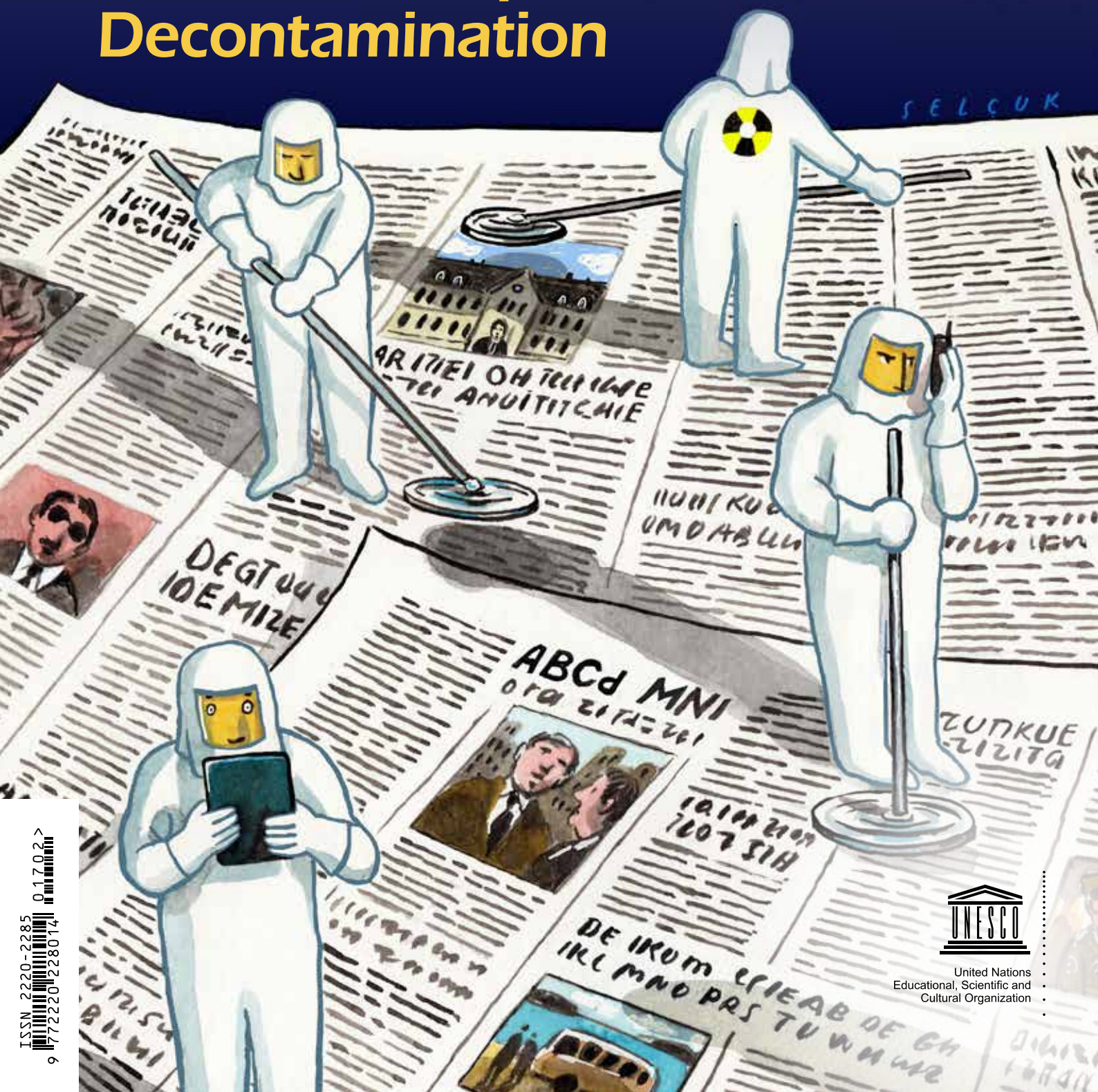


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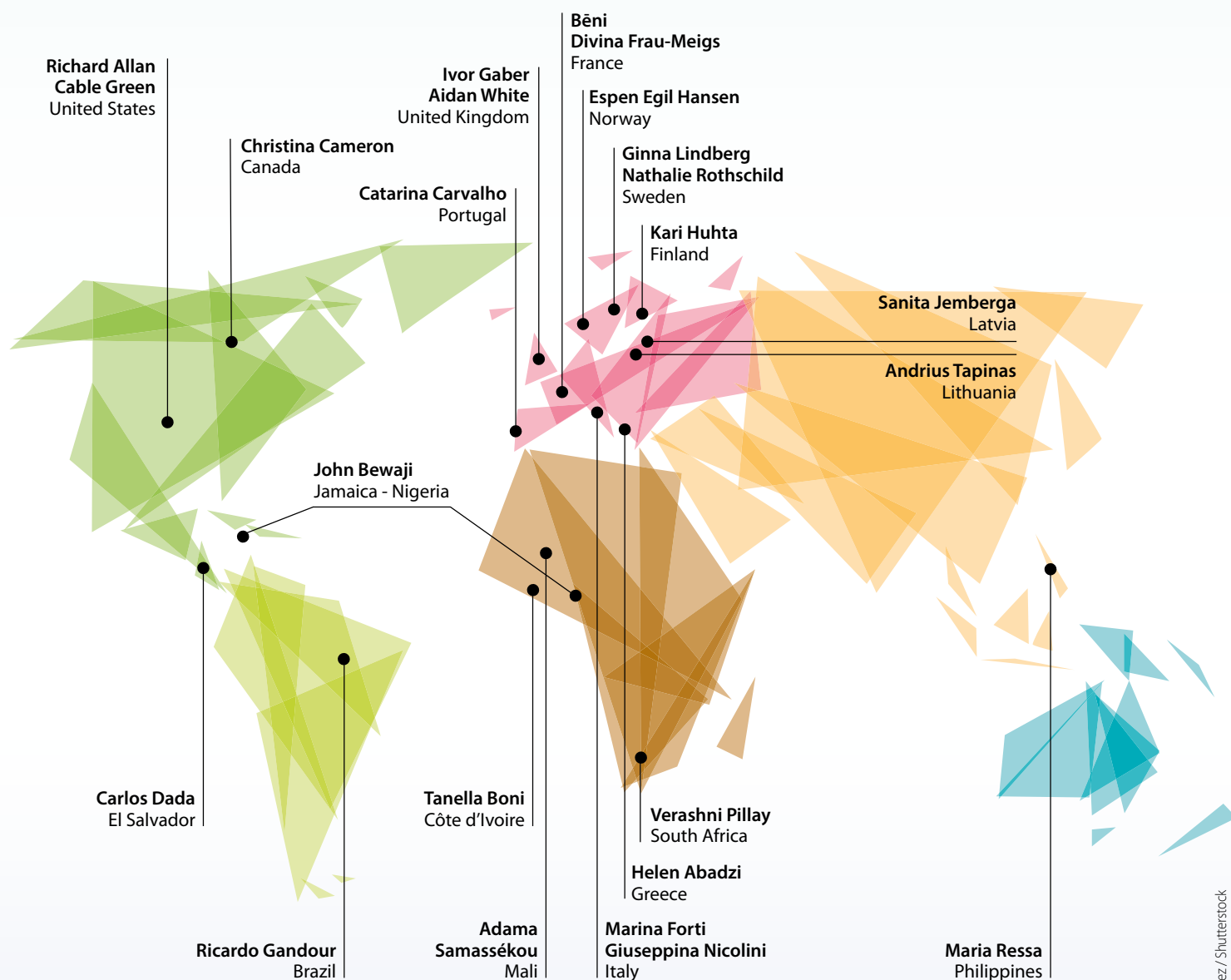
The Media: Operation Decontamination



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THE UNESCO Courier



*Irina Bokova,
Director-General of UNESCO.*

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Editorial

Each time a new media appears, it triggers a revolution – print, radio, television, the internet, have all changed the face of societies, the ways we get information, how we live and organize ourselves.

Each time a new media appears, voices rise to assert that it will kill off the one that preceded it – that radio will kill off print media, that television will kill off radio, that digital media will kill off all the others. Yet, today's media landscape also highlights examples of complementarity, of emulation and interaction between the various means of communication and information, where they amplify and respond to one another.

Never before have we communicated so much, and never on such a large scale. The new technologies have opened up new pathways, enabling citizens across the world to gain access to more diverse and more numerous sources of information, and to play a new role in the production of this information – to become the producers of content themselves. These new media are also creating new barriers and raising new challenges in terms of regulation and ethics.

Where does information come from? How is it created? Who guarantees its quality? How do we distinguish between true and false in this web, woven by billions of pieces of information coming from all sides? In the incredible tangle of the media, the traditional roles of producer, broadcaster and consumer have changed. The production of fake news and the risk of confining audiences in "filter bubbles" generated by algorithms, raises new questions about freedom of expression and cultural diversity.

The plurality of enlightened opinions is a prerequisite of the democratic development of our societies. The quality of the information disseminated by the media – traditional or new – is decisive when it comes to shaping public opinion. This is why UNESCO puts special emphasis on education about media and information, which it considers a fundamental skill for citizens in the twenty-first century.

Freedom of expression and the free movement of ideas by words and images are among the constitutive principles of UNESCO and at the core of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNESCO supports the work of dedicated journalists and activists who defend fundamental freedoms, like the journalist Dawit Isaak, winner of the 2017 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, whose story appears in this issue of the *UNESCO Courier*.

Over the last decade, more than 800 journalists have been victims of crimes aimed at muzzling freedom of expression. Only one murder out of ten ended with a conviction. This impunity is unacceptable and further fuels the spiral of violence in the future. This is why UNESCO is committed to putting an end to these crimes against the press, on all continents, as an indispensable condition for peaceful societies that are all the more robust for being better informed.

In this "post-truth" era, the role of UNESCO is more important than ever, and this issue of the *Courier* is a wonderful opportunity to renew our founding commitment to support information and communication to build peace in the minds of men and women.

Irina Bokova
Director-General of UNESCO

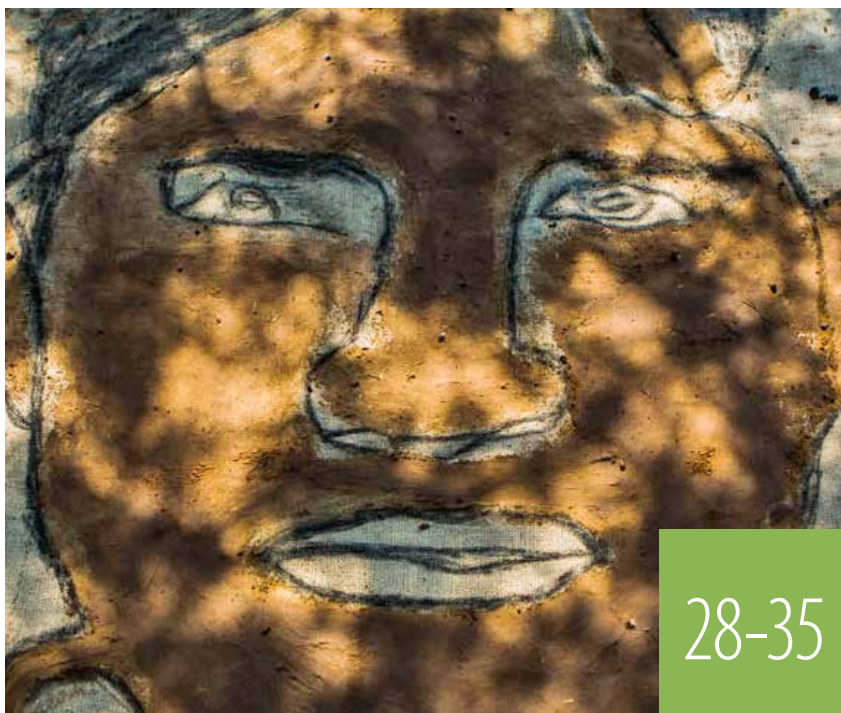
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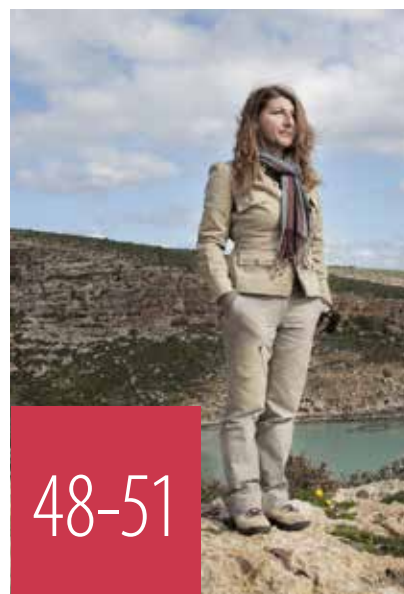
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The Media: Operation Decontamination



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Ethical journalism:

back in the news

by Aidan White

The core values of ethical journalism are more important than ever today, as we fight for quality and democracy in the media in the digital age. While new laws might lead to potential censorship, a commitment to ethics is essential to build public trust.



© Jugoslav Vlahovic

"Tech giants that dominate the public information space, such as Google, Facebook, Amazon and Twitter circulate information in a value-free environment," says Aidan White.

Journalism is on the move like never before. Today the news business is faster, more pressurized, and infinitely more complex. The media have learned the hard way how the information revolution – for all its liberating qualities – is a double-edged sword.

While news media can deliver stories around the world in seconds and communications have the potential to build stronger, more informed and more engaged communities, the business models that paid for journalism in the past are broken, and in many cases, beyond repair.

With less money to pay for public-interest journalism, newsrooms struggle to maintain their ethical base. Problems that have always been on the radar – political bias, undue corporate influence, stereotypes and conflicts of interest – are now magnified.

The past fifteen years have seen a dramatic decline in news journalism, as technology has changed the way people communicate and the way the media business works.

Today, most of us get our news through mobile telephones and from online platforms that have grown rich by exploiting people's personal data, while at the same time, draining lucrative advertising from traditional media.

Resonating with journalists worldwide

Thousands of news outlets, mainly newspapers, have closed. Tens of thousands of journalists have lost their jobs. People's access to reliable and trusted sources of news has narrowed as traditional news sources – particularly at the local and regional level – have contracted, even though the space for free speech has expanded dramatically.

The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) was created five years ago, to strengthen journalism in the face of this crisis.

As a coalition of more than sixty groups of journalists, editors, press owners and media support groups, EJN promotes training and practical actions to strengthen ethics and governance. Its work – whether it is developing a test for journalists to expose hate speech, guidelines on reporting conflict or producing reports on covering migration – resonates with journalists around the world.

Because the network has its roots within media, EJN's multi-country reports and even those that lift the lid on the untold stories about the realities of how media work and the challenges of self-regulation, have credibility inside journalism.

The EJN's soundings in this period of uncertainty are that despite the increasingly hostile economic and political climate, journalists everywhere – from Turkey, Syria and Egypt to Pakistan, China and Indonesia – remain committed to truth-telling and ethics.



Building public trust

This commitment is a golden asset at a time of social transformation, when the global communications culture is in chaotic transition. To people inside media and anyone striving for the key to safe and secure communications in future, the defence and promotion of ethical journalism has become more important than ever.

Fake news, political and corporate propaganda, and shameless online abuse threaten democracy and open up new frontlines for free-speech defenders, policymakers, and media professionals alike. A toxic mix of digital technology, unscrupulous politics and commercial exploitation of the new communications landscape is creating stress fractures across the wider landscape of public information.

With this in mind, EJN has promoted a new debate about the need to recognize why journalism, which is constrained by its framework of ethics, is essential for building public trust.

We find that there is no widespread yearning for a new code of ethics among the media or the public. The core values of accuracy, independence and responsible reporting – which have evolved over the past 150 years – remain as relevant as ever, even in these digital times.

What is needed, says EJN, is a new partnership with media audiences and policymakers to persuade them that ethical journalism should be strengthened, and that it can be used as an inspiration for new programmes to promote information literacy.

Cardinal principles

Today, it's not just journalists who need to watch their language and show respect for the facts; everyone with something to say in the public information sphere needs to show some ethical restraint.

The EJN argues that ethical values of journalism – such as fact-based communications, humanity and respect for others, transparency and owning up to errors – are cardinal principles which should guide everyone, including social media users and citizen journalists. But this should be a voluntary process and not driven by law.

Worried by online abuse and fake news, some governments, even in democratic countries, have threatened to fine technology companies that don't act to remove malicious and dangerous information when it pops up on their platforms. This could limit legitimate dissent and free speech – this is increasingly more likely to happen, unless these companies act to support ethical communications.

The problem is that the tech giants that dominate the public information space, such as Google, Facebook, Amazon and Twitter, circulate information in a value-free environment. They give no priority to information as a public good, such as professional journalism. For them, journalism competes on an equal footing in their marketing with other information, even if it is malicious and abusive.

Using algorithms to attract clicks

Using sophisticated algorithms and limitless databanks that provide access to millions of subscribers, this business model is driven by one simple objective – to encourage “viral information” that delivers enough clicks to trigger digital advertising. It matters not whether information is ethical, true or honest; what counts is whether it is sensational, provocative, and stimulating enough to attract attention.

No matter how sophisticated they are, digital robots can't be encoded with ethical and moral values. The best people to handle ethical questions are sentient human beings – well-trained, informed and responsible journalists and editors.

After recent scandals – like the outrage over censorship of iconic photographs (see p. 16), the live-streaming of torture and murder, and major corporations complaining about their advertisements being placed on websites preaching terrorism, hate and child abuse – the technology companies have promised to act. But will it be enough?

On 3 May 2017, Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg promised to employ 3,000 content reviewers (to add to the company's 4,500-strong “community operations team”), following outrage over the broadcasting of a spate of violent videos of murder, suicide, and gang rape.

Facebook has a subscriber base of two billion, which means that there is one content reviewer per 250,000 or so, users. It's a fraction of what is needed to monitor and control the growth of unethical, abusive content and the dangers posed by propaganda and fake news.

Exploiting people's privacy

One simple answer would be for tech companies to accept their role as publishers in the digital age and to draw upon the vast pool of informed and ethical journalists currently displaced by the information revolution. We know they can afford it – in early 2017, it was reported that Facebook was worth around \$400 billion, and Google more than \$600 billion. These are among the world's richest companies.

While policymakers and technology moguls wring their hands over these issues, the use of technology by unscrupulous politicians to undermine democracy and to interfere in elections is growing. And fake news laced with malicious lies is all part of the strategy.



@nickgentryart (www.nickgentryart.com)



"No matter how sophisticated they are, digital robots can't be encoded with ethical and moral values," explains Aidan White. "Profile Number 13", by British artist Nick Gentry.

The crisis was recently highlighted by Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web. The British scientist and academic warned that the online world is being overwhelmed by governments and digital corporations and that the exploitation of people's privacy is squeezing the life out of the internet.

His criticism highlights the disruptive and pernicious threat posed by the marketing of false information in politics.

In an open letter (on 12 March 2017, the web's 28th birthday), Berners-Lee wrote of the 2016 election in the United States: "... as many as 50,000 variations of adverts were being served every single day on Facebook, a near-impossible situation to monitor.

And there are suggestions that some political adverts – in the US and around the world – are being used in unethical ways to point voters to fake news sites, for instance, or to keep others away from the polls. ... Is that democratic?"

Exposing fake news

It's a good question, and one that was also asked in France on the eve of the French presidential election in May 2017, when online hackers dumped thousands of confidential email files, many of them fake, concerning Emmanuel Macron, the eventual winner.

This information mountain couldn't be examined, verified or debunked by journalists, because French law forbids public discussion of election information in the last hours before people vote. But it circulated freely on social media.

News reporting can be rough and ready, but ethical journalism owns up to its errors. More importantly, because it is fact-based and has civic purpose, it also provides a road map for policy to build a safe and reliable public information space.

Aidan White (UK) is Director of the Ethical Journalism Network, and the author of a book, *To Tell You The Truth: the Ethical Journalism Initiative*, a global review of ethical issues in the news (2008). He is the former General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, which he led for twenty-four years until March 2011. He is a founder of the International News Safety Institute and the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX).



Fake news

Sound bites on a burning topic

Fake news, or disinformation, is not a new phenomenon. But today, with the rise of digital media, it spreads easily and quickly. It is the task of responsible journalists and trusted news organizations to douse the flames of this dangerous wildfire and call fake news out for what it really is – lies. What do journalists think about this? We asked a few of them to find out.

Aidan White

Director, Ethical Journalism Network

With growing evidence of interference in democratic processes around the world, the debate over how to expose and eliminate fake news is certain to intensify. But the discussion is already confused by misunderstanding about the phenomenon, its origins, and why it poses a threat in the first place.

To try to illustrate the problem, the Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) has developed a definition for fake news: “Information deliberately fabricated and published with the intention to deceive and mislead others into believing falsehoods or doubting verifiable facts.” Using this definition, it is easier to separate propaganda, “alternative” facts, and malicious lies from journalism.

Verashni Pillay

Editor-in-Chief,
Huffington Post, South Africa

Fake news poisons the atmosphere that we all operate in. Because fake news exists, audiences are now doubtful about all news. It has really damaged the relationship between audience members and the media.

Kari Huhta

Diplomatic Editor,
Helsingin Sanomat, Finland

We easily exaggerate the effect of fake news on journalism. I don't want to be flippant about it – it is a serious challenge to society and institutionality. The point of fake news is not to tell another narrative; the main aim of fake news is to dismantle the credibility of institutions, including journalism, but not only journalism.

Ivor Gaber

Professor of Journalism,
University of Sussex, United Kingdom

There has always been fake news – ever since people realized the power of the media to influence public opinion. However, the difference today is that social media and platforms like Google and Facebook enable fake news to spread widely and more quickly than ever before, and that is the problem.

Fake news changes journalism in that it presents a real challenge to journalism, because it's not always that easy to distinguish fake news from real news, but it also makes journalism much more important. Because if anybody is going to call out fake news, it's the journalist – the responsible journalist, that is. I would say that in the short term, fake news is a problem for journalists. But in the long term, it validates them and gives them an increased importance in society.

Ricardo Gandour

Journalism Director,
CBN, Brazilian Radio Network, Brazil

Fake news reinforces a traditional mission of journalism, which is trying to shine a light in the dark, for societies and the general public. Our mission has to be reinforced on this core value, trying to illuminate the debate, trying to show the public where the real facts and the real debates are.



© Cristo Salgado

Ginna Lindberg

Head, Foreign News,
Swedish Broadcasting, Sweden

All this talk about fake news is affecting media audiences, because there is an insecurity about what is true and what is not. As professional journalists, we need to go back to what we do best – we do fact-checking, demand answers, and are transparent about our (news-gathering) methods.

Lies in social networks.

Catarina Carvalho

Editor-in-Chief,
Global Media Group, Portugal

Fake news is not journalism. Maybe we should think about what we [the mainstream media] did to journalism that has allowed fake news to become so easily accepted and so easily done. I think we should do some soul-searching to know if we are doing the right thing, if we are behaving in the right way, if we are being ethical in journalism – that could prevent fake news from having the power and influence it has, and stop the growth it has achieved.

Maria Ressa

Co-founder & CEO, *Rappler*,
the Philippines

Rappler, a social news network committed to investigative reporting, has documented at least 300 websites spreading fake news in the Philippines. One of our investigations monitored the growth of suspicious Facebook accounts that seeded fake news into campaign pages during the country's May 2016 elections.

It took us about three months to manually check the information the Facebook accounts provided and to verify they were fake.

We found that one nest of twenty-six fake accounts is able to influence nearly three million Facebook pages. We also know that, as of November 2016, about 50,000 Facebook accounts can be used in targeted campaigns for or against politicians or individuals in the Philippines. Another fake account was linked to over 990,000 members of groups supporting one political leader, and yet another was connected to an estimated 3.8 million members of various overseas Filipino organizations and buy-and-sell groups.

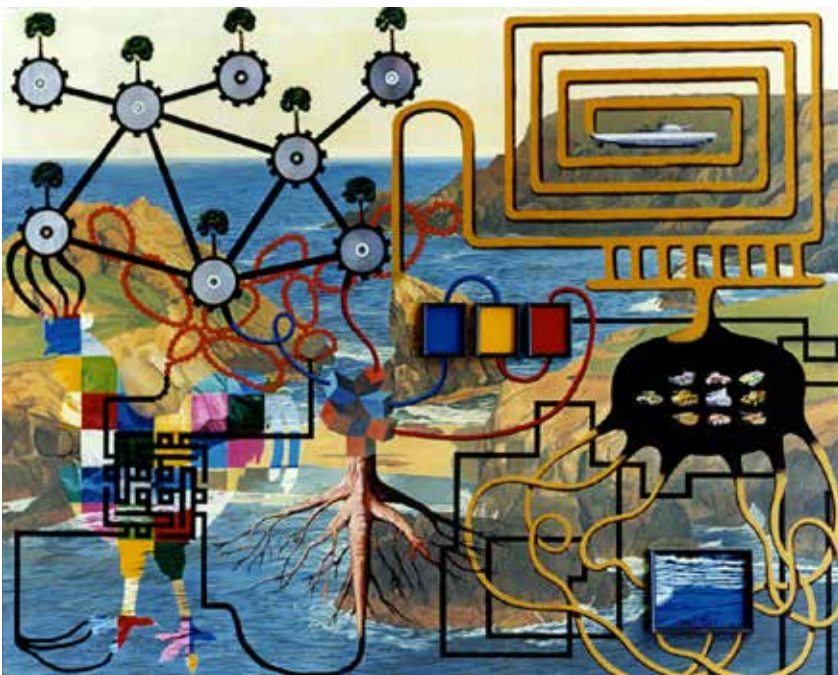
With about 54 million Facebook users in the Philippines, social media is a powerful weapon used to silence dissent and mould public opinion. *Rappler* has lived through numerous waves of attacks via the internet, including from Facebook accounts created specifically to harass our reporters and contributors.

This has only made us more determined to expose the lies and prevent their spread.

Developing a critical mind against fake news

by Divina Frau-Meigs

Having moved from light surfing, babbling and chatting to data mining for the purpose of manipulation and destabilization, the digital transformation of the media landscape underscores the growing importance of media and information literacy. This form of education must rethink the media and the political and ethical foundations that legitimize it.



© Oscar Seco

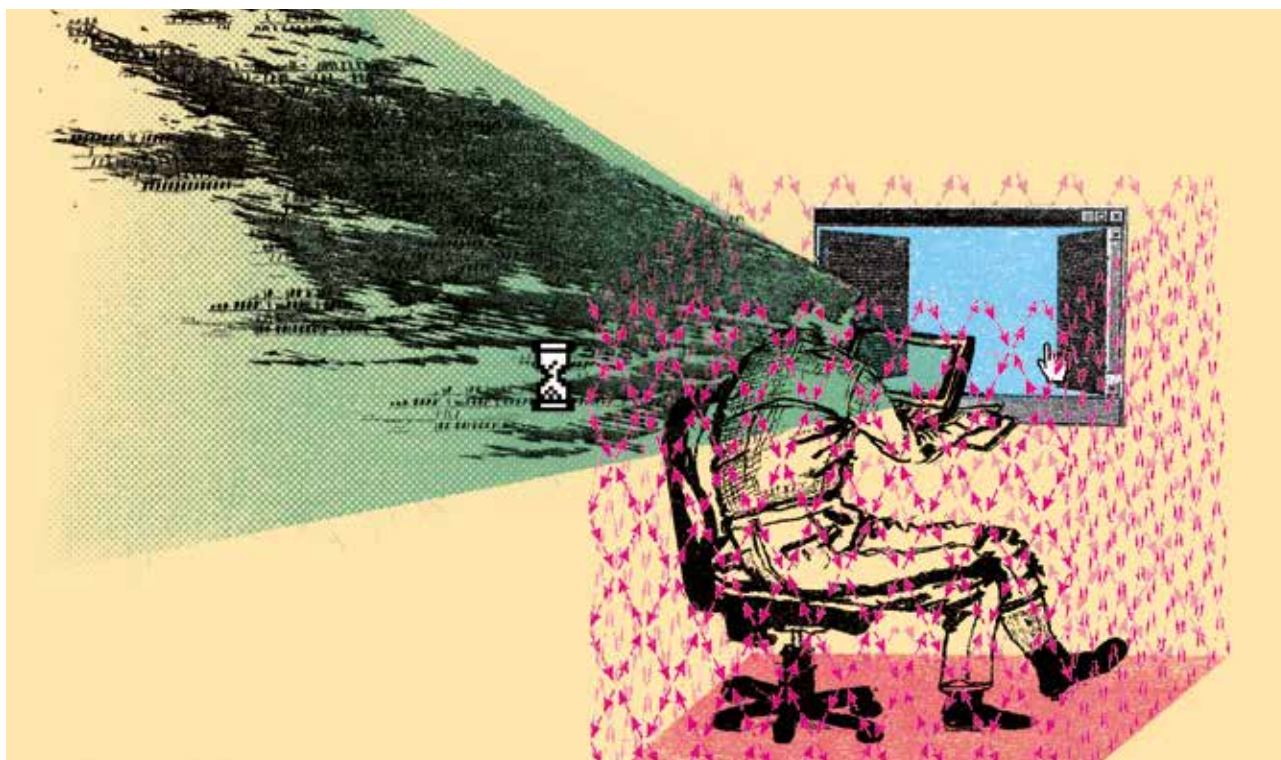
"The Doubly Mysterious Island" from the series "Labyrinth and Utopia" by the Spanish painter, Oscar Seco.

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is often called to the rescue these days, as the media is threatened on all sides, in totalitarian and democratic regimes alike. The alert was sounded in France on 7 January 2015, when the French satirical magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, was attacked. It was an attack on one of the oldest forms of media in the world – caricature.

At the time, I was Director of the Centre pour l'éducation aux médias et à l'information (the centre for media and information literacy (CLEMI)). We had to prepare students for their return to the classroom the day after the attack, and meet the needs of teachers and parents. We proceeded as we did after all major catastrophes – we searched our archives for educational fact sheets on caricature and propaganda, and posted media resources online (reference websites, a press review, a series of headlines). We also released an unpublished interview of Charb, which CLEMI had done in 2013, titled, "Can we laugh at everything?" The cartoonist and journalist, whose real name was Stéphane Charbonnier, was murdered in the attack.

This crisis situation showed the strengths of MIL, but also its limitations. We were well-prepared to respond in terms of resources, but we did not anticipate the impact of social media.

Like pre-digital media, MIL must take a leap forward and include in its concerns what data does to the media – it pushes information to the fore through the regulation of algorithms, linked to people's search histories. It can enclose people in a "filter bubble" to reinforce the biases of confirmation that support preconceived ideas, and reduce the diversity and pluralism of ideas by monetizing content (clicks by views). It is invasive of privacy and threatens fundamental freedoms by using digital footprints for purposes beyond the user's control.



© Patric Sandri

The latest crisis stemming from fake news – a blend of rumour, propaganda and plot theory – has shaken up MIL. Fake news is even stronger than disinformation, which is a toxic, but generally discernible mixture of truth and lies. Fake news is a phenomenon that falls into the category of disinformation, but its malicious intent is unprecedented, because information technology makes it trans-border and trans-media, and therefore viral.

Media Information Literacy must imperatively take into account the digital transformation, which has moved from the “blue continent” to the “dark continent”. In other words, it has gone from surfing, babbling and chatting on platforms controlled by the GAFAM (an acronym for Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft), to noxious data mining for the purpose of massive manipulation and destabilization.

It is in this respect that the decoding of online propaganda is complex, because it is a question of deciphering a form of disruptive ideology, which is technologically innovative, but paradoxically represents a conservative global revolution – designed to create chaos in existing political systems rather than proposing a system of progressive political thought.

The return of gossip

This is why MIL is obliged to rethink the media and the political and ethical foundations that legitimize it. The role of social media needs to be revisited, as do the exchanges that take place on it. The growth of digital media, which transforms old audiences into new communities of sharing and interpretation, also needs to be taken into account. The renewed tendency to gossip manifested by social media is not insignificant and should not be treated with contempt. A conversation in undertones that conveys a jumble of rumours, half-truths and hearsay, gossip makes what is private, public. It places authenticity above a truth that is perceived as fabricated by elites, far from daily and local concerns.

Social media, then, conveys news where truth is uncertain, and falsehoods have been used to arrive at the truth or by showing that the truth is not all that clear-cut. Hence the temptation to categorize social media as “post-truth”. But this stance reduces its scope and refuses to see in it the quest for a different truth, when the supposedly gold-standard systems of information go bankrupt. Social media centres once again on the eternal journalistic battle between objective facts and commentary based on opinion, that is played out in these models of influence.

Decoding online propaganda is complex. New generations have to learn to be “explorers, analysts and creators” all at the same time, says Divina Frau-Meigs.

In the information-communication sciences, gossip falls within the category of social bonding. It fulfills essential cognitive functions: monitoring the environment, providing help in decision-making by sharing news, aligning a given situation with the values of the group, etc. These functions have traditionally legitimized the importance of the media. But the media is now perceived as deficient and biased – this is symptomized by the reliance on online gossip, relayed by social media. The blame falls less on social media than on those who are responsible for public debate in real life.

In destabilized political situations all around the world, social media is restoring meaning to the regulatory role of social narrative. It highlights the violations of social norms, especially when political institutions boast of transparency, because secrets are no longer safe. Set against newspapers that toe party lines, social media is disrupting the norms of objectivity, which has become fossilized by requiring the presentation of one opinion *for* and one *against*.

© Ryoji Ikeda. Photo by Fernando Maquieira. Courtesy of Espacio Fundación Telefónica.



"Data.Path" (2013), by Japanese artist, Ryoji Ikeda, whose installations aim to make the invisible digital network visible and palpable, as it permeates and defines our world.

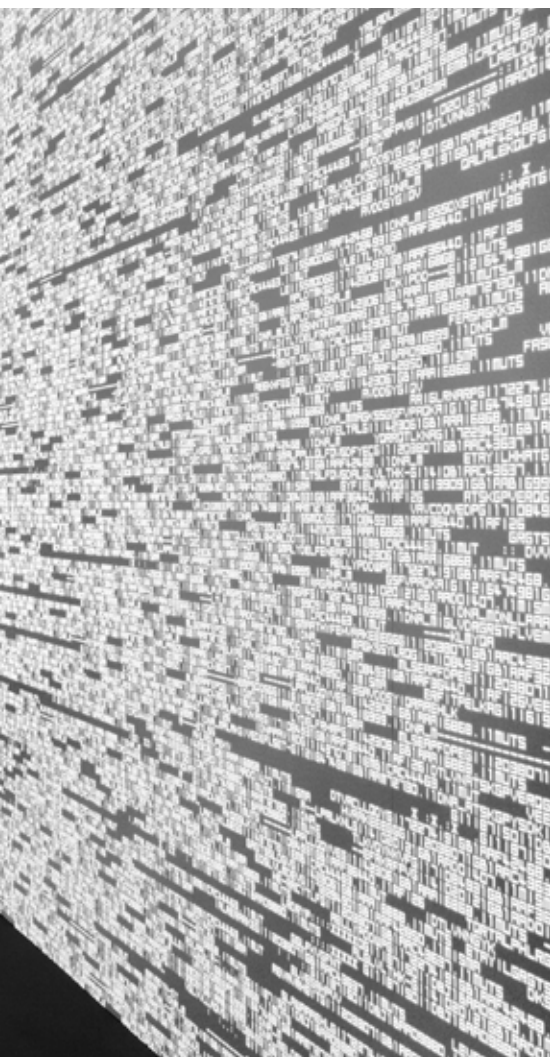
The public shows distrust of the "veracity" of this polarized discourse and is seduced by the strategy of authenticity. It establishes a close relationship of trust with the community of members that now constitutes the audience, and aims to involve them in debates, while basing itself on the principle of transparency. Thus social media pits the ethics of authenticity against the ethics of objectivity.

Explorer, analyst and creator

Social media and fake news consequently make up a textbook case for MIL, which calls upon its fundamental competence – critical thinking. But this critical thinking must have an understanding of the added value of the digital: participation, contribution, transparency and accountability, of course, but also disinformation and the interplay of influence.

The critical mind can be exercised and trained, and can also act as a form of resistance to propaganda and plot theory. Young people must be put in a position of responsibility while being protected by the adults around them: they can be prompted to call into question their use of social media and to take into account the criticism against the consequences of their practices. We must also trust their sense of ethics, once it is called upon. In my Massive Open Online Course on Media Education – the MOOC DIY MIL, which received the 2016 UNESCO Global MIL Award – I offer students three critical roles: explorer, analyst and creator. The explorer gets to know the media and data; the analyst applies the concepts, such as source verification, fact-checking, respect for privacy; the creator tries his/her hand at producing his/her own content, sees the consequences of his/her choices and makes decisions about distribution.

The MOOC has given birth to projects such as "Citoyen journaliste sur Twitter" (citizen journalist on Twitter) and "HoaxBuster", against plot theories.



In all cases, the point is to ensure that young people acquire the critical thinking reflexes of MIL, so that they can avoid the traps of hate speech, non-voluntary internet traces and fake news. Other initiatives exist, including some led by UNESCO, which has founded the Global Alliance of Partners on MIL (GAPMIL) – MIL CLICKS is a recent project to take ownership of MIL via social media.

Scaling up MIL

It is also important that MIL exercises critical thinking against the media itself. It turns out that the top press organizations are among the biggest influencers and the ones who tend to push rumours, on Twitter for example, before they are confirmed. The fake news that circulates on Facebook, the first of the social media to spread it, draws its grain of truth from the fact that news professionals are overly responsive to the pressure of the scoop, transmitted before it is checked, in the same manner as the amateurs. And the denials do not generate as much buzz as the rumours!

It is clear that challenges still exist to significantly scaling up MIL. Decision makers need convincing that trainers must be trained, teachers and journalists alike. My research at the Université Nouvelle Sorbonne, within the framework of the TRANSLIT project of the Agence Nationale de la Recherche and the UNESCO Chair in “Savoir-devenir in sustainable digital development”, consists of comparing public policies in Europe. It shows that many resources and training opportunities exist on the ground, provided by organizations or teachers on their own initiative, rather than sponsored by universities. It points, however, to a lag at the public policy level, despite the inclusion of MIL in many national educational programmes. There are few interministerial mechanisms, little or no co-regulation, and little or no multi-stakeholder coordination. The governance of MIL emerges as composite, with three models existing in different countries: development, delegation, or... disengagement (D. Frau-Meigs *et al*, 2017).

An ethical leap

The good news is that journalists are becoming increasingly aware, revising their ethics and realizing the value of MIL. Their ethical leap can help teachers to reposition MIL and provide valid resources to bolster resistance in favour of the integrity of data and media. Actions that are re-establishing the value of in-depth investigation are already taking shape – using data journalism, which reveals information that cannot be obtained otherwise.

Scandals such as the colossal leak of confidential documents known as the Panama Papers have helped moralize political life and restore confidence in the press. Other actions are aimed specifically at fighting fake news using digital means. These include AFP Correspondent, the Agence France Presse blog (which reveals what happens backstage at a large news network); Décodex, featured in the French newspaper, *Le Monde* (which lists sites according to their unreliability), Google's RevEye (which checks whether an image is genuine in three clicks), and Conspi Hunter on Spicce, the online TV reports and documentaries platform (to debunk plot theories).

In order to be deployed fully and to create an educated citizenship, MIL's critical thinking must also be applied to the geo-economy of social media. The GAFAM digital platforms, all under California law, have long refused to be classified as media companies, to avoid all social responsibility and to evade any related public-service obligations. But algorithmic monitoring has revealed the ability of GAFAM to exercise editorial control over content that is worth monetizing. In doing so, these organizations define the truth, because it is real or ethical.

The GAFAM mega-media have so far played the card of self-regulation: they make their own rules, they decide to remove sites or accounts suspected of conveying fake news, with no accountability for themselves. But they cannot resist the need for a responsible model for long – it will probably be a hybrid between a “common carrier” and “public trustee”, if they want to preserve the trust of their online communities. The communities could also organize themselves, and even circumvent them, to co-regulate the news with journalists, as is the case with Décodex. The option of co-designing an algorithm that would have journalistic ethics and fundamental freedoms built into its DNA is undoubtedly one of the alternatives to come, according to digital logic!

Divina Frau-Meigs (France) is a professor of information and communication sciences at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, and holder of the UNESCO Chair “Savoir-devenir in sustainable digital development”. The author of several books, she has just published *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe: Cross-Country Comparisons*, which she has edited along with I. Velez and J. Flores Michel (London, Routledge, 2017).



Aftenposten versus Facebook: triggering a crucial debate

by Marina Yaloyan

The increasing role that social media sites play in news distribution raises several concerns. Espen Egil Hansen of *Aftenposten* (Norway) and Richard Allan of Facebook come from different worlds, yet face a similar challenge.

© Photo Nick Ut. AP/NTB SCANPIX



The front page of *Aftenposten*, headlining the open letter from its editor, Espen Egil Hansen, to Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg (8 September 2016).

It is an icon of war photography: the black-and-white image reveals a naked nine-year-old girl, fleeing from an explosion, screaming, her face distorted with pain. Taken by Vietnamese-American photographer, Nick Ut, during the napalm strike on a Vietnamese village in 1972, the Pulitzer prize-winning photo, "The Terror of War", raised controversy in 2016, when Facebook banned it because of "inappropriate content".

"I wrote to Mark Zuckerberg telling him that I wouldn't comply," remembers Espen Egil Hansen, the editor-in-chief of *Aftenposten*, Norway's largest newspaper, who shared the post on Facebook and got threatened with a permanent ban. Hansen's bold letter, splashed across the front page of *Aftenposten*, condemned Facebook for creating rules that first "cannot distinguish between child pornography and famous war photographs" and then "exclude every possible debate." The letter drew massive support and became the starting point for a heated discussion around Facebook's intricate censorship rules and the control of content through newsfeed algorithms.

With over two billion users worldwide and leading more traffic to news sites than Google, Facebook has now emerged as a major player in news distribution, even though it still evades formal responsibility by positioning itself as a "technical platform". Nevertheless, it has arguably become the largest global media site, which has turned Mark Zuckerberg into "the most powerful editor-in-chief in the world," according to Hansen." I reminded Zuckerberg that this title comes with responsibility. He doesn't just own a tech company, he owns a media company." This is precisely why Hansen considers that censoring an iconic image of photojournalism because of nudity was a bad editorial decision. "Disturbing images may not always be comfortable to look at, but they are the ones that help promote awareness in a democratic society," he says.

Millions of people post content on Facebook's pages every day, which makes the process of selecting information case-by-case an obvious challenge. Richard Allan, Facebook's Vice President, Public Policy, EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa), defends the site's general guidelines, which demand that photographs of children under 18 containing nudity are tracked and taken down.



© Nick Ut / Sipa Press



Yet, he does admit that with the “The Terror of War” photo, this policy fell short. “Just to be clear, we question ourselves all the time. When we face a new situation we haven’t anticipated before, we ask ourselves, what should we do now? Should we change our rules?” he stated during the colloquium, Journalism under Fire, at UNESCO in March 2017. Two months later, Facebook announced that it would add 3,000 more people to its 4,500-strong community operations team. The newly-adopted, more flexible, approach requires content reviewers to treat news as an exception. “There are occasional photos of naked children where the public interest of the publication of that photo and, in this case, the consent of the person involved, outweighs the regular policy,” Allan says.

Algorithm – the world’s new editor-in-chief

There is little or no significant difference between Facebook and traditional news venues when it comes to editorial choice. “In the same way in which an editor-in-chief of *Fox News* is responsible for the editorial content of *Fox News*, Mark Zuckerberg is responsible for the editorial content of Facebook,” insists Hansen.

The only real difference between the two is the largely misunderstood and controversial newsfeed algorithm that traditional media editors do not use.

“We want to keep our essence. You are your own editor and you choose what you want to see,” states Richard Allan, regarding Facebook’s policy.

Norwegian illustrator Inge Grodum’s take on the iconic photograph, “The Terror of War”, condemning Facebook’s censorship for “inappropriate content”. The nine-year-old girl in the photo, known as “the Napalm girl”, is Kim Phuc Phan Thi, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador since 1994.

“Disturbing images may not always be comfortable to look at, but they are the ones that help promote awareness in a democratic society”

Meanwhile, algorithms continue to shape the reading habits of 1.28 billion daily active Facebook users (March 2017), or one-fifth of the world's population. Facebook scans and analyzes all the information posted by any given user in the previous week, taking into account every page that he or she has liked, all the groups he/she belongs to and everybody he/she follows. Then, according to a closely-guarded and constantly evolving formula, the algorithms rank the posts in the precise order they believe the user will find worthwhile.

However, the very nature of algorithms can turn them into controversial, and even dangerous, tools.

“Algorithms may create the so-called filter bubbles, which reinforce a negative trend of our time – one that leads to more polarized communities,” says Hansen. “More and more people live in bubbles, where they only get the information they want, and communicate only with like-minded people.” From this perspective, the criteria of selection used by algorithms to classify information become crucially important.

Allan, however, compares the newsfeed to a periodical subscription and denies imposing any content on Facebook's readers. According to him, algorithms merely allow for the arranging of periodicals in a way that is most convenient for the reader. The challenge, however, lies in the large quantity of newsfeeds available. “What we find is that people sign up for a thousand different feeds when they only have time to read twenty of them,” he says.

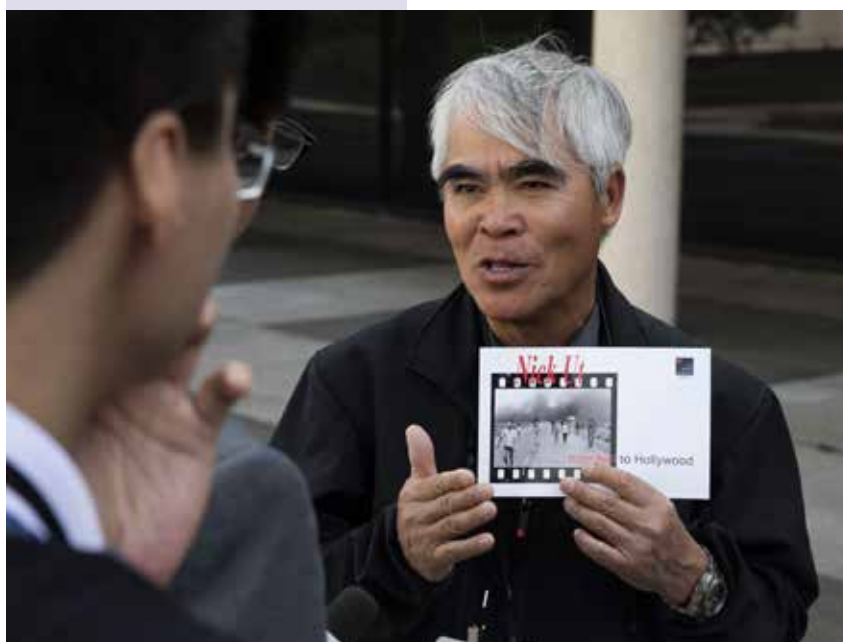
“The thousand feeds are still there but this obviously creates a selection process, as we pick those that are going to appear on the top.”

Favouring the information that readers prefer can be a slippery road. According to Hansen, it is a “convenient strategy when watching Netflix [the United States-based streaming service]” but remains a “questionable principle for the free flow of information in a society.”

Fake news – real solutions?

On a positive note, social media sites do breach barriers and make it easier for people to express themselves. “When I wrote my letter to Mark Zuckerberg, I published it in a small paper in a small country, but the story immediately went viral. Ironically, I think it was Facebook itself that made the story so popular,” recalls Hansen, whose own newspaper has more than 340,000 followers on Facebook. However, he quickly admits that the opportunity given to everyone to publish information is a double-edged sword that may lead to disinformation. “It is obviously easier today to mislead very large parts of populations. I wonder if, as a society, we are actually prepared for the alarming trends that we are witnessing,” he says.

Photographer Nick Ut, who took the famous photograph, “The Terror of War”, talking to journalists during the Vietnam War Summit in April 2016 at the LBJ Presidential Library in Austin, Texas.





© Ruben Oppenheimer



In a series of scandals related to fake news that shook Facebook in 2016, the company has been accused of influencing the United States Presidential election, by spreading fake news stories and creating filter bubbles that isolated voters from other opinions. Overall, fake news about US politics alone accounted for 10.6 million of the 21.5 million total shares, reactions, and comments these English-language stories generated on Facebook this year, according to one analysis. A hoax about former US President Barack Obama generated more than 2.1 million comments, reactions and shares on Facebook in just two months.

No wonder that in order to curb criticism, Facebook has introduced a corrective fact-checking programme. Starting in May 2017, stories that have been signalled by users as unreliable are verified by independent fact-checking experts and labelled as “disputed”.

“We are not going to remove these,” stresses Richard Allan. “On one hand, we don’t want to be the arbiters of truth and edit content. On the other, we would like to build an informed community, as we have a responsibility to society.”

Hansen views the acknowledgement of this responsibility as key. He praises the positive improvements that Facebook has adopted since his letter in *Aftenposten* first came into the spotlight. “Mark Zuckerberg gave an interview to the *New York Times*, where he said that the controversy around this letter was an eye-opener and made him realize that he needed to change the way Facebook functions.”

This realization and subsequent change become crucial, especially in the wake of social media’s broad impact on traditional media and its ever-growing omnipresence in our daily lives.

An open letter that prompts change

“...Listen, Mark, this is serious! First you create rules that don’t distinguish between child pornography and famous war photographs. Then you practise these rules without allowing space for good judgement. Finally you even censor criticism against and a discussion about the decision – and you punish the person who dares to voice criticism...”

The free and independent media have an important task in bringing information, even including pictures, which sometimes may be unpleasant, and which the ruling elite and maybe even ordinary citizens cannot bear to see or hear, but which might be important precisely for that reason...

The media have a responsibility to consider publication in every single case. This may be a heavy responsibility. Each editor must weigh the pros and cons. This right and duty, which all editors in the world have, should not be undermined by algorithms encoded in your office in California.

Facebook’s Mission Statement states that your objective is to “make the world more open and connected”. In reality you are doing this in a totally superficial sense. If you will not distinguish between child pornography and documentary photographs from a war, this will simply promote stupidity and fail to bring human beings closer to each other.

To pretend that it is possible to create common, global rules for what may and what may not be published, only throws dust into people’s eyes...”

(Extracts from an open letter from Espen Egil Hansen to Mark Zuckerberg published on the front page of *Aftenpost* on 8 September 2016.)

Crowdfunding

to save the media

by Andrius Tapinas

The digital revolution has brought monumental changes and challenges to the media industry. Journalists are best-placed to adapt to the new media landscape if they embrace new technologies, reinvent themselves, and adopt new business models. The story of Lithuania's Liberty TV, an independent television channel broadcast on the internet and financed by the public, is proof of this.

The digital age is upon us, whether we like it not. And if you belong to the media old guard, it is quite likely you will not like it. Traditional print media and television have been caught off guard – technologically, financially, and creatively – by the digital revolution, and are experiencing the biggest challenges they have ever faced. Are they up to it? Not really. But they have no choice – they can either sink or swim.

The advent of the internet, nearly thirty years ago, has hooked the world onto one of the most powerful drugs available to modern societies – free and lightning-fast access to information.

Before they knew what hit them, a second wave – social media – hit the old guard. It was bigger and stronger than the web, and with more severe consequences. Social media companies gained the upper hand as paid subscriptions to newspapers and magazines dwindled, and TV channels started to lag behind the thousands of news websites on the internet.

Suddenly everyone became the media – cameraman, editor, storyteller, journalist, promoter – all rolled in one. The gatekeepers of information saw their gates come crashing down, as they lost the biggest privilege of all – the right to decide what is important and what is not.

The November 2016 election of Donald Trump for the highest office in the United States is the most dramatic example of the all-pervasive nature of social media. The mainstream media hated him passionately, yet the former kingmakers could do absolutely nothing as he forced them to do his bidding in order not to commit commercial suicide in full sight of their readers and viewers. And so Donald Trump became the first ever US President of Social Media.

Anyone can be a star

At the dawn of the social media era, the old guard dismissed it as a tool for young people. Enter YouTube: the world's biggest television repository and video-hosting service which creates almost zero content itself, but is the haven for all the wannabes on earth. Anyone, anywhere in the world today, can be whatever they dream of – singers, chefs, boxers, media stars. The sky is the limit and it's all for free.

PewDiePie (born Felix Arvid Ulf Kjellberg in Sweden, October 1989), a web-based comedian and video producer, became the uncrowned king of YouTube, with almost 55 million subscribers! Two of the most successful YouTubers in Lithuania – Whydotas (Vaidotas Grincevičius) and The3dvinas (Edvinas Navikas) – have more subscribers than the four national TV channels combined.

Of course, new media is not all positive, and sometimes comes at a heavy price. Fake news, virtual mob lynching, trolls and baseless accusations abound – it's a free-for-all. There are no filters or editing, and no need to exercise restraint or decency if you choose not to.

We are in the throes of a media transformation, forced by the ascension of the internet. As journalists, we must embrace the revolution, and shed any of our inhibitions to go digital. With our professional qualities, we still have the edge over most of the novices out there today.



The new technologies allow for unprecedented freedom, especially in countries where the press is controlled by the government. Now is the perfect time to voice your opinion, and make it resonate across the globe. Interacting with your audience is critical – instant audience feedback is a potent tool.

Crowdfunded by viewers

The changes in journalism can be viewed as a positive development. It has forced us to be creative, and to invent new business models in order to survive, as in our case.

Propelled by the shock of losing my TV programme on Lithuanian television, I decided to fight back. Liberty TV was founded by me in September 2016. It is a completely independent internet television channel, crowdfunded by viewers.



Last recording of the season of "Hang in there!" with Andrius Tapinas, which attracted a live audience of over 2000 (23 May 2017), in Klaipeda, Lithuania's largest port city.

© Matas Baranauskas

We broadcast fifteen programmes each month, and add at least three more in the autumn of 2017. The content includes political satire in Lithuanian and Russian, talk shows, investigative journalism, political analysis and positive documentaries.

Our staff (made up of full-time and freelance professionals) includes a full technical crew – from editors to cameramen, journalists and script-writers. A small administrative team also handles communication for the channel. Our flagship programmes are filmed in theatres with high-definition cameras, in front of live audiences of 200 to 250 people.

We are a non-profit, so we have to make sure we balance our books. This calls for austerity. Most of our equipment is rented, or comes with the professionals we hire. Most of our work is done online, and we use a tiny office space for meetings and editing. We plan to relocate to a larger office in autumn 2017.

We reached our financial goal of €15,000 in ten days, just in time for the launch. Almost 5,000 people committed to funding us in the first month. Subscribers are free to pledge their support for whatever duration they choose, with no obligation to continue. For a nation of less than 3 million people, this was phenomenal. We are also funded by commercial sponsors who are prepared to accept that there will be no strings attached.

A proven business model

Putting myself and my team into the hands of the public was the biggest gamble of my journalistic career. Would they be willing to pay for something they could get for free but would cease to exist if they didn't pay for it? Are we public-spirited enough to support independent media by contributing to it? Media experts in Lithuania were sceptical. But we went ahead nevertheless.

In March 2017, we suggested that our viewers use their ability to direct two per cent of their taxes to Liberty TV. We are curious to see how much funding we are able to raise with this initiative.

In four months, Liberty TV became the biggest media entity on Lithuanian YouTube, with some of its programmes reaching six-figure viewership numbers and competing with the most popular shows on mainstream TV. In eight months, media experts started to admit that they had been wrong, and started reporting about our plans to expand.

Our business model is new and falls in line with the digital revolution, but it is not unique. Similar crowdfunded journalistic projects have been launched in Holland, Switzerland, India, and several other countries.

It is not easy; it is the hardest job I have ever done in my career of almost twenty years. But it is the only way I would like to go further as a journalist. And it is the digital revolution that gave me this chance.

Andrius Tapinas is a Lithuanian journalist and writer. He founded Liberty TV in 2016 and is the host of its flagship programme, "Hang in there". Tapinas is one of the most popular persons on Lithuanian social media, with over 130,000 Facebook followers.



A beacon, thanks to the internet

by Carlos Dada

Journalism is going through a global crisis. The all-pervasive reach of the internet and social media have meant that rumours and false information are rife. But these very spaces can be used to create better journalism, as *El Faro*, the pioneering web-based Salvadorian newspaper, has illustrated, in its twenty years of existence.

Some of us were forced into journalism – we had little choice. In 1998, El Salvador was emerging from a long civil war and we were feeling our way forward, with no towering figure to guide us. But we were convinced that the post-war period needed a revitalised press, with a fresh perspective and independent voices. The country deserved a new journalism, and we provided it.

El Faro [The Beacon] was started in May 1998, with absolutely no funding. That's why we launched it on the internet, at a time when barely two per cent to five per cent of the Salvadorian population had access to it. Our existence depended on new technologies, because we could never have afforded the expense of running a printed newspaper. Opting for the internet turned out to be a very lucky decision for us, given that at the time, we were a million miles away from imagining the influence the web would have on the future of humanity.

In the beginning, we put *El Faro* together in our spare time. We were gradually joined by young talents who wanted to cut their teeth using this new media. For several years we made zero profit, but we also had virtually no expenses – each of us worked for free, from our homes. This also helped us to forge our independent spirit. When the industry started to take the internet seriously and readers started looking for news online, we were already firmly established on the web.

We compensated for the absence of mentors and teachers by reading, and with healthy doses of self-criticism. Our paper matured as we learned from our mistakes – we constantly reflected on, debated and discussed what we were doing.

Traitors to the nation

As the years went by, we eventually graduated to paid journalistic jobs and a proper office. Many of the journalism students who had worked with us from the start are now co-owners and shareholders of the newspaper. In our nearly twenty years of existence, we have become one of the most respected publications in Latin America.

Most of our efforts are concentrated on investigative and narrative reporting, covering six main themes: violence and organized crime, corruption, war crimes, culture, poverty and inequality, and politics. These are subjects which, in our view, are the least reported. But they are also central to any explanation of why, more than twenty years after the end of the war, El Salvador remains one of the most violent countries in the world, riddled with inequalities and poverty, and largely dependent on the two million Salvadorian expatriates – a third of the population – who send money back home.



© Fred Ramos

El Faro and Salvadorian photographer Fred Ramos have launched the "The Last Outfit of the Missing" campaign, which involves publishing a series of photos to enable the families of missing persons to recognize their clothing and identify them. Ramos received support from the Institute of Legal Medicine to exhume bodies from unmarked graves.



The paradox in this profession is that the better you are at it, the fewer friends you keep. We have been called traitors to the nation, protectors of gangs, enemies of private property, and of revolution. In a country polarized between the two extremes that waged the civil war, right-wing governments accuse us of being left wing, and those on the left say we lean to the right. We have received some very unkind messages from drug dealers, war criminals, gang leaders, corrupt politicians, business executives, the army and the police. These threats have forced us to take legal action several times.

These messages of discontent also come from readers sometimes. A few years ago, we published an article that denounced the massacre of young delinquents, carried out in cold blood by the police. Several readers complained that we were hampering the work of the police, because gangs are the main source of violence in El Salvador. We understand these reactions very well, but there is no question of us changing our reporting to satisfy our readers' aspirations, or alleviate their anxieties – populist journalism would be irresponsible, harmful and immoral.

A Central American forum

More recently, we have sought to extend our coverage to neighbouring countries – Honduras and Guatemala – which suffer similar levels of violence, corruption and social decay. Though we haven't yet achieved the systematic coverage we would like, we have made good progress in setting up a network with journalists in the region, who can collaborate with us on investigative stories.

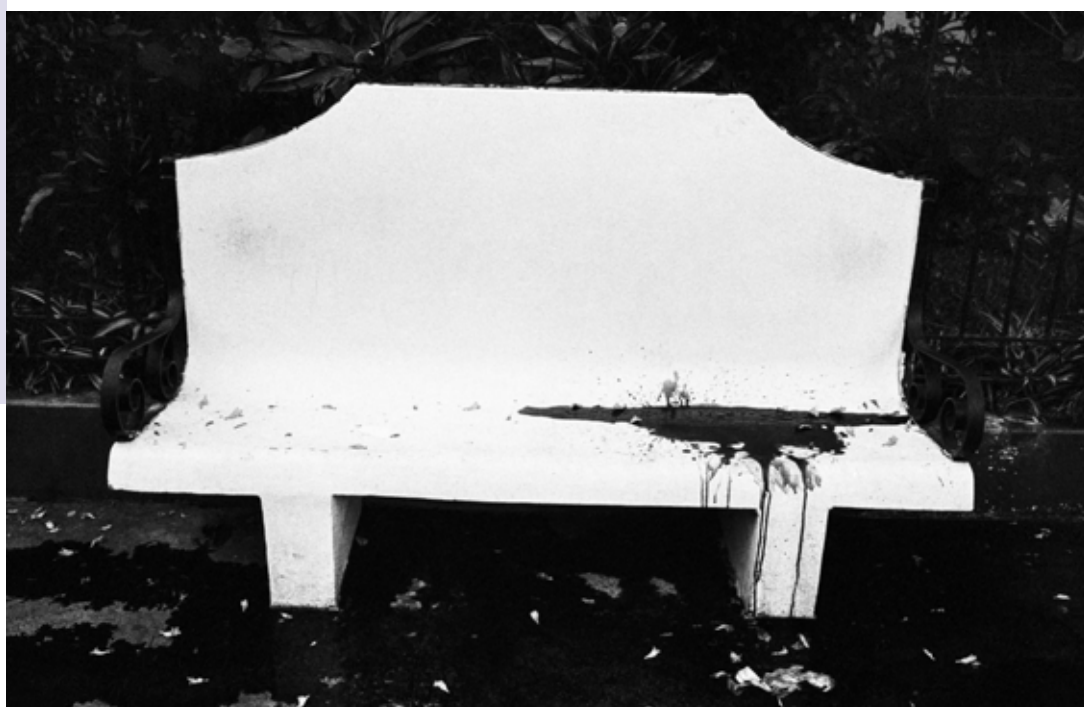
After two decades of growth, many journalists at *El Faro* have published books. We also do radio broadcasts, make documentaries and hold exhibitions and conferences. This is because we feel the need to pass on our knowledge to future generations.

In May every year, we hold the Central American Journalism Forum – a week of workshops, conferences and exhibitions with dozens of invited speakers from all over Latin America, the United States and Europe. The best journalists from the region and abroad lead workshops on investigative journalism, radio journalism, photography and reporting. More than a hundred journalists, mainly from Central America, took part in 2017.

The forum is the leading event in our permanent programme of training and conferences, aimed at improving the quality of journalism in Central America. This is the poorest region of the continent – putting our journalists in touch with their colleagues throughout Latin America opens up new possibilities for collaboration, to cover the issues that increasingly extend beyond the borders of our countries.

A Salvadorian journalist, **Carlos Dada** founded *El Faro* in 1998. He has covered events in Iraq, Venezuela, Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. His articles are published in Latin America, USA, Bosnia and Spain. He was awarded the María Moors Cabot prize by Columbia University, New York, in 2011.

"It is impossible to photograph a subject with objectivity, but it is possible to show a story with truth," says Salvadorian photographer Juan Carlos, who took this photo of a bench that bears traces of a murder in a public park in Chalchuapa, El Salvador.



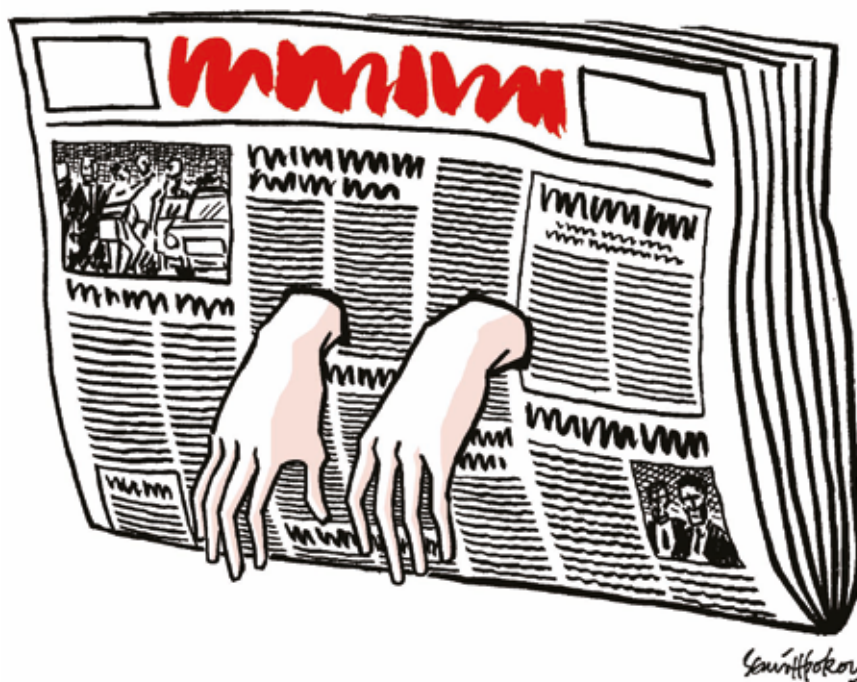
© Juan Carlos (www.juancarlospotos.com)

Investigative journalism:

against the odds

by Sanita Jemberga

Investigative journalism is one of the pillars of a well-functioning democracy. But its future cannot be guaranteed without financial autonomy. The case of Re: Baltica, a centre for investigative journalism in Latvia, is a good case in point.



© Semih Poroy (Turquie) - Cartooning for Peace

I am allergic to the idea of investigative journalism being termed a “mission” or “calling”. It is an individual choice born out of need, combined with a set of skills and a particular character, which is persistent, sometimes in the face of abuse. My colleague, Inga Sprīģe, once explained that she does it for her grandmother, who was never in a position to confront the Soviet authorities with tough questions!

Sprīģe’s resolve, and mine, to keep questioning the powers that be, was tested when *Diena* – the newspaper we worked for – was sold by its publisher, Bonnier [the Swedish media conglomerate], to local oligarchs who had tried to silence it for years. This happened in the midst of a deep economic crisis, and declining sales and readership for the paper, which took the web seriously way too late.

Taking the plunge

A group of us who had worked for *Diena* – considered the best newspaper in the Baltics – never gave up on the idea that in a democracy, investigative journalism is fundamentally necessary to hold those in power accountable. This is equally true in countries with authoritarian regimes, where the personal costs for the journalists involved is even higher.

A drawing from the collection of *Cartooning for Peace*, an international network of socially-engaged editorial cartoonists, supported by UNESCO.



© James Duncan Davidson (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Ghanaian investigative journalist, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, known for his reports on human rights violations and corruption, preserves his anonymity by concealing his face whenever he appears in public.

Without investigative writing, we would have to subsist on a diet of daily news, paid government content and celebrity gossip. Journalism would then work not as a watchdog, but as a lapdog for those in power.

To prepare ourselves for the change, Springe spent a year in the United States, studying non-profit models for investigative journalism. She returned to Latvia to establish the Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism, Re:Baltica, in 2011. Run by a co-operative of journalists, the centre provides the results of its investigations to the mainstream media, free of charge.

The idea was relatively new in Europe, but, by 2012, there were already more than a hundred non-profit centres for investigative journalism in over fifty countries. Everyone predicted Re:Baltica would be dead in a year, but they have been proved wrong. We celebrate our sixth anniversary in August 2017. There are clear reasons why we have survived and thrived.

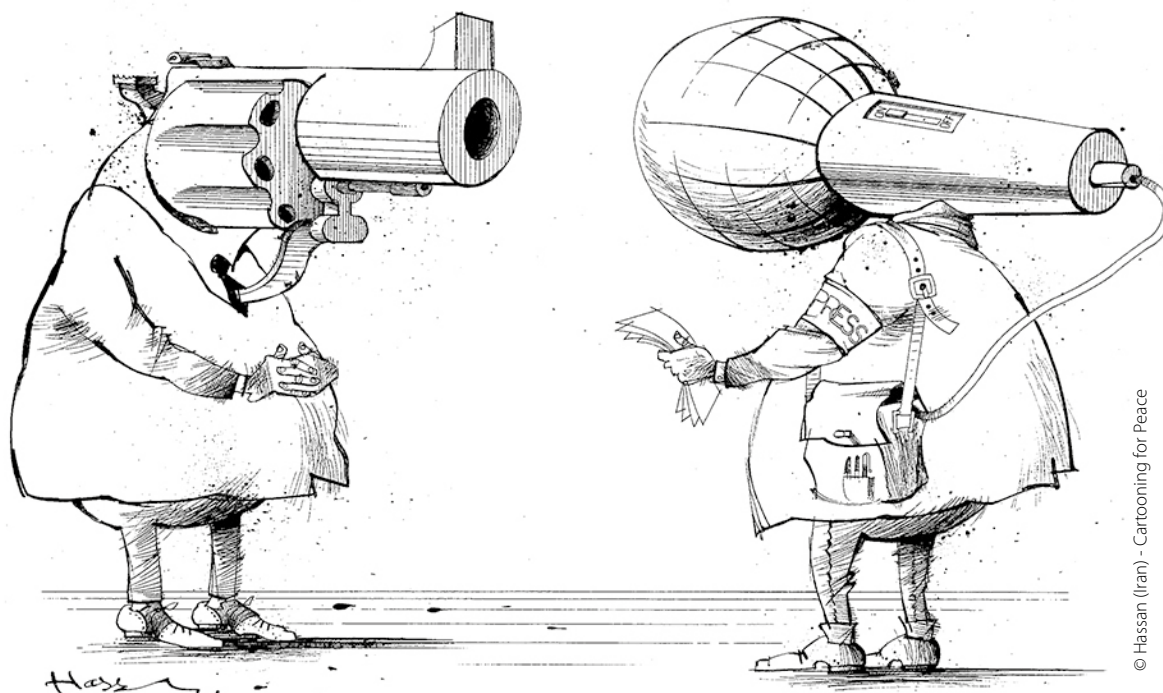
The first is the ability to put in a lot of hard work and take the plunge. We realized early on that if our incomes depended solely on international donors (which, for a small language and a relatively poor media market is almost the only funding available), we would not last long. Sixty per cent of our budget comes from grants, and the rest from our personal incomes, earned from teaching, consulting, researching and writing scripts for documentaries. We also get donations from our readers and private donors. We are still never certain how we will survive beyond a year.

Exposing more than corruption

Finding the right partners is key. We are also frugal with costs – we choose not to spend a lot on our website or office space. Re:Baltica staff consist of two core editorial people, a graphic designer and an accountant, and then we hire people according to the needs of a particular story – up to twenty or thirty journalists and translators a year.

While our work is available for free to all media outlets who want to publish it, we have a dedicated set of partners in television, radio, print and online with whom we co-operate closely. As these media outlets do not compete directly, the message is multiplied: and so is the impact.

Investigative journalism is not just about exposing corruption. We did participate in the Panama Papers investigation – the giant leak of more than 11.5 million financial and legal documents, which exposed the names of politicians, criminals and the rogue industry around the globe, and where they hid their cash. Spearheaded by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), the colossal global project made headlines worldwide, won a Pulitzer Prize, and was the basis for new laws being passed in some countries.



© Hassan (Iran) - Cartooning for Peace

Cartooning for peace

To celebrate World Press Freedom Day on 3 May 2017, UNESCO and Cartooning for Peace are holding an online exhibition of fifteen editorial cartoons.

Founded in 2006 by Kofi Annan, Nobel Peace Prize laureate (2001) and former Secretary-General of the United Nations, and French cartoonist Plantu, the Cartooning for Peace network includes 162 cartoonists from fifty-eight countries across the globe. This international network of editorial cartoonists uses humour to fight for the respect of cultural diversity, human rights, and other freedoms.

The editorial cartoon is a powerful tool, because of its ability to transcend language and cultures. It can be used to foster cross-cultural dialogue and fuel the debate about fundamental issues such as freedom of expression, peace and tolerance.



But much of our work focuses on social inequalities in Latvia, which is the biggest threat to the country in the long term. We cover a range of social problems – from the shortcomings of our education system, to the poor salaries paid to staff by large supermarket chains. The work is not always glamorous – our colleagues went undercover to work in a fish factory to expose the conditions of workers there.

Our latest exposé was about a Latvian financier who featured in the Panama Papers and was connected with the French elections in 2017. We are also working on a series of articles to expose fake news and its origins on the Baltic internet.

No strings attached

I am not very optimistic about the future of investigative journalism. But I am convinced that the rise to power of authoritarian regimes will make journalism great again: by exposing a need to separate the truth from “alternative facts” (or in other words, lies), and clickbait from real reporting. Non-profit organizations have proven to be a possible alternative to mainstream media at a time when investigative journalism is disappearing from newsrooms.

A drawing from the collection of Cartooning for Peace, an international network of socially-engaged editorial cartoonists, supported by UNESCO.

But many of these non-profit ventures will die as institutional donors lose interest and philanthropy is scarce, especially in countries which need investigative reporting the most. Investigative journalism must be recognized as a public good and assigned funding, there is very limited hope for it.

International organizations, which are keen to train journalists and fund conferences and campaigns, must devise mechanisms to publicly, openly and competitively fund the investigative content as a public good, with no strings attached. That is the only way investigative journalism will survive.

Sanita Jemberga is a Latvian investigative journalist who has worked in print and television since 1996. She is executive director and editor at the non-profit Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism, Re:Baltica, and teaches media literacy at the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga.



Lexicon for the digital age

As social media has invaded our daily lives, new terms and concepts have infiltrated into our vocabulary. Here is a quick overview of some of these terms for our readers.

Algorithm: The term is a combination of the Latin word *algorismus*, named after Al Khwarizmi – a ninth-century Persian mathematician who introduced the decimal system to the Western world – and the Greek word, *arithmos*, meaning number. In today's digital world, an algorithm is a sequence of instructions, automatically executed by a computer. Algorithms are now synonymous with machine intelligence as opposed to human intelligence, and are being used in all fields – from search-engine queries to financial markets and user-recommended information selection.

Confirmation bias: The tendency to favour information which reinforces our beliefs, while ignoring or underestimating the beliefs that contradict them.

Filter bubble: The concept was defined by American internet activist Eli Pariser, chief executive of Upworthy, a website for “meaningful” viral content, and co-founder of Avaaz.org, the internet activism site. According to him, the algorithms of social networks filter information – by analyzing users’ ‘likes’ and ‘shares’ – and provide personalized content corresponding to these preferences. This eventually confines users to a “bubble” of social and political opinions.

Alternative fact: A term to denote a gross untruth, or falsehood. The expression was first used in January 2017 by Kellyanne Conway, counselor to United States President Donald Trump, when addressing the controversy about the exact number of people who attended his inauguration.



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Fake news: Information which is false and rigged with the intent to harm. According to *Les Décodeurs*, the fact-checking section of the French newspaper *Le Monde*, fake news “uses the codes and forms of the traditional press to masquerade as a journalistic exercise”.

Hoax: A deceptive message broadcast via email and the internet. These could be in the form of rumours, alarmist news or false premises to solicit donations. The motivations behind a hoax can be political or financial (remuneration is usually based on the number of clicks generated). The term is less used these days and has been largely supplanted by ‘fake news’.

Post-truth: Declared Word of the Year 2016 by the Oxford Dictionaries, the adjective is defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”. The term was first used in the 1990s, and popularized by the 2016 Brexit and American presidential election campaigns. Post-truth describes a political rhetoric which is no longer concerned with facts and demonstrates the public’s loss of confidence in traditional media and institutions.

Virality: The rapid circulation of information – true or false – via the internet and social networks. The virality of information relies on user-based recommendations. This is the online version of “word of mouth”, on an infinitely broader scale.



Zoom



My face, my land

Text: Katerina Markelova

Photos : Marion Laumonier, Paul Laumonier, Bêni



Xákmok Kásek children take part in the collective creation workshop alongside their elders.

This photo essay is published to coincide with the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, celebrated on 9 August every year.

The photos of the IDENTITESproject are published under the licence Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0.

Five continents, five years of encounters, tens of thousands of kilometres travelled, and in the end, there is one single conclusion: we are ONE humankind. This is how French photographer and visual artist Bêni sums up the IDENTITESproject odyssey, which he launched in 2013. It is a multifaceted photographic adventure that is taking him to the four corners of the planet. From Hanoi to La Paz, via Accra, Bêni's lens captures the faces of the world and brings them together in an impressive series of portraits. "We set off for somewhere else, for something different, for the other, only to end up finding ourselves," he explains.

Let's join him in Paraguay, on the Ruta Transchaco, National Route 9, the unique 800-kilometre highway that links the capital, Asunción, with the Bolivian border. It is 2015. IDENTITESproject#3 is in full swing. The third stage of Bêni's project is in South America, and it is the first time he is not travelling by himself. He is accompanied by the Laumonier siblings, Marion and Paul, who are assisting him and documenting the journey. After four months of crossing through Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, we find them in a vehicle heading towards "one of the most isolated regions anywhere on earth today".

This is how Marion describes Gran Chaco, the vast arid plain that the country shares with Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia. And for good reason: "We had to drive for fourteen hours before we arrived at our destination," she emphasizes.

Their destination: the settlement of the Xákmok Kásek. According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), the Xákmok Kásek (or 'many little parrots') are one of the 531 indigenous communities of the Paraguayan Chaco area. They have been progressively ejected from their ancestral lands since the end of the nineteenth century. In 2010, the community consisted of 268 individuals belonging to sixty-six families. On 24 August 2010, after thirty years of legal battles, the Xákmok Kásek won a court case in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR), ordering the Paraguayan authorities to return 10,700 hectares of land to the community. Spurred on by this judgement and in spite of the reticence of the state to follow through, the community moved back onto its territory in early 2015.



The IDENTITESproject cameras were there at exactly the right time to capture the event. "They'd been on the site for less than ten days," says Marion. It was a moment of great exhilaration – the atmosphere was electrifying. But the return to their ancestral lands has been far from triumphant. "They've been living in terrible conditions, sleeping in tents, catching fish for food and drinking from ponds of stagnant water", she adds. Intensive cattle-farming and soya cultivation have caused often irreversible harm to the soil and the forest. The very identity of the indigenous people is being severely tested – their beliefs, modes of subsistence and cultural practices are all intimately connected to their ancestral lands.

Bêni was in Paraguay at the time, to organize the project's flagship – a co-creation workshop. It is no accident that he decides to place the land at the centre of the artistic sequence. The end result is a unique moment of sharing, filled with emotion, and deeply spiritual. "The village chief told us that this project has been especially important for the members of his community. Even though they were still very bound to the struggle to regain their land, working with us has given them the opportunity to think about something else, to have some different time together, just for themselves," explains Marion.

Today, the community has regained possession of 7,901 hectares, or about seventy-three per cent of the lands that are rightfully theirs, according to Oscar Ayala from the NGO, Tierraviva, which represented the Xákmok Kásek at the IACHR in 2010.



Stills from the Chaco video, tracing the stages of the co-creation workshop – from collecting plants and soil to their use in a drawing, to the night-time projection of portraits, enabling the outlines of the faces to be traced onto a jute canvas.



LINKS Project

According to the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, Paraguay has one of the fastest rates of deforestation in the world. Launched in 2002, UNESCO's Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) programme has brought to international attention the role of indigenous communities in conserving biodiversity and adapting to the effects of climate change. The return of the Xákmok Kásek is therefore cause for hope. Their ancestral knowledge, together with the government programme for the reforestation of Chaco, announced in February 2017, should make it possible to rehabilitate the land.



1



2

Serafin (1), Nancy (2), Gustavo (3) and a baby girl (4) look into Bêni's lens. Everyone leaves this exercise carrying an image of the other inside themselves.



3



4

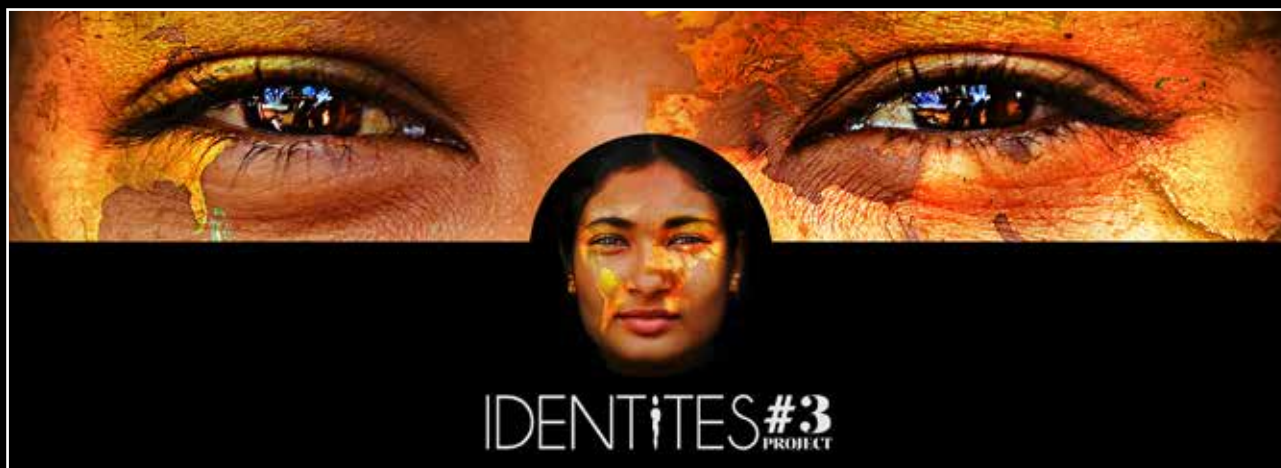


So-called "fusion" portraits, embodying the idea of co-creation.





The Xákmok Kásek saved all the original portraits produced during the workshop, to be used later, as needed.



To use as visuals for communications, the IDENTITESproject selects one portrait from each leg of the journey, onto which a world map is applied to symbolize the existence of just ONE humanity, in all its diversity.

At the time this issue of the *UNESCO Courier* is published, Bêni is travelling across Europe, on the final stage of his project. His round-the-world tour ends in Paris in August 2017, with a special initiative – the project team attempts to create a massive European face in collaboration with several French artists. Each time he returns to France, Bêni also organizes the BACKTO exhibitions, representing the different stages of the project – photographic portraits, co-creation and street-gallery workshops. These ephemeral galleries are mounted in the public space. The profits from these exhibitions and other public awareness-raising initiatives are donated to the local communities featured, to help support their development.

Bêni says he wants to take a break once the European tour is over, “to take a bit of time, maybe a year, off.” But he is already thinking about a book, which, according to him, “will bring the five continents together and enable us – and especially me – to understand what has been going on since 2013.” He also plans to make a documentary and organize a major exhibition, tracing the entire journey. He already has a title for this, which is the very DNA of the project: “ONE WORLD • ONE PEOPLE”.

Back in Paris, Bêni and his team prepare an exhibition on IDENTITESproject#3.

The BACKTOamerica exhibition traces the third stage of the project, aiming to raise public awareness about the Xákmok Kásek community.





Ideas



*"Flight" by the Senegalese artist,
Ndary Lo.*

© Ndary Lo / Sitor Senghor

Humanitude

or how to quench the thirst for humanity

by Adama Samassékou

Faced with the failure of the western model of development, which puts the culture of having before the culture of being, it is becoming urgent to develop a different project for society – one that is founded upon *humanitude*, a concept that explores openness to the Other, the only possible way out for a disenchanted world.

It has become commonplace to say that our world, which is in the grips of a multidimensional and seemingly never-ending crisis, is in very, very bad shape. This crisis, in fact, reveals a loss of meaning, reinforced by a trend towards the homogenization of the world's cultures, brought on by an accelerated globalization of markets. This is leading to a veritable dehumanization of relations between individuals, peoples, and states. The recent environmental, energy, demographic, and digital challenges – added to the existing inequalities and poverty – accentuate the widespread feeling of existential angst and a lack of confidence in the future.

The most prevalent “development model” today is founded upon what I call a culture of “having”, of profit. It has already shown its limitations, and the current crisis confirms that it is now bankrupt. This “western model” is responsible for the Eurocentrism and Western-centrism seen in international relations, both in terms of goods and intellectual production. As a result, a paradigm shift towards the promotion of values that are more aligned with a culture of “being”, has become imperative.



© Berette Macaulay

Left panel of the “memory of nothing” diptych by Berette Macaulay (Sierra Leone and Jamaica). The work is on show at the National Gallery of Jamaica as part of the 2017 Biennale.

It is with these considerations in mind that, several years ago, I suggested that we should explore a new concept – “humanitude” – in reference to Negritude, a concept I inherited from my mentor, the Martiniquan poet, Aimé Césaire.

I use this concept of *humanitude* to translate what, in Africa, we call *maaya* (in Bamanankan, the Bambara language), *neddaaku* (in Ffulde, the Fula language), *boroterey* (in Songhay, the Songhay language), *nite* (in Wolof), *ubuntu* (in the Bantu languages), and many more. There are so many terms that literally mean “the quality of being human”.

Why it is time to overhaul the CIPSH

The International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH) is a non-governmental organization founded in Brussels, Belgium in 1949 under the auspices of UNESCO, with a view to reaffirming the meaning and challenges of the human sciences in the post-war period.

This learned society, affiliated to UNESCO, has had its moments of glory, but has become considerably diminished with the passage of time.

The World Humanities Conference (WHC) provides an opportunity for the member organizations of CIPSH to encourage representatives of their respective disciplines to help re-establish the place of the human sciences in the world, and to undertake a veritable overhaul of the CIPSH. This will make it possible to replace the western-centric viewpoint with a more fertile, polycentric approach, drawing on the world's cultural and linguistic diversity.

The process of internal and external reorganization of the CIPSH is, fortunately, already underway. In December 2015, the CIPSH Extraordinary General Meeting in Beijing voted for a change in its statutes, allowing a range of organizations – including foundations and networks – to become members. The geographic base of the CIPSH has also been broadened, with the possibility of creating regional chapters. As a result, an Asia-Pacific CIPSH chapter was established in China in 2016. Lastly, the number of member organizations in the CIPSH has increased significantly, passing from twelve in 2014 to seventeen in 2016, with two new memberships in the pipeline.

The CIPSH is also creating new UNESCO Chairs in the humanities, who are attending the WHC.

Connecting human to human

African societies have always put “being”, rather than “having”, at the centre of their development. In more global terms, certain non-European societies have a cosmovision that puts “being” at the centre of all relationships with the world. This vision is characterized by a permanent search for non-conflictual, peaceful relations, oriented towards a consensus with others and harmony with the environment, in the widest sense. For a long time, this conception of the world was also shared with the West, before it became dominated by a form of modernity based upon market and material fundamentalism and individualistic accumulation.

Humanitude is our permanent openness towards the Other, our relationships as human being to human being. It demands a permanent relationship of solidarity, free from calculation – a spontaneous impulse of welcoming the Other. This *humanitude* makes it possible to “connect human to human” – to use Césaire’s beautiful phrase – and is the basis for a culture of “being”, as opposed to a totalitarian culture of “having”, which leads to permanently conflictual relations of acquisition, if not domination.

In a remarkable presentation at the Ubuntu symposium, held in Geneva, Switzerland, in April 2003, my mentor and friend from Burkina Faso, Joseph Ki-Zerbo [historian, politician and writer (1922-2006)], emphasized that “The main thing, then ... is to bring to the top of the agenda and the planet’s social struggles, the concept, the question, the cause, the paradigm, of Ubuntu as an axiomatic and specific antidote to the mercantilism of humans and humankind by the partisan neo-liberalism of the market economy.”

In his lecture, “Ubuntu or ‘man as remedy for man’”, which was later published in the book, *Repères pour l’Afrique*, Panafrika (Silex/Nouvelles du Sud, Dakar, 2007), Ki-Zerbo continues his analysis by specifying that “...Ubuntu can be the most powerful tool for this paramount task. But, above all, it should become its goal and the meaning of peace. This does not mean moving towards a form of anthropological culturalism, but when confronted with the steam-roller of one-track thinking, it is has become urgent to disarm conflicts where the burden of responsibility is borne by the structural violence of the status quo ...”

I am now convinced that, given the failure of current models of development, we have to think about how to design a new project for society, founded precisely on the concept of *humanitude*.



© Dima Vazhinovich



The major international meeting of the human sciences, the first World Humanities Conference (WHC), held in Liège, Belgium, from 6 to 12 August 2017, offers the opportunity to go deeper into this concept.

An unprecedented event

The city of Liège, called the “Ardent City”, both in spirit and industry, is a multicultural city at the heart of Europe, and is hosting an unprecedented event, under the high patronage of the King of Belgium.

So why a World Humanities Conference? The idea came to me in 2009, during my first term as president of the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH), a non-governmental organization created under the auspices of UNESCO in 1949.

We have to promote a relationship with the world based on a search for non-conflictual relations and harmony with the environment, in order for humans to reconnect with one another again.

It was a result of three observations. Following recurrent episodes of instability linked to financial globalization, the crisis of 2008-2009 became more than just financial or economic, turning into a “total” crisis. It was a crisis of society, which, in a way, confirmed the bankruptcy of the dominant neo-liberal and western-centric model of development, leading to a real loss of meaning.

My second observation was the progressive marginalization of the human sciences in the world. How can one accept that, faced with such a strongly compelling situation, those with the responsibility to explain to us the complexity of the social transformations, should be paralyzed, unable to move?

Thirdly, I observed the lack of involvement, if not the total absence, or shunning, of scholars of the human sciences from outside Europe and the “West” in global intellectual production and co-operation. The situation was made worse by the risks of the disappearance of traditional knowledge and of half the world’s languages – which are now spoken of as epistemicides and linguisticides.

This is why, in 2009, it appeared to me not only obvious, but also imperative, to propose that UNESCO organize a World Humanities Conference (WHC). The first attempt of its kind, its aim would be to start the process of rehabilitating the human sciences in the world.

An unbearable anxiety

The central issue for the WHC is to discuss the role of the human sciences in a twenty-first century characterized by cultural diversity, the failure of various forms of one-track thinking, and a need to reintroduce medium- and long-term considerations into everyday reasoning. This is a century stricken by global changes, growing migration, social and economic stresses – the resolution of which largely depends on intercultural skills, on understanding the unity of humankind in all its diversity. It also depends on the need to reinforce the relationships of the sciences across disciplines and with the arts and technologies.



"Our world is in the grips of a seemingly never-ending, multidimensional crisis," says Adama Samassékou. "The Virtual Scene – Shanghai Map", 2005-2008, relief map of Shanghai made from casino chips by Chinese artist Liu Jianhua, on show at the Galerie Continua, San Gimignano, Italy.

This is a century which has started with the development of global terrorism that spares no region in the world, no country, striking as blindly as inhumanely, innocent citizens, who are victims of a gratuitous, barbaric and unutterable violence. An unbearable anxiety traverses the planet, all the more so because such acts of violence – known during the colonial conquests and wars of liberation – have remained relatively unknown to the cloistered West since the Second World War, with a few exceptions.

The main aim of the WHC is, therefore, to study ways in which the humanities are helping or can help, nationally, regionally and internationally, to measure and understand the cultural transformations linked to the gradual globalization of exchanges, in order to manage them better – in all their economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Faced with the social and human crisis that we are experiencing, and a broken world where the process of dehumanization is growing and gaining strength, the ambition of the WHC is to build a fertile dialogue between today's minds about the challenges, the stakes and new knowledge, through which the humanities can render our world more legible, less opaque, less antagonistic, less murderous and at the same time – it's our shared hope – more human.

The humanities are a celebration of the genius of the languages of mankind and the knowledge arising from the proliferation of our social, political, economic and artistic practices.

Rehabilitating and rebuilding the human sciences

The title of the WHC, "Challenges and Responsibilities for a Planet in Transition", clearly situates the issues underlying this conference. According to UNESCO, the major challenges of our planet in transition are: population growth; the recomposition of territories; migration flows; energy and environmental constraints; the homogenization of cultures in the context of globalization – and inversely, the construction of new identities; and the arrival of the digital age, which often creates a divided society.

There is a feeling that the prevalent development models have failed, especially the neo-liberal model that seems to be imposing itself on the peoples of the world. In this context, it becomes imperative to reconsider the role of the human sciences within our contemporary societies. It needs to take into account both the specificities and the resources inherent in each culture, valuing them wisely, and the possibilities for exchange, for dialogue and mutual enrichment between them.

The WHC is therefore an opportunity to step back to rehabilitate and rebuild the human sciences, to produce a paradigm shift, enabling the reinvention of a world founded upon respect for its rich cultural and linguistic diversity. This new paradigm will enable us to substitute the conflictual relationships of competition with a genuine, universal solidarity, which is the only way to help meet the challenges of our planet in transition!

In short, we have to quench this planet's thirst for humanity by living and consecrating our *humanitude*!

Adama Samassékou (Mali) is president of the World Humanities Conference (WHC). A former minister of national education in Mali, he chaired the preparatory committee of the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2002-2003). Samassékou was also the first executive secretary of the African Union African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), based in Bamako. After two terms as president of the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH), from November 2008 to October 2014, he is currently its honorary president.

The three stages of the World Humanities Conference

The first World Humanities Conference (WHC), is held in Liège (Belgium) from 6 to 12 August, 2017. It is jointly organized by UNESCO, the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH) and the World Humanities Conference Foundation (comprising the province, city and University of Liège).

The WHC brings together around 1,800 global participants, from the fields of science, politics, non-governmental organizations, the arts and the media. Major networks, including the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), the African Union African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) and the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (ACSS) will also be present.

The overall structure of the WHC provides for linkages between upstream, ongoing, and downstream processes. This makes it possible to highlight and share the humanities from different regions of the world – in all their diversity and points of convergence.

■ **Upstream** of the WHC, a series of preparatory conferences were organized, allowing respective regions to make quality contributions to the world event – voicing their particular concerns and specificities. These included the South American Conference: “Territorialities and Humanities” in Brazil (4-7 October 2016); the Arab Regional Consultation, “Recentring Humanities: Theories, Approaches, Knowledge Production in the Arab region” in Lebanon (18-20 May 2017); and the African Regional Conference on Humanities, “Languages, Cultures, History and Territories” in Mali (28 June to 1 July 2017).

The WHC also benefited from a number of contributing events: the International Conference on Science and Civilization on the Silk Road, in Beijing, (10-11 December 2015); the Taihu World Cultural Forum, “Civilization on the Silk Road” in Macao, China (7-9 June 2016); the 4th World Humanities Forum, devoted to “Humanities of Hope” in Suwon, Republic of Korea (27-29 October 2016); and, in June 2017, meetings in Paris (for Europe) and Kingston (for the Caribbean).

■ **During** the WHC (from 6 to 12 August 2017), plenary sessions are structured around six main themes, addressing the main challenges facing our planet in transition. These include: humans and the environment; cultural identities, cultural diversity, and intercultural relations; boundaries and migrations; cultural heritage – both tangible and intangible; history, memory and politics; and the humanities in a world in transition.

Four to six distinguished speakers from every continent are giving presentations on each of these themes.

A long series of sub-themes of the WHC are discussed in seventy symposia, grouped into eleven parallel sessions.

Two plenary strategic sessions provide an opportunity to present reports from the regional conferences and discuss the future of the humanities and the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH).

Seven plenary conferences and a panel of ministers and political decision-makers are also included in the WHC programme, which brings together over 400 speakers.

The discussions include two large projects that will involve the CIPSH in the future, namely the Global History of Humanity and the World Humanities Report.

■ **Downstream** of the WHC, regional and national conferences are organized on all continents, under the auspices of various regional political bodies of the world. This makes it possible to implement the conclusions and recommendations of the WHC. The emphasis is on public-sector research policies – especially the need for infrastructure and funding for research in the social sciences and humanities.

This three-stage process makes this global event a high-level, inclusive and participatory platform for dialogue. This helps foster greater synergy between those who think, seek and find solutions to lift the world out of crises, and those who are responsible for policy decisions.

The importance of homegrown stories

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*A mural in homage to Africa
in a school in the Tower Hill ghetto,
Kingston, Jamaica.*

by John Ayotunde Isola Bewaji

The emphasis on bread-and-butter subjects like science, math and technology at the expense of the study of the humanities, is threatening the ability of the people of Jamaica and the Caribbean to appreciate and tell their own stories.

Since humans have been able, they have sought to understand life in all its dimensions, and the world they live in. They have used not just language, literature, philosophy, education, religion, arts, history, anthropology, archaeology and sociology, but also economics, psychology, media, development, sports, gender, finance, marketing, political science, environmental studies, communication studies, cultural studies and law, to interpret and record the world around them. Some of these disciplines are classified as social sciences because of the need for scientific validity, but I believe they play a part in the study of the humanities as well.

Using language, human beings have produced and privileged their own narratives over the narratives derived from other regions.

All civilizations take seriously the narratives embodying their cultures, knowledge systems and the modes of being they create.

Three events have had a significant effect on the place the humanities have come to occupy in Western academy – the scientific revolution, the industrial revolution, and logicism [the modern school of mathematical thought, founded by German philosopher and mathematician Friedrich Ludwig Gottlob Frege (1884-1925)].

The scientific and industrial revolutions have combined to breed logical positivism and the conviction that all pursuit of knowledge must use scientific methodology or lose its validity and relevance.

The consequences of this have been damning for the intellectual heritages of non-European societies – they have often been described as primitive, uncivilized, pagan and backward. This has allowed for the economic appropriation of all the resources of these societies through colonialism and the enslavement of the peoples of Africa.

Supplanting narratives

The worst scholarship has been the approximation of the narratives of Europe (and Arabia) to universal truths, and the consequent supplanting and substitution of the narratives of indigenous societies globally by those narratives. This accounts for the fact that Africans know little about their own ancestors. They use the names, languages, the religions, science and technologies of others, forgetting – even at times, hating – their own indigenous knowledge systems, traditions of being, values and ethos, and getting lost in the world of others.



Jamaican transdisciplinary artist, Cosmo White, explores the notion of identity.

A number of issues arise here. Firstly, industrialization has led to globalization of all forms of realities. Globalization is inevitable, but it does not prevent the peoples of the Caribbean from using their African heritage to make meaning of, and find paths to civilized existence. It is not necessary to fight globalization, but it can be enriched, using the historical cultures of one's ancestry.

Secondly, the advocacy for a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education creates a distorted imperative that other disciplines, which apparently do not provide direct practical benefits to society, are of little use. In Jamaica and in the West Indies, the emphasis has been on science, technology and the social sciences at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. Subjects such as fine arts, music, ethics, history, culture and heritage are minimized or removed from all levels of education, because they are not valued as contributors to human development.

At the University of the West Indies (UWI), this emphasis on the sciences has resulted in the Humanities and Education Faculty consistently attracting less than twenty-five per cent of the entire student population, because their contributions to national and regional development are undervalued. The Jamaican newspaper, *The Gleaner*, has written editorials advocating the defunding of disciplines including history, the languages, philosophy and the arts by the government. Instead, it has suggested concentrating on those disciplines that would enable Jamaica and the region to catch up with the first world technologically. The newspaper erroneously argues that you do not need to know yourself, your realities, your society or your ancestry, and that once you attain technological parity with the West, everything will be fine.

The third issue relates to the declining financial fortunes at the national, regional and individual levels. Education, especially related to the humanities, easily gets short-changed when societies go through structural adjustments. Families and individuals prefer to invest in disciplines which are "marketable, productive and profile-enhancing". The same applies to countries that believe that emphasis should be placed on science, engineering, medical and technology education, as these disciplines are thought to lead to a higher productive capacity.

Identities and heritage

The study of the humanities is critical to the identity appreciation, configuration and projection of a society. When a society neglects the understanding, appreciation and propagation of the humanities, it is open to various forms of abuse, the degradation of its heritage and the appropriation of its essence. The infliction of epistemicide [the killing of knowledge systems or the destruction of existing knowledge] on the African people in the form of “empty baggage syndrome” has led to the dispossession of Africans in the new world, of their identities and heritage, leading to a confused, disoriented and dislocated people.

The rampant violence and incivility in Jamaican society is partly a manifestation of this. Even while Jamaica has always punched above its weight category in all walks of life, there persists a preference for things Euro-western.

The thinking at the UWI has been a victim of the historical circumstances chronicled by Jamaican author and educator Errol Miller, who writes about the dependency of the regional economies after the abolition of slavery and emancipation. This is why it has not been able to pursue wholesome educational paradigms, designed to teach the humanities, without having to worry about the immediately discernible benefits of such teaching.

UNESCO has continued to lead in the development of a more humane world, where reason, reflection and diversity are valued. However, with the resistance to reparation payments to the people who have suffered the worst form of inhumanity in human history, through the horrors of Atlantic slavery, it is understandable that countries of the Caribbean region are mendicant – incapable of taking decisions which will uplift their citizens from penury.



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This probably explains why Jamaica has one of the highest homicide rates in the world, in spite of being the birthplace of Marcus Mosiah Garvey [Jamaican political leader, journalist publisher, and a proponent of the pan-Africanism movement(1887-1940)], reggae [a style of popular music of Jamaican origin] and Usain Bolt [Olympic champion sprinter].

Training teachers is key

What can be done to improve humanities education in Jamaica and the Caribbean? UNESCO's teacher-training and education projects should be enhanced and promoted in Jamaica and the Caribbean, with UWI leading the way by undertaking an introspective engagement of its role in humanities education.



Young men in front of a mural
in Tower Hill, Kingston, Jamaica.

The university needs a full-fledged department or school of philosophical studies, which would aid critical thinking in the study of many other subjects, including business, tourism, conflict resolution and the environment.

It is important that the humanities are taught at the primary, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions in Jamaica and the region, because the building blocks of peace take place in the minds of people. Cultural and musical genres of Jamaican origin have transcended the shores of Jamaica and influenced the entire world, but little has been done to teach and develop these traditions among Jamaican youth. This knowledge could be used to impact the creativity of Jamaicans and empower them economically.

Finally, it is important to understand that the humanities are the foundation of everything in knowledge generation – its curation, storage, retrieval, dissemination and utilization. Rich and powerful countries do not leave the education of its citizens to others. Similarly, weak and poor societies must appreciate the need to ensure that their own stories are homegrown and delivered to society in a wholesome manner that is conducive to our collective humanity – even in our beautiful diversity.

John Ayotunde Isola Bewaji

(Jamaican born in Nigeria) is the author of several books, including *The Rule of Law and Governance in Indigenous Yoruba Society: A Study in African Philosophy of Law*. He has been an editor of publications including the *Caribbean Journal of Philosophy* (CJP).

The poet

at the heart of society

by Tanella Boni

Poetry, like any other form of artistic creation, is one of the pillars of the humanities. By following the paths of emotion, sensitivity and the imagination, the poem transmits knowledge and human values. Better still, it shapes the human being, body and soul.

Art does not reason. It belongs to the realm of emotions, of sensibilities and imagination. The artistic experience cannot be subjected to argument, verification or proof, as it is not a form of scientific knowledge. And yet, in its own way, away from the well-trodden tracks of the sciences, art plays a primordial role in shaping the individual. It transmits the human values and worldly knowledge that are essential for opening ourselves to the Other. Artistic creation, therefore, forges very strong links between humans – transcending beyond languages, beliefs and cultures. This is why art can be considered one of the pillars of the humanities.

The times of the humanities

The humanities are still very present in the English-speaking world – covering the disciplines of literature, linguistics, philosophy, history and art – in which openness of the mind and human life are emphasized within society.

In several French-speaking countries, though, the term has fallen into disuse, or almost, except in some academic circles. Yet there was a time in the French educational system, when one “did the humanities”. That meant learning “its” classics, studying ancient languages, reading Homer, Virgil and other classical authors – acquiring as broad a vision as possible by studying the ways of being, of living, and of speaking of human beings from other civilizations.

Elsewhere in the world, in African cultures for example, there is an equivalent to this learning of “the” classics. This is the moment of initiation, when young girls and boys receive the transmission of the heritage of ancient times, enabling them to live in present times. These are the times of the humanities.

Every age, every culture has its classics, its essential texts. And, among these, poetry has always occupied pride of place. Always, that is, until now. In our disenchanted world, we have a tendency to forget that poetry exists. I would like to elaborate on this, precisely to challenge this oversight and show that poetry is an integral part of the humanities.

What poetry can do

No society exists without poets. Even if the act of creating is performed in solitude, poets do not live in a bubble. They are not hermits, shut away in ivory towers, but creators of a universe which they offer us to share. Whether their poetry is written down or sung, poets play a very important educational role.

The philosophers of ancient Greece did not fail to notice this. In their eyes, poetry was the embodiment of an experience of learning, a general culture that preceded all specialized scientific or political learning.

They knew to what extent learning Homer and other poets was important for shaping the minds of young free Greeks (those who were neither slaves nor metics). This is why Plato, in *The Republic*, was worried that Homer painted a bad image of the gods in his poems and ended up banishing poets from his city-state!

Plato’s reproach of Homer was no doubt as much a matter of what poetry *is*, as what it *cannot be*.

But, then or now, who can say what poetry is? For the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges, a definition of poetry as “the expression of the beautiful through the medium of words artfully woven together” might be good enough for a dictionary, but remains rather “feeble”. “These realities are so deep within us,” he adds, “that they can only be expressed through the symbols that all men share.”





© Ernest Pignon-Ernest, courtesy of Galerie Lelong & Co

Shared in a sensitive way

Poetry is made to be shared in a sensitive way. That is how it shapes the human being, body and soul. By following the paths of emotion, of sensitivity and of the imagination, it is a vehicle for transmitting human knowledge and values – a sense of good and evil, history, the great deeds of men and women, ancient traditions, and links with nature.

If this knowledge is an awakening of the senses by creating beauty in language and words, it is also the cultivation of imagination and memory. It is a performance of the body and all of its faculties. Because the form – of what is spoken or written – counts as much as the meaning or the “message”.

As the French poet and philosopher, Paul Valéry (1871-1945) says in his book, *Ego Scriptor*: “The goal of the poet is not to communicate a thought, but to give birth to an emotional state in the other which is similar (but not identical) to his own. The idea only plays a partial role (in himself and the other).”

Confronted with the realities of an incomprehensible world in which he finds himself “embedded”, the poet never ceases to “create dangerously”, in the words of the French writer, Albert Camus (1913-1960), in his essay, “The Artist and his Time” (Uppsala, Sweden, 14 December 1957). It is by creating dangerously, to protect life against threats from all sides, or to express the joy of being in the world, that the poet regains his place – at the heart of society.

This portrait of Mahmoud Darwich (1941-2008) by French visual artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest, adorned the walls of Ramallah in 2009, where the Palestinian poet was living. His “alarm-bell words will never cease to resonate, inspire, mobilise and keep us on the alert,” insists French writer André Velter.

Poet, novelist, philosopher and author of children’s books, **Tanella Boni** (Côte d’Ivoire) is a lecturer at the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University in Abidjan and vice-president of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP). She is also a member of the Académie des sciences, des arts, des cultures d’Afrique et des diasporas africaines (ASCAD).



Our guest



*Giuseppina Nicolini,
former mayor of Lampedusa.*

© Rocco Rorandelli (terraproject.net)



“It’s natural for an island to be welcoming!”

Giuseppina Nicolini

Interview by Marina Forti, Italian journalist

As Mayor of Lampedusa (from 2012 to June 2017), Giuseppina Nicolini bravely tackled one of the most dramatic crises to have affected the Mediterranean Basin in recent years – the arrival of thousands of migrants fleeing conflict and poverty. She explains how the 6,500 inhabitants of this little Italian island south of Sicily have reacted to this humanitarian disaster with a show of solidarity and respect for human dignity. A meeting with the woman the Italians call “The Lioness”.

When UNESCO awarded you the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize in April 2017, you accepted it as a “homage to the memory of the countless victims of the traffic in human beings in the Mediterranean”. What did you mean by that?

I think it is both honest and right to dedicate this prize to the migrants who have lost their lives crossing the Mediterranean, because the human tragedy we are witnessing in the region is really a silent war. Theirs is a forced journey – forced by war and poverty, forced by our politics, and by the organized criminals who are profiting from their predicament. Faced with closed doors, the traffickers are offering these desperate people the only possible way out.

Even now, new walls are being built and new agreements signed with a number of North African countries, with the sole aim of protecting European borders and not the lives of those who are trying to reach our shores. In contrast, this prize shows us that there is solidarity in Europe; that the values of humanity and hospitality have not been lost.

Yet, faced with this influx of migrants, many are talking of an “invasion”...

It is natural for an island to be welcoming, as I’ve said before. This is essentially what the island of Lesbos has done in Greece. Perhaps it’s because of our geographical position – the migration route passes through Lampedusa. Although, to be more accurate, it might be the other way round – it’s because our island lies half-way that the route is possible.

I don’t know what other people would do if they found themselves here, at this historic moment where so many people are fleeing. Anyone who suggests “pushing them back” is simply living too far away, and doesn’t understand the law of the sea – pushing them back is impossible. Witnessing the situation first hand, helps us understand and awakens our sense of responsibility. Here, we see them arriving – human beings who are exhausted, cold, barefoot, terrorized. We see children, and pregnant women. And one can see straightaway that they have made this journey because they had no other choice. In any case, it’s the only thing we can do, given the position that geography and history have assigned us. We have to welcome them.

In Lampedusa, we have experienced some very painful moments. Faced with a tragedy like the shipwreck of 3 October 2013, when 386 people lost their lives, who can we blame? The dead? At moments like these, you can see clearly who the victims are, and which the unjust deaths are.

This is not the first time that Lampedusa has lived through difficult times ...

No, we experienced very hard times in 2011, when the events in Tunisia caused many people to flee. The Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, Roberto Maroni, decided to leave all the migrants on Lampedusa – they couldn’t go to Italy, he told us. So we had to repatriate them directly from here. But repatriation procedures take time and, in two months, 25,000 people arrived here, which is four times the number of inhabitants!

How did the island’s residents react?

Our reception facilities were overwhelmed. The migrants were living in inhumane conditions, on the streets, in the cold. It was a false emergency, because 25,000 is nothing compared to what we’re seeing today. If they had all been distributed across the Italian mainland, their numbers would have remained manageable. But leaving them on Lampedusa created a crisis.

That year, the island suffered heavy losses. Lampedusa’s economy depends on tourism, which collapsed completely. But even then, in those conditions, there was a show of solidarity. The Lampedusani tried to help, by handing out blankets and food. The people took over from the state. If there were any protests, they were directed against the Italian government, not the Tunisians.



© Federica Mameli / SOS Méditerranée

Rescue operation by SOS Méditerranée, the NGO which shared the 2017 Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize, awarded by UNESCO, with Giuseppina Nicolini.

During a serious economic crisis, it is all too easy to mark out migrants as the common enemy. It's also a diversion to mask the political responsibilities of those who support an inequitable model of development – creating inequalities in a context made more complex by globalization. History has taught us that pointing a finger at an outside enemy also strengthens internal political authority, while surely not promoting the development of a civic conscience, or a sense of belonging to a community.

Today, NGOs are being accused of playing a role in attracting migrants...

Indeed, and this also the case for the French NGO, SOS Méditerranée, with which I have the honour of sharing the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Prize. But those who accuse these organizations are forgetting that they have arrived here to fill a vacuum.

After the tragedy of 3 October 2013, we have witnessed other disasters, some of them even worse. In April 2015, between 500 and 700 people lost their lives when a single ship sank. In 2013, some European politicians came here and were visibly moved.

The former Italian Prime Minister, Enrico Letta, went down on his knees before the white coffins of children. And the Italian government launched Mare Nostrum, the first official humanitarian operation to honour our country. This operation lasted a year. It was very costly and Italy asked its European partners for help.

But there was general opposition. Mare Nostrum was accused of exactly the same wrongs as the NGOs today – of being an element of attraction, even complicity, in the trafficking of human beings. Other humanitarian operations were to follow, such as Frontex and Triton, but their goals were more concerned with security and to detect and combat crime.

Then, in the second half of 2016, all the programmes came to a halt, including interventions by some European countries who were part of Frontex. Italy found itself alone once again, with its navy and coast-guard vessels. We were back to where we were before Mare Nostrum. As the death toll continued to rise, the NGOs filled this institutional vacuum.

Besides being very involved with civil society, you are also a committed ecologist, opposed among other things, to property speculation. What led you to stand for mayor at such a difficult time?

These struggles triggered a democratic movement made up of forces within civil society, which asked me to stand as a candidate with a manifesto against the social and environmental degradation from which our island was suffering. Lampedusa found itself pushed aside, both geographically and socially, with deteriorating schools and youth who had no choice but to leave.

We have worked hard and there is still a lot to do, but the islands in the archipelago have learned how to live again. We have invested in public transport, recycling, solar energy and schools. Earlier, we only had a college for the sciences; now we also have a hotel and tourism institute.



Nineteen thousand people rescued in fifteen months

"We're very happy to be given this award together with Giusi Nicolini," said Sophie Beau, co-founder and vice-president of SOS Méditerranée, as she received the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Prize. "We visited her in Lampedusa when we founded our association in 2015, to explain our project to start rescue activities with a ship chartered by European citizens. She declared to Klaus Vogel, our co-founder: 'You are crazy, but I'm with you.'"

"We can't just look on and do nothing as thousands of people drown in the sea right in front of us, at the gates to Europe," Beau exclaims. This was the conclusion that led Vogel, a German merchant captain, and Beau, a humanitarian programme specialist, to set up SOS Méditerranée, a European non-governmental organization (NGO) for high-sea rescue.

The NGO's field of action is the Mediterranean, which thousands of migrants and refugees fleeing war and famine try crossing to reach the shores of Europe, risking their lives in the attempt. At least 46,000 people have died at sea in the past fifteen years.

The NGO is founded on the traditional values of mutual aid between seafarers, and works in close collaboration with the Italian authorities – the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre of Rome.

The nerve centre of the initiative is *Aquarius*, a 77-metre ship, operated by a crew of eleven, with a medical team from Médecins sans Frontières and a rescue team from SOS Méditerranée. In total, thirty people are always ready to cope with a capacity of 500 passengers, sometimes more.

In fifteen months of operations off the coast of Libya (from February 2016 to May 2017), the association has rescued over 19,000 people. Most of the survivors come from sub-Saharan Africa, especially West Africa and the Horn of Africa, but also from Bangladesh, Syria, Libya, Pakistan and Palestine.

I am convinced that the future of an island like Lampedusa is linked to the geopolitical destiny of the Mediterranean. We want this sea to be transformed into a centre for exchanges, both political and cultural. But before we get there, we have to stop using territories as prisons for migrants, which is what Lampedusa almost became.

We must cultivate the tradition of welcome in its purest form, with islands serving as landing stages and first-aid points for migrants, who are then transferred to a second reception centre, free from any logic of emergency. Then, as we have noted, migration and tourism can co-exist and the island can prosper.

I sincerely hope that the prize that UNESCO has awarded to SOS Méditerranée and to me, will encourage other initiatives. Our example demonstrates the great strength of small territories.

Admired for her courage and humanity, **Giuseppina Nicolini** was born in Lampedusa, Italy. A militant ecologist, she was responsible for getting Rabbit Beach, an island next to Lampedusa, declared a nature reserve in 1997. She was mayor of Lampedusa from May 2012 to June 2017, and fought hard to get the Italian and European authorities to act in response to the migrant crisis. In 2016, she received the Simone de Beauvoir Prize for Women's Freedom in recognition of her efforts.

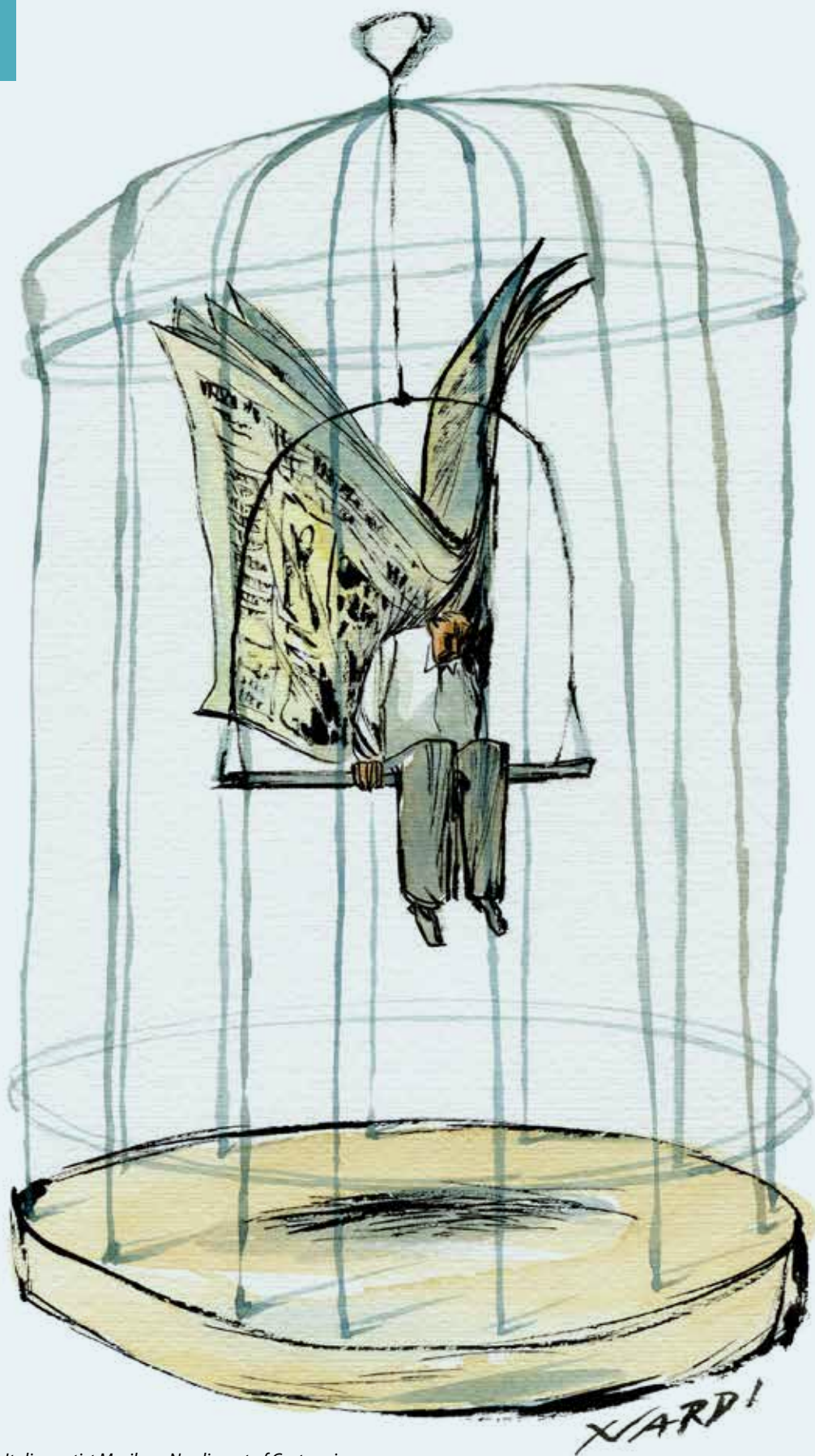
Askavusa, a collective started in Lampedusa in March 2009, has created a permanent exhibition space, PortoM, to display everyday objects found on the boats of migrants.



© Camille Millerand / Divergence (www.camillemlerand.com)



Current affairs



Drawing by Italian artist Marilena Nardi, part of Cartooning for Peace, an international network of politically-engaged editorial cartoonists, supported by UNESCO.



Dawit Isaak, a symbol of press freedom who must be freed

by Nathalie Rothschild

Dawit Isaak has become an international symbol in the fight for press freedom. He was awarded the 2017 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, which his family says has served to rekindle the hope that he will be freed soon.



© Kalle Ahlsen

Photo of Dawit Isaak taken in 1987-1988, soon after his arrival in Sweden.

It is nearly sixteen years since the journalist, playwright and author, Dawit Isaak, was imprisoned without trial in his native Eritrea. Isaak, who was awarded the 2017 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, has become a household name in Sweden (of which he is a citizen and where his three children and other family members currently reside). A portrait of Isaak from the late 1980s has become an international symbol in the fight for press freedom and the freedom of expression. Isaak has been named a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, which has called for his immediate and unconditional release.

Over the years, diplomatic initiatives by five administrations of his adopted country, international lobbying campaigns, civil-society efforts and celebrity-studded drives, have helped keep Isaak's case in the spotlight. But the Eritrean regime has neither heeded calls to grant his release nor offered him a fair trial or any contact with the outside world, apart from a brief release from jail in 2005.

Born on 27 October 1964, in the early years of the thirty-year Eritrean War of Independence [September 1961 to May 1991], Isaak grew up in Asmara. His parents ran a small Italian deli, and he was one of five siblings.

When Isaak was in his twenties, the fighting between the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Ethiopian army intensified, and the Soviet Union withdrew its support of the Ethiopian government. Isaak fled the country for Sweden in 1987, where he first made a living as a cleaner.

Committed to democracy

Isaak stayed committed to fighting for a free and democratic Eritrea, according to his younger brother, Esayas Isaak. "I have few early childhood memories of Dawit since he is 10 years older than me, but when I was a teenager, he was my Tigrinya language teacher here in Sweden. He used to tell me over and over: 'Don't forget your language, your country, your roots.'"



© Presidential Palace Press Bureau

Betlehem Isaak, Dawit's daughter, at the celebration of World Press Freedom Day in Jakarta, Indonesia, May 2017.

"Culture and identity were important to him. At the same time, he respected Swedish society and did adjust to life here," Esayas said.

In 1993, a year after obtaining Swedish citizenship, Isaak returned to a newly independent Eritrea, where he married and had three children – twin brother and sister, Yorum and Betlehem, and their sister Danait, who is 4 years younger.

"One of my earliest memories of my father is him teaching me and my brother to read, and from the age of 4, he taught us math," says Betlehem Isaak, who is now 23 years old. "He was keen for us to learn about our history and the world around us, though he wasn't always very pedagogic! But he tried his best. He was a very committed parent."

By the late 1990s, efforts to liberalize Eritrean society seemed to have paid off. The country issued a new law that permitted the private ownership of print media – a freedom Isaak took advantage of by co-founding Eritrea's first independent newspaper, *Setit*, named after the only river in Eritrea that flows all year round.

Free-flowing information

"We wanted our newspaper to flow like a river without interruption," Aaron Berhane, who co-founded *Setit* with Isaak, explained.

Isaak became part-owner of *Setit* and was a prolific columnist, covering culture and local affairs. But it did not take long before fresh clashes broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Isaak was forced to leave for Sweden – his wife and children soon joined him. Though the political situation remained unstable in Eritrea in 2001, Isaak decided to return home. He stepped straight into a dangerous controversy, as *Setit* published an open letter to the Eritrean president. A few months later, all independent newspapers were banned – eleven of the letter's signatories (which included top politicians) and ten journalists, including Isaak, were jailed.

The arrests took place just weeks after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States. "The world has totally changed since then. He [Dawit] has missed out on so much," Esayas said. "There are times when I feel like he is about to be forgotten, that there is a sense of fatigue around the efforts to free him. But then, other times, I feel like something just *must* happen.

"I also have a sense of renewed hope, now that my brother has been awarded UNESCO's World Press Freedom Prize, which brings attention to his case at the United Nations level," he added.

"I believe this award sends an important and significant signal against the treatment that Dawit Isaak has been subjected to," said Cilla Benkö, Director-General and CEO of Swedish Radio and president of the 2017 UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize jury. "He has been imprisoned without any contact with his near and dear ones and with no trial. It is a completely unacceptable state of affairs," Benkö stressed.

Renewed hope

Days before the UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize awards ceremony in Jakarta, Indonesia, which coincided with World Press Freedom Day on 3 May 2017, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights announced that it would take up Isaak's case.



© Henry Gylander

The move comes after Isaak's lawyers submitted a petition to the Commission, based on the principle of habeas corpus – a court order that commands an individual or a government who has restrained another to produce the prisoner and justify the prisoner's detention. While the Eritrean authorities have accepted this principle, they have refused the right to a trial to Isaak and the other journalists detained since September 2001.

The Commission has said it will question Eritrea about the country's failure to comply with international human rights conventions; a vow that stirred renewed hope for Isaak's family. But Bethlehem dares only to be cautiously optimistic. "It means *something*, but whether or not it will have any impact is still up to Eritrea. They have the power to decide over my father's fate," she said.

Esayas has called the move a "positive development". "It does send a signal to the international community and to the Eritrean state, which has committed severe assaults on my brother for nearly sixteen years now. I only hope those in power are listening and will do something.

Quiet diplomacy

"It took a while for Swedish officials, media and civil society to start paying attention to my brother's case", Esayas said. But eventually, the government at the time engaged in "quiet diplomacy" with Eritrea for his release. A brief ray of hope when Isaak was released in November 2005, was quickly extinguished as he was detained again two days later, on his way to a hospital.

The "Sit with Dawit" event was launched by the "Free Dawit" campaign in 2016, to create engagement in the Isaak case. A mock-up of Dawit's cell was installed on a number of sites and individuals asked to spend fifteen minutes sitting alone in the dark cell – to reflect upon Dawit's nearly sixteen years of solitary confinement must feel like, and show solidarity with him.

This photograph was taken on the 5,000th day of Dawit's detention, on one of Stockholm's main squares.

Hope was rekindled a few years later, when a former prison guard who had fled Eritrea told Swedish media that Isaak was alive, but unwell and being held in inhumane conditions. Isaak is thought to have spent much of the last sixteen years in solitary confinement, alone in a dark prison cell.

Isaak's story demonstrates that "we need journalists who hold those in power to account but that, unfortunately, doing so is also increasingly associated with great danger," Benkö said.

"We should be grateful that there are people out there who are willing to take risks in order to offer the rest of us descriptions of reality that we otherwise would not have access to. Dawit is an example of such a person and there are journalists around the world who offer important guarantees that freedom of expression is upheld.... I am proud that the jury I preside over was unanimous in its decision to award Dawit Isaak the UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize. This prize will contribute to putting pressure on those who are keeping Isaak imprisoned," Benkö added.

Nathalie Rothschild (Sweden) is a producer and reporter at Sveriges Radio, Sweden's national public radio, and a freelance journalist. Her articles have appeared in international publications, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlantic*, the *Guardian*, and *Foreign Policy*.



© Britt Stakston

Reconstruction: changing attitudes

by Christina Cameron

Natural disasters and an increase in terrorist attacks have meant that the world's cultural heritage has suffered heavier losses in recent years. This has led to a more favourable attitude by the World Heritage Committee and UNESCO towards the reconstruction of damaged or destroyed sites, in the face of traditional opposition.

With this article, the UNESCO Courier marks the occasion of the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Krakow, Poland in July 2017.

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Global destruction of cultural heritage, now occurring at an unprecedented scale, brings into focus the question of whether or not to reconstruct significant places as a means of recovering their meaning.

The 2001 demolition of the ancient Buddha statues in Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan foreshadowed a wave of deliberate desecration of the world's iconic cultural sites, including Palmyra and Aleppo in Syria.

UNESCO calls these attacks on World Heritage Sites a form of cultural cleansing, which require new national and international policies and the involvement of the United Nations, Interpol and the International Criminal Court.

In addition, natural disasters are destroying swathes of buildings, as we have seen during the 2015 earthquake in the Kathmandu valley, Nepal, where hundreds of structures within the World Heritage Site have been affected.



The Genbaku Dome of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, Japan, preserved in exactly the same state it was found, after being hit by the first atomic bomb on 6 August 1945.

Reconstruction is not new. Its roots can be found in nineteenth-century Western cultures, when the concept of historical monuments was created and consciousness of a historical past was developed, due to the rapid industrialization of society and its subsequent rupture with the past. Architects sought to replace missing parts of historic monuments as a means of restoring them to their previous splendour. French Gothic Revival architect and theorist Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc's reconstruction of the walls of the historic fortified city of Carcassonne, France, is a case in point. In the twentieth century, this trend was particularly strong in North America, where historical replicas served as living history museums, popular with visitors and effective as forms of presentation and interpretation of the past.

The most famous example of this can be found in colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, where 350 buildings were reconstructed in the 1930s, and others from later periods were destroyed in an attempt to create an interpretative park to eighteenth-century colonial America.

One can even argue that the 1972 World Heritage Convention originated in a UNESCO project: the dismantling and reconstruction of Nubian monuments from Abu Simbel to Philae in Egypt. This outstanding archaeological area, which was to be flooded by the Aswan Dam, was the site 3,000-year-old monuments and temples. These treasures were saved due to an unprecedented twenty-year international campaign launched by UNESCO, from 1960 to 1980.

Honesty and transparency

The question remains: to construct or not to reconstruct. Heritage conservation professionals have traditionally been opposed to reconstruction because this approach can falsify history and create fictional places that never existed in that form.

This opposition began in the nineteenth century and gathered momentum following the oft-repeated guidance from French art historian and archaeologist Adolphe Napoléon Didron that "for ancient monuments, it is better to consolidate than repair, better to repair than to restore, better to restore than to reconstruct".

In 1883, in the *Prima Carta del Restauro*, Italian architect Camillo Boito spelled out eight principles for heritage conservation that insist on honesty and transparency when adding missing parts to buildings. These ideas eventually found expression in the key twentieth-century doctrinal text that is the foundation of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). The 1964 International Charter on the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, known as the Venice Charter, rules out reconstruction and insists that restoration must stop where conjecture begins. Subsequent standards and guidelines have consistently expressed caution about reconstructing historic sites. There are exceptions – the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, known as the Burra Charter, adopted in 1979, accepts reconstruction if it reflects a pattern of use or cultural practice that sustains cultural value. But even here, a "cautious approach to changing a place" is advocated.

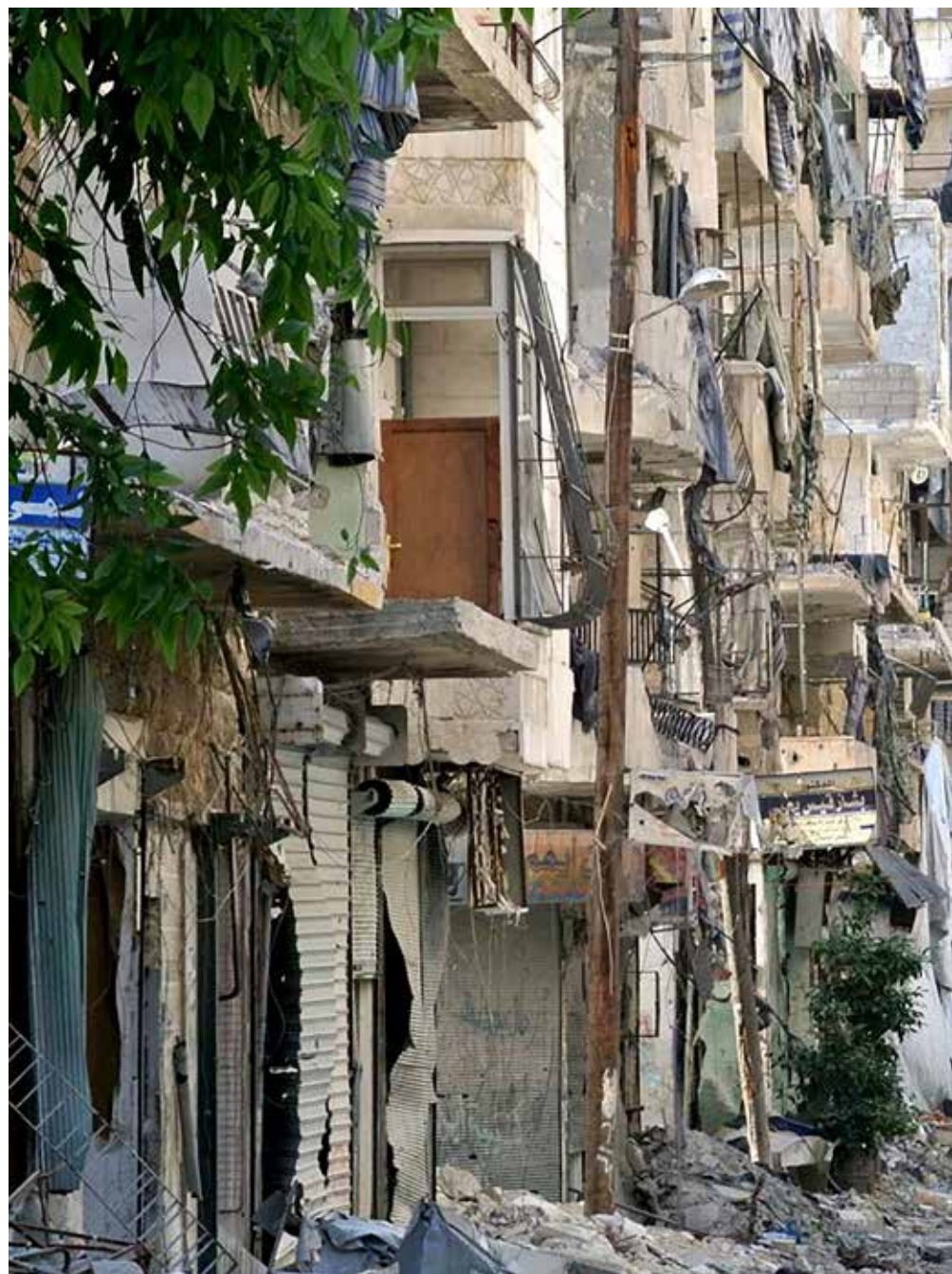
Shifting attitude

In the early years, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee (WHC) followed the ICOMOS doctrine and generally opposed reconstructions. An exception was made in 1980 for the historic city of Warsaw, whose massive rebuilding was seen as a symbol of the patriotic feeling of the Polish people. Until recently, the Committee has remained largely unsympathetic to reconstructed sites, although there have been other exceptions.

For example, the listing of the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2005, was justified on the basis of the restoration of cultural value, an intangible dimension of the property. In the case of the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi, Uganda, which were destroyed by fire in 2010, the Committee gave provisional approval for reconstruction, on condition that the new structure was based on sound documentation, traditional forms and techniques and continuing use. Indeed, the current version of the World Heritage Committee's *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* still echoes the Venice Charter when it states: "In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture."

Yet, in light of recent attacks by extremists on heritage places, decisions of the World Heritage Committee and UNESCO reflect a shifting attitude toward reconstruction. The justification for this shift is based in part on the ideas in the Nara Document on Authenticity (which was "conceived in the spirit of the Charter of Venice" in 1994, and adopted by ICOMOS) in which the broadened use of intangible attributes makes a stronger case for reconstruction.

The beginning of this shift can be marked by the wilful destruction in 2012 of the Sufi mausoleums at the Timbuktu World Heritage Site in Mali. Defying appeals from the Director-General of UNESCO and the WHC to spare these revered tombs, extremists attacked them with renewed vengeance until fourteen mausoleums were destroyed.



© Ammar Abd Rabbo / Abaca Press

Since that time, UNESCO has spearheaded a reconstruction process, which was completed in record time in 2015. This is a good example when trying to answer the question of "reconstruction: for or against?". It is worth noting that the values listed in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value focus on the tombs as witness to Timbuktu's past, with no mention of community values or architectural techniques. It was only after the destruction of the tombs that community and intangible values were evoked.

Tool for regeneration

Arguments in favour of reconstruction reside largely in the local community: traditional building techniques are transmitted from elders to a new generation of builders; the project brings together the whole community, and the sites continue to serve as religious spaces for ceremonies and contemplation. Indeed, the involvement of the local community in the reconstruction of the tombs is seen in part as a reconciliation process and a tool for regeneration.



Patchworks of sheets hung over a street to stop bullets from snipers in war-ravaged Aleppo, Syria.

Arguments against reconstruction beyond the rules in the Operational Guidelines document of the WHC include a lack of transparency in the UNESCO decision-making process and concerns that decisions are made outside the local community by professional and governmental organizations. In such cases, it is important to document the decision-making process so that future generations may understand how choices were made, what options were considered, what values remain and what new ones were created.

In addition, there is the idea of taking time to reflect after a trauma such as the one in Timbuktu, in the interest of leaving space for further consideration over time and generations. The reconstruction of all the tombs may erase memory over time and may deprive people of the space to reflect on the past. The half-destroyed Genbaku Dome at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial in Japan serves precisely this purpose as a reminder of the most destructive force ever created by humankind.

New guidance needed

On the question of reconstruction, the ad hoc decision-making by the WHC appears to be leading to new approaches. The shift represents a challenge for keepers of the conservation doctrine like ICOMOS, because decisions from such a prestigious international body give credence to a different conservation standard. In light of changing circumstances, new guidance is needed. Conservation charters need to make room for new ideas and World Heritage tools need to be updated.

Since the rise of the conservation doctrine in the nineteenth century, each generation has added new principles and guidelines. A materials-based conservation doctrine, as manifested in the World Heritage Operational Guidelines, is still part of our legacy. The Burra Charter makes an important shift towards values-based conservation, focused on heritage and cultural values. The Nara Declaration, with its emphasis on cultural diversity and the relative nature of values, encourages heritage practitioners to interpret the Venice Charter through this new lens. This additive approach is a good starting point for addressing the reconstruction question.

Christina Cameron (Canada) is professor and chairholder of the Canada Research Chair on Built Heritage at the School of Architecture, University of Montreal. She has held leadership positions in the heritage field at Parks Canada for more than thirty-five years. Cameron has been actively involved in UNESCO's World Heritage as Head of the Canadian delegation (1990 to 2008) and as Chairperson (in 1990 and 2008).

Early literacy

the key to fluency

by Helen Abadzi

At a time when large-scale refugee displacements have created huge disruptions in the literacy of tens of thousands of children, education specialist Helen Abadzi – whose work has helped raise early-grade reading fluency to a high-level international priority – strongly advocates that countries and institutions “vaccinate” young children with literacy at an early age, and definitely before the age of eighteen.

Every September 8, on International Literacy Day, my memory goes to the illiterate women of my youth. Poverty and ethnic conflict in my native Greece were severe several decades ago, but they presented the same educational problems as today.

In the 1930s, when rural girls rarely went to school, two aunts in Athens hired a young woman. They were teachers and diligently taught her to read in the relatively consistent Greek orthography. Maria learned letters but never progressed beyond single words. Eventually she gave up. She watched over children who studied before her, but still died illiterate in her 90s.

Ethnic conflict and displacement robbed my father's sister of opportunity. The family fled from Turkey to Greece in 1922, her parents died, and she never went to school. She learned the reading basics in her 40s, from her daughter who was a teacher. She spent fifty years in a big city, surrounded by print. But when I tested her at age 97, I found out that she could only read capital letters and very hesitantly. At best, she puzzled out bus labels.

Very different was the performance of Sofia, who took care of me. Uprooted from Turkey in 1922, she attended first grade before becoming a homeless orphan. When I was learning to read, she was the one who helped me. She read our textbooks haltingly, and we used to laugh. But she could process entire sentences, so she kept practising, and improved. In the last years of her life, she would put on her reading glasses, open the newspaper, and read the news to my mother.

This three-dimensional painting reproduces a drawing by 11-year-old Walaa, evoking the memory of the time when her school was bombed in her home town in Syria.

It was staged by her young friends at a refugee camp in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon. The children are attending a school run by Save The Children, where they participate in educational activities, including reading.





Adult dyslexia

Decades later, as an education specialist at the World Bank, I appraised and evaluated adult literacy projects. Governments and NGOs tried hard to teach adults in the 1980s and 1990s, but the cases reminded me of my childhood images. In Bangladesh, learners decoded letters laboriously, even after a year of practice. In Burkina Faso, adults who had completed courses read haltingly, and even had trouble reading their own handwriting. By contrast, little-educated people who had learned in childhood, read fluently, like Sofia. The difference was striking.

It is not just unschooled adults who read laboriously. Educated foreigners learning languages that have unknown scripts experience the same difficulties. “Western” academics and aid workers who spend decades in Ethiopia or Bangladesh may speak the languages of those countries fluently, but perpetually read like mid-first graders. They report seeing a jumble of letters that must be decoded one by one. Reading is thus too tedious, and many avoid it.

These events point to a striking phenomenon that could be called ‘adult neo-literate dyslexia’. It seems to become significant by age 19 and probably affects all of us.

University students who must learn different scripts past the age of 18 typically read slowly, and for decades have difficulty scanning text. Several cognitive and neuroscientific studies show long-lasting reading difficulties for adults. Adult dyslexia may partly account for the very poor adult literacy programme outcomes worldwide. But it has gone unnoticed. Educators typically attribute these failures to social issues, learner motivation, or organizational problems. These are certainly important, but the results among those who persist are disappointing. And since this strange dyslexia has remained invisible, little direct research has gone into it.

But what is effortless reading and why does it matter? This competency seems like a commonplace rite of passage in childhood, but it requires specific changes in the brain.

Children may be ‘vaccinated’ with literacy

Reading originates as a perceptual learning function; in the first few milliseconds, it is disconnected from meaning. With practice, the letter shapes are grouped and processed in the brain simultaneously. The brain does this most efficiently if the symbols are taught one by one, with pattern analogies. Practice combines small units into larger ones. Some scripts and spelling systems take longer than others to learn. But in all cultures, from France to China, people use the same brain structures to read.



© Patrick Willocq / Save the Children

Initially, learners decode single letters and exert conscious effort. After dozens of practice hours, processing moves to a part of the brain that recognizes words as if they were faces. Then multiple letters are decoded at one glance, like facial features. Simultaneously, reading becomes effortless, automatic. We cannot stop ourselves from reading, just as we cannot stop the recognition of people we know. This may happen at forty-five to sixty words per minute.

Thanks to perceptual learning, humans can learn to recognize footprints, musical notation, numbers, mathematical equations, astronomical constellations, or weather prediction signs. And once this visual function is learned and practised repeatedly, it is rarely forgotten. Thus children may be 'vaccinated' with literacy.

Strangely, we do not need to know a language in order to read it fluently, nor do we need to be able to write the letters! Millions of children worldwide learn to read, for religious purposes, texts in unknown languages that differ from a country's official scripts. It greatly helps to learn a consistent spelling system, like Spanish or Hindi rather than an inconsistent one, like English or Khmer. But to understand a text, we must be fluent. The limitations of short-term memory demand speed. Educated adults may read 250 to 350 words per minute.

Children who drop out of school *after* attaining automaticity, may read printed signs in the environment and thus get sufficient practice to maintain the skill and improve it.

This was the case of Sofia, my childhood care-taker. But if they drop out before attaining fluency, letter-by-letter decoding is too tedious. Like Maria and my father's sister, they may pass by store signs and street names, but are not able to read them.

Unfortunately, the ability of children to automatize a large set of symbols has a deadline. Certain neural circuits involved in perception have sensitive periods and gradually slow down during adolescence. If the process to automatize reading is interrupted for years, precious time may be lost that cannot be regained.

80 year-old Parachiva reads by candlelight at her home in a remote village in Bucovina, Romania.



© Radu Dumitrescu



Fluency by age 18

The large-scale refugee displacements of the twenty-first century have created the perfect illiteracy storm. The schooling of many children has been interrupted at critical moments. Moving from Syria to Greece and to Germany, they may never automatize the perceptually challenging Arabic script. For some, the disruption may be permanent. And displacement is not the only threat to childhood literacy. Low-income countries have expanded schooling with little knowledge of how to teach the poor, and the results have created a generation of schooled illiterates. The problems are compounded by the use of English and French that have complex spelling. Thus, large numbers of African students can at best decipher only a few letters or words in those languages. Some are known to attend adult literacy classes as adults, but it may be too late for automaticity, according to the World Bank.

These neurological realities have implications for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well. According to SDG 4.6, governments should ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030. To facilitate the learning process and the teachers' workload, the neurocognitive research should be put to use.

To activate the perceptual learning function, complex teaching activities are unnecessary. Teachers should teach letter-by-letter phonics and pattern analogies, and give lots of practice in class, with feedback. Practice links small units into larger ones, words and sentences.

Thick or abundant books are indispensable for the 'face'-recognition competency to develop. They should use letters that are large and spaced to accommodate the brain's visual demands. Writing supports reading, and vocabulary must be learned in order to make sense of texts. Because the reading process is universal, forty-five to sixty words could be a rough benchmark of automaticity in almost all languages and scripts. To learn from texts and enjoy reading, this speed should be attained by the end of second grade.

Donors and governments receive a lot of confusing advice about reading. Traditional letter-by-letter methods that better conformed to brain processes have been replaced by whole language activities that reflect middle-class perceptions. The effects on the poor can be severe. Students of consistently spelled languages may learn sufficient reading in first grade to survive subsequent interruptions. Old syllabaries used to accomplish this. But more 'modern' methods slow down the process, leaving students vulnerable to unexpected life shocks that may leave them functionally illiterate.

The World Literacy Day serves to remind us that we must ensure automaticity in childhood. This function has a deadline: All children must become fluent in one or more scripts by age 18 at the latest. In the future, biomedical research may mitigate this neurological phenomenon, but for 2030, the goal is clear. Wars and population displacements seem to be a feature of human evolution, but the education community should be ready. Governments and donors should put the existing research to use in order to achieve a transition to automaticity in first grade. In case of an emergency disruption, the adults should perform more like Sofia than like Maria.

Helen Abadzi is a Greek psychologist and researcher at the University of Texas at Arlington, Texas. She has spent twenty-seven years as a senior education specialist at the World Bank and has drawn on cognitive psychology and neuroscience to improve the outcomes of educational investments. Abadzi, who was appointed to the five-member Jury for the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes in 2015, chaired the Jury for the 2016 prize, a post she held till June 2017.



© Merijn Hos (merijnhos.com)

An imaginary visualization of cerebral specialization for different cognitive abilities, by Dutch visual artist Merijn Hos.

Sharing legally *and* freely for better learning

by David Kindler (CC BY 2.0)



Cable Green, Director of Open Education at Creative Commons.

With this article, the *UNESCO Courier* marks the 2nd World Open Educational Resources Congress in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in September 2017.

We live in an age of information abundance where everyone, for the first time in history, can access all the knowledge they wish. The key to this sea-change in education opportunity is Open Educational Resources (OER), freely available materials that can be legally downloaded, edited and shared to better serve all students.

For the last twenty years, the educational resources – textbooks, videos, courses, degree programmes, etc. – we use to teach people how to read and write, learn physics and think critically have been "born-digital". Even though we still use printed copies and employ non-internet delivery of learning materials, there exists a digital file. Thanks to the internet, inexpensive disc space and cloud computing, we can now store, distribute, and make copies of digital educational resources for the marginal cost of zero.

by Cable Green

The lack of universal access to effective educational resources remains a global problem. But, says Cable Green, the good news is that open education is increasing access, lowering costs and improving student learning.

But how can educators share digital learning content without violating copyright law – how can they share legally?

The key distinguishing characteristic of an OER is its open copyright licence and the legal permissions the licence grants the public to use, modify and share it. If an educational resource is not clearly marked as being in the public domain or having an open licence, it is not an OER.

The most common way to openly license copyrighted education resources – making them OER – is to add a Creative Commons (CC) licence to the resource. These licences are standardized, free-to-use, open copyright licences that have already been applied to more than 1.2 billion copyrighted works across nine million websites, according to the State of the Commons Report, 2015. When authors add a CC licence to their work, they keep their copyright and share their work with the public, for free, under the terms and conditions they choose.



Leveraging the full power of OER

It is worth noting that “open” is not the same as “free”. All OER can be freely accessed, but not all free content is OER. Many Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), for example, are free but not open. While access to the MOOC content might be free, the MOOC is only considered OER if its contents are openly licensed or in the public domain. This becomes critically important if you want to translate an MOOC into different languages and/or modify it for a local context to meet the needs of your students.

OER can be freely retained (keep a copy), reused (use as is), revised (adapt, adjust, modify), remixed (mash up different content to create something new), and redistributed (share copies with others) without breaking copyright law. Of course, if we want to leverage the full power of OER, educators and students also need access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure – computers, mobile devices and internet connectivity, in all spaces for all people.

In summary, OER are possible because: 1) educational resources are digital (most OER are “born-digital,” though OER can be made available to students in both digital and printed formats) and digital resources can be stored, copied and distributed for near-zero cost; 2) the internet makes it simple for anyone to share digital content; and 3) Creative Commons open licences make it simple and legal to keep one’s copyright and legally share educational resources with the world.

Open resources make access to education easier.



© Patric Sandri

What difference does OER make?

When colleges and universities shift to OER, they enable a series of positive education changes. The first thing that happens is that equitable access to educational resources goes up. Every single student can have access to all of the educational resources that have been designed for them to be successful in the class on day one. This might sound obvious, but even in the United States, two-thirds of college and university students don't buy the textbooks prescribed for their classes because they cannot afford them.

The second positive impact is all students get access to relevant, contextualized education content that has been designed for them. A professor in Mumbai can download an openly licensed textbook that has been shared by the University of Barcelona, translate it into Hindi, and update the book with examples that will appeal to his or her students.

Third, learning outcomes go up or stay the same, while price falls to near zero. When all students in a class have access to all of the resources on day one, they succeed. A journal-published analysis of more than 16,000 students at public institutions showed that students using open materials perform as well, if not better, than their peers using traditional course materials (Lane Fischer, John Hilton, T. Jared Robinson, and David Wiley: A multi-institutional study of the impact of open textbook adoption on the learning outcomes of post-secondary students, *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 2015).

Fourth, it has been observed that course completion rates go up. In a controlled application of OER at Tidewater Community College in Virginia, US, students utilizing OER resources in a variety of course formats fared up to 11% better in both course completion and achievement. (Lane Fischer, John Hilton, David Wiley and Linda William: Maintaining momentum toward graduation: OER and the course throughput rate, *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 2016).

Students remain and succeed in courses that provide them access to all the educational resources they need to prosper. Because more students are completing their courses, time-to-degree also drops. With OER, education institutions help students move through their educational opportunities with greater speed and success – a more effective public investment.

"Microchip synapses 29 – Between the now and the infinite", by Italian artist Leonardo Ulian.

Fifth, once we have OER in our learning spaces, students and teachers can shift to open education practices – "collaborative practices which include the creation, use and reuse of OER and pedagogical practices employing participatory technologies, peer learning, knowledge creation and sharing, and empowerment of learners" (Catherine Cronin : Openness and praxis: exploring the use of open educational practices in higher education, *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 2017). According to Cronin, students become co-producers, generators and creators of knowledge; they can create, update and improve OER as they learn.



© Leonardo Ulian (www.leonardoulian.com)



Policy support needed

One way governments can support open education is to adopt a simple policy – require publicly-funded educational resources are openly licensed.

Open education licensing policies insert open licensing requirements into existing funding systems (e.g., grants, contracts or other agreements) that create educational resources, thereby making the content OER, and shifting the default on publicly-funded educational resources from “closed” to “open”. This is a particularly strong education policy argument – if the public pays for education resources, the public should have the right to access and use those resources at no additional cost and with the full spectrum of legal rights necessary to modify the OER to meet their local needs.

This sounds obvious, but it is not the rule. Unfortunately, it is almost always the case that publicly-funded educational resources are commercialized in such a way that access is restricted to those who are willing to pay for them a second time. Why should a nation’s citizens be required to pay a second time for an education resource they’ve already paid for?

Governments, foundations, and education institutions can and should implement open education licensing policies by requiring open licences on the educational resources produced with their funding. Strong open licensing policies make open licensing mandatory and apply a clear definition for open licence, ideally using the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence that grants full reuse rights, provided the original author is attributed.

The good news is, open education policies are happening. In June 2012, UNESCO convened a World Open Education Resources Congress at its Headquarters, and released the 2012 Paris OER Declaration, which included a call for governments to “encourage the open licensing of educational materials produced with public funds”. I am pleased to say that many governments have followed this recommendation.

In conclusion, if we want OER to go mainstream, if we want curated sets of OER for all grade levels, in all subjects, in all languages, customized to meet local needs; if we want significant funding available for the creation, adoption and continuous updating of OER – then we need (1) universal awareness of and systematic support for OER, and (2) a broad adoption of open education licensing policies. When all educators are passionate about free and open access to their educational resources, when we change the rules on the money, when the default on all publicly-funded educational resources is “open” and not “closed”, we will live in a world where everyone can attain all the education they desire.

Cable Green (USA) is Director of Open Education at Creative Commons, which includes over 500 researchers, activists, legal, education, science, museum and policy advocates, and volunteers who make up the CC global network in over eighty-five countries.





Giving youth a voice!

News

For the International Youth Day on August 12, the *Courier* dedicates these pages to UNESCO projects aimed at young generations who wish to be involved in voluntary action and dialogue.

"If I were..."

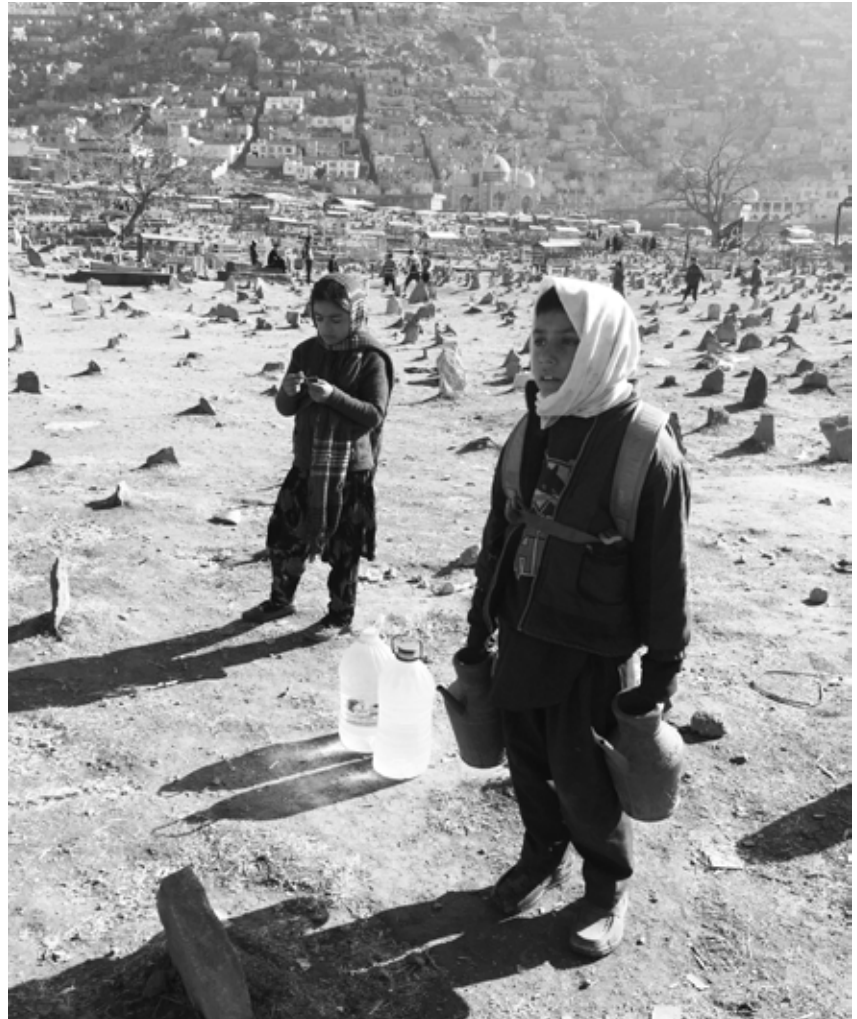
"These tombs that keep us alive" is a strange caption for an equally strange photograph, taken by 27-year-old Vesal Sulaiman, who lives in Germany. "It fills me both with sadness and joy," he says. The image immortalizes that moment during his trip to Kabul when he saw children forced to clean tombs for money. In the dead of winter and with hands frozen by the cold, the children climbed to the top of the hill behind the mosque to collect water! When Sulaiman asked them if they liked their job, they replied: "Yes, it allows us to go to school."

"I tried to imagine what it was like being them," explains Vesal, one of ten finalists of the "If I were..." contest, launched by UNESCO on social media in Arabic, English, French and Spanish from 24 February to 12 March 2017. In the space of two weeks, UNESCO received 837 submissions from 117 countries around the world.

Through the lens of a camera or video recorder, the participants, aged 21 to 30, imagined themselves in the shoes of someone else.

The ten finalists, each of whom win an iPad mini, are invited to present their photos or videos at the "Second International Conference on Youth Volunteering and Dialogue: preventing violent extremism and strengthening social inclusion", held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, from 25 to 27 September 2017.

During the three-day event, over a hundred young participants from across the globe have the opportunity to share the experiences and knowledge they gained as volunteers in different fields associated with UNESCO's mandate.



© UNESCO / Vesal Sulaiman

They are invited to propose collaborative projects with an aim to promote solidarity, empathy, critical thinking, social commitment and civic involvement.

Four themes were chosen for the workshops and plenary sessions: refugees and migration; intercultural education; the role of media and social media in constructing positive dialogue; and youth engagement with cultural heritage and the arts.

Contact : youth-conference@unesco.org

Volunteers for world heritage

Launched in 2008, the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative gives young people the opportunity to dedicate themselves to the protection of world heritage – by acquiring skills and competencies, and immersing themselves in the lives of local communities.

For its tenth anniversary, the campaign proposes the implementation of fifty-one youth action projects in thirty-two countries between May and November 2017. This year, the Vajrayogini temple complex in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley, the sixteenth-century monasteries on the slopes of Popocatepetl in Mexico, the parks and garden of Weimar in Germany, the towering mountain summits of the Rwenzori Mountains National Park in Uganda and many other exceptional places in the world, welcome young people concerned with the protection of the common heritage of mankind.

The campaign is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme launched in 1994. It seeks to encourage and train tomorrow's decision-makers to participate in heritage conservation and respond to the continuing threats facing it.

Contact : Ines Yousfi (i.yousfi@unesco.org)

A youth forum in a biosphere reserve

Young people, especially those who live or work in biosphere reserves, are the future of these areas comprising terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems. UNESCO believes youth should be given a voice in shaping their territory and defining their engagement in its Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme.

This prompted the MAB Secretariat and the UNESCO Regional Bureau in Venice to organize the 2017 MAB Youth Forum, in the Po Delta Biosphere Reserve, Italy, from 18-23 September. When the initiative was first announced during the 4th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Lima, Peru, in March 2016, it received a standing ovation!

Addressing youth between 18 and 35, the Forum aims to ensure they become agents of change and promoters of a more equitable and sustainable society. The exchange of best practices and the promotion of biosphere reserves as tools for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – from the good management of natural resources to the green economy, from sustainable tourism to education – is an important focus of the Forum.

The Forum is also aligned to UNESCO's Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021), built on the premise that youth are key partners and actors for development and peace.

Youth stakeholders participated in a large-scale, online consultation to generate ideas about the issues to be discussed during the Forum. Three main thematic areas emerged – the contribution of young people to the life of biosphere reserves; research and study into the sustainable development of biosphere reserves; and a sustainable future for youth, giving voice to their concerns, and encouraging an exchange of best practices and business ideas, to be submitted to potential donors.

Contact : Philippe Pypaert (p.pypaert@unesco.org)

Fostering dialogue among youth

Through its presence in 195 Member States across the globe, UNESCO aims to foster an environment that helps young people to blossom as individuals and become responsible citizens. It does this by encouraging innovation, creativity and reflection, especially on burning topics such as intercultural and interreligious conflicts.

To translate these ideals into reality, the UNESCO Office in Almaty, Kazakhstan, hosts the First Youth Conference on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue on 21 September, 2017. Bringing together young researchers and activists from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the conference aims to find solutions to help resolve intercultural and interreligious conflicts in the region.

There is a full programme of activities, including a workshop on intercultural dialogue, an introduction to different cultures in the region, and opportunities to share experiences. Participants also learn to understand the attitudes and reactions of other cultures, and to reflect on ways to overcome intercultural problems.

This initiative is designed to promote dialogue between religions, spiritual and humanist traditions, and to enable the understanding of their interactions and influences in order to combat prejudice and build mutual respect.

Contact : Arina Plokhikh (a.plokhikh@unesco.org)



Children learning about nature and the environment while canoeing, at the Aya Biosphere Reserve, Japan.

© Aya Biosphere Reserve

A new beginning for the UNESCO Courier

"Just the name of this emblematic publication evokes the essence of our Organization, its history, its values. From the first issue, published in February 1948, to the one I have in my hands, the Courier has remained faithful to its mission – to promote humanist ideals, to build bridges of dialogue between cultures, to provide a safe space for international debate."



© UNESCO

Young people shouting "Long live the Courier!" at the magazine's relaunch ceremony in Paris, on 27 April.

It was with these words that Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, launched the *UNESCO Courier* at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China, on 13 May 2017. After an interlude (for budgetary reasons) of five years, the magazine began its new life in April 2017, thanks to the generous support of the People's Republic of China.

Appearing quarterly in a limited-edition print run, the *Courier* is once again available online (en.unesco.org/courier) in seven languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. Access to the online edition is free of charge and just a few clicks are all that are needed to consult the archives. A strategy for extending the online presence of the magazine is currently being developed and partners for new language versions are being sought.

"In the 1980s, the magazine was published in over 35 languages, thanks to the co-operation of the various National Commissions," recalled Irina Bokova, as the *Courier* was relaunched at UNESCO Headquarters on 27 April 2017. She added that she was convinced the partnership with China would encourage "many players in the public and private sectors to become our partners to help develop the *Courier* on a global scale."



The UNESCO Courier relaunch ceremony in Beijing took place on 13 May in the presence of Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, Huang Kun Ming, Executive Vice-Minister of Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China, Tian Xue Jun, Vice-Minister of Education of China and Chairman of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, Tan Yue, President of China Publishing Group, Du Yue, Secretary-General of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO.

Exhibition

Countering “everyday” racism

What do genetics say about the diversity of the human species? Where does xenophobia come from? How can we understand racist ideas and behaviour? Which model is best for living together, respecting equal rights? These are some of the questions raised by the “Us and Them – From Prejudice to Racism” exhibition at the Musée de l’Homme in Paris, from 31 March 2017 to 8 January 2018, under the patronage of UNESCO.

Based on studies in anthropology, biology, sociology and history, the exhibition follows the same logic for deconstructing racism as that which guides UNESCO in one of its primary missions – to use science and public information to combat prejudices and stereotypes about human categories, rigid identities and otherness as a symbolic barrier between “us” and “them”.

To do so, the exhibition offers visitors an interactive journey which allows them to reflect on the individual and collective mechanisms that lead to the rejection of the other. It also highlights the role of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), a UNESCO initiative to promote the peaceful coexistence of people within societies.



Illustration : Noma Bar



The cylinder of categories invites visitors to understand how the process of classifying “others” can lead to stereotypes and prejudice and, ultimately, to “everyday” racism.

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Global Ocean Science Report

The Current Status of Ocean Science around the World

ISBN 978-92-3-100226-7
378 pp., 21.5 x 28 cm, paperback, 45 €

The ocean is the largest ecosystem on our planet, regulating change and variability in the climate system and supporting the global economy, nutrition, health and wellbeing, water supply and energy. The Global Ocean Science Report (GOSR) assesses for the first time the status and trends in ocean science capacity around the world. The report offers a global record of who, how, and where ocean science is conducted: generating knowledge, helping to protect ocean health, and empowering society to support sustainable ocean management in the framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.



UNESCO – A universe of Art

ISBN 978-92-3-000027-1
432 pp., 26 x 33.5 cm, hardback, 54 €

This book brings together some of the most beautiful works in UNESCO's Collection. Spanning over 6,000 years of history, the collection is a mirror of the world's creative diversity. One finds anonymous artists alongside some of the most renowned art figures worldwide: Joan Miró, Jean Arp, Karel Appel, Afro Basaldella, Roberto Matta, Alexander Calder, Eduardo Chillida, Henry Moore, Rufino Tamayo, Antoni Tàpies, Isamu Noguchi, Jesús Rafael Soto, Le Corbusier, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Erró, Tadao Ando, and many others. Growing over the years thanks to the generosity of its Member States, UNESCO's collection today includes over 800 works. It remains the most important artistic heritage of the United Nations.



World Heritage N° 83

Museums and visitor centres

ISSN 1020-4202 - EAN 3059630101837
88 pp., 22 x 28 cm, paperback, 7,50 €

With tourism growing worldwide every year, museums and visitor centres are increasingly important to help visitors understand the cultural and historical significance of World Heritage sites. This also includes zoos and aquariums, which increasingly play an important role in species conservation. This issue of *World Heritage* will present the role of many of these centres and their contribution to visitors' experiences, whether it's revitalizing World Heritage site museums in Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam; the National Palace Museum of Mexico and its importance in the cultural history of UNESCO; the conservation, education and research roles of the Vienna Zoo; or Belgium's Plantin-Moretus House-Workshops-Museum Complex, a printing plant and publishing house dating from the Renaissance and Baroque periods.



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