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L’accord parfait ?

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Ceux qui jouent au puzzle régulièrement appliquent une méthode bien rodée. Après avoir trié et rassemblé toutes les pièces de couleur identique, ils s’attaquent aux bords pour ensuite se rapprocher du centre.

Lorsque deux pièces qu’ils croyaient complémentaires ne s’emboîtent pas, l’étonnement laisse place à la frustration. Parfois, sans succès, ils forcent les deux pièces à s’accorder. Rapidement ils se rendent à l’évidence: ils ne peuvent changer la donne et doivent s’en accommoder.

À l’inverse, bien que prédéfini, le cadre dans lequel nous évoluons, peut certes parfois être rigide, mais il n’est pas statique. Nous ne sommes pas contraints de nous y accommoder. Et lorsqu’un projet stagne parce que les deux éléments que l’on souhaite assembler ne s’accordent pas, nous pouvons choisir d’en rédefinir les contours, d’en façonner les formes, de redessiner le paysage pour changer la donne.

Les collaborations fructueuses sont parfois les plus improbables. Elles sont souvent le fruit d’efforts renouvelés, ce qui les rend uniques.

Le nid vide

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C’est pourquoi peu de gens les reconnaissent.

Ann Landers


Civil society and the United Nations

The perfect match?

Those who like solving puzzles regularly apply a well-tried method. After having sorted and collected all the pieces of the same colour, they start with the edges then get closer to the target.

When two pieces that they want to assemble do not fit, they are first astonished then frustrated. Sometimes they try unsuccessfully to force the two pieces to fit. Quickly they have to face reality: they cannot change the situation and must live with it.

Conversely, in life, although the framework in which we operate is preset, and can sometimes be rigid, it is not static. We are not forced to put up with it. And when a project stagnates because the two elements we want to assemble do not fit, we can choose to redefine the contours, shape the forms and redraw the landscape to change the situation.

When we act like that, subtle links are formed, opportunities emerge. The projects in which we believe and invest take form. The pieces come together to achieve the perfect match.

Successful collaborations are sometimes the most improbable ones. They are often the result of redoubled efforts, which is what makes them unique.

“Opportunities are usually disguised as hard work, so most people don’t recognize them.”

Ann Landers

Magazine of the international civil servants of the United Nations at Geneva and of the World Health Organization

"Les opportunités sont souvent cachées derrière un dur labeur. C’est pourquoi peu de gens les reconnaissent."
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NGOs participating in advancing WHO goals for health

Not only has the landscape for global health become more complex with a variety of different actors, including a number of diverse nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), also the nature of the NGOs dealing with issues related to health has changed over the years.

TAINA NAKARI, WHO
LUDOVIC BOURBE, HANDICAP INTERNATIONAL

While the majority of the NGOs half a century ago were specific to medical and public health fields, today the number of NGOs that have a broader mandate as implementing partners or as advocates for health-related issues has grown.

WHO already at the time of its establishment recognized the need to collaborate with a range of partners in health to fulfil its mission, including NGOs. The WHO governing bodies have shown long-standing support and encouragement for strengthened WHO relations with NGOs and WHO resolutions have often called on NGOs and national governments to work in partnership with each other and with WHO.

WHO works with a range of NGOs through different arrangements: informal contact, ad hoc basis, participation in each other’s technical meetings or collaboration through working relations according to a more structured plan. In addition, WHO recognizes a category of formal relations, known as official relations.

The first NGOs were admitted to official relations with WHO already the same year as it was established, in 1948. The status of official relations is granted to international NGOs which have had a long-standing working relations and have a plan for collaboration for the next three years with a WHO technical unit. Currently there are 190 organizations in official relations, with a varying focus of their mandate: health-related (such as those involved in occupational health) while others are disease specific organizations (such as those dealing with malaria), or they include advocacy, emergency...
relief and capacity building organizations, to name a few.

NGOs have contributed substantially to achieving WHO’s mission and objectives. Through collaboration with a technical unit they align some of their activities with those of WHO, thus contributing to and strengthening WHO’s efforts in those fields.

Collaboration to reduce disability and improve the lives of persons with disabilities. One example of WHO collaboration with an NGO in official relations is the work that Handicap international (HI) conducts contributing towards the achievement of the goals of WHO, goals that HI shares to reduce preventable disability and improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

Through its advocacy efforts HI has made the messages from the World report on disability, produced by WHO and the World Bank, more widely known to relevant stakeholders, both globally and at national level in over 50 countries. It advocates for increasing the support in member States for the recommendations of the report and promotes the rights of persons with disability. In general HI has offered a good visibility for the World report on disability through its international online resource centre http://www.asksource.info/ designed to strengthen the management, use and impact of information on disability and inclusion in development and humanitarian contexts.

Community based rehabilitation
In support of the implementation of WHO/ILO/UNESCO/IDDC Guidelines on Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR), HI works in interested countries to support the integration of the guidelines into ongoing and future projects and contributes to establishing monitoring and evaluation systems in efforts to measure effectiveness of these projects as well conducts applied research in measuring effects of inclusive local development strategies on participation of people with disabilities. It has also set up a web-based database of good practices in CBR/ inclusive development: Making it Work initiative http://www.makingitwork-crdp.org/good-practice-database).

To coordinate and optimize the dissemination of the CBR Guidelines, Handicap International is co-chairing the CBR Task Group of the IDDC. It also conducted advocacy to give more visibility to the regional and global congresses on CBR and their outcomes, such as 2nd Asia Pacific CBR Congress in 2011 and the World congress in November. For promoting especially CBR in Africa HI entered into a partnership with the CBR African Network (CAN) to provide organisational and technical support to the network.

Assistive technology
In support of WHO’s efforts to promote the development, production, distribution and servicing of assistive technology, HI joined WHO to support the bimannual African Federation of Orthopaedic Technicians Congress, using the World report on disability as a reference for planning it. Particular focus was given to improve access to rehabilitation services, through an exercise of collecting and analysing data in countries attending the congress. Expected outcome from this collaboration is that the data can be used to improve national rehabilitation policies and mid and long term action plans.

In addition, HI has supported the development of training packages related to the WHO Guidelines on the provision of manual wheelchairs in resource poor settings, and implemented the training in countries where it is active.

The final goals pursued by WHO concerning disability and rehabilitation and HI are similar. HI aims to be a good ally for WHO in promoting more and better services for the disabled people around the world in a respectful manner. Participation and support from the WHO teams are essential for the organization. In addition HI has is a partner in the UN Road Safety Collaboration coordinated by WHO and finds it extremely fruitful in the scope of the decade for Road Safety. Furthermore, WHO and HI have also in common their concern in alerting the general and professional public on the increase of the non-communicable diseases in the low income countries and their impact on public health.

A lot remains to be achieved before those who need it most get a better access to health worldwide. The adoption by the World Health Assembly of the Disability action plan in May 2014 gives a good road map for what was declared in one of the statements “… This is our chance to ensure transformative change to health for one billion people globally”. 

1 Director of Technical Resources Division
Handicap International
Handicap International is an independent and impartial aid organisation working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. We work alongside people with disabilities and vulnerable populations, taking action and bearing witness in order to respond to their essential needs, improve their living conditions and promote respect for their dignity and fundamental rights.
Co-founder of ICBL, HI was co awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997.
www.handicapinternational.org
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In conversation with Jo Butler

Her story

MILASOA CHÉREL-ROBSON

Jo Butler² is taking a slightly early retirement after more than 30 years at the UN. Her achievements and awards are as distinctive as the palette of her many talents. Jo was named Woman of the year by the Geneva Chapter of the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) in 2012 and won the UN21 Awards for staff volunteerism in 2013 thanks to her work with the Ethiopian Children’s Appeal (ECA), the charity that she founded 13 years ago. Jo has also touched the lives of many people at work and beyond including contributing to staff-led charities in Haiti and in India.

She tells me that it was at her initiation that the Staff Coordinating Council organized the Staff Volunteerism Day.

How did a young girl of African, Irish and Native American roots who grew up in the US in the 1960s and 1970s come to leave her country 33 years ago?

The collective experience of African and Native Americans was a painful one for my parents’ generation. And as their child you could sense that they were proud of their ancestry but still struggling to be recognized by society. I could not wait to discover the world. It was a dream of mine since the age of 10 to work for the UN and in development. So dreams do come true! Though I have worked for other organizations, UNCTAD has always been my base. I have known four Secretary Generals and have been part of many key events in UNCTAD’s history.

Your life so far has been really epic...

Weren’t you also part of a landmark UN initiative, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change?

Yes, it was 1991 and climate change was emerging as a major issue. I wanted to be part of that. So I was very happy when Michael Zammit Cutajar, the Executive Secretary wrote to UNCTAD’s SG to say that he wanted me to be part of his team. It was the start of six years of working with a great team that was passionate and dedicated. There were many days when I worked 24 to 48 hours straight and would go home to just have a shower and then return to help with the negotiations or the drafting, whichever phase we were in. We were a team of 6 when I joined and by the time the Secretariat moved to Bonn, it had more than 20 staff.

I am struck by the sense of purpose and the excitement that you shared back then.

Yes, we helped organize the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and we believed in the cause when many governments were still doubtful. We were sad when the Conference of the Parties (COP) voted that the Secretariat would be based in Bonn rather Geneva. We had tears running down our cheeks. That’s when Michael Zammit looked at us and said: “When Member States decide that the Secretariat will go to Bonn, as UN staff, you smile and say that it is good news”. We held back our tears and walked around congratulating member States on reaching the decision, including Angela Merkel who was then chair of the COP.

So you decided to come back to UNCTAD.

What prompted you to move to Ethiopia?

I was working as Chief of Public Affairs at UNCTAD. It was at around that time that I felt a pull to go to Ethiopia. My husband is Ethiopian and had not lived there for twenty years because of a difficult situation during the Mengistu regime. So it meant a lot to us as a family when I was appointed Secretary of the Commission and Legal Adviser at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa in December 1999. It was an exciting time workwise and Ethiopia and the entire continent were faced with many difficult challenges and conflicts. I got to work with Executive Secretary KY Amoako on the Africa renaissance programme which eventually led to the creation of NEPAD.
And you started the Ethiopian Children’s Appeal (ECA)?

Yes, it started with helping a group of children in my neighborhood, then grew to become what it is today thanks to the support of a great many people, especially in Addis and in Geneva, through the twice yearly Bazaars that I have organized for the past 11 years. ECA has now helped more than 1000 children to make their lives better including 16 HIV double orphans for whom I am surrogate grandmother.

We should talk about ECA and other initiatives you have in the pipeline soon.

What happened after you came back to UNCTAD, the place where it all started?

I came back to UNCTAD to head the Inter-governmental Support Services. I was immediately thrown into the fray of organizing UNCTAD’s quadrennial conference in Sao Paolo, Brazil and later in Accra, Ghana. After that, I moved to become Deputy Director of the Africa and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Special Programmes Division and OIC of the division for 18 months. I then had the pleasure of working with the new Director, Mr. Tesfachew Taferre, for the past two years. The ALDC division provides research, analysis and advice to Africa, LDCs, landlocked and small island countries on ways to improve their economic development through productive capacity building. Working with ALDC and these countries was a really rewarding experience.

You told me recently that you were the only woman in the UNCTAD team supporting member states during international commodity agreements.

The gender balance at the UN has significantly improved since then and UNCTAD@50 is also embracing gender issues. You made the time to attend one of the UNCTAD Women Network’s Knowledge and Information Sharing Sessions (KISS) on your last day. You have been a mentor to many of us within the Network.

I think that the Network is a wonderful initiative and I applaud the many colleagues who are collaborating to realize it. I wish I had this opportunity many years ago as many of us were struggling with issues of career development. But what I found out about the UN is that you have to find your path and make it happen. There is not much personal guidance along the way, although this seems to be changing. But if you have an idea and are motivated and passionate enough to go for it, the organization will usually get out of your way.

One of my great pleasures at UNCTAD was getting to know the next generation of young colleagues, both men and women. Their enthusiasm, competence, skills and passion really does the organization proud. And it is a wonderful feeling to pass the baton on to them. My message is to keep the UN on its toes and to keep fighting for a better and more equitable world outside these walls but within as well.

I also want to say to the old timers like myself to keep the passion and remember how privileged we have truly been.

Thank you very much Jo. Enjoy your time with family, friends and ECA children. Bon voyage.

1 Milasoa Chérel-Robson is an Economic Affairs Officer at UNCTAD. To find out more about UNCTAD Women Network, please write to womennet@unctad.org

2 Jo Butler, former UN staff and Founder of ethiopianchildrensappeal.org and etsy.com/shop/schoolery
The crucial role of civil society actors (CSAs), including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in advancing the human rights agenda has been central to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) work since it was created more than 20 years ago. At the national level, CSAs are frequently the first to identify emerging human rights trends and alert others to pending crises. Whether campaigning for environmental rights, an end to the death penalty, or the right of all children to education, civil society voices have made a difference to law, policy and, most importantly, to practice. At the international level, CSAs continue to highlight protection gaps in the UN human rights system, advocate for new standards or treaties to address them, and then work with governments and other stakeholders to implement them on the ground. As UN human rights standards are universal and law-based, they do provide a bedrock on which national strategies can be based. Generally, all sections or teams of OHCHR work closely with civil society, regardless of where they are, on substantive human rights issues or on supporting UN human rights mandates and mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review, Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures. Particularly, OHCHR’s Civil Society Section (CSS) works to strengthen and facilitate on-going inter-action and dialogue.

CSS’ work is better explained by highlighting the three focus areas. They are:

- **Capacity Building** – The Section develops the knowledge and skills of civil society developing and making available user-friendly guides and other materials online and in print in the six official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), and by inviting civil society to participate in briefings and capacity-building activities.

- **Promotion of civil society participation** – Here, CSS takes an inclusive approach by engaging with the UN human rights programme, offering an e-mail broadcast service with human rights updates, and developing on-line systems to facilitate access to human rights mandates and mechanisms. Although engagement with the Human

“Civil society organizations and individuals inject the life blood into human rights: they are the promoters of change, the people who ring the alarm about abuse, poor legislation, and creeping authoritarianism…”

Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
Rights Council, for example, requires NGOs to enjoy consultative status with ECOSOC, there are other human rights mechanisms and mandates open to individuals or associations and coalitions that have no formal regulatory status. OHCHR, as an Office, engages with diverse CSAs on the full range of civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights.

- Protecting civil society space by encouraging implementation of relevant UN human rights standards at the country level to provide a robust legal framework that facilitates and protects the work of an independent and vibrant civil society, and developing measures to protect civil society actors from intimidation, threat or reprisal because of their work with the UN human rights programme.

Now, in 2014, the Office’s work has a new impetus to work with and for civil society through an Office-wide strategy, ‘Widening Democratic Space,’ one of six thematic priorities which will guide and inform OHCHR’s work for the next four years. The strategy is underpinned by international human rights law, in particular, guarantees for the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and will be implemented at Headquarters and in all geographic regions by most of OHCHR’s 60 field presences.

This is an opportunity to showcase the indispensable human rights work carried out every day in all parts of the world by a diverse range of civil society actors, whether they are human rights NGOs, associations working for the rights of persons with disabilities, trade unions, coalitions working on environmental issues and climate change, faith-based organizations or victim-support groups. There are numerous compelling examples of how government and civil society work together to implement recommendations from UN human rights bodies, and they deserve greater visibility.

However, sometimes CSAs pay a high price for their work: they may be subjected to arrest, torture or unfair trial. Some receive death threats directed at themselves or their family, or are branded as ‘traitors’ in the national media for speaking out about human rights abuses. Women in particular may face isolation, defamation or smear campaigns because their activism is perceived by some to be in conflict with social norms in their community. And all too often individuals are killed on account of their civil society work.

‘Widening Democratic Space’ strategy will not only sharpen OHCHR’s approach on the focus areas, but will also provide opportunities to strengthen OHCHR’s collaboration with Member States, civil society, and, of course, the UN family.

Visit the webpage of OHCHR’s civil society section in English and French:
www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx
www.ohchr.org/FR/AboutUs/Pages/CivilSociety.aspx
Les ONG et l’ONU
Ensemble pour de meilleures solutions

« La société civile est un élément central pour l’avancement des travaux des Nations Unies dans tous les domaines, non seulement en matière de Droits de l’Homme, mais aussi pour la paix et la sécurité, ainsi que pour le développement »
Ban Ki Moon, Secrétaire général des Nations Unies.

CHARLOTTE WARAKAULLE
Dès la rédaction de la Charte des Nations Unies, la société civile s’est impliquée dans le travail de l’Organisation des Nations Unies. Ce rôle intrinsèque ne cesse de s’accroître. À Genève, la forte présence de la société civile ainsi que ses compétences en font un atout unique pour la communauté internationale, et les ONG sont des partenaires précieux dans les efforts collectifs en direction de la paix, du bien-être et des droits de chacun. Ceci est le reflet d’une nouvelle gouvernance mondiale dans laquelle la communauté internationale doit s’efforcer d’aborder les problèmes inter reliés en incluant toutes les parties prenantes.

Lorsque l’on pense à la collaboration entre l’ONU et les ONG, la première représentation qui nous vient à l’esprit est leur intervention sur le terrain lors de crises humanitaires. En effet, les ONG font un travail remarquable auprès des populations vulnérables, notamment dans les domaines humanitaire, de la santé et de la protection des réfugiés. Elles sont également un acteur clé des interventions onusiennes, grâce à une expertise et un soutien précieux.

Cependant, le rôle de la société civile va bien au-delà : les ONG font entendre leur voix auprès des instances décisionnelles pour la paix et la sécurité, ainsi que pour le développement. Ban Ki Moon, Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, a ainsi déclaré : « La société civile est un élément central pour l’avancement des travaux des Nations Unies dans tous les domaines, non seulement en matière de Droits de l’Homme, mais aussi pour la paix et la sécurité, ainsi que pour le développement ».
de documents et rapports. À l’heure actuelle, 3900 ONG sont des partenaires privilégiés des Nations Unies grâce à leur statut consultatif auprès du Conseil Économique et Social (ECOSOC). Le concept d’inclusion de la société civile au travail de l’ONU prend ses racines dans l’article 71 de la Charte des Nations Unies stipulant que «le Conseil économique et social peut prendre toutes dispositions utiles pour consulter les organisations non gouvernementales qui s’occupent de questions relevant de sa compétence». Cette interaction permet un enrichissement mutuel par le biais de la participation des ONG à de très nombreuses réunions de l’ONU, notamment à New York, à Vienne et à Genève et partout dans le monde.


Chaque année, plus de 300 ONG obtiennent le «statut ECOSOC». Dans leurs démarches, les ONG peuvent solliciter l’appui de l’Unité de Liaison avec les ONG, qui les guide dans leurs activités au Palais et les assiste dans l’organisation de leurs réunions. L’Office des Nations Unies à Genève est de fait un terrain favorable à la rencontre entre les acteurs de la société civile, qui peuvent ainsi coopérer et créer des alliances. Leur participation active aux mécanismes omnisens permet également un dialogue avec les représentants des États.

La société civile contribue activement à la définition du programme pour l’après 2015 à travers diverses consultations. À Genève et ailleurs, la contribution des ONG est essentielle à la formulation d’un agenda commun et sera important pour la mise en application de cet agenda quand il aura été accepté.

Dans un monde en transition, où chacun peut maintenant influencer son avenir et le rendre meilleur, il ne fait nul doute que le rôle de la société civile dans les instances omnisens est amené à croître davantage dans les années à venir.
La Colaboración entre las ONG, la Sociedad Civil y las Naciones Unidas

La Organización de las Naciones Unidas (ONU) se estableció como un espacio para facilitar la cooperación internacional de los Estados en base a la paz, seguridad y libertad de los pueblos, en el marco del Derecho Internacional. Sus prioridades se enmarcan en la promoción y protección de los derechos humanos y los asuntos humanitarios, en consonancia con el desarrollo económico y social de los pueblos, según su Carta de 1945.

Partiendo de dicha premisa, el rol que juegan los representantes de Estados, Organizaciones no Gubernamentales (ONG), y Sociedad Civil, es transcendental en el cumplimiento de estos objetivos, pues actúan como agentes de cambio en la comunidad internacional, y asumen responsabilidades ligadas al cumplimiento de los principios e instrumentos acordados en el marco de las Naciones Unidas.

Desde la creación de la ONU, varias iniciativas han sido propuestas por diferentes actores y presentadas a través de las Delegaciones Estatales, siendo algunas de ellas recogidas en instrumentos vinculantes y no vinculantes. Al respecto, el proceso de diálogo por el que han pasado dichos acuerdos no debe ser desestimado para futuras decisiones.

En este sentido, las negociaciones desarrolladas tanto a nivel multilateral, como bilateral entre todas las partes interesadas constituyen una etapa esencial que no debe perder de vista la armonía en la redacción de un texto conciliado que refleje los esfuerzos hacia un fin común.

Es así que las representaciones gubernamentales, encargadas de visibilizar, posicionar y defender los intereses de su población, también deben velar por la universalidad de los principios y derechos identificados en el escenario internacional; asimismo, deben valorar la importancia de aquellas ONG que contribuyen con aportes objetivos para el desarrollo del Sistema Universal del cual todos somos parte.

A su vez, la Sociedad Civil tiene derecho a conocer los aspectos generales que los Estados que los representan llevan a debate en escenarios nacionales e internacionales, y a comprender de manera clara las propuestas o proyectos que estos proponen tanto en el Sistema Regional, como también en el Universal. De esta manera, el proceso de retroalimentación garantiza la participación proactiva de actores de la Sociedad Civil a través del empoderamiento de sus derechos. En este marco, los Gobiernos tienen la responsabilidad primaria de diseñar y aplicar medidas y mecanismos que garanticen el bienestar de su población y su participación activa en la toma de decisiones.

Cabe señalar que si bien la Sociedad Civil puede canalizar sus aportes o intereses a través de ONG, su posición se ve reflejada en ideas generales sujetas al espectro que abordan dichas organizaciones, y a las fuentes de información utilizadas para determinar las necesidades de la sociedad. Por lo tanto, las ONG tienen a su cargo realizar un trabajo objetivo, en apego a la realidad de la Sociedad Civil, a la que debe responder su labor, pues son un nexo importantísimo en la toma de decisiones a nivel gubernamental, en especial respecto a la protección de los derechos humanos de la población civil.

El espacio que han ganado las ONG en las Naciones Unidas es el resultado de años de esfuerzo y perseverancia de algunos actores. Es notable el crecimiento de sus representaciones en varias regiones del mundo, en las que mantienen reuniones con delegados gubernamentales para visibilizar problemáticas que conciernen a la comunidad internacional en su conjunto.
En este marco de ideas, es preciso destacar la significativa importancia del apoyo de las ONG a iniciativas Estatales que se presentan en las sedes de las Naciones Unidas, y que prevén el bienestar mundial en determinado campo.

Por otro lado, las Agencias de la ONU e instituciones públicas en varios Estados consultan a Organizaciones de este tipo para el diseño y la implementación de programas y políticas en ciertos temas, como parte de la colaboración proporcionada por la Sociedad Civil, al ser el mecanismo ideado para su participación.

Un ejemplo claro de ello es el proceso de consulta al que se refieren los nueve Comités de Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, y el Examen Periódico Universal del Consejo de DDHH de la ONU para que las representaciones gubernamentales integren o consideren la perspectiva y recomendaciones de la Sociedad Civil; en ocasiones, representada por ONG acreditadas en oficinas, programas y agencias de las Naciones Unidas, que también participan en reuniones de Grupos de Trabajo, Foros, y en la presentación de Informes.

Sobre este punto, cabe recalcar que las ONG no sólo actúan como un medio de representación o nexo entre la Sociedad Civil y los diferentes organismos de Naciones Unidas, sino que también permiten contar con mayor información respecto a la práctica que los Estados adoptan en diferentes campos del derecho. En ese sentido, las ONG asumen un papel de suma responsabilidad, pues en sus manos recae la obligación de otorgar información clara, objetiva, imparcial y técnica que contribuya a la promoción y protección de los derechos humanos.

De esta manera, las ONG cumplen con el objetivo claro de servir como nexo entre la Sociedad Civil y la Organización de las Naciones Unidas. Si bien es cierto que el rol protagónico en la negociación y adopción de decisiones en el marco de la ONU se centra en los Estados Miembros, también es cierto que la participación de las ONG en este campo ha ido en aumento, y que sus contribuciones son de especial importancia. En este sentido, su participación propone nuevas pautas para el establecimiento de estándares internacionales más cercanos a la Sociedad Civil mediante no sólo el reconocimiento de los desafíos que los Estados enfrentan en el cumplimiento de sus obligaciones, sino también por el reconocimiento de las buenas prácticas que deben replicarse a nivel internacional, y la promoción activa de aquellas iniciativas propuestas encaminadas a la protección de los derechos humanos.

Más allá de una conclusión, es positivo iniciar un diálogo abierto respecto al nuevo papel que las ONG deben adquirir en el escenario de las Naciones Unidas. El gran desafío que el Sistema Universal enfrenta en la actualidad es encontrar aquellos medios que permitan escuchar los miles de millones de voces que conforman la población mundial, en cada una de sus salas y organismos, para que las decisiones adoptadas no sólo fortalezcan las Naciones Unidas, sino también el desarrollo del Derecho Internacional en todos sus campos. Debemos recordar que nada está escrito en piedra, y que nuestra naturaleza como seres humanos nos permite siempre avanzar hacia un mejor destino.

¡Sin diálogo no puede existir el sistema multilateral al que aspiramos! ■
Sportbuddies

TEXTE ET PHOTO FLORIAN URFER

Lors de mon premier voyage sur Koh Chang en 2008, un ami établi dans la région m’avait promis qu’on jouerait au volleyball dans des conditions assez particulières. Il avait raison ! À ce moment-là, je terminais ma quinzième saison de pratique en ce domaine qui occupe encore une partie centrale de mon existence. 

Passer des froides salles de sport helvétiques à la chaleur humide de la jungle thaïlandaise fut une expérience qui devait changer toute ma vie... 

Après un vol de 11 000 km, quelques heures de bus et quelques kilomètres de moto-cross, je me retrouvais dans un petit village de la jungle, habité par plusieurs familles cambodiennes dont le sport favori, le volleyball, est pratiqué quotidiennement selon une formule que j’ai baptisée le « Wild volley ». Koh Chang, la deuxième plus grande île de Thaïlande se situe à une centaine de kilomètres de la frontière cambodgienne. 

Grand nombre de familles de ce pays voisin passent la frontière à la recherche d’emplois qui puissent leur assurer des salaires décents. Ensuite, des attentes interminables sont nécessaires pour obtenir un permis de travail. Des centaines de Cambodgiens accèdent ainsi aux emplois peu considérés (ouvriers, concierges, jardiniers, personnel de cuisine, etc.). Ils travaillent ainsi 6 jours sur 7 tout au long de l’année avec des salaires variant de 5000 à 7000 baths (150-200 CHF). Cela constitue l’envers du décor touristique, hôtelier notamment, qui reste, quant à lui, en mains thaïlandaises.

C’est après plusieurs retours sur l’île que des idées ont commencé à voir le jour en moi quant aux ressources que je pouvais mettre à disposition pour l’amélioration du sort des familles cambodiennes. La rencontre de Monsieur Ben Stennstra a été décisive à cet égard. Monsieur Stennstra a créé la Fondation « proudly open minded » grâce à laquelle il était en train de construire, au moment de notre première rencontre, une petite école pour les enfants cambodgiens. Ce projet portait le nom de Studybuddies. Il convient de noter à ce sujet que les enfants cambodgiens ne détenaient pas de documents officiels ou autres permis de travail de leurs parents, n’ont à ce jour pas droit à une scolarité publique en Thaïlande.

Lors de nos échanges, Ben me fit part de divers autres projets dont Sportbuddies, Musicbuddies, Ecobuddies, Soccerbuddies... Tous inspirés par une philosophie de rapprochement des cultures par le biais de l’éducation. De mon côté, c’est le projet Sportbuddies qui a retenu le plus mon attention et redoublé mon enthousiasme ; avec la confiance de Ben Stennstra, je pouvais dès lors me lancer dans sa réalisation.

Entre-temps, je rencontrais celle qui allait devenir mon épouse et, avec elle, je pus m’installer définitivement sur Koh Chang. Après une année de flottement dû à ce changement important de situation, nous avons pu acquérir, mon épouse et moi, une autonomie...
financière minimale grâce à ses talents d’artisane sur cuir. Très tôt, nous pûmes ouvrir un magasin. Durant ces trois années écoulées, j’ai pu m’immerger dans les cultures cambodgienne et thaïlandaise par le biais de la pratique quotidienne du volleyball, souvent dans de simples clairières dans la jungle, traversées d’un filet rudimentaire. Par voie de conséquence, j’ai côtoyé de près la petite école. Les enfants, au sortir des cours, me rejoignaient pour pratiquer le « Wild volley ».

Nous avons appris un jour que la fondation qui chapeautait la classe n’était plus soutenue financièrement et que le site risquait de disparaître, laissant 35 enfants déscolarisés. Pour ma femme et moi, ce n’était pas imaginable. J’ai donc entamé une campagne d’information par le biais de mon blog et auprès de nombreux amis qui sont venus visiter l’école. Grâce aux aides ponctuelles et à une gestion drastique des coûts de fonctionnement, l’école a été sauvée, du moins le temps de trouver des solutions à moyen terme. Je tiens à remercier tous ceux qui ont participé à cette opération de cœur.

Le centre de sport, en lien avec la pratique quotidienne du volleyball par la population cambodgienne de Koh Chang, devrait voir le jour sur Koh Chang. Il s’agit du Sportbuddies campus. L’existence de ce centre s’avère à ce jour déterminante puisque des synergies pourraient être envisagées entre Sportbuddies campus et Studybuddies, la petite école pour enfants cambodgiens. Voici comment pourraient s’opérer ces synergies:

– La construction d’un petit centre sportif dans un paysage et un climat extraordinaire pourrait permettre l’organisation de divers voyages destinés à des clubs sportifs (football, volleyball, beach volley, tennis, plongée, etc...).

– Cela permettrait des échanges humains très riches autour de la pratique du sport.

– Des retombées pour l’économie locale pourraient, le cas échéant, permettre la création d’emplois dans la région. Une telle activité serait par principe respectueuse de l’environnement social et naturel et associée en premier lieu les habitants de l’île dans son fonctionnement.

– Le bénéfice financier qui pourrait en résulter servirait directement la cause d’autres micros projets associatifs qui pourraient voir le jour sur Koh Chang et le long de la frontière Cambodge-Thaïlande. L’école des enfants cambodiens de Koh Chang en est un exemple concret.

Le chemin qui aboutira à l’édification du Sportbuddies campus est encore long mais, à la vue des enfants rieurs et enthousiastes qui, chaque matin, se rendent dans leur classe rudimentaire en plein air, au milieu de la jungle, ma motivation ne tarit pas.

On May 13, 2014 global leaders from around the world came together to discuss social good with young people at the Graduate Institute in Geneva. The event featured panelists including former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Muhammad Yunus, Founder of CNN, Ted Turner, President and CEO of the UN Foundation, Kathy Calvin, and many more.

Goodwall was fortunate enough to be invited to take part. The discussion began with the UN Foundation introducing the UN “My World Global Vote”, a survey allowing citizens from around the world to choose and prioritize the six issues most important to them to set the post 2015 Agenda. These issues were based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and included gender equality, right to water, climate change, better job opportunities, freedom from discrimination, more reliable and responsive governments and access to affordable food. Using SMS and mobile technology, the survey reached 194 countries, with 80 percent of the participants responding from developing countries. The goal is to hear the voices of 10 million people before setting the agenda for post 2015 Agenda. The My World results will be announced at the UN General Assembly on September 19, 2014.

To Kofi Annan, “MDGs are the basic floor; after 2015 we must achieve the goals”. They provide us with a common framework for development, and ensure that fighting poverty and guaranteeing access to healthcare, clean water, and education – particularly amongst girls – remain priorities on the development agenda.

When asked, “What is the largest problem that our world currently faces?” Kofi Annan responded without doubt: “climate change. Climate change presents the
greatest threat to health, food production, and economic development”. To slow the effects of climate change and eventually, reverse them, he is calling on decision-makers to focus on smart agriculture by using science to expand the amount of crops produced on a single plot of land, including in drought and flood situations. Kofi Annan also encouraged young people to take the issue of climate change into their own hands by choosing which companies to support, how to travel – whether by bike, train or car – and to put pressure on their local and national leaders to do what is right. According to Kofi Annan, “as individuals we have power and we can influence the direction of policy” and young people must be encouraged, with the help of technology, “to get engaged early, participate and play a part in shaping the future of the world.”

A student from the Graduate Institute of Geneva argued the latter point by Kofi Annan. She asserted that young people today are only encouraged to take small steps, like walking and biking, to improve the world and reverse the effects of climate change when they should be encouraged to think critically and take risks. Today’s leaders and “governments currently underestimate [young people’s] true power”, she said.

To her, “the world is not in crisis, it is transition... and a new world already exists in the minds of a younger generation... we will be able to overcome the obstacles presented by climate change in a way that is new and innovative”. She also argued that governments are lagging behind and that young people have lost faith in their governmental systems and leaders, but that an undercurrent spurred by youth that passes through businesses and organizations already exists.

“This undercurrent”, she said, “will allow us to move away from the old system and adapt to a new one”.

Another student questioned Kofi Annan on youth unemployment, to which he responded, “youth unemployment is a real problem and governments should provide adequate provisions for youth to get jobs”. That said, when addressing extended unpaid UN internships, he said that young people and students should not feel entitled to positions at the end of their unpaid internships. His reasoning was that, by gaining a position upon completion of an internship, students would be inherently denying others the same opportunity to gain valuable professional experience. Young entrepreneurs, young leaders, will play a critical role in creating jobs and defeating youth unemployment. He concluded by telling the young people in the audience to “be bold and when there are no jobs, create one”.

Following the event, the founder of Goodwall, Omar Bawa, had the opportunity to meet Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus, the father of microfinance.

To read more, see photos of the event and watch a video, visit: http://www.goodwall.org/posts/meeting-professor-muhammad-yunus

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When internships turn into careers

The World Health Organization (WHO) is building future leaders in public health through its internship programme at the Headquarters (HQ) in Geneva.

GEMMA VESTAL
WHO accepts around 200 to 350 interns and volunteers during the summer and 200 during the winter with a duration of at least six weeks up to a maximum of six months. It is an opportunity to have a glimpse of the technical and administrative programmes, learn the ropes of public health, enhance skills and capabilities on policy-making, and broaden networks in the different fields of public health. For those who aspire to a career in international public health, it is the ideal place to start.

Interns are a great addition to the workforce of the Organization. Bringing fresh ideas and new perspectives and producing high-quality work they contribute significantly to the Organization’s leadership and performance on global health matters.

An internship at WHO is sometimes seen as a rite of passage that many staff members have taken. It is a baptism of fire that transitioned them into the Organization. It has prepared them with the core competencies in communication, managing themselves, producing results, adapting to changing environments, fostering teamwork, promoting cultural differences, and setting an example. Even though unpaid, the intern reaps the benefits later in their career – all told, the internship stint is seen as a worthwhile investment of time and resources.
Living in Geneva is definitely not an easy venture on the pocket. Only those who can afford it are able to do it, and invariably interns come from high-income countries. However, equitable access to this life-changing programme is slowly being achieved thanks to available scholarships. For example, this summer four interns from lower middle-income countries that would normally have zero or one intern, have been selected. Nationalities of interns are diversifying and they return to their home country to transmit the experiences and knowledge gained at WHO.

Like most internships, the programme does not come without a challenge. Dr. Raymond Bruce Aylward, Assistant Director-General for Polio, Emergencies, and Country Collaboration, started out in the early 90s with an internship of three weeks, extended to a month and then two months. The struggle of finding accommodation and funding for living expenses added further to his adventure. He made the most out of his internship by networking and getting to know the key people in his field. He already knew he wanted to focus on vaccines and had a vision on how he could contribute. After his internship, he realized that he needed to go to the field for a first-hand country experience. When he had gained enough knowledge in the different regions, he returned to HQ in Geneva to contribute to the global eradication of polio. When asked what advice he could give to current and future interns, he said “get everything you can out of the internship experience, have some field experience after if that is what you want, and always take a chance and try.”

Interns can benefit fully from their internships by being proactive in requesting additional tasks, by performing well, and making a lasting impression. Because the internship is a learning experience, it is the best time to ask questions and meet different experts. Staff are helpful, friendly, and approachable and they are just an email or Outlook calendar invite away. Reaching out to the different experts because they are within one’s grasp is the best chance to gain a mentor who can serve as a model and guide for one’s career path. In addition, engaging in various activities such as joining the intern board or thinking of other projects to collaborate with other departments are some of the ways to spice up the internship experience. Dr. Richelle Duque, who is an intern at the Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases Department, has worked on a project with WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Secretariat but also seconded to the Department of Communications during the 67th World Health Assembly. In Richelle’s words, “it has been an eye-opening, life-learning, and fruitful experience that contributed greatly to my professional and personal growth and development.” It may be unpaid but the experience, realizations, learnings, and epiphanies that come with it are priceless.

And as a parting message, we want to stress that the internship is a symbiotic relationship, wherein an organization can reap so much benefit not only with producing results but also in producing potential candidates for succession planning.

About the authors:
Ms Gemma Vestal started as legal intern at WHO in 2002 and ended up being hired as a Legal Officer & Scientist in 2003. Dr. Richelle Duque, who is a medical doctor in the Philippines and the President of WHO Intern Board, works with Ms Vestal as an intern.
Commemoration of the International Day of Peacekeepers in Geneva

Inaugurated in 2003 on the initiative of UN Special magazine, the Memorial in Ariana Park dedicated to all those who have perished for peace in the line of duty working for UN, has become the defining Memorial for UN Peacekeepers. UN Special is honoured by this choice.

EVELINA RIOUKHINA AND SARAH JORDAN

As at this time every year, peacekeepers assembled on June 3 to commemorate their departed colleagues. On this solemn occasion, special tribute was also paid to those civilian UN staff who work hand-in-hand with the military forces in peacekeeping operations or other field missions.

As the flag was raised, the numbers sank in: 116,000 military and 20,000 civilians deployed in peacekeeping operations on 4 continents with 16 operations currently underway. And since it all began 66 years ago, 3,223 men or women have paid the ultimate price, with a loss of over 100 troops and 20 civilians in the last year alone.

Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Director-General, presided over the ceremony. Having served himself in several peacekeeping missions in the course of his career, he acknowledged that this event held special significance for him. He reminded those present that these men and women are “not only a source of inspiration, but also a source of hope.” Colonel Laurent Attar-Bayrou, President of the International Association of Peacekeepers, presented him with an honorary blue beret for services rendered in the field and then spoke, taking Julien, a young peacekeeper killed in Afghanistan in 2008, as an example of “a universal soldier”, underlining the sacrifice he made and the enduring pain of the loved ones he has left behind.

Ian Richards, Executive Secretary of the UNOG Coordinating Council, then addressed the assembly, drawing a contrast between the sunny calm and beauty of the Ariana park and dangerous conflicts in places such as Darfur, Mali, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, reminding us that “we should never take peace for granted”.

The ceremony was also attended by a group of high school students from Lyon in France, who presented the DG with a gift, and the Lebanese Labour Minister, Sejaan Kazzi, who praised the different peacekeeping operations present in his country. It was followed by a round table discussion in which the Ambassadors to the United Nations of Ghana, Jordan and Pakistan participated. These three countries supply a large number of troops to peacekeeping operations.

To work for the United Nations is a great privilege. Unfortunately, more than ever before, the work we do is also dangerous. Let us never forget those who have lost their lives for peace and continue to pay tribute to them!

The UNOG Coordinating Council was at the origin of the creation of this Memorial to the colleagues perished for peace. The UNOG Council members have recently suggested that in view of the high number of victims, a more prominent and centrally located Monument in the Ariana Park would be justified. A Monument visible to us daily (as well as to delegates attending conferences and meetings) would serve as a collective and permanent tribute to the Fallen.

Evelina and Sarah are both UN Peacekeepers. Their dedication to peace and their commitment to the ideals of the United Nations is an inspiration to all of us.

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His statement covered the collaboration of the Staff Association with the Administration on a number of issues, three of which are outlined below:

**Staff professional development**
Greater impact requires better prepared staff. Investing in staff development – in all categories and duty stations – is an important component to improve WHO performance overall. But better management of individual careers and availability of opportunities is essential as well as a performance management system that allows personal and team accomplishments to be recognized. The Staff Association sees opportunities for improvement, particularly in performance management, which when misused can damage the Organization’s reputation and staff morale.

We encourage the Administration to retain the existing talent and create career pathways at every level within the workforce. We need to invest in attracting promising young people and to offer them opportunities to grow within WHO or the United Nations system. Such efforts will mean our Directors-General will have a reliable, efficient workforce which understands our multiple dimensions and carries forward an institutional memory.

**Staff mobility**
Staff mobility is an important issue which must take into consideration the professional and personal situations of staff members in order to fully further the interests of the Organization. Managed correctly, mobility is the way forward to increase the cohesion of the agency and make it genuinely global. Mobility has the potential to provide additional opportunities for lateral reassignment and professional growth, particularly if rotation is applied to a broad range of positions, not just international professionals.

However, we must review all positions and define the job categories within which mobility or rotation can be considered. Defining and managing such a system will require careful preparation in close collaboration between management and staff representatives. WHO, as a specialized agency, requires a high level of technical expertise for many of its functions. It is therefore essential to identify the positions that are effectively interchangeable, as well as those that require special skills to maintain the credibility of the respective programmes.

**Staff health insurance (SHI)**
The Staff Association remains concerned about the lack of local recognition of WHO SHI in health facilities in many countries across the world, and the resulting need for staff to provide major, up-front, cash guarantees. Staff, retirees and dependents in the field are those most acutely affected, and the related financial difficulties that result from this situation represent a serious risk to health and security when health emergencies arise. Since January 2014, when this was last discussed at the Executive Board, the WHO SHI Global Oversight Committee has begun examining the problems faced by staff, and a comprehensive review of SHI administrative arrangements and recommend improvements is underway.

We are confident that this will be a rigorous, fast-moving process and the Staff Associations are committed to work with administration to identify the best solutions. In the meantime ad hoc mechanisms are in place to provide emergency support from WHO SHI (24/7), as well as procedures enabling WHO SHI to provide up-front payment guarantees to health facilities.
«Si l'occasion ne frappe pas, construisez une porte»

“If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door”

— Milton Berle
M. Jean-Yves Marin, le Directeur des MAH, a accueilli UN Special au sein de cet ancien temple de l’art afin de nous présenter son projet d’agrandissement, ses expositions itinérantes et l’avenir de l’art contemporain.

L’origine des collections aujourd’hui détenues par les MAH remonte à presque 200 ans. Pouvez-vous brièvement évoquer le cycle de leur évolution ?

Les MAH ont été conçus dans l’optique d’un musée universel afin de rappeler aux gens leurs origines. On peut résumer son histoire en trois étapes majeures.

Tout commence en 1825 avec le Musée Rath qui ouvre ses portes au public grâce au généreux don des sœurs Jeanne et Henriette Rath. Vers 1875 ce bâtiment néo-classique ne pouvait plus accueillir toutes les collections et en 1910, grâce à un autre généreux donateur, M. Charles Galland, Genève inaugure le Musée d’art et d’histoire aux Tranchées.


Qu’en est-il des autres musées suisses à Zurich, Berne et Bâle ? Ces villes ont séparé les musées de peintures et les musées d’histoire. Au MAH, notre Musée regroupe l’art et l’histoire. C’est un musée encyclopédique comme il en existe peu, à part le Louvre, ou le British Museum.

On dit souvent que Genève est la plus petite des grandes villes du monde. Alors, notre Musée est le plus petit parmi les plus grands musées encyclopédiques.

ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS

Même si vous habitez à Genève depuis peu ou que vous n’avez visité la cité de Calvin qu’une seule fois, vous connaissez certainement ce bâtiment néo-classique situé à proximité de la Vieille Ville toute proche – le Musée d’art et d’histoire (MAH). Construit en 1910 par Marc Camoletti, le Musée reste à jamais un symbole de l’identité de la société genevoise.

TEXTE ET PHOTOS NATASHA DE FRANCISCO

Beaucoup de gens ignorent que le MAH est l’un des trois plus grands musées de Suisse. Il comprend le Musée d’art et d’histoire, le Cabinet d’arts graphiques, la Maison Tavel, et le Musée Rath. Il compte parmi ses collections, la première collection européenne de paysages suisses dans le monde. L’ensemble de ces institutions est connu sous le nom « Les Musées d’art et d’histoire ».

Musée d’art et d’histoire de Genève

ars longa, vita brevis

M. Jean-Yves Marin
Je pense profondément que cet encyclopédisme du musée doit être conservé. Plus nous exposons de collections diverses, variées et complètes, plus forte va être la connaissance de notre civilisation. C’est le sens de notre projet culturel.

Avec tous ces projets, certainement vous manquez d’espace. Comment votre projet d’agrandissement va-t-il changer le Musée et le format des expositions ?

Le bâtiment du MAH est resté inchangé depuis son inauguraton en 1910. Le projet des Ateliers Jean Nouvel (Paris) nous apportera 10 000 mètres carrés supplémentaires. Un espace culturel pourra être créé, ainsi que de nouvelles salles pour les expositions temporaires et permanentes, et de vastes zones d'accueil.

À l’origine, le Musée a été conçu comme lieu d’exposition, pas comme un lieu d’accueil et de rencontre. Nous planifions un lieu d’accueil spacieux, contenant un restaurant, une librairie, un auditorium comprenant tous les équipements informatiques modernes, où chacun peut amener des clients ou donner un rendez-vous à ses amis et enchaîner par une visite au musée comme c’est déjà le cas dans beaucoup de grandes villes. Il est nécessaire de se diversifier pour attirer le public et faire en sorte qu’il se sente bien au musée.

Selon vous, en quoi les goûts des Genevois diffèrent-ils de ceux des touristes étrangers ou de la communauté internationale de Genève ?

Bien évidemment, les goûts sont différents – certains Genevois veulent un musée très hi-tech, d’autres un musée très classique, très proche de l’année de sa création. Mais sans aucun doute, tout le monde souhaite un musée moderne de qualité qui soit représentatif de leur ville et dont ils puissent être fier.

Pour les Suisses, le MAH est un lieu emblématique et identitaire que beaucoup de Genevois connaissent depuis leur enfance, l’endroit où ils venaient le dimanche après-midi avec leurs parents. Le Musée donne une clé pour comprendre le code culturel de la société genevoise, par exemple, la Salle des Armes raconte l’histoire de la grande Fête de l’Escalade (12 décembre 1602).

Pour les touristes, le MAH est un lieu de référence important. Il y a énormément d’étrangers à Genève. Ils viennent à Genève pour des congrès ou pour faire du shopping dans le quartier de la rue du Rhône. Mais paradoxalement Genève n’est pas perçue comme une ville de culture, comme Bâle par exemple, avec ses nombreuses musées et monuments. Quand on arrive dans une ville on a souvent envie de visiter un musée qui donne une idée générale du lieu et notre tâche est de donner envie de visiter le musée. Après les Suisses et les Français, les Chinois se placent en troisième position quant au nombre de visiteurs, ils sont très curieux !

L’art sert aussi de passerelle entre les cultures, notre récente exposition Humaniser la guerre ? organisée en collaboration avec le CICR au Musée Rath (30 avril – 20 juillet 2014) pour marquer les 150 ans de l’action humanitaire, en est un bon exemple. C’est là la première fois que nous nous sommes engagés dans un projet de coopération avec la Genève internationale d’une si grande ampleur et si créatif.


La plupart de vos collègues, les directeurs des grands musées, pensent que l’art est aujourd’hui devenu plus abordable mais a perdu son contenu. Pensez-vous qu’après les grandes époques de la Renaissance, du Classicisme, des grands réalisateurs, l’art contemporain est maintenant en crise ?

Le grand renouvellement de l’art contemporain viendra de la technologie de l’information. On voit de plus en plus d’artistes qui travaillent avec des technologies modernes. Ce sont les réquisits de notre époque.

Le grand drame c’est que l’art contemporain couûte trop cher. La culture a besoin d’argent, mais il n’est pas normal que certaines œuvres dans les galeries contemporaines soient vendues à des prix fous.

À l’opposé des galeries, le rôle d’un musée est de rendre l’art accessible. Par exemple, au Musée d’art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO) vous avez toutes sortes de représentations. Nous collaborons pour que les œuvres qui y ont été exposées il y a 20, 30 ans, et qui ont acquis de la valeur au fil du temps, puissent s’imprimer dans l’héritage culturel.

L’année prochaine, au Musée Rath, nous allons coproduire une exposition avec le MAMCO intitulée « Biens publics », dans l’idée d’exposer les œuvres d’art acquises depuis 40 ans et voir par la même occasion pourquoi elles font partie des collections permanentes. Le rôle du MAMCO est l’expérimentation tandis que le nôtre est de conserver. Certaines œuvres considérées comme mineures il y a quelques années ont acquis aujourd’hui une grande valeur. Par exemple, les grands tableaux de Pierre Soulage n’ont pas été compris par le public de l’époque ; aujourd’hui ils sont ultra classiques. Nous en présenterons dans le nouveau MAH grâce à la collection de Jean Claude Gandur.

Vous avez annoncé beaucoup de nouvelles expositions. Comment pensez-vous les réaliser avec votre projet d’agrandissement ?

Le grand bâtiment du MAH fermera sans doute ses portes le 31 décembre 2015 pour une période de 5 à 6 ans et nous réouvrirons pour l’inauguration en 2020-2021. Entre-temps, le Musée Rath, la Maison Tavel, le Cabinet d’arts graphiques resteront ouverts pour les expositions.

Nos collections seront exposées à travers le monde. Le Grand Musée de Tokyo et le Musée d’Abu Dhabi vont accueillir certaines de nos collections. Le Canada est très intéressé par notre collection gréco-romaine, de même que les Américains le sont pour notre collection de paysages.

Mais avant la fermeture, tout le monde est invité à découvrir notre riche programme culturel : Rodin - L’accident et l’aléatoire (20 juin – 28 septembre 2014) au MAH et Courbet, les années suisses (5 septembre 2014 – 4 janvier 2015) au Musée Rath – y compris un tableau magnifique représentant les Alpes que nous avons pu acquérir il y a quelques semaines grâce à de généreux donateurs anonymes, ainsi que les collections permanentes avant leur départ.

En 2020, je vous invite à l’inauguration d’un nouveau musée qui, j’espère, sera un lieu inconcevable. Le défi est de réussir notre pari pour offrir un musée de qualité qui plaise au public. Nous y mettrons toute notre âme et notre énergie !

* L’art est long, la vie est brève

Juillet-Août 2014 | 27
Rodin

The art of chance

“… Do not ever hesitate to express what you feel, despite stepping in opposition to commonly accepted concepts, you may not be understood at first, but fear not being lonely, soon friends will follow you. The truth wins inevitably…”

Auguste Rodin, Testament

September 11, 2001. From under the crushed debris of the World Trade Centre the rescue brigades are extracting fragments of human remains, personal belongings, and unidentified objects. Among these are broken bronze pieces of what used to be Auguste Rodin’s sculptures. Sculptures and drawings by the famous French artist, all part of the impressive Cantor Fitzgerald art collection housed at the “museum in the sky” on the 105th floor, are lost or broken, like many human beings, almost beyond recognition.

An accident, a hazard, a chance have always been part of Rodin’s creations. In his book, “Art”, he reveals that when he got stuck with modelling a clay sculpture, he would sometimes drop it on the floor and have another look. He would then decide.

Many of his famous sculptures were natural products of this process. Man with the broken nose (1864) was among first Rodin’s accidents. The original plaster bust froze and the back of the head fell off. The remaining mask was submitted by Rodin to the Salon of 1865 and was rejected. Rodin was changing titles all the time, regrouping figures and parts of his works as it happened to the famous Burghers of Calais (1889) or Tragic Muse (1896) extracted from the Monument to Victor Hugo (1890). Fascinated by Michelangelo, he was reinventing the classic art. For this he was loved and hated during his lifetime and today still remains one of the most copied artists with his Thinker casted in multiple versions found all around the world.

A gorgeous trio of original versions of the Thinker (1880),
the Tragic Muse and the Man with the broken nose are part of the permanent collections of Geneva’s Museum of Art and History (MAH). All three were given to MAH by Auguste Rodin after his first Suisse exhibition held in 1896 in Musée Rath, which was quite badly received by public and critics. The tradition of decorative and highly thematic figure sculpture clashed with Rodin’s daring approach to reveal imperfections, scratches, cuts, his freedom to deliberately show unfinished bits of his work in their original beauty.

Almost 118 years after, Geneva welcomes Rodin for the second time. Apart from the works belonging to the permanent collections, the new exhibition – Rodin. L’Accident. L’Aléatoire (20 June – 28 September 2014) – is hosting selected sculptures and drawings from the Rodin Museum and the Musée d’Orsay in Paris, Victoria and Albert Museum in London, la Neue Pinakothek of Munich, Fondation Beyeler, and private collections. The range of Rodin’s works is impressive and covers the whole period from his early days as a young artist to maturity, and even beyond his lifetime – some twisted pieces pulled from the wreckage of Twin Towers.

The format of the exhibition is even more intriguing. United by the philosophy of ‘accident’, by Rodin’s side, you will find Matisse, Druet, César, Lavier with his emblematic Giulietta crashed car, titled after the iconic Alfa Romeo model, which the artist bought up in a scrap yard, after making sure the accident had not been mortal.

Laurence Madeleine, chief curator of the exhibition, is proud to say that two years of preparations and intense work among partners across the globe resulted in a truly amazing opportunity to assemble really unique pieces. “It’s a very peculiar topic and the art works are quite complex – but even though they all talk about ‘accident’, the way we chose them is not by chance. They are here to remind us of the fragility of art and humanity”, – she explains.

The second exhibition of Rodin in Geneva is now open to public. Like a century ago, it will test people’s perceptions, provoke, puzzle, question, inspire. Whatever reaction it brings, Rodin, who himself was against all restorations truly believing that things should bear the signs of time and events, would have certainly appreciated it.
Philanthropy

Between the social and the private

The dichotomy between the private and social sectors is more than ever, under review.

Maria-Angeles Martin Gil
Dissociating enterprises from their social impact and managing them strictly under the criteria of financial markets, has often been attributed as one of the mistakes originating the current financial crisis, for instance, in the asset-backed securities and real estate markets, where thousands of people have in the recent past lost their homes on account of bad investment practices. More and more companies have been requested to measure and disseminate the impact of their activities in not only the environment but also in the communities where they operate. Demands for greater transparency and reporting are coming from customers, NGOs, their own investors, and certain stock exchanges such as the Brazilian BOVESPA (which requests that companies listed on it publish their yearly corporate responsibility report).

However, the private sector has not been running its commercial activities ignoring totally the social sector. Although governments have traditionally been the main funder of the NGOs, many big companies and some highly wealthy individuals have been transferring regular capital flows, mainly through their foundations, to social projects and organizations. This activity is known as philanthropy.

The evolution and status of philanthropic grants are very different around the world. It has been a concept with a long tradition in the USA, but as some economies are becoming wealthier, and the number of high-net-worth-individuals increases, their philanthropic activities show a rising trend. On the other hand, since the current financial crisis strongly impacted the social sector and more specifically the NGOs that are struggling to cope with a decrease in governmental funding and a continuing climbing up in social needs, there has been an increase in private fundraising activities developing new partnerships between such NGOs and philanthropists/private donors. Interestingly enough, according to Giving USA Foundation, evidence collected from the United States based on data collected since the 1960s reveals that donations in real terms do not decline as much as is usually expected during an economic recession. This result is aligned with the inner idea that charity is non for profit money, so is not following the logical trend of financial investments, where recession means less available resources. Moreover, it is reasonable to think that the most conscious donors, will give more when tougher times result in a higher demand for basic social services.

Philanthropy, albeit basically a voluntary action, is not free from challenges. First, these activities are perceived by a section of the public opinion as an exercise indulged in purely to avoid tax. Secondly, since there is often no immediate, measurable outcome of a philanthropic activity over the short term, these are continually under scrutiny.

Related to the tax avoidance, it is argued that the fiscal incentive is key to encourage these activities that otherwise will be heavily reduced. In addition, philanthropists are helping the Government in their social activities, so those taxes saved are somehow reinvested in the society, serving the tax purpose at the end of the day.

Concerning the second point, we have witnessed in the last years, the emergence of a new concept called “impact investment”. To distinguish themselves from the classical charity, impact investors focus their investment efforts on projects or companies from which they obtain a defined outcome. They are definitely putting their money in it for their social goal, but they apply or adapt “for-profit” techniques of measurements to be able to evaluate the real impact of their investments, and also to decide how much they will continue funding that project or whether they will eventually abandon it.

For classical philanthropists, it is still not clear how this new way of giving improves, for instance, the effectiveness of a donation. It may so happen that the cost of following up a project could be more than simply the lump sum donation. Also, social projects need a very long-term commitment that a social investor needs to be open to, whereas a donor can be more flexible with timelines.

Finally, a third argument that challenges impact investment is that they focus on the late state of a social project, when social innovation needs the capital support, that they cannot find in the markets, at the early stages of their inception and implementation. For that reason the millions of NGOs not able to find funds, are unable to reach the billions or even perhaps trillions available in the hands of impact investors.

Will impact investors and philanthropists achieve primacy in social funding instead of governments? The UN could be well prepared to play a key role, speaking the financial language of the investors and helping the social sector to attract funds while continuing diplomatic dialogue with governments for social good.
SARAH JORDAN, UNOG

These were also the words used in 2000 by Kofi Annan to launch the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight goals which cover issues such as development, diversity, reducing poverty, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015.

These words are also the title of Mr. Annan’s new book, which contains contextualised and commented highlights from the key speeches of his term of office.

As 2015 approaches, the moment has come to take stock of the success of the MDGs and to look beyond to what the Organization’s future goals could be. Such was the focus of the discussion that marked the book launch on June 3 in Geneva under Barceló’s dome in the Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Chamber. It took the form of a “conversation” between Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary-General and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, moderated by Imogen Foulkes, BBC correspondent in Geneva.

Acting UNOG Director General Michael Møller opened the proceedings, describing Kofi Annan as “a moral compass” and praising “his ability to connect with people irrespective of background”. “When he speaks, the world listens”, he said. In the debate that followed, scattered with numerous anecdotes, the speakers looked back on the last 15 years, the goals achieved and what remains to be done in the Organization and in the world: “Reform is a process, not an event” said Mr. Annan. Mr. Sidibé described how UNAIDS put HIV/AIDS on the global agenda, leading to the creation of the Global Fund, a new concept of shared responsibility and tangible results such as a huge drop in the cost of drugs to fight AIDS.

Looking forward, the speakers mentioned many avenues to follow in the future including more private public partnerships, greater respect for the rule of law and Human Rights and the empowerment of women. The debate was then opened to the floor and Mr. Annan and Mr. Sidibé answered questions on a range of issues including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), discrimination in all forms, reform of the Security Council and African resource management, with Mr. Annan commenting “there are never silly questions, only silly answers.”

After the debate, Mr. Annan signed copies of his book, proceeds from the sale of which will be donated to UNAIDS.
Les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) sont des organisations ou associations à but non-lucratif, généralement indépendantes de toute autorité politique, qui promeuvent une cause, un bien commun ou intérêt général.

OLIVIER BORIE

S’appuyant sur des valeurs morales, des principes, des droits fondamentaux ou une certaine vision du monde, elles traitent, entre autres, de questions liées au développement, aux droits humains, à l’aide humanitaire, à la protection de l’environnement, des consommateurs ou à la lutte contre les discriminations. Elles ont parfois aussi une dimension religieuse. Financées par des dons et des contributions, elles peuvent être locales, nationales ou internationales, et forment ce qu’on appelle la «société civile».

La naissance de la Croix-Rouge à la fin du XIXe siècle marque le début de l’ère moderne des ONG. À l’issue de la seconde guerre mondiale, elles virent leur rôle consultatif officiellement reconnu dans la Charte des Nations Unies. Aujourd’hui, plus de 31 000 d’entre elles travaillent avec les Nations Unies et plus de 3 900 sont enregistrées auprès du Conseil économique et social.1

Les ONG dirigent l’attention sur certains sujets ou des problèmes. Elles visent à rendre des services et à faire progresser leurs idées dans l’opinion publique, les gouvernements et le monde économique. Elles ont un rôle d’opposition critique tout en optant aussi, parfois, pour des partenariats. Elles alertent, informent et, même, certifient. Certaines participent également à des négociations et à l’élaboration de normes. Lorsqu’elles agissent pour compenser des situations de carence ou d’incurie des États, réelles ou supposées, elles ne font le plus souvent qu’œuvrer au respect de lois existantes. Il arrive qu’elles empiètent sur
la souveraineté des pouvoirs publics mais n’ont pas vocation à les remplacer.

À qui les ONG rendent-elles des comptes ? À leurs donateurs, à leurs membres, aux bénéficiaires, à l’opinion publique, à des autorités ? Elles déclarent agir au nom de l’intérêt général et s’expriment au nom de groupes dont elles embrassent, ou se saisissent de la cause. Elles n’ont en fait d’autre légitimité que les valeurs qu’elles défendent et celle que leur confèrent leurs actions. Dans les contextes de crise (conflits, catastrophes naturelles, famines, etc.), l’urgence dépolitise la situation et légitime l’intervention humanitaire qui semble alors justifier son existence.

Les ONG sont aussi utilisées comme caution morale dès lors qu’on les implique quelque peu, même à titre consultatif, pour donner l’apparence d’un débat où l’avis de chaque partie aura été pris en considération, désamorçant ainsi toute contestation.

Peuvent-elles être réellement indépendantes de leurs bailleurs de fonds ? Elles reçoivent des agences de développement des sommes importantes, et devraient logiquement s’aligner sur leurs positions.

La bonne réputation générale des ONG leur attire la sympathie et le soutien des donateurs qui pensent que leur argent sera mieux dépensé qu’en empruntant des voies officielles. Il n’empêche qu’on leur reproche, parfois, une certaine opacity. Des initiatives comme l’Internationale Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) et Publish what you fund s’efforcent de rendre plus transparent le monde (faut-il parler d’industrie ?) de l’aide.

La professionnalisation touche toujours plus d’ONG qui recourent à des techniques de marketing dignes des plus grandes multinationales. On stimule une réaction immédiate plutôt qu’une réflexion sur un temps long qui ne retiendra que peu l’attention. Les histoires simples de victimes et de sauveurs sont particulièrement bien adaptées aux médias de masse.

La récolte de fonds n’est plus un acte militant de volontariat mais une profession où l’on multiplie les contacts pour maximiser ses chances de recruter un membre donateur. Le marché du don fait l’objet d’une concurrence âpre, surtout pendant les fêtes de fin d’année durant lesquelles on n’hésitera pas à instrumentaliser les bons sentiments. Mais jusqu’à quel point peut-on appliquer une logique de marché ? Faut-il aller jusqu’à mettre en compétition des valeurs ou des droits fondamentaux, ou souhaiter le renouvellement de crises et de détresse pour assurer leur activité ? L’institutionnalisation des ONG introduit une exigence de rentabilité pour pérenniser leur structure.

Elles ne sont, bien entendu, qu’un acteur parmi d’autres dans cette problématique. L’aide au développement des dernières décennies a certes apporté des bienfaits, mais a aussi contribué à entretenir des situations de dépendance et de pauvreté. Chaque vie compte, mais accorde-t-on réellement le statut de personnes à des bénéficiaires qui, à distance, paraissent anonymes et interchangeables ? Les ONG ne seraient-elles que de l’huile des rouages d’un système pour le rendre plus supportable, plus humain ? Après tout, on a affaire à une relation asymétrique où pour bénéficier de l’aide, il faut se plier à des conditions.

Dans un contexte de mondialisation croissante des défis sociaux et environnementaux, les ONG vont être amenées à mieux coordonner leurs efforts dans une vision plus systémique des choses. Elles vont aussi devoir adopter les procédures de reporting extra-financier pour une meilleure transparence. Le développement de leur influence et de leur rôle dépendra avant tout de l’évolution de l’équilibre entre une plus grande gouvernance mondiale et un retour à la primauté de la souveraineté des États.

1 http://csonet.org/
The growing importance of public procurement
and the need for professionalism

Over the past decades, the role of procurement in the public sector has evolved from a simple support service in the administration division to a key function playing a strategic role in the organization.

JOHN HABONIMANA

Governments today use public procurement as a policy instrument. In the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, it accounts for 16% of GDP, on average. This illustrates that procurement is a major component of the economy and public spending. It is for this reason that the OECD has invested significant resources to support different governments in conducting necessary reforms in their procurement systems.

The ongoing Eurozone crisis that has been affecting the countries of the Eurozone since early 2009 has obliged governments and policymakers to embark upon a series of austerity measures and bailout programmes as one way of tackling the crisis.

As far as procurement is concerned, most of the implemented reforms are focusing on combating corruption, enhancing productivity and eliminating waste with the aim of achieving savings in these times of hard budget constraints.

In a broader context, OECD countries are using public procurement not only as a tool to achieve the primary objective of value for money, but also as a strategic policy to promote sustainable development (corporate social responsibility, human rights, labor and the environment).

The growing importance of public procurement is also observed in the United Nations in terms of volumes of goods and services purchased, the movement of funds and the number of countries involved in the various transactions.

In its annual statistical report on United Nations procurement, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) reveals that the overall procurement volume (goods and services combined) of United Nations organizations during 2012 increased to $15.4 billion, from $14.3 billion in 2011.

In the top 10 of countries supplying the United Nations in 2012, the report shows that Sudan represents 2.8% and
Despite many scholars and practitioners acknowledging its growing importance, procurement is still not a major topic in public administration education programs. It has been a neglected academic area over the years. Currently, very few higher institutions offer a degree in Procurement at Bachelor and/or Masters Level.

In Switzerland, for example, the University of Geneva claims that its Diplôme de Management Stratégique, Achat, Logistique et Approvisionnement, is the only accredited university degree to be offered by a higher institution in Switzerland in the field of Supply Chain Management.

This neglect can be explained by the fact that procurement has traditionally been seen as a sub function under Administration/Budget/Finance.

Seen from this point of view, budgeting and finance activities accomplish the strategic planning function, while procurement activities are perceived to be consisting in the execution of clerical and routinely function.

In the absence of interest by the traditional higher institutions, professional awarding bodies have built the bridge between the professional world and the academic area.

One of the leading awarding body is the UK based Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS), that celebrated its 80th anniversary in 2012. It is the world’s largest procurement and supply professional organization with a global community of over 94,000 people in 150 countries. CIPS qualifications are internationally recognized as the global standard for top quality procurement professionals. Its MCIPS designation is a professional certification credential that marks its holders out as highly qualified and experienced procurement professionals. To achieve MCIPS, one must complete the Diploma, Advanced diploma and Professional diploma in procurement and supply.

The lack of formal education programs in procurement has also led international organizations to cooperate with professional organizations and universities. In partnership with these institutions, the United Nations and the World Bank has been at the forefront of the promotion of the procurement profession and the building of capacities among practitioners.

The International Labor Organizations (ILO) has partnered with the University of Turin in Italy to offer a Masters degree in Public Procurement Management for Sustainable Development. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) cooperates with the CIPS on Procurement Training and Certification.

Recently, the World Bank launched the Certificate Program in Public Procurement (CPPP) as the first ever, free procurement certificate delivered as Massive Open Online Course (MOOC).

All these efforts are an indication that perception of procurement has changed for the better and as mentioned above, there is no doubt that procurement plays a critical role in organizations.

It’s a high time procurement practitioners move up to the next level. Knowing the applicable rules and regulations will always be the foundation but will definitely not be enough to be efficient in procurement. People involved in procurement are invited to be “cost killers” during periods of budget constraints and increasing demand to meet sustainability requirements. To do this, procurement professionals must be able to apply a combination of quality management and cost savings techniques such as Lean management, Total Quality Management and Six Sigma. All are ways of assessing that quality standards and efficiency are achieved at all the stages of the procurement process in order to improve performance and reduce costs.
Do foreigners drive more dangerously?

If you are foreign and driving in Switzerland you could be paying up to 60% more for your car insurance.

Table: Show me your passport
Nationality. Price per year in CHF
Swiss 1022
UK 1081
US 1082
France 1158
Russia 1356
Uzbekistan 1443
Brazil 1544
Mexico 1544
Palestine 1544
China 1544
Israel 1573
Ivory Coast 1615
Tunisia 1615
India 1615
Croatia 1625
Albania 1675
Turkey 1692

Prices are based on a 35 year-old male driving in Geneva with ten years residence, and are the average of the best five quotes available for fully comprehensive insurance (Casco complet) on a 2 litre petrol engine VW Golf – a car that is common in this city.

Swiss insurance companies publicly defend this practice saying the prices they charge are based on their statistical records of claims by different nationalities.

But how complete are these statistics? Are there really enough citizens of Vanuatu in Switzerland to be able to make a judgment on their driving skills? Does a foreigner who gets a Swiss passport suddenly drive more safely? And because pricing is by nationality and not by where you obtained your driving license, is it right to charge a Swiss citizen who learned to drive abroad less than a foreigner who learned to drive in Switzerland?

It may therefore be that this practice is both discriminatory and arbitrary. Indeed, on the same basis, companies could equally charge based on race, saying that their records show drivers of one skin colour to drive more safely than drivers of another skin colour. However, they probably wouldn’t venture that far.

Nevertheless, it appears that UN staff is being treated differently depending on their nationality.

Last year the European Court of Justice ruled that charging men more than women for car insurance was discriminatory. This does not affect Switzerland as it is not a member, but I would be interested to know whether the same arguments could be applied in Switzerland and would be like to hear from anyone willing to take this up legally.

Multiplying the number of foreign staff who drive by the additional amount they pay in insurance, shows huge savings to be made.
ONU/UN

UNCTAD@50

2014 is a jubilee year for UNCTAD. The Conference celebrates its 50th Anniversary.

EVELINA RIOUKHINA

It is auspicious that the UNCTAD’s 50th Anniversary takes place at a time when the global community rallies towards achieving the MDGs and seeks to respond to people’s aspirations around the world by setting the development agenda beyond 2015.

On 13 June, UNCTAD staff organized a special party on this Anniversary occasion. UNOG Coordinating Council graciously provided a grant for such an important event. This event was a symbolic opening of UNCTAD@50 week, dedicated to this important Anniversary. The week took place from 16 to 20 June and started with the launching of “UNCTAD at 50” book, specially written for this occasion and contains a deep analysis of UNCTAD, reflecting 50 years of its history (further details at: http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/UNCTAD_50_prog.pdf).

In 1964 Member States gathered in Geneva for “a better and more effective system of international economic co-operation, whereby the division of the world into areas of poverty and plenty may be banished and prosperity achieved by all.” Thus, by creating UNCTAD, the 1964 Geneva Conference added a permanent institutional fixture to the multilateral landscape with a responsibility “to formulate principles and policies on international trade and related problems of economic development”, as noted in the Conference’s outcome document.

“From its creation, UNCTAD has striven to build a world economy that serves the interests of all. This goal has been pursued through analytical research and innovative policy proposals, through intergovernmental negotiations and consensus-building and through technical cooperation with developing countries and countries with economies in transition to support their efforts to benefit from globalization.

“Today, old distinctions between North and South, and indeed between East and West, have blurred. Some developing countries have emerged to become global players and some countries have transitioned economically; at the same time, some industrialized nations have slumped into prolonged crisis. Other developing countries, such as the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States, face stagnating development prospects and vulnerability that hold back their aspirations.

“In this heterogeneous world, the need for renewed multilateralism has never been greater. UNCTAD’s work has evolved over its history from a focus on North-South relations and problems, to today’s greater emphasis on interdependence between countries and between economic sectors. Problems and challenges now cross borders and disciplines with tremendous speed and ease. We face cataclysmic threats to the global commons, including from climate change, from the financial, food and energy crises and from other dangers, such as conflict and deadly diseases.

“These truly global problems – spurred on by our interdependent and interconnected lives – cry out for global solutions and for the provision of truly global public goods. Today we are asking again, as our predecessors did at UNCTAD’s first Conference in Geneva, are the structures designed to govern the global economy really “fit for purpose”?”

These are only some of the issues and questions, raised by Mr. Mukhisa Kituyi, the U.N. Under-Secretary-General and the seventh Secretary-General of UNCTAD and which were discussed and deeply analyzed during the UNCTAD@50 week. Even at a time when some are questioning its relevance, above events presented an opportunity for the Secretary-General to show how in a world that is more globalized than 1964 the ability of developing countries to reap the benefits of trade is more relevant than ever. We do hope that Mr. Kituyi will kindly agree to share with UN Special his vision of UNCTAD beyond 2015. We believe that at a time when some are questioning its relevance, this will be one more opportunity to the Secretary-General to show how in a world that is more globalized than 1964 the ability of developing countries to reap the benefits of trade is more relevant than ever, and we look forward to meeting with Mr. Kituyi on the pages of UN Special later in this jubilee year.

Further details on UNCTAD@50:
Aleppo, an heritage for humanity

Aleppo or Halab in Arabic is the largest city in Syria and serves as the capital of Aleppo Governorate, the most populous Syrian governorate. It is located in north-western Syria 310 kilometres from Damascus.

Aleppo is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world; it has been inhabited since perhaps as early as the 6th millennium BC. Excavations at Tell as-Sawda and Tell al-Ansari, just south of the old city of Aleppo, show that the area was occupied since at least the latter part of the 3rd millennium BC, and this is also when Aleppo is first mentioned in cuneiform tablets unearthed in Ebla and Mesopotamia, in which it is noted for its commercial and military proficiency. Such a long history is probably due to its being a strategic trading point midway between the Mediterranean Sea and Mesopotamia (i.e. modern Iraq).
The Arabic name of the city "Halab" is of obscure origin. Some have proposed that Halab means 'iron' or 'copper' in Amorite languages since it was a major source of these metals in antiquity. Halaba in Aramaic means white, referring to the colour of soil and marble abundant in the area. Another proposed etymology is that the name Halab means "gave out milk," coming from the ancient tradition that Abraham gave milk to travellers as they moved throughout the region. Because the modern city occupies its ancient site, Aleppo has scarcely been touched by archaeologists.

The city's significance in history has been its location at the end of the Silk Road, which passed through central Asia and Mesopotamia since the 2nd millennium B.C. Aleppo was ruled successively by the Hittites, Assyrians, Akkadians, Greeks, Romans, Umayyads, Ayyubids, Mameluks and Ottomans who left their stamp on the city. Indeed, Aleppo has exceptional universal value because it represents medieval Arab architectural styles that are rare and authentic, in traditional human habitats. It constitutes typical testimony of the city's cultural, social, and technological development, representing continuous and prosperous commercial activity from the Mameluke period.

The old city of Halab is surrounded by a defensive enclosure, flanked by towers and entered by fortified gates from the Islamic era. Aleppo is famous for its mosques, madrasas and churches. It is still a very active Arab commercial city. Aleppo has a jumble of houses in the subtlest pastel colours with slender minarets and, dominating it all, the great mass of the Citadel. The southern ramparts, partly cleared of houses, lead to the impressive of all the fortified gates, Bab Qinnasrin.

The Jam'i al Kabir entrance (Great Mosque) is opposite an old Koranic school, the Halawayh Madrassa, installed in the former Byzantine cathedral erected at the command of the Empress Helena. The Great Mosque was founded in the early Islamic period, but there is little to see that dates from that time. The Mameluke minaret dates from 1090 and is, with its fine proportions and Kufic inscriptions, a good example of the great period of Islamic architecture in Syria. A ring of crenelated walls and towers rise 50 m above the city from a steep glacis, encircling a mass of ruins of every period. The nail-heads on the doors themselves are beautifully worked, the lintels have comic or enigmatic carvings on them, and there are fine Kufic inscriptions calling upon the power and the mercy of Allah. The interior of the citadel shows all too clearly how it has been ravaged by enemies (the Mongols invaded it twice) and shattered by earthquakes (that of 1822 was particularly devastating).

The al Gassa skirts the Jdeideh, 'old houses' quarter, with its beautifully decorated courtyards. All the houses here are built from fine limestone, narrow streets without shops and sometime vaulted. This lead through the souks, covered by vaulted roofs. The al Joumrok khan (Customs Caravanserai) dates from the 17th century. Over many generations men of taste have built up a priceless collection of works of art inspired by centuries of exposures to different architectures, traditions and craftsmanship from many countries in the east and the west.

St George’s Cathedral stands behind a labyrinth of narrow streets on a tiny square. The postern gate in the middle of the ramparts (Bab Antakya) is the Antioch Gate. Beyond there are many important monuments – the little domed Byzantine church converted into a mosque; a prison with dungeons dug into the rock; a stretch of wall 4 m thick, the base of a Syrio-Hittite temple; the remains of a great mosque built by Saladin’s son; a covered building containing sculpture and objects from various periods found on the site; the tomb of Emir Zaher.
Ghazi (son of Saladin) in an annex to a madrasa founded during the Crusader period.

The 13th century royal palace, with its fine stalactite and honeycomb entrance porch, is inlaid with white marble. The throne room, dating from the Mameluke period (15th-16th centuries) has been tastefully restored: Syrian artists and craftsmen have recreated the luxurious setting of the court – the ceiling with its decorated beams and caissons, lighting, windows, polychrome columns – all are a tribute to their skill. There are around 200 minarets, some squat like defensive towers, others slender as needles. On the other side stands a fine octagonal, part of the 15th century al Atroush mosque.

Aleppo is considered one of the main centres of Arabic traditional and classic music with the famous Aleppine Muwashshahs, Qudud Halabiya and Maqams (religious, secular and folk poetic-musical genres). Aleppines in general are fond of Arab classical music, the Tarab, and it is not a surprise that many artists from Aleppo are considered pioneers among the Arabs in classic and traditional music. The most prominent figures in this field are Sabri Mdalal, Sabah Fakhri, and Nour Mhanna. Many iconic artists of the Arab music like Sayed Darwish and Mohammed Abdel Wahab were visiting Aleppo to recognize the legacy of Aleppine art and learn from its cultural heritage. Aleppo hosts many music shows and festivals every year at the citadel amphitheatre, such as the “Syrian Song Festival”, the “Silk Road Festival” and “Khan al-Harir Festival”.

Syrian cuisine in general, and especially Aleppine cuisine, has a very wide selection of dishes. Being surrounded by olive, nut and fruit orchards, Aleppo is famous for a love of eating, as the cuisine is the product of fertile land and location along the Silk Road. The International Academy of Gastronomy in France awarded Aleppo its culinary prize in 2007. But in fact, Aleppo was a food capital long before Paris, because of its diverse communities of Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Circassians and a sizable Arab Christian population. All of those groups contributed food traditions, since Aleppo was part of the Ottoman Empire.

The city has a vast selection of different types of dishes, such as kebab, kibbeh, dolma, hummus, ful halabi, za’atar halabihi etc. The za’atar of Aleppo (thym) is a type of Syrian oregano which is very popular among Arabs, Armenians and Turks. Aleppo is the origin of different types of sweets and pastries. The Aleppine sweets, such as mabrumeh, siwar es-sett, ballortyiyeh, etc., are characterized by containing high rates of ghee butter and sugar. Other sweets include mamuniyyeh, shuaibiyyat, mushabak, zilebiyeh, ghazel al-banat etc. Most pastries contain the renowned Aleppine pistachios and other types of nuts.

Until the time of writing these lines, Syria is still facing an unprecedented conflict that is affecting the lives of millions of Syrians. And as the situation deteriorates further with incalculable human suffering and loss, Syria’s unique cultural heritage is also subject to tremendous destruction from the conflict. To date, Aleppo and other UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Palmyra, the Crac des Chevaliers…) are the theatre of violent armed conflict raising the risk of imminent and irreversible destruction, in addition to that which these sites have already suffered. The Damage to this cultural heritage is not only a blow against the identity and history of the Syrian people – it is a blow against the universal heritage of humanity.
Le nid vide

Présenté au dernier Salon du Livre, Le nid vide, Récit d’un mal de mère, publié aux Éditions Favre, sous le (semi) pseudonyme de Marie-José d’Astrée, est le premier ouvrage de l’une de nos collègues qui raconte sans détour mais avec humour la souffrance d’une mère dont les enfants ont quitté le nid.

VÉRONIQUE MAGNIN
Marie-José, tu travailles à la section de la formation et tu nous as tous surpris avec la parution de ton livre. Comment est-ce que tout a commencé ? Tout a commencé par des classes d’écriture créative, l’un de mes loisirs préférés. En faisant ces ateliers, j’ai découvert qu’on pouvait mettre en scène des chroniques de la vie quotidienne en les dramatisant ou en les rendant comiques. Je me suis régalée à faire cela pendant deux ans. C’est alors que mes fils ont quitté la maison pour vivre leur vie. Et je me suis trouvée un peu déstabilisée devant la maison vide. Alors, j’ai combiné mon goût pour l’écriture avec cet événement personnel. Le livre contient donc une part de témoignage sur ce que le départ peut engendrer comme sentiments et émotions mais aussi beaucoup de créativité. Et puis, de nombreuses scènes sont fondées sur des anecdotes vécues par d’autres personnes.

C’est un récit poignant et à la fois plein d’humour. Comment as-tu fait pour intégrer des expériences multiples ? Dans les discussions avec les amis qui partageaient leurs histoires, nous réalisions que nous avions beaucoup de choses en commun dans ce passage de vie essentiel. Et surtout, nous avions terriblement besoin d’en parler. Nous avons ri et pleuré ensemble et c’était merveilleusement libérateur ! Il y avait un mélange de pudeur et d’autodérision. Chaque histoire était différente, bien sûr, mais les sentiments et émotions étaient très universels. C’est là-dessus que je me suis appuyée. L’une de mes lectures m’a dit il y a quelques jours : « C’est l’anti héros ton personnage » et j’ai adoré ce commentaire parce qu’au fond, c’est ça ! C’est comme ça qu’on est dans notre fragilité, notre diversité, notre réalité.

Tu écris qu’il existe des syndromes reconnus par la société, tel le « baby blues », mais rien en ce qui concerne le choc du départ des enfants ? En effet, il n’y a pas grand-chose. En général, les gens vont te dire « mais c’est rien, c’est normal qu’ils partent, tu verras, dans quelque temps, tu te sentiras mieux, ça va passer »… Des banalités, guère plus. Alors qu’un peu d’empathie serait la bienvenue ! Ce qui me frappe, c’est que pendant des années, on est sublimées dans notre rôle de mère, encouragées, traitées comme des dièses. Et puis un beau jour, on ne sait pas pourquoi, d’un seul coup, ça arrive – surtout chez les mères de garçons – on devient un danger, « la femme à abattre », la « belle-mère » – avec tous les clichés qui entourent cette image ! Il faudrait presque s’effacer, s’excuser d’avoir existé. C’est brutal et peut-être un peu… injuste… non ?

N’y a-t-il pas des aspects positifs au départ des enfants ? Ah si ! Bien sûr. Finis les boîtes à pizza et les vieilles chaussettes qui traînent sous les lits (rires). Plus sérieusement, la génération des femmes qui ont aujourd’hui 50-60 ans se trouve face à une situation inédite : nous avons massivement fait des études, travaillé, voyagé, etc. Cela nous donne des perspectives créatrices, professionnelles et sociales immenses. De plus, maintenant, quand les enfants s’en vont, on a devant nous, 30 ou 40 ans d’espérance de vie – voire davantage. On n’a pas envie d’être enfermées dans l’unique rôle de « mamie-confiture » ! Nous sommes pleines de désirs et de ressources. C’est un pan d’existence passionnant. Pour les couples aussi, ça peut être l’occasion d’une redécouverte de la complicité de la vie à deux.

Qu’est-ce qui permettrait de changer les choses ? Il faudrait remettre en question nos vieilles croyances ! À vrai dire, les structures intergénérationnelles sont bouleversées alors que les schémas de référence restent les mêmes. On est encore très imbibés par les préceptes freudiens et autres clichés stigmatisants, élaborés dans la Vienne du 19e siècle. C’est un système de pensée très « enfermant », alors que le monde est, je dirais, très rock and roll ! C’est cela le principal message du livre : revisiter nos croyances sur la maternité, la parentalité. Et puis, à la fin un petit guide propose des idées sympathiques afin de mieux traverser la période de déprime liée au départ des enfants.


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Best practices
How to counter identity theft/fraud

Identity theft, the illegal use or transfer of key identifying information such as a person’s name, address, and financial/account data, represents a significant ongoing problem around the world.

JAMES IOVINO
Global payment card fraud losses reached USD 11.27 billion in 2012, according to The Nilson Report, a leading industry publication covering payment systems worldwide. In the U.S. alone, identity fraud occurred once every three seconds. Identity fraud is defined as when someone uses illegally obtained personal information for their own financial gain.

From card skimming via readers, false-front ATM devices, and shoulder surfing to “phishing” emails, visiting spoofed websites, “vishing” phone calls and “smishing” text messages, crime can occur when you least expect it. Thieves have gleaned personal information from corporate or organizational databases and the threat of credit card compromise has made international headlines. Given this global reality, everyone needs to be vigilant and education is key.

Develop good habits
• Carry only the identification information and the credit and debit cards that you will actually need when you leave your home.

• Review your monthly credit union/bank or payment card statements closely upon arrival to spot any unrecognized charges or activities.

• Contact your financial institution to obtain assistance in resolving issues related to unauthorized transactions on your accounts. It is your responsibility to report any disputes or errors within the required timeframe.

• If you are a U.S. citizen you can request a free copy of your credit report annually from any one of three credit reporting bureaus – Experian, Equifax and TransUnion – and in this way monitor your credit history and catch any fraudulent activity. Visit www.annualcreditreport.com.

• Shred unwanted documents which contain personal information before discarding them. These include preapproved credit card promotional material, membership cards, pay stubs and old receipts.

• Remove mail from your mailbox to prevent mail theft. Switch to electronic statements for all of your financial accounts and bills, where practical.
Never respond to emails, text messages or phone calls asking for personal or financial information, regardless of who the sender appears to be. Emails can be disguised as official communications from financial institutions or government agencies to trick you into volunteering personal and financial data.

Avoid opening attachments, clicking on hyperlinks or downloading programs from individuals/organizations you do not know. Be cautious of unusual emails from people you do know – their email accounts could be compromised.

UNFCU or other legitimate organizations will never contact their members or customers to request personal information such as card numbers, member numbers, Personal Identification Numbers (PINs) or passwords. Never reveal your personal information unless you have initiated contact.

From Chip Cards to Fraud Alerts to Restoration Services
UNFCU continually monitors against fraud and has stepped up the pace with more online resources and product/service innovations for its members. Having been the first financial institution in the U.S. to offer a chip and PIN credit card in 2010 (also known as an EMV payment card), UNFCU’s VISA® Elite portfolio achieved a 45% reduction in fraud last year due to a segment of purchases made with the card at secure EMV capable terminals outside the United States. In 2013, UNFCU made this enhanced security technology available through a no-fee credit card – VISA Azure. According to The Nilson Report, adoption of EMV at the point of sale is the strongest defense against counterfeit cards. While widely adopted outside the United States, EMV implementation is expected to grow in 2015.

In the meantime, UNFCU introduced Fraud Alert protection as an extra layer of security for credit and debit cards via a U.S. mobile phone number. PrivacyMaxx, an Internet monitoring and ID theft restoration service, is also available for U.S. members. This service features online reputation searches and credit report reminders.

Computer Safety
- Help protect your online identity by using antivirus and other computer security software, and set strong passwords (using small letters, caps, signs and numbers).
- Never conduct sensitive Internet transactions on a public or shared computer or over a public Wi-Fi network. Given the all too frequent occurrence of travelers leaving behind tablets and other devices, criminals can gain access to enormous amounts of usable information.
- Only give sensitive information such as credit card numbers over encrypted websites (https://).
- In addition, many mobile carriers provide services which can help locate a lost or stolen mobile device or when necessary, “wipe” your device clean of personal information.

What to do if you are a victim
Contact your financial institution immediately to specifically guard access to your accounts, stop payments on missing checks, change online banking passwords and PINs, as well as open a new account if required. To obtain more ID theft prevention tips and the latest security news, visit your bank/credit union’s website, including UNFCU’s Security Center at www.unfcu.org.

Taking personal responsibility and remaining alert can thwart potential wrongs caused by fraudsters. In the end, your best protection against identity theft and fraud is using common sense.

Following are excerpts from a recent ID Theft/Fraud Prevention webinar available on www.unfcu.org.

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Editeur & Régie Publicitaire de Revues Institutionnelles et Corporate

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Jordanie

Du Wadi Rum à Pétra (2e partie)

Après avoir parcouru le désert du Wadi Rum et être parti à la rencontre des bédouins (voir UN Special du mois dernier), direction Pétra, l’une des sept nouvelles merveilles du monde. Pétra est un lieu capable d’ensorceler le voyageur le plus averti, tant il ne pourra s’empêcher d’être gagné par l’émotion. Pétra est l’un de ces endroits dont le souvenir n’arrive pas à s’estomper, même après des années…

TEXTE ET PHOTOS CLAUDE MAILLARD

Pétra constitue l’un des ensembles monumentaux les plus fascinants du monde antique, sans conteste le plus beau site du Proche-Orient avec les pyramides d’Égypte. Son charme est accentué par les couleurs des roches dans lesquelles les nomades nabatéens (peuple apparu vers le VIe siècle avant J.-C. dans la péninsule arabique) ont façonné les édifices composant la ville.

L’endroit où s’élève l’ancienne capitale nabatéenne a la forme d’une vaste vallée qui s’étend sur plusieurs kilomètres, traversée par le lit du Wadi Mousa, un torrent souvent à sec, et entourée de hautes parois escarpées. Nul doute que les Nabatéens s’implantèrent ici parce que le site, forteresse naturelle, constituait une position facile à défendre. L’histoire du développement urbain fut la présence dans la région de quelques sources qui, bien vite cependant, ne suffirent plus à la population grandissante. Les Nabatéens inventèrent alors un système extrêmement complexe de citernes et de canalisations creusées à même la roche, d’aqueducs qui couraient dans des conduites en terre cuite, de digues et de bassins artificiels où était stockée l’eau de pluie. Grâce à ce génie hydraulique, ils parvinrent à satisfaire les besoins d’une capitale qui comptait jusqu’à 30 000 habitants et qui était située dans une région désertique.

Au Ier siècle avant J.-C., la métropole nabatéenne était une ville riche, située au carrefour d’importantes routes commerciales. Outre le commerce des épices et de l’encens, les habitants de Pétra se consacraient à l’élevage des moutons, des dromadaires et à la culture du blé.

Dans la peau de Johann Ludwig Burckhardt

Pétra tomba dans l’oubli vers l’année 1200. Seuls certains autochtones connaissaient l’existence de cette cité fantastique taillée dans le roc. Ce n’est que six siècles plus tard, en 1812, que Pétra fut redécouverte par un jeune explorateur suisse passionné par l’étude de la civilisation arabe, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt. Né à Lausanne en 1784, il était le parfait exemple de cette génération d’aventuriers qui contribuèrent au cours des premières décennies du XIXe siècle à redessiner les cartes géographiques du monde.

Rien n’a changé depuis que les antiques caravanes entraient dans Pétra. Aujourd’hui comme alors, pour franchir le seuil de la cité, il faut passer par le Siq, l’étroite gorge tortueuse longue de 1,5 km creusée par le torrent Wadi.
Mousa. Mais notre guide Luay (Tirawa Voyages) soucieux de nous faire découvrir le joyau jordanien d’une façon originale, loin des sentiers battus, va nous faire emprunter un autre itinéraire pour une première approche. Cela ne nous empêchera pas de nous mettre dans la peau de l’explorateur suisse pour partir à la découverte de la légendaire Pétra, capitale des Nabatéens, population arabe qui domina toute la région transjordanienne avant la conquête romaine.

Les Nabatéens, un peuple de sculpteurs
Autrefois, Al-Barid (la Petite Pétra) était une importante escale caravanière située au nord de Pétra et destinée à l’approvisionnement de ses habitants. De là, un sentier peu parcouru, qui passe à proximité des ruines d’Al Beidha, village néolithique datant de plus de 9000 ans, nous conduit jusqu’au Deir (le Monastère). Du monumental édifice sculpté dans la roche au sommet d’un éperon rocheux, on jouit d’un magnifique panorama sur la cité et sur les montagnes désertiques du Wadi Araba. Vu sa taille (45 m de haut), il devait revêtir une grande importance pour les Nabatéens comme lieu de culte et de pèlerinage. Par une succession de 800 marches tallées dans le rocher, on atteint la ville basse que nous arpentons le lendemain. Avec près de 20 kilomètres dans les jambes, et 1000 mètres de dénivelée, la journée est déjà bien remplie! Le retour à l’hôtel se fera par le Wadi Al Mudhilim, petit défilé méconnu qui se termine par un tunnel et dont le franchissement donnera beaucoup de sueurs froides à certains...

La réalisation du Khazneh (le Trésor), le plus célèbre monument de Pétra entièrement creusé dans la falaise, semble remonter à l’époque du roi Arétas IV (85 avant J.-C.). On le découvre progressivement à la fin du Siq, l’entrée principale de Pétra, et le moment le plus propice pour l’admirer, quand la roche prend des tonalités féeriques, est le matin, vers 9 heures. Avant de s’engouffrer dans le Siq, le chemin est bordé par plusieurs monuments dont les Cubes Djinn, d’énormes blocs monolithiques et le Bab Al Siq Triclinium, surmonté par la Tombe des Obélisques.

Pétra, la ville rose du désert
Deux millions de touristes se rendent à Pétra chaque année mais il semble que la plupart d’entre eux ne viennent que pour admirer le Khazneh. C’est vrai que l’on ne peut pas rester insensible devant un tel trésor! Mais beaucoup d’autres merveilles nous attendent encore, plus ou moins épargnées dans le site, et cela demande beaucoup de temps et d’énergie pour en voir le maximum. Le chemin qui mène au théâtre serpente entre deux falaises creusées de tombes, dont celle d’Uneishu à la façade très imposante. L’une des structures rupestres les plus spectaculaires de la cité rose est certainement le théâtre qui pouvait accueillir jusqu’à 8000 personnes. Face à lui, se dresse un alignement de tombes royales taillées dans le Djebel Al Khubtha, massif de grès dominant de plus de 300 mètres la cité. Parmi ces tombes, la Tombe de l’Urne, la Tombe corinthienne, la Tombe Palace, la Tombe de Sextius Florentinus et la Tombe de la Soie. Cette dernière est l’un des monuments les plus photogéniques de Pétra en raison des veines multicolores de la pierre dans laquelle elle a été sculptée.

La poursuite de la visite nous conduit au «centre-ville», bâti dans une profonde dépression, là où les montagnes sont plus éloignées et ne font plus rempart. Pour cela, les Nabatéens, puis les Romains, équipèrent l’endroit d’une enceinte. Le long de la rue aux colonnes, les vestiges écroulés de nombreux édifices en pierre de taille nous rappellent que la région a subi plusieurs tremblements de terre depuis. Une montée raide au sommet du Djebel Attuf va nous conduire jusqu’au Haut Lieu des Sacrifices, véritable promontoire d’où le panorama à 360° est remarquable sur toute la cité nabatéenne. Plusieurs monuments, dont la Tombe du Jardin, idéalement créée sur une butte dominant toute la vallée, nous donnent l’occasion de faire une pause pour reprendre notre souffle! L’apothéose de cette balade «aérienne», sur ce sentier vertigineux, sera la découverte du Khazneh du sommet d’une falaise qui surplombe l’édifice, le joyau de Pétra.

Il ne m’est pas possible de rentrer en Europe sans avoir une pensée pour le peuple syrien et notamment les réfugiés qui ont trouvé asile en Jordanie. Face à l’indifférence nationale qui ne réagit pas, une organisation non gouvernementale qui ne réagit pas, 1500000 Syriens (dont beaucoup d’enfants) s’entassent, entre autres, dans le camp de Zaatari. Dans des conditions très précaires, tous rêvent de retourner chez eux, dans une Syrie qui aura enfin retrouvé la paix!
Two Sisters Are Horses’ Last Hope Before Being Slaughtered

Since the start of the economic crisis, the number of abandoned horses in Spain has been increasing, and those who are abandoned usually fail to gallop very far. They frequently end up lost in the woods, or obstructing roads.

DANIELE CHICCA, OMAR BAWA
That is the case if they are not left to die of starvation earlier. Similarly, the number of horses sent to slaughter has increased in recent years. About 30,000 horses were slaughtered annually until 2010. That figure reached 50,000 in 2011, and exceeded 70,000 last year.

For the last 10 years and counting, two sisters have been trying to help those animals and save them from that fate. Virginia Solera and Concordia Márquez run a shelter, called Asociación CYD Santamaría, which welcomes mistreated and abandoned horses in Malaga.

For some time now, the sisters have noticed a clear trend: the complaints that reach them are almost always about horses found either tethered up to something and/or without an owner; most of them are left wandering aimlessly throughout Andalusia.

Previously, they received only isolated reports of horses, but now it’s groups of horses who end up collapsing in the middle of the street, causing traffic chaos. Upon arriving at the hostel, these horses are often found to have shattered teeth, a common affliction among abandoned horses which is caused by malnutrition. These animals eat anything they find, which causes the damage.

The CYD Santamaría is funded by private donations. After treating the ailments of animals welcomed at the shelter, the owners give the horses to foster families, always keeping track of their development to make sure that their conditions are better than before.

Yet, these days there are fewer donations and fewer people are willing to adopt a horse. Virginia Solera defines her and her sister’s current mood with three simple adjectives: “sad, desperate and frustrated”.

Saving money is not a good excuse for slaughtering innocent horses. According to Virginia “there is always another option. I think we are being very unworthy and very unfair to an animal that has been so close to human beings for many years.” Fortunately for us, she adds that horses “have the ability to forgive”.

Due to the economic crisis a lot of horse meat circulates in Europe. For instance, in the golden era before the outbreak of the housing bubble in Ireland, having a horse had become a must for the old and the newly rich. Later overwhelmed by debt, many people have had to remove the “superfluous” things they
own. This is the main reason why slaughterhouses in the country started to get filled with horses.

In 2012 alone, the number of horses slaughtered on the island has increased by 10 times compared to 2008. The same happened in Spain, where the increase was 56%. Keeping and feeding horses is too expensive, so the owners abandon them.

“They were in such a bad state that they ate their own excrement and lived above their droppings”, recalled Dilfenio Romero Rodriguez from the animal shelter Burrolandia, which in 2012 helped save many animals from slaughter. When the workers from the refugee came to pick up the horses, seven were already dead. “Now here at the shelter they are doing well, but a few months ago they seemed to be doomed,” he said to RT News.

“Because of the crisis many horses are abandoned and we have to pick them up. People are trying to get rid of them as soon as possible because they can no longer take care of them”, says Romero Rodriguez. Raising a horse costs about 300 Euros per month, according to RT News. For many families and business owners, or owners of the riding schools, it is impossible to meet such costs.

Without a doubt, the shelters are the best solution for abandoned horses. But shelters survive on donations, not on public funds. With no money the only alternative is the slaughterhouse. If you do not want horses to end up on the tables of European consumers, please give money to shelters like Asociación CYD Santamaría and Burrolandia.

To watch a short video and read more about the sisters saving horses visit: http://www.goodwall.org/posts/two-sisters-are-horses-last-hope-being-slaughtered
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