## newSpecial

Learning as the Key to Global Health

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF TRAINING HEALTH AND CARE WORKERS

MAY 2025 - N°842

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## KNOWLEDGE AS THE KEY TO GLOBAL HEALTH

It is our tradition to focus on health and global health issues in our May editions. We have done this for many years, primarily to reach out to the delegations that gather in Geneva annually for the World Health Assembly each May.

However, WHO's impact extends far beyond Geneva. In this issue, we highlight the WHO Academy in Lyon, inaugurated late last year. With a critical shortage of health and care workers projected to reach 10 million by 2030, the Academy aims to address this gap by offering cutting-edge training programs both in-person and online.

Did you know that WHO has a Poetry Garden? This informal gathering of colleagues meets weekly to celebrate the unique power of poetry in exchanging ideas and sharing experiences. In addition to the story about the Garden, we have included several poems for you to enjoy.

And now, let's talk about coffee! An article on this beloved beverage explores how it drives the economies of many countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, remaining a crucial generator of income.

As always, there is much more to discover. Enjoy this issue!  $\slash\hspace{-0.4cm}/\hspace{-0.4cm}/\hspace{-0.4cm}$ 

#### LE SAVOIR COMME CLÉ DE LA SANTÉ MONDIALE

Il est de tradition pour nous de nous concentrer sur les questions de santé et de santé mondiale dans nos éditions de mai. Nous le faisons depuis de nombreuses années, principalement pour atteindre les délégations qui se réunissent chaque année à Genève pour l'Assemblée mondiale de la santé en mai.

Cependant, l'impact de l'OMS va bien au-delà de Genève. Dans ce numéro, nous mettons en lumière l'Académie de l'OMS à Lyon, inaugurée à la fin de l'année dernière. Avec une pénurie critique de travailleurs de la santé et des soins, qui devrait atteindre 10 millions d'ici 2030, l'Académie vise à combler cette lacune en offrant des programmes de formation de pointe, à la fois en présentiel et en ligne.

Saviez-vous que l'OMS a un Jardin de la Poésie? Ce rassemblement informel de collègues se réunit chaque semaine pour célébrer le pouvoir unique de la poésie dans l'échange d'idées et le partage d'expériences. En plus de l'article sur le Jardin, nous avons inclus plusieurs poèmes pour votre plaisir.

Et maintenant, parlons de café! Un article sur cette boisson bien-aimée explore comment elle stimule les économies de nombreux pays d'Amérique latine, d'Afrique et d'Asie, restant un générateur de revenus crucial.

Comme toujours, il y a beaucoup plus à découvrir. Profitez de ce numéro! //

NEWSPECIAL 05-2025



## Hercule

#### RYTHME VOS JOURNÉES

Des soins par la mycothérapie sous forme liquide. Formulation exclusive à base de champignons adaptogènes. Produit 100% naturel, élaboré en Suisse.

## PHOTO COVER WHO

## May 2025

## N°842

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## A "game-changer"

#### IS NOW OPEN



The official opening of the WHO Academy campus in Lyon, France and the launch of the WHO Academy online learning platform - https://whoacademy.org/ - in December 2024 marked a significant milestone in global public health learning, training and capacity building. Health systems are facing ever growing challenges. Noncommunicable diseases kill 41 million people every year, representing 74% of all deaths and the vast majority of premature mortality worldwide. The pace of climate change and environmental degradation has accelerated, and there is an increasing number of global crises and a danger of future pandemics.

Meeting these challenges depends on a well-prepared, highly skilled global health and care workforce, who are facing two main challenges. The rapid pace of new standards and innovations is outpacing health systems' ability to keep up – it can sometimes take up to 10 years for resource-constrained health systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to adapt to medical innovations. And secondly, WHO estimates that there will be a shortfall of at least 10 million health workers by 2030, of which over 50% will be in Africa.

"To make faster progress, health systems and health and care workers need to make better use of evidence-based solutions," explains WHO Academy Executive Director Dr David Atchoarena. "Health and care workers also need better access to learning throughout their careers to adapt to evolving healthcare practices and to continually acquire the new skills needed to deliver programmes and services for essential public health functions. These needs are greatest in LMICs, and the Academy's priority is to reach learners in these countries."

## DELIVERING ON THE WHO TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

In development since 2019, the Academy has continually evolved in both ambition and scope and has had to adapt its approach in response to new challenges, most significantly the COV-ID-19 pandemic and the disruptions to global health, and the global health workforce, that it set in motion.

A central component of the WHO Transformation Agenda, the WHO Academy was initiated by WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to enhance the Organization's effectiveness in addressing the training needs of its Member States. While capacity building has always been at the core of the WHO mission, the Academy supports countries to translate WHO normative standards and guidelines into the best health practices to improve global health.

"WHO is known for producing world-class technical products - guidelines, norms, and standards - but translating these into real-world action has been hindered by a lack of institutionalized training. Often, our technical products sit unused on shelves or unread in inboxes. The WHO Academy will be game-changing, a first-of-its-kind global health learning centre that will equip health and care workers, policy-makers, and our own global workforce with the competencies and skills they need to transform health systems and deliver health for all," explained Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at the opening ceremony of the WHO Academy in December 2024.

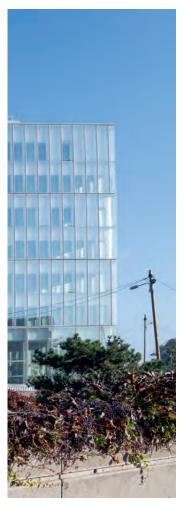
While the WHO Academy will not provide initial education for doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists or other professional disciplines, it will offer lifelong learning opportunities to help health and care workers stay up to date with the latest developments in their area. There are currently no widely accepted standards for high-quality lifelong courses or programmes for the health workforce, but the WHO Academy promotes the application of quality assurance standards in the development, implementation and evaluation of the learning materials that it develops.

"Our strategy is centred on a competency-based education approach, which underpins every aspect of our process, including course design, delivery modes, teaching tools, learning activities, assessment and recognition of learning achievement, the evaluation of learning impact, and the transfer to practice," notes Dr Atchoarena.









The Academy is the first WHO global training hub of quality assured, technology-enhanced learning solutions open to all 194 Member States.

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Over 600 participants attended the WHO Academy inauguration in Lyon and over 49000 viewed

the livestream online.

The Academy is built on the premise that when learner-oriented training takes place, improvements and change are possible. In a study of over 35 000 patients in 17 first-level hospitals in Nepal, Uganda and Zambia there was a 34-50% in-patient mortality reduction in emergency units over a 6-9-month period following the implementation of the WHO Academy Basic Emergency Care course that was developed in collaboration with the WHO Integrated Health Services department.

"To ensure equity, a strong localization team within the WHO Academy works with WHO technical units to develop courses tailored to target audiences in terms of course content relevance, language and culture, with a particular focus on LMICs," says Dr Atchoarena.

#### A PARTNERSHIP-BASED APPROACH

The Academy has three primary course delivery channels - online, in-person learning and blended learning - to ensure inequalities in access do not get in the way of continuous learn-

ing for all. All courses on the Academy's online learning platform are free for users.

While the Academy has developed a comprehensive portfolio of programmes across most health topics, to ensure Member State priorities are addressed, there is an evolving scope of learning content. Hence three flagship programmes have been launched: Biomanufacturing, Healthy Cities and One Health.

"The mission of the WHO Academy is to build a lifelong learning ecosystem that enables health and care workers, policy-makers and WHO staff to develop their capabilities. We cannot do this alone, and we know that partners and actors within and beyond the health sector are critical to achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goal targets," emphasizes Dr Atchoarena.

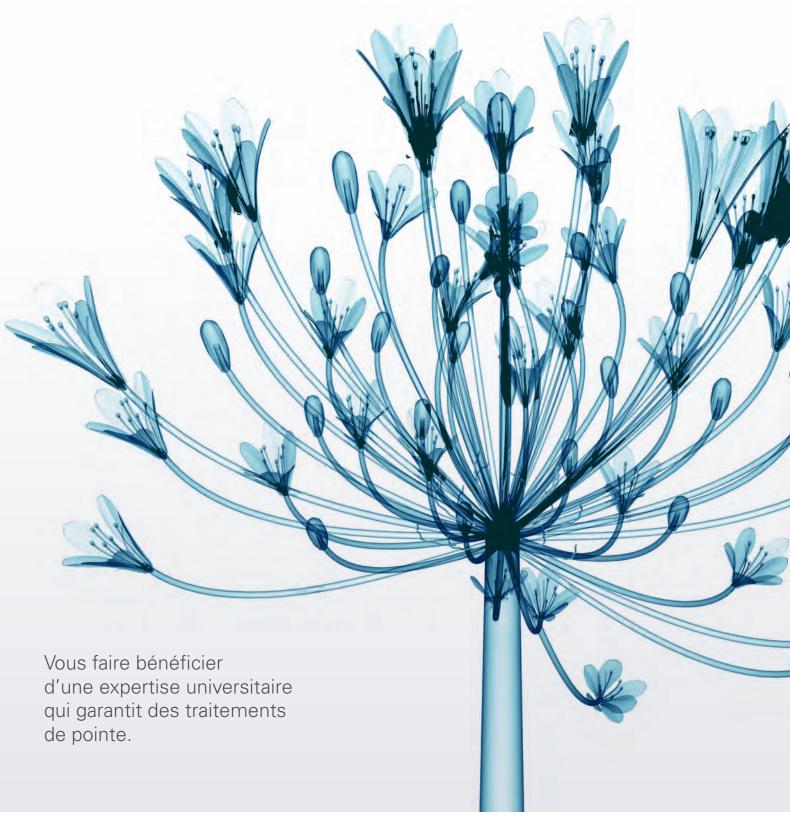
Globally, the Academy works with WHO Member States, academic and research institutions, international organizations, the UN system, and the private sector. Universities, including over 800 WHO collaborating centres, can offer high-quality content for the Academy's courses or curricula. The learning platform welcomes courses that align with the WHO Academy's priorities and standards. Furthermore, universities and professional associations can support and enhance the WHO Academy's credentialing of learning programmes.

The new state-of-the-art WHO Academy campus in Lyon also offers new learning and training hosting opportunities for the international community in Geneva. Only two hours away by train or car, the campus spans 11,000 square meters and includes: 22 training rooms, two distance-learning rooms, a world-class simulation centre, an emergency operations centre, a TV recording studio, a modern auditorium and a library.

"In these challenging times for the international development community we have to be smarter and more efficient in our approaches to regional and country-level support," says Dr Atchoarena. "Our campus facilities use the latest innovations in learning and training to ensure in-person or distance learning is learner-centred and engaging. I would encourage all international organizations in Geneva to visit our campus and see how we can partner together for better global learning." //

To find out more about partnering with the WHO Academy please visit - https://www.who.int/about/who-academy/partnerships or email academymedia@who.int.

# L'élégance de prendre soin du vivant



## Learning 4 Impact

#### STRENGTHENING FRONTLINE AND COMMUNITY-FOCUSED LEARNING FOR HEALTH EMERGENCIES



The WHO Health Emergencies Programme, with the support of the WHO Academy, recently hosted Learning 4 Impact 2025, a series of virtual workshops that aims to catalyze "build back better" holistic learning programmes to address post-pandemic challenges.

The world is not on track to achieve its health-related Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and targets by 2030 – progress is at half the required rate of change. The increasing number of global crises and the danger of future pandemics underscore the urgent need for health systems to strengthen both technical capacity and community engagement.

Addressing critical skills gaps among health and care workers is crucial to meeting these emergency needs in the future, but there is a chronic shortage of public health professionals and health workers around the world. According to WHO estimates, there will be a shortfall of at least 10 million health workers by 2030.

In addition, the International Health Regulations (IHR) are undergoing several amendments in response to the lessons learned during the GOVID-19 pandemic. Member States agreed to a package of amendments to the IHR in 2024 that should come into force in mid-2025. This will result in a new demand for training from Member States to implement the new and updated IHR core capacities.

The Learning 4 Impact series, which took place over the course of February and March, is focused on the training needs of health and care workers, particularly those in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), who serve on the frontline of public health emergency response. The workshops were aimed at IHR focal points and those working in community protection in WHO Member States, as well as WHO technical staff and partners across the globe.

### COMPTENCY-BASED LEARNING FOR BETTER COMMUNITY PROTECTION

Within the context of WHO's Health Emergency Preparedness, Response and Resilience (HEPR) framework, community protection plays a critical role in ensuring that emergency preparedness and response efforts are grounded in the realities of the people they serve. Community-centred approaches are essential for effective leadership in health emergencies – ensuring that interventions are trusted, inclusive and responsive to local needs.

"Community protection is a cornerstone of emergency response. Strengthening the learning ecosystem for those working with and within communities helps us build trust, respond more effectively and ultimately save lives. This is a crucial step towards embedding community protection into the way we prepare for and respond to public health threats," says Dr. Kai von Harbou, Unit Head for Community Protection and Resilience in the WHO Health Emergencies Programme.

Throughout the five virtual workshops, 600 participants worked together to map existing health learning products, provide insights on preliminary learning needs analyses for their countries, and identified and redefined target health learning audiences.

Community health workers (CHWs) were identified as a key learning audience, particularly in LMICs where they often serve as the first point of contact in health emergencies. Their learning needs were systematically mapped and prioritized, recognizing the crucial role CHWs play in community engagement, disease detection, risk communication and basic service delivery during crises.

"Community health workers often operate with limited resources, unclear roles in emergency protocols and without adequate training. By investing in structured, competency-based learning the Community Protection and Resilience Unit empowers CHWs to act confidently and effectively in times of crisis – an investment that strengthens both response outcomes and long-term community resilience," Dr. von Harbou adds.

Continuous learning is vital for health and care workers like Data Manager Flavia, who is training staff at Railways Health Clinic





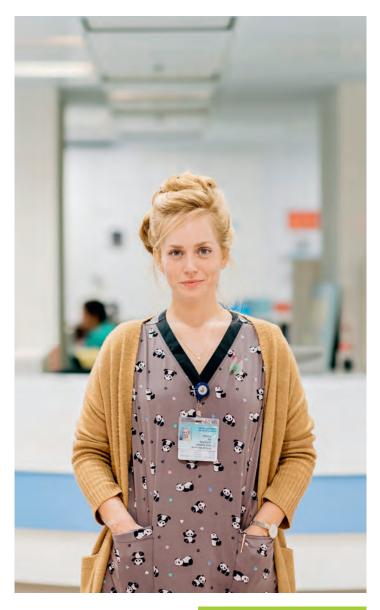
### LIFELONG LEARNING FOR BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

Together with key experts from the WHO Academy, participants also discussed innovative strategies and modalities that can improve the health learning experience. Following these workshops, both the IHR and community protection focal points plan to conduct more extensive learning needs analyses with their respective target learners and develop curriculum plans in collaboration with WHO.

Feedback from post-webinar evaluation surveys was mainly positive. One of the participants said, "I love the fact that the Organization takes time to get feedback from the Member States on the strategies that are used so as to improve their work. This is really good."

Head of the Learning Design and Production Unit at the WHO Academy Melinda Frost says that to reach the SDG health targets, health systems and health and care workers need to make better use of evidence-based solutions and focus on competency-based learning.

"Learning needs to be continuous. Healthcare practices are consistently evolving, and we need to ensure that our health and care professionals continually acquire the new skills needed to deliver programmes and services for essential public health functions. Our aim is to reach learners in LMICs, where the need is greatest. This is the Academy's priority - to reach learners in these countries, driving equity in access to learning for health and care workers globally." //



# WHO Academy strengthens Cameroon's emergency preparedness

THE WHO ACADEMY MASS CASUALTY MANAGEMENT COURSE IS HELPING TO ENHANCE THE CAPABILITIES OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.



On Monday 24 January 2022, Vanessa Tchouanzi, a high school teacher, attended the Cameroon-Gomoros football match for the Africa Cup of Nations with her friend Véronique at the Olembe stadium in Yaounde. She still vividly recalls the tragic stampede that occurred. Gaught in the crowd surge, Vanessa and Veronique lost consciousness but Vanessa was pulled away by a stranger whereas Veronique stayed in the crowd and was later taken to a nearby hospital where she died shortly afterward.

The tragedy resulted in eight deaths and approximately 50 injuries, which quickly overwhelmed nearby hospitals. The healthcare facilities could have better managed this surge in patients if they had an effective mass casualty management (MCM) plan and their staff had the necessary skills.

In a proactive effort to strengthen preparedness of management of mass casualty emergencies, 10 healthcare professionals from Cameroon participated in a WHO Academy training course on mass casualty management in Lyon, France in May 2024. "The events at the stadium served as a stark reminder of the importance of preparedness for mass casualty incidents," remarked Dr. Tania Bissouma-Ledjou, Health Planning Advisor in charge of Health System Strengthening at the WHO Country Office in Cameroon.

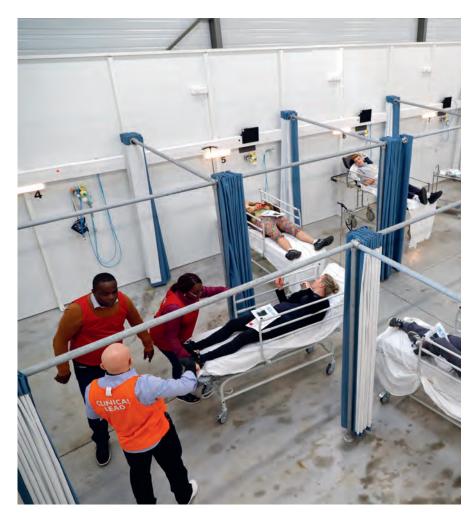
#### **SHARING GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES**

Cameroon had already organized capacity building sessions on sudden influx of victims through delivering simulation-based training in many regions of the country. Yet this was the first time that a Cameroonian team comprising health professionals from different structures (Emergency Center of Yaounde, Yaoundé Central Hospital, Soa District Hospital and WHO) were able to share their experience and learn with a foreign hospital (Nice University Teaching Hospital). Delivered by the WHO Academy, the training benefited from the participation of the WHO Cameroon country office.

Mass casualty situations pose a significant challenge to healthcare systems, as they overwhelm their capacity to handle a sudden influx of patients. Emergency departments are often the first point of contact for victims, placing immense pressure on healthcare personnel. Recognizing this critical role, the WHO Academy developed a mass casualty management course for healthcare professionals working in emergency departments. "This training has equipped us with the skills to manage these kinds of situations more effectively," summarized Dr. Tania Bissouma-Ledjou.

The training, developed in collaboration with the WHO Integrated Health Services department, is grounded in the fundamental principles of mass casualty management. It places a strong emphasis on roles within the response team, zone management (triage, green zone, red zone), and the utilization of documents such as checklists or mass casualty management plans. Participants engaged in interactive sessions, reviewing existing protocols and developing plans for their respective hospitals. They also participated in tabletop exercises.

Simulation-based learning enhances healthcare





## IMMERSIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The course highlight was the simulation exercise held at the Departmental Fire and Rescue Service in Saint-Priest, France. Participants were placed in a hospital setting with a simulated influx of over 50 casualties within a 45-minute timeframe. Assuming their assigned roles, they conducted triage, activated treatment zones, and coordinated care, mirroring the reality of such an incident.

"The hands-on exercises and simulations provided a realistic experience that will enhance our ability to respond effectively to mass casualty incidents," added Dr. David Mekolo. "The simulation allowed us to apply what we learned in a controlled environment, identifying areas for improvement and building confidence in our response capabilities as there is an urgent need to revise the existing plan and locating resources for the action phase," concluded Dr. Louis Joss Bitang, Director of the Yaoundé Emergency Center.

Beyond the technical expertise gained, the course facilitated knowledge sharing between the Cameroonian participants coming from three different hospitals in Yaoundé, and healthcare professionals from the Nice University Teaching hospital in France. This intercultural exchange fostered the sharing of best practices to better understand the approaches of different healthcare systems.

The WHO Academy's training empowers health-care professionals to prepare for mass casualty management. "We thank the WHO Academy for its commitment to strengthening response capabilities for mass casualty incidents," concluded Dr. Louis Joss Bitang. By equipping participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle such incidents, the training of these professionals will permit them to save lives and to strengthen the resilience of healthcare systems in Cameroon and beyond. //

## Leaders wanted

## THE STORY OF UKRAINE'S PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



#### LEARN +

WHO European Public Health Leadership Gourse in Ukraine



WHO-ASPHER Competency Framework for the Public Health Workforce in the European Region



Empowering
Public Health
Leaders
of Tomorrow:
Three New
European
Public Health
Leadership
Courses in
Kazakhstan,
Portugal,
and Ukraine



#### THE URGENT NEED

COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing war have accelerated the need for a significant transformation of Ukraine's public health system. Since 2022, the country has adopted the Law "On the Public Health System", establishing a network of 25 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCs) under the Ministry of Health. These CDCs are the first-ever regional health institutions with a mandate that has shifted from a medicalized approach to a broader vision of essential public health functions, such as disease prevention and health security. Building the capacity of these newly established institutions quickly became a priority. But strong institutions require strong leadership, especially during disruptive times. Who would step forward to lead change in this evolving public health landscape?

#### **SEARCHING FOR LEADERS**

A new generation of leaders must emerge – committed, highly professional health advocates capable of driving innovation, strategically designing and implementing health programs and policies at the community, regional, and national levels. Recognizing this critical need, the Ministry of Health, the Ukrainian Public Health Center, and the WHO Country Office in Ukraine launched Public Health Leadership Program in 2024. This joint initiative was aimed at building a community of competent public health enthusiasts who could learn from each other, exchange ideas, and share a vision for shaping Ukraine's public health system.

Unlike traditional leadership programs focusing on those already in formal positions, this program targeted potential leaders both within and beyond the system. Candidates progressed through three competitive rounds:

- Application phase: Evaluating vision, motivation, and professional background (272 applicants)
- 2. Professional questionnaire: Measuring public health technical competencies (140 candidates)
- 3. Leadership in action: Assessing leadership competencies through a group case study on a complex public health challenge (75 finalists)

The backbone of the selection was the WHO-AS-PHER Competency Framework for the public health workforce in the European Region. All stages were jointly assessed by Ministry of Health, Public Health Center, and WHO to ensure triangulation during the process. Ultimately, 75 outstanding applicants (54 women and 21 men from 20 out of 25 regions in Ukraine) were chosen, representing various areas such as regional CDCs, academia, primary and secondary healthcare, and international and non-profit organizations.

#### **MEET THE NEED**

Based on the assessment results, each participant received a personalized report with recommendations for professional growth. Competency development needs of participants were addressed during the WHO European Public Health Leadership Course in Ukraine, which took place in Kyiv in June 2024. This course was part of a tailor-made series of public health leadership courses in the European Region, organized by WHO/Europe through its Office on Quality of Care and Patient Safety in Athens, Greece, since 2022. Despite the dangers of war, in collaboration with the WHO Country Office in Ukraine the leadership course was brought to Ukraine for the first time.

The course involved both immersion in the theoretical aspects of public health fundamentals and the practical development of leadership skills through solving problem-based cases related to One Health approach, health promotion, preparedness and response to health threats. These topics were selected as the most relevant for competency development needs of Program's participants. Additionally, through problem-based learning, panel discussions, and expert-led sessions, participants enhanced their competencies in:

- Leading and self-leading in disruptive times
- Emotional intelligence and resilience in leadership
- Team building and community engagement
- Evidence-informed public health policy





Gender-responsive leadership training was another focus of the Program, equipping participants with tools to implement relevant policies in public health and workplace settings.

"I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to join the Program, for the knowledge and motivation gained, for new friends, and for the inspiring atmosphere. I am absolutely sure that the exchange of experience, contacts and opinions during the program united all participants in understanding the importance of public health issues in Ukraine" shared participant of the Program, Liudmyla Maliyar from the Volyn Regional Centre of Disease Control and Prevention

Besides the educational activities, as the cohort included representatives from different sectors and regions, one of the core values embraced within the Program was building a community of public health changemakers, providing a platform to freely exchange ideas, seek support, and learn from each other. General directors from regional CDCs became equal members of the Program alongside regular employees who demonstrated leadership potential during the selection process. Academics can engage directly with policymakers, bridging the gap between research and practice. Ones from NGOs are able to connect with colleagues working in governmental institutions, fostering civil society-government collaboration. And, finally, participants

from regional-level institutions met those representing the national level.

#### **REAL-WORLD IMPACT**

The Program's success is reflected in the actions of its community. A strong community of practice has emerged, with regular exchange sessions enabling participants to share experiences, seek for advice, and collaborate within their projects. In the field of education, faculty members from Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Uzhhorod National University, and Dnipro Medical University have already integrated the Program's insights into their teaching, covering topics such as Health in All Policies, One Health, Non-Communicable Disease Innovations, and Essential Public Health Functions. Additionally, WHO and the Public Health Center frequently engage participants in technical working groups and policy discussions, allowing them to contribute to decision-making and strengthen Ukraine's public health system.

#### **LOOKING AHEAD**

As Ukraine advances its public health workforce to meet the demands of an evolving system, WHO remains committed to the Program and to supporting a new generation of leaders ready to take action in pursuit of health – leading change today for a resilient and effective health system in Ukraine for years to come. //

#### **LEARN +**

Public Health Leadership Program in Ukraine: official website (accessible in Ukrainian)



## One World, One Health

## WHO'S FIRST INVESTMENT ROUND: SOLIDARITY FOR HEALTH AND KEEPING THE WORLD SAFE FROM DISEASE



#### **LEARN +**

WHO's Investment Round



All for Health, Health for All: investment case 2025-2028



WHO Investment Round: culminating moment at G20 Summit as leaders pledge



Investment Round Commitments



We are faced with multiple global crises at a time when development spending is being reduced. WHO has been working to put its finances on a more sustainable basis, which has improved its ability to weather the crisis.

With more than 190 Member States, WHO has a unique reach and mandate to serve as the guiding force in global health, convening scientific excellence, national decision-makers and health partners alike. To succeed, WHO must be not only appropriately funded, but also flexible, reliable and efficient. That is why WHO has been on a transformation journey, including to ensure that the Organization is more sustainably financed.

There has been important progress in this work. Increasing assessed contributions (which every member pays) is one side of it. Member States also strongly supported the first WHO Investment Round which was a unique opportunity for countries to come together in support of global health, securing a return on investment of \$35 for every dollar pledged.

Conceived as an inclusive engagement process, the Investment Round sought to mobilize predictable and flexible resources from a broader base of donors for WHO's core work for the period 2025-2028.

#### STRONGER TOGETHER

The Investment Round has attracted new donors and many Member States through global and regional events.

At the G20, hosted by Brazil, in November 2024, WHO reported that 71 donors pledged including 56 Member States, the European Union, and 12 philanthropic and private sector organizations, more than half of them for the first time.

Importantly, seven of the new donors are low-income countries and 21 are middle-income countries, representing a clear signal of political support for WHO in these uncertain times.

"This commitment made by our country, is a strong act for Niger so that the World Health Organization can truly address public health in a global manner, the public health of all our states, of all the Member States of this Organization," said Dr Garba Hakimi, Minister of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs of Niger during the AFRO Investment Round event in August 2024.\*

### A SHOW OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITY FOR HEALTH

"As one of the top contributors of flexible-voluntary funds, Denmark fully supports the ongoing efforts to give WHO the needed muscle to handle new health challenges and improve health systems across the world," said Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.\*

This shift also demonstrates broad-based recognition of the need to invest in health and in WHO. So far, 58% of funds pledged were either fully flexible or thematic, compared to 16% over the previous four years, increasing the ability of WHO to use the funds where they are most needed.

#### THE VALUE OF INVESTING IN WHO

WHO's work touches lives everywhere. From disease prevention to emergency response, WHO safeguards global health and well-being.

Investing in WHO is both a financial commitment and a political choice – a commitment to invest in health. Ensuring the health and safety of all citizens is necessary to help build and maintain the wealth of countries.

Expanding the number of donors to WHO allows for a wider range of investment opportunities in health, not just geographically but in relation to innovation and new medical products. The benefits multiply when a variety of actors, sectors, and institutions act together, and countries are empowered to make positive changes in policy and practice.





"The work of the Secretariat is critical to all of us as Ministers of Health. The Secretariat needs to continue to have the best public health experts, be strong in communicating in a world of misinformation, most importantly, standing beside us when we make decisions that are not politically easy," said Dr Teodoro Herbosa, Secretary of Health of the Philippines during one of the investment round events in 2024.\*

#### **SAVING 40 MILLION LIVES**

The Investment Case set out that if WHO is fully funded, 40 million lives would be saved working with Member States and other partners through concrete actions including:

- increasing the number of vaccines delivered to priority countries;
- providing access to health services to more than 150 million people in humanitarian settings in 30 countries;
- supporting 55 countries in educating and employing 3.2 million health workers;
- helping 84 countries reach targets for eliminating malaria, mother-to-child HIV transmission and other diseases;
- strengthening access to timely and reliable health data; and
- prequalifying 400 health products per year.

Source: All for Health, Health for All: investment case 2025-2028 (https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240095403)

#### **CALL TO ACTION**

WHO recognises all donors for their contributions. With great challenges ahead of us, now more than ever, the future of global health needs everyone's investment.

"As I see it, the World Health Organization is more important than ever... I call upon others to join us by pledging, as good as they can, to invest in WHO and help make this historic first WHO Investment Round a success," said Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister of Norway in a video of support of the Investment Round.\*

You can also support the WHO and global health Your support empowers WHO to respond to emergencies, stop the spread of deadly diseases, and bring life-saving care to those who need it most. Together, let's create a healthier, safer future for everyone. Explore WHO's impact and what is needed to keep progressing over the next four years.

Join the One World Movement for Health for all and Donate here through the WHO Foundation. You can make a difference. Your contribution fuels WHO's life-saving work and helps shape a healthier world. //

All videos quoted can be seen on this page: https://www.who.int/about/funding/invest-in-who/investment-round/voices-of-support

#### **LEARN +**

Four years forward: examples of impact in countries



Philanthropic Partner Engagement in the WHO Investment Round



## Three poems on global health

#### I FEAR... ALZHEIMER

I fear falling down, unable to walk, I fear driving a car, killing someone, I fear the lizard falling, crawling on me, I fear crazy rides, my head spinning like a top, I fear lazy days, making me obese, I fear attention so I hide behind, I fear speaking before a mass and fumbling, I fear walking at night, being violated, I fear the touch of a man without consent, I fear not reveling in the ocean and waves, I fear growing up and missing my silly self, I fear leaving my comfort, cozy zone, I fear forgetting to be resilient, I fear forgetting to smile and laugh out loud, I fear the death of my mother, its void, I fear missing the touch of my adoring man, I fear not being a mother, dying barren, I fear cherishing other kids, from afar, I fear living all alone, I fear losing the ability to work, I fear losing the ability to think, I fear forgetting words, how to talk, I fear not being able to read or write, I fear forgetting small act like combing, I fear forgetting to sing and giggle, I fear forgetting what belongs to me, I fear not recognizing my dear ones, I fear not having anyone to wipe my tears, I fear not remembering my name, my identity. I fear loneliness killing my joy, I fear no cure for my puzzled mind, I fear forgetting everything, I fear forgetting who I am.

#### **GLOBAL HEALTH**

A particular disease is often due to a multitude of factors, Hence interventions are available to understanding the risks

As Mycobacterium tuberculosis is the direct cause of tuberculosis.

So is the Polio virus responsible for AFP wild or else

Corynebacterium Diphtheriae,

Measles Mumps and Rubella takes its toll And so does the crowded housing and poor nutrition that increase the poll

Presenting multiple paths for preventions
With most risk factors associated
with more than one disease,
One health surfaced to address them all
Targets and practices are spiraling
out of control
WHO assures targeting specific factors

reducing multiple causes of most of these.

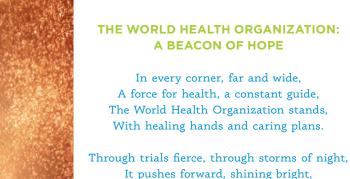
Reducing smoking will result in fewer deaths and less disease from COPD, heart disease, stroke, and cancer Eating better leafy vegies and seeds and nuts would be quantifying impact of lessening risk factors Evidence-based choices can be made always in almost any location and context as the most effective interventions to improve global health

Our Health Your health & Their health!

//

//





Uniting nations, hearts aligned.

Through pandemics' darkest hour,
It stands as strong as mighty towers,

With knowledge vast and wisdom deep, It helps the world to heal and keep.

A voice for health, for all mankind,

From fighting disease with all its might,
To ensuring that we see the light,
WHO, with strength and grace,
Fights for health in every place.

In moments of despair and fear, It brings solutions, drawing near, To lift the sick, to help the weak, In every language, it will speak.

Its perseverance, bold and true, In every challenge, it breaks through, th science, care, and hearts that burn, The world will thrive, and all will learn.

So here's to WHO, its noble quest,
To make the world its very best.
Through every struggle, it will rise,
A beacon shining in the skies.

//







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## **WHO GISRS**

## COST-EFFECTIVE SURVEILLANCE SAFEGUARDING GLOBAL HEALTH



#### **LEARN +**

Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System



WHO Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework



Updated guidance on the implementation of an integrated surveillance system for influenza and other respiratory viruses



How does WHO conduct respiratory disease surveillance? How big is the network? Why does it make sense to integrate the surveillance of influenza and other respiratory viruses? Does WHO provide support to laboratories? How does WHO prepare for a pandemic? Does WHO actually have contracts for supplies in the event of a pandemic? How does WHO ensure that all countries are assisted?

Global influenza surveillance has been conducted through the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System or GISRS for over 70 years, since 1952. GISRS is a key WHO initiative, serving as the world's network for monitoring influenza viruses, providing recommendations on seasonal vaccine compositions in both the northern and southern hemispheres, strengthening laboratory surveillance, and acting as a global alert mechanism for the emergence of viruses with pandemic potential. Starting with only 25 countries it now encompasses a network of 160 laboratories in 130 countries. It operates throughout the year.

"GISRS provides a unique platform for flu and other respiratory viruses." Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO

This massive network is unique and the remarkable capacities that have been developed over the decades have already been leveraged for other viruses such as the surveillance of the COV-ID-19 virus, SARS-CoV-2 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). When COVID-19 hit, it was national influenza laboratories that often also assumed the role of national COVID-19 laboratories. In fact, in 2020 and 2021 the GISRS network conducted 6.7 million tests annually for influenza but 44.2 million tests for SARS-CoV-2.

Even when there is not a pandemic, it makes sense to unify the surveillance of respiratory viruses. Most countries conduct the surveillance of multiple respiratory viruses in the same laboratory (there are not separate laboratories for different respiratory viruses). These laboratories are often part of the GISRS network. It therefore makes it a very efficient way of conducting the surveillance of multiple respiratory viruses through one network.

And GISRS is not just a surveillance network. It strengthens laboratory capacity through providing training on-site, through publishing guidance, through developing connections between other laboratories worldwide. It enables the rapid detection and alert of potential epidemic and pandemic viruses. Moreover, in tandem with the WHO Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (or PIP Framework), WHO can respond to pandemics. The PIP Framework works to increase the access of developing countries to vaccines and other pandemic related supplies so that when a pandemic arises, there is a more equitable response. It has, for example, signed agreements with vaccine suppliers for around 10% of future global production of pandemic influenza vaccine, in real time. Using current technologies and best-case scenario production estimates over a 12-month period, this translates to over 700 million vaccine doses.

The expansion of GISRS to monitor and respond to epidemic and pandemic threats posed not only by influenza viruses but by other respiratory viruses presents an approach to monitor and assess co-circulating viruses at the same time.

Such relative assessment is instrumental to countries for prioritization. WHO recently published updated guidance on the implementation of an integrated surveillance system for influenza and other respiratory viruses that includes practical considerations for the integration of SARS-GoV-2 and RSV surveillance into influenza surveillance system. The implementation of the guidance will help countries move towards a broader respiratory disease surveillance strategy for better preparedness and response to future health emergencies.

National level surveillance is very important as it provides an evidence base for regional and global public health actions. Similarly, integrating the surveillance of influenza and other respiratory viruses through an established global network is the cost-effective and natural course and WHO GISRS has been taking up this mission. //



## DR IVANA KNEZEVIC ON BEHALF OF THE WHO POETRY GARDEN

**TEXTE & PHOTOS** 

## Welcome to the WHO Poetry Garden

INVITATION TO JOIN RECENT INITIATIVE CONDUCTED
BY MEDICAL DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO CONVEY
MESSAGES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF WELLBEING, PREVENTION AND
TREATMENT BY USING VERSES AND POETIC IMAGES THAT MAY
HAVE AN EYE OPENING AND HEALING EFFECTS. IT STARTED WITH THE
CELEBRATION OF 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
IN 2023 AND IS NOW OFFERING BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS ON THE WAY
TOWARDS THE BRIGHT FUTURE OF THE WHO AS WELL AS UN.



#### **LEARN +**

Book orders



Celebrating 75 years of WHO



The mission of the World Health Organization (WHO) to save lives, prevent and cure diseases and promote well-being provides an endless source of inspiration for those who have devoted their lives to working towards it. To be a part of WHO, for however long, feels like an honour, and for long-serving staff to spend decades fully committed to the promotion of global health feels like a privilege. For all of us who serve WHO, its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023 provided an opportunity to celebrate its achievements and to make clear our hopes for an even better future.

The WHO Poetry Garden was initiated following a call for ideas on how best to celebrate this significant anniversary year. Since its launch as an informal gathering of interested colleagues, the Poetry Garden has grown to become a weekly event. This small but diverse community of people is united by a shared recognition of the unique power of poetry in exchanging ideas and sharing experiences.

The first-ever collection of poems written by WHO staff from headquarters, regional and country offices has now been published and is available in WHO bookshop on the HQ campus @ CHF 30.00. The book can be ordered online through Book orders (https://www.who.int/publications/book-orders) and the open-access online version is also available at Celebrating 75 years of WHO (https://www.who.int/publications/b/75603).

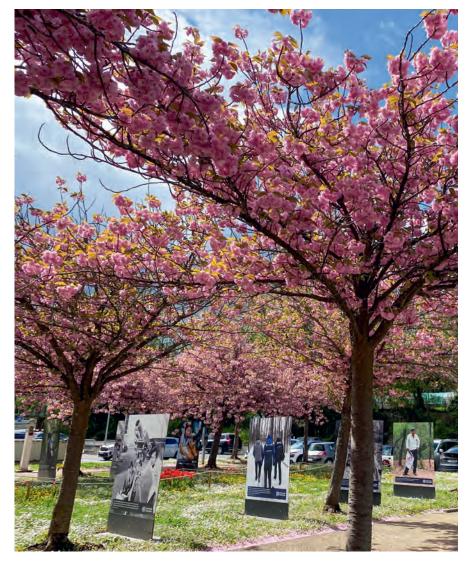
Poetry can sometimes be eye-opening, but reading and writing poems can also sooth and bring comfort and clarity to busy minds willing to

share feelings and thoughts in verse. This poetic tribute to WHO was prepared as an offering from all three levels of WHO and is intended to present a more human face to the Organization. The first part of the book is devoted to celebrating the WHO anniversary and the great achievements made in its first 75 years of work. The second part focuses on the theme of health for all, while the third part touches on that elusive but undeniable link between art and health. During preparation of the book, the opportunity to read the poems, clarify points with the poets and share the thoughts, ideas and experiences behind the poems brought great pleasure and satisfaction. The process of editing and reaching agreement on the final versions of each poem was highly collegiate, with each poet having the final say on what appears here. The book is currently published in English but may be translated into other WHO languages in future.

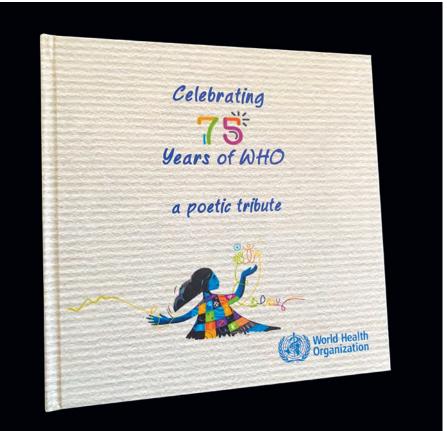
We hope that you will enjoy reading the poems as much as we enjoyed writing them. If you feel inspired by the thoughts and feelings expressed in this book, the WHO Poetry Garden is open all year round and anyone can join. We would be delighted if you wished to join us and to share your thoughts and feelings through the unique language of poetry.

Welcome to the WHO Poetry Garden and to its rhapsody of poetic colour and expressions of hope.

Proud of being WHO, we are sharing our dreams of the healthier, happier and more equitable future that WHO through its numerous activities strives to help bring about. We would be delighted to hear your impressions of the book and your comments and suggestions. //







First ever WHO Poetry book is waiting for you in WHO bookshop in Geneva.

Celebration of the World Health Day marked with the cherry blossom in front of WHO Headquarters.

## WHO Poetry Garden Lighting our Souls

A PERSONAL TOUCH









ght and ections.

When we face the light, the shadow is behind and so are our griefs

When we turn our faces away from the light the shadow is in front, and we tend to confront well

When we angle our faces towards the sides the shadow is angular, and we start debating and escalating but then

The grey areas are obtuse and angular, and I observed we have a disdain for the shadows and the greys till we grow into the shadows, or we come out of our dark zones

Do we get to see the greys? Do we move into shadows?

It has been a way to reflect with likeminded colleagues and newfound friends and the WHO poetry garden has been liberating, powerful - shaping innovations at art, health, awareness, and an intense freedom for me even towards few technical debates.

After the pandemic little was resolved at work areas and focus on work wilted at times for many reasons – still we could be together now: weaving this light tapestry of our "self" taught us to come together, grow livelier and bond earlier with hidden talents – willing to come forth and share with respect dignity clarity and an incredible urge to showcase: that despite odds somehow saw inner self does get to bloom and touch hearts, heal lives and cool off bruised souls

Thus, WHO poetry garden has contributed towards a future in a tiny meaningful way where we address hesitancy & rough patches, a step towards caring and bonding in different ways for a group of people who could come together and make that glorious run!

//



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## "I Feel Dignified When..."

## TOWARDS AN AUTHENTIC CONVERSATION ABOUT RIGHTS



My invitation here is that, while we keep the conversation about rights going, we also have a conversation about dignity, so we can rediscover the fundamental basis for those rights - our shared human experience.

People talk a lot about rights. "I have a right to this property." "I have a right to say what I want." "I have a right to defend myself."

This makes sense. After all, many important documents frame how we talk about rights. The U.S. Bill of Rights. The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. And the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A system of rights that tries to reflect and defend our human experience – as beautiful, flawed, real people, with intellectual, artistic, spiritual and political yearnings – is a good thing. It's a path to the Good Society.

But the *human* part of human rights is sometimes overlooked, even though it's actually the foundation of it all. That is, the things we claim to hold or deserve as individuals, our "rights to", flow from our shared experience. Talking about rights, without talking about our humanness – how we suffer, how we create, how we destroy, how we empathize – can get in the way.

Get in the way of what? Of conversations. Of normal, neighbourly moments talking over the fence, or over a cup of coffee, in backyards, and bars and factories, wherever it is that people get together and talk about the things that matter to them.

I'm not talking about conversations between lawyers or politicians or pundits on TV. I'm talking about us, regular people, hard-working people – farmers, office workers, teachers, students, nurses, police officers, truck drivers – that'll listen when you have a problem, and give you a hand if you need it. But even when we talk to each other, rights sometimes come before humanness.

For example, in your community, how often have you heard exchanges like the following?

And I call them "exchanges", because you really can't call them conversations:

Someone says, "I have a right to [and here you can fill in the blank...] have a gun, fence my property, defend my religion, etc."

To which someone else responds, "I have a right to (and here you can fill in the blank...) express who I am, marry who I want, do what I want with my body, etc."

And then there's stalemate, and then there's argument.

Why? Because once you say you have a right to something, and once you get it into your head that someone else's right is in opposition to yours, you stop talking. And you start jockeying to see who can shout louder or thump the table harder, to convince the other person that your rights are more important than theirs.

And that's the death of conversation.

But imagine we take that same exchange, and we don't use the word "rights". It could go something like this:

Someone says, "I feel safe when (and here you can fill in the blank...) I can protect myself, my family and my community."

To which someone else responds, "I feel safe when (and here you can fill in the blank...) I can protect myself, my family and my community."

Now, something's going on here. First of all, they're actually saying the same thing. They want to feel safe.

Granted, being safe can mean different things to different people, but whatever it is, they feel it, and they want it. Feelings are real and immediate, and very human. So, when we hear someone say, "I feel safe when...", we may not understand their point of view right away, but we hear an echo of our own needs.

Which is very different from, "I have a right to..."

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No one's disputing that we have rights. We need a system of rights, to buy and sell, to seek justice, to be heard, to build. But rights, after all, are an outgrowth of feelings.

Long before people talked of rights, long before any written or spoken rules, there was a sense of what it meant to be a person. There've always been top-dogs and bottom-dogs, so not everyone was considered on the same level. But each person (whether a peasant or a king) knew what it meant, based on their own experience, to feel safe, and free and dignified. (I'll return to dignity in a moment.)

And that's really the basis for human rights. It's a way to write down what we all feel inside - what we feel we deserve, and how we feel we should be treated.

But writing doesn't make a right - it merely describes it. And like any other feeling we describe (love, anger, jealousy) words don't always capture the meaning.

What's worse is when others analyse (maybe even over-analyse) our rights, presenting it as a case of "us vs. them", and that distances ourselves from the original intent.

My invitation here is that, while we keep the conversation about rights going, we also have a conversation about dignity, so we can rediscover the fundamental basis for those rights – our shared human experience. If we do this, then we have a chance to understand how much we really have in common with our neighbours, whom we might see otherwise (and wrongly) as the enemy of ourselves, our families and our communities.

In fact, that was the original intent of the International Declaration of Human Rights. Its first sentence reads, "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

Here we see that the starting point of rights is dignity. And dignity belongs to the entire human family.

Guiding human rights documents talk of dignity even before they talk of rights, or actually as a bridge to rights. The UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment states that the rights of all members of this human family, "derive from the inherent dignity of the human person". Also, the very first principle described in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is "respect for inherent dignity". And the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War prohibits what it calls the "outrages upon personal dignity".

Haven't we all felt outrages upon our dignity? It doesn't have to be in warfare. What about our private lives, when people we trust betray us. When we can't put enough food on the table for our children, no matter how hard we work. When we're told we're not smart enough, or rich enough, to study something that we know, truly in our heart of hearts, we could be successful in. When we're not seen as human.

What this talk of rights does is codify our common desire to cherish the human experience. That's where the power of "I feel dignified when..." comes from.

The tragedy of human existence is that we all suffer separately. The beauty of human existence is that, by acknowledging this suffering, we have the basis for an authentic conversation. We can sit down with our neighbours and say, "I feel safe when...", "I feel dignified when...", "I feel respected when...". And also, importantly, we can listen to them, when they open their hearts to us and tell us what they feel.

Then it's no longer an argument about whose set of rights "beats" other people's rights – arguments that are sometimes refereed by outsiders without a sense of, or a stake in, our particular experience. Rather, the talk of rights becomes what it was meant to be in the first place, a conversation between neighbours about what sort of society we want to build together. A safe society, a dignified society, a respectful society.

So, let's start talking about dignity. And let's start listening, too. //

## Coffee remains a vector of sustainable development

A PRAGMATIC PLAN OF ACTION SHOULD BE CRAFTED TO MAKE THE COFFEE INDUSTRY CONFORM WITH THE SDGS



Coffee constitutes the driving force of the economies of many countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. For many societies of the Greater South, the export of coffee remains a crucial generator of income. Coffee agriculture likewise remains a core employment sector providing a livelihood for millions of people, both women and men. Its contributions to the national economy in general and the export sector in particular are incontestable. Not only does coffee agriculture contribute to the economic well-being and development of countries, but it also remains an integral part of the modes of manifesting peoples' cultures, traditions, folklore, identities and values.

Although coffee was initially an "exotic" beverage, today it is consumed in all countries and societies of the world. Curiously, however, its multiplying effects on the economic and social development of coffee producing countries are often neglected. It has the potential to overcome some of the most pressing development challenges and to chart a path conducive to the realisation of a just and equitable way to advance sustainable development.

For many developing countries, coffee is a valuable crop and a vital export commodity. More than 90% of coffee production takes place in countries of the Greater South. The top coffee producing countries are located around the Equator in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Central and South America. Coffee farming and agriculture are at the heart of coffee producing countries' economic development, food security and self-sufficiency. Millions of people earn their daily bread cultivating the crop – and many more are affected by the positive economic side-effects of the coffee economy related to packaging, transporting, trading, processing, roasting and exportation.

The overall value of the coffee economy and the related value chain are enough to constitute a significant component of the overall GDP of a developing country, and therefore to serve as an engine for systemic, inclusive economic growth.

Amounting to more than USD 460 billion, one would like to think that coffee producing countries should receive a major share of the profits - however, the reality tells a different story, only 5% of the overall value of the coffee economy benefit the countries of the Greater South. There should therefore be no doubt that trade in coffee must be reorganized to ensure a fair distribution of profits. At present the global distribution of wealth emanating from the coffee sector is inequitable. If we look at the global distribution of income generated from the coffee economy, we recognize the urgent need to render it more equitable so as to alleviate the socio-economic challenges faced by coffee producing countries in general and smallholder coffee farmers in particular. Smallholder farmers are one of the most vulnerable members of the coffee supply chain. Most of coffee growing agriculture and farming are undertaken on small farms in rural areas.

Owing to the instability and volatility of world coffee prices, many smallholder farmers are deprived of stable and predictable income. In times of food crisis and shortages, these matters can generate alarming and dire impacts on small farmers, especially in respect to failing harvest seasons.

Moreover, we must take into account that climate change and the related erratic and challenging weather patterns are adversely affecting the duration of raining seasons, thus contributing to worsening socio-economic conditions for smallholder coffee farmers, resulting in unpredictable agricultural outputs. The farmers are particularly at risk from the dislocations caused by global warming, due to their dependence on the environment, resources and harvesting. The frequent droughts, deforestation and rise of temperatures are destroying traditional foods sources and habitats, and adversely affecting their livelihoods.

It therefore remains the common interest of countries of the Global South and the Global North alike to address profit inequities which





disproportionally affect producers in the former, and exponentially benefit stakeholders in the latter. Insurance against market uncertainties, price fluctuations and climate change disruptions must be geared towards providing a price guarantee for coffee that addresses the most basic socio-economic needs of the most vulnerable and contributes to alleviating poverty and improving health. The situation cannot stay as it is today, and all countries involved in the coffee-producing, processing, exporting and consuming should endeavor to craft an economic architecture that will have safety nets and will ensure justice for all concerned. A pragmatic and implementable plan of action must be formulated, discussed and negotiated. Several United Nations agencies can contribute to this development, including FAO, ILO. UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP and WHO.

Against this background, ensuring a favourable socio-economic climate conducive to women's economic empowerment, regardless of their position in social life, is a fundamental ingredient enabling them to activate their role in the society. Rural women, and particularly those in the coffee sector, constitute the majority of the rural workforce in some countries of the Greater South. Although women undertake most of the physical labour relating to cultivating and harvesting coffee, income inequality adversely affects women. According to the World Bank, in some countries of the Greater South, revenues from selling coffee is 39% lower for women-led than for men-led households.

For the economy in its integrity, the most efficient and durable way to facilitate long-term prosperity and women's economic empowerment is to advance their socio-economic status and ensure that inequalities of opportunity and of income do not adversely affect women's role in the coffee sector. The lack of female empowerment remains an obstacle towards enhancing progress in poverty reduction. On this matter, countries of the Greater South must remain committed to design targeted programmes and to formulate policies that are effective in enhancing women's opportunities for building human capabilities, providing technical, entrepreneurial, and practical farming training and facilitating access to land ownership.

Foreign direct investments must be channelled into improving access to micro-finance for small-holder farmers, facilitate technical and vocational training of youth, climate-resilient coffee agriculture, promote endogenous technology solutions for coffee supply, production and distribution, and economic self-sufficiency. Enabling coffee producing countries to reap the benefits of the global coffee value chain is key to overcome the systemic challenges and asymmetrical imbalances pertaining to coffee trade as well as to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Blerim Mustafa, a Norwegian national, serves as an international civil servant. Dr. Mustafa holds a Ph.D. in International Relations and Politics from the University of Leicester (UK) and has completed his graduate and under-graduate studies in Switzerland and Norway respectively. He has over 10 years of experience in the development and non-profit sectors focused on human rights, religious diplomacy, education, diplomatic protocol and etiquette. Throughout his career, Dr. Mustafa has worked in more than 20 countries across different world continents including Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe as well as Latin and North America - having engaged in policy change and advocacy related initiatives through a variety of mechanisms and institutional instruments. Dr. Mustafa regularly contributes with authored articles and op-eds and his contributions have been cited in different news media outlets in 10 countries. //

1 https://thecooperator.news/raw-coffee-exports-irk-museveni/

## Thirty-six years of United Nations Society of Writers

THERE IS MUCH LITERARY TALENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS. THE NEWSPECIAL HAD AN INTERVIEW WITH ALFRED DE ZAYAS ON EX TEMPORE (PART II)

Following-up on the April issue of newSpecial pp. 30-32, here is the continuation and end of an interview on the UN literary magazine Ex Tempore, the longest-lasting UN literary and artistic publication.

## Garry: What is the guiding principle of the United Nations Society of Writers?

We want to produce literature for peace, poetry, essays and short stories that advance international underdamping in the sense of the UNE-SCO Constitution and its 1999 Declaration on a universal culture of peace, launched and promoted by the then UNESCO Secretary-General Federico Mayor Zaragoza, who just left us last December at the age of 90.

Ex Tempore's literary venture was accompanied by the conviction that UN staffers had not only a vocation but also a commitment to promote the core values of the United Nations, the object and purpose of the Organization: peace, development and human rights. We at UNSW want to continue building and repairing bridges between peoples and cultures. We are inspired by the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter, notably the promotion of human dignity as a universal value, the commitment to preventing conflict by identifying the root causes of problems, to help avert armed conflict by addressing grievances in a timely fashion, and promoting

a new paradigm of brotherhood and multilateralism. We shared and continue to share the UNESCO spirit and endorse civil society initiatives, including the 1921 Charter of PEN with its emphasis on the responsibility of authors to put literature in the service of peace and to defend the Voltairean principle of freedom of expression and tolerance toward dissenting views. We also endorse the Bled Manifesto of PEN's Committee of Writers for Peace. I have attended several annual meetings in Bled and distributed copies of *Ex Tempore* to interested participants.

UNSW continues to advocate international solidarity in and through our cultural diversity. Over the centuries many authors and musicians have shared this vision of universal peace, e.g. Immanuel Kant in his famous essay on Perpetual Peace, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss, who founded the Salzburger Festspiele in 1920 (more than a century ago!!!) to consecrate music and drama to the task of unifying nations and cultures, expressing in music the eternal and ineffable - that highest aesthetic form and vital principle of humanity's striving for transcendence. We salute the pioneering work of Daniel Barenboim, who launched the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in 1999, composed of Palestinian and Israeli musicians. If anyone ever deserved the Nobel Peace Prize, certainly Daniel Barenboim does. https://west-eastern-divan.org/



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## Garry: What impact did Covid-19 have on *Ex Tempore*'s publication?

Of course, UN writers did not suddenly become silent during the "confinement" and "locks-down" in the years 2020-22. On the contrary, everybody had more time to write, and the virus generated a lot of inspiration, some very dark and pessimistic, some dystopic, some remarkably upbeat. The literary journal Ex Tempore was published on schedule in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024. Besides, in lieu of the in-door salon, UNSW/ SENU organized literary tea reunions under the lime trees in the garden of the "Villa des Crêts". Literary reunions were safely held in summer and early autumn in the fresh air without having to wear masks. Also during these Covid-19 years, we at Ex Tempore established congenial synergies with WHO's Poetry Garden, led by Dr. Ivana Knezevic, and we now have a very fruitful collaboration.

### Garry: Do you have gender-balance among your authors?

Pretty much, it is quite balanced. On International Women's Day 2023, the United Nations Society of Writers and Ex Tempore commemorated the huge contribution that UN women writers have made to 33 issues of Ex Tempore. Whoever visits the UN library, the Library of Congress, etc. can consult the Ex Tempore collections and rediscover the original writings of Stefanie Appenzeller, Liana Archaia-Atanasova, Marie José Astre-Démoulin, Maria Manuela Bailao, Cecile Barayre, Noemy Barrita-Chagoya, Maria Elena Blanco, Natalia Beglova, Solange Behoteguy, Rosita de Cabrera, Mae Cayir, Marlyn Czajkowski-Zaiden, Aline Dedeyan, Joanne Hansen, Ngozi Ibekwe, Sarah Jordan-Nikitin, Karin Kaminker, Ivana Knezevic, Elisabeth Lara, Jo-Christiane Ledakis, Ita Marguet, Françoise Mianda, Ingrid Mondet, Raymonde Morizot, Beatrice Ory, Alix Parodi, Beth Peoch, Valentina Priadko, Paule Rey, Marta Rodriguez, Isabelle Roubaux, Carmen Rueda, Yasmine Sherif, Colette Somaya, Monika Spyczak von Brzezinska, Mirta Teitelbaum, Martine Thevenot, Livia Varju, Petia Vangelova... and so many others.

### Garry: Where do most of your authors come from?

At first only from UNOG. But over the years the pool of authors expanded. Today our poets and essayists also come from UN New York, Vienna, Nairobi, UNMIK, ILO, WHO, WIPO, UNODC, UNHCR field offices, etc. Their contributions are in all UN languages.

### Garry: On a different plane, do you have any literary heroes in world literature?

Alfred: Actually too many. But since you ask, I would like to mention that I love poetry more than prose, lyric poetry more than fiction or historical epics. Personally, I declare my love for German poetry, notably Rainer Maria Rilke and Hermann Hesse, many of whose poems I have translated into English, French and Spanish. I have two book publications of my translations, and over the years the *UN Special* and the *newSpecial* have brought some of my translations. I also like the poetry of Joachim du Bellay, Antonio Machado, Jorge Luis Borges, Robert Frost, Anna Akhmatova, Gabriela Mistral, etc.

## Garry: If any of our newSpecial readers wish to contact the *Ex Tempore* team, whom should they write to?

Best to our President Marko Stanovic at marko. stanovic@unctad.org. Our Vice-President Carla Edelenbos can be reached at edelenbos@bluewin. ch. Being the editor-in-chief, I gladly receive submissions at alfreddezayas@gmail.com.

#### Garry: Do you also perform in other venues?

Over the years we have participated at the UN Library in several poetry readings, including those to celebrate "International Day of Happiness" (an initiative of Bhutan). We started this tradition thanks to the contribution of the late Irina Gerasimova and the constant support by Cristina Giordano. In these days of international turmoil, it is good to turn to literature and to draw strength from the beautiful things that still surround us. //

Those of you who would like to join UNSW, please write us and send your crisp, original literary contributions in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian. Deadline for submissions for volume 36 is 30 September 2025. Membership fee is a mere 40 CHF per year to be sent to our account with the UBS in Geneva:

0279-CA100855.0 or IBAN CH56 0027 9279 CA10 0855 0.

Please consult our website www.extempore.ch and feel free to edit and add text and photos to our Wikipedia entries for United Nations Society of Writers: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\_Nations\_Society\_of\_Writers

and ExTempore: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unit-ed\_Nations\_Society\_of\_Writers

## Connecting through the heart

IF YOU ASK ANYONE TO DRAW THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND. DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT THAT WILL BE? OF COURSE YOU DO. A HEART.



#### Were you born sitting?

Well, maybe you were - but that must have been a major complication, requiring surgery, pain, and struggle, both for you and your mother. Most of us, the vast majority, are born moving. Moving towards life, light, warmth, new experiences, the world. Painful as it is, we push forward, we stretch, we reach. So why, as soon as we emerge into this light, do the people we love - our parents, grandparents, nannies, teachers - start teaching us to sit still?

Yes, we do manage to sit, some at six months, some later. But this is just a minor step in our journey of discovering the world. First, we crawl. Then we stand. Then we walk, run, climb, fall, and get up again. We reach out not just with our hands but with our eyes, our senses, our entire bodies and little souls. We are explorers by nature. We are not born to sit. Least of all, we are born to sit in front of a screen for days on end, hunched, disconnected, suffocating in stillness.

And yet we do. And when our backs ache, our necks stiffen, our bodies revolt against this unnatural posture, we go searching for answers – chiropractors, physiotherapists, acupuncturists, endless tests. But the answer is simple: this is not natural. We were not made for this. We are animals, just like those that surround us. Look at a cat, a dog, even a bird. None of them sit still for long. They move, stretch, roam, explore. So why do we force our children, at the peak of their curiosity and learning, to sit on rigid chairs for hours?

Children should roll. Climb. Run. Fall. Crawl. They should feel the world with their hands, their feet, their laughter, their breath, their mischief. They should touch, smell, lick, bite if they must – because that is how they learn. That is how they connect.

These thoughts gave birth to our project, Peace Lean-Ins.

At their core, Peace Lean-Ins are nothing more than old bedsheets, donated by the International Red Cross to U4U Volunteers. Worn and torn, they carry the warmth, the stories, the quiet peace of those who once rested on them. We spread them on the floor, pin them to the walls, and let imagination take flight.

Children love them. They throw themselves onto their bellies, rolling, stretching, laughing, doodling freely. They write "Mama, I love you" in a dozen different languages. They leave handprints, footprints, stars, hearts. No one tells them to stay inside the lines. There are no borders, no rules, no confinement of A4 paper – the tiny cells that will soon fill their school years, limiting their movements, their voices, their worlds.

And here is something magical. Every time we hand someone - anyone, of any age - a blank surface and ask them to draw something, they all, without exception, draw a heart.

A heart is what instinctively comes to us. No matter where we are from, no matter our past, no matter our language. It is the universal symbol, the shared instinct, the unspoken connection that ties humanity together.

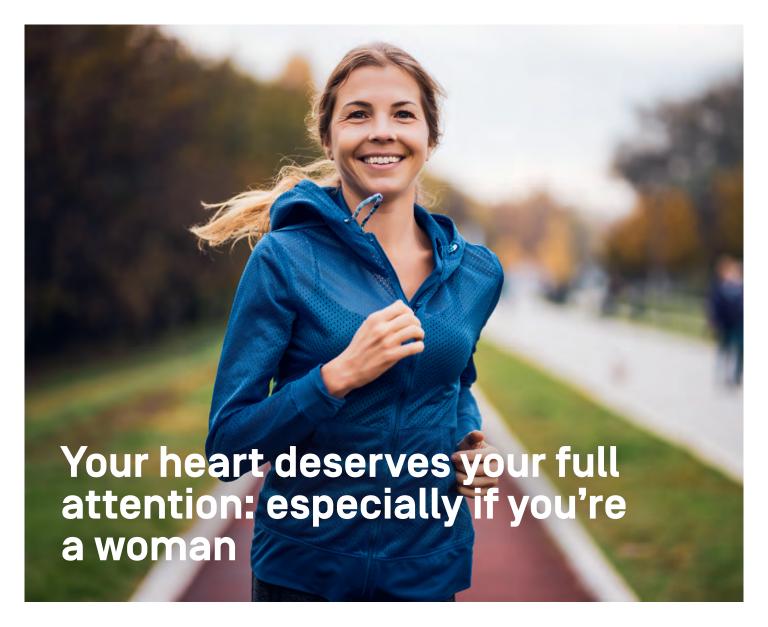
So why not communicate through hearts?

Why not connect through the familiarity of intimacy, through shared experience, through art that speaks beyond words? Why limit ourselves with the barriers of language, nationality, expectation?

It is time to go beyond words. It is time to connect through our hearts.

So now, chairs away.

Let's roll, stretch, and get very, very mischievous. //



## Did you know that cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in women? This is twice the number of women affected by any kind of cancer.

In France, we lose 200 women every day, and worldwide, 25,000 women die each day from heart disease – that's eight times more than from breast cancer.

One particularly damaging misconception is that cardiovascular disease mainly affects men. In actual fact, as a result of our changing busy lifestyles, at the same age women are accumulating a growing number of risk factors for heart disease: stress, sedentary lifestyle, unbalanced diet, to name just a few. Oestrogen affords women a certain degree of protection until the menopause, but thereafter, the risk increases considerably.

Another reason why heart disease is so deadly for women is that the symptoms of a heart attack differ from those of men. As symptoms can be subtle and easily attributed to other conditions such as anxiety or stress, many women defer seeking medical attention when they experience them. This delay can be fatal, and often explains why women are more likely to die from heart attacks than men.

To empower women to take control of their health, we offer comprehensive cardiovascular screenings that assess heart health, identify specific risk factors, and recommend preventative measures.

At Hôpital de La Tour, we are dedicated to delivering comprehensive care for women's health, with a strong emphasis on cardiovascular well-being. Our multidisciplinary team of gynaecologists and cardiologists collaborate to provide essential preventive exams, which are crucial for maintaining optimal heart health. Recognising that heart disease can often go unnoticed, we prioritise early detection and proactive care. Through education, awareness, and regular screenings, our goal is to reduce risk and ultimately save lives.

For further information and bookings





## Art for purpose

IN THE HEART OF CRISIS, ART BECOMES MORE THAN EXPRESSION IT IS A LIFELINE FOR HEALING, RESILIENCE, AND HUMAN CONNECTION AMONG HUMANITARIAN WORKERS.



The relentless pressures faced by personnel in emergency and humanitarian settings are profound. Witnessing trauma, navigating resource scarcity, and maintaining composure amidst chaos can take an immense toll on mental and emotional well-being. As a multidisciplinary artist deeply engaged with the United Nations and acutely aware of the pandemic's global impact, I've found art to be an indispensable tool for navigating these challenges.

Growing up in a rich tapestry of cultures, I learned early on that art transcends language and borders. It speaks directly to the human spirit, offering a sanctuary for reflection and emotional processing. My artistic practice, encompassing painting and photography, is driven by a desire to create a space for pause, reflection, and balance.

#### ART AS A BRIDGE AND A BALM

For humanitarian workers, art can serve as a crucial outlet for processing vicarious trauma. The act of creating, whether through painting, sketching, or even photography, allows for a shift in focus, a moment of mindful engagement that can interrupt the cycle of stress and anxiety. As a trauma care specialist would acknowledge, art provides a non-verbal avenue for expressing complex emotions that might be difficult to articulate. The repetitive nature of certain art forms, like drawing patterns or mixing colors, can be profoundly meditative, fostering a sense of calm and control.

From an art critic's perspective, the use of cultural symbols and global motifs in my work reflects the shared human experience of crisis and resilience. The vibrant hues and harmonious compositions aim to evoke a sense of hope and connection, reminding viewers that even in the darkest of times, beauty and empathy persist. As I often act as my personal life coach, I recognize the importance of self-care and resilience in maintaining well-being. Art provides a structured yet flexible framework for self-expression, allowing individuals to explore their

inner landscape and cultivate a sense of agency. By engaging in creative activities, humanitarian workers can reconnect with their sense of purpose and find renewed energy to face the challenges ahead.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical need for mental health support among front-line workers. Art emerged as a powerful coping mechanism, offering a tangible way to process the overwhelming emotions of fear, grief, and uncertainty. My own artistic journey during this period became a testament to the transformative power of creativity in fostering resilience and connection.

In conclusion, art is not merely an aesthetic pursuit but a vital tool for emotional regulation and well-being. By incorporating artistic practices into self-care routines, humanitarian personnel can find solace, strength, and renewed purpose in their critical work. This is not just about creating art; it's about creating space for healing, understanding, and connection in a world that desperately needs it. //



Purple lady acryllic on canvas 70 50.







## Laos

#### AU FIL DU MÉKONG 2/3



#### **SAVOIR +**

Mékong Éléphant Park



Le Laos est un pays qui a énormément de choses à offrir et ce n'est d'ailleurs pas pour rien que cette destination rencontre, depuis quelques années, un franc succès auprès des voyageurs. L'accueil des gens, ses paysages spectaculaires, sa culture très riche mais aussi sa bonne cuisine en font une destination incontournable en Asie du Sud-Est.

Enclavé entre le Vietnam, le Cambodge, la Thaïlande, la Birmanie et la Chine, le Laos est le seul pays de la région à ne pas avoir accès à la mer. Mais le Mékong, qui traverse le Laos de part en part sur 1850km, joue un rôle de premier plan dans le développement de la civilisation laotienne, servant de voie de commerce et d'échange culturel. Il est au cœur de la vie quotidienne des habitants; source d'enchantement mais aussi zone d'enjeux stratégiques.

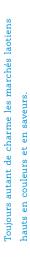
C'est d'ailleurs sur l'un de ses affluents, la rivière Nam Ou, que va se poursuivre notre aventure au royaume du million d'éléphants (voir le précédent numéro du newSpecial). Une seule heure de navigation à travers de somptueux paysages de falaises karstiques nous permet d'accéder à Sopjam, village dont l'accès terrestre est pratiquement impossible tant les pistes sont défoncées. Ici, l'activité de tissage est un bon complément aux activités agricoles des villageois et chaque habitation expose ses plus belles créations. Proche, Muang Ngoi est une charmante bourgade fluviale cernée de toutes parts par des montagnes et des pitons calcaires couverts de jungle. Ici le temps semble suspendu et on a vite fait de se caler sur le rythme local très indolent. Aux alentours, les villages ethniques de Barn Hoy San et Ban Na, construits au milieu des rizières, dégagent une ambiance de bout du monde, loin du tourisme de masse. Une aubaine pour découvrir la grotte difficilement accessible de Tham Kang, endroit où les habitants de la région allaient se réfugier pendant les bombardements américains lors de la guerre civile.

#### **LE PAYS AUX 130 ETHNIES**

Établi à l'endroit où la rivière Nam Beng se jette dans le Mékong, Pakbeng est l'étape de nuit des bateaux publics assurant chaque jour la liaison entre Luang Prabang et Ban Houey Xay, ville frontière avec le nord de la Thaïlande. La route nationale 13 qui va nous conduire jusqu'au fleuve s'apparente le plus souvent à une véritable piste poussiéreuse parsemée de nids de poule (tellement profonds que notre guide Dao les appelait «nids d'éléphant»!). Détériorée par les nombreux camions surchargés, c'est l'axe principal venant de Chine. Elle serpente au milieu de vallées encaissées, très boisées, souvent couvertes de bambous que les villageois doivent couper puis brûler afin de pouvoir cultiver du riz et du thé. Ce dernier représente une ressource économique importante qui fait vivre de nombreuses familles. Mais avec l'apparition du marché chinois, la filière du thé au Laos est fragilisée. A l'approche de Pakbeng, la vallée s'élargit et l'on retrouve des plantations de bananiers, de manioc et également de coton, notamment près du village de Ban Yor occupé par l'ethnie Thaïlu. On dénombre 130 ethnies au Laos réparties en trois groupes; «Lao Loum» pour les Laotiens de la plaine, «Lao Theung» pour ceux habitant à la montagne et «Lao Sououng» pour ceux vivant dans la haute montagne.

Surplombant le Mékong, le «Sanctuary Pakbeng Lodge» est un lieu tout à fait extraordinaire qui nous permettra, entre autres, de nous initier à la cuisine laotienne. L'établissement offre également une superbe vue sur la montagne située sur l'autre rive, lieu qui abrite le «Mékong Éléphant Park», un éco sanctuaire pour la préservation des éléphants au Laos. En effet, le royaume du million d'éléphants n'en compterait aujourd'hui guère plus d'un millier, dont moins de la moitié en liberté. Une diminution d'autant plus préoccupante que leur taux de natalité est deux fois inférieur au taux de mortalité, car les éléphants ne se reproduisent quasiment pas en captivité. Une équipe de passionnés travaille pour améliorer la vision de la protection des animaux et veut offrir à ses pensionnaires la possibilité de vivre dans leur environnement naturel, en harmonie avec la nature et les humains.

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Au Laos, sourire et accueil chaleureux sont omniprésents.

#### **RETOUR SUR LE MÉKONG**

C'est par le fleuve mythique que nous quittons la province d'Oudomxay pour celle de Luang Prabang, le Laos étant divisé en 17 provinces. 160 kilomètres et 8 heures de navigation sont prévus pour rejoindre Luang Prabang.

D'une largeur pouvant atteindre la centaine de mètres, le Mékong serpente au milieu d'une forêt primaire. Le niveau de l'eau est bas, beaucoup de rochers émergent à la surface et le pilote de notre bateau dit «traditionnel» doit redoubler de vigilance. Par endroits le courant est fort, des tourbillons se forment dans l'eau couleur de terre et notre embarcation, longue et effilée, tangue fortement. Les alluvions charriées depuis les chaînes de l'Himalaya ont façonné des rives sablonneuses en pentes douces, faisant le bonheur de nombreux orpailleurs qui ont établi leur campement en bordure du fleuve. Surplombant quelques plantations de bananiers et d'arachides, de rares habitations isolées apparaissent parmi les arbres. A 25 km de Luang Prabang, à la confluence du Mékong et de la rivière Nam Ou, sont nichées dans la falaise les grottes de Pak Ou. Ce site sacré est composé de deux grottes principales, Tham Ting et Tham Phum, qui abritent plus de 4000 statues de Bouddha déposées au fil des ans par les pèlerins. Les premières traces d'occupation du lieu remontent au XVIe siècle et depuis il est devenu un important centre de pélerinage pour les bouddhistes laotiens. Les statues sont en majorité en bois, de tailles variées, et représentent le Bouddha dans différentes positions. Certaines sont même recouvertes d'or ou de laque. Une légende raconte que les grottes étaient autrefois habitées par des esprits qui protégeaient l'endroit et les villageois des environs.

#### CÉRÉMONIE DU BACI: UN RITUEL SPIRITUEL NATIONAL

Le Laos abrite des traditions fascinantes transmises de génération en génération. Cette cérémonie repose sur la croyance en l'union de 32 organes spirituels responsables de notre bienêtre et de notre santé. Selon la tradition laotienne, des événements tels que maladies, accidents, conflits familiaux ou grands changements peuvent perturber ces organes, déséquilibrant ainsi notre santé spirituelle. Le Baci vise à rétablir cet équilibre en utilisant des fils blancs symboliques pour relier ces organes entre eux.



Durant cette cérémonie, les participants expriment leurs vœux et prières, considérés comme des engagements envers les esprits, censés se réaliser grâce à leur bienveillance. Cela rappelle l'importance de prendre soin de l'âme, de l'esprit et de maintenir l'harmonie avec autrui et la nature. Au-delà de son aspect rituel, le Baci renforce les liens familiaux et amicaux et offre une occasion unique de se reconnecter aux traditions, valeurs et racines, consolidant l'identité culturelle du Laos. La cérémonie qui accompagne chaque événement marquant de la vie - mariage, naissance, accueil d'invités, nouvel an laotien, décès, funérailles - est dirigée par un chef spirituel. Pour l'occasion, il sera noué autour des poignets des participants de fines cordelettes de coton blanc bénies par les moines et qu'ils devront porter au minimum trois jours.

La cérémonie terminée et après une nuit emplie de sérénité, rendez-vous à la gare ferroviaire de Luang Prabang pour prendre le nouveau train à grande vitesse – inauguré fin 2021 – en direction de Vientiane, capitale du Laos. Aventure à vivre dans le prochain numéro du newSpecial. //





«traditionnels» en attente de passagers. où sont amarrés des bateaux dits L'embarcadère de Muang Ngoi



# L'amour: objectif du développement durable

IL Y A DES PENSÉES QUI NOUS TRAVERSENT, D'AUTRES QUI NOUS ANIMENT, L'IMAGINATION EN EST LA CLEF



La petite fille doit naître. Elle doit éclore. Elle doit aimer, vivre et respirer. Elle doit grandir, mais elle ne le peut pas. La symphonie mondiale est trop assourdissante. L'environnement se désespère. La maison brûle. La biosphère se meurt. L'horloge atomique exulte. Le monde qui l'entoure n'est pas celui qu'il prétend être. Toutes les formes qui glissent et frôlent les murs ne sont pas réelles, ni même humaines. Pourtant tout n'est point imagination, mais bien réalité. Une réalité qui n'est que le reflet de ses propres perceptions.

J'ignore qui elle est. J'ignore ce qu'elle voit. Je l'ai croisée tantôt ici, tantôt là-bas. J'ignore même de quoi je parle, car je suis invisible. Les années ont pénétré mon corps comme l'eau de pluie s'infiltre sous la carapace d'un désert asséché. Je suis composé de chiffres. Je ressemble à un nombre décimal en quelque sorte. Je suis connecté à un courant alternatif et parfois disruptif. On peut dire que j'aurais vibré et vrombi comme une théière électrique. D'ailleurs, partout ici-bas de la vapeur s'échappe des têtes pensantes et sachantes. J'ai cru comprendre. J'ai pensé saisir. J'ai échafaudé de nombreux plans pour m'échapper de ce jeu de quilles. J'ai élaboré d'abracadabrantes et brimbalantes pensées. Mais, je me suis trompé sur mon compte. J'ai cru être une espèce comme les autres et parmi les autres. Miroir aux alouettes collé sur les panneaux publicitaires de la raison; tout ce temps, je n'ai fait que marcher tel un funambule à côté de mon propre reflet.

La petite fille discute avec un arbuste en plastique. Elle ne sait pas. Elle est persuadée de voir. Pourtant, ce qu'elle voit n'est pas. Dans ces bâtiments blêmes, son univers n'est qu'illusions. Elle se promène dans cet immense parc composé de chaises, de tables, de câbles, de crédences et d'écrans. Dans cet aquarium géant, un distributeur à gobelet schizophrène refuse de verser ses grains moulus et une fontaine à chocolat qui fonctionne jour et nuit répète à tue-tête et à qui veut bien l'entendre: «I am not what I think I am and I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am. » Dans le public, seuls deux tabourets hauts à longs poils et trois armoires à courtes pattes tendent l'oreille. Dans la ronde sonnante et haletante des fonctions administratives et du ballet des fauteuils technocratiques, la langue de Shakespeare fait florès et feux d'artifice de tous bords.

Au fond du bocal à gauche, la petite fille s'est arrêtée, pensive, devant la statue d'un célèbre joueur de foot restée de marbre. J'aimerais bien lui dire, lui prendre la main, lui saisir le bras, mais je n'ai pas le droit à la parole. Elle rit. Elle est heureuse. Autour d'elle, certains stylos palabrent des heures durant, d'autres gobelets en carton s'échinent à édifier des arbres en papier, quand d'autres couverts désargentés réchauffent de fumeuses théories. Je voudrais lui montrer et démontrer combien tout cela n'est qu'un jeu de l'esprit, un sortilège inhumain qui conduit bien trop souvent l'enfant de déception en frustration, d'égarement en accès de rage, d'anxiété en névrose insidieuse, de peur en souffrance, de tristesse en apathie. L'ennui règne sur les tables des buffets sans roi de cœur ni reine de pique. Tous ceux qui s'évertuent à dépoussiérer les décombres d'une cité détruite sont des valets et des dames de compagnie qui encore et encore peignent les morceaux de moquette et recollent les brins d'herbe.



La petite fille trouve ce décor amusant. Elle déambule dans et au travers de ces pyramides Excel, saute sur ces piles numériques de documents mouvants. Elle marque un point d'interrogation devant les visages coloriés des princes des statistiques et les formes animales des machines à photocopier le désespoir. Son rire ricoche dans les couloirs de l'oubli telle la traîne d'une mariée 2.0 repassant les clichés noir et blanc de sa cérémonie d'un autre siècle. Elle parle seule, se raconte des histoires, ses mots réveillent les fenêtres qui ne donnent ni ne s'ouvrent sur rien. Elle est heureuse. Moi, je ne sais plus. Mes certitudes m'ont abandonné. Je ne suis plus sûr de rien. L'amour est devenu un objectif du développement durable. Le sujet est sérieux. Des universités offrent de hautes études pour atteindre ces sommets. Des chercheurs le cherchent. Des commissions ont été créées pour mieux l'étudier. Des organisations ont vu le jour pour le semer et le cultiver. Certaines sont spécialistes de la chose, d'autres experts de la discipline. Peu de gens le connaissent, certains l'ont vu passer, d'autres prétendent l'avoir trouvé. Pour beaucoup, il est la clef et le remède pour remettre les pendules à l'heure.

La petite fille court après le bon sens dans ce tunnel creusé après la terrible épidémie de rire et de joie qui frappa la planète entière. Fort heureusement, cette période funeste et légère est passée. Les galeries du souvenir dorment dans l'ombre des mémoires à l'arrêt. Les agrafes argentées se sont regroupées pour former des étoiles et éclairer ces lieux oubliés. La petite fille discute et sympathise avec des classeurs démembrés. Ils sont légion dans ces sous-sols. Beaucoup d'éléments de bureau se sont réfugiés dans ces souterrains pour échapper à des éclats de rire incertains. Entre deux chaises fatiguées, elle apprivoise un trombone sorti pour rien de sa boîte; sur un tapis persan usé, elle s'amuse avec des crayons fluorescents et des gommes multicolores. Peu à peu, la petite fille rejoint la surface. «Qu'y a-t-il en haut?» demande une voix sourde. «La même chose qu'en bas!» crie la petite fille. Ne me demandez pas de quoi il s'agit, et même de quoi nous parlons, car je suis ignorant de tout cela. //

## Le col de San Bernardino

#### COLS ROUTIERS DE SUISSE (17)



Pour arriver au col de San Bernardino depuis Coire, on suit d'abord la même route par la Via Mala que pour joindre le col de Splügen, jusqu'au village du même nom¹. À Splügen, où la route vers le col de Splügen commence à monter vers le sud, la route du col de San Bernardino continue d'abord vers l'ouest longeant le Rhin antérieur, en direction du village pastoral de Hinterrhein, où la vraie montée vers le col commence.

À 2066 mètres d'altitude, le col de San Bernardino relie Hinterrhein à San Bernardino, et depuis là plus loin à Mesocco et le beau village de Soazza, toujours dans le canton des Grisons, et enfin à Bellinzona au Tessin. Le col forme la frontière linguistique entre l'alémanique de la vallée du Rheinwald et l'italien du val Mesolcina. Il n'est guère surprenant que le col soit aussi un point de partage des eaux: l'eau descendant côté Rheinwald finit dans le Rhin et donc la Mer du Nord, et côté sud, la Moesa qui commence au col finit dans le Ticino, qui termine à son tour dans le Pô et ainsi dans la Mer adriatique.

Avant le 15° siècle le col se nommait Mons Avium (Vogelberg en allemand, Uccello en italien), ce qui probablement n'a rien à voir avec des oiseaux, mais avec le nom gaulois ouxello qui signifie «hauteur», indication que le col fut utilisé même avant l'époque romaine. Au 15° siècle, une chapelle dédiée à St. Bernardin de Sienne fut construite là où se trouve maintenant le village de San Bernardino au pied du col. Les deux maisons proches de la chapelle ont été obligées d'héberger des voyageurs et à entretenir le chemin jusqu'au col et, depuis, le col a changé de nom.

Nous abordons le col du côté de Rheinwald un jour gris et très pluvieux, et après avoir suivi le Rhin antérieur par les villages rustiques de Nufenen et Hinterrhein nous profitons de l'aire de l'autoroute avant le tunnel de San Bernardino pour boire un café. En fait, la route du col a maintenant surtout un but touristique, la liaison entre Hinterrhein et Mesocco étant ouverte toute l'année par le tunnel autoroutier ouvert en 1967. Le tunnel mesure 6,6 kilomètres et raccourcit la distance, mais surtout il évite la montée et la descente pénibles sur la route du col. Le col, seulement ouvert en été, est ainsi réservé aux cyclistes et autres amateurs!

Dans le passé, ce passage était beaucoup plus important qu'aujourd'hui, même si le col de Splügen était encore davantage fréquenté. La route utilisée au Moyen Âge se situait à l'est de la route actuelle, au pied du Piz Uccello, mais quand le trafic a considérablement augmenté, du fait de l'amélioration du passage par la Via Mala, entre Thusis et Zillis avant Splügen, le risque de dommages causés par des avalanches est devenu trop important et la route a été déplacée vers le milieu du relief du col. Comme pour le col de Splügen, le transport se faisait par muletiers, qui étaient organisés en associations et qui transportaient les marchandises sur leur tronçon de la route. À partir de Splügen, les muletiers de la vallée du Rheinwald entreprenaient le transport jusqu'au village de San Bernardino au-delà du col, où les muletiers de Mesolcina prenaient la relève jusqu'au Bellinzona. Contrairement à ce qu'on pouvait penser, en hiver, les animaux pouvaient porter même plus de poids par utilisation de traîneaux.

Entre 1818 et 1823, la première route carrossable fut aménagée, financée en grande partie par le Royaume de Piémont-Sardaigne, ainsi que par des transporteurs de Coire et du canton des Grisons. Le Piémont avait grand intérêt à une meilleure liaison, comme beaucoup de marchandises entre Piémont et les Grisons passaient par le col de San Bernardino.

L'ouverture de la route résulta également en une augmentation du transport, et en plus le tourisme débuta! En 1824, l'hospice fut construit sur le col. Le trafic par la route culmina dans les années 1850, et en 1861 le sommage fut abandonné. Mais, comme pour le Splügen, la construction des lignes ferroviaires par le Brenner et le Mont Cenis réduisit l'utilisation du col, et avec l'ouverture de la ligne ferroviaire du Gothard, le col perdit tout sa signification pour le transport des marchandises. Des efforts pour construire un chemin de fer à travers du col sont restés sans succès. Seule la partie entre Bellinzona et Mesocco fut construite au début du 20e siècle, et même cette ligne fut abandonnée en 1972.

Après notre pause-café sur l'aire de l'autoroute, nous entamons à vélo électrique la montée d'un peu plus de 8 kilomètres vers le col, avec de nombreux virages étroits. À cause du temps plu-

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vieux nous ne voyons pas grand-chose du paysage, qui est sans doute magnifique. Il n'y a pas beaucoup de circulation, mais nous sommes dépassés par un petit car postal qui fait la liaison entre les villages de Hinterrhein et de San Bernardino. Peu avant le col on s'arrête pour admirer des fleurs de toutes les couleurs, une gaie démonstration de la vitalité de la nature alpine. Arrivés au col, nous découvrons un petit lac charmant avec plusieurs îlots, le lac de Moesola, qui est traversé par la Moesa avant qu'elle descende vers le sud. Le brouillard et les nuages bas font de ce paysage un endroit magique. Je m'imagine en train de prendre un des bateaux à rames qui se trouvent près de la rive et de partir dans l'infini. Mais voilà, le soleil commence à pointer, la luminosité augmente et bientôt nous percevons les limites du lac, baigné dans une lumière enchantée.

Sur le col, le petit car postal jaune s'est arrêté à côté de l'hospice, et donne un peu de couleur à ce bâtiment gris et négligé. Même si un panneau indique que le restaurant est ouvert, l'état extérieur de l'établissement ne donne pas envie d'entrer et découvrir la carte. Un papier à la porte, avant l'escalier qui mène à l'étage où

se trouve le bistro, indique que l'hospice doit se fournir en électricité et en eau lui-même, avec des turbines et une conduite d'eau d'un kilomètre à partir de la source, ce qui explique les prix élevés des mets proposés.

Nous commençons notre descente en longeant le lac avant que la route devienne plus raide. Les nuages sont de retour, mais au moins il ne pleut plus. Le petit car postal, qui est parti avant nous, nous revient de l'autre direction et la conductrice nous salue avec un grand sourire. La route descend en gracieuses courbes qui nous donnent l'impression de danser sur le vélo. Le paysage est austère et vide, à l'exception d'une petite ferme au milieu d'un virage où les vaches nous regardent avec curiosité. En descendant davantage, les arbres commencent à paraître, des pins surtout qui résistent bien au climat rude de la montagne. Et tout à coup, nous arrivons de nouveau dans le monde habité, en plein village animé de San Bernardino. La Moesa ruisselle au milieu du village, autour il y a des espaces verts et des promenades à faire. Des hôtels, souvent témoignant d'un riche passé, ne sont pas loin ainsi que des immeubles modernes que j'imagine avec des logements secondaires. Parce qu'ici on profite du cadre naturel été comme hiver, quand le domaine skiable s'ouvre pour offrir 45 kilomètres de ski alpin, 29 kilomètres de ski de fond, et 43 kilomètres des sentiers pour des randonnées dans la neige. Le domaine a été fermé pendant une dizaine d'années à cause de manque de fonds pour l'entretien, mais il a rouvert en 2023 après avoir été acheté par un entrepreneur tessinois qui aimerait faire de San Bernardino une station distinguée pour des amateurs de sport.

Avant de quitter les environs du col et de descendre vers le Tessin et la chaleur, nous faisons encore une visite à la chapelle de San Bernardino qui a donné son nom au col. L'édifice du 15° siècle se trouve sur une petite colline derrière l'église actuelle, un peu éloigné du village. La chapelle était malheureusement fermée mais, depuis le site, on a une vue magnifique sur le Piz Uccello, ainsi l'ancien et l'actuel nom du col s'unissent en une seule image que nous portons avec nous en souvenir. //

1 Voir l'article sur le col de Splügen dans le New Special de février 2025. **SAVOIR +** 

Grisons Tourisme

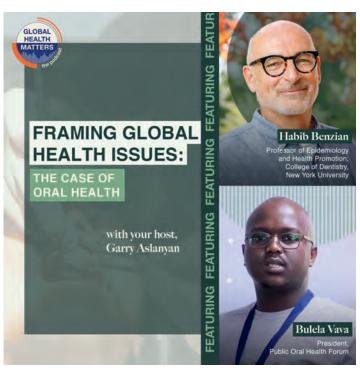


# **Podcasts**

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# Stepping Stones to a United States

IT COULD HAVE ALL BEEN SO DIFFERENT.

A MOMENT'S SNAP DECISION ON A FRENCH BATTLEFIELD THAT SET WORLD HISTORY ON THE ROAD TO A UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



How one battle and its unlikely outcome paved the way for the American War of Independence and the rise of the United States as a global superpower. A rushed decision by a French Commander, in the heat of battle, in 1759 was one of those moments that undoubtedly changed the course of world history and delivered the USA as we know it today.

It is hard to avoid news about America at the moment; the changes happening across the Atlantic have repercussions all over the world, and the power and influence of the United States to guide world affairs for better or worse is clear. But it could all have been quite different.

If you were challenged to pick one moment that inevitably set the British Colonies of the Americas on the road to independence and their meteoric rise to be a superpower of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards then you could make a good case

for a split-second decision made in the heat of a pressured moment in September 1759.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, North America was a patchwork of expanding colonial interests with the Europeans carving up and claiming territories. This was part of a much broader land grab as the traditional powers sought to establish lucrative overseas bases and control the rich trade in fur, spice, rubber, precious metals, etc. that their far-flung overseas possessions could supply in abundance at low cost.

The competition for colonies erupted inevitably into the Seven Years War, between 1756 and 1763, a conflict that really deserves to be known as the first World War since there was fighting in Europe, North America, India, and South Asia. Great Britain, Prussia and Portugal allied against France and Austria and fighting dragged on across many different theatres of operation and specific local conflicts.



The Death of General Wolfe (1770).

A romanticized view of the soldier's demise

In North America the period is known as the French and Indian War as Britain and France drew support from native tribes and from local militia composed of colonists. The area had long been a powder keg as French and British interests buffeted against each other for control of the rich fur and fish trades. Fighting actually erupted as early as 1754 when Virginian militiamen under the command of a 22-year-old George Washington attacked French soldiers.

Britain and France both wanted domination over North America and money and troops were poured in from Europe to decide the competing claims on the battlefield. Initially the British suffered a series of setbacks and losses, but the major turning point came in 1759 with a critical engagement at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham just outside the city of Quebec in what is now Canada.

To control the important Saint Lawrence riverway, the British knew that they needed to capture the city of Quebec where the French had heavily entrenched and fortified. The location was also a natural stronghold with steep cliffs rising from the riverbank and dense forest surrounding. The city also boasted a city wall, so the French were confident that their position was impregnable.

The British dispatched 32-year-old James Wolfe as their major-general, a rising star in the army. Some of his techniques had been called unorthodox and mad by his contemporaries and when King George II heard this accusation, he is reported to have quipped.

"Mad, is he? Then I hope he will bite some of my other generals!"

Wolfe was surprisingly young to lead such a combined force of army and navy, particularly because he was facing a seasoned and veteran French counterpart - the Marquis de Montcalm, who had distinguished himself in numerous battles and commanded a larger force at Quebec.

Wolfe was also under pressure to act decisively as the Saint Lawrence River would freeze in the winter and so the British ships had to leave before they became trapped by the ice. One interesting historical footnote is that Captain Cook was also part of the expedition and spent the period charting the river for the navy. He sustained an injury to his hand during this exercise which was used to identify his remains when he was eaten by cannibals in Hawaii on his 3<sup>rd</sup> voyage to circumnavigate the planet.

Quebec was placed under siege, with artillery bombardment from across the river (at Point Levi) and various attempts to push through the forest and engage the French. But the British were no match for the guerilla warfare tactics of the native Americans and their colonial counterparts who knew the country far better than the invading force.

The stalemate of the siege of Quebec was broken on 13th September 1759 when Wolfe attempted something that no one thought was possible, something which most likely would never have been considered by a regular commander. Desperate to attack the French before the winter forced an end to the campaign, he drew up a daring plan. Under cover of darkness, the British troops and light artillery were moved upriver and scaled the near vertical cliffs of the L'Anseau-Foulon some 53 metres high. The French had surveyed the spot and left it lightly guarded as they considered it impossible that a full attacking force could ascend the cliffs.

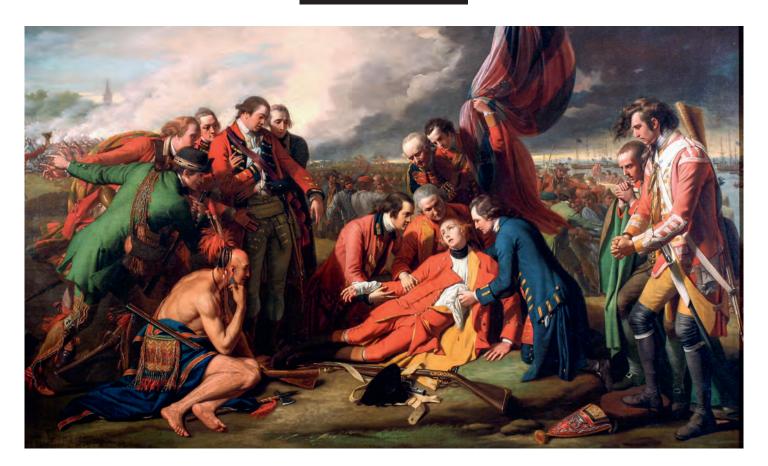
The risky move brought the British forces to a large, flat, open grassy plain behind Quebec that is still known as the Plains of Abraham after a farmer that lived there. Their arrival benefited from incredibly good luck – sentries watching the river had missed the force because it was a moonless night, an officer who patrolled the area was not present because his horse had been stolen, and Montcalm himself who had personally surveyed the cliff had dismissed it with the words,

"It is not to be supposed that the enemies have wings so that they can in the same night cross the river, disembark, climb the obstructed acclivity, and scale the walls, for which last operation they would have to carry ladders."

At dawn on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1759 the British were therefore drawn up into three companies with two light cannons (hauled up the cliff by ropes) facing the city wall.

What happened next was the crucial moment for the history of Canada, the United States and North America. Montcalm was shocked at seeing the enemy where he never expected them to be and he ordered an immediate attack, leaving the safety of the city walls, and using his least experienced troops who were the ones in that part of Quebec at the time.

This decision to fight, most likely through surprise and panic, was exactly what Wolfe wanted. Only by meeting the French in open battle did the British have any chance of lifting the siege.



Crucially however Montcalm had no need to rush out and meet his enemy - the British had placed themselves on a plateau at the top of a cliff and were actually between Quebec and another French garrison upriver commanded by the colourful Bougainville (who would also circumnavigate the world later in his career like Captain Cook). The British had nowhere to retreat and if Montcalm had waited, he could have crushed them from both sides in a deadly pincer movement and brought his more experienced regular troops into the fight.

Wolfe had rolled the dice on an incredible gamble, and his uncommon good luck held, and it paid off. The French militia, poorly equipped (many lacked bayonets) met the highly disciplined British. Wolfe had drilled his men meticulously on coordinated musket fire and one volley was so well timed that it erupted in a single deafening thunderclap that terrified and broke the advancing French.

Both Wolfe and Montcalm were killed in the battle. The British commander died on the plain and his body embalmed in brandy and brought back to Britain. He was lauded as a war hero and part of the "Annus Mirabilis" of 1759 in which Great Britain achieved multiple successes and gains.

Montcalm was carried back into the city where he wrote to his family. On learning that he had only hours to live he quipped, "All the better, I will not see the English in Quebec."

With the capture of Quebec, French power in North America was broken and in the following decades the British colonists no longer needed the support of Great Britain to defend them against French interests. The removal of France ultimately paved the way for the American War of Independence and all the history that followed after.

Had Montcalm decided to wait, had he brought up stronger troops and waited for Bougain-ville to attack the British rear on the Plains of Abraham, it is almost certain that a much larger proportion of North America would to-day speak French, and the continent may have been carved up in a very different way that prevented the formation of a United States as we know it now.

Wolfe is well known and remembered in British history with a statue in Greenwich Park, London near where he is interred. Montcalm is better known in Quebec where he is considered a symbol of francophone culture and language and the last hope of an independent French-speaking country in North America. In 2001, his remains were moved from a tomb in the Ursuline Convent of Quebec to a new mausoleum constructed on a newly discovered graveyard of the French dead. He remains a celebrated symbol of a world history that could have been so different. //

# Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI

YUVAL NOAH HARARI



This intellectual tour de force by Professor Harari revisits some of his oldest themes, but with a fresh focus - the past, present and future of information networks. It visits a huge vista of topics and historical eras as it considers the development of information networks. This book is so rich and covers so many themes, it is virtually impossible to write a review about it, but that has never prevented brave and/or foolish writers from trying, so here goes!

Part 1 reviews (mainly historical) human networks of information. It concludes that modern humanity has created two main contrasting types of political systems – democracy and totalitarianism. Part 2 considers the rise of inorganic networks (mainly computer and AI-influenced information networks, with or without humans present). Part 3 then considers how each political system might cope with a radically alien and fallible computer network in Computer Politics.

## PART 1: HUMAN NETWORKS

The first part focuses (mainly) on the past history of human information networks through stories. Professor Harari distinguishes between facts (which can be explored and proven e.g. astronomy) and intersubjective realities (which may never be proven scientifically, but which have been and sometimes still are believed in e.g. astrology or witchcraft).

Professor Yuval defines information as "attempts to represent reality, through the creation of connections and networks", "as a social nexus". Human information networks can ideally help discover truth and create order (although there may be some trade-offs between the two - kings have often claimed divinity, in order to assert their right to rule and establish order).

He explores the impact of printing, both in "fixing" previously oral stories in printed documents, but also in conferring power to the authority that produces and holds the relevant documents (a major theme in George Orwell's 1984). Prof. Harari suggests that bureaucracy is one way people in large organizations solve the "search for truth", which becomes, more pragmatically, a problem of document retrieval!

He acknowledges that "all powerful information networks can do both good or ill, depending on how they are designed and used. Merely increasing the quantity of information in a network does not increase its benevolence, or make it any easier to find the right balance between truth and order" (page 68).

Prof Harari distinguishes between religion and religious texts (which are held to be divine, infallible and free from error), as opposed to science (which has established active self-correcting mechanisms to seek out and correct errors in its texts).

He then explores the implications for decision-making in politics, contrasting political dictatorships ("a centralized information network lacking strong self-correcting mechanisms" – page 119) with democracies (a distributed information network that should possess strong self-correcting mechanisms – page 119 – which can also be considered as an ongoing conversation between diverse information nodes). Prof. Harari draws insights from Stone Age nomadic tribes, ancient Athens, the Roman Empire, the Qin dynasty, the USA (from 1825 and 1960) and Stalin's Russia.

Democracy cannot just be equated with holding regular elections (page 141). Indeed, a free press is a vital self-correcting mechanism, enabling errors to become known, debated and acknowledged. In the United States, "the Founding Fathers committed enormous mistakes – such as endorsing slavery and denying women the vote – but they also provided the tools for their descendants to correct these mistakes. That was their greatest legacy" (page 152).

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Perhaps rather worryingly, he concludes "we don't know of any large-scale kingdom or empire that operated along democratic lines" (page 138). Even more revealing is his conclusion, "once we learn to see democracy and totalitarianism as different types of information networks, we can understand why they flourish in certain eras and are absent in others" (page 185).

## PART 2: INORGANIC NETWORKS

The second part explores the major ways in which computers (and computer records) differ from historical printing presses. "Prior to the rise of computers, humans were indispensable links in every chain of information networks like churches and states" (page 205). In contrast, computer-to-computer chains can now function without humans in the loop. Previous inventions (writing, print and radio) revolutionized the way humans connected to one another. In contrast, the invention of computers revolutionized the membership of information networks (page 206). In fact, computers are increasingly operating - and maybe even running - information networks all by themselves (Chapter 6), all of the time (Chapter 7), but also while making errors (Chapter 8).

Prof Harari illustrates his arguments with reference to Artificial Intelligence (AI), Communist Romania, biometrics and social credit systems, among plenty of other examples. He considers the implications for taxation of digital transactions and power structures in society, including the alignment problem of dangerous unforeseen consequences that are not aligned with the original (human) goals (page 267). He quotes the philosopher Nick Bostrom as observing that computers may not be particularly evil, but they are particularly powerful (page 272).

Prof Harari observes "when we write computer code, we aren't just designing a product. We are redesigning politics, society and culture, so we had better have a good grasp of politics, society and culture. We also need to take responsibility for what we are doing" (page 219). This part considers many topics, including algorithmic data bias, Napoleon's military career, Kantian philosophy, evidence that algorithms have lied (page 203) and even whether computers and AI can have qualms about dying (pages 210 and 280).

## PART 3: COMPUTER POLITICS

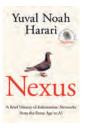
Chapter 9 starts by examining how democracies will hold conversations mediated by inorganic computer networks. Having identified that democracies need multiple conversations between diverse information nodes, Prof Harari wonders whether computer networks might annihilate privacy and "punish or reward us not only for everything we do and say but even for everything we think and feel" (page 309). However, the total surveillance made possible through computers does not mean that totalitarianism is inevitable.

There are several principles that democracies can follow - benevolence (using information to help people, rather than manipulate them page 311). Decentralization would also help protect democracies against totalitarianism (page 312) and mutuality (surveillance should apply to governments and corporations, as well as citizens). Algorithms are already making many decisions in our societies (college places, job offers, welfare benefits, loan decisions). Humans should be entitled to an explanation of algorithmic decision-making (page 331), although this is problematic in practice. Indeed, AI may get to "know" us so well, they might gradually change our views. Rather alarmingly, Prof Harari concludes "at present, it is clear that the information network of many democracies is breaking down" with radicalizing processes in many other democracies, from the Philippines to Brazil (page 346), although the causes are unclear.

However, human dictators have their own reasons to fear AI, including algorithmic takeover. Prof Harari goes onto consider silicon curtains in the rise of digital empires, data colonialism and/or global splits and competition. There are few conclusive answers in the book's discussion of the future, but plenty of fascinating and informed conjecture.

#### **IN SUMMARY**

Irrespective of your nationality, political views, technical knowledge of AI or views on history, this book raises a host of vital questions that we all need answers to, and soon. This book shows how information networks have shaped the world we live in, and influence our societies and culture, from largescale global events right down to decisions in our everyday lives. If you wish to gain a better understanding of the world we now live in, this book is required reading. //



## Menton

#### **COULEURS ET SAVEURS**



#### **SAVOIR +**

Menton, Riviera & Merveilles



La fête du citron



Le Mirazur



Menton; une jolie légende est attachée à l'origine de la ville et de son symbole, le citron. Eve, chassée du paradis terrestre avec Adam, en emporta un fruit d'or. Adam, redoutant la colère divine, lui demanda de jeter ce fruit. Après avoir franchi des montagnes, des vallées et des plaines, ils aperçurent la baie de Garavan. Le golfe, la clémence du climat, la végétation luxuriante... tout rappelait à Eve la douceur de l'Eden. Elle y enterra le citron. En ce lieu naquit un petit paradis, Menton.

Dominée par de hautes falaises typiques de la Riviera méditerranéenne, la baie de Garavan renferme de nos jours de nombreux jardins botaniques. Elle s'étend de la plage des Sablettes la plus belle plage de Menton depuis laquelle la vue sur les montagnes et sur les maisons colorées mentonnaises est magique - jusqu'à la frontière italienne. En son cœur, le nouveau port de plaisance inauguré en 1967, point de rencontre pour les passionnés de la mer, est l'un des plus grands ports de la Côte d'Azur avec 770 postes d'amarrage. Son emplacement, situé à un carrefour terrestre entre la France et l'Italie, en fait également l'un des points de départ les plus proches de la Corse, la Sardaigne ou la Sicile. Avec ses terrasses de café et ses restaurants de qualité, c'est aussi le lieu idéal pour flâner ou se relaxer sous le beau soleil qui illumine la Méditerranée.

#### **UN ÉVÉNEMENT UNIQUE AU MONDE**

Chaque année, depuis fin décembre, Menton se pare de jaune: les récoltes de citrons vont bon train. Le fruit d'or envahit les étals des marchés. Depuis plus de 90 ans, c'est aussi le moment où la ville se prépare doucement à la traditionnelle fête qui met l'agrume en avant durant la deuxième quinzaine de février.

Reconnue par le ministère de la Culture et inscrite à l'inventaire du patrimoine culturel immatériel en France en 2019, la Fête du Citron a attiré cette année 116000 spectateurs, enregistrant une hausse de 14% du nombre d'entrées. Véritable point d'orgue de la manifestation, les corsos des fruits d'or transforment le bord de mer de Menton en un spectacle éblouissant. Les chars, décorés de citrons et d'oranges, défilent dans une explosion de couleurs et de musique.

Inspirés cette année par le thème «Voyages dans les étoiles», ces tableaux vivants, formés de milliers de fruits, fascinent par leur beauté et leur créativité. Au rythme des fanfares et des animations, artistes, danseurs et musiciens animent ce défilé dans une ambiance festive. Quand la nuit tombe sur Menton, les corsos nocturnes prennent la relève pour illuminer la ville d'une douce magie. Sous le scintillement des projecteurs, les chars, parés d'agrumes, défilent en une symphonie de lumière et de fresques colorées. Parallèlement, les Jardins Biovès s'habillent aux couleurs du soleil dans des teintes jaunes et oranges éblouissantes avec des sculptures géantes d'agrumes qui émerveillent les visiteurs. Pour les gourmands, le marché de l'artisanat est un passage incontournable, pour une dégustation sur place ou à emporter. Producteurs et artisans passionnés, heureux de faire découvrir leurs délices faits maison et ravis de partager leurs histoires et leurs astuces, rendent chaque rencontre unique. Quant à l'espace réservé au Salon des Orchidées et du Jardin d'Hiver au Palais de l'Europe, c'est un véritable havre de beauté et de sérénité où chaque fleur déploie ses couleurs délicates et ses parfums subtils dans un décor raffiné.

Héros de la fête depuis 1934, le citron de Menton bénéficie d'un microclimat à tendance subtropical qui lui procure ses qualités exceptionnelles. Son parfum et son arôme séduisent et il est prisé sur de nombreuses tables étoilées.

#### UNE CUISINE SANS FRONTIÈRE, LIBRE, DÉLICATE ET AUDACIEUSE

L'objectif suprême pour chaque Chef est l'obtention des trois étoiles au Guide Michelin. Parmi les 144 établissements détenteurs de cette distinction prestigieuse, la région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur en abrite un particulièrement célèbre à Menton qui a été classé meilleur restaurant au monde selon The World's 50 Best Restaurants 2019.

Au pied des montagnes, à deux pas de la frontière italienne et surplombant l'immensité de la Méditerranée, le Mirazur, tout en élégance, se dresse dans un cadre idyllique. Le restaurant et ses terrasses extraordinaires, adossés à la falaise, se fondent dans le paysage pour offrir un spectacle particulièrement émouvant.



Menton, une ville exceptionnelle de la Riviera française, riche en patrimoine, culture et nature.





La baie de Garavan s'étend de la plage des Sablettes jusqu'à la frontière italienne.



Bien plus qu'un restaurant triplement étoilé, le Mirazur est un écosystème préservé, une philosophie de vie tout en harmonie avec la nature. Inspiré par celle-ci et par son amour pour la région, le Chef Mauro Colagreco y développe une cuisine circulaire évolutive, rythmée par les cycles biodynamiques de ses 5 hectares de potagers en permaculture et biodynamie. Chef sans frontière, citoyen de la terre, la philosophie de Mauro Colagreco se traduit dans sa cuisine de syncrétisme; il se nourrit de ses voyages, s'approprie les goûts et techniques qu'il découvre au fil de ceux-ci pour les faire siens et en livrer des expressions très personnelles adaptées à son terroir méditerranéen.

Le Guide Michelin décrit le Mirazur comme «une cuisine hors du commun»; c'est un modèle d'excellence qui, en raison de son approche éco-responsable, s'est également vu remettre l'Étoile Verte Michelin. La philosophie du lieu repose sur un approvisionnement en circuit ultra court tout en optimisant en permanence les pratiques agricoles et environnementales. Mauro Colagreco - élu meilleur Chef au monde par ses pairs dans le classement mondial «Les 100 Chefs» édition 2020 du magazine Le Chef - a su trouver un style qui lui est propre dans l'interprétation des produits et dans le contraste des saveurs. Affranchi de son héritage culturel italo-argentin et de celui des Chefs auprès desquels il a été formé - dont notamment Bernard Loiseau et Alain Ducasse -, il puise au fil de son intuition dans la culture locale des deux côtés de la frontière. Inspiré par la mer, la montagne et les fruits et légumes cultivés dans ses propres jardins, il invente des assiettes épurées, picturales, colorées qui jouent sur les textures et les associations audacieuses.

Profondément lié à la terre et soucieux de voir émerger une gastronomie respectueuse des cycles de la nature, Mauro Colagreco s'emploie chaque jour à contribuer, au mieux et à son échelle, à la transition environnementale. Sensibilisant sans relâche les pouvoirs publics et tout un chacun aux enjeux de notre humanité, il devient, en 2022, le tout premier Chef nommé par l'UNESCO Ambassadeur de bonne volonté pour la biodiversité.

#### **UN PETIT PARADIS SUR TERRE**

Nichée au cœur d'une baie délimitée à l'ouest par le Cap-Martin et à l'est par la pointe de la Mortola, Menton - surnommée «la perle de la France» - est adossée aux contreforts des Alpes qui l'enveloppent dans un cirque formé de sommets culminant à 1249m. Ainsi protégée, la ville bénéficie d'un climat tout à fait exceptionnel avec notamment des hivers doux et ensoleillés. Avec ses maisons aux façades colorées qui dominent la Méditerranée, la vieille ville est de toute beauté. Un petit air d'Italie: ici c'est la «dolce vita». Ses rues pittoresques, ses jardins luxuriants, son patrimoine architectural étonnant et sa gastronomie unique lui donnent un charme particulier. L'atmosphère y est chaleureuse, conviviale et on s'y sent comme chez soi.







30000 spectateurs sur les corsos de jour et 14000 sur les corsos nocturnes, une édition 2025 record pour la Fête du Citron.

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Aimeriez-vous partager votre opinion avec nous au sujet de newSpecial et de son contenu? Nous serons toujours ravis de lire vos réactions. Les réponses intéressantes, parfois même ingénieuses et constructives seront publiées dans le magazine. Souhaitez-vous soumettre un article, un sujet? Vous pouvez nous contacter quand vous le souhaitez.

Adressez vos commentaires à: Garry Aslanyan - newSpecial OMS, 20 av. Appia CH-1202 Genève Suisse info@newspecial.org

#### Au service du personnel des organisations internationales de Genève depuis 1949.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

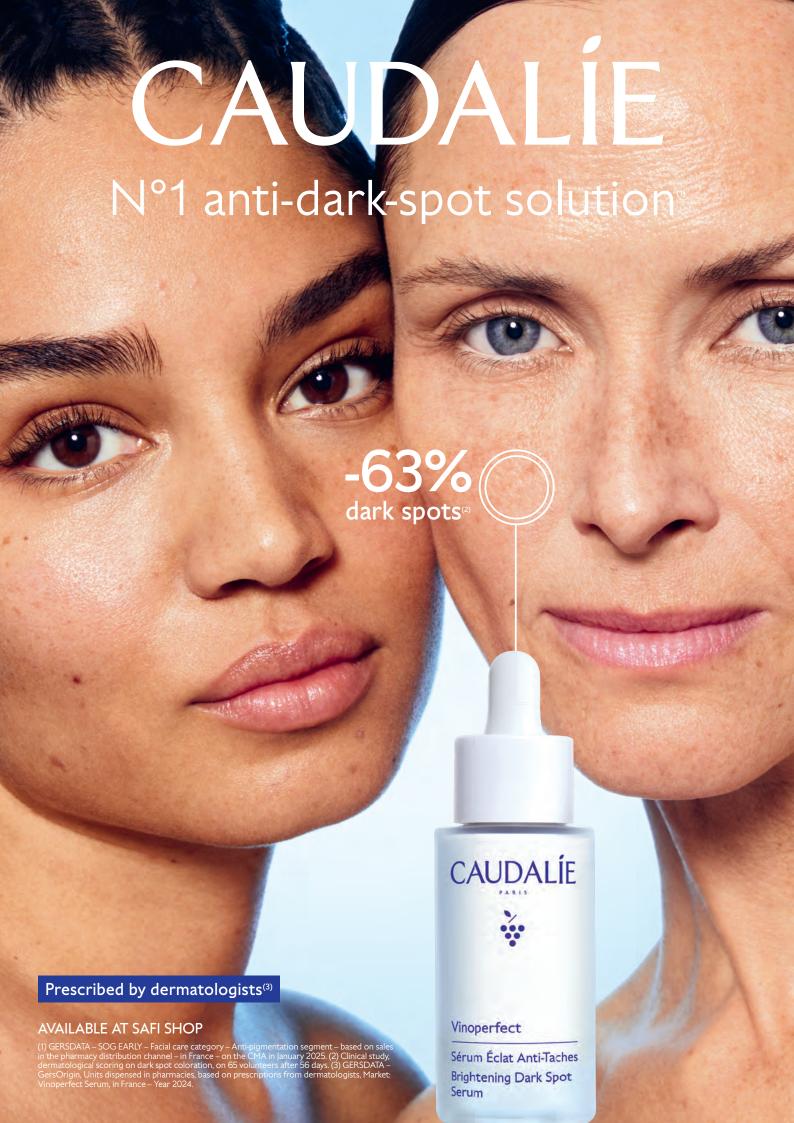
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