

# THE UNESCO Courier

October-December 2017 • n°3



**Culture:  
the bedrock  
of peace**

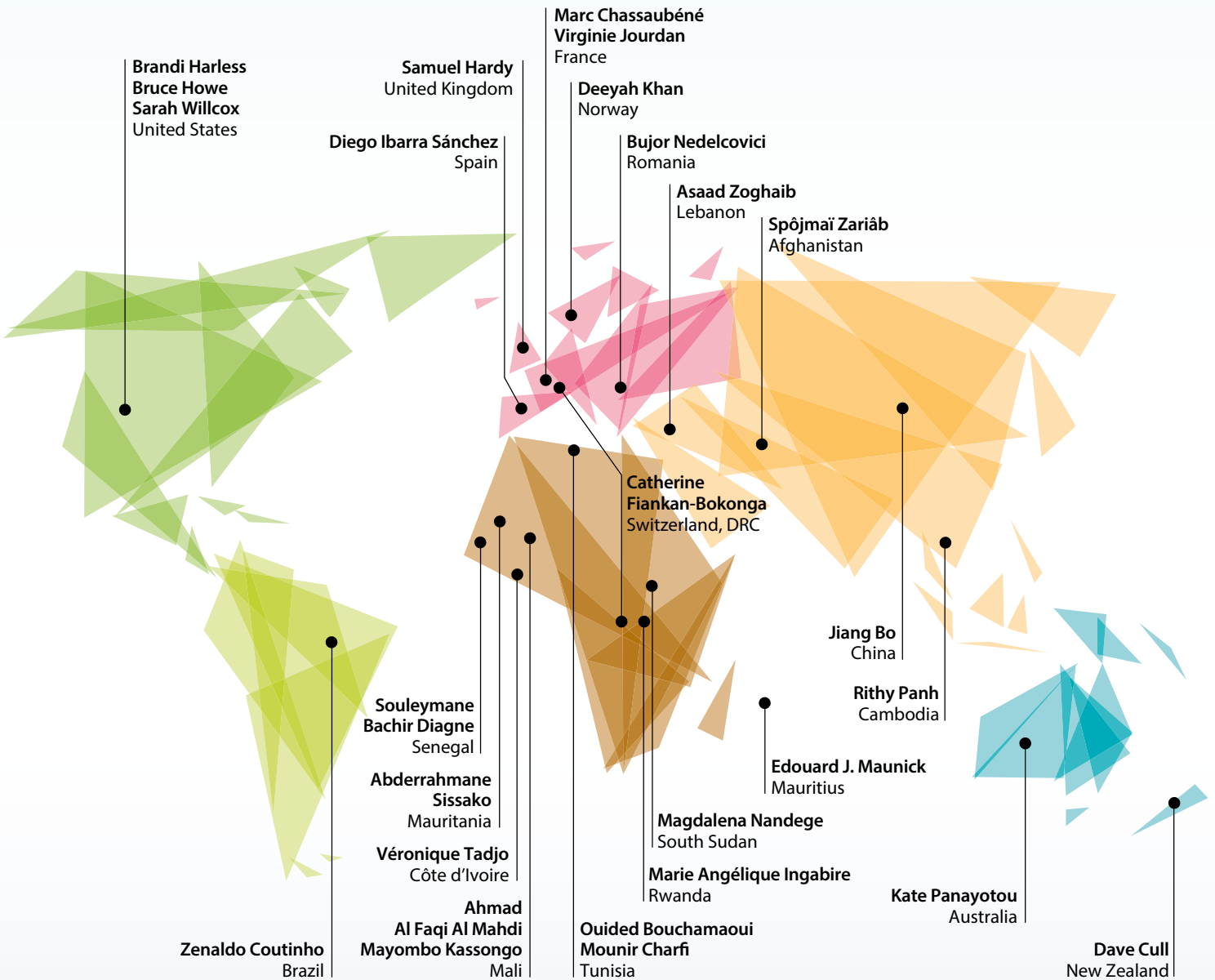
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# Our contributors



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# THE UNESCO Courier



*Irina Bokova,  
Director-General of UNESCO.*

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## Editorial

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From the very start, UNESCO has actively campaigned to emphasize the essential role that culture plays in global peace. The development of modern conflicts confirms the increased need for this form of “soft power” today.

The repeated attacks on heritage in Iraq, Libya, Mali and Syria have shown the extent to which the protection of cultural heritage cannot be separated from the protection of human lives. Violent extremists do not target only the general public; they also target teachers, journalists, schools, and historical monuments in an attempt to undermine and disrupt the societies they wish to subjugate.

In response, we must do more to integrate culture in our strategies for security and peace, as a means to build long-term resilience, resistance and cohesion. This is why UNESCO has intensified its emergency programmes and initiatives to counter violent extremism, while continuing its political advocacy.

Several resolutions recently adopted by the United Nations Security Council represent a historic recognition of the importance of protecting heritage for public security, such as Resolutions 2199, 2354 and 2347 (see p. 7). For the first time, a UN resolution, Resolution 2347, unanimously adopted on 24 March 2017, covers the range of threats to world heritage – affirming that its deliberate destruction constitutes a tactic of war, which calls for suitable responses.

The conviction by the International Criminal Court of the militant leader responsible for destroying the shrines of Timbuktu (Mali) – in the very first international tribunal entirely devoted to the destruction of cultural heritage – also marks a decisive step towards an end to impunity for these war crimes (see p. 18).

These events are evidence of an unprecedented development, which is also the result of UNESCO’s actions. The use of armed force is not sufficient to defeat a threat that thrives on ignorance and flawed readings of history. The battle against violent extremism is waged through culture and education. Lasting peace requires recourse to what the poet Aimé Césaire called “miraculous weapons” – education, culture and knowledge – which strengthen the defences of peace in the minds of each and every one.

It is in this spirit that UNESCO is seeking to raise public awareness of the values of tolerance and respect through creation. As Edouard Glissant (1928-2011), former Editor-in-Chief of the *UNESCO Courier*, pointed out, art has always served as a trigger for “the creative capacity of the individual and the community and [has] provided a mirror of identity”. Artistic creation is an initiation of intercultural dialogue, and building bridges amid the world’s rich cultural diversity.

Many people, both young and not-so-young, want to transmit this discourse of peace, tolerance and respect for rights. The Unite4Heritage campaign (p. 11) that I launched in 2015, has since attracted a great many supporters across the world. The initiative has demonstrated its vitality in building peace, growing silently like the trees in a forest, even when our attention is focused on the tree that is being felled.

Let us continue to invest in this “soft power” of UNESCO, and to continue to believe in the capacity of these “miraculous weapons” that humanity is forging patiently to establish lasting peace.

**Irina Bokova**  
Director-General of UNESCO.

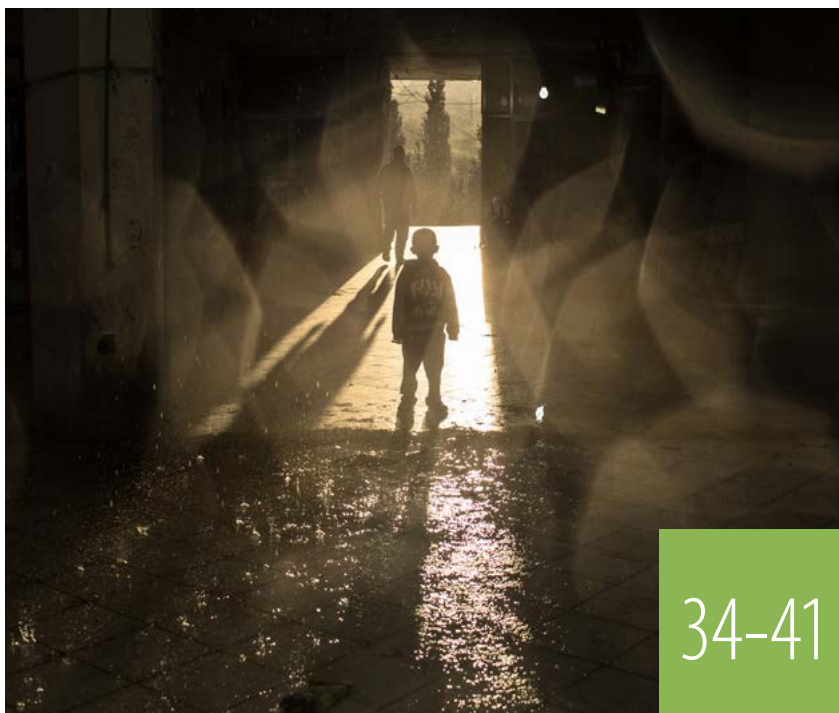
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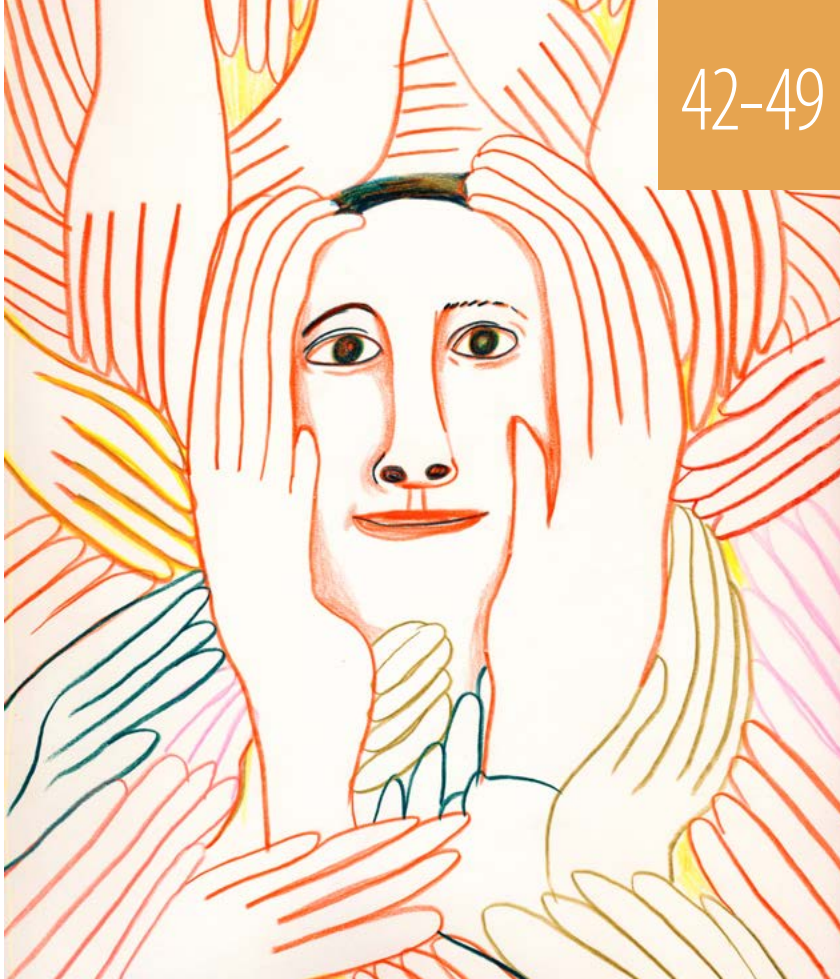
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Wide angle

# Culture: the bedrock of peace



*A poster for Unite4Heritage, a global movement launched by UNESCO, which uses social media to encourage youth to help protect cultural heritage.*

© UNESCO



# A historic resolution

## to protect cultural heritage

by Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga

On 24 March 2017, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2347, relating to the protection of cultural heritage. This was an unprecedented victory! It has taken nearly a century and a half for the idea to mature. Then, over the past few years, progress was suddenly made. And a growing awareness of the role that cultural heritage can play in fostering security was born.

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*Delegates at the International Peace Conference pose on the steps of the Huis ten Bosch palace in The Hague (Netherlands) on 18 May 1899.*

The number of armed conflicts has been escalating since the 1980s – first in Central Asia (Afghanistan), then in parts of the Middle East (Iraq and Syria) and West Africa (Mali). These have led to an increase in the destruction of historic sites by terrorist groups and an explosion in the trafficking of cultural artefacts. The international community has responded actively to the destruction wreaked by ISIS, with a much wider range of instruments at its disposal – making it possible to enhance its protection of the cultural memory of humanity.

In 2017, the international community demonstrated that it was united in its political determination to protect cultural heritage. Resolution 2347 of the UN Security Council formally recognizes that the defence of cultural heritage is imperative for security.

It took a long time before the seeds of the idea of immunity for cultural property in times of war grew into a historic decision. This marks a new global consciousness of the role that culture plays in maintaining security.

The process began at the end of the nineteenth century, when fifteen European states met in Brussels (Belgium), on 27 July 1874, to examine the draft international agreement concerning the Laws and Customs of War. A month later, Article 8 of the Brussels Declaration stipulated that, in times of war, "All seizure or destruction of, or wilful damage to [...] historic monuments, works of art and science should be made the subject of legal proceedings by the competent authorities."

Twenty-five years later, in 1899, on the initiative of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, an international peace conference was held in the Netherlands, with the aim of revising the Declaration (which was never ratified) and adopting a Convention with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land.

Also known as the Hague Convention of 1899, it considerably advanced international law and established the principle of the immunity of cultural property. According to Article 27 of the Convention (revised during the Second Hague Convention on 18 October 1907), “In sieges and bombardments all necessary steps must be taken to spare, as far as possible, buildings dedicated to religion, art, science, or charitable purposes, historic monuments, hospitals [...], provided they are not being used at the time for military purposes. It is the duty of the besieged to indicate the presence of such buildings or places by distinctive and visible signs, which shall be notified to the enemy beforehand.”

Three decades later, in 1935, the preamble of the Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions – a pan-American initiative also known as the Roerich Pact – formulated the idea that cultural property, which “form the cultural treasure of peoples” must “be respected and protected in time of war and in peace”.

*The spectacular Nubia Campaign, co-ordinated by UNESCO (1960 - 1980), was the inspiration for the idea of World Cultural Heritage.*



© UNESCO / Nenadović

## Landmark conventions and decrees

A decisive step forward was taken after the Second World War. In 1948, the Netherlands proposed a new draft international text to UNESCO on the protection of cultural property in times of armed conflict. The Organization began the process of drafting a new international convention, which was adopted at The Hague in 1954.

Safeguard and respect are the watchwords of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols (1954 and 1999). “Damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever” is internationally recognized as “damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind”. The Convention also ensures “the granting of special protection” to “a limited number of refuges intended to shelter movable cultural property in the event of armed conflict, of centres containing monuments and other immovable cultural property of very great importance”.

That same year, in 1954, Egypt decided to build the Aswan Dam, which would flood the Upper Nile Valley and a large number of 3000-year-old monuments of what was once Nubia. At the request of Egypt and Sudan, UNESCO launched an international campaign to safeguard these monuments – one of the most spectacular in the history of mankind, and which would last two decades, from 1960 to 1980. The Nubia Campaign was the starting point for the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, known as the 1972 Convention, and the establishment of the World Heritage List. This text provides for the inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger of properties threatened with grave danger, including armed conflicts, which are imminent or have recently broken out.





© Joseph Eid / AFP



*Before and after photographs of the Temple of Bel, one of the most iconic monuments in Palmyra (Syria), destroyed by ISIS in August 2015.*

It is essentially because of these texts and co-operation with UNESCO that the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was able to sentence former Yugoslav naval officer, Miodrag Jokić, to seven years of imprisonment in 2004. This was the first-ever conviction for the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage. Under Jokić's command, hundreds of mortars were fired, between the beginning of October and the end of December 1991, on the old town of Dubrovnik, which was inscribed the same year on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Largely as a result of these conflicts, UNESCO and several States Parties re-examined the 1954 Convention and drafted the Second Protocol, adopted in 1999. This introduced a new system of heightened protection for cultural properties of very great importance, which should also be protected by adequate national legislation; with the capacity to punish serious violations of the Convention with appropriate sentences. Serious violations include theft, pillage, attacks or acts of vandalism against cultural property, especially those with heightened protection.

More recently, in 2016, the International Criminal Court (ICC) found the Malian jihadist, Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi, guilty of war crimes for the destruction in 2012 of ten religious sites in Timbuktu, while the city was under the control of Ansar Dine, a group suspected to have ties to al Qaeda. He was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment. This was a historic judgement, as the destruction of cultural heritage had never before been considered a war crime (see p. 18).

"Immediately after the destruction in 2012, UNESCO alerted the international community and seized the International Criminal Court to ensure such crimes do not go unpunished," explained Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO. The Organization undertook a series of measures, ranging from providing the armed forces with topographical details, to the reconstruction of the mausoleums. For the first time in history, safeguarding the cultural heritage of a country was written into the mandate of a United Nations Mission (Resolution 2100). MINUSMA, the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, was entrusted with "protecting from attack the cultural and historical sites in Mali, in collaboration with UNESCO".

“Safeguard and respect are the watchwords of the Hague Convention”

## 2015, a turning point

The year 2015 marked a real turning point in the attitude of the international community to cultural heritage. In February that year, with the backing of UNESCO, some fifty countries adopted UN Security Council Resolution 2199 (see p. 12), prohibiting trade in cultural property coming from Iraq and Syria. “This resolution acknowledges that cultural heritage stands on the frontline of conflicts today, and it should be placed at the frontline of security and political response to the crisis,” said Irina Bokova, at the time.

A month later in Baghdad (Iraq), convinced of the effectiveness of “soft power”, she launched Unite4Heritage, a global campaign on social media, uniting young people in the celebration and safeguarding of cultural heritage around the world.

On 1 September 2015, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) published satellite photos showing that ISIS jihadists had destroyed the Temple of Bel in Palmyra. The main building of this World Heritage site in Syria no longer exists! Soon after, Italy proposed the idea of creating the “Blue Helmets for Culture” to the UN General Assembly. In February 2016, Italy signed an agreement with UNESCO to create the world’s first emergency task force for culture, composed of civilian experts and the Italian carabinieri.



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*The Italian carabinieri save a painting from the parish church of Santa Maria Assunta in the village of Cossito (Italy), which was destroyed by a violent earthquake in August 2016. That same year, an emergency task force was set up under the aegis of UNESCO.*

The United Arab Emirates, together with France, have since held an international conference on protecting cultural heritage in times of armed conflicts, under the auspices of UNESCO.

In December 2016, representatives from over forty countries met in Abu Dhabi to reaffirm their “common determination to safeguard the endangered cultural heritage of all peoples, against its destruction and illicit trafficking” and to recall the successive conventions since 1899 that “require us to protect human life, as well as cultural property in times of armed conflict”.

For Irina Bokova, “a new cultural landscape” is being built, and “a new global awareness” is emerging, with the birth of “a new approach to protect culture for peace and security”. Her convictions were quickly confirmed by the unanimous adoption of Resolution 2347 of the UN Security Council on 24 March 2017.

This text includes two of the main operational outcomes of the international conference in Abu Dhabi – the creation of an international fund and the organization of a network of safe havens for endangered cultural property. It also highlights the links between the trafficking of cultural property and the financing of terrorist groups, and between terrorism and organized crime.

For the first time in history, a UN resolution covers the full range of threats to cultural heritage, without any geographical limitations and regardless of whether the perpetrators of the crimes are terrorist groups already on UN lists or belong to other armed groups.

Born in Geneva (Switzerland) to a father from the Democratic Republic of Congo and a Belgian mother, **Catherine Fiankan-Bokonga** is chief editor of the Swiss publication, *Klvin Mag*, and a television journalist for *France 24*, based in Geneva.



# Unite4Heritage

## Mobilizing a global movement

Nour and Bayan, two sisters from Damascus who have fled the war in Syria, live in Paris today. Before the conflict, “cultural heritage touched every sense, from the feeling of old stone walls under your hands and the delicate scent of jasmine in the air, to the melodic call to prayer resonating in your ears,” they explain.

The story of these young women, who reflect their personal views on culture and heritage, is one among many others shared on Twitter by Unite4Heritage, a global movement launched by UNESCO in March 2015. It aims to mobilize young people to counter the propaganda of violent extremism through the innovative use of social media. The idea of the movement was triggered by unprecedented recent attacks on cultural heritage – by the jihadist destruction in Nimrud and Hatra, and the looting of the Mosul Museum in Iraq, in particular.

A photo and story contest launched on Instagram and Facebook received more than 10,000 entries from all over the world, including Syria – soon after it was launched, in July 2015. A few months later, the campaign started reaching nine million people every week, many of whom are young. They have appropriated Unite4Heritage as their own platform for the exchange of stories and ideas. In a very short time, it has become a global youth mass movement.

Providing an alternative narrative to the extremists’ speech, Unite4Heritage is part of “Empowering Youth to Build Peace”, UNESCO’s integrated Framework for Action. It is guided by the objective “to equip young women and men with knowledge, skills and values that empower them to live peaceful, constructive and productive lives, to engage as responsible global citizens and to be resilient to any form of abuse or manipulation, including radicalization and violent extremism”. According to Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, “We see the rise of a new generation of digital natives today... All too often, the internet can provide a powerful megaphone for violence”.

“We must harness the internet’s full potential for peace, to widen opportunities for dialogue and civic engagement, to nurture and take forward youth concerns and visions”, she emphasized.

At a time when irreplaceable cultural heritage sites and cultural expressions are increasingly under attack, Unite4Heritage brings together youth and civil society organizations, online communities and networks, policymakers, researchers, media professionals, social workers and other actors to tackle hate-related issues that affect their societies and communities.

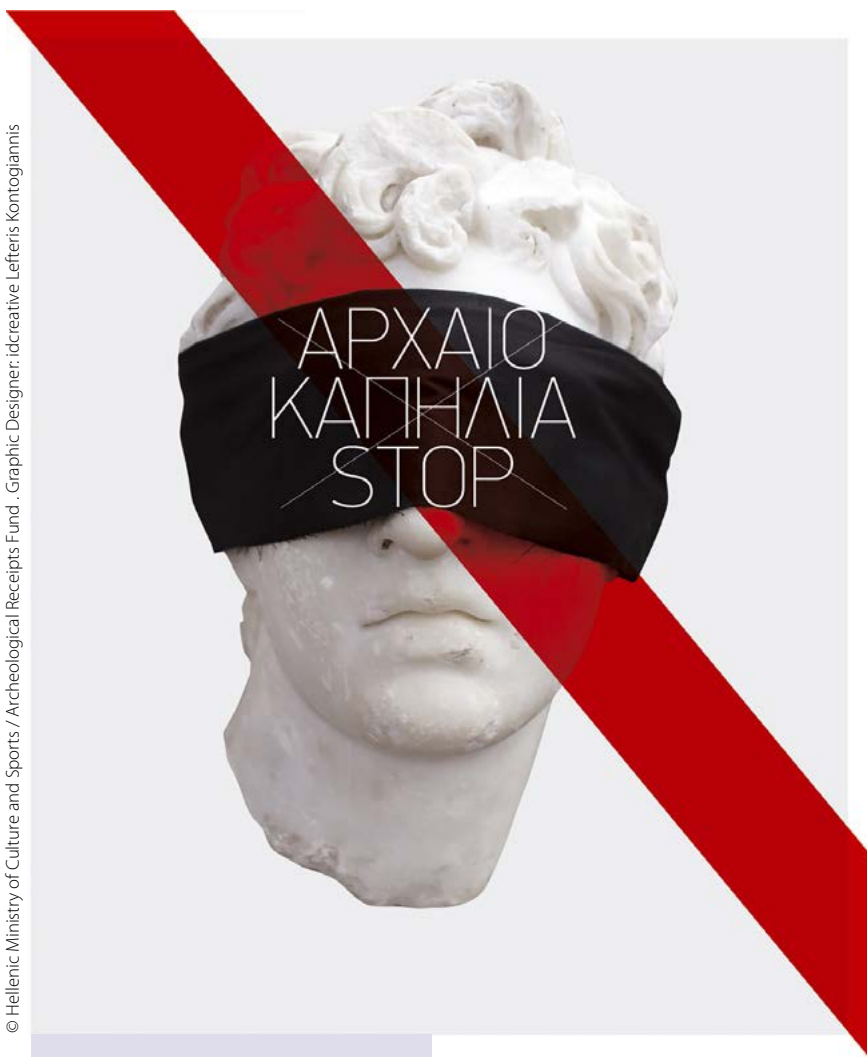


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# Curbing the spoils of war

© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports / Archeological Receipts Fund . Graphic Designer: idcreative Lefteris Kontogiannis



Poster of the exhibition "Trafficking of antiquities: Stop it!!!", Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, 2012.

by Samuel Hardy

Since the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2199 in 2015, which calls for the prohibition of trade in cultural property from Iraq and Syria, efforts have been intensified to disrupt terrorist financing through the illicit trafficking of antiquities. A global movement launched by UNESCO urges Member States to introduce more stringent legislation.

The cultural goods market is a grey market, where clean and dirty goods circulate together. While it is difficult to estimate the value of the illicit market, it is possible to get some idea of the scale. Speaking to the *International Herald Tribune* (15 February 2005), archaeologist John Russell estimated that between March 2003 and early 2005, 400,000 to 600,000 antiquities may have been looted from Iraq, generating between \$10 million and \$20 million.

Facts and figures on illicit trade are notoriously difficult to document, even in relation to "ordinary" organized crime in relatively stable environments. Such difficulties are multiplied in a conflict with myriad, shifting internal factions and changing external facilitators. They are multiplied even

further in cases where the war and the war economy are so interdependent. There are literally dozens of specific, yet baseless, claims in relation to Syria and Iraq alone.

Even when there is documented evidence, it can be difficult to interpret. For example, as the United States Counter Threat Finance and Sanctions explained, on 15th May 2015, US Special Forces in Syria raided the base of Abu Sayyaf, the head of underground resources (oil, gas, minerals and antiquities) for ISIS. They recovered a number of receipts for antiquities that indicated a one-fifth (*khums*) tax of \$265,000 on sales of \$1.32 million in Deir ez-Zor province within four months, which would probably mean taxes of around \$800,000 on sales of an estimated \$4 million in a year.



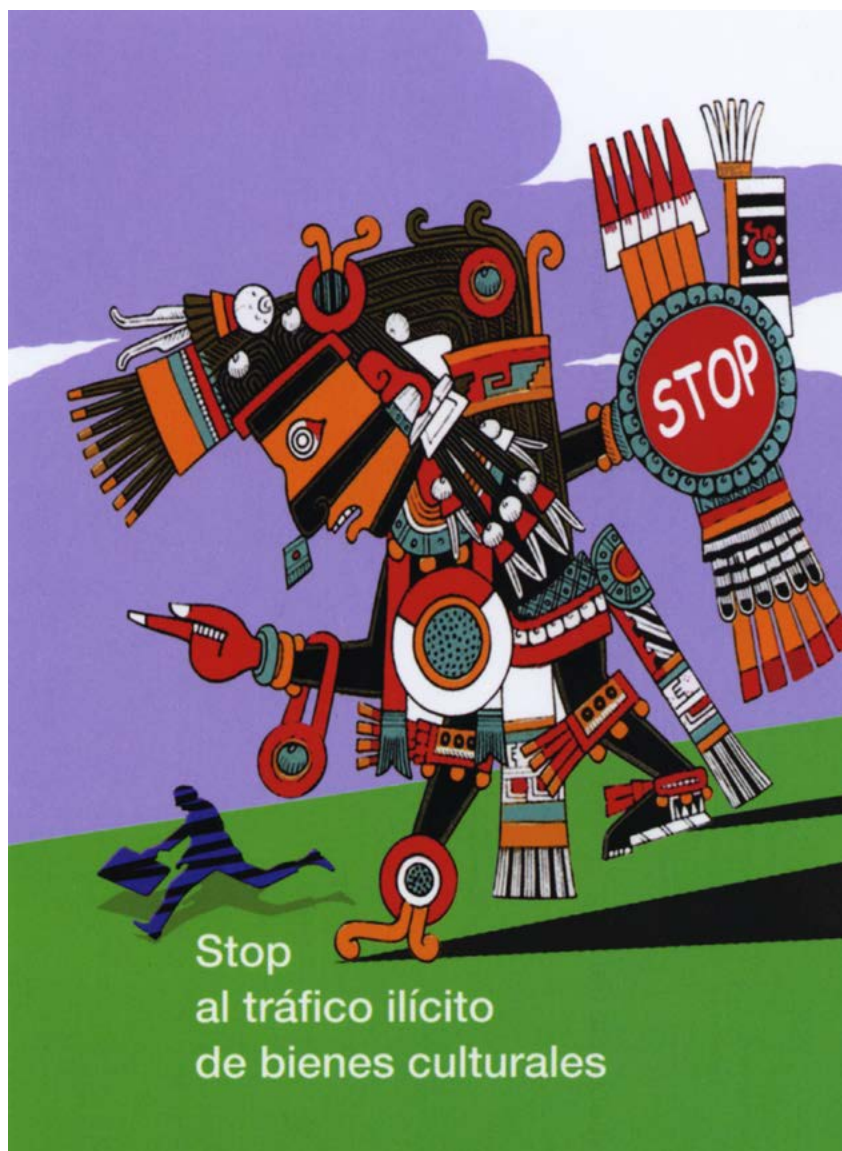
This is a very limited sample, however. The availability and marketability of antiquities and other illicit revenue streams are specific to that region; and the people, materials and activities on which specific earnings were spent are unknown. Nonetheless, in an illicit economy as in a licit economy, all revenue streams support the taxing authorities.

## Dismantling of trafficking routes

According to the INTERPOL National Central Bureau for Lebanon, trafficking of antiquities from Syria through Lebanon is an organized criminal endeavour, which has increased exponentially through the present war. Yet, in spite of its own challenges in terms of governance and security, Lebanon has been able to dismantle gang after gang, six in 2016 alone. Many more supply lines for illicit antiquities could be disrupted, if other transit and market countries took their responsibilities equally seriously.

There are a few similar successes, although they demonstrate the range of structures and mechanisms for conflict antiquities trafficking. Police in Germany caught a group who, between 2011 and 2014, had been stealing cultural objects locally to support militant groups including Ahrar al-Sham, Junud al-Sham and ISIS in Syria. In 2014, the Civil Guard of Spain caught a group who had been trafficking antiquities from Egypt in order to finance jihadists.

Tragically, there are also notable failures. According to an ongoing investigation by *Paris Match Belgique*, initially published on 27 October 2016, Khalid el Bakraoui had been ransoming works of art stolen from the Museum Van Buuren in Belgium, to three insurance companies between 2013 and 2015, before his suicide bombing of the Maelbeek metro station in Brussels on 22 March 2016.



© Raúl O. Parre

*A poster, entered in the Poster Contest against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, an awareness-raising initiative launched in 2013 by the UNESCO office in Montevideo, Uruguay.*

## Restitutions

Contrary to denials that antiquities from Syria and Iraq are reaching the market, they have been intercepted in Bulgaria (in 2015), Hungary (in 2017), Slovenia (in 2016) and France (in 2016). Antiquities from the war-torn zones have also been intercepted, then released, and even advertised in the United Kingdom (in 2015), as revealed by archaeologists Mark Altaweel and David Gill in the *Guardian* (July 2015) and on *Channel 4* (April 2016).

Although it is not reflected in public evidence, "several countries around Europe" alone have intercepted and repatriated antiquities, as the Director-General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria told *Al-Masdar News* (May 2017). At least 300 cultural objects seized between 2012 and 2014 have been repatriated to Syria, the Directorate-General of Antiquities in Lebanon informed the *Daily Star* (January 2017).



© Carabinieri Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage

*Exhibition at the Colosseum in Rome, in 2010, of 337 stolen works of art which were recovered by Italy's carabinieri.*

They included objects that had been looted from Palmyra before it was conquered by ISIS, when it was under the control of first the Free Syrian Army, and then the Syrian Arab Republic.

Yet tens of thousands of genuine antiquities from Iraq and Syria (and modern fakes, forgeries and counterfeits) have been seized in the region and further afield since 2011 in the case of Syria, and 1990 in the case of Iraq.

An overwhelming majority of looted antiquities have not been restituted to Syria since 2011.



This may be due to the technical difficulty of attributing modern state ownership on the basis of ancient cultural style and the deliberate destruction of forensic evidence of the countries of origin by looters, smugglers, dealers and collectors. It could also be attributed to the legal difficulty of international relations in situations of non-recognition of state-like authorities, or to the political exploitation of cultural diplomacy. Iraq is still struggling to recover the antiquities that were looted during the crises that erupted in 1990 and 2003.

## Nothing new or unusual

To reduce the trafficking of conflict antiquities in the future, it is important to acknowledge the existence of similar trafficking in the past. The situation in Syria and Iraq is not unprecedented or unusual. In the early 1990s, the security services were laundering stolen art through antique shops in Yugoslavia. Right-wing paramilitaries were trafficking art in Colombia. By the end of the 1990s, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were selling antiquities to finance their war in Sri Lanka. Around the same time, the Northern Alliance and the Taliban (which continues to operate today) and some years before that, jihadis and the mujahideen looted, smuggled and racketeered in art and artefacts in Afghanistan. In Lebanon too, during the civil war between 1975 and 1990, militias looted and exported antiquities.

The history of conflict antiquities trafficking as a state crime goes back at least a century-and-a-half. This included payment in kind for assassinations by the junta in Argentina; self-subsidy by the Communists in Bulgaria, or plunder by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

Again and again, conflict antiquities have been supplied to, and consumed by local, regional and global markets. In some cases, it has happened without effective regulation by the market countries who created the demand and whose markets subsidized the conflict. In others, it has taken place with the complicity of states who facilitated the financing of proxies, allies and other convenient armed groups. It has even happened under the meticulous management of states.

Confronted with such evidence, it becomes impossible to maintain the reassuring myths that conflict financing through antiquities trafficking is not happening at all, that it is not making a difference to the development of those conflicts or that it can be suppressed with exceptional measures against particular organizations. The only way to constrict this kind of trafficking is through the policing and regulation of the conflict antiquities market.

## Resolution 2199

In response to the terrorist violence of ISIS, al-Nusra Front (ANF) and others associated with al Qaeda (AQ), the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2199 in 2015. It consolidates financial sanctions on these groups, in order to restrict their violence by constricting their funding and spending, such as their income from looting, smuggling and otherwise profiteering off the illicit trade in cultural objects.

Reaffirming Resolution 1483 of 2003, which requires states to prohibit the trade or transfer of cultural goods suspected to have been illegally removed from Iraq (from 6 August 1990) and to facilitate the safe return of such objects to Iraq, Resolution 2199 replicates those legally-binding measures for cultural goods that are suspected to have been illegally removed from Syria since March 2011.

Since then, Resolution 2253, passed in 2015, has obliged states to report seizures of cultural objects from Iraq and Syria and the outcomes of proceedings against antiquities traffickers that finance ISIS, ANF, AQ and/or their associates. These targeted measures have been complemented by Resolution 2347 of 2017 (see p. 7), which requests states to prohibit the trade or transfer of cultural goods from any zone of conflict or context of conflict.



Several states claim to have taken action that contributes to the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2199. For example, Cyprus has revised procedures to facilitate law enforcement. Pakistan has worked to improve the capacity of law enforcement agents to fight illicit trafficking, by disseminating the International Council of Museums' (ICOM) Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk. The Canadian, Czech, French, Macedonian (FYROM) and Pakistani authorities, among others, have also intensified customs controls.

Significant legislative efforts include Germany's 2016 Act on the Protection of Cultural Property, which consolidates, implements and strengthens many instruments, notably universalizing the responsibility to observe due diligence in trading and retaining records of transactions. Following Germany's model, the Council of Europe's 2017 Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property, which is open to signature by any state, closes many common loopholes – for example, by criminalizing the import, acquisition and/or marketing of looted, stolen and/or illegally exported cultural objects.

Since it is a lamented fact that cultural property offenders remain in business, the convention is also significant because it enables the disqualification of cultural property convicts from trading in cultural property.

Still, many of those states that have technically "done something", have only reaffirmed or reiterated generic existing measures. UNESCO has been forced to reiterate its appeal to states to take even minimal practical measures, such as reporting seizures of cultural objects from conflict zones, while urging parties to the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property to implement resolutions 2199 and 2253 in law.

**Samuel Hardy** is an Honorary Research Associate at the Institute of Archaeology, University College, London. He investigates trafficking of antiquities in conflicts and crises, particularly by and for terrorists, armed groups and repressive regimes.

## UNESCO fights against illicit trafficking of cultural heritage

To raise awareness of, and aid the fight against, the illicit trafficking of cultural property, UNESCO has organized forty workshops for more than 1000 participants (between June 2012 and July 2017), with special attention to the emergency situations in Syria, Iraq, Mali, Libya and Yemen.

Over the past five years, hundreds of heritage sites around the world have been affected by armed conflict. In the Arab States region alone, twenty-two out of eighty-two World Heritage sites are listed as in danger.

UNESCO has been involved in the protection of Syrian heritage since the beginning of the crisis in 2011. In March 2014, it launched the Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage project. Funded by the European Union, UNESCO has conducted various workshops under the project, to halt the ongoing loss of cultural heritage and support the country during its post-conflict recovery.

These efforts are complemented by capacity-building training, organized for the benefit of Syrian stakeholders and those from neighbouring countries – Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey – in December 2017.

UNESCO has also responded to the challenges of looting in Iraq, since the war began in 2003. It has raised awareness through various campaigns, specifically focused on monitoring and addressing illicit excavations, risk assessments and emergency contingency-planning for museums.

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, recently launched an international online campaign in Baghdad, Iraq under the banner, Unite4heritage. The global movement, powered by UNESCO, was started in response to the recent unprecedented attacks on heritage and diversity around the world. The global campaign invites everyone to celebrate the places, objects and cultural traditions that make our world a rich and vibrant place.

UNESCO has also produced thirteen awareness-raising video clips for different regions of the world, with the objective of warning tourists to verify the origin of cultural objects before purchasing them.



© DR

*The Mask of Gorgon is a sculpture stolen in 1996 from the ancient Roman site of Hippo Regius (Annaba) in Algeria and restituted by Tunisia in 2014.*





# Culture:

## giving cities a human face

Interviews by **Lucía Iglesias Kuntz**

When mayors of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) got together from 30 June to 2 July 2017 in Enghien-les-Bains (France) for their XI<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, they put culture at the top of their agenda. This included respecting and appreciating the cultures of the different communities living in their cities, involving artists and citizens in joint projects, and fostering dialogue between communities – in other words, recognizing the role of culture as a factor in urban development that is inclusive and reassuring.

At the meeting, the mayors adopted a new strategic framework and called on cities in the network to do more to integrate culture and participation in their policies. Mayors from Brazil to New Zealand all agreed that culture helps communities live together harmoniously.

**Zenaldo Coutinho**, Mayor of Belém do Pará (Brazil), 1.5 million inhabitants.

Belém is the first port of access to the Amazon, giving it an extraordinary cultural diversity. Culture helps communities to express their local identities and encourages dialogue. It stimulates intense interaction between socio-cultural groups and the local authorities, especially as Brazil is going through a dire ethical and economic crisis.



© Eduardo Kobra / Ricardo Cohen / Shutterstock

**Brandi Harless**, Mayor of Paducah, Kentucky, United States, 25,000 inhabitants.

Culture can be a mechanism for peace, specifically in the US at a time when our politics are very divisive. I am in a city of non-partisanship where we are all on the same level. We talk about city issues rather than partisan political issues.

Culture is our foundation, and we all resonate with it. We are known for our quilt-making, and have the National Quilt Museum. About fifteen years ago, we had a decrepit neighbourhood that needed to be revitalized. The city offered houses to artists for \$1, which they had to renovate, and include an art studio. This attracted about fifty artists, providing a new creative environment that we didn't have before.

**Marc Chassaubéné**, Deputy Mayor of Saint-Étienne (France), 170,000 inhabitants.

Artists have been working a lot with the people of Saint-Étienne. Jordan Seiler from the United States, for example, is looking at urban advertising with residents. He has invented the "NO AD" app, which displays a work of art on a screen when you put your smartphone or tablet up against an advertising display. Getting everyone – from the mayor to a child from a working-class neighbourhood – to work on the same art project, is an ideal way to nurture ideas of equality.

*"We Are All One", the world's largest mural (3,000 square metres) painted by Brazilian street artist Eduardo Kobra to mark the 2016 Rio Olympics. Five massive faces represent the five continents.*

**Asaad Zoghaib**, Mayor of Zahlé, Lebanon, 150,000 inhabitants.

I think the most important thing to have culturally, in a country like ours, is public awareness – when people know themselves, and recognize the rights of others. Our city is working on building public awareness, transparency and accountability.

**Dave Cull**, mayor of Dunedin, New Zealand, 125,000 inhabitants.

New Zealand's first inhabitants, the Maōri, lost their land to colonizers in the nineteenth century. We are now going through a healing process, where they are being compensated, and getting back their pride.

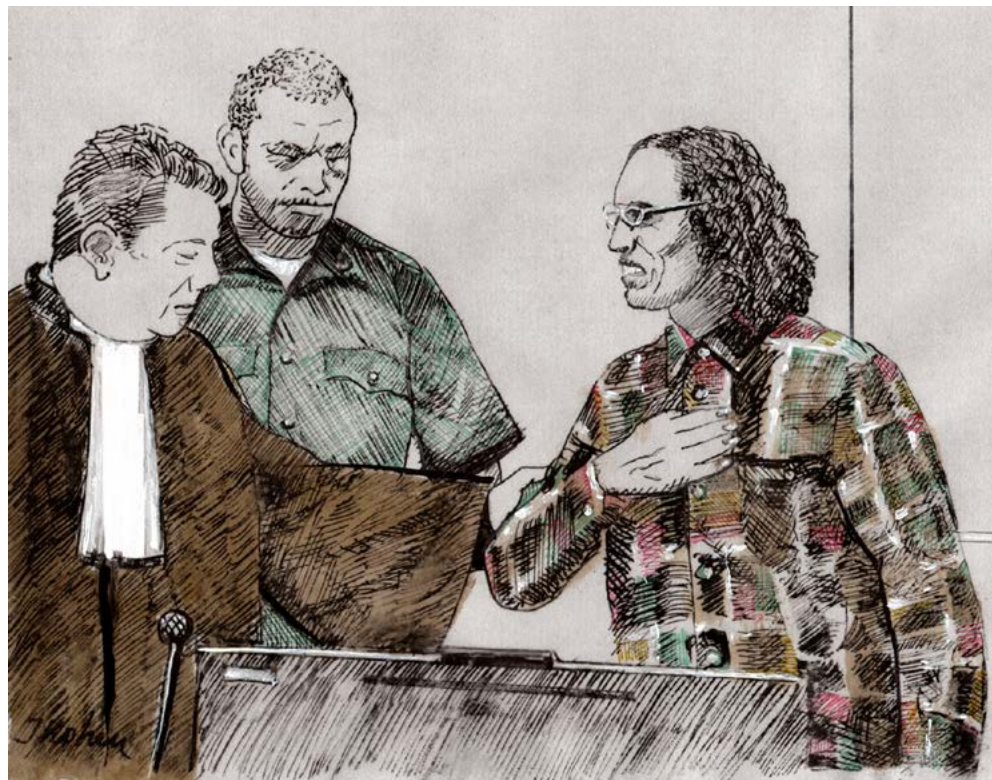
Today, my city is a refugee resettlement destination for Syrian refugees – we have taken in 200 so far. One way of using culture to achieve peace is to accept more diversity – to respect and to commemorate the cultures that make your community what it is.

# “ Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi: I plead guilty,”

Interview by Anissa Barrak

Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi was convicted of the war crime of having deliberately directed the attacks that, in June and July 2012, led to the destruction of ten religious and historical monuments in Timbuktu (Mali), a World Heritage site since 1988. This is the first time that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been requested – in this case, by the State of Mali – to pass judgement on the destruction of cultural monuments, and the first time that it has categorized such acts as war crimes. On 27 September 2016, the ICC sentenced Al Mahdi, who was arrested in 2015, to nine years' imprisonment. On 17 August 2017, the court demanded that he pay €2.7 million to the victims as compensation.

What led this Malian teacher from the Tuareg Azawad tribe to turn against his compatriots and those who share his own faith? After all, having moved to Timbuktu in 2006, he had become a valued member of the community. How did an educated man, who had been taught the precepts of the Sufi tradition of Islam, come to commit such a crime against this same school of Islam? What prompted this shift towards radical political Islamism and violence? Where did the rupture occur?



© Jean Kohlen

*Ahmad Al Mahdi and his lawyer, Mohamed Aouini on 17 August 2017, after the ICC had issued its ruling on the compensation for victims.*

The *UNESCO Courier* visited Al Mahdi at the ICC Detention Centre in The Hague, Netherlands, and traced his journey – from his childhood in the desert of northern Mali, to his wanderings with his family in the Tuareg refugee camps of Mauritania and Algeria; his enrollment in the Libyan army, and his return to his home country, Mali. Here, he settled in Timbuktu, where he found the answer to his quest for stability and recognition – until rebellion broke out in the north of the country.

Having acknowledged the acts he was accused of, and for which he has admitted responsibility by pleading guilty, Al Mahdi goes beyond his own life story in this exclusive interview. He describes the complex social and cultural situation in northern Mali, where tensions and conflict have fermented for over fifty years. Here, radical independence movements with Islamic leanings continue to jostle alongside international jihadism.



© Jean Kohlen

**You have acknowledged your role in the attack and destruction of nine mausoleums and part of the Sidi Yahia mosque in Timbuktu in 2012, which you yourself organized and led. In what capacity did you act and why?**

At the time, I was head of Hesba, one of the four command structures of the Ansar Dine group, which was linked to al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and had occupied northern Mali in 2012. It had set up its headquarters in Timbuktu in April that year, having routed fighters of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (known by its French acronym, MNLA).

It fell to Hesba – whose mission was to “promote virtue and prevent vice” – to combat all acts that, in its eyes, contravened the precepts of Islam. Hesba considered the mausoleums of Timbuktu to be the incarnation of such acts for two reasons – first, because the way that the faithful prayed was judged to be impious; and second, because of the buildings that had been constructed over the tombs. Once the leadership took the decision to destroy the mausoleums, I received the order to carry out the task, using troops placed under my command. I applied myself to the task rigorously, as with everything I do.

**Who took the decision on the destruction? Did you approve of it?**

It was one of my duties to combat practices considered to be contrary to the precepts of Islam. With my soldiers, I personally scrutinized the behaviour of the people. I regularly visited the mausoleums, giving explanations and advice. I also preached the teachings on local radio. The order to destroy came from high up, from the commander of Ansar Dine, Iyad Ag Ghali, who made the decision on the recommendation of his entourage, notably the AQIM advisers. The aim of these groups is to impose their ideology on the people, which is derived from Wahhabi doctrine. In strategic terms, al Qaeda seeks to increase its visibility through spectacular actions in order to attract new adherents and provide the parties that support it with proof of its zeal and efficacy.

“ I warned them that the destruction could lead to greater misfortune for the people... I feared the worst ”

*During his trial at the ICC on 27 September 2016, Ahmad Al Mahdi appealed to “all the world’s Muslims never to carry out this kind of action, which has such terrible consequences, is unjustified and cannot yield any benefits.”*



© MINUSMA / Sophie Ravier

*The mausoleum of Mohamed Mahmoud at the Cemetery of the Three Saints, destroyed by extremists in 2012.*

In the discussion session that led to the decision to destroy the monuments, I openly said that I thought such an action was not appropriate, since it could cause more harm than good. I reminded them of the Sharia ruling that says that no vice may be suppressed if its suppression leads to another equal or greater vice. I warned them that the destruction could lead to greater misfortune for the people. I was thinking, in particular, that it might incite hatred among the local people. I imagined armed groups firing on them. I feared the worst.

I was convinced that the destruction of the mausoleums had no legal basis in Sharia law. It's true that, according to a fatwa recognized by all traditions of Islam, tombs must not be erected more than one *chibr* (about ten centimetres) above ground. But this fatwa only applies to new tombs and not to those that already exist. I wanted to leave the mausoleums intact.

The majority of the population of Timbuktu was obliged to deal with these groups in order to survive. And I was more zealous than the others.

***When carrying out the destruction, were you ever overcome by doubt? What was going through your mind?***

I saw myself as a link in the chain of command and felt that the consequences should be the responsibility of those who made the decision and gave the orders. I knew all too well that if I did not carry out the orders, I would be dismissed. I didn't receive any pay, but the group provided for all the needs of my family.

At the same time, I was aware of what the people were feeling. I knew the sites were historic and sacred. I visited the mausoleums just like the other residents of Timbuktu, but for my own reasons. In general, I feel that we have a duty to visit cemeteries – whether the graves are ordinary or have a mausoleum over them – because all the dead are equal in my eyes. I know the history of most of the saints who have given their names to the mausoleums, having read about it in the scriptures. These were wise and good men, whose good deeds shine wherever they are, even after their death. The Prophet recommended putting graves together in cemeteries so as not to abandon the dead in solitude and isolation.

Then there is the question of supplications. I reject the idea of asking a dead person to intercede with God on my behalf. Many rumours were going around about this: some claimed that the graves in these mausoleums were empty, while others insisted that Hassan and Hussein, the Prophet's grandsons, were buried there, which is completely untrue. I believed that the mausoleums were built to take advantage of people's naïveté. So, while I knew that the destruction of the mausoleums had no basis in Sharia law, I did not see any objection to putting an end to these myths and destroying the buildings. However, I was totally opposed to any interventions in the interior of the mosque.



“ Sharia has never called on the faithful to stick rigidly to rules that were made in ancient times, or to transpose them to the letter, to another time and place ”

***How did you gain the knowledge of Muslim theology that would qualify you to interpret the scriptures?***

I have an eclectic background. As a child, I studied in the Koranic schools in my region, Agouni, near Timbuktu. My father taught me the Maliki Sufi doctrine, and then I continued by reading the books that the sheikhs gave me. By the time I was 12, I had learned the Koran and the exegesis – I had acquired a level of knowledge that allowed me to become an imam. During my meanderings with my family from 1993 onwards – between the

Tuareg refugee camps in Mauritania, and our exile in Libya and Algeria, with occasional returns to Mali – I read all the books I could find and struggled very hard to obtain qualifications recognized by the state, so that I could get a steady job. My ambition was to become a teacher. During our exile in Libya between 1996 and 2001, after the beginning of ethnic tensions and the quashing of the armed Tuareg uprisings, I studied for and obtained the certificate of primary education, but under a borrowed name, as I was never officially registered.

*Restoration work on the Alpha Moya mausoleum.*



© UNESCO/Abdoulaye Cissé



It was with this certificate and under a false name that I enlisted in the Libyan army, where I served for four years and rose to the rank of officer. I had to earn a living and provide for my family, because my father had chosen to stay in the camps in Mauritania. During this entire time, I never stopped reading and learning on my own.

Seeing that there could be no future for me if I stayed where I was, I decided to return to Mali and settled in Timbuktu in 2006, where I started preaching in the mosques. I also set up a private educational organization to build the capacities of teachers of the Koran, which I directed for six years. I was actively involved in several religious and cultural youth associations, which performed a range of activities like cleaning the streets, and donating blood. This was a period of relative stability.

I couldn't advance in my career because of this diploma, which was not in my name. So I had to start again from scratch, to obtain the certificate. This enabled me to attend the Pedagogical Institute in Timbuktu, where I received a diploma in educational psychology and was then able to pass the civil service exam. I finally obtained a position as head teacher in the east of Timbuktu. This was in 2010. I was working there when the rebels occupied the north in 2012.

***Under what circumstances did you join the ranks of the rebels?***

When the rebel troops invaded northern Mali, the people started to flee and seek refuge in Mauritania. They were afraid of abuse by the Malian army, which had happened with every rebel uprising. It was terror. I was considering asking to be sent somewhere in the interior of the country, when I learned that members of my tribe had been victims of abuse by the people of Bamako. They had been threatened and attacked and their pharmacy burned down, even though they had never lived in the north of the country. They were born and raised in the capital and were loyal and well-integrated.



© UNESCO /Thierry Joffroy

So I decided to leave the country for Algeria, as I saw no other way to escape the inter-tribal racism. In fact, this racism was not an aspect of Malian state policy, but came from the people themselves, who believed that fair-skinned people were intruders from Arab countries. Historically, this is true – people from Arab countries did settle in Mali, but that was 400 years ago! That is why I was in Algeria when the rebels invaded Timbuktu in April 2012. I then decided to go back and take up my old job and help to manage the region.

***Was this your first contact with Ansar Dine and al Qaeda? Why did you feel closer to them than to the people of Mali?***

At first, it was the MNLA rebels who occupied the region around Timbuktu. I had always supported this movement in its efforts to find justice for the Azawad tribe, to which I belong. But when I arrived in Timbuktu, Ansar Dine had already chased out the MNLA fighters. I knew Iyad Ag Ghali, the leader of Ansar Dine, from the time when he was commander of the Azawad rebellion. I admired him.



*The Alpha Moya mausoleum, reconstructed, in 2016.*

“Restoring trust will take longer than rebuilding the mausoleums”

A few days later, Ag Ghali invited me to a meeting with imams from the mosques and other prominent city figures. He arrived, accompanied by a group from al Qaeda. I was impressed by his speech and convinced by his ideas. I joined his movement right away. I was already aware of the Wahhabi teachings through the Saudi charities that were active in Timbuktu. One of them invited me on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 2006, after which I adopted the Wahhabi doctrine.

***You have apologized to the inhabitants of Timbuktu, the citizens of Mali, and the descendants of the Saints. Do you think that acknowledging your deeds and conveying your regrets have been enough to gain their forgiveness?***

Certainly not. My repentance is something personal, coming from the bottom of my heart. But I can only prove my sincerity by carrying out acts of reparation, when I get out of prison. UNESCO has ensured the reconstruction of the mausoleums, which is a remarkable achievement. But restoring trust will take longer than rebuilding the mausoleums. I have caused injury to the entire population, in all its diversity – whether Fula, Songhai, Tuareg or Arab. I hope that they will accept the hand that I am offering them to follow the path towards reconciliation. I want to write a memoir for them, which can restore their dignity and at the same time help protect the mausoleums.

When I have finished my sentence, I want to return to society and work towards restoring national harmony. The situation is even more urgent today, after the damage created by Ansar Dine and al Qaeda and the accumulated failures of the Azawad rebellion. It pains me to see the refugees confined in camps in Mauritania, Algeria, Libya and Burkina Faso. They will not be able to return to their homes unless there is national reconciliation.



**Radical ideologies using Islam are attracting a lot of young people, as was the case for you. Based on what you have learned from this episode in your life, what can you do to protect them from these influences?**

I think that Muslim countries should be governed according to the precepts of Islam, which have both a religious and a political dimension. Sharia has defined general values that are valid for all time, everywhere. These general values, which are derived from the sacred texts of the Koran and the words of the Prophet, make it possible to pass laws that are adapted to new contexts. Sharia has never called on the faithful to stick rigidly to rules that were made in ancient times, or to transpose them to the letter, to another time and place.

Islam demands a very high level of mastery of Sharia before a person can hold political office. I was very saddened and disappointed to discover that there was no one in the groups I joined who had a greater understanding of Sharia than I had, even though I was just a simple and modest student of the subject. How could I believe in the capacity of these organizations to found a stable and strong state?

Having said this, I advise young people to concentrate on themselves, their ambitions, their country and their religion. Religion is a personal practice. Faith, trust and hope are the mainstays of a healthy and responsible youth, which is able to see for itself that there is no point in joining radical Islamic groups.

It does young people no justice to view them as a flock of ignorant sheep that need to be led. It is up to me to see in them a human treasure that is potentially mature and full of wisdom. If I present my vision to them, they will be able to decide which parts they find useful. This – with respect – is how I intend to behave with them, and with all others. Just as I reserve the right to criticize them, and others.

*Mayombo Kassongo, the Legal Representative of the Victims, considers that the Al Mahdi trial was exemplary.*

## “A model trial”, says lawyer Kassongo

Three years after they were destroyed in 2012, the mausoleums of Timbuktu, a spiritual centre in Mali and a World Cultural Heritage site, have been rebuilt exactly as they were. Carried out in record time under the auspices of UNESCO, the reconstruction used local skilled craftsmen, who, from father to son, have preserved the traditional techniques of masonry so that they could continue to maintain the mausoleums. While some manuscripts were burned during the attacks, the majority of these historical treasures were preserved by residents of Timbuktu, who acted on the reflex to hide them when armed militants invaded the city.

For Mayombo Kassongo, the Legal Representative of the Victims in the trial of Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi in the International Criminal Court, the restoration of the mausoleums illustrated “the political will of the Malian government and the international community to demonstrate their resolve and to give the people new hope”. But, he insists, “repairing the trauma and the material damage caused will need a lot more time”.

While for most of the 137 complainants the damages were mainly material – especially for those who lived in these buildings and depended on them for their livelihood – all the residents of Timbuktu have been affected by the spiritual and psychological damage caused by the attacks. The direct and indirect victims have not all appealed to the law, but the Court has taken them into account in the right to compensation, set at €2.7 million. As Al Mahdi was without means, a trust fund has been set up for the victims so that the required restoration work may be completed, and for which an implementation plan is to be submitted to the Court by February 2018.

Kassongo confirmed that none of the victims have accepted Al Mahdi’s excuses or granted him his request for forgiveness. “The wound is still open and will take a long time to heal.. Asking for their forgiveness at this time is like turning a knife in the wound.”

“What it is important to take away from this model trial,” adds Kassongo, “is the hope that it may have a deterrent effect on young people who might be tempted to enlist in extremist groups and be seduced by violence. The judgement was severe, the sentence was heavy, and the amount of compensation was considerable. That should be a lesson to them.”



© Jean Kohlen





“ They chose to pick up a gun,  
I choose  
to pick up a camera  
Deeyah Khan ”



© Fuuse

Deeyah Khan at work.

### Interview by Jasmina Šopova

**Born in Norway to parents of Pashtun (Afghan) and Pakistani origin, Deeyah Khan's personal experience of straddling completely different cultures has honed her artistic vision. Using culture and art as tools in a courageous fight against extremism, she works tirelessly to tell the stories of people whose voices would otherwise never be heard.**

### *What made you decide to make the film, Jihad: A Story of the Others?*

I come from a Muslim background myself, and have to deal with the consequences of the growing religious fundamentalism within our communities. I was very invested in trying to understand why this movement is becoming increasingly violent and why it is consuming more and more of our young people. I was unsatisfied by the conversation that we are having around jihadism. It is easy to hate the men who are a part of this, but not particularly productive. I wanted to make a film about what it is like to be that person attracted to jihad. And I learned that I had a lot in common with them.

The realization that I could recognize myself in a lot of their issues scared me more than anything else. But we are separate in how we deal with these issues: these men chose to pick up a gun, I choose to pick up a camera.



© Fuuse

Scene from the film *Jihad: A Story of the Others* by Deeyah Khan, with Sabyl and Wassem, in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

“He thought he was fighting for Muslims, and for a better world and then he realized he was becoming just another oppressor”

***The people you interviewed are all former jihadists. How did you gain access to them?***

It took a really long time to build trust, and about two years to make the film, which I finished in 2015. The best way to gain trust is to be persistent and honest about what you're trying to do. I constantly told them: "I do not agree with you, I do not even like you (but I do now). I just want to listen, to understand, for you to share your stories with me." Many appointments were set up and cancelled; some of them would choose not to talk or asked me to turn off the camera. Some of them wanted me to lose hope, but I kept coming back, because I really wanted to know.

***What prompted them to abandon jihad?***

For one of the main characters, it was a matter of realizing that what he had believed, was not true. He thought he was fighting for Muslims, and for a better world and then he realized he was becoming just another oppressor. For many of them, it was recognizing the fact that there were hypocrisies and double standards in the world-view that they had created for themselves. Another factor was that people who they (the jihadis) considered to be the enemy, starting treating them like human beings. The minute you start connecting to your humanity, it's different.

***You said that you didn't like these men at first, and now you do. What made you change your mind?***

A lot of the young people who are drawn to jihad are actually initially creatively inclined, and because that is somehow stunted, it bursts out as violence. I did not expect to hear that an overwhelming majority of the men I spoke to – on and off camera – said they would like to be rappers or poets or painters. But they couldn't do it because their families would not let them or their societies did not accept it. That hurts me very much, because that, we could have done something about. We are all responsible for what is happening to our youth.

***When you say we are all responsible, are you referring to family, schools, governments, or the international community?***

I mean all of us as individuals, how we respond to people in our everyday lives. When a young Muslim boy comes and sits next to us on a bus, it matters how we look at him, how we hold our purse. Similarly, when our politicians or governments speak about these topics from a very hateful place, defining their own citizens as monsters, it makes it very difficult to engage with these monsters, and maybe allow for the chance for them to become human.



As for families, they must recognize that they are betraying their children when they put unmanageable expectations on them. Their children are only human.

I think our schools, our police, our media, all have a responsibility when our young women or men come to them for help, whatever their culture, background or race. It is all about human interaction. Whether we are artists, activists, feminists, anything, we all have an obligation to stand up.

***Is that the reason you founded sister-hood, the online magazine, and series of live events? What made you venture into the media?***

Yes, *sister-hood* was founded in 2016, and works through civil society and media channels. It is an international platform where the woman of Muslim heritage is at the centre. Everybody talks about Muslim women, but rarely do we actually talk to them.

I wanted to start creating work that refocused our attention on what it is like to be that girl who is suffering, that man who is wanting to go out and fight in Syria.

The response and the community-building between the women has been amazing – we now have nearly 200 writers from forty countries. I realize the importance of women telling their own stories, whoever they are. Exposing oppression is only half the story. I deeply respect journalism as a profession, but I am frustrated by the incomplete stories that we continue to tell in the media. We talk about honour killings, about violence against women, but we forget the person. In everything I do, I am trying to turn up the volume of the voices of the people who are already there.

***In 2012, you made the documentary, Banaz: A Love Story, about a young British Kurdish woman who was killed by her own family for choosing a life for herself. Why did you focus on just her story?***

I wanted to make a film on “honour” violence and I was going to tell two or three stories – including Banaz’s – which was a terrible failure of the police in the United Kingdom. Banaz approached the police five times for help, but was ignored.

I changed my mind when I met the policewoman who investigated her murder. I asked her why she fought so hard for this case (she got the uncle and father convicted in the UK, and then went to Iraq and worked to extradite two cousins implicated in the murder, to the UK), and she replied: “I did it because I love her.”

I could not understand how she could love a girl she had never met, who was dead, but she said: “Everyone should be loved. She should have been loved. The people who were closest to her did not love her. So I loved her and still do.”

*A still from the shooting of Islam’s Non-Believers.*



© Fuuse



“ Art goes beyond our differences, beyond all the walls and inequalities that exist between us. To me, art is an equalizing factor ”

I remember thinking: “This is the film I want to make!” And *Banaz* was born. Banaz’s story includes all the problems and all the solutions. And the solution to this problem is that we *have* to care.

**Could you tell us about your 2016 film, *Islam’s Non-Believers*?**

The film is about an underground resistance movement of young people who have decided to leave Islam. Very often, ISIS and terrorism are forcing them to re-examine their faith. When I made *Jihad*, I was contacted by a lot of young people from Iraq, Syria, and other countries, who said to me: “There is a different movement also happening: there are a lot of young people who are leaving Islam. Why don’t you speak about us? Is it because we do not use violence?”

When I started looking into this, I was shocked. I discovered that there are between 4 million and 15 million non-believers in Pakistan; between 1.4 million and 6 million of them in Saudi Arabia. Some governments have set up ministries to counter atheist thought. In many Islamic countries, it is a crime to be a non-believer and openly talk about it, and people are being jailed and even killed for this.

I decided to make a film to explore this phenomenon, which is not discussed enough.

**Why did you choose film to communicate these issues?**

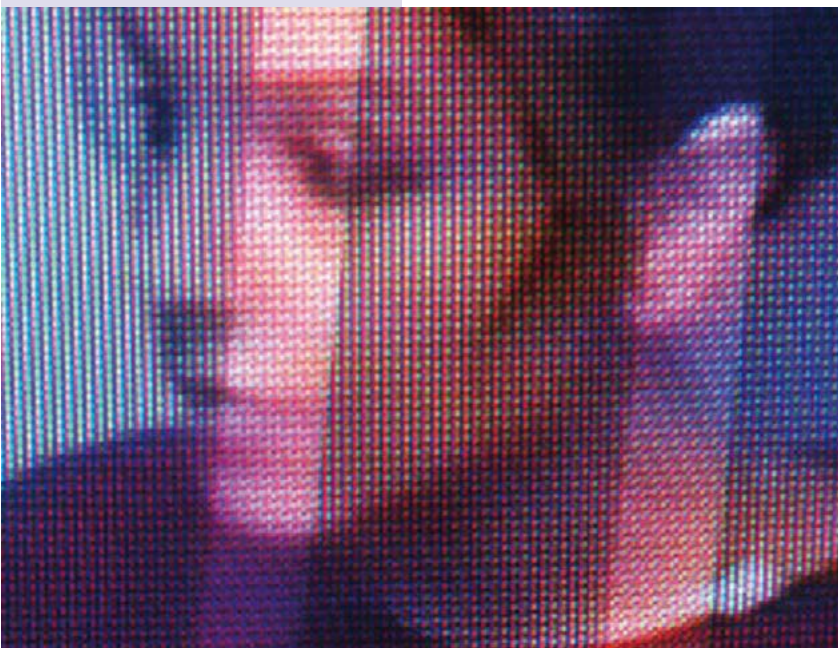
If you want people to take action, you have to make them feel something. That is what films do. That is what art does. It does not just engage our intellectual capacity, it speaks to our emotional register. This is what is so unique and precious about all forms of art.

Art goes beyond our differences, beyond all the walls and inequalities that exist between us. To me, art is an equalizing factor. To understand its power, you have to look at how oppressors, dictators and abusers treat art and artists. And the first people that oppressors target, other than women, usually, is artists.

**Going forward, what are your plans in your capacity as UNESCO’s Goodwill Ambassador?**

What I hope to do is not just promote the work that artists are doing, but also to talk about how artists are paying a great price doing this, in many parts of the world. Artists, including some of my own friends, are being persecuted, mistreated and imprisoned. And we need to protect them. My dedication and my heart is to try and support marginalized voices, and to tell more of their stories.

Poster for the film *Banaz: A Love Story*, about the honour killing of a young Iraqi woman in the United Kingdom.



© Fuuse

**Deeyah Khan**, UNESCO’s first-ever Goodwill Ambassador for Artistic Freedom and Creativity since 2016, is an Emmy and Peabody award-winning documentary film-maker and founder of Fuuse, an independent media and arts company that puts women, people from minorities, and third-culture kids at the heart of telling their own stories. She also founded *sister-hood*, a digital magazine, spotlighting the diverse voices of women of Muslim heritage.

Giving up a successful career as a singer to fight extremism and prejudice through different media, Khan continues to write and produce songs. She has received many awards for her work, including the Ossietzky prize, the University of Oslo’s Human Rights Award and the Peer Gynt Prize from the Parliament of Norway.



# Breaking

## the cycle of vengeance



© GAC

Young people from Cambodia and the Congo meet after a performance of *See You Yesterday* at the refugee camp in Kigeme, Rwanda.

by Marie Angélique Ingabire

Using theatre as a catalyst for dialogue, Global Arts Corps encourages people from conflict zones to explore their painful pasts, and help them to build a future. A group of young Cambodians travel to a festival in Kigali to connect with Rwandan and Congolese audiences who have lived through similar traumatic experiences. Together, they help each other heal, through a shared understanding, tolerance and empathy.

In July 2016, nineteen young Cambodian performers traveled to Rwanda to participate in the Ubumuntu Arts Festival. The world premiere of their production, *See You Yesterday*, a unique mix of theatre, dance and circus, was performed in an amphitheatre on the grounds of the Kigali Genocide Memorial. The Cambodians – second-generation survivors of the Khmer Rouge genocide (1975 to 1979) – were afforded the rare chance to connect with an audience who were also survivors, of the genocide in Rwanda.

The arts festival brought together companies from eighteen different countries, all of which had emerged from violent conflicts. In a country like Rwanda, where a million lives were lost in the genocide of 1994, the concept of humanity has been so fragile that the restoration of hope requires serious work.

The Cambodian group was performing under the banner of the Global Arts Corps (GAC), an international community of professional artists which uses the transformative power of the theatre to bring together people from different post-conflict areas.

“Through the rehearsal process, actors manage to hear the stories of those they have learned to fear, disdain, and hate and then, together, create a single, agreed upon, fair story of their multiple truths,” Michael Lessac, co-founder and Artistic Director of GAC, explains.

Lessac, a well-known American theatre and film personality, is the creator and director of the award-winning international theatre piece, *Truth in Translation*, about the story of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Co-produced with South Africa’s Market Theatre, the project traveled to twenty-six cities in eleven countries around the world, and led to his co-founding of the Global Arts Corps in 2009, along with his wife, Jacqueline Bertrand.

Global Arts Corps, which has taken its work from Rwanda to Kosovo, and Cambodia to Northern Ireland, hopes audience members from vastly different backgrounds can find a piece of themselves in the experiences of other people.



© GAC

*A curious Cambodian schoolboy watching the rehearsal of See You Yesterday, peering over Michael Lessac, Artistic Director of Global Arts Corps.*

They have taken their work to seventeen countries on four continents so far, reaching over 100,000 audience members and facilitating reconciliation workshops for over 15,000 people in post-conflict zones.

Partnering with non-governmental organizations and training local activists, educators and artists, GAC works to ensure that the work they begin is carried on when they leave. Everything – from the rehearsals of each production, to the dialogues they spark – is filmed. The idea is to build a vast educational archive to supplement a group of theatre artists trained to collaborate with people emerging out of violent conflicts.

Using professional theatre to support reconciliation initiatives was “not an easy process initially,” Lessac recalls. “Young people did not want to talk about the past, so they used their extraordinary physical skills to creatively move back to the past, to try to understand what their elders went through during the genocide.”

After the festival, the Cambodian cast and crew traveled to southern Rwanda, to perform at the Kigeme refugee camp there. The camp is home to 20,000 refugees, displaced from the Democratic Republic of Congo, ravaged by two decades of civil war and famine. Using a makeshift stage in a vast open field, the Cambodians performed on three consecutive days – each time to swelling audiences. Besides, GAC facilitated workshops for young refugees after the performances.

The Cambodian youth, some of them street children, were trained in acrobatics by the Phare Ponleu Selpak, an association created in 1992 in Battambang city. Using their world-class circus skills, the association’s founders work to help children in their communities to overcome the problems of the dark past of their parents.

### Empathy helps healing

The most significant outcome of bringing people from two different genocide backgrounds together was that both nationalities noticed that they were not alone, and had nothing to be ashamed of. A young boy said he remembered being forced to beat a prisoner when he was still in the Congo, as was enacted in the performance. Other touching testimonials emerged from the crowd.



© Jeff Barbee



Equally poignant was the reaction of Khuon Det, a co-founder of the Cambodian circus, who now works with the GAC. Growing up in a refugee camp on the Thai border after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, he remembered his own experience as a child, as he saw the Congolese children rush to welcome the Cambodian group. "We were so happy to see outsiders... it makes my heart full," he said.

"Talking about our past, however dark it may be, is a way to heal our wounds. It is also the best method to help future generations learn from past errors to prevent this from happening again," says Innocent Munyeshuri, a young Rwandan actor who narrated the Cambodian show in Kinyarwanda, a local language also spoken by the Congolese.

Through an exploration of different identities, the GAC hopes to generate empathy among its actors. "You should be able to empathize through someone else's point of view as well as your own, otherwise you do not know where you come from, you don't understand others," Lessac states.

Actors who grew up in post-conflict societies are the first to benefit from GAC's work. Arben Bajraktaraj, an Albanian actor and one of GAC's trainers, explains how empathy helps actors feel an inner security: "We see empathy as a discovery, the most important thing in our creation process. You must put your judgements aside to discover the real image, and it will change the way you see the world. For that, you must release yourself completely."

*Scene from the play Truth in Translation, which tells the story of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.*



## Part circus, part theatre

The GAC's future projects include bringing together people with similar dark pasts to participate in one huge production, which is part circus, part theatre. The actors will go back in time to discover where their prejudices and cultural anger come from and, out of that, create a story that includes truths from all the sides. This would create a solid basis for reconciliation, Lessac explains.

The project hopes to involve participants from the growing refugee communities in Germany and France. In Colombia, it will include former rebels who are being reintegrated into society after many years in the jungle. Young actors and musicians from Flint, Michigan (United States), will also participate. In the Middle East and Argentina, the work of women's movements, past and present – dealing with peace and identity – will be highlighted.

"We don't imagine that we can change the world directly but, by working with youth and creating ways for them to understand their own post-conflict situations through rehearsal, we can begin to build pathways for insightful communication and connection between young people from different cultures and conflicts around the world. Hopefully, this can help to break the revenge cycle that continues to plague us today," concludes Lessac.

**Marie Angélique Ingabire** is a Rwandan journalist based in Paris. She has worked for Rwanda's public television, presenting, hosting and producing political and educational programmes. She also conducts workshops on the freedom of expression in French schools.



# The story of Magdalena, South Sudan

by Magdalena Nandege



There has been a heightened awareness in recent years, of the strong links between culture and peace and security. The story of Magdalena, a young woman from South Sudan – a member of the Youth Peacemaker Network, the flagship programme of the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative – illustrates how culture can be harnessed to transform societies impacted by conflicts, into safer and more productive communities.

© WPDI

*Magdalena Nandege, a young peacemaker from the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI) in South Sudan.*

My name is Magdalena Nandege. I am 23 years old and from South Sudan. I come from Homiri, a village in Budi county. It has a population of about 150,000 people, most of them agro-pastoralists – like my mother, who is a farmer. The county has two secondary schools and eleven primary schools, none of which have access to electricity. Only fifteen per cent of the population is literate.

I am currently training to become a midwife at the Health Science Institute of Torit, the capital city of Imotong state. We are now twenty-four students, down from an original group of thirty-seven – some students stopped coming because of the lack of security, poverty and inadequate transportation. I chose this career because I believe it is important to take care of women.

Women are the most vulnerable people in the world because they carry life.

This is something I have experienced personally. In 2014, I was in labour, and left unattended, as nurses and midwives struck work to reclaim unpaid salaries. Later I was assisted by midwives working with the World Health Organization (WHO). I knew then that women in South Sudan needed help to reduce maternal mortality.

This belief also led me to enroll in the Youth Peacemaker Network (YPN) of the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI). I joined the YPN in 2014 after hearing about it from the Eastern Equatoria Youth Union, of which I was secretary for gender and social welfare.

Through this programme, I have acquired skills to promote peace within myself and the youth in our community – through conflict management, mediation, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), meditation and entrepreneurship.





The training aims to reduce violence and promote peace and development. Upon completing the course of 250 hours, I was certified by WPDI as a Trainer of Trainees (ToT), to train local young people and develop activities in remote communities. These activities consist of the facilitation of peace processes and the development of community businesses, providing services to communities and jobs to young people.

The Eastern Equatoria programme gathers eighteen ToTs and 156 youth, between the ages of 16 and 35, in *payams* (local communities). They can read and write, which is important, because the programme involves interaction using social media platforms. This way, we can help each other when dealing with conflicts and in the management of our respective small businesses.

The programme has also helped me acquire confidence by using my artistic talent for a just cause. Drama and stories are very important to convey messages. As a peacemaker, I often train people or engage in community dialogues. I have noticed that when problems are really hard, it is easier to use art, to use words that people understand, because people are able to differentiate between good and wrong through art.

Recently, I have made a short movie on gender-based violence, *Magda and Boniface – Forced Marriages*, with a group of friends and colleagues from YPN. We used a tablet provided by WPDI to make the film because we could not afford to buy a camera. A fictionalized version of situations that take place in our communities, the film was shot in English, and also in Toposa, Juba Arabic, and Arabic – everyone used their own language.

Many of the people in the movie were not professional actors. Young people and community leaders came together to solve the issue of early forced marriage. The fact that they accepted to be in the movie was, for me, one of the best moments of the whole process.

The movie tells the true story of a young adolescent, whose family wants to marry her off, and she refuses. She is allowed to make her case before a council, made up of her family and the community, and convinces them that a young woman should be able to choose her own partner and life.

The film was shared through Bluetooth with youth who had smart phones and also used by WPDI as one of its activities.

We have not yet shown the film in schools but we used a projection during a training of *payam* youth and their reaction was positive. The students acknowledged the need to encourage the education of girls and to discourage early forced marriage. I hope to show the film to a wider audience and to make more films like it, with more resources.

Through my studies and training with WPDI, UNESCO and UN Women, I have acquired skills in peace-building, conflict management, mediation, meditation, business skills, and the fight against gender-based violence. I have learned a lot about peace and human rights. But this needs to be translated in the languages that people speak at home – it must talk to their hearts. I think that art can do a lot for peace in South Sudan, so much more than long speeches. It can show positive characters that people can identify with, inviting them to practise peace and sustainable development. We need more art in South Sudan so we can have more peace.

*Magdalena Nandeye with a group of young people working on a farming project to support their communities.*



© WPDI



*A Syrian boy waits for the rain to stop in an old shopping centre outside Tripoli (Lebanon), currently occupied by 300 refugee families, 2016. The little we know about displaced people mostly concerns those living in camps, but over half of all the world's refugees are in urban areas.*



# Hijacked Education

**Text: Katerina Markelova**

**Photos: Diego Ibarra Sánchez / MeMo**



*The scars of war.  
A destroyed classroom seen through a hole  
in the wall, Hasakah, Syria, 13 April 2016.*

“Time, a time bomb, stagnates in exile and blots the sheets of school calendars that will never return.” Spanish photojournalist Diego Ibarra Sánchez uses this metaphor to express a thought that has been haunting him for a long time – war is wiping out the future of an entire generation.

According to UNESCO, only half of refugee children and a quarter of adolescents attend school, while over 28 million children living in regions affected by conflicts do not go to school at all.

Too often the effects of war on education are missed by the lenses of war photographers. Teachers are murdered, schools are destroyed or converted to military bases, there is profound psychological trauma – and, in the end, millions of children are deprived of access to an education. Going beyond the sensationalism of images of war, Diego wants to show how the future of a ‘lost generation’ is being destroyed.

Having a mother who was a teacher, Diego was already aware of the challenges of education when he set off for Pakistan in 2009, at the age of 27. At the time, the country was in the clutches of a violent Taliban campaign against the school system. That is when he launched the *Hijacked Education* project, which the *Courier* highlights in this Zoom.

In 2014, Diego moved to Lebanon, where he still lives today, with his wife and two-year-old son. He has continued to develop his work on the theme of school in the time of war, going to Syria, Iraq and Colombia.

“Unfortunately, the chapter is not closed yet,” says Diego. “This is still very much how life is in many parts of the world, and so my project is ongoing. We consume millions of images without taking the time to digest them. In passing from one reality to another, without pausing, we have become ‘tourists’ of the pain of others,” he adds. Using the power of his work as a photographer, he attempts to encourage the hurried ‘tourists’ that we are, to stop and think, and to help to defuse the ticking time bomb that is threatening so many of the world’s school children.



*Performance by French association Clowns Sans Frontières in a Lebanese school for refugee children, December 2014. Half of the world's refugees are children. Most of them live in developing countries, where many schools already have difficulties educating children from their local communities.*



*A bus service arranged by UNICEF/Caritas in the Beqaa Valley (Lebanon) enables Syrian refugee children to go to school regularly, March 2017.*



*Hundreds of textbooks set aflame by ISIS militants in a school in al-Shaddadi (Syria), April 2016. Schools, like hospitals, are among the most dangerous places in the country. Yet, there is provision for the protection of schools and hospitals under the 1907 Convention concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land.*





*A young Syrian refugee plays in a makeshift shelter erected in an informal camp on the outskirts of Zahlé, Lebanon, 16 December 2016. Globally, the number of displaced persons has reached levels never recorded before. In 2015, 65.3 million people were forcibly displaced. Fifty-three per cent of refugees originate from Syria, Somalia or Afghanistan.*



*The main entrance of this boys' school in Pakistan was bricked up after an explosion in April 2013. The Declaration on Security in Schools – put forward in 2015 by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, of which UNESCO is a founder member – has currently been approved by sixty-nine countries.*



*Pakistani boys from a school blown up by the Taliban have to study outside (2013). "In conflict situations, schools, teachers, schoolchildren are not collateral damage – they are directly targeted," says Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO.*



*Remains of a blackboard in a school in Swabi (Pakistan), destroyed in August 2012. The photo was taken in 2013. In the majority of countries suffering from armed conflict, the military use of schools and other educational institutions remains a constant feature of war, according to UNESCO.*





*Portrait of a Syrian refugee boy, Lebanon, July 2017.  
Nearly three million children in Syria have never known peace,  
and suffer from psychosocial distress.*



# Ideas



*Drawing by Kitty Crowther, illustrator and author of children's books, who is half-Swedish and half-English and lives in Belgium. It was used for the poster of the Day of Solidarity with the Exiled, entitled "You're wonderful, you're welcome", held in Molenbeek, Brussels on 10 May 2017.*

© Kitty Crowther

# Philosophy versus tribalism



© EvazéSir from the no rules corp

by Souleymane Bachir Diagne

The migrant crisis points to the tribalist isolationism that can be found at the origin of what the philosopher Souleymane Bachir Diagne calls the “crisis in our idea of humanity”. Diagne takes us on a philosophical journey through current issues, along the lines of Bergsonian thought.

This article is published to coincide with the International Day for Tolerance, 16 November, and World Philosophy Day, celebrated each year on the third Thursday of November.

We are seeing a crisis today in our idea of humanity, and philosophy can and must help us to think it through. A crisis in our idea of humanity: what do we mean by this? In the French newspaper, *Le Monde*, dated 30 April 2016, Nicolas Hulot – who was not yet environment minister (a post he has held since May 2017), but head of an environmental foundation – asked this question: “Concerning migrants, where has our humanity gone?”

I consider the way in which the question is asked to be crucial, because it shows that what is revealed by the “migrant crisis” we are experiencing – unmatched since the Second World War, they say – is our own isolationism, which is today calling into question the regulatory and ethical idea of humanity.

We must think together about the migrant, a figure that highlights human distress, and the rise of what has been called populism. I prefer to use the term ethno-nationalism or tribalism, because I consider the accepted term of populism inadequate to describe what we are experiencing today.

*Tribulations, a pop-up installation at the Réserve Malakoff (France) by graffiti and stencil artist Sir, and painter and “poster-slasher” Evazé-Nam, questions notions of migration and borders.*

The best symbol today for this encounter between the migrant and the ethno-nationalist is the ship chartered by young Europeans of the far-right movement, *Génération Identitaire* (Generation Identity). They use the ship to intercept migrants’ boats, and non-governmental organization (NGO) ships helping migrants, in the Mediterranean – one wonders if they intend to sink them. Another image is that of the fishermen of Tunisia, opposed to the refuelling of what they consider a “racist ship” in the country’s ports.

“The ‘migrant crisis’ we are experiencing is our own isolationism, which today calls into question the regulatory and ethical idea of humanity”

The ethno-nationalist movements have brought to power – here and there, as we know – parties and personalities that have turned migrants into bogeymen. They have urged their constituents to rally against migrants, by forming a national front. They came close to making their ideology dominant in the Netherlands, a country that history – the history of philosophy, in particular – considers the very homeland of tolerance and the idea of humanity.

### The primitive nature of the tribal instinct

Asking ourselves what gives tribalism its power requires an analysis to which philosophy – Henri Bergson (1859 to 1941) in particular – sheds the most invaluable light. It teaches us that the radical refusal to hear Hulot’s question originates in the negation of the very idea of a “humanity in general”, on which the obligation of hospitality can be based.

Is there no humanity in general? It exists, for what Bergson calls the “soul that opens” or “the open soul”, the one at the heart of his thought in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (Paris, 1932).

In this work, the French philosopher explains that the feeling of belonging to a tribe is an instinct within us. And because it is an instinct, there is no need to question its origin or its nature, but only to recognize that it exists and that it is inscribed primitively in our nature.

This, then, is the motive on which tribal policy and the rallying call for ethno-nationalism is based. It is therefore understandable that when this policy is given the appearance of common sense – and presents itself as immediately evident versus the complexities of what it condemns as the “political correctness” of openness to others – it is making the *primitive* nature of the tribal instinct its *primary* truth. What exists for me is the circle of closeness constituted by the community of those who resemble me, who have the same colour of skin or the same religion, and so on. It has therefore been proposed to sort asylum-seekers according to their religion!

If one wishes, then, to evoke an abstraction such as that of a *humanity*, it can only be a zoological totalization, a grouping obtained only by the addition of ultimately heterogeneous humanities. One cannot simply arrive at the idea of humanity starting from affiliations and gradually enlarging the territorial inscriptions. In short, one cannot stretch the tribal instinct into an instinct of the human.

### Beyond instinct, openness

It is therefore necessary to be able to emerge from instinct, in order to find oneself, at once in touch with humanity, in oneself and in others. Then the question is this: how is it possible to open the soul beyond the tribe if it is originally established that we “naturally and directly love our parents and our fellow-countrymen, whereas love of mankind is indirect and acquired”, to quote Bergson? Where can we tap into a force that does not have the immediacy of an instinct?



In other words, how is it possible to acquire something that goes against nature’s plan to enlist us in the community our “tribe” has built, with its own morality and its opposition to other tribes? This is possible because it is also in our nature, explains Bergson, to be able to “cheat” this same nature and to extend, through intelligence, “social solidarity into human fraternity”.

We thus acquire the meaning of this human fraternity through, on the one hand, religion (and it must be remembered here that one of the etymologies of this word gives it the meaning of that which *connects*) and, on the other, intelligence taking the form of philosophical reason. Thus, to open us up beyond instinct, there is religion and its call to love humanity “through God, in God”, and reason, “by which we all commune with one another”, and through which “the philosophers bring us to see mankind and thus show us the eminent dignity of the human person, the right of all to respect.”



© Gianni Cipriano

*An asylum seeker feeds doves and pigeons in the courtyard of the Pian del Lago CARA (Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers) in Caltanissetta, Italy, 2014.*

This love of humanity is not *primitive* like instinct. It is nonetheless *primary*. We experience it through charitable action or philosophical meaning: in one case as in the other, Bergson tells us, we arrive there in one leap, and not in stages that would go from the family to the nation, and so on.

“The open soul” is precisely the principle of this leap. It counters what one might call the stunted, closed soul, for which to love is to love *against*; which, to the idea of humanity, replies that its main concern is itself and what touches it most closely. And this is already a great deal, more than enough to deal with – it cannot take on all the world’s troubles.

Versus this stunted soul and its false facts, I recognize in myself an open soul that makes humanity immediately present to me – I can touch it – and allows me to be the neighbour of someone who is not close. As Bergson writes, I also recognize by this very fact that we have always to become human. In other words, we have to grow this open soul within us continually, and to found upon it a response to the migrant crisis, that is comprised of humanity and hospitality.

**Souleymane Bachir Diagne** (Senegal) is a philosopher and historian of mathematical logic. A professor at Columbia University in New York, he has written numerous books on the history of logic and philosophy, Islam and African societies and cultures. In 2011, he was awarded the Edouard Glissant Prize in recognition of his work.

# Refugee scientists:

## quiet pioneers dedicated to discovery

by Sarah Willcox

In a world torn apart by strife, it is crucial that scientists and academics whose individual and intellectual freedoms are at risk are given a second chance to continue to innovate and work in safe environments. Without these freedoms, as Einstein pointed out, in 1933, "... there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Newton, no Pasteur, no Lister... It is only men who are free who create the inventions and intellectual works which to us moderns make life worthwhile."



World map of exile.

© DR

For decades, a theoretical physicist defied the suspicions of his government and continued to teach and research, enduring the perpetual fear of surveillance and repression. Educated in Europe, he had published extensively and built an international reputation. He suffered for decades, advocating for political freedoms in his home country, and defending the rights of his students who stood up for the same values. Ultimately, he fled, seeking the safety of universities in the United States.

This was not 1930. Nor was this scientist Albert Einstein. This was 2012, when the Institute of International Education Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF) – a programme I direct – received his call for help. This renowned scientist is one of thousands of academics forcibly and permanently displaced

from their homelands. It is we who now reap the rewards, as he pushes the boundaries of science for our universal good.

History repeats itself. We would hope, then, that the lessons learned from the past would teach and protect us from future crises. Yet here we are in 2017, nearing the end of yet another landmark year in which thousands of lives have been upended by violence and instability.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are 65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, 22.5 million refugees, and 10 million stateless. On average, 28,300 people are forced to flee their homes every day because of conflict and persecution.



*A Carlo Bergamini-class frigate of the Italian navy rescued migrants from this boat in the Mediterranean in June 2014. Italian photographer Massimo Sestini – who took this iconic image from a police helicopter – has launched the *Where are you?* campaign to find the people who were rescued that day.*

*Contact him at:  
whereareyou@massimosestini.it*

## Not “just” refugees

The statistics are staggering, but we may accept them as part of a new global reality. Take a moment to consider the countless millions over the last century who were displaced – we know that “refugee” does not define them. They are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, granddaughters and nephews. They are neighbours and integral members of our communities. They have laid the bedrock of our towns and in many cases, crossed national boundaries to bridge our cultures and economies. Many have done this through their academic work: teaching at local universities, publishing the latest scientific discovery – quiet pioneers, contributing to research halfway around the world.

Albert Einstein was lucky to be in the US in 1933 when Hitler came to power. His house was ransacked, convincing him that he could no longer call Germany home. After a brief sojourn to Europe, he returned to the US, where he joined the newly-established Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. We do not need to understand Einstein’s theories to know that the scientific world has benefitted from them immensely.

Few of us are aware that thousands of refugee scientists and scholars from war-torn Europe in the last century excelled in their host countries, even in the face of shocking rejection by their host communities and national academies. In the US, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars, a consortium of refugee organizations – which included the IIE – helped nearly 400 academics, including 100 physicists, to find academic positions.

According to the economist Petra Moser, patents in the US alone increased by over thirty per cent in fields commonly pursued by Jewish scientists of the 1930s. The positive ripple effect for generations to come is invaluable.

Einstein’s era included Erwin Schrödinger, who fled persecution in his native Austria to join the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies in the late 1930s – his work in theoretical physics won him the Nobel Prize in 1933. And physicist Hans Bethe, the German-American nuclear scientist and winner of the 1967 Nobel Prize in Physics, played an important role in the development of the hydrogen bomb, but more importantly, he later campaigned with Einstein against nuclear testing and the nuclear arms race.

## Exceptional contributions

More than a third of Nobel prizes won by the US in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields have been awarded to foreign-born scientists. Today, we continue to celebrate refugees for their contributions to science and society after they were given a second chance. Sergey Brin, who co-founded Google, was just six when his family fled the Soviet Union for the US in 1979, when his father could no longer endure the entrenched academic repression in the Soviet Union.

Since 2002, the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund has carried on the legacy of the Emergency Committee, aiding academics afflicted by conflict and persecution. Most of the academics we work with have been displaced or are on the verge of long-term displacement. They have been singled out for persecution by insecure regimes because of their academic work, religion, ethnicity, and, increasingly, for supporting their fellow academics.

At the height of the conflict in Iraq from 2007 to 2013, we helped place hundreds of scientists at universities in neighbouring countries after they received anonymous letters threatening first their positions, and then their families. Their lives were overturned in ways that would paralyze the average person. Yet after a few years of support in the diaspora, most have returned to Iraq or maintained their academic productivity in the region. Many are helping to rebuild their universities.

Based on our own experience, we estimate thousands of academics every year need a safe place to pursue their work. Our programme has provided vital financial support and academic connections to more than 700 academics from over fifty countries. Other refugee organizations have supported thousands of others. But it is difficult to estimate how many displaced scientists have permanently lost their academic work, and will never have the chance to rebuild it in a safe environment.

*Remains of the University of Mosul, which was burned and destroyed during a battle with ISIS, in Mosul, Iraq, 10 April 2017.*



## Opening doors and providing support

Hundreds of displaced scholars have suffered because their publications – lost in the panic of their flight from danger – may pre-date online records that would have safely maintained them. For many more scholars, language barriers feel insurmountable. Without readily available resources – like scholarships and fellowships – and open doors at universities and scientific institutions, the quiet scientist lacking the name-recognition of an Einstein has little to no chance of reviving his academic work. The wasted years of training and the lost potential to society has done irreparable damage to the cause of science.

The Scholar Rescue Fund rose from the IIE's nearly hundred-year history of helping threatened students and scholars. Ours is now among a handful of formalized programmes that provide essential support for threatened academics. The Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA) was founded in 1933 by Britain's foremost academics and scientists in response to Hitler's decision to expel hundreds of leading scholars from German universities on racial grounds. CARA works closely with the Scholars at Risk Network (founded in 2000), and Germany's Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The PAUSE programme of the Collège de France helps welcome scientists in exile, and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), a UNESCO programme based in Trieste, Italy, supports refugee scientists, especially those from developing countries.

Organizations and universities in Belgium, the European Union, Canada and Jordan also provide aid to refugee scholars. But there is so much more to be done, to ensure that the world's intellectual capital will seed innovation and discovery for generations to come.

**Sarah Willcox** (USA) is Director of the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund, which she has been involved with since 2003. Based in New York, she oversees the IIE-SRF operations, including partnerships, programme policy, outreach, and communications.



# “You ask me what exile is...”

## The words of exiled creators, spoken through our columns

**Edouard J. Maunick,**  
Mauritian poet

*The UNESCO Courier, 1994-3*

Exile becomes hard when loneliness sets in, a loneliness that has more to do with the memory of something essential rooted within oneself than with ordinary recollections. Otherwise I do not regard exile as painful, because it not only means leaving home to go somewhere else, it also means stepping forward towards yourself, deciding to get to know yourself and to live in and with yourself. After living through your own tribulations and moments of wonderment, you need to find out about others, but the first essential is self-knowledge. Exile then becomes a quest, an expedition into the inner space of others, in the course of which one must, above all, never give in to the temptation of wanting to portray others in one's own likeness, on the pretext of aligning certain details.

**Spôjmaï Zariâb,**  
Afghan writer

*The UNESCO Courier, 2008-2*

You ask me what exile is... Years ago, in a quiet corner of Kabul, I read the Persian translation of *The Man from Kabul*, a short story by Rabindranath Tagore. With his magical words, this talented Indian writer made me discover the pain of exile (...) I, who was sheltered from misery and who had only known war in books, saw myself also sheltered from exile... until the end of my days. At the time, I ignored that one day, alas, history's unfair hand would turn every Afghan into the Man from Kabul by Tagore. That history's folly would divide an entire nation and disperse the Afghans to all four corners of the world, far from their fathers, mothers, children, sisters and brothers. Around me, I do not know of a single family that was spared the torment of exile, and that, although without having read Tagore, did not live the story of the Man from Kabul and did not feel his pain within.

**Abderrahmane Sissako,**  
Mauritanian film director

*The UNESCO Courier, 2000-10*

Exile is always a handicap. But distance allows you to look at your own country, its past, its history, from a slightly foreign viewpoint. When we talk about home, we tend to hesitate, to go by feel. It's a delicate process that you can lose a grip on at any moment. Maybe we have more sensitivity. Sometimes you choose to be silent and allow people to interpret.

**Bujor Nedelcovici,**  
Romanian novelist, essayist and scriptwriter

*The UNESCO Courier, 1996-10*

If exile is an initiation test, it is also a test of the truth. It entails shedding one's illusions and the world of wishful thinking and pretence, and arriving at a kind of lucidity. It means learning how to winnow out the wheat from the chaff by discarding bogus tolerance, which produces a semblance of inner peace, in favour of real tolerance, which requires one to immerse oneself in the universal (...) Involuntary exile has become, in my case, voluntary exile in search of things past and spiritual resurrection. To accept is already to effect a return, at least to oneself.

**Rithy Panh,**  
Cambodian film director

*The UNESCO Courier, 2000-10*

When you're an exile, you don't really have an identity any more. Whether in Cambodia or France, I'm kind of at home everywhere and now. Far and close from everything. I'm interested in this distance. It allows you to stand back and to see further, to grasp the shape of things. The lesser evil for an exile is managing to make use of this.



© B. Catalano / R. Poulain

A bronze sculpture from the series  
“Les Voyageurs”, by French artist  
Bruno Catalano.

**Véronique Tadjo,**  
Ivorian writer and painter

*The UNESCO Courier, 2008-2*

For a long time, I traveled, my mind and heart at peace, telling myself that I could return home when I wanted to. Things changed with the Ivorian crisis. I had the impression the door suddenly closed and left me outside. I found it difficult to understand what was happening, how we got there. I felt alienated, as if everything had to be started all over again. Exile begins when you can no longer return to the country you left behind, when the way back becomes painful.



# Our guest



*Ouided Bouchamaoui receiving the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December 2015.*

© ODD ANDERSEN / AFP Photo



# “ Prosperity springs from trust ”

## Ouided Bouchamaoui

Interview by Mounir Charfi, Tunisian journalist

**Ouided Bouchamaoui, winner of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize, makes a case for a strong state that can communicate with its youth, and for a private sector that encourages young entrepreneurs. According to the President of the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), there can be no democracy without economic development.**

*As president of UTICA, you played a major role in helping Tunisia resolve the political crisis of 2013, by initiating a “national dialogue” with three other organizations. How did you achieve this?*

There were four of us [the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, 2015] – UTICA, the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Order of Lawyers and the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH). After the politically-motivated assassination of the deputy [opposition party leader], Mohamed Brahmi, in July 2013, barely six months after Chokri Bellaïd, leader of the Popular Front, was murdered, we decided to publish a joint statement calling for calm.

We then used this [statement] as the basis for a road map, which, for us, reflected the aspirations of the vast majority of Tunisians. We submitted it to the main political parties and twenty-two parties agreed to sign it. Only the *Congrès pour la République* (CPR), one of the parties in the interim government at the time, refused to take part in the process. The Ennahdha party, which had also joined the interim government, finally signed the statement, without the amendments it had wanted.

*For the first time in Tunisia’s history, relations between workers’ unions and employers were relatively good. Was ‘dialogue’ the watchword for dealing with political and social issues?*

Yes. Before entering into the political negotiations, there was a series of discussions to reach an understanding between UTICA and UGTT – on the initiative of UTICA, I should emphasize. We wanted to establish this initial milestone in social dialogue. There is nothing is more effective than getting together around a table when it comes to breaking down barriers between unions and employers. Businesses cannot function without their owners or their workers. In the interests of productivity, the best thing is to adopt the principle of “living together in peace” in spite of our differences.

*UTICA used to be an ally of the authoritarian government, but after the 2011 revolution, it became one of the players in the democratic process. How did this change come about?*

It’s true, UTICA was not totally independent in its decision-making. We are expected to work with government, whatever its political colour. The capital is always fragile. Even so, certain burning issues had been tackled before 2011, such as parallel trade or fraud and corruption. Fortunately, we are now a democracy, which allows us to address even the most sensitive issues more frankly and openly. This greatly facilitates dialogue.

*In your opinion, what role should the private sector play in upholding the democratic process?*

The slogan created by the youth movement during the revolution was “Dignity and Work”. It’s true, there is no dignity without work. So our role is to invest in order to create jobs. And if we can achieve this objective, we will have resolved the country’s economic and social problems.

Democracy is a major achievement. But it is not sufficient for the stability of the country. What good is talking if you don’t have enough to eat? So we have an important role to play in creating jobs. But the government has to follow through.

There are several things holding back development. A number of laws need to be revised. The slow pace of the administration is discouraging investors. Foreign investors are not very motivated because they feel that existing laws are either not clear or not applied. Even we Tunisians, in spite of our good will, feel frustrated at not being able to act as quickly as we’d like because the administration and the laws aren’t keeping pace.



**Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are recognized as a necessary element in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Where does Tunisia stand on this?**

The Tunisian parliament passed a law allowing public-private partnerships. But as it was formulated, this law has emptied the principle of any meaning in practice. We are now working to improve it. Promulgation of the law hasn't been followed up adequately with information to explain the objectives underlying PPPs. With the exception of certain strategic sectors – where the state has to be present and where the private sector does not have the means or the authority to intervene – the private sector has to participate actively in investments, especially in the provinces, to develop the economy and particularly to encourage youth entrepreneurship. And I'll take this opportunity to send out a message to young people: you can always start small and expand later.

**Would you like to see radical solutions to get Tunisia out of the economic crisis it is in? What role could UTICA play in this process?**

There are no miracle solutions. An advantage for Tunisia is that the economic ills are well-defined and known to everyone. The most urgent thing is to apply the law.

We have to find a solution to parallel trade and the informal economy, which are undermining our entire economy. We need to have better control over our borders and make a serious effort to get youth into organized employment. We also have to convince people that paying their taxes is an act of citizenship. Finally, the Tunisian government, which previously did quite a good job, needs to restore the image it used to have, so that we can put our trust in it once again.

There are a number of obstacles today that we are all aware of. What is needed is the political will to overcome them and restore trust between all the stakeholders – a necessary precondition for any form of development. True, we have passed from being a dictatorship to a democracy. But this does not mean that the state has to be absent. A minimum of order is necessary, if only to apply the law. We do not want an authoritarian state again, but we do want a strong state. And the state derives its strength from the application of the law. The authority of the law provides rigour, and rigour leads to trust. And it is trust that brings investment and prosperity.

**Terrorism and the recruitment of youth via the internet has become one of the major challenges of our time. In 2015, the Tunisian Quartet launched an appeal from the Nobel podium to combat this plague. What solutions does it suggest?**

I believe that we haven't yet addressed the problems of youth in a pragmatic manner. In Tunisia, six years after the revolution, young people have still not seen any concrete actions in response to their demands. They still have no work, no leisure, no adequate framework to fulfil their potential, and no cultural or sports activities. On the other hand, they have easy access to the internet. With no work and no one listening to them, they are easy prey for recruitment, especially if they are promised paradise and loads of money.

We still haven't realized just how serious this phenomenon is, especially in the interior of the country. Let's not forget that terrorism is closely linked to smuggling – in other words, the informal sector – where young people find work. A whole education programme has to be put in place by the government to enter into dialogue with youth, to teach them about citizenship and to explain that the state alone cannot solve all their problems. To create employment, the state has to ensure that there is security, political stability and legislation to encourage entrepreneurship and foreign investment.



**Employers are often called "businessmen". But since 2011, they have had a woman as their chief representative. This is a first! How is this situation viewed?**

It has never bothered anyone. As a company director myself, I am no stranger to the family of employers. Also, no one thinks that just because UTICA has a woman as its president, it risks losing its authority or weakening its role. It is true that I was the only woman on the executive board and I was democratically and transparently elected, with a very clear majority over the other candidates.



© Zied Ben Romdhane

*Photo from the West of Life series (2015) by Tunisian photographer Zied Ben Romdhane.*

I think that the choice was made on the basis of objective criteria, such as the programme, charisma, a sense of leadership and management skills. Frankly, I have never felt uneasy as a woman in this position.

***Do the pressures of politics and union work interfere with your private life?***

When one becomes a public figure, one no longer has the private life one used to have. It's a choice I have to accept. I work without pay for the good of my country and the organization. I am prepared to endure all kinds of pressures and criticisms, so long as they stay within my official and professional sphere.

What is regrettable is the interference with my private life. Some people unfortunately mix everything up. But I keep things separate. I respond seriously to all objective criticism concerning my professional and political activities, according to my convictions. But I simply ignore disparaging remarks about my private life.

My father built up a family and businesses conscientiously and with hard work. He taught me to have a sense of responsibility, which has enabled me to manage my personal and professional life with the necessary serenity.

The first woman to be president of UTICA, **Ouided Bouchamaoui** was designated "Best Businesswoman in the Arab world" by the Deauville Partnership, launched at the G8 Summit in 2013. In 2014, she received the Business for Peace Award from the Oslo Business for Peace Foundation, and in 2015, was awarded the Golden Shield of Excellence by the Arab Organization for Social Responsibility.



# Current affairs



*Elina, detail of a photograph of a sculpture in salt and water, 300 centimetres in diameter, Projet Elina 2013-2015, Bolivia.*

© Guillaume Barth ([www.guillaumebarth.com](http://www.guillaumebarth.com))



# A Crystal Palace houses a shipwreck

Interview by Katerina Markelova  
and Xiaorong Chen

As China celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of the discovery of *Nanhai No. 1*, visitors to this thirteenth-century shipwreck can watch archaeologists as they excavate the vessel on-site, in an aquarium specially built to house the structure. A marvel of "in-whole" salvaging, it took twenty years before the shipwreck could be lifted out of the water, another six years before excavation could be started, and six more years before the process is completed in 2018. Add another twenty to thirty years for the conservation of the ship's body to be completed.

An interview with Jiang Bo, who shares details of this unprecedented archaeological endeavour.

The China National Center for Underwater Cultural Heritage and UNESCO organize an international conference on the "Discovery and Study of *Nanhai No. 1* Shipwreck" in Yangjiang County, Guangdong Province, in November 2017.

© Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Museum



*Crockery from the thirteenth century was part of the cargo on Nanhai No. 1.*

***Nanhai No. 1 is one of the oldest and largest ancient sunken ships ever found in China. When and how was it discovered?***

*Nanhai No. 1* was discovered in 1987 by a joint Sino-British team, composed of the Guangzhou Salvage Bureau and Maritime Exploration & Recoveries PLC. They were looking for the Dutch East India Company vessel, *Rimburg*, but failed to find it. Instead, they accidentally found a Chinese merchant ship which sank in the thirteenth century, buried twenty-three metres underwater.

***The joint mission tried to retrieve some objects from the shipwreck. Did this work?***

They did manage to lift some objects, but totally destroyed the rear of the ship in the process. Luckily, the shipwreck escaped any serious pillaging attempts, because of its location which was visible from the coastline.

***'Nanhai' means South China Sea, but what does 'No. 1' refer to?***

It refers to an archaeological way of naming shipwrecks – the name of the discovery spot appears first, then comes the number that reflects the order in which the wrecks were found.

***Do we have any idea why Nanhai No. 1 sank at the very beginning of its journey?***

The most likely scenario is that the ship was overloaded. Or it perished in a storm.

***How many tons of cargo was it transporting?***

*Nanhai No. 1* was designed for a load of nearly 200 tons. There are estimates that it was carrying 100,000 sets of antiques. *Nanhai No. 1* had a very rich cargo: besides the 13,000 pieces of porcelain from five famous kilns of the time excavated so far, it was carrying 151 gold, 124 silver and 170 copper sets, and 17,000 copper coins. What we found was totally beyond our expectations.

**Twenty years after it was discovered, the entire ship was lifted out of the water, making it the first “in-whole” salvage of a shipwreck.**

On 21 December 2007, after nine months of preparation, the shipwreck was lifted and moved from the seabed to the Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Museum, which was especially designed for it. China’s State Administration of Cultural Heritage and the Transport Department worked together to build a 5,500-ton caisson [a large watertight case], big enough to contain the shipwreck of 35.7 × 14.4 × 7.2 metres. The box was then sunk into the sea and pressed down into the seabed to cover the shipwreck. Then the mud around the box was cleared and a floor inserted, so that the box could be lifted onto the surface of the water. The whole operation cost \$20 million.

The lifting of *Nanhai No. 1* is considered the first in-whole salvage in the world. However, strictly speaking, there are other examples – two warships, Sweden’s *Vasa* and the British *Mary Rose* were similarly salvaged. But China was the first country to creatively use a caisson that was highly protective for the wreck.

Although the salvage operation was totally carried out by the Chinese, we needed advice when it came to archaeological excavations. Before these started in 2013, we conducted tests with the help of Japanese scholars, to decide what was the best way to proceed.

**What are the main findings since the excavation of the cargo started in 2013?**

The ship is well-preserved because it was buried, and we have the unique chance to conduct the excavation in a very detailed manner. We are getting much more information than if we were working underwater. We have clear archaeological evidence about how people packaged things, and what kind of food people ate on the ship. We found some personal objects, such as delicate lacquerware and pottery, gold necklaces and a Middle East-style belt. So we know that there were probably some foreigners on the ship as well – maybe Indians, maybe Arabs. We also found the bones of three individuals.

© Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Museum



“The ship is maintained in a gigantic aquarium which replicates the exact water quality, temperature and environment that the wreck was discovered in”

**Do we know where this merchant vessel was headed?**

Chinese ceramics have been found in the Indian Ocean, in India, Persia, and the Middle East – the ship was probably heading to one of these destinations. Maritime trade trajectories were complicated in those days, with many stops. Singapore, Southeast Asia and the East-African shore could have been potential destinations. What is almost certain is that it was sailing from China to the Indian Ocean.

**There are few records of shipbuilding technology 800 years ago in China or the rest of the world. What do we know now?**

This ship was built around 1216, during the Southern Song dynasty. What is confirmed is that this kind of ship, called ‘Fuchuan’, was made in Fujian province (‘Fu’ means ‘from Fujian’ and ‘chuan’ means ‘ship’). The most distinctive characteristic of a Fuchuan is its watertight-bulkhead technology, which was inscribed on UNESCO’s List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, in 2010.





*The Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Museum is made up of five oval-shaped buildings, one of which, the Crystal Palace, is made of glass and houses Nanhai No. 1.*

**Would you say the finding of this ship marks the very beginning of Chinese underwater archaeology?**

Yes, thirty years ago, the investigation process was driven by the personal enthusiasm of a few people and private donations. The research office of underwater archaeology at the National Museum of Chinese History was set up in 1987, after this discovery, and its early mission was to support the exploration process. The office could rely on the specific location data provided in 1989 by the museum (now called the National Museum of China) and the Japan Underwater Archaeology Research Institute, thanks to the donation of a Hong Kong merchant, Chen Laifa.

Three investigation missions to *Nanhai No. 1* were run by Zhang Wei, one of China's earliest underwater archaeologists. Conditions at the site were difficult, with poor visibility and strong sea currents. The archaeologists realized then, that the best option was to get the ship out of the water – although it was very expensive.

The Center for the Protection of National Underwater Cultural Relics was set up by the Chinese Academy of Culture Heritage in 2009. In 2014, the government combined it with the underwater archaeology departments of the National Museum of China, to form the China National Center for Underwater Cultural Heritage. The aim was to ascertain the real situation of China's underwater relics and to play a leading role in protecting them.

**What is unique about the excavations on Nanhai No. 1?**

Now that the ship is inside the museum, archaeologists, conservation and restoration specialists, digital mapping and recording system specialists – all work together on a daily basis, which is quite unusual. We also simultaneously think about how to exhibit what we have found. When a package is identified, an archaeologist would immediately open it to see what is inside – a museologist would leave it untouched. That is why we always talk to each other.

**The Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Museum is the only museum in Asia with facilities for an underwater display of this magnitude. Could you describe it?**

The museum was built on Hailing island, close to Yangjiang city, Guangdong province, at a cost of \$20 million. It is made up of five oval-shaped buildings, one of which, the Crystal Palace, made of glass, houses *Nanhai No.1*. The ship is maintained in a gigantic aquarium which replicates the exact water quality, temperature and environment that the wreck was discovered in. Visitors to the museum can view archaeologists as they continue their work, excavating the vessel on-site. They can then ascend to the top floor, to stand under a simulated star-studded sky, as if they were on board the ship at night.

Today, Hailing, which used to be a remote island, is one of China's top ten tourist islands – the museum is its only modern building, attracting over 300,000 visitors in 2016. The local people have substantially benefited from this tourism.

“The lifting of *Nanhai No. 1* is considered the first in-whole salvage in the world”

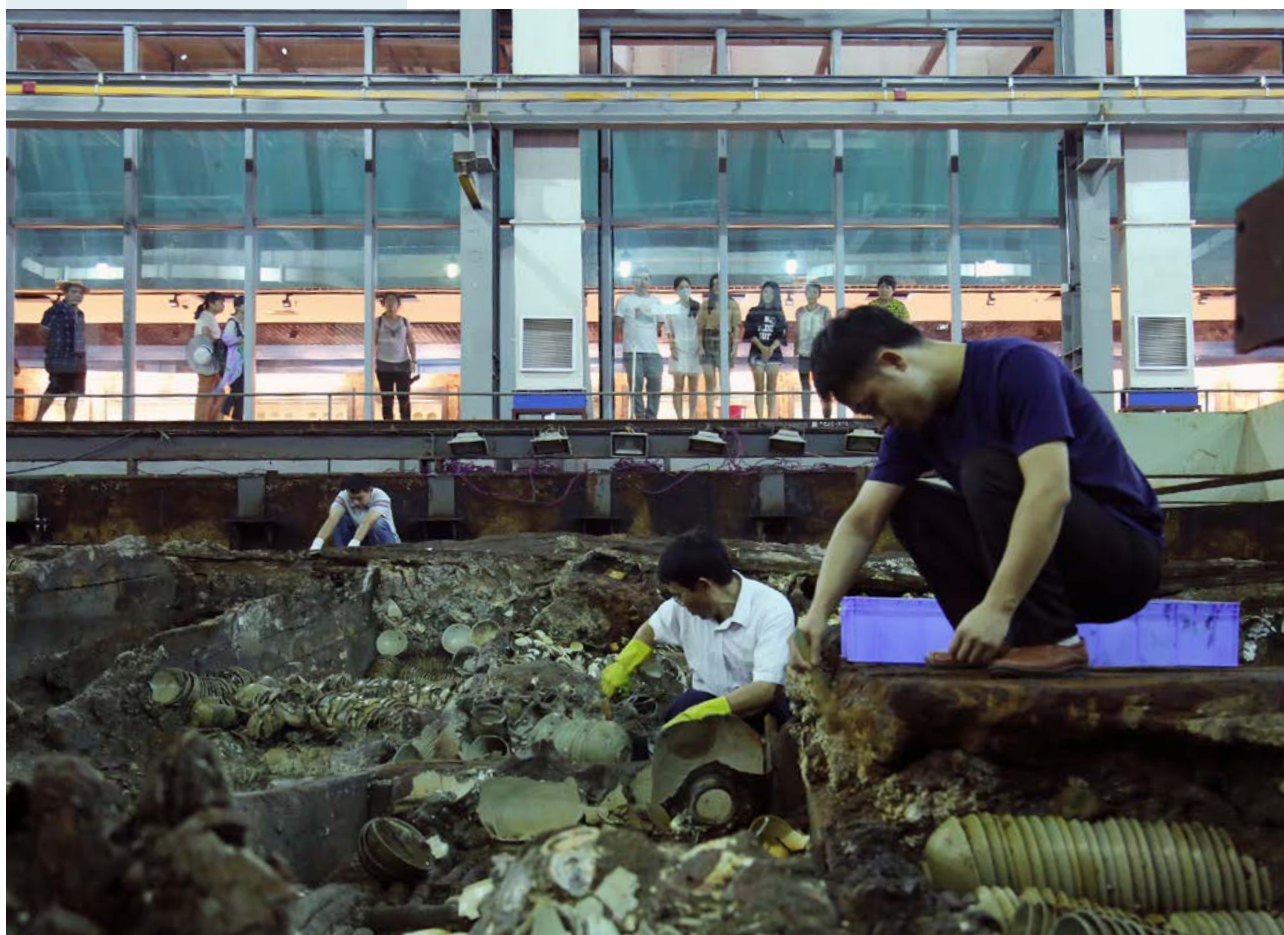
**What does the future hold for Nanhai No. 1?**

We will finish the excavation of the cargo in 2018. The next step will be to conserve the hull of the ship, which is still in the box that was used to lift it from the bottom of the sea. We keep the surface of water in this box at the same level as when it was excavated. A spraying water system helps us keep the top of the ship wet as well – it would get rifted if it dried. The shipwreck and the cargo will be desalted and dewatered within the next twenty or thirty years. There are conflicting opinions on how to preserve the wreck. Some have suggested dispatching the ship in parts. But then it can never be reassembled. Others are in favour of conserving the ship as a whole, like the *Vasa* in Sweden.

Several exhibitions are being planned in China and abroad to raise public awareness of the wreck’s historical value.

**Jiang Bo** is Director and senior researcher of the Institute of Underwater Archaeology, National Center for Underwater Cultural Heritage, China. With several publications and prizes both at home and abroad to his name, he delivered a talk, “*Nanhai 1*, Shipwreck and Chinese Underwater Archaeology” at UNESCO in May 2017.

Visitors to the museum participate in the archaeological dig on the wreck of Nanhai No. 1.



© Sun Jian



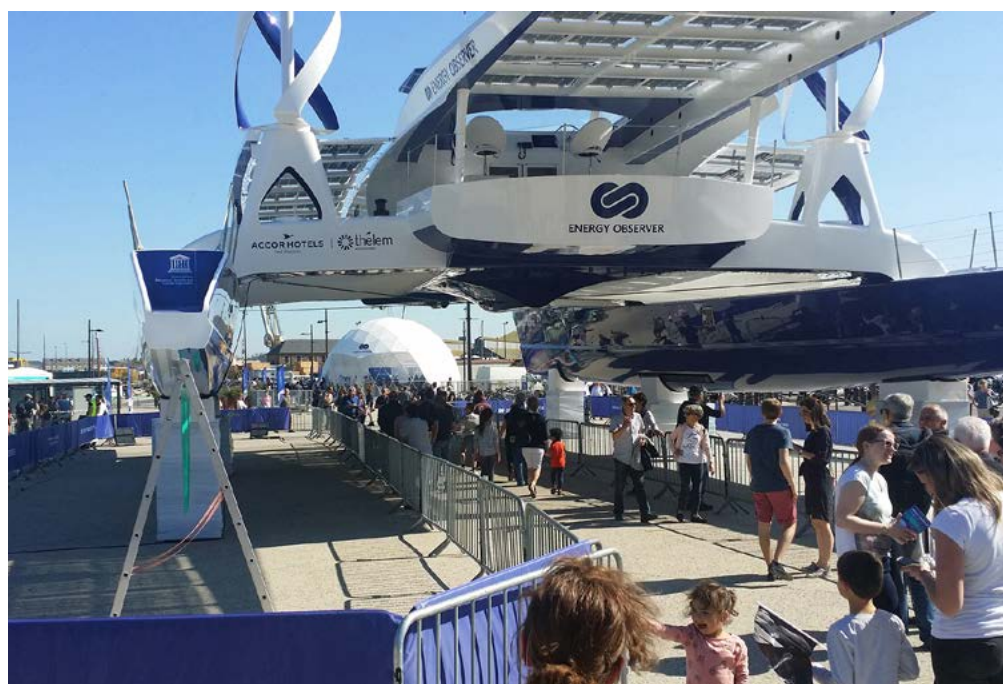
# Around the globe in the world's first clean-energy ship

by Virginie Jourdan

On 26 June 2017, *Energy Observer*, the first ocean-going ship to be powered by hydrogen and renewable energy sources, set sail from France on a round-the-world journey lasting six years. In partnership with UNESCO, the vessel criss-crosses the oceans, stopping at 101 ports in fifty countries, raising awareness – among the public and local authorities – of the value of clean energy and sustainable development.

Sailing with no greenhouse gas or fine-particle emissions, using only renewable energy – this is the challenge taken up by the French-built *Energy Observer*, the first vessel to be self-sufficient in energy. It left the port of Saint-Malo (France) on 26 June 2017 on a round-the-world voyage lasting until 2022, without a single drop of fossil fuel on board.

This real-life experiment will test the efficacy of solar and wind energy, and the production of hydrogen from sea-water. But beyond this technical achievement, Victorien Erussard – an officer in the French merchant navy and one of the project's initiators – and his crew want to meet the creators of innovative technological solutions to “show that there is a path to clean and sustainable energy”.



© UNESCO

*The Energy Observer being presented to the public before its launch at Saint-Malo (France), in April 2017. This innovative project is being carried out in partnership with UNESCO.*

For Erussard and his team, the time has come for action, not words, if we are to tackle global warming and the demographic and environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. The way we travel, feed ourselves, build our houses, work and inform ourselves – these are the questions that need answers today. “Innovative solutions are being developed all over the world. This expedition is an opportunity to build a community that transcends borders by finding solutions and connecting them to each other,” adds Jérôme Delafosse, a professional diver and documentary filmmaker on nature and biodiversity, who is head of the expedition.

## The world's fastest yacht

The adventure began in 2013, when French navigator Frédéric Dahirel recovered one of the fastest yachts in the history of offshore racing. In 1984, it broke through the symbolic barrier of 500 miles in twenty-four hours. And in 1994, it enabled the famous New Zealand yachtsman, Sir Peter Blake, to set the round-the-world record, after having withdrawn from racing to devote himself to environmental exploration.

Dahirel's dream was to build the first French vessel powered by wind-generated electricity. This was symbolic. In 2015, he was joined by his sailing partner, Erussard. Then, a meeting with the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) and the Laboratory for Innovation in New Energy Technologies and Nanomaterials (CEA-Liten) gave the project a new direction. The challenge was to explore a new technology – the use of hydrogen as an energy source.

### A floating laboratory

It took two years to get the yacht ready. Two electric motors replaced the mainsail and jib. Two wind turbines and solar panels were installed on its sides. In the middle, a twenty-metre-wide power kite can be deployed. Two hydrogen generators operate under the hull. Equipped with turbines, they use the hydraulic force generated by the yacht's motion to produce electricity. This powers the yacht's engine, on-board energy needs, and steering and telecommunications equipment. The laboratory causes sluggishness – the yacht travels at eight to ten knots instead of the thirty knots it attained when it was racing.

### Hydrogen: energy of the future

The second innovation lies in the production of hydrogen without carbon dioxide emissions. Hydrogen is seen as a future solution for the storage of carbon-free wind and solar energy. This gas does not occur naturally in its pure state and so has to be produced. The *Energy Observer* researchers opted for an environmentally-friendly solution – sea-water. "Today, ninety-five per cent of the hydrogen used in the world is manufactured using fossil fuels, like natural gas, which is highly polluting. We want to demonstrate that 'carbon-free' hydrogen can be produced," explains Nicolas Degorce, a naval engineer who helped design the yacht.

About thirty researchers at CEA-Liten worked for two years to create a hydrogen chain capable of resisting the extreme conditions encountered at sea. They were aided by engineers, transport specialists, naval architects and new technologies, as well as private enterprise. "About twenty prototypes have been developed. This is a wonderful opportunity to take them out of the laboratory and test them," adds Degorce.

In the holds and on the bridge, 700 electronic sensors record the behaviour of the various pieces of the energy jigsaw puzzle in real time – wind, solar, hydro-electric and hydrogen. The researchers then use this data to try to optimize performance. Designed as a smart grid, this system of combined renewable energy could one day be used in homes, factories and on board cargo ships. It could also help prevent the energy exclusion of the 1.2 billion people in the world who still live without access to electricity.

*The Energy Observer, the world's first floating laboratory to be powered by hydrogen and renewable energy, set off on its round-the-world voyage on 26 June 2017.*

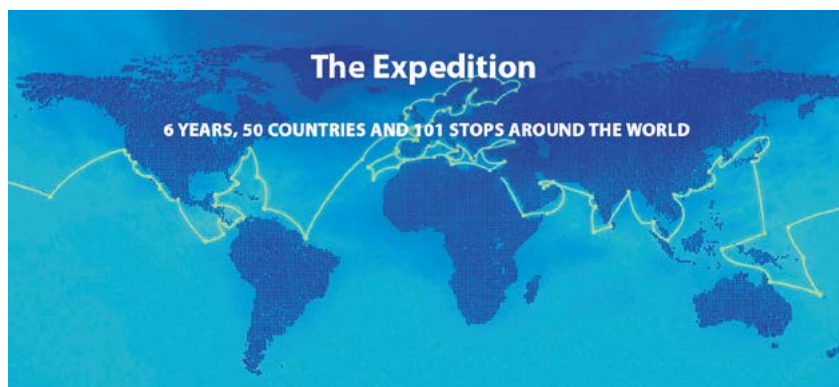


© Jérémy Bidon / Energy Observer



## A media ship for the planet

It will take more than technological achievements to secure a better future, though. With the *Energy Observer*, mariners hope to help the public gain a better understanding of the immediate risks of climate change and the need to preserve biodiversity. “I have been witnessing the impact of human activity on the planet for twenty years,” says Delafosse. “This expedition is an opportunity to show what is really happening and to bring together positive initiatives from around the world.” His ambition is to make the *Energy Observer* a veritable media for the planet. “We want to nurture people’s dreams and raise their awareness, to let them discover the world as they have never seen it.”



© Energy Observer

*The Energy Observer's route from 2017 to 2023, after its departure from Saint-Malo, France.*

During the voyage, a series of eight documentaries will be made for a French television channel. Virtual reality and 3D content will also be created and shared on the internet and at various ports of call. The inner workings of the *Energy Observer* will be on view, as well as dives with sperm whales, to improve our understanding of the ways they communicate with one another. And one day perhaps we can share all of this information with schools around the world.

This odyssey promises to be very fruitful. In the course of its 101 ports of call in fifty countries, the crew will pass through islands that are seeking to be self-sufficient in energy, like El Hierro in the Canary Islands (Spain); or model cities such as San Francisco, which has plans to become a zero-waste city. In partnership with UNESCO, twenty forays are planned in World Heritage sites and UNESCO Biosphere Reserves by 2022, such as the mud flats of the Wadden Sea in the Netherlands, and the Socotra archipelago in Yemen – home to around 700 species of plants and animals that are unique to this region. “We will be filming the sharks of Cocos Island off the coast of Costa Rica and the White Sea north of Russia – all these are little-known treasures that are nevertheless affected by human activity. This expedition is a marvellous opportunity to get to know our planet better,” enthuses Delafosse. “We want to share this knowledge through digital media and the meetings that we are organizing in major ports around the world.”

**Virginie Jourdan** is a freelance journalist, based in Rennes (France). After covering organic farming issues for many years for a specialist magazine, she now writes about the digital revolution and ecological change for regional and national magazines.



# Harnessing submarine cables to save lives

by **Bruce Howe and Kate Panayotou**

Imagine environmental sensors spaced every sixty kilometres along the seabed, providing much-needed data to better understand natural threats, such as tsunamis and climate change. With SMART Cables, a global network of real-time data for disaster mitigation may soon become a reality.

With this article, the *UNESCO Courier* marks the 2nd World Tsunami Awareness Day, on 5 November.

More than a million kilometres of submarine cables form the global telecommunications infrastructure backbone for business, finance, social media, entertainment, political expression, and science. Internationally, these cables are the physical layer of the internet. The dependability of this infrastructure is so important that entire national economies are affected when problems arise.

These same submarine cables could also provide a platform for gathering deep-ocean and seabed data for a range of environmental issues. Our oceans and climate are experiencing global changes, including warming, acidification, and sea-level rise, that affect us now and in the future.

A standard telecommunication system includes an electro-optical seabed cable with optical repeaters approximately every sixty kilometres. By adding environmental sensors to the repeaters, we could have access to a global network of real-time data for environmental threats and disaster mitigation.

An early-warning system for tsunamis could save lives and prove invaluable, particularly for developing countries, where the comprehensive coverage of all subduction zones is not viable. Since tsunami waves often arrive less than thirty minutes after offshore earthquakes, every minute counts.

To bring this concept to fruition, the international Joint Task Force of three United Nations agencies – the International Telecommunication Union, the World Meteorological Organization and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (ITU/WMO/IOC-UNESCO JTF), established in 2012, is working towards incorporating environmental monitoring sensors into trans-oceanic submarine cable systems.

## International initiative

Called SMART Cables (Scientific Monitoring and Reliable Telecommunications), this JTF initiative aims to harness the vast network of submarine cables already in place, turning them into environmentally-aware “green cables”.

An international effort in the truest sense, the JTF is made up of experts (many of them volunteers) from several dozen countries and 80 organizations representing science, observing system managers, industry, government agencies and sponsors.



© Bertrand Cleca / Xtera



## Growing consensus

It calls upon the private sector, governments, scientists, philanthropic foundations and the internet-using public to recognize this extraordinary need and opportunity, and to take concerted action to make this system a reality.

The installation of SMART Cables requires access to the sea-floor and the deepest ocean, which today is literally “owned” by the telecommunications private sector. The cables traverse the global ocean floor, crossing several national boundaries – throwing up a bewildering array of legal, technical and financial complications.

Therefore, unique new partnerships and collaborations must be established to enable this SMART cable vision. The engagement of the private sector, including internet companies which are newly investing in submarine cables, could directly address financial and legal issues, and the permitting process.

Through a series of meetings and workshops with academic and government scientists and the telecommunications industry, a growing consensus is being reached to assuage the hurdles facing SMART systems. Scientific and societal needs are being documented, and the legal framework under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and technical feasibility have been produced.

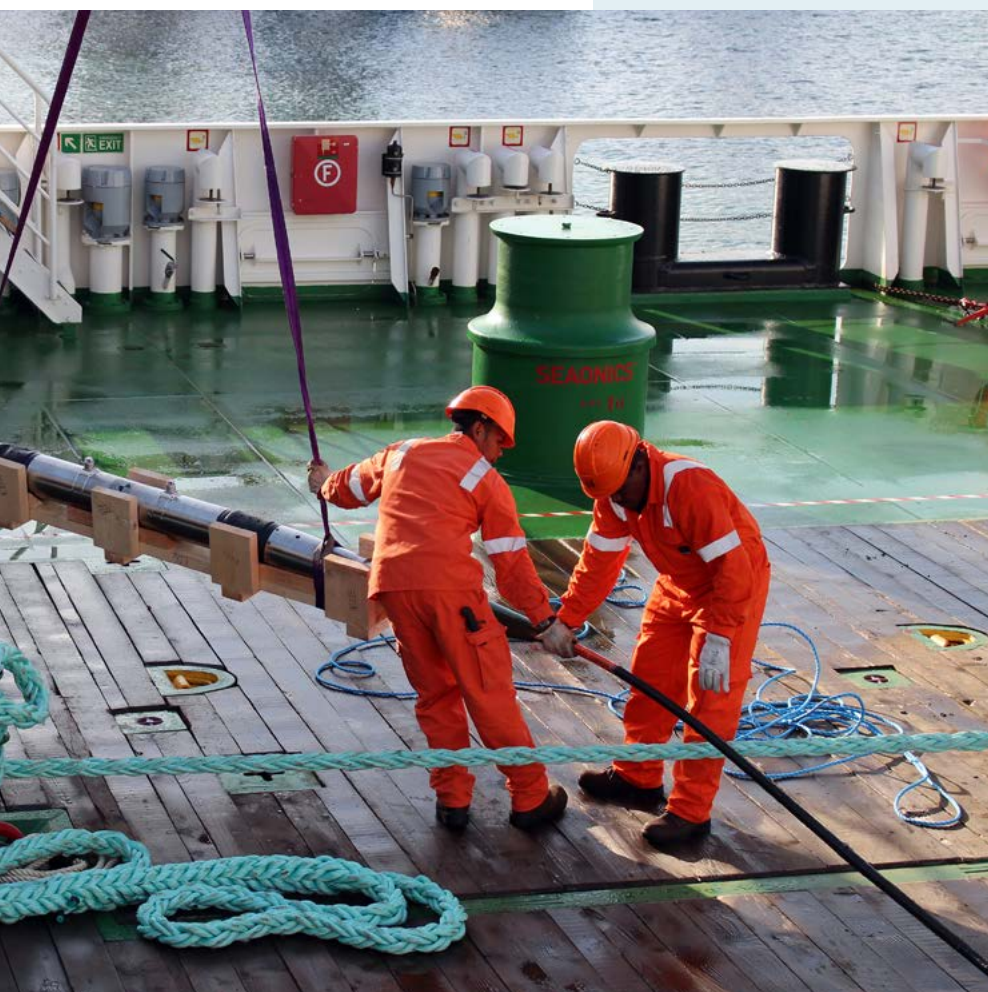
Today, only a fraction of these telecommunications cables are being used for scientific purposes. Environmental oceanic observation systems, owned and operated by academia and government agencies already exist, but they are utilized only over short distances and used for research purposes.

The concept of a “wet demonstrator” system suitable for deployment and medium-term operation has been put forth to address the effectiveness and practicality of the SMART approach. A pilot system has been proposed in the South Pacific, linking several islands.

Technological advances have made it possible to integrate basic sensors with repeaters on submarine telecommunication cables at a small fraction of the total cost of a new cable system deployment. The unit cost of a single sensor package is expected to be around \$0.2 million, so a modest system such as the proposed pilot should be under \$10 million, with an expected life of twenty-five years.

No ocean-aware underwater telecommunications system is in place today. The deep-ocean data from SMART Cables could bridge a fundamental gap in our knowledge. The time is ripe to begin a future with SMART systems.

*Crew members load an optical repeater (in the wooden cradle) on the deck of Pierre de Fermat, a cable ship belonging to France's Orange Marine company.*



**Bruce Howe** (USA) develops ocean observing sensor network infrastructure, including cable systems. He currently serves as Chair of the JTF SMART Cable initiative, and is a professor at the University of Hawaii, Department of Ocean and Resources Engineering.

**Kate Panayotou** (Australia) is a principal environmental scientist with seventeen years' experience in the coastal, marine, estuarine, environmental and stakeholder engagement sectors. She has worked in the submarine cable industry for over a decade.



# UNESCO awards five International Literacy Prizes

## News



*A graduate (middle) of the AdulTiCo programme, Colombia.*

**On the occasion of International Literacy Day (8 September), Irina Bokova, Director-General, awarded five UNESCO International Literacy Prizes at a ceremony, following the recommendations of an international jury.**

This year's prizes and celebration focused on Literacy in a Digital World. It brought together stakeholders and decision-makers from around the globe to examine how digital technology can help close the literacy gap, and to help people gain better understanding of the skills needed in today's societies.

One of two awards of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize – dedicated to mother-tongue literacy education and training and sponsored by the Republic of Korea – went to the Centre for the Study of Learning & Performance (CSLP) at Concordia University (Canada). The award was given to its "Using Educational Technology to Develop Essential Educational Competencies in Sub-Saharan Africa" project, which develops and distributes its materials internationally, and free of charge.

The project's overall focus is to develop tools and strategies to benefit pre-kindergarten to secondary education, post-secondary education, health and social services and the NGO/community sector. It aims to help those facing barriers to achieve their potential in the personal, academic and professional domains.

The second King Sejong Prize went to We Love Reading (Jordan), a programme with a virtual community that offers online read-aloud training for parents, mobilizes volunteers to read aloud in community spaces to children and provides age-appropriate material through a digital library. After working in public libraries in the United States, its founder, Rana Dajani, realized the urgency of building libraries in Jordan – with the goal of "a library in every neighbourhood". It also launched a programme in the Za'atari Refugee Camp for Syrian refugees in northern Jordan, training volunteers to become story-tellers for children.

The three awards of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy, supported by the Government of the People's Republic of China, reward work that benefits rural populations and out-of-school youth, particularly girls and women.

This year's winners are: the AdulTiCo programme of the Secretariat of Information and Communications Technologies of the city of Armenia (Colombia), for teaching digital competencies to seniors; The Citizens Foundation (Pakistan) for its Aagahi Adult Literacy Programme, which conducts digital educational needs assessments and provides teaching services for women and out-of-school girls; and the FunDza Literacy Trust (South Africa), a non-profit group dedicated to improving literacy among teenagers and young adults.

AdulTiCo has helped thousands of seniors in Armenia, Colombia, to develop skills connecting them to the modern world. "Overcoming illiteracy in new technologies opens a lot of opportunities for many of us, like staying in touch with our relatives abroad," declared Rosa Barragán, one of its most experienced students.

The Aagahi programme provides education to the less privileged, including women and girls. The word *aagahi*, in Urdu, one of Pakistan's official languages, means creating awareness.

The FunDza Trust sees education as the basis of a healthy society and literacy as central to this. It develops literacy by growing a community of readers and writers among its target audience. It has four outreach programmes: popularizing reading by getting print books to young people; growing communities of readers, using mobile phones, among other things; developing young writers through its FANZ section; and providing an online curriculum that deepens reading practice.

For half a century, UNESCO International Literacy Prizes have rewarded individuals and civil organizations who have achieved excellent and innovative goals in the field of literacy. Over 475 projects and programmes have been recognized since 1967.



# Global MIL Week 2017: Reimagining ways of learning

Youth leaders and individuals from around the world gather for the sixth annual Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Week 2017 from 25 October to 1 November, at the University of West Indies, Jamaica.

Entitled “Media and Information Literacy in Critical Times: Reimagining Ways of Learning and Information Environments”, the celebration kicks off on October 24, with youth engaging in thematic panels and workshops as part of the Global MIL Youth Agenda.

Living in the so-called post-truth era, how are people, particularly youth, to respond to challenging issues such as misinformation, fake news, sensationalism and alternative facts? UNESCO advocates that youth build creative network learning to bridge the significant gaps between learning in formal education environments and learning in other environments – including social media, movies, pop culture, the media, community centres and places of worship.

“The new information age is boundless; the mode of knowledge acquisition is vastly different from those of previous generations,” said Adama Lee-Bah, head of GAPMIL’s youth committee. “Young people tend to reject spoon-fed education and prefer to pursue knowledge through exploration and discovery.”

The Global MIL Week also features events of the Seventh Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID) Conference in Jamaica, from 24 to 27 October.

The events highlight UNESCO’s social media initiative, MIL CLICKS (Critical thinking, Creativity, Literacy, Intercultural Dialogue, Citizenship, Knowledge and Sustainability), which aims to improve people’s critical thinking competencies online and offline. Young people are key actors and part of the solution in the development of media and information-literate societies.

UNESCO leads the Global MIL Week 2017, in co-operation with the Media and Information and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID) University Network, the Global Alliance for Partnership on MIL (GAPMIL), United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and the University of the West Indies, the host for the feature conference.

*The 6th Global Media and Information Literacy Week, held from 25 October to 1 November 2017.*



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# Rethinking Youth Engagement with UNESCO

It's that time of year again, when the halls and corridors of UNESCO are buzzing with activity. When young people gather to discuss and debate the most challenging issues of the day, and make recommendations about how UNESCO can better respond to their needs. The 10<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum takes place on 25-26 October, at Headquarters in Paris, with a special pilot edition on "Rethinking Youth Engagement with UNESCO".

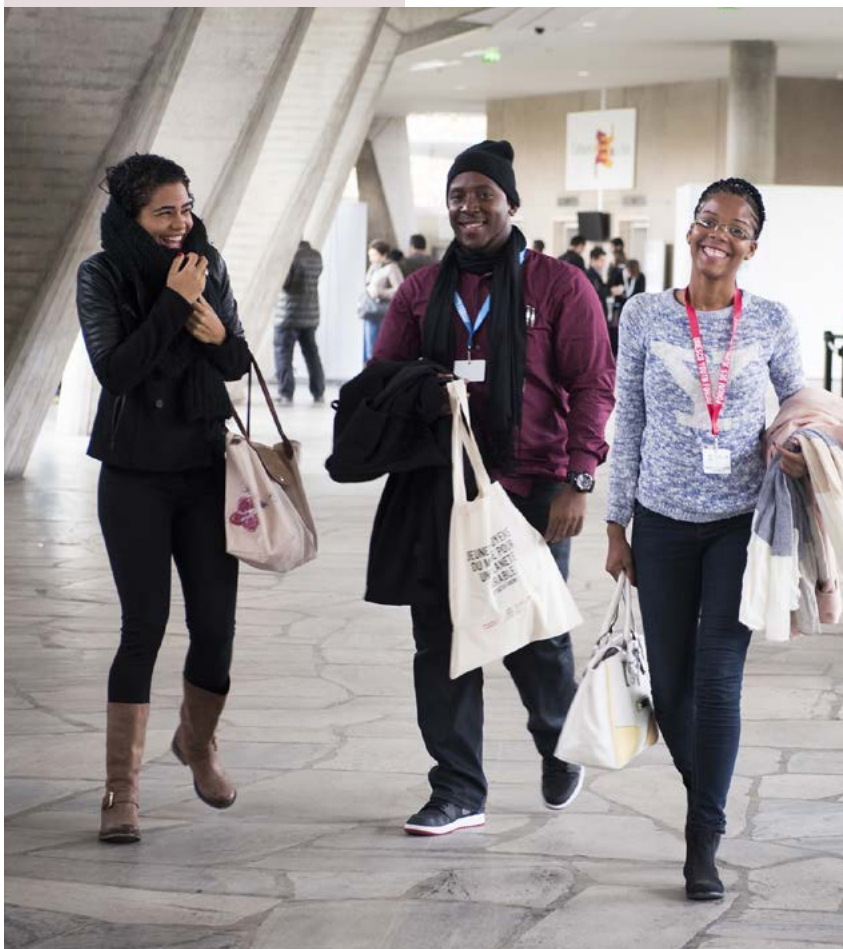
The biennial initiative, which began in 1999, brings together a select group of the most engaged young change-makers from all over the world with UNESCO staff. Together, they examine concrete ways in which they can collaborate to ensure that UNESCO's actions remain as pertinent and as impactful as possible. With the Youth Forum, UNESCO reiterates its commitment to remaining at the forefront of youth engagement.

There are currently 1.8 billion youth between the ages of 10 and 24 in the world. This is the largest youth population the world has ever had. While the numbers present a huge potential for change, problems including political instability, climate change, challenging labour markets and limited opportunities for political and civic participation, have increased the pressures on young women and men everywhere.

In response to these challenges, a new generation of young change-makers has emerged. They are working on innovative solutions to resolve some of the biggest issues affecting youth today – and the planet, more broadly. Young peace-builders are emerging from the world's conflict-torn regions, keen on equipping their nation's youth with conflict resolution skills. The climate change crisis is leading to the rise of outspoken young environmental activists, challenging their governments to ditch plastic and develop sustainable solutions.

All over the world, we're seeing the emergence of young social entrepreneurs, policymakers, researchers, teachers and civil society leaders whose innovative spirit and vital insight could potentially have a huge impact on UNESCO's youth actions.

Delegates at the 9<sup>th</sup> UNESCO Youth Forum.



© UNESCO / Nora Houguenade

## Erratum

A regrettable mistake occurred on page 70 of the July-September 2017 issue of the *UNESCO Courier*, where the name of the People's Republic of China was inadvertently truncated. We apologize for this mistake, which has been corrected in all the languages and formats in which the *Courier* is published.

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## Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/8

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The second in the new GEM Report series, the 2017/8 Report, continues its assessment of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal on education (SDG 4) and its ten targets.

The Report also investigates accountability-related issues in education, analyzing how all relevant actors – the international community, governments, teachers, schools, parents, students, civil society and businesses – can provide education more effectively, efficiently and equitably, and address global commitments to SDG 4.

By analyzing which accounting policies and practices are more effective than others, and the political, economic and social conditions that facilitate the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms, the 2017/8 GEM Report concludes with concrete recommendations for policymakers working in the sector.



## World Heritage No. 85

### Modern Heritage

ISSN 1020-4202  
96 pp, 22 x 28 cm, paperback, € 7.50

The World Heritage Convention has been an effective and interesting tool in the conservation of modern heritage. This issue examines the preservation of modern heritage from the Industrial Revolution to recent years. The Sydney Opera House (Australia), Grimeton Radio Station (Sweden) and Brasilia (Brazil) are featured as case studies. A focus on the preservation of modern heritage in the Arab world is included.

The new World Heritage sites, inscribed during the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee in Krakow, Poland in July 2017 are also presented.



## Culture: Urban future

### Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development

ISBN 978-92-3-100170-3  
304 pp., 21 x 29.7 cm, PDF  
Publication available on  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org>

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in an urban environment. It is expected that the exponential population growth and urbanization of the world will make seventy per cent of humanity live in cities in the next thirty years.

Culture is a key tool for promoting sustainable urban development – by preserving urban, environmental and cultural identity, attracting activities and visitors, fostering the development of the creative economy and of the quality of life.

This Report presents an up-to-date picture of the current policies and practices of urban regeneration and sustainable development that have put culture at their core.

It is intended as a policy framework document to support governments in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Urban Development and the New Urban Agenda.



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