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Sources

UNESCO

No 107 - DECEMBER 1998

HUMAN RIGHTS
IN THE MAKING





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.

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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:
<http://www.unesco.org>

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THE RED LINE

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A historic moment: In front of the House of Lords on Nov. 25.

THE MARCH OF JUSTICE

● Nov. 1945-Oct. 1946: In Nuremberg, 24 former Nazi leaders are tried as war criminals and for crimes against humanity by the International Military Tribunal. Twelve are sentenced to death and executed.

● 1946: The International Court of Justice, the principal judicial body of the UN, is established in The Hague. Composed of 15 judges elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

● 1993: The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, is established in The Hague by the UN Security Council. Indictments to date: 59.

● 1994: The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, also established by the UN Security Council, is based in Arusha. Indictments to date: 35.

● 1998: 120 countries vote to establish the International Criminal Court which will judge crimes against humanity and genocide.



It may be that one day, in Spain, Chile or somewhere else, Augusto Pinochet will have to face a court over his degree of responsibility in the tragic events that followed the 1973 coup d'état. But whatever happens, the ruling pronounced by the judicial committee of the House of Lords on November 25 goes well beyond his personal fate.

The contrasting opinions of the Law Lords – whose competence and impartiality are beyond doubt – go to prove that justice is no exact science. In the end, the argument that finally won over could be qualified as ethical. As Lord Nicholls stated for the majority, “(...) the functions of a head of state may include activities which are wrongful, even illegal (...) but international law has made plain that certain types of conduct, including torture and hostage-taking, are not acceptable conduct on the part of anyone. This applies as much to heads of state, or even more so, as it does to everyone else.”

In short, the immunity of a person of this rank no longer applies if he crosses over a red line, transgressing a “code of decent conduct” for leaders. Too much is too much concluded three of the five Lords. The case is a watershed: the Lords shrugged at the sacrosanct rule of non-interference in a state’s domestic affairs, including, in this case, a state in which a democracy had decided, in all legality and for better or worse, to

turn the page on this painful period. Hence, the expression that has come of age: “the globalization of justice.”

What is most surprising is not the advent of such a notion, but that it took so long to materialize. The first decisions of the United Nations relative to the creation of a permanent International Criminal Court date as far back as 1950. After meeting with dogged resistance, this body will only

come into being in the next two to three years. Its mandate will cover the gravest crimes and only be applicable to States that have recognized its existence. Nonetheless, it should be noted that a world jurisdiction has existed for years in the field of international trade for example. Should the globalization of respect for human rights be any less imperious than that of business rights?

No argument can justify such a position, and the litany of the most heinous crimes are there to remind us of this: crimes against humanity and genocide crimes. On November 29,

Federico Mayor – who had no pretence of being exhaustive – cited Idi Amin Dada, the Khmer Rouge, the perpetrators of the ethnic massacres in Rwanda among these criminals at large. And to conclude:

“Basta de impunidad!” (“Enough with impunity!”).



Certain types of conduct, including torture and hostage-taking, are not acceptable conduct on the part of anyone. This applies as much to heads of state, as it does to everyone else.

Lord Nicholls

René Lefort

HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE MAKING

Adopted in Paris 50 years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains the yardstick for measuring victories and unkept promises. Today, its principles are inspiring legislation in a host of new fields, from bioethics to cyberspace.

Fifty years ago the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was adopted in Paris. Commemorating the event cannot be limited to an exercise in rhetoric. It requires, first and foremost, going back to the original message that inspired the *Declaration* – a message we must never lose sight of: that human rights are universal and indivisible, in other words, valid for everyone and all civilizations. In the *Declaration's* preamble, States – of which it is true, there were fewer than today – pledged to promote “universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Have these promises been kept? Clearly not, alas. To be sure there have been great victories, due mostly to those militants of the cause. Through its Conventions and Declarations, the international community has recognized women's rights, which are an integral part of human rights, as well as those of children. Signalling the victory of democracy, the demise of the Apartheid regime in South Africa (a monstrous regime founded on the negation of human rights) and the collapse of totalitarian regimes in South America and Eastern Europe also signalled that of human rights.

And yet, what shadows still remain. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, we have witnessed – in the heart of Europe – a systematic and organized violation of human rights in ex-Yugoslavia, and especially in Bosnia. Neither must we forget the cruelty of the Rwandan genocide, nor the situation in Afghanistan where human rights are no longer recognizable as such.

There are challenges that must be faced. The first is ideological. The *Declaration* clearly states that human rights are universal and indivisible. Yet, this characteristic is now contested by certain governmental, religious or political bodies. People sometimes deny the universality of the *Declaration* on

the grounds that is the expression of a particular culture – Western culture – which is based on the primacy of the individual, whereas other societies, in Asia and Africa notably, give priority to the harmony of the group. The best way to uphold the rights of the individual, it is argued, is by protecting the collective rights of the community.

The *Declaration's* universality is also challenged on religious grounds, which are used to justify violations of especially women's fundamental rights and the application of corporal punishments incompatible with respect for the individual. Here the denial of universality may be seen as nothing more than an ideological justification of denial of the fundamental rights of human beings.

Who profits from globalization?

The same holds for indivisibility. There can be no human dignity wherever extreme poverty, illiteracy, lack of medical care and basic welfare protection reign. The individual is a whole, whose fundamental rights form an indivisible whole. To deprive a human being of some basic rights is to deprive that person of all rights. Still, in today's world, some 1.3 billion people are trying to survive with less than one dollar a day, and 30,000 children die each day of preventable diseases. On the eve of the 21st century – which will undoubtedly be characterized by globalization – the real question facing humanity is whether that globalization will merely be a quest for higher profits by multinationals, or a remedy for the ills that negate the pledges made 50 years ago.

We must not leave a burden for future generations. I am thinking firstly of the repression of crimes against humanity, which are the most violent and total denial of human rights: genocides, deportations, collective massacres and collective rape. In Rome, last July, the statutes were adopted for an

“To deprive a human being of some basic rights is to deprive that person of all rights.”



A free Nelson Mandela, a free South Africa and a victory for human rights.

DESMOND TUTU

(Before the Executive Board at UNESCO, Oct. 19, 1998)

Although South Africa was a founding member of the UN, it did not sign the *Declaration* in 1948.

This is not surprising: the policies of this country were to be intensified in Apartheid and become a systematic violation of all the rights enshrined in the *Declaration*. These were just a dream for black people in South Africa. We are at a point where this vicious system has been destroyed. The international community has assisted us to score a spectacular victory. I believe it may be necessary for the U.S. to have something like a Truth and Reconciliation Commission because they have not come to terms with the pain that sits at the pit of the tummy of many who are descendants of the slaves. Over 400 years, between 10 and 60 million people were abducted from Africa, carried away as if they were animals. I hope that the UN through UNESCO would declare unequivocally that this was a crime against humanity.

International Criminal Court, the most significant advance in the defence of human rights at the end of this century. This Court will be responsible for judging criminals against humanity; to ensure that they do not benefit from an impunity that is one of the worst expressions of contempt for human rights and revolts the collective conscience. Sixty ratifications of the so-called Rome Convention are needed for this Court to come into being. So far, only 50 States have signed it. It is therefore up to each State – and within those States, each one of us – to push as hard as possible for the Convention's ratification.

We must also face the new challenges of our times, such as protection of the environment. The issue was completely ignored in the post-war period, when the main goal was to rebuild what had been destroyed and to constantly increase production without any thought being given to the consequences. The right to a healthy environment is not only

an imperative in terms of human rights, but also a question of survival for humanity.

Similarly, scientific progress has opened up a whole new field in the domain of human rights whether it be in the area of genetic engineering, artificial reproduction, or the rapport between the development of new information technologies (especially the Internet) and fundamental rights. In all of these areas, the *Universal Declaration* provides us with a set of principles rather than the means to deal with these issues.

Considering the sharply contrasting results over the past 50 years, we must avoid doing as the neo-classical artists, stubbornly repeating the same old themes and reproducing the works that preceded them. Human rights are an ongoing creation.

*Robert Badinter
Former French Minister of Justice*

Bioethics: Gene dilemmas

The most important work of the International Bioethics Committee (IBC) – established by UNESCO in 1993 – has been the drafting of the *Universal Declaration of the Human Genome and Human Rights*, which was adopted by UNESCO in November 1997. Now, 50 years on, a second *Universal Declaration* is before the world community for endorsement.

The new *Declaration* concerns the consequences which flow from the discovery of our genetic map: our physical characteristics, our proneness to genetic disease and our future health history may be discovered in our genes. This development will benefit humanity, but it also presents dangers to

human rights which the *Declaration* addresses.

The rights stated in the *Declaration* are derived from a unifying concept: the obligation to respect the dignity of each precious individual and to prevent discrimination on genetic grounds; to protect privacy and to ensure that free consent is obtained for the use of the individual's genetic data.

The new *Declaration* also expresses the principles which should govern research on the human genome. The most controversial of these states: "Practices which are contrary to human dignity such as reproductive cloning of human beings, shall not be permitted." Following the cloning of the

sheep "Dolly", this provision deals with the perceived risk that attempts may be made to clone an entire individual: producing a genetic mirror image of the person concerned.

When the new *Declaration* was adopted, it was realized that genetic discoveries were moving so fast that follow-up would be needed. The *Declaration* calls for the IBC to monitor the implementation of its principles. It also calls for the establishment of national independent ethics committees to assess questions raised by research on the human genome. In November 1998, in Tokyo (Japan), I told the Summit of National Bioethics Committees of UNESCO's vision: to encourage people and their governments to become more aware of the ethical dilemmas which research on the genome presents.

Possible human cloning is but one quandry. There are many others: should employers have unlimited access to the individual's genetic profile? Should the State? Should corporations be entitled to patent a discovery that a particular gene is a cause of Alzheimer's disease? Is this a just reward to the corporation to encourage huge investments in pharmaceutical and other activities essential to convert scientific knowledge into practical cures? Or is it a new imperialism, whereby a wealthy few gain monopoly rights over the genetic heritage of all mankind?

Now that the new *Declaration* is before the world community, we have an obligation to encourage governments and the scientific community, to consider and voluntarily comply with its core principles. Because it is not a treaty, the *Declaration* has no legal binding force. But should there be some fundamental rules which the international community adopts to prohibit by law certain lines of scientific experimentation with our genes? Such as the creation of human/animal hybrids? Or the manipulation of the human germline to alter irretrievably the genetics of future generations? Or the elimination of the "gay gene" if it is found to exist? Or cloning of an entire human being? UNESCO's initiative is based on the understanding that to remain silent is effectively to condone such activities.

Core principles

The main obstacles to the utility of the new *Declaration* arise from widespread ignorance of scientific developments, a feeling of inability to affect them, a belief in the inevitability of science and an unwillingness, in hard economic times, to do anything which might frighten away biotech industries and their potential profits and investments. The reality is that most research on human genetics (and virtually all of the patents) exist in a handful of countries of the developed world. Yet what is done affects, potentially, the entire human species. The principles

upholding human dignity, as expressed in the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights*, are common to people everywhere.

At the Tokyo Summit, some of the participants told me that it would be difficult to secure consensus about all of the controversial questions dealt with in the Declaration. They point to cultural, economic, religious and other differences, and to the feeling of fatalism about scientific research which exists in most countries. I cannot agree. When transborder data flows first posed challenges to individual privacy and other rights 20 years ago, a number of regional and international organizations developed "core principles" on privacy protection and data security. Those principles have profoundly affected the laws of many countries with differing legal traditions, cultures and religions. I believe that it can be the same with the "core principles" defending human dignity, in the context of genetic research.

Searching for common ground

UNESCO's new *Declaration* provides an important test for the international community. Are humans capable of responding effectively in the face of scientific advances which may bring many benefits but present quandries of global concern? Can there be any more fundamental issue for human rights in the new millennium than protecting the integrity of the human species which enjoys those rights? Or do we simply surrender the future to whatever scientists imagine and multinational corpora-

UPDATE

On December 9, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed, by consensus, the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights*. It is the first time that the UN takes on this concern, making UNESCO's *Declaration* a reference for the entire UN system in the field of bioethics.

Our future health history may be discovered in our genes.



© KING-HOLMES/S.PL./COSMOS

tions invest in?

In the ashes of the Second World War, Eleanor Roosevelt, René Cassin, John Humphrey and their bold companions had no doubt as to what the answer should be to such questions. They completed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. No surrender of fundamentals. A search for the common ground. Criteria of the dignity and solidarity of all human beings. The challenges before them were no less daunting

than the challenges we face today. Their achievement is an inspiration for us. The problems now are no less puzzling. We should be as bold and as brave and as confident as they were.

*Justice Michael Kirby,
High Court of Australia
Member of the IBC*



© REUTERS/MAXPPP

In the name of dignity,
no to a human Dolly.

Cyberspace: Arbitrary Interference?

The protection of privacy has become one of the most important human rights issues of this century-end. Concerned with the dignity and integrity of the individual, this basic human right is being threatened by pernicious forms of intrusion for commercial and political motives.

The Big Brothers watching our every move in order to attain strategic preeminence are joining forces with the Big Sisters of economic, financial and intellectual surveillance. From now on, a mere click on a hypertext link, the most casual consultation of a site on the World Wide Web generates "cookies" which feed uncontrollable data bases.

The technique of data mining (exploitation of data) enables governments and private organizations to carry out mass surveillance and personalized profiling, without any controls or right of access to examine this data in most cases. From medical care to transportation systems, not to overlook financial transfers or commercial and banking transactions, enormous quantities of information are accumulated every day, yielding information whose treatment and correlation make it possible to draw up extremely indiscreet portraits of each one of us.

Data that sells

Thus, a tight network of surveillance surrounds us from cradle to grave, from the office to the hospital. In Europe, a Directive governing the protection of personal data, and outlining measures for its implementation, came into effect last October, four years after it was adopted in 1994. But outside Europe, few countries are conscious of the stakes or ready to hamper the freedom of electronic trade.

In the U.S., the chosen path is one of self-regulation. Private companies are expected

to demonstrate self-restraint. But why should they comply when the fact of collecting personal data on consumers is an extremely lucrative business? In fact, some companies base their very existence on this data, which they in turn sell. Under the terms of the new European Directive, the transfer of data outside Europe must now be approved according to certain specified criteria.

The citizen's role

This is already posing serious problems in the case of export to the U.S. where the exploitation of personal data by powerful information and communications industries is authorized and encouraged by the absence of legislation. So far, no Euro-American agreement has been reached. The fact that an international consensus exists on the subject is apparently not enough. What is needed is much greater awareness on the part of citizens. All too often, they ignore the incredible precision and indiscretion of electronic monitoring of which they are routinely the object. It is only with this sense of awareness that it will be possible to effectively apply Article 12 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which affirms that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy..."

Poorly or totally uninformed about the risks involved, consumers tend to be overly confident and ready to release their personal data in innumerable transactions. The truth is, however, that this information may be accumulated over the years, be re-treated, sub-divided and even in the final analysis, regrouped or categorized through a system of universal identifiers (such as a social security number). Errors are just about inevitable. Only the subjects themselves are capable of correcting them. Problems of integrity, of privacy and security of data will not

A tight network of surveillance surrounds us from cradle to grave, from the office to the hospital.



be resolved because of the very forces of the market and technology.

Indeed, the forces in question are turned towards maximum profits, not the maximum protection of individuals. We therefore need laws which oblige organizations collecting personal data to provide the concerned individuals with right of access to it. They should



© IMAGE BANK/ROY WIEHMANN

How can a hand be kept on personal data?

be allowed to correct or withhold information, and this in the name of a moral right of each individual to his or her digital representation. This ethical principle is easy to formulate but its application is another matter. The basic question is: who owns personal data? The conventional response is that personal data

belongs to those who collect this data. But what happens when this data is resold or re-treated?

Commercial versus personal interest

A cascade of successive owners only complicates the questions of responsibility regarding the ethical use of this information. We might recommend a complete change of perspective. A new human right could be formulated as follows: "All data pertaining to an individual is the property of that individual." Thus, usage of this data would be explicitly authorized by the person in question.

We might even imagine a system of royalties to be paid for the use of personal data. Naturally, this kind of thinking does not coincide with the interests of world electronic trade. On the other hand, it gives individuals more control over their private lives, and reaffirms the supreme value of the human person faced with the anonymous forces of digital abstraction.

UNESCO, for its part, is doing its best to meet the challenge of protecting privacy through various channels, notably with the creation of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology and the holding of an annual *Infoethics* congress (see *Sources* no. 106).

Philippe Quéau

Director of the Division of Information and Informatics

Environment: Legislating for tomorrow

While the concern for protecting future generations can be found in all major cultural and religious traditions, it did not emerge as an important issue on the world's political agenda until the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment. After that, many treaties started including language referring to future generations. Then in the 1980s, French oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau drafted a petition on the rights of future generations, which gathered millions of signatures worldwide. It set off a process that culminated, in November 1997, in the adoption by UNESCO of a *Declaration* that sets forth the present generation's obligations to "strive for sustainable development" and to maintain "the quality and the integrity of the environment," including the diversity of the Earth's resources.

Protecting future generations is not without controversy. Some argue that it

distracts governments from addressing the widespread environmental inequities today. How can we reconcile treating future generations fairly (intergenerational equity) with ensuring that people living today are treated fairly (intragenerational equity)? Often these equities do not conflict, since the actions needed to satisfy both are the same. However, poor communities suffer most from environmental degradation and have no choice but to contribute to it. Intergenerational fairness means that development does not take place on the environmental backs of the poor in any generation. This means devoting the resources needed to satisfy basic needs and to build capacity for sustainable development and environmental protection.

A second controversial issue is whether the present generation only has obligations to protect the environment for

Rigoberta Menchu

(Before the Executive Board of UNESCO, Oct. 19, 1998)

We, the indigenous women and men, believe that it is necessary to return to age-old ways to help us meet the challenges of the future.

One hears a lot about economic globalization (which assumes unbalanced relations), but never about human globalization – globalization of our minds, of our identities. We ought to make sure globalization incorporates other preoccupations, such as health and education for all.

I am convinced that the world of the future is intercultural. If we don't create a vision of intercultural education, we will never beat racism, nor exclusion, nor ignorance, nor lack of dialogue.

It is very important to be critical. Because it is not by ignoring our limits and the errors of humanity that we can correct them. We need to face up to them and recognize that we have been actors in this millennium in both our successes and failures. And from there, we need to formulate propositions for the future. I believe that humanity today needs these. Each one of us has a role to play in creating more harmonious relationships.



Learning to take care of the environment...

future generations, or whether future generations also have rights. Obligations are not always linked with rights, but rights are always connected to obligations. The argument against rights of future generations is that rights exist only where there are identifiable interests, which can only happen by identifying the individuals with interests to protect. Since we cannot identify individuals in future generations, it is not possible to speak of their rights. However, these may be regarded as group rights, not individual ones. The rights exist regardless of the number and identity of individuals making up each generation. When future generations become living ones, individuals acquire rights to use and benefit from the Earth and obligations to care for the Earth for other people today and for future generations. The UNESCO *Declaration* sets forth our obligations to protect the environment for future generations; it does not refer to rights of future generations.

A third issue concerns our relationship with nature. Many positions are possible: masters of nature; participants in the natural system with special responsibilities to

...to pass on a safer planet.



protect it; or equal partners with nature. The principle of intergenerational equity assumes that people are part of the environment, and as the most sentient creatures, they have special obligations to care for it for future generations. The UNESCO *Declaration* and the concept of sustainable development, one of the focuses of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, reflect this.

A legal standing

Intergenerational equity has become part of judicial discourse on international law. In response to a request from the UN General Assembly, the International Court of Justice, in a 1996 Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, observed that the environment “represents the living space, the quality of life and the very health of human beings, including generations unborn.” In his dissenting opinion, Judge Weeramantry, the Court’s Vice President, affirmed the principle of “intergenerational equity” and noted that “the rights of future generations have passed the stage when they were merely an embryonic right struggling for recognition. They have woven themselves into international law through major treaties, through juristic opinion and through general principles of law recognized by civilized nations.” In the 1997 ICJ case between Hungary and the Slovak Republic involving the construction of a dam on the Danube River, Judge Weeramantry observed that the first principle of modern environmental law is “the principle of trusteeship of earth resources.”

The next step

Since the late 1980s, national court litigation, international non-binding declarations and reports of expert groups have noted the emergence of principles relating to treating future generations fairly. In 1993 for example, the Philippines Supreme Court granted standing to 42 children as representatives of themselves and of future generations to protect their right to a healthy environment. The children were challenging the widespread leasing of biologically diverse forest tracts for clearcutting. Sixtyfive of the 92 leases were ultimately canceled as a result of the court action.

The UNESCO *Declaration* is an important step in enunciating a principle of intergenerational fairness. It sets forth a normative statement about how we must act today. It can lead to binding obligations internationally, nationally, or locally for protecting the environment for future generations. It offers a basis for a United Nations Declaration on Future Generations.

Edith Brown Weiss
Professor of International Law
Georgetown University Law Center (U.S.)



The rights of African children, as seen by youngsters in Norway (from a contest organized by the Associated Schools).

Learning human rights

Creating awareness of human rights through education is often heralded as the key to building a world which puts principles such as tolerance, justice, peace and democracy into practice. It is a delicate task which the UN Decade for Human Rights Education (1995 – 2004) is seeking to push along. Yet, as the representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recently pointed out at UNESCO, “not many countries have engaged in human rights education”.

Some specialists claim that the debate over human rights education has been too confined to an ‘elite’ and warn against outside solutions being imposed on a community without taking local contexts into account. “The movement and growth of the human rights community must not merely espouse, but itself be governed by a commitment to those principles it holds aloft to others,” claimed Canadian Professor Marshall Conley and Judy Ettinger in their presentation to the UNESCO Regional Conference on Human Rights Education in Europe (September 1997). “Indeed, human rights is something that happens ‘out there’, in the remote realms of democracy,” reflected Shulamith Koenig, executive director of the People’s Decade for Human Rights Education, an NGO. “For most people, it does not mean that our institutions, back home, must enforce the same values which we try to impose on others.”

“If we want a breakthrough, then a whole comprehensive system of education for human rights should be created,” says Janusz Symonides, director of UNESCO’s Division of Human Rights, Democracy and Peace. “In primary and secondary schools, human rights requires an integrated approach, you can’t introduce it as a separate subject,” continues Symonides. “But formal education is only part of the picture. If we talk about education for the rights of women, we are talking about addressing a whole population. Then there’s a specialized type of education needed for armed forces, police, judges, the media. This is not the work of education in

the traditional sense.”

Typically, a human rights education plan takes this broad approach. The Philippines, for example, has programmes which aim to reach out to all sectors of the community. The Philippine Commission on Human Rights has agreements with government departments, (including the department of justice), the local branch of Amnesty International and an organization of village chiefs. The resources required for such a holistic approach are substantial. There is also a question of priorities. How to talk about a future right to human rights education when the fundamental right to education may not have been met?

There are a myriad of actions at local levels. Most agree that the “lion’s share of the credit” for awareness raising in the field, and the “doing” of human rights to date should go to non-governmental organizations. Also achieving results is UNESCO’s Associated Schools Project Network, which links 5,000 schools in 157 countries through a variety of initiatives. “Human rights education is not only about teaching children their rights,” explains coordinator Elizabeth Khawajkie. “It also means creating a climate conducive to mutual respect, democratic principles, justice and solidarity. It includes actions to help those in greatest need such as the elderly, orphans, indigenous peoples, and understanding their rights. It is a long-term process.”

Yet, continuing human rights violations around the world can leave our declarations with a hollow ring. As Professor Behi El Din Hassan, Director of the Cairo Institute of Human Rights asked in October at UNESCO, “how can a person believe international conventions are obligatory when daily reality is different?” The work in “creating a culture of human rights” must continue with a commitment at government level towards human rights education across the board, with civil society, including the media, acting as a watchdog, so that ultimately actions may speak louder than words. ●

UNESCO AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The UNESCO network of Chairs on Human Rights in 29 universities aims to help prepare teachers and journalists to participate in human rights education.

UNESCO is organizing a series of regional conferences on human rights education over the next three months:

- For Africa, in Dakar (Senegal) Dec. 16-20
- For Asia, in Poona (India) Feb. 3-6
- For the Arab States, in Rabat (Morocco) Feb. 17-20.

HERITAGE How can historic centres of cities be safeguarded without jeopardizing their life and culture? A new approach, "integrated urban conservation", seeks to honour the past while responding to the needs of the present.

CITIES WITH BEATING HEARTS

What's the point in Guanajuato being a World Heritage Site if 20 minutes away from this historic centre, there's no electricity?" asks Jorge Cabrejos Moreno, professor of urban planning at Guanajuato University, in Mexico. "We can't apply art conservation theories to buildings, which are part of our everyday surroundings," affirms Pierre Larochelle, professor of the history of architecture at Laval University in Canada. Some 200 experts from about 30 countries gathered in Recife (Brazil) in October to defend a new, integrated approach to urban conservation at a seminar organized by the University of Pernambuco with support from the World Heritage Centre.

The issue concerns not just the 129 towns on UNESCO's World Heritage List, but thousands of historic towns all over the world. "In Mexico alone, there are 20,000 monuments and 1,900 historic town centres," points out Moreno.

What has changed? "The logic of conservation is based on the uniqueness of the

buildings, without any regard for people's experience," explains Lúcia Leitão, an architect involved in old Recife's conservation project. "The concept of heritage has evolved. It's no longer just about beautiful buildings, but also about what people value and treasure," reflects Jacques Dalibard, head of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in Canada.

The field of urban conservation is forever on the move. The concern for saving historic centres arose in Europe in the 1950s, in the ruins of the Second World War. But for a long time, the approach was museum-oriented, or else, towns would be "renovated" by "tearing down whole neighbourhoods, moving the inhabitants out and destroying the social fabric," reminds Dalibard.

In 1976, UNESCO broke new ground by stressing the need to preserve "historic areas" for their "human dimension," as "an immovable heritage whose destruction may often lead to social disturbance." According to Jukka Jokilehto, author of the *History of Architectural Conservation* (Butterworth/Heinemann, 1998), UNESCO's role has been very important in underlining

Early on, Latin America showed concern for safeguarding the wealth of its historic towns.



that people and the context count.”

Today, especially in countries of the South, the real issue is how to reconcile conservation with sustainable urban development. The first critical rule is to ensure that residents themselves are not forced out of a neighbourhood. Restoration is meant to improve their quality of life, and they are the ones who will be entrusted with looking after their neighbourhood. A number of projects now include training inhabitants in reconstruction and restoration techniques. Jobs are also being maintained or sometimes even created to break the vicious circle of poverty and decay. Small trades are being kept. “We don’t want a sanitized, flat public space. Movement is life,” states Antonio Arantes, the mayor of Campinas (Mexico).

“The informal trades of the city’s main square also contribute to its upkeep,” says Carlos Torres Arenal, a town councillor in Morelia (Mexico). “They also prevent the opening of bigger shops there.” In Lunenburg (Canada) and Skofja Loka (Slovenia), restoration projects include an “economic rejuvenation” component, which involves training or retraining people in fishing and fabric-making, trades which respectively made the wealth of these towns.

For Sasi Shorey, a town planner in the Indian city of Hyderabad, “urban conservation facilitates the preservation of traditional open spaces and pedestrian zones, the survival of traditional trades, and encourages local inhabitants to stay, while also favouring low pollution levels and low energy consumption lifestyles.”

Cultural Continuity

Another major concern of the new approach is to protect local cultures. “It’s not just a matter of preserving stones, but also life, memory and a living body,” points out Michel Bonnette, head of the Organization of World Heritage Cities. “Cultural identity is as essential as meals, drinks and jobs,” affirms Juratė Markevičienė, an urban planner working on the restoration of Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital. “Conservation of a cultural heritage plays an important role in sustainable development,” says Joe King of the International Centre for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), who has worked on a project in Mombasa (Kenya). “It serves as a way of maintaining social cohesion and providing a means of cultural continuity.” In Latin America, public squares are being restored and projects often include support for existing or new cultural events. In Brazil for example, Olinda has managed to keep its reputation as a centre of northeastern traditional music and dance.

But the new approach has its critics. “Participation” sometimes hides a takeover of national heritage by the private sector.

“The state is withdrawing on all sides, including from heritage,” stresses Cabrejos. “But public action is still absolutely vital. Public interest must come before the private.”

Lia Motta, a curator at Brazil’s Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) takes a critical stance. “Officially, the discourse is about conservation, but in practice, the market wins over. What we often see are aesthetic projects that put the urban heritage onto the consumption market. Heritage becomes a product that pits cities against each other.” Many people also object to the touristic aims behind restoration projects. Others criticize clinging to past models. “The talk is very ideological,” says urbanist Ana Fernandes, who lectures at the University of Bahia. “There’s too much history, memory and traditional values. We have to be modern in what we do.”

But nostalgia for cities of the past is also a yearning for the ways in which people once related to each other. “Public life is steadily disappearing from our towns,” observes Silvio Zancheti, head of the Centre for Integrated Urban Conservation (CECI) at the University of Pernambuco and organizer of the Recife conference. When standards of living improve, people everywhere spend less time in public spaces. But the latter are a town’s heartbeat. Our connection with towns is a relationship of love: they give back to us what we offer them.



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The “Plaza Grande” in Quito, Ecuador.

UNESCO and Historic Cities

One fifth of 500 plus sites on the World Heritage List are city centres, from Salzburg (Austria) to Djenné (Mali). From 1976, UNESCO started drawing attention to the importance of saving historic urban quarters.

- In the Arab world, UNESCO played a key role in raising awareness and donor support towards the medinas, with campaigns for Fez, (Morocco) and Tunis. At present, UNESCO is engaged in “integrated conservation” projects that aim to improve people’s quality of life. In old Cairo, it initiated a revitalization project. In Sana’a (Yemen), UNESCO is seeking to reinforce local management.
- In Latin America, assistance has been provided to create or support national or regional training centres: in Salvador de Bahia, Recife and Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Bogota (Colombia), Havana (Cuba), Cuzco and Lima (Peru), and Caracas (Venezuela). As part of the Monumenta project,

financed by the InterAmerican Development Bank, UNESCO also supports integrated conservation projects in Lima, Quito (Ecuador) and in six towns of Brazil.

- In Asia, UNESCO contributes its expertise to developing conservation policies, as in Luang Prabang (Laos), where it took part in drafting legislation to protect heritage. UNESCO also favours decentralized cooperation between Asian and European cities – Hue (Viet Nam) and Lille (France) – and between Chinese and European cities (see *Sources* no. 101, May 1998).
- In Europe, special attention is given to Baltic cities. In Vilnius (Lithuania), UNESCO is helping to draw up a conservation plan of the old city.
- Throughout the world, UNESCO is supporting ICCROM in creating a network of training and research centres.

World Heritage Centre: www.unesco.org/whc. Fax: (33-1) 45 68 55 70.

Recife: the tale of a fashionable facelift

The facade of the Capitania restaurant in Recife is decorated with a ribald scene featuring sailors embracing corseted “ladies of the night”. And yet, the Rua do Apollo is one of the most fashionable – and rightly so – streets in the city. Before its restoration, however, Bairro do Recife was better known as the district of prostitutes and rowdy bars.

The Bairro is the historic centre and port of Recife, Brazil’s fifth largest city, with a population of three million. The Portuguese settled there as early as the 16th century. Thanks to sugar exports, the port became the most important in the Americas, and up until the 19th century, the Bairro was the beating heart of the merchant city. But Recife continued to grow and its centre of gravity shifted. In the 1970s, a new port was built 50 kms away, and the quarter is still feeling the shock. Whereas it housed 13,200 people in 1910 – one in ten of the city’s inhabitants – the district counted a bare 560 in 1990 and was run-down, marginalized and, at night, a questionable destination.

Attracting the private sector

In 1991, the state of Pernambuco launched a plan to revitalize the Bairro. “They understood that the historic and artistic heritage could be very valuable economically,” explained Silvio Zancheti, Geraldo Marinho and Norma Lacerda, who designed the project. The renovation of historic centres is, in fact, going strong all over Brazil. The municipality began, in 1993, by restoring streets and public squares.

Next, the city began restoration of the Bairro’s Bom Jesus area, which boasts an impressive set of buildings. “The owners were sceptical,” said Mr Zancheti. The municipality set up a bureau to attract the private sector, “acting just like a business, by bringing together owners and investors.” The first month was a disaster: not a single investor showed up. But little by little, abandoned buildings are finding new life. The University has installed its Centre for Integrated Conservation in the Bairro. The baroque Apollo Theatre has re-opened. Cafés and restaurants are moving in, attracted by fiscal incentives.

To mark its commitment, the city continues to invest, by renovating bridges, water mains and sewerage systems. It has also welcomed *Colours of the City*, a movement-launched country-wide by the Roberto Marinho Foundation and the Ypiranga paint company, which donated materials to redecorate the facades.

“*And here stands Recife So rightly named With its sins of day and sins of night Yet forever tranquil, serene and sedate.*”

“*Half stolen from the ocean Half wrought from the mind For it is through the dreams of men That a city is invented.*”

Carlos Pena Filho, poet of Recife, 1929-1960.



© N. KHOURDAGHER

Locals are rediscovering the quarter cherished by their elders.

The city authorities would like to make the Bairro into a cultural pole, notably by organizing events aimed at reviving street life year-round: balls, festivals, etc.... “This hasn’t been difficult because the quarter has always been known as the heart of the city, even for people who had never been there,” explains Mr Zancheti. Today, the carnival has come back to the Bairro, and Bom Jesus and do Apollo streets with their colourful pink, blue and orange buildings, and lively sidewalk cafés, are very fashionable.

The price per square metre in the Bom Jesus area rose from \$120 in 1993 to \$2,000 in 1996, and the population of the Bairro itself grew to 900 inhabitants the same year. Today, the project’s reputation has spread well outside Pernambuco State. It was, in fact, cited as a model during a recent seminar on urban conservation held, appropriately, in the Bairro’s Apollo Theatre.

The programme is due to wind up in the year 2003. Before that, many buildings must still be renovated, and the favelas and factories which occupy the northern part of the quarter transformed into low-cost housing. “For the moment,” said Lúcia Leitão, an architect and project participant, “it’s largely the affluent bourgeois population which spends money in the Bairro: poor people live far away and do not benefit from the quarter.”

The renovation of the Bairro do Recife has nonetheless demonstrated that to succeed, conservation of a neighbourhood must be accompanied by an injection of new life, and must concern not only occupants but other city-dwellers attached to the area. As Leitão points out, “Bairro do Recife remained an important symbolic space. Even if people could no longer remember it as it was, they were happy to recuperate part of the city’s memory which had disappeared.”

N. K.-D.

Zanzibar: back to splendour

Stanley and Livingston had a house there. It was also once east Africa's largest port, serving an area that stretched from Somalia to present-day Mozambique and as far inland as the Congo basin. But colonialism, an end to Arab-Indian trade and a socialist regime that closed it off to the world for 30 years had left Zanzibar, a small island off the coast of Tanzania, little more than a vague and exotic memory.

However, things are changing and Zanzibar is working to recover its past glory.

"Fifteen years ago, the city was completely dilapidated. An impoverished government and the humid maritime climate had created a nightmare situation," says Colette La Cour Grandmaison, author of a book on Zanzibar. Today though, a major restoration programme is underway and some 600 of the 1,700 buildings that make up the old city – known as Stone Town – have already recovered their lost splendour, and Zanzibar is now a candidate for the World Heritage List.

An ambitious plan

The turnabout began during the 1980s when the government introduced economic liberalization policies and opened the island to outside investors and donors. In 1982, after the collapse of a number of buildings provoking several deaths, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements drew up a safeguarding plan. The Agency for the Restoration and Development of Stone Town (STCDA) was created in 1985. For despite its decrepit state, the old city – which accounts for only 12% of the urbanized area – remained Zanzibar's vital core: the central market is there, along with the main post-office, and 90% of the administrative services and secondary schools. However, the 1964 revolution provoked the flight of rich Arab and Indian merchants and other foreigners, and the city became home to large numbers of rural migrants. Its elegant homes with their lace-work balconies, carved wooden doors, ornamental facades and sculpted arcades – a unique blend of Arab, Indian, African and European architecture – fell into ruin.

The ambitious plan proposed today goes much further than the restoration of the monuments of the Omani dynasty that the island administered up until the revolution, such as the 17th-century fort, the Beit el Aja'ib (House of Marvels), which will house a future national museum, the Sultan's palace and the dispensary. And it does not rely solely on tourism to drive development (between 1985 and 1995, 42 hotels were opened in restored buildings). Rather it counts on breathing new life into the houses – both grand and modest – that are home to 16,000 of the city's 100,000 inhabitants.

"Part of the problem is that people don't necessarily see the reason for conservation. Things that are evident to people in the North – such as the value of heritage – are not always understood," says Stephen Battle of the Aga Khan Foundation, which contributed to the conservation plan and which, with SIDA, a Swedish development agency, has set up a public information programme about it. Thus, a tv programme – *Stone Town Baraza* – provides a forum where people can meet and debate. Craftsmen are trained in traditional construction techniques and restore demonstration buildings to show passers-by that modern options are not always the best ones. These initiatives especially target women, who have a major influence on how the household budget is spent.

However the dilapidation of the old city is also the result of poverty and a lack of infrastructure. The most run-down houses belonged to the government. The STCDA set about selling them to their occupants. Three hundred buildings were initially sold and restored, with proceeds from the sales serving to finance the renovation of other major sites. Starting next year, says Battle, structural

The elegance of a restored 19th-century building in Indian style.



© HOA OUI/C. FAVARD.

These buildings only get their meaning within the context of the fabric of ordinary lives surrounding them.

problems such as security of tenure, overcrowding and poverty will be tackled. One idea is to introduce a system of micro-credit to allow poorer households buy their homes.

Infrastructure is also being updated “to improve the existing conditions of the population,” says Battle, and offset problems such as the serious water erosion of the coral stone that most buildings are made of. The sewerage and water conveyance systems are being renewed with funds from Germany and Finland. Germany is also funding a new electricity system, and the Government of Zanzibar is footing the bill for the telephone network.

The changes will take time, but there is already a noticeable difference. Grandmison cites the example of her friend Salun who is of Omani origin. “When I first met him, he lived in a two-roomed apartment with his wife and three children, without water and with little comfort,” she says. “He has gradually increased his wealth serving as an intermediary for the Omanis. He bought his old family home – lost generations ago – restored it, and now lives in it.”

The new economic freedoms have started attracting Arab business people from the Gulf again; Europeans are building hotels

on the beaches lapped by the turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean, and the government is officially encouraging tourism. However, says Battle, “The Stone Town is not the monuments. These buildings only get their meaning within the context of the fabric of ordinary lives surrounding them. We want to protect the rich texture of life in Stone Town, which is its very essence.”

But the population is poor, land prices have increased tenfold since 1985, and the number of tourists has jumped from 20,000 since then to 100,000 today. Like many of the world’s old cities, Zanzibar faces the challenge of keeping its soul despite its new-found beauty, fame and increasing wealth. For the smells and colours of the spice and fabric souks, the glow of the copper being hammered into shape by craftsmen in front of their workshops, the music of a street-band on an evening during Ramadan, and the chatter of children playing in a square are as vital to the life and charm of the fabled Zanzibar as the marbles in the palace of the once-powerful sultans.

*Mwalim Ali Mwalim,
director of the STCDA, and N. K.-D.*

The kidnapping of city centres?

Jorge Cabrejos Moreno, a professor of urban planning at the University of Guanajuato (Mexico), expresses some reservations towards current trends.

Can a rapprochement be made between the movement to renew town centres and the advent of neoliberal policies?

In Mexico, neoliberalism has been the economic model of the 1990s, leading to changes in all domains, including in the way culture and heritage is conceived. Its paradigm is that economic growth is the basis of development. In the city, it takes the form of new urban projects: shopping centres, which were unknown here in the 80s, and literally investing in the centre to set up its headquarters there, through the presence of banks, financial institutions, companies, etc. Authorities are being put under pressure to clean up the historic centre, equip it with better infrastructure and make way for this type of project. In Guadalajara, a neighbourhood counting 100 blocks of houses is going to be turned over to businesses, boutiques and shopping malls. The concern is not to preserve the heritage but to take possession of part of this city of four million inhabitants and make it into a regional economic centre. The arguments, which are based on history and conservation, are deceiving. Paradoxically,

there’s one bright side to neoliberalism, and that is citizen participation, which can be seen as a defense mechanism.

What types of interventions would you favour?

We don’t have to transform much, nor do we require large investments. We have laws for protection and conservation. We also have economic activities that make these areas live: they should be developed and transformed to bring about a better quality of life and a better environment. What is lacking are the resources for the upkeep of public spaces, squares, roads and services: this is where public and private financing needs to come in.

Can conservation and sustainable development coexist in Latin America’s cities?

We already have one important element: “sustainable conviviality”, contrary to a number of cities in the north, where social contact must also be restored, because people don’t know their neighbours and never sit on a public bench. In Latin America, we already practice “sustainable social development,” since we spend half our time living in the street!

Interviewed by N. K.-D.

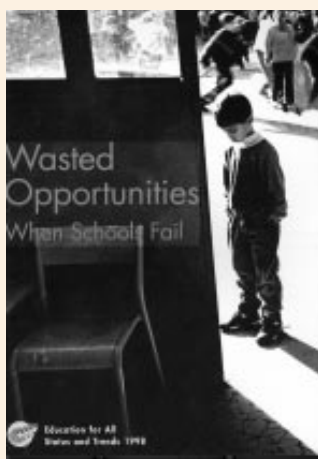


CULTURE

A Multilingual Lexicon

Marking a major step forward towards the recognition of indigenous tongues, a multilingual lexicon in Spanish, Portuguese, Aymara, Quechua and Guarani, the five most widely-spoken languages in South America has just been published on CD-ROM. Encompassing over 10,000 words relating to agro-food, public health and biodiversity, it was compiled by the Latin Union and financed mainly by UNESCO. Born of a Bolivian government initiative, the lexicon makes a valuable tool for agronomists, physicians and technicians working in direct contact with rural populations in South America. During the lexicon's presentation, Mr. Mayor affirmed that "each of our planet's languages represents a wonderful monument, as worth knowing and preserving as monuments made of stone," reiterating that "languages are factors of peace. They are not divisive, they bring people together and enrich them."

The lexicon can also be consulted on Internet at: <http://www.unilat.org/es/dtil/n1/edtil10.asp>



Wasted Opportunities

Although leaders in developing countries generally understand the importance of investing in basic education, they also face an uphill battle: today, only three out of four pupils in the developing world reach Grade 5, large numbers have to repeat one or more grades, and 84 million primary school-age children, of which three out of five are girls, never enter school at all. "Wasted Opportunities: When Schools Fail," the fourth report in the series *Education for All: Status and Trends*, highlights, with the use of graphics, the present situation of school waste and reveals its enormous costs on educational systems, individuals and societies. It cites actual examples of what some countries are doing to address the problem, while statistical tables present selected educational and socio-economic indicators for 131 developing countries and territories.

●●● To find out more:
EFA Forum
E-mail: efa@unesco.org
Fax: 33-1-45 68 56 29

AID AFTER THE HURRICANE

After the devastation wreaked by Hurricane Mitch in Central America, UNESCO released \$150,000 to serve as seed money for assistance, notably to repair destroyed schools. By making this sum available on November 3, the Director-General declared that "the time has come for the



EDUCATION

huge human and material resources devoted to military alliances to be matched by early warning and rapid intervention networks."

NetD@ys in Latin America and the Caribbean

Up to 800 universities, institutes and schools from 30 countries participated in the Latin America and Caribbean Netd@ys project between October 18 and 25. The idea stems from a similar initiative between 100 schools that took place in California's Silicon Valley in 1996. Since then, the concept has spread to different

regions of the world. The Association of Colombian Researchers Abroad (ACASTC) launched Netd@ys for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1997. This year's effort, in collaboration with UNESCO, has been so successful that the organizers are keeping lines open for any interested schools or universities who wish to join the network. The overall objective is to encourage the use of Internet in education, but also to create a space for discussion and exchange.

●●● To find out more:
<http://www.unesco.org/events/latin>



PEOPLE



© UNESCO/MICHEL CLAUDE

lence begins where dialogue stops." Ms Finnbogadottir will also be involved in the Organization's project to publish a world language report.

A Song for Peace

"To speak of life, love and death, the three building blocks of the universe", such is the vocation of Andalusian singer Carlos Cano, appointed UNESCO Artist for Peace on November 3. In honouring this musician, whose many recordings have promoted the Andalusian legacy of European and Arab cultural blending, Director-General Federico Mayor underlined that Mr Cano had been chosen "for his extraordinary work as troubadour, contributing through music, poetry and song to the preservation and dissemination of a cultural heritage that knows no borders."

THE AMBASSADOR OF LANGUAGES

Languages are "some of humanity's most valuable and fragile treasures," states Vigdís Finnbogadottir, former President of Iceland as she became a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Languages on October 28. She committed herself to promoting UNESCO's Linguapax project (see *Sources*, no. 104) and defending linguistic pluralism, a key to the emergence of a culture of peace, because "vio-



SOCIAL SCIENCE

Fight on Drugs

The annual turnover of the drug market is estimated at \$400 billion, earning more revenue than many large industrial sectors. In Newsletter no. 9, the Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme reports on the globalization of the drug problem. "Production and distribution of drugs have today become a considerable source of revenue for meeting budget deficiencies or enriching, on a personal basis, population groups,

companies or even countries... Direct recycling of profits affects the economic heart of society," reads the editorial. The issue also includes information on MOST's comparative research networks, which deal with such diverse concerns as migration in Southeast Asia or street children in South Africa.

●●● To find out more
 MOST Secretariat
 E-mail: ssmost@unesco.org

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DISABLED

Equal opportunity for the disabled was the theme of a seminar organized in Bukhara (Uzbekistan) last October. The event gathered

representatives from the ministries of education, health, labour and social affairs, along with NGOs and organizations of persons with disabilities from five central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Among their recommendations: better multi-sectoral collaboration and partnerships with NGOs, concerned organizations and parent groups; the inclusion of children with disabilities into the mainstream school system and of adults into the world of work; and better programmes to raise public awareness at the community level, as well as making infrastructures accessible to all.



PROJECTS



PROJECTS DIRECT AID

Learning materials for returned refugees in Armenia, computer skills for adolescents at risk in Costa Rica, literacy in local languages in Papua New Guinea, recycling garbage into textiles at a training center in Egypt, pre-school education in Burkina Faso — this is just a sampling of the 15 new projects supported by UNESCO's Co-Action programme, and detailed in the 1998 project catalogue. This programme finances small-scale projects at grassroots level through donations. These go completely to the project, the administrative costs being picked up by UNESCO.

●●● To find out more
 Co-Action Programme
 Fax 22-1-45 68 55 07
 e-mail: am.gillet@unesco.org

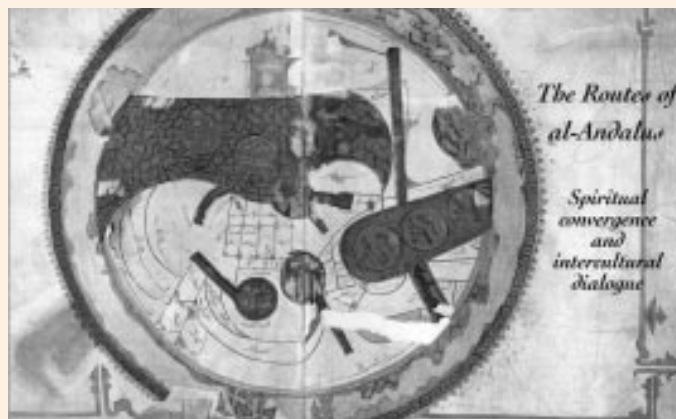


EXHIBITION

The Meeting of Three Worlds

For nearly eight centuries, three regions – the Arab world, Europe and Africa – and three religions – Islam, Judaism and Christianity – co-existed in medieval Spain, a period known as al-Andalus. From October 20 to 29, an exhibition at Headquarters celebrated "The Legacy of al-Andalus:

Cultural Itineraries." The show, featuring artefacts and documents, followed the routes along which the culture of al-Andalus spread around the Mediterranean with the Spanish Omeyas (8th to 11th centuries), to Africa with the Almoravides and Almohades (12th and 13th centuries), and later, to Latin America with the Mudejar.



World map by al-Istajri (10th century).

"Humanity's transition to a new millennium marks a historic turning point when men and women must pledge (...) to adopt attitudes and behaviour conducive to a future based on a culture of peace," stressed the Executive Board of UNESCO, gathered in Tashkent at the end of its 155th session, upon the invitation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In its decision on the International Year of the Culture of Peace in 2000, it underlined "the great responsibility that will devolve upon UNESCO to promote a world historical and civilizational change in which the peoples of the world learn to live together." The decision also invited the international community "to take all necessary steps to ensure the success of the Year and thus to affirm the values of tolerance and mutual understanding, and the values of combating poverty and exclusion, all of which are actions that will primarily be of benefit to women, young people and the least developed countries."

"The Prize gives us the recognition we needed. It's not easy to be an activist in a developing country," stated Shahtaj Qizilbash, representative of the Joint Action Committee for Peoples' Rights, co-laureate with the Indian Narayan Desai of the UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence. During the awards ceremony on November 17, both laureates made a forceful plea for nuclear disarmament and peace. "We oppose nuclear weapons because (...) we do not want to put our future generations in perpetual danger," stated Mr. Desai.

Quote, unquote.



BOOKS: HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIAL

Taking Action for Human Rights in the Twenty-First Century

compiled by Federico Mayor in collaboration with Roger-Pol

Droit

UNESCO Publishing 1998.

182pp., 120FF.

For this collection of essays, UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor asked a variety of people for their response to the question "what should we do if we want to effectively further the cause of human rights in the twenty-first century?" Artists, philosophers, scientists, nobel prize laureates and NGO leaders were invited to put forward ideas. Violinist Yehudi Menuhin is "convinced that our new world demands newly spelt-out sacred values, a new religious concept...This creed must form an inalienable part of our new religion, namely that the protector has the responsibility, the protected the right..." Dr Jacky Mamou of Médecins du Monde suggests creating an International Humanitarian Bureau to anticipate crises and take decisions regarding humanitarian intervention. Nobel Prize laureate Mikhail Gorbachev calls for a course in world history for children all over the world to be distributed by all possible means. Writer Doris Lessing suggests that major newspapers publish every day the list of dissidents who have been murdered, tortured, abducted and imprisoned. All these ideas are listed at the end of the book along with the text of the *Universal Declaration*.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

A history of its creation and implementation 1948 - 1998

by M. Glen Johnson and Janusz Symonides

UNESCO Publishing 1998.

160pp., 135FF.

The first part of this book traces the history of the *Declaration*, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948. Under the heading "A Magna Carta for Mankind," Glen Johnson, Professor of Political Science at Vassar College (U.S.), stages the players, the context, the drafting of the Declaration, the definition of human rights and the impact of the

Declaration. In the second section, Janusz Symonides, Director of UNESCO's Division of Human Rights, Democracy and Peace presents the Organization's contribution to the *Declaration's* implementation. The book also includes a list of the principal international instruments on human rights and an extensive bibliography on publications of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

Cultural Rights and Wrongs

Institute of Art and Law/UNESCO Publishing 1998.

224pp., 150FF.

What are cultural rights? Would their better definition and enforcement improve the lot of human beings in many prejudicial situations, beyond the protection they already have from existing human rights instruments? Why are 'cultural' rights so much more difficult to define than other human rights? These questions – matters of grave concern for indigenous peoples – are discussed by

authors from all continents, who point to different views of cultural rights, and explore the approaches taken to them by scholars, legislators and citizens across the world.

Human Rights: New Dimensions and Challenges

Edited by Janusz Symonides

UNESCO Publishing/Ashagate

332pp., 145FF.

This book has been conceived as an international teaching aid for institutions of higher education. This first volume (of three) stresses the interdependence between human rights, peace, democracy, development and the environment. It analyses obstacles and threats to human rights today and suggests means to overcome them. Emphasis is placed on the fact that the creation of a universal culture of human rights through education and public information is an essential element in making human rights a reality for all.



SOUND AND VISION

AUSTRALIA

Music from the New England Tablelands of New South Wales.
Anthology of Traditional Music UNESCO/AUVIDIS, 1998.

Price: 120 FF.

"Still a long way from home..."

This recording presents a selection of folk music from southwest Australia, which can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century. Although influences from the Scottish, Irish and English repertoire are obvious, the music is far from being a mere replication of

imported styles. By 1900, it had gone through a lengthy process of re-creation and transmission to create an original form of expression reflecting local



customs. Some tunes are purely instrumental, making use of violin, accordion, mouth-organ, harmonica, concertina and guitar, while others feature lyrics, whether about legends such as Thunderbolt the bushranger or occupations like kangaroo hunting. Whatever the case, most got the whole community dancing, whether on rhythms of polka, waltzes or quadrilles.





COMMUNICATION

PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTS

Published by Reporters sans frontières in cooperation with UNESCO, this little booklet, entitled "Practical Guide for Journalists," contains all the essentials about conducting investigations into violations of freedom of expression and freedom of the press around the world. Over eight chapters, it provides guidelines on related basic human rights documents, basic security rules for the protection of investigators, rules and procedures for investigating violations of press freedoms, the drafting of reports, and relations with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

●●● For more information: Reporters sans frontières 5 rue Geoffroy-Marie, 75009 Paris. France Tel. (33) 1 44 83 84 84; Fax (33) 1 45 23 11 51. E-mail rsf@rsf.fr.



Reporting against all odds for *Oslobodjenje*, Sarajevo, 1992.

Television and Cultural Programming

This report, entitled "Cultural Programmes on European Public Television Channels" and undertaken at the request of UNESCO and the European Commission, gives a comparative analysis of the status of cultural productions on the main European public television channels. In a first section, it explores the relationship between television and culture, looking at such issues as the "dictatorship of the viewer." It takes stock of several "scenarios for a solution," including Channel Four (U.K.) and Arte/La Sept (France/Germany). A second section presents a general review, looking at the situation in 15 European countries. Finally, a concluding section makes seven recommendations, among which to define common categories and indicators, encourage initiatives such as the establishment of a network of documentary resources and the structuring of European multimedia production, and develop qualitative methods of audience measurement.

●●● To find out more: Book and Cultural Industries Section



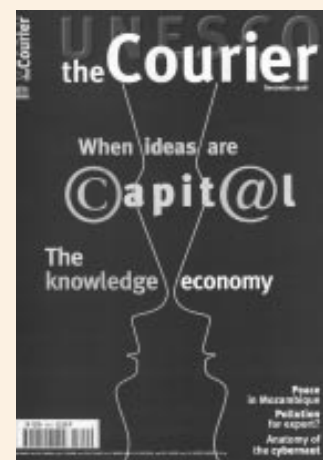
PERIODICALS

PROSPECTS

Under the title "The Evaluation of Education Systems," *Prospects* no. 105 presents discussions on the subject from an international seminar in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in December, 1997. The conference, organized by UNESCO's International Bureau of Education and the Brazilian Ministry of Education, was attended by 150 evaluation specialists, researchers and professors representing a variety of education levels. The debate was formulated around three key questions: "what we measure, who measures it and how the information is disseminated." In his editorial, Juan Carlos Tedesco writes that the presence of evaluation on systems for education "is not an end in itself and is only justified if they form part of the process of improving the quality of education." Evaluation systems should "lift the curtain of ignorance which has affected traditional education systems" in order to better gear learning to the "characteristics of each person, each group and each social and cultural situation." The issue closes with a profile of the educator and nurse Florence Nightingale whose story "popularized nurse training, which led to the establishment of a new profession for women."

The UNESCO Courier

The big bang between miniaturized computer chips and a universe of telephone connections has given birth to a new economic sphere of ideas and images, one where knowledge has overtaken products, machines and raw materials. Under the title "*When ideas are capital; the knowledge economy*", the December issue of the *UNESCO Courier* explores the modus



operandi of this new economy and looks at what's at stake, in the north and south.

The issue also tackles "havens" for pollution producers, asking "Are multinationals seeking to relocate in countries with low environmental standards?". Other stories include a report on an educational project aimed at improving the lives of girls and young women living in the garbage collection communities that skirt the edges of the Egyptian capital, Cairo. The *Courier* closes on an interview with Gloria Cuartas, Colombia's "messenger of peace" and former mayor of Apartado.

●●● 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 Fontenay, 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>.

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



A HOUSE FOR THE STREET

YOUTH *Morocco long-denied the existence of its street children. But the Bayti Association has opened society's eyes to this pressing problem and is working to get these kids back into the mainstream.*



© VALERIE COUTERON

We exist!

Invisible, they move quickly like shadows. By day, they ply the streets of Casablanca, doing small jobs and begging. When night falls, their pale faces take on the colours of prostitution. After that, pain and humiliation leave them huddled together in dark corners of railway stations or between crates on the port where they are regularly rounded up in police raids. A sniff from a tube of glue in the pocket to conjure up an imaginary world... along with a wicked headache.

These are children, and their story is almost always the same: fatherless homes, mothers who give up in despair, children who drop out of school, and head for the streets where they somehow survive, get into fights, end up totally disillusioned and waste away from malnutrition.

In Morocco, where a proud family tradition and Islamic values have always placed the child in a central – if only symbolic – role, street children did not exist. At least you didn't see them. Nobody wanted to see them or recognize what they crystallized: poverty, violence, problems of parents trying to cope, the total absence of appropriate social structures, schools incapable of taking over when parents fail, the weakness of social policies, the resignation of the State.

A REAL JUNK HEAP

One woman, nonetheless, rose up in an attempt to fill the legal void and combat indifference towards street children in Morocco. In 1993, Najat M'jid, a pediatrician and pedo-psychologist, roamed the streets of Casablanca for three months, identifying their

problems and winning their confidence. Establishing a good rapport with them, she listened. She evaluated their needs in the face of the outrageous inadequacy of the few "safeguards" that did exist, places where the state parked these "vagabonds" or "beggars." Among such centres is the House of Happiness (Dar El Kheir) "where the only happiness is in its name," said Najat M'jid, "otherwise it's a real junk heap, a garbage pail for human rejects – old people without families, prostitutes; a place where children find themselves deposited in conditions often worse than those encountered in the street. It is not surprising that all they think about is running away."

Inspired by Brazilian, Mauritanian and Indian experiences with street children, Najat M'jid wrote a report entitled "They were

2,000 strong and I only see two of them," in which she described the problem but also outlined her proposals, taking into account Moroccan culture and the specific difficulties of the country. In May 1993, she distributed the report to dignitaries assembled at ceremonies during which Morocco signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. "It caused quite a stir," she remembers. "Many people came up to me afterwards, asking to collaborate."

CUTTING THE RED TAPE

In France, where she came to raise funds, she was told that "Morocco was outside the field of humanitarian action." Accustomed to working in the field, the young woman was not about to put up with administrative red tape. It took an hour and a half, but she walked out of that meeting with 200,000 francs. To those who hesitated she insisted that any action in favour of children would be approved in Morocco, since the Convention had been signed there.

In May 1995, the first refuge set up by the Bayti ("my house" in Arabic) Association opened its doors in the working-class neighbourhood of Sidi Bernoussi in Casablanca where, according to Najat, "the governor has very progressive views." Najat and volunteers renovated the building which belongs to the local orphanage. The Royal Cabinet sent a representative to the inauguration, and by

doing so, publicly acknowledged that the country did in fact have a street-children problem.

Since last year another refuge has opened in the same neighbourhood. Each one can house about 100 children and adolescents – three-quarters are boys – aged 2 to 21, in rooms with 4 to 6 beds. They are thus offered a place where they can sleep, find a family, affection and also job training. The operation is run by a team of 25 people formed by educators, teachers, a social worker, and a pediatrician, all of whom benefit from training and continuous evaluation.

“The children no longer have confidence in anyone. We ourselves are only strangers and intruders into their environment which is structured by laws they themselves set up and which elude any form of regulation,” explained Najat M’jid who willingly admits that the street “also offers some good things which they need,” if only a feeling of solidarity and a sense of freedom, so highly valued by this group of children.

“The objective of Bayti,” said Najat, is “fitting back into the family, school and socio-professional life.” But the association should not

only be a transit,” she adds. “We try to instil a notion of partnership with the children so they know that, at least for a while, we are moving ahead together.” First of all, a programme is organized to sharpen their awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drugs. In addition, Bayti provides health care, and guidance in personal hygiene, as well as the possibility to practice a sport, take part in theatre activities, etc.

INFORMAL LEARNING

A second stage consists in proposing street workshops where “within the group, they receive individual instruction.” The courses are informal, thus can be taken in the morning or in the evening, depending on a child’s schedule, since most of them continue to earn a living doing small jobs. Some participate in groups of ten in personalized pedagogical activities led by four monitors. Each receives an individual report card for classes (Arabic, French, mathematics, history and geography, sciences, civics and religion) which enables them to resume schooling and obtain an elementary diploma. Others will train for jobs in building trades, the agro-food industry, elec-

tricity, welding, or to become beauticians or hairdressers, capable of integrating the local job market. Bayti also provides support for those who have not dropped out of school. In exchange, the children and young people are expected to respect the rules of the association which prohibit drugs, violence, sexual abuses, and lack of respect.

“The idea,” said Najat M’jid, “is to teach them to have a respectful attitude in the home and with the group, and to instil notions of regularity, punctuality, proper language and an enterprising spirit.” And so that these values don’t remain abstract, the Bayti children get points for good behaviour, each one worth a dirham of pocket money. The young pediatrician has even obtained passports and plane tickets for holidays in France, in Germany or in Spain, for some 20 children.

For the very little ones, the association has also organized street workshops in different parts of the city, proposing health care, but also educational games, artistic activities and debates. For the last five years, these workshops have been attended by over 4,500 youngsters. And there is no question of excluding girls (from 7 to 21 years old). Profoundly marked by violence from the street, girls are, in fact, one of the principal targets of the association. “Their schooling must be encouraged,” stresses Najat, “especially in rural areas, by sensitizing society in general and stimulating the creation of micro-information projects centred on the prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as contraception.”

Bayti also works with parents. “We try to build up their self-esteem. Some are completely broken.” They

can take courses to learn how to accept their children, to stop treating them violently, or to give them a second chance. And what happens when it is impossible for a child and its family to get back together? The association has just begun introducing the concept of adoption, something previously unknown in Morocco, where the extended family traditionally cares for children.

In the battle to prevent more and more children from taking to the street, Najat M’jid gets support from the Terre des hommes association (Lausanne), the French embassy, the Air France Foundation and UNESCO which has just allocated \$25,000 to speed up extension of Bayti’s work to other Moroccan cities: Meknes, Fez, Essaouira, Mohammedia and Safi.

TOWARDS SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Among these new programmes, the project for a farm-school, at about 60 km from Casablanca, would involve children of both sexes whose prospects for social reintegration so far appear virtually nil. The project is based on job training in agriculture and horticulture in the framework of a specific pedagogical programme. Najat, whose enthusiasm and dynamism are contagious, says the project “to be launched in early 1999, will be aimed at making individuals self-sufficient.”

As proof of the project’s success, one of the participating children said optimistically, “Bayti offers me a ticket back into a world which had rejected me. Now I know I can get over the feeling of exclusion, overcome my dependence on this horrible glue and start believing in myself and in others.”

*Cristina L’Homme with
Amina Barakat
in Casablanca*

Fitting back into life.





Trainees in the Maldives learn how to conduct a quadrat survey.

REEFS UNDER STRESS

SCIENCE *More than half the world's coral reefs are threatened, heightening the need for better monitoring.*

Coral reefs have more than one story to tell. It's all a question of knowing how to read this stunningly beautiful underwater book. Earlier this year, for instance, a group of divers exploring off the coast of the Maldives discovered that 80 to 90% of the once brilliant-coloured corals had turned a pale white, a phenomenon referred to as "bleaching." During a meeting held in Townsville (Australia) in November, world experts estimated that over the last 14 months, 40 to 50% of the world's reefs had been hit by severe bleaching, which is associated with high sea surface temperatures. Indeed, in 1997/98, tropical sea surface temperatures have been higher than at any time in recent history. What is not clear however, is how many of these corals will die, hence the importance of regular monitoring to understand how this intricately balanced ecosystem will recover.

Bleached corals run the risk of being colonized by algae and no longer being

able to feed themselves. Keeping track of this is just one element that trainees taking part in the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) workshop held in the Maldives earlier this year learnt to measure, with methods that had never been used in South Asia before. "If there's a silver lining in bleaching, it's that coral reef monitoring was given a huge impetus," explained Jason Rubens, coordinator of GCRMN in South Asia, the project's pilot region, which encompasses India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

The monitoring initiative, supported by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and several other partners, aims, in a first stage, to improve knowledge on the health of coral reefs in six regions of the world and in the longer run, to stem their degradation through encouraging governments to adopt sustainable conservation policies. "The idea is that if you've got a monitoring network with several years of

data about a place, the ways in which you plan to manage a reef should be much better informed," says Rubens.

Bleaching is just part of the story. Cyanide poisoning, dynamite fishing, overfishing, various forms of pollution, deforestation, coral mining (high quality cement is made from live corals) and coastal development are destroying coral reefs. The damage is obvious to the naked eye: certain types of algae, may point to the presence of nutrient inputs coming from improper sewage treatments. Corals smothered in sediment could suggest that a forest has been cleared in the catchment area of a river that flows into the sea, or that there has been dredging to build a harbour or a jetty. According to the 1998 *Reefs at Risk* study, 58% of the world's reefs are potentially threatened by human activity, reinforcing the need for an integrated approach to management.

LIFE SUPPORT

Participants at the recent GCRMN workshop learned how to use standard survey techniques to assess the state of reefs. With the transect method, scientists string out a tape measure over 20 to 50 meters, and by swimming along it, record the percentage cover of live or dead coral, algae, sand, as well as the different species found. Returning to the area regularly, it becomes possible to observe trends. The data, once entered into a data base, should provide policymakers and managers with information to manage coral reefs in ecologically sustainable ways. The project is also helping countries to draft monitoring action plans, in the hope of inciting governments to continue supporting the exercise. Beyond surveying the characteristics of reefs, the project aims to assess

their socio-economic value since many coral reefs are the life support system for coastal communities and small island states, besides providing them with revenue from ecotourism.

"We're trying to put a big emphasis on not only monitoring the physical and biological environment, but complementing that with a really good understanding of what the social and economic situation is," explains Rubens. As a result of GCRMN, marine biologists working at the universities of Goa and Madurai in Southern India have teamed up to do research with sociologists to collect data on specific areas. "An important aspect is how to involve a resource-using community in monitoring: asking fishermen to record their catches for example. This process raises awareness of the state of the reefs and how they are used."

Islands can pay a high cost for damaging coral reefs, which act as protective barriers between ocean and land, absorbing the break of the waves. Although the practice has been restricted or made illegal in many countries, coral is still mined for building material in others, leading to considerable coastal erosion.

Sometimes, the damage can turn into what Rubens qualifies as nothing short of a nightmare. Around Male, the main island in Maldives, buildings were built on reefs, right up against the ocean. When a major storm struck in the late 1980s, the island was heavily flooded and freshwater systems contaminated. Today, a thick concrete wall replaces the reef's function and surrounds half the island, blocking the view of the sea in some instances. What's more, the venture cost close to \$10 million. Clearly, nature has no price.

C.G.

CULTURE *Who's reading what these days?*
UNESCO's 50th Index Translationum tells all.

INSIDE THE TRANSLATION EMPIRE

Sign of the times, Vladimir Illyich Lenin no longer tops the list of the most translated authors in the world. Granted, there are still 3,000 translations on the market, but the revolutionary father has been surpassed by none other than Walt Disney Productions, crime queen Agatha Christie and the Holy Bible.

Without translation, words, and hence ideas, would not travel very far. From the earliest faith-driven translators of religious works to those who have devoted their lives to literary giants such as Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Proust or García Marquez, translators are among the most discreet craftsmen of the written word. But to find one's way through the vast empire of translations, there's one essential tool of the trade, the *Index Translationum*, an international bibliography which celebrates its 50th anniversary edition this year. Published by UNESCO, this CD-ROM contains almost one million

Hans Christian Anderson's little mermaid whose story is now available in more than 60 languages.



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entries from over 100 countries. It covers every subject: agriculture, architecture and art to natural and social sciences, history, law and literature, which accounts for more than 50% of all the world's translations. Almost 200,000 authors and 400 languages are listed. Every year, some 80,000 new bibliographic references find their way into the *Index*, reflecting the increasing demand for translations in our "global village."

When it first appeared in 1932 in the form of a quarterly bulletin published by the League of Nations, it listed translations published in six countries (France, Germany, Spain, the U.S., the U.K. and Italy), a figure that had jumped to 14 in 1940, when publication ceased following the outbreak of World War II. Almost ten years elapsed before the *Index* reappeared under the auspices of UNESCO. The first volume of the new series came out 1948, with some 8,500 entries from 26 countries. Ever since, the *Index* has been published annually. It was computerized in 1979 and switched over to a CD-ROM format in 1993.

Every year, national libraries or bibliography centres in Member States send UNESCO bibliographical data concerning translated books in all fields of knowledge. At headquarters, a small team within the Culture Sector is in charge of standardizing, entering and checking the data. It is painstakingly precise work. "Of course, with the data that we have, we cannot say



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Lenin's out

anything about the quality of the translation, whether it is faithful to the original," notes Cristina Iglesias, who heads the unit. Nonetheless, the *Index* remains a prized tool for librarians, documentalists, researchers, publishers, journalists, translators, students, bookstores, etc. Subject matter is arranged according to the Universal Decimal Classification headings, giving it a standardized search language. It remains the best reference work for establishing statistics concerning translations, allowing experts to analyze international readership, publishing markets and trends.

The *Index* confirms the dominance of the English language. Almost 50% of translations are done from English, while only 6% are into English. So widespread in fact is the influence of English as a language that publishers in Japan will accept a book for translation only if it has first been translated into English. While German remains the

language which accepts the most translations, Spanish is taking on a growing number of titles. The number of books translated each year also remains relatively small compared to the total number of books published worldwide. Writers from developing countries, for example, remain marginalized. Moroccan author Tahar Ben Jelloun (who writes in French) laments that his contemporaries writing in Arabic "are almost never translated. For some reason, the West feels that only the Egyptians or Lebanese are worth translating from the Arabic into modern European languages. If you do not use the language of the colonizer, your chances of being translated are very low."

Through its collection of Representative Works – which also celebrates its 50th anniversary this year – UNESCO tries to redress this imbalance by assisting in the translation, publication and distribution of works little known outside their languages or countries of origin. Now, names such as Yasunari Kawabata (Japan), Giorgios Seferis (Greece) and Wislawa Szymborska (Poland), to mention only a few – are among world classics, but it took some literary flair and a skilled translator to bring these names into the international limelight.

Vaiju Naravane
with C.G.

Index translationum
1998. PC Windows.
300 FF/\$54



next month's issue :

UNESCO IN ACTION: FOCUS ON PROJECTS IN THE FIELD



on UNESCO's calendar

from 18 to 19 January

TACKLING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY ON THE INTERNET

Experts and NGOs gather at Headquarters to discuss coordinated strategies for protecting children from sexual abuse, child pornography and paedophilia on the Internet.

from 18 to 19 January

MEMORY OF THE WORLD

In Madrid (Spain), experts meet to review attempts at standardizing access to electronic documents, in the framework of the Memory of the World Programme.

from 25 to 28 January

FAIR RETURN

At its tenth session, the Intergovernmental Committee for the return or restitution of cultural property will examine ongoing bilateral negotiations and international cooperation aimed at reducing illicit traffic.

At Headquarters.

from 28 to 30 January

LIVING TOGETHER

At Headquarters, a colloquium organized with the Commonwealth Secretariat will focus on paths towards a more "constructive pluralism."

29 January

THE ETHICS OF WATER

At Headquarters, experts discuss the ethics of using freshwater resources, as part of a working group of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology.

from 1 to 4 February

GEOLOGY

At Headquarters, the 27th session of the International Geological Correlation Programme which groups scientists from 150 countries.

from 8 to 12 February

WATER IN REVIEW

In Geneva, the fifth joint UNESCO/World Meteorological Organization conference on hydrology and water resources focuses on planning for the future.