UNESCO the Courier

PEOPLE AND PLACES
Berlin, the island that was

PLANET
The Kakadu affair shakes the heritage world

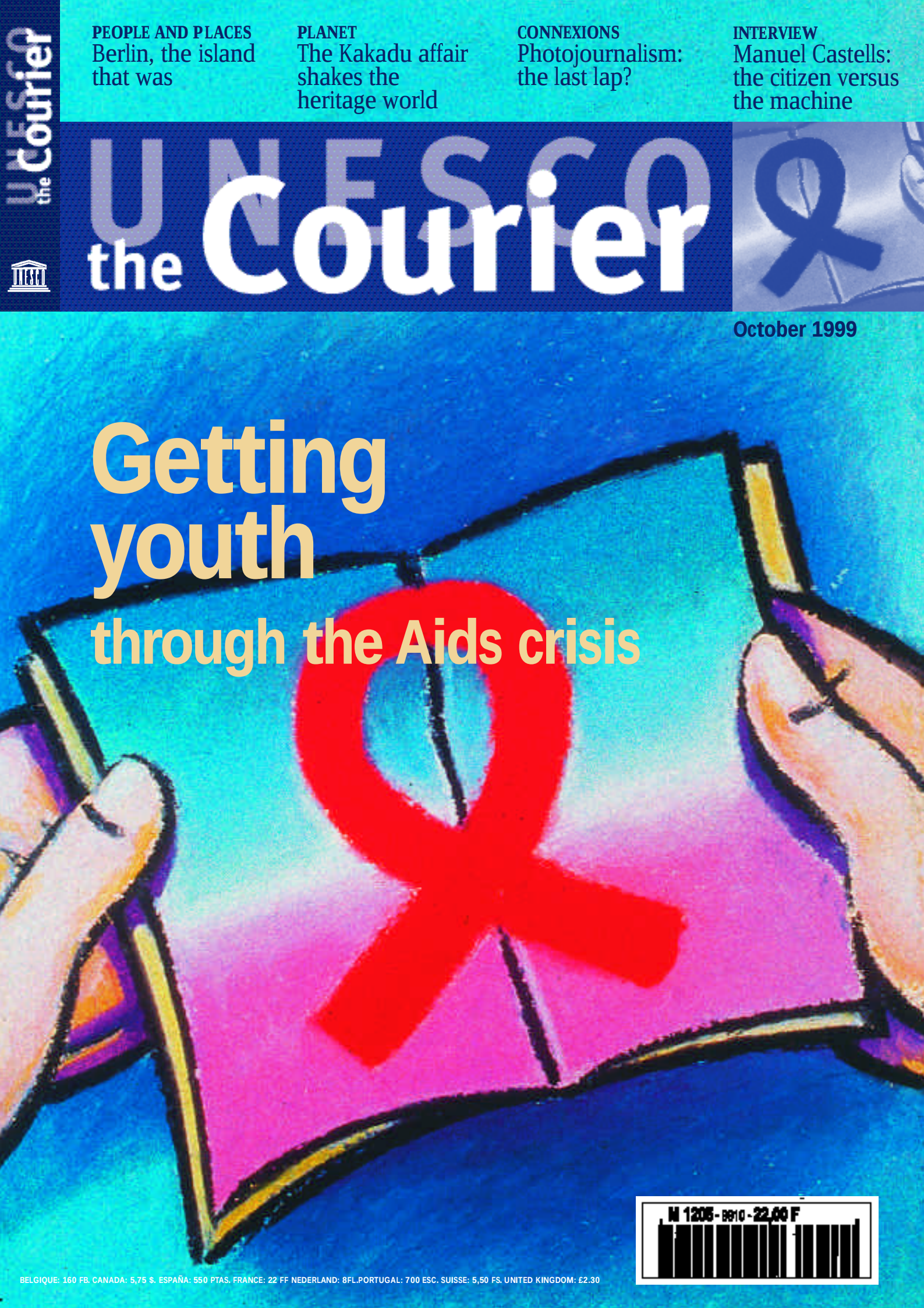
CONNEXIONS
Photojournalism: the last lap?

INTERVIEW
Manuel Castells: the citizen versus the machine

UNESCO the Courier

October 1999

Getting youth through the Aids crisis



M 1205 - 9910 - 22,00 F

BELGIQUE: 160 FB. CANADA: 5,75 $. ESPAÑA: 550 PTAS. FRANCE: 22 FF NEDERLAND: 8FL.PORTUGAL: 700 ESC. SUISSE: 5,50 FS. UNITED KINGDOM: £2.30

Contents

October 1999

Cover: © UNESCO/Tellem

UNESCO the Courier

52nd year
Published monthly in 27 languages and in Braille by the United Nations Educational,Scientific and Cultural Organization.
31,rue François Bonvin,75732 Paris Cedex 15 France
Fax:(33) (0) 1.45.68.57.45 - (33) (0) 1.45.68.57.47
e-mail:unesco.courier@unesco.org
Internet:http://www.unesco.org/courier

Director:René Lefort
Secretary, Director's Office/Braille editions:
Annie Brachet (Tel:(33) (0) 1.45.68.47.15)

Editorial staff (Paris)
Editor in Chief:John Kohut
English edition:Roy Malkin
Spanish edition:Araceli Ortiz de Urbina
French edition:Martine Jacot

Ethirajan Anbarasan
Sophie Boukhari
Cynthia Guttman
Lucía Iglesias Kuntz
Asbel López
Amy Otchet

Translation
Miguel Labarca

Art and production unit:Georges Servat
Illustrations:Ariane Bailey (Tel:(33) (0) 1.45.68.46.90)
Documentation:José Banaag (Tel:(33) (0) 1.45.68.46.85)
Liaison with non-Headquarters editions and press:
Solange Belin (Tel:33 (0) 1.45.68.46.87)
Administrative Assistant: Theresa Pinck
(Tel:(33) (0) 1 45.68.45.86)

Editorial Committee
René Lefort (moderator), Jérome Bindé, Milagros del Corral, Alcino Da Costa, Babacar Fall, Sue Williams

Non-headquarters editions
Russian:Irina Utkina (Moscow)
German:Urs Aregger (Berne)
Arabic: Fawzi Abdel Zaher (Cairo)
Italian:Gianluca Formichi,Sira Miori (Florence)
Hindi:Shri Samay Singh (Delhi)
Tamil:M.Mohammed Mustafa (Madras)
Persian: Jalil Shahi (Teheran)
Portuguese:Alzira Alves de Abreu (Rio de Janeiro)
Urdu: Mirza Muhammad Mushir (Islamabad)
Catalan:Jordi Folch (Barcelona)
Malay:Sidin Ahmad Ishak (Kuala Lumpur)
Swahili:Leonard J. Shuma (Dar-es-Salaam)
Slovene: Aleksandra Kornhauser (Ljubljana)
Chinese: Feng Mingxia (Beijing)
Bulgarian:Luba Ranjeva (Sofia)
Greek:Sophie Costopoulos (Athens)
Sinhala:Neville Piyadigama (Colombo)
Basque:Juxto Egaña (Donostia)
Thai:Suchitra Chitranukroh(Bangkok)
Vietnamese:Ho Tien Nghi (Hanoi)
Bengali:Kafil uddin Ahmad (Dhaka)
Ukrainian: Volodymyr Vasiliuk (Kiev)
Galician: Xabier Senín Fernández (Santiago de Compostela)
Serbian:Boris Ilyenko (Belgrade)

Circulation and promotion
Fax:(33) (0) 1 45.68.57.45

Subscriptions and customer service
Michel Ravassard (Tel:(33) (0) 1.45.68.45.91)
Sales and subscription agents
Mohamed Salal El Din (Tel:(33) (0) 1 45 68 49 19)
Stock management and shipping
Pham Van Dung (Tel:(33) (0) 1.45.68.45.94)

IMPRIMÉ EN FRANCE (Printed in France)
DÉPOT LÉGAL : C1 - OCTOBER1999
COMMISSION PARITAIRE N° 71844 -
Diffusé par les N.M.P.P.
The UNESCO Courier (USPS 016686) is published monthly in Paris by UNESCO. Printed in France. Periodicals postage paid at Champlain NY and additional mailing offices.
Photocomposition et photogravure:
Le Courrier de l'UNESCO.
Impression:Maulde & Renou
ISSN 0041-5278 No. 10-1999-OPI 99-586 A

BERLIN, THE ISLAND THAT WAS

◆ Photos by Ute Mahler, Text by Thierry Bruehl

Gone are the days of West Berlin's insular tranquillity and East Berlin's state-coerced calm. Today, a metropolis is rising up on the ruins of the Wall

◆ Mr. Mahler is a German photographer with the Ostkreuz Agency, Berlin. Mr. Bruehl is a 31-year-old German theatre director.

I Berlin was once an island. I moved from Cologne to West Berlin in 1988, when the Wall was still standing. To reach the city you had to travel through the German Democratic Republic (GDR), a country that the average West German born after the war knew less about than France, Spain or Belgium.

Reaching West Berlin was like driving through a tunnel. The city was already the largest in the Federal Republic, but so very distinct from it. This melting pot of "cold-war warriors", ageing activists of the 1968 revolts, politically active students and disillusioned artists made a somewhat archaic impression on the outsider. The highly-subsidized showcase of the Western world, West Berlin had a particularly leisurely existence. The city landscape was dominated by busy cafés serving breakfast till 6 p.m. Compa- ▶

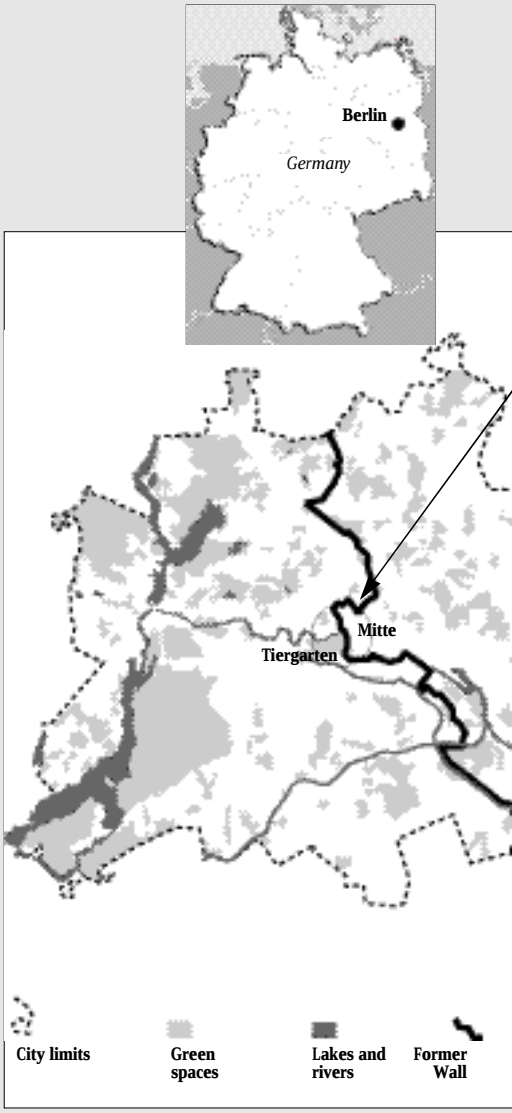
A family relaxes on the roof of its cabin in the "garden city" area of Berlin's Ostkreuze district.

A tea-dance in the Prater fairground in former East Berlin.

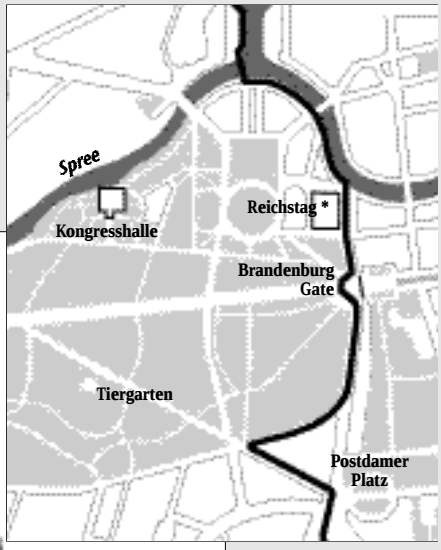
The biggest beakfast. Each year a TV channel organizes a mammoth breakfast party outside the Olympic Stadium, lasting from 10 a.m. until 2 the next morning. The meal costs around 10 Deutschmarks ($5).

BERLIN: BIRTH AND REBIRTH

By European standards, Berlin is a relatively young city, with its first records dating from 1234. Located at the crossroads of a medieval trading route, the city rapidly prospered and became the residence of the powerful Hohenzollern dynasty that reigned for over 500 years. The sprawling capital, which Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder referred to as the "Berlin Republic" upon taking up office there on August 23, stretches over 800 sq. km and is located 80 km from the Polish border. The move of the century took place over the summer, with the transfer of parliament, ministries and 12,000 employees from Bonn (involving no less than 120,000 pieces of furniture, 38,000 metres of files, carried for the most part by rail, with special road convoys for confidential defence files and art works). Powerful symbols of the past remain: the finance ministry will move into the building from which Luftwaffe chief Herman Goering commanded the air war, while the Ministry of Labour will be housed in the former headquarters of Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels.



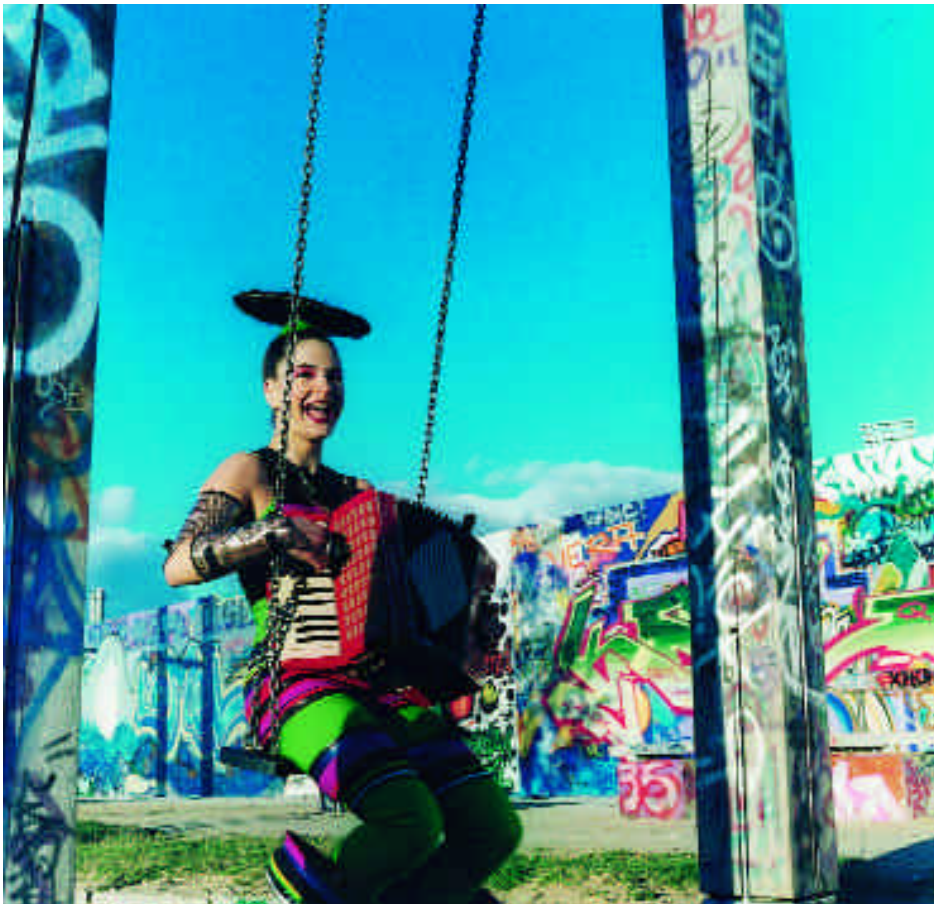
Reclaiming its former status marks a rebirth for Berlin, a city at the heart of the German enlightenment in the 18th century when it was capital of the kingdom of Prussia, before being proclaimed capital of the German Empire in 1871. During the 1920s, Berlin was one of Europe's foremost cultural and scientific centres, associated with such names as Bertolt Brecht, Walter Gropius and Albert Einstein. But the 1920s were also marked by rising unemployment and merciless inflation, facilitating Hitler's rise to power. In 1945, the devastated city was divided into four zones of occupation, then partitioned into East and West Berlin in 1949. The wall was built in August 1961. When the city celebrated its 750th anniversary in 1987 on separate sides, few could have predicted that the country—and Berlin—would be reunified two years later. In 1991, the Bundestag chose Berlin as capital by a narrow 18-vote majority. The city is now one of superlatives, with three opera houses, 160 museums and an ultra-modern cinema complex that will be ready for the next Berlin Film Festival in February 2000. The capital is placing hope in its new status to shore up its economy and become a major transportation hub, with Europe's largest railway station under construction. ■



* The renovated Reichstag is the new seat of Germany's Parliament.

A Turkish family enjoys a picnic in the park of the Schloss Bellevue, a palace which has been the official residence of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany since 1994.

A decorated stretch of the former Berlin Wall forms a multicoloured background for a swinging accordionist.



Photos © Ute Mahler/Ostkreuz/Rapho, Paris

Photos © Ute Mahler/Ostkreuz/Rapho, Paris

A visitor takes to the air during the annual big breakfast event outside the Olympic Stadium.

red to a metropolis like London or Paris, Berlin was laid-back, quiet, almost sleepy like a country village.

Bird's eye view of a burgeoning city

It was only by heading east in the city that you started to feel uneasy—the contrast couldn't have been greater. After passing the rigorous border checks and changing the obligatory amount of currency, you stepped through the Iron Curtain—yet supposedly you were still in the same city. The people all seemed so similar, with closed expressions on their faces. The pubs were usually empty and you had the impression, especially after 11 at night when the theatres closed, that the capital of the GDR had rolled up its sidewalks—but as it turned out, this was only on the surface.

So much for the past. It's now been almost ten years since the Wall was pulled down. Germany is reunited and so is Berlin, which is now the country's capital with the Bundestag (parliament) and government having moved from Bonn this summer. It's been seven years since I moved to the Mitte District on the border of Prenzlauer Berg in East Berlin. At first, curiosity drew me here, the wish to discover this "other" city inside my own. We were lucky enough to get hold of a wasteland whose owners had not been clearly identified. Young people transformed empty halls, factories and ballrooms into art associations, theatre workshops and "in" pubs. As these new venues became more established, the arts scene shifted from West to East. Just a casual stroll will lead you to marvel at an array of converted buildings and spaces that I doubt you would find in any other city.

Right in the centre, just about 500 metres north of the Reichstag, teenagers have carted sand up to the demolished Weltjugend ("World Youth") stadium on Chaussestrasse and set up a "beach volleyball" pitch. Right

Hard-hatted tourists take a guided visit to the Sony company's building site on Potsdamer Platz, whose concentration of cranes and construction works symbolizes the new Berlin.

The Oberbaumbrücke, Berlin's longest bridge, frames a boat-load of tourists on the river Spree. A terminus for road traffic and an underground railway line before reunification, it was reopened in 1994.

next to the pitch—remember this is bang slap in the city centre, surrounded by office blocks and shopping malls—there's a huge golf training course for sports students and other amateurs. These initiatives aren't motivated by profit but by the simple desire to play volleyball or golf right downtown. But has anyone on the city council considered that this area is going to be one of the most investment-attractive construction sites in the city once the government, the Bundestag and their administrations have moved in?

Potsdamer Platz, about 500 metres south of the Reichstag, tells a completely different story. Just after reunification, the Berlin Senate thoughtlessly sold it off to Daimler Benz and Sony. In the last few years, the area, which was the largest construction site in Europe, has turned into an artificial commercial district with new residential streets. There used to be an insular tranquillity in West Berlin, while a state-coerced calm prevailed over East Berlin. Today both have fallen between the cracks of the contrasting

If you look towards the west across the city centre's large park, the Tiergarten, little seems to have changed… Now look east to find the view dominated by a forest of cranes in action. Old buildings dating from the GDR era which are not protected as historical monuments are being demolished to make way for new construction.

developments of volley ball courts and commercial zones.

Between these two areas, there is one place from which one can pause to contemplate Berlin: the new terrace and dome of the renovated Reichstag building provide a bird's-eye view, from a good distance, of this city in full transformation. If you look towards the west across the city centre's large park, the Tiergarten, little seems to have changed. Early into a summer's eve, you can see curls of smoke rising from countless Berlin barbecues, most often belonging to large Turkish families making up for the absence of a garden. A midday stroll through the garden reveals another Berlin peculiarity: naked sunbathers right in the city centre!

Now look east to find the view dominated by a forest of cranes in action. Old buil- ▶

An outdoor theatre session in a courtyard of the Acud building, an alternative culture centre in the Mitte ("centre") district which once again merits its name. Before the Wall came down, most of the district was in East Germany.

dings dating from the GDR era which are not protected as historical monuments — from hotels built in the 1960s to the Foreign Office—are being demolished to make way for new construction. The redistribution of former GDR properties, which usually happens by selling off land and buildings to private investors, has provoked a veritable renovation hysteria. You can only guess at the façades of homes hidden behind the scaffolding lining nearly every street in East Berlin. Where I live, houses are being renovated one after the other, the facades painted in pastel hues, with balconies added, apartments built into the roofs—and steadily rising rents.

Given all the buzz and activity of the construction, you look forward to an evening's refuge in one of the "alternative" enclaves I mentioned earlier. "Acud", for instance, has such a special feel. The building, which used to house squatters, is set back from a busy street in the Mitte District, just around the corner from my place. Acud is a world of its own. Banners draping the several stories of the building announce a smorgasbord of cultural events. In the attic, you can sit back in old car seats and discarded rows of cinema seats to enjoy films rarely screened elsewhere. One floor down you will find a small gallery, beneath that a concert hall and an African restaurant. The courtyard has been taken over by fringe theatre groups who've created a performance space with an improvised nature reminiscent of the "Globe Theatre". Daily life unwinds in places like Acud, which reflects the events and the metamorphosis of the New City. These are islands in a sprawling city which only ten years ago was an island itself. ■

FOUR CHALLENGES FOR A NEW WORLD

UNESCO/Nes Forbes

Federico Mayor

The issues and proposals outlined in this editorial are developed by Federico Mayor in his recently published book *Un Monde Nouveau*.[1]

Federico Mayor has served as Director-General of UNESCO for twelve years. His second mandate at the head of the Organization comes to an end in November 1999. The nomination of his successor is a key item on the agenda of UNESCO's forthcoming General Conference (October 26-November 17). Each member state has a vote within this sovereign body of UNESCO.

1. *Un Monde nouveau* by Federico Mayor, in collaboration with Jérôme Bindé of UNESCO's Analysis and Forecasting Office (Editions Odile Jacob, Paris). The English version, "The World Ahead: our Future in the Making" is forthcoming.

"We can't predict the future, but we can prepare it," chemistry Nobel laureate Ilya Prigogine once observed. For the most part, the future will be what we make of it, even if by definition and through circumstance its fabric consists of uncertainty, change and unpredictable creation.

Two major upheavals have profoundly changed our vision of the world. First, the scientific revolution has taken us from an age of certainty and dogmatism and plunged us in an ocean of uncertainty and doubt. We believed in the predictability of phenomena governed by the imperious certainties of science: now the paradigms of determinism are yielding to a concept of nature and history whose hallmark is uncertainty. Secondly, the third industrial revolution, based on the information age and the rapid introduction of new technology into all facets of human life, is changing the world into a global one.

Paradoxically, this globalization, far from creating a homogeneous global society, whether desired or deplored, is subjecting societies to a logic of disintegration. It is a logic of selective pairings, of exclusive groupings, of separation, rifts and disaffiliation. The highly asymmetric economic success of a system which is based on the concept of liberty but has forgotten equality and solidarity is a virtual political failure: it is coupled with an ethical vacuum and with a complete lack of purpose. The power of globalization is devoid of meaning.

In the face of these fractures and this vacuum, four challenges must be faced. The first is that of peace, which is the precondition for successfully tackling all the others. Since the end of the Cold War, a fourth category of countries has appeared on the international stage, in addition to the industrialized and developing countries and those in transition. It comprises countries at war or emerging from conflict in which the state has often foundered in genocide and intercommunal massacres.

The second challenge: will the coming century witness the onset of a new kind of poverty whose victims will live side by side with unprecedented wealth? According to the United Nations Development Programme, in 1960 the 20 per cent of the world's people who live in the richest countries had 30 times the income of the poorest 20 per cent—by 1995 they had 82 times as much income.

Sustainable development and the wise management of the global environment pose the third great challenge. Everywhere humanity is draining the resources which could have fed tomorrow's generation. We have to find our way towards another type of development, one that is more economic, more intelligent, more caring. Because humanity has acquired the technical capacity to commit collective suicide, it has to learn to assume the "mastery of mastery", in the words of French philosopher Michel Serres.

The fourth challenge is that of the "erratic boat" syndrome. As a result of globalization, many states appear to have mislaid their maps, compasses and direction-finding instruments, even the will to set a course. They are tossed about by the waves, as though history had fallen into the hands of "anonymous masters" who can no longer be controlled—financial markets, raw materials markets, statistics of all kinds.

But awareness of these problems has sharpened and solutions exist: hope remains. If only we can find a way to give millions and millions of silent people a real opportunity to use their freedom of thought and of speech, we would see the decisions of the mighty bow to the only power that counts: that of the people.

Globalization must never remain confined to only the networks, telecommunications, computers, the media world or markets. It will have to be based on the consolidation of a public democratic space worldwide. It is only on this condition that we will succeed in rendering globalization humane, making it a project with truly universal promise, and giving it a meaning.

This is the course we must plot for the twenty-first century. ■

THE KAKADU AFFAIR SHAKES THE HERITAGE WORLD

◆ Sophie Boukhari

The opening of a mine in Australia's Kakadu Park has revived international debate about the protection of the world heritage

How far should world heritage be protected and who should judge? Nearly 30 years after UNESCO adopted its 1972 Convention on protecting natural and cultural heritage sites "of outstanding universal value", the question is still stirring passions. The much-publicized row over Kakadu, which was put on the World Heritage List in 1981, is the most recent example.

Supporters and opponents of extracting uranium from the Jabiluka mine, which is an enclave in the park but not officially part of it, have been fighting it out for the past few years. Battles between experts, flights of rhetoric, clashes between police and militants, press campaigns, special meetings of UNESCO units and diplomatic horse-trading have all been part of this stormy episode of world heritage.

Kakadu is in Australia's Northern Territory and includes a wide range of wetland and woodland ecosystems. The area contains many rare species and numerous places where ancient rock drawings can be seen. Cultural traditions there go back more than 50,000 years, making it the continent's oldest known human settlement. This long history makes its "cultural landscape" a unique showcase of the relationship between humans and their environment.

Dreamtime

The scenery, plants and animals of the region feature strongly in the religion and traditions of the 550 or so Aborigines who live in Kakadu. They keep a close spiritual link to their lands, of which they are "traditional owners" under Australian law. They believe they were put there by "spirit beings" such as the rainbow serpent, which they say appeared at the time of the world's creation to give the planet its shape and existence.

◆ *UNESCO Courier* journalist

Once their work was done, the Aborigines say, these supernatural creatures—which still have influence over the inhabitants and the fertility of the land—spread out over the countryside, pausing to fight or to rest, and established a number of sacred places: the so-called places and trails of "Dreamtime".

But the dream stops right there. Today, the Kakadu region is seen as the site of one of the world's richest deposits of uranium. The park, the biggest in Australia and the size of Belgium, contains an explosive mix—the familiar tug-of-war between conservation and economic development, the tricky problem of radioactive waste and the assertion of indigenous peoples' rights.

'We are telling the truth. Non-Aborigine people often doubt the sincerity of our cultures. But this sacred site belongs to the Mirrars.'

Three mining enclaves (Ranger, Jabiluka and Koongarra) were mapped out in the early 1970s, before the park was created in 1979, Australian officials point out. The Ranger mine has been operating since 1981. The Northern Land Council (NLC), which officially represents the 16 local Aborigine tribes in the running of the park, gave the go-ahead in 1982 for the Jabiluka mine.

A year later, things changed. A new government was elected which curbed uranium production and put the Jabiluka project on hold. But "with the agreement of the NLC and consent of the Aboriginal traditional owners," according to an April 1999 Australian government report, the Jabiluka lease was transferred in August 1991 to the firm Energy Resources of Australia (ERA), although the deposit was still not being mined.

There was another U-turn in March 1996, when the Liberal Party won national elections and said it favoured opening new uranium mines, including the one at Jabiluka. After environmental surveys, the government gave a green light to ERA, which started digging in early 1998. It reckons the project, which will create jobs, could earn up to $2.5 billion in export earnings and produce $140 million in royalties for the Aborigines. But the 27 members of the Mirrar tribe are dead against the project.

A "dangerous" site

The Mirrars are the traditional owners of the Jabiluka enclave. They say the mine is dangerous for them and they no longer feel bound by the agreement the NLC signed in 1982. Their new leader, Yvonne Margarula, has proved very tough. They say the Aborigine leaders, including her late father, were pushed into the agreement by the mining companies at a time when Aborigine rights were still little enforced and their leaders unused to "modern" negotiations.

The Mirrars also consider the experience of the Ranger mine inconclusive. Although the Aborigines have received royalties, "the social situation in the region has not improved since the 1980s," according to a 1997 survey commissioned by several of the parties involved in running Kakadu, including ERA. Unlike other Aborigine tribes who favour the mining, the Mirrars say it will turn their lives upside down and threaten their traditional subsistence economy based on hunting and gathering. They also stress that the site of the mine is a very sacred spot, one of the "Dreaming" places that are "dangerous" because disturbing them will have terrible consequences. "We are telling the truth," says Margarula. "Non-Aborigine people often doubt the sinceri-

© UNESCO mission/UNESCO

Taken in October 1998, this aerial shot clearly shows the advanced state of construction of the Jabiluka mine by the company Energy Resources of Australia. The Mirrars, an Aboriginal group, maintain that the mine would seriously harm their most sacred sites.

ty of our cultures. But this sacred site belongs to the Mirrars."

The tribe teamed up with ecology activists to form the Jabiluka Blockade in 1996 to halt the project, and militants have clashed with police at the site several times. Almost two-thirds of Australians say they are against opening the mine. An aggressive international campaign has been launched and has spread around the world.

The dispute soon landed on the desk of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, on which sit representatives of 21 countries each elected for six years. They have been inundated by hundreds of letters denouncing the mine's threat to the environment and the cultural rights of the Mirrars. The World Conservation Union, one of the Committee's three advisory bodies, confirms that the danger is real.

The Committee decided to send experts to Kakadu in June 1998. The mission reported that there were "severe ascertained and potential dangers to the cultural and natural values" of the park. It noted the scientific uncertainty about the impact of the mining on water supplies and aquatic wildlife and about the long-term effect of stored radioactive tailings. It was also concerned about the mine's "visual impact" on the site and the damage it might cause to the daily culture and religion of the Mirrars.

The International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)—two advisory bodies of the World Heritage Committee—emphasized the fragility of the intangible heritage of the Aborigines. "We respect Mecca and Jerusalem, so we should respect these holy places too," says Henry Cleere of ICOMOS. "The problem is that nobody has ever defined their exact area. That's just known to a few sages. They're supposed to keep this secret but now they're ready to reveal it to defend themselves."

'We respect Mecca and Jerusalem, so we should respect these holy places too. The problem is that nobody has ever defined their exact area. That's just known to a few sages. They're supposed to keep this secret but now they're ready to reveal it to defend themselves.'

Cleere, along with the Mirrars and many experts, says the Jabiluka enclave cannot be dissociated from the park's huge network of "Dreaming" trails and places even if legally it is not part of the heritage site. To disturb the enclave, they say, would threaten the whole sacred network.

Cultural rights

The mission criticized the fact that the building of the mine was presented to the World Heritage Committee as a "fait accompli" when the Committee should have been told about it before work began, according to the terms of the 1972 Convention. It called on the Australian government to revise the 1982 and 1991 agreements so as to protect the Mirrars' cultural rights.

In December 1998, the Committee, meeting in Kyoto (Japan), urged the Australian government to stop building the mine and scheduled a special session ▶

for July 1999 to decide whether to classify Kakadu as an endangered heritage site. The NGOs were very pleased and the Australian government launched a counter-attack.

The Kakadu dispute has many domestic political implications and has set off fierce arguments with the opposition Labor Party and the Greens, who challenge the government's environmental policies and accuse it of jeopardizing the process of reconciliation with the Aborigines, which was stepped up in the early 1990s.

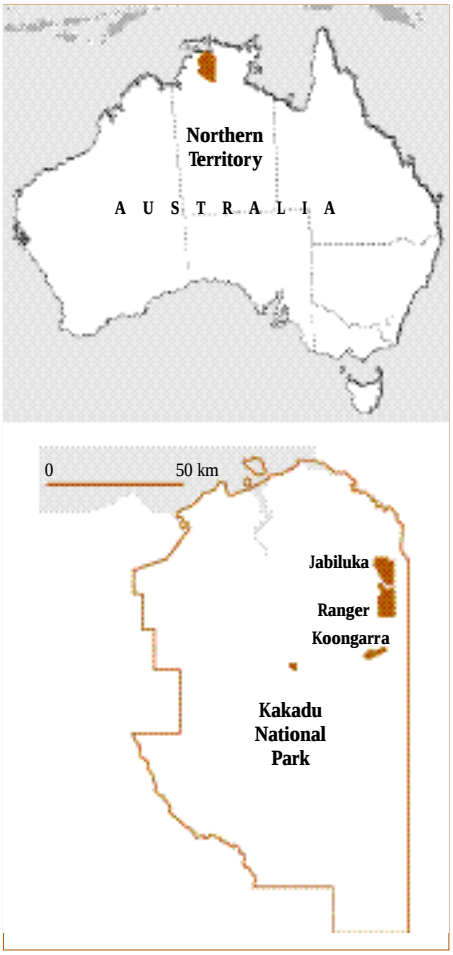
The environment minister, Sen. Robert Hill, led a strong delegation to Paris to stress several points. First, that Australia had no lessons to learn from anyone.It had been among the first countries to sign the Convention in 1974 and had changed its laws accordingly. The mission said Australia had the biggest expanse of world heritage sites of all the signatory countries and that it spent $30 million a year on maintaining them.

Alcohol and Western food

Hill emphasized that the mining enclaves were already there when the site was put on the World Heritage List and that Australia had said at the time it reserved the right to start operations at Jabiluka. The Ranger mine had not caused any environmental damage, the Australian delegates said, pointing to their country's long experience in mining and very strict regulation of it on ecological and health grounds. Citing a number of experts, they said environmental risk was small and the way the radioactive tailings were stored was very safe.The mine was also hidden by hills and hardly visible from the park. It could only really be seen from the air and only 10 per cent of visitors to Kakadu flew over the park.

Recalling that the Aborigines had initially agreed to mining at Jabiluka, the officials said the mine did not directly threaten the sacred sites, which were protected under Australian law. They in effect accused the Mirrars of using their religion as an argument to derail the project.The April 1999 government report said it was not until 1997 that there was a call to extend Boyweg, one of the sacred sites, possibly to cover the whole mining valley. "These revisions upgraded the site from 'sacred' to 'sacred and dangerous'," it said, adding that the new call was "not consistent with anthropological records or previous statements."

The delegation also said the government was not responsible for the slow social and economic development of the Aborigines and the breaking down of their culture. "We can't stop them using royalties to buy alcohol and Western food," one delegation member told the Committee. The Australians promised however to revise ERA's mining plans and resume talks with the Mirrars to establish their cultural rights more clearly.



The Jabiluka, Ranger and Koongarra enclaves are not themselves classified as "world heritage" though they are within the Kakadu park (20,000 km²).

Then, on July 12, 1999, Hill sprung a surprise: the Jabiluka mine would start operations in 2001 but just slowly, only reaching full capacity when the Ranger mine had virtually closed in about 10 years' time. The government would earmark $1.8 million to beef up the park's infrastructure and would step up efforts to improve housing, water supply, education, health and the job situation for the Aborigines.

"There will be an enquiry in coming months to assess the danger to the cultural property of the Aborigines," he said. "We intend to appoint a mediator between the traditional owners and ERA. We're going to take a break. We recognize the problems of mining in this environment, even if the mine is not strictly part of the park."

The World Heritage Committee decided not to classify Kakadu as an endangered heritage site. But the Committee said it was still "gravely concerned"by the mine's impact on the living cultures of Kakadu and by the lack of dialogue and progress in jointly managing the Mirrar people's cultural heritage. It said it had significant reservations concerning the "scientific uncertainties" relating to the project and asked the Australian government to present new reports before April 15, 2000.

The many NGO representatives who came to UNESCO headquarters at the same time as the delegation strongly protested.The Wilderness Society called the Committee's decision "a dramatic capitulation to intense pressure from the Australian government." It and other NGOs said the decision damaged the

Kakadu park has many prehistoric rock art sites portraying mythological heroes, animals and objects familiar to the Aborigines.

UNESCO/Thierry Joly

1972 Convention's credibility and was the outcome of a "dirty tricks campaign" by Australia to win over the countries represented on the Committee.

The government had announced in early 1999 a $600,000 lobbying campaign to prevent Kakadu being classified as an endangered site. It also said in June 1999 it would back the candidacy of Australia's former foreign minister Gareth Evans to succeed Federico Mayor as Director-General of UNESCO. The Wilderness Society said it hoped such backing was not simply "a way of pressuring" the current chair of the World Heritage Committee, Japan's Koichiro Matsuura, who is also a candidate to replace Mayor.

Apart from its many political dimensions, the Kakadu affair has shown how vulnerable world heritage is. How far must preservation go, when exceptional landscapes and monuments are increasingly under threat, as evidenced by the lengthening list of endangered sites, which now total 23? Can mining or other economic projects be blocked when they endanger sites but when the need for jobs and development is more and more urgent? And who should decide the importance of a site and how it should be preserved?

'Now we recognize cultures which aren't monuments but where the landscape has a very great cultural value, especially in Africa and Oceania. They have to be protected in the name of humanity.'

"In the beginning, world heritage was defined in the light of Western artistic cultural traditions," says Cleere. "But that's changed. Now we recognize cultures which aren't monuments but where the landscape has a very great cultural value, especially in Africa and Oceania. They have to be protected in the name of humanity."

But what should be done when their importance is not fully appreciated, including in their own country? How far can the international community go to protect them? The jury is still out. Under the 1972 Convention, countries which ask for sites to be put on the World Heritage List must recognize them as "a world heritage for whose protection it is the duty of the international community to co-operate". But they can also interpret it as meaning their sovereignty will be "totally respected".

© White House Press Service, Washington

At the White House in April 1999, Hillary Clinton welcomes Yvonne Margarula, one of the 27 Mirrar "traditional owners" of the Jabiluka enclave who had recently received the Goldman Environmental Prize along with Jacqui Katona, (in background) for the campaign against the uranium mine.

With Kakadu, the Australian government has stuck to a very narrow interpretation of the Convention regarding international co-operation, as embodied by the Committee. It has refused to recognize the Committee's right to list the site as endangered without its prior agreement. Sen. Hill has also challenged the way the Committee works by questioning the legitimacy of its advisory bodies, saying "the role of so-called independent experts and advisers is up for scrutiny in the future."

Eco-imperialism

He has thereby given comfort to those who oppose joint management of world heritage. Forty members of the U.S. Congress have backed Australia over Kakadu, denouncing UNESCO's supposed "eco-imperialism".

In a petition to President Bill Clinton on July 1, 1999, they said any dispute over an Australian mine should be settled by Australians "working with their elected leaders, not at some obscure World Heritage Committee." They urged Clinton to ensure that the Committee did not "meddle" in the Jabiluka issue. The pressure group also wants world heritage sites in the United States to be controlled by the U.S. Congress. It said this demand was "a response to the Committee's meddling in a dispute regarding a proposed gold mine located on private property outside the boundary of Yellowstone National Park". The U.S. government forced the abandonment of the mining project there in 1996, after Yellowstone was declared an endangered world heritage site.

These and many other examples show that joint management of world heritage is nevertheless gaining ground. The Jabiluka affair was not part of this trend, but it has illustrated the astonishing organizational power of supporters of world governance. NGOs, politicians (the European Parliament voted against the mine in January 1999) and ordinary citizens all over the world were inspired to campaign to "save Kakadu".

"We've never seen anything like this," says Sarah Titchen, who is in charge of the case at UNESCO's World Heritage Centre. "Now everyone around the world involved in world heritage knows about Kakadu."

Meanwhile the saga continues. The Mirrars are now opposing, quite legally, the building of a 15-km road through their territory. The road would allow ERA to take uranium mined at Jabiluka to be treated at the Ranger mining complex, which would be less environmentally harmful but most of all, much cheaper. ERA has even hinted it will leave the Kakadu region by 2006 if the Mirrars do not give way. It shouldn't count on the rainbow serpent to advise them to do so. ■

QUESTIONING THE ABCs OF WOMEN'S LITERACY

◆ Anna Robinson-Pant

By sharing the day-to-day village life of Nepalese women who made the move to attend literacy classes, an inquisitive researcher takes a critical look at what is being taught, and why

As we slipped along the muddy paths, Laxmi took her sandals off and said she was such a green cucumber she should not be going to all this trouble —I blame my parents, she said.[1] Laxmi was on her way to an adult literacy class, held at night in Arutar, her village in Western Nepal. Like almost all the local middle-aged women, she had not been allowed to attend school as a youngster—though her brothers had—but she now saw a chance to catch up on reading and writing. By calling herself "green cucumber", she referred to the common Nepalese saying, "Why eat green cucumber at the time of dying?" Becoming literate—like eating cucumber in this area—is both a luxury and a challenge at this late stage of life. I had been chatting to Laxmi as a friend, but also as part of my research into the links between literacy and development. For eight months, I lived in Arutar to try to find out why women like Laxmi go to such trouble to learn to read and write, and what they feel they have gained from the classes. This period was very much a two-way learning process, since Laxmi and her friends were equally intrigued as to why a Western woman with her four-year-old son should want to live in a village eight hours' walk from a road!

© Anna Robinson Pant, Sussex

In the Nepalese village of Arutar, Alina holds a literacy class for mothers accompanied by their children.

Rejecting the functional approach

In many developing countries,including Nepal, where only 14 per cent of adult women are literate,literacy is often heralded as the entry point for involving women in income-generating activities and improving their health practices. Planners and policy-makers in aid agencies repeatedly underline that better educated mothers have fewer, healthier and better educated children, and are more "productive". However, I had also begun to realize over the years that women attending and running literacy classes don't always share these views. The aid agencies intent on finding linkages between women's literacy rates and development indicators such as child mortality, fertility and nutrition tended to use the words "education"and "literacy"interchangeably. On a micro level, they often evaluated literacy programmes through calculating the percentage of women who went on to join savings and credit groups or the number of families who built latrines.

My own impression was that these women attending classes (as well as their teachers) were less convinced about the development outcomes associated with literacy and made more distinction between "literacy"and "education". Whereas the latter took place in schools and enabled their children to gain good jobs and status, the women regarded "the adult class" as a poor substitute. I heard them say that the certificate given at the end of the course was no use in getting a job—"it's just for ourselves". Observing classes, I was aware of this tension between what the women wanted and the programme's contents. Often this resulted in many dropping out but it was also clear that some were directly challenging what the aid agencies had on offer. In particular, they rejected the "functional literacy" approach to convey messages and skills directly relevant to development activities. To me, the picture was very different from the passive stereotype often presented of the poor third world woman grateful to learn to read information about improving her family life. These women already knew about family planning and nutrition and if they did not use this knowlege, it was because either they had no physical access to health facilities or they disagreed with the new ideas. They had not joined the literacy class to discuss health, fores-

1) Italicized in the text are extracts from the author's field notes.

◆ The author, a British scholar from the University of Sussex, was awarded the 1999 UNESCO International Award for Literacy Research

try or credit facilities, but to learn to read and write—sometimes for practical purposes such as account keeping or writing letters, but often just to feel educated like their husbands and children.

Ironic joking

It was the desire to reflect these women's perspectives that led me to conduct more in-depth research. I chose to focus on two contrasting programmes in differing areas of Nepal. The classes in Western Nepal (Arutar) were run by an international aid agency which used the literacy class as a way of forming women's micro-credit groups. The programme near Kathmandu (in Lalitpur district) was organized by a small local NGO which developed its own lesson sheets linking literacy skills to health awareness.

In both courses, which were run by local staff, the lessons were designed to give health messages through stories about village women who did or did not follow recommended practices. Several of the older women challenged the messages and ironically countered the images of ignorant village women portrayed in the stories: *Nani [literacy trainer] was explaining that a certain type of worm was on "sag" (a kind of spinach) and that if one eats it raw, one gets infected. The women laughed "What can you do if you're in the fields all day cutting paddy and you see some nice sag growing. No time to cook it—just eat it and get worm". Then Nani talked about hook worms and said you catch this worm if you go to the toilet with no shoes on. The woman laughed and joked, "We don't have to worry about that one—we don't have any toilets to go to anyway! We just go in the stream." The group of older women cackled away and then the joker turned her attention to me: "What can I do—eat or study? How can I cut paddy, dry it all day and then come to study? My arms are aching, I'm tired out."*

'What can I do–eat or study? How can I cut paddy, dry it all day and then come to study?'

As Nani was an older experienced facilitator, she could handle the women's sarcasm, sympathizing with those who were too tired to study. But the younger girls who ran classes found the discussion style daunting and resorted to chanting of alphabet letters instead. A further issue was around language: the course was written in Nepali, partly in response to the younger women who saw fluency in the latter as opening more doors to them than their local tongue, Newari. However the older women insisted that the facilitators conduct the class in Newari, so in practice there was a mixture of both.

© Anna Robinson Part, Sussex

In Arutar, low-caste women who learn to read and write are often more strongly motivated by a desire to improve self-esteem than the need to keep accounts.

Hierarchical relationships

In Arutar, the literacy course was a direct entry point into women's group activities around savings, credit and income generation. The women were expected to use the literacy skills to keep accounts, minutes of meetings and write reports. Although the women recognized that the development agency presented a rare opportunity for securing a loan, they disputed many of its ideas indirectly—even the assumed link between literacy and income generation. When I interviewed Sansara, the treasurer of the Arutar women's group (also mother of seven), she explained that her role was to look after the record books: *I asked her what was in them and she said she had no idea. Other people write in it and she just has to carry them to the meetings. Her daughter said, you won't have to carry them up the hill for the big meeting of six women's groups will you? They explained that each group had to appoint a leader and that person had to attend a meeting of all the local women's groups.... Sansara wanted to send her daughter in her place as she could read and write, but this was not allowed.* I later discovered that Sansara had a good mental record of all the loans taken by group members, repayment schedules and interest owed, but that these details were not written down. The group members preferred their traditional oral practices or to rely on younger family members, but the agency was keen that they should adopt new practices of written account keeping and agenda setting, even if in reality these were less accurate.

In both, the Arutar and Lalitpur classes, the women encouraged the teachers to spend time on chanting the texts in unison and copying out words, rather than the more creative discussion approach in which they had been trained. Though the women disputed ▶

the teacher's authority in relation to the development ideas, they welcomed a more hierarchical relationship where they called the teacher "Miss", answered the register and imitated the kind of education they had seen in local schools. Alina, the Arutar facilitator, responded by treating the women (who were much older than she) as school children, even though she knew well the constraints women faced as they were her neighbours:

Alina: Did you understand it? I said so much myself I don't know if you understood. Tomorrow don't bring any children. And study at home.

All the women laugh—no time.

Alina: If you can't study, how can I teach? Go home and study in any free moment you have, here and there.

So what did women gain from literacy classes? Although many women challenged the teaching methods, language of instruction or course content, their very presence at the classes suggested that they still saw something to be gained from literacy. As time went on, I realized that what they valued in the experience was less tangible than the skills of keeping written accounts or reading about worms. When I talked to Sansara, the women's group treasurer, she was keen to show me the part of the records book where the women had signed their names. I noticed on another page that there were only thumb prints—these were the marks of their husbands who had attended in their place one day. The fact that a wife could sign in place of a thumb print, when her husband could not, indicated some important changes taking place. Surprisingly, most men did not see this as a threat to their authority, as they regarded writing as just one skill which one member of the family needed. For the women however, signing their name constituted a new identity as a "literate" woman. When I attended the annual parents' meeting at Arutar school, I discovered that the few women who came did so partly to assert their identity in a public arena through signing the register.

A private space

An incident that I observed at the Arutar literacy class made me realize that some women were beginning to use literacy for their own purposes: *I sat next to Misra and glanced at her book—she had written something about herself. She covered it with her hand when she saw me looking. Alina [teacher] asked her what she had written—something that was in my mind, she answered. But still she refused to show it.* I was intrigued to think that Misra—the husband who refused to let her come to the literacy class regularly—was now perhaps expressing herself through writing. It seemed that writing (and reading) might provide a private space for women to reflect on their experiences. Further proof of this are some of the articles and stories written by women published as a follow-up to the literacy course (see box).

© Anna Robinson Part, Sussex

Sansara, the treasurer of the Arutar women's group, with two of her 7 children.

So whose agenda should determine the kind of programmes on offer? The link being made between literacy and information on health, nutrition or income generating through the "functional" approach seemed to result primarily from the aid agencies' need to produce quantifiable results from literacy programmes. My experiences in Nepal show that we, the "developers", have not taken time to understand where women are starting from, and more importantly, where they want to go. They may already have knowledge about nutrition and skills in chicken-rearing and they may not want to learn to write agendas for meetings or accounts. Is the desire to write about your feelings as a low-caste woman or to read religious books as justifiable as the more concrete development aims? If women want to imitate a style of education provided in traditional village schools, should the aid agencies be supporting this?

Gains in self-confidence

The illustrations from Nepalese classrooms demonstrate that if women are not getting the kind of literacy that they want, they either drop out or put pressure on class facilitators to focus on what they enjoy. Aid agencies need to respond to this challenge and give women more direct control over what they learn and how. This can be done by conducting initial research into women's specific needs and interests: not everyone wants to write about their lives, just as some women may prefer to learn how to write accounts.

Literacy programmes can be based on women's own interests and an understanding of the local context, rather than a universal stereotype of an "illiterate" woman. Education around issues such as family planning can begin from a more critical approach that encourages women to analyse their problems and find ways to address them. Literacy-focused programmes are only beginning to draw on such participatory planning approaches in an attempt to provide support for women's existing (rather than imagined or projected) literacy needs. The development outcomes of such programmes might be more difficult to evaluate than the numbers of savings groups formed or scores on a health knowledge test. But the gains in women's self-confidence and changes in social relationships should be long lasting and eventually improve their quality of life. ■

A LOW-CASTE LIFE

In the following story from *Sangalo*, a collection published by Save the Children (USA) for neo-literates, Sushila Uparkoti from Arutar explains her position as a low-caste woman.

"Nepal's thirty-six castes are like one common flower garden."[1] Low castes are oppressed. Women are not allowed to go to places like water holes, inns, temples. Our fathers and mothers used to say that our caste was not to study. What's the point of studying? Can't get a proper job, they used to say. When they wanted to write letters they had to go the upper castes. They had to work all morning for others in order to have one letter written. Seeing our own condition, we feel very worried. Even at the adult class we had to sit apart from upper caste friends. But after studying, we realized that one of the reasons for being backward was our lack of education. Nowadays after studying in the adult class, we can say and write some of the things in our minds. Nowadays, mother and father are very pleased that we can read and write letters. They have started sending younger brothers and sisters to school. The number of low castes at school has increased. It seems for lack of education we were dominated and suppressed. ■

1. This saying is attributed to King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who unified Nepal in the 18th century.

FOCUS

Getting youth through the Aids crisis

Contents

© Unesco/Tellem

The industrialized world stands out as an exception on the global Aids map: it has managed to stabilize the rate of new infections and to sharply reduce the number of Aids deaths through new combinations of anti-HIV drugs. But everywhere else, the pandemic is spreading, while the sick are treated poorly if at all. This is notably the case in South and East Asia,and, most dramatically, sub-Saharan Africa where the epidemic rages out of control in several countries. Six million people were infected with HIV in 1998. Four million of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. Of the two and a half million people who died last year of Aids, two million were African (pp. 20-21).

There is no vaccine to prevent the disease, and new combinations of drug therapies are too costly for the South. The only available weapon is prevention, which is becoming ever more vital since about half of new HIV infections are in young people. Youth also tend to be more open than adults to learning about safer sexual behaviour.

But for preventive education to be effective, it must be a priority for everyone. "We've preferred to keep our eyes shut," states Peter Piot, executive director of UNAIDS (pp. 18-19). Aids bears a heavy symbolic burden which helps to explain why it is all too often treated as a taboo, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (pp. 22-24). Schools are only just beginning to focus on Aids education (pp. 30-21), which is further complicated by the stigma surrounding people living with the disease (pp. 35-36).

Nonetheless, new approaches can bear fruit. The results are seen clearly in Southeast Asia (pp. 27-28), specifically in Thailand with the "100 per cent Condom Campaign" (p. 29), as well as in sub-Saharan Africa by way of films (p. 25), traditional healers (p. 26), Koranic schools (p. 33) and school teachers (p. 32). South America also offers positive signs, as seen with a programme tailored for street children in Mexico (p. 34). Most importantly, stresses Piot, politicians no longer need to be convinced of the value and necessity of prevention.

Seizing every opportunity

Fighting Aids involves no less than changing our whole sexual culture. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, stresses the impact of preventive education on young people's behaviour

Around half of all new cases of HIV infection in the world involve young people between 15 and 24. Why?

Because that's the age when you begin experimenting with sex and change partners most often, which multiplies the risk of infection. Our studies in Kenya and Zambia show 15, even 23 per cent of girls between 15 and 19 are HIV-positive, compared with only three to four per cent of boys. Girls are more vulnerable for both biological reasons (the female genitals are more susceptible to infection than those of males and are particularly vulnerable in the case of girls because they have not yet developed) as well as socio-cultural ones (whether they are won over by gifts or are the victims of force, they often have as partners adult men who because of their age are more likely to be HIV-positive than boys).

The roots of the problem lie mainly in poverty and male chauvinism. Hence the importance of educating boys, who have to be taught that their worth doesn't depend on the number of women they've seduced. We have to change the whole "sexual culture" as it were. But we have to be humble: we're not going to change the world in the space of a few years.

If scientists fail to cure Aids, the epidemic will become a soft nuclear bomb on human life.

Kenneth Kaunda, former president of Zambia

What's the impact of preventive education on young people's sexual behaviour?

Youth are more receptive to prevention messages and go on to adopt a more responsible attitude to sexuality than adults. In countries where there's been a good response to prevention campaigns, we've seen a very marked drop in the rate of infection among the 15 to 24-year-olds. In the past eight years, the rate in Ugandan urban areas has fallen 40 per cent. In Zambia, it has dropped most markedly among schoolchildren.

All this shows that education has an important role to play. Even though it's true that many children in developing countries don't go to school, the majority nevertheless pass through school. The opportunity must be seized to give them an education about Aids adapted to their age-group, right from the start of primary school. Some people still fear this will encourage children to have sexual relationships, but has anyone ever waited for lessons before starting their sexual life? It's been statistically proven that preventive education makes people much more sexually responsible, namely by having sexual relationships later and using protection.

Is Aids education given the attention it deserves in schools?

Quite honestly, no, and not even in industrialized countries. But extraordinary work is being done in some places. Brazil, for example, has a very good programme, which begins in primary schools and is backed by UNESCO. Zimbabwe too, where UNICEF is helping. Ugandan schools have introduced a new curriculum subject called "straight talk" in which pupils comment on daily newspaper sections written specifically for young people. The experiment is spreading in Kenya and a few other countries, but there's a long way to go before it becomes general practice.

I myself plan to strengthen my contacts with education officials, government ministries and teachers' unions. Curricula which include the Aids question have been designed, tested and then not applied, like many good intentions. It's no longer a question of developing teaching materials, but of making use of them.

Has anyone ever waited for lessons before starting their sexual life? It's been statistically proven that preventive education makes people much more sexually responsible, namely by having sexual relationships later and using protection

The United Nations General Assembly recently declared its goal to cut the rate of new infection among young people by a quarter in the countries hardest hit by the epidemic. Isn't this overly ambitious?

Ambitious yes, but not unrealistic. Experience has shown it can be done if you get all sectors of society involved, starting with youth. UNAIDS works a lot with young people. We design awareness campaigns not just with young staff members in their early 20s but also after consulting teenagers whose ideas are always, I must say, quite refreshing.

Since 1997, we've had an annual World Aids Campaign which targets young people. This year, the young Brazilian footballer Ronaldo has agreed to be involved. His words carry much more weight than mine among the youth of poor communities like those where he grew up. The popular Ugandan singer Philly Lutaaya also worked with us before he died of Aids. If all the famous people who are HIV-positive admitted the

© Sean Sprague/Unicef, Amhem

A World Aids Day march in San Salvador.

fact, as Lutaaya did,it would have a great impact. But they often keep quiet and I understand their fear of being rejected if they admit it. Aids is Janus-faced, and each side is just as terrifying as the other—one is the virus that kills and the other is the society, which also kills.

How can the stigma be fought?

That's my latest priority, in fact. To be pragmatic, we send volunteers who are open about having HIV to work in schools, hospitals, government ministries and other key places. This "public" approach to Aids has a much greater effect than any speech about respecting the individual. These volunteers are already working in Malawi, Zambia, Thailand, South Africa and Burundi and soon in Burkina Faso. I'd like to spread this strategy all over the world, but we don't have the resources and it's very hard to find people willing to take on such a mission.

Why do you think Aids is still largely cloaked in silence 20 years after it appeared?

The taboo surrounding Aids is a universal phenomenon. In most societies, talking about sexuality isn't easy, even between two partners. Also, the impact of Aids on societies wasn't felt as strongly 15 years ago as today. People also go into denial, which is an instinctive reaction to danger. Read *The Plague* by Albert Camus again.Another natural reaction is to say that it's only something that happens to others. So for 20 years, we've preferred to keep our eyes shut. Uganda, Senegal and Thailand are among the very few countries whose political leaders have reacted in a timely manner. It isn't just a matter of poor countries either: U.S. President Ronald Reagan never pronounced the word "Aids" in public.

But this year,the dialogue has started going in the other direction. Until now, I had to convince political leaders that the situation was serious in their countries. Now it's they who are taking the initiative.That's a big step forward.

How do you explain this turn-around?

First,the impact of Aids on societies has become so great it can't be ignored any longer, despite the tremendous human capacity for denial. Then, without boasting, I have to say that the concerted action of the United Nations has helped a lot. We're seizing every opportunity to spread the message about Aids by going all out to increase the number of sectors we work with—groups like boy scouts, women's movements, peasants and others. I myself meet heads of state, mayors of big cities, ministers of finance, business leaders, army generals, musicians, footballers, bishops and imams—anyone who can influence members of a society. Religious leaders can be a big obstacle to a prevention campaign but I mostly consider them to be allies.

Are they really allies?

I've noticed that those religious leaders in close contact with the population—the parish priest, the village imam—are the most receptive to prevention campaigns, including encouraging the use of condoms, which is the most delicate aspect.The further you go up the hierarchy, the harder dialogue becomes. Nevertheless, a Vatican envoy attended our March 1999 conference in Buenos Aires about involving priests in the fight against Aids. The message of the conference was clear: sex education at school is vital. Only a few years ago, this was inconceivable. ■

Interview by Jasmina Sopova,
Unesco Courier journalist

UNAIDS: working together

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (Unaids),launched in January 1996,is an innovative partnership that brings together the efforts and resources of seven UN organizations, namely the United Nations Development Programme (Undp), the United Nations Population Fund (Unfpa),the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef),the World Health Organization (Who),the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (Undcp) and the World Bank. The first programme of its kind in the UN system,it aims to help mount and support an expanded response engaging the efforts of many sectors and partners from government and civil society. ■

Internet:http://www.unaids.org

Frontline Aids victims: girls in the South

Youth, in particular girls, and developing countries bear the brunt of Aids' virulent spread

Some two decades after the virus started to spread, HIV/Aids is a growing crisis disproportionately weighing on youth and on the developing world. About a third of the 33.4 million people world-wide living with HIV are aged 15-24, and half of all new HIV infections occur among this group. Five young people are infected every minute. Furthermore, studies in Africa show girls have four or more times the infection rate of boys.

The developing world accounted for 95%,and Sub-Saharan Africa alone for 70% of new HIV infections in 1998.Aids is now the biggest killer in Africa. Nine out of ten HIV infections among children under 15 last year occurred in Africa.Infant mortality in some African countries rose as much as 150% in 1998 alone. Life expectancy is falling by as much as 20 years as a result of Aids. The crisis is also having an impact on economic development, with many African companies saying Aids illness and death costs sometimes total more than corporate profits. Elsewhere too the crisis is gaining ground. In Asia, of the 7.2 million people living with Aids,a fifth were infected last year.

What is perhaps most startling is that HIV is expected to gather force as a killer. In 1990 it accounted for 8.6% of adult deaths from infectious diseases in the developing world. By 2020, that figure is expected to rise to 37.1%. ■

Global estimates of the HIV/Aids epidemic, December 1998

People newly infected with HIV in 1998	
Total	5 800 000
Adults	5 200 000
Women	2 100 000
Children under 15	590 000
Number of people living with HIV/Aids	
Total	33 400 000
Adults	32 200 000
Women	13 800 000
Children under 15	1 200 000
Aids deaths in 1998	
Total	2 500 000
Adults	2 000 000
Women	900 000
Children under 15	510 000
Total number of Aids deaths since the beginning of the epidemic	
Total	13 900 000
Adults	10 700 000
Women	4 700 000
Children under 15	3 200 000

Source:UNAIDS

Facts about Aids

Aids—acquired immunodeficiency syndrome—is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which weakens the body's immune system.

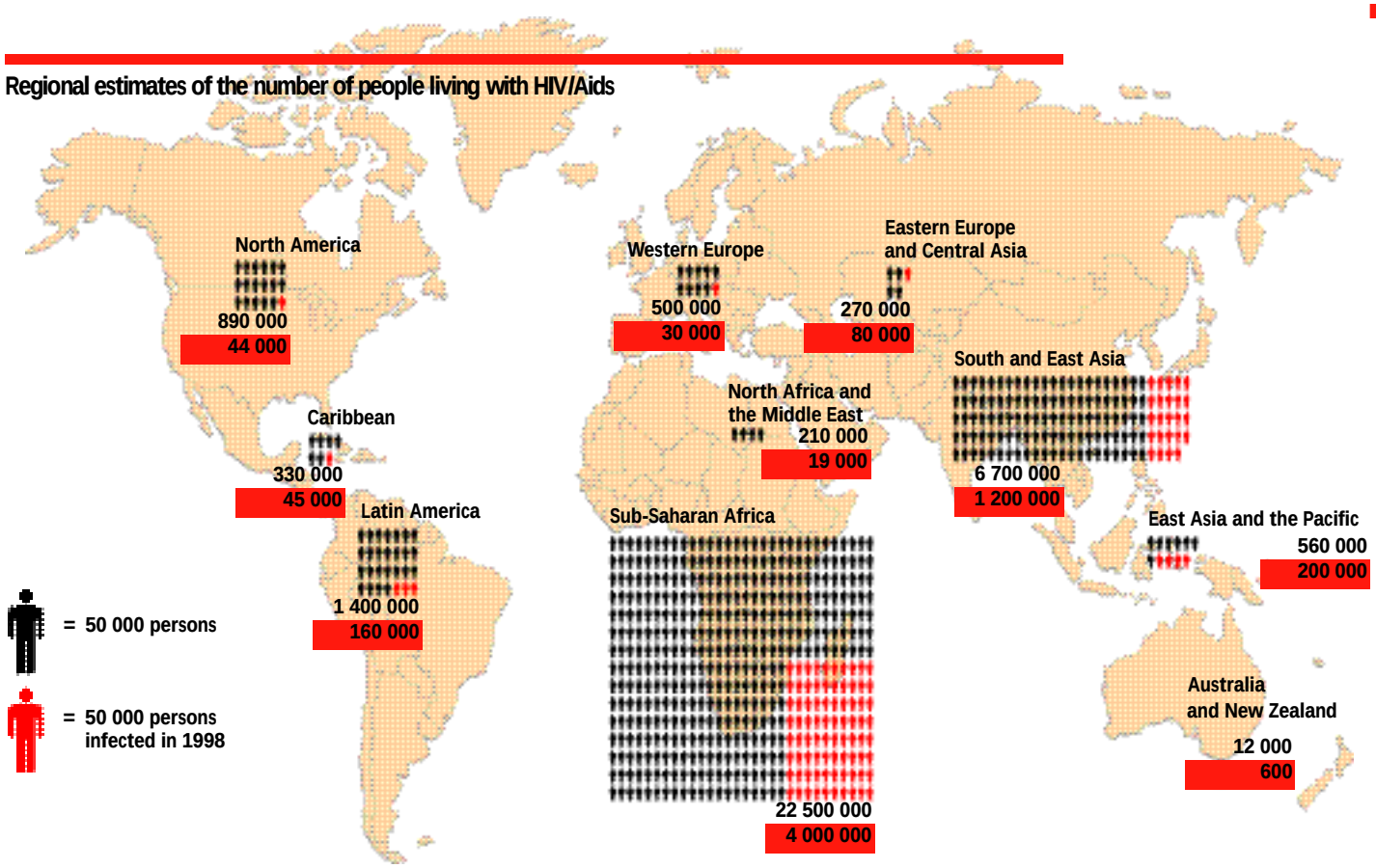
Once they have an established HIV infection, individuals are infected for life and will probably succumb to serious opportunistic infections caused by the weakening of their immune system. Treatment with antiretroviral drugs can slow the progression of HIV infection but these expensive medications are not available to most people in the developing world, who often lack access even to drugs that combat opportunistic infections. In individuals who do not get antiretroviral therapy, the time between infection with HIV and the development of the serious illnesses that define Aids is around eight years, and most patients do not survive much more than two years after their onset.

HIV spreads through unprotected sex (intercourse without a condom), transfusions of unscreened blood, contaminated needles (most frequently for injecting drug use), and from an infected woman to her child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding.

HIV is a slow-acting virus. The majority of infected individuals look healthy and feel well for many years after infection; they may not even suspect they harbour the virus, though they can transmit it to others. Conservative UNAIDS estimates are that 90% of all HIV-infected people worldwide do not know they have the virus. A laboratory blood or saliva test is the only certain way to determine whether an individual is HIV-positive. ■

Source:UNAIDS

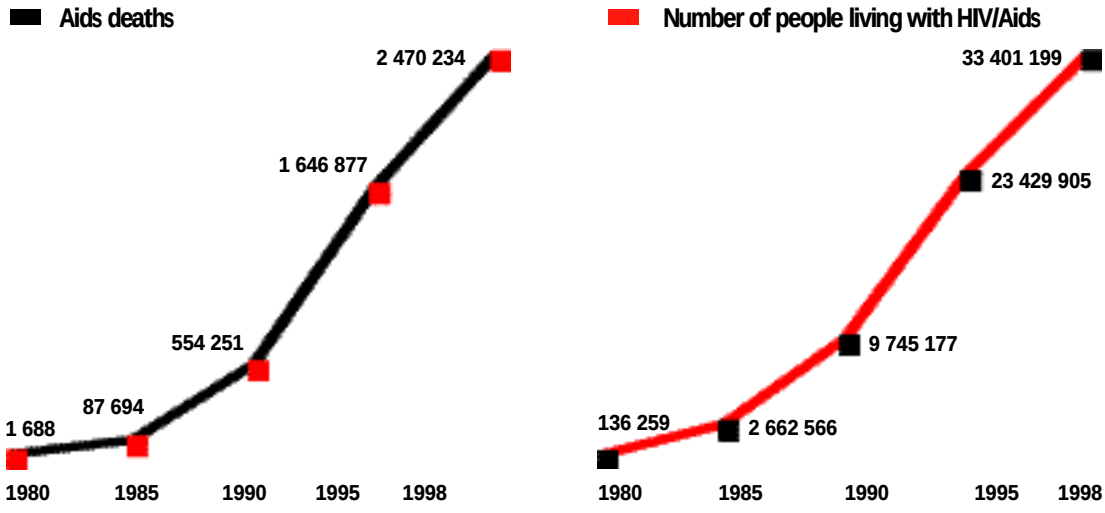
Regional estimates of the number of people living with HIV/Aids



Regional estimates of the number of people living with HIV/Aids

	Adults (15-49 years of age) living with HIV/Aids (% of total population)	% of HIV positive adults who are women	Epidemic started	Main modes of transmission* for adults living with HIV/Aids
Sub-Saharan Africa	8	50	late '70s – early '80s	Hetero
North Africa and the Middle East	0.13	20	late '80s	IDU, hetero
South and East Asia	0.69	25	late '80s	Hetero
East Asia and the Pacific	0.068	15	late '80s	IDU, hetero, MSM
Latin America	0.57	20	late '70s – early '80s	MSM, IDU, hetero
Caribbean	1.96	35	late '70s – early '80s	Hetero, MSM
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	0.14	20	early '90s	IDU, MSM
Western Europe	0.25	20	late '70s – early '80s	MSM, IDU
North America	0.56	20	late '70s – early '80s	MSM, IDU, hetero
Australia and New Zealand	0.1	5	late '70s – early '80s	MSM, IDU
Total	1.1	43		

Source:UNAIDS, Geneva.
* MSM(sexual transmission among men who have sex with men),IDU (transmission through injecting drug use),Hetero (heterosexual transmission).



1 The African epicentre

A slow march forward

◆ Damien Rwegera

In the eye of the global Aids epidemic, Africa has no choice but to organize a massive, multi-pronged prevention campaign which mobilizes the broadest range of players

The Aids epidemic raging in sub-Saharan Africa is one of the worst plagues of recent centuries. The region has only a tenth of the world's population, but is home to two-thirds of the total number of people with HIV/Aids. Two-thirds of those infected in 1998 live in the region and the situation is "out of control" in some countries,according to UNAIDS.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest region of the planet, a fact which deepens the crisis. In this context,prevention is the only way out and to date, it has been glaringly inadequate.However, the qualified success of preventive measures in some African countries demonstrates that actions can be as effective in stemming the crisis there as anywhere else.

The main problem lies in cultural attitudes to illness, pain and death. Africans tend to regard disease not as something physiological but as the result of social or religious factors, such as a curse, poisoning or divine punishment.

More than any other disease, Aids is associated with death and sex. With sperm and vaginal fluids. It is passed on by blood and a mother's milk. All this gives it powerful symbolism while making it a veritable taboo leading people to go so far as to deny its existence. Out of derision, some young people in francophone countries say that *Sida*, the French acronym for the disease, stands for Syndrome Invented to Discourage Lovers (in French). They are not convinced by scientific explanations of the disease especially after the bogus reasons trumpeted at the beginning of the epidemic: namely that Africans were responsible for spreading the disease because they "had sex with green monkeys". Africans responded in kind, claiming that "Aids comes from white people, especially white women who kiss their dogs and sleep in the same bed with them".

The main goal of preventive education is to fight such ignorance and fantasies. The second goal—to explain how to protect against it—runs up against a similar problem of perception: condoms are a "white people's thing". Moreover, they are so expensive that sometimes a person has to choose between buying something to eat or having safe sex. For an African earning about $50 a month,paying nearly 20 cents for four condoms is out of the question.

The effectiveness of preventive education has to take into account these cultural perceptions and misunderstandings and respect social structures. In Africa, even in cities, adolescents just cannot talk to their parents about sex. Such discussion is limited to people of their own age and sex.So Aids education must follow suit: women, men and teenagers each have to be approached in different ways.

Adults have to drastically change acquired habits. Teenagers have to be persuaded to adopt safe sexual habits, a much easier task.Yet this is a long-term job operating on three levels—awareness,information and education.

Despite meagre resources, African countries have made great efforts to raise awareness and spread information. Posters and radio are the favoured methods. Performing arts presentations and advertising are also often used. Experience shows that condom sales increase in the ten days following an awareness campaign. But these campaigns must happen more frequently to be effective because repetition is the key.

Reaching young people in hierarchical societies

Educating young people is still the main challenge because they are the chief victims of Aids. Around half of the newly-infected people worldwide are between the ages of 15 and 24. In 1998, 90 per cent of the world's infected people under 15 lived in sub-Saharan Africa where there is a tendency to engage in sexual relations at a relatively young age. These relations are often forced, with 12 and 13-year-old girls often the victims of sexual abuse.

◆ Rwandan anthropologist. Member of Pan-African Aids Organization (Paris, France)

A poster from Burundi.

Schools would seem to be the ideal place to reach youth and most countries have at last included preventive education in the school curriculum (see pp. 30-31). But in sub-Saharan Africa, about two-thirds of all primary school-age children and 80 per cent of secondary school-age children do not go to school. So while schools must be part of prevention, it will take some time before they have a real impact. In Africa, more than any other region, the only way to attack the epidemic is to mobilize all the major actors in society at every level—the government, civil society, local communities and foreign aid sources. The higher placed they are, the greater impact they will have given the fact that African societies are so hierarchical.

At the top are those with political power. They bear considerable responsibility for the spread of the pandemic. Their only excuse for inaction is that the continent is beset with terrible problems. In countries at war, Aids is hardly a priority. And when there's no war, poverty is people's main concern—not Aids. After all, the disease has never come up as an issue at election time.

The self-criticism of the continent's heavyweight, South Africa, has had quite an impact. President Thabo Mbeki publicly admitted when he launched the Partnership Against Aids project on October 9, 1998, that "for too long we have closed our eyes as a nation, hoping that it was not really true", while "every day another 1,500 South Africans were infected in South Africa." He appealed to young people and to the population at large to use condoms.

A campaign will obviously not work unless the battle against Aids is a top priority for governments and given ongoing attention. This has happened in Uganda which has been the most successful African country in terms of Aids prevention. The initiative for the all-out battle came from President Yoweri Museweni, who understood the extent of the disease from the day he came to power in 1986: out of about 60 army officers sent for military training in Cuba, where Aids tests are compulsory, 20 were HIV-positive. Without further ado, he earmarked funds for a large-scale national prevention campaign. Uganda has since made considerable gains. For example, between 1989 and 1995, the proportion of teenage girls (between 15 and 19) who remained virgins increased from 26 per cent to 46 per cent. They had the courage to refuse sexual relations.

In Senegal, prevention has also been boosted by ▶

The world spends $1.5 billion each year on Aids prevention. Paradoxically, only $200 million a year are spent in sub-Saharan Africa, which has the highest concentration of HIV carriers. African states provide 10 per cent of this amount. This is a mark of their poverty, but also a mark of their insufficient commitment to a prevention policy

Dr. François Chièze, Managing director of the Pan-African Aids Organization

HIV/Aids in sub-Saharan Africa

The five hardest hit countries . . .

Zimbabwe: out of a population of 11.7 million, 1.5 million people live with HIV/Aids. The HIV-infection rate among adults* stands at 24.84%.

Botswana: out of a population of 1.5 million, 190,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 25.1%.

Namibia: out of a population of 1.6 million, 150,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 19.94%.

Zambia: out of a population of 8.5 million, 770,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 19.07%.

Swaziland: out of a population of 900,000, 84,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 18.05%.

. . . and the five least hit

Madagascar: out of a population of 15.8 million, 8,600 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.12%.

Mauritania: out of a population of 2.4 million, 6,100 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.52%.

Equatorial Guinea: out of a population of 420,000, 2,400 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 1.21%.

Niger: out of a population of 9.8 million, 65,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 1.45%.

Mali: out of a population of 11.7 million, 89,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 1.67%.

* The term "adults" refers to the 15-49 age group

Source: UNAIDS, 1998.

© UNHCR/B.Press, Genève

A Kenyan poster.

► top-level political decisions, with clear results. In 1998, the government of Côte d'Ivoire earmarked $1.6 million for a prevention campaign and recently the president set up a nationwide fund,containing an equal sum for taking care of the ill.This represents a huge amount of money in Africa.

Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies are more likely to help countries which make their own financial commitments to prevention.Beyond that,international organizations like UNAIDS, WHO and UNESCO can and must convince African leaders of the extent of the problem. In 1996, the countries of Africa as a whole, except for Botswana, Kenya, Malawi and Uganda, spent less than $1 million each on Aids prevention.

Spiritual leaders and traditional chiefs, widely respected and obeyed across the continent, represent another key set of actors. Since the epidemic started, religion has hindered rather than helped the fight against Aids. A devout Catholic will not use a condom if he is told it is a sin,any more than a Muslim will if the imam does not even deign to talk to him about Aids.

The lessons learned from a conference on Aids held in Dakar (Senegal) in 1997 are revealing. About 300 participants from Africa, Europe and the Middle East, represented the two main religions of those regions—Islam and Christianity. Just getting people together to talk about such a delicate topic was an achievement. After some stormy discussions, everyone agreed that Aids was a disease and had to be viewed in strictly medical terms. If it did not remove all the obstacles to prevention campaigns, the conference at least managed to persuade participants to stop opposing the mere idea of them. Across the continent, religious leaders are now starting to join the fight against Aids—for example, Caritas International, one of the world's biggest networks of NGOs, as well as the group Christians and Aids and Uganda's Islamic Medical Association (see p. 33) have become involved.

With doctors powerless to cure or effectively treat the disease, people are turning to the symbolic authority of the ancestors, embodied by traditional chiefs. They are directly concerned by preventive education because some customs run the risk of spreading Aids—such as marrying the sister of one's late wife or the brother of one's dead husband and taking part in certain ceremonies which involve washing the dead.There is an alternative to every custom, as long as the head of the family accepts it. If the traditional chiefs were to decide to do more to help prevention, they could speed up the process of changing certain practices.

Risky customs

Equally formidable are the traditional healers and practitioners, who have a leading part to play since most Africans consult them. Nigeria has 700,000 such healers but only 20,000 doctors for 120 million inhabitants. Involving the healers in the fight against Aids not only draws on their prestige but also lessens the harm they can do: namely by admitting the disease exists and claiming they can heal it.Various projects have targeted healers by providing them with training and instilling them with a greater sense of responsibility. For example, in 1995-96 the Aids Foundation of South Africa was in contact with about half a million healers and 650 associations, all of which admitted that even if they could sometimes treat the symptoms, they could not cure the disease. Before that, 75 per cent of them said the opposite.

The Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association, with 50,000 members, has over the past decade run about 500 workshops which deal with all social groups (teenagers, polygamous families, healers, traditional chiefs) as well as members of parliament. The aim is to make people aware of the dangers involved in traditional rites such as circumcision, female excision and cures involving incision.

Preventive education in Africa remains the only way of combating Aids, but prevention must not exclude medical treatment.Africans cannot be told forever that "medicine is for others but condoms are for you". There is no underestimating the importance of a French initiative in May 1998, which was favourably received by the G8 (Group of Eight Industrialized Nations), and led to the creation of the International Therapeutic Solidarity Fund. Supported by rich countries, the fund aims to make anti-Aids drug treatments more available in developing countries. Better access to treatment will not only help save patients but reinforce prevention efforts. Experience has shown that infected people with no hope of treatment are more likely to have unprotected sex than those with medical support. ■

It's an object of our times...
An indispensable auxiliary of amorous encounters. A cumbersome companion of passing pleasures. Banal and necessary: the condom.

From Sortons couverts! ("Go Out Protected"), Librio/Sidaction, Paris, 1999

A condom tree in Burkina Faso

Fighting prejudice with laughter, film director Fanta Regina Nacro gets a strong message across

After she heard from a cousin in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) about the dangers of catching Aids, one of Konaté's two wives asked him to wear a condom. The dismayed Konaté told his friends about the request and they made fun of him. His pride was so wounded that he became impotent and even his mistress couldn't solve the problem.

Eventually the village witch-doctor intervened and told Konaté his only hope was to say a prayer at the foot of the tree on which the "thing" (the condom) supposedly grew. So Konaté went off to look for the tree.

The film *Konaté's Thing*, which came out this year, tackles Aids prevention in a light-hearted way, by laughing at male sexual pride and odd customs. Fanta Regina Nacro, the film's 36-year-old Burkinabé director,explains her approach:

Why did you use humour to handle such a distressing topic?

Being alarmist about Aids wouldn't have helped much. People run away from painful images. But we all like recalling funny episodes.

As an African woman, I'm particularly concerned about Aids. I wanted to use the wonderful means of communication I had—film—to help prevent the disease. I know how my people think and it wouldn't have worked to say to them in a moving or peremptory way "Wear a condom!" The whole weight of tradition would have come down on me. So I took another tack. Through laughter, you can fight prejudice more easily.

You raise a number of questions yet you don't deal directly with young people even though they have been hit the hardest by the epidemic.

I'm the first to admit this. But try and tell that to the National Centre for Aids Prevention. I was told that it would be "dragging them down into debauchery." They were so insistent that I gave up. The issue reeks of hypocrisy. Health officials, community organizations,everyone involved in the fight against Aids,they all avoid talking about and to young people. Fortunately children are present during awareness campaigns in the villages and no one chases them away. So they learn how to use condoms, just as they can if they see my film.

In African countries where there aren't any vending machines for contraceptives, people—especially young people—don't dare to buy them

We don't have the right to leave children in the dark about Aids. Right now, I'm trying to get the film more widely distributed so most young people in Burkina Faso can see it. It's been shown on national television but not everyone's got a TV set. A travelling cinema is in the works, along with public presentations and discussions to be held in provincial towns and villages.

How do you gauge your success?

In African countries, where there aren't any vending machines for contraceptives,people—especially young people—don't dare to go and buy them. We decided, as part of a promotion campaign, to either hand out a free box of contraceptives or the equivalent of one dollar. When a farm-worker was handed a box of condoms, he was visibly delighted. When he was given money, he was grateful but nothing more. With a dollar, he could buy five boxes but he wouldn't dare do so.

Since the film has been shown in Burkina Faso, kids have been asking in the market simply for "Konaté's thing" and that's what they get. This achievement is much more important to me than any prize the film has won.

Interview by Jasmina Sopova ■

HIV/Aids in Burkina Faso

Out of a population of 11 million, 370,000 live with HIV/Aids. Among adults in the 15-49 age group, 7.17% are HIV-infected,along with 22,000 children under the age of 15. The epidemic has so far claimed a total of 250,000 lives.

Source: UNAIDS, 1998.

In Ethiopia a puppet theatre is used as part of an Aids prevention campaign.

© Liba Taylor/Panos Pictures, London

Healers to the rescue

◆ Alassane Cissé

Vastly outnumbering standard doctors, traditional healers are destined to play a key role in the fight against Aids in Africa. Senegal shows the way forward

HIV/Aids in Senegal

Out of a population of 8.7 million,75,000 live with HIV/Aids. Among adults in the 15-to-49 age group, 1.77% are HIV-infected,along with 3,800 children under the age of 15. The number who have died of Aids since the epidemic began is not known.

Source: UNAIDS, 1998.

We don't need to come up with some supertechnological secret weapon. The answers are already in Africa.

Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS (1949-)

"You could see the bones sticking out under my skin and I was almost blind," says Amadou Sow. "I'd had Aids for 12 years when I decided to see the *malango* healers. *Malango* means 'what is needed and is suitable.' I came back feeling better. Since then, I have recovered my sight and gained weight."While Sow is a "miraculous"50 years or so old,he knows that he is not completely cured of Aids.

In Senegal's Fatick region, 150 kilometres from the capital,Dakar,the Malango Association, founded in 1983, has 450 members who are traditional healers (a fifth of them women) and work in 264 villages. Starting from the belief that nature has a cure for every ailment, they use mainly powders, potions and plant extracts. But invoking the spirits is also part of traditional therapy. In the animist view of the world,humans are considered a link in the cosmic chain who summon the lower orders (minerals, plants and animals) to join the higher ones (spirits, ancestors and gods). All of them must be called on in the hope of finding cures.

Unlike many of their counterparts in other countries, the association's healers don't promise their patients they will be cured of Aids. They successfully treat some of the symptoms (diarrhoea, vomiting and leukaemia) and ease suffering.When the treatment is ineffective, they steer their patients towards health practitioners who work with them. So far they have treated more than 10,000 people from Africa (including Senegal), Europe and the United States.

The first stop on the road

Three quarters of all Senegalese go to traditional healers. "In some areas, there's one doctor for every 100,000 people and one traditional healer for every 1,000," says Dr. Erick Gbodoussou, head of the Malango Association's experimental centre. Gbodoussou trained in Western medical schools but is convinced traditional healers can not only effectively fight some diseases, but can also play a useful role in prevention."When I treat someone with Aids,I discourage them from having sex with their partners," says one of the association's healers, a man in his 70s. "I tell them they can infect their partners if they don't do what I say."

In Dakar's Tilène market, traditional healers have been interested in helping to raise awareness about the disease."Aids exists and we have to discuss it with young people who are sexually active," says Ibra Niokhobaye Diouf. Do the ill people dare talk about their sex lives? "Ten out of the average 15 patients I see each day raise the subject openly," he says. "I use each occasion to make them understand they have to protect themselves from this disease that everyone talks about so much." With more healers like Diouf, the message about Aids reaches the whole population by word of mouth.

In the village of Sambé, in the Diourbel region,healers attended seminars on Aids in 1998 organized by the NGOs Enda Tiers-Monde and Ndef Leng ("act together").The seminars featured information workshops, debates and documentary films which convinced them of the prevention campaign's worth. Unfortunately, there were only 35 healers present."Healers aren't very efficiently used in awareness campaigns, yet they're our first stop on the road," says Dr. Moustapha Guèye, of Enda Tiers-Monde. In our talks, African traditional structures always have pride of place. It's time to make use of them."

'In some areas, there's one doctor for every 100,000 people and one traditional healer for every 1,000'

The international conference on traditional medicine and HIV/Aids, held in Dakar in March 1999, confirmed the key role of the healers. The conference, organized by Prometra (a Senegalese NGO which promotes traditional medicine) and sponsored by a dozen international organizations, attracted about 200 healers and 250 doctors and scientists, as well as political decision-makers,journalists and people living with HIV and Aids from about 30 countries around the globe. At the end of the discussions, the traditional healers were invited to take part in UNAIDS programmes and attend the next world conference on Aids, in Durban (South Africa) in July 2000. ■

◆ Journalist with Sud Quotidien,Dakar (Senegal)

2

Southeast Asia

Slowly getting bolder

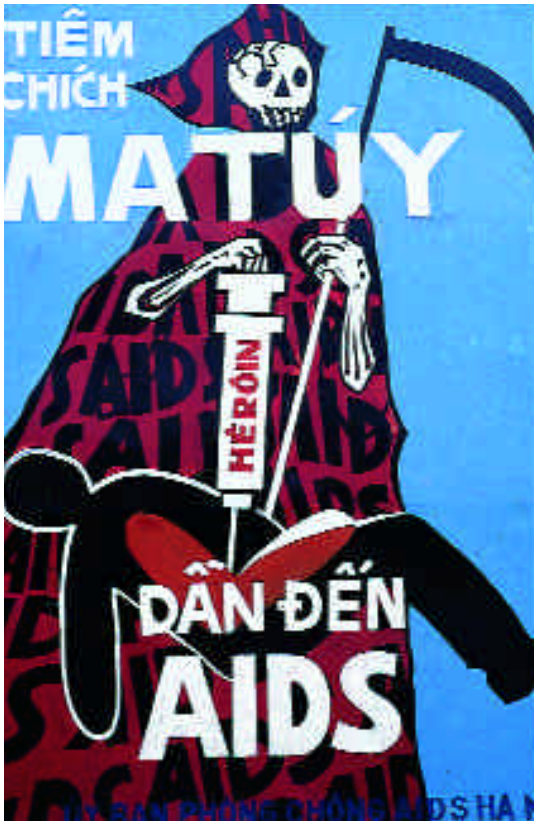
◆ Pawana Wienrawee and Carol Livingstone

While the region increasingly taps the media's potential to spread the message on Aids prevention, traditional taboos continue to hamper the educational programmes

MTV Asia is currently broadcasting an excellent HIV-prevention campaign. Savvy and modern, MTV's commercial efforts reach affluent youth in major cities. The music lovers who see MTV's HIV education spots have the means to afford condoms and protect themselves. These young people include many of the future leaders of Asia's next generation.

But the majority of youth in the Mekong region—young agricultural workers in rural areas, newly arrived factory workers in big cities, day labourers on construction sites and others—don't have access to MTV's message. Much of the HIV and Aids education aimed at youth takes place in schools, but it usually only begins after the sixth grade. A large number of young people have already left school by this age. In Cambodia, for instance, only 40 per cent of children continue their education after their sixth year.

A Vietnamese poster.



© Nic Dunlop/Panos Pictures, London

Throughout the region, traditions still act as a sizeable obstacle to effective HIV/Aids prevention programmes. Sexual education is not considered a part of the natural process of growing up. Parents still greatly influence their children's choice of marriage partners. In countries like Cambodia and Myanmar, arranged marriage is often practiced. Pre-marital sex for "good" women is considered scandalous. Couples often do not date, and thus, sexual negotiation doesn't begin until well into the marital relationship, if ever.

Scare tactics

As in many countries, teachers and students in the region often have trouble discussing sexual issues in the classroom. Teacher trainers, who help teachers learn to discuss sex with their students, often find that these adults have never touched a condom before and are frequently embarrassed while giving the lessons. Most grew up in an environment in which sex was never discussed. Often, the task of conducting sessions on condom education is left up to NGOs. Partly because of the traditional difficulty of talking openly about sexual issues, many of the education programmes have focused on scare tactics: if you have sex or inject drugs you will get Aids and die. Youth can often list what is considered appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, but this knowledge doesn't always change how they act. Traditional taboos have filtered into the formal and non-formal health education systems, and affect how governments and societies at large perceive sexuality and HIV. For instance, condoms were illegal in Myanmar until 1992. In some countries, a woman carrying one would be considered a prostitute by many members of her community, including the police.

Effective youth education programmes need to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to effectively negotiate their sexual behaviour. Such programmes must start out by listening to the students, finding out about the reality of their sexual lives, and helping them to deal with these situations. The reality is that throughout Southeast Asia there have been fairly profound changes in sexual morals and social behaviour: for instance, young couples are now more likely to hold hands than 20 years ago. Partner selection in countries such as Thailand is ▶

◆ Respectively technical adviser for PATH (Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health) and Bangkok-based journalist.

now often left to the young themselves. Advertisements show a life in which an acknowledgment of sexuality is the social norm.

Still, many traditional attitudes towards sexuality prevail and some have a particularly high cost. Because female virginity is highly prized in some countries, it is considered acceptable for young men to visit prostitutes. The sex trade has been a major cause of the spread of Aids in the region. In Thailand, there are now more men infected with HIV than women, but the ratio is expected to be even by 2005. Forty-four per cent of the prostitutes in the northern region of Thailand are thought to be HIV-positive. In Cambodia, that figure is over 60 per cent in some areas.

Dealing with prostitution

In Cambodia, they start at 13, or even younger. Many sex customers delude themselves by thinking that they are less likely to contract HIV from the young. By UN standards, 80 per cent of the sex workers in Cambodia are youth. In other countries, many young hill tribe women have ended up in the sex industry. And this trade continues to grow.

Many governments have tried to deal realistically with the prostitution issue. For example, Cambodia and Thailand have supplied condoms in brothels. This is an important measure, when you consider that the young, less well-off men who drop out of school before being taught about HIV-prevention and reproductive health, are among those who may feel they can't afford a condom. But not all condoms are free. Poverty, especially among youth, plays a major role in the spread of the virus. What appears to be a cheap price for a condom to an office worker in Bangkok, may be prohibitively expensive to a bicycle tire repairman in a village. As many African programmes have shown, money for education and prevention in all forms, from all sectors, is a key factor in fighting the spread of the virus.

Because so many young people in Southeast Asia are beyond the reach of traditional HIV/Aids education programmes, many of the most successful ones have involved peer group talks. These might take place in the workplace, informally at someone's home, during youth festivals, vocational training programmes or via other community activities. Peer-to-peer education involves not just discussing Aids and the peer pressures involving sex, but includes talking about everything, helping young people gain life skills to negotiate all the issues in their lives.

The local media that may reach the majority of the less-educated population make an important contribution to forming people's attitudes to HIV. Soap operas have been a successful medium for spreading the HIV message in Viet Nam. A non-governmental organization in Cambodia sponsored a boat tour along the Mekong to produce a video about an HIV-positive Cambodian soldier returning home. Because it was well-made and captured the audience's interest, the video was an extremely effective education tool and was seen by over 100,000 in the space of three months.

To counter given the many negative representations of Aids victims in Thailand, a group of NGOs has commissioned a series of portraits of young people with HIV. Professional photographers, many of whom have worked with fashion magazines, have donated their services to help young people see that these individuals are as beautiful, and as full of life, as everyone else.

The epidemic, which disproportionately affects young people, must be seen as a socio-economic and a development problem by governments and society at large. Unless there is a rapid and effective response, it is foreseeable that Aids will curb the economic growth of the region in the years to come. It is imperative that development plans incorporate an HIV/Aids perspective, and all the more so when dealing specifically with programmes targeting the region's youth. ■

You have to start from the ground [children and youth] with education, so that youth will grow fruitfully and be protected from Aids. If not the tree will die.

Youth delegate to the fourth International Congress on Aids in Asia and the Pacific, Manila (Philippines), October 1997.

HIV/Aids in South and East Asia

The five hardest hit countries . . .

Cambodia: out of a population of 10.5 million, 130,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults* stands at 2.4.%.

Thailand: out of a population of 59 million, 780,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 2.23.%.

Myanmar: out of a population of 47 million, 440,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 1.79.%.

India: out of a population of 960 million, 4.1million people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.82.%.

Nepal: out of a population of 22.6 million, 26,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.24.%.

. . . and the five least hit

Bangladesh: out of a population of 122 million, 21,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.03.%.

Lao People's Democratic Republic: out of a population of 5.2 million, 1,100 people live with HIV/Aids. The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.04.%.

Indonesia: out of a population of 203.5 million, 52,000 people million live with HIV/Aids. The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.05.%.

Philippines: out of a population of 70.7 million, 24,000 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.06.%.

Sri Lanka: out of a population of 18.3 million, 6,900 people live with HIV/Aids.
The HIV-infection rate among adults stands at 0.07.%.

*adults refers to the 15-49 age group

Source: UNAIDS, 1998.

Stemming the tide in Thailand

◆ Wanphen Sreshthaputra

Through a sustained national campaign, Thailand has brought its rate of HIV infection under control, but the economic crisis is casting a shadow over the progress

"Condom Night" in Bangkok.

HIV/Aids in Thailand

Out of a population of 59 million, 780,000 people live with HIV/Aids. Among adults in the 15-to-49 age group, 2.23% are HIV-infected,as are 14,000 children under the age of 15. The epidemic has so far claimed a total of 230,000 lives.

Source: UNAIDS, 1998.

A survey conducted in Thailand for the British contraceptive firm Durex, published in December 1998, showed that 60 per cent of those questioned used condoms. Polls taken by UNAIDS among 21-year-old Thai men found that use of condoms in brothels in northern Thailand rose from 61 per cent to 93 per cent between 1991 and 1995, while the number of customers fell by half.

Such changes in sexual behaviour are two solid results of Thailand's large-scale effort to fight Aids. Even before the first case was detected in Thailand in 1984, Mechai Viravaidya ("Mr. Condom"), a family planning pioneer and founder of the Population and Community Development Association, was publicly singing the praises of condoms. At first he was accused of tarnishing the country's image, but then he was congratulated for his major contribution to halting the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) and Aids.

Non-governmental organizations were the first to support his work but were quickly overwhelmed. The rapid spread of such diseases spurred the government to launch a broad mobilization campaign. In 1992, it announced a three-year plan to monitor and fight Aids. By 1996,the plan's budget had risen to $82.3 million, an initiative unmatched in any other country.

Coordinated by the ministry of health, preventive education was gradually taken over by civil society as a whole. By 1990, even before the plan was launched, television had become the chief source of information, with the broadcasting of expensive advertising spots. Rural communities set up solidarity funds and Buddhist monks opened their temples to ill people rejected by their families. The religious association Sangha Metta, based at the Buddhist University of Mahamakut, at Chiang Mai, has so far trained more than 500 monks and nuns to work in prevention and treatment.

In most towns, people with Aids or HIV took action. The New Life Friends association, set up in 1993, has several hundred members and is doing an impressive job of raising awareness, especially in schools. Many members are now teaching classes about the disease.

Complacency and budget cuts

From the early 1990s, clinics specializing in treating STDs, whose patients were mostly working in the sex industry, generously handed out free condoms and pushed brothel owners to encourage their use. This programme,launched on a national scale in 1991 and known as the "100 per cent Condom Campaign" is the key to Thailand's success, according to Wiwat Rochapichayakhon, the UNAIDS director for the Asia-Pacific region.

But prevention has flagged for the past two years for several reasons. Rochapichayakhon says people have taken for granted the progress and have become complacent. The head of the European Union's Aids programme in Thailand, Alessio Panza, blames a new policy of targeting specific groups rather than conducting a mass campaign. The chief of the Aids department in the Thai health ministry, Chaiyos Kunanusont, claims that the economic and financial crisis that erupted in 1997 is responsible. The budget to prevent the disease has been cut by a quarter, he complains.

The effect of the economic crisis on the epidemic is unclear. Will the newly-unemployed end up working in the brothels of Patpong and Pattaya? Or will the falling standard of living mean fewer customers and so less demand for new sex workers? One thing is certain: the thousands of people returning to the countryside after losing their jobs in the towns are already causing sexual health problems in the north and northeast of Thailand. ■

◆ Bangkok Post journalist (Thailand)

3

The classroom and beyond

Prevention at school: an arduous course

◆ Monique Fouilloux

School is an ideal place to make young people aware of the danger of Aids. But the topic is delicate and all the harder to handle with precious few resources

Educating schoolchildren about Aids is something very recent in developing countries—when it happens at all. Many politicians, school principals and teachers are trapped by sexual taboos and believe Aids education encourages young people to have sex. Only in 1997 did a report by UNAIDS (entitled *Effects of sex education on young people's sexual behaviour*) come out showing there was no such danger at all.

The situation is finally beginning to change. Many developing countries have now taken the plunge and Aids education is part of their school curricula. Sometimes, subterfuges have to be used. Indonesia, a Muslim country, has chosen to talk about "reproductive health education" instead of sex education. Many countries have followed suit.

Senegal's pioneering programmes

In West and Central Africa, the subject is tackled in "family life and population education" programmes which offer a multi-disciplinary mix of biology, home economics and health, civic and moral education. However, difficulties lie not just in devising programmes but also in teaching them effectively. In most countries, the programmes have not yet been endorsed by the government.

Senegal is a pioneer in the field and family education is even taught in primary schools there. Since 1994, a Senegalese NGO, Group for Research and Development on Population and Education (GEEP) has set up 140 family education clubs, involving 52 per cent of the country's secondary schools. In 1997, three such clubs were started at Dakar University.

So far more than 2,000 pupils, a third of them girls, have completed training as group leaders. Their job is to make their fellow students, as well as young people not in school, aware of Aids through cultural days, fairs and holiday camp activities. Teachers help them by looking after administrative matters. During the 1997-98 school year, their work involved about 45,000 young people, representing 32 per cent of all secondary school students.

In Asia, the situation varies widely from country to country. Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam and Sri Lanka have well-established prevention programmes which are part of formal education, while Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Maldives are only just getting started. In India, an Aids awareness campaign is supposed to be part of physical education and courses in "social useful productive work". But often teachers do not even know such programmes exist, so they have to make do by themselves. In the most remote parts of India and elsewhere, teachers with little knowledge of Aids are expected to initiate an open discussion about sexuality with classes of 50 to 80 pupils without the help of books on the subject. This is asking too much.

Teachers: overcoming their own inhibitions

"One of my students asked me a question about Aids which I just didn't know how to answer, so I said it wasn't the subject we were dealing with," admitted a history teacher in Africa during a seminar in Lomé (Togo) in April 1999. "But I had the feeling it was the first time the child had dared to ask the question and I fear he won't dare ask it again."

The teachers, themselves inhibited, do not know how to tackle the subject. In West Africa, only Guinea has arranged for Aids education at the National Teachers' College, while Burkina Faso and

◆ Education coordinator for Education International, with additional contributions from Nathalie Barboza (UNESCO Dakar); Babakar Fall, coordinator of the Group for Research and Development on Population and Education, Dakar (Senegal); Asa Andersson-Singh, formerly a programme specialist with the UNESCO office in New Delhi (India).

© INEADE/Ministère de l'Education nationale du Sénégal, Dakar

In Senegal children find out about Aids from primary school textbooks.

Togo are focusing on secondary school teachers. The other countries have made little headway.

Teachers also need to have access to interactive teaching methods so they can create an atmosphere of confidence to encourage young people to voice their concerns and learn to protect themselves. But teaching materials are seriously lacking. At the beginning of the 1990s, UNESCO and the World Health Organization (WHO) published some manuals for school curriculum planners suggesting activities for pupils and how teachers might approach the subject (see box). Several thousand of these well-produced guides were printed, but there are 55 million teachers in the world. More recently, Togo put out a brochure for schoolchildren, but it was distributed only privately.

Every time a child dies of Aids, human rights are violated.

Children and Aids: An Imminent Calamity, UNICEF

Reach children when they're young

Even when appropriate tools are available, teachers do not always make use of them. Experience shows that young teachers, who adapt much more easily to new approaches, are the ones to rely on. As a rule, nobody is really prepared to talk to young people about sex. Parents do not feel up to the job and pass it on to the teachers who in turn pass it back to the family or the church. This is especially so in majority-Catholic countries, mainly in Latin America, where condoms are still sometimes regarded as "an instrument of the devil." Surveys by UNAIDS show that when young people are well-informed about the disease, they protect themselves more effectively than adults. In Chile, Brazil and Mexico, boys between 15 and 18 are the most frequent users of condoms.

But education authorities still balk at prevention programmes and do not like to recognize that young people are sexually active. Even though premarital sex is frowned upon, it is common among teenagers, who change partners more often than adults. This is why about half the new cases of infection are found among people between 15 and 24. So they must be warned about Aids as early as possible.

The ideal age to start preventive education is about seven, according to experts. Children of that age do not have inhibitions, express themselves openly at school and freely pass on what they learn to the rest of their family and are thus excellent agents of communication. It is too late to begin introducing this education in secondary school because between a quarter and a half of all schoolchildren in developing countries drop out of school after five years. Programmes outside school are therefore vital to combat Aids. There are some, but not enough programmes, which mainly reach children in big towns.

So there is a great deal of work to be done. But people are clearly becoming aware of the problem. After two decades of silence, the issue of Aids has finally reached the horizon of the classroom. ■

UNESCO and Aids education

Set up in 1987, UNESCO's Section for Preventive Education aims to develop responsible attitudes and behaviour at individual and community levels using educational strategies. The goal is to enhance national capacities to implement effective educational programmes. This can mean implementing pilot projects, providing expertise, and organizing conferences and teacher training workshops. It assists in launching international campaigns aimed at youth in collaboration with civil society, promoting peer education, creative teaching and publishing guides for teachers and educational materials.

The Unit of Cultural Research and Management's project originated in the UNAIDS Coordinated Appeal for 1998-1999. Its basic concern is to understand and take into account people's cultures in the broadest sense when developing preventive actions against HIV/Aids.

The World Foundation for Aids Research and Prevention was established in 1993 by UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor and Professor Luc Montagnier, co-discoverer of the HIV virus. The goal of the foundation is to mobilize all kinds of private initiatives, to create new partnerships and find novel forms of co-operation, especially in research and prevention, in order to support and continue actions against Aids taken by public authorities. ■

+ ...

• **http://www.unesco.org/education**

A crash course for teachers

◆ Dr. Yvon Moren

During a day of role-playing and discussion, Rwandan teachers learn to broach the subject of Aids in the classroom without shyness or fear

HIV/Aids in Rwanda

Out of a population of 5.8 million,370,000 live with HIV/Aids. Among adults in the 15-49 age group, 12.75% are HIV-infected,along with 22,000 children under the age of 15. The epidemic has so far claimed 170,000 lives.

Source: UNAIDS, 1998.

In my country, Botswana, there is a serious problem of communication between parents and their children. This is a cry from our hearts: parents, talk to us. Without communication, guidance and dialogue on your part, we are a lost generation. Come to our aid.

14-year-old girl addressing the International Conference on STD/Aids in Africa,Kampala (Uganda),1995

At the school in Mujina, a couple of hours by road from the Rwandan capital of Kigali, the teachers have gathered for a day of instruction about Aids organized by the NGO *Enfants réfugiés du monde*. They all admit to being confused: what can we do? they ask. Their pupils start having sex quite early on—around 16 for boys, but much earlier, from about 12 and up for girls, who are often pestered and harassed by adults. The teachers all agree that the school is ideally situated to reach young people in efforts to prevent the spread of the disease. But how exactly can they get the message across to their pupils?

The curriculum officially includes lessons about Aids and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), but teachers have not been taught how to tackle these subjects. They don't have books or other written material, their own knowledge is limited and mainly obtained from the radio. Their mother tongue lacks euphemisms for sexual matters. And even the most energetic teachers shy away from the subject for fear of being accused by parents of corrupting the minds of their children.

An 'internal army'

"As a result," says a primary school inspector, "most of them just don't teach the classes they're supposed to." According to one female teacher, "it's impossible in Rwanda to talk about sex with children under 12."

A team from the Rwandan Child to Child programme gives a one-day crash course on a teaching method by which children learn to be more concerned about their own health and that of others. The training aims to equip the teachers with information about Aids and techniques for tackling the subject.

Right from the start,the team reminds participants that Aids, unlike any other sexually transmitted disease, is a blood disease, not one directly affecting sexual organs. From this angle, teachers can handle the matter more calmly, like any other infection. The problem is that many teachers are unclear about the various functions of blood. With malaria widespread in the region, they know that red blood cells carry oxygen, but they are less familiar with white ones or with problems of the immune system.

Basic information about blood is conveyed with the help of games and very brief talks. The immune system, for example, is presented as a professionally organized "internal army" which attracts their attention. They overcome their shyness and join in acting out how the virus attacks the body and how the various parts of the immune system fight back. A "Mr. HIV" and a "Mr. Malaria" give talks about the virus and how it spreads.

Illustration Isabelle Cafin © Edicef, Vanves, France

Cover of a book produced by Dr. Yvon Moren and Rwanda's Child to Child programme (Edicef publishers, Paris, 1996).

Before looking at how the virus enters the human body, the teachers are asked to draw the male and female genitals. Very few are comfortable doing so. But making a life-size model of the female genitals, using whatever is at hand (an avocado pear for the uterus, for example) is met with enthusiasm. A presentation about the different stages of Aids gives the teachers a chance to talk at length about the disease, which is so present in their everyday life and yet remains invisible.

After several further scientific points have been made, the question of prevention is tackled. *The Fleet of Hope*, a book written by Bernard Joinet, a Catholic missionary and professor of psychology at Tanzania's University of Dar es Salaam, is used. Aids is presented as a kind of Biblical flood and the class "embarks" on one of three "arks"—abstinence, fidelity or condom—to escape drowning.

An evaluation of the training shows that teachers feel it is vital to improve their scientific knowledge. But this isn't enough for them. Students in higher grades are asking them all sorts of questions about sexuality, which they are at a loss to answer. ■

◆ Member of the "Child to Child" programme, Institute of Health and Development, Université Paris VI (France)

Uganda: a jihad against Aids

◆ Maggie Keenan Wheeler

In informal schools tied to mosques, Muslim religious leaders have taken on a pivotal role in teaching youth the basics of prevention

Mohammed Mubiru admits that Aids is a topic he has never discussed with his parents. "They would think I was being disrespectful," he says. So where did Mubiru, a teenager, learn about the disease?

In an innovative project launched by the Islamic Medical Association of Uganda (IMAU), youth in Mpigi (50 km southwest of Kampala) and Kamuli Districts (140 km northeast of the capital) are learning about Aids at Madarasa schools associated with the mosques in their villages. These schools are open on weekends to teach Muslim children the Arabic language and principles of Islamic culture and behaviour. Muslims account for about 16 per cent of Uganda's 20 million people. In 1989, the country's highest Muslim authority declared a jihad (holy war) on Aids, paving the way for the Madarasa Aids Education and Prevention project.

In a 36-lesson curriculum developed by the Ugandan Ministry of Health and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), youth in the Madarasa schools learn about HIV/Aids transmission, prevention and control during 40-minute sessions. The curriculum was recently enriched with a life skills component to equip youth with some of the tools they need for building self-esteem and coping with various challenges of growing up. Topics include resisting peer pressure, communication skills and being assertive: "If a girl is asked by a man to have sex, she needs to know how to say no and mean no," insists Neema Nakyanjo, IMAU's project officer. He helps to train county sheikhs, imams and their assistants to use the curriculum. These trainees, in-turn, supervise the training of volunteer Madarasa teachers at mosques in their area. Since its launch in 1995, the programme has reached more than 36,000 children in 350 schools.

'She needs to know how to say no and mean no'

"It is challenging to introduce the topic of Aids, but children need to know," says Imam Hassan Magola from Bukulube Mosque. The project underlines that certain traditional Muslim practices can increase the risk of exposure to the HIV virus, namely male circumcision with unsterile instruments and ablution of the dead without protective gloves. Introducing the topic of condoms however proved to be the single greatest hurdle. In the first year, the issue was removed from the curriculum after some religious leaders argued that recommending use of condoms would promote sex outside marriage. Over a year, IMAU held a dialogue with Islamic leaders to work through their concerns, stressing that the condom was only being promoted as protection after the failure of the first two lines of defence: abstaining from sex and having sex only within marriage. As IMAU argued, girls do become pregnant before marriage and there are many cases of sexually transmitted disease among the unmarried. Islamic leaders eventually agreed that education on the responsible use of condoms was acceptable and the topic was reinserted in the curriculum in the second year.

Now, the project's main struggle is with funding. UNICEF has contributed $35,000 to the project since its launch while parents are encouraged to give the Madarasa teacher 100 Ugandan shillings per session (less than 10 cents) and have repeatedly expressed their support for the project. Growing numbers of non-Muslim parents are seeking to enrol their children in the Madarasa Aids classes. What's clear is that students feel able to talk more openly about the subject. "When I see someone with Aids, I know what they are going through and I sympathize," says one student. "I have learned that Aids is a reality and I live in fear of it." ■

HIV/Aids in Uganda

Out of a population of 20.7 million, 930,000 live with HIV/Aids. Among adults in the 15-49 age group, 9.51% are HIV-infected, along with 67,000 children under the age of 15. The epidemic has so far claimed 1.8 million lives.

Source: UNAIDS, 1998.

At this Ugandan school associated with the village mosque, pupils learn to fear God . . . and Aids.

© Maggie Wheeler, Seattle

◆ An American freelance writer who recently spent several years in Uganda, where she prepared two Best Practice Case Studies for UNAIDS, including one on the project cited in this article

Reaching street kids on their own turf

◆ Guillermina Navarro

Born in Mexico City, Latin America's only Aids prevention programme for street children is ready to share its expertise with other countries in the region

The street is their home. For several thousand young Mexicans, it is the place where they play, eat, sleep and when they can, work. For many, the sex trade is the only way of earning a few pesos. It is also the most likely way that they will become infected with HIV. In a few years time, many of them will succumb to Aids.

Finding suitable ways to prevent Aids is no simple task, and even less so when street children are concerned. "They are anxious, unstable and sometimes aggressive," says psychologist Gualberto Gatica. To help tackle the problem, the NGO Casa Alianza, which has been working in Mexico since 1986, launched its Luna ("Moon") programme two years ago. It is the only Aids prevention campaign in Latin America designed especially for homeless children.

Distorted knowledge

Luna, a name the infected children conjured up to evoke light amid darkness, is currently monitoring 6,180 children and teenagers. Besides being present on the preventive front, the programme also keeps a close check on HIV-positive children, provides medical treatment for youth with Aids and psychological counselling for their friends.

"Since 1997, the number of infected children has risen, so we're focusing on prevention," explains Nicasio Garcia Lopez, the programme's coordinator. "Street children usually know about sex and Aids, but it's often distorted knowledge. Hence the importance of effective prevention."

Volunteers and teachers from Casa Alianza comb the capital's neighbourhoods every day to persuade boys and girls to go to the organization's "shelter" where they can attend an hour-long workshop twice a week called "HIV/Aids—What is it?". With the help of simple, colourful teaching materials, they learn how the disease spreads and how to protect themselves against it. Many children are also reached directly on their home ground—the street. When they go around the city, Casa Alianza's teachers carry games with them that can be set up anywhere, all based on questions and answers. A game of darts for example. Depending on where the children land the darts on the board, they must answer different questions. Another, called Marathon, is based on an athletics race. The most popular game, Lunoca,is like snakes and ladders and provides information about HIV, the immune system and ways to prevent Aids. Such teaching material is easy to use and entirely based on linking ideas and pictures.

A 1996 joint survey by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Mexico City officials found that 13,373 young people under 18 lived and/or worked in the streets of the capital. Their number grew by 20 per cent between 1992 and 1995—more than 6 per cent a year.

Casa Alianza is also present in the United States, Canada, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua and is setting up a Luna network in Latin America, based on the methods, equipment and learning games used in Mexico. "The idea is to copy the material and come up with a manual which can be used all over Latin America to assess the results," says the programme coordinator.

The Mexican headquarters of Casa Alianza also plans to devise new materials and games, such as colouring books, picture slides and puzzles which contain information about HIV. The organization also responds to frequent requests to give talks to schools, parishes and Mexican institutions which care for disadvantaged children. This is perhaps the best evidence that the Luna programme is shining brightly. ■

© Fondation Casa Alianza Mexico, I.A.P.

A young workshop organizer in a Mexico City refuge run by the NGO Casa Alianza.

SILENCE= DEATH

Slogan of ACT UP, an Aids activist group

HIV/Aids in Mexico

Out of a population of 94.2 million,180,000 people live with HIV/Aids. Among adults in the 15-49 age group, 0.35% are HIV-infected,along with 1,700 children under the age of 15. The number of people who have died of Aids since the epidemic began is unknown.

Source: UNAIDS, 1998.

◆ Journalist based in Mexico City

● **http://www.casa-alianza.org**

The stigma of Aids

◆ Jean Dussault

Discrimination against people with Aids is a major obstacle to fighting the epidemic. The solution lies in education

I make love, I eat, I get dressed, I do the same things as everyone else. Is there a difference between me and them? Is there something on me which shows that I'm sick? I'm not a danger to anyone.

Arsène Tao, Côte d'Ivoire, in La Revue Noire, Paris)

In her village in Kwazulu-Natal, the South African province hardest hit by the Aids epidemic, Gugu Dlamini died because of the disease. But it wasn't the virus per se that killed her. She was accused by fellow-villagers of having brought shame on the community by talking publicly about being HIV-positive. When she was beaten by a neighbour who advised her to keep quiet, she went to the police but they did nothing to protect her. The next night, villagers attacked her house before stoning her and beating her to death.

While this story has gone round the world, there are other less bloody but just as revealing tales that receive no attention. HIV-positive children are the targets of other children's angry parents who do their utmost to have them expelled from the nursery or school or excluded from sports activities. Some doctors and dentists refuse to treat people with Aids. Community help projects regularly come up against the refusal of local inhabitants to have such "plague-stricken" people living in their neighbourhood. Even dead, these people continue to instil fear, with some funeral parlours refusing to accept their remains.

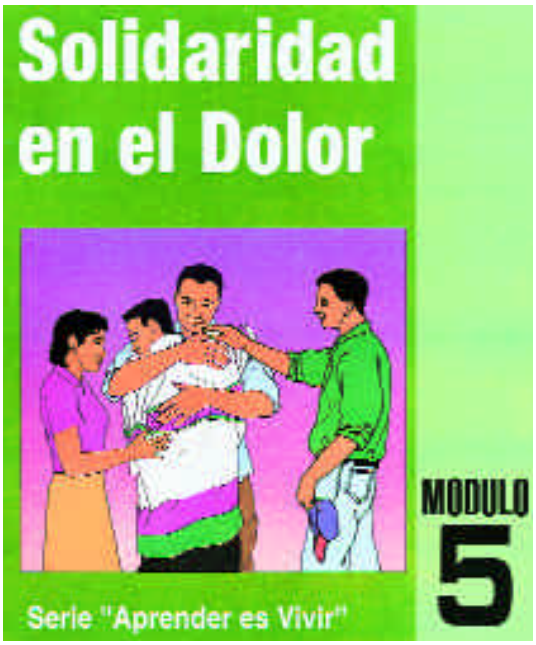
Victims of such discrimination are often poor and isolated. They do not dare complain about how they are treated for fear of making things worse. The few statistics about them hardly reflect the extent of the phenomenon. The number of known cases is just the tip of the iceberg.

Marginalized groups

As well as being frequently ostracized by ordinary folk, HIV-positive people are sometimes also hit by discriminatory laws. Using prevention as a pretext, governments adopt laws which violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Official public health programmes are sometimes the source of violations. There are plenty of examples.

Blood tests have been made compulsory for certain "target populations" such as newborn babies in New York state, prison inmates in at least 18 U.S. states and foreigners wishing to stay more than 30 days in such countries as Egypt, Bulgaria and Georgia. In some U.S. states, doctors are obliged to pass on to the authorities the names of patients who have tested positive for HIV. As a rule, HIV-positive people are refused entry to the United States.

In a collection of essays entitled "Ethics and Law in the Study of AIDS" (published in 1992 by the Panamerican Health Organization), Katarina Tomasevski, an international human rights expert, points out that "if one were to read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the aim of finding out which human rights have been affected by various responses to Aids, one would see that most, if not all, basic human rights and freedoms, laid down as the common standard of achievement for humanity more than 40 years ago, have been challenged, violated, or denied in the context of HIV/Aids." Experts have pointed out in vain that no medical or public health reason justifies measures restricting the rights of HIV-positive people. These measures are usually ineffective and even counterproductive. And yet, discrimination continues.



© Illustration Tony Nunez/IGH/Université Autonome de Saint Domingue

"Solidarity in Grief" is the title of this manual produced for teenagers in the Dominican Republic.

Most ill people evoke compassion but Aids triggers the opposite reaction. The stigma of HIV is tied to powerful social symbols, sources of prejudice and intolerance towards groups which may vary from one country to the next but all share a common trait: they are people who were marginalized even before the emergence of Aids. They include immigrants, refugees, people in prison, male and female prostitutes, native peoples, drug addicts and homosexuals. It is sometimes enough just to belong to one of these so-called "risk" groups to be considered a "threat" and thus presumed guilty of spreading the epidemic. People who help them are often regarded as their "accomplices".

The world appears to be divided in two. On one side are people with Aids and those who help them ▶

◆ Member of the the Canadian HIV/Aids Legal Network

and on the other, those who imagine they are safe from the disease and do not feel concerned. Some in the first group avoid health and social services because of the stigma to which they are subjected and their fear of discrimination. Those who most need help, information and education are thus forced underground which makes them even more vulnerable. Some people refuse to be tested for Aids, preferring not to know. Others keep their infection secret or else deny it.

People in the second group may be sticking their head in the sand like ostriches, but they are not for that matter spared by the epidemic. Their self-defence mechanisms feed their ignorance and create illusions that give them a false sense of security. They think HIV only strikes at "risk" groups—sealed communities with which they have no contact. Believing that HIV respects social frontiers makes them vulnerable in turn. At an institutional level, such a belief slows down awareness programmes and helps to reduce the funding they attract. So the stigma and discrimination that accompany Aids are not only consequences of the epidemic but also contribute to its spread.

The late Jonathan Mann, who was head of the World Health Organization's Special Programme on Aids and of Harvard University's François-Xavier Bagnoud Center, insisted that human rights feature prominently in the campaign against HIV. Arguing that such protection of ill or HIV-infected people was vital for ethical, judicial and practical reasons, he stressed that a community could not deal effectively with the disease if it failed to respect the basic right of people to have a say in decisions concerning their own future.

Protecting the victims

Although the stigma of HIV/Aids is tied to ignorance, informing people about the virus and the risk of catching it is not enough to eradicate it. Preventive education has to be accompanied by serious education about discrimination, but this is still at an embryonic stage.

At the international level, health, legal and ethics experts, representatives of communities affected by the disease and study groups have been insisting for several years on the need to ensure that policies to reduce the spread of Aids and care for its victims respect their rights and their dignity, whether they have the disease or are just at risk. But the appeals of the experts will remain a dead letter without broad public understanding and sufficient will, especially on the part of political decision-makers.

The UN High Commission for Human Rights and UNAIDS in 1998 published 12 guidelines for states on the rights of individuals concerning HIV/Aids. One of them recommended laws to protect victims of discrimination in private and public sectors while guaranteeing respect for privacy and confidentiality. Another focused on one of the sources of discrimination and called on states to "promote the wide and ongoing distribution of creative education, training and media programmes explicitly designed to change attitudes of discrimination and stigmatization associated with HIV/Aids to understanding and acceptance."

This young Zambian belongs to a nationwide network of anti-Aids clubs.

© Maggie Murray/Format, London

The current gap between the quantity of recommendations and a sluggish bureaucracy is glaring. In Aids prevention campaigns, the issue of discrimination often falls by the wayside and is rarely discussed in schools. The odd educational film attacks the stigma but no-one can boast of a broad awareness campaign that has an important impact on society.

The main features of education against discrimination must be worked out in each country according to the social context and the evolution of the disease. After the targets and participants have been chosen, steps must be taken to create a friendlier atmosphere for people who have Aids and who face rejection and indifference. This must also be done for their families and friends as well as all those involved in the fight against the epidemic. We must not forget that the disease is the enemy, not the people who have it. ■

© Unesco/Tellem

• **http://www.aidslaw.ca**

THE DEATH PENALTY: ABOLITION GAINS GROUND

◆ Martine Jacot

Countries that have abolished capital punishment now outnumber those applying it. But four countries still account for 80 per cent of all executions.

In the teeming jumble of daily news, one important human rights event passed almost unnoticed recently: on June 2, 1999, Russian President Boris Yeltsin commuted the death sentences of 716 people to life imprisonment. The death penalty was thereby effectively abolished in Russia, in line with its commitment upon joining the Council of Europe[1] in 1996. In that year, Russia executed 40 death row prisoners, sadly almost a dark world record.

Russian Justice Minister Pavel Krasheninnikov said the presidential decree was "a historic day" for his country. The decision may encourage the former Soviet bloc countries wishing to become members of the Council of Europe to follow suit or risk being barred in the future.

Tipping the balance

The Council was the first body to sign (in 1983) an international agreement obliging the signatories to abolish the death penalty in peacetime. The treaty (Protocol 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights) came into effect in 1985. Since the Berlin Wall came down, 22 former or new European countries have dropped capital punishment, at least for "ordinary" crimes. The most recent were this year: Latvia, Cyprus and Northern Ireland. In 1998, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Estonia and Lithuania took the same step for all categories of offences and Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan declared moratoriums on executions.

Europe is not the only continent where the abolitionist cause has made headway. Amnesty International notes that the number of countries that have totally abolished the death penalty has tripled over the past 20 years—from 19 in 1979 to 68 by April 1999. To this list can be added 14 more countries that impose the death penalty in wartime only and 23 others where it is considered to have been abolished "in effect" because they have not executed anyone for at least ten years.

This total of 105 states compares with the 90 countries or territories that have executed at least one of their death row ▶

© Topor/Amnesty International, Paris

A drawing by French artist Roland Topor (1938-1997) published by Amnesty International in 1982.

1 Set up in 1949, the Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg (France), aims to strengthen democracy, human rights and rule of law in its member-states, which have grown from 23 before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 to 40 today.

◆ *Unesco Courier* journalist

prisoners over the past 20 years. Today countries opposing the death penalty outnumber those applying it. The "balance" tipped only recently, between 1997 and 1998. When you look at the picture over the whole century, progress is even more impressive: in 1899 only Venezuela, Costa Rica and the tiny republic of San Marino, in Italy, had decided to abolish the death penalty.

Such progress is clearly linked with the growth of local and international human rights movements. The death penalty is increasingly thought of as a cruel and inhuman punishment. Its irreversibility always touches people's consciences in cases where it turns out that innocent people have been victims of arbitrary or unfair trials, cases which receive more and more publicity these days. International pressure has also increased. 1999 saw the tenth anniversary of the UN General Assembly's adoption of its first protocol calling for the abolition of the death penalty.

Many countries decided to abolish capital punishment as a way of turning over a new leaf following long periods of political repression. This is what happened not only in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe but also in South Africa (1997) and before that in Latin America—in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

A cradle of human rights

Elsewhere, action by courageous political leaders has been needed to overcome local public opinion that has remained mostly in favour of the death penalty. The French socialist government,for example, abolished the death penalty in 1981 soon after taking office. But opinion polls showed it was not until 18 years later, in 1999, that a majority of the public polled finally turned against the death penalty, despite France's reputation as the "cradle of human rights". In other countries, the process has sometimes been a very long one. Belgium and Greece repealed the death penalty in 1996 and 1993 respectively, more than 20 years after carrying out their last executions.

Despite this progress, Amnesty International reminds us that at least 1,625 prisoners were executed in 1998 in 37 countries, four of which—China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United States and Iran—accounted for 80 per cent of the total.

In China, for want of official figures, Amnesty estimates that in 1998 at least 1,067 people were executed and 1,657 death sentences imposed. Tax evasion has been a capital offence in China since 1997, which brought to about 60 the crimes punishable by death there.

About a hundred people were executed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1998 according to Amnesty, and 66 in Iran. In the United States (see p. 39), 68 prisoners were executed, most by lethal injection.Three of the U.S. prisoners were under 17 when they committed their crimes. Since 1990, only six countries—the United States, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen—have continued imposing death sentences on people who were minors at the time of their offence. But in Yemen, a presidential decree has just put an end to this practice.The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child forbids the death sentence in the case of minors and has been ratified by all UN member-states except for Somalia and the United States.

Progress is clearly linked with the growth of local and international human rights movements. The death penalty is increasingly thought of as a cruel and inhuman punishment.

A contagious effect on neighbouring nations

Is the United States—regarded, like France, as a "cradle of human rights"—having a contagious effect on some of its neighbours? In the Caribbean, rampant crime has fired support for capital punishment among governments and public opinion. Nine prisoners were executed by hanging in early June 1999 in Port-of-Spain, capital of the Caribbean state of Trinidad and Tobago, five years after the last execution took place there. The Bahamas used the gallows again twice in 1998, after a two-year pause. While the last execution by hanging in Jamaica took place in 1988, there's a high risk that the practice could be resumed: there are 40 people on death row there, several of whom have almost exhausted all legal recourse.

The myth of deterrence

Rampant crime was also used by the authorities in the Philippines to justify restoring the death penalty in December 1993, with the first execution being carried out in February 1999. Yet this country was the first in Asia to abolish capital punishment, in 1987, after the fall of President Ferdinand Marcos. The current head of state, Joseph Estrada,has stressed his determination to attack poverty—the "compost-heap of crime"—but without abolishing the death penalty. Recent opinion polls show about 80 per cent of Filipinos are in favour of it. Over the past six years,914 people have been sentenced to death in the Philippines.

But so far no study has shown clearly that capital punishment is a deterrent.On the contrary, the murder rate has fallen in several countries that have abolished it, such as Canada, a neighbour of the United States. Amnesty International and other human rights organizations hope the U.S., among others, will at least abolish the death penalty for people who were minors when they committed their crime, as well as for the mentally ill and the elderly. ■

EXECUTIONS IN 37 COUNTRIES

Amnesty International reports that death penalties were carried out in 37 countries and territories in 1998:

Afghanistan, the Bahamas, Belarus, China, Congo, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Iraq, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Nigeria, Oman, the Palestinian Authority, Pakistan, Russia, Rwanda, St Kitts-Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Taiwan, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe. ■

- **Amnesty International, International Secretariat,**
  1 Easton Street, WC1XOW London,
  Phone: (44 171) 413 55 00,
  Fax: (44 171) 956 11 57.
  Website: http//www.amnesty.org
- **Death Penalty Information Center: http//www.essential.org/dpic**
- **News about the death penalty: http://iep.univ-lyon2.fr/PdM**

THE AMERICAN EXCEPTION

◆ Vicky Elliott

In a climate influenced by the religious right, a public stand against the death penalty is regarded as nothing short of political suicide

In a nation where the death penalty is in force in 38 out of 51 states, roughly 3,500 prisoners are waiting on death row, 47 per cent of them white and 42 per cent black.* Executions are on the rise, with 68 carried out in 1998. In addition to imposing the death penalty for crimes committed by juveniles, the U.S. is also unusual in making no exceptions for the mentally retarded.

What explains the endorsement of the death penalty by four out of every five Americans? In the civil rights period of the1960s, the percentage of those in its favour briefly dipped as low as 42 per cent.But since the Supreme Court reinstated it in 1976,after a moratorium of about a decade, support has been little short of monolithic. It is true that the figures drop (to about 60 per cent) if those surveyed are presented the alternative of keeping serious offenders in jail without possibility of parole.

© A. Lichterstein/Sygma, Paris

In Texas, the cross marking the grave of an executed prisoner bears his number, not his name.

The 'death belt'

However, fear of crime persists and a punitive climate remains. Lawmakers are continually introducing bills to expand the list of "aggravating factors" presented to the jury in many states in the sentencing phase of a capital case.

The so-called "Death Belt" of the Southern states, with their history of lynch law, accounts for a hefty percentage of death row inmates, and half of the executions in 1997 were carried out in Texas alone. But California,which pays out more for its prisons than its universities, now has the largest number of inmates on death row. NewYork, whose Governor Mario Cuomo was one of the few American politicians in recent history willing to risk a public stand for abolition, has brought the death penalty back. And in Arizona,officials intend to accelerate the pace of executions.

Built on Puritanical foundations,human relations in this gun-toting culture are still viewed in Manichean terms, validating the frontiersman's call for the bad guy to be strung up. In a climate heavily influenced by the religious right, a public stand against capital punishment is regarded as nothing short of political suicide. Executive clemency, which was used to commute many death sentences to life imprisonment during the heyday of the gangsters in the 1930s and 1940s, is rarely exercised. Witness Governor Bill Clinton,who approved the execution of a mentally retarded convict in Arkansas just after winning the presidential elections in 1992,and California's Democratic Governor Gray Davis, who has passed up the possibility of staying two executions this year.

Moreover, the criminal justice system is inextricably intertwined with electoral politics. District attorneys, who make the decision whether to seek the death penalty in a given case, are elected. State judges, once appointed, face a retention vote at the next general elections. While federal judges are appointed for life, they face a grueling congressional confirmation battle. Public perception is that capital cases, which can cost a state in the region of $1.2 million to prosecute, are subject to unduly lengthy scrutiny. In fact, legislatures around the country have made it increasingly difficult to bring appeals.

Meanwhile, despite a 1984 Supreme Court ruling intended to correct racial bias in jury selection, the operation of the death penalty remains racially skewed. Of the 1,838 District Attorneys in death penalty states as of May this year, only 22 were Hispanic and 22 black. Although roughly equal numbers of blacks and whites are homicide victims, of the 500 people put to death between 1977 and 1998, 81.8 per cent were convicted of killing a white person. Setting aside cases involving particularly egregious crimes such as serial killings, the death penalty falls disproportionately, for crimes of equal severity, upon poor blacks who cannot afford adequate legal representation.

There are some signs of movement in public opinion. A cluster of miscarriages of justice on death row and the reversal of several convictions have helped to rally support both for a new moratorium on executions and for a plan to divert spending on death penalty cases into a fund for the families of homicide victims. It is also conceivable that if a Democrat comes to power at the next elections and appoints two new justices of a less than extreme conservative persuasion, the Supreme Court might turn the situation around.

Between now and then, prisoners wait on death row. In the words of one juvenile offender in Oklahoma, "To condemn me to death . . . is to say my life has no positive value, I'm beyond correction or rehabilitation." It is strange that a nation that puts such store in the perfectibility of the individual is willing to discard so many lives. ■

◆ Journalist, *San Francisco Chronicle*

THE MELTING POT OF MODERN DANCE

◆ Jean-Marc Adolphe and Martine Jacot

More than ever before, modern dance is synonymous with buzzing cultural exchange–from North to South, East to West, and vice-versa

The scene is set in Soweto, one of Johannesburg's notoriously poor townships, soon after Nelson Mandela's election in April 1994 as president of South Africa. It was here in Soweto, during riots in 1976, that the apartheid government's police shot dead more than 500 young people.

Jean-François Duroure, a white French dancer trained in Angers (France) and at the schools of German choreographer Pina Bausch and Americans Merce Cunningham and Viola Faber, is trying to explain his project to a group of young street dancers. He speaks in broken English which his listeners do not fully understand. The look on their faces seems to say: 'Just what does this white man want of us and why is he here?' Duroure talks about his great curiosity, his wish to exchange experiences and to choreograph them. No reaction from the audience. His words don't seem to get through. Suddenly, Duroure gets up and starts to dance. The youths join in one by one and the impromptu performance lasts five hours.

Communicating without words

"This is how we finally started to communicate—without any words," Duroure says. "This is how I learned to find my physical spontaneity with them, people without formal training as dancers but who had danced since birth. This is how I brought them what I could and how we established mutual confidence and respect which enabled us to create together."

The result was *What Are You Doing Here*, a "choreographed report" of sketches blending dance, music and song with street scenes and township ceremonies. French and South African cultural officials were sceptical at first about this project by a white dancer but the final result was warmly received by the public in South Africa and Europe in 1997 and 1998. The choreographer is currently repeating the experience in the city of Durban in Kwazulu-Natal.

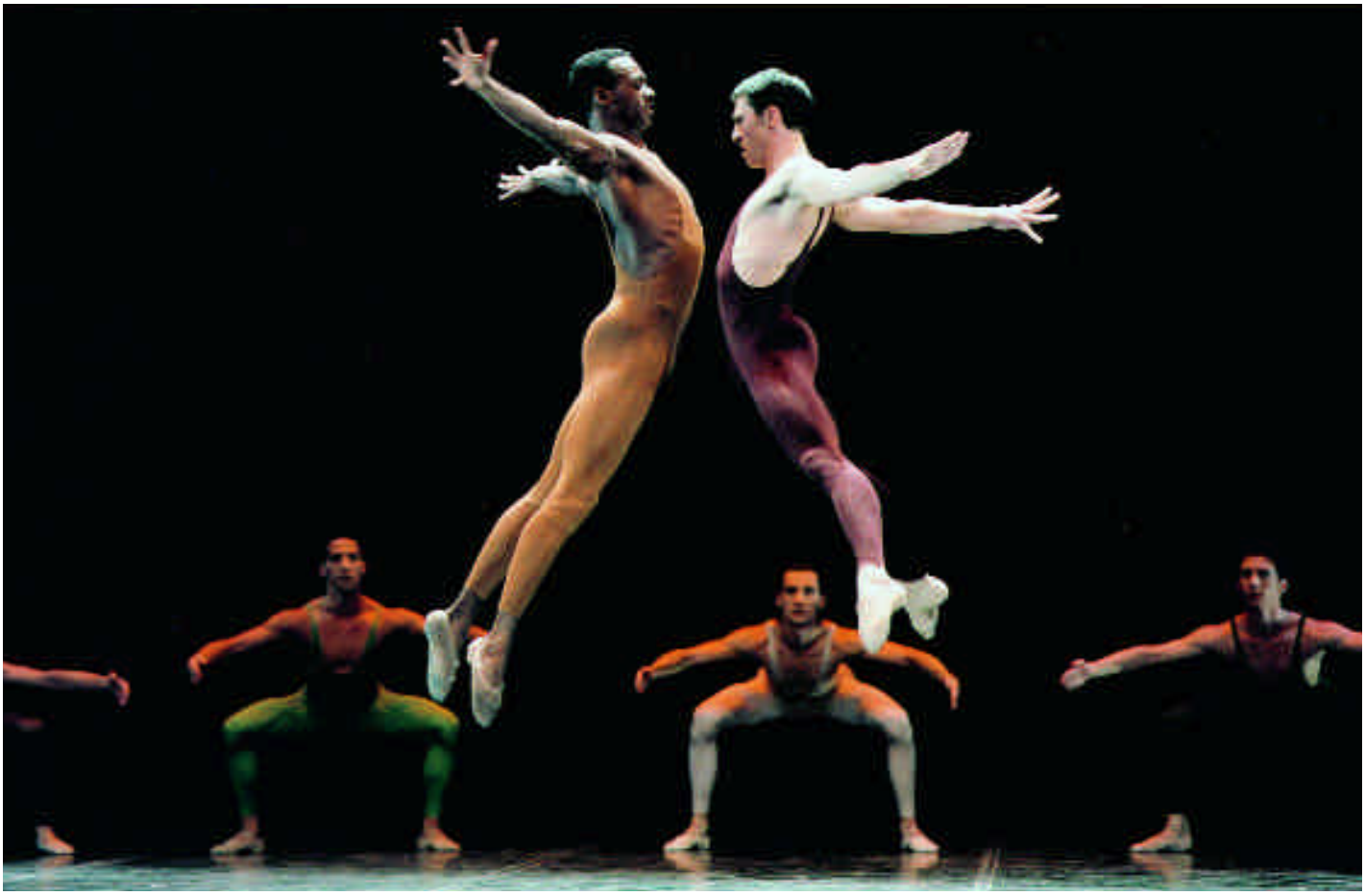
Unlike Duroure, who dances mainly to "inspire encounters and complicity", Ea Sola seeks through her work to delve into unknown dimensions of the inner self. "It's something from very deep down inside which you then have to pass on to others," she says. Sola is Vietnamese and when she was barely a teenager, she was forced into exile in the West, and felt at a loss.

She returned to Viet Nam to delve into her country's rich culture, mainly through the northern Vietnamese traditional art form known as *hat chéo* which dates back to the 13th century and combines song, drama, dance and percussion. With 15 Vietnamese

Hi no hashira **("The dance of summer") by the American choreographer Susan Buirge.**

© Brigitte Enguerand, Paris

◆ Jean-Marc Adolphe is editor of the French arts magazine *Mouvement* and artistic adviser for dance at the Bastille Theatre in Paris. Martine Jacot is a *UNESCO Courier* journalist.



***The Rite of Spring*, by the French choreographer Maurice Béjart.**

peasants, she produced a modern work, which breaks through communication barriers, about remembering pain. *Sécheresse et pluie* ("Drought and rain") was a lean, stripped-down performance in which the peasants at one point waved pictures of dead relatives. The work was followed by *Il a été une fois* ("Once upon a time") and *Voilà voilà*, which was performed at the Lincoln Center in New York. Travelling through Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Britain and Portugal with her Vietnamese dancers and musicians, Sola noticed "with the same surprise" that at each destination the "private language of the body" conveyed feelings beyond words. So there was no need for any translations.

A nomadic art

José Navas is from Venezuela, with Indian and Spanish blood from his mother and Italian and African blood through his father. He has been based for the last few years in Montreal (Canada) after studying in New York, and dances and choreographs regularly in both Europe and North America. By "talking about his Venezuelan culture" through his body, he has found a way of breaking down language barriers.

Modern dance has clearly become a major vehicle for cultural exchange around the world. It does more than simply transcend spoken words: it seems to represent a common experience of humanity. "We are all human beings—a link that comes before national or ethnic ties," says Duroure. "A child who cries conveys the same message everywhere." Dance also involves a different view of things, appealing to the imagination, just like music, and often with music.

'I was trained in African styles by the older men in the village but I never imagined I could make a career of it or that I could dance in silence, without music. Abroad, I discovered the music inside me.'

All these factors partly explain the upsurge of modern dance, a worldwide phenomenon. In 1998, 442 choreographers from 52 countries attended the prestigious International Choreography Festival in Seine Saint-Denis (a suburb of Paris, France). For the past decade, more and more festivals giving pride of place to modern dance have been held all over the world—in Prague (Tanec Praha, every June), Brazil (Festival Internacional de Dança, in Belo Horizonte in November), Tokyo (the Yokohama Festival), Stockholm (Dansen Hus), Vilnius (Lithuania) and Adelaide (Australia). Festivals are also spreading across the Mediterranean region. A modern dance gathering was held in Tunis in early 1999, with dancers from Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan and Syria. Others will soon take place in Casablanca and Beirut.

Dance often accompanies openings and growth in other domains. In 1995, the first Luanda Festival in Angola symbolized attempts to revive the country after 20 years of civil war. The second one, held in 1998, claimed the title of the Festival of African Choreographic Creation and showcased the blossoming of modern dance across the continent. Some of the prizewinning troupes—from Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Madagascar, Ghana and Mozambique—went to the Festival of New Dance in Montreal (Canada) in September 1999.

Dance—the art of movement—has always been, in essence, nomadic in character (see box). Yet the past few years have seen a tremendous mingling of different traditions, with artists who are increasingly mobile in time and space. Two French cho- ▶

© L'Arche, Paris

***Il a été une fois*, by the Vietnamese choreographer Ea Sola.**

SHEDDING STRAITJACKETS

Dance, like other art-forms, has been alive since time immemorial, never ceasing to gain new ground. At the temple of Palaiokastro, in Crete, dance was offered to Zeus to make the vines and farm animals fertile. Ceremonies like this were to be found from India to pre-Columbia America. Is it possible to draw the line at which dance evolved from a communal rite to a form of self-expression? What about the period in India, for example, when dance forms originally derived from martial arts became "performances" in their own right?

With a touch of humour, the anthropologist Johann Kealiinohomoku refers to classical ballet as "a kind of ethnic dance". Ballet became popular in France under Louis XIV, who set up the first royal dance academy in the West. Indeed the king himself danced in public until 1670. The matrix of artistic dance, ballet also opened a new vista for cultural exchange, with Italian opera troupes visiting France in the 17th century. But it was not until the start of the 20th century, with the break ushered in by the birth of modern dance, that this art form espoused influences from much farther afield.

An insatiable curiosity for universal and spiritual forms of expression inspired the work of American choreographer and dancer Ruth Saint-Denis whose passion for Oriental dance was first sparked by a cigarette poster of an Egyptian goddess. Her famous *Egypt, Greece and India* which she performed across the United States in 1916 was a mix of pyrrhic dances, scenes from the banks of the Nile and the Ganges and evocations of nirvana. Another of her famous compatriots, Isadora Duncan, the high priestess of "barefoot dance", sought to liberate the body from the straitjackets of the past by conjuring up an imaginary version of ancient Greece.

This search for "truth" of the body continued to grow throughout the 20th century, with constant exchanges between "here" and "elsewhere" in a dialogue first between the United States and Europe and then with the Orient. In London in 1916, the Japanese dancer Michio Ito created a modern version of a traditional Japanese *nô* drama, *At the Hawk's Well*, with the Irish poet W.B.Yeats. Another Japanese dancer, Takaya Eguchi, came to Germany to learn from the legendary Mary Wigman and then returned to his homeland to add a new dimension to modern expressive dance.

In Paris, colonial exhibitions introduced the public to Javanese, Kurdish, Persian and Armenian dancers. After World War II, this cultural exchange and intermingling resumed with a new dynamic. From the late 1970s, the spectacular rise of modern dance owed much to the seeds sown by German, American and Japanese dancers and teachers.

France was a meeting point. Some of the leading figures in the French dance world were foreign—among them Americans Susan Buirge and Mark Tompkins, Hideyuki Yano of Japan, Hungarian Joseph Nadj, the Afro-American Elsa Wolliaston and Angelin Preljocaj of Albanian origin. The impact of the movement was felt to varying degrees all over Europe.

Today Europe and North America have lost their choreography monopoly as enthusiastic young audiences around the world throng to see new forms of artistic expression. Dance is increasingly nomadic in character. The dancer travels yet works within his or her own space, while some choreographers go so far as to see the stage as a "fragment of mental space". **J-M. A.** ■

► reographers, Jean-Claude Gallotta and Hervé Robbe, went to set up a troupe in Japan, where the American Susan Buirge joined with a Shinto priest and an expert in *gagaku* music to create a four-part production based on the agricultural seasons. Clara Andermatt from Lisbon works with Cape Verdean dancers, and Susane Linke from Germany is putting together a show with Senegalese dancers. There is no shortage of other examples.

Miniature multinationals

Dance companies are miniature multinationals. The Tanztheater of Wuppertal (Germany) run by Pina Bausch includes people from ten countries, whose national traits find pride of place in her productions. The Tanztheater creates pieces all over the world these days. Two Burkinabé dancers joined the Choreography Centre in Montpellier (southern France) while retaining links with their country. One of them, Salia Sanou,had just completed his law studies and passed the exam to become a police inspector when he was invited to France."In 1991, you couldn't make a living from dance in Ouagadougou," he said of Burkina Faso's capital. "I was trained in African styles by the older men in the village but I never imagined I could make a career of it or that I could dance in silence, without music. Abroad, I discovered the music inside me."

In Burkina Faso, Sanou and his colleague Seydou Boro created a piece called *Signinto*, which won a prize at the 1998 Luanda Festival. Both dream of opening together a choreography centre in Ouagadougou, where studios but not dancers are lacking.

"The challenge for me is how to bring my culture and my experiences to other people so they resonate even more with their cultures without making modern dance too cerebral," says Deroure in Durban.He would like to move towards a kind of language encompassing these different cultures.

"Everywhere,especially in Latin America, our generation is more and more of mixed background and the next will be even more so," says Navas in Montreal. "We're opening up to the world and exchanging things more than ever before."

Yet does this mixing process risk homogenizing or watering down creativity? "Absolutely not," says Sola. "Tradition without creation is sterile. In dance as in other artistic fields, transplanting one country's traditions to another doesn't work, except for a few ethnology enthusiasts. Modern dance can only be creation and innovation." ■

PHOTOJOURNALISM: THE LAST LAP?

◆ Edgar Roskis

Supply of photo reports outstrips demand, competition from television is intense. Can photojournalism survive?

An Algiers suburb, September 23, 1997: a distraught woman who has lost several family members in a massacre is comforted by a relative. The photo appeared on front pages all over the world.

A young man halts a column of tanks on June 4, 1989, during the student movement in Beijing.

The famous picture of the distraught woman in Algiers being comforted by a friend (left) may well be the last still photograph to have been printed on front pages all over the world. On the day it was taken, September 23, 1997,the Agence France Presse photographer Hocine was the only photographer or cameraman on the scene. Another equally celebrated and fairly recent agency photo (below) shows a young man singlehandedly blocking an advancing column of tanks in Beijing on June 4, 1989 during the Chinese student movement. It was taken in quite different circumstances.

The top photo, taken by a press photographer working for an agency, is unique. The Chinese protester, on the other hand, was photographed in virtually identical shots taken by three photographers working for three leading agencies (Associated Press, Magnum and Sipa-Presse) as well as by a cameraman from Britain's Independent Television News (ITN).

Hawked around to the highest bidder

Why is this difference important, you may ask, since the impact of both photos is strong? The answer is that an exclusive photo, what journalists call "a scoop", can be hawked around to the highest bidder worldwide and earn many thousands of dollars. This can't happen when similar photos have been taken by several photographers. If the man who took the Algiers photo had not been a salaried employee of an agency which charges its customers by subscription rather than on a picture-by-picture basis (see box page 44), both he and the agency could have sold the photo for a fortune.

Are any great exclusive photos being taken these days—the kind of scoops whose impact, fame, composition and ability to ▶

◆ Senior lecturer in the Information and Communication department of the University of Paris-X, Nanterre (France)

capture a moment have encapsulated information and symbolism in a single aesthetic object? Perhaps not. In 1967, Frenchman Raymond Depardon and British photographer Don McCullin were the only members of their profession covering the war in Biafra.[1] In 1994, several hundred photographers descended on Rwanda in aircraft chartered for military-humanitarian purposes. Good-bye to the exclusive photo. What's more, these photographers arrived three months after the genocide began on April 6 and could only send back depressingly similar pictures of the aftermath of the tragedy—the exodus and the epidemics, not the event that sparked them off.

Exponential growth

Photography is widely considered to have been invented in 1839. Since then the number of photographic images has grown exponentially. It is increasingly hard, despite photographers' skills, to come up with a picture that doesn't echo an earlier one. Because of the laws of supply and demand this has led to the situation in which increasing output of news pictures goes hand in hand with a decrease in the price they fetch.

Does a photo—a silent image, with a brief caption or no caption at all—have any intrinsic meaning? Imagine a shot of a horseman who is caught by the camera whipping his horse. Is he a coward fleeing the enemy or is he charging bravely forward? It all depends, of course, on the caption that goes with the picture and its credibility.

Take the example of the photos that were long thought to show the "Vel' d'Hiv" stadium in Paris at the time when French Jews were held there for deportation in July 1942.[2] Now we know that they show a meeting held two years later. And what should we make of the photo analysed by French philosopher Régis Debray in his book *L'Oeil naïf* ("The Naive Eye") showing a group of Parisian strollers looking nonchalantly at a bus with an open rear platform? The scene appears banal, except when we know that the packed bus was taking Jews to the internment camp at Drancy, outside Paris.

Herein lies one of the overriding weaknesses of photojournalism and of photography in general, described by the Germany philosopher Walter Benjamin as "The image in an age when it can be technically reproduced". "I'm just an image, nothing more," is all it says to us.

Despite this drawback, a number of photos have had a decisive effect on public opinion and changed the course of history. One notable example is the photo of the naked girl running away from the Vietnamese village of Trang Bang which had just been bombed by mistake with napalm by South Vietnamese aircraft on June 8, 1972. It was taken by a Vietnamese AP photographer, Nick Ut. Another, dating from four years earlier and showing Saigon police chief Nguyen Loan shooting dead a "suspect" at point-blank range, was taken by Eddie Adams, an American working for AP.[3] A third shows the naked body of an American soldier being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. It humiliated the United States and turned U.S. public opinion against the presence of American troops in Somalia.

The strength and the weakness of photojournalism stem from its capacity to trigger a sudden earthquake in public opinion—provided that the world's magazines and daily newspapers get hold of the photo and circulate it. But this key role has now been taken over by television. Even if screened images are often less sharp than many famous still photos, television gives them added weight and viewer interest via sound, commentary and in some cases on-the-spot reporting.

'Telepresence'

From an aesthetic viewpoint, photography is every bit as good as television reporting. A photograph can be looked at again and again, whereas the televised image fades from the screen. However, a good television report has a didactic advantage: it can explain and teach us about events. Since the 1960s, television sets have become a common household item, and TV reports reach vast audiences. Meanwhile, the ingredients of photography

1. A conflict lasting from 1967 to 1969 when the Biafra region of Nigeria attempted to break away from the central government.

2. More than 12,000 French Jews were rounded up on July 16 and 17, 1942, and taken to the Vélodrome d'Hiver stadium (the Vel' d'Hiv') in Paris. From there, most of them were taken to a transit camp in the suburb of Drancy, and then sent to German concentration camps.

3. Both these photos won a Pulitzer Prize, the most famous award in U.S. journalism.

PHOTOJOURNALISM: HOW IT WORKS

There are three kinds of photojournalism. The first and oldest kind relies on individual freelance photographers who come up with ideas, shoot a feature and then offer it to various media, mostly magazines and sometimes daily papers, for publication. In some cases the media will commission them to produce a report in line with their special interest or skills.

The second kind comprises groups of photographers working in an agency. The oldest and most prestigious agency is Magnum, which was founded in 1945 and is the only agency run as a photographers' co-operative. Gamma, set up in 1967 by Raymond Depardon and his associates, is another famous agency. Sygma and Sipa-Presse were founded later. All these agencies are based in Paris. Their way of paying photographers and hence their working methods are radically changing. The agency and the photographer consult with the editors of a client publication before a job, and usually split the cost of the assignment as well as the potential profits originating from publications which negotiate reproduction fees on a case-by-case basis. They keep the copyright to all their photos. This 50-50 agreement has revolutionized major assignments.

The third kind of photojournalism is done by the big news agencies—Associated Press (American), Reuters (British) and Agence France Presse (French)—which are often known as wire services. The media pay subscriptions to the agencies for unlimited use of agency photos and news.

News agency photographers are on a regular salary, and like most agency journalists their names are not widely known. They are paid at a fixed rate irrespective of the sales of their photos. Recently, international photofeature agencies such as Gamma, Sygma and Sipa-Presse have also put some of their photographers on fixed salaries. The turnover of each of these three international agencies is nearly $20 million a year. ■

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH
http://www.unfpa.org

On October 12, world population is estimated to reach 6 billion. This benchmark is just one of the themes covered by the website of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the leading international agency which helps developing countries deal with demographic issues. Family planning, access to healthcare and equality for women are just some of the missions of UNFPA, which was created 30 years ago. The agency warns that the next decade will be crucial: world population could reach between 8 to 12 billion depending upon the social programmes and political decisions made in the next few years. ■

© Nick Ut/AP-Boomerang, Paris

A 10-year-old Vietnamese girl, Kim Phuc, running down a country road had ripped her flaming clothes from her body after being burned by napalm. This 1972 photo brought home to Americans the horror of the Viet Nam war.

are fine craftsmanship, the courage of the photographer and the high level of skill required to capture a unique moment, not a second too late or too early.

What French writer Jean-Louis Weissberg calls "telepresence" has swept away the era of printed magazines. Even the most prestigious magazines no longer shape public opinion, except on very rare occasions. What Debray calls the "videosphere" has taken over "hot news", leaving photojournalism to a few independent photographers who have a hard time getting their work published.

So is photojournalism on its last legs? Perhaps not, but to use a metaphor from athletics maybe it's on the last lap. The big photo agencies such as Gamma, Sygma and Sipa-Presse (see box on facing page) have been forced to turn to areas outside journalism, like illustrating books, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, working for the communications departments of public and semi-public institutions, photographing the tempestuous lives of celebrities, or even doing plain laboratory work. Celebrity photos accounted for 60 per cent of Sygma's turnover before it was taken over two years ago, while news photos earned less than 10 per cent.

These agencies are now so economically weakened that they are easy prey for outside investors. A major investment group looking to break into the field can buy out a famous photo agency and gain far more than a network of photographers and a stock of photos. It can also acquire a prestigious name which is worth far more than the financial costs of the takeover.

Banks took a sizeable stake in Gamma in 1997. More importantly, mega-companies such as Bill Gates' Microsoft and its databank Corbis have been especially active in trying to get their hands on major photo archives. In June 1999, Corbis bought Sygma, whose photos by its salaried staff are all free of copyright. These photos can be reproduced ad infinitum, without bringing any royalties to the photographers who took them. These companies can draw freely on such huge archives to obtain low-cost illustrations for their multimedia activities or else re-sell these pictures far more cheaply than others on the market, even if they are dated.

Wire services

"It's hard to tell the difference these days between a fresh news picture taken at great expense and a much cheaper photo that has come from an archive," says Roger Thérond, former head of the French weekly magazine *Paris-Match*. In fact too much photojournalism is killing photojournalism, just as too many taxes kill taxation. The fact remains, however, that the death of the written press has been predicted for the past twenty years yet it is still alive—and abundantly illustrated. So how do things really stand?

Perhaps the past has caught up with us. The gatekeepers of photojournalism did not emerge overnight. In 1903, French engineer Édouard Belin invented a machine which could transmit photos by telephone from one place to another, like sending a fax today. The machine enabled all the world's daily newspapers to receive pictures in "real time" for publication the next day. "Wire services" such as Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France Presse were set up to serve as communications networks and feed the media pictures via this process.

These agencies, now virtually the sole players in news photography, continue to cover world events alongside the big television networks. The hundreds of workers on their staff would claim to be simply "doing a job". Most newspapers are satisfied with what they produce. Meanwhile, photojournalism in the strict sense—telling a story with still photos—is now the preserve of a handful of talented artists. ■

MANUEL CASTELLS: THE CITIZEN VERSUS THE MACHINE

As the technological revolution revolutionizes economic life and communications and shakes industrial society to its foundations, a noted Spanish sociologist asks where the citizen stands in the emerging 'information society'

The most recent meeting of the G8 group (the world's eight leading industrial powers) decided for the first time that globalization needed to be "humanized". Does that mean it's inhuman right now?

It's very human and very creative in the eyes of the strong and very inhuman for the weak. It creates unprecedented polarization.

A third of the world's population has substantially raised its standard of living and expanded its cultural and technological resources. The other side of the coin is that the latest UNDP *Human Development Report* showed a massive growth in both inequality and poverty as well as social exclusion and marginalization all over the world,with a few big exceptions including India, China and Chile.

Forty per cent of the planet's population lives in misery on less than two dollars a day. Within this category, a growing number live in extreme poverty, especially cultural poverty. No one in this plight can make any use of the emerging information society. So "humanizing" globalization means harnessing all the enormous creative might of the new technologies, of new economic productivities and of worldwide communication through the Internet so that it benefits people outside the most advanced, educated and sophisticated sectors of the most powerful countries. But for the moment, this is just a pipe dream. We're told we have to do things differently, but the effects of such discrimination are still not being corrected. In fact quite the opposite is happening.

Does this discrimination match the divide between so-called "generic labour" and "self-programmable labour"?

Not entirely. Self-programmable labour has enough information, education and culture to adapt to constantly changing technological and professional conditions. But in a system which has become purely based on the individual, without any social safety net or solidarity, belonging to this category doesn't mean you're invulnerable: if a major incident occurs, such as a physical or psychological illness or a family crisis, you find yourself on the other side of the fence. Many middle-class children, for example, start taking drugs between the age of 18 and 20 and end up in prison, thus heading right down the path to social exclusion.

The people who work in Silicon Valley are paid to a large extent in shares rather than a regular salary. So it's in their interest to push their way upward in the firm, even if it means kicking a colleague out of a job on the grounds that he or she isn't productive enough.

Generic labour refers to workers who, because they don't have a specific qualification and an adequate level of education and culture, cannot fit into the predominant system of production—machines can or could replace them. Within this category, there are two groups. There are those who are still relatively protected, who keep their jobs because they work in institutions or live in countries that help and protect them, and guarantee a decent standard of living. There are also those who live either in run-down city suburbs in rich countries or in poverty-stricken regions and nations without the infrastructure or companies that make possible and guarantee a transition towards the information society. Such people are totally excluded. That social exclusion comes from lack of work.

Why do you say capitalism is much more brutal today than it was in the past?

Because it's broken the social contract.These days, networks mean you can connect everything that carries value for this dominant system, thus making those connected to it extremely dynamic. But this structure also means that anything for which it has little regard—individuals, regions, sectors and companies—don't get connected and are thereby condemned.And since it manages to take control of anything which could be of value to it, capitalism can afford to be extremely choosy and to impose its own rules. This is helped by the fact that states and institutions, political or para-political, which acted as a counterweight during the Industrial Revolution, have very little influence over worldwide communications, capital movements, technological development and production. Might is right, a purely Darwinian logic.

Is anyone exempt from this logic?

In a way, it takes root independently of a company's will and those who resist are crushed by competition because the networks consist only of the strong. And it takes root inside the firms themselves, independent of managers or outside shareholders. Look at advanced capitalism in Silicon Valley which, incidentally, embodies in a sense the 1960s Marxist ideal of workers' management. The people who work in Silicon Valley are paid to a large extent in shares rather than a regular sala-

© Isabelle Levy/Editions Fayard, Paris

ry. So it's in their interest to push their way up in the firm, even if it means kicking a colleague out of a job on the grounds that he or she isn't productive enough.

Does this illustrate a trend which you emphasize, namely the extraordinary individualization of people's destinies?

Setting aside current myths about the impact of the new techno-economic system on jobs, usually measured in terms of falling unemployment, the fundamental change lies in the greater flexibility of labour relations. The way companies operate in networks—both internal and external—is destroying the notion of a stable, reliable job which dates from the Industrial Revolution.

In Britain, the birthplace of that revolution, 55 per cent of the workforce is involved in various kinds of temporary, part-time or freelance work. The traditional model of organized labour is no longer the rule. The same thing is happening in cities in poor countries, which are becoming more and more urbanized. There the so-called informal economy holds sway and labour relations revolve round the long-term lack of stable and regular work. Economic activity in such countries can be quite primitive but some of it is very advanced.

Whether we like it or not, job flexibility is so much more efficient than previous arrangements that firms which still operate with a mainly salaried workforce and stable and established working methods are doomed to failure by the laws of competition. Firms are also relying more and more on a core of skilled workers they want to keep (and to whom they give stable jobs) and on a huge mass of temporary and sub-contracted workers. What we have is an individualization of the relationship between salaried workers and firms on one side and among self-employed workers on the other. Everybody sub-contracts with everybody else.

The way companies operate in networks—both internal and external—is destroying the notion of a stable, reliable job which dates from the Industrial Revolution

But this trend introduces a totally unequal balance of power between workers and companies. . . .

Yes, but also between workers themselves. The strongest have real bargaining power in the market, depending on what they can contribute to their own or any other firm. The unskilled don't have such power or any real power of collective bargaining through trade unions. In the now-dominant private sector, unions these days have only a meagre role and union membership is steadily falling. This is why we must resist shrinking the social security safety-net and support a transition from protecting individuals who work (the situation in most countries) to protecting people whether they work or not.

You paint a very gloomy picture. . . .

Saying that these changes only lead to social exclusion isn't the whole story. They are extremely useful for very many people—the worldwide image- and opinion-makers. This is not a small elite or oligarchy, since between 30 and 40 per cent of the population in countries like the United States and France belong to it. They've gained huge opportunities not ▶

CASTELLS ON THE UNITED NATIONS

I think international organizations like UNESCO have a really important part to play. They can be a link between governments which are still, after all, political instruments, and demands based on people's ideals, especially in the fields of development and peace.

So they must be meeting-places but, increasingly, also forums which give rise to practical projects. For example, everyone agrees education is the key to reducing inequality and exclusion. But what exactly does education mean? What must be done on a world scale so the kind of education needed reaches the two-thirds of humanity who currently have no access to it? The response must indeed come from governments. But UNESCO is the very kind of organization within which a world education strategy can be drawn up.

Bodies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank or the G8 group of countries are managing systems of worldwide exchanges but they concentrate on technological innovation, economic productivity and growth of information. Their power must be balanced by international organizations like UNESCO, the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organisation, which could draw up a new world social and cultural contract, as the other bodies did for economics and technology. But they will only succeed in this if they acquire similar legitimacy and authority by using the might of the networks. ■

This photo and photo on facing page feature in a report by Swedish photographer Lars Tunbjork on the dehumanization of the office environment.

only for economic but also social, intellectual and cultural creativity. As well as generating social exclusion, the technological revolution has creative and liberating aspects that we should not ignore.

Such as?

The Internet has reduced the power of governments and the big media monopolies to control people. One result is more openness, especially where political corruption is concerned. The powerful are used to spying on ordinary citizens, but now citizens can spy on the powerful. Work can be more independent and professional advancement more varied. We don't have to stay stuck for life in the same bureaucracy and only advance through seniority. The educational level of women is rising to an extraordinary extent (most university graduates in the U.S. are now women, for example). Their professional advance is continuing. Discrimination is still there, but it's dwindling. It's better than being shut away at home.

One of the main points of your work is that the information society seems to harbour the seeds of opposition to itself. How is that?

The process is very complex. The modern state—whether liberal, socialist or Marxist—has been built on a denial of basic and historical identities. The state made the nation, not the other way round. But it also managed to fuse these original identities into a new abstract identity which it called citizenship. And it protected its citizens. But globalization means the state can no longer guarantee such protection or provide the meaning necessary to foster citizenship.

Two reactions are possible to the building of an information society which gives pride of place to competition. For the strongest, those with money and power, competition can give purpose to their lives if they develop a totally individualistic, even narcissistic and consumerist identity, becoming big earners and big spenders. All networked societies are basically individualistic. It's the liberal and libertarian ideology of the dominant technical and economic elite.

But all around them, a whole mass of people either lack the resources to connect to this individualism or else reject it. They give meaning to their lives by building community identities. They build them on cultural practices which express simple, sturdy values, such as God, country, ethnic identity, land and family. This makes them feel protected in some way against the worldwide changes over which they have lost all control.

But these identities are ambivalent. . . .

They can be open because they're engaged in dialogue with people who have other identities. But they can be dogmatic when expressed in a rigid, inward-looking way which shuts out all other identities. That's the crux of the problem: everybody can't be Argentine or Serb, Catholic or Muslim, female or homosexual, so the strong affirmation of a unique identity as

A MONUMENTAL WORK

The publication of Manuel Castells' monumental trilogy about information technology and the global economy, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*,[1] attracted wide attention and superlatives from reviewers impressed by the erudition and breadth of this "encyclopaedic work".

Castells' aims might indeed seem grandiose. He says he wants to "understand our world"—all of it—to try to "give meaning to what appears to us today as terrible chaos." In the last quarter of a century, he says, "a technological revolution—information technology—has transformed our ways of thinking, consuming, buying and selling, running businesses, communicating, living, dying, making war and making love."

He explains why and how these processes have come about in three volumes of over 300 pages each, the result of 12 years' interdisciplinary research which took him all over the world. He says the structure of industrial society—its economies, political units, industrial complexes and cultural identities—always revolved round central points but that these are now disappearing. In what he calls the "informational society," a system of networks develops in every sector. "The power of flows overwhelms the flows of power," he says.

Such iconoclasm is the product of an unusual intellectual journey. In 1962, the 20-year-old Castells, "a shade Marxist but not Leninist" and to a far greater extent "anarchist and libertarian", left his native Spain to study in France. He was expelled from France in May 1968 but returned two years later.

By chance, he gravitated towards urban sociology and became one of its leading exponents. His *La Question urbaine* (1972) was translated into 10 languages, and *The City and the Grassroots* won the C. Wright Mills Prize in 1983 for the best social science book published in the United States. Today he is professor of sociology and city and regional planning at the Center for Western European Studies at the University of California at Berkeley.

A friendly and persuasive man, with an impish sense of irony, Castells refuses to act the guru and points out that his work has limits. "Every time an intellectual has tried to answer the question 'what should we do?' it's led to disaster," he says. ■

1. The 3 volumes, published by Blackwell, Oxford, UK, are: *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), *The Power of Identity* (1997) and *End of Millennium* (1998).

the only way to give meaning to one's life leads to fragmentation into tribes, to a sort of collective atomization.

The only answer to this major threat is to build bridges between these very different identities. The main challenge for the state is to establish not only a political contract between citizens but a cultural contract so that all these cultural codes and multiple identities can communicate with each other. Only with such a contract can a state guarantee the coexistence of these identities while recognizing their individual expression. But in view of the state's historical mode of construction, it is ill equipped to do this.

In view of this dual threat of exclusion and fragmentation, how can a shared awareness develop and lead to global political action?

This is the key question and I don't have an answer. I've based my work on observation, which isn't forecasting. What I see is a lot of resistance to the grip of the network system. Some of these networks no longer obey any human logic whatsoever: they have become what I would describe as automata.

All networked societies are basically individualistic. It's the liberal and libertarian ideology of the dominant technical and economic elite.

The best example is the world financial market. It controls everything and no one controls it, not even governments. First, it pools together money from all kinds of origins, not just financiers' money but everyone's, including our own (in the form of savings or pension funds). Computer programmes and electrical circuits then keep it constantly moving around. Finally, and above all, it obeys rules which are only partly economic, because what I call information turbulence plays a crucial part. Various players, including political players, send messages and create images which lead a multitude of other players to react in the financial market. But they don't act in concert and no one can say for sure how the market will react. Many players, some more powerful than others, can thus influence the world in which these financial transactions take place. They can follow strategies, but nobody can control the process or the outcome of the game. An automaton has been created.

So what happens to politics?

Today politics are not defined by the media but within media space, which is occupied by the countless and ever more varied television stations and, increasingly, the Internet. So what comes into political existence—in other words what forms into a political opinion in people's minds—depends solely on what appears in the media. Traditional political stakeholders are adapting to this new media context. But they don't play leading roles in it at all. They've been joined by a mass of lobbies, interest groups and professional organizations which specialize in creating and manipulating messages and images. These groups create new information turbulence, which stems from their determined strategies and how indepen- ▶

© Lars Tunbjork/Agence Vu, Paris

dent the media are. But the final political result—the impact on decisions citizens take—has no relation to the wishes of each of the players. It's the "automatic" result of interactions that nobody can control.

How do people react to this "automatism"?

I've noticed they do two things. First, they vote to express their opposition. The main changes brought about by elections—caused by shifts of mood among only 5-10 per cent of voters—are the result of opposition to a past event or decision, not of support for a future policy. Such protest votes show that citizens feel on the defensive towards the political system. Secondly, they rate the system's players right at the bottom of the league table of what they respect in society. They think they're corrupt, expensive and inefficient. As a result, more and more people are ceasing to see politics as a way of changing their lives.

What about those who do want to change things?

Our generation has been convinced that the state is the main instrument for applying a political programme which meets the expectations and needs of civil society. But what can the state do today faced with the financial machine and the media machine? It has extremely limited room for manoeuvre. People who want to change things or do more in life than just earn money are developing a new way of conducting politics, this time without any mediation from the state. They have come to act politically by taking pragmatic ethical action, working to bring about real change in a small geographical area, at a specific time or in a limited field. Of course such an approach only brings about very small changes in comparison with all the changes that are necessary, but at least it's effective. It's a practical policy designed to bring immediate results. Successful examples of this approach include NGOs like Doctors of the World and the Jubilee 2000 movement, which has achieved substantial results in its campaign to alleviate the debt burden on the poorest countries.

Can such a piecemeal policy make a dent in this big issue?

My bet is that all these piecemeal and isolated activities, which involve hundreds of thousands of people, will gradually come together to form networks. I hope the growth of networks will eventually include those which want to fight the harmful effects of other networks. That alongside the networks of money, technology and information, alternative but just as powerful (and so just as efficient) networks will develop and convey alternative values that will steadily build new global political strategies.

But some fundamental trends are emerging even before we reach this final stage. Look at the women's movement. It managed to set off the biggest cultural revolution in human history without using traditional political means. However, the changes in cultural practices and codes, first inside women's minds, were so far-reaching that they've now been incorporated into political systems, at least where those systems are dynamic and democratic. ■

Interview by René Lefort
Director of the *UNESCO Courier*

LIST OF SALES AND SUBSCRIPTION AGENTS

Subscriptions can be paid to the subscription agent in your country who will supply rates in local currency on request

ARGENTINA: Edilyr Srl, Librería Correo de la UNESCO, Tucumán 1685, 1050 Buenos Aires. Fax:371-8194.
AUSTRALIA: Hunter Publications, 58A Gipps Street, Collingwood VIC 3066. Fax: 419 7154. ISA Australia, PO Box 709, Toowong QLD 4066. Fax: 371 5566. United Nations Assoc. of Australia/Victorian Div., 179 St George's Road, N. Fitzroy VIC 3068. Fax: 481 7693.
AUSTRIA: Gerold & Co, Import & Export, Zeitschriften/Periodicals, Graben 31, A-1011 Vienna. Fax: 512 47 31 29
BELGIUM: Jean de Lannoy, 202 av du Roi, B-1060 Brussels. Fax: 538 08 41.
BRAZIL: Fundaco Getulio Vargas, Editora Divisão de Vendas, Caixa Postal 62.591, 22257-970 Rio de Janeiro RJ. Fax:551-0948.
CANADA: Renouf Publishing Company Ltd, 5369 ch.Canotek Road,Unit 1,Ottawa,Ont K1J 9J3. Fax:(1-613) 745 7660. Faxon Canada,POBox 2382,London, Ont.N6A 5A7. Fax:(1-519) 472 1072.
CHILE: Universitaria Textolibro Ltda., Casilla Postal 10220, Santiago. Fax: 681 9091.
CHINA: China National Publications,Import & Export Corp., PO Box 88, 16 Gongti East Road, Beijing 100020. Fax: 010 65063101.
CZECH REPUBLIC: Artia, Ve Smeckach 30,111 27 Prague 1.
DENMARK: Munksgaard,Norre Sogade 35, PO Box 2148, DK-1016 Kobenhavn K. Fax: 12 93 87.
FINLAND: Stockmann/Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, PO Box 23, SF-00371 Helsinki. Fax: +358 9 121 4450. Suomalainen Kirjakauppa Oy, PO Box 2, SF-01641 Vantaa. Fax: 852 7990.
GERMANY: German Commission for UNESCO, Colmantstr. 15, D-53115 Bonn. Fax: 63 69 12. Uno Verlag, Dag Hammarskjöld Haus, Poppelsdorfer Allee 55, D-53115 Bonn. Fax: 21 74 92.
GREECE: Librairie Kauffmann SA, Mauvrokordatou 9, GR-106 78 Athens. Fax: 38 33 967.
GUATEMALA: Comisión Guatemalteca de Cooperación con la UNESCO, 3A Avenida 10 29, Zona 1, Apartado Postal 2630, Guatemala City.
HONG KONG: Hong Kong Government Information Svcs. Dept., 1 Battery Path Central, Hong Kong.
HUNGARY: Librotrade K F T, Periodical Import/K, POB 126, H-1656 Budapest. Fax:256-87-27.
INDIA: Orient Longman Ltd (Subscriptions Account), Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate,Bombay 400 038. Fax: 26 91 278. Oxford Book & Stationery Co, Code No D 8208052, Scindia House, New Delhi 110 001. Fax: 33 22 639.
ISRAEL: Literary Transactions Inc., C/0 Steimatsky Ltd., PO Box 1444, Bnei Brak 51114. Fax: 52 81 187.
ITALY: Licosa/Libreria Comm. Sansoni SPA, Via Duca di Calabria 1/1, I-50125 Florence. Fax:64-12-57.
JAPAN: Eastern Book Service Inc., Periodicals Account, 3 13 Hongo 3 Chome, Bunkyo Ku, Tokyo 113. Fax:818-0864.
KOREA: Korean National Commission for UNESCO, CPO Box 64, Seoul 100-600. Fax: 568 7454.
LUXEMBURG: Messageries Paul Kraus, BP 2022, L-1020 Luxembourg. Fax: 99 88 84 44.
MALTA: Sapienzas & Sons Ltd., PO Box 36, 26 Republic Street, Valletta CMR 01. Fax: 24 61 82.
MAURITIUS: Nalanda Co. Ltd., 30 Bourbon Street, Port Louis. Fax: 212 1313.
MOROCCO: UNESCO, B.P. 1777 RP, Rabat Fax:212-767 03 75, Tel.:212-767 03 74/72.
MEXICO: Librería El Correo de la UNESCO SA, Col Roma, Guanajuato 72, Deleg Cuauhtémoc, 06700 Mexico DF. Fax:264-09-19.
NETHERLANDS: Swets & Zeitlinger BV, PO Box 830, 2160 SZ Lisse. Fax:2524-15888. Tijdschriftcentrale Wijck BV, Int.Subs. Service, W Grachtstraat 1C, 6221 CT Maastricht. Fax: 32 50 103.
NEW ZEALAND: GP Legislation Services, PO Box 12418, Thorndon, Wellington. Fax: 496 56 98.
NORWAY: Swets Norge AS,Østensjøvein 18-0606 Oslo, PO Box 6512,Etterstad. Fax:47 22 97 45 45.
PORTUGAL: Livraria Portugal (Dias & Andrade Lda), Rua do Carmo 70 74, 1200 Lisboa. Fax: 34 70 264.
RUSSIA: Mezhdunarodnaja Kniga, U1 Dimitrova 39, Moscow 113095.
SOUTH AFRICA: International Subscription Services, PO Box 41095, Craighall 2024. Fax: 880 6248. Mast Publications, PO Box 901, Parklands 2121. Fax: 886 4512.
SPAIN: Mundi Prensa Libros SA, Castelló 37, 28001 Madrid. Fax:91575-39-98. Libreria Al Andalús, Roldana 3 y 4, 410091 Sevilla. Fax:95422-53-38. Los Amigos de la UNESCO, Avenida Urquijo 62, 2 Izd., 48011 Bilbao. Fax:94427-51-59/69
SRI LANKA: Lake House Bookshop, 100 Chittampalam, Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 2. Fax: 44 78 48.
SWEDEN: Wennergren Williams AB, PO Box 1305, S-171 25 Solna. Fax: 27 00 71.
SWITZERLAND: Dynapresse Marketing SA, (ex-Naville SA), 38 av Vibert, CH-1227 Carouge. Fax: 308 08 59. Edigroup SA, Case Postale 393, CH-1225 Chêne-Bourg. Fax: 348 44 82. Europa Verlag, Ramistrasse 5, CH-8024 Zürich. Fax: 251 60 81 Karger Libri AG, Wissenschaftl.Buchhandlung, Petersgraben 31, CH-4009 Basel. Fax: 306 12 34. Van Diermen Editions Techniques-ADECO, Chemin du Lacuez, CH-1807 Blonay. Fax: 943 36 05.
THAILAND: Suksapan Panit, Mansion 9, Rajadamnern Avenue, Bangkok 2. Fax: 28 11 639.
TUNISIA: Commission Nationale Tunisienne auprès de l'UNESCO, 22, rue de l'Angleterre, 1000RP Tunis. Fax: 33 10 14
UNITED KINGDOM: The Stationery Office Publications Ctre., 51 Nine Elms Lane, London SW8 5DR. Fax: 873 84 63.
UNITED STATES: Bernan Associates, 4611-F Assembly Drive, Lanham MD 20706-4391. Fax:459-0056.
URUGUAY: Ediciones Trecho SA, Periodicals Account, Maldonado 1090, Montevideo. Fax: 90 59 83.
VENEZUELA: UNESCO/CRESALC,Edif. Asovincar, Av Los Chorros,Cruce C/C Acueducto, Altos de Sebucan, Caracas. Fax: 286 03 26.

UNESCO

In the next issue

Focus:

Transition countries build the rule of law

- A decade of Western advice: what's the verdict?
- Ukraine: the legacy of the Soviet system
- Kyrgyzstan: starting from scratch
- Caught between old and new
- South Africa: finding a place for customary law
- Benin: a model system, but still on the horizon
- Winners and losers of legal reform

Features include

- Japan's 20-year-olds: a pen-portrait with pictures
- Climate changes that make the world flip
- Codes of conduct for consumers and workers
- Internet and television get together
- A committed doubter: interview with Italian writer Antonio Tabucchi

The Unesco Courier is available on the Internet:
www.unesco.org/courier