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## The world needs digital technologies

820 - JUNE 2022

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**GARRY ASLANYAN**  
Editor-in-chief /  
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**Au service du personnel des organisations internationales de Genève depuis 1949**

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## The world needs digital technologies

In this issue, we have several contributions from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), one of the key agencies based in Geneva. It is probably a cliché to repeat what many people say, but every time you turn on your phone or television, ITU has something to do with that. Nonetheless, it is very true. Few sectors have changed as rapidly as the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector over recent years. The rise of digital technologies is around us, and ITU will help us put ITU to work and open opportunities for sustainable development. We have an interview with the Secretary-General, Houlin Zhao, who shared his perspective on the organization's role in achieving development goals, how ITU works and what is on the horizon. There are several other articles from ITU unpacking various aspects of the work and contributions the organization makes.

Ever caught yourself answering a question about where you're from? An interesting piece article on may help answer why some of us feel like our home is somewhere different than where we spent most of our life.

As always, we hope you can find other articles in this issue, focused on art, culture, travel and more!

Enjoy reading this issue! ■

## Le monde a besoin des technologies numériques

Dans ce numéro, vous pourrez parcourir plusieurs contributions de l'Union Internationale des Télécommunications (UIT), l'une des principales agences basées à Genève. C'est probablement un cliché de répéter ce que beaucoup de gens savent déjà, mais chaque fois que vous allumez votre portable ou votre télévision, l'UIT a quelque chose à voir avec ça. Néanmoins, c'est très vrai. Peu de secteurs ont évolué aussi rapidement que le secteur des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC) au cours des dernières années. L'omniprésence des technologies numériques nous environne et l'UIT nous aidera à apprivoiser tout en ouvrant des perspectives de développement durable. Lors de notre entretien avec le Secrétaire Général, Houlin Zhao, ce dernier partage son point de vue sur le rôle de l'organisation dans la réalisation des objectifs de développement, le fonctionnement de l'UIT et ce qui se profile à l'horizon. Plusieurs articles à ce sujet décrivent divers aspects du travail et des contributions de l'Organisation.

Vous êtes-vous déjà surpris à répondre à une question sur vos origines? Un article intéressant peut aider à comprendre pourquoi certains d'entre nous ont l'impression d'être chez eux dans un endroit différent de celui où ils ont passé la majeure partie de leur vie.

Comme toujours nous espérons que vous trouverez d'autres articles à votre convenance dans ce numéro, évoquant l'art, la culture, les voyages et plus encore!

Bonne lecture! ■

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# Rise of digital technologies opens new opportunities for sustainable development

*newSpecial* had an opportunity to interview the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Mr. Houlin Zhao.



**GARRY ASLANYAN, WHO**

**What do you personally see as your main achievements during your time in office at the helm of ITU?**

I will let our members and historians be the judge. What I will say is that my time in office has been marked by tremendous progress in the development of information and communication technology (ICT).

When I was first elected Secretary-General in 2014, only 2.7 billion people were online. I lost no time in implementing the strategy and financial plans established at our 2014 Plenipotentiary Conference, focusing on the importance of eliminating the digital divide – and making the case of what ITU can do as a technical and, equally important, development agency.

Thanks to the support of our members and partners, we have managed to build large coalitions and launched landmark initiatives in areas ranging from infrastructure to health to skills development. This work has had a positive impact on the global growth in Internet use that we have seen in recent years, with the number of Internet users growing by almost 1 billion

during the COVID-19 pandemic to reach close to 5 billion today.

Very few events have had such a profound impact on our modern society as the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) organized by ITU on behalf of the UN family from 2003 to 2005. The investments in ICT made possible by WSIS gave birth to new digital technologies and systems that have allowed us to address some of our most urgent challenges, including COVID-19. Together with UNESCO, UNCTAD, UNDP and other UN agencies, ITU uses the WSIS Forum as a powerful tool for the promotion of ICT. We are proud of this multi-stakeholder platform bringing together public authorities, non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurs, and academia from all ecosystems.

Building on a long tradition of innovation, ITU continues to be a leading global platform for the emerging technologies that will drive the new global economy, including 5G, AI, the Internet of Things and others. Our World Radiocommunication Conference that took place in 2015 and 2019 made headways with 5G, forging pathways for



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future digital communications. More recently, the sixth World Telecommunication/ICT Policy Forum (WTPF-21) organized by ITU last December has given countries guidance as to how to leverage these new technologies and others for sustainable development.

Early on in my first mandate, I invited organizations to host ICT-focused Ministerial sessions and was pleased to see my proposal become reality with meetings of the Ministers responsible for the digital economy at BRICS (2015), G7 (2016), G20 (2017), to name a few. ITU has been closely involved with the work of these groups ever since, and during my second mandate, which has been dominated by the pandemic, I joined these groups' meetings with Ministers in finance, health, education and more to promote the development of ICT in all these cross-cutting areas. I have also supported the ICT work of other UN agencies and promoted efficient and effective cooperation among our sister UN agencies to facilitate ICT development in all ecosystems, especially when it comes to encouraging investments in ICTs.

What has also been important for me as Secretary-General is that the ITU family continues to grow and reflect the rapidly evolving digital economy. Reaching out for greater engagement with new, and more diverse, types of stakeholders has been a priority of mine throughout my time in office. I have worked hard, together with my fellow ITU elected officials, to ensure greater participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in ITU's work, as well as that of universities and research institutes. ITU has close to 200 Academia Members today, and we are proud of the ITU Journal, a long-time dream of mine, which has brought the academic community closer to ITU.

**What do you see as the main challenges for ITU going forward?**

Cultivating and growing our relationship with the public and private sector is paramount, to further our technical work and advance meaningful work in development.

Connecting the unconnected, while driving the development

of new technologies central to the digital economy, is one of the great challenges of our time. 96% of the 2.9 billion people who are still offline live in developing countries, often in poor areas or ones that are difficult to reach.

I remember visiting an African country back in September 2018 where none of the children of a primary school I met in a mountain area had ever touched a computer, while a 5G network was being launched in their capital. The reality of what happens on the ground in Africa and elsewhere shows the enormity of the task ahead of us.

My message has been clear from the start, highlighting four pillars, or "4 I's": Infrastructure, Investment, Innovation and Inclusiveness. We need to develop the infrastructure necessary to offer better technology to the users and reach those not connected yet – and this will require huge investments. Innovation and technology go hand in hand. We also need innovative strategies to encourage investments in ICTs. And we cannot, under any circumstances, leave

anyone behind. All of these are key to ensuring that people and communities everywhere benefit from cutting-edge digital technologies. The world is facing a long list of challenges – from the climate crisis to unequal health systems to the future education of our children. All these issues, and many more, require investments. But the resources are limited. ICTs are part of the solution. But if we let each ICT ecosystem be developed in isolation, we risk seeing these limited resources be invested for the sole benefit of the investors.

That is why I have called for a new strategy – one that would not only attract ICT infrastructure investments in underserved areas with no or little return on investment, but also use scarce investment resources more efficiently. And we need to double down on our efforts to remove all barriers to connectivity, including the deterioration of affordability, the lack of digital skills, and mounting concerns over cybersecurity.

ITU has done a lot and will continue to work hard on efficiency, associated with transparency. We need to continue to modernize and evolve to match the ever-quickening pace of technological progress. Our collaborative way of working is a key strength for ITU. We are more than a technical agency, and we will continue our efforts to show what ITU and ICTs can do for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I echo the UN Secretary-General's call for universal connectivity with affordable services by 2030. We have challenges, and we have opportunities. But above all, we have obligations.

With our World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly, World Telecommunication Development Conference and Plenipotentiary Conference all

taking place in 2022, ITU has an unprecedented opportunity to take a major step forward.

### What do you see as major opportunities to collaborate with other UN agencies in this Decade of Action?

During my tenure, I was pleased to see ITU emerge as a key partner in development. ICTs usually offer solutions to any problem. ITU has established close cooperation with many UN agencies on facilitating the SDGs. In recent years, we have demonstrated our leadership within the UN system on addressing issues related to new technologies, always willing to partner with our sister UN agencies to promote ICT in their respective fields.

The rise of these technologies offers extraordinary new opportunities to further global sustainable development and achieve the SDGs by 2030. In the health

area, for example, ITU is building on its longstanding cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) to help develop new digital health solutions. We are working together on landmark initiatives like “Be He@lthy, Be Mobile”, to help fight the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, or through our joint Focus Group on AI for Health, which is working towards standardized benchmarking of “AI for Health” algorithms to tackle some of today’s biggest health problems, including malaria, tuberculosis and global pandemics.

Education is also an area where ICTs can make a big difference, as seen during COVID-19. ITU has closely worked with UNESCO on e-education, e-culture and e-science. ITU and UNICEF launched Giga in 2019, an initiative to connect every school to the Internet. Giga has now helped over 1 million learners get life-changing access to the Internet.

ITU actively contributes to the Transforming Education Summit to be convened by the UN Secretary-General in September during the General Assembly. I am pleased to sit on the Summit’s Advisory Committee.

Equitable access to digital technologies is not just a moral responsibility, it is essential for global prosperity and sustainability. This includes the more than 1 billion people aged 60 years or older at the center of the celebrations of this year’s World Telecommunication and Information Society Day held on 17 May.

ITU has enjoyed partnerships with UN sister agencies including the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) for decades. All these partnerships address some of the biggest challenges of our time



– from working with UN-Habitat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and others on making our cities and communities smarter and more sustainable, to partnering with the International Labour Organization (ILO) on digital skills for youth, starting with young people in Africa.

More than ever, ITU is committed to contributing to the UN process on sustainable development and encouraging our Member States, industry members, non-governmental organizations and all stakeholders to join in efforts to promote sustainable development for all through the use of ICTs. ■

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## ITU's Radiocommunication Sector

# How ITU manages the radio spectrum for the world

Every time you turn on your radio or television, hop on a plane, make a call on your mobile, access the Internet or find your location with your smartphone, you are using one of the vital services coordinated by ITU worldwide.

### MARIO MANIEWICZ, ITU

ITU's Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R), and its secretariat, the Radiocommunication Bureau (BR), is the global body responsible for management of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbit resources. With the steady growth of wireless services worldwide, all services relying on radio waves are competing for a share of the radio-frequency spectrum to support new applications, growing user numbers, and exploding traffic. The importance and relevance of ITU-R's work are increasing every day. Its work takes place in four main areas:

#### **International regulations on the use of radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits**

International frequency management is based on the Radio Regulations (RR), the binding international treaty that determines how the radio frequency

spectrum is shared between different services. Covering terrestrial fixed and mobile radio services, space and satellite-based services, sound and video broadcasting, radionavigation, meteorological tracking and forecasting, space research and Earth exploration, as well as amateur radio, the RR encompasses over 2,300 pages of texts and charts that specify how equipment and systems must operate to ensure the successful coexistence of services in today's crowded airwaves.

ITU-R reviews and updates the RR through World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs), which meet every four years for a period of four weeks. WRC-19 was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, and welcomed over 3,400 delegates, representing 163 out of ITU's 193 Members States, along with representatives from among

ITU's 600+ private sector members and 150 international and regional organization members.

These conferences review the way specific portions of the radio spectrum are allocated, along with procedures for coordinating, notifying and recording of frequency assignments and Plan modifications. They unite governments to negotiate and agree on the Radio Regulations to enable the introduction of new services and systems.

Preparations for WRCs involve extensive studies and preparatory discussions among all stakeholders (government regulators, public and private sector users of spectrum and equipment suppliers) at the national, regional, and worldwide levels. Many of these stakeholders also serve as members of national delegations at the conference itself.



This multi-stakeholder approach ensures consensus so the RRs provide a stable and predictable regulatory environment that secures the trillions of dollars of long-term investments of radio systems.

At a WRC, governments review and update the global technical, operational, and regulatory provisions that govern the use of the radio-frequency spectrum for terrestrial and satellite applications. In conducting its activities, the conference makes trade-offs between:

- the need for worldwide harmonization (generating economies of scale, connectivity, and interoperability) and the need for flexibility in spectrum allocations.
- the need to accommodate new and innovative systems, applications, and technologies as they arise and the need to protect existing radiocommunication services.

**Implementation and application of international regulations on the use of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits**

The RR contain several regulatory provisions and procedures which describe how the administrations from the 193 ITU Member States may acquire and exercise rights to use spectrum in the various frequency bands allocated for this purpose, and the corresponding obligations. These rights and obligations may then be transferred to the operators of each specific radio-communication station through licenses.

A key element of international frequency management is the Master International Frequency Register (MIFR). The MIFR is a database which contains the spectrum frequency assignments of the radio stations in operation throughout the world and confers to these stations

international recognition and protection against interference. This database is managed by BR and currently contains 2.6 million frequency assignments for terrestrial services and over 200,000 are added every year. For space services, more than 1.1 million of assigned frequencies are contained in this database. In addition, about 350,000 assigned frequencies for the broadcasting-satellite service and 25,000 allotted frequencies for the fixed-satellite service are planned for future uses.

The procedures in the RR are designed to ensure that every new spectrum usage in a particular geographical location is compatible with existing usages. They also ensure an interference-controlled environment for both terrestrial and satellite systems and guarantees equitable access to use of the resources of the frequency spectrum and geostationary-satellite orbit.


BR also publishes the list of maritime and coast radio stations help ensure safety of life at sea. This list also provides assistance to administrations in applying these procedures and in resolving cases of harmful interference, which currently concerns 1 in 5,000 assignments.

**Establishment and updating of worldwide recommendations, reports, and handbooks for the most efficient use of the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, including best practices on national spectrum management activities**

ITU-R follows closely the increasing levels of radio-frequency noise in the environment and the consequential increase in instances of electromagnetic interference on several radiocommunication services. ITU-R Study Groups also carry out technical, economic, regulatory, and operational studies to

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help prepare in support of WRC decisions.

ITU-R also plays a central role in developing global standards for radio-based telecommunication systems, including terrestrial and space systems, and best practices. These worldwide technical standards (ITU-R Recommendations) are developed by the Study Groups of ITU-R, which gather experts drawn from government, industry, academia, and regional and international organizations, who collaborate in establishing the characteristics of the systems and services that will define tomorrow's wireless landscape.

There are currently six ITU-R Study Groups, which undertake studies and develop the technical bases for decisions to be taken at World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs), as well as develop international standards or Recommendations on radiocommunication matters. These recommendations are generally voluntary. However, a WRC may decide to incorporate by reference into the Radio Regulations, in part or wholly, specific ITU-R Recommendations, making their application mandatory.

Over 5,000 specialists, from administrations, specialized agencies, the whole telecommunication industry, and academic organizations participate in the work of the Study Groups on topics such as efficient management and use of the spectrum/orbit resource, radio systems characteristics and performance, spectrum monitoring and emergency radiocommunications for public protection and disaster relief, etc.

ITU-R Recommendations are good for business, for governmental operations and for the scientific community - driving economies of scale and economic development, supporting essential safety of life services, particularly safety at sea; enabling electronic news gathering and distribution; tracking aircraft and providing for air traffic control; enabling weather forecasting; providing for space travel and exploration etc. They are also essential to the proper and spectrally efficient functioning of all radio equipment in an environment where virtually everyone is now using spectrum resources.

In 2020, ITU-R finalized the detailed specifications for the

radio interface of "IMT for 2020 and beyond", paving the way for 5G mobile broadband services in a connected society. These specifications support their operation in any of the frequency bands that has been identified for IMT by various WRCs.

**Information and assistance to ITU-R membership in radiocommunication matters**

To inform and help its membership adapt to the results of its activities in adopting international regulations, global standards and best practices on spectrum use, ITU-R also regularly holds seminars, workshops, and symposia.

These address a range of issues, currently ranging from broadband and mobile applications, transition to digital television and allocation of the digital dividend, efficient use of the spectrum/orbit resources, and emerging spectrum management techniques.

This activity is also part of ITU's efforts to promote at all levels the creation of an enabling environment for the development of a sustainable and efficient use of spectrum at the most

affordable price in all regions of the world. ■

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# La transformation numérique en Suisse, victime de son succès ?

Les entreprises en Suisse romande sont nombreuses à avoir entamé leur transformation numérique. Depuis plusieurs années, cette transformation s'opère à un rythme généralement lent et prudent. Puis l'épidémie de COVID-19 a précipité irrémédiablement les entreprises dans un vortex de numérisation rapide et indéfectible. Étaient-elles prêtes à s'y engager, de gré ou de force ? Ont-elles trouvé les « talents » nécessaires pour tenir la barre ?

**SANDRA ZANELLI<sup>1</sup>**

Une étude publiée en supplément du *Magazine Bilan* en 2017 révélait que les entreprises romandes semblaient déjà bien comprendre les enjeux de la transformation numérique<sup>2</sup>, mais que pour autant, peu d'entre elles avaient remis en question leur modèle: elles naviguaient à vue, en tâtonnant, et ce parfois de manière malavisée. Il faut dire que le contexte politique n'était alors pas des plus favorables: il a fallu attendre l'automne 2020 pour que la Suisse se dote d'une stratégie «Suisse numérique» et mette ainsi le numérique au centre de nombreuses préoccupations. Il était temps, car l'heure n'est plus au doute: «La numérisation n'est pas une tendance passagère, mais elle constitue le fondement sur lequel l'économie, la science et

la société construisent leur avenir», relevait déjà l'organisation Économie suisse il y a cinq ans<sup>3</sup>.

Les entreprises bénéficient dès lors d'un cadre bienvenu dans la poursuite de leur transformation numérique. Il n'empêche qu'elles demeurent confrontées à des défis majeurs dans sa mise en œuvre, dont spécifiquement un «flou artistique» persistant autour du référentiel des métiers qui l'articule et d'une pénurie de personnes qualifiées.

## Enquête sur les «métiers du digital»

Fruit d'une évolution rapide, la notion de «métiers du digital» mêle autant d'intitulés que d'activités différentes, comme le constate une étude publiée en 2019 par la Fédération des

entreprises romandes (FER) de Genève et le Centre patronal (CP)<sup>4</sup>. Il en ressort que ce corpus de métiers se décline en trois grands domaines. En premier lieu, on trouve les métiers des technologies de l'information qui concourent au développement et à la maintenance de solutions informatiques (les développeurs de site ou d'applications, les spécialistes de la cybersécurité ou du traitement de données). Viennent ensuite les métiers de la communication au sens large qui relèvent du traitement du contenu et du marketing digital (les spécialistes de l'expérience utilisateur, les concepteurs/trices multimédias, les rédacteurs/trices web, les experts du référencement ou encore des réseaux sociaux). Le dernier domaine se réfère aux métiers de mise en œuvre du

digital à un niveau plus macro (les *Chief Digital Officer*, *Digital Manager* ou encore chef-fe de projet ou de produits digitaux).

Pourtant, malgré que le secteur du numérique soit très dynamique, la difficulté d'embaucher semble être une réalité. Par exemple, plus de 50% des entreprises en Suisse romande évoquent des difficultés à recruter dans toutes les fonctions, quel que soit le secteur d'activité ou la taille de la firme<sup>5</sup>. Même constat en France, comme le relève l'organisation professionnelle de l'écosystème numérique (Numeum): «La demande forte des entreprises du numérique pour développer leurs activités fait face à une pénurie de talents et de personnes formées à l'ensemble des compétences nécessaires pour

déployer les dernières innovations technologiques et accompagner l'ensemble de l'économie française à la transformation numérique»<sup>6</sup>.

La tendance se confirme également au niveau international, où l'on parle de «digital skills gap»<sup>7</sup>. En d'autres termes, le manque de personnes qualifiées dans le digital pour opérer la transformation actuelle et surtout future des entreprises est avéré. Ce manque peut s'expliquer notamment par le fait que les avancées technologiques et l'automatisation qui en résulte continueront de générer une forte demande de personnes qualifiées. Cette tendance est soulignée par le World Economic Forum (WEF) qui, dans un rapport<sup>8</sup>, place les emplois tels que celui de spécialiste en marketing et relation client parmi les plus recherchés en 2025. Ce rapport met également l'accent sur l'importance de l'acquisition de compétences liées aux médias sociaux, en particulier face au développement de l'intelligence artificielle: «Social and emotional intelligence and understanding new media platforms and how to communicate effectively will be valuable skills, particularly while robots struggle to master them»<sup>9</sup>.

La transformation numérique semble être victime de son succès, ne pouvant pallier les compétences recherchées pour sa mise en œuvre. Une situation

paradoxe, aggravée par la pandémie de COVID-19: deux tiers des *Chief Information Officers* (CIO) romands indiquent que la numérisation a gagné en importance avec la pandémie<sup>10</sup>. Comment expliquer cette situation, quelles pistes d'action pouvons-nous envisager?

### ... en quête de talents!

La digitalisation des entreprises requiert des compétences multiples, dans chacun des trois domaines d'activités identifiés plus haut, qui font la part belle aux talents très polyvalents, combinant *soft skills* et *hard skills*. En effet, bien que la maîtrise des outils technologiques soit indispensable, les compétences sociales qui visent à «comprendre le client et amener des solutions nouvelles (...), de même que l'aptitude à penser et agir de manière interdisciplinaire, tout comme la capacité à analyser des situations complexes»<sup>11</sup> le sont tout autant.

Ce sont donc des profils quelque peu atypiques mêlant des compétences techniques, une capacité créative importante et une intelligence émotionnelle avérée, qui forment les «talents» des métiers du digital. Des perles rares, qui manquent apparemment sur le marché du travail.

La formation apparaît ainsi comme un levier d'action nécessaire pour se saisir des enjeux de la transformation numérique. En

effet, se former en autodidacte a ses limites, notamment pour faire face à des tests de plus en plus pointus lors du recrutement, comme le souligne un article du magazine Bilan<sup>12</sup>. Signe de ces nouvelles exigences, un niveau d'études supérieures est exigé pour la quasi-totalité des offres d'emploi mentionnant un niveau de formation<sup>13</sup>. Les enjeux sont de taille: «Pour continuer à se positionner parmi les pays les plus performants dans le développement et l'utilisation des technologies numériques, la Suisse doit promouvoir les compétences nécessaires par un apprentissage permanent»<sup>14</sup>.

La formation continue est ainsi une des clés de voûte indispensable pour que la Suisse maintienne l'employabilité des travailleurs, contribue à la pérennisation des entreprises et au final, à la compétitivité de son économie. Dans cette perspective, les hautes écoles, à l'instar de l'Université de Genève, jouent un rôle déterminant à travers leur offre de formations continues. En plus des compétences clés en matière de stratégies et d'outils digitaux, le développement d'un esprit agile, critique et analytique propre aux valeurs académiques permet d'acquérir une compréhension fine des enjeux d'un monde numérique de plus en plus complexe. ■

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- 8 Hutt, R. (2016). Want a job in 2025? These are the sectors to focus on. World Economic Forum (WEF). Repéré à <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/09/job-in-2025-skills-sectors-to-focus-on/>
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## ITU's Telecommunication Standardization Bureau Brokering standards @ ITU

### CHAESUB LEE, ITU

Standardization has been a driving force behind industrialization in the West, mainly in Europe and the Americas, over the 18th and 19th centuries. The invention of the electric telegraph created a need for standards for international telegraphy to establish interoperability and a consistent numbering system. As a result of the International Telegraph Convention of 1865, the International Telegraph Union was established. The International Radio Telegraph Convention was established in 1906 and the two conventions were merged in 1932 under the renamed International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 1934.

Standards development has remained one of ITU's core activities ever since. ITU differs from other standards bodies in that it is an intergovernmental organization founded on a treaty between nation states.

Its membership today includes 193 Member States and over 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organizations. The status of governments as members makes ITU unique in the ICT standardization world. ITU is unique in the UN because private-sector entities can be members.

ITU standards development is driven mainly by private-sector members - industry players needing a neutral platform to come together. The ITU standardization process is driven by contributions from ITU members and subsequent consensus decisions. Conformity with ITU standards is voluntary unless mandated by national law or regulations, or as part of the ITU-facilitated, internationally agreed Radio Regulations.

A key policy, the ITU/ISO/IEC Common Patent Policy and

related Guidelines, calls for intellectual property covered by ITU standards to be made available to all standards implementers on reasonable and non-discriminatory terms and conditions. The overriding objective is "that a patent embodied fully or partly in a Recommendation/deliverable must be accessible to everybody without undue constraints". To ensure transparency, this patent policy encourages early disclosure of patents that might be essential to standards already in their development stage.

Today, we encounter ITU's international standards every day, mostly without knowing it. A hidden part of the information and technology (ICT) networks and devices we all use every day, ITU standards are rarely noticed by users, but remain vital for ensuring the interconnection and interoperability of ICT equipment and devices manufactured by



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hundreds of thousands of different companies around the world. ITU standards provide developers with a global market, enabling economies of scale in production and deployment that result in real benefits for users, in terms of both cost and functionality.

Indeed, an estimated 95% of international communications traffic runs over fibre-optic networks built in conformance with ITU standards. Video now accounts for over 80% of Internet traffic, enabled by Primetime Emmy-winning video-compression algorithms standardized jointly by IEC, ISO and ITU.

Today's advanced wireless, broadband and multimedia technologies are all powered by ITU standards. Technical standards supporting compatibility and interoperability are needed to support the digital transformation underway across all sectors of our economies.

ITU standardization work is welcoming new participants, as the growing need for "enabling technologies" necessitates tailored ICT standards, either purpose-built or adapted to the requirements of various new markets. ITU standardization work is addressing healthcare,

financial services, transportation, energy, agriculture, and smart cities. ITU's work also helps different sectors to capitalize on advances in artificial intelligence (AI).

**Globally inclusive, market-driven standardization**

ITU-T standardization work is driven predominantly by ITU's private-sector members. Industry players come together at ITU to develop voluntary international standards (ITU-T Recommendations) that meet their need for common platforms facilitating industry growth and innovation.

Some 300 ITU-T standards are released each year, resulting from the collaboration of thousands of experts that work year-round to develop the technical standards necessary to the cohesion of the global ICT ecosystem.

The principles underlying the ITU-T standardization process ensure that all voices are heard and every step forward is determined by consensus decision. This is why ITU-T successes in standardization represent significant feats of international collaboration. These standards are developed by representatives of ITU's global membership of

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193 Member States and over 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organizations.

The inclusivity of the ITU-T standardization platform – supported by the ITU Bridging the Standardization Gap programme which aims to increase participation by developing countries – offers all the world’s countries equal opportunity to benefit from the ICT advances changing our world.

**Committed to consensus**

ITU-T’s contribution-led standardization process is based on a longstanding commitment to consensus-based decision-making. Standardization work on a particular subject is initiated in response to contributions from ITU members if members reach consensus on the inclusion of that subject in ITU-T’s work plan. Similarly, the standards developed as a result are approved when ITU members reach consensus on their composition.

Compliance and conformity with standards remain voluntary unless required by national law or regulations, or as part of the

ITU-facilitated, internationally agreed Radio Regulations.

Although implementation is voluntary, the approval of ITU standards by consensus helps to achieve the buy-in of all stakeholders, increasing the likelihood that these standards will be implemented worldwide.

**Evolving ITU-T membership**

The strategy, structure and working methods of ITU-T are reviewed every four years at an ITU governing conference known as the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA). ITU-T membership continues to grow and evolve as other industry sectors scale up their adoption of ICTs as ‘enabling technologies’ to promote new services.

New members include companies in energy and utilities, shipping and logistics, fintech, over-the-top applications, automotive, Internet of Things (IoT)/ Machine to Machine (M2M) connectivity, distributed ledger technologies, quantum information technology, AI and machine learning, unmanned aerial vehicles, space services, smart city

applications, esports, and light communications (LiFi).

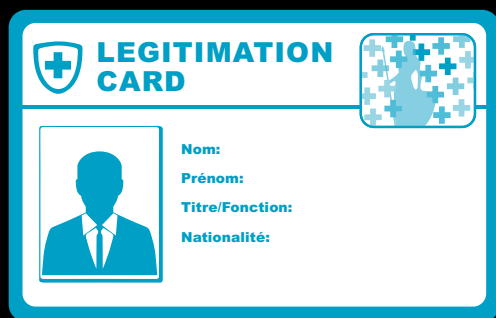
Membership-driven study groups develop international standards. Open-to-all focus groups accelerate studies in fields of growing strategic relevance to ITU membership as well as the broader economy and society. Open-to all workshops and symposia analyze emerging trends and encourage peer-learning. ■





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Smartphones are becoming indispensable to inform practitioners about tuberculosis care

Old disease, new threat, and fresh ideas:

# TB during the times of COVID-19

**DENNIS FALZON, WHO GLOBAL TB PROGRAMME**

The response of healthcare workers worldwide to the COVID-19 pandemic lends new meaning to the saying “when the going gets tough the tough get going”. In the last two years, nurses, doctors, midwives, community workers and other caregivers worldwide put their duty to serve patients first, before other concerns for their own health from infection and overwork. The pandemic added workload and urgency to their usual routine. Most were

keenly aware that emergencies like this wreak havoc on essential medical services like childhood vaccination and treatment of diseases like tuberculosis (TB) and malaria that have an immediate and lasting consequence on population health and mortality. Staff had to improvise to overcome the formidable barriers presented by lockdowns, overflowing clinics, sick colleagues, and burgeoning demands for information, testing and vaccination.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has been on the forefront of global efforts to support countries during the pandemic. Advocating with countries to maintain essential services was among the first actions taken<sup>1</sup>. Circumstances created by the pandemic made the uptake of WHO-backed technologies for TB care such as digital tools, molecular diagnostics, and shorter treatment regimens ever more critical. WHO invited countries and partners

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to relate the efforts they made to innovate to maintain TB services in the face of crisis. These experiences were compiled in two WHO reports, the latest of which was released last April.<sup>2,3</sup>

Twenty-nine brief summaries from national health authorities, non-governmental organizations, and academic groups working in 20 countries worldwide have been compiled. Half of them describe how various digital technologies are facilitating different aspects of healthcare provision. One project conducted in Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe explored how the electronic reporting of data on a monthly basis allowed the timely assessment of treatment progress in TB patients. Meanwhile Zambia implemented countrywide, weekly surveillance of key indicators of TB services to counter a sharp drop in TB notification immediately after the onset of the pandemic.

Helping patients complete their treatment is another reason for employing digital tools. In Uganda, two studies reported encouraging results when digital adherence technologies were integrated in patient-centred strategies to treat both TB disease and TB infection, as in-person encounters became rare. Regular phone calls were used from early in the pandemic to enhance TB medication adherence as community healthcare workers were called to other duties in Mozambique and Pakistan. In Brazil, one group reported how calls and educational messaging via mobile apps allowed TB patients

to remain in touch with services; nearly all of the targeted patients responded to at least 50% of the programmed calls. In another site in Brazil, video communication started being used from the onset of the pandemic and reduced in-person home visits by more than 40%, while maintaining the continuity of treatment when physical distancing was required. Video-supported TB treatment was also reported from the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, India, and Uruguay. One of the striking features of the country reports is how digital technologies were employed for different programmatic components. For example, Myanmar used a combination of tele-counselling and conditional cash transfers via mobile phones to help people complete drug-resistant TB treatment. Virtual methods were used to train health professionals in all aspects TB prevention and care in Paraguay and Uruguay. In Ukraine virtual training and webinars were used to alert staff about early signs of stress and how to avert burn-out. And in Colombia, eLearning for community leaders and virtual supervision were two elements of a multipronged TB care strategy during the pandemic, alongside measures to enhance infection control, drug supply, and molecular diagnostics.

Several of the initiatives were aimed wholly or in part at bringing TB diagnosis closer to people in need. In the Philippines, two groups reported how TB screening offered to people presenting for SARS-CoV-2 testing

managed to detect TB in many people who would otherwise have been missed or only diagnosed much later. In another project, also in the Philippines, a high yield of TB diagnoses was also reported among people coming for COVID-19 vaccination. In Ethiopia, a digital application was introduced to facilitate specimen transport. And in four big sites in India, informal private healthcare providers were engaged via digital platforms to increase access to molecular diagnostics and sample collection, as well as the home delivery of medication refills. Another project in India used a combination of digital tools to increase TB case finding, from sputum collection to self-screening to “storytelling” to raise awareness of TB in the context of COVID-19.

The pandemic speeded the introduction of shorter, safer treatments for drug-resistant TB that require no injections and less supervision. Shortly after WHO announced that they would be recommended for use, the Philippines introduced shorter all-oral regimens and by the end of 2020 over 1,400 drug-resistant TB patients had been started on this new treatment.

Clearly COVID-19 has unleashed a wave of enthusiastic enterprise to keep healthcare services on track and to monitor the impact of the pandemic on essential service. The experiences included in the WHO report are a snippet of a much larger body of work, the tip of a dynamic trend that keeps evolving. For example,

over 100 countries responded to a WHO request to report TB data on a monthly or quarterly basis, allowing a timely understanding of national TB detection and reporting as the pandemic advanced.

COVID-19 has also triggered an unprecedented surge in medical literature and research. The rapid development in the field of COVID-19 immunization brings renewed hope for a novel TB vaccine in a near future. Many novelties put in place for TB and COVID-19 are bound to benefit other aspects of lung health and beyond into the future. It may be inappropriate to speak of opportunities created by a phenomenon as grave and destructive as COVID-19. But it is also difficult to downplay the openings created by the crisis. ■

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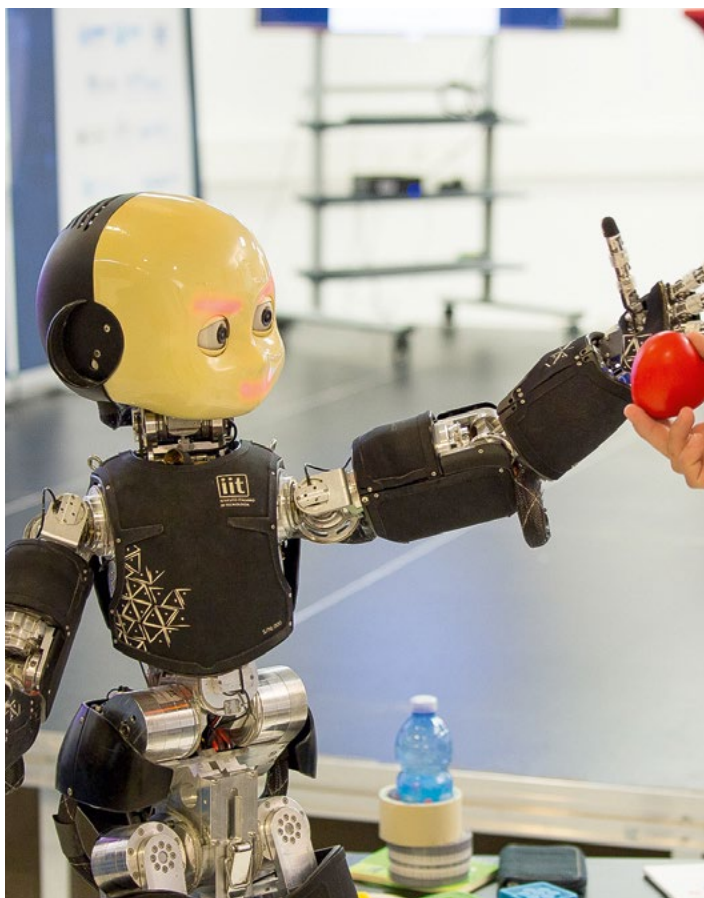
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# Becoming smarter?

Few sectors have changed as rapidly as the Information and communication technology (ICT) sector over recent years. The proliferation of new smartphones and devices has been matched by developments in software, data and Artificial Intelligence (AI). This article explores how we might become smarter, with special reference to healthcare.



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AI for Good Global Summit 2018 15-17 May 2018, Geneva

PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

## **Intelligent devices, wearables and apps are bringing new services closer to users, patients and doctors alike.**

There has been steady market growth in smart and wearable devices. For healthcare in particular, large numbers of people are now equipped with near medical-grade devices – for example, in 2020, there were 31 million people active users of Fitbit watches (meaning they use their Fitbit at least once a week) and over 100 million users of Apple Watch. According to Samsung, over 200 million people used its fitness app in 2020 alone.

## **These devices combine the benefits of a service and population data, with personalized data analysis and intelligence.**

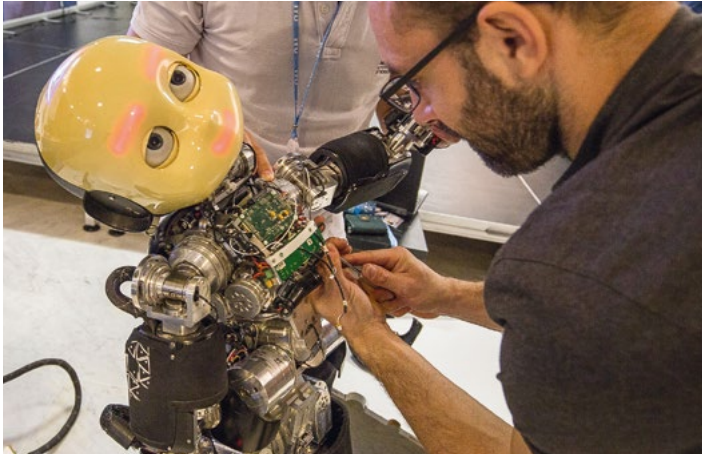
According to the magazine Verge, people are using wearable health devices to monitor their activity levels, oxygen levels, blood pressure, heart rates, fitness and activity apps and sleep tracking and providing valuable insights on patient health. Early indications are that such apps may prove most beneficial in promoting and safeguarding health and preventing sickness, as well as diagnosis. For example, in 2018, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued clearance for an Apple Watch app that could detect irregular heart rhythms (atrial fibrillation is just one of a range of possible conditions associated with irregular

heartbeats). The Apple Watch officially became a medical device allowed to inform users that they might have a medical problem. Fitbit data has even been used to establish time of death in several murder and assault cases in the United States since 2017.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used more and more extensively in the field of healthcare to help supplement and enhance the accuracy of diagnosis and to save the limited time of healthcare professionals, especially in fields of medical imagery and diagnosis, and more recently, for the modelling of pandemics. Human and computer diagnosis are often compared – for example, which is more accurate? Whereas in reality, medical professionals often find themselves working alongside machine learning models to identify or verify cases of interest, based on modelling scenarios.

## **Sharing information, feelings, finance and support**

Users can increasingly find out more information about their illnesses or conditions online – lots of it! But not always correct or helpful information – as the recent debate over COVID vaccinations has shown. Online blogs for cancer sufferers and survivors help share information, feelings, resources, tips and recommendations, and can help people and their families understand more about what their loved ones are going through, at each step



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of their illness and treatment. Online resources (and the ease with which they can be found) are helping sick persons and their families find treatments, old and new alike, for better or for worse.

**But smart services also bring challenges**

However, the use of health wearables and data brings some challenges. Firstly, the data may not necessarily be sufficiently accurate, or well understood by users. There is a danger of false positives – it has been estimated, for example, that around a third of Apple Watch users informed about irregular heartbeats may not in fact have this problem (according to the same Verge article). The liability consequences of an incorrect or false diagnosis are unclear.

It emerges that the well-known recommendation for 10,000 steps per day is fairly spurious and not

necessarily based in medical science. Doctors are struggling to cope with and respond to an influx of patient data from anxious patients armed with ‘smart watch suspicions’, as well as a ‘Google diagnosis’.

These platforms are collecting vast amounts of data, with confidentiality and publication rights under review by authorities. Since the pandemic, Google has published mobility data for smartphones for countries and regions around the world, monitoring population mobility as many countries went into lockdown and subsequently re-emerged from it (compared to baseline data from the 5-week period 3 January–6 February 2020). Confidentiality of medical records and their online publishing distribution is under examination in France, as one doctor from a French hospital tried to sell a patient’s X-ray online as a non-fungible token

(NFT) (25 January 2022, BBC News).

Online platforms can also introduce safety concerns and competitive effects. Users uploading data onto Strava may inadvertently give away their routine and location online to others, putting themselves at risk. Competitive effects brought about by online league tables may induce people into levels of exercise or activity which are effectively unsafe for them, in the name of ‘sport’ or competition.

**How to integrate personalized services with existing healthcare systems?**

The Covid-19 pandemic has helped revolutionize telemedicine, previously considered by some as a niche service. The pandemic has fuelled 3,800% growth in telemedicine, now well on its way to US\$250 billion of market value, according to a report by

McKinsey & Company. However, the question arises how to integrate these personalized services with existing systems – how can healthcare systems and professionals adapt to the proliferation of smart devices or self-diagnosis, and the data they yield? Will patients trust the human diagnosis more than the AI diagnosis? These new services raise many important questions for patients, doctors and healthcare systems alike.

As in many other fields, the future of health looks like one in which humans learn to cooperate and collaborate with online platforms, rather than compete with them... ■

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# Radio Cité Genève 92.2 à écouter avec fréquence

Sur les hauteurs de Vandœuvres, le cadre est campagnard, presque bucolique. Dans cette grande bâtisse aux allures de corps de ferme, se nichent les bureaux de la très francophone Radio Cité Genève (RCG).



©Christian David

## CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

Madame Viviane de Witt, Directrice générale dynamique de la station, nous accueille et nous guide pour visiter les différents bureaux, salles de montage et d'enregistrement au milieu des journalistes qui préparent leurs chroniques. Une explication par le détail permet d'aborder le fonctionnement particulier de cette station de radio atypique sans publicité.

Créée en 1984, reprise en 2012, le fait que Radio Cité Genève ait obtenu, en 2019, une double certification ISO 9001 et ISAS Média 9001 a valorisé toute l'équipe et l'encourage d'autant plus à vouloir offrir au bord du lac, une prestation qui reste marquée par la qualité et la prise en compte des auditeurs. Les rubriques de ces journalistes professionnels, chroniqueurs, bénévoles, personnes en formation et en devenir s'entrecroisent et ne manquent pas d'originalité en proposant des sujets variés. Beaucoup d'apprentis journalistes ont ainsi été formés sous l'onde de cette radio avant d'aborder d'autres médias. Même si la présentation des aspects culturels de Genève en reste le fer de lance, les programmes sont distillés en plusieurs thèmes qui abordent tous les aspects de vie de la cité et des environs. Madame De Witt insiste sur le cahier des charges dont les maître-mots sont la recherche de la qualité et la prise en compte des

auditeurs. Elle précise que l'Office fédéral de la Communication leur avait d'ailleurs accordé la concession selon des termes que chacun doit suivre à la lettre. Ce cahier des charges<sup>1</sup> mentionne, entre autres, que nous devons rester «en phase avec les attentes des auditeurs...//...». Ponctué par des flashes info, les rubriques se succèdent 24 heures sur 24 par le biais de reportages qui sont régulièrement rediffusés et podcastés sur le site web.<sup>2</sup>

«Genève s'engage» fait la part belle à des acteurs qui mettent en place des actions concrètes au service de la population. Des sujets aussi diversifiés que la cause féminine, la précarité, ou encore le bénévolat apportent une variété d'écoute. Avec «les cœurs de la cité», des thèmes universels sont proposés sous forme de discussions à bâtons rompus, tels que la culture, les humanitaires ou l'urgence climatique. «Merci la vie» ou les «assiettes d'or» abordent une démarche plus épicurienne. Plusieurs rubriques bilingues en français/albanais et, actualité oblige, en français/ukrainien, ou sur la culture italienne permettent également d'aborder, tour à tour, des situations gravissimes ou de présenter les traditions de minorités culturelles.

La Genève internationale ne pouvait échapper à l'intérêt de votre magazine. Cette catégorie



©Christian David

est abordée par la station sous l'impulsion de Viviane De Witt car elle fait partie intégrante de la vie de la cité. Plusieurs chroniqueurs se sont succédés au fil des années, offrant une variété d'approches, toujours marquées par l'abord de situations qui mettent en présence les travailleurs de la Genève internationale qu'ils proviennent d'institutions, d'associations ou d'ONGs. Ces derniers offrent d'ailleurs un dynamisme et un dévouement certains dans le travail de fond. Au gré des événements, Léna Ailloud dirige cette rubrique, tend son micro et restitue l'ambiance générale de ces activités internationales. Avec une présence quotidienne de 7 à 10 minutes, RCG est la seule radio locale qui met en valeur l'action de la Genève internationale en dehors des événements qui font l'actualité.

Avec «la bouteille à moitié pleine» et «l'œil du commissaire

priseur», Viviane de Witt propose des entretiens très marqués par la découverte de personnalités. Chacune de ces rencontres permet à notre hôte du jour de souligner et parfois même de révéler avec une grande intensité, leurs personnalités respectives. Chacune de ces interventions donne, en quelque sorte, une photographie ponctuelle d'une situation en permettant aux auditeurs d'exprimer leur opinion ou leur ressenti. Ces exemples d'émissions ne sont évidemment pas exhaustifs et la richesse des thématiques ne peut se résumer par une simple énumération.

La rediffusion 24 heures sur 24 et 7 jours sur 7 sur la bande FM ou par podcast sur le site web de la station promet en tout cas de belles surprises entrecoupées par des transitions musicales souvent réclamées par les auditeurs eux-mêmes et où sont privilégiés les artistes locaux.

Le modèle économique de RCG est à l'image de son fonctionnement. La station fonctionne sans publicité, elle est financée en majorité par la Fondation de Chênes dont le but est de promouvoir la culture en Suisse et particulièrement auprès des personnes les moins favorisées. Cette particularité, cette complémentarité vis-à-vis des autres radios commerciales et publiques, ce cahier des charges, déjà mentionné, constitue une charte qui doit être respectée strictement, elle oblige notamment RCG à offrir des programmes différents, dans des langues minoritaires à Genève.

La radio émet jusqu'à Lausanne et elle est écoutée, via le web, dans 22 pays, par le biais des alliances françaises. ■

1 <https://radiocite.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Politique-qualite%20C3%A9.pdf>

2 <https://radiocite.ch/>



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UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE  
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# New building project confirms ITU's sustainable future in Geneva



“ITU's new home  
International Ge  
sustainable, state-of  
conference e

The planned new headquarters building of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is envisioned as a state-of-the-art office and conference environment – where members, delegates, staff and visitors can meet, network and do their work in a smart, sustainable, forward-looking and fit-for-purpose setting. ITU – the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – intends its new headquarters building to foster a work environment of the future, supporting flexible working enabled by increasingly integrated digital platforms. The new work spaces will enable collaboration, partnership, transparency, and diversity to flourish and accelerate ITU's mandate to connect the world.

The new building, facing the iconic Place des Nations at the heart of International Geneva, will further cement ITU's presence in the city, where the organization has been headquartered since 1948. The construction of

the new building is scheduled to start at the end of 2023 and be completed by the end of 2026. It will be built on the site of the current Varembe Building, inaugurated in 1962 which will be dismantled next year. When the new building opens, the ITU Tower building will be vacated and placed on the market. ITU's headquarters upgrade also fits into a broader modernization of the Place des Nations and rue de Varembe, including connection to Geneva's forthcoming thermal power network GeniLac, currently being built by the Services Industriels de Genève (SIG) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the Portail des Nations.

You can find all the latest information on the dedicated web pages for ITU's New Building Project here [www.itu.int/hqbuilding](http://www.itu.int/hqbuilding) including sponsorships and donations received to date and ongoing updates.

**Malcolm Johnson – Deputy Secretary-General, ITU**



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...e at the heart of  
...neva will offer a  
...of-the-art work and  
...environment.”



Illustrations of the future ITU headquarters building near Place des Nations

© ITU / Christian Dupraz Architecte



© ITU/S. Acharya

# ITU-D Driving ICT-led development worldwide

DOREEN BOGDAN-MARTIN, ITU

The ITU Telecommunication Development Sector (ITU-D) works to promote human and socioeconomic development through information and communication technologies (ICTs). Since 1992, ITU-D has helped boost the growth of ICT networks and services, which are expanding access to government services, healthcare, education, agricultural services, financial services, and market information.

## The problem:

ITU data shows that 4.9 billion people are online and the gap between the digitally rich and digitally poor remains a stark reflection of global inequality, with over 90% of the 2.9 billion people still offline in the developing world.

## One part of the answer:

ITU-D is working to close the digital divide and leverage the power of ICTs for prosperity, jobs and digital skills development, gender equality and diversity, a sustainable and circular economy, and for saving lives.

Over recent years, ITU-D's membership has expanded to include partners from governments as well as regulatory agencies, regional and international organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, leading IT equipment manufacturers and software developers, and academia. ITU-D has also strengthened its collaboration with other partners, in areas including agriculture, finance, health care, jobs, education, women's empowerment, and youth.

The Sector's development goals are set at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) every four years. This year's WTDC-22 will take place in Kigali, Rwanda, this June.

ITU-D works to promote regulatory best practices, digital skills, cybersecurity, digital innovation, digital gender equality, and much more. It has ten priorities, each with a special focus on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing

Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDs): (1) capacity development; (2) cybersecurity; (3) digital inclusion; (4) digital innovation ecosystems; (5) digital services & applications; (6) emergency telecommunications; (7) environment; (8) network & digital infrastructure; (9) policy & regulation; (10) statistics.

**1 Capacity development: Building a digitally competent society.** ITU-D operates its ITU Academy initiative as its main online gateway bringing together a wide range of training activities and knowledge resources in digital development. ITU-D also runs Digital Transformation Centres (DTCs) in partnership with CISCO and publishes "Digital Skills Insights".

**2 Cybersecurity: Creating a trusted cyberspace for all.** ITU-D helps countries to establish National Computer Incident Response Teams (CIRT) and supports countries in developing and implementing National

Cybersecurity Strategies and cyberdrills (NCS). Over 80 CIRT assessments have been carried out to define national readiness to implement a national CIRT. For example, in 2021, CIRTs were set up for Barbados, Botswana, Gambia, and Kenya.

**3 Digital inclusion: Building inclusive policies for equal ICT access and use.** ITU-D helps decision-makers and communities access ICTs to improve people's lives. ITU-D organizes an International Girls in ICT Day campaign each year. ITU also runs a project to enhance access to digital technologies and build digital skills for women in Least Developed Countries (LDCs). ITU has introduced a toolkit and self-assessment for ICT accessibility implementation. ITU has also been working to help indigenous people access and use ICTs.

**4 Digital innovation ecosystems: Accelerating digital transformation through innovation and competitive digital ecosystems.** ITU-D has

helped 15 countries evaluate their digital innovation ecosystem. ITU-D hosts annual Innovation Forums and ITU Innovation Challenges to enable participants to understand how to mainstream sustainable ecosystems for entrepreneurship and innovation.

**5 Digital services and applications: Creating transformative digital strategies and applications.** The Digital Services and Applications programme develops and promotes digitally-enabled solutions in areas of digital health, mHealth, digital government, smart villages, smart islands and digital agriculture. One example is the “Be He@lthy, Be Mobile” initiative, run by ITU in collaboration with WHO.

**6 Emergency telecommunications: Disaster-resilient ICT infrastructure for reduced loss of lives and damages.** Extreme weather events, earthquakes, tsunamis, pandemics and other human-made related hazards challenge countries and communities. ICTs are key for monitoring, analysing information, delivering early warnings, and ensuring timely flow of information following disasters. ITU-D has developed disaster connectivity maps, training, multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS) and national emergency telecommunication plans (NETPs). In 2021, NETPs were developed for Papua New

Guinea, Samoa, Saint Lucia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Dominica, Grenada, Sudan and Somalia.

**7 Environment: Creating a circular economy for electronics.** ITU-D is working to help Member States address climate change, the transition to a circular economy and electronic waste (e-waste). The Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) currently provides technical assistance to over five countries in the monitoring and regulation of e-waste. It has published the Global E-waste Monitor 2020, a toolkit on Policy practices for e-waste management, and a report by ITU, the Digital Public Goods Alliance & World Meteorological Organization (WMO) calling for weather and climate information datasets to be made freely available as digital public goods.

**8 Network and digital infrastructure for reliable connectivity.** ITU-D is working on many initiatives to improve reliable connectivity, including: spectrum management, infrastructure maps, (with data from over 580 operators covering 20m kilometres); broadcasting, conformity and interoperability, next-generation networks, broadband networks and rural communications.

**9 Policy and regulation: Supporting collaborative policy and regulatory frameworks for**

**digital market development and user well-being.** ITU-D hosts the annual Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR), Regional Regulatory Roundtables and Regional Economic Dialogues to enable inclusive dialogue and enhanced cooperation to help countries achieve a more inclusive digital society. In 2021, over a thousand participants from 149 countries followed GSR-21 events, culminating in the GSR-21 Best Practice Guidelines. The ICT Eye website provides ICT indicators and statistics, regulatory and policy profiles, and price data. The ICT Policy Impact Lab is an online simulation tool exploring the impact of policies and regulations on ICT investment. ITU-D publishes the Digital Regulation Handbook and Platform and Global ICT Regulatory Outlook reports.

**10 Statistics: Helping countries with evidence-based ICT policy adoption for digitally inclusive societies.** Data is critical for connecting the world. ITU is the official source of international ICT statistics. ITU-D collects, verifies, and publishes Data and Analytics for over 200 economies and 200 indicators. It conducts world-class research to contextualize and make sense of the data. These data help Member States and stakeholders in faster and more effective decision-making.

In addition, BDT is working on a number of special initiatives,

- including:
- the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, which seeks to accelerate digital transformation in the hardest-to-connect communities, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
  - The Connect2Recover initiative, which aims to reinforce digital infrastructure in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in their recovery from COVID-19, to “build back better with broadband.”
  - The joint ITU and UNICEF Giga initiative, which aims to connect every school to the Internet by 2030. Giga is active in 19 countries in Africa, Asia, the Eastern Caribbean and Central America and is already helping map over 86,000 schools and more than 25.8 million students and teachers. Over 2,900 pilot schools have been connected by Giga partners in Kazakhstan, Kenya, and Rwanda, amongst others, with similar pilots underway in Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, and Uzbekistan.

These are just some of the ways in which ITU and its partners are working to close the digital divide and bring the benefits of digital development to people everywhere. ■

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## The Joys of Mead Making

## From Bee to Bottle

“Honey wine” is perhaps one of the oldest and simplest alcoholic beverages to make. With a long and rich history, reputed medical properties and being particularly recommended to newlyweds, it’s a great introduction to micro-brewing and a chance for the home enthusiast to discover centuries of tradition and learn the art of do-it-yourself fermentation.

© Norsk Folkemuseum



A 17th century Scandinavian yeast log

**KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO**

The period of COVID-19 lockdown saw an explosion of home-based hobbies. Baking with sour dough and brew-your-own kits enjoyed renewed interest with numerous online videos and starter guides promising to help you on your way to becoming a master micro-brewer in your spare room.

Although most people concentrate on beer, a far easier proposition, ideal for the beginner and perfect for learning the basics of home fermentation, is to start with a far older beverage, something that can trace its origins back to the very earliest attempts by human to make alcohol – fermenting honey into the drink called mead.

There’s evidence of the consumption of fermented beverages made with honey as far back as the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE in China. It was enjoyed at various times in Scandinavia, Gaul, Teutonic Europe, and Greece and was particularly prevalent in northern Europe where grapes do not grow. It was drunk by Celts, Anglo-Saxons, and Vikings and in the epic *Beowulf*, it is the drink of Kings, consumed in specially built mead halls which served as the centre of their communities. The Greeks called it “*ambrosia*” meaning immortal and to the Romans it was “*nectar*”. The Welsh had a spiced-honey version called

*metheglin* which meant “physician” and attested to the drink’s supposed medical properties. The word “honeymoon” comes from the Scandinavian practice of newlyweds drinking mead during the first lunar month of their union to increase the chances of conception, so powerful was the beverage considered.

Mead has existed since the earliest time because it is so easy to make. Honey is mixed with water in a ratio of about 1 part to 5 and various other spices and flavourings can be added for endless variations. This mixture is called the must. The natural yeasts present within the honey, on any plants added, or living on the honeycomb if that is used, colonise the mixture and begin the fermentation process, converting the sugars in the honey to alcohol with carbon dioxide gas given off as a by-product.

The fermentation part of the process was a mystery to early brewers who considered it a magical, sometimes divine process of alchemy. Often a particular stick or object was renowned for the quality of the mead produced when that object was used to stir or was soaked in the mixture during preparation. Without understanding that it was the microbiological cultures living on the object that were the true source, such mead-making

devices became magic talismans and were often handed down between generations as prized heirlooms or exchanged as part of a wedding dowry. The Scandinavians had elaborately sculpted “yeast logs” to add the magic ingredient, and even yeast rings made of wood or (most unusual of all) sheep vertebrae.

By itself, the concentration of sugars in raw honey are too high for fermentation to begin by itself. The yeast has a sweet tooth but not that sweet. The honey must be mixed with the water and even without introducing a magic yeast log, microorganisms floating in the air can also land on the syrupy mixture and go to work. One of the pleasures (and pitfalls) of such wild brewing with natural yeast is not knowing exactly what yeast will colonise your honey water, and what effect that will have on the final taste.

Modern brewers of course aim to control the process much more closely and guarantee repeatable and high-quality results; brewing equipment is sterilised, and dried yeasts cultures are used and provided with nutrients to ensure a healthy population for the crucial conversion to alcohol.

Most mead yeasts will gobble up the sugars and produce a honey wine of about 9% alcohol by volume (ABV), but special



© Kevin Crampton  
Homemade meads from a variety of honey types



© Kevin Crampton  
Raw materials. Pasteurised or raw honeys can be used

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A 14th century recipe describes the process of mead making as follows. Note the use of "grete stickis" – big sticks, laid in the mixture and potentially one source of yeast.

"Take hony combis & put hem into a greet vessel & ley thereynne grete stickis, & ley the weight theron til it be runne out as myche as it wole; & this is called liif hony. & thanne take that forseid combis & sethe hem in clene water, & boile hem wel. After presse out thereof as myche as though may & caste it into another vessel into hoot water, & sethe it wel & scome it wel, & do therto a quarte of liif hony. & thanne lete it stone a fewe dayes wel stoppid, & tis is good drinke."

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champagne yeasts can take the resulting beverage as high as 20% ABV. If all sugars are consumed, then the honey wine produced can be very dry and unpalatable and so back-sweetening that the addition of extra honey and water can be used to bring the sugar content back to the acceptable levels. The yeast dies off when there are no more sugars to consume, a process that can take about four to six weeks and will fall to the bottom as a silty lees.

Honey wine therefore offers limitless scope for experimentation, a choice between letting nature take its course or controlling every aspect with rigorous precision. It creates an easy-drinking, light wine which may retain a waxy sweetness and can also be slightly fizzy if fermentation is stopped at the right moment and some of the gasses retained.

Mead waned in popularity in Europe in the Middle Ages as

more beers became available and ale arose as the drink of choice. From the twelfth century onwards, wines were also imported from Gascony into northern Europe and displaced the practice of drinking honey wine still further. With the arrival of cheap sugars from the West Indies in the 17th century, beekeeping also declined so that today mead is only available in specialised shops or from small producers. Such commercial mead is usually made by beekeepers with the promise of an end-to-end process, "from bee to bottle". You won't find bottles of mead on your local supermarket shelf for example, although it may turn up at the odd medieval fair or re-enactment meeting.

The drink of kings, of young lovers, monks and druids, the tippie of Beowulf, imbibed before facing the monster Grendel, mead has been enjoyed as a staple across the world and discovered independently by different

communities throughout history. Celebrated in Sanskrit poetry and reputedly accidentally bestowed on humanity by the God Odin, mead is much less revered today. You can however enjoy the same experience as your forebears for the cost of honey, water, some wild or purchased yeast and six weeks of fermenting patience. ■

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For practical advice and guidance on starting your own mead making, please contact the author.



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# SAUAN TAKEOUT BENTO & SUSHI



# The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition

Sometimes knowing who you are and where you're from is a difficult subject to answer. You may not ever feel like you belong anywhere. Or maybe you feel like your home is somewhere different than where you've spent most of your life.



© Tina Quick

Tina Quick, a supportive guide for TCKs

## LISANNE HOPKIN, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, NEWSPECIAL

Growing up, I always thought I was Swiss. I was born in Switzerland, I lived in Switzerland, I went to school in Switzerland. It seemed like the only option for where 'home' could be. At school though, I quickly realised that I was English. Being referred to as 'la petite anglaise' made me feel like I didn't really belong in Switzerland. I felt like I was betraying my English family by being in Switzerland, and I felt like I was betraying my parents who had moved to Switzerland by not being Swiss enough.

When I went to university in England, it was the complete opposite. I was optimistic that I would feel like I was more at home. That I wouldn't feel like I stuck out as much. And to a certain extent, that was the case. Little things, like the clothes that I wore, made me feel less different. I felt like my sense of style was more English than Swiss. (If that can even be a thing.) All my classes were in English, so next to no one would hear my English accent when I spoke French. The rest of my family was living in England. To a certain extent, it felt 'right'.

But there were things that I had missed out on. Again, little things. But they were what seemed to give away the fact that I wasn't 'completely' English. For example, for

my 20th birthday party, one of my housemates suggested that I buy Party Rings. I had no idea what she was on about and she was astonished that I'd never tried them. (They're biscuits with colourful icing.) Other things that made me feel less English was that I never had squash at dinnertime. I couldn't get a job without having a National Insurance number, which you automatically get when you turn 18 and live in the United Kingdom. Little things, but they always seemed to matter the most.

Recently, when faced with the dilemma of where I want to live and where I would like to work, my answer's constantly changed. Fresh out of university, I would have told you with 100% conviction that I wanted to spend the next five years of my life in England. Perhaps even the rest of my life.

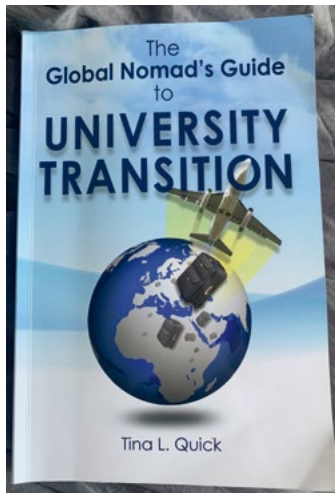
When Covid-19 hit, though, my answer changed. I moved back in with my parents, in Switzerland, went back to my old life. The friends that I had made in England, and the plans that I'd hypothetically sorted in my head, began to fade.

As time's gone on, I've found myself torn between England and Switzerland. I am always comparing the two. And my heart is torn. Switzerland feels like home.

I grew up here. I've spent most of my life in Switzerland. I think it's the best place in the world. But my family's in England. And I miss them. I'm sad I'm not able to see my grandma more than a few times a year. I'm sad that my cousins' children are growing up so quickly. I miss all the friends that I made at university. And it becomes this endless cycle of never really knowing what the right answer is and what will make me happiest.

I am what is known as a Third Culture Kid (TCK). The most simple definition of a TCK is a child who grew up outside of their parents' home culture(s). For instance, my parents both grew up in England, but they moved to Switzerland about a year or so before I was born. I spent my first 18 years in Switzerland and that is what makes me a TCK in the simplest form. While writing this article, I was able to get in touch with a family friend who has dedicated a lot of her life to working with and supporting TCKs.

Tina Quick wrote the book 'The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition' in the hopes of helping and preparing TCKs for university. It's been re-published this year as a second edition, and I thoroughly recommend reading through it. It's a book with answers that you might not even know you had been looking for.



Here is my interview with Tina:

**Your book has been republished as a second edition 12 years later. Why a second edition, what are the changes you've made?**

Tina: Before the pandemic, I used to train school counsellors and people who worked with TCKs on how to put on a 'leaving for university course' and it was very popular. But I've slowly been trying to retire from my work with TCKs and a lot of people were upset that I was giving up the training course. And then during the pandemic, I thought I should maybe revive the course. I realised it would have to be virtual, and as I started going through the book I noticed how old it was. A lot has changed, especially in the last two years, so I decided to do some research and figure out what is different from the ten years since the book was first published. I got in touch with a lot of people asking them what they thought was different and three topics kept coming up; technology, relationships, and parenting. This new edition expands on all of these topics. And as I haven't been around university kids in a while, I got three guest authors who are working in the field. One is Lois Bushong, who has written on TCKs at college dealing with anxiety, depression, addiction, and how to find a good therapist.

Lauren Wells talks about TCKs, their romantic relationships, and unresolved grief. And Amanda Bates has written about diversity, equity, inclusion, and how to build a career.

**Do you think that children who go back and forth between their 'home' country and where they grow up also struggle with a sense of belonging?**

I have some friends who live in Geneva, and the wife is American, and the husband's French. The kids have told me that when they go to the States, they feel more French, but when they're in Geneva, they feel more American. And there is a way to explain why TCKs feel a lack of identity and belonging. Naomi Hattaway explains it as: imagine a 'circle country' where everybody is circles and a 'square country' where everybody is a square. A circle man, a fully-developed adult man who knows who he is, goes to live in 'square country' for a while and slowly starts to love the music, the people, the culture, the food. He never loses his circle culture completely, he just unconsciously begins to change into something else. He becomes a blend of the two cultures and he becomes a triangle. But he knows who he is, and he absorbs a bit of the culture. This is different for TCKs, though, and I have adapted it, so that it may be easier for them to understand. Instead of TCKs becoming triangles, they become stars. Kids don't usually know who they are, they're still learning as they grow, and in an international setting, they are being pulled by lots of different cultural influences, which turns them into a star. When they go off to university, I like to remind them that everyone else will usually be circles or squares, and that is why they feel different. It's not personal, you're not weird, there's nothing wrong with you, you've just grown up in a dissimilar environment.

**How do you think Covid-19, and online learning, has affected Third Culture Kids?**

I think TCKs have been impacted very similarly to domestic students, in that they have become socially insecure, they've had to learn how to make conversation with people, they may have spent too much time in past relationships and struggled to make new friends. Though some may be better at that virtually than others. However, there is one way that TCKs and international kids have been profoundly impacted and that is that some of them have been trapped in the country where they had been studying, others may have been trapped at home.

On the other hand, I have heard from some TCKs that going to a virtual orientation helped them to get to know the campus before they got there. There are some really not so great things about technology, but then again, there are some positives, and when you balance it out, you can't say if it was good or bad.

**Do you think Third Culture Kids try to avoid imposing that same lifestyle on their own children?**

When we talk about TCKs, it is a group profile, so not everything we say is going to fit every person. And what we do find is that the TCKs usually fall on completely opposite ends of a spectrum, with very few actually ending up in the middle. Some TCKs thrive in that childhood global mobility and they want to raise their children in that same way. Others fear that lifestyle and swear that they are never going to move again, so it's more of an individual thing.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

The reason I decided to write my book is because when my family and I moved to Boston, which is surrounded by 200 universities, I ran into so many TCKs who kept telling me the same thing. 'I don't

belong here', 'I don't fit in', 'I spend a lot of time alone'. I heard from kids who were very depressed, some even contemplating suicide, and I knew it didn't have to be that way. So, I did some research and came up with what I call 'the four pearls' that TCKs have when they go off to university. They are unresolved grief, the cycle of transition itself, the TCK identity development, and my favourite is how TCKs feel their relationships very differently from a domestic student. All of these topics are covered in my book, and I go into a lot of detail, so that TCKs can understand how and why they're feeling what they're feeling and hopefully feel less alone. ■

If you would like to find out more about ThirdCultureKids and Tina's work, you can now buy her book *The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition*. (Tina also did a couple of workshops at WHO before moving back to Boston, so she was pleased to be a part of this.)



INDIA

## Soosmita Sinha...

...a committed rebel for the rights of healthcare professionals

- Raiganj, 1977
- *Human rights and health - The Health Law Institute*
- *"An ecosystem, small in size but gigantic in the diversity it attracts."*

*newSpecial* is delighted to include profiles presented by Zahi Haddad, in his recently-published book "126 Heartbeats for International Geneva".

We thank the author and his publisher, Slatkine, for this exclusivity.

A rebellious soul, with a clear vision and a fierce will to transform the world, Soosmita Sinha is not an inveterate dreamer. She is a pragmatist. Since her childhood, she has given life to her desires. Perhaps since that day when, at the age of nine, she convinced her parents to let her open her own bank account. Probably even before. She enters the University of Zaria, only just at the beginning of adolescence. And throughout her professional career that leads her to found the Health Law Institute.

Before arriving in Zaria, a millennial city in Nigeria, Soosmita unrolls an astonishing thread since her birth in India. A mechanical engineer, her father takes her family to Baghdad, a few years before the war between Iraq and Iran. After a rushed departure by taxi, via Kuwait City, the family experiences several Nigerian cities. In Kano, Soosmita maintains her Indian culture and develops her character. As Zaria is a two-hour drive away, the teenager takes up residence on the university campus, alone,

making life work between the water and electricity cuts. She manages her pharmacy degree in seven years, instead of five, due to repeated strikes by the professors. In any case, she considers herself "very emotional in the face of human suffering, so I preferred this path to medicine, which my mother wanted, to keep a certain distance from the patients."

When talking about herself, Soosmita displays calm and simplicity, shaken with laughter, like so many valves releasing a certain amount of shyness. A slightly embarrassed but accomplished look in her olive green eyes. A noted graduate, she becomes a professor at her university. At 20 years old. But two years later, her clear path breaks after a work accident that immobilizes her father for a few months.

Witnessing the limits of the health system and the impossibility of obtaining the best possible care, Soosmita moves back to the United States to support her parents, and chooses Pittsburgh to do research in medical

chemistry, afterward working as a pharmacist in Michigan.

But her childhood dream and her father's situation call her to back to doing studies in law. A course that requires field experience. So, she chooses Geneva and the OHCHR, where she focuses on the rights of women, then WHO, where her project ideas for protecting the rights of health professionals start germinating. "They should not be discriminated against because of structural deficiencies, their state of health, their gender or even the absence of protective gloves. In addition, the lack of financial resources or the failure to allocate them properly weakens the health system considerably."

But, to achieve exactly what she has in mind, Soosmita prefers to regain her independence. The creation of the Health Law Institute has become inevitable. She then launches the project, while surrounding herself with international experts meticulously chosen to satisfy her vision. To make a difference, with large-scale

research and information. And especially the development of links with the UN and its agencies, to get the message across and make it visible.

In the meantime, Soosmita refines every detail. Despite the hard knocks, the delays, the separations, her dream has come to fruition. She turns to poetry which she shares within the Geneva Writers Group. It also guides her and calms her soul. To keep her serene and steady on a happy course. ■



# Concours Eduki

## Un vent de durabilité et de jeunesse souffle sur le Palais des Nations

Ce fut un mercredi pas comme les autres et sans doute un souvenir inoubliable pour ces centaines de jeunes venus de douze cantons suisses.



Yvonne Schneiter, la directrice d'Eduki rassemble la jeunesse



### CHRISTIAN DAVID, UNOG

Leur présence dans une salle de conférences de l'ONU aurait pu les impressionner mais la joie et la jubilation étaient davantage présentes.

Pour cette huitième édition, le Concours National sur les Objectifs de Développement Durable organisé par la Fondation Eduki avait répondu aux attentes puisque 120 projets avaient été soumis à un jury.

Plus de 1000 élèves avaient concouru en se familiarisant, par la même occasion, à l'agenda 2030 au travers de trois Objectifs de Développement Durable (ODD).

Trois ODD avaient été choisis et les élèves ont pu laisser libre court à leur inventivité dans les domaines suivants:

**ODD 11:** villes et communautés durables

**ODD 12:** production et consommation responsables

**ODD 13:** Mesures pour lutter contre le changement climatique

La sélection réalisée par les jurys n'était pas aisée pour ce concours ainsi que pour la remise de la Bourse Françoise Demole.

Marraine de cette cérémonie de remise de prix, la Directrice générale Madame Valovaya soulignait que l'ambition était immense pour l'ONU, d'avoir mis en place ce défi pour 2030 constitué par les ODD. À mi-parcours de l'atteinte de ces objectifs, force est de constater que la situation est alarmante et que nous nous rapprochons de l'abîme. Elle insistait cependant sur sa détermination à s'engager avec les participants au concours et au-delà avec cette nouvelle génération à laquelle est léguée cette situation. L'Ambassadeur suisse Jürg Lauber quant à lui, vantait cette jeunesse suisse et ce dialogue intergénérationnel qui contribuent à pousser les portes de l'avenir.

Mesdames Emery Torracinta, Conseillère d'État, De Planta, Présidente de la Fondation Eduki et Egli von Matt, membre de la

commission suisse pour l'Unesco, appréciaient l'élan et l'enthousiasme présent dans la salle à l'annonce des résultats.

Quelques exemples de ces prix permettent de noter à quel point les élèves ont déjà pris la mesure de leur engagement futur.

Le premier prix était remis au gymnase de Renens, Vaud (15-19 ans) pour un projet de mobilier recyclé sur les aménagements urbains, destiné à améliorer leur durabilité et leur attractivité pour la population.

Le second prix (12-15 ans) était remis à l'école internationale de Genève pour «mechanic Whale» et représente une baleine sautant hors de l'eau pour échapper à la pollution, une allégorie, pour démontrer que quand l'espoir rejoint l'action, tout peut se réaliser.

Pour la catégorie média (4-12 ans), remis à l'école de Pinchat Genève, ce fut un coup de cœur pour cette vidéo créative tournée par les élèves au sujet des ours polaires en danger

Au-delà des projets primés, jeunes et moins jeunes insistent sur le fait que l'amorce d'une conscience politique constitue un espoir pour ces générations qui s'impliquent dans un futur immédiat. Ils parviennent même à responsabiliser leurs aînés en ayant intégré les enjeux et en partageant cette envie avec eux. ■

[www.eduki.ch/fr/je-passe-en-mode-durable-penser-global-et-agir-local/2225](http://www.eduki.ch/fr/je-passe-en-mode-durable-penser-global-et-agir-local/2225)



# Hike to the Mont-Fort hut

Lesson learned: my socks don't dry overnight.  
Lesson number two: check before you go.

## OLGA FONTANELLAZ

Our hike starts in Verbier, a village perched at 1,500 m on a steep hill. As we approach Les Ruinettes cable car, mountain bikers fly down the dirt road, and paragliders launch and soar above the valley. The trail through lush pastures with panoramic views of Verbier is easy. Bright alpine flowers bloom on the gentle slopes with grazing bell-ringing cows.

In the distance, the mountains appear dark and rocky. The blue sky is now out, fog is in. The mist rolls up from the valley, and it thickens as we wind our way around. High in the clouds, trapped by fog, we see almost nothing. According to our calculations, the Mont-Fort hut must be nearby. Walking almost blindly through the thick fog, we finally spot the hidden-away hut built

nearly a century earlier by people who understood our needs. As we approach the hut, strange sounds and noises come from nowhere. At first, we think it's the wind. We climb up to see... weird, eerie heads mounted on stone blocks. The heads are strange, but the sounds are even more bizarre. Later we find out that there is a motion sensor that triggers the heads to start singing when someone approaches.

The Mont-Fort hut sits high up on the slopes of Mont Fort at 2,457m. For almost 100 years, the hut has been a refuge for weary hikers offering warm beds and creamy fondue. We share a table with other hikers who traded in the luxury hotel to fall asleep at quite possibly the best spot in the world to see the splendour of the Alps through the window. The dinner is hearty traditional Swiss dishes

and a bottle of wine, all with the views of Mont Blanc.

We wake up to a sunrise that makes mountain peaks glow pink. The ghostly mist and rain are long gone, replaced by a bright blue sky. But my hi-tech socks didn't dry, and today I hike with socks hanging off my backpack.

We take the "Chamois Trail", known as "Sentier des Chamois" in French. Starting as an easy hike, the trail becomes narrow and scary, with a steep drop-off. We go along a balcony path high above the valley, with groups of chamois scattered throughout the slopes. These nimble-footed animals feel perfectly at home on this steep terrain, judging by the ease with which they negotiate the steepest rocks. I can't help but think it's only for chamois, not for hikers.



© Olga Fontmeliz



Art installation with singing heads next to the Mont-Fort hut

The slopes are steep and narrow, the views are dramatic, and the chances to roll down hundreds of meters are real. In some places, the path is maybe thirty or forty centimetres wide and completely exposed on one side. There are panoramic views of the villages dotted over the Val de Bagnes,

which is to say we have a clear view of that stomach-churning drop. I learned my second lesson today – plan carefully before you go.

The blue and white markers painted on rocks guide us through the terrain. In some places, we hang onto chains as we go along vertiginous slopes. For someone who considers herself a decent hiker, I struggle. “Is this rock stable? Will it hold?” I place my foot on some loose rocks testing each step. Slowly, I take a step, watch, and take another step. There is no margin for missteps. The scenery becomes rockier and wilder, and the views more dramatic as we approach the Col Termin, the highest point of the hike.

On top of the jagged ridgeline, we are met by a stream of hikers

of all ages, nationalities, shapes, and sizes. As the Swiss mountain etiquette dictates that the downward hiker gives way to the upward hiker, we say “Bonjour”, step aside to let them pass and keep going.

The descent to the lake and the Louvie hut runs in tight and steep switchbacks. Nestled amid green meadows, the charming hut with its idyllic lake is a perfect stop. The smell of fondue and cheese crust, or “croûte au fromage” in French, is to awaken the kundalini.

From the hut, we follow the path that zigzags down the steep slopes to the village of Fionnay and then back to Verbier. ■

#### Practical information

Access: The Mont-Fort hut is located in the canton of Valais in Switzerland and is accessible from Verbier by an easy trail (3h, 6km). You can shorten the hike by taking a gondola to Les Ruinettes (1h45) or you take a shorter 45 min walk from La Chaux.

Accommodation: The Mont-Fort hut <https://www.cabanemontfort.com/> is guarded only in summer.

Olga together with her husband Errol created a project [www.anywayinaway.com](http://www.anywayinaway.com) to showcase the world's cultural diversity. When she is not travelling to some remote corners of the world, she spends time hiking in Switzerland.



© Maria Lagranha

## Maria Lagranha's Les Natifs du Sud

GUSTAVO LAGRANHA

At the top of the painting, on a deeper plane, there is an ancient building which may seem difficult to define at first sight. Beside it, we can find a strange kind of cross that may serve as a clue to the viewer. If we take into account the other elements of the painting – two Indian-American natives, and a bird known in English as rufous hornero (we will learn more about it soon) – we are able to connect the dots: the building depicted is a Jesuit Mission in South America, and it is to this mostly unknown southern point of the world we are heading for through this work of art.

The painting is **João-de-barro** (*Furnarius rufus*), by Brazilian artist Maria Lagranha. Its title refers to the bird on a privileged plane of the picture, right in front of the viewer, the same position of all the birds in this collection of Maria's work. Before we get to know her and the essence of her art, a few more words about that beautiful and delicate bird. Known as rufous hornero in English, its name in South Brazil is much more interesting. João-de-barro can be translated as Clay John, an eponym derived from

its habit of collecting clay, along with small branches, to build an ingenious clay house to protect its nest – a construction that is also creatively depicted on the same painting.

Now back to the artist. Maria Lagranha was born in Uruguaiana, a city that is located between three borders: being inside of Rio Grande do Sul, a Brazilian state, it rests just a few kilometres from Uruguay and only a bridge away from Argentina. Since the beginning, this frontier-like quality defined the painter. After studying Arts at the federal public university in Porto Alegre (UFRGS) and living for years in Rio Grande's state interior, Maria's cosmopolitan spirit inspired her to move to Europe in 2001. She's been living in Geneva since 2010. All of this time, the artist has been developing techniques and finding new ways of expression.

In Switzerland, she has grown increasingly aware of the international concerns about South America's indigenous people, Brazilian natives among them. Although many filmmakers, photographers, journalists, and writers produced deep and

moving material about Amazonian Indians, Maria could not find research, actions, and productions of any kind involving the natives from South Brazil, the ones that she used to see begging, selling their arts and crafts for nothing at street markets or wandering by the roadside. It was almost like they did not even exist.

Having flirted for a long time with abstract painting, the artist decided to approach the images and characters of the natives of her land. Maria Lagranha attempted to make them visible, attempted to tell the history and preserve the memory of those people, who maybe represented the most perfect example of harmony in the integration between humans and the surrounding nature. Harmony that was severely broken after the unjustifiable violence committed by the colonizers of South America, who either killed or enslaved the natives and took their lands by force.

The history of this crime is subtly perceptible in Maria's paintings. We can tell it from the facial expressions of some of the



© Maria Lagranha



© Maria Lagranha

natives; we can tell it from the modern clothes that don't fit to their features; we can tell it from the hands of working children; we can tell it from the abstract planes and elements that refer to the cold indifference of the big city, where the natives appear desolate and dislocated. In some of the paintings, we can see them handcrafting baskets and other articles with straw – that is a portrait of their economy; their crafted products are sold for almost nothing in the streets of Porto Alegre and all over the Southern region. It is not clear within the paintings, but with a little effort, we can foresee: most natives in South Brazil will become beggars or do the hardest works available. The law that should protect them is weak; the political view that now dominates the country tries to steal what is left of their dignity. Along with the nuanced mention of this dark history, what really captures our attention in this collection of work is the beauty of the natives. Even with the urban menace around them, their integration with nature is fully materialised in the presence of native birds from South Brazil, that emerge here as symbols. Abstract coloured shapes

depicting the luxury of the flora, many times suggestively intermixed with the aforementioned elements of the austere city, support and emphasize the features and exuberance of Indians and birds, drawing the emotions and colours of an endangered and overlooked nature.

All the birds presented in the paintings are also natives of South America, especially of Rio Grande do Sul, Maria Lagranha's home state. What stands out at first glance is the realism that the artist applies in their representation, and the touching delicacy that results from it. It was mentioned above that the birds work here as symbols, and that is accurate. These are symbols of a nature that is vanishing, just like the identity from the people from those lands. The impression is that the symbol-birds are being fixed on canvas to be never forgotten, and also to be revealed to a public that scarcely have the opportunity to get in touch with such gorgeous creatures; through their delicacy, they inspire awareness and protection.

Our focus is now back on the painting where we discovered

the temple of a Jesuit Mission – its ruins are still erect in the city of São Miguel das Missões in the northwest of Rio Grande do Sul, now considered a Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO – we may still find in it another implied message. And although they tried to impose the Catholic religion and the European system of thought on the Indians, the Jesuits also protected them from enslavement and forced labour. The attempt of preserving the natives' culture resulted in what is interpreted as a rare example of "benign colonialism". The utopia the Jesuits envisaged ended with their expulsion and the destruction of the Missions, but what can we still learn from them? Maybe the placid expression of the natives on Maria's **João-de-barro** is giving us a hint.

Heir to a long tradition that strives for capturing the spirit of native people pushed to the outskirts of Western civilisation, Maria Lagranha is exposing in her series of paintings an almost unknown reality – that of the natives she really met through her life, who wander across South Brazil and South America in a state of sad invisibility. In her art, they are

the true protagonists, with their strong hands, expressive faces and deep eyes, along with the birds with their overwhelming appearances, and nature in its pure state. While suggesting the dark history behind the displacement of these characters, she discloses with mastery the beauty in them, it is done with a warning: this is the nature that still stands, and that we are compelled to defend. ■



© Deborah Randolph Talon

# Orthodox Easter in Corfu

Easter of 2022 I was lucky enough to take part in the beautiful, uplifting and culturally rich Easter on the Greek Island of Corfu.

## DEBORAH RANDOLPH TALON, WHO

The Easter Break in the Canton de Vaud and Geneva covers two full weeks and after discovering that EasyJet flew straight to Corfu, once a week, it seemed a perfect opportunity to explore this beautiful, historic and culturally rich Greek island.

Corfu (Kérkyra) is situated in the Ionian Sea. It lies further South (East) of the heel of Italy with Albania to its North-East (Indeed driving through the North of Corfu, brought back memories of visiting Albania).

The topography of Corfu is divided distinctly into three aspects from North to South by Pantokrator range and Saint Decca (Agiou Deká) range. The northern part of the island is covered with mountains, the central region has valleys and hills at intervals and the southern

region consists of uninterrupted fertile plains.<sup>1</sup> There are beautiful churches and cathedrals to visit, walking and biking trails, boat rides to neighboring islands and beautiful swimming sanctuaries.

Most of the inhabitants spoke English (our taxi driver informed me that they learnt this at a very young age) and many spoke French. I was surprised to hear how beautiful the Greek language was: to my unsensitive ear it was a mixture of Latin and Spanish.

Throughout the Easter week typical Greek restaurants and cafés played traditional music with Byzantine chants which seemed to speak to the heart and created a completely relaxed atmosphere.

As a note, celebration of the Orthodox Easter falls on different days as opposed to the Christian Easter and the Orthodox Easter

usually falls later in the year than Western Christian Easter because Orthodox Easter uses the Julian calendar and the latter uses the Gregorian calendar.

The date used to calculate the Orthodox Easter was determined at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D (first ecumenical council of the Christian church). It is on the Sunday following the paschal full moon, which is the full moon that falls on or after the spring equinox.

In 2022, celebrations in Corfu started from 22nd April and culminated with the Orthodox Easter Sunday celebration on April 24.

Further celebrations continued throughout the week of 25 April.<sup>3</sup>

The Orthodox Easter celebrations is thus more in line with

the school Easter holidays of the Canton de Vaud as opposed to the Easter holidays of the Canton de Geneve

Easter Celebrations in Corfu are lined with street processions, music by Corfu's philharmonic societies and church choirs, religious ceremonies, fireworks and the famous throwing out of the clay pots (Botides) in the old town of Corfu.

Greeks from all over the country swarm to Corfu for Easter. If staying outside of the Corfu old town, I would strongly recommend taking many of the available tourist cars that provide transport to the Corfu old town and book restaurants and hotels in advance.

The throwing out of the clay pots (flying clay pots) was one of the most spectacular ceremonies I was lucky to participate in. The



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© Deborah Randolph Talon



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ceremony normally takes place at 11 a.m. at the esplanade of Corfu (The Liston).

It consists of the throwing out of red clay pots from the houses aligning the esplanade. This is an old tradition some say dates back as far as Venetian times when one would throw out their old clay pots as part of a spring-cleaning process, and this tradition has now been incorporated into the Corfu Orthodox Easter. Other Corfiots told me it was to break a chain of bad luck and resembled the “smiting of one’s enemies” which is commonly found in the Bible

All in all, it was an impressive tradition to watch and participate in. The houses on the streets aligning the esplanade are adorned with beautiful red cloth and from time to time you can catch a glimpse of a Corfiot

in beautiful traditional attire, waving to the crowds. Below, by 9:30 a.m. on Easter Saturday the main streets, esplanade and surrounding park are packed with people, and there is a certain frenzy in the crowd. Families come with their own small red pots that they plan on smashing. People are warm and accommodating and try and make space for the elderly or handicapped so that they can take part in this family tradition.

A parade precedes the event and before long families in the houses above call to the crowd below: waving and generally inciting the crowd.

There is a countdown and then it starts. Beautiful red pots with Happy Easter written on some come crashing down from above in waves. Some pots are at least six feet high.

There are oohs and ahhs as the biggest pots come down and from time to time the families in the houses above tease us with a big pot perfect for smashing, and then pulls away.

The ceremony lasts for about an hour and ends when the orchestra marches through the crowd and most people start dancing. There is applause, back tapping and smiles all over. People then smash their own red pots on the ground with as much flourish as possible. They then hang back and have coffee or lunch in the restaurants in the Corfu old town or lounge by the seaside. The evening is followed by fireworks and the following days by the remainder of the Easter celebrations.

However, for me the most impressive was that of the flying clay pots. ■

- 1 <https://www.greeka.com/ionian/corfu/geography/#:~:text=The%20topography%20of%20Corfu%20is,consists%20of%20uninterrupted%20fertile%20plains.>
- 2 [https://www.calendardate.com/orthodox\\_easter\\_2022.htm](https://www.calendardate.com/orthodox_easter_2022.htm)
- 3 <https://visit.corfu.gr/>



© Carla Edelembos

La Suisse inconnue, à la découverte des 26 cantons

# Canton de Thurgovie: Diessenhofen

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

**CARLA EDELEMBOS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS**

Au bord du Rhin en Thurgovie se dresse la petite ville de Diessenhofen. Ici le Rhin forme la frontière avec l'Allemagne et il y avait déjà un pont en bois au 13<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le pont couvert actuel date de 1816 et permet de passer d'un pays à l'autre, à pied ou en vélo, mais aussi en voiture, même si c'est trop étroit pour que deux véhicules se croisent. On s'étonne de voir pendant les heures de pointe dans cet endroit si paisible de longues queues de voitures qui attendent leur tour pour traverser, il y a en effet très peu de ponts sur le Rhin dans la région.

Pendant l'empire romain l'endroit était connu sous le nom de *Gunodorum*. La première mention de Diessenhofen date de l'année 757, dans un acte de donation d'un hameau avec église, appelé *Deozincova*, à l'abbaye de St. Gall.

En 1178 Diessenhofen devint une ville, et elle compte donc parmi les plus anciennes villes de Suisse, même plus ancienne que Berne, qui ne fut fondée comme cité qu'en 1190.

En 1460, les troupes confédérées conquièrent la ville et chassèrent les Habsbourg. Une période de paix et prospérité commença, pendant laquelle plusieurs constructions emblématiques pour la ville furent bâties, comme la *Siegelturm*, la tour des sceaux, où les autorités gardaient les documents officiels. Cette belle tour date du 1545 et nous plonge tout de suite dans l'ambiance de l'époque médiévale tardive. Malheureusement, à la fin du 18<sup>e</sup> siècle la deuxième guerre de coalition que plusieurs puissances européennes menaient contre la France, atteint Diessenhofen qui fut occupée en alternance par les

troupes françaises et les armées autrichiennes et russes. Les amateurs d'histoire se rappelleront de la bataille de Diessenhofen du 7 et 8 octobre 1799, lorsque les soldats de Napoléon ont vaincu l'armée russe sous le général Korsakoff. Cinq ans après, la paix et la prospérité revenaient et la ville rejoignait le canton de Thurgovie.

Actuellement la commune héberge 4100 habitants et de nombreux restaurants et bistros. Nous prenons un café dans un bistro un peu démodé, en remarquant un panneau sur la porte annonçant que les fumeurs sont les bienvenus. En fait, la Thurgovie est un des rares cantons où il est encore autorisé de fumer à l'intérieur des bistros!

Le quartier de la vieille ville de Diessenhofen est le plus grand du canton de Thurgovie et sa rue principale, dominée par la

*Siegelturm*, est aménagée avec des belles fontaines y compris une vieille fontaine d'une élégance plutôt bernoise avec la statue colorée d'un soldat avec drapeau. Les petits magasins qui s'y trouvent sont charmants et ne dérangent pas cette impression authentique. Plusieurs maisons longeant la rue sont peintes dans des couleurs pastel, et donnent à la ville un aspect chaleureux. C'est très photogénique, mais peu de visiteurs y font halte, parce que la route principale entre Stein am Rhein et Schaffhausen contourne la ville.

Après avoir admiré la rue principale, nous descendons vers la rive du Rhin, où se trouve la Tour de Hänki qui fut construite en 1391 pour la défense de la ville. En 1616 elle fut convertie en prison et utilisée comme telle jusqu'en 1828. Restaurée en 1947, la forteresse impressionne toujours. A





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l'est de la tour il y a un parc et des bains dans le Rhin. Dans l'autre direction se trouve une grande maison datant du début du 16<sup>e</sup> siècle, après que les chanoines de Constance avaient obtenu la permission de construire leur maison en bas des remparts avec une porte sur le Rhin. Le bâtiment majestueux héberge maintenant le musée de la ville avec une exposition permanente des œuvres du peintre Carl Roesch, qui a grandi à Diessenhofen et y avait son atelier jusqu'à sa mort en 1979. L'atelier se trouve à l'extérieur de la vieille ville surplombant le Rhin. La maison, conçue par le peintre lui-même en 1930 et inspirée par Le Corbusier, est ouverte pour visite sur rendez-vous seulement.

Nous continuons le long du fleuve et arrivons au pont couvert. Un peu plus loin se trouve le quai pour les bateaux de croisière

qui dans la belle saison amènent leurs passagers de provenance de Schaffhausen ou Stein am Rhein. Nous remontons vers le centre pour visiter l'église qui date du 14<sup>e</sup> siècle mais qui a connu beaucoup de rénovations. Des restes d'églises antérieures des 7<sup>e</sup> et 10<sup>e</sup> siècles se trouvent au-dessous du sol mais ne sont malheureusement pas visibles. L'intérieur de cette église-halle est sobre, peint en blanc, en trois nefs, séparés par un rang de colonnes. L'ensemble donne l'impression d'une étonnante modernité, même si quelques pierres tombales ancestrales montrent l'origine ancienne de ce lieu de culte.

De retour au bord du fleuve, nous prenons le chemin piéton en direction de l'ancien couvent *St. Katherinental*, qui a ses origines au 13<sup>e</sup> siècle. Intégré dans l'ordre dominicain, le couvent connu

une période de rayonnement important et exerça une grande influence. Son «livre des sœurs», commencé au début du 14<sup>e</sup> siècle, est l'une des œuvres gothiques les plus importantes en Suisse. Le manuscrit richement décoré comprend 314 feuilles avec des chants en latin dans la tradition grégorienne. D'importance européenne, le livre est exposé au musée national suisse de Zürich. Les bâtiments ont pris leur forme actuelle pendant le 18<sup>e</sup> siècle, avec une magnifique église baroque, construite en 1732 et rénovée en 2007. Abandonnés par les nonnes à la fin du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle, les bâtiments du couvent étaient utilisés par le canton comme maison de retraite et hôpital. Ils hébergent actuellement une clinique des hôpitaux cantonaux de Thurgovie.

Nous prenons tranquillement le chemin de retour en suivant le fleuve et admirons la belle vue

sur la vieille ville et le pont en bois. Comme il nous reste encore un peu de temps, nous ne résistons pas à la tentation de prendre le pont vers l'autre rive pour contempler Diessenhofen depuis l'Allemagne avant de quitter cette petite ville accueillante. Elle nous est devenue sympathique! ■

Depuis Genève, prenez le train en direction de Zurich. A Zurich, changez pour le train vers Schaffhausen et prenez le train pour Diessenhofen. Durée du trajet: 3 heures et 50 minutes.

Musée local *Kunst + Wissen*, ouvert du vendredi au dimanche de 14h à 17h. Pour visiter l'ancien atelier de Carl Roesch, consultez le site web: <https://www.carl-roesch.ch/atelier-diessenhofen>. Visites guidées de l'église St. Katherinental sur rendez-vous uniquement: <https://denkmalpflege.tg.ch/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/st-katharinental.html/1257>



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# The pursuit of happiness

## ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

*Felix sua fata contentus* (Horatius) – happy are those who come to terms with their lot and make the best of it. But what do we understand under “happiness”? Early humans grappled with this crucial existential question. Philosophers and poets have pondered over it for centuries. There is no consensus, but surely the pursuit of happiness is not coterminous with the pursuit of pleasure, the pursuit of money or the pursuit of fame. *Sic transit gloria mundi* – fame is but ephemeral. Happiness is a state of mind, a mode of being, the capacity to love and be loved, the warmth and security of family life, the trust of friends – a gift of God.

The Bhutanese have a tradition of pursuing happiness in their own way, and they invented the concept of gross national happiness

– in contrast to our materialistic gross national product<sup>1</sup>. The United Nations liked the idea and in 2013 the General Assembly declared the 20th of March of every year to be international day of happiness<sup>2</sup>. The United Nations Society of Writers celebrates this happy day year after year, and in pre-Covid days we used to recite poetry at the UN library, the better pieces being published in our literary journal *Ex Tempore*.<sup>3</sup>

For many happiness means working for peace and justice. For others it means achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals<sup>4</sup>. Of course, one can be happy without any reason at all. We can and should be grateful to be alive and to have the opportunity to share with others, be constructive, just be – not “do”, but live. One can be happy even though one may be poor and lack

easy access to mundane pleasures, gadgets, the internet or paradise vacations. Happiness is a sense of gratefulness for being alive – a consciousness of our existence, that we are part of the universe, which in itself is a miracle in its pantheistic splendour. Happiness is a sense of the continuum of the generations, the realization that our ancestors left us a rich heritage and that it is our responsibility to preserve and improve our planet and to educate our children to appreciate the good things of life.

The recipe of hedonism is not a valid path to happiness. Whether the sought-after pleasure be luxury, gourmandise, lust, sex, alcohol, drugs, sports, gaming, beautiful art, sculpture, Meissen porcelain, Bohemian crystal, van Gogh paintings or even music and dance – we can experience happiness only if we indulge in



© Alfredo Zayas

moderation, for there can be no sustainable joy if we know that we can have everything anytime we want it – bottom line: we become blasé and a feeling of *taedium vitae* sets in.

Precisely the fun part of living is in its contrasts, the *yin and yang*, the joy of looking forward to future pleasures, accepting the hiatus between two pleasures, welcoming the seasons, letting ourselves be surprised.

Epicurus (BC 341–270) realized this and established his own school of philosophy, the “Garden”. In the Roman Republic *Lucretius* (BC 99–55) championed moderation, showing compassion for nature and society, an optimistic consciousness of man’s place in the order of things. Cicero (BC 106–43) admired *Lucretius’ De rerum natura* (BC 60), as did *Ovidius* (BC

43–AD 18) in his *Metamorphoses* (AD 8), where we encounter not only *Ovid’s* passion for nature but also the idea of empathy and the concept of the “white lie” (*pia mendacia, or pia fraus*). *Seneca* (BC 4–65 AD), despite being more of a Stoic, quotes *Epicurus* favourably in his *Letters to Lucilius* (AD 64) and achieves a reasonable synthesis of Stoicism and Epicureanism.

One wonders why the modern world seems to be so full of narcissistic hedonists – sometimes called libertines or moral nihilists, from *Casanova* to *Don Juan*, *Marquis de Sade*, *Rimbaud*, *Ernest Hemingway*, *Picasso*, or even *Bill Clinton*.

The ego is a good thing. But we must educate our ego, nurture it, taming our passions and embracing those classical maxims of the Delphian oracle – know

yourself, nothing in excess. γνῶθι σεαυτόν, μηδὲν ἄγαν.

As a retired UN staffer, I have lived a relatively long life, blessed with family and friends, conscious that happiness can be shared. My recipe for equanimity and longevity: There is no need to “give in” to our caprices or temptations, bearing in mind that occasional abstinence cleans our bodies and minds of many toxins. Thus we can rediscover the joys of piety – and not only during Lent. Remember, as the Stoic Roman Emperor *Marcus Aurelius* (AD 121–180) observed “very little is needed to make a happy life.” Hence, let us count our blessings rather than our afflictions. Happiness is not fame but consciousness of the good that surrounds us. Indeed, *bene vixit, qui bene latuit* (*Ovidius*). ■

- 1 <https://happinessday.org/>, <https://www.dayofhappiness.net/>
- 2 <https://www.un.org/en/observances/happiness-day>
- 3 [www.extempore.ch](http://www.extempore.ch)
- 4 <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



Construit autour de son château du Xe siècle, le pittoresque village médiéval de Roquebrune domine le Cap Martin situé 300 m en contrebas

© Claude Maillard

Riviera française 1/2

# Sentier « Le Corbusier »

Il y a maintes façons de rejoindre la Principauté de Monaco : par les airs en hélicoptère, par la mer en yacht, par la route en voiture de luxe avec ou sans chauffeur, par exemple ; mais il existe une façon beaucoup plus bucolique : à pied par le sentier « Le Corbusier » depuis Roquebrune-Cap-Martin.



© Claude Maillard

Charles-Édouard Jeanneret dit Le Corbusier, né en Suisse en 1887, était un artiste complet : architecte, urbaniste, peintre, écrivain ou encore designer

## CLAUDE MAILLARD

Située sur la « Riviera française » qui s'étend de Menton à Monaco, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin est l'une des stations les plus agréables de la Côte d'Azur. Son étendue et son relief lui confèrent une situation climatique privilégiée. Protégé des vents du nord par le mont Agel culminant à 1145 mètres, et baigné par les flots de la Méditerranée, son territoire abrite une flore d'une richesse inouïe. Cette situation géographique conditionne le climat tempéré caractérisé par la clarté du ciel et une lumière si chère aux artistes.

La nature a été particulièrement généreuse avec Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. Dans cet écrin suspendu entre ciel et mer, les hommes ne

s'y sont pas trompés, et y ont très vite établi leur habitat. En témoigne la découverte de l'un des plus anciens sites préhistoriques d'Europe, riche d'une histoire d'un million d'années. De l'Homo erectus jusqu'aux architectes emblématiques du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, la ville regorge de trésors témoins d'une occupation humaine ininterrompue. Mais le plus bel héritage est sans doute l'attachement de nos contemporains pour cette terre, et le désir perpétuel de vouloir préserver et enrichir ce patrimoine pour faire de Roquebrune-Cap-Martin un endroit où il fait toujours bon vivre.

## Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, exotisme et authenticité

Du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle à 1792, Roquebrune



Édifié sur le Rocher, le Palais princier est la résidence officielle du Prince de Monaco depuis 1297

© Claude Mallard

formera avec Monaco et Menton un Etat qui, au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle prendra le nom de Principauté de Monaco. L'arrivée des troupes françaises à Nice en 1792 entraîne le rattachement de la Principauté au nouveau département français des Alpes Maritimes. Revenue en 1814 à son légitime souverain le Prince de Monaco, Roquebrune coule des jours paisibles jusqu'en 1848, où une crise économique entraîne une révolution et la sécession de Roquebrune et Menton avec la Principauté de Monaco. Napoléon III règle leur annexion définitive à la France par le traité du 2 février 1861 passé avec le prince Charles III de Monaco.

La nouvelle commune française, qui s'étend du torrent de Saint-Roman à celui de Gorbio, passe rapidement d'une économie rurale à une économie basée sur le tourisme. Après la crise des années 1930, et avec les premiers congés payés, comme pour les riches Anglais et Russes qui fuient la rigueur de leurs hivers pour jouir de la douceur du climat et de la beauté des rivages, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin accueille de nombreuses familles qui succombent aux plaisirs des

vacances à la plage. Ses structures d'accueil ne cessent d'être renouvelées afin de rendre le séjour des estivants et touristes toujours plus agréable.

Les sentiers de randonnée permettent d'accéder aux plus hauts lieux de l'histoire de Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. Certaines richesses ne sont d'ailleurs accessibles qu'à pied, et même si tous ces éléments du patrimoine ne sont pas ouverts au public, les chemins de randonnée permettent de s'en approcher au plus près et de mieux comprendre leur histoire.

#### L'expression d'un esprit novateur

Au début des années 1920 apparaît la modernité méditerranéenne, et le Cap Martin est le lieu de l'expérimentation la plus accomplie d'une nouvelle architecture. La célèbre designer irlandaise Eileen Gray (1878 - 1976) réalise en bordure du littoral, le long du chemin des douaniers, la maison E-1027 et l'ensemble de son ingénieux mobilier spécifique. En 1952, l'architecte et urbaniste suisse Le Corbusier, qui admire et qui a séjourné dans la maison, construit tout proche, sur un coin de rivage escarpé,

son fameux cabanon, autre rare exemple de cette modernité architecturale (inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO en 2016). Il viendra chaque saison s'y ressourcer et imaginer les plans de capitales du bout du monde. Il fait également des recherches sur le logement de vacances à Roquebrune, et dessine sa propre tombe pour le cimetière du village où il repose aujourd'hui.

Depuis le pittoresque village médiéval haut perché de Roquebrune érigé autour de son château construit en 970, le panorama qui offre une vue remarquable allant des côtes italiennes à Monaco est exceptionnel. 300 mètres en contrebas, s'étend le Cap Martin bordé par le chemin des douaniers (rebaptisé sentier «Le Corbusier») qui, depuis la plage de Carnolès, mène jusqu'au Rocher de Monaco. Grâce à un microclimat particulièrement bénéfique à la croissance de la végétation, cette balade au bord de mer longue d'une dizaine de kilomètres permet d'évoluer, non seulement parmi les plantes traditionnelles de la Provence, mais aussi au milieu de diverses espèces tropicales importées

sur la côte il y a quelques siècles. Sublimée par la luxuriance de tous ces végétaux qui procurent un cachet d'exotisme si particulier à cette partie de la «Riviera», l'approche de la Principauté de Monaco n'en est que plus magnifique.

#### Monaco, luxe et démesure

Monaco-Ville, appelée aussi «Le Rocher», est l'un des 11 quartiers de la Principauté de Monaco. C'est la partie la plus ancienne de la Cité-État qui regroupe la plupart des institutions politiques du pays, dont le Palais princier, la résidence officielle du Prince de Monaco depuis 1297. On y trouve aussi le célèbre Musée océanographique et la cathédrale de style romano-byzantin achevée en 1903. Une promenade dans la vieille ville s'impose aux visiteurs. Avec ses anciennes demeures «Renaissance» parfaitement entretenues et ses dédales de vieilles ruelles étroites, l'atmosphère y est apaisante. Il en est tout autre avec celle plus «agressive» des quartiers plus modernes qui résonne au vrombissement des voitures de sport aux moteurs survitaminés et à la sonorité moins mélodieuse des engins de chantiers exploités pour encore



© Claude Mallard

Le village de Roquebrune offre une alternance de ruelles étroites, de passages sous voûtes et de places ensoleillées aux panoramas époustouflants



© Claude Mallard

Au cœur de Monaco, au pied des gratte-ciel, le Jardin japonais est un petit coin de verdure apaisant avec ses arbustes, terrasses, bassins et cascades

augmenter le nombre d'habitants par km<sup>2</sup> du pays, déjà le plus élevé au monde (120 fois celui de la Suisse). Après le Vatican, Monaco est le deuxième plus petit État indépendant au monde. Son territoire s'étend sur une bande de terre de 4100 m le long de la Méditerranée et sa largeur varie de 1050 à 350 m. Sa population avoisinant les 40 000 habitants ne faisant qu'augmenter, il faut bien trouver des solutions pour loger tout le monde; alors on construit dans les airs et sur la mer.

De nombreuses tours vertigineuses envahissent le ciel, dont celle de l'Odéon qui culmine à 170 m au-dessus du sol. Plusieurs sont en construction et d'autres à l'étude, devraient largement dépasser les 200 m de hauteur. Un chantier titanesque commencé en 2018 va permettre à Monaco de gagner 6 hectares sur la mer: le nouveau quartier de Mareterra en cours de réalisation, conçu comme une prolongation du littoral actuel du Grimaldi Forum jusqu'au tunnel du Grand Prix de Formule 1, va transformer la Principauté. SAS Le Prince

Albert II de Monaco a voulu que ce nouvel espace incarne l'excellence et la convivialité qui font la fierté de la Principauté de Monaco.

Roquebrune-Cap-Martin et Monaco, deux mondes si proches mais pourtant bien différents que seul le féérique sentier «Le Corbusier» permet de rejoindre à pied dans un cadre enchanteur, bercé par le bruit apaisant des vagues venant s'échouer sur les rochers: une aventure à la portée de tous, à vivre absolument. ■

Office de Tourisme de Roquebrune-Cap-Martin  
Tél. +33 (0)4 93 35 62 87  
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