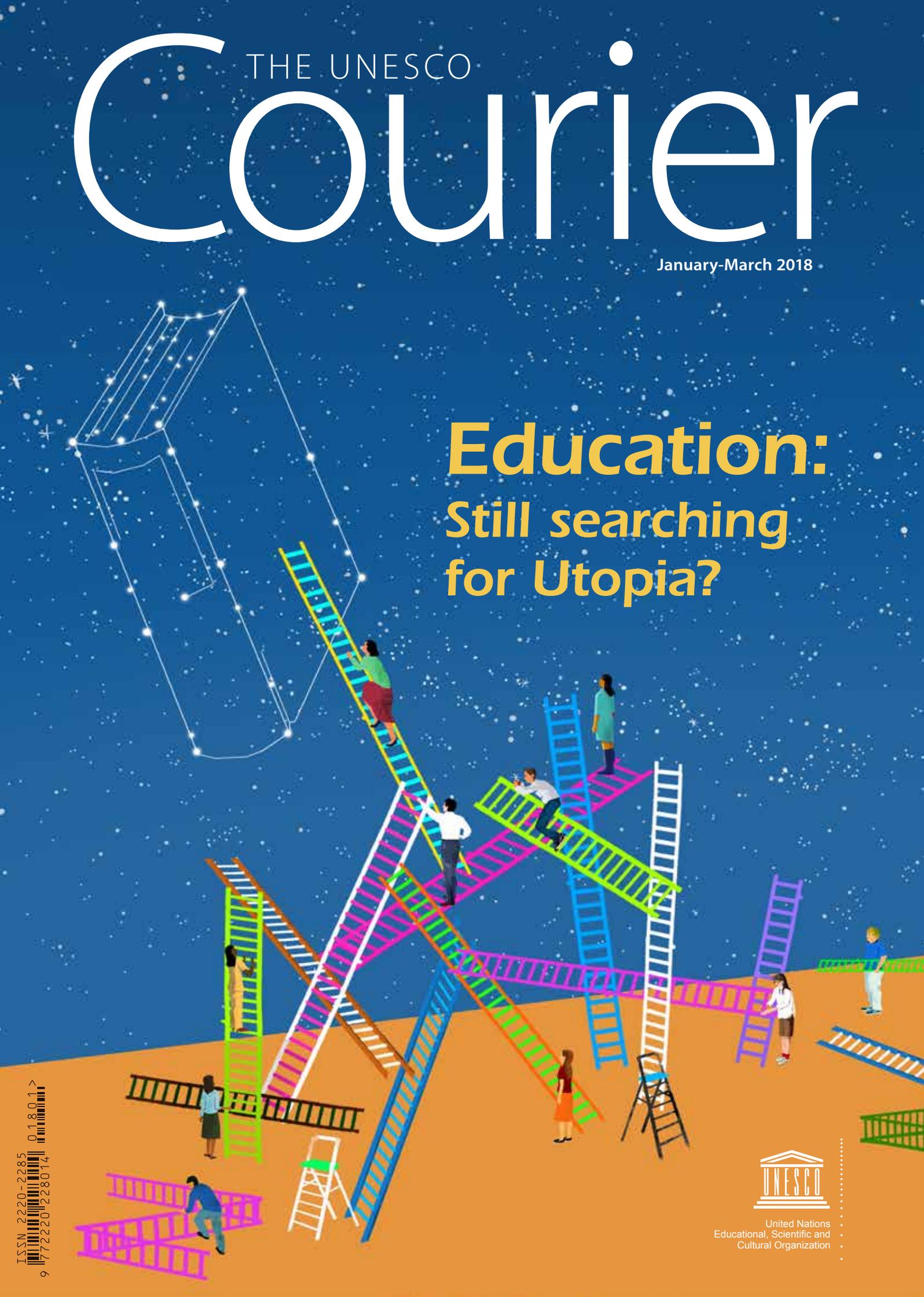


THE UNESCO Courier

January-March 2018

Education: Still searching for Utopia?

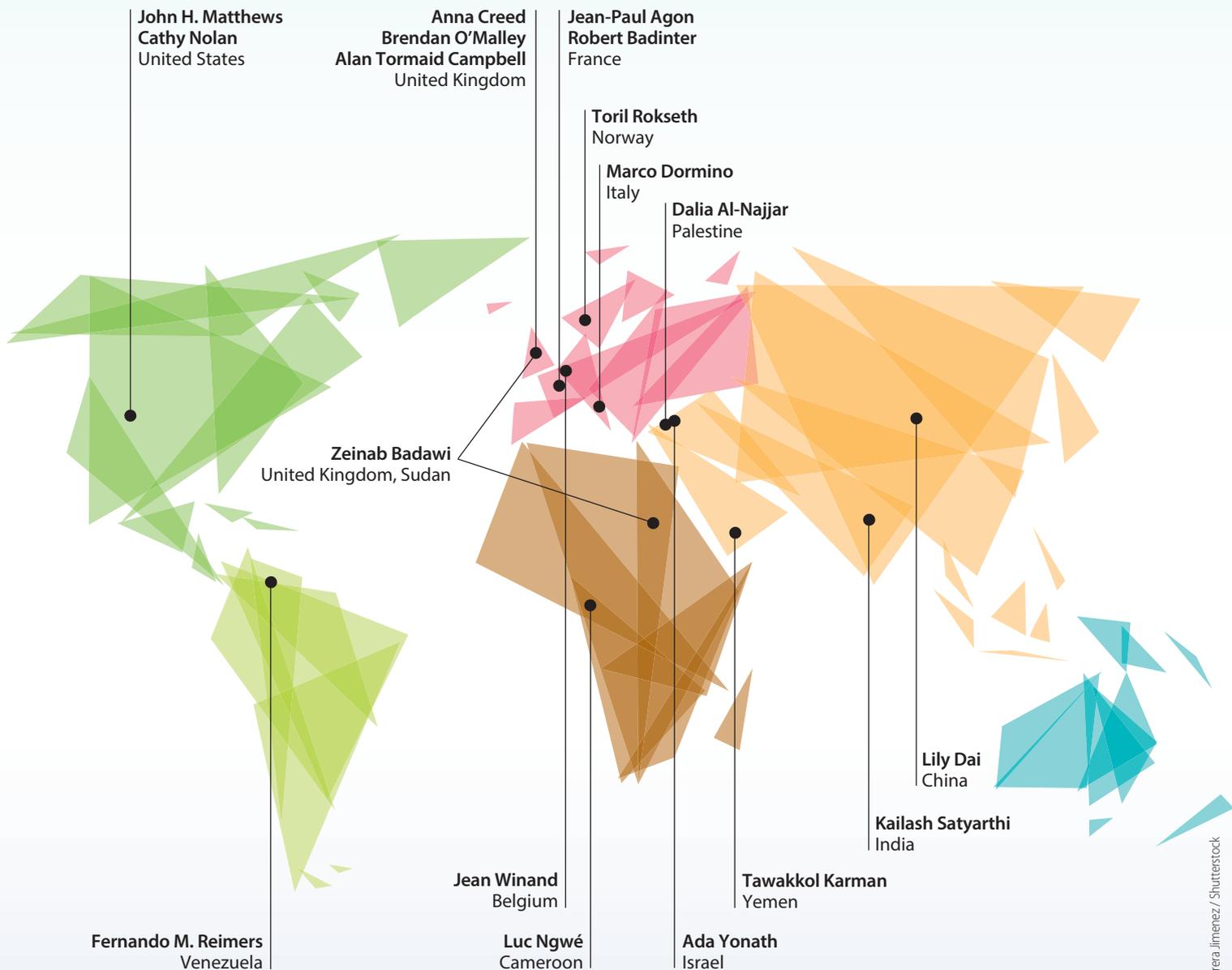


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Education transforms lives

At a time of heightened global tension, when human rights, freedom of speech, peace and the future of the planet itself may seem challenged as never before, the transformational power of education is of critical importance.

In *Learning: The Treasure Within*, the landmark Report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century in 1996, Jacques Delors, then Chairman of the Commission (1992 to 1996), spoke of education as “the necessary Utopia” and “an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice.”

Education was held up as neither miracle nor magic, but rather the best means to foster a climate where humanity would be improved – and where the rich potential for learning, inherent in every individual, would be tapped.

Our humanity is confronted with a very strange paradox: the world’s population has never been better educated, and yet, according to the [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#), 263 million children and young people are out of school, 617 million children and adolescents worldwide do not meet the minimum threshold for literacy and mathematics, at least 750 million adults are illiterate, and girls remain more likely than boys to never set foot in a classroom. Yet education is still called upon to address inequalities, poverty, terrorism and conflict. It is seen as one of the keys to global citizenship and [sustainable development](#), two of UNESCO’s fields of action. The Organization is also mandated to lead the Education 2030 global agenda with a special focus on ensuring that [no one is left behind](#).

Under the title, “Education: Still searching for Utopia?”, the *UNESCO Courier* evaluates the state of global education and explores how it responds to some of the main challenges we face.



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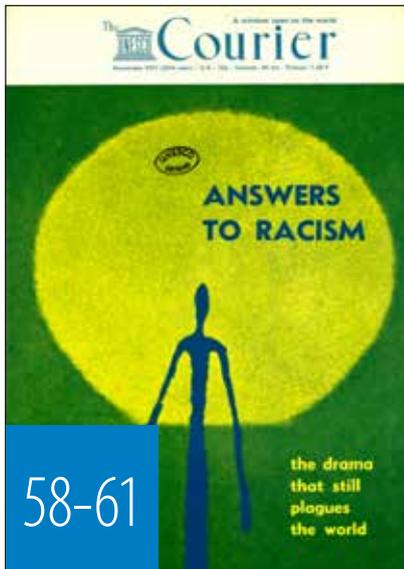
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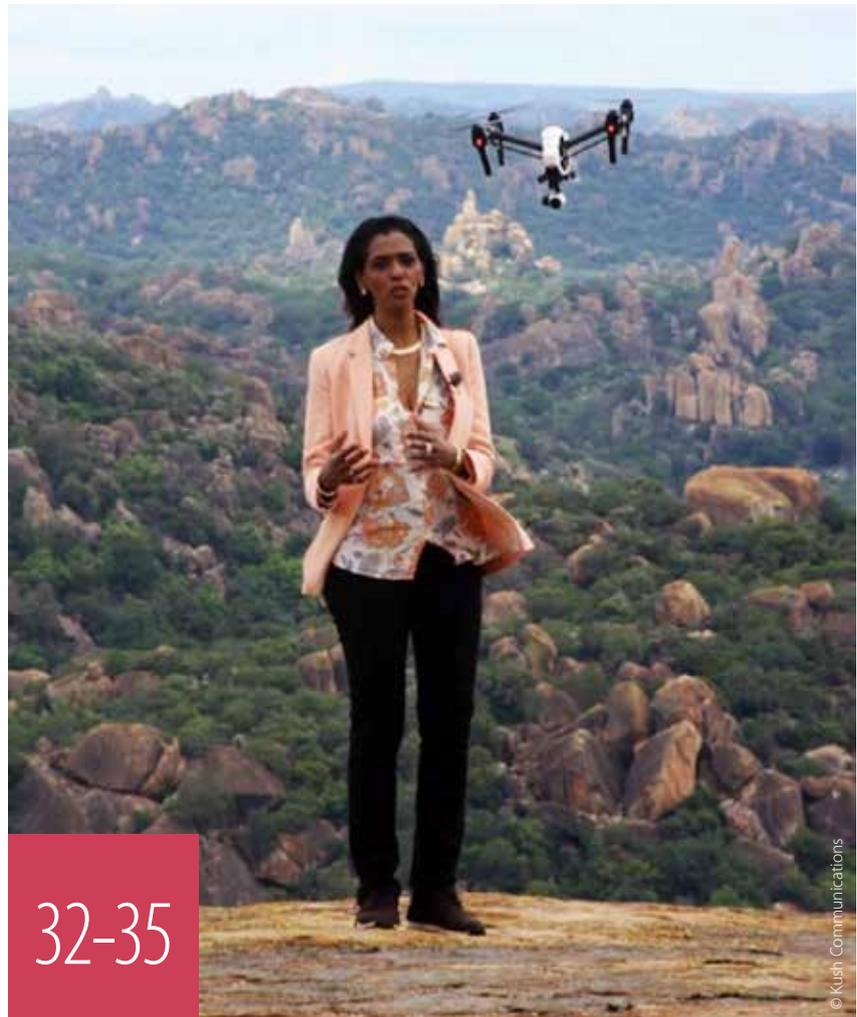
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OUR GUEST

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Education: Still searching for Utopia?

Wide angle



Nepali children on their way home from a makeshift school in Sindhupalchok district (Nepal), a year after the area was devastated by an earthquake in 2015.

© Minzayar OO / PANOS – REA



Kailash Satyarthi :

Fighting for children's rights, one step at a time



© Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation

September 2017, on the twenty-third day of the Bharat Yatra march in Indore (Madhya Pradesh, India).

Interview by Mary de Sousa

Children may have been given the right to education, but now they must be educated about their rights. This is the new challenge faced by Kailash Satyarthi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize 2014. He has been at the forefront of the fight against child slavery and labour since 1980, when he founded his movement, the **Bachpan Bachao Andolan** (Save the Childhood Movement), which has helped liberate more than 85,000 children in India from exploitation – through education and rehabilitation. Satyarthi tells the *UNESCO Courier* how his quest to improve the lives of children began, what he hopes for from his new cause to make schools safe, and why he believes true liberation starts with education.

Where and how did your impulse to fight for children's rights start?

When I was five. The very first day of my schooling, I saw a boy, around the same age as me, sitting outside the school and looking at my shoes. He had a shoe-polishing box in front of him. I was very disturbed. My first-ever question to the teacher was: why was the boy outside and not inside the school? The teacher said it was very common for poor children to have to work.

One day I asked the boy's father about this and he said his father and grandfather had also been shoe-shiners. Then he said: "Sir, don't you know that people like you are born to go to school and people like us are born to work?" That question really stayed with me, but I had no answer as a child.



© Danish Siddiqui / Reuters

When I got older, I saved my old schoolbooks and collected my pocket money to pay the fees for poor children. I trained as an electrical engineer, but the feeling that I should do something for these children never left me. I left my job to become truly involved.

What would you say were your first major achievements?

From the very start – when I used to write and print thousands of leaflets to be distributed in the market for our first campaign – I have believed that education and liberation are two sides of the same coin. When I first tried to bring the issue of child labour into the public domain, there was nothing being done about it. India did not have a law against child labour till 1986. I fought for six years for this law and it is still not perfect, so the fight goes on.

When I freed children from slavery and asked for them to attend school, I was humiliated so many times. I was told they are dirty, uncared for, we can't have them here.

I spoke to legal friends, who explained to me the problem was that India did not have education classed as a human right in its Constitution. It was only in 2001 that a mass campaign led to the 86th Amendment to our Constitution, making education a human right.

Your child labour campaign started in India, but soon became international. How did that happen?

It took two decades before it became a global issue. When I founded the Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) in 1980 in India, I discovered that none of the United Nations bodies – the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) – or the World Bank, had any international legal instrument to prevent children from being drawn into labour, trafficking, prostitution and other dangerous occupations.

I began to look at Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh, and realized that they all had similar situations concerning contemporary slavery. In parallel, I started to participate in the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland, and decided to work towards an international law against child slavery.

I campaigned in Europe and America and set up a programme in Germany to fight against child labour. As a result, the first ILO [International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour](#) was born in 1992, and then UNICEF and the World Bank joined in.

In 1993, BBA initiated the first campaign in the form of a march against child labour in India. Five years later, we launched the 80,000-kilometre Global March Against Child Labour across 103 countries, which lasted for six months.

The crowning achievement of these efforts was undoubtedly the [ILO Convention 182](#), concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. It was unanimously adopted and ratified by 181 countries. This happened in 1999, twenty years after my first leaflets were circulated in India.



Marriage of an under-age girl in Kota (Rajasthan, India) on 16 May 2010. Early marriage is one of the main obstacles to education in India.

Ten years ago, you launched another march in South Asia, to advocate for a regional protocol against forced labour, and more recently, in September 2017, the Bharat Yatra march to end child sexual abuse and trafficking. What made you organize these marches?

Bharat Yatra, a nationwide mobilization covering 11,000 kilometres over 36 days, was a clarion call to “Make India Safe Again for Children”. Child sexual abuse is a growing problem worldwide, but in India it has become a modern epidemic – with young children abused, raped or trafficked on a daily basis.

A child is sold every two minutes and sexually abused every half hour. In most cases, the perpetrators are school bus drivers, teachers, tutors. While they roam free and fearless, the victims keep quiet out of feelings of shame.

“ I realized I had been fighting all this time for every child to be in school, but in fact children are not safe there ”

I realized I had been fighting all this time for every child to be in school, but in fact children are not always safe there.

The first thing that has to change is the taboo associated with child abuse. That requires a mass movement, so we used the time-tested strategy of marching. Based on our previous successful experiences, we have tackled the problem of violence against children – this time including child marriage and exploitation, which remain huge obstacles to education.

How successful was this journey and what will happen now that awareness has been raised?

To have 1.4 million people join the Bharat Yatra march was unprecedented, particularly as the topic of child sexual abuse is taboo. Wherever we went, young people from the crowd stood up, even came to the stage, and spoke for the very first time about what was happening to them.

Children may have been given the right to education, but now they must be educated about the rights they possess. We are also pushing for a Safe Schools campaign to be promoted by schools, universities and colleges across India, where the priority will be safety from sexual abuse.

We are now working on a study assessing attitudinal and behavioural change and knowledge-building as a result of the Bharat Yatra campaign, which may be shared internationally. We have already had requests from other countries to run Safe Schools campaigns there.

During the Bharat Yatra march, you told politicians they should go back to school. What did you mean?

They pledged to visit the schools they had attended, and I told them they should go, not as VIPs (Very Important Persons), but as ordinary fathers and mothers and try to learn more – not just about safety, but about the quality of education, the general school environment, the teachers. Is the school child-friendly? Does it have the midday meal programme? What is school attendance like? So often the education sector is aloof and disconnected, and corruption can mean that in rural areas, teachers don't turn up and school drop-out rates are high.

By getting politicians to visit schools, many changes can be brought about at the same time. I also asked that female police officers visit schools more often, to build the idea of protection. The government has indicated that there will be a new bill against human trafficking, including child trafficking. The bill will also include education campaigns and programmes to help create awareness on the subject.



You were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for your “struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education.” Did it change your life?

I always joke that I was handed a medal for peace and all my peace was taken away! I have received about 40,000 invitations and would need to live another 160 years to attend all these events. At the same time, I am very happy to be thought of as the ordinary man’s Nobel laureate. Being directly connected with ordinary people gives me much more confidence in what I am trying to do.

One downside is that I am not able anymore to personally go on child labour rescue operations! My face is so well-known that I am recognized even in the remotest areas. This means there will be a tip-off, and children are removed from the mining area or factory before I get there. In several cases, I have had to be more stealthy and return two or three times to find them. On the positive side, I have access to almost all the heads of UN agencies, prime ministers, presidents, where I can talk directly about policy change.

You have come a long way from your original career as an electrical engineer. Have you found a place for those skills in your work?

My training has proved extremely useful in that it allows me to think in an analytical, rational and structured way. I believe this is why my work against child slavery has a rights-based, rather than a conventional, charity approach. Structural change is much easier to bring about when you are familiar with a structural approach.

What changes in children’s lives have you witnessed since you became an activist?

I know that once we free children from slavery and child marriages, we see a ripple effect. Education brings empowerment, dignity and identity to the most deprived and marginalized people, particularly children and girls. Once they are educated about their rights, and acquire reading and writing skills, they gain tremendous self-confidence.



© Giacomo PIROZZI / PANOS-REA

Indian students holding a meeting.

I have witnessed girls standing up and refusing to be married against their will because they know their rights and can go to the police or to a non-governmental organization (NGO). In the same way, many boys trapped into slave labour, once they know they have rights, are able to make contact with someone who can help.

You have met thousands of children. What have they taught you?

That it is essential to keep the child alive inside oneself. I believe when people are genuine and simple and clear in life, it is because they have not forgotten the importance of being childlike.

What keeps you motivated?

What keeps me motivated? The dreams I can see in children’s eyes.

Kailash Satyarthi (India) was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2014 (with Malala Yousafzai), for his “struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education.” Satyarthi was instrumental in the adoption of the ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour in 1999. He is also founding president of the [Global Campaign for Education](#) and in this capacity, was a civil-society representative in the High-Level Group on Education for All.

Satyarthi is best known for his mass awareness marches, the Global March Against Child Labour, across 103 countries in 1998, the South Asian March Against Child Trafficking in 2007 and the Bharat Yatra (Safe India for Children) march to end child sexual abuse and trafficking, which concluded in October 2017. He has also launched the 100 Million for 100 Million campaign to support children to know their rights.



When going to school is an act of faith



© UN Migration Agency (IOM) / Julie Christine Batula, Media and Communications Division (Manila)

by **Brendan O'Malley**

Every attack must be documented and every measure taken to ensure education continues during periods of conflict. The price paid for children losing access to schools is too high, writes Brendan O'Malley.

The first school I visited in an active conflict zone was set on the side of a hill overlooking a plain in Kosovo*, in 1999. To get there, we had to drive through country lanes past a village, where skeletons of houses lined the road – many of them with makeshift roofs, and all of them with black scorch marks above their windows.

They had been torched by Serbian forces in retaliation for the activities of the Kosovo Liberation Army, the rebel armed group fighting for an independent Kosovo. And in many of them, extended families were now living in one blackened room, around a stove donated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

At the school, I saw children sitting in thin clothes, shivering in freezing classrooms with shell-holes in the wall. Many of them looked numb from something deeper than the freezing winter cold.

The Santa Barbara Elementary School in the Philippines became a killing ground after it was taken over by an armed group during the Zamboanga siege of September 2013.

With their families, they had lived in the woods for six months to escape earlier retribution and, after negotiations, had recently been allowed to return to their village. The teachers were working without any prospect of being paid, to keep classes going.

As I interviewed the headteacher, there was a loud thud outside and the whole building shook. A shell had landed on the other side of the hill.

"They do this every day, just to remind us they are here," the headteacher explained. "But we will carry on. The school gives us hope."

* Within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1244, dated 1999.



A safe place to be

In times of conflict or crisis, being able to send children to school offers parents and communities a semblance of normal life; a safe place to leave their children while they work; a place where vital services, such as vaccinations, can be delivered and where vital safety information – such as how to avoid landmines – can be learned. But above all, it is a means to give their children an education that will enable them to build a future for themselves and for their community and country.

The reverse is also true. When schools are destroyed in areas of instability, hope is destroyed along with them – fear of going to school and indeed, staying in the area, can spread. People may flee for their own safety and, with that, all hope of an education is gone.

There have been some shocking examples of education being targeted in recent years. In Chibok, Nigeria, in April 2014, Boko Haram militants abducted 276 girls from the [Chibok Government Girls Secondary School](#), more than a hundred of whom have yet to be released (as of December 2017, according to news agencies Reuters and Agence France Presse).

In October 2016, pro-government air strikes on the Kamal Qal'aji school complex in the Idlib Governorate, Syria, killed three teachers and nineteen children, injured sixteen children and severely damaged the school, the [United Nations](#) (UN) reported.

In June 2017, militants planted bombs around a primary school in [Pigkawayan](#), in the Philippines, occupied it and held local people hostage in the school.

© Rahima Gambo (www.educationisforbidden.com)



Entire generations left behind

The immediate impact of these attacks may be deaths and injuries to students and staff, destruction of facilities, closure of schools and universities, and psychological trauma.

If they are ongoing – given that on average, conflicts in poor countries last for twelve years – attacks, or even collateral damage, can lead to [long-term disruption](#), closure, the permanent dropout of students and teachers, and the prevention of rebuilding.

Even after a conflict ends, it can take years to rebuild destroyed facilities and get the education system back on its feet – during which time whole cohorts of children are denied an education.

Research by [UNESCO](#) shows that half of the world's primary-aged children who are [out of school](#), live in conflict-affected states, and most never get the chance to complete their education, "[leaving behind entire generations](#)".

The latest global study of attacks on education, [Education under Attack 2014](#) – published by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) – documented that over four years, from 2009 to 2012, armed non-state groups, state, military and security forces, and armed criminal groups had attacked thousands of schoolchildren, university students, teachers, academics and education establishments in at least seventy countries worldwide.

The attacks ranged from the bombing or burning down of schools or universities to killing, injuring, kidnapping or illegally arresting, detaining or torturing students, teachers and academics.



Diptych by Nigerian artist, Rahima Gambo, from the multimedia project, [Education is Forbidden](#), reflecting on students returning to their schools which were attacked by Boko Haram militants in Nigeria. The panel on the left shows Rukkaya and Hadiza in their school playground in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri in 2016, recalling the times when they had to hide their school uniforms in plastic bags to avoid being targeted by insurgents. The panel on the right shows drawings from a Nigerian schoolbook.

In the six most heavily-affected countries – Afghanistan, Colombia, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Syria – the 2014 report documented that there were “1,000 or more attacks on schools, universities, staff and students or 1,000 or more students, teachers or other education personnel attacked, or education buildings attacked or used for military purposes.”

The report also found that schools and university facilities were used for military purposes in twenty-four of the thirty countries profiled.

The UN has since [reported that in Nigeria](#), an estimated 1,500 schools have been destroyed since 2011, with at least 1,280 casualties among teachers and students. According to the GCPEA, “in the worst cases, [children have been injured](#) and killed and schools damaged or destroyed when belligerent forces have attacked schools because military forces were using them”.

“When schools are destroyed in areas of instability, hope is destroyed along with them”

Schools and universities are targeted for different, and often multiple, reasons – whether it is to create instability, attack the perceived type of education offered, seize facilities for military use; or in the case of higher education, to prevent expressions of alternative political views.

Every attack must be documented

The first and most crucial step to addressing the problem is to develop effective [monitoring to understand](#) what is happening, and why.

Prevention measures can range from providing protection, such as security guards or building a perimeter wall, to addressing a motive for attacks, such as ensuring equitable access to schools for minorities or enabling minorities to learn through their own language and study their own religion; or hiring teachers from the local ethnic community, as has happened in Southern Thailand.

The reduction of impact measures could include building schools out of concrete instead of wood and straw, because they would be harder to burn down, or providing two points of exit for each classroom, so that students have a chance to escape if militants or soldiers try to enter a classroom to recruit them at gunpoint.

In the case of the military use of schools, a key preventive measure is persuading states and non-state armed groups to agree not to use schools for military purposes.

Deterrence measures include [ending legal impunity](#) for the attacks and holding to account the armed groups and armed forces that carry out attacks.

This includes the listing of parties committing grave violations against children in conflict – including attacks on schools and recruitment of child soldiers – in the [UN Secretary General's annual report](#) on such violations to the UN Security Council. Those parties listed must draw up action plans to address and end the violations or face sanctions.

Currently, the GCPEA is leading an international campaign to persuade countries to sign up to the [Safe Schools Declaration](#), which commits countries to many of these measures. In December 2017, the Dominican Republic became the seventy-second country (as of 9 January 2018) to sign the Declaration.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for [Children and Armed Conflict \(CAAC\)](#), Virginia Gamba, has urged all UN Member States to endorse and promote the instrument. The Safe Schools Declaration “has made an essential contribution towards promoting tangible measures to prevent attacks on education. We simply cannot afford to make schools in conflict zones a military target. The price of a child losing his or her access to education for years, if not decades, is too high to pay,” Gamba said, while presenting the CAAC Report at the UN General Assembly, in October 2017.

Brendan O'Malley (United Kingdom), a journalist and consultant, has worked with several international organizations on issues related to attacks on education, and higher education for refugees and crisis-affected communities. He is the author of *Education under Attack* (2007, UNESCO) and *Education under Attack* (2010, UNESCO). He was lead researcher of *Education under Attack 2014* (GCPEA). O'Malley was editor and co-writer of the Education Cluster's *Protecting Education in Countries Affected by Conflict* series (2012).



“ I chose to be
optimistic
Dalia Al-Najjar ”



© Vilde Media

Dalia Al-Najjar,
Goodwill Ambassador for
Children of Peace.

“ I was so angry,
I felt like I wanted
to blow up the
whole world,
but I didn't.
I decided
I wouldn't be
pushed to
become evil.
I would choose
peace. ”

by Mary de Sousa

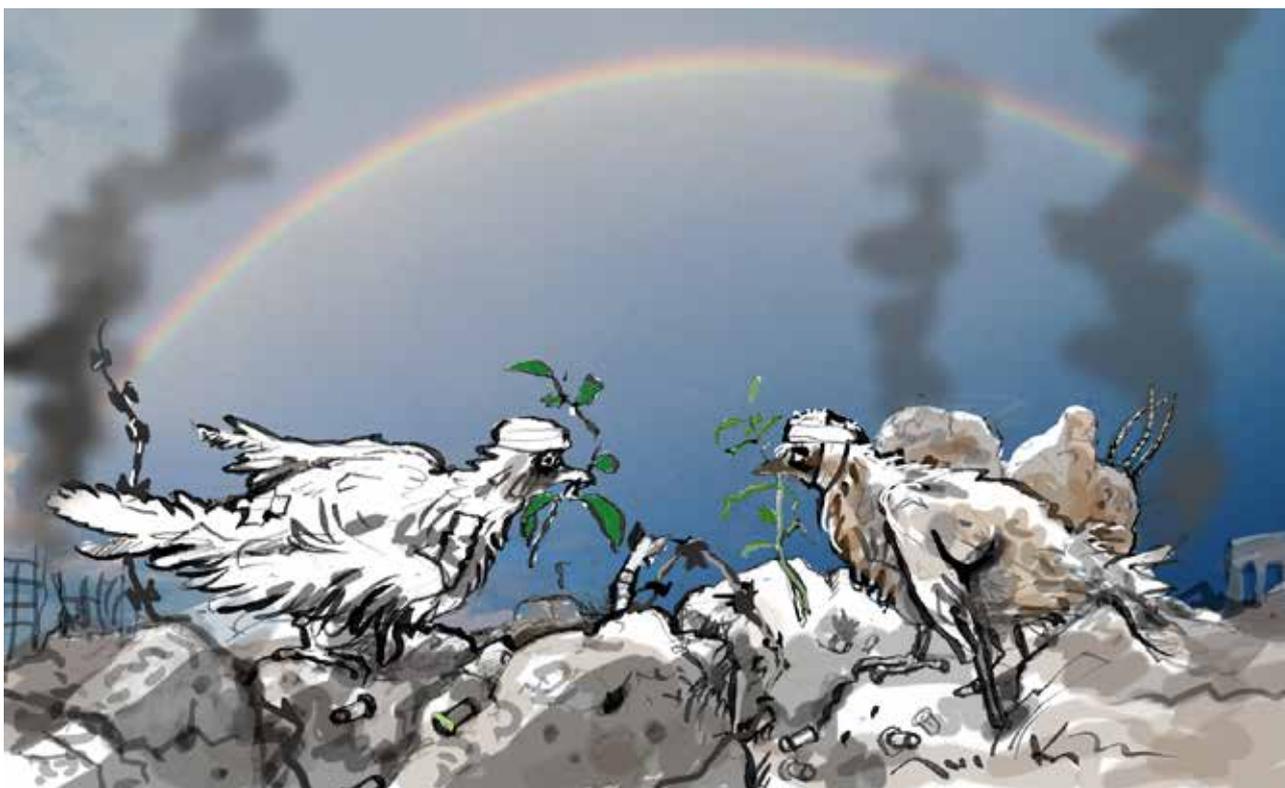
A child of war dedicates herself to peace

Dalia Al-Najjar has crammed a great deal into her short life. At 22, the Palestinian refugee has already lived through three wars and has spent every spare moment between siege and ceasefire studying, volunteering, working, blogging, on the daily struggle to live in Gaza – and planning how to change the future.

A good deal of her energy goes into her role as Goodwill Ambassador for [Children of Peace](#), a non-partisan children's charity dedicated to building trust, friendship and reconciliation between Israeli and Palestinian children, aged 4 to 17, and their communities.



© Avi Katz (Israel) – Cartooning for Peace



*“Wars and Peace”, from the
Cartooning for Peace international
network of editorial cartoonists,
supported by UNESCO.*

Dalia says she is fuelled by anger and hope, but also that she draws heavily on a family culture that values education. She has consciously used learning as a means to realize her dreams, the greatest of which is to find solutions to violence and hatred. “My family has always made me aware that education is hugely important,” she said.

Dalia experienced her first siege when she was just 12, followed by two major conflicts. “I was in ninth grade when the first war started, and everything fell apart. I didn’t understand: why were people killing each other? I thought it would last only a few weeks,” she said.

She continued to study throughout, finally graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from the Islamic University of Gaza, her life reduced to the intermittent bursts of electricity in the city. “In those days I never went to school without watching the news first, and everything depended on the power schedule. So I woke up when there was electricity, or studied by candlelight, which destroyed my eyes. I would often fight with my brother and sister to get the candle.”

The 2014 war proved a turning point for Dalia. “After the war, my ideas became much clearer. I didn’t want anybody else to have to live like this. I chose to be optimistic, because if not, I don’t live. Not living wasn’t a choice for me,” she said.

Dalia was invited on a short scholarship to the United States, and began a blog and YouTube show. She is also a member of the [World Youth Alliance](#), a New York-based international coalition, which works with young people worldwide to build a culture that nurtures and supports the dignity of the person – through advocacy, education and culture.

But it is Dalia’s work as a Goodwill Ambassador for Children of Peace that has changed her most profoundly. “It is easy to stay on your own side and demonize the other. Now I have Israeli friends and we realize we have been given different narratives, and we have to find our way through that together, using critical thinking,” she explained. “Being on one side of a conflict makes it much easier to dehumanize someone than to accept that there is trauma on both sides.”

Now studying for her Master’s degree in Human Resources in Sakarya, Turkey, Dalia has an exciting new project. She attended the Young Sustainable Impact (YSI) conference in Oslo in 2017, as an ‘earthpreneur’ (someone who uses entrepreneurship to work towards a sustainable planet), where she was tasked with proposing a startup that addressed one of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

When she learned that more people die as a result of waterborne diseases than from conflict, she co-founded Xyla Water Filtration Technologies. The company aims to commercialize a filter made from plant tissue that costs less than \$10 and can provide clean water for a family of seven for a year.

And she has another goal. “I want to be prime minister,” she said, matter-of-factly.



Can peace be taught?

by Toril Rokseth

Peace is more than the absence of war. That's the crucial start of the learning curve for young people. The Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, official showcase for the Nobel Peace Prize, runs its own education programme, teaching peace. More than 10,000 children aged between 6 and 19 visit the Center each year.

Every year, thousands of schoolchildren walk through the doors of a converted railway station overlooking the harbour in the heart of Oslo, Norway's capital, in search of one elusive thing – peace.

An initiative of Geir Lundestad, former director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, the [Nobel Peace Center](#) serves as a museum about the Nobel Peace Prize. An independent foundation, financed through a combination of private donations and government grants, its mission is to promote interest in, and knowledge of, the Nobel Peace Prize and tell the story of Alfred Nobel and the Peace Prize laureates.

Through its events, the Center aims to foster reflection and engagement on topics related to war, peace and conflict resolution. Since it opened in 2005, it has welcomed over 1.6 million visitors to its more than sixty permanent and temporary exhibitions – including twelve about the Peace Prize, and exhibitions about the laureates and other world leaders.

Alongside that work, the Center runs an education programme aimed at opening young minds to the concept of peace, how it is defined and cultivated. More than 10,000 children aged between 6 and 19 from Norway, Europe and further afield, visit the Center each year.



© Johannes Grønseth / Nobel Peace Center

Juan Manuel Santos, President of Colombia and Nobel Peace Prize 2016 laureate, at the Nobel Peace Center in December 2016.

A team of four trained educators run ten programmes a year, devised for children, families and older students. Any school or individual can sign up for hour-long training sessions and other activities including talks and films, all covering topics at the core of the history of the Nobel Peace Prize – such as conflict resolution and human rights.

Defining peace is not easy

Our first task with the children is to explore the concept of peace. Everyone knows they want peace, but it is not that simple to talk about or teach. When we start to define it, most students say at first that peace is the absence of war.

But is that enough? We challenge them to think further. Can peace be something more than the absence of war, and if so, what is it? And what destroys peace?

The obvious answers are war and conflict, but peace can also be destroyed by poverty, racism, environmental disasters, or the absence of democracy and human rights. We start to pose harder questions. If racism destroys peace, should we not oppose it? If poverty destroys peace, should we not work to eradicate it? If the absence of human rights destroys peace, should we not work to ensure human rights for everyone?

We also ask the students about their views on what promotes peace. This enables us to more fully explore topics such as human rights, how countries and groups can work together, and respect between people. The purpose of these questions is to provoke them into understanding that peace is a positive rather than a negative.

At the Center, we believe the goal of our work is for students to acquire knowledge and values that can be transformed into actions that benefit them personally, and their communities. To nurture conscious, tolerant, empathetic citizens, the foundation must be democracy, human rights and conflict resolution.



Starting with the basics

“Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife,” wrote John Dewey in *The School and Society*. The American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer (1859-1952) believed in teaching children through problem-solving rather than by learning facts by rote. We try to use the same approach.

When we talk about human rights, we start with basics, like asking students if they feel they are heard when they express opinions. From this, it is a small step to talking about others who have not been allowed to talk freely – like Nobel laureates [Nelson Mandela](#) and the German pacifist [Carl von Ossietzky](#), for example. We then discuss the responsibility that follows from basic human rights.

We adapt our methods to the age and ability of our students. We know, for example, that role-play works very well when the youngest students are being taught the importance of children’s rights. We challenge older students to take a stand in difficult cases based on true-life dilemmas. Above all, we try to ensure that the sessions are relevant and help build critical thinking.

Drawing on personal experiences

A directed discussion with open-ended questions can strengthen the students’ empathetic abilities. What is racism? What happens inside a person repeatedly exposed to racism? What are the consequences of racism? In group discussions, students learn how to articulate their opinions and expand their theoretical vocabulary. We draw on their personal experiences to reinforce the universal aspect of human rights and create a safe framework for them to share, and to try out standpoints with each other.

Our programmes also make use of our archive and the laureates’ work, as powerful concrete examples of actions for peace. This may include the Austrian novelist and pacifist Bertha von Suttner (the first woman to be solely awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905), for her persistent efforts in the international peace movement; American activist Martin Luther King, Jr.’s (awarded in 1964) use of non-violent methods to further the Civil Rights movement, or Iranian human rights lawyer Shirin Ebadi’s (awarded in 2003) audacious work to achieve universal human rights.

To follow up, we highly recommend that teachers take the conversation started at the Center back to the classroom. We provide follow-up tasks on our website, to support practice and knowledge-deepening activities. We often receive very positive feedback from teachers about the way in which the visit has stimulated thought and debate among their students.

Toril Rokseth (Norway) is Director of Education at the Nobel Peace Center, where she leads a team of four educators.

The Nobel Field, designed by American artist, [David Small](#), is often called the heart of the Nobel Peace Center.





African brain drain:

is there an alternative?

by Luc Ngwé

In October 2016, a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast that “migrants [from sub-Saharan Africa] in OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries could increase from about 7 million in 2013 to about 34 million by 2050,” adding that “the migration of young and educated workers takes a large toll on a region whose human capital is already scarce.” This decades-long haemorrhaging of the continent cannot suddenly be stopped. African universities have to include time spent studying abroad as an integral part of their courses, while encouraging short-term migration that allows these well-educated citizens to return to their home countries.

“Brain drain is particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa,” says the [World Economic Outlook](#) (October 2016), a report published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). “The migration of young and educated workers takes a large toll on a region whose human capital is already scarce. The concentration of migrants among those who are educated is higher than in other developing economies. The migration of highly-skilled workers entails a high social cost, as is evidenced by the departure of doctors and nurses from Malawi and Zimbabwe, which may mean welfare losses beyond those that are purely economic.”

This situation is not new. The African brain drain had already started in the 1980s.

Temporary migration in the 1960s

In the 1960s, the higher education policies of newly independent African states reflected a need for them to train their own elites. For some, students would be trained abroad, mostly in the former colonizing countries and the Soviet Union. They received state scholarships and were expected to return home to contribute to their country’s development. Cameroon, for example, required that all students with scholarships sign a ten-year pledge. Meanwhile, countries in the former Soviet bloc demanded that African students leave as soon as they had finished their studies. They were also encouraged to leave the host countries due to other factors – such as difficulties in finding employment, jobs reserved for nationals, discrimination or downgraded appointments. At the same time, newly independent states offered attractive job prospects for their graduates – reviving their enthusiasm for independence and using laudatory slogans like “Your Country Needs You!” to make them feel wanted.

In the two decades after independence, the African brain drain followed the logic of a wider migration movement. Its main feature was that it was temporary – at least in its intention.

In the 1980s, this post-independence euphoria gave way to disenchantment in most African countries. Promises of an escape from poverty were not kept. In a series of successive self-imposed “slimming diets”, the state apparatus drastically cut back on public-sector recruitment. The ideal of a project for the common good began to fade, and a feeling of futility set in. Getting a diploma no longer had the same meaning, while “employability” became the watchword for educational policy, in Africa and elsewhere. Students increasingly turned towards courses that enabled them to acquire skills that were “saleable” in the world job market.

Migration for life

Countries in the North were not unhappy about the migration of skills out of countries in the South, though. They competed for new talent while facing problems in renewing their own workforces. Forecasts of an ageing population and certain policies limiting the number of student places, like the *numerus clausus* for medical students in France, forced these countries to increasingly turn to foreign labour. They adopted selective immigration policies in an effort to match the skill sets of migrants to the needs of their economies. Faced with a dearth of doctors, France welcomed those from abroad, while Germany attracted foreigners with the skills their industries needed.



The health professions, computing, finance and technology, in particular, led the way for greater international mobility. In this sense, globalization gradually opened up national job markets, while encouraging greater standardization in curricula and diplomas worldwide.

But, while African countries entered this globalization through the backdoor, in that they did not always have a say in it, the same was not true for individuals. They sometimes benefited through personal educational projects, professional prospects and other possibilities (consumption, travel, etc.) on offer to them. However, while these opportunities may have matched personal development goals, they did not necessarily correspond to the development goals, orientations and priorities of some African countries.

"I decided to leave my country because, at the time, I thought that there was no future for us there, and that life would be better here, in Europe. When I've finished my studies, I want to look for a job in my home country, while keeping a base here, in Italy. That way, if I don't find work at home, I can always stay here and try to make it," says Thertys Schemele, an African student interviewed by Congolese photographer Bourges Naboutawo.

“African countries have entered globalization through the backdoor”

Be that as it may, the internal policies of African countries are among the factors that – alongside the demographic trends of countries of the North, and globalization – transformed African migration from being temporary to being permanent. This was migration with no real prospect or intention of returning, and which was not due, as we have just seen, to economic factors alone (jobs, salaries, working conditions) or policies (persecution, insecurity). It was migration as a prospect for life.

Brain power in the diaspora

Today, African countries seem to find it impossible to stop the brain drain. Repatriation strategies at any price are proving to be ineffective, so long as governments do not attack the root causes of emigration.

And that priority is not given to retaining brains that are fleeing.

One alternative – if not a solution – would be to use the brain power in the diaspora to teach courses in African universities. Such a circulation of skills would open new prospects for African countries at a time of inescapable globalization.

For several years now, university and scientific networks have been set up between home countries and countries with an African diaspora. There is, for example, the University of the Mountains in Cameroon, which has formed an alliance with the Dijon University Hospital and the Paris 13 University in France – and with the University of Udine and the Centro Cardiologico Monzino in Milan, both in Italy.





Morocco is involving its diaspora through national programmes such as the [International Forum of Moroccan Competencies Abroad](#), which supports national research and technology initiatives. In 2009, the National Centre for Scientific and Technical Research (CNRST) in Rabat signed memoranda of understanding with a number of bodies abroad, notably the Association of Moroccan Computer Scientists in France (AIMAF) and the Moroccan-German Skills Network (DMK) in Germany.

Health is an area that would benefit from this kind of cooperation. Cameroonian pharmacists who have settled in Belgium have joined forces with the University of Douala to offer introductory courses in pharmacy. Since 2010, the Association of Cameroonian Physicians in Belgium ([MedCamBel](#)) has been organizing professional conferences and public information, prevention and awareness-raising campaigns for Cameroonians.

Circular migration – a new trend

In parallel, certain countries in the North are encouraging “circular mobility”, or short-term migration, which enables foreigners to work and to specialize in their vocations for a few years, before returning to their country of origin. This circular migration is supported by the [Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration](#), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), under its Triple Win programme, and Germany’s [Federal Employment Agency](#).

Circular migration benefits both the country of origin as well as the host country, through the transfer of skills and knowledge. And we shouldn’t forget the subjects of all of these initiatives – who are learning by working, who form professional links that might prove useful, and who can earn a better living during their stay abroad, which they can then invest in the economy of their countries of origin someday.

© Bourges Naboutawo



“African students in Europe find it hard to return to their home country once they have finished their studies,” says Loveline Nguetsa. But not her. She wants to go back to Cameroon when she has her degree in electronics and a Master’s in automation. Despite the problems of employment, insecurity, education, and health, which drive young people to leave the continent, “you always feel better at home,” she explains to the Congolese photographer Bourges Naboutawo. She is convinced that, with real political will, these problems can be solved.

Similar mutually beneficial practices between host country and country of origin operate in the academic world, especially in the United States and Canada, and to a lesser extent, in the United Kingdom and France. African universities with links to higher education and research institutions in these countries are piloting a programme of cooperation with their country of origin, supported by these overseas institutions. In 2010, Mahmood Mamdani, who was director of the Institute for African Studies at Columbia University, New York (from 1999 to 2004), created the [Makerere Institute of Social Research](#) at the Makerere University in Uganda. In 2016, Ousmane Kane, who holds the Chair of Contemporary Islamic Religion and Society at the Harvard Divinity School in the US, started an academic exchange programme for students from Senegal, his country of birth. There is a long list of African researchers and academics who are helping to regenerate higher education and research in their countries of origin, through teaching and research programmes and co-publication projects.

The integration of the African diaspora in the global skills market offers them some assurance that they will remain competitive, instead of experiencing the sclerosis they suffer if they stay in their country of origin – because of the poor working conditions and an environment that does not favour professional success. This is particularly the case for lecturers, researchers, health personnel, and more recently, the so-called cutting-edge professions like Information Technology (IT), telecommunications, finance and biotechnology.

As the IMF report points out, African diaspora networks “can also provide rigorous professional development and leadership training programmes. Combining their skills, contacts, and know-how with their insight into global opportunities and local customs, diaspora networks of emigrants may help strengthen the home-country business environment, raise efficiency, and expand into new markets.”

When we make the effort to transform the brain *drain* into brain *circulation*, it can pave the way for new forms of cooperation, new modes of development for African countries and new forms of influence that can draw strength from international socialization.

Luc Ngwé is a Cameroonian researcher and freelance consultant. The author of a series of studies on higher education, he has taught at the University of Douala (Cameroon), and at universities in Nanterre and Avignon (France).



Universities

and the “democracy of the gullible”

by Jean Winand

Technological and scientific advances have changed the way we relate to the world. The role of the humanities has been ousted by an economics-centric approach. In this context, universities are confronted with a dilemma: should they be producing technicians who are intrinsically productive, or more generalist graduates who are able to reflect on the future of societies? Economic realism cannot be the sole response to today's challenges.

Among the phenomena that characterize the early twenty-first century, the most significant must be the disappearance of the landmarks that society uses to find its bearings, and the increasing difficulty that individuals have in visualizing an optimistic future for themselves – a feeling exacerbated by following a daily spectacle of wars and mass migrations.

To this can be added our questions about the nature of the living world – the maintenance of our ecosystems, the workings of our democratic and individual freedoms, the role of the State, relationships between States and multinational corporations – that are able to mobilize enormous means to control the gathering, distribution and preservation of knowledge and information, as well as their transformation and exploitation. The isolationism of some rich countries, the rise of populism and the dramatic reinforcement of integralist movements, leads us to believe that power is progressively being seized by those who believe in quick and easy – if not simplistic – solutions.



© Selçuk Demirel

Do politicians see how important it is to train people who can think about things with a critical mind?

Faced with these concerns about the contemporary world, one would imagine that the humanities – with one of its central missions being precisely to provide the keys to interpret the world in which we live – would have assumed a more prominent role. But, with the possible exception of sociology, the humanities have remained largely in the background in current debates and are slowly disappearing from university curricula. The place traditionally reserved for the humanities is clearly diminishing, just about everywhere in the world, but particularly in developed countries.

On the one hand, their scope is shrinking – the messages they convey have ceased to be relevant for technical disciplines. At the same time, the resources allocated to the humanities, for both teaching and research, are at a constant low level.

The causes contributing to this situation are too numerous to be detailed here. I will restrict myself to the role of the political authorities.

What priorities for policy?

In a world where full employment is no longer a certainty, the almost isometric correspondence between training and a trade that can lead to employment has become a real obsession. It now seems preferable to train graduates who are immediately ready for specific tasks, rather than offer them a more general degree. For example, in June 2015, the Japanese government announced its intention to drastically reduce, if not abolish, departments of humanities, social sciences, philosophy and the arts, in the universities it controls. The Japanese Prime Minister stated at the time, that rather than backing more academic research, which is very theoretical, it was preferable to provide more practical courses, which would better anticipate the needs of society.

But can universities content themselves with training specialized technicians who remain ignorant of anything outside the limited area of their discipline? It has come to the point where we have to ask ourselves if politicians, who are responsible for setting strategic objectives, see the need to train people who can think more generally, with a critical mind. In some countries, the answer is clearly no. In many others it is not, or is no longer seen as a priority – sometimes even by the university establishment itself, now obsessed with questions of profitability.

In a world where it is becoming harder to find a philosophical and moral compass, universities still enjoy a good measure of trust with the public. But, in order to maintain and reinforce this trust, they have to continue to set a good example. Scientists are not always immune to certain criticisms of their intellectual integrity.



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So science has become suspect in the eyes of a growing proportion of the population. The presentation of what is called 'alternative facts' is an interesting case in point. This is probably not the place for a lengthy exposition of the various sceptical views – which are sometimes held at the highest levels of government – on the reality of climate change, or arguments – as if they were two equivalent opinions – about the theory of the evolution of species and creationism. In this changing context, universities can be strongholds of freedom. This depends, of course, to a large extent on the institutions themselves, but governments need to guarantee sufficient resources to ensure their real autonomy.

The role of the humanities

In an ideal university, the humanities would have a central role to play. And yet they are not taken seriously today. Too often the survival of these disciplines depends on an instrumentalization that is almost forced. For example, we can easily agree that a philosophical insight is necessary on ethical issues in the life sciences, but we don't see the use of supporting research on Kant [Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), German philosopher] medieval philosophy or phenomenology.

For many scientists, research in the human sciences is not real science. The lack of understanding stems particularly from the fact that the natural sciences impose their epistemological paradigm – or at least their research practices – on science as a whole.



A collection of antique globes at a shop in downtown Vienna, Austria, 2011. Part of German photographer Frank Herfort's Interiors-Public series.

As the preserve of the humanities is first and foremost that of meaning, it inevitably follows that there will be a certain relativity in their findings.

Also, no one thinks of criticizing the technical elite, respected for their contributions to economic wealth, our physical well-being and our material comfort. The same is not true of the intellectual elites, whose mission is also to be disruptive, by the questions they pose to society, by the critical position they take vis-à-vis the authorities, or the way they decode the meaning – always the meaning – that is hidden, disguised or obscured under the continuous flow of information, in which we are all submerged.

“The excuse of leaders who follow a path based solely on economic realism is marked with ignorance, or a desire to subjugate people”

But it is precisely the humanities – which do not think in terms of binary categories – that are able to provide the tools we need to understand the complex world around us. By default, what will gradually, and perhaps irreversibly, emerge, is the “[democracy of the gullible](#)”, to borrow a term from the French sociologist, Gérald Bronner.

The warning signs of obscurantism

Confronted with the colossal challenges posed by the evolution of the contemporary world, by the extraordinary technological developments that profoundly question our models of society, the only possible response cannot lie solely in a search for economic well-being – even if there obviously have to be basic minimum standards, especially in the least developed countries. But sticking to that principle would at best be a fig leaf, used to conceal more complex and essential realities. The only adequate response lies in the comprehension of the intelligence of the world in which we live.

This understanding depends on culture, a profound culture, not – or in any case, not only – a culture of entertainment. It demands a culture nurtured by the breadth of history; a multilingual culture, a culture which is concerned with its origins, which researches them, tries to deepen our understanding of them, and thus tries to understand its own present and envisage its future. A culture, then, that is fully informed, and which can only be so through the irreplaceable contribution of the humanities.

In order to understand the position of humans in the universe, along with their history and culture, in more than a superficial manner, we need to acquire methods that can sometimes be very exacting. Yet the ignorance of these things, along with the disdain or even contempt for those who defend them, have always been the harbingers of authoritarianism and obscurantism.

The excuse of leaders who would follow a path based solely on economic realism is, at best, stamped with the seal of ignorance. At worst, it is the trace of a desire to subjugate people by brutalizing them. This is what I was referring to when I spoke of a major democratic challenge in the way we conceive the status and the role of the humanities in our societies.

Jean Winand (Belgium) is a professor at the University of Liège, and an expert in the languages and literature of ancient Egypt. He was Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters between 2010 and 2017, and elected a member of the Royal Academy of Belgium in 2017. He co-chaired the International Programme Committee of the [World Conference on the Humanities](#) held in August 2017 in Liège, in partnership with UNESCO.



A road map to change the world



© Create Peace Project (www.createpeaceproject.com)

Artwork produced during a workshop by the *Create Peace Project*, which involves students across the globe exchanging messages of peace.

by **Fernando M. Reimers**

It is imperative to equip the next generation with an education that will help them understand, care about and address the global risks we all face. Only then can we live in peace with one another, and with the planet we inhabit, argues education expert Fernando Reimers. He has created two innovative *Global Citizenship Education* curricula at Harvard University to help students become global citizens.

What is education but the construction of opportunities for people to develop the skills and mindsets that help them live in ways that advance worthy goals? This idea dates back at least to the sixteenth-century pedagogue, *Jan Comenius*, who argued, in his *Didactica Magna*, that we should educate all, so we could have peace in the world.

The same idea was captured in the inclusion of education as one of the rights in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted in 1948, and in the Preamble to *UNESCO's Constitution*.

The inclusion of that right in the Declaration sparked one of the most remarkable silent revolutions experienced by humanity. Global access to basic education increased from under 50% in 1948 to over 85% today, and the percentage of the population who could read, increased from 36% to 85% in the same period (*Global Rise of Education*, 2017). That this increase in access to education took place while the world population grew from 2.5 billion to 7.3 billion, makes it all the more remarkable.

Over the last decade, I have been working to understand how best to support the development of education systems to educate students as global citizens. The education process that leads to global competency must be supported by a high-quality curriculum and sustained by effective teacher preparation and leadership. With a number of collaborators, I developed two comprehensive school curricula, from kindergarten up to, and including, high school. We continue to collaborate with a network of schools around the world, developing instructional resources to further advance effective global citizenship education.

Cultivating a positive mindset

The first curriculum, published in the book, *Empowering Global Citizens* (2016), was designed in 2011 and 2012 to be taught in a six- to eight-hour a week course from kindergarten to high school. It was initially developed to be taught at *Avenues: The World School*, a global network of independent schools which was establishing its first campus, in New York, at the time.

We developed a competency framework which included ethics, knowledge, social competencies, self-knowledge and mindsets, aligned to the development of capacities that would help students develop a global consciousness – while cultivating their motivation and skill to address global challenges.

Central to the conception of global competency was the notion of empowerment, cultivating a mindset that each individual can make a difference, can take the initiative and act in leadership roles.

We used a project-based learning approach, offering opportunities for students to develop their own interests and passions; it involved parents and community members as well.



Instead of just engaging with content knowledge, students are engaged in creating a product that demonstrates deep understanding – whether it be a puppet show (kindergarten), a business plan (third grade) or a social enterprise (eighth grade). For example, in third grade, students study global interdependence through creating a project in chocolate manufacturing and the creation of a marketing campaign that touches on global food chains, the ethics of free trade and child labour.

As this first curriculum was published and widely shared, it became clear that a simpler version was necessary to facilitate wide-scale adoption. Feedback from those who adopted the curriculum paved the way for a more effective and accessible approach.

Understanding globalization

The second curriculum, *Empowering Students to Improve the World in Sixty Lessons* (2017), offers three tools with that aim – a protocol to design and adapt a global citizenship curriculum; a protocol to design a school-wide strategy for global education; and an actual curriculum prototype, developed following the process presented in the book.

Adopting and developing such a curriculum is within the reach of a wide range of schools, with varying levels of resources and support. Having a concrete prototype makes it possible to obtain feedback. It requires teaching only five lessons in each grade – yet it is a rigorous and robust sequence, with a clear set of learning outcomes.

This second curriculum is aligned to a map of global competencies that characterize a high-school graduate who understands globalization and appreciates the opportunities it offers for people to collaborate on improving their communities. These competencies map onto the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Leading powerful learning

As part of the [Global Education Innovation Initiative](#) (an international collaborative research-policy practice group) I lead at Harvard University, I am now working with a number of schools and networks of schools around the world, learning together how to implement intentional global citizenship curricula. The original two curricula have been translated and adapted into Chinese, Portuguese and Spanish.

We are learning that establishing conditions that sustain high-quality global citizenship education at scale requires collective leadership, and coordinated efforts – across a range of organizations in the public and private sectors over an extended period of time – that sustain the capacity of educators to lead powerful learning.

Similarly, creating opportunities for education leaders to share what they have learned with others can accelerate the process of intentional cultivation of leadership, a crucial step in making education systems relevant to the twenty-first century, as discussed in *One Student at a Time. Leading the Global Education Movement* (2017).

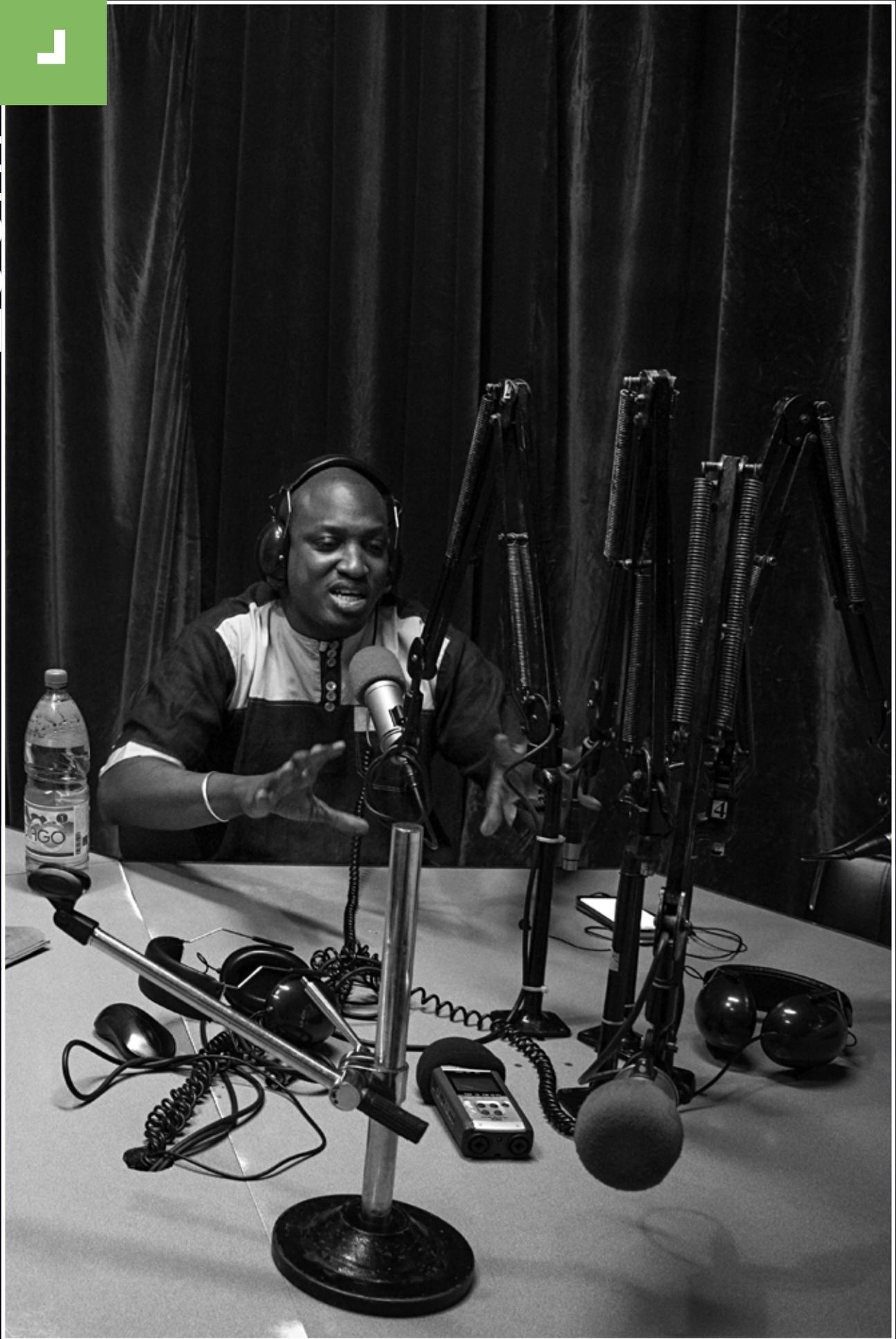
There is solid evidence that intentional high-quality curricula and effective pedagogies can empower students to become active global citizens. Education is indeed a most powerful avenue to help students improve the world. The task to educate each of the 1.2 billion learners as global citizens has never been more urgent.

Fernando M. Reimers (Venezuela) is the Ford Foundation Professor of the Practice in International Education and Director of the Global Education Innovation Initiative and of the International Education Policy Program at Harvard University. An expert in the field of international education, he is interested in advancing understanding of the ways schools can empower students to participate civically and economically, and to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

A classroom in the Erika Mann Elementary School in Berlin (Germany), designed by architect Susanne Hofmann, renovated and transformed into a place that is perfect for learning to live together.



Zoom





Radio in pictures: a detour via Bamako



Radio Benkan

Text: Katerina Markelova

Photos: Marco Dormino / MINUSMA

To celebrate radio in pictures – this was the challenge successfully undertaken by Marco Dormino. The photographer, who has worked with the United Nations for over a decade, specializes in recording emergency situations – notably in Central America and Mali.

Dormino, who joined the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in 2013, was in Bamako when its *Mikado FM* radio was launched in June 2015. This “Peace Radio” is broadcast over a vast area in northern Mali – home to the independence-seeking Azawad community, among others. Its aim is to provide the public with accurate and reliable information on all aspects of the peace process in Mali and to thus help establish peace and national reconciliation. Its name, *Mikado*, was taken from the eponymous game, and refers to the power of a people that is united.

Broadcasting in French and Bambara, and in other local languages (Fula, Songhai, Arabic and Tamasheq) for some specialized programmes, *Mikado FM* is rapidly gaining the trust of people in the country’s north – becoming the most widespread means of communication in the Gao region.

To celebrate its obvious success, MINUSMA has decided that *World Radio Day* (13 February) is the ideal occasion to pay homage, not only to *Mikado FM*, but to radio in general. Radio has become the “main tool for disseminating culture and political opinions in Mali,” Dormino explains. “It plays a key role in the daily lives of Malians.”

And here is our youthful 41-year-old Italian, combing the maze of streets in Bamako in search of radio stations! A difficult task, as their premises are often not in the best locations. “Some neighbourhoods in Bamako aren’t even marked on the map. It’s easy to get lost. In general, I only had a rough idea of where I was supposed to be going.”

In a week, he discovered several radio stations in the city – not all, but many of which are the most listened to in Mali – Kledu, Benkan, Guintan, Jekafo, Chaîne 2, Liberté.



Dormano says he always received a warm welcome, was given complete freedom of movement and had the full support of the staff. "I met some very professional journalists, who were very well-organized and very committed – whether they were working for a large public station like Radio Chaîne 2, or a small private radio," he said. "They all seemed to be passionate and were there because they really wanted to be."

By doing this assignment, Dormino wanted to get a real feeling for the way local people think. This is something he always tries to do, wherever he is. "Radio is about people's opinions, their feelings and their voices. It is people who bring radio to life," he says.

Radio is in fact the media that is closest to the people. According to UNESCO, radio still reaches more people than any other media. In Africa, eighty per cent to ninety per cent of homes have a working radio set. In 2016, more people worldwide listened to radio than watched television or used smartphones. One does not have to be able to read to listen to radio, and it can reach very small communities by broadcasting in their language.

Radio continues to be one of the cheapest means of communication. From the broadcasting point of view, a small 40-Watt FM radio station can be set up for under \$5,000.

In terms of reception – in regions of the world where the absence of transport infrastructure makes it impossible to distribute print media, and where the electricity power supply for television broadcasting is at best intermittent – a small battery-operated transistor radio is all that is needed to access news and information.

In an effort to promote access to information via radio, UNESCO, in 2011, proclaimed that [World Radio Day](#) would be celebrated on February 13 every year. The date is symbolic, as this was the day on which [United Nations Radio](#) was created, in 1946. This UNESCO resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2013.



Radio Jekafo



Mikado FM

Radio Chaîne 2





Radio Liberté

Radio Chaîne 2





Radio Kledu

Radio Guintan





Our guest



Zeinab Badawi in Harare, Zimbabwe, during the shooting of the BBC's History of Africa series. She is talking to sculptor Alan Adam, whose work was used in the series to illustrate iron-working techniques that helped shape ancient African civilization.

© Kush Communications



“My hyphenated identity is an advantage”

Zeinab Badawi

Interview by Jasmina Šopova

The British-Sudanese television personality – who transformed UNESCO’s *General History of Africa* into a nine-part series for the BBC, making this treasure-trove accessible to thousands – terms it her “most valuable project” yet. This broadcasting project is unique because it systematically explores Africa’s history from prehistoric times to the modern era – specifically targeting young people and Africans. Besides elaborating on what it took to make this ground-breaking series, Badawi also discusses the continuing gender hierarchies in the media, and the difficulties professional women encounter when aiming for a work-life balance.

Your nine-part series on the [History of Africa](#) has been broadcast on BBC World News TV in July and August 2017. What inspired you to do it?

Africa has a long, rich and complex history. Yet that history is neglected and overlooked, and what we are presented with often projects a distorted and partial picture. This has always troubled me. When I discovered, several years ago, the *General History of Africa (GHA)* published by UNESCO, I was delighted. Thousands and thousands of pages on Africa’s history from the beginning of time to the modern era, written mainly by African scholars. And yet I’d only vaguely heard of it.

The thought struck me that surely the *General History of Africa* is one of UNESCO’s best-kept secrets! This was the starting point of the project.

I have been in the media for more than twenty-five years and I have done all sorts of things, but I can honestly say – hand on my heart – that this project is by far the most exciting, the most interesting and the most valuable project I have ever been involved in.

It is a legacy project and a unique project, because never before in the history of broadcasting, have we had a systematic look from prehistory to the modern era of Africa’s history – told, I hope, in a compelling way – particularly targeting young people and particularly targeting Africans. I really hope that after they see this, they will have a very clear idea of how wonderful their continent is, regardless of which part of it they come from.

How do you plan to make the series accessible to as many people as possible? Is it available on the web?

The series will be made available to all African and Caribbean state television stations and in Brazil – hopefully in several languages – as soon as we have managed to translate and put subtitles on the episodes. There is a big cost implication to doing this and it will also take time. The series is not available on the web, but it may be in future. It will be shown again in 2018, on BBC World TV. We are also exploring other options for its dissemination.

General History of Africa is an academic publication. How did you make it appealing for a wide, general audience?

I am a television personality. I have been in television for a long time, and I am very keen to make sure that this series is grounded in proper scholarship. Which it is, but it also has to be visually enticing. So it is not an illustrated lecture. I am very keen on making sure that young people watch it. It is no use making programmes which tick the right boxes if nobody watches them.

I tried to make it fun and accessible and visually very colourful. For example, if I am talking about the trans-Saharan trade, I’ll find a camel market, I’ll jump on the camel, I’ll fall off the camel – yes, I did! And I’m not very proud of that... when I think that my great-grandfather was a camel trader.

The key thing that I am very sure about is that this project is the history of the African people – and not about stones and bones and monuments.



“The key thing that I am very sure about is that this project is the history of the African people – and not about stones and bones and monuments”

Of course, we show monuments where it is relevant, but we want to tell the history of the people. Everywhere we went, I was trying to find characters who are mentioned in the GHA and to put them at the front of the narrative. It might be the Aksumite King Ashama; it might be the Berber king Juba II, who married the daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra; it might be the Sudanese King Piye of Kush, who ruled Egypt in the eighth century BC. So this is my approach: to always start with a narrative that involves the people.

How were the local communities involved in this project?

I used local camera crews in each country. It is extremely hard work, and they were exhausted, but they were all thankful, because they were listening to the interviews, they were looking at the places, and they were learning about their country. Some of them said, at the end of it: “I had no idea there was so much in my country”.

What were the major difficulties you encountered during the shooting?

One of the problems was to get archival material from the national TV stations. They were all willing to collaborate, but in the end, you never get anything. Also, there was a question of language. I work in English, but most people in Western Africa speak French. In Northern Africa, they speak mostly Arabic. Fortunately, my Arabic is better than my French.

I would say the main problem was the lack of female interviewees. The vast majority of the experts are men. So, where possible, I tried to speak to women, in order to address the imbalance.

How do you see the gender issue in the media landscape today?

There are several aspects to the gender issue in the media. The female on-screen presence – the kind of role that I have, for example; female expert opinion that is also sought, when the women are interviewees; women in positions of real power in media organizations, behind the scenes; and the way gender issues are covered in the media.

In terms of women’s presence in the field, and on the screen, I think that it has improved, but the senior roles are still predominantly male.

All over the world, including in the United Kingdom, the number of professors who are women is small compared to men. It means that when you want to go and seek experts’ opinions, they are more likely to be male.

In terms of women in positions of power, regardless if it is a Western, African or Asian nation, the picture is not particularly optimistic. Major Western organizations remain very much controlled by men. The BBC, certainly. You find women in middle and lower levels of management, but the high level is still very male-dominated.

When it comes to gender issues, and how these are covered, that is sometimes done in a slightly superficial way – especially in countries where the assumptions, the prejudices on gender issues, are deeply rooted.

You moderated a Leader’s Forum at UNESCO in 2011, where you said that girls’ education was your “family business”. Could you explain why?

In a sense, yes, it is. I was referring to my great-grandfather Sheikh Babiker, who pioneered girls’ education in Sudan at the turn of the twentieth century, when the country was under British rule. At that time, girls were not educated but my great-grandfather wanted to change this, and he started with his own daughters.

Despite the hostility from the British authorities and the Sudanese community, he established a school for his children in his own house.

He had many children actually. We make jokes about him in the family: we say that he was so pro-women that he married four of them!

More seriously, he was indeed a great visionary. He set an example by making sure that his own daughters were educated, and then they developed schools. I grew up with aunts, who are now in their eighties, with Ph.D.s from Western universities. Presently, one of my uncles runs the Al-Ahfad University for Women in Khartoum, where girls from Sudan, but also from other parts of Africa and the Arab world, are educated.

So, when people say that Muslim girls cannot be educated because it is inconsistent with the values of that religion, I am simply astonished!

Your work is time-consuming. How do you balance work and family?

It is hard for women as mothers to have careers. We are the ones who give birth to children, and whatever our profession is, that means that there are some interruptions to our work. So you have got to do what works best for you. But if you opt for a longer interruption to your career – maybe three, four, five, ten years – in order to look after the children, you do pay the consequences for that. It could mean you are out of the frame and you have to re-learn the ladder, while others have gone beyond.

Have you experienced this?

Probably. I was lucky because my work is studio-based, but I had some interruptions to my work, because I have four children. It is a lot! Had I been childless, I would have probably had two or three more years to add to my career – who knows.



© Kush Communications

Badawi relaxes with two women who are residents of a village at the foot of the Jebel Barkal mountain, during a shoot in Sudan.

You often say that you have a hyphenated identity. Could you elaborate on this?

Today, everybody is a bit of something in Europe, but when you have a badge of colour, your multiple identity is more evident than if you don't. I was born in Sudan, and moved to the UK when I was 2 years old. At that time, there were fewer people from Africa or Asia living in Europe. There are many more now. I think that it is really less of an issue than it was.

Obviously, I am of a Muslim background, but Muslims are a part of the European landscape. And I do think that when we refer to Muslims in Europe, we should say "Muslim Britons", for example, instead of saying "British Muslims". I would switch the name and the adjective, like the Americans do. They say "Muslim Americans". The difference looks slight, but actually it speaks a lot more. It is quite profound and it is important to the mindset.

I see my hyphenated identity as an advantage that gives me a first-hand experience of both non-Western and European culture. I don't see any inherent conflict. I just have the feeling that I have the best of both worlds!

Zeinab Badawi was born in Sudan and moved to London at the age of 2. A prominent broadcast journalist, she studied at Oxford University and the University of London. She was awarded an honorary doctorate by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London in 2011, for her services to international broadcasting.

Badawi has extensive experience in television and radio, working on a range of programmes. She is best known for *Hard Talk* for the BBC, the hard-hitting programme which features the world's leading newsmakers. She also presents *Global Questions and World Debates* on BBC World TV, featured on both BBC radio and television.

She is the current Chair of the Royal African Society, a patron of BBC Media Action (the charitable arm of the BBC), a Vice-President of the United Nations Association UK, and a board member of the African Union Foundation. She is also a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council.

Through [Kush Communications](#), her own production company, Badawi has produced and presented many programmes, including the definitive TV series of African history, in partnership with UNESCO.



Current affairs



Drawing by Coline Robin, which was used as the visual for European Action Week Against Racism 2017, organized to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March by UNITED for Intercultural Action, a European network against racism, fascism and nationalism.

© Coline Robin



“ UNESCO: collective intelligence in action ”

Audrey Azoulay

Audrey Azoulay (France) was appointed to the post of Director-General of UNESCO on 10th November 2017. The former French Minister of Culture and Communication is the 11th Director-General of the Organization and the second woman to occupy this position. With a long-standing commitment to the universal values of peace, she is determined to maintain this commitment as the head of UNESCO: “a modern UNESCO, which will contribute to shaping “the world of tomorrow”.



© UNESCO / Christelle Alix

Audrey Azoulay at the investiture ceremony on 13 November 2017.

“My ambition is that UNESCO plays a major role in giving a human face to globalization,” Audrey Azoulay said, on 13 November 2017, during her installation as Director-General of the Organization. She considers that UNESCO is a standard-setter that helps society advance – as an expert agency contributing to the dissemination of knowledge to the greatest number of people, and as an intellectual forum for the world of tomorrow.

The world of tomorrow needs unity, she believes. And to rebuild this unity, it is necessary to rely on the universal values of peace through education, culture, science, and freedom, and to ensure that our action is rooted in the long term. “By virtue of its missions, its voice and its action, UNESCO is in direct contact with the future of humanity in the long term,” she noted. “This mandate is exercised with a key priority given to Africa and women. To Africa, in the conviction that it is the continent that crystallizes the challenges and solutions of our common future.” And to women and girls, so they may “restore their rightful place as agents of their own destiny and a force of progress in our societies.”

Audrey Azoulay also stressed on UNESCO’s special role in orchestrating international cooperation and bringing together the normative and operative as effectively as possible. “This supposes that we continue thinking, nurturing the crucial link with intellectual circles, especially in all scientific areas, that continuously probe the complexities of the current era,” she said. One of the major enterprises of our century in which UNESCO should play a leading role, as it cuts across each of the pillars of its mandate is, according to the Director-General, “the reconciliation between the unprecedented digital and scientific revolution that we are living and the humanist values that we uphold.”

Based on UNESCO’s clear skills to provide for the [2030 Agenda](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change, she stressed the need for more alliances with other stakeholders: United Nations agencies, Member States, regional organizations, cities and civil societies.

Convinced that none of the major challenges facing the world today can be met by any one country on its own, without relying on the fundamental pillars of science, education and culture, the Director-General believes that UNESCO must participate fully in a world order based on multilateralism and humanist values: “UNESCO’s promise and what we owe to the world is to work in this multilateral framework by acting on the root causes of our collective destiny,” she said.

In the face of the multiple challenges that we all share, a world without collective intelligence would be powerless, according to Audrey Azoulay, who describes UNESCO as “collective intelligence in action.”

A twenty-year partnership

Three questions for Jean-Paul Agon



© L'Oréal Corporate Foundation

Jean-Paul Agon, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of L'Oréal.

This year is the twentieth anniversary of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme. How would you define the partnership between L'Oréal and UNESCO?

L'Oréal's partnership with UNESCO is unique. In 1998, when we launched the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme, our ambition was to promote women scientists by launching a prize for scientific excellence that is reserved for talented women. In order to do this, we were looking for a partner that shares this ambitious vision of a science – and a society – which is more inclusive. Partnering with UNESCO became an obvious choice, as we share the same humanist and universal values. After twenty years of collaboration, our programme has expanded to a magnificent scale. Not only do we award an annual prize to five eminent women scientists, each representing one of the five continents, but we also give awards to young researchers in 115 countries.

Through these initiatives, in twenty years we have jointly supported over 2,700 women. UNESCO is a valued partner for making the programme truly international.

And the L'Oréal Foundation puts its skills and know-how behind this great cause to support women researchers through every stage of their career – bringing them into the public eye and emphasizing the importance of a better representation of women in scientific vocations if we are to solve the great challenges of our time.

Why is it important to promote women scientists?

The world has never been so changeable and uncertain. We are undergoing a veritable technological, social and environmental revolution, and are being confronted with challenges we have never faced before. How could we deprive ourselves of the scientific skills of half the world's talent? How could we shape an inclusive world without women? We need to make use of all the talent available – obviously including women – if we are to address the challenges and the extraordinary complexity of our times. Yet, women continue to be under-represented in the world of science, where the glass ceiling remains a sad reality.

Only about 30 per cent of researchers are women and three per cent of Nobel prizes in the sciences have been awarded to women since the prizes were established – none in 2017. At L'Oréal, both in our company and in our Foundation, it is impossible to imagine a world without the contribution of women.

How can the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme further the cause of women scientists?

For the past twenty years, the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme has been using the recognition and promotion of women in science to demonstrate by example that they have a full role to play in scientific institutions.

This is particularly important. The promotion of women who serve as role models for others is fundamental to encouraging and supporting young women in scientific careers.

But when we look at the figures, it is obvious that this is not enough. Over the past ten years, the share of women in research has, it is true, risen by about twelve per cent. Women are increasingly following a career in science and represent about half of those enrolled in the first years of university. But they are still largely excluded from higher positions – only eleven per cent of senior academic posts are held by women, according to the [UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030](#), published in 2015.

Even if there is no doubt that our programme has helped to raise awareness and mobilized the scientific community, we obviously have to go even further. We have to work with the entire ecosystem – in other words, with the institutions and public authorities, as well as with men. One of the great merits of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science programme is that it is far from being only a women's cause being fought by women. It also allows women to help shape an inclusive world – a prerequisite for fair and balanced societies for all, able to respond to the challenges of today's world.



“The challenge of science is like climbing Mount Everest”

Ada E. Yonath



© Micheline Pelletier / L'Oréal FWIS

Professor Ada E. Yonath with dishes used for crystallization experiments.

Interview by Cathy Nolan

Israeli crystallographer **Ada E. Yonath**, a 2008 laureate of the L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Awards, went on to win the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2009 for her pioneering discoveries on the structure and function of ribosomes, the protein synthesizers in cells. Her research has also been key to understanding how antibiotics work. In this informal interview, Yonath talks about her life and elaborates on two of her favourite topics – conveying the joy of science to young people, and encouraging drug companies to develop new and better antibiotics.

With this article, the *UNESCO Courier* marks the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, on 11 February.

When did you first get interested in science?

I was always curious. I wanted to know how the world functions. Among my early experiments is one that I performed at age 5 – it ended with an accident. I wanted to measure the height from the floor to the ceiling in our home. At the time, we were living in Jerusalem in a four-room apartment shared by three families – we were very poor. I went on the balcony, I piled up furniture, a table, chairs, but still didn't reach the ceiling. I tried to climb on top, but fell into the backyard instead and broke my arm. Fortunately, I continued to be curious, and my scientific ambition survived.

You've said your parents always encouraged you to study, but your early years were difficult.

Learning in school or at home was never difficult. The difficulties arose from our deprived economic situation. My secret: I had a perfect memory. Then, not now! I was a very good student. But survival was difficult. My father had a little grocery shop. He died when I was 11. I had a baby sister. We had very little income, so I had to work. I had a million jobs – cleaning floors, washing dishes, giving tuition to younger kids, babysitting, etc. In high school, there was a chemistry lab and one of my jobs was to clean it. There I could perform my own experiments on the side! I used to get up at 5.30 in the morning, and had my first student at 6 a.m. – I taught mathematics and chemistry. I had long days and very little sleep, but it didn't bother me.

Do you think these hardships made you more resilient?

Maybe. I was called crazy for years, for pursuing projects other scientists said were impossible, but it hardly disturbed me. What I cared about was seeing modest signs of progress in our work, not convincing other scientists who said there was "no chance". For me, being a scientist was having a luxurious life. I could ask the questions that interested me, like "how are proteins made within cells?", and I received a salary for that. It was a beautiful life.

What do you say to young people today, who don't want to study science?

Whenever I have time, I talk to high school students – in Israel and also around the world, in Spain, Australia, India, Japan. I tell them that, for me, seeing the first structure of the ribosome was an unmatched experience! I also tell them that being a scientist is a joy. It's fun. You ask a question that really interests you and you work on answering it. This is the best way to work. If you convince funding agencies that your question is important, they will pay you to answer it.

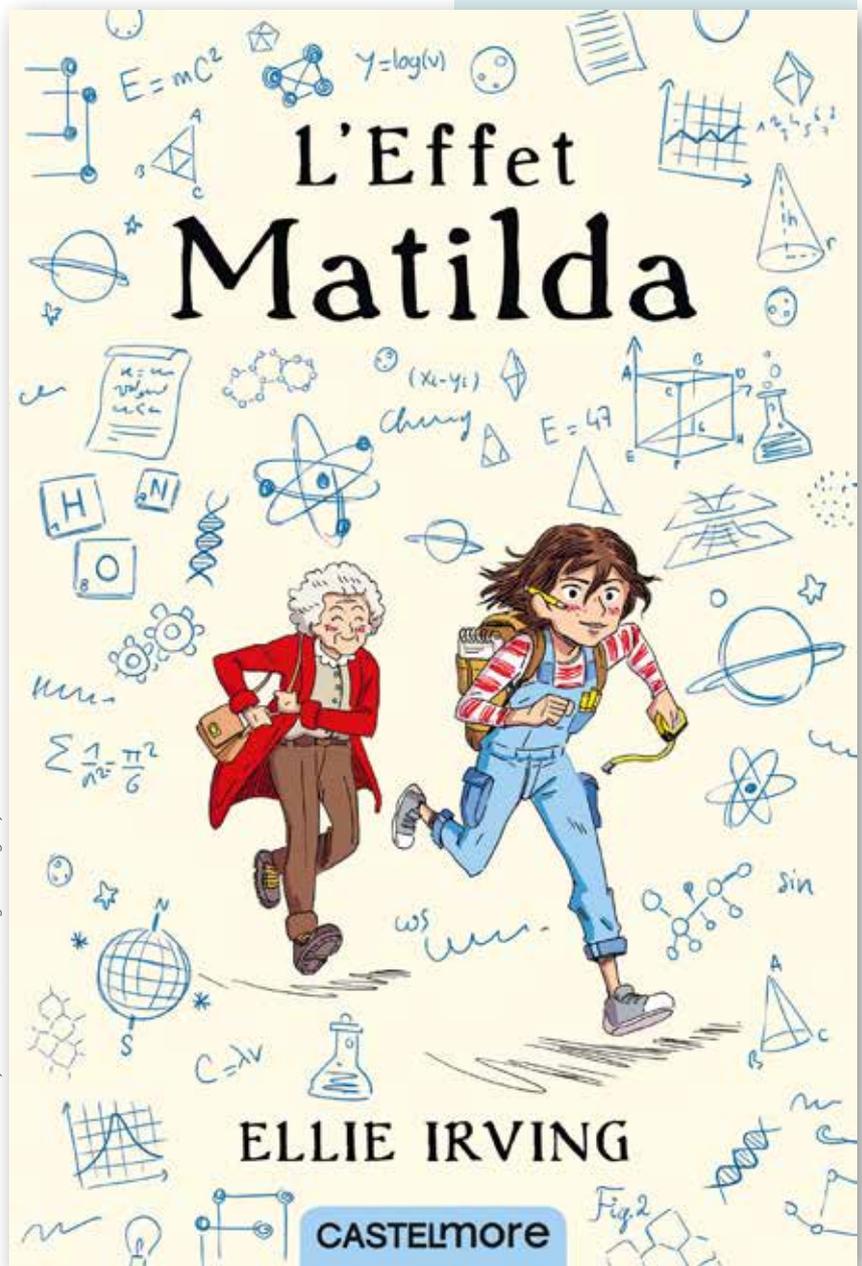
I usually compare the challenge of science to climbing Mount Everest. Getting to the top is fantastic, but the climb is also an adventure.

When I first understood how the ribosome works, it created an overwhelming internal joy. Even more than receiving the Nobel Prize! In addition, I was happy that those who called me crazy or stupid or a dreamer became supporters – because I'm human and it's nice to be recognized.

Has receiving the Nobel Prize changed your life?

Now I can do something for young people. Before I got the prize, very few young people said they would opt for science, in a poll in Tel Aviv. The day after the Nobel ceremony, a similar street poll showed the number of those interested in science had gone up by forty per cent. Even if only ten per cent of these youth take up science, I will feel I did something good.

Cover of the book, *The Matilda Effect* by British novelist Ellie Irving. The name refers to the systematic denial of the contribution of women scientists to research.



© Castelmor / Illustration by Romain Ronzeau / original design by Matt Jones



Has being a woman made your path more difficult?

I was never a man, so I cannot compare. At the same time, I can say that throughout my scientific career, I have never felt any gender discrimination.

So far, only four women have received Nobel prizes in chemistry. Why do you think this is the case?

There are many more women in physiology and medicine. I don't think the Nobel Committee is anti-women – they gave their prize to Marie Curie twice.

There are fewer women in science because society doesn't encourage women to become scientists – even societies that are supposedly open and liberal. Sentences like: "Don't try to be clever, you'll never find a husband", or "Don't choose a demanding career, you won't have a good family life", are frequently repeated. In some societies it's said directly, in others indirectly. It's the same in politics, art, any demanding profession. This is even more so in science because it may imply that the women are cleverer than the men.

At universities, in science, it starts out equal, with fifty per cent male and female students. But this changes later. Some girls may be better students, but they often go to work in somebody else's lab – either because they want less pressure at work, and are therefore less motivated to become principal investigators, or because they prefer to allocate more time to their families.

What can we do to change women's attitudes?

It's not just women. Society has to change its opinions. Education is the way. It's difficult, it will not happen tomorrow. When I lecture in schools, even if these young people don't end up studying science themselves, it could make a difference when they have children of their own.

Scientists can have a rewarding life, at home and in the lab. My granddaughter named me Grandma of the Year – one can be a good grandma and a good scientist! When a girl of 15 hears this, it makes an impression; five years later, in university, maybe she will choose science.

Women in science: still a minority

"Gender equality will encourage new solutions and expand the scope of research; it should be considered a priority by all if the global community is serious about reaching the next set of development goals," cautions the *UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030*, (2015). A summary of the situation today.

As countries grapple with the need to establish a pool of scientists or researchers that is commensurate with their ambitions for development, their attitudes to gender issues are changing. Some Arab States now have more women than men studying natural sciences, health and agriculture at university (Chapter 17). Saudi Arabia plans to create 500 vocational training schools to reduce its dependence on foreign workers, half of which will train teenage girls (Chapter 17). Some 37% of researchers in the Arab world are women, more than in the European Union (33%).

On the whole, women constitute a minority in the research world. They also tend to have more limited access to funding than men, and to be less represented in prestigious universities and among senior faculty, which puts them at a further disadvantage in high-impact academic publishing (Chapter 3).

The regions with the highest shares of women researchers are Southeast Europe (49%), the Caribbean, Central Asia and Latin America (44%). Sub-Saharan Africa counts 30% women and South Asia, 17%. Southeast Asia presents a contrasting picture, with women representing 52% of researchers in the Philippines and Thailand, for instance, but only 14% in Japan and 18% in the Republic of Korea (Chapter 3).

Globally, women have achieved parity (45% to 55%) at the bachelor's and master's levels, where they represent 53% of graduates. At the Ph.D. level, they slip beneath parity to 43%. The gap widens at the researcher level, where they now account for only 28.4% of researchers, before becoming a gulf at the higher echelons of decision-making (Chapter 3).

A number of countries have put policies in place to foster gender equality. Three examples are Germany, where the coalition agreement of 2013 introduced a 30% quota for women on company boards of directors; Japan, where the selection criteria for most large university grants now take into account the proportion of women among teaching staff and researchers; and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which established a Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Integration of Women in National Development in 2012.

Don't you have to make sacrifices when you make these choices?

Of course, there are sacrifices – science is very demanding, both for men and women. It's a question of priorities. I didn't have a policy, I managed things as they came up, every day. I went to do the work I liked, and I also had the family I loved. The important thing is to love both these facets of life.

An interesting example is that of the British crystallographer **Kathleen Lonsdale** (1903 to 1971), who took ten years off to raise her three children. She worked from home – this was before computers and internet, in the 1930s – documenting the entire mathematical background of crystallography. She wrote three books, which we still use today.

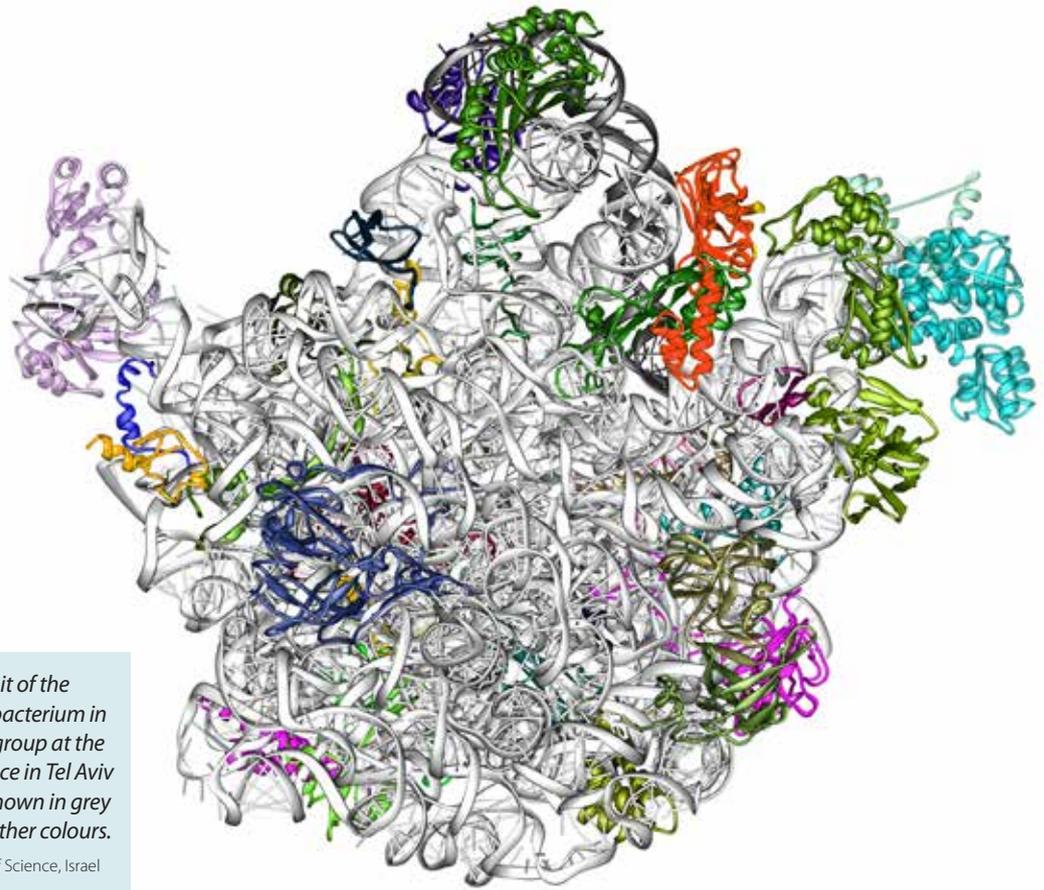
What qualities does it take to be a good scientist?

Curiosity, first. Second, curiosity. And third, curiosity!

Also, one has to love, and not be afraid of, a challenge. And to have a critical spirit, to know if what you are doing is important, accurate and original.

Do you have to be competitive? Are you?

It's possible to not be competitive in science. For example, we started working on the structure of ribosomes in 1980. We got the first indication for crystals after six months. Then the first potential was detected after four years. Two years later, we discovered that the crystals do not survive X-irradiation – the methodology used for diffraction measurement.



Large ribosomal subunit of the Deinococcus radiodurans bacterium in 3D, studied by the Yonath group at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Tel Aviv (Israel). Ribosomal RNA is shown in grey and ribosomal proteins in other colours.

© A. Yonath, Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel

This led us to install our biggest contribution to life science, called cryo-bio-crystallography. All along, we published exactly what we did.

In 1986, I met a scientist who had been laughing at me for a long time. He said: "We were able to repeat your experiment." It had been sixteen years since we had started, by then. I almost kissed him! People couldn't call me a deceiver any more. But he saw it differently: "Why did you publish it so accurately? Weren't you afraid someone would steal it?" I replied: "The result is what's important. I always publish correctly." Competition is not my strong point.

Do you think men are more competitive?

I don't know, I think everybody's different. When I talk about challenges, I don't mean trying to be better than anybody else. It's to do the best I can in order to solve the problems, and progress towards the goals of the research.

This is also the advice I give to children: don't compare. Find what you love to do most – it could be economics, or playing the flute, whatever you have passion for – and do your best.

Are you worried about the increasing threat posed by antibiotic resistance?

I'm very worried about the resistance caused by antibiotics. If you don't use antibiotics, you don't have resistance, but you may die from simple infections. We need to develop a new generation of better antibiotics. We are currently developing these. Examining the structure of ribosomes from pathogenic bacteria, we have identified a new type of antibiotic binding sites, which can inhibit protein biosynthesis within cells.

So far, none of these sites are being used by any known antibiotic. Hence, we expect slow-developing resistance. Also, these are specific to pathogenic bacteria, so we expect minimal or no harm to the microbiome, or the "good bacteria" residing in the human body. Additionally, we can use the chemistry of these new sites to design fully degradable antibiotics, thus preserving the environment from the ecological burden caused by the non-degradable cores of the antibiotics that are currently available. In short, applying our multidisciplinary approach, we expect to optimize the next generation of antibiotics to significantly reduce resistance – while ensuring maximum selectivity, supreme potency, minimal toxicity and appropriate degradability.

We do hope that although antibiotics are considered less profitable, companies will grasp the importance of the resistance problem alongside the new options to reduce it dramatically.

What are you currently working on?

I still work in the lab, on two things – developing the next generation of antibiotics, and understanding the origins of life.

Ada Yonath (Israel) was born in 1939 in Jerusalem. She earned a Ph.D. from the Weizmann Institute of Science, where she is currently director of the Helen and Milton A. Kimmelman Center for Biomolecular Structure and Assembly. Her numerous international honours and prizes – in addition to the 2009 Nobel Prize in Chemistry (with Venkatraman Ramakrishnan and Thomas A. Steitz) – include the Israel Prize (in 2002), the Wolf Prize (in 2007) and the Albert Einstein World Award for Science (2008).



“Non-violence is the common denominator of all my actions” Tawakkol Karman



© Séverine Desmarest

Portrait of Tawakkol Karman 2017,
from the Hands of Peace exhibition
by Séverine Desmarest.

Interview by Anissa Barrak
and Chen Xiaorong

Without justice, peace will always remain fragile – a kind of temporary truce, a rest for the warrior – which will only be followed by something more terrible, says Tawakkol Karman. The Yemeni feminist, journalist and human rights activist – one of the winners of the Nobel Peace Prize 2011 – participated in celebrations for the International Day of Non-Violence at UNESCO on 2 October 2017.

With this article, the *UNESCO Courier* marks International Women's Day, on 8 March.

What does non-violence mean to you? And what is the likely impact of non-violent civil resistance in countries experiencing complex conflicts?

Political violence is the recourse to force to achieve political or religious objectives and to change the beliefs, opinions or behaviour of people in the public sphere. There is another type of political violence – that is certainly hard to condemn, but which I do not recommend – it is the use of force as a means of resistance to an occupier.

I am convinced that non-violence is the most effective way to combat tyranny and find a way out of complex conflicts. It is always possible to resort to it. But that demands faith, courage and the capacity for self-sacrifice. In the end, change is achieved at a lower cost, and its effects are more powerful and more effective. Those who choose violence to change things do not always get what they want.

For me, non-violence is the common denominator of all my actions. I have adopted it in what I say, in what I do and in my strategies. I never shy away from it and I don't see any alternative.



© Murad Subay

A wall painting created during the Open Day of Art, a public event organized by Murad Subay in Sanaa (Yemen), March 2017.

As a journalist and political activist, you are, first and foremost, defending human rights.

My goal is clear – it is to contribute to the establishment of democratic states that respect freedoms and human rights. This objective can only be achieved through a fight against the violation of these rights and tyranny – and the building of legally-constituted states founded upon citizenship and institutional integrity. I act in a number of ways within civil society and use all kinds of platforms, including the media, human rights and politics.

What I try to explain, wherever I go, is that tyranny deprives societies of development and peace. Societies deprived of freedoms and human rights live in a state of precarious peace, which is doomed to collapse rapidly.

In 2005, you co-founded Women Journalists Without Chains, which aims to promote freedom of expression and democratic rights. What difficulties have you encountered over the last decade and what has been your main success?

Women Journalists Without Chains was founded to combat widespread repression in the world of information at the time – arrests, beatings and various forms of aggression – but also to defend the right of every citizen to become the owner of a media, whether print, radio and television or digital.

We put a great deal of effort into defending the civil and political rights of citizens. We participated in several actions to fight against corruption and the abuse of power. We organized sit-ins and demonstrations to help citizens stand up to the domination of influential tribal leaders.



It was a long struggle, on a daily basis, which resulted in the release of a large number of journalists who had been detained or abducted. This also made it possible for a number of independent and opposition newspapers that were previously banned, to be published again.

Even before the peaceful revolution of 11 February 2011 (in Egypt), I helped, along with others, to reduce violations by the incumbent regime (in Yemen). We created a force of civil pressure in order to preserve a minimum of rights and to raise the level of demands. After this civil revolution, Yemen entered a period of transition, where people could fully enjoy their rights and freedoms. There were no restrictions on freedom of expression, of assembly, the right to demonstrate or any other form of rights and freedoms. Everyone benefited, without distinction. There were no arrests or detentions – until the coup of January 2015 and the war that followed.

“Peace does not just mean the end of war; it is also the end of oppression and injustice”

What is your view of Yemen today, devastated by what you have called a “total war”? What do you plan to do to ensure a better future for your country?

We can only think about the future of a country when peace has been restored. But peace does not just mean the end of war; it is also the end of oppression and injustice. There can be no peace without justice, because, without justice, peace will always remain fragile – a kind of temporary truce, a rest for the warrior – and which will only be followed by something more terrible. And the worst of wars are those waged by tyrannical regimes against their own people. This is why I remain convinced of the need to oppose regimes that do not respect rights and freedoms and which are unable to guarantee them, whether for individuals or institutions. They have to be replaced.

My struggle today, as in the past, remains focused on democracy: to put an end to the situation imposed by the coup d'état in Yemen and to hold a referendum on the draft constitution – which has already found consensus during the national dialogue set up during the period of transition. After that, elections can be held.

Consequently, when political life returns to normal, I plan to found a political party which will bring together youth and women to carry forward the civic project advocated by the revolution. On the international front, I will continue to fight to defend human rights, promote peace and combat tyranny.

In October 2011, you received the Nobel Peace Prize with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee. What is it that unites you all?

The dreams we share are the building of a civil state, the use of non-violence as the only way to operate, and the defence of women's rights for effective participation in political affairs. With Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, we have worked together with the United Nations on the Sustainable Development Goals. As for Leymah Gbowee, we have worked together to promote peace and human rights, particularly through the Nobel Women's Initiative – which includes four other women Nobel Peace laureates – and the [Nobel Peace Prize Forum](#), which works to coordinate action to promote peace and combat tyranny and violence.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said that it hoped, among other things, that the 2011 prize would “help to bring an end to the suppression of women that still occurs in many countries...”. What could Arab women do to contribute to peacebuilding?

We have led a long campaign to end the repression of women, and the struggle continues. This will not happen within a matter of days or months, but I remain convinced that we will succeed one day.

Unfortunately, in the Middle East, more than elsewhere, women are exposed to repression. Adding to the violations of women’s rights, especially in the Arab Spring countries, has been a lust for wealth. This, in some cases, has led to the sponsorship of coups d’état, counter-revolutions and even collaborations with the enemy. But we are determined to continue our struggle. Arab women are the driving force of sustainable peace in their countries and in the region.

In one sentence, how would you summarize your philosophy of life?

I was born into a family whose philosophy of life revolved around two words – righteousness and justice. My father is a man of the law, and one of the earliest constitutionalists in the country. He is known for his efforts to fight against corruption and nepotism, and for his integrity in the high public offices he has held. Thanks to him, I acquired the legal culture needed to assert rights and conquer freedoms, the courage to speak the truth and confront oppression and injustice. He taught me to take initiatives, to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. My mother taught me to love people and to understand their suffering.

To summarize my philosophy, I would say that it is possible to fight against violence and repression without resorting to violence and repression.

Tawakkol Karman (Yemen), [Nobel Peace Prize 2011](#) laureate (with Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee), is a feminist and human rights activist and one of the leading figures of the Arab Spring in Yemen. She has been arrested several times for organizing peaceful protests against Ali Abdullah Saleh (1942-2017), who was president of Yemen for over thirty years till 2011.

The generalissimo of the peace movement

Bertha von Suttner, known as the "generalissimo of the peace movement", established the Austrian Peace Society in 1891. It aimed to prevent war, carrying out research into the causes of conflict, promoting pacifist thinking and supporting all efforts to establish international legislation as the basis for the peaceful settlement of all international disputes.

As a recognized journalist and activist, von Suttner was elected Honorary President of the Permanent International Peace Bureau when it was founded in 1891 in Bern, Switzerland. A year later, she established the German Peace Society with her countryman, the pacifist and journalist Alfred Hermann Fried (Nobel Peace Prize 1911 laureate).

As an author, she gained celebrity with her anti-war novel, *Lay Down Your Arms!* (1889). The novel was translated into more than ten languages and became one of nineteenth-century Europe’s most influential books – contributing, to a certain extent, to undermining the militaristic mindset prevalent at the time.

[Bertha von Suttner](#) was the first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1905. She was followed by [Jane Addams](#) (1931), [Emily Greene Balch](#) (1946), [Betty Williams](#) and [Mairead Corrigan](#) (1976), [Mother Teresa](#) (1979), [Alva Myrdal](#) (1982), [Aung San Suu Kyi](#) (1991), [Rigoberta Menchú Tum](#) (1992), [Jody Williams](#) (1997), [Shirin Ebadi](#) (2003), [Wangari Muta Maathai](#) (2004), [Ellen Johnson Sirleaf](#), [Leymah Gbowee](#) and [Tawakkol Karman](#) (2011) and [Malala Yousafzai](#) (2014).



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Nüshu: from tears to sunshine



© Publicity Department of Jiangyong county

*He Jingua, writing the phrase
“mysterious scripts through the ages”
in Nüshu characters.*

by **Chen Xiaorong**

Nüshu is considered to be the world’s only writing system that is created and used exclusively by women. Originating in China’s Jiangyong county in the nineteenth century, it gave rise, over time, to a traditional female culture, which is endangered today. The country’s local and national authorities are working to revive it.

Nüshu literally means “women’s writing” in Chinese. Today it is the world’s only script designed and used exclusively by women. It was developed among the rural women of the Xiao River valley, in the Jiangyong county of China’s Hunan province, where there is a mixture of Han culture and Yao folkways.

Nüshu characters are a rhomboid variant derived from square Chinese characters, adapted to the local dialect (Chengguan Tuhua). The characters are formed with dots and three kinds of strokes – horizontals, virgules and arcs. These elongated letters are written with very fine and thread-like lines.

The earliest known artefact in the Nüshu script is a bronze coin discovered in Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu province.

It was minted during the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, a rebel kingdom in China from 1851 to 1864, which introduced important social reforms and adopted – to a certain extent – several policies regarding gender equality. The eight characters etched in Nüshu on the coin mean “all the women in the world are members of the same family”.

A culture of sunshine

Nüshu was taught mainly by mothers to their daughters and practised for fun among sisters and friends. It was used by women in a feudal society who lacked access to education in reading and writing.

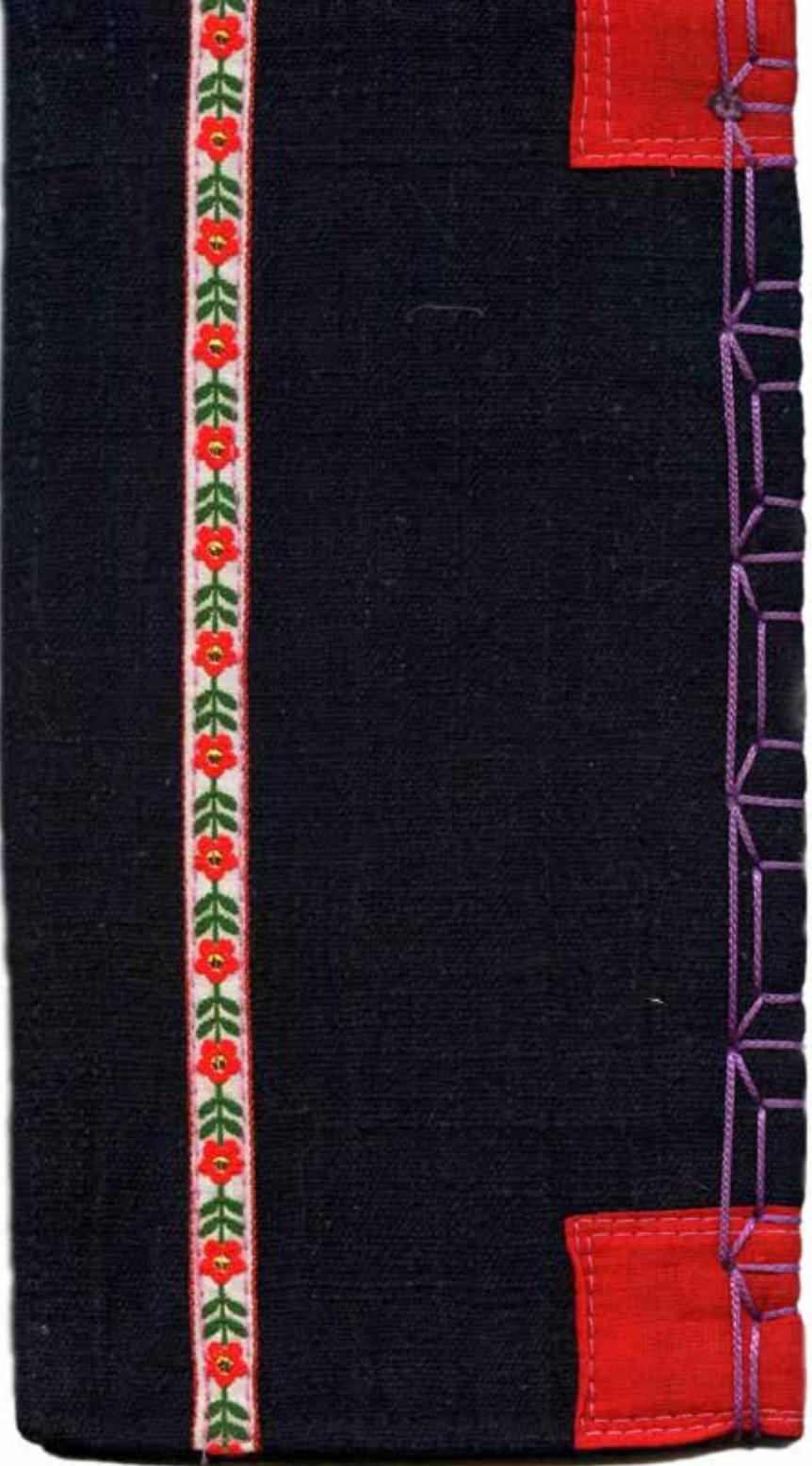
This syllabic script was generally used for writing autobiographies, letters between sworn sisters, and *sanzhaoshu* – “third day missives” of good wishes, presented to a bride by her closest friends, three days after her wedding. It was also used to record folk songs, riddles and translations of ancient Chinese poems, and to compose songs for farm women that promoted morality – stressing the importance of helping their husbands and encouraging frugality in household management. All of these works are in poetry form – most are seven-character poems and a few have five characters.

According to Zhao Liming, a professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing, Nüshu is not just a script – it represents a typical Chinese traditional female culture. It was like a ray of sunshine that made women’s lives more pleasant. “It is a culture of sunshine,” she says, “which allows women to speak up with their own voices and to fight against male chauvinism.”

As a Nüshu practitioner once said, “Men have their script, books and texts; they are men of honour. We have our own script, books and texts; we are women of honour.”

Zhao explains that it was customary for women to gather together to sew clothes and sing Nüshu songs. The Nüshu script can be found inscribed on paper and fans, and also embroidered on clothes, handkerchiefs and belts. “Each woman in Jiangyong county was responsible for writing a biography,” she continues. “Those who didn’t know how to write might have others write for them. Daughters would also write biographies for their mothers, after their deaths.”

Like a fragile plant, Nüshu withered when its writer died. When older women felt the end was near, they would often ask family members to place some of their writing in their coffins and to burn other pieces of their work. Thus, most of a woman’s work was buried with her; her descendants were often left with only a few examples.



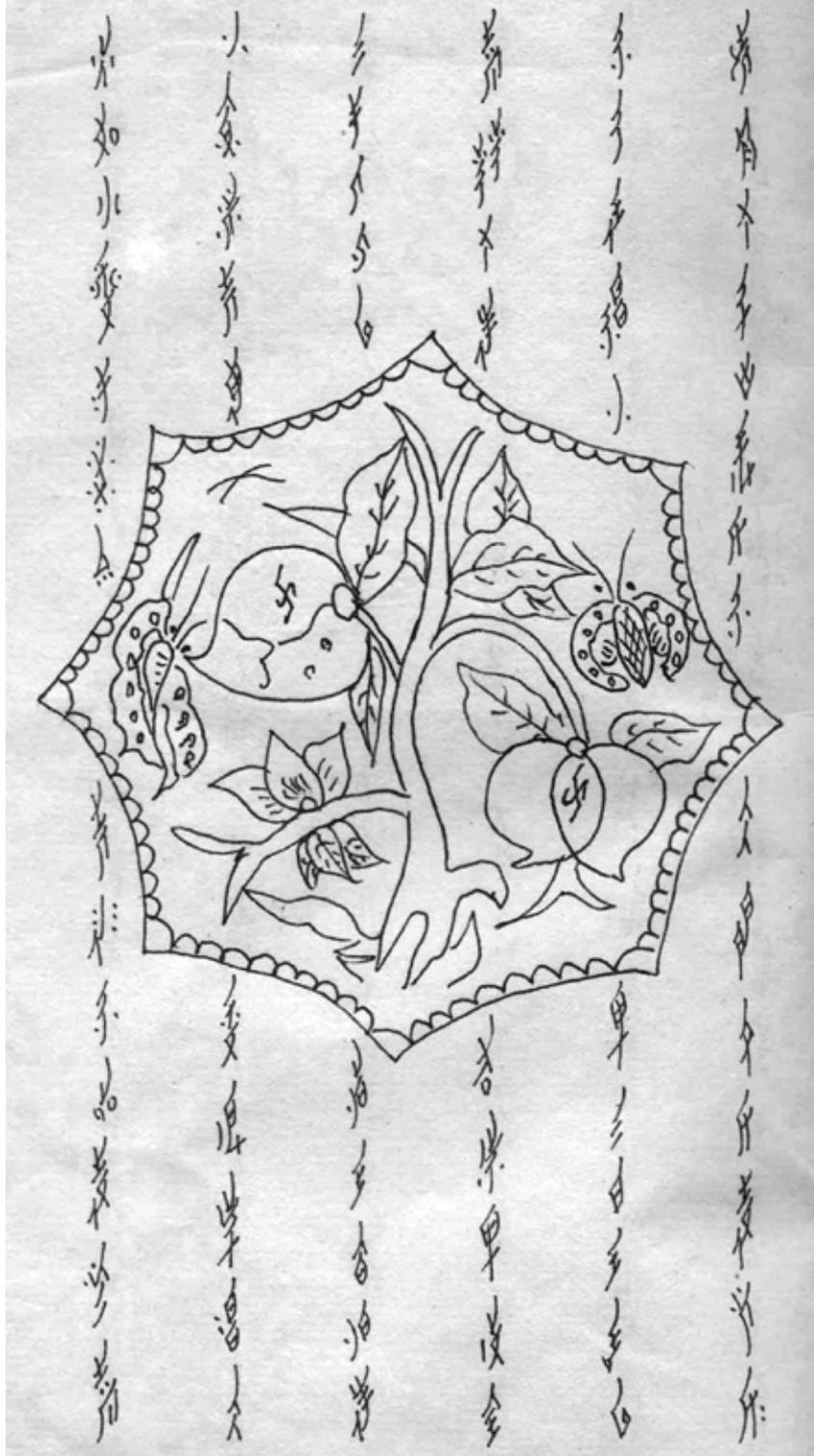
© Martine Saussure-Young (www.nushu.fr)

“The content of Nüshu works comes from women’s everyday lives – marriage, family, social interactions, anecdotes, songs and riddles. These are rich in folk custom and are important for the study of linguistics, grammatology, archaeology, anthropology and other human and social sciences,” explains Zhao, who has been studying Nüshu for thirty years.

After several years of research, her team at the Tsinghua University collected and translated over ninety-five per cent of all existing original documents written in Nüshu, to produce the five-volume *Chinese Nüshu Collection*, published in 2005 – the most complete anthology of Nüshu works to date.

Before it, only one chapter of the book, *A Ten-year History of Jiangyong*, published in 1959, was dedicated to Nüshu. The first documentary evidence of this script is found in the 1933 *Survey Notes on Counties of Hunan Province*.

“Women used their own script to tell stories, to comfort each other, to sing out sorrow and to express admiration. In the process, a paradise was built,” says Zhao. “*Tianguang* (heavenly light) is a word that often occurs in Nüshu works.”



Cover and inside page of a *sanzhaoshu* or “third day letter” given to a newly married woman three days after her wedding.

Nüshu practitioners found comfort in this word, which could guide them through all their sorrows and difficulties to a better life. “None ever committed suicide, in fact, because *Tianguang* made them stronger and more optimistic. Through their tears, they never stopped seeking the light of the sun.”

A script from tears

“This script helped women in Jiangyong to dry their tears,” says **Tan Dun**, renowned Chinese composer and conductor, and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador. “When I hear their beautiful songs, I can see their tears.” In 2008, he went back to Hunan, his home province, to research Nüshu culture. “At the gate of Shanggangtang village, there is an 800-year-old Song Dynasty bridge. Half of it has collapsed. It reminded me of Nüshu, which is also on the verge of extinction,” he wrote in his travel diary.

Tan Dun promised himself he would help save this script, the characters of which look like “musical notes flying along on the wind”. Some of them reminded him of the harp and the Chinese stringed pipa. The idea for a new symphony, *Nüshu: The Secret Songs of Women*, was born. Since 2013, the Philadelphia Orchestra (United States), the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra (the Netherlands), and the NHK Symphony Orchestra (Japan) have co-produced performances of this Nüshu symphonic poem at several prestigious musical venues across the world. From a confidential women’s culture, Nüshu is becoming a “global culture that belongs to the world,” Tan Dun tells us. According to the composer, the success of his symphony “shows the world’s respect for women’s Utopia.”

The thirteen-movement modern symphony, which combines Eastern and Western musical forms, reflects different aspects of Nüshu culture – songs about dressing for the wedding ceremony, the daughter’s separation from her mother on her wedding day, remembering fifty years of married life, longing for childhood friends, and so on. The central instrument is the harp, which, according to the composer, sounds like “a woman telling a story and crying”. He has incorporated thirteen short videos, recorded during his journey home in 2008, into the production. It was the first time that someone filmed Nüshu traditional culture.

In Shanggangtang, he met six women who can still write Nüshu and who have been designated by the county government as keepers of the Nüshu tradition. Thanks to them, this ancient culture can be passed on to new generations.

“For me, the secret of immortality is the effort to preserve endangered cultural traditions and deliver them to the future,” notes Tan Dun.

Extinction and rebirth

The death of centenarian Yang Huanyi on 20 September 2004 marked the start of the “post-Nüshu era”. Yang was one of the most famous writers and holders of Nüshu culture.

The progressive disappearance of Nüshu culture and the need to protect it have aroused particular attention at all levels of government. In 2002, Nüshu was added to the Chinese National Register of Documentary Heritage. Since 2003, the introduction of Nüshu workshops in Jiangyong county has helped develop this culture by attracting more people to learn about it. In 2006, the State Council listed Nüshu as a national intangible cultural heritage.

A Nüshu museum was built in Puwei Island, Jiangyong county, in May 2007. This beautiful island, surrounded by the Xiao river, was home to many famous Nüshu authors, making it an important place for Nüshu culture. According to Yang Cheng, Director of the Jiangyong Publicity Department, "the special Nüshu culture is the crystallization of the collective wisdom of women whose spiritual pursuits of intelligence, sense of self-respect, self-improvement and innovation have allowed various civilizations in the world to blossom with radiant splendour. And the protection of this national culture requires not only attention from academics, artists and officials, but also, more importantly, the cultural awareness of local people."

Over the years, China has made an effort to develop language legislation and planning, as well as to improve the digitalization and standardization of language. As part of the Chinese government's plan to protect language resources, launched in 2015, Jiangyong has been designated as a pilot area for an ecolinguistics project.

Local governments are currently commissioning Nüshu specialists (researchers and authors) to prepare easy-to-understand manuals to explain the historical background, values and basic elements of Nüshu culture – stressing its significance and the need for its preservation. This content will be included in primary and secondary elective courses, to popularize the unique women's script.

Colourful style

Because Nüshu was used among women to write the local dialect, its writing was not standardized, meaning each practitioner had her own, often highly colourful, wording and phrasing style.

To put the transmission of the script on a more scientific footing, Zhao and her team worked on "Nüshu Character Unification". Among the 220,000 characters used by Nüshu practitioners, they chose the most frequently used, based on a statistical survey. In 2015, 397 Nüshu characters were admitted by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and in March 2017, China's proposal to include Nüshu characters into the Universal Coded Character Set was approved.

The conservation and protection of Nüshu culture represents a huge and complex social project. With the increasing exploitation of cultural space and the development of the information era, Nüshu is making progress in the endeavour to ensure its survival. Among its enthusiasts, some simply admire this charming old script, others are exploring business opportunities and developing creative products. And some are seizing the opportunity to promote a fine example of women's traditional culture.

Scene from a microfilm, "Dressing for the wedding", created by composer Tan Dun in 2008.



© Tan Dun



Financing natural resilience: a new wave

by John H. Matthews, Lily Dai and Anna Creed

The 2018 edition of the World Water Development Report focuses on nature-based solutions for water. The issuance of water bonds is a relatively new phenomenon in this field, attracting private investment towards a sustainable future for natural resources, especially water. A new set of global scoring criteria for these bonds could help transform the financial markets and boost investment in nature-based solutions.

The United Nations World Water Development Report (WWDR), released annually on World Water Day (22 March) and published by UNESCO's World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) – in close collaboration with members and partners of UN-Water – is the UN's flagship report that focuses on different strategic water issues each year.

Climate scientists predict global warming of 4–6 °C by the end of the century. At the same time, the world is entering an age of unprecedented urbanization and related infrastructure development. To ensure sustainable development, this infrastructure needs to be both low-carbon and resilient to climate change, without compromising the kind of economic growth needed to improve the livelihoods and well-being of the world's most vulnerable citizens.

Ensuring that the infrastructure built is low-carbon raises the annual investment needs by three per cent to four per cent, to \$6.2 trillion, according to the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate's 2016 [New Climate Economy Report](#). Climate adaptation needs add another significant amount of investment, estimated at \$280 billion to \$500 billion per annum by 2050, even for a 2 °C scenario (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)'s [2016 Adaptation Finance Gap Report](#)).

Traditional sources of capital for infrastructure investment such as governments and commercial banks, are insufficient to meet capital requirement needs to 2030. Institutional investors, particularly pension and sovereign wealth funds, are increasingly being considered viable actors to fill these financing gaps.

Green bonds, which provide an opportunity to mobilize capital for green, or environmentally sustainable, investments, have emerged as key financing instruments for the application of nature-based solutions (NBS). Globally, the green and climate bond market is only about a decade old.

Beginning in 2007, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the World Bank began issuing "green" bonds (also known as "climate" bonds) as a loan mechanism to show the use of proceeds applied to environment-positive projects. Though the terms are often used interchangeably, in the case of climate bonds, the use of proceeds were further refined to apply to climate change mitigation and/or adaptation projects. The standing of these institutions inspired market confidence, while a handful of other donor and multilateral institutions followed their lead.

However, as an investment category, green and climate bonds remained relatively niche markets, with limited impact until about 2013, when issuances tripled to around \$10 billion, after commercial finance and corporate institutions began promoting the market. These trends continued and expanded to \$86.1 billion in 2016, surpassing \$100 billion in 2017.

As a source of climate finance, this total is on par with the [Paris Climate Agreement's](#) (within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and which came into force on 4 November 2016) call to reach \$100 billion worth of climate finance by 2020. In China alone, green and climate bonds have crossed \$36.2 billion in 2016.

How green are green bonds?

While the market pool has grown rapidly, some investors have expressed concern that the credibility of these new bonds as environmental investments may be questionable with the new categories of issues. How green are green bonds, and could the exposure of ineffective investments cause a collapse or systemic risk within the market category?

“The successful issuance and sale of green bonds against the Standard represents a vivid shift in investor awareness”

The need for open and independent standards was identified recently by a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with sustainability issues in the finance and investor communities. Water was shown to be a gap area, since freshwater resources are often relatively hidden to investors, who may not readily see water embedded within energy, agriculture, and urban projects – much less how the water within one project may affect other issues and systems within the same basin.

In mid-2014, a consortium of NGOs – [Ceres](#), [Climate Bonds Initiative](#), [World Resources Institute](#), [CDP](#) (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project), the Stockholm International Water Institute ([SIWI](#)), and the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation ([AGWA](#)) – coordinated the development of criteria to score the quality of water-related investments for their relevance to climate mitigation and climate adaptation. Together, they organized a series of technical and industry working groups, which defined scoring criteria for issuers and verifiers to provide investor confidence in climate bonds.

Evaluating nature-based solutions

These criteria effectively score the climate resilience and climate adaptive potential of these bonds in addition to their environmental impact. These issues remain well understood by engineers, scientists, and resource managers. But the level of even basic awareness among investor and finance groups is far more limited. Phase 1 of the work targeted traditional “grey” water infrastructure investments, with the exclusion of hydropower, and was launched in October 2016.

More broadly, the risk of greenwashing for nature-based solutions – investments in green and hybrid infrastructure – are very high. No science-based standard for such investments exists, much less the ability to certify that the ecosystems involved will themselves endure and be resilient to climate impacts.

Recognizing this gap, the [Rockefeller Foundation](#) provided support in 2016 to develop phase 2 criteria to evaluate and qualify nature-based solutions (NBS) for water investments. NBS investments depend explicitly on the use of ecosystems to provide grey infrastructure-like services, such as through so-called natural or green and hybrid infrastructure. Such services could include storm-water and flood protection through riparian ecosystems, water treatment in wetlands, and water storage in aquifers. These [additional criteria](#) were launched in early 2018.

Together, both phases evaluate the climate mitigation impact, and the ability of the investment to contribute to climate change adaptation.

In May 2016, the [San Francisco Public Utilities Commission](#) (SFPUC) in California, United States, issued the world’s first certified green bond for water, for \$240 million. A second bond for \$259 million was issued by the SFPUC in December 2016. Both bonds are certified under the Climate Bonds Standard, an investor screening tool that specifies the criteria that must be met for bonds to be labelled “green” or earmarked for funding water-related low-carbon initiatives.



In July 2017, the [City of Cape Town](#) issued South Africa’s first certified green bond for 1 billion South African rand. In September 2017, the China Development Bank (CDB), a state-owned policy bank, announced that it will issue green bonds for 5 billion yuan to raise funds for water resource protection along the Yangtze River Economic Belt, the [China Daily](#) newspaper reported.



© Edward Burzynsky, courtesy Metivier Gallery, Toronto / Flowers Gallery, London

Colorado River delta, near San Felipe, in the Mexican state of Baja California, 2011.

The successful issuance and sale of these and other bonds against the Standard represents a vivid shift in investor awareness. To date, more than \$1 billion have been issued against the grey criteria – a number that is expected to be rapidly achieved with the integrated nature-based solutions criteria as well.

In a time of ecological and climate transformation, these criteria are also helping to transform finance itself.

John H. Matthews (United States) is Coordinator and co-founder of the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA), which is hosted by the World Bank and the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).

Lily Dai (China) is a Senior Research Analyst at Climate Bonds Initiative.

Anna Creed (United Kingdom) is the Head of Standards at Climate Bonds Initiative.

Anti-Semitism:

Learning the lessons of history

© Le Journal d'Anne Frank / Ozanam et Nadji / Editions Soleil, 2016



From *Le Journal d'Anne Frank* (*The Journal of Anne Frank*), a comic book written by Antoine Ozanam and illustrated by Nadji Scelsi, (Editions Soleil, 2016).

by Robert Badinter

Over the course of history, anti-Semitism has continued to raise its ugly head. It first emerged under religious pretexts in the Middle Ages, then appeared as nationalism from the nineteenth century onwards, before assuming a scientific claim in Nazi ideology. Since the end of the Second World War, it has reappeared, in the guise of anti-Zionism. History urges us to be vigilant. Robert Badinter draws lessons from it that are rich with meaning – and warnings.

With this article, the *UNESCO Courier* contributes to the commemoration of the [International Holocaust Remembrance Day](#) on 27 January.

Anti-Semitism is not a contemporary phenomenon. It is a centuries-old evil. Since the capture of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 AD, since the dispersal of the Jews, mainly throughout the Mediterranean basin, when they were sold as slaves in such large numbers that market prices (to use a modern economic term) plummeted in the Roman Empire – the condition of the Jews for two millennia, especially in Europe, has never ceased to involve exclusion, suffering, and persecution. Since that distant Roman period, I would say we know of three forms of anti-Semitism, which sometimes merge.

From religious to nationalist and racial anti-Semitism

The first form of anti-Semitism is religious. Since Constantine's Edict of Milan recognizing Christianity as an official religion in 313, anti-Semitism has always nourished itself on the hatred of the "Jewish deicide", those who killed Jesus Christ. Throughout the periods of persecution and massacres, the possibility was sometimes – though not always – offered to Jews to escape death or exile by forced conversion, even if they became Jews again when times were less cruel.

The long, culturally rich history of the Marranos, particularly in the Iberian states, is an illustration of this.

With the birth of modern nations, anti-Semitism became essentially nationalist. The Jews, even when they were natives of the countries in which they lived, were always foreigners who were suspect. The fact that the Jews had quite naturally assumed responsibilities, despite the ostracism inflicted on them, and that they held eminent positions in political, economic and financial spheres, made them, at the slightest national crisis, potential traitors – always in the service of a mythical "international Jewish conspiracy" imagined by the anti-Semites.

This was particularly the case in France. I do not need to recall the significance of the [Dreyfus affair](#) (a political scandal and notable example of a miscarriage of justice, 1894 to 1906) in this respect. Because if we had been looking at things with lucidity for a moment, there was no reason why Alfred Dreyfus – a wealthy Alsatian Jew who hated Germany and wanted, first of all, to serve France – should be a traitor.



By the end of the nineteenth century, minds had evolved. Anti-Semitism strove to be scientific in the image of the modern disciplines. It became racial: the Jews being defined as a “race” of mysterious eastern origin that could not be assimilated by the peoples among whom they settled – especially those who claimed to belong to a superior Aryan race, who felt threatened with degeneration by the presence of Jews, with their numerous flaws, in their midst.

Recognition of Jewish citizenship

Thus, in the form of prohibitions, consignment to ghettos, markings on clothing – as if they were dangerous animals – Jews appear, in the long history of humanity, as an accursed species. Hence, the extreme importance we must attach to the French Revolution, which for the first time in history, in 1791, proclaimed that Jews living in France would be considered full French citizens.

A little anecdote: on the day the citizenship of the Jews was voted on, at the end of the Constituent Assembly, the Dauphine, sister of Louis XVI, wrote these words to a cousin of the royal Austrian Hapsburg family in Vienna: “The Assembly has reached the height of its folly, it has made the Jews citizens.”

If I stress this point, it is because the desire to make Jews full citizens, attained with difficulty in the parliamentary proceedings, is exactly what the Nazis hated the most – namely, human rights and the philosophy of the Age of Enlightenment. As stated in Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, the Jews must be excluded absolutely from the community of the German people. This rabid anti-Semitism is at the origin of the racial laws of the Third Reich, adopted in Nuremberg in 1935, the purpose of which, I would remind you, was “the protection of German blood and German honour” – supposedly defiled by the presence of the Jews.

I leave aside the impossibility that the racial theory has encountered, of finding scientific criteria. The scholars of the Third Reich sought hard and, of course, found nothing. And so they fell back on religious practice.

The criteria adopted by the Nuremberg laws forbade any possibility for Jews to leave, through any kind of conversion, the herd of these evil beings to which they belonged by birth.

A wealth of significant lessons and warnings

I will not repeat here the long list of increasing persecutions suffered by the Jews – first in the Third Reich and then in the territories occupied by the German army. Today, countless studies have unveiled the scope and the horror of the Jewish genocide by the Nazis. Nor will I return to the remarkable historical and philosophical works which have dealt with this phenomenon.

What I would like to emphasize is this, which seems to me the most significant and cautionary lesson: what is quite remarkable and difficult to understand is that a great Christian people – cultivated among all the peoples of Europe, from which emerged numerous geniuses of art, thought and scientific research – was the bearer, organizer and perpetrator of the most terrible persecutions against the Jews that have ever blighted the history of Europe. It is essential to remember this, for in Europe there were no countries where the love of culture, the passion for art, especially music, and scientific research, were held higher than in Germany, at the end of the Weimar Republic.

This is precisely UNESCO’s opportunity for reflection. Because if there was one country that shone by its philosophy, it was Germany – Germany before Hitler. And it is this country – yielding to every fury of anti-Semitism and racism – that orchestrated the cruellest episodes the Jews have ever known.

The lesson – and that is why I am insisting – is that culture, knowledge, and a love of the arts are not enough to constitute insurmountable ramparts against anti-Semitism, since it was here that it established itself with the most terrible horror.

Let me be understood clearly: in no way do I mean that we – disciples of the Enlightenment, who believe, throughout every ordeal, in the progress of humanity through the benefits of enlightened education and just institutions based on the philosophy of human rights – must renounce the struggle for ever-needed progress. But we must take into account the fact that neither education nor art, per se, nor culture in the broadest sense of the word, are by their very nature sufficient defences against the fury of racism and anti-Semitism. We must learn from this.



© Studio Canal

A woman endures a “scientific” racial examination during the Second World War, to establish her Jewish identity. Stills from the film Mr. Klein, by American director Joseph Losey, 1976.



Plünderung der Iudengassen zu Frankfurt am Main den 22 Augusti 1614. Nach Mittag umb 5 uhr von den Handwerks gesellen angefangen, und die gantze Nacht durch Continüirt, da den ein Bürger vnd 2 Iuden gar todt blieben, viel aber beiderseits beschedigt worden, bisz ihn endlich /als sie bis in die helfft der gassen komen / von der Bürger schafft gantzlich abge- wehrt worden.

Depiction of the plundering of the Judengasse Jewish ghetto during the Fettmilch riot in Frankfurt, Germany, 22 August 1614.

Anti-Zionism

The Third Reich collapsed, its founder committed suicide, his main henchmen were hanged, or they vanished. The immensity of the Jewish genocide in Europe was discovered, which gave rise to a powerful movement – at the newly-created United Nations – in favour of the creation of a Jewish state. The Allies had, moreover, already made such a commitment between 1914 and 1918.

The creation of a Jewish state in Palestine – which we must remember ensued from a United Nations decision, [UN Resolution 181 \(II\) of 29 November 1947](#) – was not accepted by all. The result was a war, launched by the armed forces of the neighbouring Arab states. They invaded Palestine, the conflict turned to the advantage of the Jews and the rest is history. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has, in fact, never ceased since the creation of the State of Israel.



I am not going to discuss the legitimacy of the rights of the various parties here, nor the best solution to end this conflict – these issues need to be discussed in other forums. But that is the reality. What is certain is that in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, anti-Semitism has once again spread widely under the name of anti-Zionism.

We must have the lucidity to recognize that under this label that refers to Zionism, it is indeed the Jews, and Jews everywhere, who are targeted. And I would say that anti-Zionism under the surface is nothing but the contemporary expression of anti-Semitism, namely, hatred of the Jews.

The new battleground

Today's anti-Semitism, of course, does not present itself in the same form as the one dating back to Constantine. It widely and successfully uses social media; speeches and videos, posted on certain websites, are based on a particularly perverse rhetoric. I have pondered at length what might have happened in pre-1939 Europe if Dr. Goebbels (Reich Minister of Propaganda of Nazi Germany, 1933 to 1945) had had access to the same technical means that we have today in the digital age. This is the new battleground, as far as the fight against anti-Semitism is concerned.

I would simply state my conviction, as a man who has lived a long time, and who has never seen anti-Semitism lose its hold – that as long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues, it is clear to me that hatred of the Jews, far beyond the Middle East, will continue to inflame some Muslims, especially the younger ones, inspired by the internet and the shrill propaganda of the violent images familiar to us.

Hence the atrocious attacks that occur throughout the West, notably in France and in the Middle East, where the conflation of "Jewish equals Zionist" feeds anti-Semitic hatred. It is enough to look at a list of the victims of the crimes committed in the last few years.

A recent image haunts my mind: a man, pursuing Jewish children in a Jewish school, and a little girl running away. And because she is running, this man grabs her by the hair and shoots her point-blank.



© Futuropolis, 2016

Drawing by French illustrator Luz from the comic album Ô vous, frères humains (Futuropolis, 2016), inspired by the book with the same title by Swiss author Albert Cohen.

What is this crime, if not a replica of the acts of the SS (The Schutzstaffel, the paramilitary organization of the Nazi party)? A horrifying expression of anti-Semitism, this image traverses time, reminding us of the Einsatzgruppen (SS death squads, 1939 to 1945) let loose in the ghettos of Eastern Europe.

Action for civil peace

Finally, I would like to point out, and to stress emphatically, one thing concerning action for civil peace. It is the importance of the role – and I would say for some, the fraternal role – of representatives of the Muslim community who denounce these crimes. Conflation here is another trap set by terrorism, and we certainly must not yield to it. I always stress the results of studies on terrorism by think-tanks, which have found that eighty per cent of the victims of terrorism in the world today are Muslims. I want to emphasize this fact, because conflation here would be reprehensible.

My message is not overly optimistic, I know, but I believe that complacency nourishes prejudice, and that prejudice nourishes death, because it breeds hatred. If we can make the principles of the Enlightenment and human rights triumph in the minds of the younger generations, we will have served the right cause – that of peace among peoples.

A French lawyer and Professor of Law, **Robert Badinter** was France's Minister of Justice from 1981 to 1986. He is best known for obtaining a vote in French parliament to abolish the death penalty in 1981. Badinter was appointed President of the Constitutional Council from 1986 to 1995, and elected Senator (Socialist Party) for the Hauts-de-Seine department from 1995 to 2011.



The UNESCO Courier is 70!

An inspiring read

by Alan Tormaid Campbell

Since its inception in 1948, the impact of this iconic magazine has been far-reaching, enthraling readers across the globe. Covering a vast array of topics, its contributors have included the biggest names in their fields. UNESCO's actions against racism have been on the top of the agenda since the beginning – the *Courier* has always provided a powerful platform for debate and discussion of this dangerous and widespread prejudice that continues to blight our world.

With this article, the *UNESCO Courier* joins the celebration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, on 21 March.

UNESCO came into being in the mid-1940s. Remembering the horrors of the Second World War, the preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO includes a phrase that is both haunting and inspiring: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

Richard Hoggart, a British academic who was Assistant Director-General at UNESCO (1971 to 1975), wrote: "The extraordinary assertions within UNESCO's Constitution – that governments will collectively promote the objective pursuit of knowledge and its free circulation – are redolent of their time. The world had just come through a terrible and protracted war... The impulse [...] that people should *understand* each other better through improved education and all forms of cultural and scientific exchanges, the passionate emphasis on truth, justice, peace and the importance of the individual – these impulses were almost irresistible". (Hoggart, R. 1978, *An Idea and Its Servants: UNESCO from Within*. London, Chatto and Windus, pp.27-29.) And UNESCO aimed very high to achieve these.

UNESCO had a bulletin for official announcements and reports from its inception, but in 1948 it was decided to create the *UNESCO Courier*, a popular monthly journal to keep the public informed about UNESCO's ideals and activities.

The *Courier* first appeared in three language editions: English, French, and Spanish. That was steadily increased over the years, until, by 1988, thirty-five different language editions were being published – plus four different language editions in Braille.

In 1949, 40,000 copies of the magazine were produced; this figure rose to 500,000 by the beginning of the 1980s. It was estimated that each copy would be read by more than four people, which meant the *Courier* had a readership of over two million. You could buy it at newsagents; you could take out a subscription, or you could find it in libraries.

The *Courier* was never well-known in the United Kingdom or the United States. But if you ask people – especially those in their 50s, brought up elsewhere – it's astonishing how many of them will say: "Yes, I remember the *Courier*. We used to get it", or even, "That's where I first learned about anthropology". I myself have heard statements like that from people as far afield as Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Ghana, Brazil, and Jamaica.



The UNESCO Courier, July-August 1950.

Wide global horizons

The *Courier* was founded by the remarkable Sandy Koffler. The purpose of the magazine was to have – to use his famous phrase – "A window open on the world", through which readers could look out onto "the wide global horizons".

Koffler, an American, graduated from the City College of New York, and was studying at the Sorbonne in Paris when his plans were cut short by the Second World War. Joining the Psychological Warfare Branch of the American army, Koffler's war experience included landing with the troops of Operation Torch when the Allies invaded Vichy-French North Africa in November 1942. There he started radio broadcasts in Rabat (Morocco) and Algiers (Algeria), before becoming a *Voice of America* correspondent – a job he held throughout the Italian campaign of 1944-1945.

In January 1954, the *Courier* makes a new start

Excerpts from the Editorial

At the beginning of this new year, the *UNESCO Courier* has wanted to do more than just offer its readers the traditional season's greetings. It has sought to "make a new start". In response to the desire expressed by readers it is abandoning its tabloid newspaper size for a new magazine format easier to read, handle and keep. It has increased the number of pages, designed a new cover in colour and prepared a brighter yet sober presentation(...). In its contents the *Courier* will continue to remain faithful to its set goal: to serve as a window opening on the world of education, science and culture through which the schoolteacher in particular for whom this publication is primarily conceived and prepared and other readers in general can look out on to wide global horizons. Each month it will present by text and image, features which are both informative and thought-provoking, and will devote a section to an authoritative treatment of an important world problem and show how it is being dealt with nationally and internationally. The *Courier* particularly invites comments, criticisms and suggestions from its readers. To the teacher who demands something more than run-of-the-mill fare, to those who are interested in people and problems of other nations, in the dramatic but little known story of ordinary men and women working together to raise standards of living, combat ignorance and disease, reduce racial prejudice and foster international understanding, to all those who are alert to today's events and problems in education, in the arts and the sciences, the *Courier* says: This is a periodical specially prepared for you.

The Editors

Whenever an Italian city was liberated, Koffler would set up a newspaper called the *Corriere* there. It came as no surprise, then, that when he joined UNESCO after the war, he set up, inevitably, the *UNESCO Courier*. His was an astonishing creative drive mixed with a passion for publishing. Moreover, it was publishing with a clear moral vision attached.

The magazine was intended for an "enlightened" public, in particular teachers and students, and it did indeed get its greatest readership through schools, colleges, and universities.

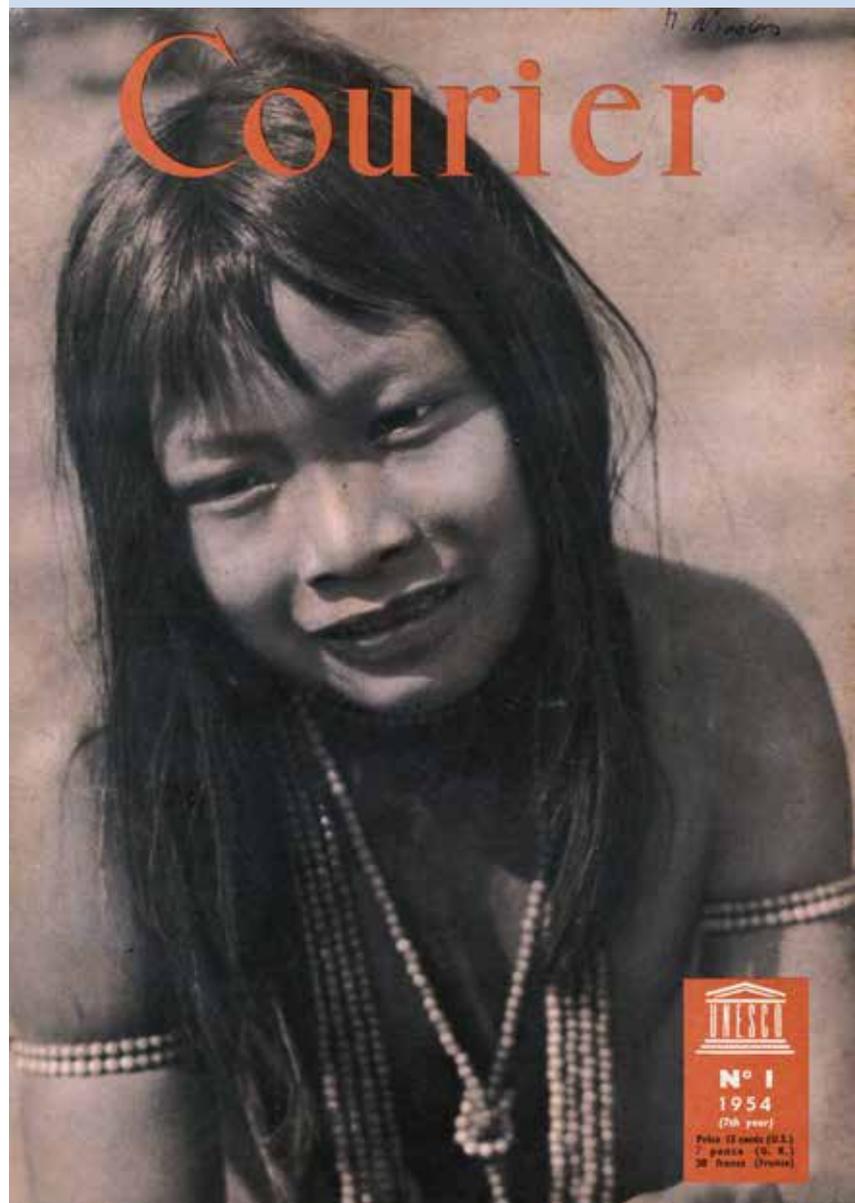
Koffler set out its principal themes as: the impact of science on human life, racial problems, art and culture, human rights, history and archaeology, cultural differences and conflicts between peoples.

The sheer breadth of the subjects covered is breathtaking. In the [same issue](#), you can discover the threats faced by the temple of Borobudur in Indonesia, by the Sri Ranganathaswamy temple in Srirangam, India, and the Parthenon in Greece. In the pages of the *Courier*, you will marvel at the work of the fifteenth-century Florentine painter [Masaccio](#), and then, the work of the [Aborigines of Australia](#). There is an issue to celebrate [Einstein's](#) 70th birthday, another dedicated to [Chekhov](#), and yet another, to [Rabindranath Tagore](#).

There are also numerous articles on ecology and conservation, especially on oceanography and marine biology – the *Courier* was green *avant la lettre*, or way before its time.

The articles were notably well-written and beautifully presented. In 1954, the magazine's format was changed to include colour illustration – setting new standards at the time.

The range of contributors reads like a check-list of twentieth-century culture. The tradition of excellence established by Sandy Koffler has continued over the years. The *Courier's* writers include [Jorge Amado](#), [Isaac Asimov](#), [Jorge Luis Borges](#), [Anthony Burgess](#), [Aimé Césaire](#), [Arthur C. Clarke](#) – to skim just a few names off the top of the alphabet. The magazine also covered major United Nations and UNESCO events. When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed, for example, a *Courier* [edition](#) was devoted to it.



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Racism at the top of the agenda

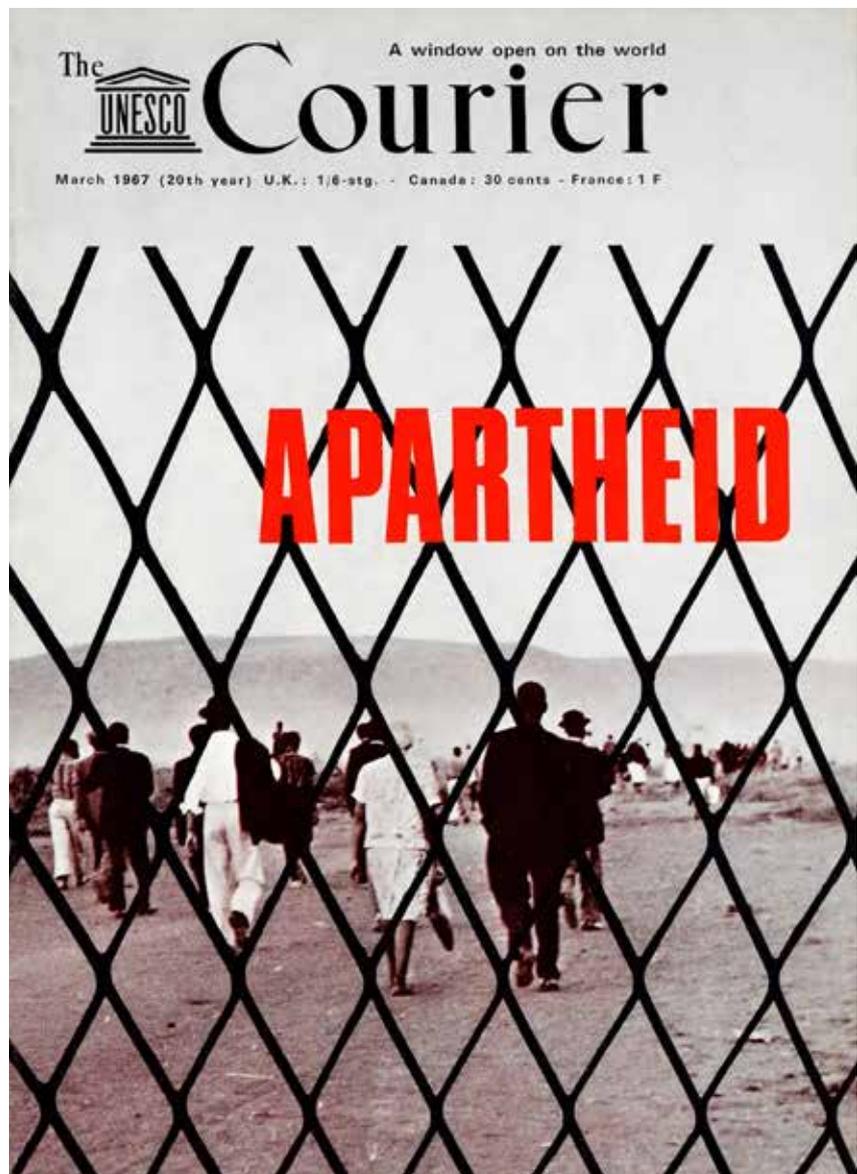
Action against racism was at the top of the UNESCO agenda from the outset. An explicit campaign against South Africa's apartheid regime led to the criticism that focusing on one country in this way sidelined other human rights issues. The point was well-made. Anyone who looks at the list of nations that officially signed up to the Universal Declaration and inquires about political repression and censorship, the ill-treatment of minorities, the consistent discrimination against women, etc., in some of these countries, would be forgiven a response of enormous cynicism.

Besides, the campaign against apartheid was going on in a world where the British and French empires were still going full tilt, where the Jim Crow laws – that enforced racial segregation – were still a way of life in the southern United States, and where caste divisions in India were still thriving.

The first article in the *Courier* that directly addressed the question of race was in November 1949: “[The question of race and the democratic world](#)” by Arthur Ramos. A Brazilian psychologist and anthropologist who was head of UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences, Ramos had been fighting racism all his life, and been imprisoned twice by the Brazilian security police during the dictatorship of Getúlio Vargas.

The article made the case that: “In any discussion on the reorganization of the post-war world, particular account must be taken of anthropology. No other science has been so deflected from its true ends. In its name, whole nations have resorted to conflict, to defend the false ideal of racial or ethnic supremacy. It is, therefore, entirely natural that anthropology, restored to its proper place and stripped of the myths in which it had been veiled, should now deliver its scientific message to the world.”

Then, when UNESCO released its “[Statement on Race](#)” in 1950, the July-August *Courier* of that year carried the headline: “[Fallacies of Racism Exposed](#)”. The statement was published in full, with the conclusions on the front page. It was accompanied by an article, “[Race and Civilization](#)”, by the Swiss-born Argentinian anthropologist Alfred Métraux.



The UNESCO Courier, March 1967.

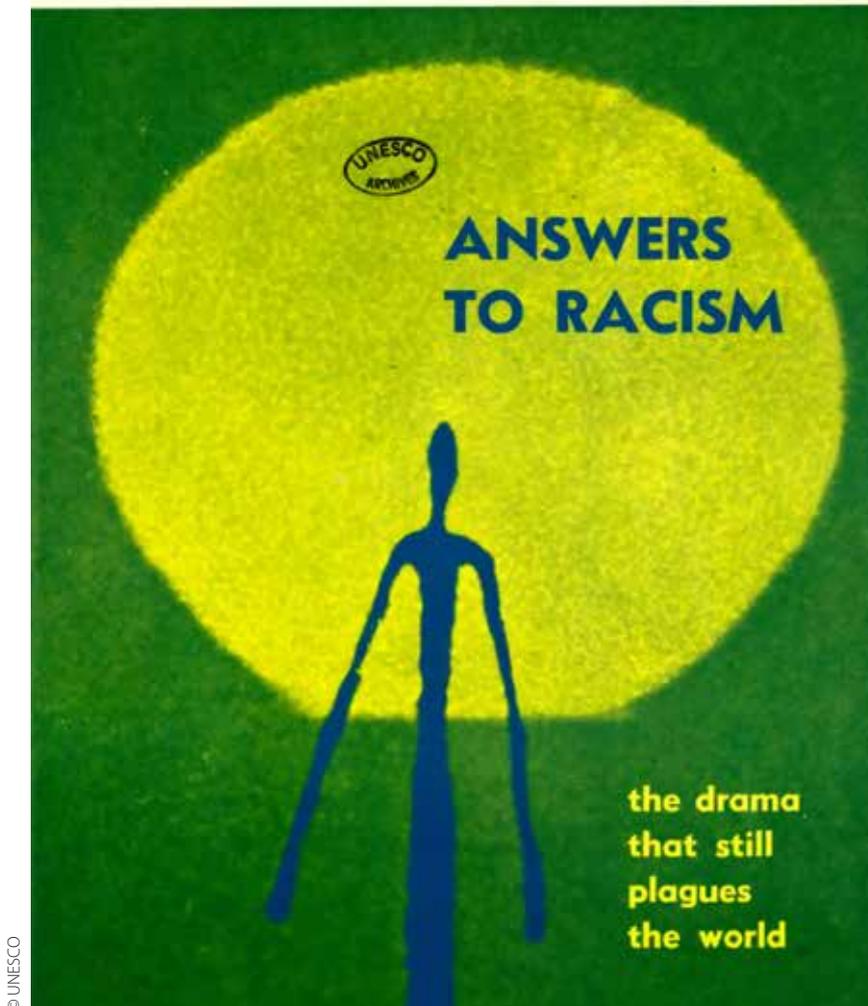
Métraux, who joined UNESCO in 1947, and was head of the Division for the Study of Race Problems in 1950, played a central role in UNESCO's anti-racism initiatives. He was the principal coordinator behind the early statements – the first in 1950, and its revision in 1951. He was a close friend of Koffler, and an enthusiastic supporter of the *Courier*. With more than [twenty articles](#) to his name, Métraux was one of the magazine's top contributors, till his death in 1963.

Challenging long-held beliefs

As seen today, there were some obvious naïvetés in the arguments in the statements on race. Firstly, there was the enormous confidence in the power of “science” – that anthropology is “scientific”, and would therefore establish conclusions with unassailable certainty.

Secondly, some of the examples are clearly debatable – the same July-August 1950 issue carried an illustration, on page 8, accompanying the statement, shows a group of New Zealand Maori above the caption “[Racial Harmony](#)”. Did anyone ask the Maori their opinion on that?

Referring to the US, Ramos wrote in the [November 1949](#) issue: “... after many years of vain effort, the policy of protecting the Indians seems to have become more humane and scientific. Here it is a question not only of protecting the Indians’ “reserves”, but of respecting the characteristics of their civilization, material or otherwise; ...” Few Native Americans today would be happy with the words “humane”, “scientific”, and “respecting” as descriptions of the way they are treated. In the same issue, Ramos praised the work of Brazil's Serviço de Proteção dos Índios (Indian Protection Service), writing that “the results have been highly encouraging”.



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The UNESCO Courier, November 1971.

The Cintas Largas, the Yanomami, and many other indigenous groups in the Amazon were to be engulfed in atrocities, and continue to suffer discrimination to this day.

The *Courier* edition of August-September 1952 featured a [report on race relations in Brazil](#). It heralded a major UNESCO study on race in that country. All the writers argued on the basis of a belief that was common then – that Brazil represented a picture of racial harmony – with one exception. [Luiz de Aguiar Costa Pinto](#), one of the authors of UNESCO's 1950 statement on Race, wrote in this issue of the *Courier*: "...the harmonious integration which is regarded as characteristic of interracial relationships in Brazil fails to correspond to facts revealed by sociological investigations. It has been said so often and for so long that racial prejudices do not exist in Brazil, that this affirmation which has been passed around the world has finally become a source of Brazilian national pride. Yet, behind this piece of dogma lie feelings of bitterness and an obvious uneasiness."

Because the discussions in the *Courier* have always been robust and dynamic, the inevitable complacencies and received ideas get shaken up and challenged.

The greatest achievement of UNESCO's [four statements on the race question](#) is the progressive move away from the "scientific" or "biological" definition of race. They dismantled any scientific justification or basis for racism, and proclaimed that race was not a biological fact of nature, but a dangerous social myth.

Decades later, on the question of race, no one can look at our world with much comfort. But listen to the hope and the intrinsic goodness in Métraux's words in "[Race and Civilization](#)" (*Courier*, July-August 1950): "There is in this concept of race something implacable."

“The inspiring, educative, cultural vision offered by the *Courier* is part of a vigorous moral vision of what human society can be”

The barbarity of our time is more ruthless and more absurd than that of the so-called Dark Ages; for racial prejudice is an unintelligent and unattractive myth. Its flourishing development in the twentieth century will no doubt in future ages be regarded as one of the most shameful episodes in history."

The *Courier* articles on race show a brave, uncompromising campaigning initiative. With a few adjustments, these statements are as appropriate today as they were then. The integrity of the arguments are part of the general strengths of the publication, not in the least constrained by narrow academic disciplines and protective professional postures. The inspiring, educative, cultural vision offered by the *Courier* is part of a vigorous moral vision of what human society can be.

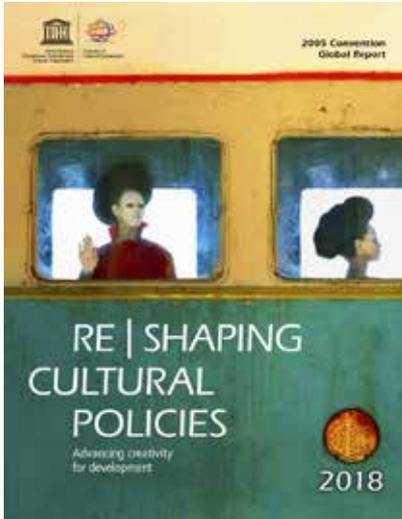
Alan Tormaid Campbell (United Kingdom) taught Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland for many years. Since 1974, he has been involved with the Wayapí, an indigenous people who live in the Amazon forest of Northern Brazil. His best-known book on the Wayapí is *Getting to Know Waiwai* (1995).



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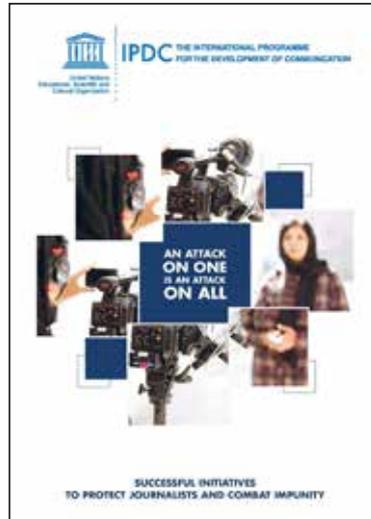
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