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BIODIVERSITY AND  
THE DESTINY OF  
SACRED SITES

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A WORLD CONFERENCE  
SPELLS OUT THE  
REFORM AGENDA

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● REGIONS'  
THE CARIBBEAN  
MAKES EDUCATION  
A TOP PRIORITY

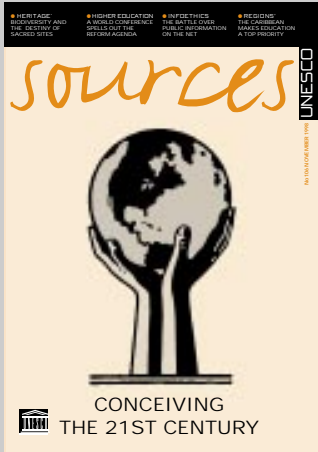
# sources

UNESCO

No 106 NOVEMBER 1998



CONCEIVING  
THE 21ST CENTURY



**UNESCO sources**

is a monthly magazine published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. English and French editions are produced at Paris headquarters; the Spanish edition in cooperation with the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia, Mallorca 285.08037 Barcelona, Spain; the Chinese edition in cooperation with the Xinhua Newsagency, 57 Xuanwumen Xidajie, Beijing, China; and the Portuguese edition in cooperation with the National Commission for UNESCO, Avenida Infante Santo N° 42 - 5°, 1300 Lisbon Portugal.

**Director of Publication :**  
R. Lefort.  
**Editors-in-chief :**  
S. Williams, C. Guttman  
**Assistant Managing Editor :**  
C. Mouillere  
**Associate Editors :**  
N. Khouri-Dagher, C. L'Homme, A-L. Martin.  
**Spanish edition :**  
L. Garcia (Barcelona), L. Sampedro (Paris).  
**Lay-out, illustrations, infography:**  
F. Ryan-Jacqueron, G. Traiano.  
**Printing:**  
Maulde & Renou  
**Distribution**  
UNESCO's specialized services

**UNESCO Sources** is also accessible on Internet under new or publications at:  
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# NATURE AND POLITICS



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## NATURE'S REVENGE?

● September 1997: fires destroy vast tracts of tropical forests in Malaysia and Indonesia. Over 70 million people in southeast Asia are affected by fumes from the blazes, which have been partially attributed to the El Niño climatic phenomenon.

● July 17, 1998: three tidal waves caused by an offshore earthquake sweep across the northwest coast of Papua New Guinea, claiming at least 1,600 lives and leaving over 2,000 missing, according to official figures.

● June-August 1998: floods of the Yangtze's river basin in northeast China claim more than 3,000 lives, affecting more than 200 million persons and almost a quarter of the country's arable land.

● August 1998: floods in Bangladesh submerge three quarters of the country, claiming at least 500 lives and leaving 25 million homeless.

// The devastation left in the wake of hurricane Mitch is first and foremost proof that human ambition to subject nature to its absolute rule remains a myth. Scientific observations were able to foresee the storm's timing and path. But the precautions that had been more or less taken were no match for the strength of the winds and rains – Mitch was the most violent hurricane that Central America has experienced this century – nor could they compensate for the fragility of infrastructures, notably those in which the populations sought protection.

The thousands left dead and missing and the million stranded and homeless once again remind us that natural catastrophes are unfortunately not something of the past. On an entirely different level, they also underscore the blatant inequalities that prevail when nature wreaks such deadly havoc.

Costa Rica, Guatemala, and especially Honduras and Nicaragua have paid a huge price for their underdevelopment: a cataclysm of the same intensity would never have left as many victims in an industrialized country because buildings and protection systems have been tried. These four countries have never had the means to take such measures.

The same inequality is reproduced in the face of relief. The harped-over argument of the isolation of these popula-

tions and the intrinsic weakness of local communication infrastructures is hardly convincing. It is more likely that for various reasons in which cultural distance and geostrategy undoubtedly have their place, international mobilization was not immediately lifted to the rank of absolute priority. Proof is that in other circumstances, huge means were gathered in no time to fly to the rescue of economic or financial interests judged, in their case, of primordial importance.

Finally, this inequality could be on the way to becoming more and more “natural”, at least it might appear so. Meteorologists are drawing an increasingly close link between global warming on the one hand, and the intensification of natural catastrophes and the concentration of their most destructive effects in subtropical zones – home to most developing countries –, on the other.

But these countries account for only a minor share of greenhouse gas emissions, the engine behind global warming. And negotiations on their reduction are moving along at a snail's pace.

While political action can in no way strive to tame nature, it cannot simply stand back before its evolving patterns and behaviour, be it in regard to natural catastrophes or in a host of other domains.

*International mobilization has not been lifted to the rank of absolute priority.*

René Lefort

# TOWARDS A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT?

To understand, anticipate and imagine. Gathered at UNESCO, eminent researchers seek to chart out a new social contract and to counter the dominant logic of the short-term. But whatever the field of action, the first step is to change our way of thinking, and hence teaching, says French sociologist Edgar Morin.

**T**he great challenge to knowledge, education and thought in our century - which will become even more important in the next - is the contradiction between increasingly global, interdependent and planetary problems on the one hand, and our learning processes, which are more and more fragmented, divided and compartmentalized, on the other.

We must aspire to what French writer and mathematician Blaise Pascal had already clearly formulated in the 17th century: "I consider it impossible to know component parts without understanding the whole, just as to understand the whole, we must be aware of its parts." What we need is a way of thinking capable of placing the singular, the particular and the local into context, and to a broader extent, to situate the global in relation to its component parts. Such a thought process can avoid various forms of blindness, whether they come from ethnocentrism or hyperspecialized reasoning, and the short-sightedness that characterizes our outlook on the world. Take the most formalized social science of all - economics - which has proved itself more or less incapable of predicting current upheavals, notably the crisis which has swept across Southeast Asia. How can we explain this incapacity? Because economics is closed, turned inward, and has lost its connections with the rest of the human and social context. From this stems the necessity for a reform in our ways of thinking, a task that is inseparable from educational reform. In order to do this, we must remind ourselves of four fundamental aims of teaching.

The first was formulated in the 16th century by the French philosopher Montaigne: "It is better to have a good head than a full head." The important thing is not to accumulate knowledge but to organize it according to the most important strategic points. It

## 21st CENTURY DIALOGUES

Intellectuals and researchers from all horizons gathered at UNESCO (Sept. 16-19), around the theme *Will there be a 21st century?* Director-General Federico Mayor summed up forecasting in two words: "to understand and to imagine," challenging participants to "make a lucid diagnosis of the present and shed light on the road that must lead us to the future." Ilya Prigogine, Nobel laureate for Chemistry, reflected in his paper that "we will likely see a new conception of rationality develop in the next century, in which "reason" is no longer associated with "certainty", and "probability" with "ignorance." The debates spanned a spectrum of issues: food security, energy, culture and the media, "the third industrial" revolution, with common challenges emerging: eradicating poverty, finding more sustainable development practices, and inventing new forms of regulation at the planetary level.

is not a question of reducing or separating the universal from its elementary parts, but to distinguish and to make links.

The second aim was formulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Emile*: "I want to teach him the human condition." Teaching the human condition, which is a base of any humanist culture, is a necessity even greater in our planetary era wherein humanity as a whole is living a common destiny, subjected to the same problems of life and death. It is precisely in this context that we can conceive the link between scientific and humanistic knowledge.

Starting with the major polydisciplinary fields which have formed since the 1960s, such as the Earth Sciences and Ecology, we can begin to situate the human condition in the cosmos, not only in space but also in time, because we are made up of particles formed during the first seconds of the universe, by atoms of carbon contained in a sun preceding our own. This defines our cosmic affiliation but at the same time underlines our difference, our specificity, which comes from culture, thought and conscience. The gift which science can bestow upon human culture is to situate us within this context.

Literature and poetry also introduce us to the human condition, forming part of the third aim of teaching, also formulated by Rousseau in *Emile*: "I want to teach him to live." What does "to live" actually mean? It is not so much a question of learning techniques and production modes, nor of gaining know-how, but rather of relating to others and oneself. Literature, poetry and the great art of our century, the cinema, are schools of living. They show us the complexity of human beings and their relationships. These are schools where we learn to understand human beings, not so much through the lens of the impersonal, objective sciences but as individuals who are subjects, and as such, live,

*The ambition of humanism is not to dominate. Its mission is conviviality on Earth.* //

suffer, love and hate, caught up in the whirlwind of human relations.

I will conclude with the fourth and last aim: to form citizens not only of the nation but of the Earth. The notion "Citizen of the Earth" can precisely be drawn from an examination of the human condition and from a renewed humanism, far from the arrogant face of man as the only subject of the universe, destined to be master of the world, an idea which held forth until recent decades. The ambition of humanism is not to dominate. Its mission is conviviality on Earth.

If there is a way of thinking which we must embed in education, it is the knowledge that unity contains multiplicity and that multiplicity embodies unity. Therefore, we need a humanism that is biologically and terrestrially rooted, one which inscribes us

firmly on the Earth through the awareness of a common destiny among humans faced with the problems of death, whether in the form of the nuclear threat, the ecological threat, the economic threat, the intellectual threat. Blind thought leads to catastrophe. Reform in our way of thinking is not an intellectual luxury. It is a necessity, a prerequisite for the safeguarding of a humanity confronted with the terrifying forces it has unleashed without yet having found a way to control them.

*Edgar Morin, sociologist  
Emeritus research director at the French  
Centre for Scientific Research*

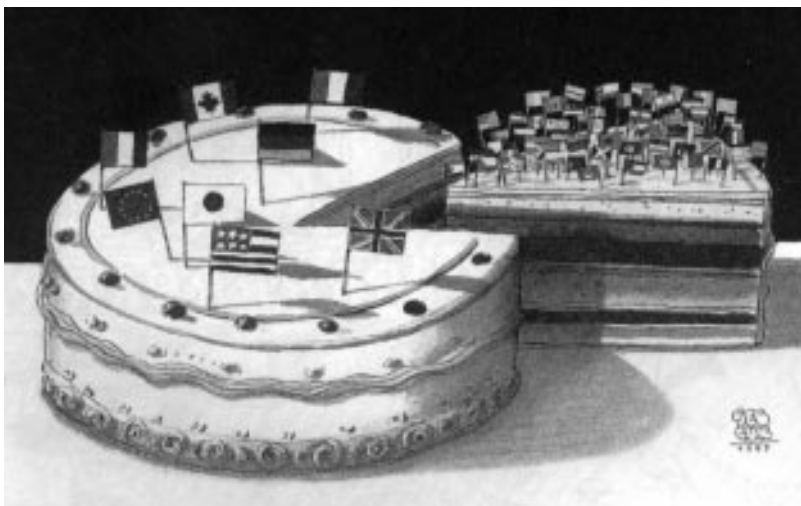
## Economy: from global consumers to global citizens

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, we've been made to believe that there are no ideologies left. And yet, at least until recently, we've also been told that there's only one way to globalize: go for the free market, go for free capital flow and follow the ideals of the neoliberal way of thinking. A full-page ad published last April in the *Financial Times* is an expression of how far this can go: police in riot gear are pictured trying to calm down a crowd in Indonesia while the headline reads: "This is a money-making opportunity." The ad, run by the Region Pacific investment group, argues that markets in turmoil offer unfolding opportunities. What they in fact propose, if you call them, are apartments in Jakarta going for \$15,000 instead of \$200,000 a few months earlier.

"A new social contract is about much more than finding new regulations for the global financial markets".

Western investors, and more broadly, all those who put their money into such funds, are only exacerbating the forces that go towards ending a social contract in many countries, not just in Southeast Asia. In the United States, fund managers are dramatically changing corporate philosophies. Shareholder pressure has been the driving force behind a wave of restructurings, constantly pushing up the profit-to-revenue ratio required to qualify among the Top 50 corporations of *Fortune's* Global 500. In Europe too, this process is underway. Chase Manhattan Bank has described the continent as a future "slaughterhouse", referring to the restructurings that are likely to occur if the Union – a market the same size as that of the United States – is to become more competitive, at the cost of jobs. The times are over when productivity gains were turned into higher wages, which in turn translated into higher purchasing power, and, in the end, higher company revenue.

Either these forces gain strength – and they do almost every day – or we find a way to counterbalance what is happening in the world. True, all those who have followed free market policies only and have confused free trade with free flow of money are now resembling the emperors without clothes. But a new social contract – if we are lucky enough to come up with one – is about much more than finding new, intelligent regulations for the global financial markets. We need new policies with the International Monetary Fund in which goals and ways of reaching



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them are not so pegged to ideology. No western country that puts its money into the IMF would accept the kinds of policies that have led to recession and increased social inequality in their own countries. With the Treaty of Versailles at the end of World War I, millions of Austrians and Germans had the feeling that something had been imposed upon them that was beyond their means, and we know about the social and political consequences of that situation.

It is also key to address what is happening within the increasingly powerful World Trade Organization, since up until now, hardly any public attention has focused on setting guidelines that could contribute to social cohesion. Nor does the end of industrialization mean that there are no jobs left. There are plenty of jobs in the fields of the environment, health, personal services and education, but less and less money is earmarked for these types of enterprises. New public/private partnerships and tax incentives have to be devised. What we definitely need is a new concept for pension funds. The notion that investing heavily in stocks will guarantee the future security of pension funds is one of the most comfortable lies being thrown around. This is only going to work for a minority, probably no more than a fifth. More generally, a forthcoming study reveals that the US stock frenzy is far from being a middle-class phenomenon. On the contrary, it shows that only the top 10% of society has in fact profited from the pre-1998 Dow Jones boom.

#### A social peace movement

If we want to achieve a new social contract, there is much to be learnt from the way big companies and financial markets operate globally and use communications. We have to find new alliances and realize that we are not only global consumers, but also global citizens. We should not only have corporate universities that teach companies about boosting efficiency, but also ones that deal with issues like social cohesion. The one single force that might trigger the debate is a type of social peace movement. In industrialized nations, the ecology movement has been instrumental in addressing questions and contributing to policies that are fostering a cleaner environment.

Just imagine a social peace movement today putting up banners in front of the ten European companies that make the largest profits and don't pay taxes anymore. Or imagine an active citizen movement, an alliance via the Internet, addressing as readers, as concerned citizens, the *Financial Times* that runs such ads. I believe this would make a difference and that we are going to get there.

*Hans-Peter Martin*  
Bureau chief, *Der Spiegel*, Vienna  
Author of *The Global Trap* (1996)

#### A Vision for Africa

Asked whether globalization could go on without Africa, Hans-Peter Martin offered a blunt response: "As I see it, nobody is talking about Africa unless we want to be polite, or something horrible happens like the bombing of the US embassy."

"I think this man should be taken very seriously," said Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania, special adviser to the Economic Commission for Africa, and former secretary-general of the Beijing World Conference on Women, taking the issue up during a debate on the African economy. "A few years ago,

to rediscover ourselves, to look at the African reality through African eyes."

Arguing that African dignity had "collapsed" in the 20th century through the legacy of slavery and the weight of colonization, Mongella underlined her continent's tremendous wealth in terms of its cultures, languages, history, and philosophies. "Africa has something to be proud of and to offer the world. Poor as we are, the person remains what is most important in our life. We have never used this to develop the African image." To many,

and perpetuating these conflicts. People are making their calculations on the wealth of Africa. In the Congo, there are multinational companies which I'm not here to name that are calculating how they are going to benefit. If we don't address issues of demilitarization in Africa, if we don't build up our own capital by rechanneling resources that are going to military expenditure, we'll never get Africa off the ground."

Stating that African politics in their current state were "a politics of survival" within a very fragile economic system, Mongella urged that Africans reflect upon a type of governance adapted to their own cultural patterns, rather than jump on the bandwagon and apply principles that don't fit the African scenario. Much could also be gained from developing trade within Africa, and looking east, towards Asia. And finally, wouldn't it be time for "wise African women to sit on the chairs of power?"

C.G.



When will they truly play a role in the realms of power?

everyone was interested in us. Now, no one is going to take Africa as a liability in the globalization process. We must take advantage of this marginalization

this heritage is being masked by the current conflicts raging across the continent. "These conflicts are global ones. We have to ask ourselves who is paying, manipulating



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Is there any fraternity left among workers?

# Work and Time: Changing Models

No long term: such might be the new motto of the work world. In Great Britain, a person with two years of university education is likely to change employers more than ten times in the course of a career, and probably, be required to learn a new skill at least three times.

"A kind of crisis is introduced in the work world that combines the rapid change in employment with the degradation of skill, so that people are continually in a situation of being displaced," says Richard Sennett, chairman of the Council on Work and a professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics. This represents a radical shift from the age of the hierarchical organizations that functioned through systems of fordist production, based on an extreme division of labour that organized people's time in regular, predictable ways. In the past 20 years, institutions have gone through nothing short of a "revolution". Partly as a response to global capitalism, post-fordist systems tend to be formed by loose networks that can be broken apart easily, recombined and sold. "These highly flexible organizations tend to have a very destructive effect both on commitment to the organization and on fraternal relations among workers," noted Sennett, explaining that such fraternity is founded on patterns of informal trust, which take time to build up.

Rather than personal commitment, such institutions place a high value on risk-taking and entrepreneurial activity. "What we have found is that the experience of taking risks tends to be highly depressing to people below the elite levels," said Sennett, referring to his research. The worker tends to equate risk with danger, and has no clear perception of how he (or she) will be rewarded for such

actions. Such systems also radically transform the classical work ethic which often, rested on delayed gratification. "For people in the lower echelons of the organization, the work ethic was a way of dealing with boredom: you justify discipline by thinking of long-term reward. But that work ethic is irrational in a flexible organization: to delay is to risk losing everything. Work is no longer a narrative in people's lives."

Beyond changes in how work is organized, French sociologist Roger Sue reflected that working time no longer fulfills several basic functions in society, just as religious time had in the Middle Ages. It no longer structures our time, fosters social ties and gives meaning to the future. Furthermore, it has been superseded by capital as the main productive factor in the economy. With the erosion of work, bodies such as trade unions and other representative organizations through which citizenship could be expressed have also lost some of their influence. "Modernity has mistakenly confused the notion of citizenship with that of the worker," said Sue. To those who have evoked alternatives to work, he countered that the "myth of the leisure society is one that is collapsing. We will not move from a society of work to a society of leisure for one simple reason: leisure supposes work. The leisure society, which traps the individual in his role as a consumer, often creates a social void."

## New relationships

If some forms of participation are losing steam, others are on the rise and offer positive pointers for the future. "We are currently witnessing a refounding of the social fabric on a model that is closer to that of an association," said Sue. "In this context, the relationship to the other becomes one of an associate, one that finally recognizes the other as an equal, and that is based on affinities." In France for example, one person out of two belongs to an association, while there is barely one in three at work. Noting that future growth was to be found in the fields of education, health, culture and information, Sue reflected that "we are passing from an individual considered as a working, productive person to a whole new concept revolving around the production of the individual — not only in terms of values, health and education — but also of genetic production."

To go "beyond the market condition" of liberalism, or that of socialism, based on the predominant role of the state, Sue advocated further reflection on how to develop a more associative democracy, arguing, as de Tocqueville had put it in the 18th century, that "the association is well and truly the mother of democracy."

Cynthia Guttman

*Risk-taking  
tends to be  
highly  
depressing to  
people below the  
elite levels.* //

# Environment: invisible dangers

Medardo Varela was assassinated on May 10, 1998. Leader of a Honduran workers' movement on banana plantations operated by foreign companies, he had organized a ban on exports, then obtained compensation for 5,000 workers rendered sterile through the use of a nematicide (a pesticide specifically aimed at worms which attack roots), DBCP. This product has been prohibited since 1979 in the US where it is produced, but American law does not restrict export. Effects of the substance on reproduction have been recognized since 1977 and its manufacturers – Shell, Dow and Occidental – sentenced to pay compensation to Philippine and Costa Rican workers affected by sterility.

Why then is it still used? Are chemical products helping to make our planet more unjust and more intolerable? Richard Levantin, a cancer specialist at Harvard University says: "So long as cost-efficiency, the quest for maximum profit or the blind execution of production norms motivate companies, so long as people are prisoners of economic need or state regulation of production and consumption, one pollutant will replace another pollutant".

In the final analysis, when only commercial logic is taken into consideration, the treasures of human ingenuity that are synthetic

molecules will backfire on their creators and can become instruments of destruction, exposing workers and the environment to dangers as pernicious as they are invisible.

There are very few areas in our daily lives which are not affected by chemistry: from plastic drinking cups or pharmaceuticals to computers and television sets. This does not prevent these products from representing one of the principal threats to the biosphere and public health. According to the American Chemical Society's Chemical Abstracts (CA) service which catalogues all chemical products, there were 212,000 such substances in 1965, 16 million in 1996 and 18 million in 1998. This amounts to two new products per minute, or about one million each year. Moreover, studies carried out by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicate a lack of basic information on 93% of 3,000 substances produced for the market in high quantities. What is the use, therefore, of prohibiting 12 organo-chlorinated insecticides, as was the case in a recently signed international treaty, when 300 of these are on sale?

## Contamination without frontiers

Results of studies carried out by a Japanese research vessel on HCH (another organo-chlorinated insecticide) in the air and water of different parts of the world, found global contamination by these products which are persistent, in other words, not biodegradable. As an example, a plane which flies from Paris to New York spews out 20 kg of PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl, another organo-chlorinated product) used to cool its reactors. Today, there is virtually no man or woman whose tissues do not contain detectable quantities of these compounds which, in fact, are pseudo-hormones, acting as endocrine destructors. Even though they are used mainly in the Third World, their effects have no frontier.

Are there any solutions? The future is unpredictable, but it must be hoped that sustainable development becomes the rule for the use of resources, and that the western consumer model – which is not sustainable – be forced to give ground. Public opinion must also persuade industry to become ecological, namely to reconsider the industrial process within a context of its environmental impact, upstream as well as downstream from the manufacturing stage. Finally, we must condemn texts such as the "Food disparagement law" voted by a certain number of states in the US, which aims at sti-

Spraying coffee with insecticide in Guatemala.



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fling the voices of citizens who protest food industry practices or the quality of agro-food products. This law defines as a “misdemeanor” any criticism of agricultural products, when it is not supported by “reasonable” scientific evidence. This means that the brunt of providing proof once again lies on the consumer and not on the producer. By reversing this process, measures can be

taken to anticipate and reduce potential risks for health and the environment.

*Mohamed Larbi Bouguerra  
Environmental management expert,  
International Francophone  
University of Alexandria*

# Straight talk from the youngest voice of them all

He has crisscrossed the planet, driven by a mission that hatched the day he fell upon an article about a Pakistani boy bonded into slavery at age four to make carpets. At the time, Craig Kielburger was 12. With some classmates, he founded the Toronto-based organization *Free the Children* and since then, has met with youth living on the streets of the world’s major cities, becoming an outspoken and tireless advocate of their cause.

Three years later, at 15, Kielburger was the youngest participant at the *Dialogues*, and seized the chance to express his outrage. “The truth is that we have the resources to end childhood poverty and to make children’s rights a priority,” said Kielburger, referring to world military (\$800 billion) and advertising (\$40 billion) expenditure. “Why are children still forced to labour in bondage and slave-like conditions? Why are they being denied their basic right to education? Because governments are not making children a priority. The first thing that we must do is to find a means of holding governments accountable, ensuring that they live up to their solemn promises,” he stated, referring to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by over 190 countries. “If the World Bank and the IMF can find a means to hold governments accountable for bad loans, why is there no infrastructure in place to force them to live up to their promises to children?”

If Kielburger is at ease in the company of heads of state and ambassadors, forceful and passionate when he addresses a gathering, it is because he is able to speak of the world’s children individually, as if he were defending his own brothers and sisters. He puts names on faces and reminds us that even a child bonded into slavery, sleeping in the gutter, rummaging for food in garbage dumps, has dreams: dreams of helping others, of rising above his or her own condition. “Around the world, children are beginning to wisen up and to say no more. In India, children are marching through the streets demanding their rights to go to school. In Brazil, they



© FABIAN CHARAFFI

“Around the world, children are beginning to wisen up and to say no more.”

are leading protests for land reform, in Senegal, they have organized themselves to fight for better working conditions. Around the world, children have begun to lose faith in large institutions and governments and have begun to take the campaign into their own hands.” A trend that fits in with the aims of *Free the Children*. With chapters in several countries, the organization counts thousands of members between 8 and 16 and is funded through grants, private donations and the children’s own fundraising drives. The goal is not only to help abused and exploited children, but to assert that this young generation carries a weight in society and should have a say in improving their situation.

“Some say that these issues are too complicated for us, that children lose their childhood by becoming involved. But let’s remember that children in industrialized countries are exposed everyday through the mass media to suffering, injustice and poverty. We can simply close our eyes on this or decide that we can help change the world for the better. For the sake of justice, we must create a sense of international solidarity and responsibility.” Sparking this awareness is also a matter of education, and children can be influenced towards loftier goals than consumption: “Corporations spend billions every year on children trying to win over their minds and hearts. But how much money, time and energy are we spending on educating youth about human rights, on promoting initiatives started by youth to promote peace?”

In comparison to nine-digit figures, his plea for support seems derisory: creating an international network on children helping children, developing a human rights curriculum, fostering better understanding by linking schools in industrialized and developing countries, and most importantly, ensuring that children have a voice in decision-making at all levels – with his eloquence and energy, Kielburger seems proof that this could indeed make a difference. ●



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Magical spots where the spirit blows across the ages.

► **HERITAGE** Steeped in legend, many of the earth's natural wonders have been revered since the beginning of time. Today, such places have a role to play in protecting the environment.

# THE DESTINY OF SACRED SITES

Some natural spots on this earth inspire religious feelings in human beings. Such “magic” places are said to “radiate energy”. Mountains, woods, trees, small islands, lakes, rivers and waterfalls have been the focus of ceremonies passed down over the ages in a wide range of societies. Imbued with stories and legends, these places serve to link our past to our future, our everyday reality to our dreams and the supernatural. They travel with us through the centuries. This is why they are called “sacred” sites.

In recent years, conservation experts and ecologists have taken a vivid interest in such sites, having recognized what Marie Roué, an anthropologist with the French National Council for Scientific Research, calls “the ability of traditional societies to preserve biodiversity through their knowledge and rituals.” Others see them as economically viable areas for surrounding communities. Everyone is concerned about how sacred sites are used and alarmed by the fact that

*We mustn't impose our idea of conservation or another notion of spirituality on traditional societies.*

they are threatened by deforestation, pollution, population movements, and unregulated land settlement. The need to protect them is agreed upon, but the means are not.

“Before we do anything, we have to understand,” emphasizes Roué. “We mustn't impose on them our idea of conservation or another notion of spirituality.” It may be useful to protect these sites, but good intentions can also have disastrous consequences. Most of the time, sacred sites are feared or are secret places. In trying to preserve them, they become more widely known, and rules are laid down which take away part of their mystery.

The price of doing so can be high. In Arizona, efforts to protect sites that are sacred to the Hopi Indians have profoundly altered them, according to Patrick Pérez of the Toulouse School of Architecture (France). “For the past 20 years, various development projects – including the manufacturing of asphalt surfaces for highways, coal mining in the north of the territory and a larger flow of tourists have threatened the physical and spiritual identity of the site.”

How can sacred sites help in preserving an endangered environment? The battle to prevent species from dying out has meant that sacred sites have come to be seen as reserves of plant and animal life. Some have wanted to “fight against the extinction of species by marking out an area surrounding the site itself,” explains Thomas Schaaf, from UNESCO’s Ecological Sciences Division. Such a “buffer” area could be used by local populations to develop economic activities such as farming, a process which gives them an enhanced sense of responsibility for protecting and rehabilitating their environment.

### Respecting beliefs

Since 1993, this idea has been put into practice in northern Ghana, where the natural vegetation has been seriously damaged by road construction, bushfires, overgrazing and fire-wood cutting. The project aims to replant degraded savanna environments with indigenous species from the sacred groves, and to generate income for local communities. “We based the experiment on women and taught them how to plant tree nurseries,” explains Schaaf. In Colombia’s Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, the idea of preservation could not be applied in the same way because local people there believe that “when nature is damaged, it should be left alone because it can regenerate itself independently.” Protection in this instance meant “avoiding all human impact on nature.” This proves, says Schaaf, “that strengthening environmental conservation at sacred sites must be based on the belief systems of local people.” UNESCO is currently organizing a survey to see if this kind of experiment can be reproduced elsewhere in Africa, as well as in Asia and Latin America.

Consulting with local populations is key to any protection initiative. Bans do not preserve anything. On the contrary, when people are removed from an area which has been declared “protected,” their status as guardians of a precious place is taken away from them. They feel robbed and have been known to attack the new reserve, slipping into it at night to chop down trees for their own use. Absurd situations have arisen, as in south-western Ghana, where the sacred sites inside a national park were no longer accessible to those who worshipped at them. “The faithful had to ask the authorities for permission to enter the park every time they wanted to go there,” says Schaaf. “It was as if every time you wanted to visit a church you had to ask permission from the minister of culture.”

Another undesirable consequence is that local people often feel obliged to adapt to Western ways of thinking when they want to protect a site, says Roué. “When they realize that the only way Westerners will respect them is for them to talk about endangered species and sacred sites, they invent them,”

she says. This is their way of protecting nature and thus their own survival.

The experience of the Kasua people of New Guinea is a case in point. When timber companies damaged one of their sacred sites, the Kasua took action to protect this sacred territory by giving the Art Museum of Papua New Guinea the legal power to declare the site as belonging to the country’s cultural heritage, thus giving it precise boundaries. This procedure required the Kasua to take the site into their own hands and put a value on it, whereas until then, it was considered as belonging to the spirits. From the West – and especially from missionaries – they learnt that “everything could be given an economic value” argues anthropologist Florence Brunois, who worked for three years in the Kasua region in a multi-disciplinary research group called “The Future of Inhabitants of Tropical Forests”.

### A holistic vision

For some peoples – especially nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples – all of nature is sacred, not just isolated places in it. For example, certain trees are linked to certain birds, and such and such a bird to such and such a seed: it is a very ecosystemic vision of things. The Inuits hunt animals for food, but also respect them: “they believe that the animal is loyal to them and will stay loyal as long as they maintain a harmonious relationship with it,” explains Roué. “They throw some of a slaughtered seal’s intestines back in the sea so that the seal can be reborn. They also believe the same animals keep coming back – the notion of a stock of souls.” A similar outlook characterizes the hunter-gatherer Cree Indians of the arctic region of northern Quebec, who “have no concept of property,” says Roué. “They look after their territory which provides them with life and is therefore automatically regarded as sacred.” A current plan to build a huge hydro-electric complex on their lands once again puts the question of a legal protection on the frontline.

### Complex choices

A decision to protect a site can never be taken for granted. Especially when a sacred wood lies in the middle of famine-stricken region like Orissa, in India, where 90% of the population live below the poverty line. The wood may be sacred but it is still a means of people’s survival. How can one reproach people whose lives directly depend on making use of the forest? In the name of what?

This is why UNESCO wants to help local people to better preserve their sacred sites, and thus their natural environment, and to use them if necessary as a starting-point for sustainable development. Especially as the key question of who owns the land on

### SITES IN QUESTION

Gathering 150 experts (ethnobiologists, anthropologists, botanists, historians, geographers, lawyers...), an international forum on ‘natural’ sacred sites, organized by UNESCO, the French National Council for Scientific Research and the National French Museum of Natural History was held from 22-25 September. Among the issues: how have the practices and representations of local peoples favoured the conservation of biodiversity in certain privileged areas? How can such sites be protected without losing their sacred character?



Listening to the true guardians of biodiversity.



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which a sacred site stands has arisen recently in connection with farming or mining there.

In Chile for example, mining companies have taken advantage of a legal void regarding the recognition of sacred sites by purchasing at rock-bottom prices lands with rivers running through them which are needed in the mining of copper. The local people innocently sold their sacred lands. "All the talk of protecting sacred sites must not mean pushing local people off their land," says Alonso Barros, a Chilean lawyer and anthropologist. "We have to give them all the information they need to decide how they want to control their own resources."

*Cristina L'Homme*

## Peru: Machu Picchu's cable car saga



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A controversial journey.

The news that a cable-car was to be built to haul more tourists up to the top of the sanctuary-fortress of Machu Picchu has stirred up a storm. The citadel in south-eastern Peru, a world heritage site since 1983, is a structure of huge stone blocks on the saddle of a mountain 2,430 metres up, overlooking precipices on either side. It is thought to have played an important role in the religion of the Inca people who lived in the area from the 11th to 16th centuries.

The Incas, who worshipped the sun, built several temples around the citadel's central square – the Temple of the Three Windows, the Temple of the Sun and the Intihuatana shrine, a series of terraces with a sundial clock crowning the highest one. Excavations by the American archaeologist Hiram Bingham, who discovered Machu Picchu in 1911, set off speculation about a holy sanctuary guarded by virgin women, after he unearthed 173 skeletons there, 120 of which were of young women.

Thousands of tourists take the train from Cuzco to the station at Aguas Calientes, and then a bus (and sometimes a helicopter) to the site itself. The trip is unforgettable, especially the swaying of the bus as it winds its way along the road overlooking the sheer drop. The journey is so risky that no company in

Peru or anywhere else in the world is willing to provide insurance. The suggested solution: to build a cable-car line up to the sacred mountain peaks, from where to marvel at the heritage of the Incas. As the argument goes, this mode of transport would certainly be much safer and quicker for tourists, since two cable-cars carrying 45 people each could travel the 2.4 kms in six minutes, which would mean between 3,500 and 4,000 tourists every day. Such figures ring more profitable than the 1,800 tourists who go by road now. There would even be a restaurant at the top where they could pause and recover from the journey. But, counter others, more than doubling the number of tourists visiting the site would undoubtedly alter Machu Picchu, both in terms of the physical environment and of its once sacred nature.

### No impact survey

Ever since the citadel was declared a world heritage site, the Peruvian government has ignored UNESCO's call to come up with a master plan to regulate activity around Machu Picchu. Instead it went ahead with contracting out the building of the cable-car line without commissioning an environmental impact survey (a priority in this case) of the project. The companies hired – Perú

Hotel S.A. and Perú Operadores de Turismo – estimate that the entire construction, including surveys will cost \$US10 million. In return, they would be granted a 25-year operating concession. The consortium is proposing a round-trip fare of \$10.90 per person (plus tax at 18%) from Aguas Calientes to the top – at which rate their initial investment would be fairly promptly recovered.

#### A string of protests

The moves have set off a string of protests. How could the government grant a construction permit, the protesters argued, when the National Institute of Natural Resources (INRENA) had appealed in June this year for an urgent survey of the project's environmental effects so as "to avoid any harmful consequences for the ecosystems."

The director of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of San Marcos, Ruth Shady, went even further by saying that "without such an environmental survey and without the approval of the World Heritage Committee and those responsible for the country's archaeological heritage, the concession the government has granted should be considered null and void."

UNESCO's position is straightforward: if Peru does not come up with a survey report next year (it produced, as required, a preliminary one by September 15 this year), the next meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Kyoto (Japan) in December 1998, might put Machu Picchu on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

"A moral sanction of this kind is the worst

*Some say there are geological faults on the mountain where the Inca sanctuary stands.*

Will more visitors upset the aura of Machu Picchu?

thing that could happen," stresses Patricia Uribe, UNESCO's representative in Peru, "but I think that before we get to that point, we will have in place the means for technical cooperation so we can preserve the sanctuary for future generations."

#### A modernizing influence?

Alejandro León, cultural affairs director at the foreign ministry, thinks the fuss over the cable-car project has been exaggerated. But he admits that the row over it has "helped to force us to produce the master plan for the site," which UNESCO has been pressing for. He claims that "many see the cable-car service as a modernizing influence which will attract more tourists and enable them to reach Machu Picchu without destroying its natural, cultural and historic environment." Lorenzo Sousa Debarbieri, who heads the main contractor Perú Hotel S.A., agrees, arguing that the project's "ultimate aim is to provide a more reliable high-quality non-polluting facility."

The environmental impact survey is being carried out by the firm Dames & Moore – and financed by the two companies responsible for building the cable-car line. A preliminary survey has already found that the environment in the area is unstable, constantly changing and seeking a physical balance. This conclusion backs the argument of those who are against the cable-car project and say there are geological faults on the mountain where the Inca sanctuary stands.

*Adolfo Medrano  
in Lima*



© DANIEL BELTRA/GAMMA

# Brazil: The Garden of Sacred Leaves

The forest gave shelter to the Tupinamba Indians and inspired their rites. It was there when the Portuguese arrived in the 16th century, that the natives were enslaved and that large-scale deforestation began. Escaping African slaves sought refuge there and it was a battlefield during the liberation of colonial Brazil in the 19th century.

Known as the “Atlantic forest,” this expanse once stretched for 3,000 kms along the coast and 200 kms inland. Today it has shrunk to just a few isolated patches. One of them, the São Bartolomeu Pirajá Park – “the garden of sacred leaves” – covers 1,600 hectares on the edge of the city of Salvador de Bahia, in northeastern Brazil. The park’s magical heritage has meant that religious ceremonies and biodiversity have long coexisted there, but today, pollution and urban violence threaten this balance.

The Tupinamba Indians regard the forest as “filled with spirits,” explains Ming Anthony, a botanist and ethnologist at the French Natural History Museum’s ethnobiology lab in Paris. “They say it is peopled with gods and the souls of dead relatives who they venerate with offerings and by building small shrines in their honour.”

This sacred vocation endured through the ages: the African slaves brought by the Portuguese found the forest a very natural place to build their temples. Indeed nowadays, the park is regarded as the most important site in Afro-Brazilian culture. Every water spring, every waterfall, each stone, each tree and the forest as a whole is the object of special reverence.

## Afro-Brazilian cults

The three waterfalls stand for three different West African yoruba gods of water – Oxum (god of fresh water), Oxumare, the rainbow god and guardian of the park (who corresponds to Christianity’s St Bartholomew), and Naia, the oldest god of “primeval” waters, those which come out of the ground or spring from a rock. Other gods are especially important in the park: Ossaim, the god of medicinal and liturgical plants, and Oxalá, the god of creation and living beings (the equivalent of Christianity’s Jesus Christ). All these are an essential part of the Afro-Brazilian cults of possession: before the gods can take over the bodies of initiates during a trance, the novices must cleanse themselves in baths prepared with brewed or soaked plants which they have gathered in the forest.

But the forest is also a formidable “bank

of genetic material which must be preserved at all cost,” says Anthony. Various surveys show that the park contains 70 kinds of trees, 56% of them being indigenous to the Atlantic forest and the rest having been brought from entirely different ecosystems in Asia, Africa, Australia and Europe.

## Plant power

“Some plants, like the Asian breadfruit tree which only reproduces itself from cuttings, and the African oil palm, were introduced by the Portuguese to feed the African population. Another plant in the park, the oleander, which is native to Mediterranean climes, was brought over by the Portuguese too,” explains Anthony.

Others like the jurema, which grows in the dry lands of the north-east, was brought into the forest by local Indians who prized the hallucinogens found in its bark, with which they made a special wine. “The local Indians knew and still know about the powers of the jurema and use it to summon up various spirits,” says Anthony. “The Afro-Brazilians have linked it to Oxóssi, god of the forest, which is striking evidence of the mingling of indigenous and African religions.”

But all these customs are on the wane before the dual assault of water pollution and burgeoning violence. The park is in a crowded urban area and is being invaded by shanty-towns and unauthorized buildings. It is weakened each day by people clearing wooded areas and tipping all their sewage and refuse into the forest’s water courses.

On top of this are the equally-polluting by-products of factories and a nearby stone quarry which threaten the source of the Cobre River, the main water course which runs through the park from north to south. Sometimes, says Anthony, one can see the sad spectacle of men and women chanting and imploring the gods “as they bathe in waters which froth with detergent waste.”

A group has been set up to defend the park however. This is the Environmental Education Centre of São Bartolomeu Park (CEASB), which includes academics, local residents, and followers of Afro-Brazilian sects. For the past 10 years, the group has been trying to make children in the area’s schools aware of the future of the forest. A book has been published and many public lectures about its history have been given.

These campaigners know that what remains of the Atlantic forest will die the day that nobody talks about it any more.



© CLAYTON F. LINO

A privileged sanctuary of indigenous and African cultures.

*“A bank of genetic material that must be preserved at all cost.”*

C. L.

# India: fruits of the grove

To revive ancient traditions linked to sacred groves by involving local people: such is the goal of the Indian Foundation AEFR (Applied Environmental Research Foundation). While sacred groves exist all over India, AEFR has been working over the last two years mainly in the western state of Maharashtra. AEFR representative Archana Godbole explains here how a sacred site can be managed both as a biodiversity reserve and as a source of income for neighbouring communities.

## What role do sacred groves play in the culture of this region?

They play a central role in the social and cultural life of the village. All religious functions take place in the sacred grove. Some parts are used as a cremation or burial ground. Some have water sources, which is another reason why they are important, as nature means life for these people. But the traditions are fading. When we tried to find out why, we realized that the process of modernization and urbanization is putting pressure on cultures and traditions all over the country. For example, in the Ratnagiri district, a small electric dam is being built and two villages are being relocated on a huge sacred grove which is to be cut down for the purpose. Fortunately, our association, along with a local organization and villagers whose sacred grove would be destroyed because of this, have taken the initiative to tell the government to put the people somewhere else because they want to keep the grove.

## Are the sacred groves viewed as “taboo” areas in Indian culture?

Earlier publications gave the impression that it was taboo to collect anything, even a dead tree from a grove, but in fact, according to our research, local communities were allowed to collect leaves or medicinal plants.

## How did the groves become endangered?

Many people are migrating to the bigger cities, leaving the elderly and children behind. So the generation that matters, the one that has become urbanized, has lost faith in its own traditions. As a result people have started cutting into the sacred groves. In two districts, the sacred groves are the only common property resources available. The trees may be cut for a building project or to make money.

## And there is nothing to stop this?

No. In some cases the state’s social forestry department has converted parts of the sacred groves into exotic tree plantations such as eucalyptus or acacia. Local people are not

aware of the value of whatever plants are in the sacred groves, and they allow the department to go ahead. Of course there are incentives to the communities: land was not just taken from them and used for forestry purposes, but the villages never understood what was at stake. Then we realized the need to involve the communities on these issues and later, to try and develop a model where important traditions were rejuvenated to help in conservation. We tried to establish a link between the local NGO working in this area on rural development, then with schools, teachers and elders. We invited children from 21 schools to join in a competition which involved writing about and drawing their villages’ sacred grove. Many drew a temple, others added trees, monkeys or birds, showing that they have an understanding of the sacred grove as an ecosystem. The written essays reflected dialogue with elders about the legends and gods associated with the groves and the types of trees there.

## Do you feel that villagers realized that these sites could be useful to them?

These sacred groves are state government property, but they are managed by the villagers. The original boundaries are denoted in the land records as sacred groves. Since the groves have suffered degradation over time, the buffer zone around them is fairly large. We asked the people what they wanted to do there. A mixed plantation was suggested, combining economic plants and wild species that were once present in the groves, as elders had told us. In one case we planted three hectares with cashews and mangoes. People have stopped letting cattle graze in these areas because they know the value of these plants. And overgrazing is one of the most important causes of soil degradation.

## Do you fear that these sites will lose their sacred value as they become economically viable?

No because we are only planting over a small area of two to three hectares leaving a core intact. Also, it is a community concern, not an individual one. The whole village does the harvesting and marketing. What is most important is incentive. Unless people feel directly concerned, they will not conserve the biodiversity. We have found that people understand the value of their culture but they want a framework to discuss these issues and come up with a common platform. This is why we are planning to form a sort of network of villages, to encourage the sharing of experience. ●

*Interviewed by C.L.*



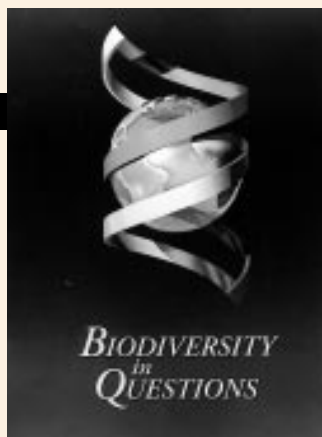
Tapping the wisdom of elders.

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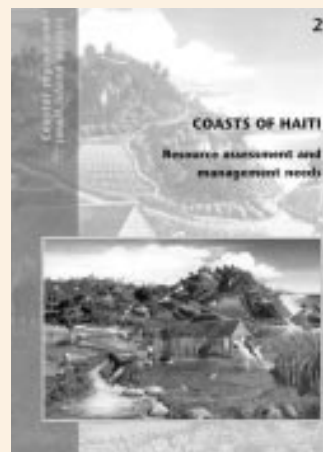




SCIENCE



**A coastal project**  
 Nearly two thirds of Haiti's population lives along its 1,500 kms of coastline, an environment on the "verge of irreversible damage" warns a just-published UNESCO report entitled "Coasts of Haiti, Resource assessment and management needs." Overfishing, deforestation and pollution go hand in hand with high population density and poverty. The document presents a pilot project which aims at achieving "sustainable socio-economic development of the inhabitants" by improving the management of natural resources in several sectors, notably tourism, fisheries and forestry. It emphasizes the



sharing of management responsibility with the resource users. Such a task will require "considerable dialogue" involving not just resource users but also local and central government officials. The report also advocates stronger regional cooperation and a major training and education programme.

●●● To find out more  
 Coastal Regions and Small Islands Unit.

**BIODIVERSITY IN QUESTIONS**

Where does biodiversity begin and how has it evolved? What do we know about the diversity of species? What is the role of

marine biodiversity? Where do genetic resources come from? Biotechnologies, for better or for worse? How is biodiversity managed? These are just some of the questions tackled in a series of educational posters published by UNESCO for teachers and pupils from secondary to university level. Illustrated with maps,

drawings and photographs, the posters can be used separately or as a series.

●●● To find out more  
 Division of Ecological Sciences.

**Water: a world vision**

"World Water Vision," a joint UNESCO/World Water Council project, got off the ground and is to last 18 months. Its goal: through a participatory approach, to develop consensus on the actions required to solve water resource problems. Ten to 15 regions are to be identified for extensive consultations on water needs, involving governments, specialized organizations,

NGOs and civil society. Sectorial discussions will set out the relationship between water and people, water and the environment, water and food. Possible scenarios for the state of water resources into the first few decades of the 21st century are to be drawn up.

The Vision's total budget is about \$US8 million, which will mostly be spent on consultations in the field. The Netherlands government has made about \$US1.5 available to support the Management Unit at UNESCO.

●●● To find out more  
 Division of Water Sciences.



LETTERS

**Spreading the positive**

My information about UNESCO is very limited, probably because the United States is not a member. I was introduced to *Sources* by officers of the United Nations Association. In these days when some of our politicians are voting against the United Nations, it is essential for us to spread the word about all the positives. *Sources* seems to be an excellent resource.

*Margaret G. Weiser  
 Professor of Education  
 Iowa City (United States)*

**SCIENCE AND THE COMMUNITY**

I am a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching math and science. Our school, along with our partner school in Germany, is trying to bridge the gap between science and the community (both local and worldwide). Your publication

could be of great help to teachers and students in our school, both for the articles on science and for the English.

*Rebecca M. Garland  
 Lwandai Secondary School  
 Mlalo Lushoto (Tanzania)*

**The multiplying factor**

Our education centre works with 13 to 24 year olds. We use your paper a lot in all our activities. Through this multiplying effect, the contents reach a much wider audience.

*Arnol J. Mejia Gomez  
 Director, Oscar Armando Avila  
 Banegas Institute, Nueva  
 Pimienta Cortes (Honduras)*

**TEACHER/PUPIL RELATIONS**

I liked *Sources* 100 (April, 1998) very much and appreciate the new format. The articles on teachers' working conditions were

generally accurate, but in India, there are differences. We have a tradition of good relations between teachers and students, going back as far as the days when Krishna went to school. Learning is an ancient tradition: archaeological excavations have brought to light university complexes in various places.

*Narayan Vyas  
 Archaeologist, Bhopal (India)*

**Training tool**

Our bureau aims to contribute to pluralism in African radio via coproductions with partner stations and the training of journalists and producers. Your publication is extremely useful during training session for production staff and those involved in directing radio programmes.

*Soulé M. Issiaka  
 Africa Bureau, Radio  
 Nederland, Cotonou (Benin)*





PEOPLE

PRIZES FOR PEACE...

"We believe it is a very powerful symbolic gesture on the part of UNESCO to give the prize to laureates from two countries in a sub-continent in which relations are tense," stressed Desmond Tutu, in his capacity as chairman of the jury for the

UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence. The award went to the Joint Action Committee for People's Rights of Pakistan and Narayan Dasai of India, a tireless promoter of religious and ethnic understanding. Both the committee and Mr Dasai

have lobbied against the pursuit of the nuclear arms race. The \$US40,000 prize is awarded every two years and made possible by the donation of Indian writer and diplomat Madanjeet Singh. The 1998 UNESCO Prize for Peace Education has been awarded to the Ukrainian Movement Educators for Peace and Mutual Understanding. Since its creation in 1986, this independent voluntary organization has been engaged in educating teachers in effective ways to transmit the ideals of peace, human rights and harmony with society and the environment. The \$US25,000 prize aims to promote actions which alert public opinion to the cause of peace.

The two prizes will be awarded at UNESCO on the 16 November and 15 December respectively.

One "was able to embody the aspirations for freedom of a people and an era," the other "advocates national unity mindful of differences": with these words, Director-General Federico Mayor praised Mario Soares, the former President of Portugal, and the Egyptian Milad Hanna, a tireless fighter for social justice and the right to housing. Both received the 1998 International Simon Bolivar Prize at UNESCO on October 19. Both men share the ideals of liberty espoused by Simon Bolivar, the *libertador* and founder of modern Venezuela. "I was in the right place at the right time," said a modest Mr Soares in his acceptance speech. "There is no patria without land; there is no citizenship without housing," recalled Mr Hanna, who has headed the housing commission of the Egyptian parliament.

"Music is an irreplaceable instrument for rapprochement among people," said Jose Antonio Abreu, the founding director of Venezuela's youth and children's orchestra network, as he was named a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador on October 14. Mr Abreu's Social Action for Music project groups 110,000 young Venezuelan musicians and aims to awaken artistic sensibilities, with orchestral practice contributing to social integration and community development. "Training youth and children democratically, through art and for art, will operate a structural transformation more powerful than that which the educational system is to achieve," stated Mr. Abreu.



EDUCATION



The Peacemakers

"The heart is the seat of love or hatred"; "I'll stay with my pupils even if it costs me my life"; "Tolerance you teach only be being tolerant": These are just a few of the forceful words used by Thérèse (Sri Lankan), Zohra (Algerian) and Azijada (Bosnian) to describe the commitment they feel to their job. Published for World Teachers' Day (October 5), "The Quiet Peacemakers" features eight portraits of teachers from different horizons: conflict zones, deprived urban areas, or smug-middle-class enclaves. They have had to learn how to deal with racism, ethnic rivalry and violence. But no matter where they are, all are bound by a shared vision of their mission: to provide children with the means to respect differences and thereby overcome centuries-old tensions and instill values of peace and tolerance. The booklet's

preface calls for teaching materials, "carefully studied so that they do not transmit false truths or prejudices." Marie Laetitia of Burundi believes it all starts by setting an example: "You can't fool children: they read everything on your face and judge from the relations you have with colleagues and neighbours."

●●● To find out more  
Global Action programme on  
Education for All.

COUNTDOWN

Issue No. 14 reports on a mosaic of UNESCO initiatives in the education field, starting out with the current development of a distance education project to help eight African countries train teachers and principals unreached by traditional training. Combining new technologies with existing traditional networks, the project runs for a two-year period. In the same issue: how UNESCO and its partners are seeking to reinforce civics education networks and produce better materials. One example: a Civics Education Kit put together by teachers, pupils and human rights experts.

and for music...

The singer Cesaria Evora (Cape Verde), composer Iannis Xenakis (Greece/France) and the Khongisa Youth Centre for Performing Arts, Music and Theatre (Republic of South Africa), jointly won the IMC (International Music Council)/ UNESCO International Music Prize. Selected from a field of 70 candidates from around the world, the prize-winners accepted the accolade at a ceremony in Aachen (Germany), October 17.



© LUSAFRICA/ERIC MULET

Cesaria Evora: into the limelight at 50 years old.





BOOKS

Policy Suggestions

**Sacmeq National Policy**

**Research Reports,**

*UNESCO International Institute*

*for Educational Planning*

*UNESCO Publishing 1998.*

*Reports 1-5. Price: 15 FF each.*

This series of five reports cover Mauritius, Namibia, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe. They are aimed at a wide cross-section of readers as well as decision-makers at all levels of ministries of education. Each report, titled "The quality of education: some policy suggestions based on a survey of schools," includes some 40 policy suggestions based on the main research findings in the respective countries. The authors of the report recognize the economic realities of SACMEQ (Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality) countries by assigning a priority to each policy suggestion according to a time-frame and costs involved. The reports are now considered to be essential documents by agencies seeking to facilitate productive educational reforms based on sound research evidence.

Available from IIEP Publications  
7-9 rue Eugène-Delacroix,  
75116 Paris, France.

The Seven Madmen

by Roberto Arlt

*Serpent's Tail/UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, UNESCO Publishing 249 pp., Price: 110 FF.*

First published in 1929, *The Seven Madmen* captures the conflict of Argentine society at a crucial moment in its history. Just years earlier, Argentina had reached record agricultural production and meat exports, but the great depression exposed its



reliance on northern hemisphere markets. Strikes and social tensions were used by the landed classes as justification to conspire with the army for the ousting of reelected president Hipolito Irigoyen, who represented the Radical Civic Union. But in *The Seven Madmen* it is interior conflict that drives the main character Erdosain through the seething streets of Buenos Aires in search of his soul. Roberto Arlt, who has been described as

a "founder of the contemporary Latin American novel and a giant of 20th-century literature," draws on his intimate knowledge of the city in *The Seven Madmen*. He was born and bred in Buenos Aires, growing up in the same crowded tenement houses featured in the novel. Later, as a journalist he made a living describing the city's rich and vivid life. Arlt died suddenly in 1942, leaving behind a number of novels and plays.

Human Rights

**World Directory of Human Rights Research and training institutions.**

*UNESCO, 1998. Price: 120 FF.*

Centres, academies, foundations, associations, federations, movements, study groups: whatever their description, the 479 institutions from 103 countries listed in this trilingual Directory (English, French, Spanish) all aim to promote human rights. The address, electronic contacts, type of human rights activity, geographical area covered, and

publications available are mentioned with every entry along with a brief description and the date of creation of each body. In this 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Directory aims to help "establish collaboration between institutions and enable the creation of networks of research and training institutions in order that specialists and non-specialists can all contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights."

●●● To find out more

Publications and periodicals are sold at UNESCO's bookshop (Headquarters) and through national distributors in most countries. For further information or direct orders by mail, fax or Internet: UNESCO Publishing, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP. Tel. (+33 1) 01 45 68 43 00 - Fax (33 1) 01 45 68 57 41. Internet: <http://www.unesco.org/publishing>



SOUND AND VISION

NORTH INDIA - VOCAL MUSIC

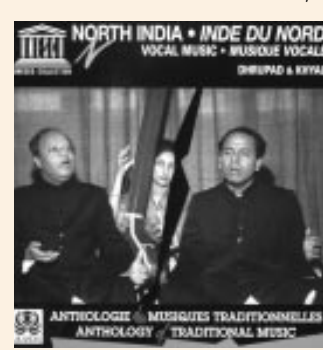
**Anthology of Traditional Music**

*UNESCO/AUVIDIS, 1998.*

*Price per CD: 120 FF.*

This disc features the ancient vocal form the Dhrupad, the oldest, noblest and most austere form of vocal performance from northern India, and the Khayl, a form created in the fifteenth century which is more imaginative and whimsical. Indian music is fundamentally vocal and all the instrumental techniques are

conceived as an accompaniment to, or an imitation of vocal sonorities. A fixed melody creates an outline of the sound-material;



improvisation alone provides the means of shaping and differentiating it, of imbuing it with an infinite variety of forms. The songs presented here are accompanied by the tanpura (lute) and tabla (a pair of vertical drums); they are sung at nightfall, and express calm and tenderness. A sung poem appeals to the shepherd-god Krishna: "I cannot live far from thee; cause me to be reborn as one of the cowherds or among the herds of the village of thy childhood".



**CULTURE**

**AN INSTITUTE FOR NOMADIC PEOPLES...**

The International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations came into being in September when Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Turkey signed an agreement under the auspices of UNESCO. Based in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia, the Institute is the fifth set up as a result of the UNESCO Silk Roads Project. It will coordinate research on ways to preserve the heritage of the Nomads and improve their living standards. The Institute will lean strongly on the Internet and the potential of modern communications in order to create an efficient and interactive network of academic institutions working in relevant fields. One of the first actions will be the establishment of a Web site. Membership enquiries are welcome.

●●● To find out more Batboldyn Enkhuvshin Institute Director  
 Fax: 976 1.321.638 E-mail: galbatar@magicnet.mn



On the move: pitching the "ger" in Mongolia.

**and a Council for Culture in the Mediterranean...**

A Mediterranean Council for Culture was formed at UNESCO's International Mediterranean Forum, held in Italy from September 17-20. This organization will group public and private bodies, and work closely with major international organizations involved with the Mediterranean, including UNESCO. Sixteen bodies from 12 countries have already joined the Council, established in accordance with Maltese law – the government of Malta has granted it the privileges of a non-governmental organization. A Group of Artists, Intellectuals and Scientists Against Violence around the Mediterranean was also set up to enable rapid intervention in the region. Members include Edgar Morin, André Chouraqui and Juan Goytisolo, who have pledged to take part in peace missions in those countries worst hit by violence.

●●● To find out more Mediterranean Programme



**PERIODICALS**

**International Social Science Journal**

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, No. 157 reproduces a selection of articles published since 1948. From UNESCO's Director-General at the time, Jaime Torres Bodet, to the present-serving Federico Mayor, with Claude Levi-Strauss, Maria Hirszowicz, Ignacy Sachs, Sarvepalli Gopal and more, the contributors cover a range of themes such as marxism and human rights or structural reform and economic development in China. In its preface, the journal describes how it has evolved over the years, while always striving to reflect the times by being a tribune allowing for the exchange of ideas between social scientists from different disciplines and cultural horizons.

**THE UNESCO COURIER**

Mobility is a key feature of today's world... mobility of capital, goods, images, sounds... and people. In its November dossier, "Immigrants on the borderline," the *UNESCO Courier* focuses on the increasing obstacles being put in place to keep down international migrations. As one author puts it, "immigrant workers are still perpetual scapegoats, no more shielded in this respect than their predecessors a century ago." Frontiers are closing down while regulating the phenomenon precisely requires some form of multilateral cooperation. This issue also features articles on the human factor behind the Chinese floods; attempts to curb the spread of light weapons, conflicts over the deregulation of the telecommunications market and a photo reportage on the anger of Russian

miners. In the interview of the month, Indian filmmaker Mira Nair speaks about the thinking behind her work, her obsession with creative freedom and her projects.

**World Heritage Desk Diary**

Illustrated with some 60 colour photographs, the UNESCO 1999 Desk Diary offers users the chance to discover some of the 552 sites on the World Heritage List, from the city of Sana'a in Yemen to the Ban Chiang archaeological site in Thailand, the Comoe National Park in Côte d'Ivoire to the historic sanctuary of Machu Picchu in Peru.



Background to the World Heritage Convention is presented as an introduction to the agenda, noting that "the preservation of this common heritage concerns us all." Other information includes a list of sites and States Parties to the Convention, a world map of sites plus diary basics such as international dialling codes and time zones.

*Price: 120FF.*  
 For purchasing information, see p.18.

*"IN BRIEF": compiled by Christine Mouillère.*



**EDUCATION** *Drawing 4,200 delegates from 182 countries, the first World Conference on Higher Education spells out reform guidelines, reaffirming the principle of access for all on the basis of merit. Now comes the time to pass from vision to action.*

## MOVING AHEAD WITH A SHARED VISION

**F**or centuries, university education and research has been an international activity. But in recent years, as countries have developed their own national higher education systems suited to their respective political, economic and social priorities, contact between scholars across national boundaries has become much less straightforward. Some university systems have become arms of government, providing skilled manpower for the state machine and a centrally-directed research effort; others have sought support in the private sector relying on market forces to shape their educational and research activities.

The gaps between industrialized and developing countries – and in particular the least developed ones – in terms of access to higher education and the resources devoted to it, already enormous, have become even wider over the past decade.

Five days of intensive discussions between more than 4,200 delegates from 182 countries during UNESCO's first World Conference on Higher Education in Paris 5-9 October marked a significant step towards redressing this imbalance, and to the handing back of higher education to the service of the world's peoples.

As the delegates, who included 115 education ministers, returned to their countries, they were armed not only with a Declaration



© GAMMA/GILLES SAUSSIER

13 million students in 1960, 82 million 25 years later.

on Higher Education in the 21st Century and a Framework for Priority Action, but the benefits of the formal and informal talks with their counterparts from both similar and totally different backgrounds.

### POWERFUL YARDSTICK

Significantly, not only the United Kingdom (back in UNESCO after the election of a new government last year) but the United States (not a UNESCO member but an observer at the conference), played a key role in the drafting of the Declaration. The 17-article document is not binding on UNESCO's 186 member states, but it will be a powerful instrument against which individual policy initiatives can be measured.

The impact the conference will have is for national governments, UNESCO, and individual institutions to determine. But there is no doubt that the event succeeded in setting a shared reference point which can be used by international agencies, governments and universities in framing their own policies in greater harmony with developments elsewhere.

The challenge was set down by UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor, who stated that higher education must face rapid and irreversible change while retaining its traditional missions of education and training: training to enable "the citizens of tomorrow's world to be independent, critical, versatile, creative capable, in a word, to take up the multiple challenges

with which the 21st century will not fail to confront them." Higher education must also prepare citizens to make best use of their freedom, which Mr. Mayor believed would be the hallmark of the coming century.

A major issue was the global shift from an elite to a mass university system against a background of declining state resources. The figures speak for themselves: 13 million students in 1960, 82 million in 1995, and a forecasted 100 million in 2025. Referring to the growth in numbers, French prime minister Lionel Jospin accepted that higher education must adapt to the market, but warned against a "mercantile vision by which it could be determined by the marketplace."

The deliberate inclusion of students in a prominent role gave the process an authority it would have otherwise lacked. But they too had reservations about the emphasis on market values which some saw reflected in background papers. Particular exception was taken to the description of students as "clients" and "consumers" as if university education was a commodity in the market place. The sentiment was echoed by representatives from university teachers' organizations who saw the influence of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the conference language, concerning the entrepreneurship both of universities and the students they turn out. Some students felt that not enough emphasis was placed on access irrespective of means, including opposition to tuition fees.

The Declaration, however, underlines a commitment to the principle that higher education should be accessible to all on the basis of merit and pointed to the need for a new, student-

oriented vision and paradigm of higher education. The Framework for Priority Action identifies steps to be taken at international, government and institutional levels pressing the need for institutions to define their missions according to the present and future needs of society and noting the importance of welcoming adult learners.

Article 4 of the Declaration affirms: "Further efforts are required to eliminate all gender stereotyping (...) and to consolidate women's participation at all levels and in all disciplines in which they are under-represented." Peter Katjavivi, vice-chancellor of Namibia University, identified women's limited access to higher education as a key barrier preventing their participation in decision-making; for social, cultural and economic reasons, only a third as many women as men enroll in higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, and they are heavily under-represented in science and technology.

The Declaration stresses the key role of research and the importance of innovation.

Mobility has an essential role to play in ensuring quality education and research, but care must be taken to avoid a brain drain from poor countries to rich ones. This will be partly achieved by redressing the exchange between the developed countries of the north and the developing ones of the south in favour of the poorer nations, which currently tend to benefit least from co-operation.

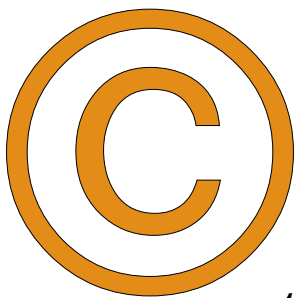
#### ACADEMIC FREEDOM

There was some unease that the issue of the freedom of individual academics to speak out on political and social issues without fear of reprisals was not adequately tackled in the Declaration. Several representatives also questioned to what extent the university could genuinely be autonomous when it relied on corporate funding for research. Ximena Eraso, speaking on behalf of the World University Service, stated that "all too often, autonomy has meant that many programmes are funded by multinational corporations who in turn encourage students to study matters of vital

concern to those multinationals."

The conference prides itself on having drawn a wide range of voices – and most importantly, student ones – into debating a framework for reform. As Georges Haddad, conference steering committee chairman and honorary president of the University of Paris I, pointed out, the process launched is "an ongoing process, one of permanent vision and action to ensure that higher education will be a pivotal issue at the dawn of the 21st century." Reiterating that students were the "protagonists in all the work we are doing," Suzy Halimi, rapporteur-general and former president of the University of Paris III, underlined some of the most fundamental principles of the Declaration: "access to higher education for all, without any discrimination," and "international solidarity".

*David Jobbins with  
Jane Marshall  
The Times Higher  
Education Supplement*



## HIGH STAKES OVER VIRTUAL ACCESS

**INFOETHICS** *Experts warn that public information on the Net may not stay public for very long, as the copyright camp steadily gains ground on the virtual planet.*

The short film shows a man strolling along with a small metal container in his hand. He reaches up, "fills" it with air and closes the lid. The air he's "caught" belongs to him. All he needs to do is find an attractive packaging and sell it.

The film kicked off a discussion on public access to information at the annual UNESCO-sponsored gathering, held in Monte-Carlo in early October, on the legal and social aspects of the Internet, which brought together about 30

experts in the ethics of information.

The air one breathes in cyberspace is not composed of oxygen molecules but mostly of data, ideas and pictures which belong to everyone. And the businessmen who lick their lips

at the commercial prospects of a virtual world are determined to pack them up in their own way and sell them.

"At the moment, it's still easy to have free access to all kinds of interesting information," says Thomas de la



Quadra-Salcedo, head of Spain's Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications Law and a former minister of justice.

"But powerful private interests, like Microsoft and Bertelsmann, are building up monopolies by buying up rights to millions of photographs, library documents and pictures. Eventually they will charge a fee to anyone who wants to see them." At the same time, they are working to tighten up laws on intellectual property.

To bar the way to this "information highway robbery," UNESCO has jumped into the battle and is trying to ensure that anyone can have access to the four categories which make up the public domain, says Philippe Quéau, UNESCO's head of information and informatics. These are:

use", namely intent to use data for educational purposes, research or for personal ends. But digitalization has called this principle into question: if you lend someone a book by e-mail, it's the same as giving it to them. So we're at a crossroads. Either we confirm the principle of fair use or we abolish it and copyright applies to everything."

The second of these choices is steadily gaining ground, in Europe for a start. "We have the most reactionary attitude in the world as far as copyright goes," says Yves Poulet, who heads the Belgium-based Research Centre Information Technology and Law.

Under pressure from the information lobbies - publishers, writers' associations and large computer groups - a special legal framework concerning

The job is a tough and costly one and the European project to create a database of the millions of items in public museums is running into endless legal problems, says Ms Buydens.

But even when they can do something, governments are reluctant to play the public game. Instead, they give franchises to private firms to put their official documents and laws on the Internet.

#### THE US STANCE

"Continental European governments have a tradition of keeping information to themselves," says Poulet. "They feel they own the data and see it as a way to make money. The Anglo-Saxons are different. They see the state as something dangerous and have a much stronger demand for information to be made publicly available. When the US Congress passed the Freedom of Information Act in 1970, it was nicknamed the "Sunshine Act." It was strengthened in 1996 by the Electronic Freedom of Information Act, which requires the government to put all administrative data on the Web.

"The Americans are ahead of the pack in the worldwide desert of the public domain," says Quéau. "They have made a direct link between free access to information and the First Amendment to their Constitution, which guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of access to information."

However, even in the United States, "copyright is constantly gaining ground," according to the American freeware "guru" Richard Stallman, who heads the GNU/Linux operating system. A law similar to the 1996 European directive has recently gone through Congress.

According to the Digital Future Coalition, a non-governmental organization

which opposes this law, the measure is being pushed by the small but powerful group of companies which make up the Information Industry Association. "We suspect they got away with it because they pay a lot of money to the legislators - legally - through their campaign funds," says Stallman. "It is normal practice in the US for corporations to buy the votes of legislators by contributing indirectly to their re-election campaign funds. And in this way, for practical purposes, companies buy votes."

There is no comparable "public domain lobby" fighting these political and economic interests, says Quéau, and attempts to do so are slow and uncoordinated. But this does not mean it is impossible.

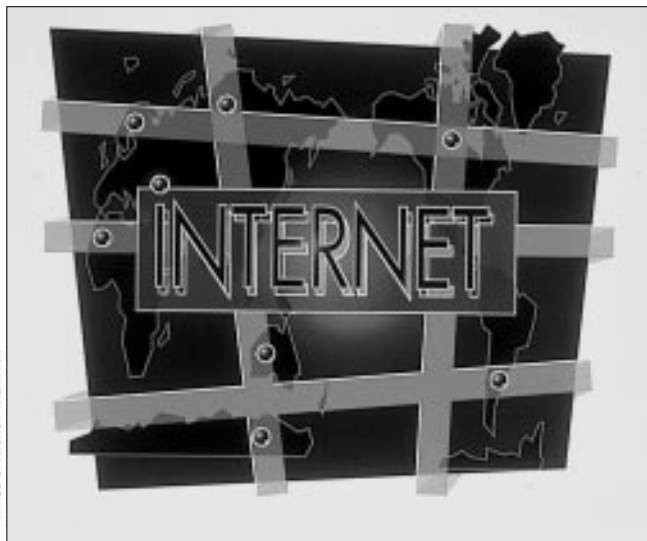
#### STRIKING BACK

Led by the Asian countries, developing nations turned around the recent negotiations under the auspices of the World Organization for Intellectual Property to strengthen copyright where databases are concerned. Scientists in poor countries do not want to pay for access to raw data concentrated in American or Dutch computers, says Quéau.

UNESCO is trying to mobilize governments. French prime minister Lionel Jospin announced at the beginning of October that his country would "actively support" the UNESCO project to facilitate the free dissemination of world literature without copyright, so as to build a "worldwide digital library."

Byte by byte, the public domain may yet come into its own.

*Sophie Boukhari*



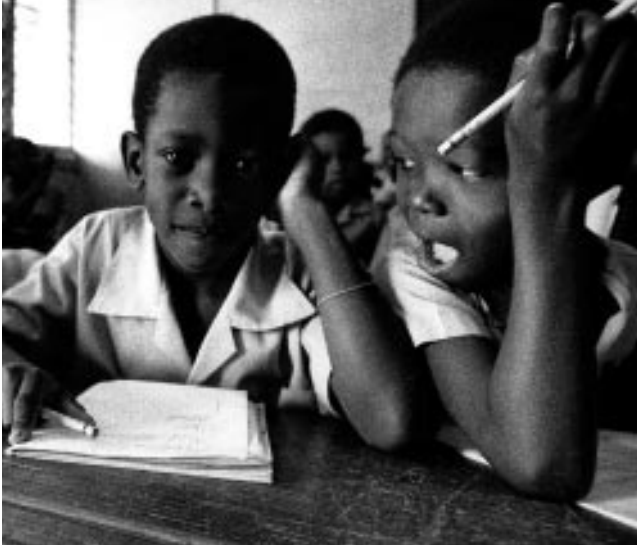
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government information and laws; literary and artistic heritage; dissertations and scientific articles resulting from public research; and the public computer "standards" or language, such as TCP-IP and html.

"The notion of a public information realm cropped up in the framework of exceptions to copyright. In US law, for example, you can avoid copyright restrictions by pleading "fair

databases, backed by a March 1996 European directive, has been established. It enables any image bank, directory or a collection of "raw" (and therefore public) data to be made into a lawful monopoly through copyright, says Mireille Buydens, a Belgian expert in intellectual property.

So far, governments have not made much use of digital technology to widen access to their own data.



**CARIBBEAN** *The island-states are driven by one common ambition: to put education at the heart of all development strategies.*

## "GET UP, STAND UP"!

**T**ime to "get up, stand up" to borrow from Bob Marley could have been the catch cry for the "Focus on the Caribbean" organized by UNESCO last October as part of a process aimed at reinforcing regional partnerships around the world.

During the 1980s, many Caribbean countries were strapped by large foreign debts. Their education systems suffered; political instability was compounded by an apparent loss of cultural identity. But a common reading of the past, combined with common ambitions for the future have galvanized the region in attempts to change the situation. Education now sits firmly at the top of the agenda to achieve development and growth.

"The negative impact of globalization and economic liberalization upon our fledgling, micro-island economies sometimes undermines voter confidence in the effectiveness of the political system and in the capacity of government to perform," Jamaican Education Minister Burchell Whiteman told his colleagues during

the one-day "focus" at headquarters. "As political leaders, our role is to embark on social development programmes which place people at the core of the process."

The role of education in fostering cultural identity and creativity was a key element of the meeting and the driving factor behind a series of projects called "Human Development for Sustainable Living in the Caribbean". These will be included in UNESCO's draft programme and budget for 2000-2001. Over-all goals include strengthening community participation (for example, through adult education programmes in parenting, conflict management, health and environmental protection), improving access to and use of new technologies and creating a collaborative approach to projects.

One such project calls for changing the authoritative teacher/pupil approach by training all teachers "in counselling and listening skills so that the classroom can become a peaceful, nurturing and validating environment." It also targets

The priority: to start off with a good basic education.

poor achievement amongst young males and asks that research and recommendations on this question be coordinated by 2001. Other objectives include ensuring functional literacy for all Caribbean citizens – of particular concern to Haiti where literacy is an estimated 40% – and increasing the enrolment in tertiary education to 15% by 2005 (it now stands at 6-7%).

To achieve this, Lawrence Carrington, Director of the School for Continuing Studies at the University of the West Indies, stressed the need for government commitment to expanding secondary education, but he anticipated problems with the pressures that demand will create. "Unless you are able to match demand quickly, you lose out to American service providers and the commercial universities that operate in the Caribbean, offering off-shore or distance learning packages. We ought to be able to ensure the direction of people who engage in such self-development is in our region's interests rather than selling out to what amounts to carpet bagging by American institutions."

Another project calls for the use of new technologies in schools, but Mia Amor Mottley, the Barbados Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, pointed out that "there are other areas that must be addressed before technology can be used to improve education," such as "building repairs, teacher training, proper evaluation methods and home-grown 'culturally relevant' resource materials." New technologies should ultimately be brought into community centres in tandem with the school programme, Ms. Mottley recommended, in order to overcome cultural resistance. But she

underlined the provision of technology should not override that of basic education. "Technology has moved at such a rate, we have no way of knowing what the requisite skills for our children in 10 to 15 years time will be, other than to say they must be retrainable at all stages of their development and a sound basic education is necessary for them to absorb that training," she added.

Despite her cautions on technology in schools, Ms. Mottley was categorical about its use for region-wide communication. "While a Caribbean person in 1962 may have rejected the notion of a federal movement, there can be no excuse in 1998 given the communication technologies available to us. Until we can ensure movement of information and feedback, we will be doing ourselves and our children a disservice because we will have failed to prepare an adequate environment in which dialogue can take place among Caribbean people themselves on their future development."

The Director of the Cuban Institute of Higher Education, Dr Elvira Martin Sabina, agreed. "Integration is the priority and education can be an example of integration. We have all the conditions to make it work."

*Ann-Louise Martin*

### FOCUS

●●● Representatives from the following 19 UNESCO member states and associate members attended the *Focus on the Caribbean*: Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti, Netherlands Antilles, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

next month's issue :

## CITIES WITH BEATING HEARTS

## HUMAN RIGHTS: THE NEW TERRITORIES



on UNESCO's calendar

from 7 to 11 December

### **NEW CONNECTIONS**

At Headquarters, the Intergovernmental committees for UNESCO's informatics and information programmes meet to consider the possible merging of projects in related fields.

from 9 to 12 December

### **FOREST PROTECTION**

In Berastagi (Indonesia), experts meet to discuss how the World Heritage Convention can be used as an instrument for protecting the biodiversity of tropical forests.

from 11 to 13 December

### **BIODIVERSITY OBSERVATION**

At Headquarters, the Diversitas network of scientists gathers to prepare International Biodiversity Observation Year (2001).

from 14 to 18 December

### **DISTANCE LEARNING**

In Nonthaburi (Thailand), a workshop on the planning and management of distance learning organized by the International Institute for Educational Planning.

15 December

### **PEACE EDUCATION**

At Headquarters, the Ukrainian movement of Educators for Peace and Mutual Understanding receives the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in recognition of its work on human rights and the environment.

17 December

### **GENDER EQUALITY**

At Headquarters, 30 international NGOs and UNESCO representatives discuss projects on the theme of "Women, Girls and Gender Equality".

from 11 to 13 January

### **MULTILINGUAL COURIER**

At Headquarters, a meeting of editors responsible for the 28 language editions of the *UNESCO Courier*, which appears, amongst others, in Swahili, Urdu, Thai and braille.