

UN Special

Education and Capacity-Building

TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Executive Director
of UNITAR

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I am sure you remember Nelson Mandela famously called education “the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” We also know how much effort our colleagues at UNESCO – and many other agencies – invest to ensure that SDG 4 comes to fruition as planned: achieving inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. What is less known, is that there is also a global campaign to transform education and lifelong learning into training and practical skills that allow people to actually find jobs and tangibly contribute to their societies. We call that process capacity-building and it is an important part of what is required to achieve sustainable development.

In this edition you will find articles on both education and capacity-building. In the opening article you will read why education is a fundamental human right that benefits sustainable development. You will also hear from the Executive Director of UNITAR on how capacity-building helps to overcome global challenges. Several other articles and our central pages will give you a comprehensive view on this important topic.

Additionally, you will read an interview with Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter, Permanent Representative of Israel on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of her country. September is a month full of celebrations at the Palais des Nations. You can read about the Geneva Peace Talks with the theme “Peace Without Borders”, about the Spanish Language Week and about the first celebration of the International Day of Sign Languages. And as always, you will find many other amazing articles for you to enjoy our magazine. Happy reading! ■

Je suis sûr que vous vous souvenez que Nelson Mandela a appelé l'éducation «L'arme la plus puissante qu'on puisse utiliser pour changer le monde». Nous savons également combien d'efforts nos collègues de l'UNESCO et de nombreuses autres agences investissent, pour que l'ODD 4 se réalise comme prévu: «Assurer une éducation inclusive et équitable de qualité et promouvoir des possibilités d'apprentissage continu pour tous». Ce que l'on connaît moins, c'est une campagne mondiale pour transformer l'éducation et l'apprentissage continu en formation pour l'acquisition de compétences pratiques afin de trouver un emploi et ainsi, de contribuer à la société. Nous appelons cela le renforcement des capacités. C'est un élément important et nécessaire pour atteindre le développement durable.

Dans ce numéro, vous trouverez des articles sur l'éducation et le renforcement des capacités. L'article d'ouverture vous informera pourquoi l'éducation est un droit humain fondamental pour le développement durable. Vous lirez également un entretien avec le Directeur exécutif de UNITAR sur la façon dont le renforcement des capacités aide à relever les défis globaux. D'autres articles vous donneront une vue exhaustive sur ce sujet important.

Par ailleurs, vous lirez un entretien avec l'Ambassadrice Aviva Raz Shechter, représentante permanente d'Israël à l'occasion du 70^e anniversaire de son pays. Septembre est un mois riche en célébrations au Palais des Nations. Vous pourrez lire sur les Geneva Peace Talks sous le thème «Paix sans frontières», sur la Semaine de la langue espagnole et sur la célébration pour la première fois de la Journée Internationale des langues des signes. Et comme toujours, nous avons de nombreux autres articles intéressants pour que vous puissiez profiter de notre magazine. Bonne lecture! ■

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A cultural diversity presentation in a public school in Belém (Pará, Brazil) in 2015.

The right to education benefits sustainable development

Education is a fundamental right for securing sustainability in human development and peace.

DR. GIANNA A. SANCHEZ MORETTI, OHCHR

International debates have long agreed that development must benefit and focus on humans; it must go beyond the expansion of income and wealth, since income is not an end, but rather a means. The motive behind this reasoning is that averages of per capita income, for example, conceal widespread human deprivation and inequalities. Inequalities can decrease the capabilities of particular groups to cope with vulnerability, thus impeding them from progress or even survival. The higher the level of vulnerability of population groups in a given country, the higher the chances of development being hindered in that country.

How can vulnerable groups and individuals be empowered to deal with vulnerability and become

active agents and benefactors of sustainable development? The answer is not simple, since various actors must carry out a wide-array of complex responsibilities and actions to provide at least the essential necessities for their populations by way of various rights, freedoms, assistance, goods and services. There is, however, an element that is a fundamental and differential factor that can have long-term effects; essential for sustainable development: education.

Education aims to achieve the full development and realisation of the human person. It has the power to enable an individual to contribute to society as an independent and emancipated local and global citizen, and thus a principal active agent of development. Education is a means to risk prevention and conflict

mitigation, as well as a tool that can help improve the human quality of life in a sustainable manner for present and future generations.

All the benefits that a quality and inclusive education may bring about within a society serve as evidence that education is a key right that unlocks the enjoyment of all other human rights. Its implementation, protection and fulfilment lead to the creation of opportunities, freedom of choice, sustainable economic growth, improvement of health conditions, poverty reduction, the enhancement of social mobility and the prevention of autocratic rule, as well as to the protection and promotion of human rights. It is thus a means and an end that has the domino effect of triggering and intertwining the realisation and enjoyment of



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An art exhibition in the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent in a public school in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2015 during her PhD research.

other human rights, which is a crucial and differential factor for sustainable development.

The Declaration on the Right to Development defines development as a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process aiming to improve the well-being of populations and individuals, present and future. Thus, one element that can serve as a driver of development is education, as both a learning process and a human right. However, even if education is considered a fundamental human right and often expressed as a social priority, there could still be even more recognition by the international community and governments of the full potential and transformative power of education as an actual catalyst for human development.

As human rights, sustainable development and a quality and inclusive education are inalienable to humans; conversely, not everyone able to exercise and benefit from these rights. Worldwide, there are population groups that tend to suffer more from discrimination, inequalities, prejudice and violations based

on their race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, age, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, or economic or physical condition. They are in turn excluded from mainstream society and more vulnerable to poverty and discriminatory acts. This concerns human development, because discrimination-based exclusion can produce inequalities, which challenge the meaning of sustainable development, since population groups in a given country do not have the chances on an equal basis to enlarge their choices or enjoy a long, healthy life and decent standards of living (the “haves” vs the “have-nots”).

Inequalities, or the lack thereof, could be indicators of a country’s level of development. Socioeconomic and educational indicators are key to measure the effectiveness of socioeconomic and educational laws and public policies in a given country, to reach marginalized and vulnerable groups and individuals. Law, policies and programs are instruments towards this and must continue evolving to become more inclusive, emancipatory and multicultural to contribute

more adequately to the reduction of inequalities and promote human rights and sustainable development.

An inclusive and quality education, with a human rights approach, and in line with SDG Target 4.7, has the potential to eradicate both discrimination and inequalities in a given society, intellectually emancipate individuals and serve as a prevention tool to sustain peace. Literacy rates are a composite part of the Human Development Index, education was within Millennium Development Goal 3 (school enrolment rates), and is now even more compendious in SDG Target 4.7, which includes “education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.”

It is important for education to be both inclusive and non-discriminatory to avoid the exclusion of certain population groups from mainstream society – ideally one that peacefully includes and respects diversity. Discriminatory acts and attitudes exercised, directly or indirectly, against vulnerable groups and individuals within educational systems could lead to negative socio-economic impacts in the labour market and society (poor and weak labour force, underemployment, unemployment, labour and wage injustices, less competition and diversification of markets, the intensification of violence, crime and insecurity, etc.).

The importance of education as a human right and driver of development must continue to be recognised and assimilated to its fullest potential. A quality education becomes the concrete key that empowers individuals to fully develop their personalities


and capabilities to participate in society through the acquisition of knowledge, values and skills. One of the main challenges for development today is to secure and expand achievements. Education is a fundamental right for securing sustainability in human development, precisely because its impacts are holistic and long-term. It is, therefore, vital that a quality and inclusive education under a human rights approach be of high priority and the practice in overall sustainable development strategies worldwide. ■

This piece is an adapted version of the original as in: Sanchez Moretti, Gianna A. (February 2016). Education through the Lens of Sustainable Human Development. Working Paper no. 135. IPC-UNDP ISSN 1812-108x: http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/eng/WP135_Education_through_the_Lens_of_Sustainable_Human_Development.pdf

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Building capacity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Interview with UNITAR Executive Director Nikhil Seth

Appointed by the UN Secretary-General in October 2015, Mr. Seth arrived in Geneva after co-leading the multilateral process to conceptualize and adopt the agenda. He is known by many as one of the champions that birthed the SDGs.



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ALEX MEJIA, EDITOR IN CHIEF, UN SPECIAL

Before joining UNITAR, Mr. Seth held various positions at the United Nations Secretariat in New York, including serving as Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). He played a pivotal role in support of Agenda 2030 and the SDG's. Before joining the UN, Mr. Seth was a delegate to the UN in the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations (Sep 1990 – Sep 1993) and was involved with various UN conferences and summits including the Rio Summit on Environment and Development and the climate change related process. We sat with him to discuss how global challenges can be overcome through training and the development of individual, institutional and organizational capacities.

The famous philosopher Amartya Sen called the attention of the world to the importance of girls' education. Why is this important? How can the UN help in this regard?

I'm glad you asked me this question because I often cite Amartya Sen when making two important points: firstly, on the importance of Sustainable Development

Goal 5 on gender equality and empowerment and the target therein on girls' education. This goal and target are important to achieve in themselves, however I use them as a prime example of the interrelationship between the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 Targets. Girls' education is critical to the successful achievement of all the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. After all the SDG Agenda is not a discreet set of goals and targets, but an interrelated matrix. Achieving one target will have multiple co-benefits in achieving other targets.

It is quite clear that an educated girl – an educated woman – will act as an enabler and accelerator to the achievement of all other the goals and targets. Educated women will help lift families and communities out of poverty, will contribute to the health goal, especially in reducing maternal and infant mortality, will reduce disparities and promote food security, will promote economic growth and the list goes on. I am sure that if Prof Amartya Sen had a choice to pick his favorite target of the 169 targets, he would certainly choose girls' education as having the greatest multiplier potential.

So, if you want to achieve the SDGs, you want to know where to invest it, 'invest it in girls' education' is what he would say.

What is the importance, in your opinion, of STEM education for the SDGs (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)?

The role and importance of science, technology and innovation, and in turn STEM education, are emphasized across the SDG agenda. The acceleration of the achievement of the goals and targets is very dependent on science, technology, and innovation. It is not only science in its purest sense, but its application to policy and decision making, which need more smart approaches. For example, a scientific approach to data collection, analysis, and application is essential for evidence-based planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation.

Beyond this, I strongly believe science, technology, and innovation offer opportunities and potential for accelerating the achievement of all 17 SDGs. Look at poverty and the role of mobile telephony in increasing social and financial inclusion. There is clear statistical evidence to prove that with greater financial inclusion, comes faster rates of economic growth. Similarly, if you go down each one of the goals, you will find that science, technology, and innovation play a very important role in their achievement. In the great transitions inbuilt in the SDGs – water, energy, food systems, consumption and production patterns, sustainable cities, sustainable economic growth – the role of STI will be central along with a larger and stronger STEM workforce.

Now how are we going to get there? An important step is to increase our investments in the STEM sector, including increasing the number of people with specific expertise. Here, once again, I want to link to your first question on gender and the importance of increasing the number of women in STEM fields for achieving the critical mass of STEM professionals needed to promote accelerated progress in these fields.

How relevant was the issue of capacity building, particularly in the negotiations with UN Member State governments before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda?

I need to be honest here and confess that while the process and the development of the SDGs was much more political with a

focus on the **what** and **why** questions, the **how** question was tackled essentially in SDG 17. It was clear during the process and subsequently, that in order to implement and realize the SDGs, capacity building was going to be crucial.

The word 'capacity building' is not mentioned often enough in the 2030 Agenda, except under Goal 17 which talks about partnerships for development. The role of capacity building and in changing peoples' mindsets and orienting them to think differently about how to tackle human hopes, aspirations, as well as human fears, is essential for the achievement of the entire Agenda.

Whilst capacity building could have been addressed more fully during the conceptualization of the Agenda, the implementation of the Agenda is now in the hand of UN Member State governments, and it will be governments, working with academia, civil society, the business sector, and all other actors in society, who will make the SDGs a reality. Without capacity building, we will have no change in mindsets, we will have no change in attitudes and behaviors, and we won't have the transformational change that is expected from the Agenda.

How can we innovate, how can we harness technology, to increase the impact of capacity building or of education as a whole?

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“Capacity building” is two small words for a very big challenge. If we want the SDG and the 2030 Agenda to be truly transformational, we won’t be able to get there by reaching thousands or tens of thousands of people. We need to reach hundreds of thousands and millions of people. And how do we reach hundreds of millions of people? It is only by leveraging the power of mass communication, using all the modern tools we have, including e-learning platforms, including more rigorous training, face-to-face coupled with the distance learning, to reach these millions of people. Technology has been crucial in advancing on the SDGs and in particular in reaching more and more remote people. The role of technology in all its dimensions will be absolutely imperative and vital in spreading the message, in capturing peoples’ imagination, and in making the SDGs a reality in the lives of millions.

Should there be a global summit, a global gathering, focused on capacity building alone to put together all the entities working in this field around the world?

I think capacity building gets a lot of lip service, but at the end of the day, the UN focuses a lot of attention on the first part of its work which is in establishing norms. An inordinate amount of our time in intergovernmental processes focuses around soft law processes (resolutions and decisions), soft legislation, and treaties. Even the more technical organizations focus largely on norm-setting. But, the second aspect of our work – which is on reaching people, on building capacity – doesn’t get the proportional importance that it deserves. For that, I think we need to make a much more significant effort in re-balancing the areas in which the UN works – in advocacy, in analysis, in norm setting in capacity building – and shift more resources into capacity building, because, at the end of the day, the UN will be remembered for meeting the promises which are contained in the 2030 Agenda, including reaching those who are most distressed, those who are furthest

behind and, of course, the most vulnerable. Everything is important – advocacy is important, norm setting is important, analysis is important, but what is most important in my mind is capacity building. Without that people, especially decision makers, will not change. So yes, a capacity building summit should be held, not only to get our act together but also to shift UN’s priorities to capacity building.

How can we better leverage finance for development to mobilize resources that can strengthen capacity building around the world?

I think the financing for development debate often gets hijacked by the discussion on additionality. But it is not only a question of raising trillions of new dollars for funding and financing sustainable development and the SDGs. The more important thing in my mind, is to spend what we are currently spending more smartly and to have better planning, better financial management, and stronger and deeper partnerships. In doing so we will shift the debate away from the issue of how do we generate additionality.

Let’s look at one or two issues. Let’s look at the issue of health. If you aggregate all national budgets on health, it will already add up to trillions of dollars. If you add up all national budgets on education, that will also add up to several trillion dollars. It’s not that the trillions of dollars are not currently being spent, but they are often being spent unwisely. And the beauty of the 2030 agenda is to point towards the need for a new framework of planning, and a new integrated view of issues, so that we have smarter spending.

The first focus on financing for development should be to look at where we are individually and collectively spending scarce money. What is it that would make our spending smarter than what it currently is? What can we do smarter which will have longer-term benefits?

Secondly, of course, this doesn’t negate the need for creating additionality, but I think, in today’s world, the additionality will come essentially through stronger partnerships, particularly through stronger partnerships with the private sector. Even if governments get to the 0.7 percent of GNP devoted to ODA and concessional finance, this will still only add up to 140-150 billion in a world that which needs several trillion to implement the 2030 Agenda. So, we have to look at the partnerships, where I think serious additionality can come from.

70 percent of the entire output of the world is generated in the business sector and this doesn’t mean large corporations alone, it means the millions in the informal sector, small and medium sized enterprises. How do you forge a partnership between all these actors to contribute to the SDGs? This is the real challenge.

What is UNITAR’s contribution to sustainable development in particular to the SDGs?

Every year UNITAR reaches 65,000 people, mostly public policy officials. Now, I’m not saying that that’s a very great achievement in itself, as I mentioned earlier, we need to reach millions. But the very fact that we are reaching 65,000 people globally, in all parts of the world, in Latin America and the Caribbean region, in the African region, in the Asian region, in Europe and in North America, is significant. Most of UNITAR’s beneficiaries are public policy officials who we hope that, after our training, will do something differently when they go back to their day jobs. We hope they will act as force multipliers and as agents for change. This in itself is a great thing and everything we do is in one way or the other contributing to the implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

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In addition, we are also doing a lot of work specifically on support the implementation of the SDGs and on crosscutting issues, including supporting national planning systems, budgeting practices and statistical systems. We have held learning conferences in Africa, in Latin America, and are now planning learning conferences in Asia, bringing national planners, statisticians, NGO's and the business sector together.

Last, but not least. Our readers have always been particularly interested in the person behind all these issues. Can you tell us a little about your successful career? We know that you are a former diplomat, can you give us a message for young professionals working at the UN?

I spent a large part of my earlier years in the United Nations, both as a delegate from India, and then as part of the UN Secretariat, helping to forge consensus around big issues of our time starting from the Children's Summit in 1990, the Earth Summit in 1992, the Social Summit, the Beijing conference on the advancement of women, to the MDGs, the MDG review conference, to the Apia conference and the Samoa pathway for Small Island Developing States and

finally the development conceptualization and adoption of the 2030 Agenda. I then came to UNITAR and realized just how difficult it is to translate the good intentions contained in consensus agreements, to real change and positive impact in the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable people and communities.

There are lots of people in the UN focusing purely on analysis and research, and who are reading and writing about different situations in the world, driving policy making, and decision making processes and solutions. There are a lot of people in the UN who focus solely on building platforms for action, on building governmental consensus. But the emphasis in the future must be more on capacity building, and this is what I've learned over the last 3 years of my career at UNITAR.

The UN itself is comprised of multiple worlds; the world of governments, the world of the UN Secretariat, the world of analysts, the world of civil society engagement with the UN, the world of Mayors and local governments and the world of professionals working at the country level. However,

bringing all of these worlds together in a meaningful way must be a very important part of our work. Often we can get locked into our little worlds and we don't see the bigger picture, and we can forget the noble intentions that are behind the establishment and the work of the United Nations.

I think securing peace and prosperity as mentioned in the Charter are the two most noble ambitions. To achieve peace and prosperity, you not only need to do analysis, you not only need to forge consensus agreements, but also you need to go out and make an effort to go directly to people and help in making that change possible. My message to young people is essentially, look for diversity in your work. Don't just get locked into one aspect of the work of the UN. It is a large and complex machinery, and all parts of the machinery have to be well-oiled. Your ability to grow in the system, by looking at different facets of the work of this fascinating machinery, is very important in the long run for the utility of the work that you do and for understanding your role and how you fit into the UN's great and noble ambitions, in striving for lives of peace, dignity and prosperity for all. ■



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The role of higher education to accelerate achieving Agenda 2030

An increasing number of universities are committing to address the Sustainable Development Goals in education and research through strategic partnerships.



Panel discussion at Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) Global Event on 11 July 2018 during High-Level Political Forum in New York. Speakers from left to right: María Cortés Puch, SDSN; Jean-Marc Triscone, University of Geneva; Nikhil Seth, UNITAR; Joanna Newman, Association of Commonwealth Universities.

JONAS HAERTLE, UNITAR

Higher education has never been in a hurry to change. It is an industry built over centuries, largely on structure and tradition. But there are signs that the institutions are breaking free of these bonds, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are proving to have the effect of accelerating this shift. This, in turn, presents an opportunity and supports the UN's aim to harness partnerships, in particular to achieve the promises held in Agenda 2030 and its SDGs.

There are a number of reasons which explain the need for higher education to adapt to a new reality. Firstly, due to technological change and the increased attractiveness of free or almost-free educational content on the internet, new providers of education degree programs and alternative credentials have intensified competition. Also, the demand for continuing education and lifelong learning is increasing and digitization has enabled content and competencies to be unbundled, making both more accessible. This has led to a number

of new companies, such as Lynda (now owned by LinkedIn), Coursera (offering free "MOOCs", ie massive open online courses), and Degreed to enter the ecosystem that was traditionally set by universities to meet the rising demand for continuing education as providers or support platforms. This is forcing established and traditional higher education institutions to respond.

Another reason is that the trend over the past three decades for higher education to be increasingly globally focused, is currently under threat. Since the end of the Cold War exchange programs and study-abroad opportunities for students and faculty have dramatically increased. In countries of the European Union and associated countries the so-called Bologna process has created the European Higher Education Area which harmonized higher education systems between member states. This further increased student movements across national borders. However, more recent political decisions have reversed this trend. For example, some countries



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Innovative way to bring the SDGs to universities: ISAE FGV in Brazil displays the SDGs on their main staircase.

have begun to restrict student visas or the right to work for foreign students upon graduation, most notably for example in the United States of America. Also, the planned exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union (“Brexit”) has caused foreign students to re-consider taking up studies in the UK. According to numbers of the US-based International Institute for Education, the number of foreign students in US universities in 2017 had dropped by 7% in comparison to the previous year, with 45 percent of campuses reporting drops in new international enrollment. According to the New York Times, experts cited an uncertain social and political climate in the United States as part of the reason for the decline in enrollment.¹

These developments present challenges to universities around the world, with specific characteristics in different countries. Interestingly, a growing number of universities have begun to use partnerships with the United Nations and its agencies and programs, to identify and work on solutions to these challenges. It is in particular noteworthy that many of these activities occur through networks of universities which are focusing on aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Three initiatives provide examples:

- The Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), a partnership between United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNESCO, United Nations Environment, UN Global Compact’s Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, United Nations University (UNU), UN-HABITAT, UNCTAD and UNITAR, was created in 2012 in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Its original goal was to encourage concrete and measurable commitments from universities for the Rio+20 conference. The HESI initiative succeeded in gathering the highest number of voluntary commitments of any sector for the conference. More recently, the HESI partnership provided higher education representatives a platform during the UN’s High-Level Political Fora in New York. This enabled a focused dialog between higher education representatives and governments as well as HLPF stakeholders on the role of higher education to support achieving the SDGs.
- Another example is the UN-affiliated Sustainable Development Solutions Network’s (SDSN) SDG Academy and its University Partnership Program (UPP). It works with universities, academic institutions and education programs to increase the integration of SDG-relevant content into existing and new programs on sustainable development around the world.
- The UN Global Compact’s Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative provides opportunities for its over 700 participating business and management schools to incorporate SDGs content in curriculum and research as well as partnership opportunities with companies.

A number of new initiatives are on the horizon as well, for example the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU), representing most of the public universities in the US, Canada and Mexico, is developing a new initiative to support SDG integration by its member institutions through a partnership with UNITAR.

All of the examples are spurred by the fact that universities are connecting more with each other to address some of the underlying trends that pose risks but also opportunities to the traditional way they

have operated. This provides students and professors with opportunities to connect their studies and work with a greater purpose and align with their personal values. By focusing projects in the curriculum or research projects on the Sustainable Development Goals, many universities have started to show that through education, research and partnerships they have a critical impact on the goals of Agenda 2030.

Regardless, long before the current trends emerged, universities were starting to concentrate more on their local communities, establishing themselves as engines of economic and social progress. This has been especially true of public institutions, which have experienced real reductions in public funding. They have been turning to local institutions for a stronger web of support, from community leaders as well as organizations. But this localization has also been brought on by the search for more concrete ways of demonstrating the impact of higher education. Consequently, higher education institutions have been emerging as stronger anchor institutions in their communities.

Moving forward, the trends outlined above will increase the potential for higher education institutions to play a lead role in achieving the SDGs. The question will no longer be “can” but “will” universities be a major factor in achieving Agenda 2030. ■

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/13/us/fewer-foreign-students-coming-to-us.html>



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Training in health research

A key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

DERMOT MAHER, WHO

Improvements in health and wellbeing are a crucial part of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, and these improvements depend to a very great extent on health research. You only have to think, for example, of how research has generated the diagnostics and drugs that have transformed the lives of people living with HIV, to appreciate this. However the capacity to undertake health research is spread very unevenly among countries at different stages of socioeconomic development. For example, high-income countries have an average of 40 times more health researchers than low-income countries. The Special Programme on Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) plays a particular role in supporting low- and middle-income countries in their efforts to end the epidemics of infectious diseases of poverty, including the Neglected Tropical Diseases, malaria and tuberculosis. In strengthening the capacity of these countries to respond effectively to these diseases, TDR helps to maximise the contribution that research can make to improved health and socio-economic development.

An example of the range of TDR's activities in this regard is the Postgraduate Training Scheme. This addresses the need in many low- and middle-income countries to boost the capacity of individual researchers and institutions in implementation research on infectious diseases of poverty. Implementation research provides answers to questions about the implementation of health interventions. How best can we ensure that as new health technologies such as drugs, diagnostics and vaccines become available they actually reach all the people who could benefit from them? Implementation research has played a key role, for example, in making insecticide-treated mosquito nets widely available, which has been crucial in decreasing malaria deaths.

TDR has a long history of providing direct individual fellowships to support researchers in low- and middle-income countries to undertake postgraduate degree training, often in institutions in high-income countries. However TDR reoriented its approach in 2015 with the aim of strengthening individual and institutional capacity



Parwana Hamdan and her poster on empowering women to fight leishmaniasis. Eastern Mediterranean scientific conference highlights research needs for neglected tropical diseases.

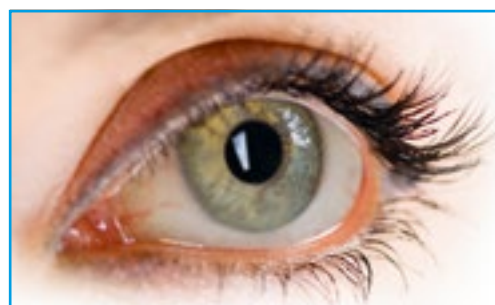
© WHO/TDR

in the disease-endemic regions. Following an open competition and selection by an independent expert panel, seven universities joined the scheme:

1. BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh
2. Universidad de Antioquia, Medellin, Colombia
3. University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana
4. Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
5. American University of Beirut, Lebanon
6. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
7. University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

These universities are funded by TDR to manage the process of competitive selection of students and provide postgraduate training relevant to implementation research on infectious diseases of poverty. Overall the TDR scheme will train a total of 170 Masters and 9 PhD students from 2015-2019.

One of the advantages of the TDR scheme is that students are trained at an institution within the disease-endemic region rather than at institutions, for example in high-income countries, which are far from where the health problems occur that the students



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University of Antioquia Master's degree graduates in epidemiology. First graduates of TDR's postgraduate training programme in the WHO Americas.

are studying. This is illustrated by the experience of the students from the Middle Eastern region who have undertaken postgraduate training at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. A new cohort of ten graduates of TDR's postgraduate training programme at the American University of Beirut completed their Masters of Public Health at the Faculty of Health Sciences in June 2018.

The students' implementation research projects generated a better understanding of how to implement health interventions for the control of infectious diseases that affect their countries. The graduates are from Afghanistan, Egypt, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen – settings with high burdens of neglected tropical diseases and health systems under stress from instability and conflict.

The close links between TDR and the universities participating in the scheme enable the universities to draw on the training tools and materials developed by TDR in training students in implementation research on infectious diseases of poverty. For example, the Universidad de Antioquia in Medellin, Colombia, uses a range of materials developed by TDR, including a toolkit and a Massive Open Online Course on implementation research, to train postgraduate students.

Through the training provided by the participating universities around the world, the TDR postgraduate scheme can help to make a difference not only to the careers of the researchers who are trained but also to the lives of the people who stand to benefit from strengthened capacity for research in disease-endemic countries. If any reminder is needed of the

importance of strengthening research capacity, the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014-2015 provides a stark example. The role of research in preventing and responding to epidemics such as Ebola, and the need to strengthen this capacity, is a specific example illustrating the broader need to strengthen capacity across the whole spectrum of research, including implementation research on infectious diseases of poverty. The TDR postgraduate scheme helps to address the capacity gaps in disease-endemic countries, in support of improved health and in contribution to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. ■

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Building support and addressing resistance

Sexuality education in Pakistan

In many countries, there is deep-seated discomfort about adolescent sexuality, outside the context of marriage.

SHEENA HADI (AAHUNG), VENKATRAMAN CHANDRA-MOULI, WHO Many people do not believe it exists; those who acknowledge that premarital adolescent sex occurs believe it must be prevented. In many places sexuality education is not seen as part of the solution as there is widespread concern that this could plant the idea of having sex in the minds of children and adolescents who are not yet ready. As a result, policy-makers are reticent, school heads and teachers are uncomfortable and community groups are opposed. Because of this, in many places school-based sexuality education programmes either do not exist and if they do, they function very ineffectively, preventing school children from getting the education and support they need and have a right to, for their healthy development.

Happily, a small number of countries are successfully navigating these obstacles. Pakistan is an example; a loose network of non-government organizations works within a supportive national policy framework to

deliver sexuality education in this religious and conservative context. One such organization is Aahung, which has strategically chosen issues to address, built community support, and dealt with backlash when it arose. Its work inspires and challenges us all.

What is Aahung?

Aahung is an indigenous organization which works to support girls' and boys' sexual and reproductive health and rights in Pakistan's Sindh province. The programme specialises in life skills-based education (LSBE), an interactive teaching methodology that informs students about health, while equipping them with skills to better manage their own lives and make healthier decisions. Over the past eight years, Aahung has institutionalised LSBE by working directly with teachers to build and shape a programme taught in 196 schools, ultimately reaching more than 200,000 students.

How has Aahung adapted its work to fit within the Pakistani context?



© Sheena Hadi (Aahung)

Aahung has adapted the World Health Organization's key guidelines for LSBE to the local context. Their curricula use only widely acceptable terminology and were reviewed by civil society, religious scholars, educators, health and development experts and parents.

By addressing extremely important but uncontentious goals, like ending gender-based violence and child marriage, Aahung has also deftly navigated the minefield of cultural sensitivities that frequently paralyse action. For example, Aahung recognised it would be culturally inappropriate to directly address pre-marital adolescent pregnancy by providing information on contraceptives. Instead, Aahung aims to prevent pregnancy and other linked sexual and reproductive health problems through intermediate outcomes, such as developing comfort with one's own body, communication skills, confidence and decision-making abilities, and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights. If more explicit and sensitive

questions arise during discussions, teachers are trained to answer them accurately and without embarrassment.

How has Aahung created community support?

Early on, Aahung cooperated with the Department of Education and local organisations, such as religious groups and school associations. Realising that parents and the wider community, including religious leaders, the media, and community leaders, are gate-keepers in reaching adolescents with sexual and reproductive health information, Aahung supported their sensitisation and counselling by school administrators and teachers. Similarly, activities like theatre and public debates on LSBE topics gave the programme positive visibility.

Farwa Kazmi, an 8th grade student at a community-based school shared her experience of the life skills-based education she has received through Aahung. "When bodily changes occur, they are so sudden and generally girls get so worried

and upset about them. Not only that, they are unable to share these with anyone. Our teacher told us that us that we should share and discuss our problems with someone close to us – a teacher, an elder sister or our mother. And we need to share and not suffocate under our problems.” “After studying this curriculum, there have been many changes in my personality and my knowledge has increased. There is a lot of information that I have gained and have come to know my rights. So now, if someone neglects us, or tries to suppress us, we are able to speak out and say, ‘No! This is our right’.”

Sara, a 17-year-old living in Karachi (name changed) whose mother passed away when she was young, lives in the care of her three elder sisters and two elder brothers and her father who has an incapacitating illness. She regularly visits the

Youth Friendly Space (YFS) run by Aahung and eagerly participates in all the activities. After attending the session on puberty, Sara asked the counsellor whether it was okay to be home alone with her brother as he would sometimes touch her inappropriately while she was asleep. She was too afraid to stop him herself and when she confided in her elder sister, she was explicitly discouraged from speaking out: “We cannot confront him because he is the breadwinner of the family.”

Sara underwent several counselling sessions at the YFS where she was taught to raise her voice and fearlessly stop her brother from sexual abuse. Finally, she found the courage to sternly tell her brother that if he came near her again, she would scream and tell her elder, married sister everything. After this, her brother never touched her again.

How has Aahung responded to backlash?

Aahung employs both proactive and reactive strategies for preventing and responding to backlash, carefully choosing its language, working to be transparent, and closely collaborating with strategic partners and ‘champions’. It takes advantage of occasions when society is more likely to be receptive to its messages, such as during Ramadan and after widely publicised reports of gender-based violence. It has built a network of friends in the media who can speak out about the value of Aahung to all of Pakistani society when the programme encounters resistance.

An example occurred to Shehneel Gill, a Senior Trainer at Aahung with the organization for 21 years when he first began working for Aahung in a small colony in Karachi. A few children were gathered

for a general discussion when a local social activist arrived upon the scene. “Without asking me any questions, he grabbed me by the collar and dragged me out accusing me of spreading ‘immorality’. Fortunately, I was able to persuade him to sit down and explained LSBE and how we work. After a couple of meetings, he was so convinced that he became one of our greatest supporters.” Since that experience, Shehneel and his colleagues have won over many opponents, who now advocate for the LSBE curriculum. Talking about his work Shehneel said “Working for Aahung is like working for myself. Who am I? I am a human being and working for the fulfilment of fellow human being is humanity. Aahung works for the development, betterment and security of people like me.” ■

For further information:
<http://www.aahung.org/>

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Building capacity from a small island

The UN is embarking on a new era of reform wherein its training and research agencies are being repositioned to achieve a greater impact in their global capacity-building effort.



Ambassador Young-am Ma.

AMBASSADOR YOUNG-SAM MA¹

We are in the third year of implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and each UN organization is performing its own duties to reach these goals as part of a global campaign alongside governments and civil society organizations. When it comes to capacity building, the UN training and research institutions (UNU, UNICRI, UNIDIR, UNITAR, UNSSC, UNRISD) are increasing their coordination and creating synergies between themselves. Particularly, UNITAR’s mission is to train a core group of people to lead the locomotive of the SDGs – government officials at the national, subnational and local levels. Part of its delivery mechanism is a network of 18 training centers located around the world, called CIFALs (Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders).

A couple of decades ago, UNITAR formulated a practical methodology called the “City Share Approach” to be widely utilized by all the CIFALs in their training programs. It is based on partnerships between participating cities. Before the workshop, participants conduct and submit a self-assessment at home, and then, after identifying their strengths and weaknesses during the workshops, they choose areas in which they can offer expertise to and also learn from partner cities. Then, the “Knowledge Fair” is open for each participant to request and suggest solutions to other cities. As for the final stage, all participants set their own targets for action plans in order to achieve the SDGs by catering to the identified weak points and implementing newly-learned lessons. In addition to the up-to-date knowledge

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The participants are making offers and requests to other participants during the Knowledge Fair stage.



Each participant's challenges, best practices and where to find more information are shared during the Knowledge Asset stage.

our training programs offer to participants, what makes us stand out the most is that we promote partnerships and cooperation among the participating cities.

How effective are these training programs?

Now, let's analyze the effectiveness of those training programs. Considering that most of the regional training centers' programs last for less than one week, it is both logical and sensible to consider the following

questions. How much does each participant learn at the workshop? How serious are those participants in applying what they have learned at the workshops into real policies or projects? Unfortunately, we are not confident that the answers to the above questions are all that positive.

Here, CIFAL Jeju takes another step towards encouraging follow-up actions. At the end of each workshop, all the trainees

jot down how they will apply what they have learned during the workshop on a postcard. Six months later, they will receive their own postcard, reminding them of their commitment made during the workshop.

CIFAL Jeju also creates SMS groups to facilitate continuous communication among participants and with the organization. CIFAL Jeju has already produced about

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Asia-Pacific Network meeting in September 2017 was an initiative to discuss how to deal with the common challenges and how to promote our own cooperation.

5,000 alumni since its establishment in 2010, and these alumni are its most valuable asset. Whenever CIFAL Jeju conducts outbound events, our alumni in the relevant country are invited. A few months ago, some Cambodian participants were excited to attend an alumni meeting despite the long distance and contributed to the significant talks on how to promote follow-up measures.

Another initiative is the recognition of the best follow-up actions. Very recently, CIFAL Jeju reviewed about 30 Post-Workshop Progress Reports from its alumni. The reports were composed of visible outputs and outcomes of the participant's action plans. Six reports were chosen as the best practices for prizes, and these selected initiatives will be invited to future workshops not just as participants but also as resource persons.

UNITAR and its CIFAL centers are working hard to train people for the effective implementation of the SDGs

But there are always some difficulties. UNITAR does not receive financial support from the UN's regular budget. It depends on voluntary contributions from governments, UN agencies, international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector, meaning that its budget is not always stable. Consequently, securing steady sources of funding is one of the most challenging tasks of UNITAR leaders.

The CIFAL Global Network recently found that each regional training center suffers from a lack of financial resources and

information on where they can find the best resource persons. Against this background and for the first time in UNITAR's history, the representatives from a number of CIFALs located in the Asia-Pacific region and from UNITAR HQ gathered last September on Jeju Island to discuss how to best deal with the common challenges and how to promote cooperation amongst themselves. The meeting proved to be beneficial for all the regional centers. Shortly thereafter, at the Annual Steering Committee meeting among the 16 regional Centers held in Geneva, it was unanimously agreed upon that this regional endeavor deserved to be upgraded to the global level, encompassing all 16 centers.

Another challenge is UNITAR's initiative to substantialize the e-learning system

Currently, the majority of the Sustainable Development Program (SDP) at UNITAR continues to organize face-to-face workshops and events. However, the usefulness of e-learning is increasingly being recognized as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) makes unprecedented progress. The UNITAR e-learning system employs lively interactions and discussions at the same level as the face-to-face classes. Such a strategy reduces the cost of training and the carbon footprint caused by travel, and it also enables a greater number of people all over the world to access UNITAR's e-learning system.

As such, UNITAR is undergoing many new initiatives and reforms. At the recent Steering Committee meeting, the

Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) was seriously discussed, and all parties agreed that the 17 SDGs cannot be achieved without private sector participation and that a new formula of partnership should be explored. UBS, one of the biggest international financial institutions in the world, is offering many good ideas and programs to help fulfill UNITAR's mission. Such a formula can be further developed into a good model beyond Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and ultimately benefit both sides in the future. The new partnership between UNITAR and the private sector will be a key factor for the next generation of UNITAR.

Whenever a new Secretary-General is welcomed, all the UN agencies are in high spirits. Despite the fact that many agencies have called for reforms in the past, we have yet to witness any significant progress. Successful reforms are only possible when they are achievable. In order to make a real difference this time, the UN needs to stick to realistic and substantial measures, mirroring the undertakings of UNITAR. It is my wish that this positive spirit and movement of UNITAR's New Era also spreads to other agencies. ■

1 Director, CIFAL Jeju, UNITAR. Career diplomat of the Republic of Korea. Former ambassador to Denmark, Israel and the Palestinian Authority. First Korean ambassador for Public Diplomacy.



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Understand

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Apply

Use information in new situations
execute, implement, solve, use, demonstrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch

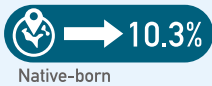
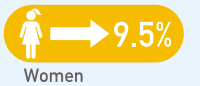
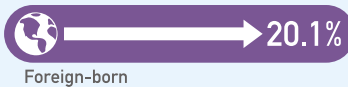
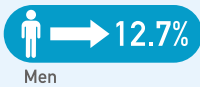
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Early leavers from education and training



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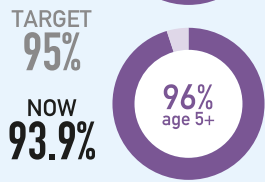
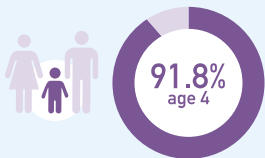
Tertiary education attainment

TARGET 40%

NOW 37.9%



Early childhood education and care



Underachievement in

TARGET 15%



Employment rate of recent graduates

TARGET 82%

NOW 76.1%



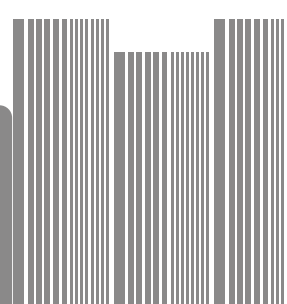
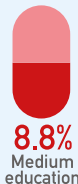
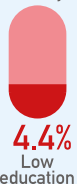
Adult participation in learning



TARGET 15%

NOW 10.7%

By education attainment:



Analyze

Draw connections among ideas

Differentiate, organize, relate, compare, contrast, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, text

Evaluate

Justify a stand or decision

Appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, weigh

Create

Produce new work or initiatives

Design, assemble, construct, conjecture, develop, formulate, author, investigate



Learning

Personalized Professional Learning Cycle

Vision

Goal Setting

Professional Learning Design

Analyze Impact & Develop Next Steps

Lesson Design

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Safe Practice

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Cost per Learner decreases as trainees increase

Classroom



Trainer is the key



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Fixed time and place



Content changes from training to training



Adhering multiple cultural groups not easy



Cost goes up as the number of trainees go up!



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On the Road to Katowice COP24

Polish Youth calls for Climate and SDG Action

For starters, students from 20 public, private and international high schools worked collaboratively to translate “Fairy Tales for a Fairer World” into Polish as a gift to UNOG Director-General Michael Møller.



Slowacki High School Students in Warsaw, participants of the “Education is a Window to the World” Programme.

ADAM KONIUSZEWSKI, THE BRIDGE FOUNDATION

“Involving Polish-language teachers and editors from leading media ensured a text of the highest-quality. This was later confirmed by the prominent literary translator that certified the text” commented Margo Koniuszewski, President of The Bridge Foundation that launched the project.

The initiative is part of the Bridge “Education is a Window to the World” programme on

global challenges – socio-cultural, economic and environmental – that aims to turn young people into informed and engaged actors of change.

A must!

1.8 billion young people around the world aged 10-24 include tomorrow’s leaders in public, business, diplomatic and scientific circles. “Our common future depends on the quality of our education. Understanding global challenges and developing sound solutions is a must. It is up

to us, through our daily choices and actions to shape tomorrow’s prosperity and wellbeing” says Philip Nesterowicz, Education is a Window to The World programme participant from Witkiewicz High School in Warsaw.

We roll up our sleeves all over Poland!

“For change to happen we have to act on all fronts. That is why we are involving youth city councils in the 16 regions of the country” says Małgosia Witek, Chair of Youth City Council for

Poznań who coordinates this project. Having student associations on board also opens-up interesting possibilities. Medical students from the Polish chapter of IFMSA will read the fairytales to children in hospitals while law students from ELSA Poland will organize SDG workshops during their annual conference in November.

A new breed of leaders

“In his video message, Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau told us that we are not only the

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Sobieski High School Students in Krakow, participants of the "Education is a Window to the World" programme.

leaders of tomorrow but also the leaders of today! We want to be part of the solution and are working to promote SDG and climate action" said Paweł Nosal from Sobieski High School in Krakow. "We also received a letter from UNOG Director General, Michael Møller, about our role in advancing SDGs. That he personally asked for his message to be delivered by programme participants made us feel very special" added Anna Gawłowska from Warsaw's Słowacki High School.

Turning the Fairytales into a Theatrical Play

One of the chapters was turned into a theatrical play by students from the Polish-French Żmichowska High School in cooperation with the Directing Department of the National Academy of Dramatic Art in

Warsaw. "It is a pleasure to see such engagement, creativity and talent from these young people" said Kinga Chudobińska who is supporting this initiative at the Academy.

Premiere at the Warsaw Stock Exchange

"We are very happy that the Warsaw Stock Exchange will host the premiere of the play. Finance and business must step up their game, they must be part of the solution: of the 100 largest economic entities in the world 69 are corporations" says Koniuszewski.

A big YES for inclusion and social cohesion

Thanks to support from the Polish Association of the Blind, the scenario will also be translated into Braille and the event made accessible to the hearing

impaired thanks to sign language interpreters.

"We want to share the SDG message with the widest audience possible and are hence not only working with youth but also with adults and seniors. Through the language of the arts we want to touch hearts and minds" added Koniuszewski.

Innovative tools for 21st century classrooms

Young people love fresh and innovative ideas. Michael Møller's initiative to engage youth (and adults alike) on the SDG agenda through the universal wonder and magic of storytelling is simply brilliant. Stimulating young minds on SDG's through stories and art helps them develop critical thinking skills and a holistic

way of seeing the world. The enthusiastic response of young people in Poland confirms its enormous potential for outreach and engagement" says Ewa Drobek, English professor and head of the Żmichowska Sings project.

The Bridge in Geneva - a think-tank city

"In recent years, we have organized various events including lectures at the University of Geneva and hosted students from Canada for a conference at the Canadian Mission and a tour of UNOG. This coming school-year we will deploy our year-long programme with close to 100 youth from Institut Florimont and at College Sismondi soon after, with other schools to follow. The "International Geneva" phenomenon provides an extraordinary melting-pot of know-how, cultural diversity and a platform for the constructive exchange of ideas between the UN, business, civil society and academia. It is a laboratory where these different worlds meet and mingle that we too often take for granted. We want young people to realize and take advantage of the immense resources and opportunities that are within their reach" concludes Margo Koniuszewski. ■

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Israel celebrates its 70th anniversary

Achievements and challenges for a small country

We recently met Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter, Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN in Geneva, to discuss the past and the future of her nation



Ambassador Aviva Raz Shechter at the celebrations of Israel's 70th Independence Day, Geneva.

© Permanent Mission of Israel / PM Vivot

SARAH BENCHERIF, UNITAR

As Israel celebrates the 70th anniversary of its foundation, how is your country celebrating?

Turning 70 is a significant milestone for the State of Israel. The establishment of an independent state was beyond just a political declaration – in many ways, it was a miracle. It was essential for the Jewish People – who have suffered throughout the centuries, and especially during the Holocaust – to have their own national homeland, a safe haven. Zionism is the realization of centuries of yearning for the Jewish People to return to their ancestor land from forced exile, and to build their own Jewish democratic country in Zion. From the very establishment of the state of Israel, we aspire to become part of the Middle East, having peace with our neighbors and share our knowhow in relevant areas with all communities in the region.

Indeed, we see every Independence Day as a reason for celebration. It is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements within the unprecedented challenges for a small country. The last several years have shown a lot of instability in our region, wars and failing States; however, Israel maintains its Peace Treaties with Egypt and Jordan, which are strategic partners, and key for the stability of the region. We will also continue to put forward any effort to reach a compromise and hopefully peace with the Palestinians and with the rest of the Arab world.

Israel is a wonderful place to visit. Though a small country, it has a very diverse landscape, from the sea of the Galilee to the Dead Sea, from Mount Hermon in the North, to the Gulf of Eilat in the South. Our capital, Jerusalem, which embraces past and present, is an open city that reflects the freedom of

worship for all religions. And the “never-stopping” Tel Aviv with its beautiful beaches and cultural life.

How do you prioritize your work here in Geneva?

I have now been in Geneva for two years, which have been both interesting and challenging.

As an Ambassador that covers the UN organizations in all aspects – from the Human Rights Council (HRC) to the WTO – the different International Organizations and Agencies, I certainly need to prioritize and to work daily with my dedicated team.

The Human Rights Council is a first priority since it has traditionally been a challenging place for Israel, where resolutions are passed – by an automatic majority of Member States with an anti-Israel agenda – under Item 7, the only

HRC agenda item that deals with a single country.

However, Israel does not let this agenda dictate its participation in the multilateral arena, and therefore, we put a lot of emphasis on many thematic issues, such as gender, empowerment of women, rights for LGBTI people and persons with disabilities, SDGs and many more.

Since Israel became part of the WEOG (Western European and Others Group), we have also been an active member in the group, and this year, I am serving as its representative to the Consultative Group to the President of the Human Rights Council. Moreover, Israel was recently elected to the Executive Board of the WHO and was ranked first in the world for its Emergency Medical Teams.

Israel is known as the “Start-up Nation,” and it is our great

desire to share our know-how and innovative spirit with other countries within the multilateral arena.

Your country recently hosted the 30th International Women Leaders Conference and several world leaders participated. Can you please tell us about Israel's policy towards gender equality?

Gender equality is a deeply engrained value in Israeli society. From the very first day, Israel has had universal suffrage and women were completely integrated into every aspect of life. We were also one of the first countries in the world to have a female prime minister, Golda Meir.

These trends continue today –female participation in the workforce has risen exponentially, from 41% in 1990 to over 56% today. Military service is obligatory for men and women alike, and most of the positions

are open to both. This reality opens many opportunities for women later on in civilian life and diminishes the gaps based on gender.

I am also part of the Gender Champions network, and I am proud to say that our Mission in Geneva has a majority of women diplomats.

Our Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV) is known for its special courses dealing with ways to empower women and helps them to become a growing integral part in their societies. In the conference you mentioned, we brought together women leaders to discuss cross-cutting issues, while demonstrating new ideas and innovative approaches to promote women and narrow gender gaps.

Israel has the highest birth-rate in the developed world and

rapid urbanization growth. How is your government tackling issues related to sustainable development, particularly on environmental matters?

As I have mentioned before, Israel is known as the Start-up Nation, and it therefore sees the contribution of the younger generation as most essential for its innovative spirit and for the achievement of constant progress. The power of the youth is a key part for the success of Israeli society and its economy. We therefore see the high birth-rate as something of an advantage. Indeed, our unemployment rate is very low at approximately 4.2%.

However, a rapidly growing population does require careful planning when it comes to sustainability and the environment. It is important to mention that over 20% of Israel's territory is protected as national parks or nature reserves, and

60% is covered by the desert. While it creates a great challenge, we have turned this reality into opportunities – Israel is now number one in the desalination and recycling of water, we are leaders in agrotech and cleantech, and 85% of Israeli households use solar energy.

When talking about the SDGs, we see it as part and parcel of Israel's ideology, from its very early years. We were striving not only to create a developed country but also to share and contribute our know-how to developing countries. In this regard, we have been trying to collaborate within the region in order to find solutions to desertification and water scarcity.

As you already explained a little, although 60% of its land is desert, Israel is the only country in the world where the desert is receding, as a result, the UN has recognized Israel as an expert in



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combating desertification. Can you tell us how Israel gained this savoir-faire?

Like in many areas where Israel is considered an expert, our knowledge comes from necessity. As I said earlier, 60% of Israel's territory is arid. So even before the establishment of Israel, the Zionist leaders understood the necessity to find ways for people to live in the desert, to cultivate the soil, to make life sustainable. David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, decided to retire and live in Sde Boker, a kibbutz in the Negev desert, to set an example.

To put theory into practice, we make the desert bloom through innovation in agriculture, biotechnology and renewable energy. We have also established grand projects like Israel's National Water Carrier, which brings water to the most remote, arid areas in the South, and raised awareness among the Israeli public about the importance of saving water.

Another educational effort, which starts in the early childhood of every Israeli boy and girl, is the tradition of planting new trees during "Tu biShvat", the Jewish New Year of the Trees.

Can you tell us a little about this concept of the kibbutz, this cooperative effort that started at the beginning of Israel?

The kibbutzim are a modern Israeli creation. The first kibbutz was established in 1909 with the idea to create a communal and equal society, based on agriculture. Many Jews, fleeing the horrors of antisemitism in Europe, came back to the land –then under Ottoman rule– to build a pioneering society that consequently served as the basis for the modern State of Israel. After 1948, the kibbutzim became an extraordinary

tool for the integration of different Jewish communities. It gave them all the possibility to have the same starting point, and to become part of the Israeli mosaic.

Today, there are over 270 kibbutzim in Israel, and they offer a unique insight into Israeli society and are fascinating places to visit.

The revival of the Hebrew language is an extraordinary story. A language that was brought back to life after centuries during which it lay dormant and is now flourishing. Our readers would probably be interested to hear more about this.

Hebrew is one of the world's oldest languages –spoken and written today in much the same way as it was more than 2,000 years ago. It had not been spoken as a mother tongue since the 2nd century CE and was exclusively used for literature and prayer. This lasted until late in the 19th century. As Jews were working to realize the dream of establishing a Jewish State, they also dreamed of reviving their ancient language.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was the reviver of the Hebrew language, and he regarded Hebrew and Zionism as one and the same. Some Hebrew educational institutions were initially against teaching science in Hebrew. It took six years of strong debates within the leadership of the Jewish Community to decide to adopt Hebrew as the official language.

Today, Hebrew is a living language spoken by over 9 million people worldwide. New Hebrew words are invented all the time by the Academy of the Hebrew Language, often through crowd-sourcing.

On the Holocaust, what can be done to keep the world from

forgetting, so young people remember? Why is it still relevant today?

This question is a profound one because the Holocaust was the biggest catastrophe in the history of the twentieth century and mankind. The slogan "Remember – Never Forget" runs in our DNA. The State of Israel was not established because of the Holocaust; however, it did reinforce the realization of the urgent need for the creation of an independent Jewish State.

The State of Israel therefore carries a moral responsibility towards the Jewish People, but it also needs to stay at the forefront of keeping alive the memory of the six million victims that perished under the Nazi machinery and their legacy. The Holocaust teaches us the intrinsic and indivisible value of all human life. One of the results of WWII and the Holocaust is actually the creation of the UN – the establishment of key human rights and humanitarian law instruments– so that all States work together to prevent another genocide from ever happening again.

Seventy-three years later, we still face anti-Semitic attacks, incitement and denial of the Holocaust. The growing use of social media brings unfortunately also to the spread of hatred against Jews and Israelis. The demonization and delegitimization of the Jewish State of Israel is simply another form of antisemitism.

In one of my former capacities, I served as the Head of the Department for Combating Antisemitism in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Commemoration and enforcement of legislations are all critical, but the real key is education. We need to educate people –our children from an early age– to accept each other without

discrimination and to combat incitement and hatred.

For this reason, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs promoted the recognition of the International Holocaust Memorial Day in the UN, which takes place every year on 27 January. This day serves as a platform for survivors to speak, for the new generations to listen, and for all of us to promise –never again. Soon there will be no survivors left to testify. Therefore, we need to keep passing their story on to the next generations. One of the projects for preserving this history in a vivid way is, for instance, the creation of survivors' holograms, which can interactively respond to questions from museum visitors.

We, nations, carry the responsibility to teach each and every generation the lessons, so that it will never happen again.

To conclude, do you have a message to the UN staff and the diplomats here?

The United Nations encompasses all the states in the world, but I don't like to use amorphous terms. A "state" is, after all, a society, a people, and the people are the decision makers. So, my message is that it is in our hands—we need to put aside conflicts and work together to the benefit of our societies and peoples.

Imagine what could be accomplished in our region if we could share know-how, technologies, and capabilities, and work together to make the world better.

This is a hope, not a utopia. I indeed think that this is the responsibility of each and every one of us, and my country, Israel, would very much like to further contribute to this effort. ■

13 September 2018

Oscar winner to visit UNOG for the First International Day of Sign Languages Celebrations

In December 2017, the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/161, establishing 23 September as the International Day of Sign Languages, highlighting the need to raise awareness of sign languages as fully fledged natural languages, vital for an inclusive society and multilingualism.



© UN DCM photographer

At UN Open Day. The sign means “for future generations”.

REBECCA EDGINGTON¹, UNOG

In December 2017, the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/161, establishing 23 September as the International Day of Sign Languages, highlighting the need to raise awareness of sign languages as fully fledged natural languages, vital for an inclusive society and multilingualism. Indeed, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that sign languages are equal to spoken languages, and that countries should undertake actions to recognize and promote their use.

The United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) is organizing a series of events to celebrate this Day and raise awareness about the importance of sign languages on 13 September 2018 at the Palais des Nations, to coincide with the session of the CRPD and the Human Rights Council. As the home of the Human Rights Council and the meetings of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) UNOG is the main duty station using sign languages. In 2017, the Division of Conference Management (DCM) Interpretation Service organized 247 days of sign interpretation: 123 days

in International Sign -an international means of communication- and 124 days of different national sign languages including from Russia, Panama, Jordan, Canada, Honduras, Morocco and the UK.

The lunchtime activity on 13 September will be the screening of the short film “The Silent Child”, which won the Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film in 2018. DCM is delighted that its author, Rachel Shenton, will be with us to introduce the film. “The Silent Child” tells the story of a deaf 4-year-old girl named Libby, who lives in a world of silence until a social worker, played by Rachel Shenton, teaches her to communicate in sign language. It is a wonderful illustration of why the General Assembly adopted the International Day and also of the importance of sign languages to ensure no one is left behind.

Other activities on the day include: the display of the short video clip “Signer en Langues” by Director Nurith Aviv around the Palais des Nations; a guided tour of Palais des Nations with sign language interpretation by the Visitor’s Service; and a pop-up sign language café with volunteer sign language

teachers. The Director-General of UNOG and representatives from the Deaf community will also participate in a high-level panel organized by the Secretariat of the CRPD Committee, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, from 3-5 p.m.

We invite all of you to join in the events throughout the day, starting with our pop-up sign language café on the 2nd floor Mezzanine by Door 40. ■

1 Rebecca Edgington is Chief, English Section at Interpretation Service. UNOG

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The full first EMERGE cohort.

Graduation of the first cohort – Palais Wilson, 22 June 2018

EMERGE – Programme for Emerging Women Leaders

SARAH JORDAN, DEPUTY EDITOR UNOG

Palais Wilson has always been my favourite venue since I joined the United Nations (UN) in 2001 – be it as a trainer or a trainee. On this glorious, but windy, summer afternoon, overlooking a lake on which white horses galloped, I was happy to return – invited to a graduation ceremony. But this was no ordinary graduation ceremony; I was about to witness something that back in 2001 would have been unthinkable – a new era at the United Nations – young professional women in the driving seat!

Indeed, on entering the room I could not help but notice a few differences to habitual UN gatherings. The first was the gender balance in the room – maybe 90% female? Curious... The second... curiouser... was the average age of those present – somewhere between 35 and 40 I would estimate... The third... curiouser still... was the atmosphere in the room – happy, relaxed and united – my university days are somewhat distant I must admit, but my children's less so, and there was no mistaking a tangible “graduation” feel to the proceedings: a

moment of shared joy further to shared efforts – but for lack of a gender-neutral equivalent, on this occasion the word “brotherhood” would definitely have to be replaced with “sisterhood”.

So, just what is EMERGE? It is a Programme for Emerging Women Leaders from 11 United Nations entities: ILO, ITU, OCHA, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOG, UNSSC, WHO and WIPO. Coordinated by the Geneva Learning Network (GLN), it supports efforts to reach gender parity in the United Nations system, aligns to the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), builds on the dynamics of the International Gender Champions and complements existing women's leadership programmes offered by UNSSC, UNITAR and UN Women. Its goal is to contribute to the professional growth and development of participants so that they strengthen their leadership competence and style. The nine-month programme is open to three selected participants at the P3 level from each organization, with a maximum intake of

33 for each cohort. Workshops focus on some pretty meaty skills building (women and leadership, strategic thinking, political savviness, negotiation, influencing upwards,) and, in these days of mindfulness, seek to raise awareness (self-assessment tools, interaction with senior female leaders). Added to this are individual coaching and mentoring sessions aimed at tackling those self-imposed barriers that typically hold women back in their career progression.

EMERGE has got off to a very auspicious start. It won the Employee Engagement Award at the Career Development Roundtable in Dublin in December 2017.

After opening remarks from Peggy Hicks, Director, Thematic Engagement, Special Procedures and right to Development Division, OHCHR, “Participants’ Voices”, facilitated by Virginie Ferre, Chief of the Language Training Programme, UNOG, provided feedback from “Emergers” from a wide variety of career backgrounds on their experiences of the programme followed. Here are some extracts:

“Together we can be stronger and have more impact.”

– Irene Kitsara, Intellectual Property Information Officer, WIPO

“EMERGE has become a voice in my head. When there is an opportunity outside my comfort zone it tells me ‘Do it! Go for it!’”

– Annie van Klaveren, Technical Officer, Multinational Enterprises, ILO

“I volunteered to do things I don’t usually do.”

– Liza Sekaggya, Human Rights Officer, OHCHR

“If you change the way you see things, you start to change the way you do things and you get a different set of results.”

– Annika Howse, formerly Procurement Specialist, UNICEF

“This programme was about how to find purpose in what we do.”

– Eva Garcia Bouzas, Protection Officer, UNHCR

Reference was made to the role of senior female officials, particularly Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, who was deemed particularly inspiring. “What guides you? What is your beacon? What motivates you? Why do you come to work day after day?” were the questions she asked EMERGE participants. Emergers agreed on “the importance of a role model that looks like we do”. Other themes were daring to apply for a job even if you only have 80% of the required criteria and how women still often have to juggle the demands of their families alongside those of their work. Confidences shared were frank; laughter frequent and although I witnessed no tears, they were referred to and emotion was palpable.

A discussion between Roberta Rumiano, Project Manager and Business Relationship Manager, UNOG and Kristin Engvig, Founder and CEO of Women’s International Networking (WIN), a 20-year-old private sector precursor to EMERGE, followed. Kirstin described what management is about in a very appropriate manner for somebody descended from a multi-generational family of photographers: “it’s about putting people in the best light so that they shine”. Her tips to the young EMERGE managers: be open; ask for help when you need it and give help

to others; share at and outside of work; take risks; commit; never accept unacceptable behaviour because you will reinforce it; be joyful with each other.

On this last point, by this stage in the proceedings little further encouragement was needed. After presenting certificates and taking souvenir photos, Juliane Drews and Jesus Guerrero, EMERGE co-leads, outlined “the Way Ahead” (encouraging alumnae participation in future cohorts, investing in the growing network of future women leaders – and launching a second EMERGE cohort) before hosting a celebratory cocktail party, at which it was clear that networking has become second nature to this first of hopefully many cohorts. ■

For further details, interested persons should contact the Learning & Development team of their respective entity. For UNOG: <https://learning.unog.ch/node/9019>



Juliane Drews and Jesus Guerrero – Emerge co-leads.

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Creating Peace Without Borders at the 2018 Geneva Peace Talks

Showcasing inspirational stories of people making positive contributions to peace in their everyday lives, the sixth edition of the Geneva Peace Talks will take place on the International Day of Peace, 21 September.



© Antoine Tardy for Interpeace

SARAH NOBLE, INTERPEACE

Organized under the theme “Peace Without Borders”, the 2018 Geneva Peace Talks aims to encourage and promote breaking out of silos and working together to generate common understandings and solutions in today’s times where uncertainty has become the new norm.

Focusing on the idea that collaboration is key to building peace, the 2018 Geneva Peace Talks will feature speakers that work to promote peace that goes beyond borders – be they geographic, political or physical boundaries. Speakers include a young Iraqi who fled violence in Iraq and now lives in Switzerland where she is a youth delegate in the United Nations representing refugees, a social worker who works to integrate asylum seekers in Geneva, a Cameroonian who works on promoting communication spaces for the most marginalized, a German doctor who works to help women survivors of sexual violence in contexts of war, two middle-eastern youth promoting peace and social cohesion in their communities, and the founder and director of the only museum exclusively focused on the experience of childhood affected by war.

Talking from the Palais de Nations, where individuals from all around the world collaborate and take action on pressing global issues, speakers will share the challenges they face and the opportunities they create toward enabling sustainable peace in their communities. Each inspirational “Peace Talk” will emphasize personal stories to motivate and empower audience members to work toward creating peace in their current workplace and circumstances.

The Peace Talks were initiated in Geneva in 2013 with the Geneva Peace Talks, co-organized by the United Nations Office at Geneva, Interpeace and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform. To date there have been 10 editions of Peace Talks in 6 countries, 115 speakers, over 6,200 in person attendees and more than 120 million impressions on the event hashtags. The 2018 Geneva Peace Talks will be recorded, streamed live online and available for viewing at peacetalks.net

Through these personal stories of collaboration, courage and reconciliation, the 2018 Geneva Peace Talks aims to inspire the audience, near and far, to reach out and play an active role in their communities

and promote peace across borders. When addressing the Geneva Peace Talks in 2017, late Kofi Annan encapsulated this idea with the following words of hope and wisdom: “You have the right to make your voices heard... not only can you participate, you can lead. As individuals, you have power.” ■

Join us for the sixth edition of the Geneva Peace Talks to mark the International Day of Peace.

Date: 21 September 2018 from 16:30-18:30

Venue: Palais des Nations in Geneva

For more information on this year’s peace talks and previous editions, see peacetalks.net

La Semana del Español: no hay dos sin tres

CLAUDIA FRESAN, UNOG¹

Everything happens in threes, and the Spanish Language Week is no exception. This year marks the third edition of a creative venture born in 2016 thanks to the enthusiasm of a group of translators and interpreters from different organizations in Geneva. It all started with the official celebration of the Spanish Language Day, sponsored by UNOG/DCM. Soon it became apparent that one day was not enough to pay tribute to the diversity of the second most widely spoken language in the world, and thus, the celebration turned into a whole week of festivities. What follows is a brief account of some of the many activities organised for the occasion. Hopefully it will give you an idea of what to expect this year; a series of colourful events that will awaken all your senses.

To start with, you can delight your taste buds with the unique and diverse flavours of Latin American cuisine during the Gourmet Week in the cafeterias of several international organizations (UNOG, WTO, OHCHR, ITU, WMO, ILO, UNICEF and ECOLINT). And for once, too many cooks won't spoil the broth as the young, yet renowned,

chef from The Canary Islands, Oscar Dayas Rodrigues, gives a master class at the WMO, during which participants will be able to put their culinary skills to the test.

A group of artists from different countries will prove that a picture is worth a thousand words through the international art exhibition *Connecting cultures*, promoted by UNSA Spain. The paintings reflect on how our differences can be used for a greater good, and enhance awareness about migration issues, under the umbrella of SDG 17 "Partnerships for the goals".

Bolivia, Chile and Equatorial Guinea will be at the literary forefront during this edition. The public will learn about contemporary narrative during a presentation at the UN public library on 15 fundamental novels of Bolivia. The Chilean writer and musician Isabel Mellado will present her latest novel in the charming bookshop *Albatros*. And the young and talented Cesar Brandon, from Equatorial Guinea, winner of Spanish TV show *Got talent*, will read his poetry and talk to the public during two events at ECOLINT and the University of Geneva, as well as in Room XX at the Palais des Nations.

There will also be something for film enthusiasts. The Week will include the screening of two movies on UNOG premises, so if you are hungry for something new, please join us to discover two pearls of Mexican and Dominican cinematography.

In keeping with tradition, UNOG/DCM will sponsor the official celebration of the Spanish Language Day. If you joined the party in the past you will probably have high expectations. You won't be disappointed. Music and poetry will resonate again under the beautiful ceiling of the Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room. But let's not reveal too much; we'll simply mention the name Violeta Parra...

Building on the success of last October's workshop on the comic book *Asterix in Hispania*, this year the Spanish Week includes a play for children based on Spanish medieval tales. After all, we can all learn from art, and we want to foster a love for it among the youngest members of the family.

Last but not least, this year marks the 5th edition of the literary contest *De la Traducción a la Creación* (from translation



to creation), open to translators and interpreters. The closing date for submissions is September 17. *La pluma es la lengua del alma* (the quill is the tongue of the soul), wrote Miguel de Cervantes, so just follow his lead and go for it!

Surely these tidbits will give you an appetite for more. Please visit the page of La Asociación de Funcionarios Internacionales Españoles to get more detailed information and check for possible changes: <http://afie.es/actividades-culturales-y-sociales>. ■

Some words of acknowledgement to all those who make the organizations of the Week possible: AFIE, Comité Palabras+, the UNOG Spanish book club, the Spanish section of CLM, DCM, and Spanish speaking country missions in Geneva.

¹ Claudia Fresan is member of Palabras+, with the collaboration of Lisa Mcelroy

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DAVID BICCHETTI. GPAFI

Depuis plusieurs décennies les fonctionnaires internationaux ont la possibilité de souscrire à des assurances à des tarifs négociés et préférentiels grâce au GPAFI, le Groupement de Prévoyance et d'Assurance des Fonctionnaires Internationaux (*Provident and Insurance Group of International Officials*).

Fondé en 1958 par le Conseil de coordination du personnel, le GPAFI propose à ses membres des couvertures d'assurance complémentaires aux prestations fournies par les organisations internationales. Depuis le 1^{er} juin 2018, le GPAFI fait partie intégrante de l'Association Mutuel des Fonctionnaires Internationaux (AMFI), un fond spécial des Nations Unies. Grâce aux contrats collectifs négociés avec les assureurs, les membres du GPAFI bénéficient de conditions et de primes d'assurance particulièrement avantageuses.

Par exemple, pour l'année 2019, le GPAFI a le plaisir d'annoncer une baisse exceptionnelle des primes de l'assurance complémentaire santé pour les enfants et les jeunes adultes ainsi que les adultes entre 46-55 ans par rapport aux tarifs 2018. Tous ceux dont l'assurance de base est UNSMIS (ONU-HCR), CAPS (BIT-ILO) ou SHI (OMS- WHO) peuvent profiter de ces rabais en plus d'un rabais permanent de 10% s'ils deviennent membre du GPAFI en même temps que de l'assurance de base. Ces rabais sont d'autant plus bienvenus pour les familles en cette période de coupure budgétaire et d'ajustements salariaux. Aussi afin de renforcer la solidarité du portefeuille d'assurance, dès 2019, nous admettrons les nouveaux

membres pour l'assurance complémentaire santé jusqu'au mois de leur 60^e anniversaire au plus tard.

En outre, pour parer aux imprévus de vacances et de voyage, comme les bagages égarés, les annulations, le vol, ou plus sérieusement comme les tremblements de terre, les inondations, les attaques terroristes, le GPAFI offre une version PREMIUM pour tous les assurés complémentaire UNSMIS. Malheureusement ces phénomènes se multiplient ces dernières années de façon totalement imprévisible et cette version PREMIUM vous décharge de toutes les démarches administratives et financières face à une situation d'urgence médicale, en plus de couvrir vos frais de rapatriement.

Pour les amoureux des sports en plein air, non pris en charge par l'assurance de base, comme la plongée, la spéléologie, le parapente, le canyoning, etc. le GPAFI propose une assurance accident qui couvre les dépenses médicales résultants d'un accident dans la pratique de l'un de ces sports ainsi que les frais d'évacuation. Cette assurance couvre aussi les frais d'évacuation lors d'un accident de ski par exemple, car ceux-ci ne sont pas non plus pris en charge par l'assurance de base. De plus cette assurance, judicieusement négociée, couvre intégralement vos frais médicaux liés à un accident de la circulation dont la responsabilité incombe à un tiers, sans que vous ayez à entreprendre vous-même les démarches pour vous faire rembourser par le tiers.

En ce qui concerne la prévoyance professionnelle, le GPAFI offre une assurance

perte de gain dont l'utilité n'est plus à démontrer. En effet, lors de grave problème de santé, comme un cancer, les 9 mois de salaire à plein traitement sur une période de 4 années consécutives se révèlent bien souvent insuffisants pour couvrir toute la durée de traitement ou de convalescence. Cette assurance perte de gain permet au fonctionnaire de continuer à toucher un salaire à 100% pendant la période à mi-traitement ainsi qu'un salaire à 50% jusqu'à la mise en invalidité ou pour 16 mois supplémentaires au maximum.

En effet, un arrêt de travail prolongé peut être lourd de conséquences financières qui viennent s'ajouter aux problèmes de santé du fonctionnaire ce qui fragilise d'autant plus une situation stressante. Cette assurance perte de gain s'avère donc indispensable pour préserver son budget, pouvoir faire face à ses obligations financières et protéger son foyer. Les risques d'une perte de revenu sont malheureusement souvent sous-évalués par la plupart des fonctionnaires. Avec une prime généralement inférieure à 1 pourcent du salaire, vous pouvez protéger jusqu'à 100 pourcent de votre salaire pendant 18 mois complet! D'ailleurs si vous y contribuez pendant 10 ans environ, elle est amortie dès le versement des premières prestations.

De plus, pour renforcer la prévoyance, le GPAFI a le plaisir d'annoncer le lancement prochain d'une assurance vie risque décès. Si un enfant, une épouse, un époux, un partenaire pour la vie, ou un parent dépend de vous et de votre revenu, vous avez besoin

d'une assurance vie! Vous avez des charges familiales qui sont restées au pays, cette assurance est faite pour vous. Selon un sondage, 7 familles sur 10 avec des enfants mineurs aux USA ne seraient pas en mesure de faire face aux dépenses du ménage si le gagne-pain principal décédait. Vous ne pouvez pas prédire le futur mais vous pouvez le protéger avec cette assurance vie.

En outre, Cette assurance est particulièrement avantageuse pour les femmes dont les primes sont moins chères. Imaginez, la prime annuelle commence à CHF 65 pour CHF 100 000 d'assurance, et pour CHF 300 000 vous ne payez que CHF 145 par an jusqu'à 39 ans! Cette assurance est de loin le plus avantageuse sur le marché. De plus, elle ne contient pas de limitation concernant le suicide, ou le terrorisme, par exemple. Afin de faciliter l'affiliation, le questionnaire de santé a été fortement simplifié. Cette assurance est aussi particulièrement adaptée pour les fonctionnaires qui se trouvent sur le terrain, au Moyen-Orient ou en Afrique, car elle n'impose pas de résidence en Suisse¹.

Cette assurance sera disponible dans le courant du mois de septembre, mais vous pouvez d'ores et déjà vous pré-inscrire en écrivant un email à l'adresse gpaifi@un.org. De plus n'hésitez pas à consulter notre site internet www.gpaifi.org. ■

1 Pour l'instant, cette assurance vie n'est pas disponible pour les résidents en France pour des raisons légales avec l'Etat français. Tous les autres pays de résidence sont admis.

Evaluation Ties: Connected in Common Cause

**WAYNE MACDONALD, FAITH TEMPEST,
JOHN BURRETT¹**

How evaluation in general, and UNEG (the United Nations Evaluation Group) in particular, provides an important conduit for system wide collaboration and cooperation, that connects UN Specialised Agencies, UN Funds and Programmes and UN Secretariat affiliated organizations in common cause.

The United Nations – to what end?

Within the United Nations system, performance expectations are many and varied: transparency, reliability, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, and results to name a few. Underpinning these are concerns over a UN system bedeviled by byzantine structures, functional duplication, diffused authorities, centralized bureaucracies, unwieldy processes, and profound confidence deficits. Still, the UN is, and always will be, a unique global actor. Its ethos is simple: together, we are stronger, for a better world. The aspiration is to make a difference in the lives of the people it serves. Calls for UN reform are continuous, but what does change seek to achieve? We hear cries for a more nimble, professional, efficient and innovative organization that can demonstrate results, respond to client/stakeholders, and ensure greater added value.

Agenda 2030 – a call to action

Agenda 2030 embodies another key policy and program expectation for the 21st century, with achievement to be measured through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It represents a substantial paradigm shift, calling for a more

coherent, collaborative and joined up approach to address the globe's 'wicked' problems that influence poverty, quality of life, and the environment. The SDGs are central in the policy dialogue among international organizations, governments, businesses, NGOs and international networks (e.g. EvalSDGs).

UNEG who?

But can policy expectations match program performance? Are there instances of UN organizations acting together, in concert, with joint resolve to confront future challenges? One example is the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). As a voluntary, professional association, UNEG connects evaluation units across the UN but has no formal mandate. UNEG advocates for common evaluation norms and standards and promotes the independence, credibility and the usefulness of the evaluation function. The network's 47 UN member organizations represent the UN

Specialized Agencies, UN Funds and Programs and UN Secretariat affiliated organizations. The bulk of contributing UNEG member organizations are located in New York, Geneva, Rome, and Vienna, as well as Washington, Montreal, Bangkok, Bonn, Amman, Beirut, the Hague, Paris, Nairobi, London, Addis Abba, and Trinidad and Tobago. UNEG develops methodologies that address UN reform topics (e.g. system-wide evaluation), supports professionalization of the evaluation function, encourages evaluation utilization as part of evidence-based policy decision-making, and establishes partnerships within the wider UN community and beyond. UNEG is a community of professionals where evaluation knowledge and learning is shared, and at a relatively low cost.

UNEG's 2014-2019 strategy sets out four Strategic Objectives (SOs). Each SO is directly tied to expected outcomes and impacts, which contribute

to achieving UNEG's vision: evaluation fully realized in every entity of the UN system through appropriate evaluation policies, resources, skills and activities; and evidence produced by evaluation that informs a more relevant, efficient and effective UN system with greater impacts on the lives of the people it serves. (see logic model on next page).

UNEG regularly assesses its achievements, shortcomings and challenges. An external team of consultants recently undertook a Mid-Term Review of UNEG's strategy, focusing on questions linked to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, governance and partnerships. For further details, see <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2104>.

"Let me take a selfie!" – mapping UNEG

Understanding how networks interact to deliver strategic objectives (e.g. UNEG's SOs) is essential to understanding

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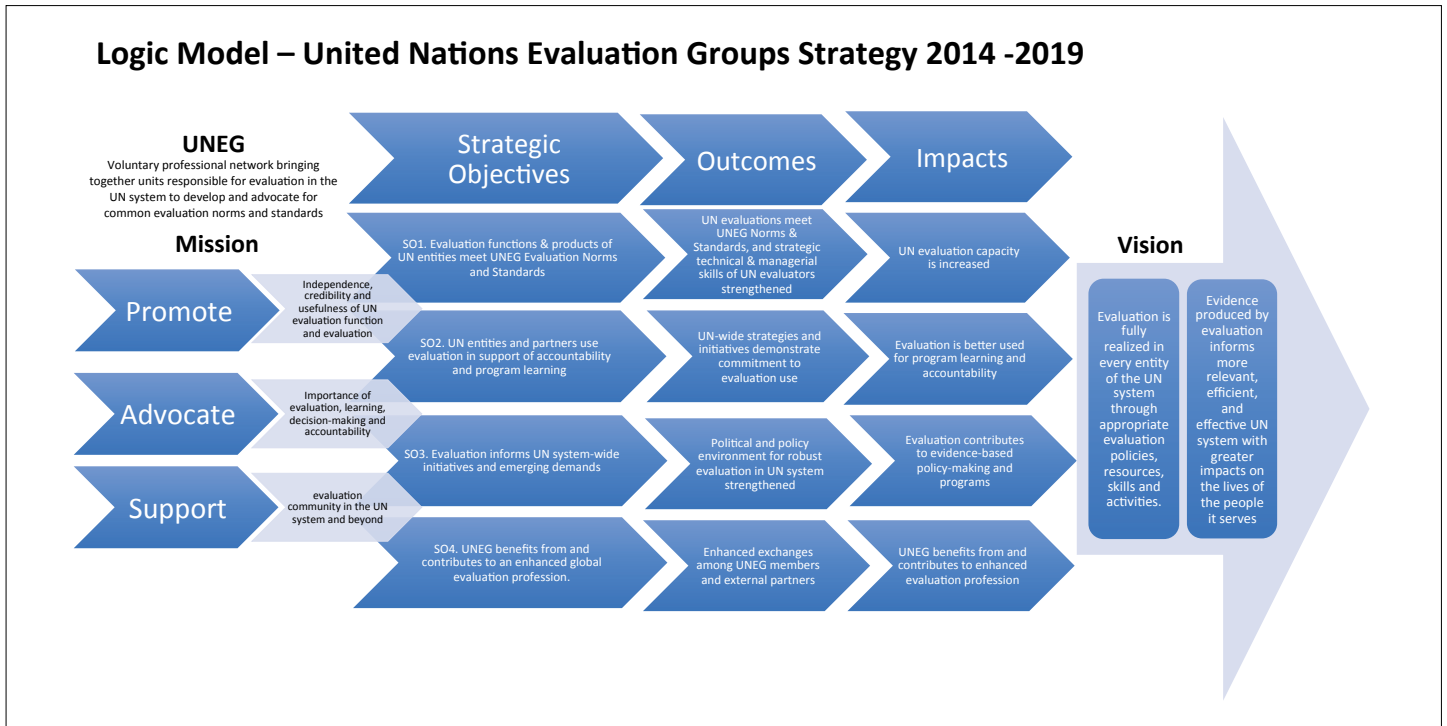
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Logic Model – United Nations Evaluation Groups Strategy 2014 -2019



their functioning. Network analysis is a useful tool for revealing interconnections, collaborations, and information dissemination pathways. UNEG delivers each of its four SOs through member voluntary participation in various working groups. Network maps elaborate interactions by UNEG members in these working groups alongside other member entity attributes: members' financial and in-kind contributions to UNEG; member budgets available for UNEG/evaluation activities; member staff available for UNEG/evaluation activities; the seniority of the UNEG heads, and UN member location (see map 1, next page).

UNEG networking can be portrayed in terms of four clusters. One group (right-hand side of Map 2, next page) represents those UNEG organizations with few associations to UNEG's Strategy. The other three clusters involve those connected to one or more SOs. Members of a cluster are more interrelated with each other, even if they are connected to other SOs not in a shared group. The

central grouping was created to emphasize organizations that are connected to all four SOs and accounts for almost all of the higher-weighted connections. It is mainly composed of UN Funds and Programs and Specialized Agencies. Some organizations, such as UNDP, UNICEF and FAO, are very connected and provide closer associations between all other members, thus promoting communication and collaboration. Both maps show that SO1 (evaluation functions and products of UN entities meet UNEG norms and standards for evaluation) and SO3 (evaluation informs UN system-wide initiatives and emerging demands) have more links and receive more support in terms of resource contributions (in-kind and financial).

Aligning an SDG 'target' network with a UN 'evaluation' network
Why is this important? Informal linkages can offer more fuel to policymaking and performance than official channels. The maps (next page) show where UNEG members are allocating resources, including having conversations

on performance issues and opportunities for cooperation, on the margins and outside the more formal UN apparatus. It affords some optimism that such reflections are occurring that could potentially contribute to addressing Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. The complexity of the SDGs, with their many moving parts and interactions, requires a systematic approach. This is germane to program evaluation. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) portrays the SDGs as

a "network of targets". What better way to address such a network than through a network of UN professionals whose *raison d'être* is to determine whether change is occurring, independently assess its performance, and judge its value. As UNEG prepares its next Strategy (2020-2025), decisions will be made regarding the extent to which a harmonized approach can tackle the SDG challenge, along with those of UN reform, and building better national evaluation development capacity.

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Successful UN mission to Venezuela

ALFRED DE ZAYAS¹

From 26 November to 4 December 2017, I carried out the first visit to Venezuela by a UN rapporteur since 1996. Whereas numerous countries welcome rapporteurs, many do not, partly because they perceive rapporteurs as *a priori* hostile and not independent. When States anticipate that rapporteurs will mainly grandstand instead of listening to stakeholders and formulating constructive recommendations, invitations will not be forthcoming. In my 13 prior reports to the Council and General Assembly I demonstrated a result-oriented approach, offering pragmatic solutions to concrete problems. Thus, I am pleased to have opened doors for other rapporteurs, two new visits currently being prepared.

Admittedly, my competences were limited by the terms of reference of the international order mandate². I was not a super rapporteur and could therefore not focus on para-institutional problems, freedom of expression, independence of judges or the rights to food and health, for which other rapporteurs are competent. Notwithstanding, I did receive and transmit petitions on these issues incorporating some into my recommendations and obtained the release of eighty detainees and the adoption of new cooperation arrangements between UN agencies and the government³.

Over the past years the media has reported extensively on Venezuela's economic and human rights problems.

In 2016 Venezuela was examined under the Human Rights Council's universal periodic review. Its fourth report to the Human Rights Committee and third report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were examined in 2015, both Committees issuing recommendations, which I carefully studied, as well as reports of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Human Rights Watch, keenly aware of the methodological imperative to listen to all sides, *audiatur et altera pars*. When in Venezuela I met with stakeholders of all political colours, members of the opposition, of the National Assembly, university professors, churches,



non-governmental organizations including Amnesty International, PROVEA, Fundalatin and the Grupo Sures, who helped me understand the complexities of democratic and constitutional conflicts as well as the current scarcity in certain foods, medicines, products of personal hygiene, the problems of hoarding, black-market, contraband, corruption, sabotage and induced inflation.

It is, of course, insufficient to observe the existence of an economic crisis. The challenge is to understand its causes – which became apparent after digesting masses of documentation and statistics. One major problem is the dependence of the Venezuelan economy on the sale of petroleum – a situation prevailing since the early 20th century. Although the government has endeavoured to diversify, conversion is slow. The dramatic fall in oil prices was not helped by the ideological constraints of *Chavismo*. Then followed unilateral coercive measures, including sanctions and financial blockades, exacerbating the situation. For example, when in November 2017 Venezuela needed anti-malaria medicine, Colombia refused to deliver and Venezuela had to purchase in India. I learned that to avoid US penalties, many banks closed Venezuelan accounts and other banks refused to effect transfers,

routine international payments, including for the purchase of foods and medicines. Bottom line: economic sanctions kill.

The economic war started with the arrival of Hugo Chavez to power twenty years ago.

The economic war did not start with the 2015 sanctions, but already with the arrival of Hugo Chavez to power twenty years ago. Outside interference with the Chavez government included helping to organize and finance the failed coup of April 2002. This parallels the economic war against Salvador Allende of Chile 1970–73, which ended with the Pinochet putsch. As Nixon told Kissinger in 1970, an alternative socio-economic model would not be tolerated and the Chilean economy would be made to scream.⁴

Whereas the international law principle of non-intervention and Chapter 4, Article 19 of the OAS Charter specifically prohibit interference in the political and economic affairs of States, sanctions have been imposed that aim at asphyxiating Venezuela's economy and facilitating regime change. More and more we hear about a "humanitarian crisis" and emigration from Venezuela to neighbouring countries. The narrative is clearly intended to make a

military “humanitarian intervention”, as in Libya in 2011, more palatable to world public opinion. However, the situation in Venezuela does not reach the threshold of a humanitarian crisis, as confirmed to me by FAO and CEPAL officials, nothing comparable to Gaza⁵, Haiti⁶, Somalia⁷, Sudan⁸ or Yemen⁹.

The noblest task of the Human Rights Council is to help peoples achieve their human rights. Accordingly, the solution to Venezuela’s crisis must be through mediation, as that conducted 2016-18 in the Dominican Republic under the guidance of former Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero. On the day of signature, 7 February 2018, and to general surprise, the Venezuelan opposition refused to sign. In my report to be presented during the 39th session of the Council I propose renewed negotiations (A/HRC/39/47/Add.1). In the meantime, if we want to help the Venezuelan people, we should ensure that sanctions are lifted and the economic war ends. ■

- 1 Independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order
- 2 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22457&LangID=E>
- 3 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22569&LangID=E>
- 4 <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB110/>
- 5 Norman Finkelstein, Gaza, University of California Press, 2018.
- 6 <https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/haiti-humanitarian-situation-report-april-2017>
- 7 <https://www.care.org/emergencies/somalia-humanitarian-crisis>
- 8 <https://www.unocha.org/story/south-sudan-humanitarian-crisis-catastrophic-proportions>
- 9 <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4670011/murphy-young-yemen-murphy-saudis-deliberately-create-famine-yemen>

Some background information

Since Chavez inaugurated the “Revolución Bolivariana” in Venezuela in February 1999, neo-liberal economies in the world have been concerned that the different socio-economic model, also practised in Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua, might be copied elsewhere. The experiment launched by Chavez promoted economic and social rights partly at the expense of civil and political rights, e.g. freedom of expression and political participation. The system benefited poorer classes in Venezuela, two million low-cost apartments having been built and given to destitute Venezuelans, free education from primary to university being advanced.

When Chavez died of cancer in March 2013, his hand-picked successor, the syndicalist and former Vice-President Nicolas Maduro, was elected with a narrow majority over the establishment contender Henrique Capriles. The opposition accuses the government of being undemocratic and incapable of solving the current economic crisis, which they attribute to the incompetence and corruption of the government, combined with their inflexible ideology which demotivates business and investment. It is claimed that Venezuela, which has the largest oil reserves in the world, has

become a failed economy and that the resulting “humanitarian crisis” justifies humanitarian intervention. Maduro, however, contends that Venezuela’s troubles are caused by an economic war and illegal sanctions imposed on Venezuela since 2015, which aggravate the crisis emanating from the fall in oil prices, which constitute 95% of Venezuela’s income. In 2015 the opposition won a majority in the National Assembly, which tried to terminate Maduro’s presidential term. In response Maduro invoked articles 347 and 348 of the Venezuelan Constitution and called for the creation of a National Constitutive Assembly.

On 20 May 2018 Maduro was re-elected President with a popular participation of 46.1% of whom 67.8% voted for Maduro for a new six-year term. A part of the opposition boycotted the elections. Bearing in mind the polarization of Venezuelan society, the impasse between the government and the opposition should be solved through dialogue and mediation. The government recalls that in April 2002 the opposition tried to overthrow Chavez through a 2-day failed *coup d’état* and on 4 August 2018 a drone incident in Caracas appears to have targeted Nicolas Maduro himself.



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Jamaica's art as a reflection of Caribbean history

Jamaica, like the other islands in the Caribbean, has gone through several periods of growth, development and evolution and so has its art industry.



© Gail Frederick/Flickr

ONEIKA RUSSELL

The island has a long and complex history, with multiple cultural influences, which are indicative of the potential of its creative sector. Our music and dance culture are known worldwide but the Visual Arts still often struggles to find the same foothold and visibility. Even so there have been developments in the last 10 years for Jamaican art and artists who are based both locally and internationally. If we trace a path forward from key developmental moments to the contemporary period however, a more layered understanding of the cultural legacy that artists of today frequently engage with may be highlighted.

Belisario: Historic & Social Documentation

In homes and buildings in Jamaica today among the most popular prints on the walls are **Isaac Mendes Belisario's** depictions of the characters from the seasonal masquerade tradition of 'Jonkonnu' or 'John Canoe' created between 1837-38. Jonkonnu is derived from

the West African masquerade traditions of Egun as well as the mimicry of colonial class by the working class of the period. As an artist he helped to concretize and develop the visual records of the culture and customs of his time. Belisario was of Portuguese Jewish origin and had all the technical facility needed to become quite an established artist in the island. The technical adeptness of his prints and skill in painting the landscape and society of the time have allowed great insight into both the ruling groups and the oppressed groups in the society during this period. His means of visually representing workers in extreme minutia in contrast to the expanse of the landscape are not dissimilar from English paintings of that period such as the J.M.W. Turner painting, 'Hornby Castle from Tatham Church'. Belisario is said to be the first documented Jamaican-born artist and for these and other reasons discussed Belisario's prints and paintings hold great value as documents of that period in Jamaica's cultural history.

The Era of Independence & Modern Means of Representation

The ethnic composition of the society had changed drastically during the periods of Colonization and The Slave Trade. Amerindians had given way to Spanish and Portuguese settlers and then British and West Africans began to comprise most of the makeup of the island's population after slavery ended. The Chinese and East Indians would further add to the diversity of the island in other waves of immigration. In the 20th century, Jamaica like other Caribbean nations began thinking about independence from British rule. In 1962, when independence was achieved it was accompanied by a new desire to establish nationhood through various channels including culture.

New opportunities for training and scholarship arose for the various classes as attempts were made to gradually integrate the citizens of a new Jamaica. Many of the

early leaders in the local art scene were recipients of such scholarship opportunities created for Jamaicans to travel and study overseas and to return with new influences and ideas. They returned with the means and thoughtfulness with which to engage with the West in a more modern sense. Expatriate artists from Europe and the Americas also came to Jamaica to make use of the opportunities and assist in shaping this newly awakened country.

Barrington Watson, one of Jamaica's foremost academic painters also studied overseas at The Royal College of Art in London in the 1950s. His paintings went further in the direction of portraying the black Jamaican as a legitimate subject in his paintings where they were featured in larger proportions in the compositions. While being influenced by European art, Watson also rewrote some of those European narratives by inserting coloured bodies which reflected his observations about the intimate social lives of Jamaicans of varying classes.

1970's-80's: New Art Institutions & Collections

For many artists who were active between the 60's and 80's however, rewriting the narrative of colonization and eroded cultures and identities in their art was a major way of reasserting the potential and the possibilities of the peoples of the island away from its history of servitude and exploitation. It was a way of equalising and showcasing the mélange of cultures which had shaped the society. Artists of the period were busy in the exercise of giving serious thought to what it meant to be an artist in Jamaica and the Caribbean. This wave of regenerative thought was part of a Caribbean-wide renaissance of

new thought and reflection by writers, philosophers, artists, musicians, policy makers and politicians.

Groups of self-taught artists from around the island were exhibited under the label of 'Intuitive'. Intuitive Art was akin to what in other cultures would be called Outsider Art. The **Intuitives** were presented as the keepers of authentic Jamaican visual expression. This move facilitated an alternative narrative within the growing Jamaican Art story where room was made for artists who were self-taught and were also mainly making working in their communities away from the art scene. Intuitive Art enjoyed a particular status in Jamaica at the heart of the art market during the 70's to early 2000's and proved sure-fire favourites with collectors of Jamaican Art.

1990s-2000s: Pan-Africanist thought & Public Art

The opening of the region and connections being made between the Caribbean islands as well as the influx of Pan-Africanist thought did not escape artists. The alignment with African Art and culture and the coupled resistance and integration of Modern Western Art ideas became evident in the work of **Stanford Watson, Omari Ra** and **Petrona Morrison**. They emerged along with many other artists coming out of the bubbling atmosphere of deeper thought and inquiry. The new subject matter of the art varied from reflections on the state of affairs in the now independent and struggling nation state; challenging pervasive social ideas which were holdovers from colonial era Jamaica; and reconnecting with the art traditions and aesthetics of the African continent as well as reclaiming personal histories through materials.

New public art and monuments helped to reaffirm shared histories and memorialise key figures in national culture. A selection of Jamaican artists has been involved in memorialising cultural icons such as Bob Marley, Marcus Garvey and Usain Bolt. **Alvin Marriott, Christopher Gonzales, Fitz Harrack, Laura Facey, Raymond Watson, Basil Watson** and **Stefan Clarke** have made major public art pieces which have helped the growing nation symbolise its status and shape its national narrative. Their work has helped cities and institutions define symbolic landmarks and signify a dedication to celebrate this modern moment in our history as well as to build new appreciation for the arts amongst its people. ■

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Sur les volcans du monde 3/3

Depuis le 3 mai, le volcan Kilauea est entré en éruption à Hawaï. D'impressionnantes fissures se sont ouvertes un peu partout sur l'île et des fleuves de lave provenant de son cratère se déversent dans l'océan Pacifique.



Forte activité «bouillonnante» à la surface du lac de lave du volcan éthiopien Erta Ale.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Quelques jours plus tard au Guatemala, l'explosion beaucoup plus dramatique du volcan Fuego a dévasté des villages construits sur ses flancs, causant la mort de centaines de villageois pris au piège dans les cendres brûlantes et les gaz toxiques expulsés du cratère. Tout récemment, un autre volcan a fait parler de lui sur l'île de Bali. Après 55 années de sommeil, le volcan Agung s'est brutalement réveillé, obligeant le déplacement de milliers d'habitants vivant à ses pieds.

Mais un second volcan de l'archipel indonésien, beaucoup plus gigantesque que le mont Agung, vient également de faire l'actualité, pourtant bien des années après être entré en activité. Au XIII^e siècle, l'une des plus phénoménales éruptions volcaniques de ces dix mille dernières années bouleversa complètement la physiologie de la Terre, provoquant son refroidissement, affectant tous les écosystèmes, y compris les sociétés humaines. Dès les années 1970, des scientifiques du monde entier ont cherché en vain le mystérieux volcan

ayant provoqué ce cataclysme. Ils savent que l'éruption s'est déroulée vers la fin du Moyen-Âge, mais impossible de trouver le volcan coupable même si les impacts et les répercussions d'un tel événement ont laissé des traces dans la nature. Sillonnant la planète en quête d'indices, croisant leurs hypothèses, ils ont enfin pu mettre un nom sur le monstrueux volcan.

Le Samalas à l'origine du Petit Âge glaciaire

Le Petit Âge glaciaire est une période climatique extrêmement froide survenue en Europe et en Amérique du Nord du début du XIV^e à la fin du XIX^e siècle approximativement. Elle se caractérise par une avancée très nette des glaciers et des records de minima de températures. Plusieurs théories ont été avancées pour expliquer l'existence et surtout la persistance du Petit Âge glaciaire. La plus évidente, fondée sur les découvertes réalisées en stratigraphie (étude de la succession des différentes couches géologiques), relie cette période de glaciation à l'éruption très violente de plusieurs volcans, dont le Tambora situé sur l'île

de Sumbawa en Indonésie. Il est en effet connu que les aérosols expulsés par un certain type de volcan peuvent nettement diminuer l'efficacité du rayonnement solaire. Le début du Petit Âge glaciaire pourrait ainsi être lié, en partie, à un phénomène de forçage volcanique (abaissement de la température provoqué par des cendres volcaniques et des gouttelettes d'acide sulfurique, dues à une forte éruption volcanique, présentes dans l'atmosphère et réfléchissant les rayons du soleil).

Au début des années 2010, le géomorphologue volcanique Franck Lavigne et le volcanologue Jean-Christophe Komorowski ont estimé, au regard des éléments analysés, que cette période de refroidissement aurait été causée par l'activité volcanique d'un autre volcan indonésien. Situé dans le complexe volcanique du Rinjani, sur l'île de Lombok, le Samalas serait entré en éruption en 1257 lors d'une explosion qualifiée de méga-colossale. L'analyse des cendres récoltées dans les glaces du pôle nord et du pôle sud et sur le Samalas

confirme que c'est bien lui l'auteur du cataclysme. Il aura fallu quelques heures à ce volcan pour bouleverser le destin du monde. L'éruption, estimée à 100 fois plus importante que celle du Vésuve, libéra 40 km³ de magma sous la forme de cendres et de pierres ponce éjectées jusqu'à 43 km d'altitude dans l'atmosphère, atteignant ainsi largement la stratosphère. L'île de Lombok a été recouverte de plusieurs dizaines de mètres de dépôts jusqu'à une distance de 25 km du cratère. 658 millions de tonnes d'oxyde de soufre ont été rejetées, confirmant ainsi que c'est bien le Samalas le coupable d'un tel désastre climatique.

Il ne reste plus du Samalas qu'une vaste caldeira (cratère d'effondrement) de 6 km sur 8,5 km et d'au moins 800 m de profondeur, aujourd'hui occupée par un lac.

«International Day Of Volcanoes»

Débutée sur les pentes du volcan Yasur dans l'archipel du Vanuatu (Voir le *UN Special* du mois de juin 2018), la découverte des plus spectaculaires



© Claude Mailhard

Vue du cratère de l'Helgafell (Islande) depuis le volcan Eldfell dont la dernière éruption remonte à 1973.



© Claude Mailhard

En Indonésie, le Bromo n'est pas le plus intéressant des volcans mais l'un des plus accessibles.

volcans de la planète va se poursuivre pour nous, accompagnés par notre guide de choix Guy de Saint-Cyr. A l'occasion d'une Aventure hors du commun de 33 jours qui nous emmène du Vanuatu au Nicaragua, en passant par l'Indonésie, la Nouvelle-Zélande, Hawaï et les Galapagos, le fameux «chasseur de lave» nous fait partager sa fabuleuse passion.

Depuis cinquante ans Guy de Saint-Cyr guide des groupes de scientifiques, de passionnés ou de curieux à la découverte des éruptions les plus extraordinaires, les plus dangereuses du monde. Au catalogue de son agence «Aventure et volcans», ce ne sont pas moins d'une quarantaine de voyages qui sont proposés, tous aussi passionnants les uns que les autres.

De toutes les aventures que Guy de Saint-Cyr a vécues en quête d'explosions titanesques, de fleuves de lave tumultueux ou de lacs de roche en fusion, il en a retenu dix-sept pour nous faire vivre ses frayeurs les plus intenses, ou sa joie viscérale devant ces déchainements de fureur, au fil d'un savoureux ouvrage de 336 pages (*D'un volcan à l'autre, les aventures d'un chasseur de lave* – Éditions de La Martinière).

La néo-zélandaise Jeannie Curtis, rédactrice technique et éducatrice dans le milieu de la volcanologie, et Tanguy de Saint-Cyr, propriétaire et gérant d'«Aventure et volcans»¹ créé par son père, proposent qu'une «Journée Internationale des Volcans» soit organisée. La date du 10 avril retenue devra être

reconnue officiellement par les Nations Unies lors de la prochaine Assemblée générale. Le 10 avril n'a pas été choisi par hasard. C'est le jour où le volcan Tambora est entré en éruption. C'était en 1815 et il tua des dizaines de milliers d'habitants qui ignoraient le danger. C'est notamment pour sensibiliser les populations aux risques encourus lorsque l'on vit à proximité d'un volcan que cette «Journée Internationale des Volcans» mérite d'être organisée.

Société de Volcanologie Genève

La Société de Volcanologie Genève (SVG)² est une association à but non lucratif qui a été fondée le 9 février 1985 à Genève. Elle regroupe aujourd'hui près de 300 membres. Ses principaux buts sont de promouvoir l'étude et la

connaissance des volcans, des phénomènes associés au volcanisme et de mettre à disposition des membres un maximum d'informations scientifiques sur les volcans et leurs activités. Elle organise également des rencontres et des conférences dans le but de favoriser la connaissance des régions volcaniques et des phénomènes qui leur sont propres. Enfin, la SVG fournit à ses membres tous les renseignements utiles et pratiques disponibles pour des expéditions sur les volcans, notamment au travers d'un bulletin mensuel. ■

¹ Aventure et volcans – BP 3154, 73 cours de la liberté, 69406 Lyon Cedex 03 (France)
Tél: (00 33) 478 60 51 11 – lyon@aventurevolcans.com

² Société de Volcanologie Genève – c/o Jean-Maurice Seigne, Chemin de l'Etang 11, 1219 Châtelaine – www.volcan.ch, bulletin@volcan.ch

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Nedd Willard, 1926–2018

Former Editor-in-Chief of UN Special



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SUZANNE CHERNEY, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM POPPY WILLARD AND JOHN BLAND

A restless intellectual polyglot with a passion for the active life, our 92-year-old colleague Nedd Willard passed away on July 12th at STELLA EMS, in Geneva. With clarity of purpose despite his dementia, he chose to stop eating and drinking and after 18 days of struggle achieved a peaceful death.

Nedd was a merchant sailor and a university teacher before joining WHO to work in public relations.

Born and raised in New York City, Nedd lived with his family in a series of Manhattan neighborhoods, some of them so rough that he had to fight off young anti-Semitic toughs. He often said that the only way to survive then was to talk faster and run faster than the bigger boys in the neighborhood. Nedd's brilliance was recognized early on. By late grammar school he was enrolled in a school for the intellectually gifted, and at age 16 he earned a scholarship to the University of Wisconsin. He interrupted his university career at age 17 to join the Merchant Marines and then a

year later the Navy. He sought active duty but because of his intellect was assigned to an administrative post stateside, escaping the fate of his shipmates who were later attacked and perished at sea. Towards the end of WWII and for some months thereafter, he served on a troop ship that shuttled between the US and Europe, especially France, a place he came to love and ultimately live in, and whose language and culture he mastered in a way that few Americans ever manage to do.

After completing his BA at Wisconsin on the GI Bill and an MA in Comparative Literature at Columbia University, he taught at the University of New Hampshire and Columbia University. Returning to Europe, he toured Spain on a motorcycle in the 1960s, taught English at a boarding school in Cahors, France, and earned his doctorate at the Sorbonne with a dissertation on "Genius and Madness in the 18th Century". A similar doctorate at Columbia University was never completed.

Married and with two children, Nedd and his wife – employed at GATT – moved to Thorens-Gliere in the Haute Savoie, where they bought an 18th-century fixer-upper of a house that Nedd gradually rehabilitated and renovated, mostly with his own hands. He began working for the international organizations. Ahead of his time in judging tobacco use to be far more dangerous than marijuana or hashish, Nedd discovered through research that the campaign to make drug

use illegal in the USA had been led by many of the same people who had pushed through alcohol prohibition. This is one of the many findings in his book *A Hard Look at Drugs*, published by the United Nations in 1967. Nedd also did interpretation stints at the UN in French and Spanish and spent six months of professional activity in Ethiopia and Cameroon before being hired in 1977 by WHO Geneva as a Public Information Officer.

Six of Nedd's 19 years at WHO were spent as chief of public information in SEARO, during the heroic phase of smallpox eradication. In New Delhi, Nedd worked closely with and forged enduring relationships with members of the eradication team, including Dr. Larry Brilliant and the team's head Dr. Nicole Grasset. He developed a deep connection to India, Nepal and Tibet and was transfixed by the beauty of the Himalayas. "Imagine being blind and not being able to see those magnificent peaks", he often said. Years later, he would join Dr. Brilliant, Dr. Grasset and others in founding SEVA (from the Sanscrit word meaning "selfless service to others"), which became a world-renowned NGO devoted to preventing blindness and restoring sight (www.seva.org). He continued to serve on SEVA's Advisory Circle and to support the organization financially throughout his lifetime.

During his years as a Public Information Officer at Headquarters, Nedd continued his focus on the dangers of tobacco, contributing many articles on tobacco-related diseases and on smallpox to World Health

Magazine. He then became editor of *UN Special*, our magazine for international civil servants in Geneva. In 1981 he was the information attaché for a world survey in preparation for WHO's fifth World Conference on Smoking and Health. An imaginative, exciting and terse writer, Nedd contributed many articles not only to *UN Special* but also to *WHO Dialogue OMS*. After retirement, he wrote several books – including *Travels with a Thin Skin* and *The Lives I've Led* – relating his adventurous travels around Europe and Asia, charmingly illustrated with his own quirky and evocative line drawings.

In 1996 Nedd married Poppy, an American with French nationality, with whom he went on to have more than 20 happy years. Poppy was at his side when Nedd began to show subtle signs of dementia, around six years ago, and continued to care for him devotedly during his 18 months at STELLA EMS, where he received attentive and affectionate care from the staff to the very end. Nedd is also survived by his son Ethan and daughter Briar and by his close circle of friends in the Geneva area and elsewhere who valued his quick mind, passionate interest in cultural and political life, and ethical commitment to justice, fairness and community service. An example to us all, he tithed to the end. ■

Message du rédacteur en chef

Vous aimeriez partager votre opinion sur le magazine et son contenu ?

N'hésitez plus et écrivez-nous !

Nous serions heureux de recevoir votre avis. Les plus pertinents, les plus intéressants, les plus originaux seront publiés dans le magazine.

Si vous souhaitez proposer un article, n'hésitez pas à me contacter à tout moment.

Et maintenant, à vos plumes !

Adressez vos commentaires à :

Alex Mejia, rédacteur en chef – UN Special
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Genève 10, Suisse
Par courrier électronique: alex.mejia@unitar.org

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Would you like to share your opinion about *UN Special* and its contents ?

Write to us!

We will be glad to hear from you. The most interesting, relevant, or even ingenious responses will be published in the magazine.

Should you wish to submit an article, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Now, put pen to paper!

Send your thoughts to:

Alex Mejia, Editor-in-chief – UN Special
Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
By email: alex.mejia@unitar.org

Nos remerciements vont également aux personnes qui ont participé activement à l'élaboration de ce numéro:

We thank the persons who actively contributed to the preparation of this issue:

Austin H. Gignilliat
Imaan Saarah Khan

UN Special

UN Special

Palais des Nations, bureau C507
1211 Genève 10
sarah.bencherif@unitar.org
www.unspecial.org

In New York: office AB-0829

Alex Mejia

Rédacteur en chef/Editor-in-chief

Garry Aslanyan

Rédacteur adjoint/Deputy Editor

Sarah Jordan

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Catherine Peck-Arif

Trésorier/Treasurer

Éditeur / Publisher

Publicité / Advertising

CEP S.A.

Quai Gustave-Ador 42, 1207 Genève
T. +41 22 700 98 00 – F. +41 22 700 90 55
cepbarbara@bluewin.ch

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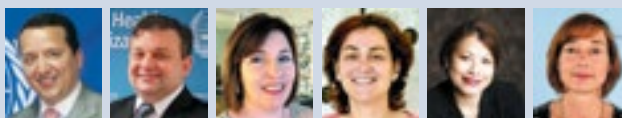
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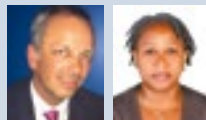
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