

newSpecial

Trust in a Changing World

SCIENCE, SOVEREIGNTY
AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

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TRUST IN A CHANGING WORLD

In this issue, a clear thread runs through every story: trust how it is built, how it is tested, and why it matters more than ever. From WHO's call to "Stand with science" to the quiet success of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework, global health reminds us that cooperation is not an abstract ideal but a daily practice. When evidence is challenged and misinformation spreads faster than facts, reaffirming the value of science becomes a collective responsibility. As WHO's new communications strategy shows, trust must be earned through clarity, relevance and genuine engagement.

Beyond health, trust extends into the digital realm. Switzerland's debate on "neutralité numérique" highlights how sovereignty, privacy and technological dependence are reshaping national strategies. As experts in Geneva warn, neutrality in the digital age is not a given it is a choice requiring political will, transparent governance and a commitment to protecting individual freedoms.

Across Africa, the push to localize malaria data training underscores another truth: solutions work only when rooted in local realities. When health workers learn in their own language, using their own data, the impact is immediate. Trust grows when people see themselves in the systems meant to serve them.

Whether in global health, digital governance or community-level action, the message is consistent: we move forward only when we move together. In a polarized world, these stories offer rare evidence that cooperation still works, and that progress is possible when trust is treated as a shared asset.

As Geneva continues to serve as a hub for dialogue and innovation, this issue invites readers to reflect on the systems we rely on, the values we defend, and the future we want to build collectively. Enjoy your reading! //

LA CONFIANCE DANS UN MONDE EN MUTATION

Dans ce numéro, un fil conducteur relie chaque article: la confiance, comment elle se construit, comment elle est mise à l'épreuve et pourquoi elle compte plus que jamais. De l'appel de l'OMS à « Soutenir la science » au succès discret du Cadre de préparation en cas de grippe pandémique, la santé mondiale nous rappelle que la coopération n'est pas un idéal abstrait, mais une pratique quotidienne. Lorsque les faits sont contestés et que la désinformation circule plus vite que la vérité, réaffirmer la valeur de la science devient une responsabilité collective. Comme le montre la nouvelle stratégie de communication de l'OMS, la confiance ne se décrète pas: elle se gagne par la clarté, la pertinence et un engagement authentique.

Au-delà de la santé, la question de la confiance s'étend au numérique. Le débat suisse sur la « neutralité numérique » met en lumière la manière dont souveraineté, vie privée et dépendance technologique redéfinissent les stratégies nationales. Comme le rappellent les experts à Genève, la neutralité à l'ère digitale n'est pas un acquis, mais un choix qui exige volonté politique, gouvernance transparente et protection des libertés individuelles.

À travers l'Afrique, l'effort de localisation des formations sur les données du paludisme révèle une autre vérité essentielle: les solutions ne fonctionnent que lorsqu'elles s'ancrent dans les réalités locales. Lorsque les agents de santé apprennent dans leur propre langue, avec leurs propres données, l'impact est immédiat. La confiance grandit lorsque chacun se reconnaît dans les systèmes censés le servir.

Qu'il s'agisse de santé mondiale, de gouvernance numérique ou d'action communautaire, le message reste le même: nous avançons seulement lorsque nous avançons ensemble. Dans un monde polarisé, ces récits offrent une preuve rare que la coopération fonctionne encore, et que le progrès est possible lorsque la confiance est traitée comme un bien commun.

Alors que Genève continue de jouer son rôle de carrefour du dialogue et de l'innovation, ce numéro invite chacun à réfléchir aux systèmes sur lesquels nous comptons, aux valeurs que nous défendons et à l'avenir que nous souhaitons bâtir collectivement.

Bonne lecture! //



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N°848

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Together for health. Stand with science.

WHY THIS YEAR'S WORLD HEALTH DAY MARKS A TURNING POINT

At a time when misinformation is widespread and trust in science is tested, the World Health Organization is using World Health Day 2026 to launch a year-long campaign to bring science closer to people's decisions for health. Under the theme "Together for health. Stand with science," the initiative reflects a broader reset in how WHO communicates science and evidence-based health advice.

HEALTH DECISIONS MUST BE GUIDED BY EVIDENCE

That is the central message of World Health Day 2026, marked each year on 7 April - the day that WHO's Constitution came into force in 1948.

Under the theme "Together for health. Stand with science," the day signals more than an annual observance of WHO's founding. It marks the launch of a year-long campaign by the World Health Organization (WHO) to reaffirm the value of science, strengthen trust in evidence, and reset how global health information is communicated and used.

The timing is deliberate. Across the world, trust in science and public institutions is under strain. Misinformation spreads rapidly, expertise is increasingly contested, and multilateral cooperation is openly questioned. In health, the consequences are immediate and serious: hesitation to seek care, resistance to proven life-saving interventions such as vaccines, and confusion at moments when clarity matters most.

World Health Day responds directly to this reality. Its message is simple but urgent: science is practical, protective and deeply human. Standing with science, the campaign argues, is something that we must do together, because everyone benefits when health decisions are grounded in evidence.

At the heart of this message is relevance to all people in all countries - not just those in low- and middle-income countries where the organization has presence. Global health only builds trust when people can see how evidence connects to the deci-

sions they make every day for themselves, their families and their communities.

"World Health Day 2026 is not a one-off moment, but the start of a year-long effort to stand with science and rebuild trust in evidence."

This framing reflects a broader shift underway at WHO, captured in its new Global Communications Strategy (2026-2028), currently in the final stages of consultation. World Health Day is one of the first visible moments where that strategy is being put into practice.

A CHALLENGING GLOBAL LANDSCAPE

The need for this reset has been building for years. The global information environment has become faster, more crowded and fragmented. Messages compete for attention in seconds. Simplistic claims, even when they are false, often travel further than careful explanation. Scientific evidence - by nature cautious and evolving - is frequently perceived as uncertain or weak.

Recent global health crises, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, exposed these tensions clearly. As guidance evolved with new evidence, many people struggled to understand why advice changed. At the same time, false or deliberately misleading narratives filled the gaps. Trust, once weakened, is difficult to restore.

For WHO, and for many international organizations, this has been a defining challenge. Growing attacks on multilateralism, combined with declining confidence in science and public institutions, are testing the foundations of global cooperation. Yet these pressures make WHO's role not less important, but more essential.

WORLD HEALTH DAY AS A CASE STUDY

World Health Day 2026 is designed with this reality firmly in mind. Rather than leading with institutional language, the campaign starts with a shared concern: how people make decisions about their health.



“With the slogan “Stand with science” the campaign invites the public, policy makers and partners to consider how they can be discerning about the health information they consume, and be curious about how science is the best foundation for decisions about health,” says Dr Gaya Gamhewage, WHO’s Director of Communications, ai.

The campaign brings experts, within and outside WHO, prominent figures, and everyday people including youth and social media influencers, to point to the relevance of science-based advice to everyone’s daily lives, wellbeing and health.

The campaign will be spread throughout the year, reinforcing how science supports all of WHO’s advice and work; and the need for all sectors, populations and partners to work together to protect people’s health.

FROM AUTHORITY TO TRUST

At the heart of WHO’s Global Communications Strategy is a recognition that trust cannot be assumed. It must be built deliberately and continuously, especially in an environment shaped by skepticism and misinformation.

The strategy defines WHO’s voice through three qualities: competence, confidence and care.

Competence reflects WHO’s scientific foundation that underpins its role in setting norms and standards. Confidence means speaking clearly and consistently, without unnecessary jargon or hesitation, and speaking up for people’s health when this fundamental right is threatened. Care acknowledges that health and decisions about health are taken in complex contexts and that listening to, understanding and addressing people’s concerns is key.

ENGAGEMENT OVER BROADCASTING

WHO’s strategy places strong emphasis on engagement and dialogue – listening to concerns, responding to questions and explaining how evidence is generated and used. World Health Day encourages participation and sharing, recognizing that trust grows through interaction rather than instruction.

By framing science as something that requires a collective approach, the campaign invites audiences to see themselves not as passive recipients of information, but as active participants in protecting health.



MAKING RELEVANCE VISIBLE

This emphasis on relevance sits at the core of WHO's communications reset. Explaining science clearly is essential but so is showing why it matters.

By consistently linking evidence to real world decisions and outcomes, the campaign helps bridge the gap between global guidance and everyday experience. Throughout the year, the same theme will be integrated with other health topics and world days to showcase how science supports safer choices, stronger health systems and better outcomes for people and communities.

This aligns closely with the communications strategy's emphasis on relevance: explaining not only what WHO does, but why it matters – to countries, to communities and to individuals.

LESSONS BEYOND WHO

While World Health Day is a WHO initiative, its implications extend far beyond one organization. Many UN bodies face similar challenges: contested expertise, declining trust and growing pressure to explain complex mandates in accessible ways to demonstrate relevance and impact on everyone, everywhere.

By starting with a clear, human-centred message and anchoring it in evidence, WHO demonstrates how institutions can defend science and demonstrate their relevance.

“Standing with science is not only a health issue; it is a multilateral one, with implications for trust, cooperation and collective action.”

For Geneva-based missions and international organizations, this matters. Public confidence in science underpins cooperation, policy and collective problem solving.

TOGETHER FOR HEALTH

In Lyon last April, WHO and the Government of France hosted two global events that highlighted the campaign theme. At the One Health Summit, WHO and global partners emphasized that human health, animal health and the environment are deeply connected and these sectors must work together to better protect against future health risks and crises. *“Science must guide our action, and cooperation must be our strength,”* said Emmanuel Macron, President of France.

Continuing the theme of working together for science-based health evidence and action, the first Global Forum of WHO Collaborating Centres brought together experts from leading public health and scientific institutions from more than 80 countries.

Coalitions, partnerships and networks for science-based health evidence and action are essential to ensure that the best advice on health is generated, shared and used – by the public, by partners and by policy makers.

“At a time of growing global health challenges, this spirit of trusted scientific collaboration is not only valuable – it is indispensable to protecting lives and shaping a healthier future for all,” said Dr Sylvie Briand, WHO Chief Scientist.//

[Join WHO's year-long campaign. Access campaign products that you can adapt and use here:](#)

[World Health Day 2026](#)

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/2026>

CAVES OUVERTES

SAMEDI 30 MAI 2026
10H-17H



A consommer avec modération

WHO PIP Framework

A QUIET TRIUMPH OF EQUITY AND MULTILATERALISM



TEXT TOLGA KIM, KATE S. RAWLINGS, JENNIFER BARRAGAN FROMME,
SARAH HOLDERNESS, LUISA BELLONI, ANNE HUVOS, WHO
PHOTOS ENRIC CATALA CONTRERAS

Fifteen years after its adoption, the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework stands as a success story of modern multilateralism. At a time when trust between nations is strained and global health cooperation is tested, the PIP Framework offers a rare example of what countries can achieve when responding to a common risk becomes a shared purpose.

Designed and negotiated by WHO's 194 Member States, and adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2011, the PIP Framework created the first, and still only, global access and benefit sharing system dedicated to public health. Its goal is simple: enable the timely sharing of influenza viruses with pandemic potential and ensure that countries receive equitable access to the benefits that arise from that sharing. The fact that this model works, and continues to work, reflects both strategic foresight and a high degree of international trust.

"[T]he PIP framework is one pristine example of how to put on an equal footing access and benefit sharing." – Dr Hugo López-Gatell, Minister and Head of Health Affairs, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN office in Geneva

At the heart of PIP is a balanced system linking virus sharing to two key elements of pandemic influenza preparedness and response: a) an annual, predictable stream of funds to address capacity gaps; and b) timely access to future pandemic influenza vaccines, antivirals and diagnostics. The PIP Framework delivers both.

The funds collected through the PIP Partnership Contribution, paid annually by influenza products manufacturers, allow WHO to strengthen preparedness capacities in countries where they are weak. Over the past 15 years, these contributions of over US\$ 350M have enabled 86 countries to strengthen various preparedness capacities such as laboratory and surveillance systems, regulatory capacities, and risk communication, and to train thousands of health workers. Although targeted at pandemic influenza, the collateral benefits of these investments were seen in the COVID-19 pandemic. These gains reflect the collective commitment of the PIP Framework partners.

"Critically, as we also saw during COVID, those investments were not [...] for influenza only. Those labs and surveillance systems strengthened through PIP funds for influenza were very helpful for countries during the COVID detection and response period... in 2020, especially for lower and middle-income countries." – Dr Farida Al Hosani, CEO, Global Institute for Disease Elimination (GLIDE)

The achievements to secure access to pandemic influenza response products are equally striking. Through legally binding advance supply agreements, WHO has secured access to an estimated 940 million doses of pandemic influenza vaccine, along with millions of syringes, antiviral treatments, and hundreds of thousands of diagnostic kits. This means that when the next influenza pandemic inevitably strikes, there will be timely access to these products for countries that need them, not just the countries that can afford to purchase them.

PIP's success is not accidental; it rests on several pillars that are rarely aligned in global health: legal clarity, transparent governance, predictable financing, and a strong culture of partnership across governments, industry, civil society, the global scientific community, and WHO. Above all, throughout its 15 years of implementation, PIP has strengthened equity across preparedness and response by building trust, among partners, that virus sharing will be met with fair and reliable access to products resulting from that sharing.

"The uniqueness of that model is that it doesn't wait for the pandemic to unlock its resources... it builds systems that make pandemics - less catastrophic and it does that quietly, persistently, and equitably even when the world is not watching." – Dr Farida Al Hosani, CEO, Global Institute for Disease Elimination (GLIDE)

In a time of increasing political uncertainty, where public health, science and multilateralism are challenged, the PIP Framework reminds us of what cooperation makes possible. As we look toward the future of global health security, PIP stands as proof that a more equitable, better prepared world is not an aspiration. It is already being built through multisectoral, multilateral cooperation. //

A WHO facilitator conducts an open forum with community members.



A WHO-supported training session on molecular testing to detect Influenza and SARS-Cov2.

Local voices, local data

HOW LOCALIZATION CAN STRENGTHEN MALARIA ELIMINATION ACROSS AFRICA

LEARN +

Malaria



WHO Academy



World malaria report 2025



For a health facility in northern Togo, effective analysis and use of routine surveillance data can mean the difference between identifying a rise in malaria cases early or only recognizing it once wards are full and children present with severe disease. For malaria programmes across Africa, the ability of health workers to understand and act on data directly shapes who receives timely care.

Yet across malaria programmes in the region, health workers are increasingly expected to analyse trends and guide responses using routine data, often with limited access to advanced, practice-oriented training that reflects their language, context and analytical needs. When learning is not accessible or contextualised, data may be collected but not fully used for decision-making.

To address this, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed the Malaria: Harnessing the power of routine health facility data course, and made it available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese on the WHO Academy online learning platform as part of a blended learning programme. Led by Dr Deepa Pindolia, the course was designed from the outset with localization as a core principle, recognizing that data analysis is already complex, and learning it in a second or third language is not effective.

WHY LANGUAGE MATTERS

For Dr Atekpe Payakissim Somiabaló, National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) Coordinator in Togo, providing the training in French was critical. *“The main priority is training operational staff in a language they know so that everyone understands the importance of the data collected for decision making.”* According to the NMCP, malaria remains the leading cause of illness in Togo, accounting for 30% of outpatient consultations, 9% of hospitalizations, more than 2.18 million cases and 993 deaths in 2024.

When asked if he would recommend the course to colleagues working on malaria elimination, Dr Somiabaló was emphatic. *“Yes, yes and yes. Any effective intervention to combat a given disease is*

based on a better surveillance system. We need to develop contextualized operational action plans to solve the problems identified and improve coverage and performance indicators.”

In Senegal, Mr Médoune Ndiop, a specialist in monitoring, evaluation and surveillance within the NMCP (2002-2025) and co-chair of its working group (2018-2024), shares this observation on the importance of localized, contextualized and accessible learning for health-care workers at different levels of the health system. *“It increases participants’ understanding and ensures they have a better grasp of concepts,”* he noted. *“The use of the local official language facilitates interactions with participants, especially in analysis and interpretation exercises.”*

LOCALIZED LEARNING ESSENTIAL TO HEALTH OUTCOMES

Thibaud de Chevigny, malaria expert and facilitator of the course, has witnessed this transformation across Africa. After more than a decade supporting malaria programmes in the region, he believes localization is not optional – it is foundational. *“Translation is absolutely essential, because most subnational programme teams and health information officers in Africa don’t work in English,”* he emphasized. *“When people can learn in their own language, the concepts are clearer, the training feels more inclusive and it also creates more opportunity to cascade the learning.”*

For de Chevigny, all training should be fully localized and adapted to the context. *“Beyond translation, the real impact comes when the course is localized to reflect each country’s context. I’ve seen how participants become much more engaged when we use local epidemiological data or case studies. Suddenly the discussions shift from theory to their daily reality.”*

This approach is critical in a region that carries the overwhelming share of the global malaria burden. According to the World malaria report 2025, 94% of malaria cases globally occurred in the WHO African Region in 2024. Of the 610 000 malaria deaths, 95% were in the WHO African Region and three quarters of those were among children under the age of five.



Localization was central to the design of the Malaria: Harnessing the power of routine health facility data course.

As de Chevigny highlights, routine surveillance is the backbone of effective malaria control, especially in an era of growing insecticide and drug resistance, climate change and decreased funding, making data-driven decision-making more critical than ever.

“My main hope is that health-care workers come away with the confidence to use surveillance data as a powerful decision-making tool in their daily work. I want them to leave the course knowing that their role at the frontline is central to reducing malaria’s burden, and that they are equipped with both the knowledge and the practical skills to make a tangible difference.” //

Suisse et Neutralité numérique, peut-on garder notre indépendance ?

UNE TABLE RONDE, RÉUNISSANT DES EXPERTS INCONTOURNABLES SUR LA PLACE DE GENÈVE, SE DÉROULAIT À L'INSTITUT NATIONAL GENEVOIS (INGE).

TEXT CHRIS DAVID
PHOTO CNG/IMG, DR

Dans un contexte mondial de questionnement sur les enjeux numériques, la question des dépendances aux technologies se pose désormais à tous les pays. Cette notion constitue un enjeu stratégique majeur pour garantir l'indépendance, sensibiliser la population et mettre en place une cybersécurité efficace.

Raimondo Pictet, entrepreneur et responsable des initiatives numériques de Geneva Center for Neutrality (GCN)¹, think tank (fondé et présidé par Nicolas Ramseier), anime la soirée et rappelle l'engagement de son association à promouvoir un écosystème souverain pour la Suisse. Le GCN entend faire de Genève un acteur de référence sur ces enjeux de neutralité numérique. Si elle s'en donne les moyens, La Suisse peut bâtir un refuge neutre et sûr pour les données, à l'image de ce qu'elle représente pour la diplomatie et l'humanitaire. La Suisse doit adapter ce principe à l'ère numérique. Le cyberspace est en effet devenu un cinquième théâtre d'opérations militaires après la terre, la mer, l'air et l'espace.

Une neutralité numérique supposerait l'obligation de protéger la souveraineté étatique, les libertés individuelles et la confiance internationale. Elle ne se décrète pas mais se construit par des choix technologiques majeurs, politiques et citoyens. La Suisse a des atouts et doit les faire valoir.

Les trois experts présents, intarissables sur le sujet, sont Marc Løebekken, responsable du département juridique de Proton AG, Boris Siegenthaler cocréateur de la plateforme Infomaniak.ch et Patrick Ghion (police de Genève), chef de la cyberstratégie et responsable du Centre régional de cybercompétence de Suisse occidentale.

4 THÈMES SONT ABORDÉS

- La Suisse comme argument de vente.
- La loi sur la surveillance des télécommunications (LSCPT) (3) appliquée depuis 2018, favorise la surveillance pour contrer la délinquance. Une révision de cette loi est en cours car elle provoque une tension entre la surveillance étatique et le respect de la confidentialité de la vie privée.
- Rôles de l'état et du secteur privé dans l'établissement d'un système souverain.
- Place de l'IA dans nos choix sociétaux autour de la souveraineté.

Proton a ouvert une grande partie de son code source. La protection des données personnelles reste en Suisse et les données ne sont pas transférées à des serveurs étrangers. L'entreprise a été fondée en 2014 avec un cadre juridique suisse précis, attractif et l'un des plus stricts du monde. Pour Marc Løebekken, la neutralité numérique, c'est la liberté des individus. La loi doit protéger les droits, et non imposer la surveillance. La Suisse doit rester un refuge, pas un terrain de jeu pour les États.

Pourtant, à la technologie et la performance de la démarche se heurtent l'application de la loi LSCPT qualifiée d'intrusive et notamment son ordonnance qui a étendu le contrôle du monde numérique. Sa vocation initiale, d'étendre les devoirs de surveillance, pourrait avoir des conséquences négatives sur l'économie suisse et même son attractivité internationale. Il serait difficile, pour les entreprises suisses, d'être pénalisées par des contraintes que n'ont pas leurs concurrents. Le point qui pose problème aux entreprises, est la conservation des données. Si une personne sur 10000 commet un forfait, est-il nécessaire d'avoir accès aux données des 10000 personnes? Chez nos voisins européens, ce principe qui devait être appliqué a d'ailleurs été cassé à trois reprises par la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne. Une révision de cette ordonnance est en cours.



Geneva Center
for Neutrality

Suisse et Neutralité numérique

peut-on garder notre
indépendance ?



INGE – Institut National Genevois

16 février 2026, 18:30 – 20:00

Modéré par Raimondo Pictet

Par ailleurs, l'entrée en vigueur prévue de la réglementation e-Evidence en Europe dès août 2028 soulève une question supplémentaire : comment la Suisse articulera-t-elle ses obligations légales nationales – notamment l'article 271 du Code pénal – face à des injonctions directes de polices étrangères adressées aux fournisseurs suisses ?

Une stratégie qui puisse intégrer la question de souveraineté suppose des choix politiques et c'est d'ailleurs ce qui se produit dans plusieurs pays qui ne veulent pas rater le train des technologies futures.

Pour l'IA, les sociétés qui capturent le marché et donc les données de la population ne gagnent pas d'argent. Il y aura un moment où elles voudront générer des revenus et nous pouvons légitimement nous poser la question sur la manière dont elles procéderont pour rentabiliser leurs investissements. Il faudra mettre en place des garanties et un respect des données individuelles : c'est ce que tente Proton.

Le citoyen informé et éduqué doit faire la différence entre un produit américain gratuit ou un service alternatif. Il est impossible de jouer selon les règles des géants qui ont le monopole.

Infomaniak se revendique comme une entreprise suisse contrôlée par son personnel et dont les données sont traitées par des logiciels open source. Boris Siegenthaler précise que son entreprise performe par la qualité de son personnel et son savoir-faire local. Tout est fait pour conserver cette spécificité suisse et éviter la tendance du départ vers l'étranger. Avec 40% du chiffre d'affaires réalisé en Europe, Infomaniak a initié une démarche différente, voire innovante face à ces multinationales qui souvent imposent leurs modèles. Un désaccord apparaît par exemple avec un contrat cloud de 110 millions entre la Confédération et des géants étrangers dont Microsoft.

En effet, plusieurs milliards sont dépensés pour l'achat de logiciels étrangers. L'idée est que ces milliards restent en Suisse pour créer de l'emploi, du savoir-faire. Le fait notamment de développer et améliorer des technologies open source en Suisse permettra à tous les pays de les utiliser. Ainsi, la plateforme Swiss Transfer a été bloquée en Asie ou en Amérique du Sud pour permettre une biodiversité de développement de produits équivalents.

Nous hébergeons des centaines de milliers de clients. Il faut comprendre qu'internet, c'est le Far-West et chacun peut le constater sur sa boîte mail. Une de nos activités principales est de lutter contre les hackers et c'est très énergivore en termes de ressources humaines et de temps. La souveraineté, c'est l'argent qui reste en Suisse. Nous investissons dans l'open source, les ingénieurs suisses, les énergies locales. D'ailleurs, nous avons un projet, avec des étudiants à Sion, d'un antispam open source qui sera une IA. Euria, notre IA 100% maîtrisée en Suisse, dans le respect de la vie privée et de nos engagements environnementaux, est disponible sur le site.

SAVOIR +

Replay





Le problème réside en ce que les Chinois et les Américains possèdent une avance technologique et que nous devons rattraper ce retard tout en conservant notre indépendance. Cette dernière passe également par l'accès stable à une énergie sécurisée nécessaire à la consommation de nos data centers. C'est aussi pour cette raison que nos prestataires énergétiques sont suisses ou européens.

L'Europe nous protège dans une certaine mesure; il faut que l'Europe se porte bien et la Suisse suivra. La mondialisation a atteint ses limites et aujourd'hui, il faut raisonner par continent. L'IA peut paradoxalement nous permettre de rattraper notre retard malgré un effectif réduit grâce à son coefficient multiplicateur. Cependant, comme l'IA est un outil, elle peut être utilisée à mauvais escient et nous exposer à des dangers. La souveraineté, c'est l'argent qui reste en Suisse. Arrêtons de financer les géants étrangers. Investissons dans l'open source, les ingénieurs suisses, les énergies locales.

Pour Patrick Ghion, le rôle de la police et de la cyber stratégie qu'il dirige, consiste notamment à anticiper pour s'adapter aux technologies. La police enquête dans un cadre légal, sur des crimes et délits commis par des cybercriminels, et ce afin d'aider les citoyens et les professions qui ont besoin de protéger leurs données. Des cybercriminels utilisent les fonctionnalités de cryptage pour commettre leurs méfaits dans l'anonymat, mais ces technologies permettent aussi aux entreprises de sauvegarder leurs données. Il est nécessaire, pour les enquêtes, d'avoir accès aux données dans ce cadre strict. L'échange d'information entre les pays passe par les Bureaux Centraux Nationaux (BCN). Les 196 pays membres d'Interpol ont leurs BCN. Le type d'information obtenu évolue en fonction de la loi locale.

Toutes les sociétés qui offrent leurs services à l'étranger, notamment en Europe et les polices étrangères devraient théoriquement émettre des décisions contraignantes envers la Suisse. Or, l'article 271 du code pénal nous interdit de répondre à ce genre de requête. Il existe donc des lois contradictoires dont il faudra régler l'application, sous peine que certains pays participent moins que d'autres à l'échange d'information.

Nous fonctionnons sur le triptyque investigation, renseignement et forensic (police scientifique, médico légale). Le domaine évolue tellement vite que désormais, nous faisons appel à du personnel civil spécialisé, par exemple dans la blockchain et les cryptos. Les criminels utilisent aussi les nouvelles technologies, y compris l'IA. Nous travaillons avec l'office cantonal des systèmes d'information et du numérique (OCSIN)² qui dispose d'un service dédié à l'IA. La question est de savoir comment utiliser l'intelligence artificielle pour détecter les éléments de preuve qui auraient pu être falsifiés. //

¹ genevaneutrality.ch

² <https://www.ge.ch/organisation/office-cantonal-systemes-information-du-numerique-ocsin>

l'Institut national genevois

Fondé en 1852 par James Fazy, l'Institut national genevois (INGE) organise des événements ouverts à la population. Ces conférences sont dévolues au partage des savoirs et des expertises présentes au sein de la diversité genevoise. Les thématiques de l'économie, des arts, des sciences et des politiques sont régulièrement proposées à un public qui peut aborder ce large spectre de connaissances compris entre histoire, culture et ouverture sur le monde.

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horses and
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Polio eradication, from the Last Cases to the Next Chapter

HOW MEMBER STATES ARE STEPPING UP TO END POLIO



TEXT DR ARSHAD GUDDUS, DIRECTOR FOR POLIO ERADICATION,
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
PHOTOS WHO / GENNA PRINT & AYESHA JAVED

As health ministers gather in Geneva this May for the World Health Assembly, one of the most extraordinary human efforts in history hovers close to its goal.

Polio, once a feared disease, has been pushed to the brink of eradication. An estimated more than 20 million people today are walking who would have been paralysed by the virus were it not for vaccination and the global eradication effort.

Since 1988, cases have fallen by more than 99 percent thanks to a partnership called the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

Reaching this point was not obvious, nor was it inevitable. It has required governments to be dedicated, communities to be fully engaged and health workers to be persistent and creative. And it has required a level of international cooperation that withstood decades of political change.

THE FINAL PUSH

Today, wild poliovirus transmission remains endemic in only two countries: Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both continue to restrict the virus through country-wide network of surveillance that can detect the virus anywhere and respond through vaccination campaigns that aim to reach every last child. Compared to 2024, the number of polio cases in these endemic countries decreased by 48% in 2025, and are mostly reported from a few security compromised districts along the border between the countries.

At the same time, emergence of the variant virus in polio-free countries, including several countries of Europe, have reminded the rest of the world that until polio is eradicated everywhere, children everywhere remain at risk. International spread of poliovirus remains a Public Health Emergency of International Concern - WHO's highest level of public health alert requiring globally supported and coordinated efforts.

Over the past year, countries and partners have responded rapidly and decisively to outbreaks of variant poliovirus in some of the most complex settings on earth. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Sudan sustained vaccination efforts have dramatically reduced transmission that once affected large areas of the country. Madagascar successfully closed a long-running outbreak after an intensive response. In Papua New Guinea, teams have reached children in some of the most remote terrain in the world to contain virus circulation.

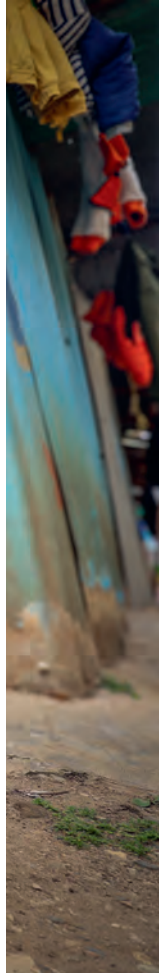
Perhaps most striking has been the response in Gaza. Amid extremely difficult humanitarian conditions, coordinated efforts by health workers, governments and international partners and active participation of parents enabled emergency vaccination campaigns to reach hundreds of thousands of children. Surveillance continues to monitor the situation closely, but the response demonstrates an important lesson: when access is secured and communities are engaged, outbreaks can be stopped - even under the most challenging circumstances.

These achievements are not simply technical successes. They are the result of political choices, community ownership, operational excellence and international solidarity.

DIPLOMACY FOR HEALTH

Polio eradication has always been more than a health programme. It is a diplomatic undertaking as much as a scientific one.

At its core, the initiative represents a shared commitment by Member States to a common global good: ensuring that no child, anywhere, is paralysed by a preventable disease.



This commitment is visible not only in countries where vaccination teams are working on the front lines, but also in the corridors of diplomacy here in Geneva. Permanent Missions and Member State delegations play an essential role in shaping the programme’s direction, sustaining political momentum and ensuring accountability.

A MODEL FOR MULTILATERAL ACTION

At a time when the international system is facing increasing geopolitical tensions and financial pressures, the polio programme offers an important reminder: multilateral cooperation can still deliver extraordinary results in addressing global health security threats.

Few initiatives bring together such a diverse coalition of actors – national governments, international organizations, civil society groups like Rotary International, philanthropic foundations and millions of volunteers – working toward a shared objective.

Rotary International’s global network of volunteers has played a particularly remarkable role, sustaining political attention and mobilising communities for more than four decades. Governments, including many represented in Geneva, have matched this civic leadership with financial support and diplomatic engagement. New partners, notably the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are bringing fresh political, technical and financial momentum to the effort, while longstanding partners such as the United Arab Emirates continue to demonstrate deep and sustained commitment. In early December, the Mohamed bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity convened long-standing and new partners at a pivotal moment in Abu Dhabi, underscoring the UAE’s leadership and a shared determination to end polio.

Together, this partnership has built one of the most sophisticated disease surveillance systems ever created, capable of detecting the virus even before paralysis occurs. It has delivered billions of vaccine doses and reached children in areas affected by conflict, natural disasters and fragile health systems. A network has been established to help address broader public health and humanitarian emergencies.

A young boy being vaccinated against polio by a community health worker in Nairobi Country, Kenya. This child was one of 3.8 million children reached with the polio vaccine during a campaign in October 2024, thanks to the efforts of the national government and Global Polio Eradication Initiative donors and partners.



WHO staff and social mobilizer Hina Riaz in Sheikhpura, Punjab province, Pakistan, engages with a family during the national measles-rubella vaccination campaign implemented in November 2025.

In many ways, the polio effort already embodies the kind of international cooperation that the broader UN reform agenda – including the UN80 process – seeks to strengthen: coordinated action, shared accountability and a focus on delivering measurable results for countries and communities.

THE LAST MILE

History teaches us that the final stage of eradication is often the most difficult. Smallpox eradication succeeded not because the world stopped at 90 or 95 percent progress, but because it remained committed until the last chain of transmission was broken.

Polio demands the same determination.

The virus thrives wherever immunity gaps persist. If eradication efforts were to falter now, modelling suggests that the disease could resurge globally, paralysing hundreds of thousands of children within a decade.

The cost of failure would be measured not only in financial terms, but in human lives and lost opportunity.

Finishing the job therefore remains one of the most urgent priorities in global health.

THE NEXT CHAPTER

Yet even as the world works to interrupt the final chains of transmission, it is also preparing for what comes next. Over the past year, governments have actively engaged in consultations on the next phase of the eradication effort: Sustaining a Polio-free World – a Strategy for Long-term Success, which will be presented to the World Health Assembly.

The strategy reflects a fundamental reality: eradication is not the end of the story. Once the virus is gone, the world must ensure that it never returns. This will require continued surveillance, strong immunization systems, rapid outbreak response capacity and sustained international cooperation.

The Sustaining a Polio-free World Strategy will ensure that once eradication is achieved, countries retain the tools necessary to keep the world safe: strong surveillance, resilient immunization systems reaching the most underserved and vulnerable populations, rapid outbreak response capacity and implementation of global standards to minimize the risk of containment breaches from any facility retaining poliovirus.

In this way, the legacy of polio eradication will extend far beyond a single disease.

A SHARED ACHIEVEMENT

When the World Health Assembly debates polio this year, ministers will not simply be discussing another global health programme.

They will be reflecting on one of humanity's most ambitious collective undertakings – and on the extraordinary cooperation that has brought the world to the brink of success.

Polio eradication began with a simple but powerful decision by Member States in 1988: that no child should suffer from a disease the world has the means to prevent.

Nearly four decades later, that commitment is stronger than ever.

The last cases are within reach. The next chapter is already taking shape.

Now is the moment to finish what the world started. //

Youth Wellbeing Ambassadors in Jordan

A ONE-YEAR PROGRAMME BUILDING YOUNG ADVOCATES FOR TOBACCO CONTROL

In Jordan, a WHO Jordan-developed new youth initiative is demonstrating that youth engagement in tobacco control can go far beyond awareness. Through a one-year programme that blends tobacco control literacy, debate, policy advocacy and applied action, university students are emerging as informed advocates for smoke-free campuses and stronger implementation accountability.

On university campuses, tobacco and nicotine use is shaped not only by personal choice, but also by social norms, peer influence, environment and policy enforcement. In Jordan, a WHO developed an initiative addressing this reality by investing in youth not simply as recipients of health messages, but as advocates and change-makers.

The Youth Wellbeing Ambassadors programme is a one-year capacity-building programme that equips university students to play a more meaningful role in tobacco control. The initiative goes beyond traditional awareness activities and focuses on developing young leaders who can understand tobacco control as a public health and policy issue, communicate evidence, engage others and contribute to practical solutions.

A core strength of the programme is its combined focus on technical knowledge and advocacy skills. Alongside leadership development, participants complete a tobacco literacy package that provides a strong foundation in tobacco control. This includes learning about the health harms of tobacco and nicotine, the public health rationale for tobacco control measures, relevant laws and policy approaches, and the issue of tobacco industry interference and its impact on public health efforts. This foundation is essential. It helps youth participants engage with tobacco control not only as a message to promote, but as a field that requires evidence, policy understanding and strategic communication.

Over the course of the year, the programme uses a structured training approach to strengthen participants' capacities in tobacco control policy advocacy, debate and public speaking, Model United Nations (MUN)-style negotiation, policy brief

writing, project management and strategic media presence. These components are designed to help students move from interest to action—and from participation to leadership.

The emphasis on debate skills is particularly important. Participants learn how to build arguments, use evidence, respond to opposing views and communicate persuasively. These are critical skills for youth advocacy in tobacco control, where misconceptions, social pressure and competing narratives can influence attitudes and behaviour. The training also supports students in engaging more confidently within their universities and in wider public discussions.

This kind of outcome reflects the programme's broader value. It shows that when young people are equipped with the right knowledge, structure and mentorship, they can contribute to tobacco control implementation, not only communication. They can help identify gaps, propose solutions and support a culture of accountability in the environments they know best.

The programme also offers an important lesson for tobacco control and global health more broadly: sustainable change is stronger when youth are treated as partners, advocates and co-creators of solutions. By linking youth capacity-building with universities and national stakeholders, the initiative helps connect student leadership with institutional and policy-level action.

In campus settings—where norms are still being shaped and where prevention can have long-term impact—this investment matters. The Youth Wellbeing Ambassadors programme demonstrates that youth engagement in tobacco control can be rigorous, policy-informed and action-oriented. It can produce not only awareness, but advocacy skills, leadership confidence and practical innovations.

From tobacco literacy and debate to policy briefs, media engagement and digital reporting solutions, Jordan's Youth Wellbeing Ambassadors show that youth leadership is not a side activity in tobacco control—it is a strategic asset for change. //

TEXT RASHA MANASRA, TOBACCO CONTROL OFFICER,
JORDAN COUNTRY OFFICE, WHO

L'écriture

UN OUTIL RÉPARATEUR SIMPLE ET PUISSANT POUR LES PERSONNELS DES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES



TEXT MARIE-EVE RAGUENAUD, OMS
PHOTO PEXELS

A mon retour du Soudan, après six mois de mission humanitaire, je me suis retrouvée enfermée dans un studio loué, face à un épais cahier A4 encore vierge. Sans comprendre exactement pourquoi, j'ai fermé les yeux pour me replonger dans mes souvenirs. Ils formaient des masses encombrantes, lourdes à porter, qu'il me fallait déposer quelque part pour retrouver un peu de sérénité.

Pendant un mois, j'ai écrit. Longuement. Quotidiennement. Il me fallait tout reprendre depuis le début : mettre le passé au clair, rembobiner le fil de la mission, décortiquer l'enchaînement des faits, les revisiter au ralenti. L'écriture offrait une seconde lecture de cet épisode de vie bouleversant ; elle dissipait peu à peu le brouillard mental. Sur le terrain, j'avais encaissé un choc - plusieurs même - une succession d'épreuves condensées en un temps très court. Une fois revenue, raconter ce que j'avais vécu s'est imposé comme une nécessité soudaine et irrépissable.

Jour après jour, heure après heure, j'ai tenu le journal de ma mission : une exploration minutieuse du tourbillon qui m'avait emportée de Bruxelles à Khartoum, puis à Abyei, au cœur de la guerre, de la famine, des épidémies, et d'un retour chaotique. J'écrivais frénétiquement, revivant les événements avec une permission que je ne m'étais pas accordée sur le terrain : celle de ressentir des émotions étouffées. Car un médecin ne pleure pas devant ses patients.

Ce relâchement m'a apaisée. Une fois le récit « vomi », une fois reconstruite une histoire trop vite traversée mais désormais accompagnée d'émotions authentiques, je suis repartie en mission, légère, sans regrets ni cauchemars. L'affaire Abyei était classée. Je m'en étais libérée, sans savoir que l'écriture elle-même avait été thérapeutique.

Beaucoup de collègues vivent des tempêtes émotionnelles similaires, sans toujours trouver l'espace pour les traverser. Pourtant, écrire, c'est donner du sens : organiser, transformer, apaiser ce qui se passe en nous. L'écriture thérapeutique repose sur un principe simple : mettre en mots ce qui vit à l'intérieur. C'est une pratique accessible, une main tendue vers soi. Le stylo devient alors une béquille.

COMMENT CELA FONCTIONNE-T-IL ?

Ecrire permet d'externaliser ses pensées, ce qui réduit l'activité des circuits cérébraux impliqués dans la rumination. On ressent alors une décharge émotionnelle. Peut-être même un début de guérison des blessures humanitaires, les miennes accumulées en étant témoin du sort de dizaines de milliers de Dinkas - leur fuite éperdue à travers une brousse hostile, les enfants kidnappés par une milice à cheval, les survivants rongés par la faim, anéantis par le choléra, la rougeole, la borréliose.

Mettre des mots sur une émotion, c'est-à-dire prendre conscience de ce que l'on ressent, active les zones du cerveau impliquées dans la régulation et diminue l'intensité du système d'alarme interne. Ce processus d'« étiquetage émotionnel », pour reprendre le terme psychologique, contribue à rétablir la clarté.

De plus, le rituel même d'écrire -se poser, se recentrer- stabilise le système nerveux et impose un repos mental. Assise durant un mois à me concentrer uniquement sur mes pensées, respirant lentement, les nerfs enfin calmés, le cerveau passé en mode automatique après l'interruption du flux continu d'analyses et de décisions, n'avais-je pas déjà amorcé une forme de réparation mentale, indépendamment de mes phrases hésitantes ? Ecrire offre une parenthèse dans l'hyperstimulation. Avec la plume, on passe de l'action au sens, du faire à l'être.

Ecrire aide aussi à ordonner sa mémoire. D'abord replacer les événements dans un récit cohérent : une mission avortée sur une ligne de front volatile, l'équipe prise entre les feux d'un Nord et d'un Sud irréconciliables. Ensuite distinguer ce que l'on a ressenti : avais-je eu la peur de ma vie ? Ou étais-je submergée de tristesse face au destin des Soudanais errant dans Abyei, chacun pour une raison différente ? Se projeter sur une page blanche favorise la prise de recul.

Je revoyais ce moment précis où je remettais un bébé décédé de malnutrition dans les bras d'une jeune mère silencieuse ; la gorge nouée, je balbutiais un « désolée », un « trop tard », sans savoir si les sons étaient vraiment sortis de ma bouche. Toutes deux terrorisées par cette première fois :



une douleur incommensurable pour la mère, un aveu d'impuissance pour la soignante. En l'écrivant, je m'autorisais enfin à pleurer. L'écriture facilite la catharsis.

« *L'écriture c'est le cœur qui éclate en silence.* » (Christian Bobin)

Raconter transforme. On cesse de subir dès lors qu'on commence à nommer. Raconter, c'est sortir de la sidération ; c'est renforcer sa résilience.

Bien sûr, l'écriture ne remplace pas un accompagnement professionnel et ne suffit pas dans toutes les situations. Mais elle crée un espace intime et sécurisant dans lequel nous redevenons humains, au-delà de la fonction que nous portons, badge au cou. Car derrière chaque badge, il y a une histoire : parfois lourde, toujours digne d'être racontée.

L'écriture est un outil particulièrement adapté aux personnels des organisations internationales, exposés à des contextes complexes : crises humanitaires, dilemmes éthiques, violences, solitude de certains postes à responsabilité, confrontation à la souffrance, à l'injustice, à l'effondrement des systèmes de santé. Toutes ces situations génèrent une charge émotionnelle importante. L'écriture offre un exutoire discret, un refuge pour la santé mentale.

Les pratiques d'écriture sont variées : journal intime, écriture structurée ou libre, narration, des lettres jamais envoyées... Quelques pistes pour commencer : écrire cinq minutes par jour tout ce

qui vous traverse l'esprit, noter tout ce qui vous pèse aujourd'hui sans vous censurer, décrire votre météo intérieure, noter trois choses qui vous ont soutenu aujourd'hui, s'écrire une lettre.

« *Une blessure, ça se mesure par le journalisme et ça se raconte par la littérature.* » (Kamel Daoud)

Il arrive que, peu à peu, l'écriture qui panse dévoile d'autres chemins de bien être, jusqu'à devenir une pratique essentielle où l'on n'écrit plus seulement pour se réparer, mais pour rêver, respirer, inventer. Avec le désir de le dire avec style, avec grâce. Avec l'envie aussi de contribuer, par la littérature et la poésie, à consoler un monde moribond. Pour celles et ceux qui souhaitent dépasser la seule fonction d'exutoire, il existe des associations d'écrivains amateurs où l'on peut partager ses textes et approfondir sa voix créatrice. A Genève, la Société des écrivains des Nations Unies (SENU) réunit personnel onusien et membres de la communauté internationale autour de projets littéraires, notamment le journal *Ex Tempore*.

« *La littérature n'a pas d'autre destination ni d'autre destin que d'appartenir à l'humanité.* » (Ben Okri)

Dans un monde tourmenté, où le sens vacille parfois, écrire demeure un geste essentiel pour rester humain. Nos missions sont exigeantes ; nos récits sont précieux. Les coucher sur papier est déjà une manière de prendre soin de soi.

Et si votre journée se terminait, ce soir, par quelques minutes d'écriture ? //

Houston's Vision of Harmony

FROM RODEO GROUNDS TO GLOBAL HORIZONS



TEXT CRISTINA CABREJAS-ARTOLA,
PEACE RESEARCHER, INTERNATIONAL PEACE DOCTORS

Houston is a cosmopolitan city where cultures, industries, and traditions converge. More than 145 languages are spoken across its neighborhoods, and its unique global character is matched by a deep respect for land, heritage, and a strong spirit of resilience. In such a rich and diverse environment, harmony thrives naturally, shaping a community where differences are celebrated and collective strength is nurtured.

Few cities embody the principle of harmony as vividly as Houston. Through institutions like NASA and events such as the Houston Rodeo, the city reaches for the skies while staying grounded in its cultural heritage, fostering vibrant communities, and celebrating the connections that bring people together.

NASA's presence in Houston adds a forward-looking narrative of exploration, science, and shared human destiny. As a global centre for space research and innovation, it deepens our understanding of the cosmos while inspiring collaboration across nations and disciplines. Its mission reflects curiosity, precision, and collective effort, reminding communities that progress is achieved through cooperation and long-term vision.

The Houston Rodeo, rooted in agriculture, honours the land and food systems that sustain society. Through scholarships and youth programs, it advances education and opportunity for all. Every year the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo draws millions of visitors to Houston, making it one of the largest rodeo and livestock-show events in the world. In 2025, the event set an all-time record with about 2,735,695 total visitors over the course of the rodeo and related activities during the 23 days.

As a large civic gathering of millions of visitors, accompanied by music, sport, and celebration, it serves as a modern ritual that strengthens community bonds. Its Western heritage preserves values of resilience, responsibility, and cooperation.

Together, these two pillars, one grounded in the land, the other reaching toward the stars, makes Houston a city centre of harmony: a unique balance of tradition, innovation, and shared purpose. This balance is further shaped by the city's deep connection to the sea.

As a major port and gateway to the Gulf, Houston is linked to global waterways, trade, and cultural exchange. Its maritime roots and coastal ecosystems reinforce a living relationship with the tides, a reminder that movement, exchange, and stewardship are also essential elements of harmony.

This human connection with earth, sea, and sky is a universal language that transcends words, borders, and ideologies. It is a space where tension softens, conflicts find balance, and cultural narratives intersect, revealing the invisible threads of our shared humanity. Such harmony is the power that enables people to coexist, engage, and flourish together despite their diverse cultural backgrounds. Given Houston's vibrant, richly diverse cultural landscape - and its role as a global crossroads - it is easy to envision the city as a true centre of harmony.

This spirit of Harmony is evident from an early age at Harmony Public Schools, where students from diverse backgrounds learn, collaborate, and grow together. In classrooms that bring together many languages, traditions, and perspectives, young people are not only educated in academic subjects but also in the daily practice of mutual respect and shared purpose. These schools stand as living examples of how diversity, when embraced with intention, becomes a source of collective strength rather than division.

Beyond education, Houston's neighborhoods, houses of worship, cultural festivals, and businesses demonstrate how distinct communities can retain their unique identities while contributing to a shared civic life. In this way, the principle of harmony is an unfolding reality, woven into the fabric of the community and pointing toward an even more connected and flourishing future.

Houston's long-standing commitment to education, community development, and global engagement makes it a true modern *City of Harmony* - where sea, earth, and sky meet through cultural diversity, innovation, and shared purpose, thriving together. //

EXPLORING NEW TRENDS



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INSIDE WHO'S HEALTH HERITAGE INNOVATIONS (H2I) INITIATIVE

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H2I



What do you see when you walk through a forest? Trees, leaves, perhaps a quiet landscape. But for generations of traditional healers, the same forest is a living pharmacy. A leaf may calm a fever, a bark may ease pain, and a root may restore strength. Across cultures, this knowledge has been refined over centuries through observation of nature, practice and community memory. Traditional medical systems developed complex understandings of disease, healing and wellbeing, many of which continue to support the health of billions of people today.

Yet, modern health systems have often struggled to engage meaningfully with this knowledge. Traditional medicine has frequently remained fragmented, insufficiently validated or disconnected from contemporary scientific and technological innovation. As a result, valuable health wisdom accumulated over centuries has not always been translated into solutions capable of addressing today's global health challenges.

Recognizing this gap, WHO's Global Traditional Medicine Centre launched the Health Heritage Innovations (H2I) initiative, a global effort to identify and support innovations that bridge traditional medicine with modern health care. The initiative aligns with WHO's broader vision of advancing Universal Health Coverage (UHC), exploring how safe, evidence-informed traditional medicine solutions can expand access to care and strengthen health systems worldwide

In its first global call in 2025, the initiative attracted more than 1000 entries, demonstrating the scale of global interest in reimagining traditional medicine through innovation. Following a rigorous international review process, 21 innovations were selected. Together, they offer a glimpse into how the future of health innovation may evolve, one that draws simultaneously on ancestral wisdom and emerging technologies.

REINTERPRETING TRADITION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

One of the most visible trends among H2I innovators is the use of digital technologies to reinterpret and systematize traditional medical knowledge. For example, researchers are developing artificial-intelligence platforms that capture diagnostic insights traditionally interpreted by experienced practitioners. One such system combines sensors, computer vision and machine-learning algorithms to replicate observational methods used by Ayurvedic physicians, helping practitioners collect patient data more efficiently and support personalized treatment decisions.

Similar digital tools are being developed to generate measurable data from traditional therapies and to standardize clinical practices that historically relied on practitioner experience alone. Elsewhere, advances in molecular biology and artificial intelligence are enabling scientists to identify plant-based compounds that may target specific genetic mutations involved in cancer. By combining multi-omics research platforms with traditional medicinal knowledge, researchers are exploring new pathways toward affordable and culturally resonant cancer therapies.

INNOVATION BEYOND PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

While some H2I innovations focus on new therapies or digital platforms, others address an equally important dimension: how knowledge itself is generated, governed and shared.

Researchers are developing an Indigenous-led research framework designed to guide ethical partnerships involving native medicinal plants. The framework emphasizes consent, knowledge protection and equitable benefit-sharing, ensuring that Indigenous communities remain central participants in innovation processes involving their knowledge systems.

TEXT DR. ZEWDNEH SHEWAMENE SABE & DR. GEETHA KRISHNAN
GOPALAKRISHNA PILLAI - WHO
PHOTO ISTOCK



Such initiatives reflect an evolving understanding that innovation in traditional medicine must be accompanied by responsible governance. Respect for cultural knowledge systems, sustainable biodiversity management and fair collaboration with communities are increasingly recognized as essential elements of ethical research and development.

In this way, innovation becomes not only a technological endeavour but also a social one, requiring new models of partnership between scientists, practitioners and communities.

BUILDING A GLOBAL INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

The selected H2I innovators entered a structured accelerator programme that provides mentorship, technical guidance and international visibility to help strengthen research validation and pathways toward scaling. By spotlighting promising solutions and connecting innovators with global partners, the initiative also aims to catalyse greater investment and funding for responsible traditional medicine research and innovation.

The programme brings together researchers, policymakers, practitioners and entrepreneurs who share an interest in advancing evidence-informed traditional medicine innovations. By fostering collaboration across disciplines and cultures, it aims to accelerate the development of responsible and impactful health solutions.

Such efforts reflect a broader shift in global health thinking: innovation increasingly emerges not from isolated breakthroughs, but from networks of collaboration that connect diverse forms of knowledge.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR GLOBAL HEALTH INNOVATION

For decades, traditional medicine and biomedical science were often seen as separate worlds. The innovations emerging through H2I suggest that this boundary is rapidly dissolving. Artificial intelligence is helping reinterpret ancient diagnostic techniques. Digital platforms are generating evidence that enables traditional therapies to be evaluated alongside modern treatments. And Indigenous governance frameworks are reshaping how research partnerships are conducted.

As the global health community searches for solutions to complex challenges, from chronic disease and antimicrobial resistance to equitable access to care, the convergence of ancestral knowledge and modern science may prove to be one of the most promising frontiers of innovation. Initiatives such as H2I illustrate how traditional medicine can contribute to global health priorities while building evidence, partnerships and investment needed for sustainable scale-up. //

Bridging traditional medicine and emerging technologies to drive health innovation.

Plenty of literary talent at the united nations

UN STAFFERS DISPLAY EFFERVESCENT IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY WORTHY OF LITERARY SALONS



TEXT & PHOTO
ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

There is talent to spare in the staff of UNOG, UN New York, UNESCO, OHCHR, WHO, ILO, WIPO, WTO, UNHCR, UNRWA, UN field offices, UNDP, UNEP etc. Secretariat members are gifted authors - not only as drafters of reports and resolutions, but also as inspired bards who delight in poetry, short stories, essays, epigrams, haikus - and that in all six UN languages.

The United Nations Society of Writers/Société des Écrivains des Nations Unies/Sociedad de Escritores de Naciones Unidas was founded in 1989, is still going strong and attracting new members. Like everything in our world, visibility is important, and for that very reason Garry Aslanyan interviewed the Editor-in-Chief and co-founder of UNSW in April/May 2025. The colourful interview gives the most comprehensive history of our international *Pléiade*. April 2025 issue pp. 30-32 (<https://newspecial.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/WEB-RNS-MAG-MARS-AVRIL-2025.pdf>) and May 2025 issue pp. 30-31 (<https://newspecial.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/WEB-RNS-MAG-MAI-2025.pdf>).

Thanks to Garry's activism, UNSW discovered the existence of WHO's flourishing "*Poetry Garden*", and now UNSW's literary journal *Ex Tempore* benefits from excellent submissions by WHO staffers, who also come to our poetry readings at the "*Villa des Crêts*" in Grand Saconnex.

Ex Tempore has been published since 1989 under the auspices of the Director General of the United Nations in Geneva, who, since our volume I, has honoured us by accepting to be our honorary president.

The most recent general assembly of UNSW took place on 18 February 2026. As a result of the elections the UNSW Board is composed by Josep Gari (President), Carla Edelenbos (Treasurer), Monika Spyczak von Brzezinska (Vice-President) and Joel Hakizemana (Secretary).

Many new ideas emerged during the general assembly. Boris Engelson elaborated on the concept of Geneva as a melting pot, as an emblematic venue for cosmopolitan literature. There is "*valeur ajoutée*" to the Geneva celebrations of the Journée de la Poésie and to *La Fureur de Lire*.

Monika Spyczak suggested organizing an event around St. Valentine's Day. Love poetry is always appreciated. In any event, it could be worthwhile to suggest a "*theme*" to potential authors. Alfred de Zayas welcomed the thought of encouraging authors to write pro-actively optimistic poetry. But the last time a theme was chosen - music as the universal language - *Ex Tempore* received few submissions, and Number 21 (2010) was our shortest with only 104 pages. Of course, a general theme - e.g. *Peace through literature* - could be proposed, but potential authors should remain free to write about family and kids, dogs and cats, mountains and lakes, professional issues, political concerns, if that is what interests them most.

Marie-Jose Astre Démoulin thought that local journalists could write about UNSW and *Ex Tempore*. She herself published a lovely article on 25 June 2025 (<https://www.tdg.ch/grand-saconnex-une-digne-maison-centenaire-et-un-bon-esprit-992122319838>).

Alix Parodi considered that the *Fonction Cinema* at the Grütli could be an appropriate venue for future UNSW events, which could be organized together with the Société genevoise des écrivains. Alix also suggested an event on 21 September to celebrate International Day of Peace, and maybe an event concerning the fascinating Archives of the League of Nations.



Aline Dedeyan proposed to reach out to CAGI in order to give more visibility to UNSW and *Ex Tempore*. UNSW should again cooperate with the UN Library in organizing events to celebrate the International Day of Poetry and the International Day of Happiness. At present the Library in Bâtiment B has been closed for renovation and moved to Le Bocage. Therefore activities must wait until the Library reopens and we have again access to open spaces there.

Our new Secretary Joel made several proposals for activities over the next months and years, including reaching out to a “Parlement des Jeunes” and focusing on the cultures of Africa and Asia. He suggested organizing an event around the 7th of July, international day of the Swahili language. What is the role of Swahili in regional African cohesion? Perhaps some reflections on the wars in the Great Lakes region and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo could be of interest.

UNSW’s new Committee met at the “Villa des Crêts” on 20 March 2026. Our new President Joseph Garí proposed to mobilize young people and tapping on refugees for new ideas, emphasizing our duty as authors “to give voice to the voiceless”. We should commit to the values of the UNESCO constitution and help build peace through literature. Genève should be the Beacon of Humanity, the “Phare de l’ONU”. He also suggested organizing an event to celebrate summer solstice on 21 June.

On 23 January 2026 the 31st *Ex Tempore* Salon was held. 34 UNSW members gathered at the Villa des Crêts and 18 ensured a very lively evening with their poems and short stories full of imagination and optimism. The evening was enriched with drama acted out by our Thespian Aline Dedeyan,

and performed together with Boris Engelson. See some of the photos taken at the event that lasted from 7 to 11 pm.

We invite you to subscribe to *Ex Tempore* and support UNSW with your membership fee of CHF 50 per year.

Please contact: Alfred de Zayas, zayas@bluewin.ch or Carla Edelenbos, edelenbos@bluewin.ch.

You may send your membership fee or generous donations directly to *Ex Tempore*’s account with UBS 0279-CA100855.0 or IBAN CH56 0027 9279 CA10 0855 0 (BIC/SWIFT UBSWCHZH80A).

Membership is open to active and retired staff and their families, fellows, consultants and interns of the United Nations, specialized agencies, CERN, Permanent Missions and Observer Missions, Inter-Governmental Organizations, NGO’s with UN consultative status and the Press Corps.

For the Journal’s 2026 issue the Editorial Board invites literary efforts of general interest, short stories, science fiction, humour, poems or aphorisms in any of the UN official languages (or in other languages accompanied by a translation into a UN language). Please send these as well as pictures and illustrations to the Editorial Board electronically in format Times New Roman, 14 p to: zayas@bluewin.ch, or to edelenbos@bluewin.ch.

Visit also our website:
www.extempore.ch

If you want to add to the website, please send it to us, and we will input it.

Feel free to update and contribute to the Wikipedia entries e.g. by inputting poems or aphorisms (essays and short stories would be too long, but you could input the links): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Society_of_Writers and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ex_Tempore_\(journal\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ex_Tempore_(journal)). //

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Website



United Nations Society of Writers



AI and the Mind

BETWEEN SILENCE AND HELP



In the small hours of the night, there is no waiting list. No stigma. No delay. Artificial intelligence is stepping into that gap. Not as a therapist, but as the first line of support.

At 2 a.m., Maya tosses in her bed, paralyzed by anxiety, insomnia, the beehive of dark thoughts that makes her numb with worry. She opens an app. She types: I feel overwhelmed.

The response is immediate, structured and calm. It guides her breathing. It helps her name what she feels. It suggests one small step forward.

Nothing dramatic happens. But something important does. Maya does not spiral. Instead, she finally falls asleep.

THE MOMENT THAT MATTERS

Mental health care often fails at the exact moment it is needed most. Not because it does not exist, but because it is not reachable. Appointments take weeks. Hotlines feel intimidating. Explaining pain feels impossible.

Artificial intelligence enters precisely here. Not as a replacement for care, but as a response when there is no one else.

The World Health Organization estimates that one in eight people globally lives with a mental health condition, while the majority receive no adequate care [1: World Health Organization, “*Mental Health*,” WHO global estimates]. That gap is not theoretical. It is daily.

FROM EXPERIMENT TO INFRASTRUCTURE

AI in mental health is no longer a niche experiment. It is already embedded in public systems.

In England, NHS Talking Therapies services use AI tools such as Limbic to guide patients through intake and triage. Patients begin their journey by interacting with a conversational system before seeing a clinician [2: Limbic Ltd., “*Limbic Access for NHS Talking Therapies*,” NHS deployment data].

In Oxfordshire, this approach has reduced friction at the point of entry and increased access to care [3: Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, official release on AI chatbot integration].

The results are not marginal. A study published in *Nature Medicine* found that AI-enabled referral tools increased access to mental health services, particularly among minority groups who are historically less likely to seek care [4: Rollwage et al., “*Evaluation of an AI-enabled referral tool*,” *Nature Medicine*, 2023].

AI is not replacing the system. It is becoming part of it.

WHAT AI ACTUALLY DOES

AI does three things well. It responds instantly. It structures thought. It keeps people engaged.

Tools like Wysa and Woebot use cognitive behavioural therapy techniques to guide users through exercises, mood tracking, and reflection [5: Woebot Health, “*Woebot for Mental Health*”; Wysa Ltd., product overview].

For a user, the experience is simple. You type. It answers. You stay. That is not therapy. But it is often the step before therapy.

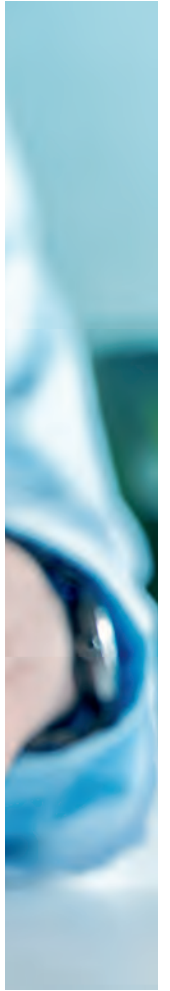
Dr John Torous, Director of Digital Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, puts it clearly: “*Digital tools can extend mental health care beyond the clinic and support patients between visits*” [6: Torous J., Harvard Medical School, Digital Psychiatry Division].

That extension matters. Because mental health does not operate on schedules.

THE QUIET SHIFT INSIDE CLINICS

The biggest impact of AI may not be visible to patients. It is happening behind the scenes. Clinicians spend enormous time on documentation, intake forms, repetitive assessments. AI reduces that load. Ross Harper, CEO of Limbic and former NHS doctor, explains: “*We can help services see more patients by automating parts of the assessment process*” [2: Limbic Ltd., NHS materials]. More patients, yet less delay and more time for care. This is not futuristic. It is operational.

Mapping the self through artificial intelligence.



When data listens to the body.

THE EVIDENCE, STILL EARLY

The science is catching up. A randomized controlled trial published in NEJM AI found that a generative AI chatbot reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety in participants [7: Darcy et al., “A Randomized Trial of a Generative AI Chatbot,” NEJM AI, 2025]. A systematic review in JMIR Mental Health reported “promising effects” across multiple AI-based interventions [8: Inkster et al., JMIR Mental Health, 2025].

The evidence is not definitive. But it is no longer speculative either.

THE LINE THAT CANNOT BE CROSSED

For all its promise, AI has limits. It does not understand context the way humans do. It cannot intervene physically or take responsibility. AI systems can misunderstand context or miss crisis signals. Their responses can be plausible but incorrect (which, some say, is all too human).

Claire Murdoch, National Mental Health Director at NHS England, states it directly: “AI chatbots should not be used as a substitute for proper care from trained professionals” [9: NHS England statement, reported in The Times].

Dr Roman Raczka, President of the British Psychological Society, adds: “AI has a role, but it must complement, not replace, human therapists” [10: British Psychological Society, official commentary].

And the critique goes deeper. Mental health data is among the most sensitive data individuals possess. Besides, AI is not immune to cultural biases. It may misinterpret culturally diverse expressions of distress (as do all of us). Alarming, users may form emotional dependence on non-human systems.

Dr Emily M. Bender, University of Washington, warns: “These systems are designed to produce plausible text, not to understand or care” [11: Bender et al., “On the Dangers of Stochastic Parrots,” FAccT, 2021].

In mental health, that difference is critical.

A TOOL, NOT A RELATIONSHIP

The real risk is not that AI becomes too powerful. It is that people expect too much from it. AI can guide, prompt, stabilize. But it cannot replace presence, emotional connection, human touch. And yet, for many, it is the first place to confront fears and speak out. That alone makes it valuable.

THE REAL FUTURE

The future of mental health is not artificial. It is layered. AI as a alert gatekeeper. People, with all their emotional complexities, at the center. AI for early access. Professionals for care. AI for immediacy. Human mind and heart for meaning.

CONCLUSION

It is 8 a.m. and Maya is slowly waking up to a new day. The app did not solve her anxiety. It did something smaller yet critical. It kept her from falling further. It helped her pause, stay, breathe, fall asleep. She hesitates a moment, then picks up the phone and books an appointment. And that is the shift that matters. AI did not heal Maya. It simply kept the door open long enough for healing to begin. //

What AI Does Well

- Immediate response, 24/7
- Structured thinking and reflection
- Mood tracking and pattern recognition
- Lower barrier to seeking help
- Support between therapy sessions

Where AI Is Already Used

- NHS Talking Therapies intake and triage systems [2]
- University-led digital psychiatry programs (Harvard, King’s College London) [6]
- AI-supported therapy tools (Wysa, Woebot) [5]
- Clinical workflow automation (documentation, risk flagging)

The Risks to Watch

- Misinterpretation of serious symptoms
- Lack of real understanding or empathy
- Data privacy concerns
- Over-reliance or emotional dependency
- Bias in training data

What Experts Agree On

- AI should support, not replace clinicians [9] [10]
- Human judgment remains essential
- Hybrid care is the future
- Ethical oversight is critical

Journée internationale des forêts

QUAND LA SANTÉ DES FORÊTS FAÇONNE LA SANTÉ DES ÉCONOMIES

SAVOIR +

Un Stamps



L'Assemblée générale a proclamé le 21 mars Journée internationale des forêts, qui sera célébrée chaque année afin de sensibiliser le public à l'importance de tous les types de forêts. Chaque année, un thème est choisi par le Partenariat de collaboration sur les forêts.

Le thème pour 2026 est « Les forêts et les économies », qui célèbre le rôle essentiel des forêts dans la prospérité économique. Ce rôle va bien au-delà des revenus et des emplois générés par la production forestière et le commerce des matières premières renouvelables et des denrées alimentaires ; les forêts soutiennent également l'agriculture familiale et communautaire, améliorent la productivité agricole et préservent la santé des bassins versants.

Alors que de nombreux pays cherchent à s'orienter vers une bioéconomie durable, les produits forestiers offrent des solutions fondées sur la nature pour remplacer les matériaux à forte intensité de carbone tout en générant de nouvelles opportunités économiques.

Les forêts sont indispensables à la santé des économies, aujourd'hui et pour les générations futures. Les pays et les populations du monde entier sont encouragés à entreprendre des efforts locaux, nationaux et internationaux pour organiser des activités liées aux forêts et aux arbres, telles que la plantation d'arbres.

LES DESIGNS

1,70 \$

Les forêts favorisent le développement durable en fournissant des moyens de subsistance et des revenus aux communautés tout en soutenant la biodiversité. Elles fournissent de la nourriture, de l'air pur et de l'eau douce et jouent un rôle essentiel dans la régulation du climat en stockant le carbone. Des forêts saines renforcent la résilience, réduisent la pauvreté et garantissent une stabilité environnementale et économique à long terme.

1,90 CHF

Les forêts soutiennent l'emploi et agissent comme des moteurs de la croissance économique en soutenant des industries telles que la sylviculture, l'agriculture, l'écotourisme et les produits forestiers non ligneux. Elles sont des sources essentielles de médicaments, de sécurité alimentaire et de nutrition, en particulier pour les communautés rurales et autochtones. En soutenant des millions de moyens de subsistance dans le monde entier, les forêts renforcent les économies locales tout en favorisant la résilience à long terme.

1,45 €

Les forêts favorisent le développement durable en fournissant des moyens de subsistance à des millions de personnes grâce à la sylviculture, à l'agriculture et aux industries forestières. Elles soutiennent les économies locales tout en préservant les écosystèmes dont dépendent les communautés pour leur vie quotidienne. Lorsqu'elles sont gérées de manière durable, les forêts contribuent à réduire la pauvreté et à garantir la résilience environnementale et économique à long terme.



My take on DEI

WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE EQUITY REAL IN ORGANIZATIONS



TEXT
DR SHANTA GHATAK, WHO SEARO

DEI stands for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - the framework used across organizations to promote fair treatment, full participation, a deeper connection and sense of belonging for all people, especially underrepresented or marginalized groups. Diversity means that stakeholders and participants can or should have varied backgrounds; Equity ensures fair access and treatment; and Inclusion aims to foster an environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and valued.

I have made a small, but significant contribution to the DEI portfolio as an advisor about bringing in different identities, backgrounds and experiences, with perspectives of race, gender, age, sexual orientation and disability. This requires providing resources and opportunities based on individual needs to reach a more feasible equal outcome, as well as addressing issues of historical disadvantages and intergenerational poverty.

My personal aim has always been to create a culture where everyone feels comfortable, accepted, and able to contribute fully, fostering a sense of belonging. I have always understood and explained fairness to be everyone getting a fair chance and not being disadvantaged due to their identity. Including diverse perspectives can improve problem-solving and innovation, helping ensure that all employees feel valued, increasing satisfaction and boosting meaningful retention practices. But this is not a job for the faint-hearted - I have sometimes run into a brick wall!

Changing workplace ethics is challenging, and can easily falter. Some persons may try to take undue advantage of the proposed flexibility and benefits. For example, some while away the flexi timings introduced, while quite a few others tried to wrest away the extra cash I proposed to help pregnant adolescents (who had survived rape and were having to deal with the many after-effects, physical and psychological) or workers with overwhelming responsibilities at home, such as disabled family members with little or no access to supplies.

The DEI concept is impressive, and so needed right now, with such a wide ambit of genuine purpose. It is always rewarding when people smile or extend their withered hand, when children or young adults get whatever they need. And those needs are very varied - from educational services and appropriate healthcare, to a pair of glasses or a wheel chair, or easy access to injections (such as insulin, vaccinations or an urgently needed antiepileptic) or that essential morning-after pill.

The DEI framework is remarkable, when viewed from every aspect of human dignity and respect. Upholding it is crucial for the outcomes sought and hoped for. The concept may sometimes falter, due to the manipulative errors and subconscious bias within ourselves. However, genuine disregard for cultural factors cannot be ignored and regular training is needed, rather than hoping to address DEI at a single attempt or in one fell swoop.

Not many people may have experience of cultural diversities, and some people may lack the educational or emotional experiences or diplomatic skills to get through the rough patches of working together. It is easy to forget - what seems normal for some people is often not normal for others, and too many people may end up simply left out or excluded.

My humble mission is to ensure stepwise policies and well-being becomes central and embedded throughout the systems being set up, and to work out newer strategies to keep the DEI marathon flying - concentrating on actual real results through means, mechanisms and techniques that deliver. It may be so that the 3 pillars will need to be looked through some different lenses for the scope differs the entities are separate and the contexts are subject to unforeseen man made bindings.

My hope is to keep the DEI flag flying higher, better and more boldly: institutionalizing universal acceptance of all, for all. //

Possible

HOW WE SURVIVE (AND THRIVE) IN AN AGE OF CONFLICT

Part theory, part validation of a distinguished lifetime of work, this book presents some of the main lessons and learnings of an experienced negotiator working on some of the thorniest conflicts around the world. William Ury develops, advances and explains a rigorous method to structure even the most complicated negotiations, in our work and personal lives.

From Venezuela and Colombia, to Aceh, North Korea and the Middle East, William Ury describes his work behind the scenes with President Hugo Chavez, President Santos and many other well-known public figures. He takes us with him down a Kentucky coal mine in the middle of a miners' dispute, he describes diplomacy over dinner in restaurants in Geneva, he brings us into the middle of tense negotiations, debates and conflicts in many different places around the world.

What emerges is not so much a rollercoaster ride (although it is certainly that!), but a clear, rigorous methodology - a thinking person's approach to what he has learned from working on some of the most challenging divides and disagreements in global geopolitics. William Ury graduated in anthropology from Harvard, and brings his full understanding of human culture to bear on trying to understand, negotiate and broker consensus.

William Ury explains that conflict is inherently human, but does not always have to be destructive - *"we can change the way we see conflict and the way we choose to live with it"* (p.26). Instead of denying it, avoiding it or ignoring it, he encourages us to believe that we could 'lean into it' to advance situations and try to find positive outcomes, even in the midst of destruction, human misery and frightening death tolls.

He accepts the role of historical traumas and suffering, and he makes room for emotions to play out in negotiations, where he acknowledges *"we often see emotions as getting in the way. But fear, anger and frustration can be signs that some basic need of ours is not being met. Emotions and feelings are possible signposts pointing in the direction of basic needs"* (p.89).

He consistently asks about the bigger picture - the so-called 'third side', that the benefits of the whole will always be bigger than the sum of the

two sides. Nelson Mandela is referenced on several occasions, including Nelson Mandela's masterful observation that could apply to nearly any conflict, past or present: *"I have never sought to undermine Mr. de Klerk, for the practical reason that the weaker he was, the weaker the negotiation process. To make peace with an enemy, one must work with that enemy, and the enemy must become one's partner"* (p.115).

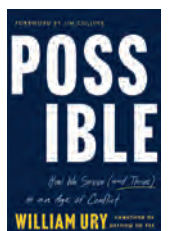
William Ury distinguishes between advice, coming from the position of an expert, which he suggests might consist of 80% talking, and counsel, which he suggests comes from the other party's perspective and might consist of 80% listening (p.252). He also distinguishes between general knowledge, acquired formally through school, books and articles, and local knowledge about people and context, that is acquired through experience, often unspoken and rarely written down.

William Ury urges us to use our human curiosity, creativity and to look for potential openings in a 'possibilist' mindset to give protagonists choices they might not have previously thought of. He advances a three-part method of:

- **The balcony:** trying to get the big picture, understand the motivations of different parties and zooming out to take a lateral view of the overall context of a conflict;
- **The bridge:** trying to engage in lateral thinking to build a bridge between people's core interests, rather than their stated positions, and 'attract' them towards a solution.
- **The third-side:** Using all resources to trying to host negotiations, help and sometimes even 'swarm' parties towards agreement.

William Ury suggests that we can bring such a method to bear on even our most difficult situations to look past obstacles to possible solutions, internationally, in the workplace and at home, in our personal lives and families.

This book is a thrilling read that certainly encouraged me to think more deeply about people's possible motivations, deeper interests and the possibilities of bridge-building that exist all around us, if only we could be brave enough and bold enough to open our minds to see them. This is not only a very readable book, it is a very important book, given the tragic challenges of the era in which we live. //



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STABAT MATER

VIVALDI

LES QUATRE SAISONS

et d'autres chefs-d'œuvre de Vivaldi

Avetis baroque festival orchestra

ANDRES GABETTA violon et direction

MARINA VIOTTI mezzo

VARDUHI KHACHATRYAN soprano

10 JUIN 2026, 20:00

Victoria Hall SCÈNE CULTURELLE DE LA VILLE DE GENÈVE

AVETIS
ASSOCIATION

Food for the Soul

IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SOUL, WHERE THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE TAKES ON SUBSTANCE, PLENITUDE IS BORN IN STILLNESS.

TEXT ANTONY HEQUET, MÜND
PHOTO NADINE RENNERT

In our tumultuous society, life can often feel lacking in substance because we are constantly being distracted by insignificant stimuli that take us away from what is essential. In fact, our contemporary society is built upon these distractions and the subsequent control of our attention. On the other hand, what we truly aspire to, in the depths of our soul, is a form of plenitude, where the experience of life takes on substance.

A life constantly lacking substance necessarily leads us to the visible moral and spiritual decay of our young women and young men. Mental health issues, depression, despair, disorientation, drug addiction, alcohol abuse, "only fans", isolation, morbidity, suicide, ultra violence, all emanate from the fact that we have built a world where our youth have no mental space in which they could build their future.

Civilisation always brings new problems along with its other gifts. As soon as humans started gathering in cities, problems arose: disease, violence, alienation from the elemental forces of nature... In order to recreate balance, techniques were applied intended to restore the connection with the rhythms of the Cosmos. Dionysian festivals, shamanism, carnivals, sacrifices, rituals.

When we look back into the history of mankind just a few centuries, we notice that all the art forms were in the service of spirituality. Shiva dances and plays his drum, JS Bach is composing and playing to bring us close to God, Michelangelo is painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to convey the spiritual dimensions of the creation of the world, the monk is singing Aum. In fact, music in particular was the language connecting us directly to the Spirit.

According to Jazz musician and visionary Sun Ra, Music is a spiritual language that can reshape reality, free the mind, and connect us to something beyond Earth.

We need to remember the real purpose of art, we need to fulfill our role as artists... I am constantly pondering this question: what is my role as a singer - composer - poet?

The poet Kenneth White, when he traveled far north to Labrador, experienced a density of life created by the experience of being directly at the source of elemental forces. He was able to translate this experience into very moving poetry and literature, which inspired many of us to seek similar experiences. This is what art, poetry, music, and dance offer at their best. This is what we aim for: an experience of life which has substance and density, fulfilling our real needs - to make life alive. A poet of the earth, Kenneth White, encourages us to appreciate and value our life, and to live it with a sense of its density.

As a poet, it is my mission to study this way of relating to life, finding the proper vocabulary to transmit the feeling that comes from being in this particular state, when things become meaningful, substantial, and quiet as well. There can be a contradiction in this stillness, as described by an American Indian poet who speaks to us of how "The surface of the lake is like a silver mirror, not a single ripple disturbs its face." But at the same time, inside his core, as he contemplates this mirror, he feels a bubbling intensity of energy.

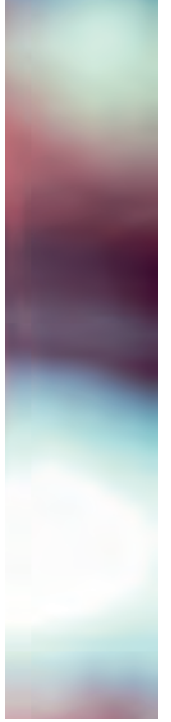
Today, intensity is often created by adding decibels, flashing lights, and smoke- something very superficial that gives no real core satisfaction. Reaching into our own depths, this is where we may find connection and peace. //



The sculpture "Frau", made 2018 by Berlin based artist Nadine Rennert shows two states of a human being at the same time: the state of inwardness and contemplation and the state of outwardness - exaltation.

Hermann Hesse

POEM



TRANSLATION BY
ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS
PHOTO ISTOCK

STUFEN

Wie jede Blüte welkt und jede Jugend
dem Alter weicht, blüht jede Lebensstufe,
blüht jede Weisheit auch und jede Tugend
zu ihrer Zeit und darf nicht ewig dauern.
Es muss das Herz bei jedem Lebensrufe
bereit zum Abschied sein und Neubeginne,
um sich in Tapferkeit und ohne Trauern
in andre, neue Bindungen zu geben.
Und jedem Anfang wohnt ein Zauber inne,
der uns beschützt und der uns hilft, zu leben.

Wir sollten heiter Raum
um Raum durchschreiten,
an keinem wie an einer Heimat hängen,
der Weltgeist will nicht fesseln uns und engen,
Er will uns Stuf' um Stufe heben, weiten.
Kaum sind wir heimisch einem Lebenskreise
und traulich eingewohnt, so droht Erschlaffen.
Nur wer bereit zu Aufbruch ist und Reise,
Mag lähmender Gewöhnung sich entrafen.

Es wird vielleicht auch noch die Todesstunde
uns neuem Räumen jung entgegenschenden.
Des Lebens Ruf an uns wird niemals enden...
Wohlan denn, Herz,
nimm Abschied und gesunde!

STAGES

As every blossom fades and youth must pass,
so every stage in life will only flower
in its time, all wisdom, virtue has its hour
and should not overreach, its prime surpass.
Alert to every call from life, the heart
must welcome new beginnings - learn to part
from all without regret, embracing new
relations, ready for what may ensue.
In all beginnings dwells a magic power
that protects us, guiding us through life anew.

Cheerfully we should advance
from space to space,
not cling to any as our home, the spirit
of the world will not confine us, tie us
down, but step by step uplift us with its grace.
As soon as we have settled down, our merit
drops, impending slumber comes upon us,
habit weighs us down. Thus only those prepared
to part and wander prosper unimpaired.

Perhaps the hour of death will even send us
newer spaces, younger hopes. Life's call to us
will never end, will prod us on to feel.
Well then, O heart,
bid farewell now and heal!

You can learn a lot of things from the flowers,
Alice in Wonderland

BESTIES



LEARN +

Sobre
J. Franklin





J. FRANKLIN

La danse des morts

UN HOMMAGE À LA VIE À TRAVERS LE REGARD
DES MORTS QUI DANSENT

TEXTE
ANTONY HEQUET

Le rythme des mots qui fait danser la vie
réveille les morts pour qu'ils dansent aussi
tous en cadence touchés par la grâce
ils hurlent en chœur un chant dégueulasse
qui serait même beau s'il nous faisait
moins peur
mais de trépasser il n'est pas encor l'heure
le chaos dansant mystère malaise
pas même un souffle ma bouche de braise

Le chaos dansant le cerveau qui bruisse
je ferme les yeux mystère malaise
je ferme les yeux que nulle ne puisse
pas même un souffle ma bouche de braise
y lire mes pensées cruelles ou tristes
indifférence seul je te résiste
le cerveau qui bruisse le chaos dansant
je ferme les yeux et je serre les dents

Quand j'ouvre les yeux lumière fournaise
ton regard trouble mes pensées limpides
concupiscentes perplexes lucides
pas même un souffle ma bouche de braise
le rythme des mots qui fait danser la vie
silence des morts mais ils dansent aussi
rêves musicales sensuelles lubriques
pulsent paroles anciennes magiques

Halet mehobar mündurlur me la sund
surli tezunür kurlivol ma let münd
à l'intérieur se lève un guerrier des temps
son souffle renaît parmi les mille vents
barluf tayame gedola tseyoyün
hamif geyedin mirdayeb râdir sun
tu reviens à moi tendresse merveille
et comme autrefois j'embrace le soleil



Mask papier mâché
(Nadine Rennert)

Mixe media charcoal on paper & stone
(Antony Hequet)

SAVOIR +

Gyre Project



Château-D'œx (Suisse)

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE BALLONS

SAVOIR +

Pays-
d'Enhaut



Festival
International
de Ballons



Chaque hiver, le ciel du Pays-d'Enhaut prend des teintes extraordinaires. Le temps d'une semaine, Château-d'œx devient la capitale de la montgolfière: un village alpin qui a la tête dans les nuages... mais les pieds bien ancrés dans la fête! Cette année, le 46^e Festival international de Ballons a accueilli 64 équipages venus de 14 pays pour un spectacle haut en couleur et plein d'exaltation.

Bienvenue au Pays-d'Enhaut, là où le temps s'arrête et l'émotion commence. Une région de caractère nichée au cœur des Alpes vaudoises. Ici, la montagne façonne les paysages, les savoir-faire et l'art de vivre. Loin du rythme effréné du quotidien, on prend le temps de respirer, de découvrir et de savourer l'instant. Entre nature préservée, traditions à partager et aventures à ciel ouvert, trois villages emblématiques occupent ce territoire d'exception: Rossinière, un écrin architectural unique qui séduit immédiatement par son patrimoine bâti exceptionnel, Rougemont qui fait partie des plus beaux villages de Suisse, et Château d'œx, capitale des airs. Réputée dans le monde entier, la petite bourgade de 3650 habitants fait rêver avec ses vols en ballon, offrant un point de vue unique sur les Alpes. Quelle que soit la saison, Château-d'œx se découvre au fil des balades, des rencontres et des expériences. Un lieu où la nature, la culture et les traditions se rejoignent pour créer des souvenirs inoubliables. Et en janvier, le temps du Festival international de Ballons (FIB), le ciel se colore d'une multitude de montgolfières: un spectacle à ne pas manquer!

Mais le Pays-d'Enhaut, c'est aussi un terroir vivant. Dans les alpages, les producteurs perpétuent des traditions séculaires, comme l'affinage du fromage L'Etivaz AOP, véritable emblème local. Ici, le goût de l'authentique se partage autour d'une table, dans un chalet ou lors d'une visite gourmande. A l'honneur également, un savoir-faire ancestral transmis de génération en génération qui raconte la vie des montagnes, entre finesse, poésie et tradition vivante: l'art du « papier découpé ». En quelques coups de ciseaux, les artistes révèlent des scènes inspirées du quotidien montagnard. Chaque œuvre reflète l'harmonie des paysages alpins et le sens du détail propre à la région: un trésor à découvrir au Musée du Pays-d'Enhaut & Centre Suisse du papier découpé.

UN MILLÉSIME 2026 AUX ALLURES DE RECORD!

Tout commença en 1979 avec la création de la 1^{re} Semaine internationale de Ballons à Air Chaud de Château-d'œx avec 12 montgolfières venues de 5 pays. Aussitôt l'événement gagna une renommée internationale, soutenu par l'acteur David Niven, Oscar du meilleur acteur en 1958 et résident du village. En 1994, le Championnat du Monde de dirigeables se déroulera dans l'espace aérien valaisan et en 1999, Bertrand Piccard (accompagné de l'anglais Brian Jones) choisira Château-d'œx pour faire décoller son ballon « Breitling Orbiter III » à bord duquel il effectuera le premier tour du monde en ballon sans escale, soit 45 000 km sans toucher terre, simplement poussé par les vents. Vingt-sept années plus tard, l'aventurier Suisse, explorateur, pionnier de l'environnement, participe toujours activement au FIB. Château-d'œx fait vibrer le ciel alpin au rythme des ballons à air chaud venus des quatre coins du monde. Depuis 2010, la programmation est également ouverte à d'autres engins volants: ballons à gaz, dirigeables, hélicoptères, avions acrobatiques. L'événement est devenu un rendez-vous incontournable pour les passionnés d'aérostation, les curieux de passage... et les aéronautes venus faire danser leurs montgolfières au rythme du vent pour offrir un spectacle féérique entre sommets enneigés et ciel d'azur. Tout est réuni pour un véritable ballet aérien à couper le souffle.

Cette année, du 24 janvier au 1^{er} février, les conditions météorologiques favorables ont permis de faire décoller les montgolfières 7 jours sur les 9 possibles et 45 000 spectateurs ont fait le déplacement à Château-d'œx; des chiffres de haute volée! Parmi les moments forts de cette édition, il y a eu le décollage groupé de 40 ballons pour participer à un concours de précision avec un largage de lest sur une cible installée dans la cour du Château de Gruyères: une exhibition féérique.

64 équipages venus de quatorze pays se sont donné rendez-vous cette année pour le Festival international de ballons de Château-d'Œx.



Lionel Burmand, président du comité d'organisation du Festival de Château-d'Œx aux côtés de Gaël Cardon (Ballons du Léman).

L'AVENTURE EN GRAND

Mais, à l'occasion du FIB, on ne se contente pas de lever les yeux au ciel pour assister au spectacle ; on peut également vivre l'aventure en grand. Cette année, 382 vols ont été réalisés pour plus de 530 heures dans les airs, 640 amateurs d'expériences émotionnelles fortes ont été transportés et 1057 enfants ont pu profiter de vols captifs (amarré au sol, le ballon permet de découvrir les sensations d'un vol en montgolfière et de profiter des paysages en prenant de la hauteur).

S'envoler comme passager à bord d'une nacelle, découvrir la magie d'un décollage tout en douceur, profiter du silence qui règne là-haut tout en contemplant les vallées à perte de vue, survoler les hauts sommets recouverts de neige scintillante... un moment suspendu entre rêve et réalité. Dans le cadre de la manifestation, « Ballons du Léman » (voir le numéro précédent du *newSpecial*) inaugurerait son tout dernier ballon venu compléter sa flotte de 10 montgolfières. L'occasion était trop belle pour ne pas solliciter Gaël Cardon - fondateur et directeur de la société spécialisée dans le vol en ballon à air chaud basée à Cossonay - pour nous faire apprécier son nouveau « bébé » en action. Serhan en sera aux commandes. Pilote expérimenté venu de Turquie, il n'aura aucun mal à faire décoller notre ballon rempli de 9000 m³ d'air chaud parmi les dizaines d'autres montgolfières toujours au sol, en phase de décollage. A nos pieds, la Sarine - rivière qui prend sa source dans le massif des Diablerets et qui s'écoule vers le lac de la Gruyère - dont nous suivrons le cours. Le survol des villages de Rossinière, de Montbovon, du lac du Vernex est féérique. Serhan maîtrise avec finesse sa montgolfière, tutoyant au plus près les versants enneigés et la cime des sapins pour trouver des courants favorables qui nous propulseront jusqu'à 2000 m d'altitude. La vue sur les Alpes environnantes est exceptionnelle. Après 1h10 de vol, nous toucherons terre avec délicatesse près de la commune d'Albeuve, bientôt suivis par la montgolfière aux couleurs flamboyantes de Château-d'Œx.

L'ESPACE BALLON

A bord des montgolfières de Château-d'Œx, les vols passagers pour un souvenir mémorable, c'est toute l'année. Selon la direction des vents, vous survolerez paisiblement les villages, vallées et montagnes du Pays-d'Enhaut, puis de la Gruyère ou du Saanenland. Plus en hauteur, un moment inoubliable vous attend face aux plus hauts sommets des Alpes. Et si vous préférez garder les pieds sur terre, l'aventure continue à l'Espace Ballon situé au cœur du village. Parcourez l'exposition interactive « L'invention du vol », un voyage dans l'espace et dans le temps, à la découverte de l'histoire des ballons et de l'invention du vol humain. Prenez place à bord du Vol en ballon 4D, une expérience spectaculaire et conviviale, pour vous envoler au fil des quatre saisons du Pays-d'Enhaut ou expérimentez un simulateur de pilotage pour prendre les commandes d'un ballon à air chaud virtuel : une expérience unique au monde !

« Grâce à sa situation géographique et à ses conditions météorologiques propices, Château-d'Œx est devenu un lieu de référence pour l'aérostation hivernale » rappelle Lionel Burnand, Président du comité d'organisation qui nous a déjà donné rendez-vous du 23 au 31 janvier 2027 pour la 47^e édition du Festival international de Ballons. //



How the U.N. Works

ANECDOTES, TALES AND PARODIES

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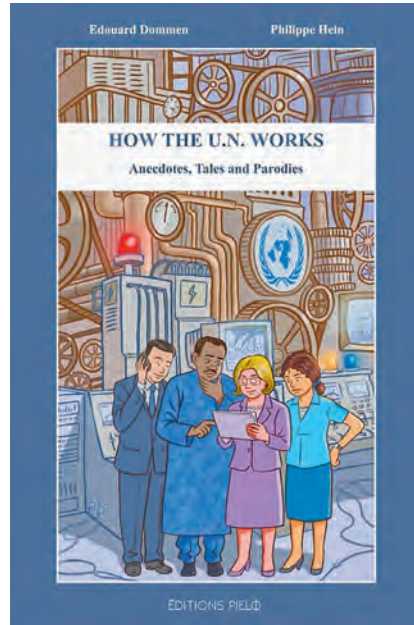
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The tales gathered in this volume give a light-hearted glimpse of how the UN actually works. Like the UN itself, the stories span the globe from its hubs in New York, Geneva or elsewhere to its furthest corners. It brings together anecdotes relating to the people who work inside it – diplomats, representatives of non-governmental organizations, Secretariat officials and experts in the field. It reflects how they make what Charles de Gaulle called “*le machine*” tick. Many of the tales are drawn from verifiable sources, others fall under the saying *se non è vero, è ben trovato*, but all capture the unique, sometimes comical but always deeply human nature of life and work inside.

Philippe Hein and Edouard Dommen are both insiders, retirees from UNCTAD.

Available on Amazon as an e-book CHF 4.82, hard copy CHF 13,17.



TEXT
EDOUARD DOMMEN & PHILIPPE HEIN

WHERE COMPANIES
BECOME BRANDS

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Trésors du patrimoine mondial UNESCO en Suisse

LE CHEMIN DE FER RHÉTIQUE ALBULA-BERNINA

SAVOIR +

Unesco



Musée ferroviaire de l'Albula



Chemin de fer rhétique



World Heritage



La Suisse compte 13 biens inscrits au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO, dont 9 à caractère culturel et 4 à caractère naturel. La vieille ville de Berne et l'abbaye de St. Gallen étaient parmi les premiers sites à être reconnus déjà en 1983.

C'est en 2008 que le chemin de fer rhétique Albula-Bernina est entré dans la liste du patrimoine mondial. Tous les amateurs de chemins de fer connaissent cette ligne exceptionnelle et viennent du monde entier afin de voyager dans ses beaux wagons rouges!

Construite entre 1898 et 1910, la ligne à voie unique et sans système de crémaillère traverse trois régions linguistiques et culturelles, romanche, alémanique et italienne. Elle a été construite avec un œil sur le tourisme naissant, et l'intégration de la voie ferrée dans le paysage grison est l'une des caractéristiques principales de la ligne. Cette alliance entre le paysage et les exigences techniques a été le déclencheur pour la reconnaissance par l'UNESCO.

En fait, ce qui est remarquable, c'est que les deux lignes ont été conçues à deux périodes différentes. La ligne d'Albula a été construite entre 1898 et 1903 pour des trains à vapeur, qui avaient une faible puissance, et il était donc nécessaire d'éviter les pentes trop raides. La voie ferrée de 67 kilomètres de long et de 1123 mètres de dénivelé passe par un impressionnant nombre d'ouvrages d'art : 42 tunnels et galeries couvertes ainsi que 144 viaducs et ponts. Son inclinaison maximale est de 3,5 % et son point culminant est à 1815 mètres d'altitude. Par contre, la ligne de la Bernina a été construite entre 1905 et 1910 comme voie électrique et franchit le col au lieu de passer au-dessous par un tunnel comme la ligne de l'Albula. Son inclinaison maximale est de 7 %, le double de celle de l'Albula. Ses 61 kilomètres totalisent 13 tunnels et galeries ainsi que 52 viaducs et ponts avec des panoramas à couper le souffle.

C'est toujours une aventure de prendre ce train, qui relie Thusis dans le canton des Grisons à Tirano en Italie en un peu moins de quatre heures. Ici, pas de question de lire un bouquin, il faut regarder et admirer non pas seulement le paysage

qui compte parmi les plus beaux en Suisse, mais aussi ces constructions techniques ingénieuses qui sont en parfaite harmonie avec la nature environnante. A bord du train, on traverse des paysages de moyenne montagne avec des forêts de conifères, par le col de la Bernina marqué par la neige, même en été, jusqu'au doux climat italien où poussent les palmiers. J'aime particulièrement le voyage en hiver, quand les trains sont équipés de chasse-neige et les arbres sont chargés d'une belle couche blanche scintillante.

Parmi ces miracles de la technique, le viaduc de Landwasser est probablement le plus emblématique. Juste avant Filisur, ce viaduc de 136 mètres de long et 65 mètres de haut traverse les gorges de la rivière Landwasser, d'où son nom. J'ai pris le train à cet endroit à plusieurs reprises, et c'est toujours sensationnel, mais ça passe très vite, on a à peine le temps de prendre une photo avant que le train disparaisse dans un tunnel. Le meilleur endroit pour l'admirer est donc paradoxalement depuis l'extérieur. Sur la route d'Albula, il y a un parking à côté de la rivière, où on peut garer la voiture et continuer à pied le long du ruisseau pour arriver à une clairière, bien équipée avec des bancs et des barbecues, et même un kiosque en saison. Pendant l'été, vous pouvez prendre un petit train tchou-tchou depuis la gare de Filisur qui vous amène sur place en une demi-heure. Une fois là-bas, il faut juste un peu patienter avant qu'un des beaux trains rouges des chemins de fer rhétiques passe en hauteur sur le viaduc - consulter l'horaire peut être utile, les trains passent normalement une fois par heure dans chaque direction. Et avec un peu de chance, vous verrez un des trains panoramiques qui font la fierté de la ligne, le légendaire Glacier Express, qui relie Zermatt à St. Moritz, ou le Bernina Express, qui relie Coire à Tirano.

Le prochain arrêt incontournable est le musée des chemins de fer rhétiques qui se trouve à la gare de Bergün. Ici, vous pouvez découvrir comment les pionniers des chemins de fer ont exploré les Grisons et tracé la ligne historique de l'Albula. Le musée montre des objets et documents d'époque et les plans de construction. Des films et des installations sonores vous invitent à vivre cette histoire. À l'extérieur, des amateurs de train

TEXTE & PHOTO
CARLA EDELENBOS,
SOCIÉTÉ DES ÉCRIVAINS DES NATIONS UNIES À GENÈVE



trouveront leur bonheur en prenant place derrière le simulateur de conduite à bord de la mythique locomotive nommée Crocodile.

Après Preda, le train entre dans le tunnel d'Albul, qui passe au-dessous du col à une altitude de 1800 mètres. Ce tunnel long de 5865 mètres est le plus haut tunnel des Alpes d'une telle longueur. Après le tunnel, le train continue vers Samedan, et de là, vers St. Moritz (si vous êtes dans le Glacier Express) ou Pontresina (le Bernina Express). Après, la voie ferrée continue à monter vers le col de la Bernina, où se trouve la gare de l'hospice à 2253 mètres d'altitude. On passe les arrêts de Lagalb et Diavolezza où des télécabines vous acheminent en hauteur vers le domaine de ski. Depuis le train il y a des merveilleuses vues sur les sommets et leurs glaciers comme le Piz Roseg (3937 mètres), le Piz Morteratsch (3751 mètres), le Piz Bernina (4049 mètres) et le Piz Palü (3901 mètres).

Un arrêt populaire est la gare d'Alp Grüm, une auberge isolée à 2091 mètres d'altitude qu'on peut rejoindre uniquement par train, à pied ou à vélo tout-terrain. J'ai des bons souvenirs d'y avoir passé la nuit une fois, quand j'ai fait une randonnée pédestre depuis Maloja à Poschiavo. La vue depuis la terrasse sur le massif de la Bernina et sur le val Poschiavo est spectaculaire. Ça vaut la peine de s'y arrêter pour prendre un verre avant de quitter

le monde glacial de la montagne et de continuer le voyage vers le sud.

Depuis Alp Grüm, le chemin de fer perd rapidement de l'altitude, et nous passons par des forêts où les biches se font surprendre par les grincements du train. Nous nous approchons alors de la gare de Poschiavo, située à 1091 mètres d'altitude juste avant la frontière avec l'Italie. Le village impressionne par ses grandes maisons de style néoclassique, construites par les habitants de Poschiavo rentrés d'Espagne où ils avaient émigré au 18^e siècle, pour y travailler dans la confiserie.

Le train continue vers le sud, il longe le lac de Poschiavo avant de traverser un autre exploit technique qui enthousiasme les passagers, le viaduc circulaire de Brusio. Un viaduc de neuf arches au-dessus d'une prairie permet de faire un cercle parfait pour finir au-dessous de ce même viaduc pour continuer sa descente vers Tirano, la gare la plus basse de la ligne, à 479 mètres d'altitude. Celles et ceux qui veulent encore poursuivre le voyage, peuvent y prendre le Bernina Express Bus pour Lugano. //

Pour en savoir plus:
Trésors de l'Unesco, Meyer/Westermann,
éditions Livreo-Alphil, 2024

Égypte

CANAL DE SUEZ 2/3

SAVOIR +

Altaï Travel



Voie navigable artificielle qui s'étend à travers l'isthme de Suez pour joindre la Méditerranée à la mer Rouge, le Canal de Suez - qui est la route maritime la plus rapide et la plus courte pour relier l'océan Atlantique à l'océan Indien - est l'un des axes empruntés par les navires les plus fréquentés au monde et représente une source importante de revenus pour l'Égypte.

Les pharaons caressaient déjà le rêve de relier la Méditerranée et la mer Rouge grâce à une voie navigable à travers le désert d'Égypte. Vers 609 av. J.-C., au cours de sa campagne syrienne, Nékao II - pharaon de la XXVI^e dynastie régnant de 610 à 595 avant notre ère - lance le projet ambitieux de creuser un canal navigable entre la mer Rouge et la branche pélusiaque du Nil, la plus à l'est du vaste delta du fleuve. Trois siècles plus tard, le pharaon Ptolémée II (282-246 av. J.-C.) entreprend de faire élargir le canal que seuls les voiliers de petite taille pouvaient jusqu'alors emprunter. Mais au début du I^{er} siècle ap. J.-C., malgré les tentatives des empereurs Darius et Trajan pour réhabiliter le canal, cela tombera dans l'oubli. On devra attendre 1798 pour que l'un des ingénieurs de l'expédition française menée par Napoléon Bonaparte soit missionné pour réaliser des relevés topographiques dans la région et remettre à l'Empereur un impressionnant rapport relatant les intérêts financiers et stratégiques du canal. Son tracé sera redessiné et en 1854 ce sera le début d'une grande aventure pour Ferdinand de Lesseps qui obtiendra une concession de 99 ans pour le creusement d'un nouveau canal. Les travaux débiteront en 1859 à Port-Saïd, sur les bords de la Méditerranée, et la première portion menant jusqu'au lac Timsah - sur les berges duquel est édifiée la ville d'Ismaïlia - sera mise en eau 3 années plus tard. Par la suite ralenti par des conflits internes, le chantier reprendra dès 1866 grâce à l'arbitrage de Napoléon III, et le 15 août 1869 la mer Rouge rejoindra finalement la Méditerranée.

Le canal de Suez sera inauguré le 16 novembre 1869. Il sera nationalisé en 1956 par Gamal Abdel Nasser, alors Président de la République, puis fermé pendant 8 ans après la guerre des Six Jours et l'invasion israélienne. Aujourd'hui, après le creusement du doublement d'une partie du canal, la route des Indes, entre Londres ou Le Havre et Bombay, se trouve réduite de moitié en évitant de contourner l'Afrique. Long de 193 km, d'une largeur moyenne de 345 m et profond de 24 m, le canal de Suez a changé la carte du monde en reliant la mer Rouge à la Méditerranée. Les quelque 23000 navires au tonnage très important qui l'empruntent chaque année représentent plus de 12% du commerce maritime international.

ALEXANDRIE, UNE CITÉ LÉGENDAIRE

Surnommée la Perle de la Méditerranée, Alexandrie (voir le précédent numéro du newSpecial) captive par son mélange unique d'histoire millénaire, de culture vibrante et de charme côtier. Fondée en 331 av. J.-C. par Alexandre le Grand pour y installer la capitale de son empire, cette métropole égyptienne a longtemps été un carrefour des civilisations grecque, romaine, égyptienne et arabe. Avec ses 70 km de littoral, ses sites archéologiques fascinants et son ambiance cosmopolite, Alexandrie se distingue comme une destination à part, loin de l'agitation du Caire ou des temples du sud de l'Égypte. Bénéficiant d'un climat doux, avec des températures agréables, la deuxième ville d'Égypte est historiquement connue pour son phare construit au III^e siècle avant J.-C., puis détruit par deux tremblements de terre au XIV^e siècle. D'une hauteur de 135 m, il était situé sur l'île de Pharos et fut pendant près de deux millénaires l'une des sept merveilles du monde antique. La ville livre au voyageur de belles surprises et la meilleure façon de les découvrir est d'y vagabonder. La corniche, promenade emblématique le long de la Méditerranée, séduit par ses vues imprenables. Flâner sur cette avenue bordée de restaurants, de cafés et de bâtiments historiques permet de saisir l'âme maritime de la ville peuplée de près de 6 millions d'habitants.

Peu habitués aux touristes, les habitants du delta du Nil sont de nature très chaleureux et accueillants.



Le port de Rosette, ville de près de 60000 habitants, donne sur l'embouchure du bras occidental du Nil.

Les amateurs d'histoire trouveront leur bonheur dans les sites archéologiques d'Alexandrie. Les catacombes de Kom El Shoqafa, datant du II^e siècle, offrent un voyage souterrain où se mêlent influences égyptiennes, grecques et romaines. Ce complexe funéraire, découvert par hasard en 1900, impressionne par ses fresques et sculptures. Construite sur les ruines du phare d'Alexandrie, la forteresse de Qaitbay se démarque par son architecture imposante, caractéristique des constructions islamistes du XV^e siècle. Conçue à l'origine pour protéger la ville des invasions maritimes, elle se dresse majestueusement au-dessus de la Méditerranée. Au milieu du riche héritage de la ville qui reflète la noblesse de l'histoire impériale égyptienne se cache un trésor qui brille d'une magnificence inégalée au Musée royal de la joaillerie. Abrité dans le palais de la princesse Fatma Al-Zahra - qui constitue à lui seul un objet de curiosité -, il renferme une collection inestimable de bijoux ayant appartenu à la famille royale égyptienne.

HISTOIRE ET MODERNITÉ RÉUNIES

Carrefour culturel et commercial, la ville d'Alexandrie offrait un cadre idéal pour la construction d'une bibliothèque qui, plus qu'un simple lieu de stockage de volumes, serait également un vibrant centre d'échanges intellectuels. Rassembler en un même lieu les plus grands savants venus des quatre coins du monde antique et le plus grand nombre d'ouvrages, tel était le projet inédit que lance le souverain d'Égypte Ptolémée I^{er} au III^e siècle av. J.-C. La bibliothèque d'Alexandrie devait être un symbole de grandeur. Elle devint célèbre en raison de la quantité de rouleaux de papyrus entreposés sur ses étagères - près de 700 000 exemplaires - et pendant des siècles elle fut un centre de recherche de premier plan. La liste des érudits et des savants passés par Alexandrie est longue et prestigieuse : Euclide, l'un des pères des mathématiques, y a enseigné, tout comme Archimède, dont les travaux ont profondément marqué l'histoire des sciences. De toute cette richesse, il ne reste rien aujourd'hui. La bibliothèque a disparu dans les flammes lors de la guerre entre César et Pompée en -48 avant notre ère.

Inaugurée en 2002, la Bibliotheca Alexandrina moderne se veut l'héritière spirituelle de son ancêtre antique. Elle symbolise le renouveau de la culture et du savoir-faire dans un cadre architectural audacieux. Véritable « fenêtre du monde sur l'Égypte et fenêtre de l'Égypte sur le monde » selon ses fondateurs, elle incarne le renouveau d'une ville qui redécouvre et valorise son extraordinaire patrimoine tout en s'ouvrant sur l'avenir.

LA PIERRE DE ROSETTE

Plus à l'est, à l'une des embouchures du Nil dans la mer, Rosette a joué un rôle stratégique dès sa construction sous le règne du calife Jafar Al-Mutawakkil en 853. Son port fluvial reliait la ville au Caire et devint un centre commercial majeur. Découvrir cette contrée insolite depuis Alexandrie permet de traverser une partie du delta du Nil, avec ses villages aux maisons couvertes de toits en foin séché, ses immenses palmeraies - l'Égypte est le premier producteur mondial de dattes -, ses plans d'eau entourés de roseaux et ses vastes plantations de coton. Une région verdoyante contrastant avec les paysages du reste du pays, une autre Égypte bien loin des cartes postales. Rosette est célèbre dans le monde entier grâce à la fameuse stèle découverte en 1799 lors de la restauration du Fort Julien. Cette pierre de Rosette a permis au Français Jean-François Champollion de déchiffrer les hiéroglyphes, l'écriture de l'Égypte ancienne.

Au revoir la côte méditerranéenne ; direction Tanis, important site archéologique, puis Ismaïlia située sur la rive ouest du canal de Suez. //

(Suite de l'aventure à découvrir dans le prochain numéro du newSpecial)



Les catacombes de Kom El Shoqafa sont considérées comme l'une des sept merveilles du Moyen Âge.

Avec une production annuelle de 1,87 million de tonnes de dattes, l'Égypte est le premier producteur mondial.



The Hanseatic League

EUROPE'S MEDIEVAL TRADE EMPIRE



A merchant alliance that transformed Northern Europe into a thriving hub of commerce, culture, and cooperation. In a modern world of trade tariffs and protectionism, a medieval example of mutual interest and collaboration serves as a refreshing example.

When we think of medieval powerhouses, images of kings, castles, and knights often come to mind. Yet, behind the scenes of feudal Europe, another force was quietly shaping history – not through swords and crowns, but through ships and contracts. The Hanseatic League, a confederation of trading cities and guilds, dominated Northern European commerce for centuries. From the icy harbours of Scandinavia to the bustling markets of London and Bruges, this network of merchants created an economic empire that rivalled kingdoms in wealth and influence.

The story of the Hanseatic League begins in the late 12th century, when German merchants sought protection and privileges in foreign lands. At a time when piracy was rampant and political borders were fluid, traders needed security to move goods across dangerous seas. These early associations evolved into a more formal alliance by the mid-13th century, as cities like Lübeck and Hamburg joined forces to safeguard trade routes and negotiate favourable terms with rulers.

Lübeck, founded in 1143, became the beating heart of the League. Its strategic location on the Baltic Sea allowed merchants to control access to Eastern Europe's rich resources. Soon, other cities followed suit, and by the 14th century, the League encompassed nearly 200 towns across modern-day Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. This was not a political empire, but its economic reach was vast—stretching from Novgorod in Russia to London in England.

Unlike kingdoms or empires, the Hanseatic League had no monarch, no standing army, and no central treasury. Instead, it operated through a decentralised system of cooperation. Member cities sent representatives to periodic assemblies known as Hansetage, where decisions were made collectively. These meetings addressed everything from trade regulations to military alliances, and while enforcement relied on mutual interest rather than force, the League's unity was remarkably resilient.

The League's strength lay in its shared purpose: protecting trade. Cities pledged to uphold common standards, defend each other against external threats, and impose sanctions on members who violated agreements. This model of governance – based on consensus and economic interdependence – was centuries ahead of its time, foreshadowing modern trade blocs like the European Union.

At its peak, the Hanseatic League controlled the arteries of Northern European commerce. Its merchants monopolised the export of raw materials from the East – timber, furs, wax, and grain – while importing luxury goods such as spices, cloth, and wine from the West. The League's ships crisscrossed the Baltic and North Seas, linking distant markets in a web of exchange that brought prosperity to its cities.

Key trading posts included Kontors, permanent offices established in foreign cities like London, Bruges, Bergen, and Novgorod. These outposts served as hubs for negotiation, storage, and dispute resolution, ensuring that Hanseatic merchants operated under favourable conditions. In London, the League's presence was so strong that the Steelyard – a walled compound on the Thames – became a symbol of German commercial power.

Commerce in the Middle Ages was fraught with danger. Pirates prowled the seas, and rival powers sought to disrupt trade for political gain. The Hanseatic League responded with remarkable resolve. While it lacked a standing army, it could muster fleets and troops when necessary. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the League waged wars against Denmark and other adversaries to protect its interests, emerging victorious in several conflicts that secured its dominance over Baltic trade routes.

One notable episode was the War of the Hanseatic League against Denmark (1367-1370), which ended with the Treaty of Stralsund. This agreement granted the League sweeping privileges in Danish ports, cementing its supremacy in the region.

The wealth generated by Hanseatic trade transformed its cities into centres of culture and innovation. Lübeck, Hamburg, and Bremen boasted grand town halls, ornate churches, and imposing gates – architectural marvels that still stand today. The distinctive Brick Gothic style, char-



acterised by red brick façades and soaring spires, became synonymous with Hanseatic prosperity.

Beyond architecture, the League influenced legal systems and commercial practices. Its codes of conduct and maritime laws laid the groundwork for modern business regulations, while its emphasis on collective security and mutual benefit inspired future models of international cooperation.

No empire lasts forever, and the Hanseatic League was no exception. By the 16th century, its power began to wane. Several factors contributed to its decline:

- **Rise of Nation-States:** Strong centralised kingdoms like England and Sweden asserted control over trade, reducing the League's autonomy.
- **Shifts in Trade Routes:** The Age of Exploration redirected commerce to the Atlantic, bypassing the Baltic and North Seas.
- **Internal Divisions:** Conflicts among member cities weakened the League's cohesion.

By the 17th century, the League was a shadow of its former self, though some cities retained the "Hanseatic" title as a mark of prestige. Today, the League survives as a cultural memory - a testament to the power of cooperation in a fragmented world.

The Hanseatic League may have faded from the political map, but its influence endures. Many former member cities celebrate their shared heritage through festivals and partnerships, reviving the spirit of collaboration that defined the League. The term "Hanseatic" remains a badge of honour, evoking centuries of maritime trade and civic pride.

In a globalised economy, the League's story offers valuable lessons. It demonstrates how networks of trust and mutual benefit can thrive without rigid hierarchies - a principle that resonates in today's interconnected world.

"Core article generated using Microsoft Copilot Artificial Intelligence and then adapted by human author." //

Did you know that the Hanseatic League once imposed a trade embargo on England? In the 15th century, after disputes over privileges for German merchants, the League flexed its economic muscle by cutting off vital imports. England, facing shortages, was forced to negotiate favourable terms - a striking example of economic diplomacy centuries before modern sanctions.

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