platform.

The system also includes robust reporting and data analytics capabilities. It features a library that enables national organizations to work easily with huge amounts of data and to visualize them in multiple ways. Users can create compelling charts and graphs out of the box, and they can generate

reports and conduct audits for after-action reviews of events. End users can customize the app to their specific needs and situations such as collecting images and video, geotagging events and noting actions taken. They can include diverse reporting form features, from checkboxes to category color coding, and they can choose the granularity of data displayed publicly or privately in the mapping tool.

In the future, the system could automate reporting, pulling and aggregating a large volume of disparate data from a variety

of inputs – text messages, emails, social media and other channels.

UNICC's event monitoring and reporting solution is ideal for crowdsourcing event data, tracking and reporting on proceedings, responding quickly to developing situations on the ground or conducting after-action reviews and capturing lessons learned. ■

1 Maria Thomsen is Associate Communications Officer, UNICC

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Philanthropy is not only about giving money

The way organizations and individuals practice philanthropy has changed tremendously over the past 10 years, and it is only the beginning. But does it change the purpose of philanthropy? Interview with Dr. Giuseppe Ugazio, UNIGE.



BRIGITTE PERRIN, UNIGE

Assistant professor in Behavioral Finance at the Geneva Finance Research Institute (GFRI), Giuseppe Ugazio and two colleagues* are launching a new continuing education programme in *Strategic and Operational Philanthropy* this autumn at the University of Geneva. The objective is to gather practitioners and academics to analyze the complex journey of promoting societies' well-being and making smart decisions that consider both moral and financial principles. In this interview, he explains how to practice philanthropy efficiently in a constantly moving environment.

What is philanthropy today and how has it changed in the past years?

Philanthropy is evolving, opening its horizons to new schemes, like social impact bonds and designing new partnerships models with the for-profit world, as in the case of blended finance. In the past decades, and particularly so after one of the largest financial crises in history about 10 years ago, the belief that

“business-as-usual” does not work has also been gaining traction in the financial world. Note that for example sustainable finance is growing every year. This evolution of philanthropy closely follows the shift in what people value: the way we want to use money, time and skills has been more and more focused not only on individual benefits but also on social purpose.

The tendency is no longer to solve problems, but to prevent them in the first place by tackling their root causes. New fields of philanthropy are developing today in this regard, like Strategic Philanthropy or Systemic Philanthropy.

Philanthropy has obviously also changed a lot during this very special past year with the increasing importance of digitalization. Direct personal contact was not possible anymore and we had to learn how to keep interactions going with partners, even if the largest organizations were still mostly relying on paper, mailings and flyers.

We are in the middle of a global crisis. How does it impact philanthropic activities around the world? Are some sectors more at risk than others?

We observe different trends: on one hand individual donations have increased; more people wanted to be involved in philanthropy. On the other, it is possible that in the coming years, investments may be reduced in corporate philanthropy, as this activity is still perceived as a luxury. The use of capital will need to be more effective; companies and organizations will not be able to afford to waste money contributing to projects that cannot reach the right causes.

To respond to this need for effectiveness, we decided to create a new continuing education course at UNIGE for anyone who is practising philanthropy, to ensure recipients, funders and all stakeholders are involved and working hand in hand. Parachute philanthropy is over; we need to include different cultures and create a dialogue between donors and recipients.

How do you relate philanthropy with sustainability? Can we say that the SDGs are “trendy” today in this domain?

International organizations, public sector, NGOs cannot work in siloes any longer. Everyone needs to work together to achieve the SDGs. Problems are too complex for one single entity to solve. It is necessary to learn from each other's experience to better understand each other, figure out how to build partnerships, consider diversity in regional costumes and approach organizations in an effective way.

Anything we do can be related to the SDGs, it is therefore easy to make it a trend. We need to provide generic language assorted with a common understanding to avoid the spreading of sustainability concepts that have sometimes led to greenwashing. The concept of transparency is key when we are invested in supporting a given goal/cause. What are the concrete steps taken to achieve this goal? By being transparent, organizations can lead by example putting pressure on

those who are least involved to “walk the talk”. We need to be careful not to point fingers at organizations; rather we should educate organizations and people about the SDGs not being only symbolic. Putting successful “champions” in the spotlight is a good way to educate organizations, notably in communication, because sending a wrong message can prevent finding the right partners. For this reason, our course has several modules that integrate the SDGs, how to measure impact and how to communicate about it.

How can philanthropy have a lasting positive impact on societies in today's globalized world?

From my perspective, globalization can be really helpful if addressed properly. Globalization is not wrong per se; it becomes a problem when some take advantage of it to exploit others and it can damage the balance between regions. Philanthropy can help in two ways, first by making amends for what has been done wrong by giving back, second by teaching how to build winning models which lead to “good globalization”. Achieving this requires a global dialogue, involving all parties. That is why our course covers widely diversity and regional practices in philanthropy.

What is the real impact of new technologies and fintech on philanthropy?

Technology makes philanthropy easier; it mitigates risk if people know what they're doing. Fintech and Blockchain make it safer because money can be tracked from end to end. People need to learn about these new technologies. Artificial intelligence will change the way fundraising and partner recruitment and management are carried out. For example, chatbots already

answer routine questions in for-profit organizations; philanthropy needs to catch up, the question is only how long it will take for philanthropic organizations to adapt. Many people do not know how to use these digital tools, and they are those who can benefit the most from them. Philanthropy needs to be at the forefront of these technological changes to promote the fairest and inclusive use of them.

How do you see the future of philanthropy?

In 10-15 years from now, I think that individuals will keep contributing their time and money as people seek to align their values with their actions. Foundations entirely dedicated to philanthropy will also remain necessary. However, I believe we will see an increase in hybrid entities, such as impact-investors. We will need to make the two approaches communicate and work together, make them talk the same language, and share their vision and what drives them. Technology can certainly help with this.

An important concept to clarify is that philanthropy is not only about giving money. If I decide not to have a car in order to protect the environment, I am already practising philanthropy! In a way it is flipping the perspective: many people are no longer primarily interested in earning as much as they can, sacrificing their health and family time. Instead, well-being is now being prioritized. It needs to be communicated better. When you act in a way that promotes a cause you believe in, and you forego lots of money for instance, this is already a philanthropic action in its deepest sense. People are already spontaneously doing philanthropy; it would just take a simple next step to do it in a more structured way.

Many organizations have already realized this and are transitioning from the “Give-money-to-project” approach to philanthropy to promoting initiatives for their personnel to engage in prosocial activities. Both ways are good ways and it is possible to make them work together. Crowdsourcing (different from crowdfunding!) is developing in that regard by asking for people's time and knowledge, not their money.

What is specific about doing philanthropy in Geneva? Are there regional differences?

Geneva has a unique community of people invested in promoting social goals from many different professional angles, from banks to international organizations to NGOs, and cultural backgrounds. There are countless possibilities to untap the potential of this

network and benefit from all this diversity to develop philanthropic projects. ■

More information on the UNIGE Diploma: www.unige.ch/formcont/cours/das-philanthropy

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LYCÉE TÖPFFER
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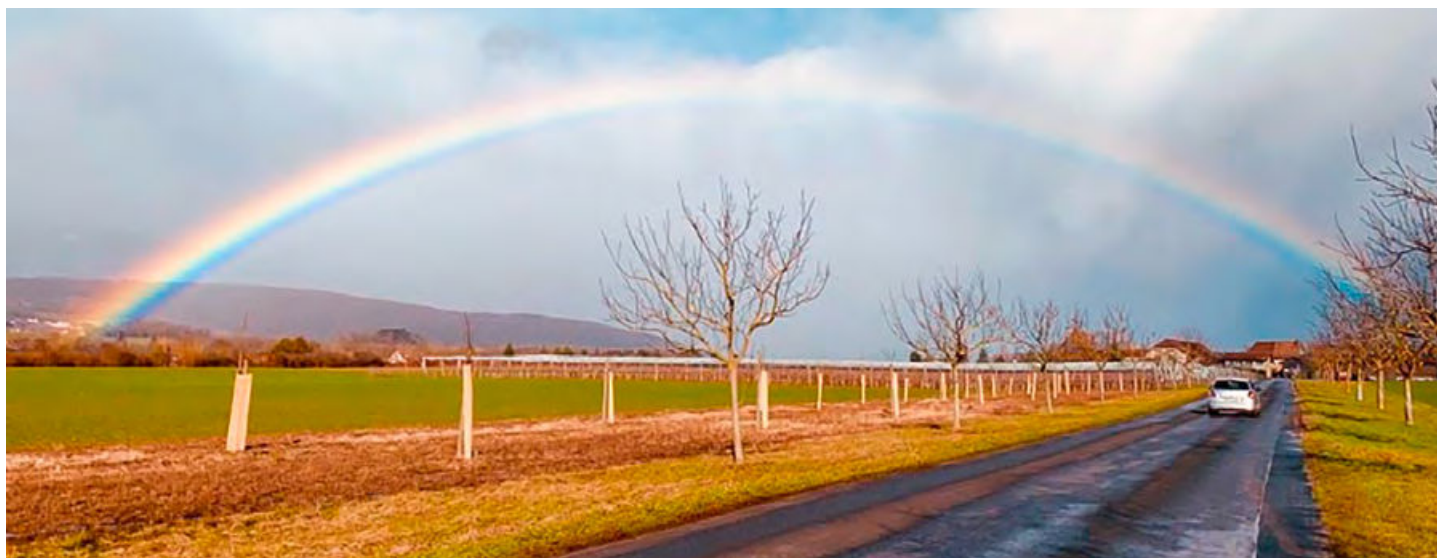
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EXTERNAT & INTERNAT



Nature will never stop giving

The Good of the Ugly, turning Pandemic into Kindemic

Sunny side up! We have asked our colleagues and friends to comment on the positive impact of the lockdown and other big changes brought about by the pandemic. We have invited them to share any special examples of kindness and support that they may have witnessed over the past year. This is what we have learned...

YULIA ANDREEVA, UNDP

Could you name at least one good change that the “global lockdown” in response to the pandemic has brought to the world and to you personally?

CATHERINE KIROREI CORSINI, WHO:

In my opinion, the world has become a better place with more solidarity, togetherness, closeness and kindness.

Personally, I have become closer to my colleagues. I now make it a habit to go through the directory to remember colleagues and make a point of calling one or two each week to ask how they are but also to ask if they need any help whatsoever.

MARUSIA, AGE 7:

My mom helped me make a list of what I would like to do in 2021. Here it is: travel by

plane, hug and kiss, a bear, walk around without face masks, learn to play a flute, for everyone to be happy, play with friends, celebrate birthdays together, see my great-grandma again, shop without face masks and do lots of sports.

PHILIPPE GOLL, RENAULT FINANCE:

There is a lot less traffic now! It is beautiful that we are starting to hear the sound of the city, not just of car tires. With no opportunity to travel, I am enjoying the chance to explore my own country, Switzerland, rediscover its beauty and take the time to explore my region without rushing to see new places.

NADYA ROSS, PIANIST:

This time is a unique opportunity to appreciate and rediscover the values we took for granted. Starting with our own life, which is very fragile.

A human being looks so sturdy, with bones, muscles and pure power. The fact that a tiny virus can break this strength anytime has made many of us value our everyday life. For me personally, the “forced” calm and quiet made me think more about what my soul really needs and care less about the image of myself that I want to project.



When restaurants are closed: fondue in the Swiss Alps

VICTORIA BOTVIN, EMPLOYMENT LAWYER:

While it's been very difficult not having social interactions in-person, I think the lockdown has encouraged people to reflect on the people in their lives that they're interested in connecting to. For me, it's meant that my family and I have had regular Zoom gatherings to celebrate Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and birthday milestones together. I've also reconnected in a very meaningful way with several friends from high school and college for whom I doubt I would have ever had time if we weren't in a lockdown, Covid-world.

NATASHA DORKIN, STUDENT, AGE 14:

In the past year, I've learned many things about myself that would have possibly taken

years to figure out if it wasn't for the pandemic. As a teenage high schooler, living through Covid has been extremely impactful. Many girls and boys my age struggle with mental health issues, including myself. However, having the time and space away from socializing on a daily basis, has allowed me to reflect on who I am on the inside. There are numerous negative aspects of this global issue. Nevertheless, taking a long pause from the world outside of my room, to focus on myself has been somewhat refreshing.

PIERRE MABILOTTE, FREERIDER:

Doing more with less. By nature, we are incredibly resourceful and resilient. However, overconsumption and

everyday comfort have made us lazy and dependent. With so many things becoming inaccessible, we are encouraged to look and find good resources within. One of my favorite examples is making a table and chairs with the help of three snowboards and cooking fondue in the snow. The best lunch in the mountains!

MARINA APPIAH, WHO:

The world has been forced to slow down because movements nationally and internationally are restricted, and the "need to get something done now" has temporarily lost its place in places of work. Personally, I feel more in control of my time, and therefore have a better work/leisure balance than I did in the past.

Citez un changement positif que ce «verrouillage mondial» dû à la pandémie a apporté à l'humanité et à vous en particulier.

CHRISTIAN DAVID, UNOG:

La prise de conscience des changements climatiques et de l'impact de l'homme sur sa petite planète étaient déjà présents avant la pandémie, notamment chez les jeunes.

Il semble qu'un mouvement de fond permettra à un grande part de l'humanité qui paraissait l'ignorer, de mieux percevoir les enjeux auxquels seront confrontés nos générations futures. Pour ma part, l'accès aux conversations virtuelles que je maîtrisais peu, a ouvert des perspectives nouvelles pendant la pandémie. Je me suis aperçu que je pouvais contacter des personnes qui m'auraient parues inaccessibles, dans le monde entier.



Lockdown brought us closer to nature.

Travel restrictions provide an opportunity to discover your home... and your family!



Could you share an example of kindness and support that you have witnessed (or done) during these challenging times?

MARINA APPIAH, WHO:

Cooking is not my thing, but this pandemic gave me an excuse to invite someone who is a refugee into my home for a meal. It is something that I would like to do more often and even try to fit into my routine. I have also been at the receiving end of kindness where friends have taken on tasks (extra curricula activities) which are my responsibility. It has also touched me that they have insisted on spending more time with me so that I do not feel isolated.

PHILIPPE GOLL, RENAULT FINANCE:

I was touched by people who were buying food for the elderly and all the others who could not leave the house. Realizing how fragile our life is, I started calling my mother more every two-three days instead of once every three months.

NADYA ROSS, PIANIST:

The school where my granddaughters are studying made entrances on different sides. One with a big parking lot. Another with a small. I noticed that every morning, across the small parking, all cars would stop to let children cross the street safely. I gave concerts online, streaming, in front of big audiences. It was a small window into the outside world for those who were confined. I tried to ease things up.

VICTORIA BOTVIN, EMPLOYMENT LAWYER:

little things can mean a lot. While I know this did not do anything directly to help the pandemic, but during lockdown, I loved hearing all the neighbors go outside at a designated time and clap, cheer, and make noise to celebrate and appreciate the health care workers. Some people would

play music and all the neighbors would dance. some flashed their lights, lit fireworks, etc.

There is an elderly home that I can see from my apartment and I really enjoyed watching the elder-care assistants come to the window each night to hear the cheering. They were always smiling so big and really seemed to enjoy the cheers, as did I. Little things can really mean a lot during difficult pandemic times.

PIERRE MABILLOTTE, FREERIDER:

As a consequence of the pandemic, many tourist destinations and sport clubs suffered a lot and were even forced to shut down. As a big fan of kite surfing, I tried to support financially the kite clubs in Mauritius to help them survive the season without clients.

CATHERINE KIROREI CORSINI, WHO:

I would like to share a story of a colleague, who is very vulnerable and at very high risk of catching Covid-19. Due to his condition, he could not leave the house. One day the WHO Staff Association (SA) had an “open house” with staff and invited those needing help to reach out to us.

The vulnerable colleague called me a day after and asked if the SA could ask the management to bring him his computer, an adapted chair and some materials he needed to be able to work comfortably from home. I remember him saying that the SA’s “open house” was like music to his ears.

Apparently, he really needed some materials and personal articles from the office but did not know who to ask. He felt



The pandemic is a chance to try new things.

very uncomfortable calling his team for help and he was also afraid to appear weak or forced to reveal his medical condition to colleagues.

When I talked to the management about the colleague's request, the process appeared to be very complex and time-consuming.

Instead of waiting for a long time for the formalities to be completed, I decided to volunteer, pick up what the colleague needed and bring it to his house. The colleague was very touched and moved. I was surprised how a small gesture like that could make such a difference – the person had tears in his eyes! A day after, he called me to say that he has become a dues-paying member of our Staff Association.

Pouvez-vous partager un exemple de gentillesse et de soutien dont vous avez été témoin ou que vous avez accompli vous-même pendant cette période?

CHRISTIAN DAVID, UNOG:

Notre regard envers les autres a changé. Les relations ont évolué. Dans les villes et les villages, j'ai constaté que des personnes qui se disaient à peine bonjour, se viennent en aide. Il semble que cette période ait parfois permis que s'efface un peu la pression du rythme effréné de nos sociétés. Il peut arriver que, dans certaines circonstances, le vernis produit par nos civilisations se craquèle pour qu'apparaisse notre identité profonde. J'espère que cette pandémie aura donc été utile, d'une certaine manière. ■

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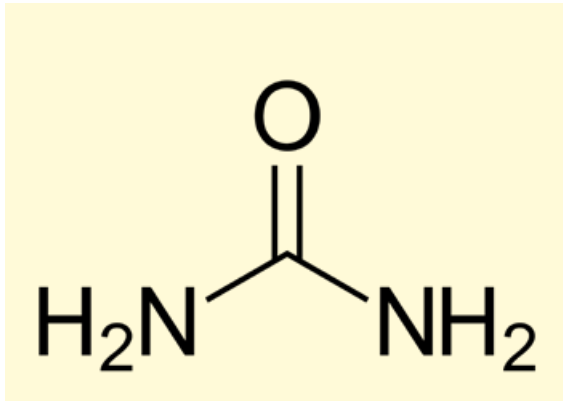
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Historic uses of “liquid gold”

The Power of Pee

From teeth whitener and quack medicine to an ingredient for explosives and a softener for leather, the history of our relationship to urine is a fascinating and often surreal tale revealing once-commonplace practices that seem bizarre today.



The chemical structure of Urea

KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

With the advent of “peecycling” however, our inexhaustible supply of “liquid gold” may prove an environmentally-friendly resource for a sustainable future. The average person produces 500 litres of urine per year, enough to fill three bathtubs and all of which is typically mixed with other “waste” products and flushed down the drain. The only widespread modern use for human urine is to assist in assessing health and diagnosing certain conditions (think of the urine colour charts in the WHO lavatories) but it wasn’t always the case;



A Doctor Examining Urine by Trophime Bigot (1579–1650).

our thrifty ancestors had some practical and sometimes perverse uses for their pee (often ingenious) and they built whole industries around the stuff.

Human urine is 95% water but contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. The main nitrogen-containing substance in our wee is urea which, when stored long enough and allowed to grow “stale” and decay, converts in to ammonia – a very useful compound with a high pH that can be used to break down other organic matter or be used as a base for cleaning when mixed back in to water. Grab any household cleaning products and look at the ingredients and you’ll probably find some ammonia in there.

This power of pee was well known to our predecessors and urine was a much sought-after product for the tanning industries where it was used to soften animal hides and make them easier to clean by breaking down the bits of flesh and hairs attached to the skin. More recently, it’s common folklore that the trusted method for a biker to soften up their new Doc Marten riding boots is to leave them filled with the owner’s urine overnight.

In ancient Rome, pots were often set out at street corners for passers-by to relieve themselves and when enough urine had been collected it would be taken to the *fullonica* (laundry) where, when mixed with water, it would be poured over dirty clothes and some lucky employee would get the job of trampling the resulting mixture with their bare feet. Urine was said not only to get your toga’s whites whiter but also to bring out the colour of your garments since ammonia also helped bind organic-based dyes to fabric.

This use of urine was long-standing; in 16th century England casks of urine were shipped to the textile industry in Yorkshire for use as a colour fixer – the estimated fluid output of 1,000 people was required per year for this task. If washing your clothes in human pee was a commonplace Roman solution to the family’s weekly laundry chores, you also probably wanted to keep some of that precious urine back as it was also recommended as a mouthwash, to clean the teeth and give you the most brilliant smile. The Roman poet Catullus lampooned the practice pointing out, “*the fact*

that your teeth are so polished just shows you're the more full of piss." Another Roman, Pliny the Elder (the one who died trying to rescue survivors during the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 and after whom the term Plinian eruption is named) recommended urine for "sores, burns, affections of the anus, chaps and scorpion stings".

The medicinal use of urine throughout history is particularly rich and varied. Being a sterile fluid when it leaves the body, it was often a safer option for washing wounds than any available water. In 1550, Italian Doctor Leonardo Fioravanti observed a young man whose nose was sliced off in a duel and promptly relieved himself over the detached appendage before sewing it back on.

Doctors in Tudor England were particularly keen on cleaning injuries with urine and also recommended starting your day with a cup of your own pee, preferably while "tis yet warm" for a whole host of claimed health benefits. It has also, at various times, been suggested as a beauty product – particularly for softening and cleansing the skin.

Urine still features prominently in several alternate medicine approaches, just Google "urotherapy" for modern practices that may make you feel as if we never left the Middle Ages! A 2010 study in the Pan African Medical Journal, however, entitled "The Golden Fountain – Is urine the miracle drug no one told you about?" generally came down against drinking urine where possible.

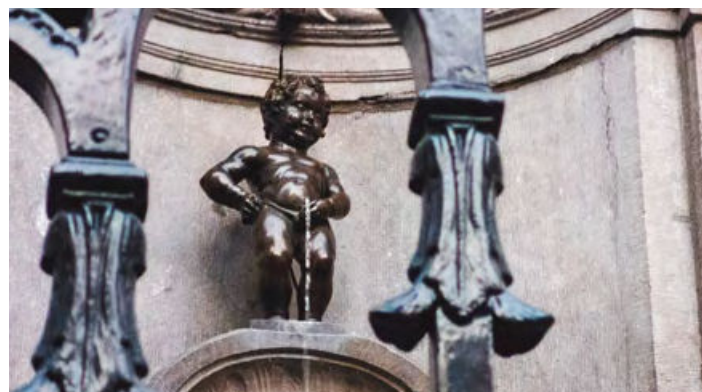
A less constructive, in fact downright destructive, use of urine has been as an ingredient for gunpowder. Before the main ingredient (potassium-nitrate) was synthesised in large quantities in the early 20th century,

historic means of manufacture relied on the nitrogen present in human waste. A mid-19th century cookbook for explosives recommended creating a dung heap of human excrement mixed with ash and watering it regularly with "the richest kind of liquid manure" – stale urine.

That same nitrogen also made urine an ideal ingredient for the creation of fertilisers, and 90% of the urea produced today using modern (non-human-bladder) methods is destined for the fertiliser industry. In fact, it was the synthetic production of urea in 1828 by the German chemist Friedrich Wöhler that conclusively proved that living organisms were made up of the same chemicals as inanimate objects – up until then it had been suggested that these were two entirely different types of material. Urine then, launched the field of organic chemistry!

Synthetically-produced urea is today used for everything from browning pretzels and hair removal to breaking down the nitrogen pollutants produced by the combustion of fuel in diesel engines. At other different times in history, urine has been used to cure drying tobacco and help bring out its flavour, it was recommended during the First World War as an emergency protection against gas – soldiers would dip a cloth in urine and wrap it around their faces – and there is anecdotal evidence that a contract could be symbolically sealed between two men in Feudal Japan by mixing their streams.

Urine may be set for a big comeback however, taking its lead from the original Roman practices and brining the latest technology to the challenge. Start-up Robial in Bristol, England are looking at mechanisms for generating electricity from urine via innovative



The Manneken Pis in Brussels.

microbial fuel cells and a French company called Eco-sec based in Montpellier has been experimenting with the use of urine as a fertiliser for wine production. A viticulture at the Domaine de la Jasse, in Combaillaux in the south of France volunteered a section of his vines to be watered with human pee and used as a control group against land enriched with factory fertiliser. Early tests for waste-powered energy or human-watered agriculture are highly promising (Robial already powered some lights at the Glastonbury Music Festival with the liquid waste of festival goers and charged a mobile phone) and recycling of human waste in this manner would be an environmentally-friendly approach that reduces our reliance on fossil fuels and the damage linked to

the manufacture and application of factory-produced fertilisers.

But since 10ml of urine or wastewater can only generate around 1-2 milliwatts (mW) and the average hectare of wheat needs an estimated 30,000 litres of urine per year (180 bath tubs) industrial scale collection and processing to reduce costs to an economically-viable level for energy and agriculture remains a challenge.

A brass pot on every street corner in Bristol and Montpellier isn't yet going to cut but the day may come when you take a toilet break on the motorway not just for your comfort but also to keep your car moving. ■

Medical students were attending their first university class. They all gathered around the lab table on which the teacher had placed a large jar of dark yellow human urine. The professor told them, "The essence of good medicine is observation. Using just this bodily fluid, I can observe the colour, the smell and even the taste and make deductions about the state of the owner's health". He dipped his finger into the foul-smelling liquid and then into his mouth. Then he asked the students to do the same. The students hesitated for several minutes, but at last everyone dipped their finger in the urine sample and tasted it with a grimace. When everyone finished, the professor looked at them and said: "I said that the most important quality in our work is 'observation'. Those who will pass my class noted that I dipped my middle finger into this pot of pee but then tasted my index finger only. Today you have just learned the importance of close observation!"



Author with John Purser and his display of early horn instruments

© Patricia Macfadyen.

The turning fork and the Treaty

In many countries, village life is disappearing, but here we found a community with social cohesion.

DAVID MACFADYEN*

It was unusual, half a century ago, for employers to provide induction courses for new staff. The World Health Organization (WHO) was ahead of its time. On day one, I was given the names of people with whom to arrange briefings.

One was Norman Sartorius, whose insightful article, 'Preserving mental health after retirement', appears in February's *newSpecial*. Norman gave sound advice to those entering WHO and does the same for those about to leave. When UN agency staff retire, he suggests, they need to develop an identity that is no longer that of the international civil servant, but rather one compatible with the environment in which they choose to live. My last working day in WHO fell on 31 December, not the ideal time of the year for a return to Scotland of two exiles who'd been 37 years away. My wife Patricia and I therefore decided to revisit countries in which the family had lived

during my international career. Our journeys lasted till spring-time, when highland landscapes come to life with swathes of bluebells and wild garlic. We set up home in a remote community on the Isle of Skye, one that comprises 31 households, each sited on a small parcel of crofting land that supports a few sheep and cattle. In many countries, village life is disappearing, but here we found a community with social cohesion. As Norman says, this is key to the preservation of health.

Friends from overseas visited, of course, and tourists flock in the summer, when a festival is held to celebrate the culture of the island. I added a book festival to this annual event named *Aos Dana*, the 'people of the arts' of the Celtic world. A venue for these literary events, including one 'World Premiere', was the village hall. The three days of the 2008 festival were devoted to just one acclaimed book, *Scotland's Music. A History of the Traditional and Classical Music of Scotland*

from Early Time to the Present Day, and to just one author, the musicologist and island resident John Purser.

The opening event took place out-of-doors. According to John, birdsong was perhaps the origin of some of Scotland's earliest music and the book points out the similarity of the mournful cry of the redshank to early laments. The setting was Skye's High Pasture Cave. Part of a bridge for a plucked string instrument was discovered at this site dated to c.500 BCE. John treated the audience to performances on ancient instruments and demonstrated how the music we enjoy today evolved.

At the time of writing, all we see of friends are galleries of faces on a computer screen. The back story I've just given came to mind in February 2021 when a group, who normally meet for a monthly lunch, gathered online. In pre-Covid days, we followed lunch with an entertaining talk. Now we



© Patricia Macfadyen.

Opening day, Aos Dana book festival, Uamh An Ard Achadh (High Pasture Cave), Skye.

were meeting virtually and listening online to a lecture on ‘Organology’. A brilliant young academic demonstrated how music changed as wind and string instruments developed. In describing how orchestral pitch evolved, she informed us that the 1919 Treaty of Versailles incorporated an international definition of the tuning note, A. This is based on a defined number of wave cycles, currently 440cps.

The Versailles provenance of this standard seemed scarcely believable. It seems, however, that military bands of the allies were unable to play together because their instruments had different pitches. To my astonishment, a colleague informed the lecturer that the definition is specified in Article 282 of the Treaty, a second adding that it is listed in para 22. All of this live on Webex! I have to confess that I never was able to forsake my former identity. You can dim the glow of a previous life, but there’s no ‘Off’ switch. The Treaty of Versailles had

been at the centre of my work for a decade. In 2011, I discovered and began researching the letters of a Scottish doctor who worked for the League of Nations. Four years later, I travelled to Edinburgh to participate in an annual meeting of former international civil servants, mostly British, but with a few from France, Germany and Switzerland. At the closing session, I rose to point out that 2019 would be the centennial of the Peace Treaties that ended World War 1 and that this had particular significance for Scotland, since the parchment signed in Versailles named Eric Drummond the ‘First Secretary-General of the League of Nations’. The meeting decided that a book would be the best way to achieve recognition for the man who was the youngest and the longest serving of those who have been Secretary-General of either the League or the United Nations. Subsequently, three colleagues and I agreed to explore the hinterland of Drummond and what he did

after Versailles: Michael Davies, formerly of FAO and the Inter-American Development Bank in Oxford; Marilyn Carr, now in London, had worked for the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the UN Development Fund for Women; and John Burley, who lives close to Geneva had worked for the UN, UNDP and UNCTAD. In Scotland, Drummond’s family kindly gave me access to his private papers.

A year later, on a Sunday night, Michael telephoned to say I should turn on the TV. The Antiques Roadshow, a popular BBC show, was in Edinburgh. A man had brought a large engraved Orrefors vase with the inscription ‘presented by the Swedish government to Sir Eric Drummond Secretary-General of the League of Nations 1924’. The vase had been sold three years before at an auction of the content of a Drummond family house. The proceeds from the sale of the vase had been donated to a two-century old public lending library that

Sir Eric had visited as a boy. He had gone to Versailles as Private Secretary to Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour. As we ploughed through archives and books, Drummond emerged as an immensely likeable Scot and an outstanding executive.

The Treaty of Versailles incorporated the Covenant of the League of Nations, which was signed on 28 April 1919. Characteristically, Drummond took time to reflect before embarking on his great experiment. He spent the next days fly fishing, five alone and six with his wife (a map on the wall of his office in the Palais Wilson highlighted pools on the Versoix River favoured by three large elusive trout, Moses, Aaron and Ham). By the end of May, Drummond had arrived at a basic structure for the League, constructed from the Covenant. The superbly preserved League archives in the Palais include minutes of meetings that Drummond held, most weeks, with his Directors. These begin on 13 August 1919 and extend

over his 14-year tenure, giving a unique fly-on-the-wall insight of a Secretary-General at work.

Our book, *Eric Drummond and his Legacies*, published in the centenary of Versailles, was launched at the Palais in 2019. It views 1919 as the year in which nations began cooperating in technical fields. Drummond, and the gifted international officials he appointed, used two articles of the Covenant to develop programmes of economic, social and technical cooperation that form the basis of much of what the UN system does today. A tiny illustration is provided by Article 282 (22) of the Peace Treaty of Versailles. Acceptance of an international standard in music soon extended to other domains, including health. The earliest League of Nations initiative on biological standardisation took place in Edinburgh in 1923. The Conference accepted, *inter alia*, an offer by the National Institute for Medical Research in London to retain a sufficient quantity of insulin for examination in different centres, with a view to defining a standard unit.

The final League of Nations initiative on standardisation was a 1944 London Conference on the Standardisation of Penicillin. This recommended that a quantity of pure penicillin sodium salt be adopted as the international standard and that it be kept safely and permanently at the National Institute of Medical Research, from which centre it was to be supplied to directors of national centres in other countries. Thus, the medical equivalent of a tuning fork at the Paris Conservatory of Music, oscillating at a standard number of cycles per second, were standard samples of insulin and penicillin held in a London laboratory.

A century after the Treaty of Versailles, international norms remain at the centre of the work of WHO and the UN. The *Weekly Epidemiological Record*, first published by the League, has been in continuous publication since 1926; and the *World Economic Survey* of the League laid the foundation for the *World Economic and Social Survey* of the UN as well as the *World Economic Outlook* of the International Monetary Fund.

An eloquent *Hommage* to international civil servants, past and present, also appears in the February issue of *newSpecial*. This speaks of the adherence by UN civil servants to norms of the highest levels of conduct – *l'intégrité, la loyauté, l'indépendance, l'impartialité, la tolérance et le respect de la diversité*. These are qualities set by Drummond, by example and in print. The oath that I took on joining WHO, and which all staff take entering UN service, is identical to the oath that he introduced for League staff. In Geneva, there's no recognition of the founder of the international civil service. In the United Kingdom, there's only one – the Scottish grave that marks the final resting place of James Eric Drummond, 16th Earl of Perth. This describes him as 'a great international civil servant'. ■

*DM was foundation Chief of the WHO Global Programme on Health of the Elderly and, later, Director of Programme Management in the WHO Regional Office for Europe. He and three retired colleagues from the UN authored the book: Macfadyen, David, Michael D. V. Davies, Marilyn N. Carr, and John Burley. *Eric Drummond and His Legacies: The League of Nations and the Beginnings of Global Governance*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2019.

Health for all The film festival

The public is invited to post comments and questions on the short films and a selection of these questions will be featured during the online award ceremonies in May. The shortlisted films can be viewed by the public as of today through the following Youtube playlists:

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) <https://bit.ly/31aZPYz>

Health emergencies <https://bit.ly/2Pp9Bny>

Better health and well - being <https://bit.ly/2QBXZ11>

An additional playlist will be published on our Youtube channel on April 7 towards WHD Health Equity special prize.

LET'S WATCH, COMMENT & SHARE



Mozambique



© Aurélien Bergot

Carlos Machava... fire eater and feline of Afro-pop dance

- *Maputo, 1987*
- *Traditional and Afro-jazz dance*
- *“The broken chair on the Place des Nations and the diversity that surrounds it.”*

newSpecial is delighted to include profiles presented by Zahi Haddad, in his newly-published book “126 Heartbeats for International Geneva”. We thank the author and his publisher, Slatkine, for this exclusivity.

Lindy hop, a little jazz, a lot of swing and above all the Mozambican tradition make Carlos Machava’s dance a treat. A colorful palette of joy and lightness. When the music takes hold of him, nothing matters. Carlos floats above the ground. On a cloud of happiness. Carlos has rhythm in his blood. Carlos embodies the rhythms that take him. Simply. Cheerfully. Born on the shores of the Indian Ocean, Carlos grows up with Mozambican “friendliness and exuberance”. Very quickly, he joins the theater, thanks to his friends who take him to the neighborhood church, where he takes his first stage and acting lessons. He is six years old and “it was better than hanging out on the street and exposing myself to all the trouble it could then give me.” A year later, Carlos discovers a dance group in his school. He observes every member, every connection, every emotion. Unravels every subtlety of this distinguished language, so intimate that dance is. Attentively. Passionately. “It was then my head and body were ignited. I felt the need to do the same!”

Thirsty for more dance, Carlos then goes to work. He learns every step, every rhythm, every

tradition. He lives his culture at top speed and merges it with all those that make him happy. He is totally taken and, for five years, creates his own choreographies, teaches his techniques to the young, takes part in various festivals around the world. He travels as far as China, where he is admired for his art and “for the color of my skin by people who had never approached a black person before. The encounters resulting from it are among the best memories of my career!” “Never tired,” Carlos lines up performances, has fun, wins two national competitions in a row. As rare as exceptional. “I would tell people around me that I was eating fire!”

Then, despite a three-year break and small jobs as a mechanic to earn a better living, Carlos perseveres. He finishes school, resumes dancing and joins the National Song and Dance Company. On stage, he twirls around, lets his legs take him to another world. As in an extraordinary levitation. With his group Hodi, literally “knock knock”, he goes beyond borders, sharing stages with international artists, bearers of complementary cultures, like lindy hop aficionados, who take

inspiration from the improvised movements of African dances.

With his joy for life and his broad smile, Carlos enchants his partners and his admirers.

On tour in Stockholm in 2017, he meets his future wife, a dancer like him, living in Geneva. Thirty years old, Carlos is ready for a solo career, although he maintains very strong ties with Mozambique and his friends from Hodi, when it comes to building bridges, co-producing a show, offering his artistic vision. He joins the ethnomusicology workshops, dividing his time between performing and teaching “face-to-face or online, adapting to local and international demand.” Thus, Africa, Asia and Europe welcome him and dive close off the Mozambican coast, the roots of Carlos, from tribal dance to oriental or Latin Zumba, through Afro swing and the very energetic pantsula, born in the South African townships during apartheid. So many bodily expressions, social demands, stories and imaginations presented with the lightness and agility of the panther. With the simplicity and generosity that define Carlos. ■

J'ai choisi le bonheur

*Interview de Dr Noha Baz, pédiatre,
écrivaine, gastronome...*



MARIT FOSSE, MAGAZINE DIVA

Dans la vie on croise beaucoup de personnes, certains laissent des traces et de bons souvenirs ou même vous encouragent à voir la vie du bon côté. Noha Baz fait partie de ces personnes. Sa passion d'aider les autres, que cela soit par son travail de pédiatre, l'association qu'elle a créée en 1997 ou simplement la phrase, « j'ai choisi le bonheur », fait qu'on a envie d'en apprendre plus sur son travail et sa philosophie. Nous avons eu de la chance de recroiser le Dr. Baz, il y a peu de temps, et de lui poser quelques questions...

Vous êtes une femme de multiples talents et une pédiatre de renom, pourquoi avez-vous créé votre association ?

J'ai créé mon association « Les Petits Soleils ». En 1997 à Beyrouth pour concrétiser un rêve que je portais en moi depuis le jour où, à l'âge de onze ans, j'avais décidé de devenir médecin. Nous vivions au Liban dans les balbutiements d'une guerre civile qui devait durer plus de vingt ans et je constatais déjà dans le pays beaucoup de disparités et de misère sociale. J'ai donc choisi un métier qui pouvait venir en aide à beaucoup

de personnes en soulageant une des formes de la misère : le manque de moyens pour accéder à des soins de santé de qualité. Une façon d'apporter ma petite goutte d'eau pour faire de ce monde un lieu plus accueillant et plus juste. Idéaliste comme on peut l'être à l'adolescence... avec la volonté d'y arriver coûte que coûte.

Je crois que lorsqu'il y a une volonté il y a un chemin. J'ai donc tout fait pour rendre cela possible vingt-trois ans aujourd'hui qu'avec de la persévérance et l'aide de beaucoup de personnes bienveillantes nous arrivons à faire sourire tous les jours des dizaines d'enfants et soulager autant de familles.

Pourriez-vous nous parler plus en détail de votre association ?

L'association les petits soleils offre une assistance médicale quotidienne à tous les enfants vivants sur le sol libanais sans aucune distinction d'appartenance ethnique ou religieuse. Nous accueillons en priorité des petits libanais venant des quatre coins du pays qui souffrent terriblement aujourd'hui de la double crise économique et sociale qui a

frappé le Liban depuis septembre 2019.

Beaucoup de pères de famille se sont depuis retrouvés au chômage sans aucune compensation et sans aucune couverture sanitaire ou sociale, la crise sanitaire n'a fait qu'empirer les choses. Nous accueillons de tout cœur également les enfants de travailleurs étrangers et de familles de réfugiés totalement démunis n'ayant droit à rien et qui vivent dans des conditions lamentables.

Tout est difficile aujourd'hui au Liban. Le quotidien, où il faut acheter citernes d'eau et électricité fournie par des moteurs privés. Depuis la crise économique, l'état est incapable d'assurer les subventions nécessaires pour assurer l'importation de médicaments à la fois pour les traitements de malades chroniques et pour les médicaments simples comme pour le paracétamol. Nous avons mis donc en place depuis un pont aérien qui apporte tous les mois laits de croissance et plein de médicaments.

Pour en revenir à l'association j'ai mobilisé, en fondant l'association, quarante-cinq

médecins, toutes spécialités confondues, ainsi que des psychologues, des physiothérapeutes, des orthophonistes, des éducateurs spécialisés pour la psychomotricité. Nous assurons de cette façon la prise en charge en urgence et au long cours, des soins de santé, du suivi vaccinal de l'ardoise en charge d'interventions de chirurgie générale, d'urologie, d'otorhinolaryngologie d'ophtalmologie et d'orthopédie. Nous fournissons prothèses implants et matériel orthopédique lorsque cela est nécessaire ainsi que le suivi souvent sur de très nombreuses années. Voir ces enfants grandir et sourire est le plus beau des cadeaux au quotidien!

Le Liban a traversé une épreuve après l'autre depuis bientôt 40 ans. Comment est la situation actuelle ?

Le Liban est une mosaïque unique, mais compliquée. Un équilibre fragile avait réussi à s'installer jusqu'au soulèvement populaire de septembre 2019 dû à l'effondrement de la monnaie libanaise indexée au dollar et une inflation incroyable qui a multiplié les prix de la vie quotidienne par dix. Il y'a encore un an un franc suisse c'était 1500 livres



libanaises aujourd'hui un franc suisse vaut 8500 LL. Il y a un an pour avoir 100 euros il fallait déboursier 200000 livres libanaises aujourd'hui il faut un million deux cent mille livres. La crise sanitaire a fait des ravages les hôpitaux publics étaient sous équipés. Heureusement, une campagne de vaccination offerte par l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé est en train de redonner un peu d'espoir, mais la pauvreté est partout! 65% de la population libanaise vit sous le seuil de pauvreté.

La société civile prend le relais de l'état sur tous les plans. Depuis l'explosion du 4 août qui a fait en quinze secondes plus de dégâts qu'en quinze ans de guerre civile, ce sont les jeunes encadrés par des ONG qui font le travail sur le terrain. Avec les petits soleils nous avons même été amenés à remettre des enveloppes mensuelles pour permette à 180 familles de survivre c'est du lourd!

Les enfants que vous aidez à travers votre association, comment les trouvez-vous?

Ce sont eux qui nous trouvent! Les antennes d'assistance sociale réparties sur le territoire nous adressent les enfants démunis et leurs familles. Les médecins sentinelles dans tous les hôpitaux du pays, nous appellent dès qu'ils reçoivent un enfant sans couverture sanitaire ou sociale et nécessitant des soins urgents. L'association,

grâce aux médias qui ont avec intelligence su mettre nos actions en lumière ont permis à l'information de circuler et à nos soleils de se multiplier.

Vous écrivez aussi des livres. Qu'est-ce que cela vous apporte que d'écrire, et comment trouvez-vous le temps pour le faire?

L'aventure de l'écriture qui est devenue aujourd'hui quasiment un deuxième métier est née certainement de ma passion pour la lecture. Les livres m'ont toujours accompagnée depuis que je suis enfant et ont été un rempart contre l'imbécilité de la guerre. Ils sont pour moi une partie avec de murs solides et bienfaisants. J'écris sur mes téléphones partout dans les trains les avions en voiture. Tous mes livres sont destinés à «faire vivre.» Mes droits d'auteur nourrissent l'association une façon de plus d'aider.

J'ai organisé, au fil des années, de très nombreux événements gastronomiques dîners de gala, etc.... pour lever des fonds pour l'association. Un dîner c'est agréable aussi, mais un livre est un objet que l'on peut savourer, relire, reproduire les recettes. Et donc s'il peut en plus apporter de la joie et apaisée des souffrances alors c'est encore plus motivant à écrire!

Dans votre livre autobiographique, vous dites, «J'ai choisi le bonheur.» Qu'est-ce que c'est que de choisir le bonheur, surtout si on a,

comme vous, vu tellement de choses tristes au cours de votre carrière? Quel est votre secret? Pourquoi choisir le bonheur?

Parce qu'au détours d'une guerre civile, vous apprenez percevoir l'essentiel, dans l'urgence de vivre pour donner du bonheur autour de soi, il faut commencer par essayer d'être heureux. Ne serait-ce que pour donner l'exemple comme disait Jacques Prévert: «quelle vie est exempte de chagrins et de moments de tristesse et de désespoir?» Tout le monde a été confronté un jour avec bien sûr une intensité différente à des chagrins. J'ai choisi de regarder la vie du côté heureux parce que le bonheur se multiplie lorsqu'on le partage.

C'est un exercice quotidien et un regard sur le monde. Dans le flot d'horreurs déversé par les informations quotidiennes, je vais essayer de trouver malgré, tout de quoi sourire. J'ai peut-être gardé de mon enfance cette capacité d'émerveillement et je trouve dans les petites choses de tous les jours, de quoi m'apaiser et me faire sourire pour aider les autres à le faire. Une belle page de lecture un joli morceau de musique, un sourire et un mot gentil que j'adresse sincèrement à quelqu'un la cuisine m'apaise. On dit souvent que c'est de l'amour et c'est vrai! Préparer un Plat ou un gâteau pour quelqu'un me remplit de joie.

Me plonger dans un marché rempli de senteurs d'épices et de fleurs également. À chacun de trouver ce qui lui fait plaisir, d'éteindre la télé ou les radios et de trouver une harmonie. Se tourner un peu plus vers les autres aussi la solidarité fait du bien pas seulement à celui qui en bénéficie, mais également à celui qui la donne. Croyez-moi, ceux qui ne donnent rien ne savent pas ce qu'ils perdent.

Et puis pour conclure, je vais vous citer Voltaire et sa phrase culte «j'ai décidé d'être heureux parce que c'est bon pour la santé!»

Lorsqu'on pense à votre engagement pour les enfants au Liban, on a le cœur lourd, et on se demande comment on peut vous aider. Auriez-vous quelques suggestions?

Vous pouvez m'aider de mille façons. Vous m'aidez déjà en parlant de l'association! Je remercie d'ailleurs beaucoup de personnes merveilleuses en Suisse qui par leur dynamisme et leur activité autour du livre ont fait connaître l'association. Julie Vasa et toutes les dames du festival du lac de Collonges Bellerive. Alain Bittar et l'ICAM qui a organisé une très belle rencontre autour de mes livres pour aider l'association. Le journal le Temps, et Richard WERLY qui y a écrit à cette occasion un très bel article.

Je remercie aussi l'association suisse Liban avec Jean Altwegg pharmacien à la retraite qui se démène avec les membres de cette association pour nous aider en me commandant mes livres directement par exemple de cette façon les bénéficiaires vont directement à l'association.

Et puis vous Marit si bienveillante et si élégante en mettant l'accent sur le travail de l'association à travers cette interview. La vie fait parfois aussi des cadeaux Rencontres avec des personnes formidables. Vous en faites partie! ■

The original interview has been published on Diva magazine online



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Souvenirs et trésors au Parc Trembley

La ville de Genève abrite de nombreux beaux monuments qui méritent notre attention.

ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Beaucoup commémorent l'histoire de cette ville, par exemple le Mur des Réformateurs, la statue Rousseau sur l'île Rousseau, ou la Statue de la Confédération, inaugurée en 1869 dans le jardin anglais pour célébrer l'entrée de Genève dans la Confédération suisse en 1814. D'autres monuments sont universels, comme la chaise cassée de la Place des Nations, rappelant aux visiteurs les milliers de victimes mutilées des mines terrestres, la sculpture en bronze d'un pistolet noué, expression éloquente de notre engagement pour la non-violence, ou la stèle devant la synagogue de Plainpalais en mémoire des victimes de l'Holocauste.

Il y a trois ans, en avril 2018, une série commémorative de neuf lanternes en bronze était officiellement dévoilée au Parc Trembley, rue Pestalozzi au Petit Saconnex, tout près du Palais des Nations. Les candélabres de dix mètres honorent la mémoire des victimes du génocide ottoman contre les

Arméniens d'Asie Mineure pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Ce monument remarquable est le résultat d'une proposition de citoyens genevois d'origine arménienne soutenue par des militants des droits de l'homme basés à Genève.

La proposition avait été acceptée par la Ville de Genève déjà en 2008, mais sa réalisation a été retardée par une discussion pseudo-historique et tristement politisée. Pourtant, le projet a bénéficié du soutien du Fonds municipal d'art contemporain (FMAC).

Huit artistes ont participé au concours organisé par FMAC. Le projet simple, esthétique et cohérent soumis par Melik Ohanian, artiste contemporain français d'origine arménienne, résidant à Paris et New York, a été unanimement accepté. Il rend hommage à la mémoire collective de toutes les victimes de violence et d'exil dans un esprit de tolérance et de dialogue.

Les « lampadaires » de la mémoire nous font penser aux

larmes virtuelles. Deux petites plaques dans le parc identifient l'œuvre d'art comme « Les Réverbères de la Mémoire », mais les plaques sont presque cachées. Il m'a fallu une demi-heure pour les trouver!

Lors de la cérémonie d'ouverture du 13 avril 2018, l'ambassadeur arménien de l'époque en Suisse, le grand Charles Aznavour, a déclaré que l'installation n'était pas seulement un rappel d'une catastrophe passée: «C'est un monument qui dit que cela ne doit plus jamais se reproduire». Il y a cependant eu une certaine opposition de la part du gouvernement turc, et la controverse s'est même portée devant la plus haute cour de Suisse, qui, en février 2019, a rejeté les allégations selon lesquelles le monument pourrait conduire la région à devenir un site de manifestations, voire de conflit entre des membres arméniens et les communautés turques.

La série de lampes nous invite à flâner dans ce parc généreux, orné de conifères centenaires, de sapins Douglas, de trois

majestueux Cèdres du Liban, de trois séquoias, de chênes et d'autres arbres élevés. Si vous y allez en avril, vous apprécierez les centaines de jonquilles. Il est également possible de faire du vélo sur les sentiers sinueux, à condition que les piétons et les amoureux ne soient pas dérangés – il y a aussi beaucoup de résidents poussant des landaus ou promenant leurs chiens, et par beau temps beaucoup d'enfants qui courent et de couples se prélassent sur l'herbe.

Depuis 1757, le parc est la propriété d'Abraham Trembley et est resté dans sa famille pendant deux siècles. Finalement le parc devint propriété de la ville de Genève, qui y construisit une école, un terrain de basket, une salle de gymnastique. La plupart des visiteurs ne sont même pas conscients du message discret des lampes, destinées à honorer les victimes du premier génocide du XX^e siècle, qui a commencé avec les massacres d'avril 1915, déjà condamnés en mai 1915 par les gouvernements britannique et français comme « crimes contre l'humanité et



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la civilisation» – pas seulement un crime contre les Arméniens, dont les ancêtres vivaient en Asie Mineure depuis l'époque biblique. Jusqu'à récemment, cette tragédie avait été largement ignorée par les historiens et les médias. Hitler a jadis fait une remarque cynique sur les massacres de plus d'un million d'Arméniens: «Qui se souvient des Arméniens maintenant?».

En 2001, le Parlement de Genève a reconnu le génocide arménien et le Parlement fédéral suisse en 2003. Nous, internationaux, savons que la vocation des Nations Unies et du Comité international de la Croix-Rouge est de sauver les générations futures du fléau de la guerre et de protéger les populations civiles en temps de conflit armé, comme en témoignent les Conventions de Genève de 1949 et les Protocoles de 1977.

En 1944, alors que l'Holocauste était perpétré, le juriste polonais Raphaël Lemkin a inventé le terme «génocide», en le dérivant du mot grec *génos* pour groupe ethnique et du verbe

latin *caedo* (tuer). Depuis l'adoption de la convention sur le génocide en 1948, le génocide est considéré comme le crime ultime et, depuis 2002, ce crime peut être poursuivi par la Cour pénale internationale en vertu de l'article 6 du Statut de Rome.

Une paix et une justice durables ne peuvent être construites que sur la vérité historique. Le déni ne fait que prolonger le traumatisme. Le négationnisme constitue une continuation du crime. La réconciliation dépend donc de la vérité et de l'éducation. C'est pourquoi tant de commissions vérité ont été créées en Amérique latine à la suite des crimes des juntes militaires, comme en Afrique du Sud après l'apartheid.

Au Conseil des droits de l'homme, la fonction de Rapporteur spécial des Nations Unies sur la promotion de la vérité, de la justice, de la réparation et des garanties de non-réurrence a été créée en 2012. L'objectif est la prévention par l'information et l'éducation, en particulier un changement de paradigme

afin que nous percevions notre voisins comme amis potentiels plutôt que rivaux potentiels.

Le Parc Trembley est un lieu convivial pour le mémorial, mais d'autres emplacements plus proches du Palais des Nations avaient été proposés, par ex. dans le Parc Ariana, qui abrite également d'autres monuments. Nous qui travaillons aux Nations Unies devons réaliser que ce mémorial est nécessaire et qu'il mérite une plus grande visibilité.

La Ville de Genève devrait installer des panneaux d'information à chaque entrée du Parc Trembley expliquant la signification du monument, mettant en évidence l'histoire du mémorial et donnant des liens électroniques vers des sites utiles qui éclairent les événements historiques. L'Université de Genève et le Graduate Institute pourraient organiser des séminaires juridiques et historiques sur tous les génocides, y compris la Shoah, les génocides contre les Arméniens, les Grecs de Pontos, les Chaldéo-Assyriens, contre les indigènes

d'Amérique du Nord et du Sud, en particulier les Amérindiens du Brésil, les Mapuche d'Argentine et du Chili, les Yézidites d'Irak et d'autres minorités.

Genève est une ville de refuge et des droits humains, siège du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés et du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits humains. Les «réverbères de la mémoire» du parc Trembley nous invitent à faire le lien entre la tragédie arménienne d'il y a un siècle et les catastrophes humanitaires d'aujourd'hui, comment les prévenir, comment aider les victimes et leurs familles. ■

En 2015, à la 56^e Biennale de Venise, le projet a été récompensé par le Lion d'or. En 2019, les Réverbères ont reçu le Prix suisse Visarte à Zurich. <https://visarte.ch/de/kunst-und-bau/prix-visarte/prix-visarte-2019/>

Le 24 avril, les Arméniens d'Arménie et de la diaspora du monde entier se souviendront du sort de leurs ancêtres. La mémoire est identité.

<https://www.ville-ge.ch/reverberes/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/2015040805214/http://armeniangenocide100.org/en/>



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La Suisse inconnue, à la découverte des 26 cantons

Canton d'Argovie: Laufenburg

*Une série de 26 impressions des lieux
plutôt inconnus – loin du tourisme.*

CARLA EDELEMBOS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Laufenburg, petite ville de moins de 4000 habitants, se trouve non loin de la confluence de l'Aare et du Rhin. Au début du 12^e siècle, la ville est tombée sous le contrôle des Habsbourg, qui avaient construit leur premier bourg une vingtaine de kilomètres au sud-est de Laufenburg. Cette demeure fortifiée existe toujours et a donné son nom au petit village de Habsburg en Argovie.

Le Comte Rudolphe II d'Habsbourg a fortifié Laufenburg et fait construire un bourg sur la colline surplombant le Rhin.

Laufenburg profitait bien de sa situation au bord du Rhin et le transport fluvial lui apportait des richesses. La ville s'étendait

sur les deux rives, rejointes par un pont en bois. En fait, le Rhin entrainait dans une sorte de gorge à Laufenburg, créant des tourbillons qui rendaient la navigation difficile. Le nom Laufenburg signifie donc : «bourg auprès des rapides». Cette difficulté apportait des bénéfices aux habitants parce que les bateaux étaient obligés de décharger complètement avant les rapides, pour pouvoir être guidés à vide à travers les tourbillons par les gens locaux.

La marchandise était transportée dans des charrettes et, la courte distance parcourue, tout était chargé de nouveau dans les navires de l'autre côté de l'obstacle naturel. Une bonne source de revenus pour les habitants! Hélas, on ne peut plus admirer les rapides

aujourd'hui! La construction d'une centrale hydroélectrique au début du 20^e siècle a entraîné l'harmonisation du fleuve. Depuis, les bateaux passent presque sans encombre par une écluse.

Malheureusement, avec tous les barrages construits dans le Rhin, les poissons se sont faits rares: le saumon, autrefois extrêmement abondant dans la région, a complètement disparu du Rhin au milieu du 20^e siècle. Depuis, les saumons ont été réintroduits, mais on ne les trouve pas encore dans la partie suisse du Rhin à cause des obstacles entre Strasbourg et Bâle qui ne permettent pas aux poissons de remonter le fleuve. Des échelles à poisson devraient résoudre ce problème d'ici 2027.

L'histoire n'a pas toujours été tendre avec Laufenburg. Prise par les troupes de Napoléon, la ville devint un protectorat français en 1797. Pendant la deuxième guerre de coalition, les troupes françaises et autrichiennes se disputaient le Rhin et le pont fut détruit.

Dans le traité de Lunéville, en 1801, Laufenburg fut divisé en deux: la rive gauche suisse, et la rive droite allemande. Même si le pont fut reconstruit, le Rhin était devenu une frontière qui séparait au lieu de réunir. Le siècle suivant fut difficile pour Laufenburg qui souffrait économiquement.

À partir du 20^e siècle, les emplois, créés par la construction de la centrale électrique et l'arrivée du train, permirent



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Die Stadt Laufenburg und der Leininger im Jahre 1842
(Lithographie von C. Gumboldt in Weidmann)



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une amélioration pour la population.

Une partie des murs de fortification entoure toujours la vieille ville et quand je quitte la gare pour passer par la porte de Wasen, j'ai le sentiment d'entrer dans une ville d'une autre époque. Les rues descendent doucement jusqu'au Rhin, il y a plusieurs restaurants et cafés ainsi que des petites boutiques qui nous invitent à prolonger la visite.

Beaucoup de bâtiments sont ornés de jolies enseignes affichant leur commerce. L'église, dédiée à Jean le Baptiste, date du 15^e siècle et la tour avec sa belle silhouette du 16^e siècle. Quelques siècles plus tard, l'intérieur fut modernisé dans un style baroque qui resplendit encore aujourd'hui.

Je suis ravie de cette ville qui est un bijou avec ses rues bordées de maisons élégantes aux couleurs douces, ses jolies places autour des fontaines octogonales et ses promenades au bord du Rhin. L'ancienne tour qui a donné son nom à la ville domine toujours fièrement la colline, même si elle est tombée en ruine depuis des siècles. Depuis la tour, la vue sur le Rhin et les deux Laufenburg suisse et allemand est splendide. L'ancien pont qui relie les deux côtés n'est accessible qu'aux piétons et aux cyclistes. Un nouveau pont, destiné aux voitures, se trouve un peu plus loin, hors des villes.

Dans une ruelle proche du fleuve, le petit musée Schiff expose des objets qui illustrent l'histoire de Laufenburg. Près de là, le « panorama de la

langue », Sprachpanorama, nous fait découvrir les origines de la langue allemande, ainsi que la diversité des langues dans le monde.

On peut même y tester ses connaissances des dialectes suisses – mais pour l'instant la visite ne se fait qu'en allemand. Juste en dehors de la vieille ville, le musée Rehmann montre des sculptures modernes de l'artiste local Erwin Rehmann, décédé en décembre 2020, à l'âge de 99 ans. À l'extérieur de son ancien atelier, le vaste jardin de sculptures surplombant le Rhin invite à un moment de détente.

À la fin de la visite, quoi de mieux qu'une mini croisière en bateau: en voyant les falaises entre l'ancien pont et la centrale électrique, on peut

imaginer la force des rapides d'autrefois. Pour l'instant, nous sommes contents de profiter de la tranquillité du Rhin pour nous faire bercer et admirer la ville. ■

Depuis Genève, prenez le train en direction de Zurich et débarquez à Aarau. A Aarau, prenez le train pour Frick et changez pour le train à Laufenburg. Durée du trajet: 3 heures et 20 minutes.

Si vous voulez visiter les musées, il faut bien s'organiser: le Sprachpanorama n'ouvre que les mercredis après-midi et de temps en temps le samedi. Le musée Schiff est ouvert les mercredi, samedi et dimanche après-midi. Le musée Rehmann est ouvert du mercredi au dimanche.



Tel une pyramide, le sommet enneigé du Spanglung (5800m) domine le col verdoyant du Horlam.

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Inde

Du Kang Yatse au Tso Moriri ^{2/2}

Proche de la frontière indo-tibétaine, le Changthang est l'un des plus hauts plateaux désertiques du globe.

Suite à l'indépendance de l'Inde en 1947 et aux guerres répétées avec le Pakistan et la Chine, l'Union indienne avait été contrainte de fermer les frontières du Ladakh avec le Tibet et l'accès à cette région a été interdite aux étrangers jusqu'en 2010.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

A partir de Dat (*voir le précédent numéro du newSpecial*), on s'approche du Changthang. Parsemé de lacs, il s'étend depuis le Ladakh à l'ouest jusqu'à la province chinoise du Qinghai à l'est sur une distance d'environ 1600 km.

Cette vaste étendue est principalement habitée par les nomades changpas vers qui nous allons partir à la rencontre.

Perpétuant un mode de vie autarcique rythmé par la recherche constante de pâturages à une altitude proche de celle du Mont Blanc, ils survivent grâce aux produits de leurs troupeaux (beurre, fromage, laine, cuir...) et au milieu (plantes médicinales) dont ils dépendent entièrement.

Aux confins nord du continent indien

Seul un moine vit en permanence dans le hameau de Dat déserté durant l'été par les nomades partis à la montagne

avec leurs bêtes. A notre arrivée, sortie de nulle part, une harde de kiangs (mulets sauvages à la robe couleur de miel) se met à galoper. Notre bivouac est installé près des maisons abandonnées et au petit matin, quelle ne sera pas notre (désagréable) surprise de nous réveiller sous la neige.

Adieu le beau ciel bleu qui nous avait accompagnés jusqu'à présent, adieu le chaud soleil tellement réconfortant. Par bonheur, la journée est consacrée au transfert en véhicule jusqu'au lac salé Tso Kar. Au chaud, à l'abri des intempéries, nous aurons même le privilège de goûter aux joies de «la glisse» au passage du Yarla, col culminant à 4900 m transformé en une piste boueuse où tout croisement nous donnera de belles sueurs froides!

Terminé la neige, et c'est sous un ciel orageux que se dévoilent les rives verdoyantes du Tso Kar envahies par des milliers de chèvres pashminas. Ressemblant à des bouts de



De son village de Thukgey blotti sur les rives du lac Tso Kar, Nawang Tharchin est venu s'inviter à notre pause-thé.



De nombreux murs de pierres sur lesquels sont gravées des prières (murs de mani) jalonnent notre parcours.

© Claude Maillard

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banquise, de gros blocs de sel bien blanc sont échoués autour du lac. Nawang Tharchin s'est invité à partager notre thé. Cet ancien nomade habite le proche village de Thukgey.

Toute sa vie il n'a fait que conduire ses troupeaux vers les crêtes, récolter la laine de ses chèvres, traire et dresser sa tente de campement en campement. Au petit matin, du givre s'est déposé sur nos toiles de tente. La nuit a encore été très froide et la neige recouvre les sommets environnants. Nous laissons derrière nous le lac Tso Kar et après une pause dans le village nomade de Riyul complètement déserté à cette époque, nous parvenons à Nuruchan où nous bivouaquons pour la nuit.

Perdu au milieu de nulle part à 4600 m d'altitude, l'endroit est glacial dès le soleil couché et le lendemain au réveil, on a l'impression d'avoir dormi dans un igloo! Au programme du jour, l'ascension du Horlam La dont le col, qui frise les 5000 m,

permet d'avoir une vue splendide sur les alentours. En point de mire, le Rachung Kru (5400 m) et, telle une pyramide, le Spanglung La qui atteint 5800 m. Comme le veut la coutume à chaque franchissement de col, nous ne manquerons pas de suspendre un drapeau à prières en entonnant tous en cœur le «*Kiki Soso Largyalo*», expression rendant hommage aux Dieux qui seront toujours vainqueurs.

Dolma, bergère des hauts sommets

Le sentier qui dévale au travers d'une vallée verdoyante arrosée par la rivière Spanglung Chu nous mène jusqu'à Rachungkhar. Ici, à 4700 m d'altitude, vivent pendant les deux mois et demi d'été une quinzaine de familles composées de nomades tibétains.

Leurs tentes en poil de yack sont regroupées en bordure d'immenses pâturages. Avant la tombée de la nuit, Ratna (Adventure Tours*), qui officie d'habitude comme cuisinier

au camp de base de l'Everest, nous initiera à la confection de l'incontournable momo, ravioli tibétain cuit à la vapeur.

Au petit matin, nous retrouvons Dolma au milieu de ses chèvres prête à escalader les collines environnantes pour aller faire paître son troupeau. La veille, sous sa tente, bien au chaud près du poêle fonctionnant à la bouse de yack séchée, elle nous avait gentiment servi un thé au beurre salé.

Ce breuvage qui possède de surprenantes vertus énergétiques et nutritionnelles est spécialement adapté au froid, à la sécheresse de l'air et à l'altitude. Pour Dolma, la journée a démarré par la traite, tâche dévolue aux femmes.

Accroupie sur un minuscule tabouret, elle a vite fait de récolter les quelques litres de lait qui seront transformés en fromages. Pendant l'opération, les chèvres, qui ont passé la nuit protégées contre le loup et la panthère dans un enclos

de pierres sèches, sont attachées entre elles à l'aide d'une longue corde qui passe entre leurs cornes.

Pour nous, la journée s'annonce «sportive» avec l'enchaînement de deux cols de haute altitude, le Kyamayaru La (5410 m) et le Gyamar La (5380 m). L'ascension de ces sommets est raide, le manque d'oxygène se fait sentir et il est conseillé de garder un rythme lent et régulier avant de pouvoir rejoindre notre bivouac installé à près de 5200 m d'altitude.

La nuit sera froide (-15°) et à l'intérieur de notre tente, l'eau contenue dans nos gourdes va se transformer en glace. Autant dire que nous attendrons le lever du soleil avec impatience! Nous nous réchaufferons assez rapidement durant la montée de l'ultime col de notre trek, le Yarlung La (5430 m), également le point culminant du circuit. Depuis ce point de vue panoramique, le plateau de Mentok ainsi que le lac Tso Moriri apparaissent sous nos yeux.



Au soleil couchant, les hauts sommets enneigés du Chamser et du Lungser se reflètent dans les eaux turquoise du lac Tso Moriri.



À 4700 m d'altitude, une quinzaine de familles nomades vivent durant l'été dans les grands pâturages de Rachungkhar.

Lac Tso Moriri, la perle du Changthang

Avec 30 km de long sur 3 de large, le Tso Moriri bordé de géants enneigés est le plus vaste des lacs de l'Himalaya indien. Les sommets du Chamser (6200 m) et du Lungser (6350 m) se reflètent dans ses eaux turquoise alors qu'en arrière-plan on distingue les neiges éternelles du Tibet situé à quelques kilomètres.

C'est dans les parages que dans la nuit du 15 juin 2020 des heurts violents sont survenus entre l'Inde et la Chine. Pour la première fois depuis 1975, le sang de militaires a coulé le long de leur frontière himalayenne contestée appelée «Line of Actual Control», située à environ 4250 m d'altitude.

En effet, elle n'existe sur aucune carte et chaque camp a sa propre ligne de revendication, provoquant ainsi des tensions entre les deux géants d'Asie.

Le Tso Moriri abrite la plus grande colonie au monde d'oies à tête barrée, l'un des oiseaux volant le plus haut et déjà observé à des altitudes dépassant les 10 km. Recroquevillé dans un vallon de la rive occidentale du lac, le petit village de Korzok est dominé par un monastère qui veille sur une trentaine de maisons basses, aux toits plats chargés de fourrage à donner au bétail pendant les sept mois d'hiver.

Les quelque 300 habitants qui résident ici, à près de 4600 m d'altitude, font partie de ceux qui vivent en permanence le plus haut sur notre planète. C'est parmi eux que va s'achever notre formidable aventure au Ladakh avant d'emprunter une piste chaotique, bordée par le magnifique lac salé de Thatsangtso, pour regagner Leh.

En cours de chemin, le hameau de Sumdo qui abrite un pensionnat accueillant les enfants

des nomades tibétains de la région nous ouvre ses portes. Six établissements de ce genre sont construits au Ladakh, tous financés par le Dalaï Lama. La soixantaine de gamins scolarisés, âgés de 3 à 9 ans, assis à même le plancher, nous reçoivent en chantant les mantras sacrés avec une belle ferveur qui nous ira droit au cœur. ■

www.adventure-tours.in

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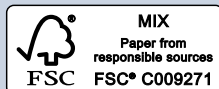
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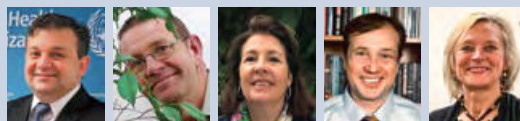
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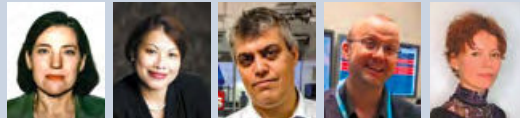
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