Education: A vaccine for HIV/AIDS

Talking to James Morris

The price of school fees

Sciences lose their glamour
The statistics on HIV/AIDS are heartbreaking, the human distress each case represents even more so. Two decades after the start of the pandemic, the New Courier takes stock and devotes its “Focus” dossier to shedding new light on this devastating topic.

We know more and more about the progression of the pandemic. Decision-makers’ lack of determination to see and tackle the problem is compounded with all the factors of precariousness: poverty, social isolation, low level of education, difficulty in accessing medical care, etc. The results are tragic: the huge vulnerability of so many young African women or other high-risk groups, such as drug addicts in certain countries. In the face of such destruction, as deadly as the worst of wars, the international community has progressively organized to fight on all fronts, under the banner of UNAIDS, which UNESCO co-sponsors. Here and there, we can see sparks of hope.

Improving medical treatment is crucial to limit damages, but the principal keys to checking the spread of the disease remain preventive action and education, relayed by mobilization at all levels. The numbers and the stories reported from Thailand, Brazil, South Africa or Uganda are eloquent. The results – victories large and small – depend mainly on partners joining forces. Brazilian authorities, for instance, were able to put together the NGOs’ capacities to contact marginalized populations, rely on the competence of UNESCO’s office in Brasilia, and involve the media, including directors and producers of extremely popular television series.

The articles in this issue of the New Courier testify, each from a different angle, to UNESCO in action, illustrating its multitude of links to organizations of all kinds, corporations or individuals who want to act with it. We go to Kazakhstan, where innovative solutions using distance education are needed to alleviate the side-effects of nuclear testing. Then to Barcelona, where the first Universal Forum of Cultures mixed and mingled multiple forms of cultural expression for four months. Then to the 34 new sites just inscribed on the World Heritage List. We will meet Navarre Scott Momaday, Manu Dibango and Miyako Yoshida, recently appointed “Artists for Peace”. Everywhere, UNESCO pursues its ideals, seeking to build step by step the defenses of peace in people’s minds.
Talking to JAMES MORRIS
“A hungry person can’t think”

UNESCO in action

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Living tribute to Morocco’s intangible heritage, the Tan-Tan Moussem is reborn

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Empty stomachs are not conducive to learning. This simple observation sparked the School Feeding programme. James Morris, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, hopes it will eventually feed 50 million pupils. In Afghanistan, after the Taliban’s departure, distribution of food at school helped significantly increase the number of children enrolled, particularly girls.

The New Courier:

What is the idea behind School Feeding?

James Morris: Every child should have at least one good meal every day and there is nothing more important in any person’s life than education. Providing a school meal is a powerful incentive for a child to attend school, and a good way to see a child has a good meal every day. It also offers opportunities to do other things of enormous value for a child. For example, it gives the World Health Organisation the opportunity to offer medicine that can eliminate worms from a child’s system. Having a child in school is the most powerful way to offer HIV/AIDS education.

What is the link between education and nutrition?

JM: A hungry person has no ability to think or do physical work, and anyone’s success, day by day, is related to their capacity to do physical work and ability to think. We know that a child’s being well fed makes all the difference in the world. Food for Education is a powerful vehicle. Teachers say if there was a distribution of food the week before, children
are bright and alert. If they are not fed, they pass out at school and vitality in the classroom is substantially diminished.

What is the scale of hunger?
JM: We believe there are 840m hungry people in the world, at least 300m of them children. It’s likely half of hungry children don’t go to school -- and most of them are girls. If a girl can go to school and be fed, her life changes for the better in many ways. She will delay her child-bearing years until she is 20, instead of 12 or 13; she will have two or three children instead of seven or eight, and different expectations, aspirations for them. She will be a better mother, better citizen, teacher, entrepreneur, farmer -- whatever she chooses she will do it better, be more successful as a human being and economically. A very small investment in a child, especially a girl, has an enormous future payoff.

Where are children hungriest?
JM: In Africa there are a couple of hundred million. There are 50-60 million in Latin America, 150 million in South-East Asia. Many countries have intense pockets of poverty and often when that is the case children are most affected. In Guatemala 46% of children under five are chronically malnourished; and 39% in Honduras. There are School Feeding programmes in 69 countries, and the schools are everywhere – though more likely in rural communities.

How does the School Feeding Programme work?
JM: Where the WFP is working, UNESCO and other UN agencies will be present, so we can bring all services together through the schools. We often work with [international] NGOs such as World Vision, Save the Children, Care, Oxfam, Mercy Corps, and with local government and community leaders, NGOs, parents’ groups. Our job is generally to see the money is available to procure the food, transport it in or buy it locally, and then it is often prepared and distributed by NGOs, parents’ or local school groups. I have seen places where parents rapidly learn to prepare highly nourishing meals. In Afghanistan we supported 280 bakeries to produce loaves for children. Clearly, education and health ministries are critically important. About 20 countries have “graduated” from the programme, but we will always be there to help if needed. Often we try to deliver emergency food assistance through schools; in a crisis kids often stop going to school.

Do teachers also receive food?
JM: These are decisions made by local school boards, but clearly teachers are key to the success of this programme and there are places where we provide food as interim short-term compensation for teachers. When Afghanistan didn’t have cash to pay for teachers, we paid them in food.

What results have the programmes had?
JM: We know school feeding has a powerful impact on the percentage of children going to school, and going on to secondary school. In Pakistan it has tripled the number of girls attending school. We have seen substantial progress in Bangladesh and Honduras.

One of the first places I visited was Dodoma in Tanzania where the number of children going to school rose from 400 to 800 and the percentage of kids going on to secondary school rose from 8% to 22%. There was a Kabul school with 1,500 boys and no girls; after the Taliban, and with introduction of the School Food Programme, there were 3,200 pupils -- 1,700 boys and 1,500 girls.

In North Korea the results are remarkable. These are not necessarily related to school feeding, but between 1998 and 2002 we were feeding millions of children and our nutritional survey shows the percentage of underweight children fell from 60% to 20%. The acutely malnourished went down from 16% to 9%; and chronically malnourished from 60% to 40%. It’s still way too high, but it is an extraordinary example of the impact of therapeutic feeding on children’s lives.
talking to

What are UNESCO and other agencies doing?
JM: Development in humanitarian work is guided by the commitment to Millennium Development goals: reducing hunger and poverty, infant mortality, HIV/AIDS; improving maternal health, gender equality, universal primary education, the environment; strengthening democratic institutions. I believe hunger, food security and nutrition are at the basis of all these – there will be no progress if people are not well nourished. If you address hunger and malnutrition, lives can turn around overnight.

Who funds the programme? How much does it cost to feed children?
JM: We have donor countries and private individuals, companies and NGOs who have contributed specifically to the School Feeding Programme. Thirty euros a year can provide a meal for a child every school day – about 200 days a year. We aspire to feed 50 million children.

What are the difficulties?
JM: There are challenges. We often have to provide kitchen facilities and utensils, get the programme started and make sure it has nutritional strength to benefit a child, and over the long term to see the government and local community take over the programme. We have a special effort now in nine Sahelian countries [Burkino Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, which face common difficulties such as desertification, water shortage, deforestation,
School Feeding Programmes and Education For All (EFA)

School Feeding is very relevant to EFA because the last children to attend school are those with serious problems that prevent them attending, such as hunger, lack of food at home and poverty. Other issues it addresses include HIV/AIDS prevention, early marriage, child labour.

School feeding has much support among members of the EFA working group – UNESCO, UNICEF, the Millennium Project, donor governments and most developing country governments – as a way to help poor children, especially girls, those in conflict zones and those otherwise vulnerable, to attend school by offsetting costs to the family, to receive needed nutrients and to learn. They benefit from school-based health and sanitation programmes, stay in school and have a meal during the day, reducing short-term hunger that disrupts learning and behaviour.

*Donor governments: Algeria, Andorra, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, European Union, France, Germany, Honduras, India, Italy, Kenya Luxembourg, Malawi, Monaco, Norway, Switzerland, USA.

educational problems] where we have been working with the education and health ministries to bring in school feeding. Then there are children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa 11-14 million children orphaned by AIDS are in care of grandparents, or other children; these kids are less likely to go to school, will have poor health care and less adequate nutrition. Their number will rise to 20 million over the next few years.

But the good news is that the WFP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNAIDS and WHO are working hard to address these issues. We have rethought our programming, how to help governments and community organisations. UNAIDS says most important is to educate 5-to-15-year-olds; second, to prolong parents’ lives so they have more time with their children; third, addressing orphans’ needs. There are places that have lost teachers, health professionals, agricultural workers. All the antiretroviral drugs won’t make any difference without good food and clean water and people who can administer the programmes.

How are results monitored?

JM: Our work is monitored and evaluated every day, in every place in the world, so we know the benefits. We have our own staff and outside people, including local governments in the community. Teachers, principals and parents have a good idea of our practices. (See Standardized Feeding Survey box.)

What next?

JM: We are heavily focused on investigating where we are most needed, so we can target resources on the hungriest, poorest people. There is nothing more important than feeding schoolchildren; food and education are the keys to their future.

Interview by Jane Marshall
JUST A MOUSE CLICK AWAY: SCHOOL FOR KAZAKH CHILDREN

Only 700 out of 5400 educational institutions in Kazakhstan are linked to the Internet.
Decades of Soviet nuclear testing have poisoned large areas of Kazakhstan. Result: Qualified teachers refuse to work there. To bridge the gap, UNESCO is launching an ICT distance learning programme.

Massive

Soviet-era atomic testing has left the children of vast areas of Kazakhstan a lethal legacy, which extends beyond the obvious health issues posed by exposure to radioactivity. Coupled with economic hardship, contamination renders these zones unattractive to qualified teachers, who refuse to be posted there, thereby dampening hopes for the future entertained by the area’s children.

A recent UNESCO-sponsored study shows that the schools that do exist are inadequate. One teacher often teaches all subjects to all grades from 1 to 11 in a decrepit building and higher education is unavailable. UNESCO is launching a pilot project aimed at using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to develop distance learning software that will fill the void left by the shortage of teachers and ensure that the children in the contaminated areas are not denied their educational rights.

The most devastated zone is around Semipalatinsk, in eastern Kazakhstan, which was a huge nuclear testing range. From 1959 until 1989, the Soviet military nearly succeeded in blasting the region off the map, conducting 456 nuclear tests on the 18,000 km sq. site, called the Polygon. For 50 years, the radioactive contamination was carried by winds across the steppes far beyond the confines of the range. The contaminated area now covers some 550,000 km sq., about 1/5 of Kazakhstan, or an area “roughly the size of France, but without the Louvre or Montmartre,” wryly observes renowned Kazakh poet Olzhas Suleimenov, his country’s Permanent Delegate to UNESCO.

LETHAL LONG-TERM EFFECTS

All information regarding the tests was cloaked in the deepest secrecy, including their impact on health. The only hospital in the region, military run, denied the existence of the numerous strange and disturbingly debilitating diseases appearing in the region, including leukaemia, other types of cancer and genetic mutations causing physical and mental defects. It’s impossible to know how many people have been affected since 1959 but Kazakh government estimates run as high as 1.7 million with about 350,000 still afflicted today.

Semipalatinsk was renamed Semei after Kazakhstan became independent in 1991 and the Polygon was officially closed down. But the effects

Schools without boundaries

UNESCO is launching pilot comprehensive distance education projects at secondary level in both Kazakhstan and Namibia. The Kazakh project will be extended to other countries in Central Asia, while the Namibia scheme will serve isolated regions in Africa. In the Kazakh project, the University of Erlangen Psychology Department in Germany will develop teaching software for student classes and teacher training. A kick-off meeting of all private and public partners, including the Ministry of Education and Katelco, a satellite television channel, was to be held in late summer in Almaty. The Namibia project is still being defined but will focus on math and science. While the country has a relatively well-developed primary school system, it has few secondary schools. Start-up dates for the projects are set for the 2004-05 school year.
of radiation last thousands of years, sometimes with dramatic consequences. Even now, children are born without arms, hands growing directly from their shoulders, a result of radiation-caused genetic mutations. Parts of the area are 1,000 times more polluted than Chernobyl. Some ground water is radioactive and, because so vast an area cannot be closed off, livestock are free to graze on contaminated grasslands.

Cleaning up has begun and serious efforts are being made to address the health needs of populations in these areas. But this is only one of many problems the country faces. There are a dozen other former nuclear sites to deal with along with the disaster of the drying up of the Aral Sea, causing desertification of arable land. With so many pressing needs, Kazakhstan is hard put to find funds for education.

**FUNDS SCARCE FOR EDUCATION**

The schools that do exist in the area are isolated and remote. The shortage of teachers for the country is estimated at 3,700, but since independence, priorities have shifted along with the demands of the burgeoning market economy leading to a fall in public spending, including in education. Public sector teachers earn less than those in the highly popular private schools and are often forced to take a second job making them less available for their students. Teaching materials in Kazakhstan are generally outdated and of poor quality, and supplies are insufficient to meet the demands of the country’s 3,004,900 schoolchildren.

Programmes in Asia, Africa and Brazil show that ICT can provide innovative solutions to a dearth of teachers. UNESCO is developing an ICT education programme that will draw on previous UNESCO experiences in other regions to produce a comprehensive system, says Team Leader Dana Ziyasheva. The project will adapt free software available in Europe aimed at education management and course production. It will also provide teacher training on how to use the software and strengthen infrastructure in selected pilot sites. “Relying on the educational expertise of Kazakh specialists and the transfer of know-how are the key to a sustainable project,” says Ziyasheva. A first step is training teachers to use both ICT and traditional methods efficiently to reach students. The steppes lack computers and remain mostly internet-free. At present only 700 of Kazakhstan’s 5,400 secondary schools are linked to the internet, but the government aims to have them all connected by the end of 2007.

Decontamination is the best way to solve the health problems and entice teachers back, but this is a long-term and costly undertaking. So far only $15 million of $43 million pledged by international donors in 1999 has trickled to the region. “We are not holding out a begging bowl,” Suleimenov says, but adds that the magnitude of the task is too daunting for any single country. 

*Pat Brett*
SCIENCES LOSE THEIR GLAMOUR

Considered boring and badly-paid, science is inspiring fewer and fewer vocations. Yet the world needs more and more scientists.

Are young people fed up with science? How can their curiosity and taste for scientific adventure be stimulated? Many observers fear a shortage of scientists in the near future. This fear, repeated again and again in developed countries in recent years, is replicated in emerging and developed countries, where the training of young people to work in research is a vital issue, as much for the development of democracy as for their economic future. In this respect, the international Conference on the teaching of sciences and technology which was held at UNESCO Headquarters in June 2004 represented a new step in the collective approach to the problem. Several recommendations were made during this meeting (see box 1), which was organised by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) with the support of the National Science Foundation (NSF).

More than ever before, research appears to be one of the major driving forces of economic development. In OECD member countries alone, the number of researchers rose from 2.4 million in 1990 to 3.4 million in 2000, and the demand continues to rise³. In early April 2004, the High-Level Group on Human Resources for Science and Technology in Europe called on the members
of the European Union to take action to reach the target of recruiting 500,000 new researchers by 2010. The NSF meanwhile estimates that 2.2 million scientific and engineering jobs need to be created in the decade 2000-2010. In such a context, it is easy to see why there are concerns when certain scientific disciplines are being deserted, the population is aging, especially in Europe, and there are the risks of relying on foreign “human capital.”

In emerging or developing countries, science’s lack of appeal can largely be attributed to the lack of infrastructure and a policy on science. This is certainly the case on the African continent, as Professor Nyiira Zerubabel, executive director of the Ugandan National Council for Science and Technology, told the conference: either young people go abroad, or they choose another training path which offers more promising employment terms and salary. The brain drain hits these countries hard. In order to resolve this situation, Pakistan has put financial incentives in place, as Syeda T.K. Naim, a consultant on the Ministerial Committee on scientific and technological policy of the Organization of Islamic Conference, explained. These include a raise in salaries for those researchers who publish in an international journal and for holders of a PhD. In India, Amitabh Mukherjee, director of the Centre for Science Education and Communication at the University of Delhi told the conference that the number of staff in the scientific streams had been rising since 2001.

The relative lack of interest in science is part of a complex picture in which the global migration of students plays an essential role. For example, more and more Chinese and Indian students choose other OECD countries over the United States, or they stay in their own countries. Less is known about why certain streams are losing their appeal. The French physicist and academic Yves Quéré believes there are three reasons for this: “Science (in the way it is taught these days) is boring, it is considered dangerous and people believe they will never earn much by working in it.” Everyone seems to agree with this analysis of the problem and on the necessity to begin teaching science from primary school level. This aim currently has even greater support because the InterAcademy Panel (IAP) backs it, according to Yves Quéré, who co-chairs this international federation of science academies.

INTRODUCING SCIENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

It is precisely on this subject that most experiments have been done thanks to several high-level pioneers.

First there was the remarkable work of the American physicist and 1988 Nobel Prix Prize winner Leon Lederman in schools in under-privileged suburbs of Chicago, of which Yves Quéré spoke with admiration: “Everyone was leaving these schools and violence reigned. Leon Lederman introduced an initiation to science using active methods and he educated the teachers at the same time as the pupils. He completely turned the situation around. It was very impressive.” In the mid-1990s, Yves Quéré and astrophysicist Pierre Léna discovered this work with Georges Charpak, winner of the 1992 Nobel Prize for Physics, who had been invited to see it by his colleague and friend Lederman. Once they returned to France, the three academics created the “La Main à la Pate” association (see box 2). Their objective was to reintroduce the teaching of science to primary schools, by putting the emphasis on experimentation and investigation. The experiment was sufficiently successful for it to be repeated around the world.

In her speech to the international conference in June 2004, Shirley Malcom proposed that this approach be considered for use at higher levels. Malcom, the director of the education section of human resources at AAAS, said access to science for everyone was similar to UNESCO’s promotion of Education for All. She was also echoing the
“Declaration on Science and the Use of Scientific Knowledge” which was adopted in Budapest in 1999: “(...)Science education is essential for human development, for creating endogenous scientific capacity and for having active and informed citizens”. This declaration received the backing of UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura who saw it as fitting in perfectly with the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Dominique Chouchan

1. Mario Cervantes, project manager of the Directorate for science, technology and industry at the OECD, L’Observateur, http://observeurocode.org/, mars 2004
4. The World Conference on Science was held in Budapest from 28 June to 1 July 1999 organised by UNESCO in cooperation with the International Council for Science (ICSU).
Emotion surged across Kenya when President Mwai Kibaki kept his campaign promise to abolish school fees in 2003. Propelled by pent-up hope, parents swarmed overnight to enrol their children in school. But as principals turned away pupils, the rosy picture was dimmed by the spectre of “the masses” swamping an already fragile education system.

Today, the good news is that more than a million new pupils are squeezing into classrooms. But unfortunately, the expected foreign assistance has not fully materialized. In short, “School fees were abolished with great euphoria but little planning,” according to Andiwo Obondoh of the Global Campaign for Education.

THE AFRICAN MOVEMENT

The confusion is a rite of passage in the bold move towards free primary education made first by Malawi in 1994, followed by Uganda (1997), Cameroon (1999), the United Republic of Tanzania (2001) and Zambia (2002). Today any debate on free primary education must inevitably focus on these African countries, which offer valuable insight for Africa and for countries with high tuition fees such as Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea.

Steve Packer of the EFA Global Monitoring Report was in Malawi when the government removed all school fees. “Enrolment surged from 1.9 to 3.2 million in just three months. Some said it was crazy – the quality of the system was already appalling. But from a human rights perspective, can you deny millions of children ANY education, even if it is poor quality?” he says.

No is UNESCO’s resounding answer. “UNESCO believes that it is better to uphold the principle of free primary education and to address energetically the quality challenge posed by an enrolment surge than to ration..."
access to school through fees,” according to John Daniel, the former Assistant Director-General for Education.

A POLICY SHIFT
While UNESCO focuses on the normative and policy front, UNICEF has launched a hands-on campaign to eliminate all primary education user fees in Africa. Cream Wright, UNICEF’s Chief of Education, explains why: “First, we have repeatedly seen that once you remove school fees, the demand for education soars. On the negative side, AIDS is leaving a wake of orphans while devastating the community and family networks that used to help poor kids go to school. Without drastic action, more and more children will have no chance.”

Even the World Bank has come around to encouraging countries to remove school fees. According to the Bank’s lead education specialist, Bob Prouty, Bank officials watched the African movement to abolish fees with skepticism that gave way to amazement. “These countries have achieved the biggest success in Education for All overnight,” comments Prouty.

UNEXPECTED COSTS
According to a 2001 World Bank survey in 79 countries, only Algeria and Uruguay have no fees. In the rest, about one third of fees are “unofficial” or illegal (see box). Not included are indirect costs, like transportation (in Cambodia, 21 percent of household spending goes on education) or opportunity costs that hit the poorest families sending their children to school instead of work.

There are also the “unexpected” costs, detailed in a recent report1 by the United Kingdom aid agency DFID comparing how very poor families cope with primary school costs in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zambia. Officially, primary school tuition fees are illegal in all six countries.

The case of Uganda, committed to providing
free education, is most striking, as parents continue to pay a range of official fees as well as “unexpected” costs – teachers’ funerals, year-end celebrations, classroom construction and telephone connections. Asked why pupils left primary school, 48% of parents cited inability to pay expenses. After food, education was the largest household expenditure in Uganda (and other countries, except for Nepal).

ENSURING QUALITY

The authors don’t recommend fees, but conclude that “It is important for governments to recognize that the removal of tuition fees may result in schools having to insist on other charges.” In all countries surveyed, households routinely make sacrifices to continue paying for their children’s education. In Kenya, parents tend to skip meals, while in Sri Lanka, they defer medical treatment. But while cost is a major barrier, it is not alone in determining the demand for education.

In the decision to send children to school or not, parents also consider the question of quality. A World Bank survey of school fees in 79 countries (see box p.17) found that poor families are theoretically willing to pay slightly more for education seen as “good”. But when standards are not up to expectations, parents stop making sacrifices to cover costs.

When Uganda abolished school fees in 1997, total net enrolment reached 84% but fell to 76% by 2000. While it is too soon to draw firm conclusions, some experts argue that quality of education is to blame for dropout rates.

Mary Pigozzi, Director of UNESCO’s Division for the Promotion of Quality Education, is concerned that countries are focusing exclusively on getting children into school without policies designed to keep them there. “There is a common misunderstanding that access to education must always precede attention to quality,” she says. “Quality clearly costs money but can we afford NOT to address it?”

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES

For Katarina Tomasevski, the first Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education by the
The challenge lies in developing school systems that don’t simply try to catch up with industrialized countries. For that, Education Ministries will have to master the ‘budgetary speak’ of aid agencies to fund homegrown visions of quality learning.

Amy Otchet
(First published in UNESCO’s Education Today bulletin, July-September, 2004)

2. Because of Nepal’s harsh winters, clothing costs outweigh education spending.

Fees of every stripe and colour

According to a World Bank Survey (2001)*, school fee types vary considerably. In Africa, community contributions are the most common (81% of countries), then uniforms (48%) and tuition (41%).

Tuition fees, collected unofficially, exist throughout the transitional economies of Europe and Central Asia. In contrast, Latin America has almost no tuition fees, except in Colombia. Textbook fees are also relatively rare (29% of countries surveyed) but compulsory uniforms (76%) and community contributions (65%) are the norm.

Most Middle Eastern and North African countries have the constitutional right to free education. Yet tuition fees exist in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Yemen. Community contributions and textbook fees are charged in half of the countries.

Private tutoring is common in South Asia, where Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan charge tuition, although the fee is legal only in Bhutan and Pakistan. Over half of the region imposes textbook fees and community contributions. In East Asia and the Pacific, uniforms and community contributions are obligatory in 80% of countries, followed by textbook fees (70%). Tuitions exist in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, China and Viet Nam.

Fees represent up to 20% of all education spending, an estimated 30% in Africa and even 40% in the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern European countries.

*User Fees in Primary Education by Raja Bentaouet and Nicholas Burnett

UN Commission on Human Rights, the funding gap is not about economics but the lack of international consensus to provide free primary education. “Look at the Millennium Development Goals – not a word about guaranteeing free education,” she says. She notes that governments that abolished fees are not getting firm pledges that their efforts to enroll and keep pupils at school will be rewarded by generous aid and debt relief.

This is where the World Bank is trying to step in, through its Fast-Track Initiative (FTI), an EFA financing initiative. A formally approved “credible” action plan is the basis for FTI eligibility, for which the Bank has developed a set of benchmarks based on characteristics of successful EFA countries. For example, a credible plan works towards directing 50 percent of the education budget to primary schooling. The benchmarks are supposed to inspire confidence in donors.

“I think the FTI will provide a much better understanding of whether aid is moving to the right places,” says Steve Packer. But he is dubious about its mobilizing the resources which developing countries are now expecting. According to the Global Monitoring Report, about 5.6 billion dollars are needed each year to achieve universal primary education and gender parity.

Whether or not that money will arrive, countries are indeed lining up to join the FTI, with the number of eligible members expected to grow from 18 to more than 40 next year.

Abby Riddell, programme specialist on educational planning for UNESCO – which is an FTI partner advising governments on policy – lauds the World Bank initiative, but fears the quality of education is at risk.

THE ROLE OF AID

Riddell points to Malawi, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. “In all five, you see similar visions of education,” she says, “but they are dealing with very different circumstances.” Uganda was able to abolish school fees in part by building on a tradition of decentralized government with truly representative local school boards. Zambia does not have this base, yet the policy reforms look the same.
The Barcelona Forum 2004, which has just closed its doors, turned the Catalan capital into a must-see cultural meeting point – in which UNESCO played a key part.

Access to drinking water, the death of languages, reading in the digital age, conflict prevention or the conditions faced by millions of refugees: all these issues and many more featured in the debates at Barcelona. Experts from almost 200 countries joined in a cultural marathon that also included 20 exhibitions, 423 concerts – with artists ranging from Mstislav Rostropovich to Sting, Lenny Kravitz, Norah Jones, Bob Dylan, Alicia Keys, BB King and Alejandro Sanz – 20 circus shows, cabaret, puppetry, street theatre and much more. All of which took place in a 30-hectare area on the banks of the Mediterranean, in the presence of heads of state, intellectuals, artists, and above all else, almost three million visitors.

UNESCO entered into partnership with the Universal Forum of Cultures through a resolution adopted by the General Conference in 1997. UNESCO and the Forum’s Organizing Consortium – made up of the Spanish government, the autonomous government of Catalonia and the Barcelona Town Hall – signed a framework agreement, which first of all entailed general planning of the event, and later a detailed series of activities which have since taken shape at the Forum. The fruit of this collaboration has included
The festivities attracted nearly 3 million visitors.

Photos: © Forum Barcelona 2004/Agusti Argelich
such notable events as the Youth Parliament, the UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize, the presentation in Barcelona of UNESCO’s Fellini medals, or the participation of specialists from the Organization in dialogues on issues such as “poverty, microcredits and development” or “audiovisual communication and cultural diversity.”

Last May, the UNESCO Director General, Koichiro Matsuura, explained the motives behind this alliance in a speech at the inaugural ceremony: “The Forum is, in my opinion, the symbol of civil society’s mobilization around some of the great challenges that all the cultures of the world will have to confront in the new century. Cultural diversity, urban planning for lasting development and peace are central themes of the Forum’s activities, and also three of UNESCO’s strategic priorities.”

GUARANTEED CONTINUITY

Now that its doors have closed, it must be said that the Forum proved one of those events that leaves neither its supporters nor its detractors entirely satisfied. In its defence, one could argue that the Forum was a success from the very day of its opening, for the simple reason that it was unprecedented and confounded those who gave it little importance or even predicted that it would never see the light of day. The Forum’s other great accomplishment is to have found a successor, thanks to a proposal from the Mexican city of Monterrey, capital of the state of Nuevo León, to host a second event in 2007. Nuevo León’s governor, José Natividad González, visited UNESCO last August to discuss with the Director General the broad outline of his plan. Based on the experience in Barcelona, Monterrey is planning a shorter Forum (90 days long), with a smaller budget and a lower expected turnout. Even so, there is no doubt that the endeavour to stimulate dialogue between cultures so that progress can be made on the road to peace is worth all the effort.

Marcelo Aparicio
WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE INSCRIBES
34 NEW SITES ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

The Iranian city of Bam, where 26,000 people died in a brutal earthquake in December 2003, was among the new sites inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Twenty-nine cultural and five natural sites were inscribed at the 28th session of the World Heritage Committee, held from June 28 to July 7 in Suzhou, China.

Five countries - Andorra, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Iceland, Saint Lucia and Togo - entered the List for the first time during the session, which was chaired by Zhang Xinsheng, Vice-Minister of Education of China and Chairperson of China’s National Commission for UNESCO.

The new inscriptions brought to 788 the number of listed sites (611 cultural, 154 natural and 23 mixed). The 21-member Committee also added three properties requiring urgent attention to the List of World Heritage in Danger: the City of Bam, the Cathedral of Cologne (Germany) and the Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara (Tanzania). At the same time the Committee decided to strike three sites – Cambodia’s celebrated temples and palaces at Angkor, the Bahla Fort in Oman and Rwenzori Mountains National Park in Uganda – off the Danger List due to the success of internationally-coordinated efforts to improve their preservation. The List of World Heritage in Danger numbers 35 sites.

The World Heritage Committee examined ways to improve its work and the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Aiming to encourage the growth of under-represented categories of sites and improve geographic distribution on the World Heritage List, it decided to test new rules on a temporary basis. The Committee has decided that at the 30th session, in 2006, it will examine up to two nominations per State Party, provided that at least one of the nominations concerns a natural property. The total number of nominations to be reviewed,
including nominations deferred by previous sessions, extensions, transboundary nominations and nominations submitted on an emergency basis, has been capped at 45.

Also during the 28th session, a Chinese edition of UNESCO’s World Heritage Review was launched. It is the fifth language version of the Review, which has been published in English, French and Spanish since 1996 and in Russian since 2002.

The 29th session of the World Heritage Committee will be held in Durban (South Africa) in July 2005.
NEW CULTURAL SITES INSCRIBED THIS YEAR

ANDORRA – Madriu-Claror-Perafita Valley;
AUSTRALIA – Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens;
CHINA – Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom;
DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA – Complex of Koguryo Tombs;
GERMANY – Dresden Elbe Valley – The Town Hall and Roland on the Marketplace of Bremen;
GERMANY / POLAND – Muskauer Park / Park Muzakowski;
ICELAND – Pingvellir National Park;
INDIA – Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (4) – Chhatrapati Shivaji Station (formerly Victoria Terminus);
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN – Pasargadae – Bam and its Cultural Landscape;
ITALY – Etruscan Necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia – Val d’Orcia;
JAPAN – Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range;
JORDAN – Um er-Rasas (Kastron Mefa’a) (1);
KAZAKHSTAN – Petroglyphs within the Archaeological Landscape of Tamgaly;
LITHUANIA – Kernave Archaeological Site (Cultural Reserve of Kernave);
MALI – Tomb of Askia;
MEXICO – Luis Barragán House and Studio (2);
MONGOLIA – Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape (7);
MOROCCO – Portuguese City of Mazagan (El Jadida);
NORWAY – Vegaøyan - the Vega Archipelago;
PORTUGAL – Landscape of the Pico Island Vineyard Culture;
RUSSIAN FEDERATION – Ensemble of the Novodevichy Convent (5);
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO – Deˇcani Monastery (6);
SWEDEN – Varberg Radio Station;
TOGO – Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba (3);
UNITED KINGDOM – Liverpool - Maritime Mercantile City (8).

NEW NATURAL SITES INSCRIBED THIS YEAR

DENMARK (GREENLAND) – Ilulissat Icefjord;
INDONESIA – Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra;
RUSSIAN FEDERATION – Natural System of Wrangel Island Reserve;
SAINT LUCIA – Pitons Management Area;
SOUTH AFRICA – Cape Floral Region Protected Areas.
The Hague Convention celebrates 50th anniversary

The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict has marked its 50th birthday. The Convention, adopted with its First Protocol on May 14, 1954, at The Hague (Netherlands), was the first international treaty to focus exclusively on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. It was reinforced by a Second Protocol, which was adopted in 1999 and entered into force on March 9, 2004.

Since its Adoption, 109 countries have become party to the 1954 Convention. To date, 88 of them have joined the First Protocol, and 22 have joined the Second Protocol.

Educational Radio and TV Centre Re-Opened in Kabul

After being almost totally destroyed during years of civil conflict, the building housing the Educational Radio and Television Centre (ERTV) of Afghanistan's Ministry of Education has been fully renovated and equipped with 40 computers, internet access and some digital television equipment. Radio and television studios will follow shortly, but the Centre is already operational and producing a range of educational programming. Funded by a $2.5m grant from the Italian government, the renovation was carried out under the aegis of UNESCO which has also organised intensive training in fields such as TV and radio techniques, use of digital equipment, programme production, English language proficiency and computer literacy.

UNESCO and Afghanistan: http://www.unesco.org/afghanistan
Education and ICT: http://portal.unesco.org/ci/

Two Film Directors Receive Fellini Medal

Film directors Ousmane Sembene (Senegal) and Chantal Akerman (Belgium) received UNESCO's Fellini Medal on May 28 in Barcelona. The medal is awarded to directors and actors for contributing to the respect and promotion of cultural diversity. Ousmane Sembene is a leading figure of African literature and cinema. He has won a number of prizes in his career, including the “Un Certain Regard” prize at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival for his film “Moolade”. Chantal Akerman has directed 41 films, written 21, and acted in eight. Her best-known feature is “I, You, She, He.”
Young people view cultural diversity

UNESCO’s new publication “All Different, All Unique” is produced in collaboration with the International Youth Parliament and the British NGO Oxfam. It consists of a bilingual French-English text, in magazine format, presenting commentary on each article of UNESCO’s Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and listing concrete initiatives for young people to put it into action. The project is a compilation of the suggestions made by young people in ten different countries, during preparatory workshops organized by UNESCO and Oxfam International’s Youth Parliament (in Argentina, Australia, Colombia, Fiji, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Kenya and Togo).

“All Different, All Unique” is also available on line: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001345/134556e.pdf

New edition of Global Education Digest

Children everywhere are spending more time in school than ever before, but there remain substantial differences between countries and regions, according to UNESCO’s Global Education Digest 2004. A child in Finland, New Zealand or Norway can thus expect to receive over 17 years of education, almost twice as much as in Bangladesh or Myanmar and four times as much in Niger or Burkina Faso. The Digest, published by UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics, presents detailed global data on pre-primary through tertiary education, teachers and finance. It is available at the following address: http://www.uis.unesco.org

A prize for ethics

The first winner of the Avicenna Ethics in Science Prize is Margaret A. Somerville, who holds dual Australian and Canadian nationality. She received the prize from Director-General Koichiro Matsuura on April 26, in the presence of Jafar Towfighi, Iranian Minister of Science, Research and Technology. The laureate holds the Samuel Gale Professorship of Law and is a professor at the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University in Montreal (Canada). Through her books, conferences and other work, she has made an important contribution to the global development of bioethics, and to the ethical and legal aspects of medicine and science.

Obliged to go to school, but already allowed to work or get married!

At what age can schoolchildren work, get married or be taken to court? A report from Right to Education* and UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education answers this question. Only 45 of the 158 countries examined have synchronized school-leaving age with the minimum age of employment. In 38 countries, no minimum age is set for marriage. In six countries, there is no minimum age for criminal liability, and children can be held criminally responsible starting at age seven in 32 others. The report can be read on line: www.right-to-education.org
UNESCO in brief

First Ratifications of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Algeria, Mauritius and Japan have become the first three Member States to ratify the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference in 2003. The Convention, which will enter into force when 30 States have ratified it, aims to safeguard oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events and knowledge and practice concerning nature and the universe, as well as traditional craftsmanship skills. Text of the Convention: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001325/132540e.pdf

World Forum on Human Rights in Nantes

At the initiative and with the support of UNESCO, the city of Nantes (France) organized the World Forum on Human Rights from May 16 to 19. Some 1,200 policy makers, representatives of civil society and human rights experts participated in the forum, which focused on three major themes: Human Rights and Terrorism; Globalization and the Struggle Against All Forms of Discrimination and Exclusion; and Poverty as a Violation of Human Rights.

Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize

The Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Mustaf Ceric, and Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, former president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, received the 2003 Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize at a ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters on September 21 attended by several religious and political personalities. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers from Bosnia and Herzegovina Adnan Terzic was among the guests, along with Henri Koné Bedié, the former president of Côte d’Ivoire, and Alassane Dramane Outtara, the former Prime Minister.
Web portal for 20,000 Portuguese-language books

Thanks to an initiative of the Brazilian government, supported by UNESCO’s office in Brasilia, more than 20,000 books in Portuguese will be made available in Portuguese-speaking countries via the web portal E-libro (http://www.e-libro.com). The books, as well as publications from more than 150 international publishers including UNESCO, will now be accessible free of charge to thousands of computers in libraries, schools and universities in Portuguese-speaking African countries (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe) and Timor-Leste.

47th session of International Education Conference

“Quality education for all young people: challenges, trends and priorities” was the theme of the 47th Session of the International Conference on Education, organized by UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education in Geneva last September. Delegates from more than 135 countries attended the meeting and identified a range of priorities to improve the quality of education for all young people, including: the increased use of information and communication technology to improve access and equity for all young people to quality education; emphasis on innovating and creating, including the reform of educational delivery; affirmative action to compensate gender imbalance; recognition of the importance of teachers and trainers; increased research; and improved use of resources and better partnerships. The delegates also appealed for the mobilization of all partners in order to achieve this goal.

Saving the DRC’s Unique Ecosystems

Donors gathered at a conference held at UNESCO headquarters last September pledged over 40 million dollars to safeguard five sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo that are on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The conflicts that have ravaged the region and killed three million people have also inflicted serious damage on the unique ecosystems of these natural sites. They have also decimated certain animal species with commercial value, such as elephants and rhinos. Until now, efforts allocated to reinforce the protection of the sites have been thwarted by armed militia who attack park guards. Funds promised are designated to help Congolese institutions in charge of conservation. Donors attending the conference, however, stressed that the project’s success depends on greater involvement by local authorities and an end to the war in DRC.

The Sharjah Prize

The Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture for 2004 has been awarded to Tunisian researcher Abdelwahab Bouhdiba and Spanish historian Juan Vernet Ginés. Born in 1923 in Barcelona, Juan Vernet Ginés is a renowned specialist in Arab science and the evolution of science – especially astronomy and map-making – during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, a sociology professor at the University of Tunis and President of the Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Literature and Arts, is notably the author of La Sexualité en Islam (Sexuality in Islam), which has been translated in English, Arabic, Bosnian, Spanish and Japanese, and will soon be available in Portuguese.
The figures are staggering. Every day 8000 people die of AIDS and another 14000 are infected. With nearly 70 percent of the world’s 40 million people living with HIV, Africa is hardest-hit by the disease, and the continent’s women and children are most vulnerable. In sub-Saharan Africa almost six out of every ten people infected are women [p. 33].

And the virus continues its deadly progression almost everywhere, ignoring all borders and taking hold in areas which, until now, have been relatively untouched. In Eastern Europe for example, and notably in Russia, HIV/AIDS is rapidly gaining ground, especially amongst drug users [p. 35].

Considerable efforts have been made to prevent its spread, but have often proved ineffective. Despite being well informed of the dangers of AIDS, Kenyan truck drivers, caught in the trap of poverty and insecurity, are among those considered most at risk [p. 38].

However, there are signs of hope. Following the example set by Thailand [p. 40] several countries have introduced policies that have served to brake the spread of the disease. The diversification of prevention techniques has also paid dividends. From Delhi to Rio and Abidjan, popular television series based on AIDS help to relay information about the virus and the different problems it raises [p. 43].

Antiretroviral treatments are also giving new momentum to prevention efforts, in that they offer a new perspective to AIDS sufferers and encourage people to get tested. Eight years ago, Brazil implemented a policy of universal access to treatments, and the rate of new infections is now falling [p. 46].

But the battle is far from won. The World Health Organization and UNAIDS predict that unless prevention efforts are not dramatically increased, the number of or AIDS-infected people around the world will reach 45 million by 2010.
A SOCIAL DISEASE

Unknown 20 years ago, AIDS is now the number one cause of death among young adults in the world. The evolution of the epidemic has consistently exceeded the most pessimistic predictions. Today almost 40 million people are infected and AIDS orphans number more than 13 million.

In the absence of a vaccine or a treatment that can cure the disease, prevention remains the best antidote. WHO estimates that two-thirds of infections likely to occur between now and 2010 can be avoided if prevention strategies are reinforced. Much has already been done. Many countries have integrated AIDS education in school curricula. Millions of dollars have been invested in projects aimed at high-risk populations and campaigns for the general public. The city of Paris recently put up posters showing a tourist on a beach, surrounded by exotic beauties. Almost a banal souvenir postcard, except that the floral wreath he wears around his neck is a funeral wreath.

Despite all these efforts, ignorance about HIV/AIDS and its means of transmission remains daunting. In Mali, Benin and Haiti, 40% of young girls do not know how to protect themselves. (DHS, 1998-2002). Even people who are the most exposed often continue to deny the gravity of the disease. More than 90% of Haitian adolescents, for instance, think that the risk of their contracting the virus is low or even non-existent, when the country has one of the highest rates of the disease after sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS).

MISINFORMATION

Furthermore, inaccurate ideas about the virus and stigmatization of patients continue to flourish, even in developed countries. A study carried out in the US in 2000 shows that 40% of those questioned think they can be contaminated by sharing a glass of water with someone who has AIDS, or by his cough (UNAIDS). In these conditions, the recommendations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in June 2001 in the wake of the Millennium Summit seem practically unattainable. It is difficult to see how 90% of young people aged 15 to 24 will gain access, between now and 2005, to information and education and reduce their vulnerability to the virus.
To explain the failure to halt the spread of the epidemic, many have criticized the approach taken thus far as too moralistic, too simplistic, and not taking into account the pathology’s singular aspects. Experience has proved that mere information is not sufficient to change sexual behaviour. “We reacted to AIDS as we did to any public health problem, with the same rational information campaigns,” regrets Mary Crewe, director of the Centre for the Study of AIDS at the University of Pretoria (South Africa). “It’s not a disease like other diseases. We should have tried to better understand what governs sexuality and desire.”

Others also deplore the fact that emphasis was systematically put on changing individual behaviour rather than focusing on the disease’s social ramifications. “AIDS was long considered from a simply medical angle, without taking into account the social context in which it was developing,” analyzes Michael J. Kelly, former professor at the University of Zambia and a specialist on the relationship between HIV/AIDS and education. The virus, which is now primarily transmitted through heterosexual contact, infiltrates society through its weaknesses, striking the most vulnerable: the poor, women, ethnic minorities, migrants, youths. “AIDS takes advantage of war, lack of education, gender inequality. It is truly a social disease,” stresses Alexandra Draxler, programme specialist at the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).

**NO MAGIC BULLET FOR PREVENTION**

Experience does prove that prevention can work, but only under certain conditions. “There’s no magic bullet. We know that in order to get results, a policy of prevention has to work in several directions at the same time and be advocated by political leaders, health services, school and civil society,” explains Peter Aggleton, Dean of Research and Consultancy at London University’s Institute of Education and HIV/AIDS specialist. If a country as highly affected as Uganda has succeeded in significantly reducing the epidemic, it is because efforts were supported by political will at the highest level. The instituting of rigorous epidemiological controls, the mass distribution of condoms, the absence of taboo about the disease, and the commitment of...
political, community and religious leaders all contributed to the policy’s success.

School also emerges as a key factor in the fight against the virus, among other reasons because the 15-24 age group is the first to be hit. According to estimates, nearly half of new infections occur among young people under the age of 24, while statistics indicate that attending school decreases the risk of infection. A study conducted in Africa and Latin America shows that girls who have had schooling have their first sexual relations later and are more likely to insist that their partner use condoms (UNAIDS). In contrast, young people who have had little or no education are 2.2 times more likely to contract the virus than those who have finished primary school (World Bank).

The influence of school is such that experts often refer to the “education vaccine”. It is not only because AIDS information is available in schools. In a more general way, education gives young adults greater self-confidence and control over their lives. “School is a very effective social protection. It gives students the ability to process information they receive but also to become more empowered and independent, notably strengthening their capacity to resist peer pressure,” adds Michael Kelly.

THE “EDUCATION VACCINE”

Under these conditions, UNESCO’s role is crucial. Its 2004-2008 strategy for preventive HIV/AIDS education, elaborated in the context of its collaboration with UNAIDS, places education at the heart of preventive action. The goal is to give everyone the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and attitudes necessary to limit the impact of the virus, by working with ministries, NGOs and experts as well as teachers. The idea is to make sure that the message fits the targeted audience as closely as possible. “Social values, religion, family relationships all determine how a message will be interpreted. A campaign based on the idea of death will not have the same impact in a Christian country and a society that believes in reincarnation,” underlines Helena Drobna, assistant specialist for UNESCO’s Programme on Cultural Approach to HIV/AIDS.

Access to the new antiretroviral treatments is also an essential factor in prevention. Accordingly, one part of UNESCO’s strategy is devoted to access to care and education about treatment.
While no cure is available at present, existing drugs do increase life expectancy and quality of life for people infected with HIV/AIDS, and can incite those who have doubts about their HIV status to get tested. When treatment exists, an increase in consultations and voluntary testing is noted in many regions, according to WHO’s most recent World Health Report.

Nearly 6 million people currently need antiretroviral drugs. In 2003, only 400,000 of them received them. The “3 million by 2005” initiative launched by WHO to increase the number of patients receiving treatment is a tough challenge for the finances of countries and the international community, but the end justifies the means. “We have to act quickly and decisively,” insists Michael Kelly, “if we don’t want AIDS to become a disease of the poor.”

To what extent does HIV/AIDS affect the goals of Education for All?

HIV/AIDS is perhaps the biggest challenge in the face of EFA goals. The impact of the pandemic on schools is certainly much more extensive than we ever imagined. It affects the supply, the demand and the quality of education. In the most afflicted countries, teachers are often in the high-risk social groups. And as for the pupils, the regularity of their school attendance is notably reduced if they are infected by the virus, or if someone in their family is. Because then they have to work to help support their families. And on top of that, schools are not free from the discrimination exercised against people who are affected by HIV/AIDS.

At the same time, education remains the most effective means of preventing the disease. We can hope that this crisis situation the epidemic has caused, which is having disastrous effects on the institution, can also serve in the long run to bring about a reform of schools, for instance by promoting peer teaching, better adaptation of schedules to the rhythm of children’s lives, particularly in rural zones, or by acting to prevent discrimination.

The last UNAIDS report shows that the epidemic, instead of decreasing, is continually growing. In this context, what action should UNESCO take?

To eliminate the disease, it is not enough to advise people not to have sexual relations, or to use condoms. More in-depth work is needed. That is why UNESCO is pursuing its strategy of prevention education. And that means not only delivering a prevention message, but also inciting people to think about their lives and to make the right decisions. It involves teacher training, integration of HIV/AIDS-related issues in school curricula, and consideration of the social context in which the epidemic develops. Human rights, gender and poverty issues are crucial in understanding the disease. UNESCO also has a
role to play in treatment education. Furthermore, as part of its cooperation with UNAIDS, UNESCO has launched a new initiative that consists of providing education ministries with a “tool kit” of methods that have been tested and can be adapted to different contexts and countries.

This presupposes, however, political will at the highest level. What can be done when the political will is lacking?
When political leaders are elected, voters have a chance to act. What is essential, in all cases, is to succeed in breaking the silence. The Ugandan government has done this very effectively. It is an example to countries most affected by the virus. The media also has an important role to play. Everyone has to be made aware that HIV/AIDS is not somebody else’s problem. Very often, people start to feel concerned only when the disease hits those close to them. We have to get the message across before the situation becomes that dire.

“A NEW KIND OF VIRUS

Women are not only more vulnerable to the disease physiologically, they are also more fragile socially. Yet AIDS prevention programmes have been slow to focus specifically on their needs.

“Many of my friends would be alive today if they’d been as lucky as me,” Angeline Mugwendere states bluntly. A 24-year-old woman from Zimbabwe, now head of an organization that assists young women in rural areas, she knows she is privileged. An NGO paid her school fees, giving her access to secondary education. Some of her friends had no other choice but to give in to the advances of “sugar daddies”, older and wealthier, to finance their studies. That was how several of them contracted the virus.

Such stories are tragically commonplace. Ten years ago, women were less affected by the disease than men, but the trend has reversed in certain regions. In sub-Saharan Africa, 58% of the 29.4 million people now living with HIV/AIDS are women. The risk of infection for young African women is 2.5% per cent higher.
than for men. More vulnerable biologically – the risk of contamination from a man to a woman is estimated at twice that of a woman to a man – they are also more vulnerable socially.

The reason: in societies where men are dominant, women have little freedom of choice. “Young women like me who grow up in rural areas learn to be quiet and obedient, to work on the farm and around the house, to get married early and have children. That kind of education considerably reduces their capacity to negotiate with men,” confirms Angeline Mungwendere. Marriage does not protect them. Many women are infected by their husbands or steady boyfriends. A recent study conducted in Zimbabwe shows that only 11% of the women questioned thought they had the right to ask their husband to use a condom, even when the husband was unfaithful and HIV-positive.

PROGRAMMES NEED TO ADAPT TO WOMEN’S SITUATION

Yet prevention programmes have taken a long time to address women’s specific problems. “Most of them are based on abstinence, fidelity and use of condoms. These are not realistic options for women,” says Sally Smith of the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, an initiative launched last February by UNAIDS. The result is that rumours and myths about how the virus is transmitted persist. In Cambodia and Vietnam, 50% of women between the ages of 15 and 24 believe that a mosquito bite can cause infection.

In that context, education remains the best antidote. Women who know how to read and write are three times more likely than illiterate women to know that a healthy-looking person can be carrying the virus, and four times more likely to know how to protect themselves from AIDS (UNAIDS, World Bank, 2002).

Science may also provide another part of the solution. For the last several years, scientists have been working on developing vaginal microbicides. In the form of gel, lubricant or suppositories, these products could give women more control of their sexuality, despite the fact that they are apparently only 60% effective. But funds are lacking. “Research in this area is cruelly underfinanced,” says Sally Smith. US $775 million are needed to test existing products, and only US $343 million have been allocated.

Such an investment, however, seems crucial. In its 2004 report “Changing History” the World Health Organization warns that women’s disproportionate mortality rate is leading to an imbalance in the adult population, with as-yet unforeseen consequences.
RUSSIAN FEDERATION: A QUESTION OF ATTITUDE

According to the 2004 UNAIDS report, Russia is one of the countries where the epidemic is spreading the fastest. The number of new cases recorded in 2000 is almost twice the previous total since 1987. Yet the importance of the disease continues to be widely underestimated.

Pavel doesn’t really know how he contracted the HIV virus. It could have been when he was sharing needles in the metro underground with other addicts. Or during unprotected homosexual intercourse, the proceeds of which provided him with enough money to feed his addiction. Whichever it was, Pavel is a physical wreck. Unable to work, he lives on a meager government pension in a run-down apartment on the outskirts of Moscow and is struggling at age 22 to see his way forward to any sort of future.

His plight is repeated hundreds of times over in Russia, but people don’t really care. The recent World AIDS day “memorial March” in Moscow saw a small turnout and little media coverage. “We don’t have an AIDS problem” said Maria Zhakarova, an office worker and member of Russia’s burgeoning middle class. “Why would I go to a memorial day for AIDS victims when I know no one who has died of the disease? None of my friends are gay” she added.

Maria’s attitude is by no means unusual. When it first emerged in the former Soviet Union, AIDS was restricted largely to homosexuals, sex workers and prisoners. The picture, however, is changing, and faster than officials can cope with. The rate of infection from heterosexual sex has...
quadrupled from 5% in 2001 to 20% in 2003. The overcrowded conditions many city people live in, added to poverty and a prevailing sense of despair among the poorest, explain the progression to a certain degree. Fatal ignorance about the infection also contributes. According to certain studies, fewer than 60% of sexually active people think that condoms provide protection from the virus.

More women are becoming infected and as a result the number of mother-to-child infections has sharply escalated. And with a dire working class economic problem still predominant, prostitution is increasing almost as rapidly as the infection. Encouraging men to wear condoms doesn’t appear to be a major priority either in a nation where condom use has traditionally been low and sex education frowned upon by both the Orthodox Church and parents.

**HIGHEST RATE OF NEW INFECTIONS CURRENTLY IN RUSSIA**

Still, it is infection rates amongst intravenous drug users which remains most worrisome: the annual growth rate of drug users is 5% and their number is currently estimated at between 2 and 2 and a half million people. Meanwhile, substitute drugs such as Methadone are illegal in Russia, and doctors are often quoted saying that installing dispensers for sterile syringes would only encourage drug abuse.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that UNAIDS claims the former Soviet republics have the highest growth of HIV infections in any part of the world today. Indeed, the US National Intelligence Council, which advises the US President, believes that Russia could have 8 million new HIV infections in the next decade. That would equal 10% of the Russian workforce.

Yet only 280,000 HIV and AIDS cases are registered officially in Russia, though the figure is probably much, much higher. According to Vadim Pokrovsky, Federal AIDS Centre official and a long-time AIDS activist, it is close to 1 million. With negative population growth in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet state, the economic impact of the AIDS epidemic will be acutely felt. Not only will the virus cause loss in human capital and productivity: the annual cost of retrovirals will impact heavily on the health budget. The World Bank estimates that treatment costs are unsustainable at current prices (World Bank, Russia Office, 2002).

The key to lowering infection rates is education. But as Pokrovsky notes: “We spend $1 million per year on awareness programs. We should be spending $70 million.”

A Russian doctor, trained in epidemiology, told me anonymously that there is virtually no information on the virus available to the medical profession. “People walk through the door every day with AIDS-like symptoms and a lot of the time doctors at my polyclinic don’t recognize that the person they are looking at is HIV positive. They just treat the symptoms. Anyway, even if they knew, what could they prescribe?” said this dispirited doctor.
Although pessimism is never in short supply in Russia, what is called for in the fight against AIDS in this country is hope that can turn into action. Few would disagree. Not even office worker Maria. But harnessing minds — and with them, hearts — is the challenge.

Says Pavel: “I am not a leper. I am not a bad person. I have AIDS. I need drugs. That’s it! It’s simple. So why can’t people just understand and accept the situation?”

Monica Attard
in Moscow

The most rapid spread of the virus is among drug users

Agenda

In observance of World AIDS Day on December 1, several events will take place at UNESCO.

- Sida Info Service and UNESCO are organizing, on November 20 at Paris headquarters, an evening of solidarity entitled “Africain(e)s d’ici et de là-bas unis pour vaincre le sida” (Africans from here and there united to conquer AIDS). Under the patronage of the French National Commission for UNESCO, the event aims to raise awareness in African communities living in France.

- On December 1, a major concert will be held at UNESCO in the context of 50th anniversary commemorations of the death of German orchestra conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler. Proceeds from ticket sales will go towards financing AIDS prevention education projects.
Unshaven, scowling, his face drawn with fatigue, Rashid Ahmed shakes his head disapprovingly. Leaning on his truck, a tired and dented old Iveco, the long-distance driver recites the list of his colleagues who have died because of what he calls their “lack of discipline on the road”. The man with the greying hair, who has spent more than 20 years driving back and forth on the roads of East and Central Africa, isn’t referring to traffic accidents. He’s talking about AIDS.

“Places like this,” he grumbles, as he loads sacks of cement into his truck, “You find all along the road. Guys stop here to fill up on gas and alcohol and buy themselves girls. And you know the rest.” The place is Naivasha, a truck-stop town on the edge of the Rift Valley, some 80 kilometres from Nairobi. Every day dozens of trucks pull up for the night. In the streets,

In Kenya, an estimated 40% of truck drivers are HIV positive.

A truck driver’s life doesn’t stop being dangerous at sunset. Nights are risky too, in the stopover towns along Kenya’s major highways.
close to the shops and the bars with the garish signs, women aged 16 to 35 hang around, on the lookout for a potential client.

In Kenya, on the only road that links Mombasa to Rusia, there are no less than a dozen towns like Naivasha. For the drivers, far from home for weeks on end, the street women are a great temptation. With dire epidemiological results. UNAIDS considers truck drivers a high-risk population and a significant vector for the spread of the virus. Kenya fits the pattern. The rate of infection is estimated at 40% among the drivers, compared to 12% in the general population.

PREVENTION ON THE ROAD

In Naivasha, nearly everyone is aware of the reality of AIDS. But they place the responsibility elsewhere. Drivers tend to blame the promiscuity of the prostitutes. “For three beers, you can buy a girl for half an hour. In one night, she might go with five drivers, so if she’s infected, it’s a disaster,” Joseph Marenya, a seasonal driver, calls out from the cab of his truck.

As for the women, they talk about the drivers’ reluctance to use condoms. “After all those hours taking risks on the road, it’s another gamble for the Mambuyus (drivers). They don’t want to put on condoms. Some of them flatly refuse,” says Joyce Njambi, an adolescent who works in a beauty salon during the day and at night as a prostitute. “We know about prostitution and AIDS being dangerous,” adds another young girl, barely 20, who calls herself Lucy. “But what does that mean compared to an empty stomach?”

Initiatives have been launched to combat the problem. All along the truck routes, large billboards warn against the risk of AIDS and recall the means of protection. The government’s programme to fight against AIDS and control sexually transmissible diseases, NASCOP, has conducted several information campaigns aimed at truckers. The Kenya Long Distance Truck Drivers’ Union has also tried to draw its members’ attention to the risks of unprotected sex with prostitutes. It cooperates with an American NGO, Africans United Against Aids Globally (AUAAG), to set up prevention centres all along Kenya’s key highways. Four reception centres have already opened on the Nairobi-Mombasa route. Drivers can pick up information brochures, advice and free condoms.

The campaigns, however, are slow in achieving results. Though drivers are generally informed about the disease, a number of them continue to ignore it. Besides, the miserable pay and dreadful working conditions inflicted by the trucking companies keep drivers in a precarious state that also nurtures the epidemic. “It’s a long-term campaign,” admits the head of NASCOP, Dr Kenneth Chebet. “But it will pay off in the long run.”

Hands covered in cement dust, Rashid Ahmed is ready to take to the road again with his load. “You can’t prevent men in their prime from having sex on the road,” he says. “You have to give them condoms, force information on them, make them realize the part they play in spreading AIDS. It’s the only way.”

Bogonko Bosire
in Nairobi
Using draconian methods, Thai authorities managed to reduce the epidemic in rather spectacular fashion. But warning signals seem to be flashing again.

Sporting a perpetual grin, Khun likes to make conversation as he drives his songthaew, a collective taxi that cruises the streets of Chiang Mai, second largest city in the country about 800 kilometres from Bangkok. A cheerful man, unfazed by the suffocating heat that weighs on the city at the start of the rainy season or by the uninterrupted roar of traffic, Khun is telling the story of his life. His life before, when he was a dishwasher in a London hotel, or his life now, with his wife, two daughters…and his mistresses. Khun confides that sometimes he has adventures. What about AIDS? In response he opens the glove compartment and takes out a box of condoms, hidden behind a jumble of music tapes and old papers. “I never go out without them,” he says, holding up the box.

Khun, 43, is part of that generation of Thais hardest hit by the epidemic. Between the mid-1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the virus spread throughout the country at devastating speed, particularly in the northern region, which remains the most affected by the disease. In 1988, the percentage of drug addicts infected with the virus went from 0 to 30% in six months. Just in Chiang Mai, a 1989 study showed that 44% of the prostitutes were HIV-positive. In 1991, at the height of the epidemic, 143,000 new infections were counted in the country’s population of 62 million.

TOUGH TACTICS TO HALT INFECTION

Starting in 1991, Thai authorities reacted vigorously to the crisis. Owners of brothels, nightclubs, hotels used by prostitutes and massage parlours were ordered to impose the use of condoms, or risk having their businesses closed down. At the same time, ads about the dangers of the virus and how to be protected against it were aired constantly on radio and TV. "If the strategy worked, it was because commitment at the highest level of government was behind it, relayed
in the community by numerous actors, from policemen to military to NGOs,” adds Sompong Charoensuk, country programme adviser of UNAIDS in Bangkok.

Consequently, the number of new infections was divided by six, reaching 23,673 in 2002. And people’s behavior evolved, in a country where men tend to have extramarital affairs. The use of condoms during paid sexual relations rose from 14% in 1989 to more than 90% five years later. Another example, the percentage of enlisted men patronizing prostitutes dropped from 60% in 1991 to 25% in 1995. For all these reasons, Thailand was held up as a model in the region, particularly in comparison with some of its neighbours, like India, where the virus is spreading at an explosive rate. UNAIDS considers Thailand as one of the few success stories in the fight against the disease.

**BUDGET CUTS**

Yet while the statistics are undeniable, the practical reality is more ambiguous. First because the economic crisis that struck Asia in 1997 provoked serious cuts in the budget allocated to fighting AIDS. Many organizations had to close down for lack of funding. The distribution of free condoms in places of prostitution was suspended. And the effects of slackened effort in prevention are being keenly felt. The Ministry of Education, despite its crucial role in prevention, has limited involvement. “[Teachers are expected to teach prevention in the classroom, but either because they are shy or they lack training, they often don’t,” explains Alice Schmidt, from the UNESCO office in Bangkok. “And if they’ve all heard of the virus, some very high-level education officials know very little about the disease.”

In Chiang Mai, the idea of Thailand as an
exemplary case is being called into question by some. “The numbers concerning new infections are seriously underestimated,” according to the head of an NGO who prefers to remain anonymous. “And men around here continue to think that using a condom is an insult to their manhood.”

Now considered among the new high-risk categories are young people, homosexuals and drug addicts, as well as ethnic minorities and migrants. “In my country, Myanmar, many villagers go seek their fortune in the big cities of Thailand,” says Muang, a young Buddhist monk from the state of Shan. “When some of them return, they die of malaria or tuberculosis. They don’t know they are carrying the virus.”

**DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AIDS PATIENTS**

Muang is in Chang Mai to attend a three-day workshop on AIDS. In the old Wat Pa Pao temple, sheltered from the noise and incessant bustle of the city, some 30 monks and novices are silently taking notes. On the blackboard is a drawing of a ship. Aboard are pregnant women, workers, prostitutes, drug addicts, migrants and children. The question the monks are given to ponder: if there is a storm, who should be the first to be thrown overboard? The prevention work done by the Sangha Metta project, the NGO organizing these workshops, is based on Buddhist principles. The idea is that the monks will go back to their communities to participate in prevention efforts and contribute to reducing stigmatization.

In a country where nearly a million people are infected, rejection of those afflicted remains chronic. Cases of employees fired or students expelled because they are HIV-positive are not rare. “Stigmatization is less pronounced in rural areas that are heavily affected by the disease, simply because it’s become a daily reality,” explains Gareth Lavell, director of the Rejoice Urban Development Projects, an organization that distributes drugs to people who are ill. “But in cities, the number of schools that will take an HIV-positive child can be counted on one hand.” On the eve of the 15th International AIDS Conference in Bangkok last July, a 4-star hotel in the capital had no qualms about separating clients according to their HIV status: those who were positive were asked to take their meals separately.

Yet with the support of the statistics, Thai authorities continue to defend their country’s success. “Thailand is still today a very good example of what can be done to stop the epidemic,” insists Sompong Charoensuk. Only as long, however, as prevention efforts continue, particularly in regard to young people. Otherwise, Thailand may cease to be a good example.

*Agnès Bardon in Chiang Mai*
Amidst romantic intrigue and action scenes, television series are promoting prevention without being obvious. With surprising results in the ratings.

Will Sipho, handsome black male nurse, fall for sexy Ayanda, a doctor in the clinic where he works, or go back to his ex-girlfriend Chantal? The question kept South African TV viewers on the edge of their seats for weeks. Young and seductive, members of the post-apartheid society, the characters of the series “Soul City” know the pitfalls of love and betrayal. But what really sets this soap opera apart is that on the fringes of the usual romance novel plot, it brings up serious issues, the most prominent being AIDS. In this case, Sipho, who finally proposes to Chantal, learns that she is HIV-positive. Initially, he is shocked by the news, but finally decides to stay with her.

Since it was first aired in 1994, “Soul City” has known unflagging popularity. Every week more than 13 million viewers, most of them black, are glued to their screens. And yet the series was invented not by a screenwriter or a network, but by an NGO. The production and creative aspects are the work of a private television company, but the content is defined by the eminently serious Institute for Health and Development Communication (IHDC).

“Every episode takes a great deal of preparation,” explains Sue Goldstein, director of research at IHDC. “We organize outside discussion groups on a regular basis, preferably in underprivileged areas. That’s where we identify issues. Then we work with the producers and...”
Once the script has been written, it is presented to discussion groups, community activists and people living with HIV for further assessment. The result is a high level of realism that mixed with a skilfully concocted romantic intrigue has succeeded in attracting millions of regular viewers.

A HIT WITH VIEWERS

“Soul City” is not the only TV series to blend education and entertainment. In the last several years, fiction has increasingly been used to communicate messages about prevention, with unexpected ratings success. In India, the series “Jasoos Vijay”, aired every Sunday night for the last two years, is now one of the most watched TV shows in the country. The detective Jasoos Vijay is typically brave, he likes action, he flirts with his pretty female partner and he always gets the bad guy. This hero, who is very popular in India’s rural areas, does have one unusual characteristic for the genre: he is HIV-positive. In Brazil, homeland of the telenovela, AIDS has also made its appearance in certain soap operas. “Malhação”, show for young audiences, increased its ratings after one of the adolescents in the series found out that he was HIV-positive.

Popular as they are, television series are an excellent means of conveying information, particularly because they do not address the rational part of our personalities. “Issues that have to do with love and sex depend on very complex emotional processes,” explains Sue Goldstein. “It is not enough to tell people ‘you have to use condoms’ to make them do it. But a series can explore sexual questions in all their emotional complexity.” Programs of this kind elicit strong feelings of identification with the characters and situations, adds Mary Myers, independent consultant in communication development and author of a study on the topic. “This identification facilitates discussion and can help bring about changes in behaviour.”

There is evidence that these shows have impact. In Japan, while the series “Kamisama Mo Sukoshidake” was on the air, portraying a female student who becomes infected with the virus after prostituting herself, the number of HIV tests doubled. Another example: a poll of TV viewers in Cote d’Ivoire showed that those who had watched at least ten episodes of the series “Sida dans la
UNESCO has been active in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention education for well over a decade. Its activities throughout this period include:

**1990**
The Section for Preventive Education developed a conceptual framework for identifying strategies and priority areas for prevention education programmes.

**1993**
UNESCO entered into a collaborative project with the World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention. Publication, jointly with WHO, of *School health education to prevent AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases*, a resource package for curriculum planners, adapted to different socio-cultural contexts.

**1994-98**
Development of national prevention programmes.

**1998**
UNESCO launched, in cooperation with UNAIDS, a project entitled *A Cultural Approach to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care*. Country-specific and thematic studies, training and sensitization workshops as well as pilots projects have been carried out since.

**1999**
UNESCO/UNAIDS launched a youth initiative on HIV/AIDS and human rights.

**2000**

**2001**

**2002**

**2003**


**2004**

**FINANCING FROM DONORS**
Consequently, soap operas are being taken seriously by funding agencies, which are a main source of financing. The Institute for Health and Development Communication, creator of “Soul City”, gets most of its budget from foreign donors like the European Union, Japan or Great Britain. The Indian series “Jasoos Vijay” was made thanks to the sponsorship of the National Aids Control Organization (NACO) and the BBC World Service Trust.

Television series can therefore succeed where many official campaigns have failed, but only if health and social structures are keeping up with them. “To reach their goal, producers must cooperate with the health services and with actors in the community,” stresses Mary Myers. “It’s useless for the hero of a TV series to demonstrate the importance of getting tested if the test is unavailable or beyond the means of the majority of viewers.”

Agnès Bardon

“A” were much more likely to use a condom than those who hadn’t.

© Soul City Institute of Health and Development Communication

The South African series Soul city was one of the first to mix entertainment with information
By combining prevention campaigns and free access to drug treatment, Brazil has successfully curbed the AIDS epidemic.

Explosive. That was the word to describe the AIDS epidemic in Brazil. In 1992, the World Bank predicted that the number of cases would exceed one million in the year 2000. The demographic growth of Brazil, a country of nearly 170 million people, heightened fears of an epidemic comparable to that sweeping Africa. But while Brazil is one of the countries in Latin America that has been hardest hit by the disease, with more than 600,000 people living with HIV, the numbers are far below the catastrophic forecasts made 10 years ago. The country has even become a point of reference for numerous developing countries in the throes of the epidemic. The daring policy adopted by the authorities in Brasilia - based on active prevention campaigns and, since 1996, the free distribution of anti-retroviral drugs to those who are sick - has turned out to be particularly effective.

Currently, 140,000 Brazilians, or nearly all of those who are aware that they have the disease, are receiving free medication. Result: the AIDS-related death rate has been cut in half since 1997. And contrary to what some people feared, the widespread access to treatment has not had an adverse effect on prevention. The number of new HIV infections stood at 22,000 in 2003, down from 25,000 in the 1990s. In addition, the incidence of high-risk behavior has dropped. For example, the percentage of soldiers who use a condom when having sex with a paid partner increased from 69 percent in 1999 to 77 percent in 2002.

“It’s impossible to carry out prevention efforts
today and not pay attention to treatment issues. It makes no sense to convince people to be careful if you don’t treat those who are sick,” says Alexandre Granjeiro, the national coordinator of Brazil’s program to fight AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), which is overseen by the country’s health ministry. However, implementing such an innovative policy did not come easily. From 1997, Brazil began producing generic versions of anti-retroviral drugs that were not, or were no longer, protected by patents. For the treatments still under patent protection, the government battled it out with the world’s major pharmaceutical groups to obtain price cuts of 40 to 70 percent.

400 MILLION CONDOMS

Meanwhile, prevention efforts were not neglected. Brazil distributes the most free condoms of any country in the world. Each year, the government offers some 400 million condoms to prison inmates, drug addicts, young people and military recruits. Beyond efforts targeting transsexuals, prostitutes, homosexuals and truck drivers, the health ministry runs a major nationwide awareness campaign three times a year. Two years ago, one television ad showed a guardian angel waiting for a young man to come home from a night out at Carnaval. Annoyed, the guardian angel told the young partygoer that he could not protect him from all his mistakes, and that he could certainly do nothing for him if he failed to use a condom. “Our policy is based on two ideas. The first aims to make information about HIV/AIDS widely available, the second aims to drive home the idea that using a condom is the most effective way to prevent infection,” explains Alexandre Granjeiro.

But Brazil’s success is also due to the mobilization of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). “This dynamic approach was a deciding factor because civil society can reach people that the government is not used to dealing with. And it so happens that in Brazil, as opposed to in other countries where they have to fight for their rights, transsexuals, prostitutes and homosexuals are very organized,” explains Cristina Raposo, who runs the AIDS programs at the UNESCO office in Brasilia.

The lack of taboos about sex in Brazilian society was also a definite plus. With UNESCO’s help, the government recently launched a pilot program to hand out condoms in high schools. The goal is that by 2006, some 2.5 million teenagers will have access to them. Elsewhere, such an initiative would have caused a major stir. In Brazil, no one said anything at all.

Lisandra Paraguassu
in Brasilia

Since 1997, Brazil has been producing generic versions of anti-retroviral drugs that are not, or no longer, patented

All patients in Brazil get free medicine.
Result: the mortality rate from AIDS has been cut in half since 1997
Globo TV, the Brazilian television network, and UNESCO Brazil signed a protocol of cooperation last April that will allow them to join forces on such projects as the Criança Esperança campaign. Launched in 1986 by Rede Globo, it has already raised more than 40 million dollars to finance some 4,850 projects for the benefit of more than 2.7 million Brazilian children and adolescents, and has inspired similar campaigns in Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador. The Globo-UNESCO partnership will also concern other projects such as Globo e Universidade, Amigos da Escola (Friends of School) that aims to reinforce the role of schools as community cultural centres, Abrindo Espaços (Open Spaces) that opens public schools on weekends to facilitate access to culture, sport and other leisure activities, Ação Global, Geração de Paz and others. Joint projects will be organized to reduce violence and provide AIDS prevention education.

UNESCO Global Alliance – Maxilivres

BOOKS FOR AFRICA

The group Culture and Development has received a donation of over 21,000 euros following a joint project undertaken by UNESCO in collaboration with the publisher and bookseller Maxilivres. This chain of bookstores, with outlets in France and Belgium, held a special sale for a week last April in the run-up to the World Book and Copyright Day. Culture and Development will use the proceeds of the event to buy books produced by African publishers, which will then be donated to the poorest libraries of Senegal. This project forms part of the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity, a UNESCO programme aimed at supporting the growth of the culture industry in developing countries. During the ceremony in which the donation was made, the president and director general of Maxilivres, Xavier Chambón, voiced his wish that “this joint experience with UNESCO be repeated as part of the next World Book Day,” due to take place on April 23, 2005.

A new partnership between UNESCO and the Japanese Television channel NHK will see the co-production and broadcast of some 200 short television programmes that will form the core of a new Heritage Image Archives Initiative. The Initiative aims to produce quality three-dimensional moving images and reconstruction images, using state-of-the-art digital visual and sound processing technology. At the same time, a data base system will be built that will allow such images to be utilised for various projects, such as DVDs and other audio-visual packages, public exhibitions, new types of exhibitions using virtual reality systems, and production of quality replicas for exhibition and academic uses. Furthermore, this database and other related databases will be connected through network systems in order to promote international exchange of educational and academic research across the globe.

All programmes co-produced within the framework of the agreement will be shot on HDTV, a cutting edge digital television technology that generates high definition crystal-clear images on wide screens. Several heritage sites will be shot by NHK from an airship, which will travel from Europe to Japan. The airship will be presented at the 2005 Aichi Exposition.

An advisory committee, chaired by UNESCO Goodwill ambassador Professor Ikuo Hirayama and made up of members of UNESCO’s secretariat, representatives of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO and renowned Japanese heritage specialists, will supervise programme content.
Teams from Azerbaijan and Nigeria, Germany and Kuwait, and Fiji and the Czech Republic are the winners of the DaimlerChrysler-UNESCO “Mondialogo School Contest”. They were selected by an international jury from among 50 finalists from 36 countries, who were invited to attend and present their work at a symposium held in Barcelona last September to close this first edition of the contest.

First place was awarded to the partner team from Azerbaijan and Nigeria, who developed a joint intercultural game and illustrated their daily life for their partner school in pictures.

The German team took second place with their partner school from Kuwait. Under their project, the students created an adaptation of William Shakespeare’s play “The Tempest”, in which the action in the play is transferred to Berlin’s Zoo Station and a central location in Kuwait. The highlight of the project work came with performances of the play in Berlin and Kuwait.

Third prize went to the school partnership from Fiji and the Czech Republic, for a survey conducted by the school students from the Czech Republic in which the young people compared lifestyles in the two countries and published them on their website. In addition, the Fijian team designed a colourful album to describe traditional elements of their culture.

A Special Prize was awarded to a partner team from Ghana and Mexico. The students wrote a song about the deadly disease of AIDS and the beauty of life.

More than 24,000 school students in 1,466 teams from 126 countries took part in the “Mondialogo School Contest”. Their key task was to develop a creative project with the school students from their partner school.

The “Mondialogo School Contest” is part of the initiative “Mondialogo – Intercultural Dialogue and Exchange”, which was launched in October 2003 by DaimlerChrysler and UNESCO in order to promote more understanding, respect and tolerance between civilizations and to encourage young people of differing cultural backgrounds to communicate with each other.
Manu Dibango (Cameroon), one of Africa’s most renowned popular musicians joined the ranks of UNESCO’s Artists for Peace on May 27, “in recognition of his exceptional contribution to the development of the arts, of peace and to dialogue among the world’s cultures.”

Mr Momaday is the founder of the Buffalo Trust, which is working with UNESCO to create Community Multimedia Centres in partnership with Native American communities in the USA, to help safeguard and revitalize the intangible heritage of the American Indians, using traditional and electronic communication technologies.


Japanese ballerina Miyako Yoshida was appointed UNESCO Artist for Peace on Wednesday, July 21st “in recognition of her outstanding contribution to classical dance and for her devotion to the cause of the Organization’s goals and aims, in the field of its programme for arts education”.

Miyako Yoshida began studying dance at the age of nine. After training in Tokyo, she moved to London in 1983 to study at the Royal Ballet School. Promoted in 1988 to the rank of principal dancer at the Sadler’s Wells Royal Ballet (now the Birmingham Royal Ballet), Miyako Yoshida joined the Royal Ballet...
in 1995. During the course of her career, she has won various prizes and honors including “Dancer of the Year” in 1991. She has displayed her immense talent in starring roles in the world’s great ballets including Swan Lake, Romeo and Juliet, Giselle, Cinderella, Don Quixote and Coppelia.

Along with her artistic work, Miyako Yoshida teaches classical dance and would like to support UNESCO’s programme for arts education and the training of professional artists.

The complete list of UNESCO’s Artists for Peace and Goodwill Ambassadors is available on line at: www.unesco.org/goodwill

For the third consecutive year, the BNP Paribas Cup – Stade Français tennis tournament, organized by the Stade Français and the BNP financial group, took place under the auspices of UNESCO. More than 300 young tennis players - ages 12 to 14, from more than 60 countries - participated in the event, nicknamed “Junior Roland Garros”. During the competition, UNESCO put on a series of activities at the tournament site, located in the Paris suburbs. Between matches, young players could find out about values linked to education, science and culture and understand their essential role in development. They could also sign up for workshops on doping, learning about values and cultural diversity through sport, and non-violence. For the first time this year, the finals were played on the central court at Roland Garros. The boys’ cup was won by Nassim Silla (France) and the girls’ cup by Renee Reinhard (Netherlands).
Tea in the Sahara

Suspended for 23 years, the Tan-Tan Moussem reincarnates as a showcase for Moroccan intangible heritage
Do you know how we treat a broken bone? Bury the person in sand. The bone sets itself,” the Saharawi herbalist in charge of the traditional medicine tent cheerfully informs a visitor from France. Then he explains various remedies on display, effective for common ailments from indigestion to bronchitis. The scene was this year’s Tan-Tan Moussem, or traditional festival, held in the southern Morocco town from September 13 to 19, which brought together several thousand Sahara nomads from more than 30 tribes to show off their unique customs and folklore. Other Moussem attractions included fantasias - galloping horsemen firing rifles in perfect synchronicity – as well as sleek racing camels, story telling and poetry reading in dialect, ululating young women in bridal finery and antique silver jewelry, and musicians and dancers from as far away as Mali and Mauritania.

The Tan-Tan Moussem used to be a major social, commercial and cultural event for the desert tribes, held annually in honor of revered holy man Saint Sidi Mohamed Laghdef, but it died out in the 1970s. At the instigation of Spanish explorer and goodwill ambassador Kitin Munoz, UNESCO sponsored its revival in the context of the organization’s promotion of oral and intangible cultural heritage.
particularly of endangered ethnic groups. This year’s version reestablished the Tan-Tan Moussem as tribal get-together, cultural crossroads, tourist attraction and tribute to the nomad’s ancient, ephemeral way of life.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EXCHANGE

More than just a colourful celebration, it was a rare opportunity for exchange between desert people and a variety of distinguished visitors. At the closing festivities on September 18, presided by Morocco’s Prince Moulay Rachid and UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura, actresses Claudia Cardinale, Marisa Berenson (both UNESCO goodwill ambassadors) and Isabelle Adjani were among the VIPs mingling with nomads, ministers, diplomats and local dignitaries. The guests from Europe, some donning Saharawi dress for the day, toured exhibition tents depicting tribal life. Food preparation, weaving, saddle-making and other crafts, popular games, tribal arbitration and Koranic education were illustrated as well as medicine.

“The living testimony of the Saharawi oral and artistic cultures that we are able to discover at the Tan-Tan Moussem is a lesson of knowledge and creativity from which we have much to learn,” said Mr Matsuura in his speech. He congratulated Morocco on its efforts, and expressed the hope that Morocco would be among the first countries - there are already five - to ratify UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Cathy Nolan
THE FUTURE OF VALUES

“Can we hold to the vision of a universal project compatible with the multiplicity of our heritages and enriched by their interwoven histories?” This is one of the key questions addressed in this second anthology originating from UNESCO’s “21st century Talks”, orchestrated by Jérôme Bindé, Director of UNESCO’s Division of Foresight, Philosophy and Human Sciences and Deputy Assistant Director-General for the Social Sciences Sector.

It brings together about 50 renowned scientists, researchers and thinkers from a range of disciplines – legal experts, anthropologists, astrophysicists, historians, sociologists, biologists, geneticists, linguists, writers, psychoanalysts and philosophers – who set out to redefine and anticipate tomorrow’s values, and reflect on the direction these values may lead humanity.

The volume is divided into four chapters: The Future of Values, Globalization, New technologies and Culture; Towards New Social Contracts?, and Science, Knowledge and Foresight: Each section comprises a series of articles that can be read separately. But the publication is more than a series of brilliant presentations. It has its own logic and structure, which only reveals itself when the book is taken as a whole.

The Future of Values is also an example, par excellence, of UNESCO’s role to serve as a forum for ethical discussion. “At the dawn of the twenty-first century,” writes Jérôme Bindé in his introduction, “at a time when attempts to reappropriate values seem to have foundered – whether in relation to revolutionary schemes of political emancipation or ventures into the realm of philosophical, spiritual, ideological or political renewal; when certain prophets of doom are proclaiming the advent of ‘post-humanity’, not to say of the inhuman; when tragic events leave us disoriented and discredit the hypothesis of the ‘end of History’; and when societies are mobilized in the search for new ethical codes, UNESCO could not fail to address the question of the future of values from a forward-looking philosophical standpoint.”

The Future of Values 21st Century Talks
Edited by Jérôme Bindé
352 pp.
2004,
ISBN 92-3-203946-X
UNESCO Publishing/Berghahn Books
21.50 €
UNESCO TOOLKIT OF LEARNING AND TEACHING MATERIALS


The overall objective of this toolkit is to provide comprehensive training material on the innovation, application, installation, operation, monitoring and evaluation, management maintenance and rehabilitation of PV systems as well as providing useful information for advocacy, awareness raising, innovation, policy and planning. It contains comprehensive technical, educational and geographical coverage. It provides a complete course in PV applications for rural electrification at three levels: instructor, senior technician and field technician. This toolkit is based on experience gained in the Pacific, where solar photovoltaics and rural electrification were pioneered in the 1970s and 1980s.

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SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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By Herbert A. Wade
196 pp., 27 x 21 cm
2003,
ISBN 92-3-103903-2
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GEOTHERMAL ENERGY: UTILIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY

A concise but complete description of geothermal phenomena and geothermal exploitation. Features include a comprehensive introduction to the nature, classification and distribution of geothermal resources; a description of geothermal electricity generation and non-electric uses; an analysis of the potential impact of geothermal energy utilization on the environment, and socio-economic and regulatory aspects. This publication will appeal to under- and post-graduate students in power engineering, mechanical engineering and physics who wish to further their knowledge in geothermal applications.

Edited by Julián Blanco Gálvez and Sixto Malato Rodríguez
208 pp.,
27 x 21 cm
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Immeuble Stamatides, (2nd floor), Avenue de l’Independence, BP 12090,
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E-mail: yaounde@unesco.org

Cameroun
Immeuble Stamatides, (2nd floor), Avenue de l’Independance, BP 12090,
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UNESCO Regional Office for Science
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A gift from Ecuador to UNESCO in 1993, the mural by Oswaldo Guayasamin adorns the entrance to the Executive Boardroom. In 1976, the Ecuadorian artist (1919-1999) described his style in these words: « I have painted for half a century as if I were crying in desperation. And my cry was added to all the other cries expressing the humiliation and anxiety of our era. »