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MAGAZINE DES FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX – MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS



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PlaceDesNations

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deux degrés de moins

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à l'occasion du COP21

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GARRY ASLANYAN

Rédacteur en chef/Editor-in-chief

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Une ère nouvelle a commencé

Avec la conclusion en 2015 de plusieurs réunions de haut niveau, une ère nouvelle a commencé. La COP21 à Paris a assurément démontré ce qu'une diplomatie diligente pouvait accomplir. Nous vous en proposons quelques exemples dans ce numéro.

En dépit de commentaires pointant les insuffisances de cet accord, c'est un moment propice pour la planète ainsi que pour les Nations unies. Peut-être que ce pacte aurait pu être meilleur et plus ambitieux mais, maintenant, il s'agit surtout de faire en sorte que les signataires honorent leurs engagements. Parce que même s'ils le font, il pourrait s'avérer que ça ne soit pas suffisant.

L'OMS estime que le changement climatique est déjà à l'origine de dizaines de milliers de décès chaque année du fait de l'évolution de maladies, de phénomènes météorologiques extrêmes comme des vagues de chaleur ou des inondations, ainsi que de la dégradation de la qualité de l'air, de la nourriture, des ressources en eau et de l'assainissement.

The new era has begun

With the conclusion of various high level events in 2015, the new era has begun. The COP21 meeting in Paris has definitely demonstrated just how much can be achieved by determined diplomacy. We try to bring you some pieces of this diplomacy in this issue.

Despite some commentaries about the agreement's shortcomings, this is a good moment for the planet and the UN. Maybe the pact could have been better, and stronger, but the focus shifts now to getting signatories to live up to their pledges. Because even if they do, it may not be enough.

WHO estimates that climate change is already causing tens of thousands of deaths every year – from shifting patterns of disease, from extreme weather events, such as heat waves and floods, and from the degradation of air quality, food and water supplies, and sanitation.

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Scott Foster

“Transforming Lives: Reinventing the Energy System for Tomorrow” through TEDxPlaceDesNations

TED is a nonprofit organization devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. Started as a four-day conference in California almost 30 years ago, TED has grown to support world-changing ideas with multiple initiatives.

GARRY ASLANYAN, WHO

Interview prepared with the participation of Evelina Rioukhina

In the spirit of Ideas Worth Spreading, TEDxPlaceDes Nations event will be held on 11 February 2016 with the main idea “Transforming Lives”.

This second TED edition in Geneva International will showcase remarkable stories of scientists and peacemakers, innovators and humanitarians transforming lives of people around the globe and finding solutions to shaping tomorrow’s world. On the eve of this important event, *UN Special* met with Mr. Scott Foster, one of the keynote speakers for TEDxPlaceDesNations-2016.

Is it your first TED event? Is it your first TEDxPlaceDesNations? Are you happy to be

among keynote speakers? What does this event represent for you (globally, and in the context of Geneva International)?

This is my first time working with the TED process. It is a very impressive approach with highly professional preparation. I am pleased to be part of it and I am looking forward to it. The key for me is the outreach we can have on an extremely important topic – sustainable energy. Our whole team here at UNECE’s sustainable energy division is extremely passionate about the topic of sustainable energy, and we are doing excellent work not only for our member States but also in collaboration with the other regional commissions. I believe we are succeeding in moving the dial on sustainable energy, and participating in this event will help with that process.

You are one of the featured speakers for this new edition of the TEDxPlaceDesNations, where the main topic will be “Transforming Lives”. What message you will try to pass through in your speech?

The world needs to reinvent energy, how we think about energy. The progress that has been made over the past century to improve quality of life particularly in the developed world is testimony to a strong engineering culture. If we can make that kind of progress in one generation, then



Mr Scott Foster



The talented singer Philippe Ekeke will perform at the TEDxPlaceDesNations

I am convinced we can meet the challenges of sustainable development on a global basis.

But we need to move beyond the engineering culture that brought us to today to a service culture that will take us into the future. Reinventing the Energy System for Tomorrow is in fact really a matter of connecting a lot of developments that are happening before our eyes. What we can see in telecoms is happening already in the energy system. You may have read the news that Mark Zuckerberg is developing his own artificial intelligence system for his house – I think he refers to Iron Man's butler Jarvis – but the intent is to have a system that manages all of the home systems: temperature, lighting, appointments, household logistics, and it can even keep an eye on the kids, at least until they figure out how to by-pass it!

The proposition is that energy is a service, not a commodity, and our policies and regulations on energy should be updated to reflect that reality. The old system, which still exists today and will persist in the future, involves drilling or digging stuff out of the ground, processing it and moving it somewhere else, and then transforming it into gasoline or electricity or using it directly in an industrial plant. Most people do not realize that 80% of the world's energy today is fossil based, and that even under a climate change scenario that meets a 2°C target, fossil energy will still represent at least 40% of the energy mix by 2050. We will not change this system unless we fundamentally re-think it. A lot of the changes

are happening, but only in fragmented ways, and we need to get the policy and regulatory environment properly sorted out if we hope to get to our destination.

Sustainable energy is achievable, but only if rational economics are allowed to work in properly conceived markets. The energy system is being reinvented for tomorrow, and thinking of energy as a series of services rather than as a commodity is an important place to start. Energy is already being reinvented by a new generation of actors. Tomorrow we will go even further with new ideas and new players. But policy and regulation must catch up. On customer interfaces, network operations, and production, changes are needed in how prices are set, how markets are organized, and how innovation is supported. Thinking of and regulating energy as a service will make the SDGs achievable. The challenges can be met.

How is the main topic of this event related to you personally? How is it related to your daily work for the UN, and namely for the UNECE, where you are Director of one of its priority Divisions?

Before I joined UNECE I was working as a management consultant helping major energy companies with their investment and climate change strategies. Invariably they would arrive at a conclusion that something absolutely had to be done about climate change, but that they could not put their balance sheets at risk on climate change and meet their fiduciary duties to shareholders as long as the rules of the game remained unclear. That realisation among

one after another of these big companies led me to believe that if progress was to be made on the sustainable energy challenge, then UNECE was the place to do it. That is what brought me here – that plus the fact that someone decided to hire me! UNECE's work on sustainable energy is designed to improve access to affordable and clean energy for all and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the region. We promote international policy dialogue and cooperation among governments, energy industries and other stakeholders. Our focus is on energy efficiency, clean electricity, renewable energy, coal mine methane, natural gas, energy resource classification, and energy security. The topic for this TED talk, Reinventing Energy for Tomorrow, explores what could be.

What are the main priorities and goals that can transform lives today? What other priorities, besides those mentioned already, that can transform lives today?

The United Nations have agreed on a set of 17 sustainable development goals. These cover a wide range of topics that affect daily lives and include health, education, and transportation, among others. Goal number 7 is about providing sustainable energy to the world. All of the sustainable development goals depend on energy as does achieving the climate goals that were agreed in Paris. It is the golden thread that connects them all.

What do you expect from TEDxPlaceDesNations? How do you think TED will contribute to transforming lives?

I have been extremely impressed by the quality and professionalism of the organizers, and I am looking forward to hearing all of the presentations that cover a gamut of topics that are connected by the concept of transformation. There will be a big live audience in the room, but there will also be a much bigger connected audience worldwide. If we are able to convey our ideas and our passion for a better world and if we are able to mobilize action across the range of transformational opportunities, then we will have succeeded. This event provides a platform and an enduring opportunity to effect change. ■

The event will take place in the Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room of the Palais des Nations, Geneva on 11 February 2016. Come to attend and to listen to the presentations by Scott Foster and other speakers. For further details please visit: <http://www.tedxplacedesnations.ch/>.



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Jacques Vigne with Marko Stanovic, Vice-President of UNOG Staff Coordinating Council and President of New Wood Staff Union of the United Nations

Changing times, unchanging challenges

Interview-reflection with Jacques Vigne, former Executive-Secretary of the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council and current Secretary-General of the New Wood Staff Union of the United Nations.

EVELINA RIOUKHINA, UNOG

For many years Jacques Vigne was Executive Secretary of the UNOG Staff Coordinating Council where he wrestled with serious issues that were facing UN staff back then, and that for better or for worse, still remain valid today. He is currently Secretary-General of the New Wood Staff Union of the United Nations where he remains involved in helping UN staff solve some of their “old” as well as new challenges. Having met him recently at the New Year 2016 Staff Town Hall meeting with the UN’s Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, I wanted to find out what he is thinking today, and decided to ask him several questions for this interview.

Today we speak about such challenges as COP21, Ebola or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are different perhaps, from those you used to face as Staff Council Executive Secretary more than a decade ago, actually, during the two previous UN Secretaries-General. How did you feel today in the meeting room?

With reference to the new challenges you are referring to, compared to the ones I had to face when I was Executive Secretary of the Coordinating Council 15 years ago, I must say, that the content has changed, but not the environment. Today we continue to be in the same environment called “the United Nations system,” a “no-law” environment, since full labour standards including the right to collective bargaining are not applied. In our environment workers continue to be treated not as “people” but as “parts” of a big machine called the UN system. In other words, “robots” similar to the characters of the film “Metropolis” (1927), produced by Fritz Lang, where workers appear like robots in an environment very similar to the “open space” work concept which is now being planned for UN staff in Geneva. This fact alone makes the similarities with the above film even more striking. Unfortunately, today we are witnessing an environment where people are increasingly dehumanized. We have all seen recently “self check-out”

cashiers in Coop or “self check-in lines” at the Cointrin airport. In this regard, I would dare say that UN workers do not appear as “human beings” but more as inhabitants of planet Mars, since the labour rights including the right to collective bargaining are not applicable to them although our own General Assembly resolution No. 128, adopted by the General Assembly on 17 November 1947, stipulates that labour rights including the right to collective bargaining are applicable to “all human beings”.

We spoke today a lot about budget cuts, did you have such issues and how did you manage to solve them then?

Concerning the issue of budget cuts, even though in the past we had, of course, similar problems, we managed to solve them more easily since the action was mainly taken at the “local level”, i.e., in Geneva. Now, however, all actions and decisions are centralized and “dictated” from New York, which precludes local discussions between the management and staff representatives. In the past we had much more capacity to act and decide things that affected Geneva staff in Geneva, of course, after previous due consultation with the management. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case now since decisions are increasingly made and imposed directly from HQs.

You heard the voice of the ONE UN (all over the world), and we have been using strange words, such as UMOJA in every second question, but still all staff concerns were about cuts and possible employment terminations of staff, did you have similar concerns, say, in the 90s?

The constant reference to UMOJA during the meeting when at the same time, the main concern of the staff is in fact the question of the budget cuts and possible termination of employment also derives from the same trend in the organization, i.e., to consider workers not as people but as parts of the big machine called the “UN system”. Within such terms of reference it goes without saying that organizational and logistical problems become logically much more important than the “human” aspects of people employed by the Organization, although some years ago, the UN staff was referred to by the top management as “the first asset of the Organization”! The same is apparently no longer the case.

If you could have the opportunity to ask one question, what question would you ask UN SG Ban Ki-moon?

If I had the opportunity to ask one question to the UN SG Ban Ki-moon, my very first question would be: why is he not implementing the Resolution No. 128 adopted by the General Assembly on 17 November 1947, requesting the application of labour standards, including the right to collective bargaining, to all human beings on Earth, when absent proof of the contrary, UN staff members also appear to be “human beings”!

What challenges did you manage to overcome, what advice can you give? Have the labour rights improved, or on the contrary, deteriorated? What did improve, what became more difficult? What changed, what remains unchanged?

Unfortunately, not many challenges could have been solved, in particular, as far as labour standards for staff are concerned, the UN system remains in this regard a “no-law environment”. Nevertheless, a recent report from inspector Gérard Biraud of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2012/10) advocates for the application of labour standards including the right to collective bargaining in the Organization, and I consider that my contribution and that of my colleagues to such an evolution, although not “official” of course, was quite significant. As a matter of principle a real

change can only come from either a will of the UN SG to implement GA resolution 128 from 1947, or a will of member states to apply the same labour standards they accord to their citizens also to the UN staff.

And regarding what remained unchanged, when you were ES of the Council, you also were a member of the EB of the UN Special, and I remember, you were both a reader, and an ardent supporter of the magazine. You did a lot to develop further the staff magazine and supported many innovations (which were not supported by all then), and those innovations helped to bring the magazine to the prototype you see today. Have your

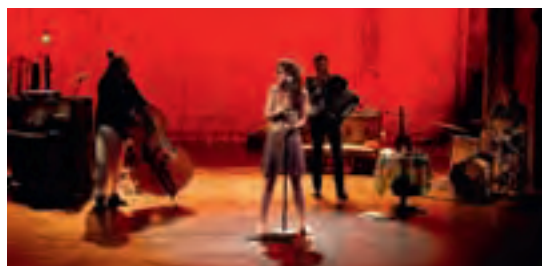
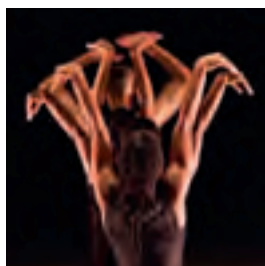
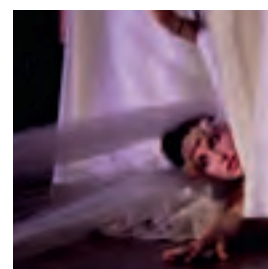
feelings (passion) remained unchanged? In any case, we assure you that the ties that unite us, *UN Special* with you, remain as strong as they used to be back then, i.e., Unchanged!

Concerning the *UN Special*, I of course, concur with all you have said about my continuous action concerning this magazine, and I can assure you that my feelings and of course passion regarding the *UN Special* remain unchanged. I am happy to hear from you that your thoughts and feelings are also unchanged, and I hope that we will be able to continue in the same direction with the same managing organization for the magazine. ■



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Chaire UNESCO de Santé sexuelle & Droits humains

Un exemple de partenariat et bénévolat dans le contexte du développement durable

Interview de Madame Ingrid Geray, avocate, membre du comité exécutif et Docteur Thierry Troussier, médecin de santé publique et sexologue, Responsable de la chaire.

CYRIL DESCHAMPS, JT-PRODUCTION¹



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Madame Ingrid Geray

Qu'est-ce qu'une chaire UNESCO?

Une chaire UNESCO est un instrument de coopération entre les institutions d'enseignement supérieur et de recherche et l'UNESCO qui promeut la coopération internationale interuniversitaire à travers des accords de jumelage et de partenariat entre des établissements d'enseignement supérieur et des universitaires du monde entier.

Pourquoi avoir créé une chaire qui associe la santé sexuelle et les droits humains?

Les chiffres liés aux comportements sexuels et aux violations des droits humains, dans le monde, demeurent alarmants.

Plus de 16 millions d'adolescentes accouchent chaque année et 3 millions d'entre elles subissent des avortements à risque. En outre, 70% des femmes sont victimes de violence au cours de leur vie. Mais encore, d'après les estimations préliminaires de l'OMS pour 2012, le nombre de nouveaux cas pour les quatre infections sexuellement transmissibles (IST) curables, parmi la population 15-49 ans, est de 441 millions par an.

Ces indicateurs constituent des défis pour les sociétés à travers le monde.

La sexualité de chacun relève du domaine de l'intime et du secret. Toutefois la sexualité individuelle intéresse la collectivité dans la mesure où elle peut mettre en difficulté le développement durable de l'humanité. Il

convient donc d'œuvrer pour améliorer la santé des populations et plus précisément la santé sexuelle qui se définit comme un «bien-être lié à la sexualité».

La prise en compte de la sexualité reste encore très souvent réduite à la pathologie ou à la prévention des maladies et une approche positive et globale basée notamment sur l'éducation sexuelle est nécessaire.

Cette approche positive et globale de la sexualité dans le respect des droits humains constitue notre objectif.

Bien que la communauté internationale reconnaisse la nécessité de respecter, d'appliquer et de promouvoir les droits humains dans toutes les composantes de la sexualité afin de permettre le développement de la population, les barrières politiques, religieuses et idéologiques, mais également financières apparaissent comme des freins.

C'est dans ce contexte que la chaire UNESCO/Réseau UNITWIN de Santé sexuelle & Droits humains, sous la responsabilité du Docteur Thierry Troussier, a été créée en 2010 au sein de l'Université Paris-Diderot. Ses objectifs et ses missions sont au carrefour de la santé publique et de l'éducation.

Comment fonctionne la chaire UNESCO Santé sexuelle & Droits humains?

La chaire UNESCO est indépendante et autonome des institutions et des laboratoires de santé privée. Elle ne reçoit aucun financement de l'UNESCO et les membres, professionnels de disciplines diverses, médecins, psychologues, sociologues, juristes, etc.

interviennent bénévolement pour mettre en œuvre les projets qui s'inscrivent dans les objectifs du développement durable (ODD).

Pourquoi lier les Droits humains à la santé sexuelle?

Les ODD ne peuvent être atteints sans respect des Droits Humains qui constituent le fil conducteur de toutes les actions de la chaire. Le respect, l'application et la promotion des droits humains contribuent à impacter positivement les indicateurs de la santé sexuelle et de la santé en général.

Comment articulez-vous vos actions principales avec les objectifs du développement durable (ODD)?

L'éducation, objectif n°4 des ODD, est mis en œuvre à travers l'enseignement national (diplôme en Education et Conseil en Santé sexuelle et Droits humains de l'Université Paris-Diderot) et au niveau international avec notamment les formations de formateurs menées en Afrique sub-saharienne avec des ONG locorégionales.

Mais encore, nous finalisons actuellement un cours international sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive en lien avec les droits humains, en direction des prestataires de santé publique et de soins, en partenariat avec la Fondation Genevoise pour l'Education Médicale et la Recherche (Centre de collaboration avec l'OMS).

Enfin nous développons un réseau d'enseignement et de recherche au travers d'accords-cadres inter-universitaires dans les cinq régions du monde.

Nos actions de formations sont destinées, principalement, à promouvoir l'égalité de genre, l'accès aux soins de santé sexuelle et reproductive et la prévention du VIH et des IST, objectifs n°3 et n°5 des ODD.

La chaire intervient en prioritairement en direction de la région Afrique et dans des contextes difficiles.

Sous quelle forme est assurée la coopération Nord-Sud et Sud-Sud?

Cette coopération est mise en œuvre à travers des actions de formation co-construites avec des formateurs de la région africaine. Ainsi, en 2014 en partenariat avec «Expertise France» (Esther), la chaire et des formateurs du pays du Sahel ont dispensé un enseignement en santé sexuelle et droits humains pour des prestataires de soins en contact avec des personnes vivant avec le VIH, regroupant neuf pays d'Afrique et Haïti.

Une partie de la formation était consacrée aux droits humains appliqués à la santé sexuelle et avait pour objectif de permettre aux participants de connaître les principaux standards, textes internationaux et régionaux relatifs aux droits humains, de comprendre les mécanismes d'application des conventions et traités internationaux et d'identifier les droits humains qui permettent de promouvoir et protéger la santé sexuelle.

Afin de mettre en application les acquis, il a été organisé un jeu de rôle de simulation de procès concernant des activistes homosexuels engagés dans la lutte contre le sida, interpellés à l'occasion d'une réunion dans un lieu privé et poursuivis pénalement pour homosexualité. Les participants ont été partagés en trois groupes: le jury, la défense des accusés, et les représentants de l'Etat.

Les débats qui ont mis en exergue la confrontation des valeurs culturelles et les normes locales et internationales, ont permis l'incorporation des déterminants complexes auxquels sont exposés les professionnels de santé. Cet enseignement basé sur les outils de l'entretien motivationnel permet d'accompagner la prise de conscience des différents systèmes de valeurs et des transformations nécessaires par une construction collective qui tient compte des contextes sociaux culturels et d'une réflexivité de la pratique.

Les participants convaincus de la nécessité d'appliquer les droits humains dans leur pratique professionnelle ont rédigé une charte pour sceller leur engagement dans ce sens.

Quelles sont vos actions récentes?

Fort d'un bilan d'activités riches et variées, la chaire UNESCO a été renouvelée en 2015 pour une nouvelle période de 4 ans. Notre participation aux objectifs de

développement durable, se concrétise au quotidien via nos activités prioritaires en recherche, innovation et éducation.

En 2015, un ouvrage collectif de 32 auteurs, «Santé Sexuelle & Droits humains: *un enjeu pour l'Humanité*» a été publié.

La chaire participe également à l'élaboration de plaidoyers en faveur des droits humains appliqués à la sexualité notamment en collaboration avec le comité des droits sexuels de la World Association for Sexual Health (WAS).

A l'occasion de la journée mondiale de la santé sexuelle le 4 septembre, il a été

organisé une conférence sur les violences sexuelles avec le soutien du Ministère chargé de la santé et la Commission Nationale Française de l'UNESCO.

En novembre 2015, nous avons organisé le prix international de l'innovation en santé sexuelle et droits humains qui nous a permis de labéliser et mettre en réseau des actions et/ou des ressources dans ce domaine. ■

www.santesexuelle-droitshumains.org
www.sexualhealth-humanrights.org
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¹ French web based TV journal


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Stimulating education for 90 years

On 18 December 2015, UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (IBE) celebrated its 90th anniversary. Established in 1925 in Geneva by a group of renowned intellectuals it became, in 1929, the first intergovernmental organization in education. For nine decades, the IBE has been a leader and at the forefront of educational ideas and activities.

**JULIETTE TORABIAN, HANSPETER GEISSELER, IBE,
CHRISTOPHER STREBEL, WHO**

The 90th anniversary is being celebrated with a special temporary exhibition at the League of Nations Museum (Palais des Nations, Geneva) from December 2015 to March 2016.

Origins: the "New Education" movement

The origins of the IBE can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century. Thanks to a grant provided by the Rockefeller Foundation, on 18 December 1925 the governing board of the J-J Rousseau Institute set up the IBE to act as an information centre for all matters relating to education. Pierre Bovet was appointed Director with Adolphe Ferrière and Elizabeth Rotten as his deputies. And so was the IBE born.



Jean Piaget during the International Conference on Public Education, 1937.

During its first years (1926 to 1929), the Bureau showed remarkable vitality in the range of its activities, collaborating with organizations and institutions worldwide to promote international cooperation in the field of education. Driven by ideals of pacifism and universal fraternity, the IBE organized courses, study visits, exhibitions, and conferences. In April 1927, for example, under the chairmanship of

Pierre Bovet, an international conference was organized in Prague on the theme of "Peace through the school".

The first intergovernmental organization in education: The IBE

In 1929, the IBE extended its membership to governments; becoming the first intergovernmental organization in the field of education. Jean Piaget, the eminent Swiss psychologist and educationist, was appointed Director with Pedro Rosselló, a Spanish educationist and a fervent advocate of comparative education, as his deputy. At the beginning of the 1930s, the IBE began organising sessions of the International Conference on Public Education. Initially, the Conference was held annually and each session debated three themes on which recommendations were made. The IBE also started inviting ministries of education to present a report on recent educational developments in their countries.

The IBE and UNESCO join forces

At the end of the Second World War, a ministerial conference on education was held in London in 1945, where the constitution of UNESCO was adopted and the agency was set up in 1946. Soon thereafter, the IBE began collaborating with UNESCO on educational issues. The IBE and UNESCO also began to jointly organize sessions of the International Conference on Public Education in 1946. Over several decades, the Conference was one of the principal means for setting the international agenda in the field of education.

In January 1969 the IBE was fully integrated into UNESCO as an international centre of comparative education, with a mandate of advancing educational research in the field of comparative education and providing educational documentation

and information services. In 1970, the International Conference on Public Education became known by its current title, the International Conference on Education (ICE). Between 1974 and 1985, within the framework of efforts to promote innovation, the IBE's programme also comprised an International Educational Reporting Service. Documentation activities and techniques have kept pace with the computer age, as the IBE made extensive use of networking and documentation databases and provided training in these fields to staff of ministries of education and research centres.

Since 1994, the IBE has focused on leading international research projects, publishing a range of comparative studies on current or emerging pedagogical and educational issues, such as on civics education, multi-cultural and intercultural education, and violence in schools.

In 2011 the General Conference of UNESCO decided to transform the IBE into an international Centre of Excellence in Curriculum and related matters. Since then IBE's services have been further developed around three integrated focus areas; capacity development and technical assistance, knowledge production and management, and policy dialogue on curriculum issues and trends.

A Centre of Excellence in Curriculum: A unique mandate within the UN family

The current mandate and programme areas of the IBE are particularly of significance and relevance to the Education 2030 and the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) that commit UNESCO Member States to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The IBE is, therefore, strategically positioning in the optimal achievement of SDG4, and by implication, the realization of the other 16 SDGs that depend on provision and delivery of equitable and development-relevant quality education and lifelong learning opportunities.

Celebrating 90 years of excellence

The celebration of the 90th anniversary the IBE began with the opening ceremony of the temporary exhibition at the UNOG Library Events Room and League of Nations Museum on 10 December 2015. Keynote speakers at the opening ceremony included:

Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva; Mr. François Longchamp, President of the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva; Mr. Alexandre Fasel, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and to the other international organisations in Geneva; Ms. Mmantsetsa Marope, the IBE Director; and Ms. Rita Hofstetter, Professor of History of Education at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Geneva.

This temporary exhibition highlights important milestones of Bureau's history since its creation in 1925. Through images, text and a floating timeline, the



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exhibition also pays tribute to the many forerunners, innovators, and scholars in education who were and still are convinced that international dialogue and cooperation are essential for achieving true equality of opportunity in education for all children. ■



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UNOG Library collects, protects, and connects United Nations (Hi)stories

On 3 December, as the United Nations' 70th anniversary year was coming to a close, UNOG Library presented a special event, "Histoire(s) des Nations Unies".

RACHEL FORMAN, UNOG

This event offered a unique opportunity for exploration of the history and heritage of the Organization, from the early peace movements in the late 19th century to the recent past. A lively and interactive series of discussions and demonstrations emphasized the importance of preserving, sharing, and honoring our history.

(Hi)Story of a former unog director-general

the program began with an inspirational round of storytelling about the life and legacy of Vladimir Petrovsky, Director-General of UNOG from 1993 to 2002. Shashanka Michael Karlen, editor of the recently-published *Vladimir Petrovsky: The Master Diplomat*, explained why he had decided to compile this book: "[Petrovsky] was a statesman; he was an academic... he was a friend to many... and I thought that he really left something which should be treasured, because it's something that can contribute to a better world." Petrovsky's open and innovative diplomatic style, his dedication and energy, and his continuing influence in diplomatic practice were themes that came through in stories told by all members of the panel: H.E Mr. Alexey Borodavkin, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations; François Nordmann, former Ambassador of Switzerland; Aminata Djermakoye, who served as Chef de Cabinet under Vladimir Petrovsky; and his eventual successor as UNOG Director-General, Michael Møller.

(Hi)Stories of the pacifists

a second distinguished panel discussed the '(hi)stories' of other exceptional individuals whose work has had a lasting impact on the international community – the eminent pacifists of the late 19th century. Erhan Turgut, editor and director of Editions Turquoises, and Jean-Paul Vienne, translator of *Bertha von Suttner: Une vie pour la paix*, related the life story of Bertha von Suttner, the first female winner the Nobel Peace Prize. Then Colin Archer, Secretary General of the International Peace Bureau (IPB), told the story of the creation of the IPB and spoke about the ideals and actions of Bertha von Suttner and other key pacifists, which led to its founding in 1891 and which still guide the work of IPB today.

It's our history: the archives of the peace movements, of the league of nations

archives, and of the united nations archives
Blandine Blukacz-Louisfert, Chief of UNOG Library's Institutional Memory Section, moderated the discussions and also gave a presentation about the invaluable collections of which UNOG Library is custodian, including the archives of the League of Nations and several million pages of archival documents from the pacifist movements, as well as the personal papers of

Bertha von Suttner. The Library is also responsible for collecting and managing the records of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The importance of these collections has gained greater attention in recent years. The League of Nations archives are now included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register, which recognizes the global significance of this collection and emphasizes the Library's essential responsibility to preserve and provide access to this documentary heritage. The Library has undertaken digitization projects, including some in collaboration with member states, such as

Lithuania and Georgia, in order to provide online access to several collections. There remains much to be done, however, and the Library continues to seek support of members of the international community in the efforts to provide access to the largest possible public.

At the end of the session, members of the audience were invited to hands-on mini-workshops where they could discover more about the archival collections and the work that archivists at UNOG Library are doing to collect, protect, and connect these documents for today's researchers and for future generations. ■

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COP21 & Sécurité

Pour deux degrés de moins

Tout a été dit ou presque sur la COP 21, cet évènement international qui réunissait, sur une scène unique, les locataires les plus nombreux de la planète: les humains.

CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

COP21 signifie «21^e Conférence des Parties» et réunit donc les 196 Parties signataires de la Convention-cadre des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques, rédigée en 1992 et dont l'objectif est de «stabiliser (...) les concentrations de gaz à effet de serre dans l'atmosphère à un niveau qui empêche toute perturbation anthropique dangereuse du système climatique».

Jamais un évènement n'avait rassemblé un nombre aussi important de responsables, puisque plus de 158 chefs d'Etat étaient présents à l'ouverture de la Conférence.

L'enjeu était de taille autant pour les autorités françaises, qui accueillaient l'évènement, que pour l'Organisation des Nations Unies, qui n'avait peut-être jamais aussi bien porté son nom.

Une anticipation sans faille était impérative pour permettre à tous ces conférenciers de préparer le travail dans des conditions optimales, l'attente de la société civile et des médias étant à la mesure de l'enjeu.

Dans un contexte particulier – après les attentats du 13 novembre à Paris – chacun était conscient de la multiplicité

des obstacles à franchir et de la nécessité d'offrir aux participants une organisation permettant de progresser en toute quiétude.

Dans cette optique, l'ONU s'était déployée dans tout le périmètre de la «zone bleue» située dans un gigantesque complexe de 16 hectares jouxtant l'aéroport du Bourget et utilisé habituellement pour des expositions. Pour agrandir encore cet espace, une piste de l'aéroport avait été réquisitionnée.

La logistique impressionnante mise à disposition par l'Etat

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hôte nécessitait en outre une coordination importante entre des forces de sécurité de l'ONU et françaises qui n'avaient pas l'habitude de travailler ensemble.

Dès l'arrivée de l'effectif onusien dans cette gigantesque fourmi- lière, malgré le contexte pesant post 13 novembre, régnait dans ces lieux, une atmosphère

sereine. Une énergie positive se dégageait clairement et chaque corps de métier impliqué savait ce qui l'attendait avant le jour J d'ouverture et l'arrivée des chefs d'Etat.

A la veille de l'évènement, il était étonnant de constater que certains stands n'étaient pas terminés, certaines mises au point en attente. Cependant,



aucun affolement ni précipitation n'étaient palpables. Au contraire, le ballet des ouvriers, machines et voitures électriques autour du site semblait répondre à une orchestration maîtrisée.

Le chef du dispositif de sécurité de l'ONU était arrivé sur place environ deux semaines avant le début de la Conférence.

L'effectif de la sécurité était conséquent, composé de forces provenant de tous les sièges de l'ONU. Les équipes constituées se répartissaient les différents postes dans la «zone bleue», matérialisée par de hauts panneaux disposés autour du périmètre. La coordination avec les forces de police et de sécurité française était mise en place.

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Un tel évènement nécessitait également une prise en compte importante de la part de l'équipe ONU de protection rapprochée des VIP. Un tel aréopage de chefs d'Etat, de gouvernements et de personnalités connues a eu pour conséquence de solliciter jour et nuit cette unité.

Les hautes personnalités accédaient à une zone de bureaux aménagée à l'intérieur de laquelle avait été installé un jardin miniature. Les délégations étaient reçues alternativement par M^{me} Figueres Secrétaire Exécutive de l'UNFCCC, par M. Fabius, Président la COP 21 et par M. Ban Ki-moon le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies.

Une méthodologie spécifique, relative aux tenues de grands évènements, types conférences internationales, a été établie au fil des années. La multiplicité des paramètres, qu'ils soient sécuritaires, techniques ou protocolaires, est prise en compte grâce à une approche qui allie l'expérience professionnelle et la logique.

Au travers de ce dispositif, tous les personnels concernés connaissent précisément leurs rôles respectifs. Ils se sont pleinement impliqués et responsabilisés dans leurs domaines d'expertise instillant une plus-value importante dans

la mise en place et l'exécution du dispositif. Le savoir-faire, reconnu par les organisateurs des précédentes conférences constitue désormais la «marque de fabrique» d'une expertise onusienne dans ce domaine.

Comme chacun le sait, la COP 21 s'est achevée par l'adoption d'un texte historique. Plusieurs d'entre nous ont ressenti, tout au long de ces quinze jours, une volonté et une dynamique réelles. Cette sensation était même palpable sur certains stands des pays et au travers des contacts avec ONG et société civile.

Cet aboutissement constitue désormais davantage qu'un vague espoir, il devient une base de référence pour laquelle chacun des acteurs qui s'est investi, devra se mobiliser pour que cet engagement tienne ses promesses. ■

Photos supplémentaires sur www.synergies/internationales.ch



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Paris, le 16 décembre 2015 – Les gouvernements du monde se sont unis sous l'égide de l'ONU la semaine dernière pour agir sur le climat en adoptant l'Accord de Paris, le premier accord universel et juridiquement contraignant sur les changements climatiques. Cet accord stimulera une transformation de la croissance et du développement mondial, ouvrant la porte à un avenir sobre en carbone, stable et durable, a déclaré la Présidence française de la COP 21.

Aujourd'hui, près de 700 grandes villes, régions, entreprises et investisseurs de par le monde ont promis d'aider de façon rapide et efficace à mettre en œuvre l'Accord de Paris, et d'accélérer les changements transformatifs nécessaires pour relever le défi du changement climatique.

L'Appel de Paris est un appel à l'action en soutien à l'Accord de Paris, qui rassemble une multitude de voix d'une ampleur sans précédent pour une déclaration unique et collective.

Question à Laurent Fabius

CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

Dans ce contexte particulier qui fait suite aux attentats de novembre et pour la mise en perspective de ce défi planétaire organisé par votre pays, quel serait votre message destiné aux forces de sécurité françaises et leurs alter ego de l'ONU?

Je remercie chaleureusement l'ensemble des personnels qui ont assuré la sécurité de la COP 21, à la fois les forces de sécurité françaises et leurs collègues des Nations Unies. Tous ont fait preuve d'un professionnalisme exceptionnel. Grâce à leur action, la Conférence a pu se dérouler dans les meilleures conditions: aucun incident n'a été relevé, la sécurité a

été parfaitement assurée, alors même que les conditions étaient parfois extrêmement difficiles – je pense en particulier à la journée d'ouverture, au cours de laquelle plus de 150 chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement se sont rendus sur le site du Bourget.

Une Conférence internationale de cette ampleur constitue un défi en soi pour les forces de sécurité; lors de la COP 21, la tâche a été rendue encore plus complexe en raison des attentats du 13 novembre à Paris, qui ont imposé des conditions renforcées de sécurité, et donc une vigilance accrue de la part de celles et ceux chargés de l'assurer. Leur mérite n'en est que plus grand.



© UN photo

Si la Conférence de Paris a été une réussite, c'est aussi à l'action des forces de sécurité que nous le devons. En tant que Président de cette Conférence, je leur en suis profondément reconnaissant. ■

Laurent Fabius est le Président de la COP 21, Ministre des Affaires étrangères et du Développement international de la République française

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COP21: Sécurité du pays hôte

*M. le Préfet Hubert Weigel, Secrétaire Général Adjoint
Pôle Sécurité et Sûreté, occupait la responsabilité de
sécuriser les abords et de coordonner toutes les forces
de sécurité françaises, toutes unités confondues.
L'enjeu mondial, l'enjeu pour le renom de son pays,
tout contribuait à rendre cet événement exceptionnel.*

PROPOS RECUEILLIS PAR CHRISTIAN DAVID

M. Hubert Weigel

«Notre plus grand défi était de permettre à cette conférence de se tenir dans des conditions optimales et de faire en sorte que les questions de sécurité et logistique ne viennent en rien perturber le déroulement normal des négociations mais permettent au contraire qu'elle se déroule sans être polluée par le moindre dérangement. Offrir des conditions optimales dans ce domaine constituait notre défi principal.

La capacité d'accueillir 158 chefs d'Etat dès le premier jour était une gageure, nous savons très bien qu'il y a toujours une période de rodage. Nous avons, à cet égard, beaucoup apprécié le travail de complémentarité rencontré auprès de nos collègues de l'ONU et notamment avec Kevin O Hanlon, le chef du dispositif. Le retour d'expérience onusien, grâce au partage des connaissances relatives aux conventions de travail mises en place à Varsovie, ou à

Lima lors des précédentes COP nous ont été plus qu'utiles. La préparation pour la coordination de tous les services français s'est déroulée sur une période d'une année. Nous avons procédé par groupes de travail thématiques qui avaient pour but de rassembler des services différents pour, d'une part, présenter les enjeux de la conférence et, d'autre part, la nécessité de travailler en parfaite coordination. Ainsi, lorsque l'événement a commencé, tout le monde connaissait parfaitement son rôle, la fonction des autres partenaires et les raisons détaillées pour lesquelles ils travaillaient.

Le PC Opérationnel qui a été structuré ici constitue justement l'illustration de la mise en commun de tous ces services avec lesquels nous avons préparé l'événement.

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secours de trois grands services: police, secours et renseignement. Ces trois groupes ont été constitués intégrant les spécialistes qui disposent de la plus grande légitimité dans leur cadre de compétence.

Cette salle immense permet de visualiser, quasi instantanément, les différents secteurs couverts à l'intérieur du bâtiment et aux abords. Plusieurs prestataires différents ont donné accès à leur système vidéo pour l'occasion (RATP, SNCF). La zone de compétence de ce complexe et de son activité se situant sur les deux départements, de Seine-Saint-Denis et du Val-d'Oise, ont nécessité les autorisations des autorités administratives.

Tous les services réunis disposent d'une interaction permettant de réagir rapidement face à toute demande ou circonstance particulière et de répondre, quasi instantanément à toute sollicitation afin d'affecter les moyens humains et techniques adéquats au problème rencontré.

A titre d'exemple, un changement d'itinéraire peut être envoyé à une équipe de protection rapprochée. Une équipe de détection d'explosifs peut intervenir suite à la constatation d'une valise abandonnée. Des interventions médicales avec évacuations sanitaires peuvent être mises en place. Toutes les autres thématiques de sécurité comme déminage, santé secours, incendie, infirmeries, risque NRBC sont traitées.

Pendant la COP 21, trois briefings étaient organisés par jour, ils réunissaient tous les responsables présents sur le site. Deux pôles différents avaient été identifiés: Ordre public & Sécurité extérieure

La mise en place de ce PCO a nécessité une année de travail préparatoire. Cet entraînement a permis, pendant la COP 21, de constituer les équipes et de parvenir à déterminer un modus operandi adapté à chaque intervention en faisant intervenir les effectifs adaptés.

Celle longue période de préparation a également permis de répondre à toute menace supposée comme par exemple l'installation d'obstacles anti intrusions pour prévenir toute tentative de véhicule bélier.

La préparation d'une bonne exécution ne peut être que le résultat d'un travail d'équipe.

Par la suite, les différentes entités, responsables et hauts responsables du département ont été pleinement associés. Dans la préparation, comme dans l'exécution, la complémentarité a été le vecteur principal de réussite. Toute la chaîne de hiérarchie administrative a fonctionné.

Un débriefing interviendra selon une méthodologie mise en place après chaque grand événement. Des conclusions seront tirées sur la méthode qui consiste à travailler par groupes résulte des observations réalisées lors des précédentes conférences. Nos collègues étrangers qui seront confrontés à des préparations d'événements similaires seront les bienvenus pour prendre connaissance de ce retour d'expérience.

Le contexte post attentats du 13 novembre a rajouté une complexité supplémentaire dans la mise en place de notre travail mais nous a aussi dotés de moyens juridiques assez conséquents qui ont parfois facilité notre tâche.

Cette expérience fut, pour tout le personnel mobilisé, excellente et on pouvait ressentir profondément la mobilisation et la motivation profonde de tout le personnel concerné. Et, de façon plus anecdotique, cela m'a permis de rafraichir mon anglais.» ■

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Fin 2015, Claude en Ethiopie sur le volcan Dallol

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Claude Maillard à l'honneur à l'occasion du COP 21

Grand voyageur, aventurier, journaliste et surtout photographe, Claude Maillard parcourt la Terre pour vous faire profiter chaque mois de ses expéditions dans la Revue UN Spécial.

GARRY ASLANYAN, WHO

Après avoir collaboré pendant de longues années au service imprimerie de l'OMS, il est à l'origine de l'association «Terre de Partages» qu'il a fondé avec son ami Laurent Axel Roubaud, guide de l'extrême, qui accompagne depuis près de 30 ans des personnes avides de sensations fortes, notamment sur les volcans en éruption.

Au hasard de ses rencontres et de ses découvertes, souvent très belles, Claude a réalisé un cliché qui vient d'être publié dans un livre à l'occasion de la conférence sur les Changements Climatiques (COP 21) qui s'est tenue à Paris. En effet, le magazine Paris-Match a édité un ouvrage de 400 pages, illustré de nombreuses photos, au titre de *Ma Terre en Photos* dont la couverture est due au célèbre dessinateur Sempé. Et ce livre, au tirage limité, a été remis aux 150 chefs d'Etats présents au COP 21, à de nombreuses personnalités

(ministres, vices-présidents...), au secrétaire général de l'ONU Ban Ki-Moon et également au Pape François. Une belle récompense pour Claude qui a toujours été passionné de photo.

L'histoire de cette photo

«Cette photo, c'est le fruit de l'association de trois belles rencontres sans lesquelles elle n'aurait jamais vu le jour. C'est d'abord la découverte du Vanuatu, archipel volcanique composé de 81 îles situé dans l'océan Pacifique où je suis allé une première fois en 2005.

Tombé amoureux de ces lieux magiques habités par une population d'une extrême gentillesse parmi laquelle je me sens bien, j'ai renouvelé l'expérience six ans plus tard... et prépare une prochaine expédition pour fin 2016. Quand on aime on ne compte pas! La deuxième très belle rencontre est celle du Suisse Yves Rossy, l'«Homme oiseau», plus connu



© Anne-Marie Moreau

Claude au bord du lac de lave de l'Erta Ale (Ethiopie)

sous le nom de Jetman qui réalise exploit sur exploit aux commandes de son aile delta propulsée par quatre réacteurs. Un long article lui avait d'ailleurs été consacré dans le N° 708 de la revue *UN Spécial*

en 2011, revue dont il faisait également la couverture. Enfin la troisième belle rencontre sans laquelle cette fameuse photo n'aurait jamais existée, c'est celle de Christian David, alors rédacteur en chef du



© Claude Maillard

Vue par tous les chefs d'Etats, le secrétaire général de l'ONU, le Pape... la photo de Claude Maillard publiée dans le livre édité par Paris-Match

UN Spécial qui m'a permis de collaborer à la revue pour laquelle je travaille depuis 2008». ■

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What will Spring 2016 bring to the children of the world?

Winter is saying good bye, a shy spring is showing its face, and sun rays are sneaking through the clouds... Everything seems ready for a fresh start, a new beginning.

MAHMOUD HAMMOUD, UNOG

We can almost listen to children playing outside, smiling, finding new ways to being, loving life. Children are unquestionably one of the most wonderful blessings of this world. They bring us joy and contentment. As soon as we imagine children, we imagine well-fed and nourished youngsters supported by their parents and going to school. However, even though we are drawn to imagine the perfect scenario and the best of realities about children, we need to acknowledge that unfortunately the reality of many children in this world is quite different than what I just described.

All around the world, there is poverty that weighs on adults but more than anyone else weighs on children. Children cannot provide for themselves, they are at the mercy of their parents or immediate family, which means that if they are born in a poor family they will suffer from that poverty.

One of the world institutions that help children all around the world is The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF is a member institution of The United Nations (UN) that is intimately involved in helping children. The actions of UNICEF have saved millions of lives around the world. UNICEF serves in many different ways; from providing drinking water and toilets, to food aid, shelter and education for children in need. UNICEF spends more than \$800 million a year, primarily on immunization, health care, nutrition and basic education in 138 countries.

The UN was founded in the aftermath of the terrible WWII specifically to help

stabilize and promote peace worldwide. Those were horrendous times of threat of nuclear war and ever ongoing regional conflicts. Hence, peacekeeping has reasonably become an overriding concern of the organisation. Peacekeepers with blue helmets became the most visible role associated with the UN. It is painful for some UN officials to admit that a major part of non-peace keeping efforts of UN is not as visible to the general public because it fails to draw attention. UN and its family of agencies are "engaged in a vast array of work that touches every aspect of people's lives around the world."

The UN devotes no less than \$10 billion each and every year to the promotion of the development of human skills and potentials. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) supports more than 5,000 projects for agriculture, industry, education, and the environment with a budget of \$1.3 billion.

UN is behind some great worldwide achievements such as peace-making, fighting AIDS and bringing confrontational issues to discussion. As of 1996, the UN had deployed 42 peace-keeping forces, thereby allowing peace restoration to take place. This alone saved the life of millions of people in situations of conflict. UN has negotiated 172 peaceful settlements that have ultimately ended regional conflicts. More than 30 million refugees fleeing war, famine or persecution have received aid from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees since 1951. Some of these achievements include also making potable water available to more than a billion people in rural areas during the last decade.

The World Health Organization (WHO), another institution of UN, has conducted a 13-year effort to completely eradicate smallpox.

The UN has played a major role in promoting self-determination and independence. Hundreds of international treaties have been signed, thanks to UN. Every year, the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) gives away over two million tons of food to tens of millions of people facing acute food shortages in tens of countries. In December 2015, world leaders gathered in Paris and voted to limit global warming to less than 2°C. The UN plays a crucial role in protecting the environment. The "Earth Summit," the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, resulted in treaties on biodiversity and climate change, and all countries adopted "Agenda 21" – a blueprint to promote sustainable development or the concept of economic growth while protecting natural resources.

UNICEF is not the only major achievement of UN, but maybe one of the most visible members of the family of UN. UNICEF is active in child protection through social inclusion, paying special attention to children with disabilities. UNICEF cares for early childhood development, especially through healthy environments free of AIDS and parasitic diseases. Nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene only complement UNICEF's efforts in immunization and education to protect the young ones.

What will Spring 2016 bring to the children of the world? May they have peace, fresh air, and a clean place to play and grow. ■



© jenny-pics@Flickr



Fall leaves leaving with water...

© Mark Strobl/Flickr

So how is life?

How is life? Well, it depends much on where you are and what job you are doing.

MAHMOUD HAMMOUD, UNOG

A recent endeavour by The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was christened, “The Better Life Initiative”, and that shows how life can be at two extremes between Mexico, Turkey and Chile on one side, and Australia, Sweden and Switzerland on the other. However, how was that measured?

Many indexes that claim to evaluate “life” or “the quality of life” in countries or regions, almost solely take the cold numbers of GDP and eventually, similar economic statistics. How unfair and skewed is that! The number of high-income

people in any area or country could easily bias those indexes and give a false impression on the “average” income of the working individual.

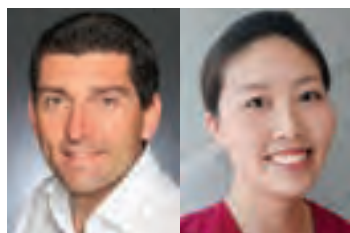
The Better Life Index establishes benchmarks to compare essential topics of life in those countries. Those criteria included housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction, safety and work-life balance. Whether or not those are the best measurable values to consider would be a subject for discussion. According to OECD, Turkey has an index of 0.0 (zero) for Work Life Balance. That latter is defined by the iconic “How much you work, how

much you play”. So what does here a 0.0 mean? This figure is probably strongly indicative of the very high unemployment rate of about 50% of people aged 15-64 and the fact that 41% of Turks work very long hours. Compare that to a Work – Life Balance index of 8.1 in Sweden, where 74% of those in similar age interval have a paid job and only 1% of employees report working very long hours.

The initiative is a fascinating one and its outcome is a must read). For all of those in the fields of the criteria of this study, it is a goldmine of information. Beyond the simple figures are what they are, analysis of why those figures and how each country could work to improve the life of its citizens generates numerous books of interest to policy makers as well as to NGOs, the United Nations and its Member States.

Maybe far more interesting than those figures, at least for the curious among us, is that the OECD website gives each and every one of us the possibility to create and own Better Life Index by rating the topics or criteria above according to their importance to you. As you indicate the importance of each topic, the countries involved in the study go up or down, according to their score on your selected topics. Very interestingly, if you give Housing and Income middle importance, and Jobs, Education and Life Satisfaction the highest importance, Switzerland comes first in the ranking! My love for Switzerland does have some logical foundations after all.

May I recommend that you take a look at this tool on oecdbetterlifeindex.org. Then, let us ask again: “How is life?” ■



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The team entering the water at the Coupe de Noël in Geneva.



Team members enjoying a mint tea after the icy plunge.

WHO team competes in the Geneva Coupe de Noël 2015

BERNIE CAPPELLO, WHO

On 20 December 2015, a team of World Health Organisation colleagues and friends braved a 120-metre swim in the breathtakingly cold (8 °C) waters of Lac Léman in Geneva. The full team included Bernadette Cappello, Nico Clark, Elise Gehring, Christian Gunneberg, Alex Kasterine, Glenn Laverack, Kaylene Selleck and Kate Strong. This event involved over 1500 other cold water swimming enthusiasts in the 77th staging of the Coupe de Noël. Organized by Genève Natation 1885 in conjunction with the Ville de Genève, and held annually since 1934, the Coupe de Noël has grown to be one of the largest open-air cold water swimming events in the world and the longest running sporting event in Geneva. It is a colourful and convivial community event, attracting brave, fun-loving and crazily-dressed participants.

Groups of 25 swimmers at a time were released into the water at 5-minute intervals from 9 a.m. until around 2 p.m., to the cheers and encouragement of an enthusiastic crowd of family, friends, well-wishers and bewildered tourists.

Bernie Cappello said, “we exited the water to a heroes reception and a hot cup of tea, before collecting our finishers medals and then warming up in a giant Jacuzzi”. Costumes at the event were seriously impressive – everything from crocodiles and ladybirds to superheroes and lumberjacks. Plenty of food and drink stalls, music and happy people created a great festival atmosphere. The five minutes or so that were spent in the water swimming ended up being just a

small part of the time at this well-organized and popular event near the Jardin Anglais in Geneva.

Cold water swimming is not for everyone, and certainly not for the faint of heart (literally or figuratively). However it has proven to be an addictive pastime for all the team, and the training and preparation for the Coupe de Noël has enabled them to withstand and overcome the negative effects of swimming in frigid waters, and eventually enjoy the positive, social and endorphin-fuelled physical benefits of this sport.

There are many purported health benefits of cold water swimming: boosted metabolism, improved circulation, benefits for the immune system, glowing skin, improved libido and better sleep. The team can vouch for these benefits. They're great. And coupled with things like camaraderie, friendship, being outdoors and contributing to a better work-life balance, they have developed a healthy addiction.

There are also health risks associated with cold-water swimming. The team have each experienced (and survived) the panic and hyperventilation induced by initial submersion as part of the “cold-shock response”. This involves an involuntary, gasping intake of air in response to the cold. It is followed by hyperventilation due both to the body's response to the cold, and often by a psychological panic reaction. Both of these effects have an attendant risk of drowning due to inspiration of water into the lungs. Then there are the effects on the

cardiovascular system: vasoconstriction, effects on heart rate and blood pressure and risks of arrhythmias and cardiac arrest. If you remain in the water long enough, “cold-incapacitation” can occur – a loss of functional movement due to reduced nerve and muscle function associated with reduced peripheral blood flow. And of course, there's hypothermia, when core body temperature drops below 35 °C. Some members of the team found the trick was to start slowly, build tolerance by swimming in ‘warmer’ water to begin with and get into the super-cold water gradually. Then remember to relax, concentrate and try and control your breathing. Keep your head above water and don't stay in too long. And swim with friends, they'll look after you.

The team members each had different motivations for initially trying cold water swimming. These included losing a bet, a means of making friends when new to town, pushing personal boundaries, the promise of the mysterious sensation of being cocooned in cotton wool and the sheer physical and mental challenge of putting ourselves beyond our usual comfort zones.

The goal of competing in the Coupe de Noël contributed to the enthusiasm and determination to keep it up. The team will continue to swim throughout the winter and the rest of the year. Usually swimming at least once a week at the Bains des Pâquis, we'd welcome and encourage others to join us any time and give cold water swimming a try, ready for the 2016 Coupe de Noël. ■

Kids want to know about the UN! Perception change project

Why is the European Headquarters of the UN in Geneva? Have you met Presidents or famous political personalities? How can we work together to preserve our planet and end epidemics? How can we bring peace to countries at war? What is the difference between providing medical care to rich and poor?



Arthur Bobillier (15), Collège Madame de Staël, interviewing Marco Kalbusch, Senior Political Affairs Officer, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

JANA BAUEROVA, UNOG

In 2015, the Perception Change Project (PCP) opened the doors of Palais des Nations to students curious about the work of the UN system, aged nine to sixteen. These were a few of the fascinating questions they raised in an interview series called *#KidsWannaKnow*. The project kicked off thanks to a dynamic partnership with Eduki Foundation and Greycells, an association of former civil servants.

The young interviewers asked hard-hitting questions and their sincere interest was infectious. From the Ebola mission in Sierra Leone to promoting human rights in Kenya, the stories and experiences shared across generations were captivating. Students were interested in the educational paths of the speakers, as well as the most remarkable moments in their careers. Each of us working for an international organization has a unique story to tell, but we hold in common core motivations and values that drive our work.

The reactions of all participants, both young students and the interviewees, were unanimously positive. Opening the international organizations to the local population and engaging youth is crucial to our mission of perception change. It has been a growing trend pursued by UNOG through various events, like the UN Open Day in October 2015 and hosting the first training for the Escalade run at Nations in November 2014 and 2015.

All interviews were conducted in French and were filmed. A short video clip from each can be viewed on www.youtube.com/user/GeneveInternationale.

If you are interested in participating in *KidsWannaKnow* or similar projects, please contact PCP (perceptionchange@unog.ch). ■



Vincent et le volontariat, une longue histoire d'amour!

A 31 ans, Vincent Simon comptabilise 23 années d'activités volontaires. Et oui, cela est possible lorsque l'on s'engage à l'âge de 8 ans!

MARIE-JOSÉ ASTRE-DÉMOULIN, SDLS, UNOG



© S. Bartolo

Tout commence avec une initiative du gouvernement français destinée à renforcer l'implication des jeunes dans la gestion des communes: la création de Conseils municipaux d'enfants. Dès que le projet prend forme dans sa ville, Mont-de-Marsan (les Landes), le jeune Vincent se présente aux élections et y est aussitôt élu.

Du haut de ses 8 ans, il y défend des projets liés aux activités sportives «puisque'elles faisaient partie de mes engagements» mais, très vite, ce sont des activités à visées plus sociales qu'il a envie de promouvoir. Le déclic a lieu deux années plus tard lors d'un séjour au Salvador et au Guatemala.

«Nous logeons chez des amis de mon père. Ils nous font visiter le pays. Je vois tout avec une force extraordinaire: les couleurs, les paysages, le "Christ noir", les "Indiens", le contraste entre la richesse et la pauvreté. J'ai dix ans. Je suis bouleversé, je sais dès cet instant que je veux contribuer à l'éducation des enfants.

Le Conseil municipal des enfants ayant été une excellente école de vie, je me dis aussitôt "tu vois un problème, tu cherches une solution"! Alors, dès mon retour en France, je tente de mobiliser des élèves et des professeurs de mon collège autour d'un projet d'aide aux enfants du Guatemala.

Parallèlement, fasciné par un livre publié par l'UNICEF et intitulé *Enfants du monde*, je convaincs ma grand-mère de m'accompagner au Comité de l'UNICEF de Mont-de-Marsan auquel je veux proposer mes services comme bénévole. Contre toute attente, la responsable du bureau, sans doute touchée par mon jeune âge, me prend sous son aile et m'emmène à de

nombreuses réunions. C'est ainsi que, au fil du temps, avec le soutien de l'UNICEF et de mes camarades, je forme le Club Quetzal¹. J'ai choisi ce nom parce que le quetzal est l'oiseau emblème du Guatemala et qu'il meurt si on le met en cage... Un joli symbole pour des projets pédagogiques, non?

On organise des ventes de bracelets, des projections de films, je mobilise les Conseils départementaux de la jeunesse, j'utilise toutes les ressources imaginables. C'est ainsi que, bien que je ne sois pas un grand aficionado, je sais que dans les ferias du sud-ouest il est possible de lever des fonds en formant des Peñas. Ce sont des groupes d'amis qui se constituent en association pour partager une passion commune ou défendre une cause commune.

Je contacte El Juli, le toréro star de l'époque, et il accepte de donner son nom à une Peña² à but humanitaire pour soutenir le Club Quetzal, l'UNICEF et les Restos du Cœur. Le groupe a aussitôt un grand succès. Il existe toujours, d'ailleurs, et jusqu'à ce jour, où que je me trouve dans le monde, en juillet de chaque année, je m'y rends pour aller cuire des frites. Nous engrangeons jusqu'à 25 000 euros de recettes à chaque fois, avec l'aide d'une centaine d'autres bénévoles!

A 17 ans, je parviens à obtenir l'accord de mes parents pour passer ma dernière année avant mon baccalauréat au lycée français de Guatemala city. La lecture d'un texte de Rigoberta Menchú dans la classe soulève parmi les élèves une polémique qui m'étonne. Je décide d'aller voir cette grande dame, prix Nobel de la paix en 1992. La rencontre me bouleverse et mon admiration pour elle se renforce. Elle me fait l'honneur d'ajouter son nom au Club qui devient "Club Quetzal: les amis de Rigoberta Menchú".

Je rentre en Europe pour faire des études de droit mais entre une carrière d'avocat à Paris et les possibilités qui s'offrent dans le domaine de l'international à but humanitaire, je n'ai pas une seconde d'hésitation. Après un passage à l'Organisation internationale des migrations, je suis retenu pour le Programme des Volontaires des Nations Unies (VNU)³ qui m'offre un poste d'Officier des droits de l'Homme auprès du bureau du Haut-Commissariat à Guatemala city.

Une combinaison parfaite: je vis dans un pays que j'adore, je travaille dans le cadre des VNU, un programme qui réunit des jeunes pleins de peps et d'énergie qui croient dans les missions qui leur sont confiées et, en plus, je suis affecté au Bureau chargé de la défense des droits de l'homme: le plus bel instrument de toute l'Organisation des Nations Unies... J'ai vraiment de la chance, vous ne trouvez pas!?

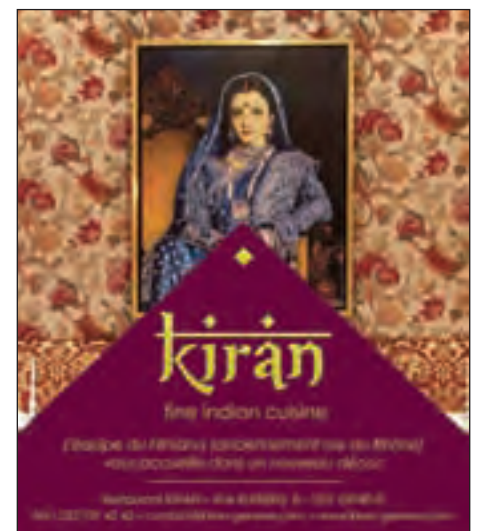
Cher Vincent, je ne sais pas si vous avez de la chance mais je tiens à vous dire que je suis immensément chanceuse – et fière – d'avoir quelqu'un comme vous pour collègue! ■

¹ <http://www.clubquetzal.org/>

² <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pe%C3%B1a-El-Juli-Un-grand-torero-pour-une-grande-cause/111593742304>

³ <http://www.unv.org/fr/qui-nous-sommes.html>

Restaurants



De l'autre côté de la rivière

*Rencontre avec José Amulfo Gomezs
Pescador, créateur et vendeur de bottes*



© Marie-José Astre-Démoulin

**MARIE-JOSÉ ASTRE-DÉMOULIN, SDLS,
UNOG**

Déambuler dans les rue de Antigua, Guatemala, adorable ville classée au Patrimoine mondial de l'humanité par l'UNESCO. Plonger ses mains dans des étoffes aux couleurs éclatantes. Sursauter lorsque le volcan de feu, tout proche, se met à gronder. Admirer les colliers de jade, les coussins brodés, les tissages dignes des plus grands couturiers. Entrer dans une boutique qui propose de ravissantes et étonnantes bottes du cuir incrustées de broderies. Engager la conversation avec José, le jeune créateur et gérant des lieux. Écouter son histoire et basculer dans un moment de pure émotion.

«Je viens d'une famille très pauvre. Quand j'étais petit,

avec mes parents et mes sœurs, on vivait dans une baraque de tôle et de plastique. Pour mes parents il n'était pas question que j'aille à l'école... Nous n'avions même pas de chaussures. Mais moi, j'étais obsédé par l'envie d'apprendre. Alors quand j'ai eu six ans, le jour de la rentrée scolaire, je suis parti de la maison en cachette et je me suis glissé au fond de la classe pour écouter le maître. Celui-ci a été formidable. Il a accepté ma présence. J'ai donc continué à aller en classe, en secret de ma famille.

Comme je n'avais ni cahier ni crayon, je mémorisais les lettres et les chiffres visuellement, puis je m'entraînais le soir en les formant avec mon doigt dans la terre, sur le sol. Un jour le maître a frappé à la porte chez moi. J'ai eu très peur mais il voulait montrer mes résultats à mes parents. Il leur a expliqué que j'avais les meilleures notes de la classe et qu'il fallait m'encourager.

Mes parents ont compris et m'ont permis de continuer. J'ai récupéré des fournitures données par différentes personnes. Après l'école, j'allais vendre les tortillas que ma mère cuisinait et, quand je me dirigeais vers le village, de l'autre côté de la rivière,

je me disais que je travaillerais tellement bien à l'école que ma mère pourrait un jour vivre dans l'une de ces vraies maisons, sans avoir besoin de travailler.

J'ai donc été un excellent élève, même si j'ai dû m'arrêter deux ans, vers 14 ans, pour travailler. J'ai été peintre, maçon, vendeur de granité et bien d'autres choses mais ma mère a économisé suffisamment pour que je puisse prendre des cours du soir. Et j'ai réussi mon bac!

Alors j'ai pu devenir comptable, mieux gagner ma vie. Et étudier dans les internet cafés pour me perfectionner dans la gestion d'entreprise. Un jour, alors que je travaillais chez un artisan qui fabriquait des chaussures, j'en ai créé deux paires, juste pour m'amuser. On les avait posées sur un meuble et je n'y ai plus pensé. Jusqu'au moment où un Mexicain est entré. Il s'est dirigé droit vers mes bottes et a voulu les acheter. Quand il a demandé le prix, j'ai dit 600 Quetzales (environ 85 dollars), en pensant qu'il allait éclater de rire. Mais il a acheté les bottes sans discuter.

J'ai su aussitôt que j'avais une idée à saisir! Et j'ai démarré ma propre affaire. Avec six paires de bottes posées sur un banc au début. Puis douze. Et puis

voilà... deux ans plus tard, je vais ouvrir ma deuxième boutique et j'offre du travail à une quinzaine de personnes.

Et ma maman? Eh bien, elle vit dans une vraie maison, bien sûr. Et elle ne travaille plus.

Mon souhait maintenant, c'est d'ouvrir une école de langues pour donner une chance à tous les enfants de pouvoir communiquer avec des gens du monde entier et d'avoir de bons métiers. Je sais que je ne changerai pas le sort de tous mais ce que je pourrai apporter sera une opportunité pour ceux qui en bénéficieront. Et je me bats pour y arriver. D'ailleurs, chaque jour, je continue d'étudier en ligne. Pas seulement pour y parvenir mais aussi parce que je ne connais rien de mieux que le plaisir d'apprendre! ».

R ressortir de la boutique en lui souhaitant de tout cœur de réussir dans ses projets et en le remerciant pour ce bon moment – et cette véritable leçon de courage et de vie. ■

www.facebook.com/armonia2harmony

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*Grâce à la mise à disposition d'une nouvelle salle,
le Club Santé et Bien-être de l'ONU peut étoffer son
offre et vous proposer des cours à l'heure du déjeuner.
Plus d'excuse donc, en 2016 on se fait du bien!*



MURIEL SCIBILIA, CNUCED

Créé à l'initiative de quelques membres du personnel, le Club vous permet de pratiquer des activités physiques ou de vous relaxer sans avoir à courir à l'autre bout de la ville.

Outre les cours de gymnastique Pilate, dont le succès ne se dément pas, vous pourrez dérouiller vos articulations et rectifier votre posture grâce au stretching postural, renforcer votre musculature avec le Pilate, mieux gérer vos tensions et vos émotions et développer votre potentiel créatif avec la sophrologie et la musicothérapie.

Les cours sont dispensés par des professionnels talentueux.

Pour faire partie du Club, vous devez vous acquitter d'une cotisation annuelle d'un montant de 30 fr. qui va de janvier à décembre.


Les cours, qui ont débuté en janvier, sont très demandés. Etant donné que la salle principale (A459) ne peut accueillir que huit personnes à la fois, une fois décidé, il faudra vous engager à suivre au moins 5 cours. Vous pouvez bénéficier d'une séance d'initiation gratuite pour chacune des activités.

Le prix de chaque cours est de 20 fr. Le carnet de 5 cours est valable 2 mois, celui de 10 cours est valable 4 mois.

Inscrivez-vous sans tarder en envoyant un courrier électronique à l'adresse suivante: clubsante@unog.ch


Dans votre message, dites-nous si vous seriez intéressés par des cours à partir de 17 h30 ■

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Pilates

Cette méthode permet d'éliminer les tensions, de renforcer la musculature et d'améliorer la posture.

Elle convient aussi bien à ceux qui ne pratiquent plus d'activités physiques depuis des années qu'aux sportifs ou à ceux qui veulent développer harmonieusement leur silhouette.

Lundi, 12h-13h, salle de gymnastique du palais, 8^e étage, ascenseur N° 13

Mardi, 18h15, 19h15, salle de gymnastique du palais, 8^e étage, ascenseur No 13

Mercredi, 12h-13h, salle A459

Groupe 1 – 12h-13h, Groupe 2 – 13h-14h, Salle A459

Contact: Philippa Fletcher, 746 27

Stretching postural

Ce cours est centré sur des exercices d'étirement afin de gagner en souplesse musculaire et articulaire et de réduire les tensions dues au stress. Il permet aussi de corriger notre posture, souvent mise à mal par une vie trop sédentaire ou de longues heures passées devant un écran d'ordinateur; ce qui occasionne de multiples douleurs.

Vendredi, Groupe 1 – 12h30-13h15; Groupe 2 – 13h30-14h15; salle A459

Contact: Muriel Scibilia, 757 25

Musicothérapie

Battements du cœur, rythme cérébral, respiration des poumons, vitesse de circulation du sang, pulsations du système nerveux, le corps humain est un véritable orchestre. Lorsque les sons entrent en correspondance avec nos rythmes biologiques, ils exercent une action bénéfique. Partant de ce constat, la musicothérapie stimule des réponses corporelles, émotionnelles et cognitives en utilisant toutes les composantes du langage musical (rythme, mélodie, harmonie). Les effets sont la réduction des tensions et de l'anxiété, la stimulation de la motivation et de l'attention, le renforcement des capacités d'écoute et de concentration et le développement du potentiel créatif de chacun.

Aucune formation musicale n'est nécessaire.

Jeudi, Groupe 1 – 12h30-13h15; Groupe 2 – 13h30-14h15; salle A459

Contact: Muriel Scibilia, 757 25

Sophrologie

Technique douce et très efficace, la sophrologie permet de mieux gérer les tensions et les émotions, d'améliorer le sommeil, la concentration et la mémorisation, de développer une attitude positive, d'augmenter la confiance en soi, de réconcilier le corps et l'esprit et de gagner en vitalité et en sérénité.

La sophrologie s'appuie sur des exercices de respiration, sur la relaxation musculaire et la visualisation positive. Elle est en plein essor dans les domaines de la santé, du sport, de l'éducation et de l'entreprise.

Les exercices de sophrologie sont accessibles à tous et ne requièrent aucune condition physique préalable. Il est recommandé d'opter pour dix séances car un suivi est nécessaire si l'on veut tirer parti de cette activité.

Lundi, Groupe 1 – 12h30-13h15; Groupe 2 – 13h30-14h15; salle A459

Contact: Muriel Scibilia, 757 25



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From 27 June to 26 August (3 separate sessions)

6 WEEK COURSES FOR LEVELS A0 TO B1

From 18 July to 26 August

UNIVERSITY PREPARATORY COURSE FOR LEVELS B2 AND C1

From 18 July to 26 August

FOR PROGRAMMES AND INFORMATION

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FACULTÉ DES LETTRES





In 2016

Culture for all the family even if you don't speak French...

Geneva is an international city and there are plenty of things to do in the evening or at weekends that people who do not speak fluent French can enjoy too...

SARAH JORDAN, SDLS, UNOG

THÉÂTRE FORUM MEYRIN (TFM)

This cultural centre celebrates its twentieth birthday in 2016. It comprises a 700-seat theatre, exhibition galleries, a library and restaurants and is easily and quickly accessible from Cornavin train station via the tram number 14, or by car with easy on-site parking.

Convivial, light and spacious, the TFM immediately feels like a good place to be. The programme is very eclectic – classical and contemporary dance and music, circus, theatre in French and other languages, conferences, workshops and other cultural events. The restaurant serves original, locally sourced food and beverages and offers special platters for children (some healthy competition for the happy meal). Most of the shows are under 2 hours in length and have offers such as the family pass, making culture really is financially accessible to all.

Here are some of the TFM's offerings from February onwards:

Nous sommes pareils à ces crapauds qui... & Ali

1h05 in length

A surprising and fast-moving multidisciplinary show with elements of circus and dance accompanied by musicians playing early 20th century Greek music.

Monsieur de Pourceaugnac

1h45 in length

The script is by Molière – so some French is needed – but the music, by Lully, is accessible to all. This production, set in Paris at the end of the 50s, takes a light-hearted look at social class and the differences between city and country dwellers.

The Roots

1h30 in length

A great show for teenagers – they won't get bored! An energetic troupe of 11 men dance hip-hop to Brahms and electro music.

Platonov

1h40 in length

An adaptation of one of Tchekhov's first plays, in Dutch (subtitled in French), with a piano accompaniment.

Joseph_kids

30 minutes in length

This short offering involving dance and digital technology for children could be a good pretext to tear them away from their screens. Workshops for children aged 7 to 10 to further explore the issue will be held on Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 March

Le Jour du Grand Jour

1h30 in length

This show, held in a specially erected tent outside the TFM, is a humorous theatre of life that examines human rituals around birth, baptism, marriage and death...

Les Hommes de Piaf

1h15 in length

For all those who love the music of Edith Piaf, a quartet,

including an accordionist, play her unforgettable tunes.

Notturino & Set and Reset / Reset

1h20 in length

The acclaimed British contemporary dance company CandoCo, with a show featuring handicapped and non-handicapped dancers.

An Old Monk

1h15 in length

In this musical theatre show, a jazz orchestra pay tribute to old age, to dance and movement, and to the music of Thelonius Monk. ■

For the dates and times of the shows above, consult the TFM website – www.forum-meyrin.ch

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Les Français © Tal Bitton



Monsieur de Pourceaugnac © Brigitte Enguerand



Monsieur de Pourceaugnac © Brigitte Enguerand



Les Français © Tal Bitton

COMÉDIE DE GENÈVE (CDG)

This theatre was founded in 1909 and has been based in its present location, the Boulevard des Philosophes, near Plainpalais, since 1913. Performances here feature theatre, music and dance and range from newly-visited classics to avant-garde creations. A good command of French may be necessary for some of the performances staged here, but not for all. The themes raised are often highly topical and thus of potential interest to those working in the United Nations context. Here is a brief sample of the winter-spring programme.

Les Français

More international than this is difficult: a ground breaking

theatrical adaptation of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, in Polish, with English and French subtitles! Staged at the impressive Bâtiment des Forces Motrices.

Un Conte Cruel

An original CdG production on the theme of conjugal violence, inspired by the fact that 1 in 5 women in Switzerland are victims of physical or sexual abuse in the course of their lifetime. This play will be performed at the Théâtre de Poche: as its name suggests, a delightful "pocket" sized venue in the heart of the historic old town.

L'Opéra des quat'sous

Based on Brecht's masterpiece, an orchestra and two clans confront each other on stage and

consider the timeless question of the exploitation of mankind by mankind.

Le Violon de Rotschild

A theatrical adaptation of two short stories by Tchekhov, one about an unpopular Jewish coffin maker and the second, a conversation between a widower and his young son. These apparently insignificant snippets of daily life inspire more intelligence, tenderness and humour than one might expect.

Geneva Camerata Orchestra (GECA)

Bach, rap and slam – with David Granite – The third and last of the GECA's "wild concert" series, hosted by the CdG, in which classical and very contemporary music meet head

on. No need to speak perfect French to enjoy this!

The Comédie is also home to the Boulevard Café, a great place for lunch or a pre or post-theatre supper. In the kitchen, is Montserrat Sadurni, formerly chef at the Bains des Pâquis, to which the international crowd is no stranger, and Arta Avdullahi, sommelière and wine specialist, will be delighted to advise you on what best accompanies your choice. ■

For the dates and times of the shows above and for post-theatre supper reservations, consult the CdG website: www.comedie.ch



St Julian's Bay

Harbouring Grand Memories

Malta's Unique Natural Harbour at the Crossroads of the Mediterranean

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MALTA

One of the beautiful sights in the Maltese Islands is its majestic harbour which lies in the city of Valletta. During the day, the sun throws the architectural intricacies of the Maltese Grand Harbour into sharp relief, highlighting its curtain walls, bastions, towers and forts. At night, few sights compare with the enchantment of the lit fortifications.

Throughout the ages, cities and towns have cropped up along its many shores. Such settlements situated themselves around a harbour, which assured employment, security and a closeness to the sea, which local-born islanders inherently treasure. Though many natural harbours dot the coastlines of the Maltese Archipelago, the Grand Harbour is the biggest and perhaps best situated of all. Its usefulness to the Island colonizers across the centuries is obvious. Most of the fortifications were built during the era of the Order of the Knights of St. John. Malta's harbour, in such an advantageous mid-Mediterranean position, was rightfully recognised as crucial for the Knights, and was consequently set upon with the idea of military improvement and cultured beautification. It is from this era that Malta's capital, Valletta, emerged. Its artistic beauty graces the view at any angle from the Grand Harbour.

Undoubtedly, there is much to discover. There is more than one way to explore the Island's majestic harbour and all its creeks,

buildings and monuments. Walking by oneself or within a small group of friends is, unexpectedly, perhaps one of the best. Not only does it give you the luxury to stop and spend time wherever you want to, but the many hidden footpaths and quiet spots with fantastic views of the harbour provide a treasure chest of wonders for the dedicated flâneur.

Harbour cruises departing from Sliema, in Marsamxett Harbour also include Grand Harbour. These trips take time and visit each creek and fort in turn, offering great sea-views of Forts Ricasoli, St. Angelo, and St. Elmo; the Kalkara, Cottonera and French creeks; the many docks and wharfs, as well as the recently renovated Valletta Waterfront. A running commentary extensively describing the rich (and troubled) history of the harbour is always included.

Should one wish for a smaller, more intimate experience of the Grand Harbour, water taxis may be a good option to consider. All taxis and cruises can be booked online, their websites also displaying pick-up points, schedules and prices. Guided walks and tours are also a possibility, giving one the opportunity to see several ornate Churches (many of which are Baroque), the Customs House, the Great Siege Bell, the Barrack Gardens and the Sacra Infermeria – originally built by the Order of St. John to treat the wounded, but recently converted

to the Mediterranean Conference Centre. There is always something else to discover among the streets lining the Grand Harbour. The Maltese government rightly attaches much historical and cultural significance to the Grand Harbour area, and thus many proposals for restoration projects have been taken up and completed, or else are currently under way.

The Grand Harbour is but one of the many wonderful aspects of visiting and living in Malta. Apart from the architectural beauty and colourful history, this small Island in the Mediterranean boasts a robust economy with sound financial stability. Despite the challenging financial external environment, economic and employment growth are projected to continue to outpace the euro area average in 2016. Throughout 2015, the Maltese Government has taken a series of important steps to introduce the United Nations Pensions Scheme, which grants "special tax status" to former UN employees who decide to retire on this majestic Island and who fulfil certain conditions, primarily that at least 40% of their pension is received in Malta. The scheme exempts former UN employees from income tax on the pension. Any other income arising outside Malta is subject to a 15% tax rate. Further information and guidance notes on the provisions of the scheme are to be found in the following link: <https://ird.gov.mt/regulations/unpp.aspx>. ■

Book Review

Hybrid Eyes

Reflections of an African in Europe

Osman Sankoh's Hybrid Eyes – Reflections of an African in Europe is not just another in the catalogue of stories about Africans in Europe, it is a fresh puff of narrative air, and a compelling story of tremendous human interest.

**PROFESSOR SHEIKH UMARR KAMARAH,
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, SHAW UNIVERSITY,
NORTH CAROLINA, USA**

In this autobiography, the author focuses on a particularly important “moment” in his life. The experiences and “encounters” that fill the space of this “moment” engender a revision of previously held views, a critical re-evaluation of the author’s own culture, and a bifocal appraisal of the new culture (German) with which the author is confronted.

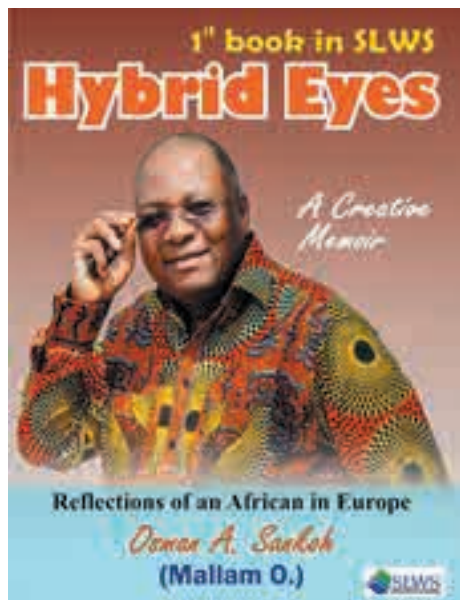
The book opens with the author waking up to a new physical and cultural environment. We hear him say, “I have been trying to figure out where the hell in the world I am.” An African from Sierra Leone, the author is now in Germany in pursuit of higher studies. Osman’s story is not new; what is new and of great interest is the way he tells it, and the VISION embodied in the narrative.

The author’s narrative style is a blessing to his vision. Because he employs a multiplicity of narrative techniques, Osman is able to “say”, dramatise, and interpret his experiences, and at the same time share with his readers, the essence of his message. For example, while following the life of Osman Sankoh, the reader is brought intimately close to the “nature” of racism through the author’s use of DIALOGUE and ENGAGEMENT. In his encounter with the elderly German woman, the author uses dialogue to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the participants with regard to RACE (Colour). But the author goes beyond the dialogue to what I call “engagement,” whereby he captures the German lady’s attention, exorcises the fear of Blacks in

her, and then calmly tells her a story about the origins of Black – skinned and White – skinned people. This method of engagement has an educational value. It allows the breaking of the barriers of ignorance and fear that breed prejudice. The author uses the same technique in his encounter with the little boy in the public transport (S-Bahn). When the little boy refuses to sit near the author and his wife because his mother had told him that “all blacks were niggers,” the author engages the little boy. Without rage, but with a sincere intent to “educate” the little boy, the author succeeds to “detoxicate” a young mind. This is a refreshing feature in the story of the African in Europe. It is not about passive complaint; it is about confronting this human issue in a human way.

Osman Sankoh employs the epistolary method to raise and deal with very topical issues.

In Andrew’s letter from Sierra Leone to the author in Germany, issues of racism, the Western woman, money in Europe (the greener pasture phenomenon), the rebel war in Sierra Leone, and a lot more, are raised. The reader accesses Andrew’s views on all of those issues through the author’s use of the epistolary method. It is very revealing. The issue expressed in the American proverb, “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence,” is of interest particularly to African readers. Any African, especially one from a large family, who lives in Europe or America, knows about the enormous pressure from relatives and friends to send money back home and to help them come over to the “Greener pasture.” It is difficult to convince



anyone in Africa that one suffers in many ways in Europe or America. The author uses two lengthy letters that clearly map and discuss the problem. Since people are usually unsatisfied with their lot in life, a modern psychologist has spoken of “The ‘Greener Grass’ Phenomenon” by which modern individuals continually evaluate supposedly better alternatives for themselves. This basic behavioural truth expressed in a universal metaphor, “The Grass is always Greener on the other side of the fence,” the illusion of the land of plenty and luxury, is eloquently dealt with in this book.

Another important issue that the reader is forced to grapple with is that of individual versus group behaviour. In the book, the author’s family faces a serious crisis. The author’s daughter was born with a hole in the heart and is diagnosed in Sierra Leone while the author and his wife are in Germany. The little girl, Fatima, needs immediate medical attention. The outpouring of sincere human concern and support, both moral and financial, is enormous. Of

interest here is the fact that the support comes from both BLACK and WHITE people. The story of Professor Urfer and his wife Barbara, both white Germans, is testimony to the fact that generalisations about human beings are, to say the least, inaccurate. Why then do we have racial tensions around the world? In the words of Carol Tavris, a social psychologist, “Something happens to individuals when they collect in a group. They think and act differently than they would on their own.” Osman’s book is a perfect laboratory to test the validity of the above theory. This book is certainly one of great human interest.

The narrative of *Hybrid Eyes* is laced with humour. Behind the veneer of humour is the author’s vision. Differences in cultural practices, and statements about how human perceptions and actions are closely linked with one’s world view, are made in a humorous tone. The story of the Sierra Leonean male who brings “flowers” to welcome his loved one is told in a humorous way but speaks volumes about cultural differences. While flowers are important in interpersonal relationships in Europe and America, their function is different in the author’s culture. The BEE episode is another story told in a humorous way but making a profound statement. Walking in the fields on Professor Urfer and Barbara’s farm, Fatmata sees a stray bee and lifts her foot to smash it. Professor Urfer immediately intervenes to save the bee’s life saying, “No, it has a right to live.” The need for humans to respect the life and dignity of every creature on this planet, and particularly of other humans, is eloquently expressed in Professor Urfer’s protest.

The author has injected freshness in the genre of autobiography. While telling his

story, he does not merely stand or sit, watch and report, but actively participates in the social drama. He interprets, “engages” other characters, fights back, reflects on issues, evaluates, and tells HIS and OUR story.

The language is intimate, conversational, and accessible. Like the storyteller in Warima, Osman holds a dialogue with the reader. The most interesting aspect of his narrative technique is the intricate interweaving of stories within the story. Since his story in Germany is about encounters, experiences, and slices of other lives, the story switches from one encounter to the other or from one slice of life to an encounter, without notice. All the little “slices” or “pieces” are intricately tied in one huge examination of – human – nature story. *Hybrid Eyes* is not only about the experiences of an African in Germany, it is, in a wider context, a reflection on the human condition – black and white. By recognising the beauty and deficiencies in both cultures, by raising prejudice to the level of a universal category, by recognising the role of language in the construction of social reality, by reflecting on the nature of politics in contemporary Africa, and by challenging Mankind to shed the clothing of FEAR and IGNORANCE and embrace one another, *Hybrid Eyes* transcends its physical, temporal, and social setting. *Hybrid Eyes* goes beyond the personal story, and assumes universal appeal. It is the story of everyone everywhere who lives with the “other.” It is a story worth reading and discussing in classrooms everywhere. ■

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Fighting “Otherdom”

ELIZABETH CHASE

Living in a highly diverse country, I’ll admit, I’ve come to take for granted that I can celebrate Chinese New Year with friends, Hanukkah with another, and Christmas with family, all in the same season. It’s a cultural mosaic I live in, and it’s one of the many things that have allowed the country to thrive. It’s made obvious when you visit a contrasting area: it’s so uncomfortably homogeneous that any change, no matter how small, is met with a gasp, a stare, or utter rejection. People have been kicked out of their homes, pushed out of their countries, and killed for being “different”. So how, if at all, does diversity play a role in preventing this?

Seems a little obvious, doesn’t it? If you surround yourself with people of many different religions, cultures, and countries, you will inevitably come to understand their struggles more deeply. Empathy is the key word here.

“People fear what they do not know. It’s very easy to demonize minorities for this reason,” explains Maryam, a student whose studies have taken her around the world. “This happens when you don’t know people of these minorities personally. For example, when the minaret ban referendum was passed, there was very little support for it

in more diverse, multi-cultural cities. Most of the people who voted for the banning of minarets were those living in rural towns, places that were mostly homogeneous. So again, I think this is just an illustration of how, when you live alongside people and get to know them, you’re not as susceptible to fear-mongering.”

This fear of the unknown is what has kept us taking one step forward and two steps back with every movement for social justice. Albeit being given the same freedoms and rights as others, the pressures on

women around the world are still present as the number of girls with eating disorders grows. Despite the growing support for the LGBT community, many still remain closeted in fear of the reactions of others.

Many areas of the world have quickly become infamous for their anti-LGBT movements, and even those who are simply in these places to visit have felt the effects of it. They’ve never been very diverse areas, so they have come to reject the outside world, preferring to remain in their closed-off bubbles.

“There were two women browsing a store, not far from where I was. They were discussing things to purchase for their home

when a man who worked at the store came up to them and began questioning them. At first, he wasn’t being aggressive, however he soon began outright asking them if they were queer, and then telling them to get out of his store.”

As a member of the LGBT community herself, Shaelyn, the teen who encountered the people during a trip, was suddenly uncomfortable. Her safety was suddenly compromised at the realization of where the shop owner’s stance was on the subject.

“I think this would be less of an issue if there was more diversity of genders and sexualities in that area. The biggest roadblock that the LGBT community faces is the lack of representation and, as a consequence of such, the lack of understanding, the lack of communication, and the lack of acceptance.”

That’s the key. In every story of discrimination, the root is always a fear of the unknown. To truly make the world safe for all people, one needs to remove the estrangement, the “otherness” that effects how one views a minority.

We need diversity so we can come to see people as people, no matter their country of origin, their traditions, their religion, what they look like, or whom they love. ■

Peace by piece

Imprisonment with the key

CHARLOTTE BAILEY¹

You sit quietly at the front of the classroom, staring but not absorbing what's being written on the board. You hear shrieking laughs, and the faint sound of mind-numbing gossip echoing from behind you, pushing you even further into a frenzied state of paranoia. You turn your back ever so slightly only to witness two girls in your class pointing their fingers at you, waving them around hysterically whilst giggling and smirking. Your heart sinks – a feeling of dread and panic electrifies your body, marring your skin with a trail of goose bumps, as you realise yet another vicious rumour will be spun, twisted and spread around the whole school by tomorrow morning. Deep breaths do nothing to calm your jittery nerves, to keep your mind from racing, or to warn off that inevitable anxiety attack approaching.” You try to whisper “I’m being bullied. I need somebody to help me”, but your mouth stays silent and nobody can hear you...

In today's society, children are unbeknown to the supposed “monsters” that lurk under their bed or in their closet because their demons are found in the real world – in the form of their “peers”. It is estimated that over 3.2 million children annually experience some form of mental or physical bullying, resulting in at least 4,400 unnecessary deaths per year.

Even at the age of 17 I know how mean words can plague your thoughts, years after they have been callously hurled at you. They replay in your mind, like a video player stuck on “rewind, play, pause”, often spiking a sense of remembered pain. It can stab you at an unexpected moment – unlike a nightmare where you wake up crying, and seem to magically forget about what caused you the pain in the first place. The painful memories of the experience tend to linger at the back of the mind, always there, but never addressed. Numerous case studies have shown that this threatening behaviour has been linked with countless mental disorders such as PTSD, clinical depression or even schizophrenia in children.

However, that's not to say that bullying only occurs during childhood. Bullying has no age limit. What if that man we see strolling past us every day to fetch his newspaper is being intimidated by his boss? What if that woman at the bus stop who purposely avoids all eye-contact is being consistently undermined by her co-worker? Bullying can no longer just be deemed as a “natural” act of progression from childhood to adulthood. It can't be deemed as just a “kid's thing”. After all, such cruelty has no boundaries – it doesn't know where, when or how to stop.

This has often led us to fostering a specific term for those who are bullied – they become a “victim”. Personally, I prefer the term “survivor”; surviving when all odds are stacked against you. Just like the Evergreen tree; even in the harshest conditions, where there is very little nourishment, even less nurture and whilst the other wildlife slumbers during the painstakingly cold –50°C, the tree still somehow manages to flourish into a tall, magnificent, strong being.

Even though you may feel lost, tormented, or that anywhere is a better place than the position you are in right now, you have to remember that there is a light at the end of the tunnel – whether that's the Channel Tunnel or the Backbone Tunnel, Tennessee (a mere 3 m in length) – there is always a way to mitigate the problem.

For instance, do not wait too long to tell someone – the longer you wait, the worse the situation is likely to become. Share your problems with someone who is close to you, and someone who you can trust. In addition, avoid social isolation. Join a society outside of school/work – this could even be an anti-bullying/prevention group which aims to support those who have been in your situation. Sometimes, just having someone listen to you can help alleviate some of the issues surrounding bullying.

Furthermore, schools/places of work can help to resolve this problem by establishing clear

bully prevention policies and procedures. For example, the institution could develop rules, responsibilities, and a firm code of conduct which includes a strict disciplinary policy stating the consequences of the behaviour in order to try to combat this issue.

Most importantly, involving others in the process may be beneficial, as this enables them to fully understand and adhere to the rules. This should help to establish an inclusive environment, whereby both children and adults feel safe, included and secure during work hours.

In addition, if you happen to witness somebody being bullied, report it, you could even report anonymously. The worst gesture you could give to somebody who is experiencing bullying is to slowly turn your back away, pretending it doesn't exist even after you have witnessed the torment and suffering they endure every day...

He sees her every day, shy away from the class, pushing her seat further and further into the desk, willing herself to vanish. He watches her hands clench and shake as she realises “they” are making more snide, vicious remarks about her... probably sending an unfounded rumour to her peers. A small scrap piece of paper is pushed onto his desk; he slowly glances down and reads her name. At the same time, he hears a faint whisper from her direction “I’m being bullied. I need somebody to help me”. His heart plunges into a deep abyss, and the feeling of his own security diminishes. Closing his eyes he scrunches the paper until it is small enough to fit into his pocket. The bell chimes in the hallways... he leaves the class. He has the evidence, and now it's his time to do the talking.

The question is, if somebody told you “I'm being bullied. I need somebody to help me.” Would you? ■

¹ Charlotte Bailey, a high school student at Coleg y Cymoedd/St.David's Catholic College from South Wales (UK), dedicated to lifelong learning, self-development and helping younger students realise their academic and artistic potential.



© Kibae Park

Trillions of dollars needed to end poverty – or a solid plan of action?

NEDA FARR

World leaders have decided to give their entire efforts into ending poverty by the year 2030. By eliminating poverty, they mean reducing the 43% of world's population earning \$1.25 a day in 1990 to 0% of the global populace. We have made vast progress. The globe's 43% is now at 21%. Their solution to reach 0% seems feasible – establish healthcare for all, reform education, improve water distribution, solidify energy sources, and protect the environment. This seems achievable for your individual community- only spending a few hundreds of thousands. But globally? For each and every man and woman of the 7.125 billion breathing on this Earth? Our leaders have estimated a few billion to complete this task. It is inevitable they would soon realize they had made a major underestimation. We will need trillions of dollars to continue the restoration. Foreign aid will be insufficient to build such a large

amount of money, so where exactly will the coinage come from?

The number one suggested plan was to reform tax collection. Better tax systems would increase the amount of spending money for every government on social programs. When first reading this, you may think this is referring to tax increases globally, which would exponentially augment poverty tenfold. Instead of changing tax rates, this is referring to tax evasion. The major way taxes are wielded ineffective is tax avoidance by big businesses. Global corporations have years of experience in abusing tax loopholes. Therefore, there is no way that countries can extract a percentage of the money made in their regions. Mineral-and-resource-rich lands are only losing money to the companies exploiting their goods with unjust contracts that give no pay in return. The

former president of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, concludes that Africa loses \$50 billion (50,000 million!) to illicit financing. Tax evasion by big business account for 60% of this travesty. Besides Africa, the entire world is experiencing a loss of \$250-300 billion. "For the schoolchild in Haiti, the new mother in Malawi, or the farmer in Bangladesh, these losses have real impact. They result in classrooms that are overcrowded, health clinics that are never built and water that is never delivered," World Bank Managing Director Sri Mulyani Indrawati stated on the subject. The G20 leaders of progressive and large developing countries have created plans for communicating tax information and reforming corporate tax fairness. Indrawati and other financial experts are optimistic, but more work is needed to be done to build a secure pathway to achieve the new sustainable development goals.

The governments of every nation have already taken the first step: joining together for a cause. What happens now that plans have been laid and goals have been defined? What exactly are these goals?

1. Finish all types of poverty. Terminating poverty is not solely centered on income, but also their accessibility. Being in a location where water, medicine, learning, security, and homes are provided can vastly impact a homeless family's life.
2. Enrich economic expansion using specific targeting. Depending on sustained growth is not always plausible and the positive results of expansion are usually not distributed equally to benefit the most impoverished. To terminate extreme poverty the benefits of growth need to be shared with the poorest people – in sub-Saharan Africa where 80% of the globe's extremely poor populace are expected to reside by 2030 – but also with those living in 'pockets' of poverty in 'middle income countries' like India.

Once the specific regions of poverty are found, governments should then:

3. Provide education, fixed on the type of environment. Training teachers, building safe learning facilities, and breaking down any social barriers (specifically for women) are the needed steps for any culture to develop a stable education system. Once children receive the knowledge, they will realize their full potential and can create life change for their family and themselves.
4. Create health care establishments. Communities need assistance in building health care clinics, train aspiring medical professionals, and invest in modern medicinal technology and safe drugs. Once these facilities are created, children can grow to be healthy and strong. Vaccine availability is also key in growing a brighter future for the homeless and deprived.
5. Provide sanitation and clean water. Functional latrines across the location are vital. Also, connecting organizations with regions to facilitate purified water can make a vast difference. Installing a well can be an easy first step!

6. Give education to parents on economic management. Providing information to the poor families in an area about how to maintain financial growth in their household and where to properly spend to support their children can create a heavy momentum for stabilization.

7. Insure that the poor families engage in their community. Once children realize they are important individuals that help support a group of people, ideas will flow to them naturally on how to better life around them. They will learn about their citizenship, contribute thoughts, and brighten their future.

8. Establish public energy. Lighting, fire and other heating methods, and transportation should be provided to all the impoverished. Having the basic necessities as all others do is a saving grace for those who are penniless.

9. Protect the environment. Although this may seem as if it is a completely different problem to be dealt with, it can heavily impact the lives of the poor. Children and adults surrounded by trash and random debris will undoubtedly contract disease and can reproduce offspring with birth defects. Having a clean community will improve the chances of recovery for the deeply disadvantaged families.

10. Teach poor farmers how to grow more crops. Give proper irrigation devices, the best technology on how to mass distribute, and general education on extraction. Updating grovelling farmers on the newest and most efficient ways to grow local fruits and vegetables can provide cheap nourishment for the region and provide income for valuable farmers.

11. Connect donators to communities. Hundreds, even thousands, of people have been lifted from poverty from their childhood. Many have experienced the tortures of financial insecurity. These people are more than willing to contribute in building a stronger life for those who cannot afford to help themselves. Organizations to bond a group to a benefactor should be made widespread and solidified.

The UN is concerned with, where they will find the amount of money to complete these

tasks, but just starting these projects will have a profound effect. Once they complete their objectives in one community, the world will be inspired to help their own. Setting an example can create a ripple effect to people who live comfortably but are in contact with the poor. Once things have been set in motion, bigger ordeals like taking down money-sucking big businesses down and stabilizing the economy. Let's take things one step at a time, for the people who need it most.

Using a fresh perspective, our global leaders should improve their region's data and focus on the most impoverished areas to direct their aid to. They need to add affordable schools, hospitals, homes, and more accessible resources to these areas. Governments should not simply give money to their poor citizens, but give them the resources they need to grow mentally and physically. Once they have the tools, they will have an incentive to build more. ■



© Claude Maillard

Haut de 6542 m, le volcan Sajama est le point culminant de la Bolivie.

Bolivie (2^e partie) Rendez-vous en terre salée

Après avoir parcouru le Sud-Lipez, l'une des seize provinces du département de Potosi (voir UN Special du mois passé), cap plus au nord, vers les salars d'Uyuni et de Coipasa, région où vivent les Indiens chipayas qui constituent la plus ancienne communauté amérindienne du continent.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Nous sommes sur la route qui mène au salar d'Uyuni, à San Pedro de Quemez où nous avons passé la nuit. La centaine de familles qui vit ici s'en sort un peu mieux que dans le passé grâce notamment aux retombées du rallye raid Dakar qui traverse la région. Au fur et à mesure que nous progressons, l'horizon semble disparaître, les montagnes s'effacent de plus en plus et la luminosité s'amplifie à devenir aveuglante. Devant nous, d'une superficie équivalente aux départements de la Savoie et de la Haute-Savoie réunis, apparaît la plus grande réserve de sel de la planète, vestige d'un lac d'eau de mer asséché, situé à 3660 m d'altitude.

Du salar d'Uyuni au volcan Tunupa

Une expérience unique nous attend, celle de parcourir une distance semblable à celle de Genève-Lyon en ligne droite sur une plaine de sel à la surface absolument uniforme,

celle du salar d'Uyuni. Sous nos pieds, au maximum 120 m de sel se sont accumulés depuis sa formation qui remonte à 10 000 ans, quand s'assécha une partie de l'immense lac Minchin. Deux étendues d'eau subsistent encore (les lacs Poopo et Uru Uru) et se formèrent deux grands déserts de sel, le salar de Coipasa et le gigantesque salar d'Uyuni. En chemin, détour par le site de Galaxie, une grotte subaquatique antérieure à l'ère glaciaire qui renferme des vestiges funéraires incas et surmontée d'un mirador où l'on peut observer quantité de formations coralliennes fossilisées. Plus loin, deux îles couvertes de cactus géants, Pescado et Incahuasi émergent de la «banquise» salée dont la croûte est composée d'une multitude de formes hexagonales, miracle de la géologie, et qui se répètent à l'infini. Dans ce lieu sans repère, où l'on «navigue» à vue, le volcan Tunupa que l'on commence à distinguer au loin est un peu le «phare» du salar. Culminant

à 5432 m, il indique le Nord et le village de Coquesa bâti à ses pieds. Au-dessus du bourg actuel se trouvent les ruines de maisons tiwanakus (civilisation pré-inca) et une grotte qui abrite des momies chipayas datant d'environ 700 ans après J.-C. et à qui les villageois apportent régulièrement des offrandes.

Depuis Tahua, attrayant village fantôme choisi pour y installer notre camp de base, la vision sur le volcan Tunupa est fascinante. Nous surplombant de 1772 m, il en impose par la taille de son énorme cratère déchiqueté et ses flancs constitués de différents minéraux aux couleurs allant du blanc au brun foncé, en passant par le jaune, le mauve, l'orange, le gris et le rouge. Ce mastodonte est certainement l'un des plus beaux volcans au monde... et nous allons l'escalader depuis Jirira, village d'où part un sentier. Malgré sa hauteur, son ascension ne présente pas



L'église de Huachacalla et son élégant clocher blanc.



Au milieu du salar d'Uyuni, l'île d'Incahuasi et ses cactus géants

de difficultés majeures et nous atteindrons le sommet plus vite que prévu, ébahis par le panorama à 360° qui s'offre à nous. D'un côté, le colossal cratère du Tunupa aux parois abruptes et derrière nous, la vue époustouflante sur l'immensité du salar d'Uyuni: c'est l'extase! Au retour, Santos Quispe qui habite dans les alentours nous fera l'honneur de nous recevoir dans sa modeste maison et se fera un plaisir de nous présenter son petit trésor composé de poteries, outils, statuettes... chipayas découvertes durant sa vie: un vrai bonheur!

Bienvenue chez les Chipayas

Le village de Churacari marque l'entrée du département d'Oruro, l'une des neuf subdivisions de la Bolivie. Depuis notre entrée dans le pays, nous avons avalé 700 km de pistes et un ravitaillement en carburant à Salinas de Garci Mendoza s'impose. La petite localité d'un millier d'habitants avec sa place d'armes de style colonial très animée, est le lieu d'origine du quinoa royal. Plante sacrée des Incas, le quinoa a largement contribué à l'expansion de cette grande civilisation. Encore de nos jours, il est la principale source de protéines pour la majorité de la population dans l'Altiplano bolivien. Après ce petit moment de fraîcheur passé à flâner parmi les villageois, le salar de Coipasa et son univers hostile nous attend. Deuxième plus grand salar de Bolivie, il est, avec le lac Popoo, le déversoir du lac Titicaca situé au nord, à la frontière avec le Pérou. Les Indiens chipayas comptent parmi les rares habitants

de cette région du salar de Coipasa. Malgré les diverses influences étrangères qui ont touché ce peuple depuis la colonisation espagnole, la culture chipaya est parvenue, par la force de ses croyances et de ses traditions, à survivre à travers les siècles. Leurs habitations sont des huttes de boue séchée recouvertes de jonc et de paille, de forme circulaire, afin de mieux conserver la chaleur dégagée par leurs occupants. Les Chipayas portent aujourd'hui encore le vêtement traditionnel, un long poncho gris à rayures noires et les femmes, quant à elles, arborent toujours de longues tresses dans leur chevelure. Alors que le soleil est au zénith, une poignée d'ouvriers, dont une majorité de femmes, découpent à la pioche la croûte de sel pour en faire des plaques de 25 kg destinées à la consommation. La vie n'est assurément pas facile dans ce milieu désertique...

Le paradis des archéologues

Proche de Sabaya, bourgade austère au clocher original (dont Hergé a dû s'inspirer pour dessiner la fusée de son album «Objectif lune»!) se dresse un alignement de tombeaux aymaras qui renferment des ossements datant du XIII^e siècle. Plus loin, avant de franchir le rio Lauca, comme surgies de nulle part, nous découvrirons les Chullpas polychromes les plus belles de Bolivie. Ces étranges édifices, très bien conservés, sont d'anciennes tombes des seigneurs aymaras. Auparavant, nous avons traversé Huachacalla, puis Machacamarca dont l'église baptistaire datant du XVII^e siècle mérite que l'on s'y attarde. La longue

piste tracée au travers des étendues de sable blanc où quelques touffes d'herbes permettent à des alpagas de survivre nous conduit directement «au paradis». Blottie au pied du volcan Guallatiri qui laisse échapper de gros panaches de fumée, la laguna Chokera est un véritable sanctuaire pour les flamants roses. Avec ses eaux d'un gris bleuté ceinturées de roches volcaniques qui sont disséminées parmi les dunes de sable doré, les tapis de mousse vert tendre et les cristaux de sel blanc étincelant, le tableau est paradisiaque. Et pour les amateurs d'archéologie, le sol est jonché de fragments de poteries aymaras: on croit rêver...

A 4000 m d'altitude, près de la laguna Macaya et du village de Mogachi, le désert fait subitement place à de vastes pâturages copieusement irrigués grâce à la fonte des neiges provenant du volcan Sajama dont le sommet, couvert d'un beau manteau blanc, est le point culminant de la Bolivie avec ses 6542 m de haut. On dirait presque le logo de la Paramount! En contrebas s'étend le Parc national de Sajama où des troupeaux de lamas, d'alpagas et de vigognes s'ébattent en toute liberté.

La fin de l'aventure approche pour nous avec le retour imminent au Chili, puis vers l'Europe. Mais avant cela, la Bolivie nous réserve encore bien des surprises. Deux jours de trek et un campement à plus de 5000 m d'altitude au bord d'une laguna sont au programme. A partager dans le prochain numéro du *UN Special*. ■

Sunday april 17th

Vivicittà run race 2016

The sixth edition of Vivicittà will take place in a few weeks from now. An ever-growing number of runners are participating every year, attracted by an unanimously appreciated running route.



© Hans Thurnheer

HANS THURNHEER, VIVICITTA VICE PRESIDENT

VIVICITTÀ is one of the most important and popular mass sport events as more than 70,000 runners are participating every year in more than 50 cities worldwide. Ideally, these races take place simultaneously (same day, same hour). In Geneva, the race is organised by SATUS, a multiple-sport non profit-making association. VIVICITTÀ is not intended to become a major running race but rather an important social event: protecting environment, promoting solidarity between nations and respecting people whatever their differences may be.

The running distance of the official Vivicittà Race is 12 km. For kids and young people, races over 1.5 km and 2.8 km are taking place on the same day.

For the first time, a relay race for two runners is being organised, each runner covering the distance of 6 km.

Start and finish are situated close to the Bains des Pâquis. The race then goes along the lakeside and up through the Botanic Garden, across the area of several international organisations, the park of Château de Penthes and the village of Pregny-Chambésy before returning down to Perle du Lac announcing the finish is no longer far away.

Information/Registration

www.satus-geneve.ch/vivicitta

Registration starting March 11, 2016

Deadline: April 12, 2016 for on-line booking

On-site registration on Saturday April 16 and on Sunday April 17.

The event is supported by the Canton and the City of Geneva as well as by the Municipality of Pregny-Chambésy. ■



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 le succès est au rendez-vous, le magazine comportera à l'avenir une rubrique « nos lecteurs nous écrivent ».

Et maintenant, à vos plumes !

Adressez vos commentaires à :

Garry Aslanyan, rédacteur en chef – *UN Special*
20, avenue Appia – 1211 Genève 27 – Suisse
Par courrier électronique: unspecial@who.int

Message from the editor-in-chief

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.

We are also thinking of a regular feature with the messages from our readers.

Now, put pen to paper!

Send your thoughts to:

Garry Aslanyan, editor-in-chief – *UN Special*
20, avenue Appia – 1211 Genève 27 – Switzerland
By email: unspecial@who.int

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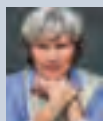
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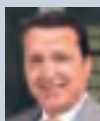
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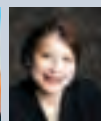
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