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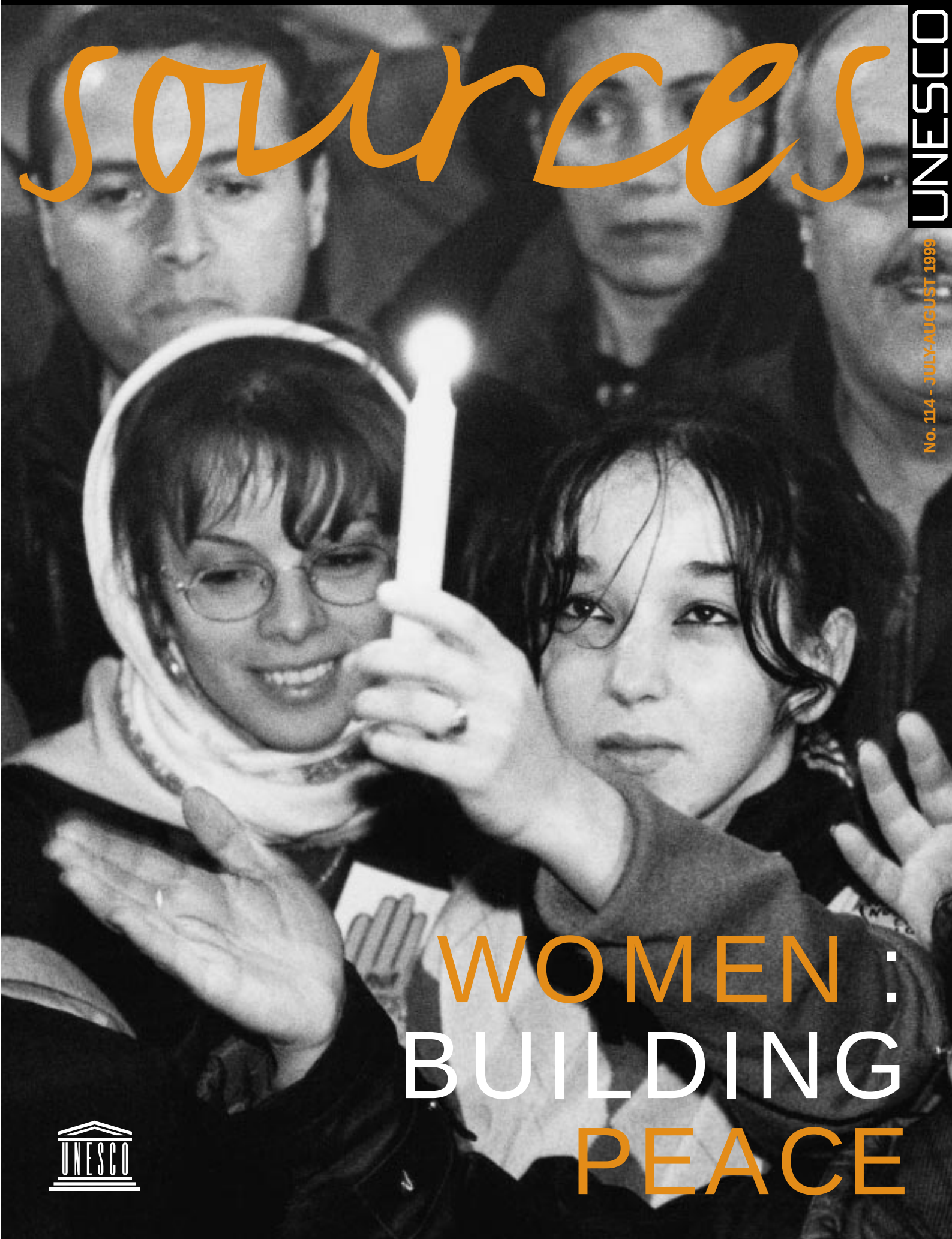

# WOMEN : BUILDING PEACE

UNESCO

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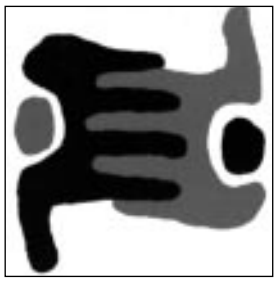
EDITORIAL

# 100 MILLION SIGNATURES



Peace is in our hands
(Logo Manifesto 2000)

**The main points of the MANIFESTO 2000**

- Respect all life
- Reject violence
- Share with others
- Listen to understand
- Preserve the planet
- Rediscover solidarity

"The Year 2000 must be a new beginning, an opportunity to transform the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and non-violence. This demands everyone's participation, and must offer future generations values that will shape a world based on justice, solidarity, liberty, dignity, harmony and prosperity for all.

The General Assembly of the United Nations has proclaimed the year 2000 as the "International Year for the Culture of Peace." UNESCO will coordinate connected activities throughout the world, including MANIFESTO 2000 for a culture of peace and non-violence, drafted by a group of Nobel Prize Peace Laureats and released on March 4. People everywhere are being urged to sign it; the aim is to gather 100 million signatures which will be presented to the UN General Assembly in September next year.

*Defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity: give preference to dialogue, and listen without engaging in fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others*

**The manifesto reads:**

"Because I am aware of my share of responsibility for the future of humanity, in particular to the children of today and tomorrow, I pledge in my daily life, in my family, my work, my community, my country and my region to:

**Respect all life**. Respect the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice.

**Reject violence**. Practise active non-violence, rejecting violence in all its forms: physical, sexual, psychological, economical and social, in particular towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children and adolescents.

**Share with others**. Share my time and material resources in a spirit of generosity to put an end to exclusion, injustice, and political and economic oppression.

**Listen to understand**. Defend freedom of expression and cultural diversity, giving preference always to dialogue and listening with-out engaging in fanaticism, defamation and the rejection of others.

**Preserve the planet**. Promote consumer behaviour that is responsible and development practices that respect all forms of life and preserve the balance of nature on the planet.

**Rediscover solidarity**. Contribute to the development of my community, with the full participation of women and respect for democratic principles, in order to create together new forms of solidarity."

Can preferably be signed on the internet at www.unesco.org/manifesto2000 or sent to: International Year for a Culture of Peace
UNESCO
7,Place de Fontenoy
F-75352 Paris 07 SP France
Fax: 33 1 45 68 56 38"

# WOMEN BUILDING PEACE

**Women can play a crucial role in the construction of a culture of peace. This traditional role played by African women is now becoming part of an international network. And men are participating as well, turning towards a new masculinity**

Zan-zi-bar. The name resonates on the tonue like an awakening dream. It was in this city that UNESCO's programme of women for a culture of peace organised a meeting for 300 women from around Africa. The women, among them teachers, politicians, researchers, discussed their experiences in the one of the most war-torn continents on the planet.

It was at the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, participants decided to look closely at the special role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in the world. To see whether women can crush the predominant logic of war and create a movement towards a culture of peace. The challenge is enormous, given the inexorable rise of armed conflicts (around a hundred, mostly civil wars, have erupted since 1990, mainly in developing countries). The African continent is especially hard hit, with 15 out of 43 countries currently at war (see inset).

The question is simple: can women change this situation through a "feminine way" of understanding and managing conflict, of preventing and solving problems? Women, who carry, give and protect life are mortified by its loss. How can one make the most of the knowledge they have gained over centuries? How does one ensure that dialogue takes precedence over violent conflict and builds a culture of peace?

Women give life, and war takes it away

© ROGER LEMOYNE/GAMMA LIAISON

## Demanding justice

Women the world over, in the North and South, have proven their capacity to organize, unite and find a common path. They can speak with one voice to oppose war, but they can also support each other, share their pain, circulate information, and influence decision makers (see article on women's networks). They have shown that no peace can last without their full and active participation. In Argentina, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo have been demanding justice for their vanished children since 1977 - their campaign against the impunity accorded to the guilty is also a defence of the right to truth and justice, without which no pardon or true social peace is possible. During the Chechen war, Russian mothers of soldiers demanded that military authorities give them news of their loved ones who were kidnapped, victims of ill treatment or who were killed during their military service.

In the past, the struggle of women against conflict sometimes took "radical" forms, like in Greek dramatist Aristophane's play Lysistrata: the story recounts how five centuries before Christ, the women of Athens and Sparta decided to go on a "love strike" as long as their men went to war.

Sometimes, women's actions focus on the civilian victims of conflict. Just before the Gulf war began and immediately after the blockade imposed in August 1990 by the UN Security Council in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, 282 Arab women wanted to bring milk and flour by boat for Iraqi children. "Their boat was stormed by Western troops brought in by helicopter.

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Sharing knowledge equals saving lives

The soldiers beat and insulted the crew and could not tolerate being told by the women 'I could be your mother,'" reports a Culture of Peace document on the incident.

Female solidarity can also go beyond borders - a case in point was the creation in Israel (in the 1980s) of the group "Women's Organisation for Political Prisoners (WOFPP)" to defend the rights of Palestinian political prisoners.

## Preventing war

However, women have not merely reacted to war, their role has primarily been one of prevention. In most traditional societies, women are deemed to be "outside the clan" - this allows them to play the role of messenger or ambassador and calm things down before they degenerate. To this end, they use poetry, songs, stories, theatre, symbolic objects (see article on the Maasai), and even clothes... the black dress worn by women in Israel or in Belgrade is a sign of protest against war.

Women also play a central role in the reconstruction of a war-torn country, as in Cambodia for example, where a group of activists from the international campaign against mines showed video-tapes of the devastating effects of mines. After seeing the pictures at the Beijing conference, women labour activists from an Italian arms manufacturing company (Valsella Meccanotecnica) were successful in persuading the company to reorient its production.

This is not all. Women the world over and in ever greater numbers, are demanding their right for equal access to power. Guinea Bissaun minister, Francisca Peteira is a good example - in 1997 she was named minister for security, public order, border police, immigration, roads, airports and ports. Women, according to Nigeria's minister for women and social development, Safiya Muhammad, know that it's only by having more clout in the decision-making process and by having a role equal to men in the management of society, that they can change something. One simply cannot exclude half of humanity from positions of power.

It remains to be seen, she adds, whether men, notwithstanding their declarations which are often paternalistic or even made in jest, really desire "to share power - they tend to think a war has been declared against them, whereas all we're asking for is partnership."

## The domino effect

Attitudes also have to change, which is why the focus "must be on education", says Ingeborg Breines, director of UNESCO's Women and a Culture of Peace Programme. She tells the following anecdote as an example: a woman is on a riverbank trying to fish but is constantly interrupted because she is also saving people from drowning. She manages to save quite a number and is about to leave when somebody tells her, "you've got to continue saving them." She replies: "I'm going to find out who is throwing these people into the water without even teaching them how to swim."

Even today, the same principle operates in the education of girls and boys all over the world, Breines points out. "Little girls are taught to be docile, obedient and sweet, while boys are taught to mark their territory, and be decisive and aggressive." (see article on masculine identities)

Gradually however, women's determination for peace is having a domino effect - their message is making people think, have the strength of their convictions and act. Violence has failed and "we have paid the price," adds Breines. Too high a price to remain inactive.

*Cristina L'Homme*

### REMEMBERING ZANZIBAR

Voices from African women can be a catalyst for the construction of a culture of peace. Around 300 women from all over the African continent gathered together in Zanzibar from May 17 to May 20 1999, under UNESCO auspices, to share their experiences of war and violence and find solutions together. And on this mythical island at the crossroads of the Arab, Indian and African worlds, they shed tears together while remembering the horrors they lived through, shared their sorrows and discussed what actions they could take to "never live through such things again."
The conference ended with an appeal to governments to "share" power and allow women to play a greater role in decision making. The feminine approach, they are convinced, can be decisive in preventing violent conflict and war.

# Tradition
# for the defence of peace

Before milking their cows each morning, the Maasai women in Kenya pray to God to bring peace to their community as well as to the rest of the world. The practice goes beyond a simple gesture: the Maasai women play a key role in the maintenance of peace in their communities, and always have done.

The Maasai word for peace, osotua, is the same as that for the umbilical cord which ties the mother to her child, explains Sultan Somjee, anthropologist and principal research scientist in ethnography at the National Museums of Kenya. "Peace is therefore embodied by the woman-as-mother,

© MARAIS GILL/SIPA IMAGE

She prays for peace each morning

the one who gives life, and the umbilical cord symbolises harmonious relations." The Maasai in fact only really cut the cord after three deliberate attempts to sever it that "fail", thus showing their reluctance to separate the mother from her child, or to disturb the harmony.

A blade of grass is tied around the cord before the actual cutting. Thus, the child starts its relationship with others carrying a symbol of peace. This metaphor is still very strong today - no one will fight with someone who is carrying grass, just as in Western tradition, no one would shoot at someone carrying a white flag.

Osotua also means beauty, explains Somjee. This is why the Maasai say "there is no beauty where there is no peace" and vice-versa, thereby connecting the aesthetic and the ethical.

## Family quarrels

"We think (these people) are warriors because they are in conflict, but they are people who have handed down the values of peace for centuries," says Somjee. "We have forgotten that before becoming the continent with the most wars in the world, traditional Africa, its women in particular, tended to prevent, control or resolve conflicts."

It was to explore this idea that Sultan Somjee reversed the focus of studies on conflicts in Africa to concentrate on how tribes traditionally prevented or solved them in the past, or, where traditional culture is still strong, how they work today.

An avid student of African visual and oral traditions, he undertook six years ago a survey of the specific conflict-prevention mechanisms used by eight pastoral tribes in Kenya. He is presently working with 16 agricultural and pastoral groups of Nilotic, Bantu and Cushitic background.

Although wars usually arose out of family quarrels, over the use of watering places or grazing grounds, today the causes are more complex because of the involvement of the state, politicians or economic players. "Ethnic differences and issues that could have been solved by traditional methods have often been manipulated and exacerbated for political reasons," he says. So, if ethnicity is used by some to provoke conflicts, Somjee wants to "use the same ethnicity to rekindle the cultures of peace anchored in their tradition."

## War and peace

He began by studying images of peace and war in different ethnic groups. The Maasai for example, consider war and peace as part of a whole that can be seen in one of their bead patterns called keri - a pattern of high contrast made of colour combinations such as black and white or black and yellow. The two opposite colours are set side by side - reflecting the contrast that is also found in human society. The narok (black or darkness) necklace consists of dark blue beads and in between there are fine strands of bright white and red beads because "to see the dark you need light." In other words, peace can always be found at the heart of a conflict.

© PAUL HARRISON/STILL PICTURES

Elders sit under peace trees

*"The Maasai word for peace, osotua, is the same as that for the umbilical cord"*

*"Traditional Africa tended to prevent, control or resolve conflicts"*

Similarly, certain trees such as the olive tree, also symbolize peace. "Elders sit in the shade of peace trees," says Somjee. "They are sacred trees and one cannot therefore be only non-violent, but also predisposed to negotiation to resolve a dispute." The Maasai word for a shade tree is oloipi which is also the word for respect. There are other peace trees such as the oseki which is placed in front of the homestead to confer blessings and peace on those who enter. One can thus only go in and leave the home with peaceful thoughts.

The symbols are powerful and still have a real force. A Maasai woman, for example, can even prevent a man leaving his family to go to war by simply taking off her skirt and throwing it in front of him. No warrior would dare to disobey. In the same way, a typical female object such as the imporor narok, a bead necklace, can serve as an instrument of reconciliation and return to order in the event of conflict. "Traditionally this necklace is given by the first-born daughter to her mother the day she herself becomes a mother."

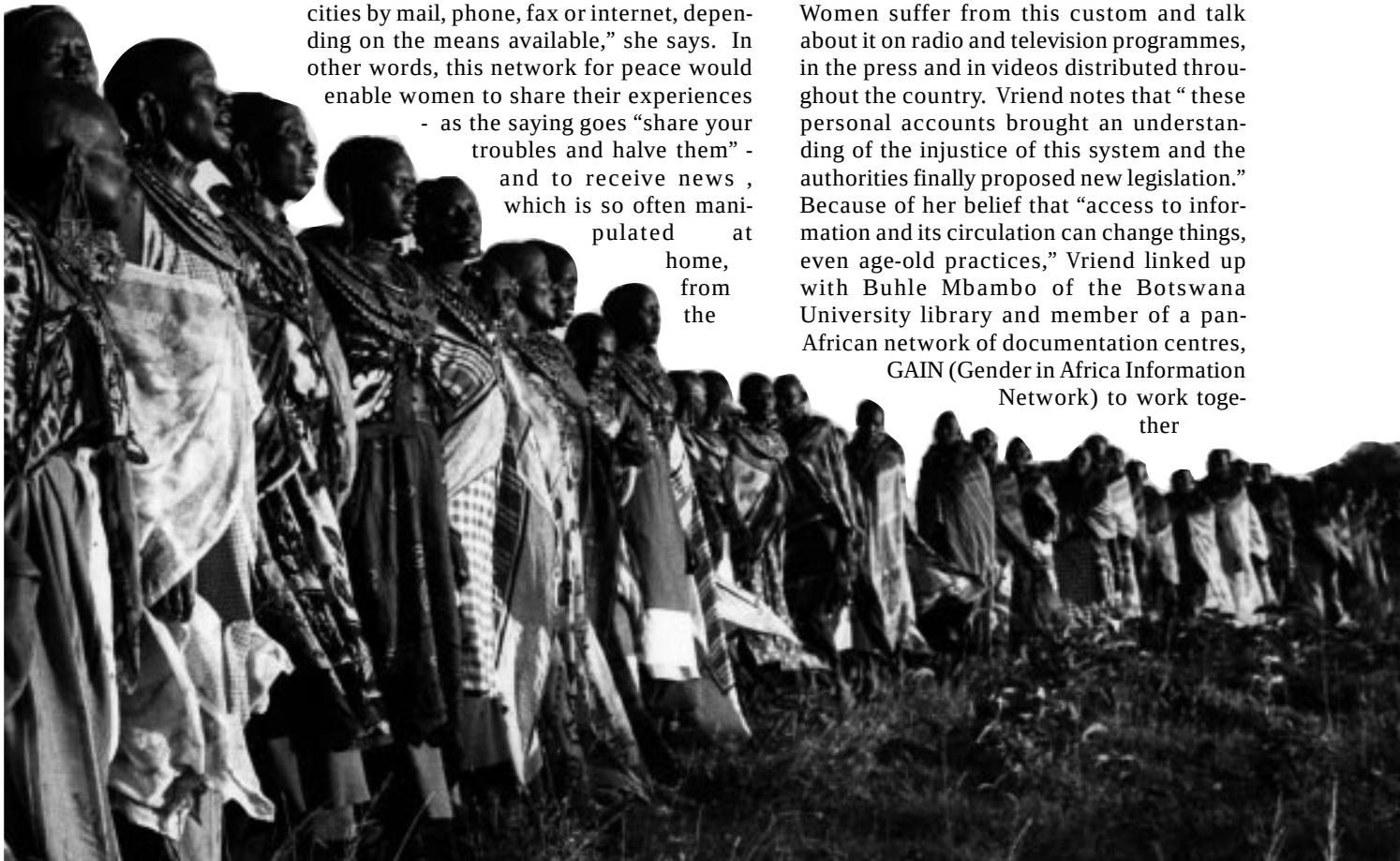
"By strengthening the existing and reinstating the fading peace traditions," stresses Somjee, "we can help these communities to rediscover in themselves ways of responding to wars and re-establishing peace in Africa."

*Cristina L'Homme*

# Strength in numbers

A peace initiative launched alone goes nowhere, whereas a network of groups working together can find an echo and create a dynamic; to build confidence and solidarity and serve as an early warning preventative message. This was the thinking that sparked the idea for a world-wide network of women, a "women's movement" for peace - in the words of Ingeborg Breines, director of UNESCO's Women and the Culture of Peace programme. "If something happens in Liberia, a woman could contact another woman from this movement in Sierra Leone or Guinea and communicate her account of war atrocities by mail, phone, fax or internet, depending on the means available," she says. In other words, this network for peace would enable women to share their experiences - as the saying goes "share your troubles and halve them" - and to receive news , which is so often manipulated at home, from the outside world. A way of ensuring there are no more forgotten wars.

This network is to bring together women's information services and institutions across the world. Women who have access to information can influence decision makers.Tilly Vriend, of the Netherlands-based International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement (IIAV) gives an example: "In Zambia, women collected information on the status of widows in their country. As in other African countries, when a man dies, his wife is dispossessed of all she owns by her husband's family." Women suffer from this custom and talk about it on radio and television programmes, in the press and in videos distributed throughout the country. Vriend notes that " these personal accounts brought an understanding of the injustice of this system and the authorities finally proposed new legislation." Because of her belief that "access to information and its circulation can change things, even age-old practices," Vriend linked up with Buhle Mbambo of the Botswana University library and member of a pan-African network of documentation centres, GAIN (Gender in Africa Information Network) to work together



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*"Access to information and its circulation can change things, even age-old practices"*

in order to extend the number of African women's information services. The first copy of a printed version of this database was published with UNESCO's help called "Women' s Information Services and Networks", it comprises 162 women's information centres, libraries, associations and small national women's networks around the world. The list, permanently updated on the internet (address: http://www.iiav.nl/mapping-the-world), grows daily, and by word of mouth which is one of the best means of communication in Africa.

These two women have taken part in numerous seminars, enabling them to create a database and also "to put faces to names," adds Mbambo,"and to create a network of people who know each other or have enough confidence in one another to feel they are part of a whole."

### Priorities

The network gives women a tool and a means of understanding how to share what they know and how to press their demands by working together and using the strength of the network. "Women who live in war-torn countries often have little or no access to information," says Mbambo. "They are our top priority, because they and their children are the main victims of the conflicts". In Angola, Uganda or Sierra Leone, they are often even unable to move about because of the risks from ambushes and mines, not to mention obsolete means of communication. Vriend adds that "information even from the remotest areas, where some of the associations in the network are, can be disseminated and shared. Together, we can always find solutions and launch initiatives. Being in touch gives women the assurance that they are being heard by other women. That they are less alone."

*C.L.*

**Women' s Information Services and Networks: International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement, The Netherlands, (ISBN: 90 6832 711 9), US$17.50.*

*contact: IIAV-Knowledge sharing program*
*email: mapping@iiav.nl*
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# On men and violence

The Roman epic and the Iliad are blood-drenched narratives of warrior men battling for pride, land, and the possession of women. Thus the classical literature from which European culture stems announces from the start the gender of war.

It is historically rare for women to be in combat, and the 30 million members of the world's armed forces today are overwhelmingly men.

In private life too, men are more likely to be armed and violent. In the USA, the average percentage of men owning guns was 49% in 1994, four times as high as among women; in 1993, men accounted for 91% of murders. In Australia in 1992-93 men accounted for 90% of those charged with homicide.

Major domestic violence is overwhelmingly by husbands towards wives. Rape is overwhelmingly by men over women. Men

Take the toys from the boys: the voice breaks but the habit doesn't

© ALINARI ANDERSON-GIRAUDON

also predominate in warlike conduct: sports involving ritualized combat and often physical injury, such as boxing and football; or a masculinized management style emphasizing toughness, risk-taking, and ruthlessness about profit.

So men predominate across the spectrum of violence, and a strategy for peace must concern itself with this fact. There is a widespread belief that it is natural for men to be violent: rape and combat - however regrettable - are part of the unchanging order of nature. There is often an appeal to biology, with testosterone a catch-all explanation. But cross-cultural studies of masculinites reveal a diversity that is impossible to reconcile with a biologically-fixed pattern of masculinity. Moreover, when we speak statistically of "men" having higher rates of violence that women, we must not slide to the inference that therefore all men are violent. Almost all soldiers are men, but most men are not soldiers. Though most killers are men, most men never kill.

## Gender reform

Further, when we note that most soldiers, sports professionals, or executives are men, we are not just talking about individuals, but of masculinized institutions. It is in social masculinities rather than biological differences that we must seek the main causes of gendered violence, and the main answers to it. Masculinity is a pattern of social conduct. There is generally a dominant or "hegemonic" form of masculinity, the defence of which is usually done quietly through institutions. But large numbers of men and boys have a divided, tense, or oppositional relationship to it, and clear-cut alternatives are often culturally discredited.

Since the 1960s there has been a movement among men concerned with change in gender relations. Discussions on how to change traditional masculinities are now occurring in countries as far apart as Japan, South Africa, Germany and Chile. The agenda for change emphasizes peaceableness, sharing, and some rejection of careerism and competitiveness. Its arenas are private as well as public, including the sharing of housework and child care. These movements presuppose that masculinity can be changed. Gender reform is not easy, and one must expect to face opposition, and think of ways of making change attractive to significant groups of men.

There are many causes of violence, including dispossession, poverty, greed, nationalism, or racism. Gender dynamics are by no means the whole story. Yet given the concentration of weapons and the practices of violence among men, gender patterns appear to be strategic. Democratic gender relations are those that move towards equality, nonviolence, and mutual respect between people of different genders, sexualities, ethnicities, and generations. The task is to reshape gender, to disconnect courage from violence, steadfastness from prejudice, ambition from exploitation. Making boys and men aware of the diversity of existing masculinities is an important task for education. A gender-informed strategy for peace must therefore be designed to operate across a broad front: schooling and adult/child relationhips; marital relations and sexuality; peer groups and neighbourhood life; mass media, popular entertainment, and sports; workplaces, corporations, and bureaucracies.

© DELAHAYE/SIPA PRESS

Men and violence: a nasty but familiar cocktail

*"To disconnect courage from violence, steadfastness from prejudice, ambition from exploitation."*

For men, the democratic remaking of gender practices requires persistent engagement with women, not the separatism-for-men which is strong in current masculinity politics. Educational programs on masculinity should not be gender-specific (involving one gender only) but gender-relevant (involving both). At school, though certain activities (eg: sport, discipline) are especially influential in shaping masculinities, teaching about gender issues can occur accross the curriculum. Adult education in settings such as unions and workplaces might be as important as school-based education: in the construction of gender the earliest patterns are not the most decisive. The perspective of a "culture of peace" can help to link these diverse educational efforts and multiply their effectiveness. For this task, active models of engagement are needed for boys and men, especially when peace is understood not just as the absence of violence, but as a positive form of life. ●

*Robert W. Connell*
*Faculty of Education*
*University of Sydney (author of the UNESCO report, "Male roles and masculinities in the perspective of a culture of peace")*

Information technology is not a panacea for the world's ills; nor can it narrow the gap between North and South. But it is a formidable tool, that can be used to improve education, economies and societies

# HI-TECH FOR THE GRASSROOTS

Information technology (IT) has changed the face of societies in the North forever. Thanks to IT, we no longer have to wait in queues for the bank at lunchtime. We can pay bills over the phone. We can communicate with family, friends and colleagues around the world by picking up the phone, tapping a keyboard, or by attending videoconferences. But can information technology actually change people's lives at the grassroots level? Is it worth investing millions of dollars in high-tech equipment and infrastructure, only to have it perhaps misunderstood, misused or ignored?

UNESCO has an ongoing commitment to using IT for grassroots development. "Information technologies are absolutely essential for development, particularly to empower those living in developing countries," says Philippe Quéau, director of the Information and Informatics Division at UNESCO. "IT should be used to create easy and free access to public domain information in all fields of knowledge. Online (eg: internet) and offline technologies (eg: CD-roms) can be combined to give very wide and very cheap access to the best information resources of the world. The most important element to achieve this is political will and determination."

© Still Pictures/Mark Edwards

Tuning in to the universe from Nigeria

## Creating a market

"This applies to both industrialized countries as well as developing countries," says Dr Ahmad Abu-El-Haija, professor of electrical engineering and senior consultant in telecommunications and information technology at Jordan's University of Science and Technology.

"And in all sectors, the story is the same," he says, "industry, agriculture, health, education and higher education, society, and so forth."

He cites as an example the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which, by modernising their communications infrastructure and networks, were able to create a hub of IT activity in the Middle East. Even though the UAE are not strictly developing states, they have been able to accelerate their economic development thanks to IT. "The UAE have made significant progress in development over the last decade, attracting investors thanks to modern telecommunications facilities. Many multi-national corporations selected Dubai to establish their regional offices in the Middle East, while other investors opted to base their industries in Jabal Ali (near Dubai). These decisions would not have been taken if UAE did not possess an efficient communications system and easy access to information."

Dr Abu-El-Haija, like Quéau, believes that IT can have tangible effects on human knowledge and development. "For example, distance education, which nowadays uses mainly the internet, and has expanded rapidly all over the world, will enable many more people to get college level education and beyond (i.e. postgraduate studies)," he says. Amongst those to benefit would be women in conservative communities in developing countries, using IT-driven education that would cost less, in terms of materials, than traditional education.

"This will also benefit workers who do not have the time to join regular universities. They will be able to work at their own pace.

*"Is it worth investing millions of dollars in IT, only to have it misunderstood, misused or ignored?"*

Housewives can certainly benefit from this education system as it can be done without sacrificing any of their other obligations towards their homes, children or husbands," he says.

## Expanding horizons

"If education does not require a specific spatial location or a building then it can be delivered anywhere. The development of online courses, libraries and other information resources, and the marketing of distant or online education by businesses and schools eager to profit from opportunities to expand their horizons, are the beginning of what some may see as a revolution in learning," agrees Vincent Mosco, Professor of Communication at the School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University, Canada.

While on paper the possibilities seem endless, there are nonetheless major obstacles to fully integrated IT use in developing countries, mainly a lack of infrastructure, a lack of access, and a lack of training.

"Personal computers are the cheapest of these components," says Dr Abu-El-Haija. "It is the establishment of data communications networks, which is necessary to be able to use the information, that is the most difficult obstacle for developing countries. "

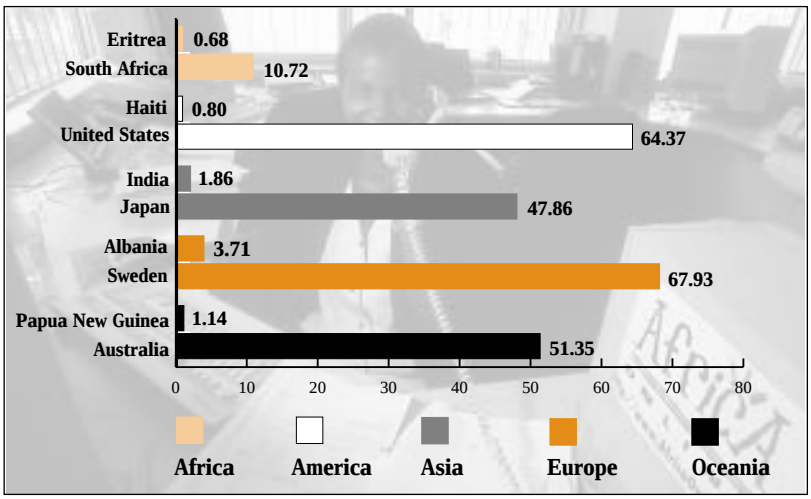
In Senegal, for example, there is on average one telephone line per 100 people, while in Switzerland there are 66 telephone lines per 100 people, according to figures from the International Telecommunications Union.

"Conventional data networks, particularly in developing countries, use the existing telephone network as basic infrastructure, and add to it other components necessary to process, store and forward data and information (e.g., email service and access to internet)," says Dr Abu-El-Haija.

## New users

"In most developing countries, this forms the main obstacle towards the establishment of proper data networks that enable people to use the high technology that provides them with the necessary information. The capacity building is usually done in parallel with development of the high technology environment, since it needs technology to be available (at least in limited form) in order to train people how to use it."

Dr Nicholas Negroponte, head of the MIT's Media Lab, believes the problem of a communications framework is comparatively easy to fix, and that the difficulties will arise in the medium-term rather than the short-term future. "The nations with the worst and most expensive telecommunications today are precisely those that will pay the highest price in terms of development. In any given developing country, improving the quality and extent of new telecom infrastructure is perhaps the easiest problem to fix." So poor countries will in fact benefit from a current lack of facilities, in that they will be able to install - from scratch - the cheapest, most efficient frameworks available; while countries in the North continue to deal with the ageing, expensive and inflexible structures already in place.




© Hartmut Schwarzbach/Still Pictures

Phoning home: the number of telephone lines per one hundred inhabitants differs greatly around the world (Source: I.T.U. Statistical Yearbook 1998).

Once all the IT tools are in place, are local communities actually willing to use them? " New users at the grassroots level can be divided into several categories," says Dr Abu-El-Haija. "Most are eager to have access to such technologies, but for different reasons. People in academic and research environments want to know about their fields of interest. On the other hand, schoolchildren would like to know about the latest developments in subjects that they are interested in (music, songs, movies, style and fashion, etc).

"Other people would like to use the net to advance in their careers and/or their businesses, and to improve their income and lives. Those who have used the new technology prefer, as an example, to use email in contrast to other means of communications

She has the whole world at her fingertips

© Panos Pictures/Piers Benatar

*"The less positive impact of IT applications on people in many countries has to be considered"*

because of its better efficiency and reliability, and its much lower cost."

Nevertheless, the thirst for knowledge is often checked by governmental concerns that local culture will become diluted and marginalised by the free flow of information from cyberspace. The less positive impact of IT applications on the society, culture and religion of the people in many countries has to be considered. People in different countries, and perhaps different communities in the same country, have different principles and values. Unlimited access of the population to information available on the internet exposes users, for example, to information, pictures, or films not accepted by the society's culture. And of course political groups around the world have been quick to establish web pages to introduce political opinions and ideologies in opposition to the existing governments. How can governments harness the best that IT has to offer, while keeping in tune with domestic cultural sensitivities?

"If they are serious about economic development, governments should introduce new technologies to help development of their respective countries," says Dr Abu-El-Haija.

© Travel Pictures/Sipa Image

The internet has changed societies

"But the roles of the governments are also to protect the culture and values of their people. From this point of view, some governments might put some constraints on the use of new technologies. This resembles the advent of satellite television, which was officially prohibited by some countries - but the picture is changing now. I believe that the same will occur with the internet, and it will enter every home in developing countries in the future. It is a matter of time, and the faster the governments move in this direction (if they can financially afford it), the less they will lose in terms of economic growth and development. "

### Impossible to regulate

Some information technology experts would challenge Dr Abu-El-Haija's assertion that governments will eventually be able to regulate the Internet. Dr Negroponte says it is impossible: "The internet cannot be regulated. It's not that laws aren't relevant, it's that the nation state is not relevant. Cyberspace is by nature global and we're not very good at global law"

Dr Abu-El-Haija likens the advance of IT in grassroots development to the advance of television in the South. For example, in Namibia in 1980, there were only 4.9 televisions per 1000 people — and in 1996, that figure had jumped to 48 televisions per 1000 people.

Information technology is not a panacea for the world's ills; nor can it fix the ever-widening gap between North and South. But IT is a formidable tool, that can be used to improve education, economies and societies - if it is backed by political will and effort.

*Chloë Fox*

# Sri Lanka: Radio brings a revolution in communication

A radio station in the picturesque central hill country of Sri Lanka is the model for a revolution in communication where rural masses have access to new communication technology.

The Kotmale Radio station is situated 150 kilometres from the capital and caters to a rural community of plantation workers and farmers. They have recently put into practice a novel communication concept, where listeners gain access to the internet through the facilities of the radio station.

The radio station, one of five established under a UNESCO project launched in 1981, provides listeners with a variety of information, normally only available to those living in urban areas.

"There are many school children who are making the best use of this facility. They are helping themselves to widen their knowledge on a variety of subjects," says Sunil Wijesinghe, a programme producer from the radio station.

The small, but enthusiastic staff at the radio station download the information from various websites via the internet according to listener requests, and broadcast the information in a one hour programme every week-

© Mervin Senarathne

Even Buddhist priests are surfing on the net in Sri Lanka

day. Listeners who have access to phones call in, while most others send in letters asking staff to look for certain information on the internet.

"We download the information and also send them printouts if they need them. Recently a student wanted to know about waterfalls and we sent him the information," says Wijesinghe.

## Opportunities

School children who face the disadvantage of studying in an underprivileged area with minimum facilities, and who then have to sit public exams alongside students in the urban areas (who have easy access to internet facilities) are among the main listeners. Computer facilities are also provided at the radio station for listeners who drop in.

The radio station has drawn up a timetable in order to cope up with the demand. "The two computers provided to the station are occupied throughout the week," says Wijesinghe.

A school leaver living in a village remote from Kotmale who maintained regular contact with the radio station was able to find out that they were calling for applications to enter the law college where he would be able to study to become a lawyer, an opportunity of which he would have otherwise been deprived.

Another listener wanted to know whether he could find a market for cut flowers, while another wanted to know whether he could find employment through the internet.

Part of the pilot project also involves establishing three computer access points within the community, enabling locals to use internet facilities. The first of these points has been established at a library in the town of Gampola, 20 kilometres away from the radio station.

The librarian there has been trained to teach people how to surf the internet. Local journalists based in the area are among the key users.

Nevertheless, the concept of providing high technology in this way has its difficulties - particularly the language barrier, because the local population speak either Sinhalese or Tamil, and only have access to data in English. The bilingual radio station staff are able to help the listeners by downloading the required information and translating it for them.

## Popularity

An initial UNESCO grant of $50,000 for the project helped to get it off the ground, but after October this year the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC)will bear the costs.

With the project less than two months old, communication experts say it is too early to judge its success, but the overwhelming positive response of the listeners is seen as a boost to implement new technologies.

The setting up of the project is seen as a step in the right direction in a country where nearly every family has access to a radio, and where 90% of the population is literate. And with plans to introduce new communication technologies by setting up a "computer park" in the south of the country, the idea is likely to gain even further momentum.

*Anthony David,*
*in Kotmale, Sri Lanka*

### Beam us up: telemedecine at work

It is easier to move information around than seriously ill people, or doctors. It is also cheaper. With this in mind, UNESCO and the European Union have thrown their weight behind a project that could revolutionize health care for people living in isolated areas such as islands, rural zones and in crisis situations.

Basically, this project - known as TeleInVivo - involves the development of a lightweight, transportable telemedecine workstation containing an ultrasound device plus computing and telecommunication capabilities. This workstation will be capable of scanning patients and transmitting the three-dimensional data to another medical specialist who could virtually be anywhere in the world. The doctors carrying out the scan and receiving the data will be linked online and able to "read" the images and make their diagnosis without any time lag.

This means, for example, women in isolated areas requiring urgent gynaecological or obstetric treatment or patients suffering from abdominal problems, or people injured in war zones or requiring surgery, could be diagnosed more accurately and treated far more quickly and efficiently.

# Uganda: A miraculous oasis of information

The Nakaseke Multipurpose Community Telecentre (MCT) and Library Pilot Project, funded among others by UNESCO, has revitalised the life of this rural community in Uganda.

Life has changed in Nakaseke, which is 64 kilometres north of the Ugandan capital Kampala, and 16 kilometres from the nearest town, Wobulenzi. Now a modern library, complete with textbooks in English and the local language, Luganda, serves not only the local people, but also the 24 neighbouring primary schools, four senior secondary schools, a primary teacher's college and the nearby hospital.

As well as the library, the Nakaseke MCT and Library Pilot Project is equipped with eight computers, two telephone lines, one fax and a photocopier. The centre's staff are eagerly awaiting the installation of internet and email facilities. Then the whole world will be at the community's fingertips.

## Distance

The MCT in Uganda is one of five such projects run by UNESCO in Africa, the others being in Timbuktu (Mali), Malanville (Benin), Manhiça and Namaacha (Mozambique) and Sengerema (Tanzania). The project is sponsored by UNESCO in partnership with the British Council, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the International Development Research Centre, the Danish development agency, DANIDA and the Ugandan government.

Why is this such a revolutionary project for the people of Nakaseke ? The 5000-strong rural community is situated in what used to be known as the 'Luwero Triangle' where a vicious five-year guerrilla war (1981-1986) was waged by the present Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni against the government of former dictator Milton Obote. Infrastructure all but collapsed as a result of the war that saw more than 200,000 people die. Very little effort was made to rebuild this part of the country, with transport hard to find and roads in disrepair.

"The nearest place from which local people used to make telephone calls was from Wobulenzi, which is 16 kilometres away," says Nakaseke project officer Meddie Mayanja.

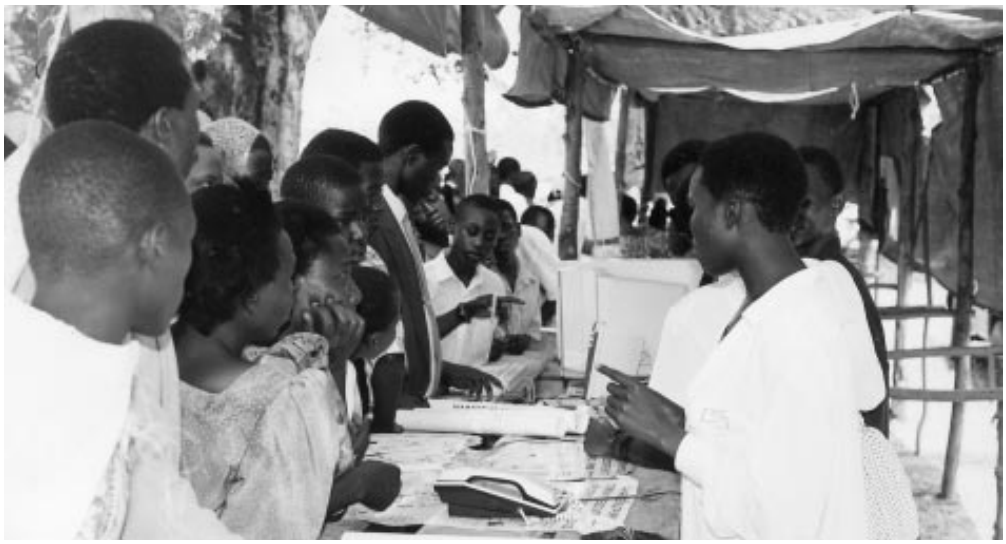
## Trainees

"To put a price on it, photocopying a page cost 100 shillings (7 cents), while transport to Wobulenzi was 1000 shillings (70 cents) and you could take a whole day waiting for a means of transport. Now they have nearly everything here, and less expensively. The schools no longer write their examinations on chalk boards, nor travel far away to have them typed and printed. It is all done here. People even write their wills and get them typed here."

The sight of eight people, most of them women, huddled attentively around a computer instructor summarises the level of interest in the computing courses available. Although the centre is only equipped with eight computers, they run classes for 40 students every day in shifts. At first the centre trained 24 people selected by the local steering committee for "Training for Trainers" which took two months. Some of the people trained at the centre are now responsible for running elementary computer lessons to other trainees, who in turn pay a small user fee.

"Computers have been demystified in

*"God is great. Our life has been made easy by this project"*



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In Nakaseke, villagers of all ages want to learn how to use computers

the community. Many of the students are secondary school students on vacation trying to catch up with what they are told is the trend, that is, to be computer literate. Others are staff from the hospital, secondary schools, primary schools and the primary teacher's college ; institutions that expect to be equipped with computers in the future and are getting ready for new challenges in the work place," says Mayanja.

Local client Edward Baliddawa simply says, "God is great. Our life has been made easy by this project. I run a small business and now I do not have to travel far away to send messages to Kampala anymore, and can make sent radio announcements from here, although that particular service is not yet perfect."

### High literacy rate

The idea of the project was to have a direct impact on the community by providing services people wanted. The Uganda national commission for UNESCO helped the community to elect their own local steering committee, which in turn identified the needs of the community. In the case of this particular project, the local community wanted a library, because despite the rural background of most inhabitants, the population has a 65% literacy rate.

Nonetheless, special classes at the centre of up to 40 adults per session will further help to improve the literacy levels in the area. Mayanja says there are a considerable number of local people who cannot use the centre's facilities, because they cannot read or write.

### Radio link

The project is still not delivering at full capacity because of the poor telephone transmission facility which is also delaying the installation of internet and email. But Mayanja says there are plans to construct a radio link to make it easier to communicate with the centre and fix these problems. On the whole, he says, this centre has brought smiles to many faces and changed the outlook of this rural community. ●

*Billie O'Kadameri*
*in Nakaseke, Uganda*

## Changing the lives of the disabled

"People who have hearing problems or are visually impaired, people who are housebound, people who're disadvanted by distance - all can now have access to the world through the internet. Information technology has broken the shackles," says Martin Hadlow, the director of UNESCO's office in Amman, Jordan. To help improve these people's access to this technology, the Amman office has launched special training programmes to develop their computer skills: to teach them how to navigate the net and design internet sites and home pages.

The training is carried out at UNESCO's new fully-equipped Informatics Training Facility in the Jordanian capital, which also provides similar training for other priority groups including youth, women, journalists, teachers and people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

© Panos Pictures/Heldur Netocny

All humanity is equal on the internet

"It's more than a morale-boosting exercise," says Maher Abu-Khader, a web-design specialist who has helped set up the project, and who is also profoundly deaf. "It's also a job creation activity."

"The information technology sector is one of the fastest growing career areas," explains Hadlow. "We hope to give skills to disabled people in the Arab states that will help them find rewarding and interesting jobs and fully participatre in the so-called information age. It's a very exciting project."

The 13th World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), held in Brisbane, Australia at the end of July had a particular emphasis on telecommunications. The WDF is divided into commissions, and during the congress the technology commission held a range of sessions. "Topics included multi-mode telephony, deaf people and the Internet, deaf computer clubs and the future of telecommunications technology," says International President of WDF Technology Commission, Phil Harper. "I hope that we can bring about better communication, education and lifestyle options through the use of technology."

## CULTURE

### CONTEMPORARY MUSIC ON THE AIR

**Ariel's Music for clarinet and orchestra by Australian composer Brett Dean, and Ground for cello and chamber orchestra by Norwegian composer Rolf Wallin were the works selected in the general category by radio music producers participating in the 46th International Rostrum of Composers held at UNESCO from June 14 to 18. In the category for composers under 30, Waves 11B for chamber orchestra by the Norwegian composer Maja Ratkje, 27, was given top billing. This year's Rostrum saw works presented by 33 national networks from the five continents. The annual event, organized by the International Music Council and supported by UNESCO, aims to foster the exchange of performances of contemporary music between broadcasting organisations. For example works chosen at last year's rostrum were given well over 600 broadcasts by participating networks and affiliates of the European Broadcasting Union. Some of the works were also performed in public concerts.**

### Women, embroidery and gel

Egyptian artist Ghada Amer received the UNESCO Prize for the Promotion of the Arts at the Venice Biennial in June. Her work was on exhibit among 102 entries in the competition as part of the Aperto Overall, an international exhibition for young artists.

Using embroidery and gel, Amer's award-winning work featured women : "*Questions have been stuck under our eyelids, our nails, our tongue, questions that are crying out to be freed by our courage. That's why I'm searching for unexplored aspects of love and life,*" says Amer. The prize, established in 1992 with a donation from the late Japanese artist Kaii Higashiyama, recognizes outstanding creative achievements of young artists or groups of artists in the field of the visual arts, new technologies, or the performing arts.

Untitled # 7853, 1995.

### HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

**Using space-age technology to conserve and manage the remains of ancient civilisations, "GIS and Cultural Resource Management" is a new UNESCO/World Heritage Centre publication that will introduce a well-known computer programme - Geographical Information Systems - into a new realm of heritage management. Designed as an easy to use introduction to GIS technology, the manual shows how this technology can be used. In addition to explaining its application, it cites case studies that demonstrate technology usage in a number of contexts, including the original pilot site: Angkor Wat (Cambodia). Other featured sites include Stonehenge (England) Banff National Park (Canada) and Patan Durbar Square, in the Kathmandu Valley.**

## SCIENCE

### SCIENCE AWARDS

**The 1999 $15,000 UNESCO Science Prize is shared this year by professors Atta-Ur-Rahman (Pakistan) and José Leite Lopes (Brazil), while the Javed Husain Prize for Young Scientists has gone to Dr Juan Martin Maldacena (Argentina).**

**The awards were presented by UNESCO's assistant director general for science, Maurizio Iaccarino, during a ceremony at the World Science Conference in Budapest at the end of June. Professor Leite Lopes was recognized for his contribution to the development of physics in Latin America, and Professor Atta-Ur-Rahman for his work in the field of organic chemistry which contributed to the development of plant-based therapies for cancer, AIDS and diabetes. Dr Maldacena, 30, is a physics professor at Harvard University (USA). He was selected for his research in relation to quantum gravity with the rest of fundamental interaction and is the author of the Madacena Conjecture, an exciting new advance in the field of particle physics.**

© UNESCO/E.Kouchok

Maurizio Iaccarino (left) presents José Leite Lopes (centre) and Atta-Ur-Rahman (right) with their prizes

## CULTURE OF PEACE

### FOR PEACE IN THE BALKANS

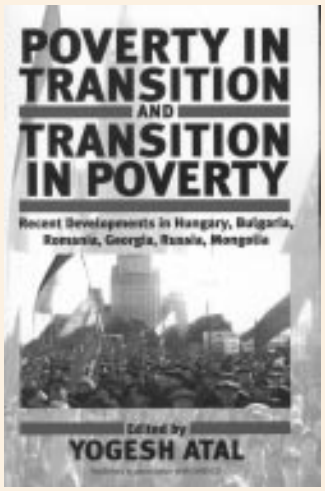
**"As plans for reconstructing the Balkans get under way, we must, once and for all, address the root causes of the violence and strife that have ravaged the region for almost a decade. For efforts to create the material conditions necessary for a return to normality will be ineffectual, and conflict will flare up again. If these root causes are not addressed," said Federico Mayor, the director-general of UNESCO, while calling for the launch of a campaign "to restore tolerance, dialogue and solidarity in the region, and offering the organization's assistance in peace and human rights education. "History has proved that rebuilding infrastructure, necessary as it is, and punishing those guilty of human rights abuses will not suffice to build a lasting peace."**

## BOOKS

### Poverty in Transition and Transition in Poverty:

**Recent Developments in Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Georgia, Russia, Mongolia**

*edited by Yogesh Atal UNESCO/ Berghahn Books, 1999 - 256 pp., 98 FF*




Poverty is an issue facing countries around the globe, yet it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon caused by a variety of factors, differing from context to context, with no linear chain of cause and effect. The occurrence and persistence of poverty is influenced by an interrelated web of economic, social, psychological, cultural and political factors.

Focusing on countries-in-transition, this book looks at the ways in which each country is dealing with its newly acknowledged and rapidly increasing poverty. One of the major factors is that the transition from socialism to democracy and market economies has proved more difficult than anyone can imagine. The book contains six chapters by six different academics, who examine current social policies and programmes on poverty eradication in former Soviet Bloc countries.

### Rats' Nests:

**The poetry of Hagiwara Sakutaro**

*UNESCO Publishing/Yakusha, 1999 - 441 pp., 219 FF.*

Introduced and translated by Robert Epp, Rats' Nests is an all-in-one guide to the work of Japanese poet Hagiwara Sakutaro, including background information on this pioneer writer of free verse, as well as a comprehensive collection of his work.

Particularly interesting poems include The Nihilistic Crow, Depressing Panorama, Dreadful Mountain and Dejected Convicts. As the titles show, the father of modern Japanese poetry suffered from lifelong emotional depression. He came from a long line of doctors, and was the first son in eleven generations who chose not to follow a medical career. Rats' Nests includes a twenty-page psychological retrospective by Dr Edward Sparrow, which helps the reader understand the poetry at a greater level.

Even now, Sakutaro's influence on Japanese poetry continues. The Maebashi City Museum of Literature contains the largest display of Sakutaro's work in Japan, and every year offers a poetry award in his name. The winning entry of the Hagiwara Sakutaro Prize for contemporary poetry is then engraved on a stone and placed on the Hirose River Promenade in Maebashi City.

Rats' Nests is an interesting, challenging and ultimately courageous introduction to one of the finest poets in modern Japanese literature.

## ON THE WEB

### A VIRTUAL EXPO

**http://www.unesco.org/cpp/burundi/burundiI.htm.**

**Take a guided tour of Burundi, learn about the people, the customs, the beauty of the country, and the ravages wreaked by the conflict there, without moving from home. This virtual exhibition includes a collection of splendid photographs taken by French photographer Christel Martin between January and February of 1998, accompanied by text from five Burundian writers.**

Burundi - teeming with life

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### All bugged out

http://www.unesco.org/webworld/y2k/index.html.

Worried about how the Y2K bug will affect your life? You should be. The year 2000 date conversion problem of computers (Y2K bug) threatens the effective operation of governments, companies and other organizations. The bug could have a serious impact in all countries and could affect power supplies, telecommunications, financial systems, transport, public health, building and factory systems, food supplies, and emergency services. UNESCO has a Basic Y2K Information page, which will help organisations and individuals assess their risk and take according action by going to the links provided.

## Quote, unquote ...

**Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Pierre Sané, Secretary-General of Amnesty International France and Mireille Delmas-Marty, an international lawyer, debated the future of human rights at UNESCO's Twenty First Century Talks at headquarters on June 8.**

**"How to turn words into actions? The challenge we face is to give practical effect to the thousands of promises governments have made."**

Mary Robinson

**"Respecting human rights is propitious for business. Are multinational companies going to exercise their responsibilities? They must develop codes of conduct according to universal principles. But (this) is only the first step. Companies must encourage states to implement legislation which conforms with universal principles."**

Pierre Sané

**"There is strong resistance in the name of economic development which is delaying the implementation of civil and political rights but it is a global process and all rights must be considered with equal urgency. Ensuring indivisibility is the condition for human rights to be really recognized as a common ideal."**

Mireille Delmas-Marty

**"The United Nations (...) must be able to intervene, if necessary, where all forms of arbitration and negotiation have failed, where there are massive and uncontrolled human rights violations, and where the state no longer exists and has been replaced by the law of force...."**

Federico Mayor, UNESCO's Director-General

# EDUCATION

## BACK TO SCHOOL

**Teachers in Myanmar often work without the most basic training, but a recently-instituted UNESCO programme hopes to change that. Along with the UNDP, UNESCO has launched a teacher training project in eleven of the poorest rural townships. The project encourages teachers to move away from the rote system that many of them learnt with, and to develop more stimulating student-oriented activities.**

**As part of the project, a mobile library has been set up, and this July was host to a workshop on writing for children. "The workshop will provide training in how to produce culturally relevant and appropriate materials for language learning," says Dr Thein Lwin, a national programme officer. "Teachers are discovering that it is possible to teach differently, and are noticing that their pupils are more interested in their lessons."**

## Cuba: rich in knowledge

Since the end of the Cold War, Cuba has struggled economically, with standards of living declining dramatically. But one aspect of Cuban society continues to be strong: education. Although one of the poorest countries in Latin America, according to a recent UNESCO study, Cuba shows the best results in basic education. The study concludes that good education does not require extravagant resources, says Juan Casassus of UNESCO's office in Santiago. "Socio-cultural factors affect good achievement more than economic factors," he says. "Education has been a top priority in Cuba for 40 years. It is a true learning society - all Cuban parents have at least completed secondary education; they work hand in hand with the schools and formal pre-schools are excellent."

## UNESCO FELLOWSHIPS: A GUIDE

**What does UNESCO have to offer in the way of fellowships, study and travel grants? And what are the principles and conditions that govern UNESCO fellowships? The answers to these questions can be found in a new handbook published by the organization and destined for the national commissions and the delegations of member states, and other recipients.**

**Some 42,000 UNESCO fellowships have been granted since the inception of the fellowship programme, with a view to training promising scholars, scientists, researchers, engineers, social workers, administrators and the like. Continuous efforts have been made to reduce the initial gap between men and women: in fact, whereas the UN average is 26%, UNESCO shows a 35% rate for women beneficiaries. Available from the Fellowships Section.**

## The right questions

Why Eat Green Cucumbers at the Time of Dying? is the title of the 1998/99 winner of the UNESCO International award for Literacy Research, sponsored by the government of Canada and the French governmental literacy agency Groupe Permanent de Lutte contre l'Illetrisme, and supervised by UNESCO and its Institute for Education (UIE) in Hamburg (Germany).

The author, Anna Robinson-Pant (UK) received the $10,000 prize at a ceremony held at headquarters on June 15. She explained that the title refers to a joke among elderly Nepalese women who compare the difficulty of learning to read and write after a day's work in the fields with eating cucumbers without teeth. In her work, subtitled Exploring the Link between Women's Literacy and Development, Ms Robinson-Pant challenges the view of literacy as a commodity that leads directly to development. Instead of posing the question "does literacy bring development?" she asks "what kind of literacy brings what kind of development to whom?"

## REBUILDING KOSOVO

**Providing education for young adults recently returned to their homes in Kosovo is the aim of a new project launched by UNESCO's Institute for Education in Hamburg (Germany).**

**International staff will work with two local teacher-counsellors, using the UNESCO-designed Teacher Emergency Package (TEP) - or the "school in a box." This exists in two versions, one containing educational aids and the other recreational and sports materials.**

**The project will operate out of tents that will also serve as a refuge, a meeting place, a sports and recreation centre and a focus for community activities. Classes will be offered in literacy and numeracy, health and hygiene, land-mine awareness and education for peace and reconciliation.**

©UNICEF/RADHIKA CHALASANI

After the children, UNESCO will help young adults in Kosovo

## Educational entrepreneurs

It's not easy being a teacher - especially when you can't even find the most basic textbooks to use in the classroom. Maria Mercedes Rios, a primary school teacher in Lima, Peru, had had enough last year and she decided to set up her own company to produce and distribute textbooks. Now as a reward for her ingenuity, she has won the first prize in UNESCO's "Make Your Business Come True" scheme, which is co-managed with the Peruvian ministry of industry, tourism and international business negotiations. The scheme promotes entrepreneurship among 16-27-year-olds in Latin America, and the contest is the highlight for the 1,300 young people from all over the region who set up a business each year. Once applicants register for the contest, training in how to develop a business - and submit it to a jury - is given. Along with Maria Mercedes Rios, nine other young people were rewarded for their businesses in textile design, organic produce, and a dancing school.

## COMMUNICATION

### FIGHTING PAEDOPHILIA ON THE NET

**Internet service providers, non-governmental organizations and Interpol representatives met at UNESCO on June 21 for a second meeting on the fight against child pornography and paedophilia on the Web. The service providers outlined the measures they were introducing to tackle these problems, while Interpol announced the establishment of a web site which will concern missing children, sexual abuse and the least publicized parts of Interpol's work, including a database to inform different police forces carrying out investigations. UNESCO will soon publish the records of the first meeting on the subject that was held last January, and is preparing a manual for parents and teachers dealing with questions raised by children regarding pornography and paedophilia.**

## EXHIBITION

© Georges VAL

Faces of Nigeria

### Images of Nigeria

Georges Val is French. After going to Nigeria for business, he fell in love with the country and stayed. Thirteen years later has has an astonishing collection of photos from both the North and the South, which were exhibited at headquarters from June 21 until July 2. His images range from festivals, dance and religious rites to portraits and landscapes.

Some of his most interesting work includes pictures taken of the secretive Ekpo society, in the south-east. "I had been in the village for three days, trying to negotiate with them," he says. "But one of the society's members refused to let me take photos. On the third day, this same man came up to me and said, "Someone who drinks palm wine the way you do can't be bad." They accepted me as a member of their society, so then I had the right to take the photos."

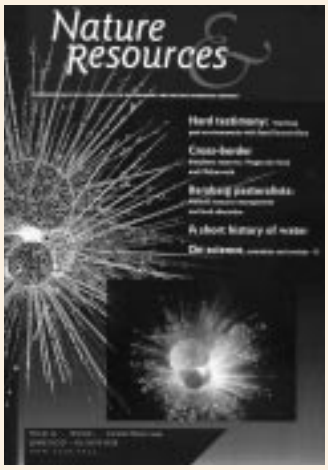
A member of the Nigerian Museum Society, he still has a deep affection for this country that welcomed him from 1972 to 1985. Does he miss being in Africa? "I am very African, in that I am happy where I am, and do not regret where I am not". Thanks to his wonderful photography, Georges Val will always carry Nigeria with him wherever he goes.

Celebrating

© Georges VAL

## PERIODICALS

### Nature and Resources



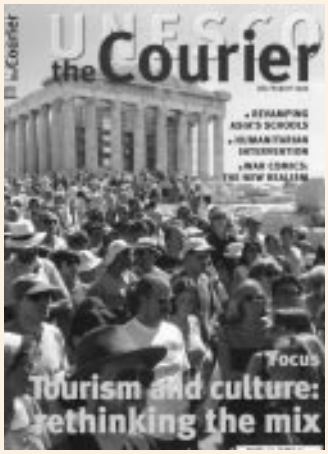

"Only in the late 17th century did European scientists begin to reach a clear understanding of the origin of water and its natural cycle. This included the sea, the clouds, and continental surface water." At a time when water-related issues figure prominently in many parts of the world, the history of our understanding of the water cycle bears recalling. In this quarter's issue of Nature and Resources (Vol. 35, No 1, January-March 1999), the article "A Short History of Water" illustrates the diversity and the wealth of the connections between people and water. Other articles include one on natural resource management; teaching past environments; and new approaches to cross-border biosphere reserves.

**To find out more**

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

### THE UNESCO COURIER

**How can cultural tourism protect itself from the ravages of success? Cultural Tourism, Rethinking the Mix is the title of The Unesco Courier's double July-August issue. The issue assesses the advantages cultural tourism's rapid development can bring to monuments and traditions alike; but also the damage incurred when short-term tourism industry interests become all-important – finally degrading the sites to the extent that tourists don't want to visit anymore. The issue also contains articles on the acceleration of education reform in South Asia after the economic crisis; points of view on humanitarian intervention in the light of recent events in Kosovo; and a study on how comic strips tackle the difficult subject of war.**




*"IN BRIEF" compiled by: Monica Perrot-Lanaud*

PORTRAIT *Winner of the UNESCO prize for Human Rights Education, the Chilean lawyer Jaime Castillo Velasco has always defended justice - before, during and after the dictatorship. He has one regret, that the military regime's torturers have been protected by an amnesty law*

# JAIME CASTILLO VELASCO: A GOOD MAN

© DR

At the height of the dictatorship, Jaime Castillo Velasco and his friends founded a human rights commission in Chile

This is a good man. One of those human beings who transforms beliefs into convictions and convictions into action. One who leaves a mark on the mind of a people by daring to stand tall, protest, speak up and publicize, by daring to defend the memory of the past when others are set on crushing and eliminating it, on pushing it into oblivion. His eyes are wrinkled by the years and his thick glasses give him a gleaming look. It makes him seem rather enigmatic, a bit of a sage. Like people who are in the evening of their lives, who look at events with a degree of detachment and play down the importance of them.

This is Jaime Castillo Velazco – lawyer, politician, Christian Democrat, several times a cabinet minister. History will remember him. He's a behind-the-scenes figure, a modest man who does things silently, without making any fuss. Which is why he was very surprised to be awarded the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education. "I've never thought of myself as the kind of person who gets prizes," he says.

## DICTATORSHIP

Twenty years ago, he and a dozen friends – lawyers, doctors, trade unionists and university professors – founded a human rights commission in Chile while the country was still being crushed by a dictatorship. They defended political prisoners before military courts. "We didn't get much, but at least we got some information, some accounts of what was going on," says Castillo.

## EXILE

At first, the commission's activities were ignored but the military government eventually became concerned about them. Two of its members were jailed, tortured and then freed after a few days. It was a way of personally intimidating them, of pressuring them.

Not long afterwards, Castillo had to go into exile. "I was one of the lawyers for the family of Orlando Letelier (the former Chilean foreign minister murdered in Washington by the Pinochet's secret police, the DINA) and I played an important part in the trial." The generals suddenly ordered his arrest. "I went into exile twice, for a total of four years," he says.

Castillo replies to those who saw nothing, or did not want to see anything during the dark years of the Pinochet dictatorship, in a book called "In Chile, There Were Some Human Rights Violations." With typical precision, he analyses the account of events that General Pinochet gave in his memoirs and shows that things happened quite differently. "The true facts must be made known," he says.

After the dictatorship ended, Castillo continued working as a lawyer with the human rights commission. "We didn't target the state's actions any more," he says, "because Chile was moving towards democracy, but we knew that things could still happen..." The Commission, watchful and ready to criticize, tried to push the authorities into taking a clear and open position on human rights. But the transition from army rule to democracy is not immediate.

"Nothing happens overnight," says Castillo. "We have to hope things will change over time. At great risk, we had to call into question the laws, the Constitution that Pïnochet had decreed to ensure his power lasted until his death."

## AMNESTY LAW

Castillo opposed the amnesty law that made it legally impossible to prosecute any violators of human rights on grounds that it was necessary to "forget the past so as to concentrate on the future." He says the government adopted this law "so as to cover itself, which is why I think it's an illegal law."

But the amnesty law was applied. "It's crazy," he says. "You can't look towards the future today without sorting out the past. Many Chileans suffered under the dicta-

torship but the dictators haven't been punished. They must come before a court and explain what they did. They must have the courage to do this. But they don't have it. They don't want to speak in a court."

At the start of Chile's democratic transition, the authorities decided to set up a national commission of enquiry, the Rettig Commission, to investigate the disappearances of people during the dictatorship. Castillo, who was recognized for his fairness, was a member. Several families were brave enough to give evidence before it. But not others, which meant that the enquiries, dealing with 1,200 cases, were limited.

### OBJECTIVE WORK

But the Commission noted things down and analyzed, sorted and matched up data. "It was very objective work," says Castillo, "very conscientious. We even asked the military and the police for information. But they always replied that their files had been burned, that they no longer existed, that nothing remained."

The Commission's final report was rejected by the military, but "they never denied the facts," says Castillo. And with good reason, because each case had been well documented.

*Cristina L'Homme*

# ECONOMIC VERSUS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL SCIENCES *The richest countries are not those where people have the best lives. Is the ultimate goal economic development or humanity's well-being? Should the focus be on people, not growth rates?*

New York is at war with Washington, and it's the United Nations versus the World Bank. This is the battle going on these days in the world of development.

On one side are supporters of the "Washington Consensus,*" which is "a tacit agreement between the IMF, the World Bank and the international financial institutions which think that good economic performance requires liberalized trade and a 'passive' state which does not regulate the economy," as a briefing paper by UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme put it at a recent conference held at UNESCO headquarters.

On the other side are defenders of the "New York Consensus," out of the headquarters of the United Nations and of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) which, since its first Human Development Report in 1991, has offered an alternative vision of development which downplays economic statistics and stresses the quality of life for a country's inhabitants, as measured by social statistics such as level of education, infant mortality and access to water.

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Living on the streets of New York. In the USA, poverty is growing, particularly among young families and children

### FINANCIAL CRISIS

The scale and intensity of last year's financial crisis in Asia raised important questions about the best path to development. Some people said the crisis signalled the failure of the purely economic model which grew up after World War II, along with its caricature, the neo-liberal model, which took hold everywhere in the 1980s.

"Asia was considered the model of successful development, and then became the epicentre of the economic crisis," the conference was told by Rubens Ricupero, secretary-general of UNCTAD (the UN Conference on Trade and Development). "The failure of the 20th century is that it hasn't solved the problem of mass unemployment. Insecurity and anxiety are ever-present - about jobs, food and basic needs," he said.

The defenders of "a human development" think the ultimate goal should be a feeling of economic, political, environmental and military security. Such development believes people, not growth rates, should be the focus of attention. It prizes

fairness above economic performance. It specifically targets the poor, while the neo-liberal model just hopes the effects of growth will trickle down to everyone. It also gives priority to women, who are victims of economic and social inequality everywhere.

### STANDARDS OF LIVING

In short, advocates of a human development argue that the richest countries are not those where people have the best lives. "There's no clear correlation between economic growth and human development," says Richard Jolly, special advisor to the administrator of UNDP. There are huge inequalities in some rich countries, as seen by the number of deprived people who live there. Other countries are wealthy but offer little to some sections of the population, like some oil-producing states where women have few opportunities. Two poor countries with the same per capita income may provide quite different standards of living to their inhabitants.

The director of UNDP's Human Development Report Office, Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, has come up with what she calls a "radical criticism of the market's ability to regulate the economy." She says "market efficiency will not deliver you equity, environmental sustainability and human security." The current development model is "a squeeze on time for care, an area dominated by women. Yet human activity flourishes where there is human contact and human care," she told a predominantly-male audience.

Economist Ignacy Sachs, speaking about time spent at home and in social situations, said it was "odd that economic theory ignores half of all human activity because it can't measure it in numerical terms."

Discussion at the conference included a reminder from Jacques Baudot, secretary of the Copenhagen UN Seminars for Social Progress, of the "intellectual contribution of the United Nations" to the development debate.

Jolly noted that "over the past 20 years, the United Nations has been a major innovator in development theory. It hasn't come up with new concepts but it has promoted them," he said, citing the notion of an "informal economy" which first appeared in an International Labour Office report on Kenya in 1973. The term "sustainable development" was launched at the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio.

### PROFITS

Agreement seems to be emerging among experts about the notion of human development and some say the war against the Washington Consensus has already been won. "It's like killing a dead body," says Ricupero.

But events prove that the battle for what Fukuda-Parr calls "going beyond the market and the pursuit of profit" is far from over. Widespread sackings, restructuring, financial speculation and firms moving to cut their costs show that the planet is governed less by a desire to ensure the welfare of all – the original aim of the science of economics – than by the search for profits in a world which every day becomes more like a commercial jungle and less like a peaceful global village.

*Nadia Khouri-Dagher*

** Beyond the Washington Consensus. Summary and prospects for a new approach in Asia, Latin America and countries in transition," held on June 16 and 17.*

# SAFEGUARDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

CULTURE *How can we preserve cultural diversity in the face of an increasingly globalised economy? This was the focus of a recent UNESCO-sponsored gathering in the run-up to the next round of World Trade Organisation negotiations in Seattle in September*

Because a community's values and identity are largely the product of people's minds, cultural goods and services cannot be treated like any old pieces of merchandise. That was firmly agreed by experts who met in Paris on June 14 and 15 to discuss the challenges to culture posed by growing globalisation.

Those at the conference, which was organised with the help of the French and Canadian governments, went on to question the wisdom of international trade regulations which aim to abolish all tariff protection for national industries, leaving the door wide open for imported versions of the same products.

Applying such a system to cultural industries risks abuse by the powerful main exporting countries and stifling the voice of many nations. But how are the economic and cultural domains to be linked? Apart from removing cultural matters from the area of international trade negotiations, there has to be a new mechanism which specifically takes into account policies to promote and protect cultural diversity, says Ken Stein, who chairs a Canadian government working party set up to consider "new courses of action for culture and trade."

"Are we just producers and consumers of commercial goods and services, or

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This Navajo weaver contributes to the recording of history in her country

are we prepared to stand up and stress how important it is for every country to ensure that the record of its own way of life and experiences is accessible to both its own citizens and the world at large?" asks Stein. This does not mean, he quickly adds, that countries have to shut themselves off from foreign competition. Because of Canada's proximity to its powerful US neighbour and the linguistic ties between the two countries, the Canadian cultural market is dominated by the United States.

## PROMOTING CULTURE

Yet local cultural industries play a very big part in the Canadian economy. Taken as a whole, they account for three percent of the country's GDP. The sector provides 610,000 jobs (nearly five percent of the working population) and is growing by about 10% a year - more than other key sectors such as transport, agriculture and construction.

This performance is not the simple result of the workings of the market. It is fed by a deliberate government policy over several decades, which includes financial incentives, tax breaks, rules about a minimum Canadian content in products and about foreign investment and ways of protecting intellectual property.

"By working together," says Stein, " the government and the cultural sector have come up with a set of measures which give Canadians access to the best products on the world market, at the same time as keeping a place for local Canadian culture."

This is what needs to be transferred to an international level and made into law, says Canadian heritage minister Sheila Copp, "or else we risk finding ourselves in a world where everyone has the same culture and mentality, this through having done everything to promote world trade but not to recognise cultural diversity."

## NO OBLIGATION

To prevent our global village turning into one gigantic shopping centre, Canada wants to see an international convention drawn up so countries can help their cultural industries and its products. No country would be obliged to promote culture, but all would have the right to do so, in specific ways. It would also protect the signatories from commercial reprisals. Are the countries which committed themselves at the Rio Earth Summit to protecting biodiversity equally determined to work together to promote the world's cultural and linguistic diversity?

These issues are a focus of UNESCO's Promotion of Living Cultures programme and are also being studied with a view to action through the World Commission on Culture and Development and the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development. They are especially relevant to the debate about international economic rules and the symposium was held so they could be seriously discussed.

*Caroline Helfter*

## A STRING OF PEARLS

"Let's think of all the world's cultures as a necklace, in which each culture is represented by a pearl," says Férid Boughedir, a filmmaker and lecturer at the University of Tunis. "Obviously you can't say, just like that, which pearl is more valuable than another.

"But then there appears, in the middle of the necklace, a pearl we can call for argument's sake, the Heart of the Ocean, after the huge diamond in Titanic, the most popular film in the history of the cinema. This gem is so amazing that it completely dazzles us and increasingly prevents us from seeing the other pearls, some of which are in more and more danger of being overshadowed and forgotten. Among these threatened pearls are filmmakers in the poor countries, especially those in Africa, who are among those who get the least exposure."

This is why Boughedir is calling for serious support for production and distribution of their work, like the steps France took to save its national film output and even to become the lucky co-producer of most of the "art films" in Europe and the Third World.

Unless there is such backing - which will be out of the question if the next World Trade Organisation negotiations decides to liberalise trade in films - the expression of African identity and culture will be nipped in the bud and Africans will be "further condemned to be just passive consumers of foreign films and cultures," says Boughedir.

next month :

# SPECIAL ISSUE:

# UNESCO'S ACTIVITIES IN 2000-2001: TOWARDS A CULTURE OF PEACE

## on UNESCO's calendar

24 to 27 August

**PACIFIC HERITAGE**
The Pacific has a number of remarkable world heritage sites, and in Port Vila (Vanuatu) the Global Strategy Meeting for the Pacific examines the future of these sites

31 August to 2 September

**BIOSPHERE RESERVES**
The establishment of eleven new biosphere reserves, including one in Vietnam, will be discussed by the MAB Consultative Council to be held at headquarters

1 to 12 September

**CHINA IN PARIS**
To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the People's Republic of China, UNESCO hosts a week-long cultural festival at headquarters

5 to 9 September

**ARAB BIOSPHERE RESERVES**
In Agadir (Morocco), a meeting of the ARABMAB network, to discuss biodiversity in danger throughout the Arab-speaking region

6 to 8 September

**CELEBRATING LITERACY**
To celebrate International Literacy Day on September 8, three days of round table discussions and forums at headquarters, with the Literacy Prize awarded on the final day

8 to 11 September

**EMERGING DISEASES**
UNESCO joins forces with the European Academy of Arts, Sciences and Humanities to host a workshop on Basic Sciences and Emerging Diseases at headquarters

14 September

**FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE**
One thousand participants are expected at headquarters for the official launch of the International Year for a Culture of Peace