Multiculturalism & Multilingualism

WHO Message from the President of WHO Staff Association

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Si nous construisons notre identité à travers de codes socioculturels et linguistiques, ceux-ci représentent parfois un obstacle à apprécier la richesse qu’apporte la différence. Prisonniers de notre propre échelle de valeurs, nous risquons de passer à côté de personnes remarquables.

Or, la diversité est un atout. Elle développe la tolérance et la patience, contribue à accepter la dissemblance et briser les préjugés. Grâce à leur langage universel, l’art et le sport représentent un vecteur de dialogue interculturel. En cassant les codes et les aprioris ils favorisent la solidarité et le rapprochement multi-ethnique.

Désormais, grâce aux moyens de transport et d’internet, les distances ne représentent plus un obstacle. Progressivement les frontières culturelles et linguistiques s’effacent.

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Message from the President of the WHO headquarters Staff Association

As the elected President of the WHO headquarters Staff Association I came to understand during my last term that the World Health Organization has changed since our last annual report issued at the end of 2012 and more since the financial crisis of 2008, and that it is likely that we shall continue to adapt to these changes.

LAHOUCRI BELGHARBI, PRESIDENT, 61ST STAFF COMMITTEE, DECEMBER 2010–DECEMBER 2013

This message is aimed at giving readers of UN Special a sense of the efforts made by the Staff Association during the last term to stand for staff rights, and through it I would like to walk you through some aspects of WHO’s recent history.

Globally, WHO’s workforce consists of a total of 7338 staff members worldwide. As of 31 December 2012, 6549 staff members held long-term appointments and 789 temporary appointments (Human Resources annual report, A66/36). In headquarters and affiliated offices, including the partnerships, we have 1837 staff of whom 666 had fixed-term appointments, 1621 long-term or continuing appointments, and 424 held temporary contracts. The number of National Professional Officers (NPOs) included in these figures is 46, and 96% of them (44) have fixed-term appointments. This said, the number of staff holding fixed-term/long-term appointments decreased by 5%, and the corresponding decrease of staff with temporary appointments was 19.4%. In total, the Organization lost 937 staff between the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2013.

Also during this period the auditors to the Management recommended that the entire United Nations System becomes International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)-compliant. This was implemented and WHO was fully IPSAS-compliant in 2012. However, this had a negative impact on staffing. Indeed, with Member States stressing on tangible reduction of costs and higher efficiency, Senior Management had to reduce any current or potential liability to the Organization. So one way out was to downsize on staff numbers strength and aim to reduce or challenge current benefits.

The Staff Association has in no uncertain terms strongly opposed, and continues to oppose, the policy of reducing staff numbers as a response to our discouraging financial situation. We continue to flag to the Management the need to
re-instate protective mechanisms such as reducing the issue of non-staff contracts. Our reality check confirms that in the area of non-staff contracts alone, as many as 60 million such contracts could have been avoided and the same used to retain some staff whose services were terminated. Other protective mechanisms that the Staff Committee suggested included the return to the hedging system which protected the Organization from the adverse effects of currency fluctuations, the computing of our expenses in Swiss Francs that would enable us to make some savings; and the re-establishing of a corporate fund to cover liabilities that are now directly borne by technical departments.

Moreover, we have made our concern clear that because these strategic plans are not in place, the threat of further post abolitions is real. And, for this very reason, it would be prudent for the Organization to discontinue, for now, further post abolitions until clusters/departments produce strategic plans that align their long-term vision with the WHO Reform Agenda. The need to stop the continuous downsizing is reinforced by the surplus reflected in our finances for 2012. Regardless of our efforts to reiterate to Management the plausible benefits to the Organization – such as avoiding recruitment expenses and retaining needed competencies and skill sets – we have witnessed the fact that staff reduction exercise started and is still being implemented at cluster or departmental level.

Some staff also had the perception that some of these exercises are meant to abolish lower-grade posts not only to restructure departments but also to establish new and higher positions. The latter observation is in clear violation of the spirit of talent management and good succession planning. Since some of our suggestions on post abolitions have gone unheared, the domino effect on the Organization is the high incidence of appellants’ cases challenging WHO’s decisions. To worsen the already bad situation, the internal justice system appears to be slow in responding to the recent surge in appeals.

That said, we applaud the Organization’s willingness to improve the internal justice situation by speeding up the process and reaching fair resolutions. Some of the measures taken thus far by the Staff Committee and Administration include a joint review of the internal justice system and an investment in a mediation mechanism to prevent appeals and deliver fair and timely responses to appellants. In parallel, the Staff Committee is engaging with the Federation of International Civil Servant’s Associations (FICSA) to improve the internal UN justice system and reform the ILO justice system, so that these adhere to the standards of justice including independence, professionalism, fairness and timeliness. The Organization did implement serious measures to address some of these issues. Also, additional staff and funding were committed and we were glad to be heard in this area of work. The Staff Committee did also commit some funds to further explore this topic and make recommendations and an implementation plan in 2014. To this end, the Staff Committee, in collaboration with FICSA, ILO and other entities, will organize an international symposium on internal justice in April 2014 at the ILO, thus providing to all stakeholders a discussion platform to forge a way ahead.

Certain changes in staff appointments and contracts, the targeted reduction or (near) discontinuation of the continued appointment status, or the reduction of length of contract from 5,2 to one year make the UN service less attractive for building long-term workforces. However, we are still in consultation with the Administration for changes that will reflect tangible justice, equity and fairness for all staff. Again, given the trend of events, we anticipate that the UN in general has plans to reduce entitlements and benefits attached to international civil service functions that will also not make the UN any more competitive. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) is currently discussing this, and hopefully the Administration and FICSA will convey our discontent on this matter. We recognize that any such decision will be at the expense of both current and potential WHO staff. This is more so because employment contract duration offers are no longer competitive, and do not attract highly skilled applicants. One positive aspect is that staff continue to serve the Organization whole-heartedly despite continuous deterioration in their conditions of service, and are committed to the humanitarian values of both WHO and the UN.

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The overarching concern for all levels of the WHO Management is still inadequate funding, with 20% of our budget being funded by Member States and 80% through voluntary contributions. Staff continue to live in constant fear of losing their jobs through further post abolitions. This said, the Staff Committee does not wish to be the “prophet of doom” but it only wants to provide its candid opinion on the state of affairs and at the same time share the efforts made by Senior Management thus far, such as the ongoing Financing Dialogue which we hope will help WHO improve its insecure and inadequate funding.

Another laudable effort is the Organization’s initiative to develop, for the first time in 60 years, a corporate communication strategy. This will increase the Organization’s visibility and credibility in a competitive world where multiple stakeholders operate in the field of health. We strongly encourage all staff to engage in this effort and make it a success in the interests of the Organization.

We would also like to add that despite an array of seemingly insurmountable issues, we strive to maintain positive and constructive dialogue with the Management at all times and all levels. We also strive to actively participate in all opportunities offered and, in every instance, we do our best to defend staff and/or express their point of view.
Conscious Step

Conscious Step was founded in 2013 by three twenty-something social entrepreneurs from Australia and America. Their highest priority? Support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and post-2015 Development Agenda by leveraging the power of conscious consumerism.

CHANTAL STREIJFFERT GARON, WHO

What is Conscious Step?
Conscious Step is a brand of fashionable sock that solves social problems. Each fairtrade, organic design supports the achievement of a different Millennium Development Goal – with profits from each design going to a different partner non-governmental organization (NGO), thus a quantifiable impact is created with every pair sold and worn.

For example, one green and chocolate design supports the achievement of MDG 7 (ensure environmental sustainability.) Through a partnership with Trees for the Future, with each pair sold 30 trees are planted, and agroforestry techniques are taught to women in Ghana. Each sock is embroidered with a symbol representing the MDG it supports, to spark discussion around global development, the MDGs, and how socks can save the world.

Conscious Step seeks to bring the social, economic and environmental issues of the planet into mainstream discourse and awareness, and wishes to promote humanitarian goals to overcome them. By leveraging the power of conscious consumerism, and the conversations generated by conscious individuals everywhere wearing a loud, ethically produced fashion necessity, Conscious Step’s vision is a new generation of everyday philanthropists bringing us closer to a poverty free world, one step at a time.

Why socks and not t-shirts, for example?
Three reasons. First of all, out of all the fashion items that can be worn and seen

© Conscious Step

Hassan Ahmad, a medical doctor and past WHO intern; Adam Long, an industrial designer and marketing strategist; and Prashant Mehta, a finance major and microfinance expert.
by others, socks have the lowest brand loyalty. In such a segmented market, we believe it is much easier to create a conscious consumer (or Conscious Stepper, as we call our supporters) without asking them to give up their Nikes, their Oakleys, or their Jimmy Choos.

Secondly, socks are a necessity. Everybody needs socks. And because everybody needs socks, they represent a USD $3 billion dollar market in the USA alone. Even a fraction of this market diverted to fund the achievement of the MDGs would be an achievement. That is not to discount the non-monetary value of awareness created by putting the MDGs on the ankles of people everywhere, and the poverty alleviated through championing of fair trade, sustainable supply chains.

Finally, brightly patterned dress socks are a growing trend around the world, as a way to add a splash of colour to the otherwise humdrum uniform of the corporate warrior. Encouraging a trend of standing out from the ordinary is something that fits quite well with an enterprise that is trying to change the world through the socks worn on our feet.

Conscious Steppers understand though, that Conscious Step is not really about socks. It’s about using the power of consumerism for good. And while it is Conscious Step socks on your feet today, it may surely be Conscious Step sheets on your beds and Conscious Step solar panels on your roofs tomorrow.

What are your motivations?
While interning at the WHO Office for Europe, Hassan could not help but feel the creation and progress of anti-poverty goals, collectively representing the planet’s greatest chance of a future worth living. During his post as Director of Engineers Without Borders Australia, Adam became disheartened as the success of his projects became reliant upon a fickle and earmarked funding stream, and lamented that so many great NGOs were unable to pursue their missions due to a lack of awareness and funding.

After passing up a career in Wall Street to seek meaningful work abroad, Prashant became increasingly preoccupied by the existence of a blindingly simple idea that allowed the individual to be part of the change they wanted to see, while going through the regular motions of a simple 21st century existence.

Brought together by the winds of fate and a shared passion to change the world, Conscious Step was born.

How does it work exactly?
What is your business model?
Conscious Step is a “for purpose” social enterprise – that is, a profitable entity that donates a portion of retail revenue from sock sales to our respective non-for-profit partners. Additional profit is reinvested back into the business to grow our partnerships, improve our product line, and attract the best talent to create an organization on par with the world class for-profit and intergovernmental organizations’ (IGO) alike.

Rather than identifying as a “for profit”, which brings with it pejorative connotations of capitalist gain, or “non for profit”, which attempts to describe our organization by stating what we are not, we are “for purpose”, – a mission driven organization to raise awareness and funds for the greatest social problems of the planet, using the power and precision of business to ensure change is scalable and sustainable.

What projects did Conscious Step support so far?
Conscious Step was first born as a crowdfunding campaign on the Indiegogo platform in October 2013 (igg.me/at/conscious-step). We began with three initial designs and three initial NGO partners to support three MDGs. Our goals for that first campaign was to feed 6,000 children, plant 60,000 trees and generate 3,000 engineering hours, which was achieved in 40 days with over 350 backers pledging USD $23,000, financing our first order of 6,000 pairs.

These socks provide three therapeutic food packets to malnourished children in Sub-Saharan Africa. We’re working to directly support Action Against Hunger’s nutrition programs in Kenya, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This is in support of MDG 1 (eradicate poverty and hunger).

We are working with Trees for the Future to plant trees and teach agroforestry technologies to the women and children to develop income generation, provide material for fuel and food, and protect the environment. This is in support of MDG 7 (ensure environmental sustainability).

In Nepal, contaminated water sources are keeping kids out of school – because of health problems like diarrhoea, because of the need to collect water instead of going to school. These socks support Engineers Without Borders Australia in educating people on how to identify clean water and practice good hygiene – this greatly increases the health of communities and the number of children in primary schools. By allowing children to attend school, these socks are in support of MDG 2 (achieve universal primary education).

What are the next steps?
The immediate future for Conscious Step will be building our brand and consolidating the Conscious Step movement. This will involve working closely with our loyal community of Conscious Steppers to create socks that want to be worn, and generate impact that needs to be communicated. It will also see us establishing our direct to customer sales channels – our e-commerce store, as well as our retail presence. We are also seeking to refine our business model into one that is sustainable, scalable, and valuable for both our NGO partners and Conscious Steppers alike.

For more information, you may want to check the links:
www.consciousstep.com
www.facebook.com/ConsciousStep
www.consciousstep.theshoppad.com
www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUC7a0BENCk
A truly multilingual WHO

With more than 6500 languages in the world and only six official UN languages, how can one expect to reach out to all people in all countries and also deliver information to the most remote areas if not in the local language? For us in the World Health Organization (WHO), how can we expect to deliver health information reliably if it is disseminated only in just a few languages?

WHO chose to bridge this tangible gap in meeting health information needs in all relevant languages through multilingualism, which was embedded in every aspect of the Organization’s work.

Multilingualism has always been an integral feature of WHO’s work in publications and health information products, which are valued as benchmarks of health research and standards by institutions all over the world. UN Special was in conversation with Dr. Hooman Momen, Coordinator, WHO Press and Special Coordinator for the promotion of multilingualism at WHO.

Hooman joined WHO in 2001 as Editor of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization and was appointed Special Coordinator for the promotion of multilingualism in 2006. Today multilingualism in WHO’s work is an exemplary collaboration between various resources, teams and structures, including the Online Communications team, the IRIS project in the WHO library, Staff Development and Learning, the Translation team and ePOR-TUGUESe, among others, he observes.

A mandate for WHO
While WHO has six official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), the Regional Office for Europe uses German as an official language, and Portuguese is an official language in the American regions.

Multilingualism has been the subject of a series of discussions and resolutions by the WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly, it gained renewed emphasis with the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations on Multilingualism (2003). The report recommended that
all UN institutions nominate a ‘Coordinator’ for multilingualism and have a Plan of Action. [Read the JIU report here: http://intranet.who.int/homes/whp/documents/jiu_rep_2003_4_english[1].pdf]

Accordingly, the World Health Assembly approved a Plan of Action on Multilingualism in 2007. The following year the Francophone Member States also proposed a resolution on the subject, which among other actions requested a biennial report on progress with the plan of action to be presented to Health Assembly. The next progress report will be presented to the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly in May 2014.

In another development to promote WHO as a multilingual agency, in 2012 the Russian Federation provided nearly US$ 2 million to increase the quality and quantity of WHO technical and scientific information products in the Russian language. Under this initiative, the Russian government funded the translation of 40 WHO key publications. In addition 120 existing print publications in Russian have been digitalized and entered in IRIS and over 20 new technical websites in Russian created or updated on the WHO website, Dr. Momen informed.

A truly multilingual Web

One of the highlights of successfully incorporating multilingualism in WHO’s work can be seen in the Organization’s website, says Dr. Momen. “The website is completely navigable in each of the six official languages. It is not just the content that is in all official languages but it is also searchable in each language. That makes our corporate website a model for UN websites.”

Similarly IRIS, the Institution- al Repository for Information Sharing (http://apps.who.int/iris/) also has an interface in six languages. Governing Body documentation, resolutions and other publications of WHO in any language are uploaded there, and can be searched for in all six languages.

A tapestry of languages spoken by staff

Another feature of WHO’s work through which multilingualism’s objectives have been promoted is the language training offered to all staff. WHO staff have the option of learning all six official languages free of charge through distance learning and face-to-face sessions, subject to certain criteria, which was another of the JIU’s recommendations.

In the directory of language skills of staff on the intranet (http://intranet.who.int/), all staff members can report their language competencies. A large number of WHO staff are multilingual. A total of 1241 staff have entered their language skills in the directory, and between them they speak 155 different languages. As many as 630 staff have advanced proficiency in two official languages, and 171 in three. One staff is fluent in five official languages.

Multilingual flagship publications

WHO’s information products also incorporate multilingualism. Flagship publications such as the World Health Report, other key reports and all Governing Body documents are available in the six official languages. The Bulletin of WHO comes out every month with summaries of articles in all six languages. A translated version of the full contents in Arabic is brought out by the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. A summary of the Bulletin is also published in Russian with funds made available by the Russian Federation. One significant recent milestone was to have the ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases) translated into 60 languages.

Language initiatives

Within WHO’s multilingual programme is ePORTUGUÊSe, a platform to support the development of resources for health in the eight Portuguese-speaking Member States across four WHO regions. This facilitates collaboration among institutions, delivery of health information, and promoting capacity-building in that language. (Read the article on ePORTUGUÊSe in this issue for more information.)

The Blue Trunk Library (BTL) in French, English, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese is another multilingual activity in WHO. The Blue Trunks make available key publications to health facilities in low-income countries in the language of the country. Many medical hospitals and universities in Africa, Asia and South America have received BTLs from WHO.

Recent milestones

Dr. Momen looks back at the many significant improvements in the range and scope of multilingual content made available by WHO since 2006. “There is now a lot more multilingual content in the Web, although English still dominates in terms of the number of pages. Increasingly our websites are accessed in other languages. IRIS makes WHO’s work greatly visible, making accessible online more and more WHO publications in an easy-to-find fashion. Web style guides in the official languages are available. Efforts to create new Style Guides in different languages, and especially to incentivize glossaries, are also being planned,” he says.

Understandably, funds are key to plans for a wholly multilingual future. Preparing glossaries and terminologies and translating publications need more and more resources. To have the same level of workflow on the Web, creating a multilingual XML-based workflow and software is also being considered, he informed. On another vein, he added that while staff developing language skills is now based on a voluntary exercise, the same can be incentivized. Constrained by resources, WHP now makes use of existing structures such as the Web team, IRIS and ePORTUGUÊSe to promote multilingualism.

Looking to the future

Dr. Jun Xing, Adviser to the Director-General at headquarters who deals with multilingualism, synthesizes its progress and future in WHO’s work succinctly: “In fulfilling its mandate to address the health needs of Member States, it is critical for WHO to be well equipped to communicate health messages, and produce and disseminate health information in multilingual settings. Through years of effort, much progress has been made in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in WHO’s work. WHO is one of the few organizations of the UN system to have websites with user interface and navigation in all official languages. Efforts have also been made to ensure that WHO’s information products are available in official as well as non-official languages.”

“Looking to the future, we need to build up on the progress made and strengthen our partnerships with government agencies, NGOs and the private sector in promoting multilingualism and leveraging resources to support this important area of work. Meanwhile, the linguistic capacity of our staff could be further promoted and better utilized.”

To know more about multilingualism in WHO, go to: http://www.who.int/about/multilingualism/en/index.html
To know more about IRIS, go to: http://apps.who.int/iris/
“Women Create Life”
An advocacy approach with a multicultural appeal

Art-informed interventions are becoming popular and have proven effective forms of engaging diverse audiences to communicate research, knowledge and promote the understanding of complex ideas related to health.

JOANNA CORDERO¹, IGOR TOSKIN¹, ELISA SCOLARO¹, SVETLANA V. AXELROD², MARIO MERIALDI¹

These interventions have a strong appeal to audiences, from different age groups, fields of work and interests and cultures because they promote understanding, not only through the rational and cognitive level, but also through sensory and emotional experiences.

For this reason, arts-based outreach activities can offer alternative means of communications sidestepping linguistic barriers and bridging some of the socio-cultural differences that exist. As an expression of human nature and sensibilities, the arts provide a means to explore the intersection of the political, cultural, social and public health dimensions of health. The arts can then offer novel approaches that are very effective in conveying messages which inform individual and collective decision making on topics related to women’s and children’s health, which can be sensitive and, at times, controversial.

Women Create Life, a project that uses art for advocacy and resource mobilization

Women Create Life leverages the potential of art to meet the challenges posed by the continuing global disparities in access to basic women’s and children’s health care that continue to represent one of the strongest health inequalities of our times necessitating the call for innovations by the United Nations Secretary-General to close the gap. Despite the progress that has been made, the world will fall short of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4: “to reduce under-five mortality rate by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015”; and 5 that aims at reducing maternal mortality ratio by three quarters during the same period and to achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health.
It was with the aim of accelerating MDGs 4 and 5 that the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the Every Woman Every Child campaign during the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Summit in September 2010. In the campaign’s key document, The Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health, key areas were highlighted, where action is urgently needed: “support for country-led health plans, supported by increased, predictable and sustainable investment” and “innovative approaches to financing, product development and the efficient delivery of health services”.

In response to the above key area, the World Health Organization’s Reproductive Health and Research department initiated “Women Create Life” (WCL), a forum which utilizes the potentials of artistic creation to enhance awareness and to mobilize resources to implement programmes for women’s and children’s health in a diverse and multi-lingual arena.

Apart from being a forum, WCL engages with artists and cultural figures from around the globe who use creative media or visual language to celebrate the women of the world who do not only give birth to the next generation, but also often generate the conditions that promote life and development in their communities.

The first WCL artist was the Italian painter, Elisabetta Farina who created 80 Pop Art-inspired portraits of women from all over the world. The images, which celebrate the diversity and vibrancy of women, have been shown in over 35 shows since 2007. In 2008, 38 of these paintings were sold in partnership with a leading auction house, Christie’s. The profits of the auction were then used to support a mobile boat clinic to improve the health and sanitary conditions of local communities in La Mosquita, Honduras.

Again, in 2011, under the patronage of the Italian Ministry for Gender Equality, the Region Lazio Council and the City of Rome, WCL showed paintings and prototype products at the Palazzo Rospoli in Rome. During this five-day event, WCL engaged with Italian politicians, celebrities, members of the arts, and design world and the general public.

WCL also proved to be successful in high-impact events like the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, which took place in St Petersburg in the Russian Federation (Russia) in June 2012. In addition to showing women’s presence at some of the afore-mentioned gatherings, WCL does use paintings to engage with experts from the health sector. For instance, in August 2008, WCL painting were presented to the 6,000 experts, doctors and nurses working in gynecology and obstetrics who attended the XIII Congresso Paulista de Obstetricia e Ginecologia in Sao Paolo, Brazil.

In spite of WCL’s international face, its events have generated local interests very often, and as a result of this, other WCL events had been adapted to the local context.

Reaching a global audience using art and new technologies
Harnessing the increasing popularity of social media with the arts, WCL has also developed a popular platform on Facebook that has obtained 303,148 page likes since its inception in 2009.

On its Facebook page, WCL combines artworks, compelling images, inspiring stories involving art along with important information about maternal and child health and positive images of women. Through this platform, the WCL hopes to help create and safeguard a culture where women are seen and treated as full members of society, able to take on active roles in all aspects of social life. This approach has proved successful in garnering interest from audiences worldwide.

For example, Pakistani fans are the most present on the page with 61,006. The top countries of origin of the page’s fans also include Egypt (40,639), Bangladesh (37,229), India (25,554), Nepal (21,777), Iraq (18,894), Philippines (18,031), Libya (10,983), Papua New Guinea (8,073) and Morocco (6,592).

As expected, young people showed the most interest in the page with 18-24 year-olds accounting for about 50 percent of the total fan base. Though women dominated the page’s fan base, male Facebook users actively supported the page, making up 40 percent of the total.

Another interesting development on Facebook worth sharing is one of the page’s most popular post type, Woman of the Week. This page combines art (specifically paintings that WCL commissioned from Elisabetta Farina) with statistics and data on maternal and child mortality in specific countries, as to make it more reader-friendly to the general public. The accompanying text also provides important information about gender equality in the country.

Since 2012, WCL’s Facebook page has also used a magazine approach to feature numerous artists, fashion designers and arts organizations whose work transmit positive messages about women and explore issues of maternal and child health in different settings in the world.
Photographer Anne Geddes, who highlights children’s health, was one of the first artists to be featured on WCL’s page. Her now iconic image ‘Jack holding Maneesha’ has touched the hearts of so many people. The photograph of the tiny Maneesha, born prematurely at 28 weeks weighing 680 g, held by the strong but tender hands of Jack, encapsulates the risks of preterm birth and has become a globally recognizable image.

The post, which includes an interview with the artist and a selection of her well-known images, reached 37,670 visitors within the first 28 days of its publication. 1,136 users liked the post and 143 shared the album.

Still on how WCL uses its Facebook platform, it featured in February of this year, an interview with Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu, the founder of Ethiopia-based global brand, SoleRebel, that produces eco-friendly shoes. Alemu’s story is indeed a perfect example of how WCL promotes positive images of women. A total 77,102 people saw this post on Facebook, 1,910 of them liked the feature in the first 28 days of its publication. (http://goo.gl/5Ub3mG)

Women Create Life is only one example proving that the collaboration with the field of arts and the creative sector in communicating about maternal and child health can be fruitful. At present, the department is pursuing new avenues like collaborating with SciencesPo in Paris and Politecnico of Milan that focus on the visual representation of complex social and organizational phenomena. The project currently being developed looks at the complex and changing debate about Family Planning and Contraception. The project maps out the key players in the debate within the online community and the major topics of discussion.

To be a part of the WCL initiative, head for the Bookshop of the World Health Organization’s headquarters to buy WCL products. These include the newly released special Women Create Life Edition of the Moleskine notebook.

If you are also interested in organizing a WCL event, do contact joanna.cordero@womencreatelife.org. Let’s make an impact on the health of women and children together.

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1 Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO
2 Ministry of Health, Russian Federation
3 http://goo.gl/aHj3S
Проект по расширению использования русского языка в работе Всемирной организации здравоохранения

Владимир Иванович Стародубов1
Светлана Валерьевна Аксельрод2
Vladimir I. Starodubov
Svetlana V. Axelrod

Россия финансирует проект ВОЗ «Повышение качества и увеличение объема информации в области здравоохранения на русском языке», 2012-2014 гг. для поддержки главной функции Организации – технической помощи странам в укреплении здравоохранения. Россия рассматривает этот проект как эффективный вклад в укрепление здоровья населения. Россия распространяет информацию в области здравоохранения на русском языке в сфере общественного здравоохранения, в техническом задании которого предусмотрена задача координации деятельности стран, использующих русский язык, по выполнению Европейского плана действий по укреплению здравоохранения, в техническом задании которого предусмотрена задача координации деятельности стран, использующих русский язык, по выполнению Европейского плана действий по укреплению здравоохранения.

В консультации с Министерством здравоохранения Российской Федерации Отдел печати ВОЗ определил федеральные планы действий по укреплению здравоохранения, в техническом задании которого предусмотрена задача координации деятельности стран, использующих русский язык, по выполнению Европейского плана действий по укреплению здравоохранения. Этот институт, активно участвуя в данном проекте, предлагает, при условии продления проекта на следующий двухгодичный период, разработать глюссарий по техническим материалам ВОЗ, которые предстоит оцифровать и включить в базу данных ВОЗ – IRIS. В рамках проекта практически все издания, находящиеся в библиотеке штаб-квартиры на русском языке уже «оцифрованы» и введены в базу данных. В Европейском региональном бюро и в российском Документационном центре ВОЗ еще остаются около тысячи европейских публикаций на русском языке, которые предстоит оцифровать и разместить в глобальной библиотечной базе данных, а также на веб-сайте ВОЗ и ЕРБ ВОЗ.
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The importance of a language

The ePORTUGUÊSe network experience

The ePORTUGUÊSe Programme is a platform developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2005 to improve access to health information for Portuguese-speaking countries.

REGINA UNGERER, WHO

Portuguese is the sixth most spoken language in the world, with 300 million speakers in eight countries across four continents and four WHO regional offices. Considering that Portuguese is also the third most spoken language in the western hemisphere (after Spanish and English) as well as the most spoken in the southern, it can be said that Portuguese is used “in the four corners of the world”. The eight Portuguese-speaking countries are Brazil in the Americas, Portugal in Europe, Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome e Principe in Africa, and finally Timor-Leste in South-East Asia.

There are other pockets of Portuguese-speaking expatriates in several countries. And let us not forget Equatorial Guinea that made Portuguese an official language in 2010 and is waiting to be accepted as a member of this linguistic community.

With thousands of languages and dialects being used in the world –Africa alone has about 3000 languages and local dialects – how can health information be disseminated widely and reliably if it is only in a few languages?

Language is a very important means to communicate and disseminate information. Each language is the authentic expression of a culture, tradition or identity of a community. The ePORTUGUÊSe Programme came to fulfill a long-term demand of health professionals in the Portuguese-speaking developing countries in Africa asking that access to health information in their language should be improved.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index 2013, the majority of Portuguese-speaking countries have lower development indices and are therefore in desperate need of reliable and up-to-date health information.
Following the Millennium Declaration in 2000, a series of programmes, initiatives and actions were put in place globally that aimed at reducing the development inequalities among countries. After the Global Forum on Health Research in Mexico City in 2004, issues of the digital gap between countries and multilingualism came up to the fore and WHO committed itself to develop language information networks. In this context, the ePORTUGUÊSe Programme was created to strengthen collaboration among Portuguese-speaking countries in the areas of health information and capacity-building of human resources for health (HRH).

This platform supports Portuguese-speaking countries to improve their access to a wealth of knowledge and evidence-based health information through several online and offline tools. The Virtual Health Library (VHL), for example, was developed in each such country and allowed for universal access of leading scientific and technical databases such as PubMed, a free search engine for the Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online (MEDLINE) maintained by the National Library of Medicine of the United States of America. Other examples include LILACS, the most important and comprehensive index of scientific and technical literature in Latin America and the Caribbean, and SciELO, the scientific electronic library online that covers a selected collection of Brazilian scientific journals.

The ePORTUGUÊSe Programme has also created a Portuguese version of the Blue Trunk Library (BTL). A compact library with basic health information ranging from primary health care, maternal and child health, infectious diseases, noncommunicable and chronic diseases, patient safety, etc. It provides health professionals from rural and hard-to-reach areas with reliable and up-to-date health information.

The ePORTUGUÊSe Programme is continuously evolving to incorporate new trends, accommodate requests from countries and allow for collaboration with other WHO departments. The broad objectives of the programme are to:
- provide access to up-to-date knowledge resource in Portuguese
- scale up training and capacity-building of human resources for health in several areas of knowledge
- promote visibility and support for local knowledge production
- facilitate distribution of Blue Trunk Libraries in Portuguese
- strengthen discussion among health professionals through the discussion group HIFA-pt
- facilitate interchange of news and communications through blogs, collaborative space, Facebook and Twitter
- promote technical cooperation with WHO departments
- encourage eLearning programmes in Portuguese, and
- support Portuguese-speaking countries to strengthen their health systems and improve their rate of achievement of Millennium Development Goals targets.

Since its launch the ePORTUGUÊSe Programme has had considerable impact in Portuguese-speaking Member States, as the following user statements demonstrate:

Says Alfredo Estado José, Director of the National Health Library in Mozambique: “ePORTUGUÊSe is a blessing for Mozambique! We broke the traditional status quo to consult a medical doctor for every health question that we had for any clinical session in any health facility. With the BTL, the collaborative space, the HINARI trainings and the discussion group, the world of health information has opened up to us.”

Mouhammed Djicó Ould Ahmed, Director of the Health Information and Communication Centre at the National Institute of Health, Guinea-Bissau, describes his experience with the BTL in Portuguese: “Guinea-Bissau is one of the least developed countries in the world and lacks health information on a large scale. The Blue Trunk Library, although compact, plays an important role in providing health information for medical students and other health professionals in rural areas. The exponential increase in Internet access and improved broadband connections will only help increase the profile of the ePORTUGUÊSe Programme. This country considers the ePORTUGUÊSe Network an important programme for strengthening institutional capacity.”

In 2012 the ePORTUGUÊSe Programme received an award of recognition from the UN Office for South-South Cooperation at the UN Global South-South Development EXPO in Vienna, Austria, as an exemplary example of South-South cooperation in health.

To learn more about the ePORTUGUÊSe Programme
www.who.int/eportuguese/en
One of the first things that attracts the attention of the foreign visitors to the WHO headquarters, is the different languages spoken in the common areas of the building. French, English, Spanish, and Arabic are common languages that you can systematically use, and you will have someone to direct you to where you want to go. People from different ethnicities and backgrounds can be viewed enjoying their coffees and discussing in many languages, accents can be different, but most people can find at least one language that they can both master to communicate.

And despite this multilingualism, the working language in the headquarters is English, which unfortunately remains a barrier for many professionals around the world, who are sidelined because of their poor language literacy and not on the basis of their professional and technical competencies. International organizations, governments and professionals need to all contribute to bridge this gap and overcome this inequity, through the promotion of the multilingualism within the workplace. Individuals should make an effort to learn and master other languages as a means for enriching the inter-cultural communications and exchanges.

Multilingualism remains one of the means for bridging the gap between cultures by promoting openness-mindedness.
Taking a larger view

How UNOSAT turns satellite imagery into information

Nearly each week a new natural disaster causes humanitarian consequences to which the UN is called to respond. Complex emergencies and conflicts require impact assessment and humanitarian coordination over periods of months. The United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) is a technology intensive Programme and is part of the UN Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR) that conducts satellite imagery and geospatial analysis for the UN system, its agencies rapid and objective information. The information has to be reliable and verified. Sometimes the only source of objective information comes from sensors and cameras aboard of satellites.

FRANCESCO PISANO
Areas of difficult and dangerous access for the UN become populated with displaced people; UN agencies try to assess the situation and assist the people involved. Unforeseen situations arise about which the UN needs
and its member States. Created in 2000 and based in Geneva, the programme has its production centre at CERN thanks to a partnership in which the largest physics laboratory in the world contributes with massive IT and computing support to the UNOSAT team. UNOSAT is also a group of committed staff, field experts and analysts constantly working at pushing the limits of what geospatial technology can offer to the mission of the UN. In less than ten years, UNOSAT developed a centre of excellence at the service of the entire system.

Already in 2006, the UN Secretary-General recognized the outstanding work of UNOSAT with the “UN21” Award.

Nowadays UNOSAT analysis is used in several fields ranging from human rights to humanitarian assistance, from damage assessment after disasters to international criminal justice. Perhaps the brightest success story is the Rapid Mapping service, a well known tool, which UNOSAT created in 2003 as a spin-off of a test project. In that year UNOSAT initiated tests of the first version of a mapping service dedicated to supporting humanitarian decision making and ground operations by increasing situational awareness with just-in-time analysis using optical and radar satellite data. The idea was to adapt the technology to humanitarian needs, to provide twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week support without interfering with humanitarian agencies’ work processes, and at no cost for the users.

After just three tests in 2003, the “activations” of this new service have grown rapidly, peaking at forty-seven in 2007. Already in 2006, the UN Secretary-General recognized the outstanding work of UNOSAT with the “UN21” Award. Ten years after its start, UNOSAT rapid mapping is the golden standard not only in the UN but also in the competitive circle of geographic information system (GIS), where the UN has earned increasing respect thanks to the work of UNOSAT. Jack Dangermond, founder and president of Esri, the largest GIS software company, said of UNOSAT: “Their work collecting, interpreting and visualizing satellite derived information is the foundation for providing safety and security for people all over the world. We are grateful for the opportunity to work together so that we may continue to deliver the high-end image analysis and situation maps that provide better decision support.”

This success is the result of relentless research and hard trial-and-error work done with the participation of experts from humanitarian UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations worldwide. New tools and procedures had to be developed from scratch, together with standards and operational procedures still unwritten at the time. While it was clear that there were large benefits to be gained through the use of this technology in humanitarian action, very few UN agencies were familiar with GIS, and even less with satellite derived analysis. Even today, albeit confronted with the evidence of the facts, there are still those who think satellite imagery analysis is unnecessary – just as e-mail was superfluous 20 years ago, and cellular phones redundant gadgets 25 years ago.

Today when a large disaster occurs, such as Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, UNOSAT is activated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or UNICEF or another agency immediately or even in the hours preceding the crisis. UNOSAT experts set to tasking satellite operators, acquiring imagery and developing analytical reports and maps. These are used on the ground and at headquarters and gradually enriched with field information. Web versions of these maps (LIVE-maps) can now show the situation as it evolves online. Volunteers and UN experts can add details to the map using a dedicated mobile application, including photos, videos, comments and even voice notes from the impacted area.

Two important connections stand at the root of these successes: users and donors. From the beginning, the relationship with the users has been very important. This strong connection to the reality on the ground was used consciously to avoid losing perspective and becoming entrapped in technology itself, losing sight of what needs to be done versus what technology can do per se.

UNOSAT is a service that typically attracts cost recovery fees, but in the case of humanitarian emergencies, in order to be agile and effective, the service is free of charge for the users. This is possible thanks to the engagement of a small number of motivated donors who see value in the objectivity of satellite assessments and the advantage of a centre of excellence as a common benefit for the whole system. Thanks to them, UNOSAT was able to become a reliable service in less than three years, responding to 100% of humanitarian requests since 2007.

UNOSAT means more than the operational advantage it brings. It ensures that the UN can benefit from advanced satellite applications and be in step with the future of this growing technology. This is not to forget the importance of helping Member States with both training and operational support. During the catastrophic floods in Pakistan in 2011, one government officer involved in the response wrote back: “We, in Pakistan greatly appreciate the maps being posted by UNOSAT. These are being used by many for planning relief activities and to assist the affected people. Please keep up the noble work which you are doing and be blessed by the prayers of the sufferers.”

Francesco Pisano is the Director of Research, Technology Applications and Knowledge Systems at UNITAR. He managed the UNOSAT Programme from 2007 to 2012.
2013 Global Summit on Social Responsibility

ALEX MEJIA, UNITAR
A political decision-maker attending a recent public event told us something that still resonates in my mind:

“In my opinion, the issue with Corporate Social Responsibility is that sometimes, we in the public sector, see it as something foreign, something out of our realm – we see it as something in the ‘to do list’ of the private sector. That is, until you understand ‘CSR’ without the “C”, until we are reminded during election times or during accountability engagements that ‘Social Responsibility’ is – should be – engrained in all what we do the government. The basic definition of SR involves the duty a public organization has to maintain a balance between the economy and the ecosystem, between society and nature. We all know the concept but sometimes we don’t really understand it.”

“I will give you an example: resilience and disaster risk reduction. It sounds good that governments get the private
sector and civil society involved to build resilience. But, do we really ensure the whole of society is engaged in this quest? Not really. Sometimes not at all, until it is too late. Until we are reminded by Mother Nature that the time for partnerships, preparations and action plans is over. We are then rudely awakened to the fact that we should have known better as this was not a matter of ‘if’ but a matter of ‘when’. If we all assigned the right priority to preparedness, planning, capacity building and the like, we indeed would be able to build the resilience we need in our nations. You see, that is an example of how sometimes we fail to understand ‘Social Responsibility’ in the public sector. A pity indeed.”

This conversation happened a few months ago in Santiago de Chile and this assessment seems to be right. Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Responsibility are frequently seen as somebody else’s role. The corporate world in developed nations has embraced the concept for more than a decade now, but most of the governments that comprise the United Nations as well as public corporations in the South – with a few exceptions – still have a lot of work to do.

The role of the United Nations in expanding the CSR movement has been deemed to be important. As a UN strategic policy initiative, the UN Global Compact encourages businesses to align their operations and strategies with 10 universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. As a key component of the principle 1 of the UN Global Compact, which sets out that businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights were adopted and later endorsed by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011.

But that is not all. The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) offer guiding perspectives for corporations engaging in creating higher standards of sustainable living, while carrying out their social responsibilities. However, the MDGs will come to an end in 2015. That is why most of the decision-makers engaged in producing the successors to the MDGs through the post-2015 development framework need to ensure that the process will not stop. Even if we continue on this trajectory, a critical question remains: are we focusing enough on building capacity to ensure that the development agenda expands the concept of Social Responsibility?

That is a difficult question, as many actors are working in the field of capacity building. To answer we would need to analyze several sectors and initiatives. Still, from the United Nations in Geneva’s vantage point, we see this as a priority. Particularly, at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) an ever growing number of the 27,000 current beneficiaries who we serve annually with more than 400 capacity development activities, so that they are getting a better grasp of social responsibility. As the training arm of the United Nations, we contribute to advancing this cause through the Decentralized Cooperation Programme, a unique platform of 11 training centres around the world, that carry out various CSR training initiatives, benefiting professionals from the business sector, government authorities and civil society leaders. But, how do we do it? To mention one side of our portfolio, UNITAR is currently delivering the 5th session of the e-learning course “Introduction to Corporate Social Responsibility”, in partnership with Dr. Michael Hopkins, the renowned author and expert on CSR. This course provides participants with relevant introductory knowledge on CSR that will help them to better address social responsibility concerns through a United Nations perspective, and from there promote and accelerate adherence to UN Global Compact principles and progress on the MDGs.

Additionally, we recently held a Global Forum on Social Responsibility in Quito, Ecuador. The forum provided an international platform to debate annually various social responsibility issues, sharing CSR best practices that improve quality of life and also raise awareness on public sector trends towards the management of socially responsible regions, cities and territories. It gathered more than 800 international participants who came from the public and private sectors as well as from the academia and civil society. Besides, covering the main topic, the forum convened over 20 renowned experts from different parts of the world who shared their views on the links between social responsibility and social innovation, inclusive business, sustainable value chains and responsible consumers. Based on the success achieved so far, we are committed to holding similar events next year in different cities around the globe, including Geneva.

In addition to these key training initiatives, in 2011, UNITAR created the International Training Centre for Corporate Opportunities (ITCCO) based in Antwerp, Belgium. ITCCO’s work focuses on stimulating businesses around the world to embrace CSR and adopt the UNGC principles as a way to increase their contribution towards the MDGs and the post-2015 development framework. The Centre’s training activities facilitate partnerships between countries, the private sector and civil society and so far it has focused on strengthening the adoption of CSR practices in the diamond industry and the port and petrochemical sectors.

While these have been only some initial efforts, UNITAR as a whole is set to engage more with training initiatives on CSR in the next biennium. As we approach the post-2015 development framework, we recognize the crucial role that committed businesses, multi-stakeholder partnerships and all of us as individuals have in contributing to the achievement of global sustainability and development. We must not forget that promoting a better understanding of social responsibility is not only “somebody else’s job”, it is also “our job” and is indeed a priority. ■

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1 http://www.unglobalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/TheTenPrinciples/index.html
Teaching Shakespeare Under Unusual Circumstances

“O wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world That has such people in’t!”

— Shakespeare, the Tempest

NILOFAR BAWA

The city of Quetta, bordering Iran and Afghanistan, is a natural fortress protected by imposing peaks. The beautiful city of cool mountain springs, cherry blossoms, apple and pomegranate orchards is home to several ethnic groups, tribes, languages and faiths. A melting pot where the Pushtoons rub shoulders with the Baluchis. Persian speaking Hazaras of Mongol descent live closely together under the feet of the mountains. Zoroastrians and Christians form a minority, and traces of the Jewish symbol, the Star of David, remain on old forgotten dilapidated gates bearing witness to the Jews who must have lived here a long time ago.

In the heart of the thriving city is one of the youngest universities in Pakistan – the University of Baluchistan. A few weeks ago, after years of walking the corridors as one of the first female students, I graduated at the top of my class and became a young lecturer of English Literature.

Today, I am to deliver my very first lecture on Shakespeare’s swan song – The Tempest: a story of betrayal, revenge and love; where good finally triumphs over evil and unlikely bedfellows discover peace, tolerance and reconciliation.

Standing outside the auditorium’s doors, I feel scared, yet excited. Questions rush through my mind: “what if I go blank in front of the class?” I nervously start shuffling through my notes until I decide to leave them behind and lecture extempore.

I open the doors and walk in. The auditorium is packed. It is a full house! Every seat is taken. Male students occupy the rows on the right and a few female students the rows on the left. While only a narrow aisle separates them, a thick invisible concrete wall of tradition divides them. Quetta is a conservative culture; easy mixing of the two sexes is discouraged and frowned upon.

My legs suddenly turn to jelly, millions of butterflies flutter in my stomach. I am going to faint. Staring at the floor, I quickly walk to the front of the auditorium. I fear I might have forgotten every single word of my lecture! To support my trembling legs, I sit down on the desk in front of the blackboard.

I slowly glance up and notice the serious faces of men glaring at each other. They wear crisp white turbans and thick black well-groomed beards. The women, wrapped up in shawls, keep a low profile and whisper quietly. At the back of the auditorium are well-built armed body guards, each with an assault rifle to protect the sons of prominent tribal leaders. The tension in the room is high. I am not the only one nervous here.

After a long silence, I finally gain the courage to speak. As I begin my lecture about a brother betraying a brother, my students grow calm and relax to listen. Tribal and ethnic differences are cast aside and the armed body guards silently slip out the back door, quietly closing it behind them. Encouraged and motivated by the enthusiasm of my students, miraculously I remember every word. When I conclude, I receive a kind gentle applause.

As my students leave the room, I realize the role Shakespeare just played during the course of my lecture. His words brought together, even if for just a moment, people who despite their differences, share a universal understanding of good and evil, of dreams and aspirations.

Literature, regardless of language, has the power to break through barriers and to unite.

Thirty years after my first lecture, some of my students play important roles as peacemakers, diplomats, academics, lawmakers and politicians. Perhaps in that classroom hidden in the distant mists of time Shakespeare planted a seed of common goals and shared interests?

University of Baluchistan, Pakistan
“Beneath the armor of skin and bone and mind most of our colors are amazingly the same.”

— Aberjhani, *Elemental: The Power of Illuminated Love* 

Illustrations: Elisabetta Farina
Did you say the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) Language Training Programme?

You might wonder what changes have occurred in the UNOG Language Training Programme in the last few years... Or what is going on at present... Or even what is cooking in the Section right now? We will try to answer these questions about the Language Training Programme and some others you may have, but never dared to ask.

JESÚS GUERRERO BUITRAGO

Like in all stories, there is a beginning. For the UNOG Language Training Programme, this new beginning was in November 2010 when we launched the Needs Assessment Survey with the aim of improving the language training services offered by our Section. Our objective in doing this was to find out how staff worked with any of the six official UN languages and how they would like to learn these languages. In a nutshell, we wanted to have a clear picture of who our public really was, what their needs were and what they expected from us.

To our surprise, we had 1,282 answers, from around one quarter of our potential clients. After analysing all the data, we implemented a long-term plan to apply the findings of the survey. We focused on different areas such as developing new specialized courses based on client needs (in the last five years we have doubled the number of specialized courses on offer to a total of forty-five); investing in new electronic equipment such as beamers, overhead projectors and microphones; obtaining additional classroom space to welcome more students to more courses and launching brand new websites for all the language teams to improve communication with students.

We are a team of thirty-five professionals, passionate about our work and everything we do, be it teaching our regular programme, developing new courses tailored to your needs or providing the administrative support to allow you to attend language classes... In short, we are your partners all along the challenging path of learning a language.

You may wonder what we are most proud of. In recent years there have been many changes and improvements in the way we help staff reach their language learning goals. As an example, in 2012, the Language Training Programme had a record of participation in language classes: 2,790 students for a total of 264 courses. Also in 2012, we started the new language exchange service called “Tandem” and increased the number of extra curricula activities in Arabic and Chinese. In addition, in 2013, we have improved the language training enrolment services by publishing the course schedule at the time of registration (aimed at helping staff to better plan their work/language training schedule).

You may wonder what is cooking in the kitchen of the Language Training Programme.
INSTITUT DE FORMATION MARIA MONTESSORI
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Séance d’information le 5 février à 17h00
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Janvier 2014 | 27
First Response to Typhoon Haiyan by the UN’s Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams

As Super Typhoon Haiyan, locally known as Yolanda, approached the Philippines, a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team with five members were deployed on 7 November 2013 to the capital Manila. After Haiyan made landfall and the scale of the devastation became clear, eleven more UNDAC members were deployed to the Philippines to support the first humanitarian response. During this period, the UNDAC members established several coordinating functions to ensure an effective humanitarian response. DiBella

ELENORE ANDERSSON, OCHA FCSS GENEVA
Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in the Philippines on the 8 November 2013 and had a devastating impact on the central parts of the country. Winds reached a staggering speed of up to 315 km/h and mainly hit the Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas and Central Visayas regions. Storm surge reached more than five meters in Tacloban City. As of 27 November, the government reported that 5,000 people had been killed, 1,613 people were still missing and in total 15 million people had been affected by Haiyan. Among the affected, 4 million were displaced; a number that is constantly rising, as people continue to move away from their destroyed homes weeks after the Typhoon passed. Immediately after the Typhoon tore through the Philippines, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (UNERCC) visited the affected areas. “The United Nations agencies in the Philippines, with their humanitarian partners, are supporting the government and other responders in their efforts to assess the situation and respond rapidly with vital supplies; through the coordination system led by the local authorities said Valerie Amos1. The [UNDAC] team’s first members arrived already before the Typhoon struck and deployed immediately from Manila to the cities that appeared hardest hit: Tacloban, Roxas and Coron2.”
Tacloban City had the only functioning airport in the affected area after Haiyan passed over the Philippines.

The UNDAC team members supporting the Philippines came, as professionals with a variety of backgrounds (fire-fighters, environmental experts, medical doctors, military officers, humanitarian aid workers) from all over the world: Trinidad and Tobago, China, Denmark, New Zealand, Switzerland, the Republic of Korea, Canada, the United States of America, Australia, the Netherlands and Japan.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) deployed UNDAC members from both the Regional Office in Bangkok and from Geneva and New York headquarters. In total 114 OCHA colleagues were deployed, where of thirty-two of which as UNDAC members. For the first time a staff member of the nongovernmental organization – PLAN International – was part of the team. Crucial technical support staff was provided by MapAction, Télécoms sans Frontières (TSF), DHL, the Asia-Pacific Humanitarian Partnership (APHP) and the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP).

A Reception-Departure Centre (RDC) was established at Tacloban Airport to register incoming international humanitarian workers and USAR teams. The OSOCCs functioned as coordination hubs where information on humanitarian needs, response and gaps was compiled, analysed and shared with other colleagues working in the field. Sectors were divided into clusters, involving all agencies working in the respective sector to further support coordination mechanisms and information sharing. These were directed by cluster-lead agencies, supported by the OCHA led UNDAC teams.

In the first two weeks the response to the humanitarian needs on the ground clearly exceeded both national and international organizations’ capacity to respond. Due to their remote locations, some affected people did not receive aid until almost a week after Typhoon Haiyan had passed. Two weeks after Haiyan had passed; Valerie Amos visited the field for the second time and commended the progress and intensive scale-up of operations in the field: “I saw how the international community pulled together with the communities and authorities to work out how to overcome major obstacles, and saw more and more people being reached with basic assistance”. At the same time, the UNDAC team was preparing to hand over the coordination to local actors and OCHA colleagues.

UNDAC is part of OCHA and provides the organization with the additional capacity to mount the surge operation required for coordination in a sudden onset disaster. The network is managed by the Field Coordination Support Section in the OCHA’s Emergency Services Branch, which also covers the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) network. UNDAC teams can be deployed at short notice (12-48 hours) anywhere in the world. They are provided free of charge to the disaster-affected country and deployed upon the request of the United Nations Resident or Humanitarian Coordinator and/or the affected government. UNDAC members are experienced emergency managers from United Nations Member States and international organizations who are specially trained in establishing coordination structures for assessment and operations in the first phase of an emergency.
Haiyan

WHO’s “Fatest and largest-ever emergency response”

Olan Campomenos was born on 20 November, 2013 in Divine Word Hospital in Tacloban, the Philippine city which was hit hardest by Typhoon Haiyan, that battered the country’s central islands 12 days earlier.

MELISSA WINKLER

Like some 2,200 other medical facilities in the affected region, Divine Word was ravaged by the typhoon’s ferocious winds and storm surges, which caused major structural damage to the building, ruined critical equipment, destroyed the facility’s emergency and diagnostics rooms and collapsed medical services. Prospects of tending to the storm’s injured and sick looked grim. But within a week, a group of doctors and nurses from Mindanao in the southern Philippines were dispatched, as well as 60-strong well-supplied medical team from the Republic of Korea to help a beleaguered hospital staff revive services and also to begin clean-up and repairs. Days later, surgeries, consultations and other basic health services had resumed, with Olan being the first baby born in a hospital quickly coming back to life.

Typhoon Haiyan— one of the strongest ever to make landfall – brought extraordinary destruction to the Philippines last November, killing well over 5,600 people, wreaking havoc on the lives millions, leveling entire towns and devastating infrastructure on over twenty-five islands.

The World Health Organization (WHO) immediately mobilized an organization-wide response. Its regional office in the Philippines was repurposed into an emergency operations hub, and WHO’s country office, led by Dr. Julie Hall, began coordinating a swift and massive effort with the Philippines government to assess and address the life-saving needs of survivors.

Within days, experienced professionals from WHO and its international partners were reassigned or deployed to the
country, including top-level experts in coordination, public health, logistics, epidemiology, disease surveillance and dead body management.

“I arrived on day four and started mapping donated supplies and their destinations, damaged health facilities and their functionality, and foreign medical teams and their capabilities,” says information management specialist Dr. Mark Boan, who joined the effort via the emergency roster of WHO’s Canadian recruitment partner, CANADEM.

Within two weeks, 84 of the 92 specialists identified as essential were in place in the Philippines, eight WHO operations hubs were up and running and medicines and supplies were delivered to the worst-affected islands to cover the health needs of hundreds of thousands of people. Measles and polio vaccination campaigns were also being launched with the Department of Health and partner agencies, while WHO staff were registering, categorizing and coordinating the deployment of 153 medical groups (63 foreign and 90 local), like the teams from the Republic of Korea and the Philippines that safely delivered baby Olan at the resurrected Divine Word Hospital.

For WHO, this was also the first major test of its new Emergency Response Framework, which sets new policies, procedures and standards for how the organization responds in emergencies. In the case of the Philippines, WHO classified the crisis as a Grade 3 emergency within 24 hours of the storm hitting, activating the new systems and triggering what evolved into the organization’s fastest and largest-ever emergency response. The development of the Framework was part of a WHO reform process, aligned with the UN’s “Transformative Agenda,” that aimed to address serious gaps in the international response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake and Pakistan floods.

“Twenty-four months ago we embarked on a huge project to transform our work in emergencies,” says Dr. Bruce Aylward, the WHO Assistant Director-General overseeing the agency’s typhoon response. “The WHO that responded to this disaster is a different agency than the one that would have responded two years ago.”

Dr. Aylward acknowledges that it is still premature to measure impact on the ground, but he says the prospects for lower rates of disease and death are better than in previous acute emergencies due to the rapid, strong and collective response of the entire health sector and the Philippines Department of Health.

“What we know is that the chance of better health outcomes is higher because in the initial phase of the response, the right experts were brought in at the right time, the Department of Health carried out rapid and effective assessments, medical teams were well coordinated and vaccinations and disease surveillance started sooner,” Dr. Aylward notes. “Urgent attention was also given to clean water supply, sanitation and the prevention of diarrheal and other diseases of crowding, while the needs of pregnant women, the elderly and people with chronic diseases were prioritized from the start.”

By week three, international donors had pledged some $14 million dollars, funding more than 90% of WHO’s appeal, which according to the agency’s Director-General, Dr. Margaret Chan, is a clear reflection of donor confidence in the organization’s emergency operations.

Given the magnitude of the disaster, reconstruction in the Philippines is widely predicted to take years. WHO is committed to working with the Philippines government and partners for the long haul, to ensure the health sector is built back better than before and that it is more resilient the next time a disaster strikes.
En busca de «Madrids in the USA»

Madrileño y antiguo profesor de español en Naciones Unidas, Eloy Parra comparte en UN Special algunas impresiones de su viaje más “chulo” e insólito: la ruta por los lugares llamados Madrid en Estados Unidos.

ELOY PARRA
Lo primero que me preguntan al saber que he visitado los nueve Madrid de Estados Unidos es: “¿Cómo se te ocurrió este viaje?”. Y deberán disculparme los robinsones nostálgicos, pero lo cierto es que surgió de una simple búsqueda cotidiana: consultando el tiempo en Internet. Al buscar Madrid weather, no fue la capital de España la que apareció en la pantalla, sino otros Madrid situados en diferentes estados de Estados Unidos, concretamente en Iowa, Nebraska, Colorado, Nuevo México, Nueva York, Maine, Virginia, Kentucky y Alabama.

Empujado por la curiosidad de conocerlos en primera persona, esta vez sin el filtro de la todopoderosa web, no tardé en llamar a mi amigo Carlos y a mi hermano Pedro y allí fuimos sin otras credenciales que nuestro deseo de descubrir estos Madrid de ultramar y un cierto pedigri de madrileños Spaniel que, pensamos con acierto, crearía un vínculo inmediato con nuestros anfitriones.

Si el adjetivo “chulo” sirve para designar todo aquello “divertido”, “gallardo” o “típico de Madrid”, no cabe duda de que este viaje se nos antojó como “el más chulo” que se pudiera realizar en Estados Unidos.

Repartido en dos viajes, el primero en la mitad oeste, el segundo en la mitad este del país, el recorrido de Madrids in the USA supuso unos 9.000 kilómetros en poco menos de un mes. Estos viajes nos permitieron conocer las distintas caras de la realidad estadounidense: desde la América agrícola a las ciudades fantasma, de las migraciones hispano-mexicanas a las profundidades de las minas de carbón, del Cinturón de la Biblia a las comunas hippies, todo ello a través un único hilo conductor: el nombre de Madrid.

Y el periplo no pudo comenzar mejor; en Madison, Iowa, su alcalde nos regaló la llave de la ciudad en plena asamblea...
municipal, mientras el periódico local inmortalizaba el momento. Todo un espaldarazo a este improvisado plan de diplomacia informal, castiza y desenfadada.

Ante tal recibimiento habría sido imperdonable llegar con las manos vacías. Por eso, y para mostrar nuestra gratitud, los alcaldes de Madrid de Nueva York, Iowa y Alabama pudieron degustar las delicias de un cocido madrileño de lata llegado desde la misma metrópolis. Una delicatessen que prometieron volver a probar un día en España, a ser posible sin lata de por medio.

Protocolo aparte, desde el primer momento nos lanzamos a buscar, cámara en mano, a la gente de a pie allí donde se reúnen: en sus casas, en los bares y en las iglesias. Nuestro “Hi there! We come from Madrid, Spain” se convirtió – pueblo tras pueblo y estado tras estado – en un abracadabra que con efecto inmediato predisponía a nuestros interlocutores a la sonrisa y al diálogo. Sin otra tarjeta de visita que un saludo inocente y visiblemente extranjero, logramos conversar con gentes tan dispares como granjeros, amas de casa, plantadores de abetos, camareros, marineros, sheriffs, curas, mecánicos, susurradores de caballos, alcalde, coristas gospel, cowboys, empleadas de correos, hippies, profesores de yoga y carpinteros de la comunidad amish, por citar solo algunos ejemplos del universo humano que compone la sociedad estadounidense.

Nuestros encuentros con los nativos fueron innumerables en los nueve estados: desde Madrid en Iowa – que cuenta con unos 2.500 habitantes – hasta el más desolado, en Colorado, compuesto por solo tres familias. Al hablar con ellos descubrimos que su gentilicio es todavía motivo de discusión entre los lugareños: ¿madridiano, madridite o madridente?

En Iowa aún no se han puesto de acuerdo y barajan esas tres etiquetas. En Nuevo México, sin embargo, lo tienen mucho más claro y nos deslumbraron con una respaldaciente joya de creatividad lingüística: “aquí somos todos madroids.”

Como era obligado, quisimos saber a qué debía su nombre cada Madrid, recibiendo una variada gama de respuestas. En un país con un importante legado español podría pensarse que estos nombres llegaron en la época de la presencia de la corona española en América del Norte. Pero rara vez es el caso. Así, en Maine y Nueva York, Madrid se encuentra en zonas donde sencillamente abundan los nombres de ciudades europeas – Berlin, Lisbon, Belfast, Paris, Potsdam –; en Iowa la idea se le ocurrió hacia el año 1853 a un tal Charles Gaston, que cambió el nombre de un pequeño asentamiento de colonos suecos – Swede Point – por el de Madrid, causando el enfado de su rubio vecindario; en Colorado un asentamiento de trece familias de origen mexicano fue inaugurado por Hilario Madrid, pionero de la expedición, cuyo apellido dio nombre al lugar; y en Nebraska todavía se preguntan si se debió al capricho de un cowboy que tachó el nombre del lugar – Trail City – cambiándolo por el de Madrid, o tal vez el hecho de que el pueblo se encuentra en el paralelo 40 norte, el mismo que la capital española.

También nosotros quisimos ser mensajeros de noticias para nuestros conciudadanos de ultramar: además de presentarles el cocido madrileño, les obsequiamos con guías turísticas de nuestro Madrid y les comentamos, por ejemplo, que el origen de la palabra Madrid deriva del árabe Mayrit. Un apunte que levantó no pocas cejas.

En el mundo hay otros Madrid en países tan distantes como Sudáfrica, Filipinas, Colombia, Suecia o México. Para muchos madrileños con afán aventurero la idea de visitarlos resulta de lo más llamativa. Quizá usted también quiera echar un ojo a los lugares del mundo que comparten el nombre de su ciudad natal, puede que existan, y si es así tal vez quiera visitarlos. No dude en hacerlo, siempre habrá gente que le hará sentirse en casa.

*www.madridsintheusa.com*
*info@madridsintheusa.com*
Language is one of the most important tools that humans have developed not only to communicate but also to survive and progress. It is intimately linked to thinking and other cognitive processes. Some philosophers and linguists believe that there can be no thoughts without language and that the limits of language define the limits of our world. Language plays a major role in the mental and social development of the individual, and a new language opens a window on a “new world.”

Benefits of learning a new language go beyond the learner; they extend to the family, the school or the workplace, and the society. Acquisition of a new language reinforces self-confidence and incites individuals to be more curious and more tolerant. Learning a foreign language adds to life new sources of knowledge, music, literature, science, humour, etc.

In international organizations, multilingualism and multiculturalism can help increase the efficiency of the management of human resources and can be crucial in areas requiring special sensitivity towards cultural, scientific and social differences. Some organizations use language as a mean to create an “emotional attachment” or a “bond” with the public; which translates at the end into public trust and support, facilitating therefore their work and missions.

Multilingualism plays an active role in promoting human rights and advancing human rights through guaranteeing people’s right to access information in the languages they prefer, especially when it comes to very important areas in their lives such as science, security, nutrition, environment and health.

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ما يتعلق بها يجوب مهمة في حياتنا كالأعمال والأمن والتعليم والعلاقات والصحة.

هي اللغة المفضلة لدى الغالبية العظمى للتعليم والتحصيل على المعرفة، فإن التعددية اللغوية تساهم بشكل كبير في تسهيل عمل ومهارات تلك المنظمات.

تعد اللغة العربية وحقوق الإنسان كون اللغة هي الوسيلة الرئيسية للتواصل مع العالم وكون اللغة الأم

للجمعية فرضت التعبير باللغة التي يرودون، قولاً إلى الإنترنت لتتمكن المنظمات من التعبير عن العديد من اللغات وأخذها لغة العالم التي يفترض أن يعرفها الجميع!

العربية اللغوية في المنظمات الدولية

وعندما يتعلق الأمر عمل المنظمات الدولية والعمل فيها وتمكين اللغات وتبادله اللغات يمكن أن يكون بشكل كبير في حق جو عمل مريح وودي للمجتمع، ويمكن أن يساعد بشكل كبير على نشر ما تحققه هذه من المنظمات والمؤسسات من معرفات ومعلومات مفيدة، ونشر رسالتها إلى أكبر عدد ممكن من الناس.

ويطلب القدرة على التواصل مع إنجازات بحثية يتم يومية في قطاعات اللغة وثقافة مختلفة جددًا كبارًا في زيادة فعالية إدارة الموارد البشرية والبحث وتخفيف من الحقول التي تتطلب حساسية خاصة ناحية الفوارق الثقافية والاجتماعية.

وستستخدم بعض المؤسسات والمنظمات اللغة العربية لجلب تعاطف الجمهور نحو عملها وتوجهه على دعمها وتعاونها، ومنها من يسعى إلى خلقية الجمهور بلغة الجمهور وليس بلغة عملها الرسمية، ومنها من يرسل إلى الميدان في مناطق النشر أو الكورنات والطوارئ موظفين لتشجيع اللغة العربية، من خلال تنويه الجهات المحلية، ومنها من يستخدم اللغة لأغراض التسويق واللغة في الوصول للأخرى. مضخمة الجمهور بلغته توصل رسالة أولية مفادها «نحن نحتككم»، «نودكم على ذلك بأعتد، دعونا تقبلهم ما يطرح

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Janvier 2014 | 35
Living in a multicultural and multilingual environment
This article describes the unique experience of a Chinese woman who lives and works in a multicultural and multilingual environment in Geneva. She analyses the change in her feelings and attitude to both professional and private life, from the aspects of communicating with colleagues, handling professional work, dealing with issues between her and her Swiss husband, educating her daughter, etc. Some practical advice on how to deal with the barriers and difficulties caused by cultural and language differences are provided together with the description of her experience.

带着两年在牛津生活、工作和学习的经历，2007年我开始就职日内瓦世界卫生组织总部。工作第一天就感觉自己曾经很引以自豪的英文在诸多口音的“国际英语”中变的如此虚弱，以至于听不懂会议上有些事在说什么。再加上不同肤色、不同种族、不同语言的同事在眼前晃来晃去，几句下来头昏脑胀。好在自己性格开朗，喜欢迎难而上，抓住一切机会跟同事交流。办公室、咖啡厅、报告厅、食堂、健身房等等等等留下了我的身影。我慢慢地发现，当交流中不再把对方的语言、文化背景作为最深影像植入到头脑，而是把对方看作跟自己一样的需要尊重和沟通的个体时，对话就轻松和有效很多。当然还是要了解并尊重他人的风俗习惯和文化差异。我的工作恰好又是世卫的多语种项目，对外需要跟不同的国际组织和不同国家的研究人员和政府官员沟通，对内需要联系组织内的很多技术部门和职能部门。困难是有，但更多的是自己在享受并收获多元文化多种语言交流的乐趣，由此也结交了很多朋友。得益于这种积极的心态，业务也做得游刃有余。

初来瑞士，很惊讶于这里的多语种状态，很多人英语流利不说，同时会其他一种甚至多种语言的也不在少数。刚到时总会觉得自己所学的英文是工程师学的，企业家学的，而自己的就是一种工具，比较滞后。随着工作和生活的深入，我慢慢地意识到，对自己的文化自信是很重要的。瑞士的教育制度很宽松，我女儿在小的时候可以说什么也不学，但只要她想学，什么都可以学，而且可以学的很深入。她对中国语言文化很感兴趣，读一年级的时候，她就已经在学中文了，而且学的很认真。她告诉我，她说这个学校很好，可以让她在上海和瑞士之间任意转换。这是一种很好的体验，也是一种很好的教育。
What is your vocation? What are the principles that guide people in their professional and life choices? Are they different in different countries and for different careers?

NATASHA SHAPOVALOVA
DR. ANDRÉS DE FRANCESCO

Based on in-depth self-questions over time, the quest for a vocation for a doctor is described here. Vocation is not learnt, but understood.

After years of working at home and abroad under challenging circumstances, one recognizes the relevance of principles of moral commitment, social responsibility, and ability to perceive somebody else’s troubles more acutely than your own ones.

The image shown is a cup of coffee.

I hate coffee. I don’t like the taste. It makes my heart beat faster. It keeps me awake at night. It’s a bad habit. I should break it.

But I can’t. It’s too comfortable. It’s too familiar. It’s too easy.

I’ve tried so many times to quit. I’ve tried with tea, with herbal infusions, with hot chocolate. But nothing works.

I’ve tried cutting back. I’ve tried drinking it only in the morning. I’ve tried drinking it without milk. I’ve tried drinking it without sugar.

But it doesn’t work. I still need it. I still crave it.

I guess I’m addicted. It’s a messy situation.

But it’s worth it. I mean, it’s worth it for me. I get a boost of energy. I feel more alert. I feel more focused.

I know it’s bad for me. I know it’s not healthy. But I can’t help it. It’s too strong. It’s too powerful.

I try to be careful. I try to be mindful. I try to be cautious.

But it’s hard. It’s like a addiction. It’s like a compulsion.

I know I’m not the only one. I know many people struggle with coffee addiction. I see it in my family. I see it in my friends.

I know I’m not alone. I know it’s a real thing. I know it’s a problem.

But I can’t stop. I can’t quit. I can’t break it.

I’m stuck. I’m trapped. I’m in a cycle.

I guess I’ll just have to accept it. I’ll just have to deal with it. I’ll just have to learn to live with it.

It’s a messy situation.
La verdadera vocación del médico está en el juramento hipocrático: «hacer el bien sin hacer daño». Aprender a cuidar y a tratar el cuerpo humano debe ser la máxima aspiración para un médico en potencia. Más aún, no se debe limitar solamente a la medicina, sino que debe extenderse al respeto de todos los demás seres. Ese es el verdadero reto.

El verdadero reto.

Después de un tiempo viendo pacientes, decidí que mi vocación estaba más allá. Mi sentido de aventura y de responsabilidad con los demás me llevó a zonas inhóspitas del Amazonas de Colombia donde trabajé con pacientes y programas de salud en pequeños hospitales rurales. Allá, más que en otra parte, entendi los factores y necesidades para hacer el balance salud-enfermedad. Ahí entendí que ya había encontrado lo que llamábamos el verdadero reto.

Esta evolución en torno a la vocación ha ayudado a mejorar la salud de algunas gentes. Contribuyó además con aspectos más personales, como el encontrar a alguien con quien se compartan esos mismos valores. De ahí nació este artículo conjunto. La vocación se expresa cuando uno menos se da cuenta.

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Exposition Victor Brauner à Genève

Une exposition consacrée à l’artiste Victor Brauner, acteur essentiel du mouvement surréaliste, créateur prolifique et énigmatique se tient actuellement à la galerie Interart jusqu’au 1er février 2014. Reconnu internationalement, Victor Brauner est peut-être l’artiste le plus particulier du XXe siècle.

Une vingtaine d’œuvres présente un panorama de sa création et donne à voir la brillante diversité et la vivacité de l’œuvre de ce peintre majeur.

Né en Roumanie, Victor Brauner s’installe à Paris en 1930. Proche de Constantin Brancusi, Alberto Giacometti et Yves Tanguy, il rejoint bientôt le groupe surréaliste et y prend tout de suite une place majeure; pour André Breton il sera l’artiste « magique » par excellence. Peintre des prémonitions, mais également peintre subversif et onirique, il crée des images insolites et obsessionnelles, des figures chimériques combinant les différents règnes de la nature. Devenu borgne lors d’une rixe en 1938, il se croit investi de pouvoirs exceptionnels et pense avoir accès au monde du mystère, du mythe et de la métamorphose. Cet accident devient pour Brauner le signe d’un accès initiatique à une autre visibilité, magique. Pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, il se voit contraint d’utiliser des matériaux de fortune, dont la cire, qui se révèlera un médium exceptionnellement apte à transcrire sa vision propre. Jusqu’à la fin de sa vie, Brauner en perfectionne la technique et l’usage, alliant à une certaine rusticité du matériau un somptueux raffinement dans le traitement de la couleur.


La plupart des œuvres réunies pour l’exposition illustrent avec maestria la technique de la peinture à la cire, qui représente ses travaux les plus recherchés; les figures finement incisées dans le fond mat et patiné par diverses couches subtilement appliquées, évoquent l’esprit du peintre: «une toile blanche, c’est un néant industriel et désagréable. Avant d’utiliser il faut la salir, l’user, la rendre humaine. Le meilleur moyen est de lui donner une qualité d’objet trouvé, une chaleur d’objet».

Victor Brauner est parmi les seuls artistes surréalistes à avoir produit après 1948 une œuvre de qualité égale à sa production antérieure. Bien que ses peintures à la cire de la période de guerre soient, individuellement, ses meilleures œuvres, la portée de son art a augmenté et son contenu s’est approfondi. Avec cette exposition, la galerie Interart est heureuse de pouvoir faire mieux connaître l’œuvre riche et énigmatique de cet «illuminateur» qu’est Victor Brauner, artiste qui incarne au plus près l’esprit du mouvement surréaliste sous ses facettes les plus variées et dans toute sa complexité.

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LOISIRS

**Rites et coutumes locales lors des festivités du Nouvel An en Mongolie, Colombie et Fédération de Russie**

### Tsagaan Sar

**DENIS ELSIG**

« Tsagaan Sar », est le nom de la fête familiale par excellence célébrée chaque année en Mongolie depuis plus de 800 ans. C'est le « mois blanc » dont la date se détermine selon le calendrier lunaire. Dès le 1er février 2014 donc, et pour deux semaines, les Mongols célébreront la nouvelle année avec l'arrivée du printemps, pérennisant traditions de famille et rites religieux transmis depuis des générations.

Très codifiées, ces festivités sont empreintes de respect. Pour les dieux tout d'abord, par les offrandes faites par chaque famille selon les rituels bouddhistes. Pour les anciens aussi, en raison des structures familiales très hiérarchisées, à qui l'on confie la responsabilité de donner à la famille une direction bénéfique pour la nouvelle année. Et entre les membres de la famille dont chacun joue un rôle précis.

Tout commence la veille de la nouvelle année, appelé « Bituun », ou « La nuit sans lumière de lune ». La yourte est nettoyée et les plats sont préparés durant la journée. On y retrouve du dos de mouton bouilli, un riz sucré, des produits laitiers et des biscuits typiques. A la tombée de la nuit, le thé au lait est partagé avant d’entamer le repas. Cette journée est celle durant laquelle chaque Mongol termine ce qu’il a commencé et règle ses dettes pour s’attirer bonté et bonne énergie.

Les célébrations débutent le lendemain. « Tsagaan Sar » doit apporter richesse et prospérité à toute la famille et l’abondance de cadeaux et de nourriture, soigneusement préparés tout au long du mois précédent, traduisent cette bonne fortune à venir. Vêtus d’habits traditionnels et enclins à partager toutes sortes de jeux, les Mongols ponctuent de chants ces moments de fête.

Ainsi, durant deux semaines, se succèdent repas et activités ludiques, entre proches ou en compagnie d’invités. Si la durée de « Tsagaan Sar » excède largement celle de nos fêtes de fin d’année, les citadins modernes ont su l’adapter aux exigences contemporaines ; elle est plus courte dans les agglomérations et les rites sont simplifiés. Mais « Tsagaan Sar », initiée par Gengis Khan, conserve son but d’unité familiale et de spiritualité, fierté des Mongols.

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Régie publicitaire exclusive UN SPECIAL
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Sobre los años nuevos en Colombia

DR. ANDRÉS DE FRANCISCO

En Colombia es tan importante celebrar el año nuevo como lo es celebrar el año viejo. Bueno, realmente nos gusta celebrar cualquier cosa y esa época es propicia. Frecuentemente se juntan las fiestas de Navidad, del Año Nuevo y el día de los Reyes el 6 de enero. Celebrar nos caracteriza como gente en general alegre, buscando siempre cualquier motivo para desbordar nuestras emociones y nuestro calor humano. La vida, tan seria como es, hay que vivirla con alegría.

Tradicionalmente, y sobre todo en el campo, hay que quemar el muñeco del año viejo. Este es un muñeco hecho en casa con ropa vieja, frecuentemente rellenado de artículos pirotécnicos. En sus adentros se esconden escritos sobre los malos recuerdos y problemas que uno tuvo durante el año que se acaba. El muñeco se deja a la vista unos días y se quema la media noche del 31. El humo se lleva los problemas para empezar el año nuevo y para seguir acumulando otros hasta el final del año siguiente.

La noche del 31 de diciembre es la culminación de muchos preparativos. Mucha gente va a misa. Otros se ponen una prenda nueva, frecuentemente unos calzoncillos rojos. Hay que organizar una fiesta con los mejores amigos, preparar comida abundante, alistarse alcohol, y organizar la mejor música bailable, si es posible en vivo. La fiesta y el baile se extienden hasta el primero de enero (a veces más), ya que incluye desayuno con caldo de papa y costilla de cerdo que ayuda a levantar muertos (como dice el dicho).

A la media noche del 31, se escuchan en la radio las doce campanadas y se empiezan varios rituales que se creen mejorarán las condiciones del año siguiente, e incluyen comerse una uva con cada campanada, darle una vuelta a la cuadra corriendo, abrazar y besar a todo el mundo, brindar por la paz y prosperidad para el año que viene, y seguir bailando…

Russian winter holidays

CHRISTINA BRANDES-BARBIER, WHO

The famous Russian winter with its chilli weather and long cold snowy nights contribute to a long lasting celebration. Few Russians start the season with feasting Catholic Christmas on 25 December. But most prefer to celebrate the New Year Eve, rather than traditional Orthodox Christmas (due to the 13-day difference between the newer Gregorian, and older Julian Calendars, Christmas is celebrated on January 7).

At this time of the year the agencies that organize events are fully booked as they provide dress-up entertainment services «Traditional Feast with Ded Moroz and Snegurochka in your house». «Ded Moroz» (Granddad Frost, a Russian equivalent of Santa) together with his Granddaughter «Snegurochka» (Snowmaiden) are visiting people’s homes delivering gifts to children and wishing a prosperous year to adults. Anyone can order the «Ded Moroz» service as a special gift to their friends and families, and then a sitcom-like situation may occur: two, or even three Ded Moroz’ will meet in the same house!

There are hundreds of superstitions and believes related to the New Year celebration. This is one of the most popular. When the clock strikes twelve times you should go outside, find a snowflake, hold it in your palm and make a wish. If the snowflake does not melt until the last strike of the clock, the wish will come true in the coming year.

Russians enjoy making feasts, no matter the reason. May be that is why they have the longest national winter holidays in the world – ten days of joy, of eating, of drinking, of having a good time and lots of fun!
Le sport: un vecteur du dialogue interculturel et d’intégration sociale

Le sport est un miroir de la société. Phénomène planétaire, il génère chaque année plusieurs milliards de francs de revenus. Il a toujours exercé un grand pouvoir d’attraction grâce aux émotions qu’il suscite, aussi bien en tant qu’acteur que spectateur, et au travers des valeurs qu’on lui attribue.

OLIVIER BORIE
Dès ses débuts, le sport a donc pu servir à développer force et résistance qui reflétaient à la fois des valeurs morales et physiques, utiles à la chasse comme à la guerre. De nos jours, il est plutôt considéré comme un vecteur efficace d’éducation et d’éveil à la citoyenneté.

En Grèce antique, les jeux olympiques antiques furent instaurés pour remédier aux guerres fratricides qui déchiraient la péninsule grecque. La trêve olympique n’impliquait pas l’arrêt de tous les conflits, mais préservait la cité d’accueil de toute attaque, et permettait aux sportifs, aux officiels et aux spectateurs de ne pas être inquiétés lors de leurs déplacements à travers les zones de guerre. Au-delà de cette fonction pratique, la trêve avait également une dimension sacrée importante. Aujourd’hui, le comité international olympique cultive cette tradition pour «encourager la recherche de solutions pacifiques et diplomatiques aux conflits qui sévissent dans le monde».

Les valeurs du sport
Le sport et ses pratiques ont évolué au fil temps et des cultures. Au-delà de ses aspects purement physiques, religieux, ou autres, le sport reflète des valeurs. Elles reposent sur une idéologie consensuelle,
porteuse d’un message humaniste. Le sport serait donc un espace dominé par la notion de bien. Selon l’Agence Mondiale antidopage, l’esprit sportif valorise la pensée, le corps et l’esprit, et se distingue par les valeurs suivantes :
- L’éthique, le franc jeu et l’honnêteté
- La santé
- L’excellence dans la performance
- L’épanouissement de la personnalité et l’éducation
- Le divertissement et la joie
- Le travail d’équipe
- Le dévouement et l’engagement
- Le respect des règles et des lois
- Le respect de soi-même et des autres participants
- Le courage
- L’esprit de groupe et la solidarité

On considère souvent que le sport favorise la compréhension interculturelle à travers des échanges de vues ouverts et respectueux entre individus et groupes issus de contextes culturels différents. Il offre en effet un environnement qui garantit l’égalité des chances, la liberté d’expression, la sécurité et la dignité.

**Le sport et le multiculturalisme**

Le multiculturalisme reconnaît le caractère légitime des diverses identités culturelles, et s’oppose au processus d’assimilation. Selon cette approche, « prendre des mesures pour s’opposer au processus d’assimilation. Selon le multiculturalisme, les identités culturelles et le respect des principes constitutionnels et des cultures va de pair avec le respect et l’acceptation des diverses identités culturelles, et l’égalité des chances, la liberté d’expression, la sécurité et la dignité. »

Le sport participerait donc à l’émergence d’une société multiculturelle, pacifique et harmonieuse. Le symbole de la trêve olympique renforce cette vision.

Toutefois, le sport ne peut être totalement isolé des influences du milieu dans lequel il évolue. Ses valeurs lui sont de fait attribuées par une multitude d’acteurs animés par des intentions diverses. Par ailleurs, en dépit de toutes les vertus qu’il véhicule, l’esprit sportif n’est pas toujours respecté. Dans ses aspects les plus sombres, le sport peut engendrer des excès et des dérives : violence, rejet des différences et discrimination, attitudes belliqueuses, corruption, dopage, nationalisme exacerbé, etc. C’est pourquoi, on dit, parfois, que le sport est un miroir de la société. Reste que grâce à sa capacité exceptionnelle à toucher les gens et à susciter un engouement populaire quasi-universel sur les grandes compétitions internationales, à travers la vitalité qu’il dégage et les valeurs positives qu’il incarne, le sport joue un rôle toujours plus grand dans nos sociétés et leur recherche d’un juste équilibre entre diversité et bien commun.

A une échelle supranationale, c’est ce que décrit la Charte internationale de l’éducation physique et du sport adoptée en 1978 par l’UNESCO qui souligne que « l’éducation physique et le sport doivent tendre à promouvoir les rapprochements entre les peuples comme entre les individus ainsi que l’émulation désintéressée, la solidarité et la fraternité, le respect et la compréhension mutuels, la reconnaissance de l’intégrité et de la dignité des êtres humains ». Le sport participerait donc à l’émergence d’une société multiculturelle, pacifique et harmonieuse. Le symbole de la trêve olympique renforce cette vision.

To celebrate the international women’s day, a special March issue of the magazine will include articles from the readers focusing on:
- Poverty
- Work
- Cultural differences
- Education
- Women in the media and the messages media sends about constructing female identity
- Violence against women
- Health
- Women and political participation, women’s political role

The competition is open to all readers. The editorial committee members are not eligible to apply. Articles may be in English, French and Spanish and must comply with the following rules:
- Being the work of a single person or maximum of two.
- Being unpublished.
- Containing 800 words maximum, one picture or illustration are recommended.

Authors should send their texts in WORD format to the following address: unspecial@who.int
Mention competition with UN Special in the object.

1. [http://www.olympic.org/fr/content/le-cio/commissions/international-relations/etre-olympique/](http://www.olympic.org/fr/content/le-cio/commissions/international-relations/etre-olympique/)
POURQUOI NE PAS LE FAIRE?

LE ROC DES TOURS


TEXTE ET PHOTOS ANDRÉ ROTACH

Prendre l’autoroute A40 direction Chamonix, la sortie N°16. Suivre le Grand Bornand par la D-12 et prendre la direction du Chinaillon. Au centre du village prendre sur la gauche la direction Samance. Après plusieurs virages la route s’élargit, le parking sur la gauche à la hauteur du chemin de la Gaudinière est le point de départ (pas de balisage). Emprunter le chemin et après 200 mètres, au point 1385 suivre Lac de Lessy. Passages aux points 1415 en 8 minutes, 1530 en 30 minutes, 1560 en 45 minutes, 1885 en 1 heure 30. À cet endroit un bifurque sur la gauche en direction du Roc des Tours. Ce dernier tronçon se fait dans les lapiaz. Arrivée au sommet en 2 heures. Retour par le même chemin en 1 heure 30, soit au total 3 heures 30, 7 km 800 et un dénivelé positif de 644 mètres.

Pour plus de détails voir: Paradis Sauvages de Haute Savoie, Edition Rosolis.

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BONNE RANDONNÉE.
ET (S)PORTEZ-VOUS BIEN.
Après avoir fait l’ascension du Tia-La qui culmine à 5360 m, nous avons dû rebrousser chemin, les mules transportant notre matériel n’ayant pas pu franchir le glacier situé près du sommet (voir UN Special du mois passé). Mais grâce à l’efficacité de « Adventure Tours », organisateur du trek, nous allons pouvoir poursuivre notre périple.

Bien entendu, nous sommes déçus de ne pas avoir pu franchir le Tia-La comme prévu, mais finalement, nous avons le loisir de découvrir les paysages déjà parcourus dans l’autre sens. Et nous ne regrettons pas, tellement ils sont beaux. Seul bémol, le torrent glacié qu’il va falloir à nouveau traverser! Nous nous consolons en imaginant l’accueil qui va nous être fait par les habitants de Largyap Gongma. Et nous ne serons pas déçus… Nous mettrons deux jours pour redescendre la vallée, ne bivouaquant qu’une nuit dans le village de Largyap Gonpa où nous faisons la curiosité des enfants du village.

Kiki Soso Largyalo
Avant de poursuivre notre trek, nous serons rapatriés à Leh où nous pourrons profiter d’un bon lit et surtout d’une douche chaude très appréciée. Mais notre sommeil sera perturbé vers 4 heures par les prières du muezzin et tout d’un coup on se prend à regretter nos tentes, installées bien au calme, perdues dans les montagnes. Les 4×4 qui vont nous conduire à Tia, village où nous reprendrons notre marche, sont stationnés devant l’hôtel. S.B. Gurong, directeur de « Adventure Tours » est là pour nous souhaiter bon voyage. C’est lui et ses guides qui ont déniché ce parcours qui relie la vallée de la Shyok à celle de l’Indus. Ils l’ont aussi aménagé en construisant des murs de soutènement et des ponts dont les premiers bénéficiaires sont les villageois. Nous prenons la route qui mène à Srinagar et, après un arrêt photo à la jonction des rivières Indus et Zanskar, nous retrouvons les paysages arides typiques du Ladakh, mais avec un relief aux formes plus douces. Par contre, nous attaquons d’entrée par un sentier abrupte qui passe par le Cham-La (3900 m), puis par le Timong-La (4040 m), avant de nous engager dans une descente vertigineuse sur Skyndiyang. C’est dans ce village, véritable oasis perdue dans ce paysage lunaire que notre bivouac est installé. Et, comme d’habitude, les habitants nous reçoivent comme des amis en nous ouvrant...
leur porte et en nous offrant leur «boisson nationale», le thé au beurre salé.

C’est au son des cloches pendues aux cous des mules que nous ouvrons un œil. On se croirait dans les alpages suisses ! Il fait chaud, l’étape sera longue et l’eau se fait de plus en plus rare. Le lit de l’impressionnant canyon aux parois déchiquetées que nous devons remonter en début de journée est complètement asséché. Avec une dénivelée de 500 m, il permet d’accéder au Junu-La, puis au Sarchan-La, qui culmine à 4050 m. Et, pour respecter la tradition, à chaque franchissement de ces cols haut perchés, nous déployons un drapeau de prières, formons une ronde et entonnons tous en cœur le « Kiki Soso Largyalo » (Les dieux seront vainqueurs). Si l’ascension s’est passée au milieu des rochers, la descente, ultrarapide, se fera par contre sur les flancs d’un torrent glissant de rivières et de vasques érodées qui coule entre deux éperons rocheux, soulignant le beau d’eau qui fera notre bonheur. C’est là que nous passerons la nuit, à 3600 m. Durant la soirée, curieux et étonné de voir des étrangers envahir son territoire, un majestueux yak viendra rôder autour des tentes.

Notre ultime étape de trek débutera une nouvelle fois par la traversée d’un grandiose canyon, puis par l’escalade d’éboulis qui nous mènera jusqu’au Niamu-La, brèche taillée dans le granite rose à 3850 m d’altitude. Nous profitons une dernière fois d’une vue à 360° sur les autres sommets qui nous entourent. En effet, demain, nous serons redescendus dans la plaine. Mais avant cela, une descente glissante au milieu de cheminées de fées, de gros blocs de rochers et de vasques érodées nous attend. Blotti entre deux éperons rocheux, coule un mince filet d’eau qui fera notre « beauté » avant de passer un agréable moment, autour d’une bonne table, comme d’habitude bien garnie par les excellents cuisiniers qui nous ont accompagnés pendant ces dix jours.

**Rendez-vous avec Lobsang**

Les moments les plus forts, émouvants et dont nous nous souviendrons très longtemps vont avoir pour cadre Likir. Situé sur l’ancienne voie cara-vanière de Basgo, le monas-tère a été édifié en 1065 par le lama Drupwang Choedge doré au frère du Dalai Lama. C’est dans ce lieu sacré que va nous recevoir Lobsang, le supérieur du monastère. Pour en arriver là, Lobsang a dû étudier vingt ans pour décrocher un master en bouddhisme. Ce privilège exceptionnel auquel nous avons droit vient de Renée, l’organisatrice de notre « Aventure » au Ladakh, qui parraine plusieurs moines du monastère.

Votre serviteur recevant un khata de la part de Lobsang


Votre santé nécessite la perfection

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