

Edited by Ingeborg Breines and Hans d'Orville

60 WOMEN CONTRIBUTING TO THE 60 YEARS OF UNESCO

Constructing the Foundations of Peace



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“60 Women contributing to the 60 years of UNESCO – Constructing the Foundations of Peace” has been conceptualized, directed and edited by Ingeborg Breines, Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office Geneva, and Hans d’Orville, Director of the Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO.

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Foreword by the Director-General of UNESCO

The full participation of women in social, cultural and economic development, and in democratic processes at all levels, is a moral imperative, a matter of human rights and justice, and a political exigency of the highest order. The quest to ensure gender equality has been powerfully endorsed by world leaders in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document. It is indeed clear: without gender equality, the global fight against poverty may never be won.

The vision of women, their intelligence, energy and experience, are indispensable to the creation of a more just, equitable, prosperous and peaceful world. The continued marginalization and under-utilization of women's talents, expertise and resources represents a serious loss of opportunity, not only for women themselves, but more seriously for society as a whole.

The Beijing Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995) and the Millennium Development Goals (2000) have already established the need to bridge the gender gap in education as an international development priority. UNESCO is deeply committed to the goal of gender equality, and firmly believes that ensuring quality 'Education for All' is a critical step in this direction.

With the inauguration of its 60th anniversary celebrations in November 2005, UNESCO has begun a yearlong period of reflection and recognition. The present volume is an important part of this process. It presents the voices of 60 eminent women, who – in different parts of the world, in different positions, and in different moments across the history of Organization – have made, and in many cases are still making, significant contributions to UNESCO's action. These 60 individuals represent the voices, views and aspirations of many other women – in national governments, the UNESCO Secretariat, National Commissions for UNESCO, universities, schools, libraries, museums, research and educational institutions, the media and communities – who struggle on a daily basis to keep the ideals of UNESCO alive. Reading the various contributions allows us, if not compels us, to reflect on the approaches to gender mainstreaming that UNESCO has adopted in its planning, and to consider the relevance and impact of such action.

This book is an inspiration to UNESCO, both for the historical perspective and rich testimonials it presents, as for its many forward-looking suggestions and recommendations. I hope it will make a substantial contribution to realizing women's aspirations, to developing ways of improving gender equality, not least in UNESCO, and to fortifying hopes for a peaceful future at local, national,

regional and international levels, drawing on and integrating the full potential of women.

The dual theme of our 60th anniversary celebrations is “unity and diversity”. The women who have gracefully contributed to this publication come from different parts of the world and from widely different backgrounds, experiences and careers. They are, however, remarkably in unison in their call for dialogue, education, empowerment and gender equality, and for building a culture of peace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Matsuura', with a stylized flourish above the name.

Koïchiro Matsuura

Introduction

Including *herstory* in *history*

UNESCO was founded in London by 37 countries on 16 November 1945. The Constitution held out a promise of peace ‘founded upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind’. It came into force on 4 November 1946, after ratification by 20 countries, and 30 Member States got together in Paris for the first General Conference on the same day. Women were involved from the very first stages of the envisioning of what was to become UNESCO.

The Preamble of the Constitution, notably the much quoted paragraph: ‘Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed’ has given UNESCO a vast educational task, and has inspired women and men at different stages of life and in different parts of the world ever since.

The purpose of the Organization is described in the Constitution ‘to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations’.

UNESCO launched a cycle of 60 weeks from the autumn 2005 to the autumn 2006, to observe, if not to celebrate, its 60th anniversary. This publication on ‘Women and UNESCO’ was initiated and designed as a contribution to this anniversary with a special focus on women who have contributed to the work of UNESCO over these years. Women, who have influenced UNESCO, even though always fewer in number than men. Women, who have developed creative, and frequently courageous, approaches to challenges. Women, who through their upbringing, gender-specific experiences and their distance from prevailing power structures have been able to bring alternative solutions. Women, who have played important roles working in professions within UNESCO’s fields of competence. Women, who often are in the forefront of global movements for peace, human security, disarmament, freedom of expression and a sustainable and environmentally sound development.

Despite the commitments in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, we are far from the ideals of gender equality, development and peace outlined in the ‘12 critical areas of concern’ and confirmed and reiterated later through different resolutions in different fora. According to the ‘World’s Women 2005’, women continue to remain largely invisible despite internationally agreed goals. The figures speak for themselves: 53 countries cannot report their nation’s population by age and

sex, which makes gender-responsive planning very difficult. There is no country in which women receive equal pay for equal work. Only some 15 per cent of the world's members of parliament are women. Girls and women comprise two thirds of the approximately 100 million out of school children and 771 million illiterate adults in the world.

Bridging the gender gap is a serious challenge in all spheres. Bridging the gender gap in education is a top priority both in the 'Education for All' goals (1995) and the Millennium Declaration and its 'Millennium Development Goals' (2000). This was forcefully reiterated in the World Summit Outcome document of September 2005.

Despite encouraging developments over the last year, the world counts slightly less women Heads of State and Government (eight women, four per cent) or Chief Executives of major corporations than at the time of the 1995 Beijing Conference. Up until 1989 there have been less than 20 women top political leaders, and in the shorter period from 1990 until today, we have had almost 50 women in top positions.

There has never been a female Secretary-General of the United Nations. In our own organization, UNESCO, 50 per cent of the professional staff are women even though they are mostly concentrated at lower and middle levels, with only 20 per cent women at the level of director. We have never had a woman Director-General or Deputy Director-General. The women Assistant Directors-General throughout these 60 years can almost be counted on one hand.

To give visibility to women, hearing their stories and listening to their visions and suggestions is therefore imperative. To quote the first democratically elected African woman president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia, in her speech in UNESCO on the occasion of the International Women's Day, 8 March 2006:

These gains notwithstanding, women, in many parts of the world, have remained virtually excluded from the mainstream of decision making, while at the same time their tireless efforts to gain access to resources and opportunities continue to be undermined by the reluctance of their societies to show a demonstrated commitment towards the goal of equality. ...

Women leaders will be expected to demonstrate at all times a willingness to break with the past, a commitment to serve and a determination to never relent in pursuing truth, justice, good governance and the rule of law.

Boys and men should also join the quest for gender equality not least to escape the straightjacket of restricting traditional male roles enabling them to make full life choices. This process, already under way in some countries might have far-reaching positive social, cultural, political and economic implications. The UNESCO Statement on Women's Contribution to a Culture of Peace (1995) already outlined the task at hand: 'Only together, women and men in parity and

partnerships, can we overcome obstacles and inertia, silence and frustration and ensure the insight, political will, creative thinking and concrete actions needed for a global transition from the culture of violence to a culture of peace’.

Choosing 60 women for this publication was not easy, since UNESCO is fortunate to count thousands of dedicated, committed, talented and hard-working women as promoters and defenders of its ideals – in the Secretariat itself, in Member States, Permanent Delegations, National Commissions, NGOs, UNESCO Associated Schools (ASP) and UNESCO clubs, institutes and centres, educational establishments, cultural institutions and the media, as well as in local communities and families, and not least in the schools. If we could have listened to all *her*-stories, we surely would have been profoundly enriched by their achievements and insights.

In the difficult task of selecting only 60 representative women, we endeavoured to achieve a geographical balance, a balance between the different fields of competence and the programmes of the Organisation, as well as an historic overview. From among the many active women within the secretariat, past and present, we have only included the few women at the Assistant Director-General level. The women in the Secretariat surely deserve a book of their own! Many of the 60 women have mentioned other women and men who have inspired and assisted their work, thereby the scope and coverage of this publication has been somewhat broadened.

We are proud of, and grateful to, the 60 women who agreed to participate in this project, who responded gracefully to questions we developed, and who either have made, or continue to make, invaluable contributions within all UNESCO spheres of competence. Some hold, or have held, high positions in the Organization, some have led or inspired UNESCO’s work in Member States, some have been in charge of programmes, projects, committees or juries, others have lent their status, name or talents to help advance UNESCO’s objectives. Some are, or were the first – if not the only – woman ever to hold a given position in UNESCO.

Many women personalities, indeed women leaders, who have made their mark on the Organization are no longer with us. To salute them and their eminent contribution, we have chosen to present, at the very beginning of this publication, excerpts from the speech of Ellen Wilkinson, Minister of Education of the United Kingdom at the opening meeting of the Preparatory Committee for UNESCO, which she chaired in November 1945. We have equally included excerpts from the speech of Alva Myrdal, first director of the UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector, and later Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (Sweden), on the occasion of UNESCO’s 25th anniversary. Their reflections shall represent and commemorate many other distinguished women, who have been associated with UNESCO, in different capacities, including:

- Indira Gandhi, Member of the Executive Board, and Prime Minister of India (1966-77);

- Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, Member of the Executive Board, and Prime Minister of Portugal (1979-80);
- Sophie N’Kanza, first women Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences in UNESCO and Minister of Social Affairs from the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Gabriela Mistral, Nobel Literature Prize Laureate (1945), Chile; involved with the International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation, predecessor of UNESCO in the League of Nations and Nobel Literature Prize Laureate (1945), Chile;
- Jeanne Hersch, first director of UNESCO’s Philosophy Section and renowned Swiss philosopher;
- Maria Montessori, Member of the Board of the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg and renowned Italian educationalist.

A special recognition goes to the first, and so far only, woman president of the General Conference, Ms. Jaroslava Moserová of the Czech Republic, who sadly passed away just after she had completed her contribution to this very publication. The following poem by the former UNESCO Director-General Mr Federico Mayor, to women at the Fourth World Conference in Beijing, 1995, was rededicated to her memory by the Women’s United Nations Report Network (WUNRN):

WOMAN

Woman
 You brought with you
 A new song.
 But we did not let you
 Speak out
 Although yours
 Is the voice of half the earth.

Woman,
 Your eyes
 Saw the world
 Another way.
 But we did not want
 To know the meaning
 And warmth
 Of your vision.

Woman,
 You carried under your skin
 Of all colors
 The seed
 Of the future,
 The light
 Which could illuminate
 Different paths
 Rebellious
 Yet peaceful ways,
 Woman-bridge
 Woman-bond
 Woman-root
 And fruit of love
 And tenderness.

Woman,
 Your hands outstretched
 And your open arms
 Enfold the immensity
 Of refuge
 And of comfort.
 But we have not understood
 The strength of your embrace
 Nor the cry of your silence
 And we carry on
 With neither compass
 Nor relief.

Woman,
With no other master
But yourself,
Live from now on
Equal and free,
Now as companion
Sharing
The same dream FOREVER.

We acknowledge, with thanks, the many who have contributed valuable ideas, suggestions, encouragement and hard work to make this publication possible. We would like to thank all male and female colleagues at Headquarters and in the field who have presented and argued for individuals to be included in the publication and colleagues, who in their spare time have translated various contributions into English, notably Mary Lynn Hasan and Frederick 'Russ' Russell in the Bureau of Strategic Planning. Finding the contact information and getting in touch with the 60 women has been most time consuming. Mairéad Maguire, in the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva, has been a linchpin in this sometimes taxing process. Evelyn Ralph and the interns Jessica Pautsch and Ellie T. Kim have spent long hours helping with editing and proofreading.

Finally, and above all, we would like to salute the 60 women who are at the centre of this unique publication. Their competence, courage, creativity, honesty and experience are a great encouragement to us all and will continue to guide and inspire the work of the Organization. May their ideas and their distinct and diverse voices resonate among all of us and inspire us to do better in the quest for equality, justice, development and peace for women and men alike.

Ingeborg Breines
Director
UNESCO Liaison Office
Geneva

Hans d'Orville
Director
Bureau of Strategic Planning
UNESCO Paris

Ellen Wilkinson



A worldwide brainworkers' parliament

Excerpts from speech at the opening of the conference preparing the UNESCO Constitution, 1st-16th Nov 1945

Now we are met together, workers in education, in scientific research and in the varied fields of culture. We represent those who teach, those who discover, those who write, and those who express their inspiration in music or in art. We have a high responsibility, for entrusted to us is the task of creating some part - and not the least important part - of that structure of the United Nations on which rest our hopes for the future of mankind. It is for us to clear the channels through which may flow from nation to nation the streams of knowledge and thought, of truth and beauty which are the foundations of true civilization. [...]

Music knows no barrier of tongues and pictures speak without speech. Knowledge should know no frontiers, and there is a brotherhood of learning no less strong perhaps than that brotherhood of which the poet spoke: 'the brotherhood that binds the brave of all the earth.'

We live in a machine age and the world has worshiped at the shrine of the practical man and of technological achievement. But we know that progress as machine users can lead only to disaster unless we also have progress as human beings. Behind the machine, and vastly more important, is man and the mind of man. It is indeed the mind of man - the right-mindedness of man - which alone can prevent the misuse of the new powers always coming to his hand. Civilization, it

has been said, represents the conquest of nature. But surely it must also depend on the development of all that is best in human nature.

We have seen in these past years professors forced to glorify the narrowest nationalism: teachers and preachers forced to inculcate unlimited subservience to the war machine. We have seen the service of education - the education of the young - wholly prostituted to the cause of savagery and aggression. But we have also seen the great fight put up against this monstrous wickedness by the intellectual worker, by men and women of integrity of mind. In every land which the totalitarians overran, it was the intellectual who was picked out first to face the firing squad - teacher, priest, and professor. The men who meant to rule the world knew that first they must kill those who tried to keep thought free. [...]

First, in the physical world, we find ruined schools and universities, textbooks burned, libraries destroyed, scientific apparatus smashed or blown up. In the realm of the mind, many teachers have been lost. Among the children, many have had no continuous school life during the war and in some countries a whole generation has largely missed its education. There is widespread malnutrition, and the years that should have passed in security and innocence have been lived amid horror, fear and suffering. On the other hand, we have a generation of young men and women who have shared in a great adventure and have fought in a great cause. They will be returning from the Services experienced in life and filled with a determination to see to it that the world shall not be driven into facing this ordeal again for a third time, which might well be the end. They realise that wars have got to be prevented. But prevention of war alone is not enough. We need the organization of something positive - the positive creation of peace and the ways of peace. That is our task at this Conference.

We meet to draw up a constitution for an organization, designed to take its place as one of the 'special agencies' under the Charter of the United Nations. This is not the first attempt to devise an international organization in this field. The League of Nations established an Organization for Intellectual Co-operation, [...] and the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation in Paris. [...]

Thus, if, as seems probable, we adopt a constitution on these lines, we shall have established what has never existed before - a worldwide brainworkers' parliament.

The League was expressly debarred from dealing with education, we are not merely concerned with education, but education is to be our principal field of activity. It is the emphatic first word in our title. [...] There shall henceforward be a link, an official link, under the United Nations Charter, between teachers in every part of the world. Not, of course, between teachers alone. I am not forgetting the administrators, the inspectors, the parents - least of all, the children and young people. But it is of the teachers that I am particularly thinking today.

[...] I say to them: Pay attention to what is being done here in London. Support those who are establishing this organization and, when it is established, see that you make it your own, to reflect your wishes and to meet your needs. See that its influence penetrates from the officials at its centre to the scattered workers on the circumference, so that the unity of the teaching profession may at last be no empty slogan but a living reality expressed through the effective working of the new international Organization.

Though science was not included in the original title of the Organization, the British delegation will put forward a proposal that it be included, so that the title would run 'Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.' In these days, when we are all wondering, perhaps apprehensively, what the scientists will do to us next, it is important that they should be linked closely with the humanities and should feel that they have a responsibility to mankind for the result of their labours. I do not believe that any scientists will have survived the world catastrophe, who will still say that they are utterly uninterested in the social implications of their discoveries. It is the scientists themselves, [...] who have insisted the proposal for the inclusion of the word 'Scientific' in the title of the Organization. [...]

Lastly we have the word Culture. Some may argue that the artist, the musician, the writer, all the creative workers in the humanities and the arts, cannot be organised either nationally or internationally. But those of us who remember the struggle in the Far East and in Europe in the days preceding the open war, know how much the fight against fascism depended on the determination of writers and artists to keep their international contacts that they might reach across the rapidly rising frontier barriers. [...] Our international organization, intended to be a bridge between nations, must rest firmly on foundations dug deeply into the national life and tradition of the member states. [...]

What can this organization do? Can we replace nationalist teaching by a conception of humanity that trains children to have a sense of mankind as well as of national citizenship? That means working for international understanding. What a difference might be made if we could establish, for instance, international commissions on the impartial teaching of history and geography and standards of civic conduct! Why should we not undertake international research into comparative educational method and systems of child guidance and psychology? Why should we not organise more widely the interchange of scholars and teachers, especially student teachers and teachers in Training Colleges? Can we not use broadcasting and films to promote mutual understanding?

Can we not increase the interchange of books and make easy the flow of books and serious periodicals across the frontiers? This is especially important for the countries who have lost so many of their books, libraries and records. [...]

It would be a great advantage if states would compete in the new and best methods of teaching, in erecting modern buildings, in supplying up-to date equipment and in securing a high status for their teachers, and would compare their work one with the other. [...]

Our Conference is of unique importance and unique hopefulness: for surely in the field which is our concern the national and the international can most readily be fused for the common good of common man. Let us then in faith and confidence set our hands to our work.

Aloa Myrdal



UNESCO and peace and women's rights

Excerpts from her article 'UNESCO and Peace' published in the context of UNESCO's 25th Anniversary

The end of the Second World War certainly did not lead to a world peace, durable and just, which people had expected and many had fought and died for. But the governments were united in a will to work for peace. The intergovernmental organizations created in the wake of that tragic war were set up in order to lay secure foundations for a joint undertaking to 'save succeeding generations from the scourge of war' as it is expressed in the Charter of the United Nations. [...]

UNESCO's Constitution outlined as the purpose of the Organization. 'To contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture'. UNESCO's Constitution's Preamble opens with the magnificent words, so often quoted: 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.'

There were in the UNESCO Constitution even more specific directions as to the fundamental means to be used in its work for peace. It would be necessary first to combat false doctrines of the inequality of men and races, and further to overcome the ignorance of each other's ways of life.

Never before had such noble principles been laid down in an agreement reached by a majority of nations from all corners of the world. [...]

The Preamble points out the crucial contributions to be made by education and culture to a campaign for peace. It started from the assumption that ‘peace must be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind’. This implied solidarity between individuals and groups within countries and thus required ‘full and equal opportunities for ‘Education for all’, in the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge’. This profession of faith in truth marked great progress. More directly, it was postulated that solidarity between the peoples of different nations would in itself secure peace. To his end, the Member States declared themselves ‘determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives’. [...] All its activities in education, science, culture and mass media, were to serve the supreme goals of peace and progress. [...]

In UNESCO’s work for peace, studies of ‘tensions’ became its key contribution to this interesting early phase. [...] It represented a pioneer effort. Only some two decades later was it followed by programmes under the heading of ‘peace research’, which had in the meanwhile emerged as a recognized new field of study in the academic world. [...]

The situation [...] for the social sciences was highly underdeveloped before UNESCO’s time. Practically no internationally organized documentation existed and practically no international, professional associations of social scientists. All this becomes glaringly clear if a comparison is made, for instance, with the situation in regard to the natural sciences.

UNESCO was therefore led to intervene more directly in this field than elsewhere, in order to encourage the foundation of bodies designed to bring together experts in the different sciences on the international level. It assisted the efforts which culminated in 1949 in the formation of, for example, the International Sociological Association, the International Political Science Association and the International Economic Association. In the following year, the International Committee of Comparative Law began its work, and in 1951 the International Union of Scientific Psychology was revived and reorganized. In addition, two organizations for interdisciplinary social science activities were founded with UNESCO’s assistance in 1950: the International Social Science Council and the International Committee for Social Sciences Documentation. [...]

The *International Social Science Bulletin* (later *Journal*), published since 1949, provided a forum for exchange of up-to-date research notes on a wide range of international problems. If you add to this the establishment of regional information centres or regional social science institutes or faculties as well as an impressive series of surveys and expert missions on the teaching of the various branches of social science, I believe everybody should be impressed by UNESCO’s

achievement. Only with the huge, international network could co-operation between the social scientists be put into action. The advantage was mutual: as international social-science organizations and documentation services developed, they could take an ever-growing part in the implementation of UNESCO's programme for peace and international understanding. [...]

The large programme in applied social sciences was concentrated in UNESCO's first ten years on 'tensions' which represented a daring new endeavour, and had necessarily to a large degree to be characterized by experimentation. [...] One of the first directors of the Social Sciences Department, summarized them (international problems) as follows: 'The nature of national prejudices, the stereotyped image held by people concerning their own and other nations, the problem of national characteristics and ways of life as objective facts, the methods by which attitudes of national or racial bias can be changed, the impact of ideologies on international relations, the origins and history of the recently defeated European dictatorships, the influence of different legal systems, of modern technology, of population movements, etc., on attitudes and mutual relationships between peoples – these were some of the early 'tensions' problems.' [...]

The manipulation of beliefs, creating and spreading biases instead of objective knowledge, stands out for the present writer as one of the most important factors in causing both hot and cold wars. It is also the one that could most easily be corrected if UNESCO's recommendations as to education and dissemination of knowledge were effectively implemented everywhere.

Attempts to eradicate false beliefs were then, and later, concentrated on a veritable campaign against racism, probably the best sustained and most influential of UNESCO's undertakings for peace and understanding. [...] There is no scientific evidence against the belief in the right of all peoples on this earth to be treated as equals. Many [...] books, published in several languages in thousands of copies, have [...] without doubt contributed to the present-day view that race prejudice is a sign of lack of education, or even of manipulated ignorance. [...]

The ambition of UNESCO in the early period was to help Member States to recruit teams of social scientists to analyze situations in areas where conflicts were brewing in order to give data that could help to forestall a conflagration. No such requests were made in regards to conflicts between nations. On the other hand, a resolution 'authorizing UNESCO to organize studies, in collaboration with Member States, which have recently gained independence, of methods to reduce internal social tensions' led to requests for assistance from several governments. [...]

In 1954, we proposed a so-called 'tensions barometer' but although it was cautiously presented as being focused particularly on 'acceptance or rejection of UNESCO and United Nations principles', the suggestion was not accepted. The

substantial research work that had been carried out in 1953-54 on the international comparability of investigations of public opinion would have been followed by ascertaining through sample polls in a number of countries the public's attitudes towards major international issues, and the changes such attitudes were undergoing. [...] The major instruments which public-opinion polls and the social science methods of content analysis have become are not as yet utilized internationally, for example, in a concerted effort to avoid misunderstandings and to build peace. Combined with latter-day possibilities of computerization, I have no doubt that some of these ideas are worth resuscitation.

Around 1955, the first period may largely be said to have drawn to an end. [...] The work regarding problems of race and minorities was, however, continuing; considerable attention was for several years given to the 'minority status' of women. But the major interest in the social-science field shifted to 'Social Sciences and Problems of Social Development' and particularly to 'the impact of technological change and industrialization upon developments in the social and cultural fields'. [...] The work of UNESCO became more practically oriented in the sense that social science contributions were offered for area studies, for community-development studies, for evaluation studies, all intended to lend support to the growing technical assistance programme. [...]

I believe that it is justified to state that UNESCO's work for peace has a potential value far larger than what is usually realized.

After roughly a second ten-year period, when the interest of the social sciences had been bent predominantly in the direction of 'social engineering', a new impetus towards an interest in 'peace engineering' came about. [...] The high priority to be given to this work was marked by a solemn declaration on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Organization. Besides renewed, vigorous attention to human rights, studies were to be made on the economic and social consequences of disarmament and arms control as well as on the economic and social burdens of military expenditures, in co-operation with appropriate agencies. [...]

UNESCO's work programme in the peace-research field was [...] presented to the 1970 Conference by the Director-General as a long-term plan for integrated action. This plan should be viewed against the background of peace research in the 1960's. Peace-research institutes recently established are now counted by the hundred, several international organizations have been formed and a very lively exchange of research information is carried on by scientists in the field. A repertory of peace resources was published by UNESCO in 1966 and is being brought up to date. [...]

The report prepared by the experts on peace research in July 1969 is very instructive as to the role of the Organization in the promotion of peace. [...] The report elaborates the role of UNESCO in disseminating information on peace

research and in providing aid for the establishment of peace research institutes and other agencies of that nature. [...] It lists a number of research projects that should be accorded priority. These projects are seen as embracing the role of more democratic decision-making systems in relation to questions of peace and war, trade in arms and its importance in making conflicts operating and the part played by foreign investments and nationalization of natural resources in creating internal and international tensions. While many of these must be studied by joint groups of social scientists, largely outside UNESCO, more closely related to other parts of UNESCO's programmes are proposed studies on the role of the young and other social pressure groups in determining how the peace problem is handled in different countries. UNESCO could play a useful role as a clearing-house in the establishment of research projects to be adopted by other institutions the world over. [...]

The causes of and the mechanisms that diffuse false rumours, prejudices, distortions and misunderstandings, together with the causes of mutual ignorance or contempt that exist between certain groups of human beings, should be explored and the means of remedying them examined. I also want to draw attention to the difficulties inherent in studying problems where so many touchy interests are involved. The experts have sensed it and the present Director-General, René Maheu, has recently referred to the 'hesitations so far displayed in the diagnosis and handling of armed conflicts and crises, in the analysis of aggressiveness, in reaching an exact notion of violence, the variety of actions that are both desirable and possible within the Organization's range of competence, the complicated evaluation of their actual repercussion, and respect for the sovereignty of Member States' as factors of relevance.

While waiting for a more specific UNESCO programme on peace research to mature, I want once more to caution readers that it is obvious that neither the new outlines nor the programme activities I have discussed earlier could at any time be regarded as the sum total of 'UNESCO's work for peace'. Far from it. All those who work for and with the Organization are imbued with the faith that practically all the activities of UNESCO can and will contribute to the safeguarding of a more peaceful world.

We are convinced that a world where literacy is becoming universal, culture more internationalized and science no longer the privilege of universities in a few countries, must lead to a more peaceful world. Obviously, the main instrument for creating those conditions is education. First, establishing education facilities where there are none, second, permeating education at all levels with the concept of internationalism. For while education in itself is a *sine qua non*, it must also bear the hallmark of internationalism and spread the basic idea of the necessity of internationalism. There is but one world for all of us. To make us all really understand what that entails is the task of education. And it is here that all the activities of UNESCO converge. [...]

The urgency of acute, political problem-solving must not detract us from the obligation to devote attention to more deep-probing studies and more future-inspired programmes of organizations such as UNESCO. I hope my examples have helped you to realize it is high time that we learn to listen to UNESCO.

UNESCO and women's rights

Excerpts from an article written in 1955

In the case of women's conquest of political rights, however, I believe it can safely be said that the United Nations has had a definite effect; 26 countries have granted women the right to vote since the United Nations started to exert its influence upon governments, bringing the number of countries where this elementary Human Right is guaranteed from 36 to 62.

In the United Nations, the Commission on the Status of Women set up in 1946 was charged with the important task of studying the political, economic, social and educational status of women throughout the world, and making recommendations to the Economic and Social Council on steps to be taken to improve that status and to enact equal rights and obligations as between men and women.

The Commission has been busy studying other problems such as the status of married women in private law, the domicile of married women, as well as maternal rights and duties, and the participation of women in the work of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies. It has also maintained close co-operation with UNESCO and ILO as regard educational opportunities for women, their vocational training and guidance, their economic rights and the implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work.

While the United Nations and ILO press this promotional action at government level and through legal studies and recommendations which may result in international conventions, UNESCO has the somewhat different function of preparing documentation and carrying out clearing-house activities in the field of women's education and also of investigating social facts in their complex diversity and of throwing a light on the interplay of forces which hinder or favour progress.

Under the banner of Human Rights, UNESCO has taken a great stride forward in the field of racial problems, enlisting social science and educational resources in a campaign against race prejudice and discrimination. Although women are not, quantitatively speaking, a minority, they are still to a considerable degree held in a minority status, being either victimized as individuals or incomplete use being made of their capabilities, to their loss and that of society as a whole. UNESCO has seen the need of studying the underlying causes of this situation, before rational steps can be taken to improve it. [...]

*Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser
Al-Misnad*



Education for all

I have been blessed with very successful children. Each one of them is a distinct individual with a different personality but all of them carry the same dream for their country and the same respect and appreciation of their culture and history. Being a mother has opened my eyes to the issue of education of other children. My children were educated in foreign schools and I was able to teach them what they needed to know about their history at home. But what about other children, who could not, for one reason or another, have this comprehensive education? And what about the children who are in public schools? Are they not worthy of such an education? How can they compete with strength and confidence in a very competitive global market?

This issue has become a national aspiration that exceeds my domestic borders and I have made it a personal challenge to give all our children what they deserve to become better adults.

My work with UNESCO gave me the opportunity to make the challenge even more international. All children are entitled to have a quality education, an education that gives them the tools with which they can process knowledge, rather than blindly observe it. I believe that each child is born with the impetus to survive and co-exist on this planet with others. If things have gone wrong, and peaceful co-existence has been derailed, then it is our fault, the adults. So it is us who must fix it.

Becoming critical thinkers

The objectives of UNESCO are shared by Qatar and, indeed, all progressive societies. As the nations of our world are becoming increasingly interdependent, it is important for institutions to adjust to a culture of innovation and change. Institutions such as the Qatar Foundation's 'Education city' are providing opportunities for scholars, students, researchers and academics from all around the region and the world to come together in the quest for knowledge. On site in the Education City, we witness massive cross-cultural exchange. I believe as people get to know one another, dialogue and tolerance are the natural outcomes. When people work together for concrete, common aims, in an atmosphere where diversity is respected, they are bound to open up to each other.

UNESCO has worked hard on areas such as peace education, dealing with educational dilemmas in countries in crisis, cross-cultural exchanges, gender equity, education for all and cultural preservation. My specific experience with the Iraqi fund for higher education allowed us to make a difference in assisting Iraq rebuild its educational infrastructure and then continuing and enlarging this mandate under the 'Reach out to Asia' (ROTA) campaign.

I believe education is essential in creating a culture of peace and non-violence. Quality education teaches people to become critical thinkers, capable of analyzing the faulty narratives that construct misunderstanding. My own work with UNESCO, the 'United Nations' Alliance of civilization initiative' and the Qatar Foundation has focused on the power of education to serve these goals.

However, I would like to add that while wars may begin in the minds of men, there are real political and material reasons behind the attitudes that sustain war. Poverty and corruption are at the top of this list. Therefore, parallel political action is required to alleviate situations of injustice and suffering which encourage and sustain a culture of violence.

Creating social security

My professional life and personal life have both been enriched because of my UNESCO experience. Working with UNESCO has given me the chance to see models of development that work well and I try to encourage those models both at home and abroad. Many of my own personal goals are shared by UNESCO: creating an environment of social security for all, where people can prosper and societies can thrive. I have been inspired by the commitment of many people I have met as a result of my work with UNESCO. I also have realized that our experience in Qatar, a small nation looking boldly into the future, is shared by many countries.

UNESCO is designed to serve the citizens of the world and its goals and objectives are shared by all. It is our responsibility as global citizens to advance its work. Every individual, in his or her own capacity, makes his or her own contribution. I do hope my more significant contributions are still to come. The establishment of the 'Reach out to Asia initiative' and the 'International fund for higher education' in Iraq are very important to me. I hope I will be able to continue to contribute in whatever way I can, and I encourage others to contribute in whatever capacity they can as well.

As an Arab Muslim woman, I have found people keen to hear about my experiences and my ideas. I am proud that I have had the opportunity to dispel misconceptions and share in the experiences of other women.

Providing tools and skills to be strong and independent

At the Qatar Foundation we say that 'Qatar's greatest natural resources are its people' and we are working towards the empowerment of people in preparation for the global challenges they will face. This means all people: men and women. In order to improve the lives of women we need to focus holistically on families and improve the lives of each family member. To empower women we have to empower men and the children who will be the men and women of the future. By empowering families we are empowering society as a whole.

UNESCO's work in women's empowerment and family development, especially in its Education for all programmes, is pursuing this goal: giving girls, women and entire families the tools and skills they need to be strong and independent.

My advice to young women everywhere is to stand for something that matters. Be firm in your ideals and principles. Work hard, but with dedication and passion – you will need it because important change rarely, if ever, comes easily. Change, after all, is inevitable. The challenge is how to orchestrate it, how to play the maestro who directs the scores in a very concerted way that makes every one of the players feel important and needed. We must not exceed the boundaries of what is accepted. Change should be unconventional, but not contentious. Add what is new, not what is strange.

Connect culture through creative avenues

I would encourage UNESCO to complement the work of other United Nations organizations in achieving the 'Millennium Development Goals', especially as related to the alleviation of poverty and corruption. The root causes of gender inequity are connected to poverty and corruption and if we can work on these, gender issues will become more manageable.

I also hope that UNESCO will make an even greater effort to forefront the issue of cultural communication and to connect cultures through creative avenues. I look forward to the Organization continuing its work to amplify the voices of moderation and openness. I also anticipate the development and dissemination of new educative materials that promote cross-cultural understanding.

The idealism of youth – the key to our survival

I would like to see UNESCO focus a concerted campaign on youth across the world –to reclaim the basis of a simple and good education. I would like to work to deconstruct the current youth culture that is based on disillusionment, cynicism and uncertainty and replace these values with characteristics of well-educated global citizens such as courtesy, respect, empathy, honesty, intelligence and idealism. The world is badly in need of idealists and we must willingly engage in a struggle for the survival of idealism. If we continue to conform to the dominant youth culture of disillusionment, we are failing in our educational achievements, and idealism, the impetus to civilizational progress, will not survive.

We must take responsibility for this disillusionment which was born out of lack of hope with the state of the world's affairs and the failures of our leaders. We, adults, are the cause of this disillusionment and we must work hard to rectify this.

I profoundly believe that education holds this power. Education restores value and transforms lives. It helps people feel empathy for others, understand different principles, approaches and beliefs.

This is why I think it is so important that UNESCO continue working persistently toward the Education for all objectives to provide quality education to as many people as possible, and never lose sight of the fact that fostering the idealism of youth is the key to our survival.

Christine Anyanwu



The strength of not being alone

My personal story

I am Nigerian by birth, and was trained in the United States at the University of Missouri, Columbia School of Journalism. I worked nine years for Nigeria's national television network as the petroleum and political correspondent and later I was appointed by the government to serve as the Information and Culture Commissioner in one of the states.

I returned to journalism and founded a weekly news magazine called 'TSM'. It was while I functioned as editor-in chief of the magazine that General Sani Abacha took over the government of Nigeria and the era of violent repression and human rights abuse began. As repression and abuse grew, resistance also grew and the reaction of the administration to resistance was even more innovative forms of repression. As a result, administration reacted to internal grumblings and discontent in the military forces and civil society by accusing perceived enemies of planning a coup d'Etat.

The media found facts that cast serious doubts about the claim of a planned coup d'Etat by the government and published them. The government reacted to the stories by arresting four journalists and accusing them of 'raising public sympathy' for those it claimed was planning to overthrow it. I was one of them.

Without proper trial, a military tribunal summarily sentenced us to life imprisonment, which was later cut to 15 years. I spent three years in prison for doing what every journalist does on a day-to-day basis. During this period, UNESCO gave me the UNESCO Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize (1998).

In June 1998, General Abacha died and we regained freedom. Two months after my release I had the honour of receiving the UNESCO award personally in Paris. It was a day I will always cherish. By that award, UNESCO had turned what was meant to destroy my career and future into a victory. In this part of the world ideals such as human rights, fundamental freedom of speech and the rule of law are not always well understood. I believe that by that singular act, UNESCO went a long way in impressing upon the minds of people here, that these are ideals worth defending.

Constructing enduring defences of peace

From one part of the world to the other, the world is full of tension and violence due to ethnic, religious and racial hatred. The western developed nations that condone racism and ethnic hatred are as guilty as the eastern or southern, developing nations that fuel ethnic and religious hatred among their various peoples. All have contributed to the making of a violent world.

A violent world is symptomatic of a globe ruled by closed minds. A battle for the control of the mind is raging. Never before has there been a greater need for mass education as an instrument of ‘constructing enduring defences of peace’.

Towards freedom of expression

Using my UNESCO Award money as seed funding, I have by the grace of God rebuilt my media organization which today is focused on broadcasting and content providing. Spectrum Broadcasting Company owns a mega FM Radio covering eight states, the most far-reaching FM in Nigeria. It also produces widely syndicated television shows. With radio and television, I have been able to make sustained contributions in the area of public enlightenment on issues that coincide with UNESCO’s core interests. But before this, I had set up the Multimedia Centre for Democracy in 1999, an NGO dedicated to public education on democratic rights and processes, the rule of law, women’s empowerment and inclusion in democratic processes.

Since 2001, the Multimedia Centre for Democracy has played an important role in the enlightenment of the Nigerian masses, particularly youth and women on being a part of the process, using radio and television as the vehicle. In 2002-2003, multimedia engaged in massive public enlightenment campaigns to prepare

the citizens to vote wisely during the elections, encourage women to join the election process and persuade political parties and governments at all levels to create space for women to engage in the process.

The efforts culminated in the emergence of a women's network, which is now making useful contributions in the areas of empowerment of women and gender equality. There is a compelling need for a more vigorous programme of public enlightenment now that Nigeria is going into another election year. This is one area in which UNESCO can help the country.

My impression is that Nigeria needs massive sustained public education of its citizens on the cardinal planks of UNESCO's Constitution. Democracy is new. Its tenets, principles and best practices need to be properly imbibed. Traditional attitudes to women must now give way to the higher ideal of women's inclusion. Archaic judicial practices have to be dropped for speedy and fair trials. The concept of the rule of law and adherence to court decisions has to become a natural way of doing things. The resurgence of ethnic and religious chauvinism is breeding a new generation of sectionalists, not nationalists, and fouling up the political climate. There is work to do on 'the minds of men' to assure future peace.

The strength of not being alone

Beyond the award, UNESCO's Director-General at the time went out of his way to endorse my application for a broadcast licence. It would be the first time that a female had applied. Although it took two years for the government to grant the licence, I did get it nonetheless, thus giving me the privilege of being the torch bearer in that sector for other women. Without doubt, UNESCO's endorsement gave my application seriousness. For me, it was just one more reason why I had to see the project through. Today, the station house is a landmark on a strategic hill epitomizing what can happen when good people all over the world come together in a good cause. UNESCO gave me a view to the world that I had not known. Now, I can stand on the side of human rights, free speech, justice and the rule of law and I know I am not alone.



Lourdes Ariape

Women, powers and international ideals

UNESCO has proved that men and women holding very diverse cultures, political ideologies, beliefs and skills can work together on improving the human condition. It has also confirmed that women are vital agents in this development. While other branches of the United Nations have dealt with geopolitics and economic development, UNESCO, since its creation sixty years ago, has provided the intellectual, scientific and moral leadership in a world that was building an international structure of political ideals and institutional arrangements. Equality, justice, knowledge and an ethical basis for all relationships as universal values were tied to a peaceful horizon, which would benefit every inhabitant of the world. Today, as structures become global, new sustainable goals for humankind and new political and social contracts must be developed. But one thing is clear and that is, that women are now full participants in creating this sustainable future.

Women, and girls in particular, have benefited from UNESCO's focused, coherent and moral pathway. It has allowed them to study, to enhance their knowledge and capacities, and to become active participants, citizens and agents in public affairs. Every country, every community and the world as a whole have received enormous benefits from women's contributions in all spheres of private, public and scientific life. Women have become, in many instances, the balancing force in war and peace, almost always, and most firmly, on the side of peace.

Viewed in historical terms, UNESCO has been an extraordinary success. When I walk through its corridors after a session of fierce or diplomatically suave debate,

I remember how I marveled that so many people speaking and performing such different cultural repertoires could in the end agree and set to work together and, while working together, these people would create worldwide, transversal agreements. UNESCO's ideals and agreements are put into action by tens of thousands of people and are believed in by millions of people as a beacon of enlightenment, one which we must all take pride in and treasure. For women especially, these ideals have been a beacon from ignorance, oppression and marginality.

UNESCO has created a space in time - something which will always remain. It must now, however, go through a transformation into a new era. Women are already embedded into world structures and must accompany this change and, very importantly, generate a part of it. In order to do this we need to assess what has happened and how we can delineate a new blueprint for the future. Most of all, these changes head towards the goal of sustainable development, understood in the way it is defined today, in terms of sustainable societies living together in a world of a durable geo-ecosystem.

In other words, the floor, roof and walls of the house in which all of us worked towards world peace and harmony at UNESCO have now shifted. The rooms in which we women actively networked and cooperated have also moved, some advancing, others retreating. We have to build a new architecture that starts out from personal lives, moves to different generations and communities and thence to nations, regions and the world. Our own personal experiences, now held up as mirrors, can light up the way to the future.

From Panama to Paris

My first encounter with UNESCO was at a seminar on cultural policy in the 1970s. I was thunderstruck by the possibility of listening to, and getting to know, some twenty people from different Latin American countries, including several women Ministers of Culture. As a postdoctoral anthropology student at the London School of Economics and Political Science at the time, I was steeped in academic knowledge, which I thought was eternal. The invisibility of women in all interesting debates seemed eternal. When these participants, including several UNESCO programme officers, actually listened to what I was saying, I almost fell off my chair!

I was of course a feminist, as were so many women of my generation who had gone through the tragic events of 1968 in Mexico. My immediate aim was to create new knowledge to help women fight for their rights and dignity. My anthropological research dealt with indigenous groups in Mexico with whom I actively participated in creating the first Indian organizations in Mexico. In fact, my second book on research, funded and published by the government, was on Mazahua Indian women who migrated to Mexico City. The more I lived with

Indian families, the more engaged I became in the struggle for Indian women to have a voice and a recognition within their communities and in the national society; and also in changing an undemocratic, closed political system that excluded citizens and relegated women to the trivial margins of public affairs.

My research and my engagement in furthering the cause of women led to my involvement in the United Nations' World Conference on Women in 1980, 1985 and 1995. In the 1980s, I also worked with the ILO as a consultant on rural women's development projects in Senegal, India and Bangladesh. Soon after, I became a frequent participant in UNESCO research seminars on migration, and women and development, many of them organized by Serim Timur and also by Christina von Furstenberg, and then, the Director of the National Museum of Popular Cultures of Mexico in programmes on culture. By the beginning of the 1990s, my research had led me to locate women and gender in the framework of what I called social and cultural sustainability.

As I worked my way up international ladders and scaffoldings (since we were building a new international architecture), I remember encountering many women with whom a special kind of 'ritual kinship'¹ was established. I needed to find models to teach me how to structure the kind of work I wanted to do internationally, and I met some extraordinary women, such as Gro Harlem Brundtland, Barbara Ward, Lucille Mair, and Flora Lewis.² More closely to UNESCO, there was Ingrid Eide, whose courage, sensitivity and willingness to stand back when necessary I greatly admire and who showed me a path I wanted to follow. I would also like to mention Else Öyen, Elizabeth Jelin, Françoise Rivière and Ingeborg Breines.

With so many of my own and younger generations, we not only shared an ideal, we unstintingly gave each other a hand in learning the 'tacit knowledge' about policy, diplomacy, management and power that one needs to move forward effectively and that we women had never had a chance to learn.

I must mention that one of my most formative experiences in learning international connections was in an intergovernmental organization, the Society for International Development (SID). In its committees and meetings, I had the privilege of listening to the best thinkers, politicians and international civil servants, in an informal, interdisciplinary atmosphere where one could really pose difficult questions. SID was especially open to women, and out of our networks

¹In anthropology, ritual kinship refers to loyalties established by way of a rite or ceremony. In Mexico, as in other parts, such is the case of the 'padrino' and 'madrina', who then address each other, among women as 'comadrita'. The comradeship and unfailing solidarity of such relationships reminds me of the 'sisterhood ritual kinship' all of us shared and share still, as we built our new beacons.

²Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norwegian Minister at the time; Barbara Ward, distinguished internationalist; Lucille Mair, Jamaican Ambassador to the UN; Flora Lewis, editorialist, the International Herald Tribune.

came distinguished internationalists such as Noeleen Heyzer, Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Nafis Sadik and Khadija Ul Haq. In the case of UNESCO, this synergy between UN agencies, policy think-tanks, the research community and professional and grass-roots organizations in an informal and open atmosphere has been one of its greatest assets, but one which has been diluted over the last decades. With it comes the opportunity of training young professional women, many of whom may not have such possibilities in their national societies, in the international policy circuit even while they are still working in government, academia or grass-roots organizations. These formative experiences are crucial for them to later become international civil servants, consultants, voluntary organization leaders, qualified opinion hubs and, at the national level, transmitters and advocates for UN activities. I strongly recommend that UNESCO support IGOs such as SID that can provide this formative and nurturing environment for young women professionals.

The same can be said for training young women in formative intellectual spaces on international development through international scientific organizations such as the International Social Science Council (ISSC) or the International Council for Science (ICSU). More and more funding is provided to these organizations exclusively for research, but none for training or for continued seminar activities at international level where young people can acquire an international vision of development. This is detrimental both to the synergies among academic communities, as well as to the intellectual content of research and to the training of young people, especially young women who have fewer formative options leading to international think-tank groups. In the reverse direction, towards UNESCO, there is also a detrimental effect. Cut-off from the academic communities and the younger generations, new debates and ideas are not introduced into formal discussions except through expert documents that always reduce rich debates to their simplest forms.

Women performing culture

As women began to move into international thinking and action, I remember how heavy our triple workload and commitment felt. One had to simultaneously develop the intellectual thinking of how women fitted into the different development processes, translate this new knowledge into policy proposals and then present it at policy debates with arguments that could be clearly understood, recognized and accepted. This is, of course, the standard work of internationalists, but in the case of women it was all new. We were inventing as we worked in research, policy and advocacy. What I term the extraordinary advance in the last thirty years in 'looking at the world through women's eyes' and 'changing the minds of men' and of women themselves about women's roles, speaks of the enormous creativity of women during this period. It also demonstrates the tremendous creative loss to the world when they are silenced and oppressed. For this creativity to flourish, institutions such as UNESCO must be receptive and supportive.

Needless to say, and as noted by so many women, the triple workload became duplicated because we had to be doubly good at whatever we did in order to overcome many men's prejudices and skepticism about women's capacities. It must also be recognized that with some exceptions, women and men tend to excel in different sectors. Since women are as diverse as men, a case-by-case procedure is better suited to ensuring that both the woman and the post or work are well paired, rather than have a uniform policy affecting all women or all men. Also, in my international experience, women tend to take conciliatory rather than aggressive roles to get things done. Nature or nurture? The debate is still raging.

I would like to take this occasion to express my admiration to the women in the generation following mine in UNESCO. They have been more untrammelled by atavistic webs than my own generation and are now fully deploying enormous talent in developing the work of UNESCO. For the future, it is vital that appropriate programmes be in place to give continuity to the younger generations in terms of increasing young women professionals' formative and managerial skills.

One of the programmatic fields in which I worked constantly dealt with women in culture. An important step forward was taken in the report of the 'World Commission on culture and development' in which several women and myself had the honour of being appointed members – knowing also that it was women in UNESCO and other government structures that ensured this. I can say there was a certain amount of resistance to include a chapter on women, but in the end its content was negotiated and it was included. And I think that all the chapters of, 'Our creative diversity' open up liberating arenas for everyone, especially for women.

Culture, as we all know, has multi-layered and contradictory processes. This is why, on one hand, culture may be the emancipating tool for women when it is seen as having a developmental thrust, while, on the other, culture is used to turn women into the defenders of traditions, including those that oppress them. It is a tribute to UNESCO that during most of its mandate the programmes on culture have both included women and opened cultural arenas for them to develop their creativity.

Getting into the windmill and living to speak of it

UNESCO is like a huge windmill which crunches noble ideals, political interests, intellectual pursuits and culturally diverse aspirations into neat and simply worded documents, some of which have the effect of time bombs on the world. Many despair that the end result is always a watered-down version of the original intent. As women we must say that with regard to specific women and gender programmes, UNESCO's record is far from the ideals that we would have wanted. However, we must also recognize that there are also men, who have been

alarmed by programmes and actions that UNESCO has undertaken on women and gender. It is indisputable, however, as all data and statistical evidence show, that, for example, an increase in women's and girl's education and well-being are immediately translated into higher social, economic and political development for both women and men and children, as well as for countries.

UNESCO has always been in the vanguard in this fight for women's education and must unremittingly continue this fight. Many of its other programmes on women have opened up new spheres of research, or political debate, of government action or of creations by artists and intellectuals. During my time at UNESCO many programmes spring to my mind, but I will mention those on women's rights and on research and denunciation of rape of Bosnian women as a tool of war, which accompanied ethnic genocide during the wars with Serbia. When I was Assistant Director-General for Culture, I strongly supported all programmes in the culture sector, which referred to women, and fostered two new ones for indigenous women writers and for women in cyberspace – in which we had an exuberantly new virtual experience, under the coordination of Wendy Harcourt and the Society for International Development.

The actual experience of women working in UNESCO, from what I hear of other UN bodies, has been mostly positive, with no glass ceilings or walls to prevent them from occupying higher positions. In my case, as a woman, it was entirely positive in institutional terms and almost without exception with the delegations; as an international civil servant, however, it became highly problematic given the internal political reality. Also, there were some men who could, perhaps, graciously accept that a woman might occupy a higher position, but they simply could not cope with her having greater intellectual, political or discursive strengths than them.

Additionally, women are inevitably caught up in what is common to all bureaucratic and political organizations, that is the vying for power between forces representing governance structures, international geopolitics and administrations. In this arena, two added dimensions affect women more than men. One dimension is that, because women are expected to be givers, talented women tend to remain unrecognized because they are expected to compensate the work of untalented bosses, who then appear to be efficient. In such cases, efficiency tends to be overridden by political power plays. Another is that of personal relationships, which for some women could mean personal destruction, or, for others, its opposite, and a way to achieve unwarranted advancement. It is such dimensions, coupled with those also known to exist in any UN organization, of political appointments of functionaries unsuited to the tasks, which in some instances distort the ethical proceedings of talent, merit and efficiency.

UNESCO as culture

In general terms, it must be said that UNESCO has fully complied with the mandate given at its inception: to create a culture of intellectual openness, political debate and development actions. However, because it is a house open to the world and the world has changed, though not always for the better, it now has to restructure its aims. The vital role women play in development and the centrality of women's dignity and emancipation to human rights and peace, make it very important that UNESCO continue with its activities on women and gender.

Conservatives argue that the forward shift in women's participation over the last four decades is the result of traditional values and religions. This misbelief has led many to advocate a return to these traditions in the hope that women's customary roles remain intact. In fact, as all evidence shows, women's active participation has been driven by a whole range of economic, political, social and demographic processes, some of which are historically irreversible. First, there is a constraint set on population growth by ecosystem life support resources on the planet, which displaced the centrality of women's place in ensuring generational continuity! Second, there is an individuation that intrinsically characterizes market systems, especially capitalism as a world system. Third, in the current form of globalization, as wages are kept low, women's wages or the income they produce become crucial to the survival of households, especially the middle class and the poor. Fourth, as State social services retract, women have to play a more active role, and one different from customary roles, to tend to all those unable to fend for themselves in a market economy. In this context the United Nations generally, and UNESCO in particular, have, as their mandate ordains, taken up the issues, demands and aspirations that women and the changing social and governance situations around the world have thrown up as major challenges for the future. Such a practice will no doubt have to be enhanced in the years to come unless population trends, capitalism and globalization shift dramatically over the next few decades. In fact, the United Nations' achievements must be viewed in relation to this capacity to respond to the changing priorities in world development.

The failure of development policies in the last twenty years has clearly shown that a UN organization such as UNESCO, which is open to governments and parliamentarians, scientific communities and artists, civil society and indigenous peoples (half of whose participants are, or should be women) has a better possibility of developing appropriate and useful policies, than vertical institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF that have brought about social and cultural breakdown with their policies. This is also the reason why UNESCO has enormous social capital in all countries of the world, an asset that is becoming more and more important in a globalized world in which high social costs and cultural unrest are leading to economic polarizations and political uncertainties. Women's active participation is the only way to ensure a more balanced and peaceful sustainable development.

Margaret Austin



Cooperation for a more just world

Personal history

My working life spans over fifty years. After graduating from the University of Canterbury, I taught Science and Biology at secondary schools and was Head of Science at Christchurch Girls' High School for some twelve years. During this time, I was awarded a Teaching Fellowship at Canterbury University, was seconded to the Christchurch Teachers' College as a lecturer, engaged in major curriculum development in the biological sciences and was the Chief Examiner for the National University Entrance examination. Later as Deputy Principal at Riccarton High School, I became involved in educational administration and was greatly inspired by Dame Jean Herbison. As Commonwealth Fellow from 1980 to 1981, I was able to pursue further work on the 'Nature of the secondary school curriculum' at the Institute of Education in London and subsequently to lead a reform of the curriculum and administration at Riccarton High School.

Politics was the next step. In 1984, with David Lange as Prime Minister, I was elected to Parliament as a Labour Member for the Yaldhurst seat in the Government lead. Six years in Government and six years in opposition (including a period with Ministerial responsibilities for Internal Affairs, Research Science and Technology and Arts and Culture) allowed me to draw on a background of experiences in education and administration, governance and management. I stepped down from Parliament at the end of 1996 with the intention of becoming active in international affairs, the arts community and in the health sector. International

Affairs gave me the opportunity to become active in UNESCO and in 1999 I was fortunate to be invited to chair the National Commission by the then Minister of Education. I have been incredibly fortunate in enjoying a rewarding family life and the support of my husband and three children.

Engaging in cooperation for a better, more just world

UNESCO is a unique organization and I have found it challenging, highly motivating, interesting and rewarding to engage with the National Commissioners, the Sub-commissions and the projects they initiate, as well as the international events that we have organized and in which we have participated. The Associated Schools 50th anniversary, the ASPAC consultation, numerous education, science, culture and communications conferences have all contributed to my respect for UNESCO's work. The people involved in these events have truly been representative of the many Member States and the different walks of life. Their richness and diversity must be respected and nurtured.

Then there has been the opportunity to work with the Presidents of National Commissions over the last three years and to try to find ways to improve the effectiveness of National Commissions and to advance UNESCO's work in the Member States. My speeches on behalf of UNESCO now fill a volume in my archives.

Whether it is through interacting with ministers and government departments, promoting values and education, focusing on science and social science through lectures and awarding scholarships, partnerships with the Royal Society and non-governmental organizations in New Zealand, working with the Human Rights Commission to foster respect for cultural diversity, or celebrating and speaking at events, I know that what is most important is to convey UNESCO's vision for the peoples of the world. The messages of justice and human rights are fundamental to life in this country and an important focus of our foreign policy work.

New Zealand values its independence and at the same time stresses the importance of working with and supporting people to achieve economic prosperity through development projects. Building defences in the minds of people depends on eliminating conflict and intolerance among leaders, rejecting violence and improving access to all levels of education for oppressed people so they have freedom to pursue their interests and goals. UNESCO's responsibility must also extend to developing innovative responses to natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes and floods. Mobilization of resources for rehabilitation within Member States, as well as calling on the international community, is essential.

Three pillars of success: open-mindedness, respect and adaptability

On a personal level, I have felt great satisfaction representing New Zealand and leading our delegation at regional and general conferences, contributing

to the agenda as objectively as possible and being aware that New Zealand is respected for its work internationally. The lessons that I have learned are the importance of being well informed through personal research, of addressing agenda items directly in a way people comprehend, of taking opportunities to interact with representatives from Member States and to share experiences and understanding.

Though I hesitate to give advice, I wish to say to those coming into UNESCO not to be passive, take a lead, listen to others, and be prepared to accept that your views are not the only ones and that you must be adaptable.

Involvement with UNESCO has reinforced my view that there is no place in this 'world of nations without borders' for warlords, dictators or oppressors and also that there is good to be found in people everywhere. Invariably people value their families and want the best for them despite great adversity. I remain resolved to use whatever talent I might have to a commitment to other peoples, especially our neighbours in the Pacific.

I have enjoyed the respect and friendship of people at UNESCO and count many people within the Organization and international community as personal friends. I am aware that in too many countries women do not enjoy the freedoms we in New Zealand take for granted. We have been a crucible in the advancement of women in all walks of life. We all have to make choices about career, family and lifestyle and it is necessary to earn respect for your work and achievements and then to use the opportunities which present themselves. Young women today have the world at their feet, but they still have to make the same choices. Be yourself, get good qualifications, identify your talents, make commitments, but do not forget that you will be the mothers of the next generation.

Preparing for the future

As UNESCO begins to prepare for the next Medium Term Strategy, it has to make a determined commitment to work alongside those governments which discriminate against women and to persuade them that men can no longer control in a way that prevents women from participating in economic, social and public life.

UNESCO's relevance in the twenty-first century will depend on its ability to communicate and engage with people and to be a developmental, not an aid, agency. To achieve its mandate around the world for peace and prosperity, UNESCO must give greater recognition to the role of National Commissions in the Member States since they are the most visible instruments for action. There is no single answer to achieving peace and we need people of goodwill everywhere to do their best.



With UNESCO Director-General, Koichiro Matsuura

Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux

A rewarding and enriching period

My appointment as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO for my country, Honduras, was followed by a rewarding period that provided me with a fruitful and lasting experience. I was elected chairperson of the Headquarters' Committee (1996-1997) and of the Circle of Permanent Delegates and I became the representative of my country on the Executive Board of UNESCO and vice-chairperson of the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations (CRE). I was later elected chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board with a two-year mandate (2000-2001). My experience with UNESCO became not only very gratifying, but also equally enriching on more than one level.

I fulfilled my mission in the service of my country, but by the same token, in that of UNESCO, which embodies the common values of the entire international community; ethical principles that I spared no effort to protect.

In my opinion, my most significant contribution to the work of the Organization was as chairperson of the Executive Board and of the Headquarters Committee. I must emphasize that I chaired the Executive Board at a crucial turning point for the Organization. It was the end of one century and the beginning of the new millennium. It was also a period of adaptation for the newly elected Director-General, Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, who had immediately launched an extensive programme of reforms, with a view to reinforcing UNESCO's effectiveness and

providing it with a policy centred on the fulfilment of objectives and assessment of results, enabling it to uphold its place on the international scene in a globalized world. This was a major undertaking, which consequently entailed a mobilization of efforts in close collaboration with all members of the Board.

One of the most formidable challenges I have ever been faced with was to try to accomplish the needs and duties of the Board, in view of the urgency and necessity for the Director-General to start work on his reform programmes.

The Executive Board took an active part in the success of UNESCO's process of renewal in line with world changes. It was in this spirit of adaptation to current realities that I organized two thematic debates on topical subjects within the fields of competence of the Organization: 'UNESCO Facing Globalization' and 'The Risks Inherent in the New Communication Technology'. Distinguished personalities from various countries were invited to participate in these discussions, among them, Mr. Jean Claude Trichet, President of the European Bank and Professor Luc Montagnier, HIV co-discoverer. In this period the draft 'Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity' was developed by the Board and later adopted by the 31st session of the General Conference. This declaration and the 'Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights' that had been approved by the 29th session of the General Conference became milestones in the awareness of the international community towards the importance of ethical issues. The 2000-2001 biennium was a period of great significance in the life of the Organization, and despite certain misgivings it was successfully concluded without too many difficulties. This was thanks to everyone, Member States and the Director-General. This success was attributed to the climate of confidence and harmony that had been established. At the same time, the cooperation and the constructive and thorough consultations held between the representatives of Member States and the Director-General, allowed for the success of the decisions on these important subjects. The lessons that I personally learned from the four sessions held by the Board from 2000-2001, were that these results would not have been possible without the spirit of dialogue constantly exhibited by everybody involved.

50th anniversary of UNESCO

Following the adoption by the General Conference of the six-year plan for the renovation of the Headquarters' buildings (1994-1999), I proposed that the Executive Board launch an appeal for voluntary contributions for the renovation of Headquarters on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of UNESCO. At the time, the objective was to do everything possible so that the Organization would be ready to face the third Millennium. After the Executive Board's appeal, in collaboration with the Headquarters' Committee, I launched and led a voluntary campaign to raise funds. The results obtained were very positive. The amount

raised financed the complete renovation and equipment of the hall known as the 'Picasso Hall'. Beyond the campaign of raising money, the most important thing was to initiate awareness with the Member States that the buildings of UNESCO headquarters were in dire need of renovation.

Learn to know one another

The phrase from the Preamble of the Constitution, 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed' was, for me, a kind of revelation that marked an important turning point in my diplomatic career. It has remained the basis of my motivation to do my best in the service of the Organization. Following the devastating World War II, and with a view to preventing this tragedy from occurring again, the international community established a new system of international cooperation, the United Nations, with its specialized agencies amongst which UNESCO occupies a special place. Today, it is more important than ever to instil the notion of peace in the minds of people in a lasting and profound way, because of the uncertainties, the wars and threats to the peace and security of human beings, the environment and natural resources, and the bleak future prospects faced by some. The duty of Member States, having ratified the Constitution, is to continue to help the Organization reach its goal, as worded by the American poet Archibald MacLeish, in the Preamble of the Constitution.

In this respect, we cannot reiterate often enough, that human beings must learn to know one another better and to live in peace and cooperation, based on dignity, social justice, solidarity and egalitarian participation. The interdependence of the world's countries only reinforces the validity of these principles, as today's world covers a rich cultural diversity. But, it is not divisible, neither is the law that governs it.

Strengthening women's autonomy

I was fortunate to be involved in the work of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, September 1995. I took an active part in the development of the UNESCO Declaration on women's contributions to a culture of peace. One of the Conference's objectives was to strengthen the autonomy of women and their access to power. The Conference recommended that women have equal access to all forms of learning, in order to become autonomous and participate in the day-to-day running of their country. Lessons learned from this major conference are in evidence today in the recent election of women to the highest office in some countries. Effectively, after the election of Angela Merkel in Germany, it was Chile's turn to elect a woman, Michelle Bachelet, for the first time in its history to head the Government. In Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president for six years and in Finland, the people have again entrusted the running of their country to Tarja Halonen.

The common denominator existing in all these victories seems to me to be the fact that they are the result of persistence, perseverance and, above all, hope. The will demonstrated by these four presidents, and the political fight they led, should be a never-ending source of inspiration, not just for all women, but also for all youth. These four women should remain, for more reasons than one, examples to follow and sources of inspiration never to be forgotten.

Evaluation as a basis for planning

It seems to me judicious that an assessment of the results of the Medium-Term Strategy 2002-2007 be made before making suggestions for the period 2008-2013. The General Conference decided that the 2002-2007 strategy would be planned as a rolling strategy, susceptible to revision should the need arise and in accordance with new facts, notably lessons learned from the consultations on the new decentralization policy. In this respect, I would like to propose that an evaluation be made of the activities of the field offices (national and cluster offices) to see if they have fully met the objectives assigned to them, in terms of carrying out UNESCO's programme effectively.

The importance of solidarity in a globalized world

In my opinion there are two themes to which the Organization should give more attention: solidarity and sharing in a globalized world and the elimination of poverty, in particular extreme poverty in economic, intellectual and social domains. Inequalities in terms of access to markets and also to knowledge have continued to widen between the richest and the poorest. Undeniably, new technologies are a factor in the changes and growth in all spheres of human activity. However, if they come in support only of a non-controlled application in a market, the developing countries could be excluded from the benefits of progress and would lose hope that one day they would have a better situation than the one in which they presently find themselves.

In addition, in metropolitan areas and rural zones of many countries, thousands of young people and adolescents are weakened and made vulnerable by social exclusion. Left to themselves, delinquency and even criminality increase amidst general indifference. In an effort to avert an impending disaster, UNESCO attempts to relieve their distress and their suffering, but it cannot go it alone. It needs the help of the authorities of the countries concerned and the international community. I would like to say in conclusion, that as we love this Organization and remain deeply committed to it, we are duty bound to assist it in every way possible, in order for it to remain true to its mission and accomplish the ideal it has been entrusted with.



Aziza Bennani

Demonstrating that women can

A personal story

After completing my studies with a doctoral degree in Hispanic literature, I began a rich and varied academic career. While investing myself in the field of teaching and research, I also took on administrative and official responsibilities in my capacity as Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Arts at the University Hassan II, Casablanca. Thereafter, I was called upon to carry out the functions of High Commissioner for Handicapped People and Secretary of State for Culture.

In 1999, I was appointed ambassador and named as the Permanent Delegate of the Kingdom of Morocco to UNESCO. Since that time I have fully committed myself to follow questions of interest to my country, particularly within the framework of the values and ideals which we share with UNESCO, aimed at ‘the construction of the defences of peace in the minds of men.’ At the end of my first two years within the Organization, I was unanimously elected as Chairperson of the Executive Board (2001-2003) of UNESCO. I was thus the fourth woman since the creation of the Organization to occupy this post, following representatives from Canada, Pakistan and Honduras.

Demonstrating that women can

Enriched by my past experiences, I undertook the heavy task to prove that a woman, who is also an African, an Arab and a Muslim, was worthy of this responsibility.

The biennium during which I occupied the presidency was marked by a difficult international conjuncture that led the Executive Board to debate several very sensitive dossiers concerning education and cultural heritage, notably in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. The Board also had to ensure the follow-up of several priority issues such as: 'Education for All', water, actions in favour of Africa, cultural heritage in all its forms, cultural diversity, the promotion of dialogue between cultures, civilizations and people, the ethics of science and the preparation of the World Summit on the Information Society.

My mandate also coincided with intense normative activities, notably the finalization of the text of the 'Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage' and the launching of the elaboration of the 'Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions'.

I always endeavoured to conclude the work of the Board through the constant maintenance of dialogue between all Member States of UNESCO so as to reach consensus decisions in accordance with the established tradition of the Organization. The establishment of a climate of confidence and good will between all the parties concerned, as well as responsible, courageous and consensual decision-making, contributed to increased visibility and efficiency for UNESCO.

Today, I am proud of the positive evaluation of my mandate by my peers and by the staff of the UNESCO Secretariat. May this contribute to illustrate to those who remain unconvinced that a woman can and must take part in the reflections on the great preoccupations of humanity, as well as in the decision-making process, in order to build a better future.



Gloria Bonder

A feminist perspective

Part of the feminist movement

At the beginning of my professional career, I worked as a psychotherapist, taught Social Psychology at the University of Buenos Aires and did research on social psychology related issues. Later, in the early 1970s, in quite a spontaneous fashion, and with very little information on what was happening with feminism in the world, several colleagues from different backgrounds (mostly from the field of psychology, but also from law and medicine) formed a group to reflect upon and discuss our professional experiences working with women as patients or clients. We all had something in common: we were dissatisfied with the conceptual and technical tools we were using to understand women's problems and address their demands. Intuitively, we 'felt' that our academic training was biased and/or insufficient to understand women's suffering, needs and visions. Yet, at that time, we did not know about the theoretical production that was being created by feminist intellectuals, nor did we know about Women's Studies. Unease, intuition and joy to find other professional women at a similar juncture were part of the climate of our meetings.

That group was active for around two years and made a difference in my life. It opened the road to new ways of thinking about women, about me, and about social relations. It encouraged me to search for other intellectual resources and to find the seminal work of Women's Studies and Feminist Theories that

was being developed in North America and Europe, and later in Latin America. But, most importantly, it showed me that, when addressing women and/or men and women relations, a whole submerged continent was to be explored and that working in order to curtail discrimination and oppression was not only ethically and politically indispensable, it was a practice that energizes and gives meaning to professional life.

During times of dictatorship in Argentina, this group lost some of its members and had to change its *modus operandi*. Our gatherings continued to develop in a kind of ‘clandestine way.’ We read new literature, held discussions, wrote our early works with a new perspective and prepared ourselves for better times. With the return of democracy in 1983, I went back to the university. It was then that my relationship with UNESCO began with the realization of the meeting on ‘Women and higher education’ in Latin America. That pioneer meeting gave a strong impulse to scholars from different countries to create or strengthen programmes, centres and projects devoted to women and gender equality.

Translating discourses into policies and practices has always been a very complex job. In our attempts at doing so over the years, we have learned the significance of having a strategic and systemic approach, as well as the right combination of passion and patience. In this respect, several factors are involved and they are all equally important, such as the socio-economic and cultural context, the political system, the existence of stable and reliable institutions, the participation of different actors and social movements and the quantity and quality of information.

The awareness of being part of a discriminated group within my own society gravely influenced my life. Born into a middle-class family with quite modern ideas and outlooks, with parents who encouraged me to study and get a career and having chosen my education ‘freely’ and developed my professional career quite successfully, I share a feeling of pride for my achievements with many women from my generation in Argentina. Also, the conviction that opportunities were always there for us, if we acted in a responsible and serious fashion. A similar pattern is evidenced by some research that we are currently developing with women scientists. Recognizing discrimination is painful and controversial. It tears down the very foundations of our identity and compels us to take a position.

Long lasting relationship with UNESCO

I began working with UNESCO, as well as with other international organizations, out of my commitment as researcher, educator and activist fighting against gender discrimination. UNESCO contributed to this decision in many ways: through its discourse, its support to different projects, its participation at international events and, most importantly, through my long-lasting relationship with women in UNESCO, with whom I share dreams, experiences, strategies and knowledge.

I have witnessed, and in some cases backed, the huge effort made by women working at UNESCO to introduce, legitimize, disseminate and mainstream gender equality into the Organization's policy and programmes. As in all other institutions, this effort requires a strong will, commitment, intuition and strategic skills. Very often, this can be a lonely and rugged road. Since 1982, UNESCO has been victorious in many ways, yet, in my opinion, UNESCO is still far from 'moving gender analysis from margins to the centre.'

Since the early 1980s when I began collaborating with UNESCO, I have developed several research projects, educational programmes, policy planning and evaluation and advocacy activities for gender equality and women's empowerment, mainly in the fields of higher education, science and ICTs. In most cases, I tried to build bridges between different disciplines and between research and policy-making. In doing so, I strived to gain the involvement, at least at some stages, of the academia, women leaders in political and social organizations, educators and media professionals. Although this strategy can be very complex, time-consuming and sometimes controversial, it has proven to be the most effective one if we want to make an impact on reality.

During my long-lasting relationship with UNESCO, I witnessed several occasions where its principles supported very strong and influential actions:

- UNESCO's meetings on Women's Studies fostered the development of several university programmes, centres, research projects and networks in Latin America.
- UNESCO's active participation at international conferences such as the Beijing Conference, the Conference on Science, Budapest 1999, and more recently, the World Summit on the Information Society, have contributed to the elaboration of an innovative discourse on gender equity in crucial fields for the development of today's society.
- Also, I would like to underscore UNESCO's backing to the Latin American Preparatory Forum on Women, Science and Technology, held in Bariloche, Argentina, in 1998, whose recommendations drove several actions, including the introduction of gender equality in science and technology policies.

The role of education in transforming mentalities, social relations, ideals and values is indispensable. However, education, as we know it in many countries in the region, is not necessarily the best 'road' or strategy to develop new subjectivities among men and women who are fond of peace, capable of enjoying and enriching their life with diversity, and are committed to the struggle against discrimination and violence. Although many reforms have been put into practice, including new curricula and specific programmes on human rights, citizenship, gender equity, etc., there is still a long way to go to mainstream those principles and concepts into the educational system and practices. This does not mean that we have

to disregard education as an instrument to achieve peace and equality, but we need to increase our efforts to transform education as a means to foster social transformations.

UNESCO Chair on Women and Science and Technology

UNESCO, like any other large international organization, goes through times of great splendour and inspiration, but also of bureaucratic inertia, conflicts of interest and resistance to change. It also has some extraordinary intellectual champions who back up and contribute to the development of innovative projects. During all these years, I have had the opportunity and the privilege of working with women in charge of women/gender programmes in UNESCO with such skills and values. I find it difficult to pinpoint my most important contribution to the work of the Organization. What I can say is that I have always been strongly committed to creating new knowledge on women and gender relations, particularly in Latin America, and to building synergies and networks with organizations from different countries and regions.

I cannot identify one single interaction or experience with UNESCO that can be considered the most rewarding one for me and my work. In fact, all of them have been most challenging in their own way. Despite occasional administrative roadblocks, the processes and outcomes of UNESCO made a difference in our programmes and plans of action. Particularly, I would like to highlight the creation, in 2001, and the development of the UNESCO Regional Chair on Women, Science and Technology in Latin America. Since then, we have been developing a sustainable plan of action, including research, training, mentoring, dissemination and policy orientation, geared to achieving women's full participation in science and technology. This is a 'hard,' but extremely important field of knowledge and social transformation in which gender inequalities operate in a complex way. However, this field is still considerably unexplored by researchers coming from sciences and/or gender studies. Since 2005 we have been promoting a network of UNESCO Chairs in this field (including water-related matters) at international level.

Over the past years, I have been mainly involved in women and science and technology issues, developing regional research to spotlight 'hidden' gender discrimination practices in scientific institutions, cultures and rules. Our research unveiled overt, but also subtle and very sophisticated forms of discrimination against women in this highly powerful and respected environment. It has also raised awareness among women scientists and policy-makers on the need to change cultures and procedures to achieve equality and develop innovative resources and strategies (using multimedia tools) to promote non-sexist science and technology education and to influence policies in several Latin American countries.

We have also made significant progress in the creative use of ICTs for training trainers on how to develop non-sexist scientific and technological educational programmes at higher educational levels. A new step in this direction is a project for supporting career development and leadership of young women researchers in Latin America, based upon a virtual workshop and mentoring. UNESCO has the potential of being a good partner for designing and implementing transformative projects. Nevertheless, sometimes there are huge gaps between its discourse and real practice. This can be discouraging, but also a teaching of reality and an incentive to figure out new paths, bridges and strategies.

Recently, we have started a virtual mentoring programme of young women researchers involved in biomedical projects. This programme has a huge potential and is intended to reach researchers in many countries and promote collaborative work. UNESCO is playing a leading role in the field of women and gender equality in science and technology and it should sustain and strengthen this role in the future.

Challenges for the future

In my opinion, UNESCO should create communication channels for young women to express their demands, ideas and projects and thus ensure their participation in the initiatives fostered and advocated by the organization. Complementarily, young women need to demand those spaces, be proactive and build alliances with senior women to work together towards common goals. A new Medium-Term Strategy should assure the integration of gender principles and analysis in all projects and programmes. This means going beyond the mere statement of the terms ‘gender’ or ‘equality’ in documents or the promotion of specific, and most often, small-scale initiatives addressing women and gender issues.

All strategic objectives and programmes need to be reviewed and enriched from a gender perspective. Gender unit or units need to have enough financial resources to guarantee effective and sustainable work. There is also a need to support networks of researchers on women and gender issues, encourage interdisciplinary and comparative projects at regional and interregional level, and promote the strategic use of new technologies for networking, research and education.

UNESCO Chairs on Women, Science and Technology should be strengthened in conjunction with the network of Chairs created most recently. Ensuring women’s full participation in the development of science and the creation of the ‘knowledge society’ is crucial and UNESCO should head in this direction.

In closing, I would like to celebrate the initiative of this publication as a signal of a consultative strategy that UNESCO should uphold, in addition to the definition of specific topics and priorities for the new programme. I believe that the top priority is to democratize its operation and be more open to social demands and supportive of innovation in all its fields of competence.

Claudia Cardinale



Defending women's rights

My background is rich and varied. I was born in Tunisia, have Italian nationality and live in a French cultural context. As a Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO, I was asked to represent the voice of women in the world at a reunion concerning children in Africa at UN headquarters, New York. I accepted right away knowing that most women confided in me easily. Being allowed to speak on behalf of women is most rewarding.

Having had a varied education, I found it easy for me to help women of different cultures, nationalities and religions. But, it is not an easy task for political reasons, beyond the scope of UNESCO.

I think UNESCO has a very important symbolic position around the world, but UNESCO must go on with faith and strength to obtain much more, in these desperate times to obtain peace around the world. UNESCO has to fight for peace and refuse political reasons, excuses or interference. We must all work together in the same direction.

My involvement with UNESCO has not changed my professional life, but it has changed my personal point of view on human opinions and human sufferance. But doors open differently, with deeper admiration and respect! In the future, I would like to be able to do so much more for women and the world we live in.

Though my experience as a Goodwill Ambassador is limited, I have come to realize that it is not an easy job to defend women's rights. My advice to girls pursuing careers with UNESCO is to believe deeply in what you are doing and struggle for it, even though results may not necessarily be those you expected.



Ulla Carlsson

Empowerment through media

A time for change and progress

Thirty years ago in Nairobi, UNESCO initiated a study of the images of countries representing different social systems and developmental stages, as portrayed by the mass-circulated press in the respective countries. The study focused particularly on the images of developing countries and changing economic and political relations in the international community over the preceding twenty years. The project was included in the programme for free and balanced flow of information, undertaken in a turbulent era in UNESCO's history.

In those days, I was a graduate student in the Department of Political Science at Göteborg University with a burning interest in international politics and the Third World. I was a bit of an odd person in our department. My colleagues, all men, were equally passionate and interested in opinion formation and election research. My interest in issues far beyond Sweden's borders was aroused, not surprisingly, in the 1960s. Sweden had emerged from the periphery of Europe as a welfare state with ambitions on the international scene. Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, each with a personal commitment to international justice, opened Sweden to the world and, by the same token, put Sweden on the map.

The 1960s and the 1970s were years of optimism; the wealthy nations of the world were experiencing a boom; former colonies were gaining their independence; systems were criticized and alternatives propounded; collective solutions were favoured; and faith in technology was strong. Like many other young people in the western world, I put a good deal of energy into what we believed would lead to liberation from all forms of authority - parents, teachers, politicians, and, for us younger women, from men's dominance - liberation once and for all.

At this point, I had also become involved in a collaborative project among universities in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to create a documentation centre for Nordic media research. Thus, I helped to start up the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (NORDICOM), which today is a knowledge centre of world renown. NORDICOM was an early member of COMNET, the UNESCO network for regional documentation centres.

At about the same time, a dynamic international forum for mass communication researchers emerged, the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR/AIERI). At the time the Organization was unique in its dual ambitions to bridge the gaps between East and West, and North and South. The 'Foreign Images Study' was undertaken for UNESCO by IAMCR. Looking back, I can say that IAMCR opened the gates to what was to become a long-term and multifaceted relationship with UNESCO.

This relationship has revolved around research and media policy. The research is about UNESCO and for UNESCO; involvement in COMNET and research documentation; the Swedish National UNESCO Commission and the UNESCO General Conference and, not least, the establishment and development of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Piloted by Ms. Breda Pavlic from its origins in dusty archives at UNESCO, Paris in the 1970s, the programme grew to regional UNESCO meetings in different parts of the world, including a UNESCO consultation on new communication technology at Göteborg University in the 1980's in which Mr. Alan Hancock played a major part and later with Mr. Alain Modoux and Dr. Abdul Waheed Khan.

Research: the key to knowledge

Those early contacts with UNESCO in the 1970s were decisive in my choice of direction for my research. The subject of my doctoral dissertation was the issue of a 'New World and Communication Order' (NWICO). Today, as UNESCO searches for its proper role in the implementation of the 'World Summit on the Information Society' (WSIS), it is not the first time the international community has set out to draft a policy for information and communication issues in the global arena. In their first decades, the normative roles of the UN and UNESCO related to work on the

protection of human rights. Later, in the 1960s technological advances in the field of telecommunication introduced a need for international regulation of an entirely new sort. Questions concerning information assumed a new political importance, and the discussion increasingly revolved around the doctrine of free flow of information.

The Cold War still defined the front lines in this period, but a new 'front' was also emerging - that between the North and the South. Demands for a new international information order were voiced from the Third World. In 1976, at the height of the debate, the UNESCO General Conference appointed the MacBride Commission to analyze problems in the field of communication and to propose solutions. The diplomatic community and international policy-makers acknowledged the international character of the media, their structures, world views and markets.

The MacBride Commission made a significant contribution by structuring the problem area, which made it possible to raise the intellectual level of the debate. The issues, however, were to fade from the international agenda as a new political climate and new power relationships emerged in the 1980s. Today, 25 years after the MacBride report, technological advances are once again provoking a discussion of the need for a new international communication policy. This time, it is in the framework of the WSIS and is phrased in different terms from those of the 1970s. The UN, UNESCO and ITU are all involved in the new arena, where information and communication issues are primarily discussed in terms of 'global governance'. Now, as then, issues of democracy and development are central, and considerable attention is devoted to the question of how to bridge the digital, or more correctly, the knowledge divide in a North-South perspective.

The relationships between wealthy and poor countries described by the MacBride Commission at the end of the 1970s still seems to prevail for many countries, even if the terminology is partly new. Several countries in the South still lack adequate infrastructure for modern mass media and ICT. Those who can change the situation are not always motivated to do so and those who want to change the situation are not always in the best position.

The MacBride Commission engaged a number of external scholars from different disciplines. Their studies ranged from conceptual analyses to statistical reports, surveys of national media legislation, and bibliographies. The absence of such a scientific fundament in the WSIS process is remarkable. Indeed, it is lamentable that the WSIS process has not engaged researchers of many disciplines and geographical venues to develop a better and deeper understanding of the media and communication situation as it relates to the ongoing processes of globalization. Such an effort would surely better equip the WSIS implementation process to create an enabling environment for media and communication on an international level.

WSIS, and to some extent UNESCO, have also marginalized media in many respects in the ICT debate and have failed to confront critical issues like the lack of media freedom in many parts of the world, the ongoing global concentration of private media ownership, the absence of media legislation, the challenges facing public service media where these exist, and the need to recognize and promote the legitimacy of independent, community-based media. If the WSIS is to achieve its goals, media must be included in its analyses, deliberations and recommendations. This is important, not least in many developing countries.

New knowledge is needed in order for UNESCO to fulfil its ambitions regarding a ‘knowledge society’. Media and communication research in the perspectives of globalization, democracy and development are more important than ever. Media and communication researchers need new creative fora in the international arena, and it is my hope that UNESCO will respond to this need in the Organization’s next Medium-Term Strategy. I also hope that that response will lead to renewed collaboration with IAMCR/AIERI.

The international clearinghouse on children, youth and media

About ten years ago, UNESCO and UNICEF initiated a number of international conferences on children and media violence. The conferences produced the idea of an international clearinghouse, a knowledge centre that would stimulate research through networking within academic circles and make research findings known to a broader public. The network should be global, with a special emphasis on linking countries and institutions in the southern hemisphere. Many institutions in Europe and North America vied for the project, but it was to Nordicom at Göteborg University that UNESCO turned. With the joint support of UNESCO and the Swedish Government, the Clearinghouse saw the light of day in 1997.

The focus of the ‘International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media’ is no longer confined to media violence. It addresses a number of different user-groups in all parts of the world: researchers, policy-makers, media practitioners, interest groups, voluntary organizations, teachers, students and others. The work of the Clearinghouse aims at increasing our understanding of children, youth and media, thus informing relevant decision-making and contributing to constructive public debate. We also promote children’s and young people’s media literacy.

The Clearinghouse has woven a global network of 1000 or so participants in more than 150 countries. We have made special efforts to involve people and institutions in the southern countries. The Clearinghouse collaborates with a number of organizations, institutions and networks in a variety of activities: projects, expert committees, conferences, etc.

In all its publications the Clearinghouse seeks to broaden and contextualize knowledge about children, young people and media literacy. Our books bring

together leading scholars from all over the world to penetrate different themes relating to young people and the media: media violence, media education, media literacy, and new media technology, globalization of the media, regulations, gendered media messages, soap operas, and computer games. The recognition the Clearinghouse has received in so many parts of the world surely has to do with our ambition to reach out, and with the fact that we are the first institution to try to bring some order to a field of research that has produced many, seemingly contradictory, findings.

An emerging area that will occupy the Clearinghouse, as well as UNESCO, in years to come concerns the various impacts of media globalization on the 35 per cent of the world population who are young people. What do globalization and commercialization of the media mean for young people's cultural identity and participation in society? What are the implications for existing knowledge and economic divides both within countries and between richer and poorer countries?

Two themes impress me as being particularly important in the work of the Clearinghouse: media literacy and information literacy, and gender and the media. These are also issues that were mentioned in the Swedish contribution in Commission V at the latest UNESCO General Conferences. I am hoping to see a significant commitment to these issues on UNESCO's part in the new Medium-Term Strategy covering the years 2008-2013.

Media and information literacy – the empowerment of young people

Promote or protect? This is a most important theme for us at the International Clearinghouse. Modern communication technology, in combination with globalization, and increasing commercialization of the media sector has changed the face of the media landscape quite dramatically. Convergence, fragmentation, diversification and individualization are frequent themes in discussions of contemporary media culture. A considerable number of people in this world - albeit far from all - have access to an abundance of information and entertainment via television, books, periodicals, the Internet and mobile telephones.

Meanwhile, many parents, teachers and political decision-makers express concern about the negative influences of the media, particularly television and the Internet, on young people. The topic of violence in the media has received a great deal of attention.

For a number of years, policy measures to limit the dissemination of harmful media content have been widely discussed. More recently, however, the emphasis has shifted from legislation and prohibition towards an emphasis on the responsibility of adults - within the media, in the schools and in the homes. There is a growing emphasis on the importance of media literacy. Consequently, 'protection' is no

longer viewed exclusively in terms of keeping young people away from certain content, or vice versa. The importance of strengthening young people in their role as media consumers is recognized. Media literacy means understanding how the mass media works, how it produces meaning, how it is organized and how to use it wisely. In short, it is seen to empower people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using images, sound and language.

Having media-literate individuals in a media-literate society promotes a critical, open and all-embracing public sphere. Today, the media has tremendous power. It largely shapes the choices, values and knowledge that determine our everyday lives. Media literacy helps, therefore, to strengthen critical abilities and communicative skills, while promoting a well oriented, democratic ‘knowledge society’.

Media literacy has been defined and developed in relation to well-established audiovisual media, while information literacy has been developed relatively recently and in relation to various new technologies for representing and distributing information. With the growing convergence of radio, TV and computer techniques, including the emergence of various hybrids and specializations, we see how a variety of electronic media, information and communication are gradually becoming common goods. Media literacy has tended to focus on cultural expression and has a critical dimension that information literacy lacks. Recently, however, information literacy is increasingly connected to issues of democracy and active citizenship. There is a need to bring the two forms of literacy together to further strengthen the role of citizens and their participation in society. UNESCO should take the lead in bringing media literacy and information literacy together, thereby carrying on a proud UNESCO tradition.

Gender and media – the empowerment of women

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media has also directed its attention to gender and media. One important aspect of media research involves studying media with a focus on gender. This is also a frequently occurring issue in societal debates around the world. The point of departure is that society (family, religion, school, etc.) constructs ‘the feminine’ and ‘the masculine’ and accord men greater worth. The media mirrors reality, but it also contributes to constructing hegemonic definitions that all too frequently are depicted as self-evident, as natural, all pervasive and invisible as the air we breathe. It is particularly important to study the contribution of the media to the maintenance of this gender order, considering that children and young people have constant access to today’s extensive media output through a multitude of different channels.

A new Swedish study from NORDICOM on public perceptions of violence and pornography in the media found that pornography and explicit sex are, at least, as

serious a concern as violence when it comes to negative impacts on children and young people. The concerns are particularly strong among women, who are also more supportive of restrictive policy measures. Thus, we have reason to reflect on how violence and sex are depicted, and how victims and perpetrators are depicted. And not least, how responsibility for the acts is assigned. How do the media - and pornography in particular - define what is masculine and what is feminine? That is, to what extent do the media contribute to sustaining a social order in which women are subordinate to men? We have cause to ask whether gender equality and freedom of expression are not sometimes operating at cross-purposes.

Women also tend to be marginalized when UNESCO discusses communication issues like access to and use of ICT. This, despite the fact that we know there is a clear link between ICT and gender equality and that modern communications technology can facilitate the integration of women into society: economically, politically, socially and culturally. There are many reasons why a gender perspective and the empowerment of women should be a leitmotif as UNESCO sets its Medium-Term Strategy.

My relationship with UNESCO stretches over three decades, half the life of UNESCO and more than half of mine. To have the good fortune to be invited to take part in the international arena early in life, particularly back in the 1970s when the world stood wide open to us eager young Europeans, has meant probably more than I can put into words. Clearly, it has shaped my life, and not only professionally. Constant contacts with people of other cultures, other political systems and other faiths mean many opportunities to learn and to better understand - both 'the other' and our own ingrained habits and values.

Oftentimes, when the frustrations of dealing with UNESCO - red tape, the complexities of contract negotiations, endless meetings with dark-suited men, their brows deeply furrowed - I try to call to mind the tremendous multicultural meeting-place that UNESCO represents and the situations when UNESCO serves as a laboratory for best practices and a clearinghouse for ideas that can strengthen the intellectual, strategic and ethical 'watch' capacities of the international community in the fields of information and communication.

The work of the UN and UNESCO is absolutely necessary today. In the era of globalization, national solutions cannot solve the problems we face. They must be solved in concert, by international agreement. It seems a paradox to find in the midst of ongoing globalization clear-cut evidence of increasing cultural introversion and intolerance. Without multilateralism, we risk finding ourselves in an increasingly fragmented and polarized world. Thus, despite the inertias of a community of nations and the disruptions caused by regional conflicts, these institutions are our best hope.

In all efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals and to achieve a sustainable society, media and communication must play a central role. Properly designed, the 'knowledge society', with its starting point in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principle of Freedom of Expression has a great potential to support more democratic, just and developed societies. International organizations like UNESCO face entirely new challenges to their vital work to achieve a rule-based international order, applicable to all, based on gender equality, in a complex global society.



Gloria Cuartas Montoya

Realizing the duty to protect

Unconventional beginnings

My life began on 18 June 1960 in Sabaneta Antioquía. I was born through an unconventional union which marked my life as a daughter, niece, grandchild and especially as a woman. I grew up conscious of the fact that to sustain a relationship and feelings of love between two people, you do not have to follow the conventional patterns of a couple, and that the family is not only one composed of father, mother and children, but that it can also be formed by loving people surrounding us, that affection and the joy of a child's love can emanate from close contacts and, in my case in particular, from grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends at school and the people in my neighbourhood.

The love of the women who surrounded me defined my life then and now. I spent practically all my life apart from my mother, a Venezuelan immigrant and a working, enterprising woman who was always absent. Via her letters, I got to know the situation of illegal immigrant women, and the complex reality of giving this kind of love which, in spite of the physical distance between us, expressed the constant urgency of wanting to educate and help her loved ones. From her, I inherited knowledge of the joy of reunions, and the inevitability of separation from loved ones and a lifestyle devoted to service to others.

Eye opening experiences

Between 1970 and 1980, my life centred around education with the Carmelite nuns of my natal town of Sabaneta, Antioquía. By involving myself with religious communities via the theories of the theology of liberation, I came into contact with the poverty, misery and the tremendous hopes and needs of the popular sectors. Knowledge of the urgent needs of children, young people, men and women led me to choose social work as a profession. Working with those worst off in society, helped me understand, assimilate and contribute towards transforming the burden weighing upon the lives of these people. Through this experience, I became aware of the harsh situation of women living in poverty. In the following decade, I began my studies in sociology which helped me further expand my mind and heart.

Later, when travelling to Israel, I came into contact with human rights workers and national and international organizations doing community work. In Colombia, I shared my life with communities that had lost everything through natural disasters. I spent most of my time with an interdisciplinary group, especially with the women who had lost everything in one day without knowing why and who had to face alone the scarcities in their lives and those of their children. They started to confront their men in order to attain more independence and equality in daily life. The women of Cauca, the survivors of the Armero disaster, and those from Antioquia, brought about another internal revolution and caused me to re-evaluate the reasons why I had studied and worked and inspired me to rebuild my own life.

From this moment, I was more conscious of being a public leader with a political programme. I took the decision not to have children, but to be a 'travelling woman,' sharing marvellous projects which inspired my life in each place I visited. I joined the struggle of the people to find dignified ways of living and recognizing that the power of people must be built slowly, and from below.

Step by step I learned the importance of speaking out and denouncing injustice and lifting the silence of centuries which in all societies has hidden the contribution of women throughout history. I came to understand myself better, my body, my problems and my sensitivities. I also came to understand that no kind of social assistance or retribution can exist if it does not include bringing about, in each woman, her own internal, liberating revolution.

Life in Central America and its struggles, dreams of revolution and, in particular, the life of Monseñor Romero, led me to choose a path, alongside the theology of liberation, of physical, spiritual and political commitment. I joined other causes which build alternative ways of living, seeking justice and equality so as to build 'heaven' down here on earth.

Realizing my duty to protect

At the beginning of the fourth decade of my life, I was in Urabá, and more specifically in Apartadó one of the areas of greatest political, social and economic violence in the country. My first role was to act as the advisor for a national organization on housing policy. Despite my experience, I was shocked by the new and painful sights I encountered in Urabá: women displaced by armed conflict, condemned by war and overlooked as victims of armed conflict. These women were exiled, not only from their land, but also from their loved ones; women caught up in economic, sexual and emotional violence.

Through this, I came to know the disinherited of society and the damage, the poverty, the uprooting that comes with being ripped from ancestral lands. Until now, I had not directly experienced the wounds of war, even though I was in a country with a history of conflict. I had not focussed specifically on the women whose pain is the pain of the nation. My concept of women's lives changed dramatically in Urabá after recognizing the impact of war and violence on their lives, and sharing in their struggles. This was the moment when I acquired consciousness of my political duty to become part of an historical process.

Being Mayoress of Apartado was one of the greatest challenges of my life. I found myself faced with the daily reality of crisis and, at the same time, had to work out budgets, development plans, take into account and negotiate with all members of society, as well as managing a difficult budget. Another challenge was that I had to learn to compromise. Being a woman in public service in a zone of armed conflict, I was increasingly followed by the national and international media. This, unintentionally, led to giving a view of the internal workings of a mayor's office, contributing to spreading and building a new idea of what being involved in politics really meant and explaining local development through the voice of a woman.

Without hesitation I stood up for a policy centred on human rights. I distanced myself from the policy of death called 'Plan Return' which was being imposed in the region in order to exterminate the political opposition. I learned that it was possible to work on peace projects and to encourage citizens' coexistence as a form of resistance, understood as the right of men and women to stay on their own land; to live within their own culture; to stay with a way of life they knew and loved; and to protect natural wealth from the abuse of the multinationals and from harm by national private interests. UNESCO, with its prize for 'Cities of Peace' in 1996, helped me to protect my life. I worked for humanitarian agreements and took a radical position towards the official policy of the country.

Political Participation

I worked for UNESCO from 1998 until the middle of 2000 as facilitator of the project 'Cities for Peace' and as Latin-American Councillor for Women. In Venezuela and Ecuador, I gave my services and experience as a woman and political activist to the women of Latin America and the Caribbean.

In January 2001, I returned to Colombia, putting all my effort into joining the peace and social coexistence initiatives. I am part of the Women's Political School, and with other women I helped design the project known as 'Feminine Resistance and the Map of Hope'. These projects show another way to live in the country by putting energy into our solidarity networks and working towards the construction of an effective democracy. We have worked out programmes for peace, recognizing that change would never come through the interminable practice of death and violence.

I believe in the political participation of women. In the middle of profound difficulties with party structures, I was a candidate for the Senate in the 2002 elections, gaining 29,041 votes as an alternative option, but not enough to win a seat. I live in a country where women are excluded, to a large extent, from the exercise of political power. Only 21 women were elected to Parliament in 2005, which is 12.6 per cent of the elected candidates, and women in the Senate (Upper House) amount to only 9.8 per cent. Figures show a decrease in women's representation in the period 1998 – 2002.

I am a woman of the Left and a member of the Frente Social y Político (Social and Political Union) and since December 2003 I have been their General Secretary. I participate by raising my voice in public debates dealing with the central themes being debated in the country. These include: the 'Anti-terrorist Law', the law of alternative punishment for crime, abstention from the referendum, opposition to the so-called law of 'Justice and Peace' and to the 'Commission for reparation and reconciliation' promoted by the government. I do so because I believe this is no way to respond to the reality of the country in the middle of the paramilitarization of society. We work for humanitarian agreement (prisoner exchange) and towards a political solution to the armed social conflict. We support the proposal for ALBA (a Latin American alternative to 'ALCA', the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) and we work for its elaboration, in opposition to the TLC, which tries to impose submission, misery and death. We do not accept external interventions and we are pained by the circle of death. We affirm our commitment to work with women in the construction of real democracy.

At every national and international gathering, I take part in the activities of popular, social and academic organizations and women's movements, which have developed a network that strengthens hope in Colombia and integration and solidarity in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Alissandra Cummins

Photo by Mike Toy

UNESCO in a small island State

What is important to me in my relations with UNESCO

Initially, my relations with UNESCO began in the same way as they must have done for many others. My institution, the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, was engaged in an intensive programme of redevelopment and I saw UNESCO simply as a source agency to achieve these goals. My knowledge and understanding of the Organization was quite limited; it has grown considerably since then. My appointment as a member of the Barbados National Commission for UNESCO in 1995 helped to increase my knowledge of other elements of UNESCO. However, it was my selection to represent Barbados on UNESCO's Executive Board, as well as an eventual appointment in 1999 as the Chairperson of our National Commission (a much misunderstood structure), which really broadened my insight into the Organization. I have, therefore, interacted and continue to relate with UNESCO on a number of different levels, sometimes simultaneously - as a member, and sometime chairperson, of international advisory committees on heritage. Each position has added a new piece to the puzzle.

I am also proud of the fact that the Government of Barbados evidently felt it could trust me enough to represent Barbados at the international governmental level. This was significant, since no one from the non-governmental sector had represented them before. I think this served to consolidate the partnership between the museum and the government in the mutually shared goals of preservation

and protection of cultural heritage, the development of capacities, the nurturing of national identity, side by side with the respect and appreciation for other cultures.

I have come to understand different levels and perspectives of the Organization, both from the inside and the outside, on the periphery as well as at the core. What has been important for me has been the way my knowledge and experience of the Organization has grown and has become useful, not just for my government or my institution, but for colleagues within the region and beyond.

I believe that I have grown as a result of my UNESCO experience, grown to understand that while national governments have the responsibility for their own nation, people and identity, there is a greater mandate, as part of the world community. For example, to have the opportunity to participate in the creation of new international conventions has been both a privilege and a responsibility for me.

UNESCO is in truth a laboratory of ideas, while at the same time remaining true at the core to the notion that if we are to have peace, security, health, freedom, and happiness, then nations must care for and accept responsibility for the well-being of other countries, and people must support each other and come to understand, respect and appreciate the diversity inherent in difference. These are not sentiments to be expressed daily or even on ‘appropriate occasions’, but rather a truth which is and should be inherent to our sub-consciousness and indelibly inscribed on our DNA.

My most important contribution in the past

I hope I have helped people both inside and outside of UNESCO understand that size is not an irredeemable impediment and that small does not mean incapable or insensible. Small States can provide visionary leadership, conscientious direction and purposeful support. Small States can represent excellence and credibility. Developing countries serving on the Executive Board are not there for what they can get, but for what they can give.

It was imperative to me to have colleagues acknowledge that small States could provide consistency in approach and conscience in application and that the Caribbean had knowledge, ideas and expertise to contribute to the fulfilment of UNESCO’s goals. This made our role in the articulation, negotiation and adoption of new international conventions a critical one, since we could demonstrate the value of the Caribbean contribution to an international process.

I hope I have helped others to understand the Caribbean better. To realize that as a unified region that confers a sense of common citizenship and community, the Caribbean is really a figment of the imagination. There is a geographical expression

called ‘the Caribbean’ often associated with a site, a sea, and several States and many people describe and define themselves as Caribbean persons, claiming a unique identity which has its own cohering characteristics that distinguish them from others. The truth, however, is that the Caribbean, even as a geographical expression, is a very imprecise place that is difficult to define. I believe that one of my most important contributions to UNESCO was to articulate the vision that we share as a region, to consciously and conscientiously represent both the fragility and the strength of a communal memory of historic experience.

At the national level, and also as Special Envoy for Cultural Heritage, I had a specific and defining goal – to improve Barbados’s performance in the preservation of cultural heritage. I designed and coordinated a programme of research and evaluation on UNESCO’s international conventions for the protection of cultural heritage, their intent, their meaning, their mechanisms and provided the government with the research material, critical evaluation and tools which enabled them to make the decision to become signatory to these conventions and active adherents to the criteria, creating a framework for Barbados’s national, as well as international, adherence to these highly important goals. I feel this has been my most important contribution to date and I continue to work towards this goal, with the new conventions recently adopted.

Personal commentary on UNESCO ideals and mandate

The Caribbean scholar, Michel-Rolph Trouillot remarked that, ‘Caribbean societies are inescapably heterogeneous...the Caribbean has long been an area where some people live next to others, who are remarkably distinct. The region... has long been multi-racial, multi-lingual, stratified, and some would say, multi-cultural.’ For this reason, the Caribbean experience of nations and peoples living in close and harmonious conjunction with each other was something I had never had reason to question, and which was an unshakable assumption in my relations with others.

The devastation experienced during two world wars was not within my direct, personal experience. However, the horrifying occurrences of humanity at war with humanity is an escapable ‘event’, played out at close quarters on our media, both enhancing the intimacy and, at the same time, disconnecting us from such inhumanity. People can make the choice to be deeply obsessed or indifferent to the degeneration of human existence. UNESCO’s core mandate reminds us that our mutual responsibility ‘to build peace in the minds of men’ remains as germane today as it did at the start of UNESCO’s existence.

A shared experience of meaningful co-existence as observed in the Caribbean was the basis of Benedict Anderson’s renowned book ‘Imagined communities’. In it, he argues ‘It [ethnic or communal identity] is imagined because the members of

even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their community.' UNESCO's core values underline the notion of a communal identity and a communion of spirit which we all, both individuals and institutions, aspire to.

What I focused on and what I struggled to obtain

Throughout its engagement with UNESCO, Barbados has reiterated, as its priority, those activities envisaged within the UN programme on 'Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States' (SIDS), defining as it does its future oriented priorities and the need for capacity building and protection of fragile and vulnerable identities so prevalent amongst our small communities.

This is the principle reason why we actively participated in the elaboration of the most recent conventions on intangible cultural heritage and cultural diversity, and engaged consistently at various levels with various positions and perspectives which were identified. For me, the challenge was to demonstrate the commitment of Barbados to these processes, and to actively participate and commit to investing the time, energy and resources necessary to ensure that UNESCO achieved consensus texts for these two conventions.

The protracted consultative and negotiating processes were a challenge, and an education, for small States and delegations. For many of us it was imperative that these conventions reflect not so much traditional notions of heritage, which must be owned or controlled, but rather to identify, new and ancient considerations of a shared or communal heritage to enable us all to have reached this stage in the preparation of the conventions. Throughout a turbulent process of negotiation, articulation, interpretation and finally consensus, we held true to that commitment, ensuring that the conventions recognize culture as an integral and vital component in the sustainable development of small States.

Of critical importance for the region was the need to ensure that ten years after its creation, the 'Slave Route programme' should not simply be allowed to disappear or die. The intent, I know, was to make space for other 'Routes' programmes, which deserved to have their day. However, I think it was perhaps not well recognised at this critical juncture that, unlike other 'Routes' projects (the Silk route, the Iron route, etc), this programme was not merely a process of ascribing the symbolism of importance of these products in the past, but was an articulation of the silent subconsciousness of millions, and a reflection on ideologies, not products.

Indeed, simply to have terminated the programme after ten years as a gracious

celebration of a historic moment in human history would, ironically, have been to trivialize what was a global attempt to commodify human existence. A process to which UNESCO most certainly could not subscribe.

What UNESCO should focus on in the future

SIDS are amongst the most vulnerable of heritages and cultures today, not least since entire communities and countries may be entirely wiped out due to natural disaster and other such devastations on a scale which has never before been observed. SIDS should be recognised for their important function as ‘crossroads of cultures’, to adopt terminology recently emerging within UNESCO.

Heritage protection, interpretation and management should have a greater profile and support within UNESCO, given that it is the single UN specialized agency working in this field, unlike its other fields of competence. The recently adopted convention on the ‘Protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions’ has finally provided us with the ability to actively foster our cultural diversity, while respecting and enjoying that of other nations and cultures. Indeed, UNESCO should give recognition to the fact that culture, as the singular element in all human creativity and activity, underpins the processes of education, science and communication and, thus, should be placed at the core of UNESCO’s structure.

A final thought, critical to UNESCO’s continued relevance and effectiveness, is the recognition that it is mutual partnership instead of masterful patronage which should define its programme. As a facilitator for the generation of creativity, it needs to encourage and coordinate the best in human endeavour.

Aicha Bah Diallo



The importance of girls' education

My way to UNESCO

I am an educator, originally a chemistry teacher – who got in contact with UNESCO via my husband who used to represent Guinea in UNESCO. He was convinced that UNESCO was very much needed in Africa, not least in relation to teacher training in the overall context of the freedom struggles. Education and culture were key elements in the independence struggles in Africa in the 1960s. He always discussed major issues with me, so when I became Minister of Education, UNESCO was already familiar to me.

Almost immediately upon my designation as Minister of Education in 1990, UNESCO proposed that I undertake a study on the barriers to girls' education. At the time, we only had 'blind statistics' that were not sex-disaggregated; this made our educational planning inappropriate. I rectified this and worked closely with a statistician on the UNESCO study. We went to all four regions of Guinea in order to understand the real situation for girls. A fact-finding study revealed several hampering factors for girls' schooling. First and foremost was the poverty, but also the schools were far away from home and parents worried about the safety of the girls.

The education was not always seen as relevant and the teachers were often 'harder' on girls, not encouraging or giving them attention. There were often no toilets for girls, which could be embarrassing, particularly once in the age of menstruation,

and issues related to procreation were often taboo. Only grandmothers would discuss these issues with their granddaughters. Often, girls were required for work at home, acting as ‘small mothers’. All these factors prevented the girls from becoming independent and successful.

The importance of girls’ education

UNESCO has greatly helped in targeting girls’ education, which became a top priority for me as a minister. I was also most pleased to be in a position to stop the previous tradition of expelling pregnant girls from school. I was actively involved in the establishment of the ‘Forum of African Women Educationalists’ (FAWE) in 1992, and we proudly received the UNESCO Comenius medal for our work in favour of girls’ education in 1994. Now there are FAWE antennas in ‘almost’ all countries, and we are ‘exporting’ the concept to other regions. I was also personally gratified to represent FAWE in UNESCO’s preparatory committee for the Fourth World Conference on Women.

UNESCO also responded very positively to my request for assistance in order to get a complete overview of the educational needs in Guinea from early childhood education through to baccalaureate. UNESCO’s holistic vision of education was very important to me as a minister. I would like to encourage other ministers of education to request UNESCO’s assistance in this regard. MINEDAF is also a very important UNESCO initiative, through which African ministers of education are brought together in order to share experiences and learn from each other.

The right to education

UNESCO is continuously striving to make the right to education become a reality, including by encouraging parents to send all their children to school and governments to allot a minimum of four to six per cent of GDP to education.

In this context, it is primordial that children are educated in their mother tongue, in order not to be alienated from their own culture the moment they enter school. For some children, it is already overwhelming to leave their parents and culture and go into a totally new environment. Education in the mother tongue is an important part of what constitutes the quality of education. UNESCO helped national experts to codify my own language, Fulani. Particularly in Africa, it is also vital that the school helps bridge ethnic divides and focuses on how to learn to live together.

The Preamble of UNESCO will always be valid, not least in multi-ethnic societies. It is the parents who first of all should learn to live together peacefully. Until the age of three, children are not aware of skin colour or other special features. Being white, or brown, or black, may describe a way of life more than a skin colour and, under the skin, blood has the same red colour for us all. It is imperative to build on what unites us.

Open the doors

With my inside experience of UNESCO in the management of the education sector, including as acting Assistant Director-General, it has been sad to observe that we do not as yet properly practice what we preach. We are still struggling to live together harmoniously. We are not smiling at each other for fear of not being taken seriously. We like to have 'my project', 'my budget' and 'my domains', instead of working as a team. We have to open the doors of divisions and sectors.

I did my utmost to incite true teamwork among my staff, and also with colleagues from other sectors, both at UNESCO Headquarters and in the field. A Norwegian funded project on polyvalent teachers; training teachers to be able to teach both early childhood classes, primary school and non-formal literacy, became a showcase. A post-conflict project in Liberia developed by an inter-sectoral team and with local expertise is another example.

The cross-cutting themes are also excellent in principle, even though some colleagues continue to resist. It is when we can work across the sectors of UNESCO, to combine insight and experience in education, culture, sciences and communication that we become strong. It is only possible when knowledge and experience flow freely. This is the beauty of UNESCO; we have to build on it!

Broadening the mind

Personally, I am most grateful to UNESCO for the opportunities I have had to go around the world and to learn from other people. My knowledge of language has made me feel at home in many parts of the world. I learn something new every day with UNESCO. Now, I also find it satisfying that I can give back to others from what I have acquired. Perhaps we, as individual staff members, and UNESCO as an organization, have not been able to make this enormous asset of the Organization sufficiently visible and broadly appreciated.

Being fully respected as a woman professional is not always obvious. Being both a woman and black may make things even worse. Perhaps this is taboo in many workplaces. If so, we need to start talking about it in order for women to be able to enjoy real equality in authority and in salary and for men to enjoy real partnership.

Humbleness as a door opener

Intelligence and wisdom are not the prerogatives of one sex, or of one ethnic group or a geographical region. We should, therefore, all be humble and listen to what we can learn from each other. Humbleness is in fact a door opener. Throughout my whole life, I have fought for gender equality. I come from a country where

women are strong, and from an ethnic group where men consult women and take advice before making decisions. Men in general should make fighting for gender equality more of a priority.

If I should give advice to young sisters in the Organization, it would be to be proud of serving a great Organization, and take the opportunity to learn. It is also important to always remember that you are strong; do not let anybody lead you to think otherwise. Women have the same university backgrounds as their brothers and should thus show their strength through always doing their best. Hold your heads high!

The most important challenge for UNESCO is to deliver on all the EFA goals and the two Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education: Ensuring primary 'Education for all' and bridging the gender gap in education. All available human and financial resources should be focused on how to do this. Former colleagues across the world are ready to assist, and they should be called upon. Once you have served UNESCO, you will always be ready to continue. The situation in the world with armed conflicts and wars demonstrates the need to learn to live together. This must be the focus of all our educational programmes.

Joan Domiceli



Detail of photo by Bette Mifsud

Involvement with World Heritage preservation

My personal story

My background is that of an Australian architect-planner, mediator and heritage adviser, with recent work in the fields of cross-cultural mediation, world heritage and cultural landscapes. I have a personal interest in human rights. I was fortunate to meet and marry an Argentine fellow student, of Yugoslav-Italian parentage and so have enjoyed the pleasures of multiculturalism throughout my adult life.

I live and work among mist, birds and eucalyptus in a small town in the rugged upland country of the Greater Blue Mountains, a place of exceptional bio-diversity and beauty next-door to Sydney. With a fine scientific team, I prepared the nomination of this Area for inscription on the World Heritage List and, in 2000, its million hectares of wild country were recognised as ‘a property of outstanding universal value’. It is a place closely tied to all its inhabitants, especially the Aboriginal people who have occupied and cared for it over millennia. In 2004, UNESCO endorsed local endeavours to celebrate the values of the area. The exchange of scientific and traditional knowledge for its conservation and co-management has been initiated through a mapping country programme, enriched by rock art research. An environmental schools programme, Earth Journeys, is underway and a nationally broadcast series, the Songlines Conversations, celebrates people and place. I am delighted to support these endeavours.

I was introduced to the family of United Nations Organizations in Santiago, Chile, where my husband Serge and I lived and worked with our two small children from 1972-1975, during a time of passionate and painful political change. Serge was working for the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America at the time. Following the military coup, I became immersed in safeguarding the lives of political refugees, under the auspices of UNHCR.

Involvement with UNESCO on World Heritage preservation

My involvement with UNESCO has been principally in the field of culture and the social concerns of cultural diversity. This inevitably mingles with UNESCO's other two great fields: science and education.

My first direct involvement was not until 1988-1990, when Serge and I ran a project for the World Decade for Cultural Development. We looked at urban form as an expression of local socio-economic history and cultural identity. We asked whether, in reshaping a city, local people might evolve their own dialect of building to replace the more ubiquitous international language of construction.

On an absolutely minimal budget, experts gathered in India, Argentina and Australia to ponder over Fatehpur Sikri, Chandigarh, Shahjahanabad, Las Misiones de la Guarani, Viedma, La Boca, Kakadu rock art, Canberra and Pymont-Ultimo. The project led to the publication, 'A Sense of Place - a Conversation in Three Cultures' and to Sydney University's ongoing graduate course on international urban conservation, known as, 'Transforming cultural environments'. This again linked into an international ICCROM (the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) programme for urban planners and conservators.

Throughout the 1990s and into this century, I have been closely involved with UNESCO's 1972 World Heritage Convention; first as vice-president of the Paris-based non-governmental organization ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites), and then as Council member of the Rome-based inter-governmental organization ICCROM. Both are formally named within the Convention as advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee. This field of World Heritage has remained my principal involvement with UNESCO.

I am also fortunate to have served on several national bodies, such as Australia's Heritage Commission, the State of Environment Advisory Council, the State Heritage Council, as well as the Land and Environment Court. In 1999, I received the Order of Australia for 'national and international service to the conservation of cross-cultural heritage'.

I have very much enjoyed working with colleagues across the world on the subjects that interest me most, people and places. At the moment, my work

focuses on environmental and indigenous heritage - their linkages, evolution and protection.

Human coexistence with the land

My most rewarding experience with the Organization was probably in 1994. I was one of eight international experts invited to review the World Heritage List and to prepare the consequent 'Global Strategy for a balanced, representative and credible World Heritage List'. The intellectual effort was intense. I had the honour of presenting our findings to the World Heritage Bureau shortly afterwards. The Strategy was adopted in full by the World Heritage Committee at the end of the same year and has guided its work ever since.

The Strategy strives to recognise and protect places that are outstanding demonstrations of human coexistence with the land and of human interactions within society. It has led to a flurry of initiatives. Broader categories of place have been defined, such as cultural landscapes and pilgrim routes. Conferences and studies continue on previously neglected topics in many ignored regions of the globe, and there are new signatories to the Convention, now 177.

In 1995, I experienced the Strategy in action at two UNESCO conferences interrogating the concept of cultural landscapes. The first was the 'Regional Thematic Study Meeting on Asian Rice Culture and its Terraced Landscapes', held in the spectacular Ifugaoan terraces of the Philippine cordillera. The second, the 'Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Associative Cultural Landscapes', was held at the Sydney Opera House and at the mouth of the Jenolan limestone caves.

In 1997, I experienced again the Strategy in action at the 'First global strategy meeting for the Pacific', held in Suva. Islander delegates eloquently described their response to a maritime continent with only 2 per cent land mass. Their tangible and intangible heritage, they said, reflects the spirit of navigational tides, winds and stars.

Collaborate to avert conflict

Trying to translate UNESCO's purpose into reality, as set out in its Constitution, is not always easy. The words are strong and beautiful: 'To contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations'.

Sometimes, ‘promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture’ can avert conflict. Often, like the creation of UNESCO itself, it emerges from the aftermath.

In 1994, I joined a UNESCO mission to the Dubrovnik region of Croatia, concentrating on the fertile Konavle Valley lying behind the World Heritage city. This region had been under fire, occupied by the enemy, and severely damaged between October 1991 and October 1992. The purpose of the mission was to work with the community - both local and newly formed national government bodies - to create a programme for the physical, socio-economic and cultural rehabilitation of the Valley. This covered its shattered infrastructure and the thirty-three devastated villages within it. The subsequent report touched on training, construction techniques, programming and finance, and was implemented to a large extent by its resilient people. It was later translated into Croatian for application in other war-torn areas of the country.

There are anecdotes of unexpected acts of collaboration that give us heart. An invaluable collection of traditional embroideries, hidden during that war in a nearby well by its desperate curator, was found, acknowledged and courteously returned by an enemy search party, days before flooding rain that would have ruined it. The collection is safe and on display again.

Whose cultural values?

A major concern within Australia is the treatment of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures. In 1992, the ICOMOS executive and international committees accepted our invitation to meet in Sydney. This was their first time in the Southern hemisphere. ICOMOS Australia organised the regional conference ‘Whose cultural values?’. A publication followed in 1994 entitled, ‘Diversity, place and the ethics of conservation’. It was based on international and national cases and set out ethical principles for conservation practice, including respect for indigenous and non-indigenous cultural differences. The principles have been adopted for all members of ICOMOS Australia.

UNESCO has a talent for creating documents that articulate internationally agreed principles. This is by no means easy. In 1994, I witnessed the painful birth of one very esoteric, and yet effective, document: ‘the Nara Document’ on authenticity in relation to the World Heritage Convention. It grapples with the meaning of one word, ‘authenticity’. At the UNESCO-ICOMOS-ICCROM Conference, I was, as one of 45 international experts, a rapporteur and speaker on cultural diversity. The document has set benchmarks for honesty, accountability and respect for cultural diversity. This was followed by the useful Tokyo Symposium on ‘Cultural diversity and heritage’.

Glimpses of light

The Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution continues to be important in my work. Its words: 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed,' addresses both health of mind and preparedness. It would be helpful to include women in this Preamble, with their roles at times of war and in defence of peace. Modern warfare, as we know, affects men and women indiscriminately, with battlefields in the heart of civilian areas.

In 1994, I wrote a report for UNESCO, entitled, 'Finding the expertise'. It was concerned with preparations to protect cultural heritage in emergencies, whether caused by human or natural disasters. It links heritage, planning and emergency services agencies through pre-arranged alerting systems. How bitterly disappointing it is that only 2 per cent of international emergency funds goes to effective means of reducing risk, such as negotiating for peace or supplying sandbags. The vast 98 per cent goes to politically photogenic relief, after the event. We spoke about these issues at the 1997 international symposium 'Risk preparedness for cultural properties', held in Tokyo and Kobe following the earthquake. Apart from technical questions, the ensuing declaration emphasises the need to improve awareness and collaboration in the minds of men. UNESCO is right - education, education, education!

I dread answering the question as to where the 'building of defences of peace in the minds of men' should be pursued with increased vigour in the present international environment, as it appears to challenge every objective of UNESCO – peace and security, collaboration, universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Instead we have wars, insecurities and politically driven fears. We have a socio-economic environment based on competition and consumption with only rare, treasured instances of cooperation. We are seeing disrespect for the natural environment, for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, not on a universal scale, but at least widespread.

Into this dark atmosphere steps UNESCO, and its United Nations family, offering some sanity and glimpses of light. UNESCO must pursue its message everywhere, illuminating minds of people in the richest and poorest parts of the earth and in all the places in between. The task, which relates to the sustainability of all aspects of life, has grown in difficulty. It requires extraordinary vigour, subtlety and intelligence.

Insistence on high professional standards

There are certain lessons to be shared with successors in the field of heritage protection coming from observing successes, failures, threats and opportunities over time. The risk of politicization is possible, as with other international fields such as the Olympic Games.

The World Heritage Convention sets out, under Articles 8 and 9, the requirements for the selection of members to the World Heritage Committee, its decision-making body. An equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world is to be ensured. National delegates are to be persons qualified in the field of cultural or natural heritage.

Initially there was an admirable sprinkling of archaeologists, fine arts scholars, botanists and ecologists. Recently the Committee has more often been composed of lawyers, diplomats and national politicians. Regional representation is contested. Decisions are made after advice from the expert advisory groups, as required under the Convention, but there is now much competitive political negotiation in a field intended to be collaborative, pristinely scientific and celebratory. This politicising trend makes the work of the World Heritage Centre, which administers the Convention, more difficult.

Two lessons, while not easy to implement, are important. The first is to continue to insist on high professional standards in the evaluation of nominations and the conservation of listed properties. This may require technical or financial assistance. The second is to ensure that those standards are applied with imagination and flexibility when responding to complex situations, yet without compromising the outcome.

My involvement with UNESCO has warmed my life and amplified my world view. Working with colleagues from across the world has enriched my understanding of this rather fragile spaceship earth. It has exposed me to a great range of views on our custodial responsibilities, with stimulating, sometimes heated arguments. It has introduced me to the depth of knowledge available in specialised fields, like geomorphology or the conservation of earthen architecture. In fact, it has affected me through all three branches: education, science and culture. This human interaction has led to a multitude of friendships. It has confirmed, forcefully, the essential nature of UNESCO's mission.

Empowerment of women, essential for the fulfilment of UNESCO's purposes

Gender neutrality in the workplace is not granted for millions of women around the world.

In my association with UNESCO, I have experienced neither advantage nor disadvantage as a woman. It is important to note, however, that my female professional colleagues are, as I am, privileged by education.

I have not worked directly in the area of gender equality or the empowerment of women. My concern with indigenous heritage issues has, however, involved deliberate efforts to ensure that communities, through their elders' voices, are heard and respected. Often those wise voices are the voices of women. In 1999, UNESCO's World Heritage Committee gathered to consider whether or not Australia's Kakadu National Park should be inscribed on the World Heritage in Danger List, because of a perceived threat to the acknowledged cultural values of the Mirrar people, caused by the proposal to construct a second uranium mine at Jabiluka. The Mirrar people had at the outset been granted observer status only. As delegate for ICCROM, I was able to ensure that they were given speaking rights. The concise and powerful words of Yvonne Margarula, their elder and spokeswoman, were translated into English and French and had a profound effect on the Committee's deliberations. It is obvious that the empowerment of women, who make up 51 per cent of the world's population, is essential for the fulfilment of UNESCO's constitutional purpose.

I should like to offer encouragement rather than advice to young women working with UNESCO today. I assume that they already have a good education. They are unlikely to endure the harsh realities of poor, destitute or otherwise underprivileged women around the world, who lack all forms of well-being, including education. Many well-trained women face a period of part-time or interrupted work and study during their adult lives. They are more likely than men to have carer responsibilities for children or other dependents. This phase can reduce self-confidence in the workplace, but it should not. Time is not lost. Invaluable skills are gained in time and people management, essential for senior professional roles.

UNESCO values under challenge

How can I, or anyone, offer general advice as UNESCO prepares for its Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013? There are such worldwide difficulties to be faced. There is also, however, a sound structure in UNESCO for confronting them. I can only reiterate a certain sense of despair that I am fighting, at the present international environment. In much of the world, everything that UNESCO stands for is under challenge. We long for, but do not have, peace, security, collaboration and universal respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Certain strategies are obvious. Universal primary school education, human rights for refugees, freedom of religious and cultural expression, respect for indigenous

cultures, widespread diffusion of the joys of diversity and, not least, dialogue. UNESCO will have to go beyond affirming the fine purpose defined in its Constitution. It must now give more than encouragement to those working to uphold its mandate. We need fresh intellects focused on creative approaches to immediate and long-term ameliorative action in our new situation. We need to study and understand the differing contexts of specific threats to education, science and culture. We need courage. We need eyes-wide-open, highly professional revitalisation with emphasis on early education programmes across the world. Women are particularly good at this.

I will illustrate the type of issue I should like to see emphasised as a UNESCO priority, with a project that fascinates me. It is a story of diverse terrains and cultures, requiring extraordinary levels of collaboration. The Qhapaq Nan Main Andean Road is 6,000 km long. It runs north south along the Andes Mountains with connecting routes through Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina. It links pre- and post-Inca cultures and territories and crosses jungles, deserts, 5,000m peaks, fertile valleys and ice fields. It was built by people on foot. The six neighbouring nations have decided to work regionally and in cooperation with local indigenous communities to nominate the entire system for inscription on the World Heritage List. This is collaborative, innovative, probably hazardous and close to festive.

As education, science and culture are inter-dependent, no one sector should be emphasised. Heritage is cultural places, languages, belief systems and associations that are valued from the point of view of education, science and culture. UNESCO should continue the emphasis on cultural diversity. It should foster, sustain and celebrate it as a priority, including respect for indigenous cultures. ¡Adelante!

Angrid Eide



UNESCO - A personal story

For me, UNESCO is a life long relationship. It has deep foundations, thought provoking relevance, and remains a continuous challenge professionally, culturally, and politically. The reasons, I believe, are easy to explain. I was born in 1933; the year Hitler came to power in Europe. Seven years later, my secure and loving environment was turned up side down. War broke out as Germany occupied Norway; German soldiers then paraded streets and market places, our local schools were transformed into military barracks and camps, destitute Russian prisoners of war cleared fields, and family, friends and neighbours were arrested because of their resistance, some never to return. Jews in our neighbourhood had 'disappeared'. A political party without a single representative elected to our Parliament, took over government with the support of the occupying powers.

Five years later it was over. Peace was a very concrete experience; the joy appeared endless. At the same time all the images and stories of a war ravaged continent, of battlegrounds and incomprehensible bestiality in concentration camps were printed in all the mass media. A few months later, the effects of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought out in awful detail the human cost of nuclear war. A child's mind is sensitive to such images, and a teenager worries about fundamental questions. How could it all have happened? How can wars be prevented? How can reconciliation restore societies, countries and continents? A year later UNESCO tentatively offered explanations and indicated lines of action.

The Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution was read and discussed at school. Do wars begin in the minds of men? Obviously! Whatever the motives, men had thought out, accepted, planned and waged the wars we had experienced. Logically, we felt, we had to change our minds about war (particularly men's, but that issue was picked up much later). The next point about ignorance being a precondition for suspicion, mistrust and eventually war was more of a challenge. During the occupation we had been exposed to all kinds of propaganda, and we were convinced that many German soldiers had been totally misguided, even if they were highly educated. So, how much protection would there be in knowledge? But we were at school, working hard to reduce our own ignorance of ourselves and others, and we learned that when Norway seceded from the union with Sweden at the beginning of the century, teachers in both countries had revised their respective history books with a view to compatible and fair descriptions of 'the other'. This idea, we were proudly told, had been picked up by UNESCO.

A desire for democracy

Five years of German occupation had given us first hand experience of what it meant to be deprived of democratic institutions. We had witnessed the consequences of prejudice and beliefs in racial superiority, and we absolutely wanted our education to be based on justice, liberty, peace and the dignity of all. Democracy at school, debating societies, school journals and extra curricular cultural activities started a modification of established authoritarian structures.

We had competent teachers, dedicated to bringing up a new generation of citizens better able to cope with world politics than they had been. Some of them knew only too well the meaning of war, having barely escaped death themselves. Some were old enough to have been educated in Germany in the pre-war years and could shed light on how the first and second world wars were linked. Preventing the third world war was a shared ambition. Never again! A peaceful world was possible!

All the governments who had signed the Charter of the United Nations and UNESCO's Constitution agreed that this was a task not only for governments, but also for the 'peoples of the world'. UNESCO spoke directly to us, pupils, students and educators; it raised our concerns about 'Education for All', the pursuit of objective truth, the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, the wide diffusion of culture, and the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity as the foundation of peace. Big words, difficult perhaps, but inspiring.

Our world was full of hope. We were committed. Soon some of us organized, mobilized, and lobbied. Based in the UN Association, we arranged a series of international summer events for young people. Nansen camps, we called them, in memory of the great Norwegian scientist, explorer and humanitarian. Our first aim was to relate to German youth. We wanted to understand and overcome

past conflicts, and discuss our common future on a shared continent. We did not believe in collective guilt, or the responsibility of children for the wrong doings of their parents. We soon realized that our generation in Western Europe enjoyed a degree of freedom that was denied many peoples. Colonialism and the struggles for independence and for racial equality globally entered our debates with full force. UNESCO came to our rescue by sending participants from newly independent countries to our Nansen camps. Non-violent and violent methods of liberation were discussed from all kinds of perspectives, including personal experiences from Asia and Africa. The pros and cons have troubled our minds ever since. Nevertheless, we felt the UN could be trusted, that non-violence was a priority, and that UNESCO was the specialized agency that we could relate to.

I attended my first UNESCO conference, recruited by the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO, in 1952. It was held at a German resort where Hitler used to gather young people. German and French social scientists dominated the debates, but the internationally recruited groups of younger people felt strongly that we had the right to be seen and heard, as the topic was ‘the contribution of young people to creating a world community’. UNESCO at the time had several institutes established in Germany on youth and education in an effort to assist post war Germany in its political transformation and cultural recovery. The Federal Republic of Germany was soon to become one of UNESCO’s most constructive Member States.

Members of my generation had sincerely hoped to contribute to a world community where interaction was based on the ideals, values and promises reflected in UN documents. Instead, an ‘iron curtain’ was drawn across our region, increasingly affecting all other regions. Competition replaced cooperation, trade was restrained, contacts controlled, information flows restricted and perverted. Polarization followed. Too often perceptions were black or white. For reasons both right and wrong, fear replaced trust. The wisdom in the words of UNESCO’s Constitution was almost lost. Still UNESCO remained. Its many councils, committees, institutes and centres were small ‘breathing spaces’ where it was possible for teachers, students, scholars, scientists, librarians, architects, authors, artists, curators – the whole world of UNESCO’s original constituencies - to meet and generate sufficient mutual trust to find ways to cooperate despite and across the cleavages of conflict. The more formal General Conferences where government representatives met, somehow managed to legitimize, even encourage these rather uncontrollable events. The Cold War was a frozen peace where UNESCO’s existence now and then produced a thaw.

Budding peace research

I experienced this first hand when the idea of peace research was elaborated. Several social scientists on both sides of the Atlantic realized that the levels of mistrust, destructive capacity and proliferation of violent conflicts in all

regions once again had brought the world to the brink of war. Indeed the term 'brinkmanship' had become a synonym rather than antonym for diplomacy in some quarters. There was an abundance of studies on wars, factual and imagined. It was politically correct to think and plan for 'the unthinkable': nuclear war. Many courageous nuclear scientists in both camps had warned the world for years about the prospects of a nuclear war, and ways to prevent it.

There was a need, even a demand for evidence-based and value-oriented research on conflict and peace. Conflicts, we said, are inevitable and necessary within and between States, but conflict management should be non-violent and institutionalized. Consequently non-violent methods must be studied and disseminated through training; all kinds of conflict resolution mechanisms must be better understood; cross-border and cross-conflict interaction must be mapped and enhanced; the individuals, groups and organizations involved should be studied and encouraged. How does the military-industrial complex impact social development? What is public opinion on the critical issues of our time? What have we learned about the impact of violent conflicts on peoples and governments? How can the UN, its member governments and other constituents realize their commitments? There was no lack of topics in need of research.

More than a decade earlier, UNESCO had promoted social science and spearheaded similar research programmes. We had accessed UNESCO's works on democracy in a world of tensions, on racial prejudice and conflict, on exchanges between 'the Orient and Occident', and the perceptions of different civilizations as reflected in history. UNESCO provided the budding peace researchers with a kind of ideological as well as professional platform, and members of the secretariat generously shared experiences, networks and infrastructure, data and occasionally office space with us. Personally I was entrusted with an analysis of data UNESCO had collected on 'Students as Links between Cultures,' in the contexts of the 'East-West major programme'. I had already met and interviewed several UNESCO experts around Latin America, people engaged to 'work in the field' in UNESCO's priority areas at the time: combating illiteracy and ignorance in innovative ways, in short 'education for all'; conservation of cultural heritage; and supporting development of locally and nationally relevant social sciences. Part of that story is that some of these sociologists later had to flee because of military coups. (Incidentally: where did I, years later meet one of them? In the corridors of UNESCO, Paris, where he was attending a meeting for demographers and statisticians.)

Peace research became an established field with its own institutes and journals, now and then, at critical moments, supported by a small UNESCO grant, and frequently contributing to UNESCO events in such fields as human rights and peace education.

UNESCO and Norway

Personally, after teaching sociology at the University of Oslo for several turbulent years during the late 1960s and early 1970s, I involved myself in party politics. All my knowledge from years of interaction with UNESCO was suddenly relevant in unexpected ways: I was appointed State Secretary, Deputy Minister in education, science, culture and communication (all UNESCO's fields). Our labour government had set ambitious goals for reform in all these areas, with a renewed emphasis on gender equality. I was Norway's official delegate at various international conferences, including UNESCO's General Conference, often having to defend our policies. Many governments thought that higher education should serve mobility and meritocracy, where we said it should rather serve local and regional development. Some governments were unwilling to understand that we wanted an education system with no blind alleys; one delegate simply argued, 'sooner or later you have to weed, so why not start sooner'. Our feeling was that we were defending UNESCO's ideals in a modern world, and that no human being deserved to be seen as 'weed'.

Norway had always been an active Member State of UNESCO. In fact, it had been a participant already at the Organization's 'design stage' in London and in the USA. The linguist Alf Sommerfelt who had represented the Norwegian Government in the London-based negotiations, was later elected as the first Norwegian member of the Executive Board. He represented a fruitful continuity to the intellectual cooperation of the pre-war years and anchored the Organization in the academic community. The second time Norway was represented at the Board, the prominent politician, parliamentarian and journalist Gunnar Garbo held this position. He left his mark as a staunch supporter of UNESCO's basic principles of peaceful, universal cooperation also in the most controversial field, namely communication and development of media capacity in countries in the south.

When I was asked by our government to be a candidate to the Executive Board for a four-year period in the early 1990s, I felt privileged, awed and honoured. At that time, candidates were nominated by their governments, but elected in a personal capacity, based on their CVs. Seating in the board room was in alphabetical order by family names, not by Member States.

I knew and admired the work of my predecessors, but I was aware of all kinds of frustrations around the Organization. Two of the governments that had been most instrumental in creating UNESCO, the USA and the UK, had left it. On the other hand, a visionary, competent and profoundly committed Director-General, Federico Mayor, had recently been elected. I also had the highest respect for the many UNESCO professionals I had observed over the years at Headquarters, or working for programmes and projects in the field. They had all struggled to reconcile almost utopian ideals with limited resources in sometimes difficult

environments. For some years I had myself worked in UNDP and other parts of the UN, mostly concerned with women in development and human development more generally. Several UNESCO publications had proved useful: a whole series of studies on women in development, on household surveys, normative instruments that Member States had accepted, and statistical information with the categories relevant for raising many issues of gender inequality. I was also familiar with systemic, political and structural strain in the UN system, and that UNESCO was perceived as too different from the rest. Intellectually and culturally oriented, and located in Paris, UNESCO was, in some ways, 'outside'.

I knew that my chances for winning a seat on UNESCO's Board were slim; Norway was not a member of the European Community, now the EU, which, consequently, did not want to support a Norwegian nomination. Against all odds, we won the election, and I am proud to say it was thanks to votes from all the regions - from countries North and South who trusted Norway as a true multi-lateralist. This, I felt, was almost a mandate, and it was firmly based on taking UNESCO's Constitution seriously. Whilst the General Conference was still in session, the Berlin Wall 'came tumbling down'. Definitely, the world was changing.

The Executive Board was a group of equals. More than 50 individual members from countries big or small in territory or population, North or South, rich or poor, personally elegant or modest should represent the General Conference as a whole, their respective countries, and themselves as relevant professionals and citizens in debates and other interaction. What made them equals? Orwell notwithstanding, it was never predictable who would contribute more in terms of substance, innovation and creativity. Many were scholars, some artists and academicians, some had fallen from power; others hoped to gain some. You never knew, rarely asked, but always listened. As a newcomer to the Board, the support received from the other Nordic countries and our respective National Commissions for UNESCO was absolutely necessary. In the Nordic countries generally we also know that we normally can count on the political and practical support of relevant ministries. Our group was sufficiently disciplined to cover its agendas, and sufficiently free to create opportunities for UNESCO. Several examples come to mind.

Culture as an important factor in development

This was the Decade for Cultural Development. Seven years remained when a Norwegian delegate to the General Conference suggested that UNESCO should establish a World Commission to produce a report on culture and development, as a parallel to the one on environment and development, called 'Our Common Future'. I started sounding out my colleagues on the Board. Opinions were divided: Was it necessary? French colleagues insisted the topic was thoroughly analyzed

(by them). This would cost too much; it had to be financed extra-budgetary! This was a common worry, since the budget had just been voted. We had to mobilize funding. Would this once again shame and blame the countries of the South for low standards and bad statistics? This argument was easily countered: it was precisely in the field of culture that even the poorest Member States could prove their traditional skills, creativity, and contributions. The proposal gradually gained support. But when it was proposed that this report and commission should be of the UN and not UNESCO's alone, opposition came from within: was UNESCO about to sell out and lose its most unique domain, one in which it alone excelled within the UN system? We had to find a way to sufficiently reconcile UNESCO with the need for wider support and future dissemination in the UN. Norway and other supporters lobbied system wide, we secured the initially necessary extra budgetary funding, the Director-General received advice from Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Norwegian Prime Minister, who had chaired the preceding World Commission on Environment and Development. Working within the UN system, the Director-General found a solution whereby he and the Secretary General of the UN together should appoint the Commission. We finally had sufficient, to some extent even enthusiastic, support in the Executive Board, but the General Conference still had to accept the proposal. There the opposition was revived. It was thanks to the cultural and diplomatic skills of our Thai colleague, Savitri Suwansathit, that an acceptable resolution was drafted.

The task of getting it all started was skilfully managed by the Director-General: the World Commission finally reflected relevant competencies and concerns, it was gender balanced and balanced in every other way imaginable. Above all, it consisted of individuals and a secretariat that saw this as a new opening in the field of cultural and development policies. They had the courage to raise controversial issues about individual and collective cultural rights, they highlighted the fact that cultural industries and trade in cultural products reflected inequalities that could threaten local creativity and hence the diversity of cultural production. They argued for the existence of a global ethic, and for the universality of human rights, and that some cultural practices were violations of human rights and, hence, unacceptable. It highlighted the fact that cultural diversity is a fact and a value that at least 10,000 distinct cultures are found in the world's less than 200 'nation States.' It follows that homogeneity is an illusion, and since homogenization is an illegitimate and largely futile practice, learning to live together is necessary. That is also necessary for the continued existence and enjoyment of our cultural heritage. The method of work of the Commission was process oriented and decentralized, taking it to different cultural environments for localized debates. The report was aptly titled 'Our Creative Diversity'. Sweden contributed to the systematic follow up by staging an international conference, which also produced a significant cultural policy document. UNESCO followed the Commission's recommendation and started producing a biennial report on culture, parallel to its reports on 'Education for All'.

Towards a culture of peace

Another example that deserves continuous attention is the fact that our Board launched the concept ‘culture of peace’. Contrary to expectations, when the Cold War ended, wars, mostly internal, broke out in all continents in the early 1990s. We actually witnessed, in the Board, how some of our colleagues were transformed into megaphones for messages totally incompatible with UNESCO’s basic principles. Others rose to the challenge and argued for a ‘back to basics’ in UNESCO - a culture of peace that would sensitize the citizens of the world to the inevitable demands of coexistence, managing conflicts non-violently, sharing more fairly to secure life and dignity for all, and preserving the environment. Culture of peace is about how we live together, culture for peace helps us confront the challenges. UNESCO started a ‘Culture of Peace’ initiative and, after a while, the UN voted for a Year (2000) as well as a Decade (2001-2010) dedicated to these ideas.

Many of us felt that there was a gender dimension to these issues: women were in particular ways both civilian victims and managers of survival in times of war, but also, in some places, soldiers. More frequently, women had their own ideas about conflict prevention, conflict management and post conflict reconciliation. This sounded like essentialism; it was not politically correct, even considered incompatible with demands for gender equality. Nevertheless, women’s aspirations and experiences hold great potential for building peace. Ingeborg Breines in UNESCO’s Secretariat ‘bridged’ these ideas to the Beijing Conference. She also brought scholars from peace research, education, and gender studies, including studies of male roles and masculinity, to different meetings, building research networks and editing books on gender, violence and peace education. In my role as President of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO, I could continue cooperating with UNESCO on these issues. A particular effort was made to involve universities more systematically: Higher Education for Peace was a conference, a programme and a plan that eventually resulted in studies, courses and degrees at tertiary levels.

Keeping UNESCO unique

A large number of other themes could and should be mentioned; my hope is that others will have written about many of them. There is so much and so many that deserve attention, so much in UNESCO that can never be a stop-go event, but rather longer term, institutionalized efforts. I had hoped to see the Organization change to a three-year cycle of programming, with only triennial General Conferences. It would save time and money, and reallocate resources to activities. For similar reasons I proposed to limit the amount of translations of documents to the Board from six languages to two or three and rather use that translation capacity on ‘works of substance and beauty’. We also tried to have

gender neutral language mainstreamed, even in the text of the Constitution. Such proposals invariably failed.

The Organization itself must be open to change, but firm in its foundation. I regret that UNESCO's Constitution was amended: now governments rather than individuals are elected to the Executive Board. Japan argued that the Organization was too different from other intergovernmental multilateral organizations. Some of us saw UNESCO's uniqueness as its strength, the Executive Board reflected its different constituencies, and its members were able to meet as equals, while representing different disciplines and sectors. Board members could communicate with the Secretariat as professionals. With due respect for diplomats and bureaucrats, many of us felt something was lost. But Japan was, and is, also among UNESCO's strongest supporters, and only time will prove if a strengthened UNESCO, more able to rally the good will of governments, will follow from this initiative.



Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

Education as the key

‘Girls, get educated, get educated - wherever and whenever you can!’

Education is the key to self-esteem, respect and freedom

When I focus on the issue of women and culture, and the status of women and girls around the world, I am impressed with the importance of UNESCO, along with its United Nations partner UNIFEM, and how they have been instrumental in creating discussions to improve women and girls’ status in different countries. We must never tire or falter in continuing that work.

I have been inspired by UNESCO since my youth, particularly in my early years, and continued this interest in languages and the preservation of languages. This is partly because I am from an island that has made the art of language into a science. We Icelanders are proud of our heritage traditions, and the fact that a citizen living today speaks much as his ancestor did in the Middle Ages. Thus, for me to become a Goodwill Ambassador for Languages for UNESCO was both symbolic and an honour.

Similarly, I am compelled by my own experiences, and those of women around the world that I have witnessed, to be intensely involved in issues that are of grave importance to women’s lives. I will be frank and say that, while women hold up half the sky, as the Chinese say, men do too. It is to men that I feel we must look to help women improve the lives of half the population.

Women in all countries are not using their potential to the full. We know that from the many UNDP reports including the ‘Gender Empowerment’ measurement and from a recent study from the World Economic Forum. If one looks at political participation, economic empowerment and opportunity, health and education, there is no country where women and men are equal. A few come close and again I am proud of my Nordic compatriots. Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Norway all top the lists of near equal treatment of women and men.

To answer the question, ‘why women’s potential is not being fully utilized?’ we must turn to culture. Culture, traditions and languages are wonderful parts of life and society. We know, however, that both culture and tradition, and misuse of religious interpretation can be used in negative ways that affect the lives of women.

One should not have to choose between faith and life

Culture can brighten our lives, educate us and knit our communities together, but can also make women’s lives difficult, if not harmful. To quote Madeleine Albright, ‘Some things are called cultural when they actually are criminal’. To educate a boy before a girl, to use family money to buy food or health care first for boys and only then for girls, to prefer a boy child at birth over a girl, to deprive women of their legal land rights or access to health care providers, are examples of a culture that negatively impacts half the population.

Culture is often exercised in the name of tradition. No one can claim a right to a monopoly in interpretation of culture or religion. One should not have to choose between faith and life. Human rights are universal!

In today’s globalized world, the media plays a strong role in creating or perpetuating mythical prejudices and people’s perception of the images of women. UNESCO can play a role in creating a space for debate of important issues that are neither simple nor easy to deal with, but must find their way into public discourse.

UNESCO has made a contribution to women. Its focus on education for women as a priority is exemplary. Education is the key to equality and understanding. It is the taproot from which grows healthy children, lowers population growth, and increases citizens’ contributions to their society. The message from UNESCO must continue to be: educate girls! Never sacrifice a girl’s education to educate boys only. Not everyone needs to go to college, but if her brother gets to complete high school, so should she. Societies must be encouraged to carry this message at every level, from national, international and local governments to civil society and religious groups.

UNESCO must continue its valuable collaboration with UNIFEM and other UN agencies, particularly on the agenda of gender. Each of these institutions has a gender department which should be working closely with their counterparts.

Each has its own areas of expertise and support - working together can only make the whole stronger.

My involvement in UNESCO has included being a Goodwill Ambassador for Languages and the founding Chair of the World Commission on Ethics, Scientific Knowledge and Technology. I have been able to see the strengths of the Organization and the challenges it faces. I think we could all wish that any institution had fewer hierarchies, as we all are impatient to see the goals and missions we commit to, achieved.

I am also the founding Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders. This group was formed in 1996 in Stockholm. We started with 15 women world leaders, who are, or have been, presidents and prime ministers of their countries. We are now 31 and hopeful of continued growth. This network of powerful women shows that the collective voice of women can make a difference, whether it be at the grass-roots or the tree-tops. A critical mass of women can help shape and change the world's agenda. This is why it is so important to have at least 25 per cent representation of women in parliaments and ministries in each government. Women, like men, can be the voices of ethical governments, advocates for healthy families, healthy environments and peaceful security. They must be allowed to be heard in the same way as men feel their entitlement to be heard.

Enlightened men realize that women are like gold mines

My motto in life has always been: 'never let the women down'. If I were to advise younger women I would say, 'include the men'. I am proud to say that in October 2005 we had a conference on gender equality with men only in Iceland. It reflected the reality that men hold much of the power, but that it is in their natural interests to see to that women are equal partners with them. If women talk to other women, there is a mutual understanding of experiences and great power in creating networks. If we also include men, we can make change happen more quickly. Enlightened men realize that women are like gold mines. Who would not tap into a gold mine of intelligence, ambitions for peace and capacities to lead? Certainly men with daughters have developed a keen sense of this need for a level playing field.

It is truly beneath the dignity of humankind to ignore the intelligence and capacity of any of their citizens - whether women, or minorities, or low-income men. We have many problems to solve on this globe - improving the environment, creating healthier and longer lives, security and peace. Who can say who will find the cure for cancer? We know clear facts. Educating populations, especially girls, leads to development, healthier families, better child welfare, and more possibilities for environmental sustainability. And yet, ironically, we often see that, in times of rising societal insecurity, it is precisely women's rights that become the scapegoat.

International institutions such as UNESCO are crucial to making the world a better place - if they can be effective, respected and focused. As UNESCO celebrates its 60th birthday it can be proud of the role it has played during these past decades, and it can look forward to being an important part of the future because its work is not yet completed.

I have a vision that I have shared with influential people in many countries, which I think will become a reality, one day not far in the future, that the best known male politicians of the world will gather in a men-only meeting to discuss the status of women in our global society.



Princess Firyal of Jordan

Promoting education for girls and women

In a world of problems, ethnic wars, poverty, and natural catastrophes, in effect what Shakespeare named 'a sea of troubles', UNESCO can be compared to a lighthouse. It unites all that is best in the human condition: education, culture, science and the promotion of tolerance, peace and democracy.

Following the path of my mother who was head of the Red Cross in Jordan, I started my voluntary work in the Middle East by working with local charitable organizations in rural and urban areas in Jordan, and became aware of UNESCO's programmes in that area. Because of my experience with non-governmental organizations I was asked to become a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador in 1992 to help promote programmes for the education of girls and women. I did this through fund-raising and through participation in conferences with local and regional decision makers. I was doubly involved in education, because during this same period I was completing the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree at Columbia University – so I was personally aware of the problems and challenges facing professors and educational institutions because I myself was still a graduate student.

Over the years I have supported various UNESCO programmes and, in some cases, did fund raising for extra-budgetary projects. Each time I have been impressed by the commitment, depth of knowledge and imagination and skills of the UNESCO experts and programme directors I met. It has always amazed me

how some of the experts and dedicated professionals have reached such a high level of competence despite the adversity, constraints and hardship they have had to overcome in their home countries to achieve an education. Moreover, people at UNESCO are employed based on meritocracy alone, regardless of sex, language or religion. The fact that such a varied group of people works together in the organization is an affirmation of one of the fundamental aspects of the Charter of the United Nations. I also draw inspiration from contact with my fellow Goodwill Ambassadors, who come from various cultural and national backgrounds.

One of the experiences that left a mark on me was a visit last summer to UNESCO World Heritage sites in Albania. This very poor country had been subjected, for a great many years, to oppression and conflict; the population has had a very limited and difficult access to education. Yet the people of Albania take great pride in their newly opened country, in their World Heritage sites, and in their folklore and culture. Without any bitterness they have become ardent defenders of peace, which will lead, eventually, to prosperity. The foundations they are building to assure their future can only be achieved through education and hard work. Their very real pride in their cultural heritage is a positive factor for the development of their country, and it is my intention to do anything I can to help these proud people.

The latest UNESCO goal with which I have been involved is 'Education for All'. This is a vast project, which is connected to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The projects are idealistic and practical at the same time. What has impressed me and what I wish to explain to people outside UNESCO is that 'Education for All' is a cooperative effort between the concerned countries, governments, educators and UNESCO. The emphasis on the education of women is based on the proven statistic that educating women will do more to improve a country's GNP than any other developmental plan, whether it is a system of highways or an electricity plant. So education is a very powerful tool indeed for fighting poverty.

UNESCO plays an important role in fulfilling the needs of many societies, both in the oriental and occidental world. It promotes strong international values. That is the reason why I believe that it is a privilege for young men and women who are beginning their career at UNESCO to benefit from the scope of experiences of this international body.

My involvement with UNESCO has been an eye-opener and taught me many valuable lessons. As my field of work for UNESCO is education for girls and women, the goal of eradicating illiteracy across the globe is a top priority and has become one of my main personal objectives.



Francine Fournier

Challenges within the social and human sciences

I have felt, during all my professional life that I have been in perfect symbiosis with the work and ideals of UNESCO. I write this without pretension, looking at this not from the viewpoint of possible successes, but at the level of my aspirations and the fields in which I chose to work. In short, my experience covers research and university teaching in political science, particularly on research methods and participation in political life (of which several works on women's participation) as well as research and action in the field of human rights in my capacity as secretary of the Council on the Statute of Women of Quebec at its inception, then as director of research and president of the Quebec Human Rights' Commission and as president of the Canadian Committee on Equality Rights at the time of the establishment of the Canadian Charter on Rights and Freedoms.

These rich learning experiences allowed me to measure the importance of the scientific and intellectual contribution to social change and to the protection of the rights of individuals and populations.

Two years in the post of Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO gave me an overall perspective of the work, programmes and responsibilities of the various components of UNESCO and their necessary interrelationship.

Passionate challenges within the social and human sciences

It is an understatement to say that assuming the direction of the Sector of Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO as an Assistant Director-General (ADG/SHS) during a little more than ten years, was for me, a most gratifying experience filled with passionate challenges.

The fields covered by the SHS programme are at the heart of UNESCO's mission. The objective, 'to ensure the universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms for all' is indeed targeted by the work of the sector dealing with programmes of university education on human rights in order to reach, inter alia, future leaders and with the creation and diffusion of easily understood documents on democracy and human rights. In the same vein, the social analyses that make it possible to identify, beyond simple generalizations, the causes of conflicts and inequalities and which rely on the use of rigorous methodologies, make for realistic solutions adapted to the problems. Or again, in the field of human establishments, the setting up of projects that are both respectful of the natural and cultural environment and of the needs and aspirations of the populations concerned, contribute to the improvement of living conditions and to the lowering of tensions within communities. Yet another example would be the better understanding of population movements and international migrations, which stem from social science research that furthers the harmonious integration of these populations.

Quite obviously, if the results of research and scientific analyses are to serve the ideals of the Organization, it is necessary to train scientists and to set up and stimulate networks of researchers. This objective was pursued in all programme activities.

Education and science thus support 'the universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms' and the fight against inequalities and poverty that constitute in themselves violations of basic human rights.

During my ten years at the head of the Sector of Social and Human Sciences, we succeeded in developing an impressive number of UNESCO Chairs in the field of human rights and democracy, as well as in the different social science disciplines, bearing on relevant social issues. The important and respected MOST network (Management of Social Transformations) initiated a large-scale programme with a view to developing policy-relevant research which, in turn, instigated the creation of international networks of researchers in the different regions of the world e.g. 'Asia Pacific migration research network' and 'Growing up in cities', which involves cities from Norway to South Africa. The priority areas covered by the MOST programme were: the impact of globalization at the local level,

multicultural and multiethnic societies, urban development and democratic governance and the struggle against poverty. This international intellectual cooperation was also developed through the long standing *International Social Science Journal*.

Finally (but not exhaustively), the programme on mobilization of youth for the defence and realization of UNESCO ideals was made possible through concrete projects, for example, within the framework of the international conference on Human Settlements, or other meetings, as well as through support of networks of mutual aid and reflection, or through sport.

In attempting to comment on my personal experience relating to the translation in reality of the fundamental aims of the Organization, I found it essential to lay out the framework of the Social and Human Science programme that was developed during the ten years of my directorship. I assumed this responsibility with pleasure and pride. In presenting this overview, I wish to emphasize the direct relevance of the sector's programme with respect to the objectives of UNESCO and at the same time recognize the quality of the professional work of my collaborators. It is their competence, experience and enthusiasm that allowed us to forge this programme throughout the years. It goes without saying that I also fully recognize the importance of the orientations laid out by the Directorate.

Contribution to the major UN conferences of the 1990s

UNESCO's contribution to the major UN conferences of the 1990s definitively helped in furthering the Organization's objectives. SHS was responsible for the coordination of UNESCO's participation in most of these conferences: The World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna), the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo), the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen) and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul). I also took an active part in UNESCO's contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women on peace, equality and development (Beijing). I was responsible for the coordination of United Nations' activities within the framework of the United Nations Year of Tolerance, established upon the initiative of UNESCO, and I participated in the very important Conference on Development and the Environment (Rio).

UNESCO's contribution to these various international conferences was outstanding and represented great strides in the ideas and commitments of the international community in support of its specific mandate: to foster international co-operation through education, natural and human sciences, culture and communication so as to ensure the respect of human rights, be they civil and political or social, cultural and economic.

Furthermore, the numerous international conferences organized by the sector were aimed at the core of UNESCO's mandate and contributed to scientific 'collaboration between nations' and to the enrichment of analysis in favour of concrete action on a number of fundamental questions such as Education and Democracy (Tunis) or Beyond the Washington consensus (Paris).

I would also like to mention a first hand experience of mine, in the preparation and works of the UNESCO International Council of Sciences' international conference on: 'the Social Role of Sciences' (Budapest) for which responsibility lay primarily with the Sector of Natural Sciences. This was a great example of scientific cooperation, not only among scientists of the same school of sciences, but also between different social and natural sciences.

I equally wish to underline the work of the 'International panel for democracy and development', chaired by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The work of this high level experts' panel gave rise to the report entitled 'the Interaction between democracy and development' (2002) which presents three groups of recommendations: the impact of globalization on democratic development, the juridical conditions of democratic development and the socio-economic conditions of democratic development. The reflection and advice contained in this report rest on the 'democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men' stated in the preamble of UNESCO's constitution.

Peace studies

'Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.' SHS has contributed to meeting the challenges of UNESCO's mandate in peace building by supporting research and publications in the field of Peace Studies. The scientific study of the phenomena of peace and war is indeed essential to the development of 'the defences of peace'. The purpose of meetings and debates on the concept of tolerance, organized by the sector within the framework of the United Nations Year for Tolerance, or the mobilization of young people around such topics as tolerance and respect of diversity, is to prepare the groundwork favourable for peace and harmony between peoples and communities. In situations of conflict, meetings of militant women's groups reflecting on appropriate actions for peace were particularly rich and promising.

We also took part in the definition of the concept of a culture of peace and its possible applications. I greet with respect the impulse, the orientation and the support for the work concerning the culture of peace, given by the Director-General, Mr. Federico Mayor.

Today, more than ever, the interiorization of the values of peace is a necessity. It is broadly demonstrated that a bellicose approach for settlement of disagreements

brings neither long, nor medium-term solutions to differences. Populations that endure the full whip and impact of wars and conflicts need not to be convinced, but it is also necessary to inculcate a 'culture of peace' in the populations living far away from the zones of conflicts, so that they can influence their leaders. Such a democratic approach does not exclude direct assistance to populations in distress, quite the contrary; hence the importance of discussions relating to the reinforcement of the means of action of the United Nations system in this regard.

The satisfaction of real teamwork

My most significant contribution to the work of the Organization is perhaps to have succeeded in establishing a real bond of confidence with my collaborators and thus to facilitate truly fruitful teamwork. Sustained cooperation with scientists, intellectuals and specialized groups implicated in the fields covered by the mandate of the sector was thereby facilitated. This resulted in a solid programme that enabled advancements for which I take great satisfaction.

It is of primordial importance to recognize and to support the role of women in the fight against poverty and for development, in the transmission of knowledge and culture and in the hampering of violence and conflicts. In parallel, the role of research, education, information and mobilization relating to the respect of the fundamental rights of women in all parts of the world must be accentuated. This is one of the most effective ways of achieving the goals of UNESCO.

To me, UNESCO's Constitution is an act of faith in humanity. A lucid act of faith at the ending of the 'great and terrible war', which rests on the recognition of the power of the human spirit placed at the service of the ideals of justice, peace, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Upholding the development of intellectual, scientific and cultural capacities in support of these ideals is of primary importance. In that respect, UNESCO truly plays its role as a 'conscience of the United Nations system' as defined, at its founding, by Jawaharlal Nehru.

Gael Harel



Bringing schools and people together through art

An eye opening experience

On 15 March 1988, I was celebrating my 40th birthday on a flight back from an English teachers' conference in Chicago where I had presented the first findings of my PhD research study, when I noticed the superb sunrise over the Atlantic. Now in retrospect, I can see the symbolic significance of that moment. It was a new dawn starting with 'the age of wisdom', according to Jewish tradition, as I had found the meaning of my life.

At the TESOL conference I had met Dr. Esther Lucas, the founder of UNESCO Associated Schools Project (ASPnet) in Israel in 1963. Esther asked me to join the project together with the Beit Berl Teacher Training College where I taught English literature and didactics. Upon my return to Israel, I approached Dr. Aaron Seidenberg, the President of Beit Berl, and he agreed to join the ASPnet, Israel. Following the advice of a dear friend who passed away recently, Ms. Martine Zohar, to whom my work is dedicated, I went to Mr. Raphi Talbi, the principal of Ben-Zvi junior high school in Kfar-Saba, where I sent my English trainee teachers, and asked him to let me initiate a coexistence project with an Arab junior high from a neighbouring town. The principal of the partner school was Mr. Ghazi Yiraki who, from the beginning, was enthusiastic to cooperate.

Bringing two schools and people together through art

My partner in this endeavour was Professor Ouriel Zohar, a disciple of Peter Brook, the director of the Théâtre International de Créations Artistiques in Paris. He is manager of the Israeli Polytechnic University Theatre and an expert in inter-cultural encounters through art. We cooperated in bringing the principals and their staff together by encouraging them to tell their personal stories. This was followed by transforming the stories into artistic creations such as short stories, video and cinema adaptations. We created incredible group cohesion and subsequently started planning the children's encounters. It was not an easy process, as fear and prejudice prevailed on both sides. The first encounter was centred around arts and crafts and it was a great success. I started my journey, together with the teachers and students, and made the discovery of the humanity of the other people along with them. I cried with joy through the whole event. For me it was the beginning of a magnificent opera. The two schools have been twins ever since, reinventing themselves every year. The parents have joined the project, as have the two mayors and the community members. I always visit them on celebrations and tears fill my eyes.

We have evaluated this project twice - once quantitatively and once qualitatively. My research partner is Mr. Yitzhak Gillat, psychologist and researcher. I studied Arabic and went to visit the English teachers in the Arab villages. I gave in-service training courses and learned more than I taught. I became acquainted with a new culture, acquired a new language and broadened my vision of humanity.

Citizen of the world

In 1993, I was sent to the 40th anniversary of the ASPnet in Soest. I was overwhelmed by the encounter with representatives from all the nations of the world. The first day, I overslept and intended to slip into the plenary unobserved. When I entered the room, I realized, to my horror, that every representative had a special seat with the name of the country, the flag and a microphone and that everybody was sitting in alphabetical order. I had Hungary and Ireland on my left and Italy and Jordan on my right. Following this embarrassing incident, I made sure I always arrived on time! In Soest, I felt like a citizen of the world for the first time. I put to good use the seven languages I speak. Making friends from every corner of the earth, I gained a global vision.

In 1996, I convened the first European National Coordinators' seminar and dedicated it to the 'Study of Tolerance'. The idea of this ASPnet meeting was conceived together with Ms. Elizabeth Khawajkie, the international ASPnet coordinator, and Mr. Wolfgang Reuter, the convener of ASP's 40th anniversary and the deputy secretary general of the German National Commission for UNESCO. About 30 ASP National Coordinators from all over Europe and the Middle East

attended this meeting. Dr. Sigrid Niedermayer, now the new international ASPnet coordinator, attended and helped me overcome my inexperience. All our Israeli ASPnet members helped out with the organization and proudly presented their projects before the audience. It was a time of brotherhood, harmony and love.

During the following three years, we took part in the German-Palestinian-Israeli project for students and teachers initiated by UNESCO Germany, headed by Dr. Traugott Schofthaler, Secretary-General of the German National Commission for UNESCO. The first year the conference was held in Givat Haviva, Israel. The second took place in Nuremberg, Germany and the third in Beit Jalla, the Palestinian Authority. Our teachers and students will never forget these encounters. The bonds created on all levels were strong and deep. Mr. Jeehad Karashuli, the Palestinian Secretary-General and Dr. David Harari, our Secretary-General, unfortunately, both of blessed memory, became good friends and created a personal friendship with Dr. Schofthaler. Over the years, I came to the conclusion that nothing can strengthen multicultural relations and overcome barriers more than personal encounters.

Encounters as pieces of peace

In the decade 1993-2003 and up till 2005, I attended a number of international encounters including the Second European National ASP Coordinators meeting in Toledo, Spain, the third Conference of European National Coordinators in Oslo, Norway; the 2005 Fourth Conference in Luxembourg; two meetings in Austria and the 50th Anniversary Conference in New Zealand. The most memorable encounter for me was the meeting of Outstanding National Coordinators (ONC's) in Lisbon, Portugal in 1997. The distinction given to us by the Director General, Mr Federico Mayor and Elizabeth Khawajkie is something I will always cherish. The conference was so harmonious and the atmosphere so inspiring, that I will remember it as a time of perfect happiness. I wish to add that the relationships established during these meetings have turned us into a big loving family. Let me stress, however, that conferences are hard work! I have been responsible for the rapporteur job, the bureau, workshops, presentations, lectures and declarations. In addition, I always volunteer to provide entertainment in the form of jokes, limericks, satirical songs and poems. Fun and laughter are always in abundance at these international encounters. The conferences and the projects are little 'pieces of peace'. I like to think that in a small way they contribute to world peace.

The power of education

The ASPnet Israel has grown to 25 educational institutions and the number of projects has increased. Our Secretary General of the UNESCO National Commission, Mr. Daniel Bar-Elli has a special place in his heart for us and grants us a generous annual budget to 'oil' the projects. Beit Berl College has given us

an office and offered its services. On the walls of my office, I have hung up the Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution, 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'. It is written in English, French and Arabic. It is my belief that education is the solution to the ailments of the human mind that lead to hatred, racism and war.

We publish a biannual report edited by our dear Honorary President, Dr. Esther Lucas, where the various projects are described. Whenever we hold a day of exhibition and presentations, everybody's heart swells with pride and emotion. To mention just a few projects, the Model United Nations coordinated by Ms. Aviva Shulman and attended by several ASP schools and the Palestinian authority as well as Jordanian and European schools, and the 'Shaked' school which works with a twin elementary school from Tira on health projects and human rights. The coordinator is Ms. Carmela Goldglas who also leads a group of 40 Principals of Jewish and Arab schools that work in full cooperation. I regard Carmela's work in the Ministry of Education as the 'multiplier effect' of our work. 'Ramot Hefer' school works with Ethiopian children, Jewish-Arab coexistence and ecology and the coordinator is Ms. Dafna Stemper. 'Kaye College' has just held an international art exhibition, coordinated by Dr. Riva Levenchuk. They also do a wonderful job with Bedouins. Ms. Liora Israeli from Gordon College has written a series of didactic manuals for peace education, 'Footsteps in the grass', now used in Jewish and Arab schools all over Israel. There are many more projects and activists in the Jewish and the Arab sectors. Distinguished members in the Arab Sector include Ms. Intissar Haj-Yehia and Ms. Huria Ghazmauy and two very active principals are Mr. Rhady Kassem and Mr. Ziad Majadali.

I have discovered that life can be divided into a series of projects, the way Descartes suggested that a big problem could be solved by cutting it into manageable smaller problems. A project offers a sense of purpose, a clear goal, a sense of belonging and of competence. As mentioned before, it is peace realized, carrying with it the meaning of life.

UNESCO teachers

In 2001, I had the honour to convene the second international conference in Beit Berl. It was dedicated to 'Multiculturalism in Teacher Training'. Elizabeth Khawajkie attended together with 20 university professors from Europe. It lasted two entire weeks since it counted for a semester towards an M.A. degree in peace education. I once had a dream of establishing a group of universities all over Europe that would offer a degree in peace education. This would enable teachers to travel and learn about cultures and conflicts together with methods of teaching human rights, stereotypes, conflict resolution, multicultural skills and other relevant topics. In Austria, Prof. Wintersterner is running such a project right now. My ambition is to establish such a fully subsidized project on a larger

scale and contribute to the creation of 'UNESCO teachers around the world'. It was a great privilege that a group of experienced professors, all knowledgeable and skilled, signed up for the seminar. We also had 25 Israeli lecturers, mainly from the college, who shed light on the issue of multiculturalism from multiple angles. The encounter became a happening and a learning experience for all the participants. At the end of the day, nobody wanted to leave for dinner and the evening activities. The ardent discussions went on late into the night.

A task force was chosen consisting of representatives from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Romania, France, Italy and Israel. We have kept in touch and they visited Israel on a later occasion. As a result of that seminar, we set up a UNESCO Chair for Multiculturalism in Teacher Training in Beit Berl College and I have the honour of being the Chair. We are currently planning the next conference for 5-8 February 2007. It will be dedicated to the theme, 'the effect of globalization on centre, periphery and multiculturalism'.

Empowered through a sense of mission

These eighteen years of activism (18 in Jewish numerology means 'Chai', i.e. 'life' or 'alive'), volunteering for the ASPnet and learning about multiculturalism and peace education, has enriched me with unforgettable experiences and deep insights. Professor Yitzhak Schnell, head of the Geography Department at Tel-Aviv University, reported in his research study of the correlation between cultural space and physical space in the different ethnic groups of Tel-Aviv. He reached the conclusion that in the traditional ethnic groups the two spaces coincide, but with modern people, university lecturers, hi-tech employees and artists, the reference group or the cultural space can be separate from the physical space. I am one of those people who reach out to friends over cyber space and travel to meet the international family across the sea. My journeys around the globe and my encounters with extraordinary and dedicated people have been a total growth experience. Working with people of different cultures locally and globally has offered my soul access to infinite time and space. One of the researchers of 'Teachers' beliefs' says that teachers feel empowered only if they have a sense of mission (Zeichner, 1993). In my personal case, this is true. Giving to UNESCO, has given me the meaning of life. Therefore, I will quote a dedicated veteran ASP Israel member, Aviva Shulman: 'What you get from UNESCO, you cannot buy for money!' It is a give-and-take situation when, on one hand, the giver proves that one individual can move mountains if he or she is animated by a high ideal, and, on the other hand, that the ideal can remain distant for the time being, but the giver will definitely be fully transformed for the better and rewarded.

I am grateful for this opportunity to retrospect and to introspect and share with you memories, impressions and thoughts emerging from almost two decades of activism with UNESCO. I want to recommend that the 'elders' share their

insights from experiencing and learning all their life, by engaging with the young activists in an established way. This would be a way of inspiring and training new volunteers in the service of the ideals of UNESCO. I have fond memories of eight days in 1999 when I accompanied Ms. Elizabeth Khawajkie throughout Israel. I felt extremely enriched as if I had attended a Master Class.

For us, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project is a treasure, a field of research, a lab and practicum for teachers who want to contribute to peace education. I urge that it be given every support by UNESCO.

Nguyen Thi Hoi



National Commissions: A great asset

Personal history

I came to the Foreign Services at the end of November 1970, and have been there since, working in different capacities. I worked as an interpreter for six years with two years break for further study abroad and then came to the Department of International Organizations from 1978 until my first appointment as Ambassador to the Republic of Austria and Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna in 1992. I came to the Department of Culture as the Secretary General of the National Commission for UNESCO of Viet Nam in 1998 and remained there until the second appointment as Ambassador to Canada in 2002.

A worthy mandate

Though I have only worked with UNESCO for five years, I had been previously involved in UN activities for more than twenty years. I realize that only UNESCO has a system of National Commissions, which prove to be very helpful for the execution of its functions. Therefore, I believe that we must build very strong National Commissions to be effective arms for achieving the goals of UNESCO in each Member State.

As the head of the Secretariat of the Viet Nam National Commission, I set up my own clear agenda for working closely with the UNESCO field office in Viet

Nam, namely to match the priorities of UNESCO with our national strategy of development in all sectors concerned. These included:

- Combining ‘Education for All’ with poverty alleviation; improving the role of women especially women in the ethnic minority groups; introducing applicable technology to people in the countryside and mountainous areas to improve their income and to motivate them for further study.
- Active participation of Viet Nam in the Culture of Peace programme of UNESCO: Hanoi was one of the places to launch the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000) and a number of seminars on the Culture of Peace were conducted in Viet Nam like ‘Ho Chi Minh and the Culture of Peace’. The Conference ‘Asian Women for a Culture of Peace’ was co-organized by UNESCO and ESCAP in Hanoi.

The National Commissions: A great asset

The defence of peace must be built in the minds of men. Since UNESCO is mandated with the key sectors for building defences of peace, namely science, culture and education, it should be the leading agency involved.

The fields of competence of UNESCO are key to the development and peace of nations and the world. The world is changing and thus UNESCO must be able to adapt by changing its approach and its priorities. We must also take full advantage of National Commissions in policy formulation and execution.

UNESCO should focus on working as a ‘think tank’ for all sectors and should also concentrate on developing effective ‘models’ for the realization of each goal. For me, the mottos ‘globalization with a human face’, the ‘culture of peace’, cultural diversities, the four pillars in education: learning to know, to do, to be and to live together, are admirable and impressive. Models applicable to different countries in different stages of development and cultural backgrounds are necessary for effectiveness. I believe that National Commissions can be used as instruments for execution and for providing success stories from each country.

Advice for future generations

My lesson to share is simple: the key to any success is strong commitment with mind and heart to whatever work you are given. Only when you are deeply committed to the work can you fully understand and find the best way to do it. When you work in a National Commission for UNESCO, you are well placed to understand your country’s needs and priorities and match them with those of UNESCO. This is only possible through good coordination and cooperation

between the National Commission and the UNESCO field office. In the few years as the head of the Secretariat of Viet Nam's National Commission, I strived to follow this principle.

I often mention how much I enjoyed working with, and learning from, UNESCO's national and global activities. Given the chance to meet and work with many leading scholars from my country and others has indubitably helped enrich my knowledge, which contributed to both my work and my own personal life.

With over thirty years of work in foreign service, I realize that achieving gender equality on the individual, national and international stage is not an easy task. I have been actively and voluntarily working for this goal in whatever work I have been given. For instance, I dedicated much time to increase the involvement of women in the execution of the UN reconstruction and development projects in Viet Nam, especially in the field of child protection, family planning and poverty alleviation (related to UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP). This motivation was embedded in me from various fellow Vietnamese women; but notably by Mme. Phan Thi Minh, one of the only two female Director-Generals in the Ministry in the late 1970s.

My advice to young women working in UNESCO is to always remember: you are lucky to be there, so be committed, prove to male colleagues that women, not only can, but can do well with them in achieving the lofty goals of UNESCO and, first and foremost in bringing peace to the families, nations and the world.



Attiya Dnayatullah

Breaking the glass ceiling

Perspectives of a woman who has broken the glass ceiling

As the archives tell me, my entry into UNESCO was in the summer of 1983. At the time, I was designated as a deputy to the 116th session of the Executive Board. Until then, I had devoted my activist life to addressing the population, development and environment triad, and promoting family planning as a human right, with the strong conviction that neither could be achieved without improving the condition of women. One day, Pakistan's Minister for Education called me to request a meeting and later convey to me that he had the approval of the President of Pakistan that I be the next Executive Board Member from Pakistan. I indicated that I was not an educationist and dedicated my time to other UN agencies, mostly the General Assembly, UNFPA, the Human Rights Commission and UNIFEM. He said that they considered UNESCO as the world's intellectual think tank and in their judgment I had the requisite competence. Holding the Minister in esteem, I took the plunge and being totally green to the UNESCO world, landed in the deep end.

In this way I began my journey of discovering the world of UNESCO. I was overwhelmed by the Organization's responsibility to humankind, outlined thus in the Constitution: 'Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'. This was compounded by my discovery of the extent of its areas of competence: education, science, culture

and communication. It did not take long to absorb the wide scope of UNESCO's mandate and when juxtapositioned with the Constitutional mandate, I agreed with the Minister's description of UNESCO as the intellect of the world. I was challenged, excited and never looked back. I have remained focused on making my contribution through the Executive Board.

In hindsight, my 'UNESCO made easy' is to understand it through its logo. The overarching aim of UNESCO, peace and security, is the roof, whilst the key pillars holding up UNESCO's roof are its substance: education, science, culture and communication.

Highlights of the work in the Executive Board

With the salt of UNESCO's flavour being immense, it is almost impossible to enumerate the significant happenings of my UNESCO life. A few diverse contributions are encapsulated, remembering that UNESCO's work culture is reliant on teamwork:

- Keeping women's issues squarely on UNESCO's map was a priority. It is truly said that when women lead, change follows. I have seen it in the Board room when, through the 'listen in' voice box in every office, staff avidly followed the Board's deliberations and built on the positive support they got from members, such as me, on women's issues, concerns and programmes. In a man's world, women have realized that their armoury is skills, network and inspiration.
- UNESCO's international meeting, 'Peace the day after', brought together for the first time after the Washington Reconciliation, Yasser Arafat and Shimon Peres. Held in Granada, with its centuries old tradition of tolerance, as the sun shone down on us in the Alhambra courtyard, the radiance of UNESCO's efforts to construct the defences of peace in the minds of men shone bright.
- During my period as Chairperson of the Executive Board, some innovations were made in our working methods, ranging from female housekeeping measures to interaction with the management. The Board room became more hospitable by adding a large pot of greenery to the central oval space and the monotony of the walls was broken with a contrasting logo, working lunches were organized on specific issues and plenary sessions held with a cadre of the management. For this interaction the Director-General and I chose the young professionals. This particular innovation is recommended for replication, both because it gives an opportunity to see UNESCO's renewal, rejuvenation and equitable geographical distribution at work and also provides an opportunity to interact with the youth of UNESCO who are the trustees of posterity.

- A major objective I set for myself was to ensure that the Board's agenda and proceedings corresponded as closely as possible to its mandate. An important step in this direction was that the title of the Director-General's report was aligned with the Board's mandate to read, 'Execution of the Programme adopted by the General Conference'. It was no longer an information document only to be noted. This change was carefully negotiated with the Director-General and enabled the Board to ensure oversight of the effective and rational execution of the programme through deliberations, discussions and decisions.
- It was a major challenge for me to serve as Chairperson of the Drafting Group on the Medium-Term Strategy, which is amongst the most important and difficult of the Board's functions. Now, I have an unfulfilled wish that we call the Medium-Term Strategy what it is, namely a Strategic Plan instead of using the current euphemism.
- I have seen the departure and return of the USA and the UK to the Organization. Mindful of the integrity of the universality of multilateralism, this was a highly stressful time in the life of UNESCO and I can say with no hesitation that the Executive Board at the time rose to the occasion and served as an anchor and ensured that UNESCO did not go under.
- During my leadership of the Board, we were able to obtain an invitation from a Member State, Morocco, to be the guests of His Majesty King Hassan II. This fraternity was a tacit recognition of the post-cold war focal role of UNESCO in peace building. The Board meeting was held in Fez. Appropriately, the item debated in a city, which is one of the finest jewels of the world's architectural and cultural heritage, was the conservation of old cities as part of the cultural heritage seen within the context of modern urbanization. Since such invitations and visits have great value added for the Board and UNESCO, they should have a higher frequency.

Keeping women on the agenda

Quite effortlessly and most naturally, the role, status and contribution of women in UNESCO's areas of competence were permanent on my UNESCO Board agenda. As a target group, a close second was youth. The environment of the last half of the 20th century brought to the forefront of public consciousness, through global conferences and in-country movements, the deprivation of women. This was supported by relevant policies, administrative decisions and political muscle flexing, all of which were able to cumulatively ensure women that their empowerment and human development were brought onto the global radar screen. In my UNESCO world, I was able to make a small contribution. Amongst other things is the pride in being elected as the first Muslim, Asian woman Chairperson of the Executive Board. Through the networking of woman members of the Board

introduced by me, we were able to keep alive and push women-centred policies and programmes. At the 'Fourth World Conference on Women' in Beijing, the UNESCO launched Statement on Women's Contribution to a Culture of Peace, which I assisted in evolving, received a significant response. In-house, we women Board members found a very responsive 'women's unit', led by Ingeborg Breines. Together, the Board and the Secretariat were able to find space for women's issues in all areas of UNESCO's competence. The most satisfying development in this regard is the focus the Dakar Conference and the Millennium Development Goals have given to girls' education. This is imperative, because the gender gap has left nearly twice as many women as men illiterate. In many developing countries girls are devalued from birth, their autonomy is severely restricted and their potential, if recognized at all, is regarded as irrelevant.

In my valedictory address, my message regarding women was as follows: 'I thank UNESCO for empowering me. I am a woman who has broken the glass ceiling. It has not been easy, but yes, it can be done. To borrow from Kipling: If we women are patient and steady with all we must bear, if we are easy in manner, but solid as steel, if we have eyes that have foresight, hindsight will not do and if, when growing in strength, we will not be unnerved, then indeed we can break the glass ceiling. Will you, colleague Board members, please scatter my simple if-message to women across the continents of the world?'

Actions for the future

At the 174th session, my last on the Executive Board, I called the 2006-2007 biennium, the watershed biennium, because the Medium-Term Strategy 2008-2013 is to be prepared and the results of UNESCO's structural and good governance reform package is to be made visible. In a constructive mode and within the limited eight minutes speaking time, the following points were flagged for consideration by the Board on the subject:

- Members States and the Secretariat should do some 'out of the box' thinking. The process could benefit from some passion and excitement in the deliberations, whilst we at the same time need to be pragmatic and take the many hard programme and structural decisions called for. Above all we need to ensure that the voices of women and youth are heard in the process and reflected in the outcome document.
- We need to create a symbiotic working relationship with the Director-General on administrative reform, because it is imperative that we attain in this biennium the much-needed functional efficiency of the staff at all levels of the system and come to a closure on reform.
- In the political domain, regrettably multilateralism through the UN system is being given short shrift. UNESCO's response to the overall review of the

UN system clearly flags that the renewal of UNESCO's three-organ structure can no longer be delayed. We have exhausted deliberations on the subject; we now need the political will to take decisions within the framework of the General Conference resolution on the three organs.

- Gender mainstreaming and youth empowerment should be applied vigorously throughout all programmes. It is my expectation that UNESCO will break the culture of silence around gender-based violence which knows no social, economic or geographic boundaries and the toll of which on the dignity, autonomy and well-being of women, is shocking. Over 500 million youth, ages 15 to 24, live on less than \$2 per day. They are growing up in a different world than their parents. AIDS, globalization and new information and communications technologies are powerful forces shaping their lives.
- Fresh water resources are reflected as a major challenge for human security. Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource essential to sustained life, development and environment. For a large portion of the world's population, their poverty is both a symptom and cause of the water crisis.

Dialogue amongst equals is no longer an optional extra

Over time, I became endeared to the Executive Board and truly felt that my physical space in the Organization was its dedicated space in the Fontenoy building and so it is most appropriate that my photograph in this publication is the one displayed outside Room X in the Executive Board Chairperson gallery. No matter how involved and committed, the golden truth is that one must have the wisdom to know it is time to leave whilst you are still applauded. For me, the 174th Executive Board session was the occasion. I conveyed my decision to bow out and am truly grateful for the standing ovation given to me by all present in the Boardroom. The concluding sentence of my valedictory address was another golden truth: 'Though I bid the Board farewell, one can really never leave UNESCO because working as it does for a more peaceful, tolerant and humane world, it is an organization that gets under your skin'.

The Chinese National Commission for UNESCO recently informed me that they would give me the award of Honorary Professor in Fudan University, Shanghai. What better finale could I have asked for of my years of association with UNESCO? I am the first-ever Pakistani in 50 years of diplomatic relations with China to have been considered for this high recognition. Being humbled by the citation, the overwhelming thought that came to mind was that Islam, the religion I practice, places a very high premium on an educated mind. For its attainment it enjoins Muslims to go, if necessary, to China to seek knowledge. The very China, to which we are enjoined to go in the search of knowledge, recognizes me as a professor, who by definition is the fulcrum of knowledge.

My years in UNESCO contributed to my growth. The return of South Africa to UNESCO's world, shorn of the abhorred practice of apartheid and triumphant over oppression, gave me a message of strength that with perseverance, the page of history must turn. In UNESCO's world, I have had a thirst for understanding neglected or emerging issues such as cultural diversity, bioethics, dialogue amongst civilizations and cultures, globalization, peace, pluralism and tolerance. It is a thirst which is not yet quenched. The sense of enquiry is today integral to my persona.

I have left the Board as a satisfied woman. Initially, because of UNESCO's complexity I made an enormous effort to understand the house, thereafter over an extended period of my adult life I have given of my energy, which has contributed, to this house in multifaceted ways. How true is the African, 'You can't be a beacon if your lights don't shine'.

UNESCO, by definition, brings together 'sovereignties', but its mandate enables a polylogue of humankind. With the haunting spectre of alienation, violence and war, dialogue amongst equals is no longer an optional extra on the margins of our global agenda. As a young girl I lived in a world of colonialism, exploitation and apartheid. Today as an adult coming to the close of a good innings, it is shattering to see violence and terrorism claiming victims in the name of religion. It is timely that we converse on the foundation of mutual acceptance and hold tolerance in reverence. As Lentil Ulysses said: 'Come my friends, it is not too late to seek a new world'. My prayer is that through UNESCO, God grant us the strength to establish ties of solidarity amongst the peoples of the world based on the forces of freedom, creativity, justice and knowledge.



Zofija Klemen-Krek

Learning to live together

Personal story

In my early childhood I started wondering about the world. Letters regularly sent by my father's sisters, who lived in the States, added fuel to these dreams. In my humble home with just one salary, newspapers and books were always at hand and listening to radio news was the law. In the secondary school I was acquainted with the UN Youth Clubs, a network which was well developed in former Yugoslavia.

My interests were oriented toward geography, history, world literature and foreign languages and my decision to study political sciences, specializing in international relations, was strongly linked to my dreams about the world and fascination with distant countries with rich cultures, histories and different languages.

I began travelling during the 1960s and commenced my professional career in the department of international cooperation of the Socialist Alliance. Through my work I got involved with the Slovene Association for the UN, whose President, Ms. Marija Vilfan, was the former President of the Yugoslav National Commission for UNESCO. The Association was also a gathering place for Slovenian experts in international relations and intellectuals being involved in UNESCO and in other international activities.

New civil initiatives - UNESCO and my country

In 1984, when the USA led a very strong campaign against UNESCO, I was Consul-General in the Yugoslav diplomatic service in Cleveland, Ohio. I was invited to talk to a group of local intellectuals about Yugoslav involvement in UNESCO and the UN. Upon return to Slovenia, a major part of my professional responsibilities was to facilitate the cooperation of Slovenia with UNESCO's programmes and activities. As a republic of a federal State, Slovenia had no direct cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and information was limited to documents sent from the federal office of the Yugoslav Commission for UNESCO. A Commission for cooperation with UNESCO was already established in Slovenia in 1982. Through it, we tried to develop a broader cooperation and involvement of the Slovene intellectual community in UNESCO activities.

In 1991, when Slovenia fought for its independence, official political and diplomatic activities were concentrated and oriented toward major international power centres such as Western European countries, the USA and the UN. Civil initiatives, although still nowadays deprived of recognition of their contribution to the struggle for the independence of our country, took strong action. A large number of Slovenian intellectuals themselves sent thousands of e-mails, faxes and other types of messages to their colleagues, friends, collaborators throughout the world, asking for their support to this struggle. I felt that my responsibility was to send a letter to Mr. Mayor, the Director-General at the time, and to some staff members, whom I had had the opportunity to meet, asking them to take action in line with UNESCO's noble goals and principles. In the letter I warned Mr. Mayor about the bombing by the Yugoslav Army of schools, and possible destruction of cultural and natural heritage (in particular, the world heritage site Škocjan Caves, which was very close to a military exercise ground). Some years later, I was informed that my letter had been presented to Mr. Mayor, and that the Yugoslav Permanent Delegate to UNESCO was invited to his office to comment on it.

During the occupation of Slovenia, possible breaches of the Hague Convention by the Slovene defenders worried me. The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in times of war was not known enough and blue shields were not used. My concerns were confirmed when I was called from the City Council Office, responsible for protection of cultural heritage, asking me what could be done to protect the city's cultural heritage. Upon my advice, the very next day the blue shield flags appeared all over the old City. The two largest Slovene daily newspapers published my article on the Hague Convention, responsibilities of defenders and attackers, and the role of blue shields. I had found my way to contribute to the struggle for independence by using UNESCO's goals. After the international recognition of the Republic of Slovenia and its admission to UNESCO in May 1992, I was nominated Secretary-General of the Slovene National Commission for UNESCO, though not because of my above-

mentioned activities. It has been my privilege to serve as such till the middle of this year.

I have worked with a personal enthusiasm to promote Slovenia in UNESCO. Having strong faith in the Slovenian intellectual community's capability to contribute to UNESCO's ideals in making things better at national and international level, it was possible to carry out many new projects and activities. By active participation of the Slovenian National Commission and its members, our small and new country has become recognizable and well known in UNESCO. The 2003 elections to the Executive Board, when Slovenia was elected with a large number of votes, proved it as a fact.

Creating a more cohesive world

All specialized organizations, agencies, funds and any other parts of the UN system are bound to the same purpose: to contribute to peace and security in the fields of their mandates, as it is generally defined in their founding documents and affirmed by the Charter of the United Nations. They are also expected to respect human rights and consider them as universal values. However, some fundamental human rights, like the right to culture, the right to education, the free flow of information and freedom of speech are more directly linked with UNESCO mandates than to any other UN agency's mandate, while some other rights are generally the responsibility of all, like equality of men and women. Decisions of peace and security are in the hands of Member States. UNESCO's mandate, however, is to construct defences of peace in the minds of human beings, and yet, the same Members States, the founders of UN and UNESCO, breach human rights and peace. Therefore, it is incumbent to create such general conditions, in which the practice, implementation of, and respect for UNESCO's noble ideals are possible.

UNESCO's great constitutional ideas can be materialized under conditions of an open environment where people are prepared to utilize their education for constructing defences of peace in their minds and for the progress of the humanity as a whole. Daily political decisions are mainly in the hands of governments and parliaments, so both should have to act in favour of peace. Reality, however, suggests otherwise. In many cases their decisions do not meet these expectations. People are still too easily manipulated by different powerful groups. When the time of realization comes, it is too late!

Without UNESCO's impact, I believe the world would be deprived of the human, cultural and intellectual face and ideals and visions of a better world. When I first met UNESCO's name, it was culture, the protection of cultural heritage which came to my attention. Still today, a general understanding among people is that UNESCO is a synonym for culture. Somehow culture has always been the most visible part of its mandate in the public eye. The Abu Simbl conservation

project demonstrated the broadest possible cooperation within the international community, free of any prejudice to race, language or religion. It represents a great symbol of universal solidarity. For me, protection of cultural and natural heritage is the most successful part of UNESCO's history. Rather late, and I hope not too late, intangible culture has also become one of the core issues.

In developed countries, UNESCO's mandate in education is wrongly understood and under-estimated. 'Education for All' (EFA) goals are as important for them as for developing countries. It is true that combating illiteracy is a very important issue, but other even more important EFA goals should not be marginalized. Too often UNICEF wrongly receives credit for many activities in education led by UNESCO. It is UNESCO's mandate to deal with education.

Intellectual and moral solidarity

Constructing peace in the minds of human beings is, in most cases, presented as the main objective of UNESCO and should be pursued with increased vigour in conjunction with all other mentioned principles. Peace cannot exclusively be based upon the political and economic arrangements of governments; it must be founded upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind, and on the sharing of knowledge and international exchange of ideas and experience. UNESCO's strongest assets are in the international intellectual and moral solidarity. It must not be lost; it is its real and majestic power. When properly employed, it can overrule the power of money.

One would think that by adhering to these principles, Member States would agree and strive to develop and increase communication between peoples of the world. Sadly enough, the opposite proves true. Are the Member States, with their political elites, genuinely committed to these constitutional objectives? In speeches maybe, reality is too often different, since these ideals could represent a danger to their own political goals. Educated and enlightened people cannot be easily manipulated!

Making dreams a reality

I have been profoundly honoured by being chosen among sixty women presented in this publication, and I have been wondering if I really have contributed enough to be among them. It is true that I have committed myself to these ideals. Yet, there is disappointment with politicians and governments on a daily basis due to manipulations with human rights and peoples. It is sad that religions and beliefs are used for manipulations as well. The lack of quality education, curricula full of prejudice, preaching of justice, on one hand, and breaching it, on the other, make me even stronger in my commitment. UNESCO's ideals are opening a new world based on respect, knowledge, trust, democracy, dignity and equality - the world you dream about. Yet in order to make dreams a reality, we must be sincere

and dedicated, using every moment in our lives to tackle prejudices, ignorance and mistrust. These ideals cannot remain at the mercy of governments, civil society has to take a much stronger lead in constructing new ways and means for international understanding and a culture of peace.

Throughout history, open-minded and knowledgeable men and women have been more of a threat than a blessing for many political and economic establishments. UNESCO, with its ideals, is walking on a very thin and fragile ice. Some fear it will lose slowly but gradually its exceptional structure of governments and civil society working together. It is worth giving it whatever support needed in order to keep this uniqueness. UNESCO is indispensable for a better future for humankind, particularly in the era of globalization.

Learning to live together: the role of ASP

Education is a field where ideals can reach every human being. The UNESCO Associated Schools' Project (ASP) could be the incubator for new approaches in education for a culture of peace, democracy, human rights, dialogue and respect for cultural heritage. I have used every occasion to give support to ASP and also to underline the necessary changes needed in order to meet the high expectations of the project. ASP schools should open themselves even more to the community and integrate UNESCO's ideals in their everyday work and curricula, and search for new ways and means and quality of learning.

The Slovenian ASP-net started developing new approaches in line with Delors' four pillars of learning. My contribution was through my knowledge of UNESCO's goals and objectives. I hope that ASP will get more and more support in Member States and will be able to contribute substantially, both to the EFA goals and to a better education on how to live peacefully together. Today, ASP gets much more recognition, it is more ambitious, but it still needs stronger support from and cooperation of the best experts in the field of education, not least in relation to didactics.

Making women's voices heard

Gender issues became an important part of my life at the very beginning of my professional career in the field of international relations. This was at a time when a male stronghold resided; I was a rare species. Many men did not even notice that I was female. Under the strong influence of my mother, a woman with a limited education of only a few classes, but with 'Anna Kharenina' deep in her heart, I started noticing gender inequality in every day life: old traditional underestimation of female capacities at work, and in politics. There were prejudices almost everywhere in public life. It hurt me to witness these injustices.

In addition to my career, gender issues became a very important part of my life. I participated in the advisory group to the Yugoslav delegation to the UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi and worked for gender issues in the non-aligned movement. I also served as president of the Conference of Social Activities of Yugoslav Women. I had rich experiences in gender issues when I participated in UNESCO General Conference in 1993 for the first time and noticed quite a large confusion on gender issues in its programme and resolutions. Therefore, I immediately joined the group preparing a resolution concerning these issues. I strongly felt that UNESCO should become more involved in gender issues in its fields of competence. Some topics such as women and peace, the role of women in science and culture had not been thoroughly discussed in the Third UN Conference on Women in Nairobi.

During the 28th General Conference when several resolutions on gender issues were presented, they needed a lot of negotiations. I was one of several active negotiators and supporters of presenting a clear and long-term strategy on gender issues for the Organization. It was a success and was followed by another strong push through a resolution at the next General Conference in which the Director-General was invited to establish a new coordinating unit in order to make the Secretariat capable of performing in line with these resolutions. When preparations for a world conference on science started, I decided to send a letter to the Director-General inviting him to give all due attention to gender issues in science. It was a rather interesting situation since the existence of any gender inequality in science was generally denied. I did not give up, nor did many National Commissions, the Director-General himself and Breda Pavlič, Slovenian and newly appointed director of the Coordination unit of gender issues in the Secretariat. Many women scientists, backed by male scientists as well, participated in discussions and demanded the incorporation of gender issues into the final documents of the World Conference on Science. Still today, it is considered very successful lobbying.

The importance of National Commissions for UNESCO

The National Commissions for UNESCO are unique examples of an organizational structure within the UN System. They represent a great advantage for the Organization. The National Commissions are supposed to coordinate governmental bodies and civil society, and act as advisory bodies to governments and their delegations. Member States are to provide their Commissions with a status and resources enabling them to act independently from the political powers and in line with the provisions of the UNESCO Charter on the National Commissions. I am convinced that the National Commissions, as a structural and constitutional part of the Organization are one of the genius elements of the conception of UNESCO. They are the real promoters of UNESCO ideals in Member States, but only in those countries where governments are genuinely prepared to promote these ideals.

I believe that there is no better ally for the Director-General in the process of implementation of the programme than the National Commissions. When working long enough in a National Commission to adequately understand UNESCO ideals and absorb them, Secretaries-General do their best to promote them and do so genuinely. UNESCO would never be as successful and visible as it is, if it was not for National Commissions and open minded, daring and independent Secretaries-General with their well-trained staff.

Gender equality takes time

When taking the floor or discussing with male participants in UNESCO meetings, I have never felt any discrimination against me or any other female colleague. As a woman, I was thrilled about this special open atmosphere which only UNESCO can provide. At the beginning, I was surprised how many male participants spoke about the need to improve the situation of women and young girls in education. After the collapse of the socialist and communist systems in Eastern and Central European countries, gender issues were completely marginalized and considered as a communist issue. In my country they are still not understood as core issues of democracy. Discussions on gender issues can easily be discredited and laughed at, even in our parliament.

The lesson, which was learned not only in UNESCO, but throughout my life, is that women must never forget that gender inequality has existed in the minds of men and women for thousand of years and cannot be uprooted in a couple of decades. We must, therefore, remain *en garde*. Another lesson is that the best success is achieved when women and men tackle gender problems together.

UNESCO is strong in the field of empowerment of women through education and it must pursue this task and help women fully develop their potential. Women should be encouraged to become involved in science, cultural diversity and creativity and use modern communication technologies, since these skills could be utilized as important tools for their empowerment. The potential of more than half of the population cannot be marginalized. Women should take their part in searching for solutions to the burning issues of development and peace. The rapidly changing world could greatly improve the situations for women provided that action is taken in time to confront new emerging inequalities. Women risk to be the first victims of globalization; it is no new story. Therefore be alert and act quickly. UNESCO can do it. It has the largest intellectual potential. Use it, do not wait, and do it now!

Gender issues are clearly not obsolete. It has not yet become a part of our mindset. I am very happy that, for the first time, the present Director-General is introducing gender training of all staff members. Gender sensitization of male and female staff members is incumbent for any genuine progress and important for UNESCO as such.

Now it is time to evaluate the last ten years and present a review of UNESCO's performance and report on results achieved since 1995, when resolutions on gender issues passed the General Conference the last time. No new strategy can be made without such a review and with a profound analysis of the process of globalization and gender issues. Bigger developing countries are rapidly changing and opening their labour markets to industrial branches, which are leaving high developed countries and using much lower paid manual workers in less developed countries. It is important to know how these changes will affect women and how UNESCO can help to tackle these problems. The traditional roles of women and family ties in many countries will rapidly and drastically change.

Harnessing the intellectual potential

UNESCO is not a funding agency. Therefore, intellectual solidarity is, and will remain, the most powerful tool in its hands. I am sure that forefathers and foremothers of UNESCO were fully aware of its potential value and power, and did not trust economic and political arrangements made only by governments. By the change of the constitutional provisions concerning the nature of members of the Executive Board, UNESCO has been impoverished of its full intellectual splendour. More and more the governmental arrangements are getting into it and more bureaucratic approaches are noticed. UNESCO's ideals should not be channelled into one canal or squeezed into a mould, or remain exclusively at the mercy of governments.

The minds of human beings have to have their freedom and space for creativity. Insisting on transparency and measurable immediate results is merely a simplified and ignorant request and an excuse for those who cannot open their minds to others and understand these ideals. The future of the Organization is in its intellectual solidarity and in international cooperation between peoples. It must not become a mere administration and bureaucratic centre for implementation of some programmes and activities. It has to act as the largest engine capable of pooling together the intellectual potentials of the world.

Keep well, my friends. Keep well UNESCO with your noble ideas, for the sake of future generations, for peace and the progress of humanity.



*Countess Setsuko Klossowska
de Rola*

Detail of photo by Mr. Kageyama

The power of beauty

Personal story

I was born in Tokyo where I received a traditional education in classical dance, poetry (notably 6th century), flower arranging/ikebana and tea ceremonies. I studied French at the very liberal Jesuit University of Tokyo where, at the age of 20, I met my husband, the painter Balthus. He was, at the time, Director of the French Academy in Rome and had been sent by Andre Malraux, French Minister of Culture, to select the works for an exhibition of Japanese sacred art. I was fascinated by his vast knowledge, immense culture and by his almost fanatical attitude to his work, which I admired and loved.

Living at the Villa Medici was a wonderful opportunity for me. I came to befriend many of the young prize-winning artists there and I evolved into a painter myself. After 15 years, we moved to Switzerland where I still live and work. In 2001, my husband died and I became honorary president of the Balthus Foundation.

With widowhood, another life began for me. I discovered that I adore adventures and was amazed to discover that people were interested in me and in what I have to say and contribute. When the Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, asked me to be the cultural patron of the 2002 Venice Congress, marking the 30th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, I was both flattered and honoured. UNESCO was an organization that I had always respected, but I never

thought that I would be called upon to serve it in any capacity. This was one of the very first ‘assignments’ I agreed to take on after the death of my husband. For me, it was a new beginning.

The power of beauty

I have also been fortunate to be involved with young people as a jury member of the Mondialogo School Contest, organized in the context of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project (ASP) to promote intercultural dialogue. For me, it was most rewarding to work with children in the art workshops that were organized in Barcelona. The goal was to make something beautiful. It is my firm belief, which is also in accordance with Plato’s philosophy linking together beauty, goodness and truth, that if children are encouraged to create beauty they will be more inclined as adults to keep peace.

Beauty reaches beyond the limited interests of the ego and the borders of the nation state. The United Nations should give emphasis to beauty. We must provide opportunities for children and youth to dream and to have hopes and visions for a harmonious future in order to overcome hatred, greed and ignorance.

Giving birth, protecting life

I have never been preoccupied with gender as such. Throughout the years, many Japanese women have done remarkable things behind the scenes. Such women, who might not have had many rights, nevertheless developed intelligence, a wealth of ideas and creative approaches. Perhaps having all the rights makes one lazy. It is conceivable that what we witness in today’s world is the result of too many men having become tired.

Women have the advantage of being biologically capable of giving birth. This makes it immensely important for them to protect creation – and not to destroy.

Artist for peace

I have been named ‘UNESCO Artist for Peace’ for my role in promoting education of world heritage. To me, all true artists are in favour of peace. However, in this respect, I would like to underline how important it is that educational systems around the world, and all education, from the pregnant woman on, develop children’s sensitivity: touch, sight and hearing. It is difficult, but primordial, to develop knowledge and insight through sensations. Transmitting intellectual and analytical knowledge is much easier.

I would also like to point out that the beauty and uniqueness of all world heritages runs the risk of being destroyed if crass commercial forces are allowed to exploit

world heritage sites without careful supervision and oversight. The members of the World Heritage Committee have a huge responsibility to ensure that such a tragedy does not occur.

If I were to allow myself to tender advice to the youth working at UNESCO, I would stress how vital it is that they keep the idealistic flame burning in their hearts.

Doanna Kuçuradi



Philosophy as a means to overcome injustice

I was born in Istanbul on 4 October 1936 and later studied philosophy at Istanbul University. When I look back, I can say that what led me to study philosophy was probably my revolt as a child, in both primary and secondary school, against the injustice done to people around me, such as the injustice committed against my teachers and the different, even contradictory, evaluations of the same persons, the same actions of persons, the same situations, the same events, etc. I was 13-14 years old when I read Plato's the *Crito* and the *Apology* where the concept of human dignity first became apparent to me. Probably these, as well as similar readings, instilled the hope in me that philosophy can help us fight against such problems. Later, while teaching philosophy to students of other disciplines, I started developing, and putting in black and white, my own views on ethical problems and on the human activity of evaluation.

In 1968, I joined Hacetepe University (Ankara) and in 1969, I established the Department of Philosophy – the third one in Turkey. I thereby started promoting international relations in our field. At that time I more or less knew what UNESCO was doing and I found that the spirit, in which it was established, was important. Yet, my first direct contact with UNESCO was only in 1978, during the Düsseldorf World Congress of Philosophy.

The issue of human rights was, and is, a thorny issue. The events transpiring around me, combined with my ethical concerns, led me to reflect, and read books

and reports on human rights. During these readings I realized, among others, the need to clarify the concepts of human rights. Human rights concepts are also criteria for judging alleged violations, as well as for avoiding unintended violations. In the absence of clear concepts, other criteria, developed successfully or unsuccessfully by common sense, play this role.

When I met the director of the Division of Philosophy of UNESCO in Düsseldorf, and communicated to him my relevant thoughts, we decided together on the title of the Conference that we organized in Ankara in 1980, on 'The Philosophical Foundation of Human Rights'. Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director General of UNESCO at the time, honoured the inauguration of this seminar and started his speech with the following sentence: 'Le programme de votre séminaire, ainsi que l'exposé de Madame Kuçuradi, montre combien l'esprit de vos travaux est proche des conceptions de l'UNESCO en matière de droits de l'homme'.³ Thus started my cooperation with UNESCO, which has continued all these years.

My most rewarding interaction with the Organization, and also my most significant contribution, is the recent development of the 'UNESCO strategy on philosophy' and the establishment of the World Day of Philosophy. When I became Secretary-General of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, I wrote to the Director-General at the time and suggested that in order for UNESCO to carry out its mandate in a more effective way, philosophy should become the *backbone* of all UNESCO programmes and human rights their *veins*. This vision of mine, which sounded utopian to many people, started being realized with this strategy. Now we have to make the necessary preparations and implement it worldwide. People have become increasingly aware of the importance of philosophy, both for the life of the individual and for public life.

What has attracted, and continues to attract me to UNESCO today, is its humanistic, universalistic spirit. This is a spirit which should have more impact on the other organs or bodies of the UN. The role of philosophy in translating these ideals into reality was known by those who established UNESCO. The connection between philosophy and human rights was also known. I had the pleasure to hear from Jeanne Hersch, the first Director of the Division of Philosophy, how she joined UNESCO in 1966 and how she prepared the volume *Le droit d'être un homme*, in order to show the 'universality of the root of human rights'. In *Entretiens* (1986), she says: 'Si je pouvais montrer, par des textes de toutes traditions, que les hommes ont aspiré à ce qui est exigé par les Droits de l'Homme, à la reconnaissance de ce qui est dû à chaque être humaine comme tel, si je pouvais montrer qu'il a

³The seminar programme, as well as the presentation of Ms. Kuçuradi, demonstrates to what extent the spirit of your work is close to UNESCO's principles in relation to human rights.'
In Philosophical Foundation of Human Rights, Ankara 1982, p.7.

des traces de cette aspiration dans toutes les cultures, alors on verrait bien qu'il s'agit, dans la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme, d'une exigence généralement humaine'.⁴

Constructing peace through ethical value knowledge

Not only wars and the defence of peace, but everything we decide and do start in our minds. The question is: how is it possible to construct the defence of peace in the minds? I think that peace, in the proper sense, can exist only if human rights are protected. Thus, in order to construct peace in the minds of men, it is necessary to equip them with ethical value knowledge and the knowledge of what human rights are. This knowledge also includes the reason why these rights should be protected by everyone and constitutes the reason why the teaching of human rights as ethical principles has to be introduced or increased at all levels of education worldwide. We have to train trainers who are able, through such a teaching of human rights, to awaken in the trainees the will to protect human rights in general and not only 'their own' rights.

The way I look at others, at life and at the world was already shaped before my involvement with UNESCO. I was fascinated to see that UNESCO was promoting the same universalistic, humanistic spirit worldwide. UNESCO is a world organization, and the only one in its field, that embraces the world as a whole. Regional organizations, in spite of the good intentions of some people who work with broader views, usually promote what they think is 'their own' i.e. what distinguishes *ergo*: separates them from other regions.

To my mind, the work done during the past five years by the Sector of Social and Human Sciences has helped, and is helping, UNESCO to carry out its mandate in a world which, according to an observation expressed in the 2002 Human Development Report, with which I fully agree, 'economically, politically and technologically, the world has never seemed more free – or more unjust'.

Avoiding gender classification

UNESCO has made significant progress for the empowerment of women. But for gender equality to reside, we must also help men change the way they look at women in many, if not in all, countries. An ethical education, which helps young people, both women and men, to reflect on ethical value problems on the grounds

⁴'If I could demonstrate, with the texts from different traditions that human beings have aspired to all that is demanded by Human Rights, to the acknowledgement of all that is due to each human being as such, if I could show that there are vestiges of this aspiration in all cultures, then we would see clearly that, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is a question of broadly humane necessities.' *Eclairer l'obscur, Entretiens avec Gabrielle et Alfred Dufour, L' Age de l'Homme, 1986, p.89.*

of philosophical knowledge, and thus become aware of their human identity, is still necessary, perhaps for different reasons, in all countries of our world.

Personally, I would like to say that I do not define people by gender; I do not look at myself as a woman nor do I look at men as men, but rather as human beings who came to this world as women or men by chance. By saying this, I do not suggest that gender problems do not exist, they do and we need to overcome them. What I wish to emphasize, however, is that we, women and men, have to promote the equality 'in dignity and rights' of all human beings. This, to me, is a more radical way to fight gender inequality.

Medium-Term Strategy: a time for renewal

If I confine myself to make one or two modest suggestions on issues of which I have first-hand knowledge, I could say the following: at present, the work done in the Sector of Social and Human Sciences is on the proper track, completely in line with the mandate of UNESCO. It must continue uninterrupted. Also, the Strategy on Philosophy should become truly inter-sectoral, i.e. the backbone of all programmes. In other words, all sectors, and especially the education sector, must work in close collaboration with the philosophy section for the implementation of the Strategy.

Secondly, more emphasis should be given to the education/teaching of philosophical ethics, i.e. of ethics as knowledge and not as norms. This teaching has to constitute the base for the teaching of bioethics, various professional ethics, etc.

I would really like the Strategy on Philosophy, as well as the Strategy on Human Rights to be pursued in detail so that they can have a broad impact, including in connection with poverty. If emphasized as a whole, as a top priority for UNESCO, they could help the Organization carry out its mandate more efficiently. Furthermore, I hope that in future work, the UN as a whole will seriously take the framework of these strategies and programmes into consideration. We need decision-makers in whose minds the defence of peace is already constructed.

Gasmeen Lari



Team work for cultural heritage preservation

My personal story

I am an architect by profession, having graduated in 1963 from the Oxford School of Architecture (now Oxford Brookes University, UK). My mother, a remarkable woman belonging to the rural Uttar Pradesh, taught us the value of tradition. At the same time she was determined to keep up with my father who belonged to the famed Indian Civil Service (ICS) of the British India and, having studied at Oxford was equally influenced by Western civilization. They both encouraged me to take up architecture and by chance I turned out to be the first woman architect of Independent Pakistan and India.

In 1964 I established my architectural practice *Lari Associates, Architects and Urban Designers* and was able to work on projects ranging from informal settlements, low-income housing, and adobe structures to state of the art public buildings as well as conservation of several historic structures. My husband, Suhail Zaheer Lari, a graduate of St. Catherine's College, Oxford, having retired as a business executive during the late 1980s, became a scholar and an acclaimed historian. In 1981 we established the Heritage Foundation Pakistan (HFP) as a Lari family trust and developed a great deal of source material on Pakistan's cultural heritage.

In 1987 I initiated HFP's *National Register of Historic Places* by cataloguing Karachi's historic urban assets in order to provide them with legal protection, thus

reversing the trend from demolition to conservation. It was the documentation of cultural heritage that provided the impetus for me to write books on heritage-related topics.

Team work for cultural heritage conservation and development

I had hardly had any interaction with UNESCO until 2002, the same year that HFP was given the *UN Recognition Award for promotion of a culture of peace*. In 2000 I had decided to retire from architectural practice and concentrate on research and writing, when KaravanKarachi (later KaravanPakistan) evolved as a community and youth outreach arm of HFP to celebrate Karachi's heritage through large-scale public assemblies. When I received an email from the UNESCO Islamabad Office inviting me to discuss a project on *Cultural Tourism in Lahore and Peshawar*, I was both unsure regarding my own availability and also hesitant knowing the usual fate of reports that mostly gather dust on shelves. After a few email interactions I visited the UNESCO Islamabad office and accepted the assignment as National Project Coordinator. Having worked on cataloguing historic buildings of both Peshawar and Lahore, coupled with the earnestness and commitment of the Director, Ms. Ingeborg Breines, there seemed an opportunity to realize my own dream of saving the heritage of Pakistan's culturally premier cities.

The most rewarding experience with UNESCO, came a year later, when I was asked to become National Advisor for the World Heritage Site of Lahore Fort project funded by the Norwegian Government. This was the most exciting project that I had the chance to be involved in, even though in the past I had designed some of the largest and most interesting architectural projects in the country. The project called for the conservation of the endangered Shish Mahal mirror ceiling, as well as preparation of the Lahore Fort Master Plan for conservation. For the first time in the history of heritage conservation in the country, the national team was given the prime responsibility by UNESCO, and I was determined that the assignment should be a success. During the period, Ms. Breines provided full support by making available the best national and international expertise, and all necessary resources required for training and capacity building of local personnel. Due to the confidence reposed in us, the endangered ceiling was rescued, conservation of other Shish Mahal structures was taken up, along with development of, hitherto lacking, baseline information which formed the basis for the Master Plan document that I had been asked to co-author.

During the period 2002-2004, UNESCO Islamabad was particularly active in creating a platform to bring together institutions and experts working in the field of culture, which prompted the government to lay greater emphasis on various aspects of culture and heritage. The collaborative spirit that was harnessed by UNESCO allowed institutions and experts that had been working largely in isolation, to join hands in order to achieve a coordinated effort towards conservation and propagation of heritage.

The effort was reinforced in December 2003, when UNESCO Islamabad organized a seminar on culture which brought together many experts from across the nation and abroad. Although I have worked primarily in the heritage field, discussions with Ms. Ingeborg Breines and other UNESCO officers, brought about my involvement in the structuring of the event, and later in the compilation of the recommendations of the seminar. We were able to focus on many issues, such as the need to promote various Pakistani languages and dialects, acceptance of diversity, human and cultural rights, as well as aspects related to education. The need for propagation of creative and performing arts, as well as utilization of cultural heritage in national cohesion, was also emphasized. My own KaravanKarachi experience of public assemblies, celebrating heritage landmarks of Karachi, had demonstrated how in a strife-torn city with a diversity of ethnic groups, societal integration could be fostered through promotion of the city's heritage landmarks.

The cultural seminar began a process of discussion, which continued in different provinces during the entire year of 2004, and more recently in early 2006, in the federal capital Islamabad by the Ministry of Culture, which gathered national experts to finalize the cultural policy.

Educating for tolerance and acceptance of diversity

Additionally, the emphasis by UNESCO Islamabad during this period on 'Education for All' and focus on gender issues, sparked a great deal of interest and debate. Pakistan suffers from low levels of literacy and is a society still reticent in nurturing women's participation and empowerment. UNESCO needs to continue in its role, with greater zeal, to bring these critical topics on to the national agenda.

In the long term, the agenda of peace has to be pursued through school children, particularly boys. It is difficult to change the mindset of grown men, but children's minds can be moulded through activities which pursue the objectives of peace. Tolerance and acceptance of diversity are among the most important aspects that need to be promoted if we are to attain a peaceful world.

To my knowledge there is insufficient teaching material on the culture of peace in school curricula in most of the developing world. Although UNESCO has published *Heritage in Young Hands*, there seems to be insufficient efforts made to popularize it in schools. There is a need for worksheets and course material to be made available in local languages and incorporated into school curricula. More discussion on topics of heritage and peace needs to be carried out, particularly in public schools catering to the underprivileged. The boys of disadvantaged communities are the most vulnerable and are susceptible to being drawn into violence. In collaboration with the government, UNESCO needs to make a concerted effort to foster a mindset among youth which promotes a culture of

peace. We know that appreciation of cultural roots will make school children confident and sure of themselves, assure them of their identity, accept diversity and help in their development as responsible citizens with respect for the law of the land. In my experience, the open-to-all, large-scale KaravanPakistan children's assemblies have been extremely effective in conveying the message of rule of law, cultural and human rights, and heritage as a basis of identity.

Some work on developing heritage course material has been completed by HFP in collaboration with UNESCO Islamabad, however, we believe that much more needs to be done in a sustained manner in order to reach out to different communities and strata of society if a real change in thinking is to be attained.

Fostering a spirit of cooperation and local ownership

The most significant outcome of my work with UNESCO has been the fostering of a spirit of cooperation among national and international experts and institutions. In undertaking the work on the World Heritage Site of Lahore Fort, I was able to encourage a deep sense of responsibility and mutual respect in the national team consisting of experts, department officials and artisans. All the members were able to rise above their individual concerns to provide their collective best for the success of the project. The outcome has been rewarding: the increased confidence in their own abilities and pride in the work executed, has helped meet our objective of developing self-reliance, including for similar future works.

During the execution of the Lahore Fort project it became clear that where international expertise may be essential for certain aspects of heritage safeguarding, it is the national team which must develop its vision and take responsibility for execution. The capacity building of national experts thus became critical to enable them to undertake the primary burden.

The success of the Lahore Fort project compared to other heritage safeguarding projects undertaken in the past, amply demonstrates the value of the involvement, training and responsibility of national experts and local personnel. We were able to develop a vast amount of expertise, from documentation techniques, especially devised by me for a complex site such as the Lahore Fort, the strategies to maintain authenticity of heritage assets, and training of the local experts, particularly those working in the public institutions in conforming to international guidelines and relevant UNESCO charters and normative instruments.

The advantage of involving women

The induction of women in the conservation workforce, as well as providing literacy opportunity to women who were non-literate, although seemingly small steps, have transformed the working environment in the Lahore Fort. The women are proud of their contribution to the upkeep of the Fort and are forever vigilant

in ensuring that no littering takes place when they are around. Through this effort, one more door has been opened for women in Pakistan. Where they were once hesitant, and had to be goaded by me, now there are many more who would like to join the workforce to carry out similar work. The establishment of artisans' workshops for providing training in historic crafts was another important step taken as part of the project, which provided impetus for revitalization of these almost extinct crafts.

The next generation of women needs to know that there are no easy solutions. There is bound to be resistance against gender equality for perhaps many decades to come. Those women, who have crossed the barrier, or broken the glass ceiling, carry the responsibility to try to open doors for others, so that in time even conservative societies become supportive of women in fulfilling their potential.

Working for UNESCO enabled me to view the matter of heritage safeguarding in a holistic manner. It became apparent that the various aspects that UNESCO propagates, particularly those to do with education, gender, human and cultural rights, are an important part of developing an understanding of conservation of heritage. Although, through KaravanPakistan, we had been aware that young people are an effective medium for propagation of the value of heritage in developing pride, my work with UNESCO reinforced this understanding and realization that it is through education and training that the long-term objectives can be met.

Since my main work was during the tenure of a woman director in the UNESCO Islamabad office, I felt that being a woman, I was able to interact more freely and discuss the issues most close to my heart. For example, since both of us felt strongly about the induction of women in various activities, we were e.g. able to create a women's squad to begin cleaning the Lahore Fort. There had never been any women in the workforce in the history of Lahore Fort conservation. The literacy of the women workforce was another aspect that we were able to initiate.

I was also able to involve a large number of young people (school children and college students) in carrying out dry-cleaning of the Lahore Fort walls, which had never been done before, once again because both of us instinctively were in favour of such activities. Through KaravanPakistan events, I was able to organize a gathering of some 10,000 school children, with support in the form of prizes for various activities by UNESCO. Engaging women, youth and school children in heritage safeguarding had been among my most important goals, and wherever necessary, UNESCO provided support to fulfil our objectives.

Being a woman I have always been partial to providing opportunities for women. However, once I started to work with UNESCO Islamabad, there was a heightened awareness to pursue this goal more zealously. In Pakistan the

constitutional amendments in recent years have provided an impetus to a large number of women to hold office. In spite of this quantum leap, women in general remain constrained by social taboos. Unless special efforts are made to empower women, they have difficulty in breaking the societal constraints. In the Lahore Fort, with special effort, we managed to encourage women to start working, even though there was much resistance from their men folk. My being at the Lahore Fort project, gave them confidence and they were able to convince their families. The women's squad at the Fort has become so successful and has done such a fine job, that if we had more funding, many more could be engaged in this work.

The South Asian Earthquake

After the 8 October 2005 disastrous South Asia Earthquake when I started to work in the Siran Valley, I specially focused on women. In the beginning it was difficult, since women mostly huddle inside homes during winter. In April 2006, in spite of opinions to the contrary, at my invitation, 150 women attended a meeting, many trekking for two hours across the hilly terrain to attend the function. Since then, we have been able to make great headway in getting women to start working on their crafts. Ten Karavan Craft Centres (consisting of 12-14 women who offered to form a centre) have been established, and women have started earning through their age-old craft of bead jewellery. Women today, even in the remotest hamlet and belonging to the most disadvantaged groups, as is the case in the Siran Valley, understand the empowerment that accompanies income generation. Above all, they are all very interested in educating their daughters. We have to be ready to provide them with the opportunity, and even the most disadvantaged women will respond.

Women's empowerment must not remain a mirage

UNESCO does support initiatives for gender equality in Pakistan; however, these efforts have to be increased many times over, if we are to reach out to the disadvantaged and remote sections of society, otherwise, for a majority of Pakistani women, their empowerment will remain a mirage!

Gender equality is a clear UNESCO objective. However, the biases that are stacked up against women, particularly those in the workplace, are challenging in every part of the world. The only way women can make headway is through their dedication and excellence. Women should not be shy of taking on challenges and giving it all that it takes, nor be disappointed in the face of opposition, but continue to pursue actualization of their dream.

The experience in Pakistan shows that gender mainstreaming can happen through women's control over their own decision-making. One of the key issues is how women could become earning members of the family. In the context of Pakistan,

and perhaps in many other countries in the developing world, we need to respect the cultural norms, under which most women would prefer to stay at home. Thus, artisan skills and help with agro-based products need to be promoted, allowing women to work at their own pace, along with taking care of their families.

Future role of UNESCO at country level

Since the heritage scene in Pakistan is closest to my heart, and it may have parallels in other countries as well, I would like to see UNESCO providing a platform to enable all those interested in the promotion of culture and heritage to participate. In the last few years in Pakistan, UNESCO's support provided a great deal of impetus to the entire heritage safeguarding scene. As UNESCO becomes less active, the momentum that had been gained becomes diffused. UNESCO can play a major role in being the engine that promotes or prompts cultural activity, particularly related to conservation of heritage. The creation of a UNESCO fund, specifically for the country to provide support to local heritage organizations, would go a long way in rescuing many of Pakistan's heritage treasures.

Another related aspect that UNESCO could pursue is the training of women artisans in historic crafts traditionally practiced by men. To the detriment of historic crafts, men in the developing countries tend to veer towards more lucrative trades; it is thus critical that women are trained in such crafts, as was done in the case of fresco training at the Lahore Fort project. To be successful, the programme should:

- train women artisans in traditional crafts;
- provide support to local organizations engaged in developing traditional and women's crafts;
- create partnerships with marketing organizations worldwide to market the crafts as high-end art works.

UNESCO's role in safeguarding heritage and tradition in disaster areas, such as after the great South Asian Earthquake 2005, has been negligible. It is important that UNESCO provides the necessary leadership in helping conserve and revitalize tangible and intangible heritage in disaster-struck areas. It is not enough for UNESCO to merely bring out culture and heritage-related publications for schools. It is equally important to develop a strategy, in partnership with local government and organizations, to provide training and teaching material on culture, heritage and peace. Part of the fund for education available with UNESCO must be allocated for imparting education on the above aspects in order to pursue aggressively a change of mindset in the next generation.



Noëlle Lenoir

Developing normative instruments in bioethics

Personal story

A lawyer by training, I served as Director of Regulatory Matters on the Government Committee on Data Protection from 1982-1984. Since 1984, I have been a member of the Conseil d'Etat, the highest administrative court in France, and in 1988 I served as 'Commissaire du Gouvernement' to the 'Conseil d'Etat', which is the equivalent to public prosecutor or solicitor general in other courts. That same year I was appointed Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Justice where I served until 1990. I have always had a great interest in the relationships between science, human rights values and the law. This is why I was appointed by the French Prime Minister to review French and international bioethics laws in 1991. The report I presented to the President and to the Prime Minister entitled, 'Aux Frontières de la Vie: Pour une éthique biomédicale à la Française' contained various proposals and became the 'Foundation for French bioethics law', later adopted by Parliament in 1994.

On this basis, Federico Mayor, the Director-General at the time, asked me to create and chair the first International Committee on Bioethics of UNESCO (ICB). I am very grateful to Federico Mayor and praise his visionary approach. From 1992-1998, I had the honour of being involved with this committee and with UNESCO. By 1997, we had drafted the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, which was approved by the UN in 1998 for the 50th anniversary of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With my mandate fulfilled,

I chose to leave UNESCO to allow somebody else from another country to take the lead of the ICB.

Indeed, at the time of my involvement with UNESCO, I was a judge at the French Constitutional Court where I served as the first woman ever to be appointed to such a position. I was also the first woman and youngest person on the French Supreme Court for constitutional matters, and chaired the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies for the European Commission, which advised the EU on biotechnology and on ethical issues and regulations related to Information and Communication Technology.

By and large, two main ideals still hold true for me today: the universal nature of human rights; and, the rejection of discrimination. As part of my functions with UNESCO, I had the opportunity to work with, abide by, and translate both into reality, thereby conjugating respect for multiculturalism, such as language, religion and ethics, with the idea of universality.

In the International Committee on Bioethics, everyone could speak freely. It was a place where languages, cultures and ethics clashed, where one learned about others and their beliefs and where a set of guidelines were drawn up to bring people together in harmony with UNESCO's Constitution.

Developing normative instruments in bioethics

In all honesty, I am worried today by the emergence of a form of cultural relativity. Respecting cultural diversity does not mean we should abandon the idea of universality. Yet many authoritative States, whose power is based on military force or religion, try to impose their conception of human rights to justify the repression of political opponents, the negation of women's rights, the labour of young children and so many other things. This is a grave deviation from the UNESCO ideals, especially when the members of UNESCO themselves ignore these ideals.

UNESCO was created for the 'peoples of the world'. In that sense, the International Committee on Bioethics was a place where all persons (not only governmental officials) could speak, teach and learn. I did all I could to ensure that this continued.

It is my opinion that peace comes through the stabilization of democracy and democracy needs to be learned. This is a role UNESCO already fulfils admirably and yet it still needs to push the building blocks of democracy further through peaceful means. This means education, which is UNESCO's greatest challenge.

The Committee's role in gathering information and seeking common ground for all was an extension of this idea: getting to know the minds of men in order to better bring them together. Personally, I believe that democracy needs to be taught

at two different levels. Not only in respecting democracy in other countries, but also in your own neighbourhood, in your own village and in your own country. In that sense, UNESCO needs to teach everyone love and respect for democracy at a personal level first.

I believe that the most important achievement of the Committee was its ability to gather very large quantities of information, while consulting hundreds of people all around the world, then organizing it so as to be able to draw up a set of comprehensive guidelines for all. This was to become the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights. As indicated by its title this declaration is meant to be universal and should apply to all. Human beings, even though different, come together around common values.

Break the cycle of obscurantism

I do not believe that my experience with UNESCO changed my view of the world, although it may have refined it. Human rights, democracy and respect for women are basic and key elements in any society. If I have learned anything with UNESCO it is that it is extremely important for us to know more about other cultures. Ignorance breeds fear and UNESCO is designed to fight that fear. Never has the condition of women around the world been so contrasted. On the one hand, we have women chancellors and presidents and, on the other, we have what can only be referred to as a form of slavery.

If I were to rejoin UNESCO today it would be to tackle this issue. Women tend to be the first victims and agents of obscurantism. The first signs of obscurantism are often the negation of women's rights. Women are the first victims and the first agents of its transmission, through their educational role.

Consequently, only through education can anything be achieved. UNESCO already does much along these lines, but I believe it should advertise these points more and give further opportunities to women around the world to be heard. Giving people more examples of how things should be and inspiring more of them, would break this cycle of obscurantism.

A new ambitious project for women

I believe a UNESCO Charter of unacceptable women's sufferings should be drawn up. It should include the infanticide of girls, honour killings and excision. Member States should then be required to sign and ratify this document in terms that give its content as much concrete effect as possible, for example, using language, such as 'I forbid' instead of 'I will respect', to lay a real onus on signatories and to ask them to take on a real undertaking with strict and automatic sanctions. Today, too many States do the opposite of what they say and agree to. The language used must be unequivocal and not open to misinterpretations.

I believe that UNESCO should set a hard deadline, such as 2015, by which all women of the world should have at least the right to vote and the right to a proper education. As States tend to speak more freely when at UNESCO, this is the perfect platform from which to launch such an ambitious and important project.



María Clemencia López-Jiménez

The search for equity, equality and justice

Personal history

I am a graduate of the School of International Affairs, at the Central University of Venezuela and post-graduate of the National Institute for Defence of Venezuela and New York University, in Latin American Studies. Since then, I have been exposed to a wide experience in the field of International Relations, through my work at the United Nations, as a career diplomat, starting in 1965 at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

After many years of multilateral work, I switched to the bilateral sphere as Ambassador of Venezuela in three Caribbean countries: Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Upon my return to the multilateral field in 2003, I was appointed Secretary General of the Venezuelan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO in Caracas, and Deputy Representative for Venezuela at the Executive Board, in Paris, after occupying different posts related to OPEC and the 5th Centennial of the Discovery of the New World.

UNESCO entered my life when an accumulation of professional experiences and convictions matured, which were deeply imbedded into my being thus intrinsically linking my work to the ideals and aspirations of the Organization. On a personal level, I distinctly remember my experiences in 1977 as a member of the Security Council during the struggle against Apartheid, racial discrimination, and in the war against women's discrimination.

The search for equity, equality and justice

My work at the United Nations for over twenty years as a member of the Permanent Mission of Venezuela has offered me the unique opportunity to interact with representatives from the world community and to familiarize myself with the most pressing issues affecting humankind.

The World Organization, through its different agencies, teaches us that we should always be ready to make salient contributions to humankind's well-being. Continuous efforts and cooperation to change the eroded and inadequate rules that presently govern international relations is needed. The search for equity, equality and justice in all fields of human endeavour has been ever-present in my own search as an international public servant. This, in part, is thanks to the opportunities that have been granted to me in the processes of implementing my deepest convictions. From 1965 to 1980, I was part of the De-colonization Committee, the Committee of Social Development, and the Committee of the High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as having served in the Non-Aligned Movement on the occasion of the independence of the emerging countries of the Caribbean and Africa, and other international events relating to de-colonization.

For the above-mentioned reasons and experiences, subjects relating to the suppression of poverty, injustice and inequality are of special significance to me.

As a representative of a developing country, my professional activities have been associated with my country's foreign policy, which happens to fully coincide with the aspirations of three thirds of humanity. I have kept in line with my own personal convictions where I have been able to serve in Third World struggles. There have, of course, been moments of doubt pertaining to the question if the correct path has been followed or if we have been able to confront the powerful interests that have obstructed our search for international equity.

Achieving gender equity

Undoubtedly, gender inequity still persists, but it is not always necessarily on a personal and conscious level. Despite much progress, the factors that impair a greater participation of women in our Organization, and for that matter in all human activity, have not disappeared. On a higher level, the elimination of this inequality is linked to the struggle against injustice, in whatever form. The modification of the factors, which hold back the access of women to employment and education, are matters which should be efficiently addressed. These are simultaneously the result of a static patriarchal mentality and of the struggle to occupy spaces traditionally held by men, which can solely be won by women through competence and work.

The struggle for equal rights and equal opportunities has lasted many centuries, but nevertheless it cannot be considered obsolete. The re-education of gender should be a pressing aim and an essential target for women and men at all levels. However, for women - the most excluded of all - the struggle is permanent at all UNESCO levels, since lack of education has been the main factor behind their backward situation.

I consider there are two possible fields of work that are especially vital and relevant for women: a plan for the equality of women, and a plan to prevent violence against women, both of which would be of great importance for the inclusion of women in development and both of which could be part of the UNESCO Medium-Term Strategy. The problems of poverty and extreme poverty are still priorities of the Organization, but scant progress has been observed. UNESCO should consider this matter as an item parallel to the structural changes needed, together with a more realistic strategy for quality education for all. The Medium-Term Strategy is one channel to assist in the strengthening of our objectives in developing leadership capacities which, in sum, is an important factor in women's inherent capacity to salvage humanity.

Personally, I was able to be a part of the Committee on the Status of Women many years ago and observe that today the agenda is still present on all United Nations' agendas.

For the younger generations, the best advice I can give is to observe your surroundings and take note of the fact that some of us have indeed obtained certain positions in life, but nevertheless there remain exceptions within and outside the Organization. We are not representative of the status of women worldwide. Our efforts have to continue and we are all responsible for a permanent vigilance of the main UNESCO objectives, which are part of a constant and continuous battle

Fatima Abdel Mahmoud



Women in science and technology

Personal Story

I am fortunate to have had a rich and varied career path. My formal education is in the field of health and, throughout the years, I have held various positions in the Sudanese government and have resided as member and president of ten civil societies. I have also served, founded and led many NGOs, including the Sudanese ‘National Council for Social Welfare’, the ‘Peace and Friendship Solidarity Council’ and the ‘Nuba Mountains Women’s Organization’. Furthermore, I have established organizations such as the ‘SOS International Village’ in 1976, the ‘Abu Halima Social Development Centre’ and many women’s development centres in Khartoum and surrounding towns. Presently, I serve as a Member of Parliament, Head of the Department of USA-European Affairs and chair holder of the UNESCO Chair for Women in Science and Technology at Sudan University for Science and Technology, located in Khartoum.

Translating UNESCO’s ideals into reality

I took the initiative to create the UNESCO Chair for Women in Science and Technology and have assumed the responsibility as its director since its inauguration in 2003. Mr. Koïchiro Matura, Director-General of UNESCO, participated in the launch of the Chair.

The Chair's programme includes science and technology education, scientific research, sensitization of women, society building and development, the fight against poverty, decision-making processes, capacity building, access to new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and promotion of a culture of peace.

The Chair has undertaken many activities in various fields, particularly in scientific research. For instance, a comprehensive documentation research covering many aspects of the Sudanese women's role in the last century (1900-2003) was undertaken. Many workshops, exhibitions and training sessions transpired, including 'Women, Peace and Science in Sustainable Development programmes', the 'Role of Local and International Organizations in Women's Development Programmes', the 'Women and socio- biological ethics', the 'Role of Women's Literature in the Society', the 'Women, Water Technology and Management', the 'Modern Technologies in Basic Science and the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage'.

UNESCO should continue its efforts in favour of women's empowerment and gender equality, notably in the field of women, science and technology. Young women in UNESCO should work seriously to make UNESCO's ambitions and aspirations a reality in favour of all human beings, particularly focusing on the role of women in the society.

A project should be established aiming to give women, particularly those in the so-called Third World or developing countries, better access to computers so that they can profit from this technology which would give them access to the world and a say in the way in which it develops.

I would like UNESCO to devote special attention to the programmes that can contribute to women's capacity building, as well as to programmes that would strengthen their master role as mothers of future generations and as an active factor in sustainable development.

Lydia Makhubu



UNESCO and higher education

After obtaining a PhD in Medicinal Chemistry from the University of Toronto, Canada, I immediately returned to Swaziland to join the Department of Chemistry as a lecturer, rising to become the Dean of the Faculty of Science and eventually the Vice Chancellor of the university.

In the course of my service at the University of Swaziland, I was privileged to participate in various UNESCO activities at the invitation of different units of the Organization. My first experience was attending the General Conference as part of the Swaziland delegation in the early 1980s. I cannot remember what year it was, but I distinctly recall being overwhelmed by the large volume of human beings milling around the building. While I do not recall the exact year, I do remember that Amadou Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal was the Director General of UNESCO and his eloquence was quite inspiring to a young African lecturer attending the General Conference for the first time.

Following this magnificent introduction to UNESCO, I had the privilege to be invited to serve as a member of the Steering Committee for the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE), which was held in 1998. In this capacity I participated in the discussion of what topics were to constitute the programme of this conference. I was struck by the lack of emphasis on women in higher education, although this eventually became well represented in the framework for action. I also do not recall deliberations on science and technology in higher education occupying much time of the Steering Committee, although I felt that

this was a critical topic, especially in Africa. I must say, however, that there is always a danger in trying to look back at events without documentation in front of you, which is what I am doing at the present moment.

The World Conference on Higher Education was a fantastic event characterized by throngs of people filling every corner of the UNESCO building, speaking in every tongue. There were many academics; one could tell this by the way professors always manage to look! I was also asked to make a brief presentation on behalf of Africa, where I took the opportunity to highlight the importance of promoting women in higher education. By then, I had already been offered the Association of African Universities/UNESCO Chair in Science and Technology in Southern Africa. I was, therefore, speaking with conviction on the promotion of women in higher education, in particular in Africa.

The highlight of my attendance at the WCHE came when I received the Comenius Medal for research and innovation in higher education from the Director General, Federico Mayor, towards the end of the conference.

The WCHE was not my last contact with UNESCO. The next event was to be the World Conference of Science (WCS) convened by UNESCO in cooperation with ICSU in Budapest, Hungary in 1999. This was a unique, challenging forum discussing how to put science at the disposal of society. Here, I had the honour to speak at the plenary session on 'Science, the Gender Issue' in my capacity as the then President of the Third World Organization for Women in Science (TWOWS).

By the time I was elected to represent Swaziland on the Executive Board of UNESCO, I had a good understanding of UNESCO, its objectives and activities. UNESCO is a multinational and multicultural organization. The task of promoting collaboration among nations is a big challenge. In Africa, much is being done, especially in education, in the area of teacher education and recently in promoting 'Education for All' (EFA). I cannot help but feel that the role of higher education is under-emphasized in Africa and this is to the detriment of the development goals of the continent. The challenges are, however, vast and escalating in Africa, especially with the emergence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

UNESCO is living up to its mandate. In science, I have seen renewed interest in promoting the basic sciences through the formation of the International Basic Services Programme (IBSP). This is of particular significance in Africa where many countries still need assistance in promoting scientific development.

As a member of the Executive Board, I tried to highlight the importance of higher education which I felt was under-emphasized in favour of EFA. I also tried hard to highlight the importance of strengthening women's education, especially in

developing countries. This should continue to be stressed, notably by women serving in the different boards of the Organization.

As a woman, I experienced no special disadvantages in the Organization, but I felt that more attention could be paid to challenges facing women in science.

The biggest handicap in the efforts aimed at promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in science, including in the UNESCO Chair of Women in Science in Africa has been lack of financial support. The chair in Swaziland started off well when we worked with rural women on 'water' as the science topic. This initiative and others like it deserve to receive assistance in order to be able to contribute to achieving women's empowerment.

My advice to young women is to work hard and stay professional.



Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa

UNESCO in practice

I am writing this contribution for the 'Women and UNESCO' book project celebrating the Organization's 60th anniversary, while sitting on my veranda facing the Pacific Ocean in my village of Lotofaga. Today is Sunday; a day of worship and rest. Samoa is a Christian country and the observing of Sunday provides for a day of quiet reflection and contemplation. My country Samoa is one of 16 island states in the Pacific who are members of UNESCO.

At the end of this month of March, my country will hold its general elections to determine the government for the next five years. I have been a Member of Parliament for the constituency of Lotofaga for twenty-one years. I was first elected in 1985, became a Cabinet Minister in 1991 and I have held the Education portfolio for fifteen years. It was in my capacity as Minister of Education that I was brought into the realm of UNESCO and its work. I have represented my country at the biennial UNESCO General Conferences and I was a member of the Executive Board from 1998-2001.

When I left my home village to travel to Paris for UNESCO business, the contrast of my departure from a rural village of a small island State to the great metropolis of Paris brought home to me, again and again, the broad span of the human experience. Samoa's distance from Paris is the same irrespective of whether one travels east or west.

UNESCO in practice

My involvement with UNESCO is, essentially, part of my responsibilities as the Minister for Education for Samoa and Chair of our National Commission for UNESCO. My main role has been to implement the ideals of UNESCO through activities in education, social and applied sciences and communication, as well as developing organizational elements, such as strengthening National Commissions. The sphere covered by these activities has mainly focused on my country and the Pacific sub-region.

My work in the broader Asian/Pacific region has mostly involved developing priorities to feed into the global framework of the Organization's work. More specifically, I have been involved with the development of ICT policies and implementation strategies and providing feedback on particular ICT packages for education.

UNESCO has provided an umbrella under which we in the Pacific have learned to work collaboratively in its mandated fields. It has been satisfying to work as a sub-region of small states, pooling our resources in all respects, thereby enabling us to meet our development goals. It fosters good professional networks and a determination to achieve quality outcomes. I have noted that regional approaches have also been adopted by other regions to successful ends.

The regional approach has heightened the profile of small states while giving a voice to people and places that have been under-represented in the UNESCO family. UNESCO has been a catalyst to broader and more intensive educational interventions within the region with multiple development partners.

Education for All

Achieving the EFA goals in the amount of time we allotted ourselves will be our collective challenge. My most ardent wish is that by 2015, despite missed deadlines thus far, we will have achieved the set goals. Our sub-region of small island states is working hard to hold up our part of the sky through collaborative efforts.

At the last High Level EFA Consultation in China, it seemed that we might have reached the point where we could direct resources at our disposal to the neediest areas. Sadly, we pulled back on committing to the stated allocation and stayed with the safe, general statement of just identifying the areas of most need. The High Level Group was conceived as the leader to drive the efforts to attain the EFA Goals. With less than ten years until 2015, only through the strongest leadership, with resolute commitment, can we achieve our goals. The important countries that had left UNESCO are now back, but, will their return and the

strong positions they hold catapult our efforts? Will the neediest countries do their bit to let the world help them help themselves?

Perspectives and pathways

‘Fiame,’ the name by which I am known is a chiefly title. Chiefs are extended family leaders who are responsible for the welfare of their family. Chiefs succeed either through family consensus or through arbitration in the Land and Titles Court. I became a chief or ‘matai’ (the generic word for chief) when I was 21 years old through an arbitration process. As a young woman, it was a great challenge, and had it not been for my country’s Constitution, my youth and gender would have greatly disadvantaged my claim to be a ‘matai’.

I aspired to being a ‘matai’ and a Member of Parliament because I wanted to participate in processes that would promote the development of my people and country towards a better quality of life. For small countries, the level playing field that we seek, in order to participate in international affairs, can only be truly effective through global compliance in upholding the human rights of all peoples.

Prior to becoming a Parliamentarian, I had studied political science and when I acquired my title, my time was spent in the care and administration of family, village and district affairs. Being a family chief requires that one sits on the Council of Chiefs at village and district level. Councils of Chiefs are similar to local government bodies and play a significant role in law, order and security issues, utilizing traditional methods of conflict resolution. My other major involvements were, and still are, with women’s organizations; the National Council of Women (NCW), Inailau Women’s Leadership Network (IWLN) and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). With the NCW and IWLN, the focus has primarily been national whilst with the YWCA, I was the Pacific representative on the World Executive Body (1987-1990). I draw great strength from these associations; they keep me grounded; they offer me refuge when my professional world of men seems chaotic; and they are my staunchest supporters as only mothers and sisters can be.

Peace is Respect

I recently attended a farewell function for a senior female UNDP official. She is an American citizen of Asian ancestry. Her farewell remarks began with a light-hearted story of how during her time in Samoa she was invited to be a judge for the Miss South Pacific Beauty Pageant. As a feminist, she was taken aback by the invitation and had explained that perhaps the organizing committee might look for someone else because she felt that she, as a feminist, might not be the most suitable candidate. The reply she got was; ‘it is okay with us that you’re a feminist’. I spoke on behalf of my Government to thank her and I ended my

remarks, referring to her beauty pageant story, saying that I believed that she took up the invitation because she had come to a different perspective about beauty pageants. It is appreciating the different perspectives of people that bring about real understanding and engagement.

Respecting differences is fundamental to establishing and maintaining peaceful relations. In my culture, 'respect' is a given to people, the environment and the spiritual world. The western concept of 'respect' seems to flow from hierarchical relationships, authority and status. Respect, from our point of view, is something that exists automatically for everyone and everything and can only then be lost. Whilst from a western perspective, respect is not given; it must be earned.

The recent motion picture sequels called *Miss Congeniality* (1 and 2), starring Sandra Bullock communicates that, even a seemingly vacuous activity such as a Beauty Pageant, can also have high objectives, like promoting world peace. Whilst the delivery of the film's themes and messages might be tongue in cheek it did present beauty queens as people of sincere purpose. Everyone is of value and should be respected.

Sisters at UNESCO

My involvement with UNESCO at the organizational level was greatly enhanced by developing networks, which evolved into friendships. Since there were only a few males, it was predominantly a female group. We came together during Executive Board sessions and conferences. For a small delegation like mine which was not resident in Paris, the network provided a more fulsome information flow of what was happening in the Organization that went beyond the documents distributed. I found, and still do find, the governance structures of UNESCO very large and unwieldy.

The UNESCO Office for the Pacific is located in my country. That has been advantageous for me in that it made communications easier, not only to Paris, but more importantly to the Pacific Member States. It has been fortuitous that an open-door policy on my side was reciprocated by UNESCO personnel based in Samoa which has facilitated a very positive working relationship. Much of the success of UNESCO's work in the Pacific was due to Edna Tait, the former Director of the Apia office; a woman dedicated to the Organization's mission.

Tensions within the Organization, arising from positions taken on many issues, often seems to reflect the divide between developed and developing countries. Mostly, I am certain that a resolution can be found but then, at other times, I feel rather fatalistically that the dye is cast and never shall the two meet. The beacon that gives me hope is the ideals enshrined in the Organization's Constitution as stated in the Preamble. It is, indeed, only in the power of our minds that humanity can rise to the fullness of its potential.

Making notable progress towards gender equality

Fortunately as a woman, I have never felt disadvantaged in any respect during the time I have been associated with UNESCO. There are, of course, glaring examples of discrimination against women in different parts of the world. In Samoa, we are experiencing a disenchantment by males of the education system or, even more broadly, of positive social development. This issue raises great challenges for me as Minister for Education. There was a time, in our recent history, when girls were kept back from school to take care of the family. The situation has reversed considerably. Girls are entering, staying and claiming top prizes in our schools. Women hold some of the most senior positions in government service, attorney general, finance, health, legislature, public service commission and state broadcasting, to name a few. In my own ministry, four out of six assistant chair executive officers are women. It is only in the field of politics that women have yet to make significant representation. Currently, there are only three out of forty-nine of us in Parliament. However, I am greatly encouraged that there are eighteen women standing as candidates in the up-coming election. This is the highest number of women who have entered an election race. UNESCO has been in the forefront of promoting civics and voter education and women representation in politics in Samoa and the Pacific.

I am honoured to have been asked to contribute to this project to celebrate the 60th anniversary of UNESCO. For those of you reading this, I send you warmest greetings from the South Pacific and wish you success in your endeavours towards making our world a better place.

Delia Dera Medina



Relation to the UNESCO Associated Schools

My relation to the UNESCO Associated Schools

Since 1993 I have held the position of national coordinator of the schools associated with UNESCO in Cuba. I already knew about UNESCO's work as I had worked for two years as an international organizations' specialist in the Department of International Relations in the Ministry of Education.

The work of UNESCO has been a motivating factor for me and, for that reason, I was very pleased to be appointed to the coordination of the Associated Schools Projects network (ASP), particularly given the fact that my first job had been as a primary school teacher in a rural area.

The job as the National ASP coordinator has been very rewarding for me and as a result, I have become more and more committed to it, improving my abilities day by day. In 1998, I was chosen for the National Coordinator Excellence award, and this further increased my sense of commitment.

The actions of ASP are not limited to urban areas. Within the 73 UNESCO Associated Schools in Cuba, there are schools located in remote areas, in all the provinces, and at all educational levels. All of these schools work in an outstanding and systematic manner that has won them international recognition. National seminars are held in different provinces on an annual basis to exchange

experiences, give lectures on UNESCO's prioritized subjects and offer workshops on representative UNESCO projects. The ASP Network of schools should act as 'beacons of UNESCO ideals' and as 'centres of innovation'.

Peace pillars

From the time I began to work with ASP topics, one of the first things that happened in my schools was an incorporation of the subjects of peace and international understanding. Faced with countless challenges for the future, education has become an indispensable instrument for humanity in its progress towards the ideals of peace, liberty and social justice.

In 2000, during the 'International year for the culture of peace', ten Cuban schools received the 'Pillar of Peace' award, borne out of the cohesive, responsible and professional work of hundreds of students, professors and school principals in order to achieve a culture of peace in the school and the community.

The network is made up of schools dedicated to the defence of peace in the minds of children, using inter-cultural learning for peace and the promotion of comprehensive human development, and working through a first-class, universally available, education system.

Education, in its function of promoting optimum perspectives for constructing societies where people may embark on apprenticeships, permitting them to live in harmony with themselves and with others, in mutually respectful dialogue, must resort to formal and informal ways and means to reach the goal of spreading a culture of peace.

We have successfully worked on inter-cultural educational projects, such as the 'Learning for the future' project and the 'Mondialogo School Contest'. Similarly, the bonds of friendship and solidarity with other schools in the world have been strengthened. A teacher in the Qatar ASP Network stated, 'Since wars take shape in the minds of adults, bastions of peace must be raised in the minds of children'.

In precise terms, peace must be learned. This has been our priority and I am pleased that the Cuban ASP Network is a large family and that, even though we live in peace, my country has been the object of a cruel and genocidal economic, commercial and financial blockade during the last 45 years. Our teachers, professors and students know full well the meaning of the three letters PAZ and they struggle so that the world shall experience peace. There are peace festivals, activities are held on International Peace Day and throughout the school year there are various activities related to this theme.

One of our achievements has been the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and inter-cultural dialogue, using our heritage as a starting

point through the ‘World Heritage in Young Hands’ project, which we have been working on for 10 years. The multiplying effect of the Associated Schools in other communities than where they are located, is evident.

The wealth of exchanges with other countries has been a motivation to find interesting elements in different cultures, thereby enriching their knowledge about other cultures and about their own culture, contributing to preparing the students’ understanding of their past, to face the challenges of the present and the challenges in store for them in the future.

Opening up the world

UNESCO has influenced my professional life and I have had the opportunity to learn much from others around the world. I collaborate with several national ASP coordinators and have volunteered as a project adviser for others to explain our achievements in the schools.

Many of the people I have interacted with also hold a very special place in my heart. I have learned something from each one of them and it has nourished my work. It has given me a global outlook on experiences elsewhere in the world, while making me a better person for having shared ideas and concrete actions with colleagues. I might not otherwise have had the courage of my actions to attain the lofty goals of the Organization.

All of this opens up the world for us, ensuring that people all over the globe, through dialogue, are able to communicate with each other and become more complete human beings. When there are problems in some countries, I immediately try to communicate my solidarity and to offer my modest assistance in whatever form is needed; and I have always been warmly thanked.

In Cuba there is no discrimination against women, nor is there discrimination because of skin colour, religious beliefs, social status, salary, in giving access to education at university level, or occupying important positions in the country. I reflect the gains achieved by Cuban women. I was able to become educated without any problem. I worked in the Ministry of Education at the central level and for the last six years, since retiring, I have continued volunteering as I enjoy, enormously, what I do. I am surrounded by many women who are examples of selflessness, love and sacrifice; all hard-working women driven to obtain the best of results.

My relationship with UNESCO has allowed me to learn about the status of women in the world and to be able to admire the phenomenal women who struggle and work for peace, justice and solidarity among all peoples of this planet.

Work with dedication and love: the secret to success

I believe that a balance in the equality between the sexes can be attained in any part of the world; one just has to give women the opportunity. In UNESCO and in the International ASP network, I have met marvellous women who have shouldered this work and who have become an example for me. These women are very close to us, helping us with our work.

Young women working with UNESCO today must work with dedication and love. That is the secret to attaining success in both their private and professional lives. I should also like to wish them success in achieving freedom and everything else attained by Cuban women, thanks to the triumph of the Revolution.

In today's world, poverty, illiteracy, thirst and discrimination all have a woman's face. It is incredible that in the third millennium, women are still being largely excluded. Humanity must be made conscious of the struggle for true equality between men and women. This may only be achieved when there is political will and courage to confront this scourge that has for so long plagued humanity. This should become an organizational priority in UNESCO. Governments need to have political conviction and, of course, an educational system based on principles of equality from the primary level and where women, from birth, are not subjected to any discrimination by virtue of their sex.

Rigoberta Menchú Tum



Detail of photo by UNESCO/Tandem

The rights of indigenous peoples

Acceptance speech of the UNESCO Prize 1990 for Peace Education

I come from a small village; there were sixty families living there, and it was located in the department of El Quiche, in Guatemala. It was a Maya community where we practised mutual assistance, solidarity and respect for our neighbours. But today Chimel is no more. When I was a little girl, living with my parents in the community, I learned at first hand about hard labour on the land of the high plateau, and especially on the plantations where crops were grown for export, as we scraped a living as best we could in our state of poverty and marginalization. From an early age I longed to go to school and be able to develop my intellectual abilities, for the good of my community, but I never did. The course of recent history in my country, tragic and outrageous as it has been, made me fight for the cause of my people, of Guatemala; more than ten years of struggle, accusations and demands have brought me before you on this occasion to thank you for this Prize on behalf of the workers of the country and of the ComitC de Unidad Campesina de Guatemala (Peasant Unity Committee); and also to speak of the rights that are being claimed today by the Indian people of the continent, all the poor people of America and, I believe I can say without exaggeration, of the whole world.

The first thing that the indigenous American peoples wish to conquer as an acknowledged right is the right to have our voices heard, as peoples and as individuals; to begin to break out of those 500 years of silence and marginalization;

to say what we think of our past, of the circumstances of our lives in the present, and of the future that we are seeking for our children and grandchildren, without being persecuted and condemned to death for doing so.

We also have a right to our mother the earth, for our livelihood depends on her, and our cultures and our historical memory are rooted in and inspired by her. Fighting for our ancestral lands means fighting to till the soil and harness our natural resources so as to produce a sufficiency for all the men and women of the earth.

It also means having access to technology so that we can make our fields and forests flower and bear fruit. The malnutrition and illiteracy from which the indigenous peoples of America suffer is an open secret. As Indian peoples we have a right to education, health, development, science and technology, but we do not want them to be imposed on us. Our identity and values must therefore be given due consideration, forestalling any clumsy measures of enforcement.

Our land and mother nature - like our cultures - have suffered in recent decades from development from systematic criminal destruction. Never before has nature: land, forests, seas and skies suffered such destruction as today! Human beings have a right to lead healthy lives. The struggle to achieve this is the struggle of us all, indigenous peoples, mestizos, blacks, whites - all who are determined to dedicate themselves to the preservation and defence of nature and the environment.

The indigenous peoples of today and tomorrow are thinking of this, and we are preparing to build a more equitable future, based on our cultural past, on the harsh reality of these 500 years of oppression and discrimination, and on that resilience that has allowed us to make our presence felt at the end of the twentieth century, with our ability to struggle to establish a more acceptable way of life for humankind. We cannot agree that knowledge of and admiration for indigenous peoples should be confined to great historical monuments, Tikal, Teotihuacin, Machu Picchu and so forth, but feel that fundamentally they should be a response to our determination and capacity to help in the task of constructing a more humane and more equitable world.

‘A people that is hungry is a people that is not at peace’, runs one of our sayings, but there can be no doubt that justice is needed as well. In other words: equality before the courts; trial and punishment for those who infringe the most elementary human rights; freedom of expression and organization; and the right to full participation by peoples in the construction of their future.

In Guatemala we are at the heart of Indian America, the epicentre of discrimination, massacres, militarization and the ‘scorched earth’ policy which has led to so much suffering and bloodshed in my country in the past decade. The various

ways in which our communities and peoples have fought to defend their lives and cultures are legitimate, and the international community, like the governments, should understand them. The future of Guatemala stands for the future of our Indian peoples, and this is why we need to move forward together in our search for true democracy, to construct a society based on development, respect and peace. You who are present here should not forget this, for in these past years it has been easier for me and for my indigenous brothers and sisters to be heard in international forums and gatherings than in our own countries. It is time for our words to be heard there too!



Margaretha Nickwitz

UNESCO: Connecting people

In the 1960s there was a growing interest in Finland in international cooperation and in the world outside the European sphere. Europe had recovered from the Second World War – a recovery process, which in the case of Finland lasted well into the end of the 1950s, and the effects of which were still being felt as late as the early 1960s. Until then, national efforts had focused on reconstruction, but now a need was felt to look outside not only the national, but also the European borders. Together with a generation shift there was also a shift in attitudes: younger people, those born at the end of the 1930s or during the 1940s - a generation to which I myself belong - were looking for ways and means of starting a debate on various social and political issues, including issues with a global dimension, such as peace, human rights and the situation of the developing countries.

The end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s was a period of expansion in the United Nations system. For Finland, this period also meant the opening up of new channels and possibilities for international cooperation. When the Finnish Government took the decision to join UNESCO in 1956, a strong argument for membership was that ‘continuous development of our national culture is possible only through fruitful international interaction’. I believe this statement is still valid.

After finishing my university studies, I entered active working life in the 1960s. I then spent some years working in London where I also did postgraduate work. It was there that I saw advertised, for the first time, the post of Officer of Public

Information of the Finnish National Commission for UNESCO. My father, who knew of my interest in international cooperation, sent me the clipping from a Finnish newspaper. I felt that the objectives and the work of UNESCO were something that I wanted to be associated with, but at that time it was impossible for me to apply for the post. On my return to Finland, I had some other jobs but they were not particularly interesting or satisfying. One day in 1965, I saw the post in the Finnish National Commission advertised again and, this time, I applied for it without hesitation.

I was interviewed by Kalevi Sorsa, the Secretary-General of the Finnish National Commission, who had returned from Paris where he had worked for six years as a Programme Specialist in the Education Sector of UNESCO. Kalevi Sorsa was later to embark on a spectacular political career, becoming Prime Minister of Finland. The Chairman of the National Commission, R.H. Oittinen, Director-General of the National Board of Schools had also interviewed me. It was largely thanks to Mr. Oittinen's efforts and initiative that Finland had joined UNESCO in 1956. He became the first Chairman of the National Commission and was also Minister of Education many times over, as well as 'father' of the Finnish comprehensive school.

To my genuine surprise, I was chosen for the post among the many qualified candidates. Little did I know then that I would be associated with UNESCO in various ways during a major part of my working life. I was practically thrown into the water to learn how to swim. Only one month after my appointment, Kalevi Sorsa assigned to me the task of organizing a seminar on UNESCO for thirty journalists from Finnish newspapers, radio and television. One of the guest speakers at the seminar was the Director of the Office of Public Information of UNESCO. Organizing the seminar was a real challenge. I learned a lot and established useful contacts. After the seminar, I was absolutely certain that I was on the right path and I also felt a strong commitment to the objectives of UNESCO as expressed in its Constitution.

The principles embedded in the Preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO are so noble, so indisputable and timeless that any attempt to express what they have meant to me is doomed to be either pompous or pathetic. There is, however, no doubt that they have affected my outlook on the world in general and have also been an important credo for me in different spheres of my life.

When the Finnish National Commission's Secretariat became a part of the new Department for International Relations of the Finnish Ministry of Education, I was assigned to duties in other sectors of international cultural cooperation. After some years, however, I was asked to become Secretary-General of the Finnish National Commission. I was responsible for this function twice: in the 1970s and again in the 1980s, eight years in total.

The National Commissions: An enriching experience

There is no doubt that working with, and for, the National Commissions for UNESCO was a most rewarding experience for me. No other specialized organization of the UN system has at its disposal an instrument similar to the National Commissions. A specific article in the Constitution, Article VII, lays down the functions of these national bodies for cooperation. The fields of competence of UNESCO are so diversified and complex that liaison bodies in the form of National Commissions are necessary to maintain contact with, and to associate, relevant national bodies and institutions with the work of the Organization. The National Commissions truly serve Paragraph 1 of Article 1 of the Constitution, according to which the States Parties 'are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives'.

The National Commissions offer possibilities of networking at the sub-regional, regional and worldwide level for experts from all the Member States. They are sources of ideas concerning the substance of the work of UNESCO and help the Organization to base its work on the real needs of Member States. In the European region, the National Commissions and their meetings also served the purpose of facilitating flexible and direct personal contacts and exchanges between experts from Eastern and Western Europe at a time when such contacts were otherwise rare or difficult to organize. The Finnish National Commission has been active in promoting European cooperation and organized the 7th Regional Conference of European National Commissions in Helsinki in 1977.

I became a member of the Secretariat of UNESCO when I was appointed in 1977 to the post of Chief of the National Commissions Division of UNESCO, which I held until the end of 1980. To me, the possibility that I had to assist the National Commissions, particularly in the developing countries and of facilitating contacts between Commissions from different regions, was extremely gratifying as was helping in the launch of new Commissions. In 1978, during my time as head of the Division, the General Conference also adopted the Charter of National Commissions. This reflected more than thirty years of development of the Commissions and described their functions, as well as the responsibilities of the governments and of UNESCO towards them, more fully. The status of the Commissions and the attitudes of the governments to them have varied. In a majority of Member States, the Commissions are well established and enjoy the confidence of their governments. In some others, the existence of a National Commission was regarded with suspicion and as an unnecessary element in the government's relations with UNESCO. Some members of the Secretariat also looked on the National Commissions as cumbersome and refused to take notice of them in their contacts with the Member States. One of the tasks of the National Commissions Division was to change these attitudes.

I returned to Finland in 1980, having been offered a higher post in the Ministry of Education, but my contacts with UNESCO did not end there. In 1987-1991 and in 1997-2001, I had the honour of representing Finland on the Executive Board of UNESCO. During both these terms, a new Director-General took his seat in the Organization.

Developments in the 1980s and 1990s

There were some interesting development trends during my two terms on the Board. My first term as a member of the Board at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s coincided with great political changes in Europe; the division of which was coming to an end. During my second term, at the turn of the century, increasing attention was focused on UNESCO, on the positive and negative effects of globalization in its fields of competence, for instance, with regard to cultural diversity.

A positive development started at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s when 'The World Conference on Education for All' was organized in Jomtien. The role of UNESCO as a key agency in the development of 'Education for All' was beginning to be recognized and its cooperation with other UN agencies was strengthened. For me, education should be considered a priority in UNESCO's programme, particularly the education of women and girls. Achieving improvements in the literacy rate of women, and eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education, are some of the most important goals among those adopted by the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000. Gender equality in education is essential for the development of societies as a whole.

At the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s, culture emerged as even more important than before in the activities of UNESCO, taking, to a certain extent, the place of communication as a focal point of attention – including politically. The UN launched the World Decade for Culture and Development in 1986 and the UN and UNESCO appointed the World Commission on Culture and Development, largely at the initiative of the Nordic countries, particularly Norway and Sweden. The Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development was organized in Stockholm in 1998 and adopted a plan for further action. The most recent result of this development was the adoption of an international convention on cultural diversity by the General Conference of UNESCO in 2005.

A joint effort

Those invited to contribute to this book were asked to identify their own, most significant contribution to the work of UNESCO. I refrain from doing so. Instead, I have outlined above some general development trends in which we, who worked with UNESCO from the 1980s to the beginning of this millennium,

have all shared in. I have participated, as a representative of my country, in the drafting of many proposals and initiatives concerning the mandate and structures of UNESCO and its working methods. These proposals were, however, always joint ventures, having been prepared and submitted by a group of Member States, often by the five Nordic countries, or by these together with other countries. They have also been prepared at the national level in consultation with a wide range of experts, in particular both the members and the Secretaries-General of the National Commissions.

I can single out some Finnish initiatives. During my first term as a Board Member, Finland proposed an in-depth study focused on UNESCO activities in the social sciences. My Board colleague from Cameroon was co-rapporteur for the study. The recommendations resulting from the study gradually led to the development of the MOST programme (Management of Social Transformations) within the Social Science programme. However, many of the study's proposals, such as those concerning measures to increase input by the social sciences to serving UNESCO's other sectors, were not fully realized.

Education has been identified as UNESCO's specific responsibility in the field of human rights. UNESCO should continue to advocate the need not only to implement the right to education, but also of the need for human rights education. The Government of Finland proposed to the Board that an overall strategy be prepared for human rights education as a major element in UNESCO's work for a culture of peace and also strengthening its cooperation with other organizations in the field. The proposal had the support of the other Nordic countries and later that of other countries. Despite its adoption by the General Conference, the recommendations have not been fully followed up.

I believe it is important to regularly 'revisit' the major programmes of UNESCO to ensure that they correspond to current developments and global UN and regional priorities and do not contain obsolete elements. A good example of this is the overall review of the major programmes in the natural sciences and the social and human sciences presently being launched.

The Executive Board: A meeting place?

A Board member, as opposed to a member of the Secretariat, has increased possibilities of influencing UNESCO's work. The work of the Board is, however, very slow and sometimes frustrating. The efforts to reform the Board have a long history and progress has been slow. Looking back, I feel that I achieved more in the National Commissions Division in the Secretariat where I saw much more concrete results of my work. My impression may, to a certain extent, be due to the fact that while working in the Secretariat, I was much younger and more optimistic and I also worked closer to the grassroots of the Organization. A certain amount

of cynicism and disillusionment comes with age. Despite this, I have never lost my faith in UNESCO. The work of the Executive Board is an important part of the democratic decision-making process in UNESCO. It requires patience and diplomacy, but also insight into the programme of the Organization.

Finland and the other Nordic countries have constantly worked to render the structures and working methods of UNESCO as relevant and efficient as possible. We have proposed reforms of the governing bodies, including a reform of the agenda of the General Conference in order to appeal to the decision-makers. Additionally, Finland has also initiated the organization of youth fora in connection with the General Conference to engage young people in the programme of UNESCO. Other proposals include a reduction of the number of Board members (which is too big for the Board to be really 'executive') and rotation of Board membership so that small Member States can also make their voices heard. The Nordic countries have also always advocated an efficient division of work between the organizations of the UN system.

Originally, the Executive Board was designed to be a meeting place of great minds and so it was, for quite a long time. The members of the Board were elected in their personal capacity as experts in the fields of competence of UNESCO. I shall not go into the details of the development, leading to the fact that Board Members are now Member States and not persons. The earlier composition of the Executive Board was idealistic, but not realistic as the number of Member States increased. The Board acts for the General Conference between its sessions and is responsible, not only for the substance of the programme of UNESCO, but also for budgetary, administrative and often, also for political matters. Nevertheless, the amendment to the Constitution in 1991, changing the composition of the Board, requested the Member States to choose as their representatives persons who were qualified in one or several of the fields of competence of UNESCO. This requirement has not, however, been fully followed up. As a representative I myself was a hybrid, not an expert in any specific field, but a civil servant. My roots were, however, in the fields of competence of UNESCO as I came from the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

Gender inequality still persists

Until I joined the Secretariat in 1977, the situation in the division, of which I had become head, was a traditional one – the programme specialists were men and the general service staff, the secretaries, were women. The staff in the division came from many parts of the world, the men from countries not immediately associated with gender equality. It transpired that each staff member showed me exceptional solidarity. It was a great pleasure for me to work with our team where each member played an important part in the totality; I shall never forget them. In addition to being grateful to the staff as a whole, I would like to give special

credit to the secretaries, without whose accumulated experience, we could not have carried out our work.

This positive experience of good teamwork did not, however, extend, in the same way, to some other parts of the Secretariat where women as chiefs or directors were rare in the 1970s. Without going into details, I felt that a woman's voice, although head of a division, was not heard in the same way as that of a man in the same position. It was also a disadvantage to be a woman when going on mission or to meetings in certain Member States. These cases were, however, rare. At one conference, to which I was accompanied by one of my male colleagues in our division, the organizers refused to recognize that I was 'the boss' of my colleague and, their protocol arrangements insisted on the reverse. On the other hand, there were also pleasant surprises where one would least have expected them.

Conservative attitudes to the roles of men and women were also revealed in other ways. My husband took leave of absence from his work as a journalist and accompanied me, with our children, to Paris when I was appointed to UNESCO. He took care of our children and our household while I worked. Because of this he was, on a number of occasions, the subject of derogatory remarks from some conservative male colleagues of mine (not those in the National Commissions Division). His self-confidence did not, however, suffer.

Later, negative attitudes towards women representatives were less obvious in the Executive Board. The number of women who have been the main representatives of their government on the Board has, however, always been small. During my two terms on the Board, their number varied from three to eleven of, in total, 58 members. The majority of Member States elected to the Board have appointed Permanent Delegates, i.e. ambassadors as their representatives. Diplomacy is still a predominantly male profession. The first woman to chair the Executive Board was elected as late as 1991. From 1946 to 2005 the Nordic countries have held a seat on the Board fourteen times, five of whom have been held by women representatives.

On the Executive Board, the Nordic countries have consistently tried to draw attention to questions relating to gender equality. One aspect of this is the low number of women at the higher levels in the Secretariat. UNESCO has had nine Directors-General during the Organization's 60 years of existence. None of them a woman. The Director-General appoints the members of the Secretariat from the Deputy Director-General (DDG) down; no woman has yet held the post of DDG either. At present, all the Assistant Directors-General of the five programme sectors of UNESCO are men.

There is a need for an improved balance between men and women in the decision-making bodies of UNESCO. The adoption of a quota system to ensure

a more equal representation of men and women could be one way of achieving this. In Finland, all governmental and municipally appointed bodies (including delegations to international meetings) should have at least forty per cent each of male and female members.

Having left the Executive Board in 2001, I have since then only followed development in the Organization at a distance. UNESCO's gender mainstreaming policy seems, on paper at least, to be well conceived and to the point. The question remains, however, whether there are sufficient resources and staff to deal with the matter and, above all, whether there is a real 'political will' to concretely implement appropriate measures in this regard. The problem is similar to that at the national level in Finland where legislation meets all the requirements of gender equality but where much remains to be done in practice.

I ended my career as Director-General for International Relations in the Finnish Ministry of Education, but UNESCO has practically always been an important part of my life and work. I have had the unique possibility of experiencing UNESCO, both from the viewpoint of a National Commission, as a member of the Secretariat and as representative of my government on the Executive Board of the Organization.

Looking back, I consider that linking experts from the whole world in the Organization's fields of competence is one of the most significant achievements of UNESCO – if not the most significant. These contacts are all the more important, as cooperation for the development of education, science, culture and communication is vital for the development of a safer and more just world. To use an advertising slogan of the Finnish-based Nokia Company, an essential attribute of UNESCO has always been that it is good at 'connecting people'.



Eleonora Nitrofanova

Women: a constructive potential

Personal history

I was born in Stalingrad, now Volgograd. My father was an economist and my mother was a Russian language teacher. Making up my mind to follow in my father's footsteps early on, I set my sights on entering the prestigious Institute of International Relations in Moscow. Much to my surprise, I, an ordinary girl from the provinces, was accepted. After graduating with an international economics major, I spent some time working with the Foreign Trade Ministry and then continued my education doing postgraduate studies at the Marine Transport Ministry's research centre where I defended my thesis in international marine law.

I married early and, since I adore kids, I have four of them, as well as many grandchildren. I am pleased to have contributed to improving the demographic situation in this country. In 1989, at the very height of Gorbachev's perestroika, I quit my work at the Institute and set up a successful law firm of my own. Back in those days, doing business in Russia was a new and risky undertaking. Many people tried to dissuade me, but I like taking chances provided, of course, that they are well thought out. I really love independent work.

Setting an example for Russian women

Later, under the influence of my brother, a State Duma deputy, I too went into politics. I did so primarily because I wanted my children and grandchildren to live in a democratic society. In 1993, I was elected to the State Duma, the Lower House of the Russian Parliament, spending two years as a member of their budgetary committee. When they set up the Audit Chamber in 1995, I was elected to work as an auditor, becoming the first woman to venture into this traditionally male realm. For nearly six years, I focused on the country's domestic and foreign debts and kept an eye on banks working with government funds. Since Russia is placed 87th in the world pertaining to female employment in government, these undertakings were not done primarily for personal reasons, but rather to set an example for other Russian women that political involvement is possible. I am sure that the more women are employed in government and in politics, the sooner Russia will become a fully fledged democracy.

Broadening horizons through new perspectives

Soon afterwards, the chance to work for UNESCO came. Passing through the intensity of interviews successfully, I started working as the Organization's Assistant Director-General for Administration and Finance in January 2000. My three years working with UNESCO was more than just fascinating; it was a great experience for me both as a professional and as a woman. Before I joined UNESCO, I was largely stuck in the Soviet mentality. Through working for UNESCO, I truly became a European woman by learning to understand Western mentality, values and motivation. Most importantly, I came to recognize and appreciate the high degree of universal respect present in this multinational organization. This is exactly what is still missing in Russia, whose totalitarian history has inevitably influenced the general mindset of our people. Working with UNESCO, I have learned that the process of making civilized decisions is based on a comprehensive analysis and a maze of democratic, harmonization routines. Overall, I have found that working for UNESCO was a way of breaking with past clichés. It allowed me to see beyond the limited social milieu formed during the Soviet era. I know from my personal experience that a radical change of the human mindset is probably the most difficult change one can ever experience. That is why the main problem in Russia today is the need for our people to embrace new democratic ideas by parting with Soviet-era stereotypes – a process so difficult that it will take decades to complete. As they say, 'Democracy is a plant of slow growth'. Therefore, I am convinced that the road to democracy in Russia lies in the implementation of the gender equality principle enshrined in our Constitution.

A tiny pebble in the huge mountain

Since UNESCO is a large international organization, I believe that my contribution was just a tiny pebble in the huge mountain of everyday work done by the many people working there. Frankly speaking, UNESCO gave me much more than I gave back.

I came to work at UNESCO at a very interesting time. Reforms proposed by the Director-General, Koïchiro Matsuura, including a new information system, were introduced. I actively participated in setting up the Organization's all-new administrative department and worked with the Administrative and Financial Commission of the Executive Board. I helped raise money to repair the Organization's Headquarters in Paris, which had not been repaired since 1957.

My European experience could have been a factor behind both the President's May 2003 decision to appoint me as the first Deputy Foreign Minister and award me the People's Friendship Order.

My task as Russia's First Deputy Foreign Minister was to coordinate ties with fellow Russians living abroad. This humanitarian effort initiated by the then Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, included cultural, educational and scientific work with Russian speakers living outside this country, including through UNESCO. That is why they asked me to head the Foreign Ministry's International Scientific and Cultural Cooperation Centre, or *Roszarubezhcenter*, in the summer of 2004. I would say that provisions of the UNESCO Constitution are entirely in harmony with the goals of the *Roszarubezhcenter*.

Priorities and principles

Balancing personal and professional life is often difficult, especially when one comes from a large family. However, despite my success and financial stability, I continue my work so as to demonstrate to Russian women that our goals are attainable if one puts in an effort. Helping to give Russian women an equal status worthy of them is my biggest priority. I want to say that the real socio-political status of the Russian women differs starkly from what they are guaranteed by law, even though the Russian Federation signed and ratified the pertinent UN Convention that outlaws all forms of discrimination against women, signed the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 and undertook to implement the decisions of the 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly billed as Women in 2000: 'Gender equality and global development in the twenty-first century'.

Realizing that the implementation of these basic international documents in Russia may take decades, I stick to the tried-and-true principles of, 'Think globally, act locally' and 'One step at a time'; it is all-important to be able to set yourself small, but realistic goals and achieve them step-by-step.

Support needed for women's projects in Russia

UNESCO has many important tasks that lie ahead. As an outsider, I would like to see UNESCO play a greater role in achieving gender equality. Russians would really appreciate UNESCO's support for our project on women's new role in the new Millennium: 'Cratology of the Future. Feminine Model'. What makes this project so special is that never before have notions like social gender been viewed as part of the global civilization culture, as an inalienable part of the human life on this planet.

Also, I believe that introducing women peacekeepers in the Muslim world is another very relevant and promising project we could work on, and one that is urgent in Russia, with its 23 million-strong Muslim population. We would also appreciate UNESCO's participation in our 'Orthodoxy and the Social Awareness of Women' project.

UNESCO could act as a common platform for political, social and cultural interaction of women as part of the International Women's Union programme. We would certainly appreciate UNESCO's help in the implementation of a programme to eradicate child neglect and homelessness. Some experts say that there were an estimated 700,000 homeless kids roaming the streets at the end of 2002, which is commensurate with what we had in the immediate wake of the Second World War.

Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, said while speaking at the 49th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, that 'Gender equality is a major precondition for the development and preservation of peace in all countries'. Women have great peacebuilding and constructive potential in Russia. Women's problems and family problems remain the focus of my attention and are in line with the very logic of my life.



Jaroslava Moserova

Elevating the human dignity

A new political situation

My very first interaction with UNESCO was in December 1989, immediately after the downfall of the totalitarian Communist regime in Czechoslovakia. During the totalitarian period, UNESCO was of no interest to anti-communists, as it was completely controlled in the country by the omnipotent Party.

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, I and two others wrote a letter to the Minister of Education urging him to do whatever necessary to have Prague put on the UNESCO World Heritage List, in order to save the unique beauty of Prague from high-rise buildings and other architectural monstrosities. It worked, and is still working.

The rebirth of freedom and democracy in my country changed everything. Thus, at the age of sixty, a completely new life started for me. I was elected, in the first free election, to the Czech Parliament, and the Czech National Council, where I first served as vice-president and later as Chair of the Standing Committee for Science, Education and Culture.

After my term in Parliament, I was posted to Australia and New Zealand as Ambassador (1991-93). After my return, when given the choice of which department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs I should like to work in, I chose UNESCO. This was a logical decision since I had previously been in charge of

the Science, Education and Culture Committee in the Czech National Council. Also, throughout my life I was active in culture (as a translator, writer, dramatist and painter), as well as in education and science.

When I was appointed Secretary General of the Czech National Commission for UNESCO, it was an absurd situation as there was a Secretariat, but no actual National Commission. The Czechoslovak Commission had been dissolved after the division of the country. It was not an easy task to establish a new National Commission as it had to be formally instituted by a legal act of the government, and some distrust still prevailed among government members towards UNESCO because, before the Velvet Revolution, the National Commission had been under Communist control. I even had to seek an audience with the President of the Republic to put things right.

Building bridges

I believe that peace in the minds of men and women can only be restored by education, both at home and in schools. Yet the mightiest tool of all, for better or for worse is, of course, the media. The media, however, must not be interfered with, although very often they, unfortunately, escalate the animosities between peoples. I have no remedy for that. Perhaps the only possibility is public praise of the good newscasters, documentaries and audiovisual entertainment (it sincerely pleases me to see the UNESCO logo on the Discovery channel).

As for my activities in UNESCO, they were not spectacular, but I believe I did achieve something by diplomacy and thanks to the fact that I do like people and, dare say, that I understand them, or at least, try to understand them. In the Committee for Conventions and Recommendations (CR), I prided myself on contributing towards a fruitful dialogue, even with the most difficult partners. I believe I may have contributed towards the USA rejoining UNESCO, having spoken to several senators and congressmen, explaining how beneficial it would be for both sides. As I have been on the CR for many years, I can state that it does get results, not only in the individual complaint cases it deals with, but with most of the dictatorial States I see a slow, but steady, move towards a more liberal system. With only one exception, the dialogue with these countries is improving year by year. I believe, therefore, that the CR is of great value.

On the Executive Board, I always tried, unobtrusively, to smooth out friction and unnecessary fights over wording; I also tried to always speak briefly and to the point. The greatest thing life had in store for me was, without a doubt, my election as President of the 30th General Conference; it was a great honour.

The most momentous achievement for UNESCO, during the years of my association with it, was the 31st General Conference. It took place shortly after the tragic attack on the Twin Towers of Manhattan, and while most other major

intergovernmental conferences were cancelled. Prior to the General Conference one could feel the tension. The representatives of the Islamic world, no matter how blameless, felt apprehensive and were on the defensive. The atmosphere was uneasy, to say the least. Yet, after the opening of the Conference and the brilliant speech by President Chirac, somehow the tension disappeared and the whole General Conference went well, in the spirit of mutual understanding and goodwill. I truly believe that that General Conference helped to thwart the aim of the terrorists, that is, to drive a wedge between Islamic and Christian countries. Few are aware of this crucial role played by UNESCO at a crucial moment. (I hope my opening speech and informal diplomatic discussions also contributed towards the peaceful and fruitful course of the General Conference.)

The necessity of multilateral cooperation

If I should offer any advice to the future generations working in UNESCO, it would be to involve the National Commissions in quality projects, including to operationalize the normative instruments of UNESCO, to assist cooperation between countries with similar problems and to attract the interest of the media to success stories. UNESCO should also promote municipal radio networks in isolated regions, in order to transmit information, not least to illiterate people. UNESCO's priority to Africa should continue.

As Europeans, we need to stress the importance of not being 'euro-centric' and, the necessity to 'neutralize' globalization by 'positive globalization' of decency, enlightenment and quality education.

After having been attached to UNESCO for so many years, it has certainly changed my way of thinking. I believe that one must think globally. It is important to look beyond the love for one's native land and work towards the betterment of the world's people.

Contributing to women's role in the world

Fortunately, I never felt discriminated against as a woman in UNESCO, and I very much appreciated that, during the 30th General Conference, women were elected to both top positions: the Presidency of the Executive Board and Presidency of the General Conference. I experienced only one situation in which I felt the predominance of the male element and that was when I tried to introduce my pet project.

Much is being written about the empowerment of women, and I shall always support such efforts. I believe, however, that there is also something women could do for the world. They are generally the ones who shape the minds of young children, both in the family and in elementary school. If the women took it

upon themselves to break the vicious circle in which hate and prejudice is being handed down from one generation to another, the world would be a happier place. Whenever I proposed such a project, however, my male colleagues either turned a deaf ear or expressed skepticism, without even giving the proposition a serious thought. I, therefore, framed my project as ‘Women and teachers against hate and prejudice’ hoping it would be more acceptable to the predominantly male members of the Executive Board and could be incorporated in the Medium-Term Strategy.

Finally, I would like to reiterate a quote that holds special significance for me and that I would like to see somewhere on the walls of UNESCO:

‘Whoever violates the human dignity of others destroys his own.
Whoever elevates the human dignity of others enhances his own.’



Anastasia Nakkaazi

The challenge of implementation

My personal story

I am a retired civil servant born in a village called Masakwa in Mpigi District in the Buganda region of Uganda. I am one of seven children and my parents were peasant farmers.

I completed primary and secondary school in 1960 and my Bachelor of Arts and Masters degrees in 1968, plus teaching methods in science education, in the USA.

My first teaching appointment was in 1968 in Tororo Girls School. Later, I was appointed headmistress at Nabisunsa Girls Senior Secondary School and then promoted to Headmistress at Mount St. Mary's Secondary School, Namagunga. I worked briefly as Examinations Secretary for Primary Examinations before joining the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, first as Assistant Secretary, then Acting Secretary-General and, in 1991, I joined the civil service and was appointed Secretary-General, a post that I held up to 3 March 2004.

I am currently patron of the Women Engineers, Technicians and Scientists of Uganda (WETSU), patron of Uganda Libraries Association, a member of the Information and Communication Committee of the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology and Vice-chairperson of the Board of Governors of Buyege Girls Secondary School.

I have been awarded certificates of merit and hard work, including a UNESCO Philae Bronze Medal and certificate for distinguished service in promoting cooperation between Uganda and UNESCO.

Involvement in UNESCO

An outstanding Secretary-General of the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO in the seventies and early eighties, the late Joseph Magoba, was my student adviser in the USA and later became my mentor. Because I had admired him and his ways so much, I longed to work with him. When, in 1980, a post of Assistant Secretary fell vacant, and I had the necessary background in education and science, I was recruited. There were just two of us in the Secretariat of the Commission. I found the work very challenging because it was very diverse. I was exposed to an intensive learning experience to the point of becoming an unedited encyclopaedia on education, science and technology, and culture.

Any action taken in the course of work required extensive reading of documents, the largest being the UNESCO Programme and Budget that used to be four times its present size. Notwithstanding the mental exhaustion, leaving the office at 8 p.m. almost every day of the week and working weekends, I enjoyed being the first one to know, and being a small 'think-tank'. I gathered a lot of knowledge through exposure, not only from reading, but also attending UNESCO seminars, workshops and conferences both at national and international levels.

Such knowledge is very useful for understanding issues pertaining to holistic sustainable development and forging through life in the globalized village the world has become. My interaction with UNESCO also provided me with a direct link to the other UN agencies in the country. Although I was not a UNESCO representative, except for the UNAIDS programme, to which the Director-General appointed me to represent UNESCO, these agencies used to invite me to their meetings and other activities.

On a government level, I enjoyed direct liaison with high offices without the red tape. This is because the National Commission for UNESCO was recognized as the authority on UNESCO matters in the country.

I found it very difficult to relate the purpose of UNESCO, as described in the Constitution, Article I, to real-life situations. The issue is that some UNESCO activities do not explicitly reflect its intentions as cited in the mandate. The tools for achieving the desired outcome in the mandate are not laid out explicitly in the major programmes. Many people, therefore, conceive UNESCO as an Organization to promote education, science, culture, communication and information for their own sake and for development purposes. The notion that these fields of competence must serve human rights and security, promote international collaboration and ideals of justice and forge peace, the ultimate ideal

of UNESCO, is not always explicitly conceived. UNESCO should, therefore, come out with explicit programmes and indicators addressing what is spelled out in Article 1 of the Constitution.

My experience has shown me that issues pertaining to those ideals in the UNESCO mandate are very sensitive in some Member States, especially in Africa. These issues, usually tied to politics, are often entangled in the politics of the day. Some authorities tend to misunderstand the objectives of such programmes and activities and therefore confuse them with critics of the government in power as if it is being provoked on its record on such issues. This is a relevant problem in most Member States, especially in Africa.

The challenge of implementation

Interpretation of the UNESCO mandate has not been difficult for me, especially after a better understanding of UNESCO, but ensuring implementation and practise in the desired direction and getting the expected outcomes, was not obvious. I explained to people that UNESCO is there to further the twin objectives of the United Nations: ensuring development and peace. Each of these needs the other for prosperity, to which we all aspire, especially in Africa. In order to build and maintain peace, one needs to achieve the ideals described in the UNESCO Constitution. Through education, science and culture, one should become aware of the importance of these ideals and the need to strive to achieve them. One should learn to respect diversity and the possibility of achieving unity within that diversity; one should practise equality, human rights and justice through the rule of law and learn to resolve differences without violence. It should also be hoped that people acquire awareness of the rights, duties and responsibilities at all levels of societal life, as required by the Charter of the United Nations.

Once this is achieved, socio-economic development will emerge. It is also believed that when people are satisfied and share equally, socially and economically, there will be less likelihood of developing disgruntled sections of society, thereby provoking conflict and war. This was my interpretation of the purpose of UNESCO and I found people understood the principle. The problem was lack of clear and demonstrable indicators on the ground, making the whole thing appear far-fetched, wishful thinking. People would ask: ‘Judging from what is happening at home and abroad, is UNESCO really achieving its purpose, especially as far as peace is concerned?’

Another challenge is the need to promote and develop the major programmes of UNESCO to a level where they can promote the achievement of the ideals of peace and development. In cultures like ours, we are still struggling to achieve acceptable basic levels of education, let alone science and technology. When shall these major programmes develop to a level to enhance the attainment of the underlying principles of peace and development?

The mandate, mission and functions of UNESCO always informed the activities of the UNESCO National Commission. I was also centrally involved in the popularization of the Charter of the United Nations, which we translated into five major languages of Uganda, Luganda, Luo, Runyakitara (Runyoro-Rutoro), Kiswahili and Kiconzo. We also copied and distributed the Constitution of UNESCO and the Charter of the National Commissions and developed a brochure describing the mandate, mission and functions of the Organization.

We also participated fully in the project on building the culture of peace through translating and distributing the Manifesto 2000. We initiated an annual national UNESCO Peace Award. From our awareness campaign, we brought about the establishment of an NGO called ABETO (Always Be Tolerant Organization). We promoted the Associated Schools Project and UNESCO Clubs. Many activities were carried out involving primary and secondary schools, especially prompting intercultural dialogue and celebration of international days and we networked with NGOs involved in human rights and conflict resolution.

The Faculty of Law, Makerere University, collected many UNESCO books and documents on human rights to guide them in developing a university curriculum on human rights and peace. The awareness created by the UNESCO Commission on human rights education, peacebuilding and peaceful conflict resolution resulted in the establishment of the Human Rights and Peace Centre at the Faculty of Law, which became a valuable partner of the UNESCO Commission in Culture of Peace initiatives. The Culture of Peace programme activities proposed by UNESCO was widely distributed. The term 'Culture of Peace' found its way into the language of some authorities, even that of H.E. the President of Uganda; that was a measure of success.

The Preamble of the UNESCO Constitution stipulates that it is through learning that experience becomes engraved into our brain and mind or heart. Therefore, the building of the defences of peace should be done through education in schools and institutions and other non-formal programmes that penetrate the minds of men and women. Unfortunately, when constructing curricula, emphasis is put on the traditional academic subjects, which provide academic knowledge and production skills and not life skills and those that change attitudes and teach living together with others. Particularly, emphasis should be placed on the UNESCO Associated Schools Project because of its role in helping education stakeholders to inculcate culture of peace ideals through both formal and non-formal education.

The most significant contribution I have made to the Organization is transforming the Commission from a one-man desk (1962-1996) to a semi-autonomous body (1996 to date). I established a new structure, programme committees, operational networks with stakeholders in different sectors and also UNESCO focal points in the line ministries of the Government of Uganda. A good majority of the Ugandan people know about UNESCO.

Generally, I would have liked to see UNESCO programmes adapted and translated into national policy formulation and strategies. UNESCO has developed the Forum of Parliamentarians because they are the legislators, but still these are not achieving their objectives of lobbying for UNESCO programmes in government plans and their constituencies. The UNESCO Secretariat should help ensure that the UNESCO biennial programme and budget is taken account of when drafting national development plans.

Another issue I would have liked to attend to better was to visit the remote villages. I tended to remain at the desk, handling the massive documents, and in the institutions in the city area. In areas where we had UNESCO clubs, composed mainly of women and youth, our interventions were more effective in terms of raising people's morale and general awareness and boosting self-esteem in activities such as health-education work camps, adult literacy and environmental campaigns. These activities improve the visibility of UNESCO and I realized I should have done more of this. The snag was, however, limited staff and resources.

Although I do not have powers to change many things, I can x-ray national visions and programmes and be able to identify the gaps. One of our greatest challenges is non-implementation of blueprints and recommendations of major conferences and various plans of action.

No weaker-sex syndrome

Although women are among the priority groups of UNESCO, as an individual I did not notice any advantage or disadvantage to being a woman at UNESCO. However, I was overwhelmed by the number of female Secretaries-General and I wondered why it was so. From my upbringing and experience, I do not think being a woman is much of a handicap. What matters is command of knowledge, self-esteem and confidence and to relate positively and with dignity to members of the opposite sex.

I have been involved in women's activities, for example, as patron of WETSU and the programme of Women and a Culture of Peace which was initiated by UNESCO in Arusha. We have also had groups of women working in UNESCO clubs. I have, however, always believed that programmes, which isolate women from their male counterparts, place them at a disadvantage. Men also tend to resent ideas coming from women's groups as they think they are fussing and self-pitying. The message, which I give to the young girls, is to understand gender roles and to ensure they take up their roles very competently through education and culture. They should be all-round educated, composed and dignified ladies, competent in their home life and public service, whatever their choice. UNESCO should continue supporting and promoting the education of the girl child in order to bridge the gender gap in education.

My advice to women working with UNESCO today would be to continue working as human beings and not necessarily in the laid-back position of women, (weaker-sex syndrome), and be very competent in knowledge and skills and the work ethics the job requires for efficiency and effective output. They should not leave any room for men to say that there is a gap created in output because it is a woman who is responsible. Women should also continue to lobby the Organization to recognize the unique nature of the woman's role, especially in child-bearing and in home-making and management so that gender-friendly work policies are formulated.

I would like women to continue to be a priority group in the UNESCO programme since they are still lagging behind. The programme should have effective activities for women and there should be gender mainstreaming. Women should be encouraged to enhance their potential by awarding them scholarships and study grants and involving them in young professionals' programmes. This will boost their knowledge and skills and enable them to relate confidently to their male counterparts. They should be empowered so that they get job positions, not because they are women, but because they are competent. Women should participate in decision-making processes on merit.

Africa has to compete in the global village

I have come to believe that globalization is real and that Africa has to compete in the global village. However I have also learned that Africa needs empowerment if this is to happen. The World Bank's Structural Adjustment Policies, the shrinking of natural resources at worldwide levels and the threat of terrorism to world peace may not permit Africa to attract donor funding as before.

The area of top priority for the Organization should be education for sustainable development, also mainstreamed in other major programmes of UNESCO. With the world today threatened by war and conflict, terrorism and violation of human rights and democratic principles, UNESCO should put emphasis on promotion of education to address these world problems and streamline clear indicators for achieving them. The world is also threatened by climate change due to continued depletion of the ozone layer culminating in global warming. Increased use of fossil fuel and failure to switch to renewable energy as more effective sources of energy, poses a serious threat to the environment and to the well-being of future generations.

The effect of global warming on the natural and socio-economic environment is real. Every continent has its share of disasters that we hear about every day. The water level of Lake Victoria, which provides hydro electrical power, has dropped due to a prolonged drought. As a result, there is prolonged load shading. The further one goes from the prime areas, the less power. This impacts negatively on

the economy. UNESCO should give priority to interrelationships and interaction between human beings and nature in order to fulfil requirements for sustainable development.

The public should be educated to raise their level of awareness on issues pertaining to Article 1 of the UNESCO Constitution and to continue to promote knowledge of international instruments pertaining to the culture of peace and preservation of the natural environment. UNESCO should support Member States to achieve greater justice by improving their legal systems in order to ensure the application of their agreed laws. UNESCO should reinforce its Culture of Peace programme and demonstrate that without peace and democracy, it is impossible to achieve sustainable development.

Ute-Henriette Choven



Reaching out to children in need

I am the mother of four children who have the good fortune to live a comfortable life in a democratic society where all the basic needs of children are met in an adequate and equitable manner. For many years, I have engaged in social activities for the benefit of sick and handicapped children in Germany. Convinced that this involvement should not remain limited to any single country, I turned to UNESCO in the early 1990s and was given the opportunity to devote my energies to various projects for the education of children in need. This initiative has since grown into a vast programme involving some 300 projects in 80 different Member States of UNESCO. Every time I visit the projects on the ground and meet the children we are supporting, I am thankful to UNESCO for having given me the opportunity to prolong and intensify my commitment for the benefit of children who suffer and need our help - in all parts of the world.

The dire reality in which most of our projects are being carried out, the continuing poverty, injustice and exploitation of children in so many countries, has taught me the supreme importance of education, coupled with non-discrimination and respect for human rights, as the only way forward to give poor and underprivileged children a future.

Constructing defences for peace in the minds of men

Many UNESCO projects that I am supporting endeavour to meet the needs of children in areas of war and civil strife, living behind the fences of refugee camps,

wounded and crippled in their bodies and minds, and often forced to become child soldiers. There is no group of human beings for whom the key sentence of the Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution has greater urgency and importance.

I have, as Special Ambassador for the Education of Children in Need, done everything in my power to bring effective and lasting help to children who, abandoned by everyone, would have no future without UNESCO's assistance. The contribution I have been able to make in this way is something to be proud of, but at the same time, I am sadly aware that much greater efforts will be required from a wider circle of civil society if we are to fully live up to the aims of UNESCO's Constitution.

My involvement with UNESCO, for almost 15 years, has greatly enriched and broadened my personal experiences and has convinced me that what happens to children in remote and lesser known countries is, today, just as important as the fate of our own children. Being a woman has, in many societies, given me less restricted access to other women, mothers of the children we are trying to help, women who, too often, raise their children and maintain their family alone, without any help from government or society.

My advice to young women working in UNESCO today would be to broaden their outlook beyond the UNESCO Secretariat and see that UNESCO can, and must, mobilize and motivate people far beyond its own bureaucratic boundaries.

Empowerment through education

Experience has allowed me to realize that educating and empowering women as family heads, for instance, through vocational training and income-earning activities, is often the most powerful means of securing an education and a better quality of life for the entire family.

I believe that bringing education to children in need, surviving for the most part outside the school system and, more or less, abandoned by society, requires much more dedication, and much more inventiveness and imagination than most educational professionals can muster. These children will not get education simply as a by-product of expanding school systems. Their future depends on combined efforts of psychologists, health specialists, nutritionists, legal experts, and many others. It requires that UNESCO experts leave their offices and go out to where these children live and survive, in the most abject and inhuman circumstances. This is not just a matter of new programme priorities, but also a question of ethical commitment.

Progress for UNESCO in the medium-term will be linked, no doubt, to its capacity to penetrate more deeply into civil society and to seek active contributions from the millions of women and men who sympathise with UNESCO's ideals, but have no means of getting involved in its work.

Roza Otunbayeva



Challenges in a transitional period

New beginnings under a new regime

I came to UNESCO during the Soviet period. Perestroika and glasnost were in full swing at the end of 1980s in the USSR. Soviet people had not known such freedom of speech, expression and meeting before. Problems, not spoken of before, were now being openly discussed without fear. All deep-rooted foundations of the State system, norms, traditions and customs of public life were being reevaluated. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the superpower began reforming itself by reflecting on these colossal transformations. Consequentially, it became the locomotive steering the Soviet Union to the international community.

The Soviet Union began to generate new progressive ideas and to vigorously melt the ice of the Cold War. Great changes were seen both in the form and style of the foreign policy. Gorbachev sought to attract to the top echelons of power people of all ethnic backgrounds and nationalities, forming this vast country. Serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Soviet Republic, I was invited in 1989 to the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Secretary General of the USSR National Commission for UNESCO. I was appointed as a member of the Foreign Ministry Board with the status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR. It was an unprecedented appointment; the entire history of Soviet diplomacy, as well as 200 years of Russian diplomacy, knew only seven women ambassadors. I was the only representative from a Soviet republic among these 'magnificent seven'.

My appointment into the sacrosanct of the Russian tradition of diplomacy broke the age-old imperial custom of not having women in this field. I also broke the continuous sequence of men who headed the USSR National Commission. All these changes were, without doubt, duly noticed and welcomed at UNESCO Headquarters. I formed friendly relations with the heads of the Organization, the Director-General, Federico Mayor, Chairman of the Executive Board, Jose Vargas, heads of UNESCO National Commissions from many countries, and ambassadors to UNESCO. My path crossed many of them again during my diplomatic service.

I must emphasise that there were many women representatives at UNESCO, in directorial posts, as ambassadors of their countries and members of the Executive Board. I believe that in many countries, both culture and education form the core of the traditional sphere of women's activities. Most of the teachers in the world are women. A photo of the International Atomic Energy Agency, on the other hand, would show a different, more male-dominated picture. The harmonious atmosphere at UNESCO made me feel comfortable as a woman. I can only wish such continued harmony and agreement in the Organization in the years to come.

A time for reform in heated times

In late 1980s and early 1990s, the Organization was subject to heated discussions on its reform. Certainly, all UN agencies were in need of major reorganization, but our Organization became the evident victim of the Cold War ideological debate between the two worlds and the two systems. The issue of re-entry of the USA and UK to UNESCO became top of the agenda. Tectonic changes in the USSR and the former socialist block presented a unique opportunity to reconstruct the unity of this Organization offering a huge boost for a renewed thrust toward achieving UNESCO's objectives. It is for these reasons that the role of the Soviet delegation in the UNESCO Executive Board became exceedingly important and valuable. From 1989 to 1991, I served as Chairperson of the USSR National Commission for UNESCO and member and vice-President of the Executive Board of UNESCO. I am proud of having represented the transformed image of the country that was making its historical steps.

Rewarding encounters

My experience at UNESCO was unique to me. It was my first fully-fledged experience in an international organization. Learning the workings of the Organization from inside, and directly participating in its management and reform, was a school in international cooperation and co-existence. I later drew from this experience in 2002-2004 as Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. At UNESCO, I was fortunate

to meet hundreds of new people, make friends from Africa and Latin America, continents and regions with which I normally had so little contact.

The UNESCO experience was vital for me when I became Minister of Foreign Affairs of the newly independent Kyrgyz Republic - a post I held four times. Representing a superpower was one matter; representing a young fragile country with a baggage of transitional problems, was another. Nowadays, undoubtedly, development problems are the main focus for me and my country.

I took the opportunity at UNESCO to learn the mentalities of different peoples. The importance that different nations lend to culture in their developmental processes is particularly evident in such a large organization with a mandate for culture and education. National culture, in a broad sense, is critical for poverty reduction and integration in the world. This relationship is described by renowned specialists, such as Lawrence Harrison and Samuel Huntington at Harvard University and can, to my mind, become an important vector in UNESCO's objectives and activities.

I have fond memories of the Jomtien World Conference on Literacy in 1990 where I represented the USSR, one of the world's most literate countries. The experience of Third World countries seemed irrelevant to us since our literacy levels were one of the highest in the world.

Today the situation is different. A young country like Kyrgyzstan has a burden of problems, including in the field of education, and we more than ever before need to draw from the experience of other countries in approaching and cultivating methods of education for our growing generations.

UNESCO activities did not reach the far corners of the USSR, a vast but highly centralized country, and were largely limited to Moscow. We had begun to decentralize our work during Soviet times, opening UNESCO National Commissions in Georgia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Yakutiya and allowing universities and scientific groups from remote areas to take part in our projects. Such local work in the Republics of the former Soviet Union precisely reflected the UNESCO mandate of promoting world peace and safety through educational, scientific and cultural integration. The Soviet Union was a country where different races, languages and religions intersected in their proper habitats. During that historical period, we actively promoted UNESCO's principles and visions.

At UNESCO I had the opportunity to meet renowned figures of culture, science and education, including people from the former USSR. During my time in Moscow I formed close relationships with artists, journalists, academics from Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and others.

The horizon signalled conflicts in the 1990s. The Nagorno-Karabakh and Georgian-Abkhaz, Pridnestrovie conflicts became evident, and the situation in Central Asia was unpredictable. The authoritarian system weakened; the air of freedom flowed about, and the independence movement in the Baltic States began. It was a time of deep systemic crisis in the USSR. Such historical transformations do not happen every day or every year - especially in a country with pretensions to being a beacon for half of the world. The ancient Chinese wished a life in the times of change only to their enemies – we were proof of the truth of this old saying. Unfortunately, the transitional period for many now-sovereign countries of the former USSR was painful. However, those who managed to escape civil war, ethnic conflict and violence have been truly fortunate.

The ideas of the UN and UNESCO are equally strong and applicable during times of peace and war. But if war begins in the minds of people, we must bring up the new generations in the spirit of peace, friendship and tolerance and not allow tension, collisions, and escalation to war. In this age of globalization - CNN and Al-Jazeera, transcontinental air and tele-communications, international political and economic alliances, intensive traffic of people across continents, mixed labour markets – every small country, wherever it may be based, feels the realities and events of the world and seeks answers to pressing problems of its existence in the international society.

It is here that UNESCO activities are vital. This historical network of experts, traditions, and databases are needed to both rich and poor countries alike in order to arrive at adequate solutions to current problems. In the twenty-first century, we also take into consideration, regardless of the geography, the highly mobile and educated individuals and politicised populations thanks to the introduction of election systems in many countries. In these circumstances, UNESCO must respond to acute, pressing problems, as well as to the fundamental problems of people.

Revisiting the fundamentals to tackle actual problems

Many young countries face three main challenges: development, security and national identity. The issue of cultural and national identity sometimes overshadows the challenges of development. The experiences of other countries that have successfully developed their national languages and managed to live with one more official language in multilingual settings, is invaluable. How to make the lives of our post atheist, introvert societies with the sudden influx of all sorts of religious groups, peaceful and harmonious?

Illiteracy has taken on new forms in both the developed and the developing worlds and remains an unknown territory. Although UNESCO is understandably not an international funding agency or a charity, it nevertheless lacks the

effectiveness, leadership role and contribution to the problems of education in developing countries. In my opinion, UNESCO faces a problem as ancient as life itself. It needs to focus primarily on fundamental issues, such as education. A rapid integration into the wild market has caused such solid education systems as the Soviet one to undergo unbelievable transformations, at times degradation, and this process is not yet completed. Each independent country had to rewrite textbooks on history, geography, literature and political sciences; some books are still being written to this day. Each country has adopted its own language as the language of instruction, which has resulted in a need for total re-qualification and change of teachers. Added to this are contemporary tendencies when adolescents are forced out of classrooms to feed families, lured by the prospect of earning money. The era of the Internet and accessibility of international television channels deter children from studies and reading, with negative impacts on the children - not only from poor backgrounds, but also from wealthy families. Through external financial assistance and our ideological disorientation, these new countries have seen emerging, in a single country, dozens of universities with mixed programmes, foreign content, and instruction in a foreign language. As a result, in a small country with a 5 million population, there is in excess of 40 universities of questionable quality.

UNESCO must do more

There is a lack of intellectual potential and databases in developing countries on many pressing and non-standard issues within UNESCO's mandate. The cultural sections of many embassies of rich countries provide significant assistance in bilateral exchanges. I wonder why UNESCO does not have online databases within its fields of competence, which would be comparable to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Simple databases of expert networks, museums, universities, scientific institutions, artists workshops, festivals, etc would help the establishment and development of education, culture and science in many countries with weak information resources.

I would suggest that UNESCO become a visible landmark for each developing country, particularly in the field of education. The dialogue of experts and countries on these issues is extremely important, especially in unstable parts of the world, where many problems have an explosive character. The five Republics in Central Asia are forming various political systems in which dialogue among peoples, intelligentsia and teachers is restricted. Furthermore, different education systems with no links to each other are being adopted, and it is difficult to predict the form or existence of a common and 'problem-free' market for goods, services and labour.

There is no doubt that UN system's standards on recruitment and promotion of women are benchmarks, gradually being adopted by countries around the world.

Women's status in society in the countries of the former USSR, and Central Asia especially, is particularly weakened. Women here have borne most of the problems of the transitional period – economic stagnation, social collapse of families, and deterioration of health care, education and social services. In the absence of a tradition of strong political parties, the majority system we currently have in place for elections requires substantial finances, which most women do not have. This leads to limited female participation. In fact, the current Kyrgyz parliament does not have one single woman representative. This is the result of fifteen years of our independent history. The Kyrgyz political history has not known such disgrace. In neighbouring authoritarian countries women are present in name, however, their weight and role in politics and society is negligent.

How can UNESCO help the countries where women's role and status are far from the ideas of gender equality? My country is a member of OSCE, UN, and UNIFEM. I have never heard these organizations' moral evaluation of the current situation or the concern from western countries in relation to these facts. I know of only one person, a person-institution in essence, who compiles a rating of countries reflecting women's participation, attends various international fora at its own expense, and often raises uncomfortable questions to heads of States on women's issues. This is a Briton, Raymond Lloyd (www.shequality.org).

In the area of education and instruction, UNESCO has invaluable and irreplaceable experience, expertise and potential. I participated in an international conference for Asian women on a culture of peace in Hanoi in 2000 where we exchanged views on how to intensify women's participation in solving crucial problems in society. The depth and spectrum of ideas, the wealth and variety of experience, the dedication of women to peace, development and progress inspired me. Every day, I talk with the women in my country – particularly from villages. This is the most educated, sincere, incorruptible, moral and responsible part of the population. How can we ease their burden, help them spread their wings, make them happier in this turbulent time, in this drawn-out transitional period?

Maria Luisa Paronetto Dalier



Photo by Manja Offerhaus

Intellectual and ethical challenges

My personal story

I am happy to contribute to this publication in a free and personal way, especially as the questions, asked with tact and relevance, made me realize more than ever the importance of UNESCO in my life, as well as of the dialectic relationship between my private, personal and national life and the universal perspective particular to UNESCO.

I belong to an old Venetian family, and Venice has for centuries attracted and fascinated visitors, many of whom settled there and made it their home. All languages were spoken in an international and cosmopolitan environment. I did my studies at the University of Padua, founded at the beginning of the thirteenth century by Venice, and which has seen attendance by great minds, such as Petrarque and Copernic, but more importantly by students from all over Europe. I devoted myself to Greek literature and meditated on the impassioned realism of Tucidide and the ethical absolute of Antigone. The war was a horrible jolt: the efforts to restore the foundations of peace and the structure of democracy obliged us to seriously consider the imperatives of human rights.

At one difficult moment in my life, when a friend asked me what I intended to do, I answered that I would like to work with an organization dealing with education, science and culture, having its headquarters in Paris; a place called UNESCO.

Unfortunately, Italy was not a member at the time. Research, which I undertook in the archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in UNESCO, enabled me to reconstitute a fascinating history. On the one hand, was the impatience of democratic intellectuals who felt the right and duty to quickly restore international dialogue to fight against the effects of Fascism and war, and on the other hand, the hard realities of political balancing acts which required a certain period of latency. I continued to gather documentation on UNESCO, particularly through the English specialized press. I was fascinated. I even had the audacity to publish, in a major publication, an article of four columns, which had as its title quite simply 'UNESCO'. I re-examined this article a few days ago and found it somewhat rhetorical and abstract. I was reminded of the difficulties of achieving a task which could hardly lead to Utopia because it answered the fundamental questions of men and women aspiring to a different, more human life.

At the beginning of the 1950s, when I began to work at the National Commission of UNESCO, one of the very first assignments entrusted to me was to organize, in collaboration with the authorities of the Ministry of Education, the celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in school establishments. There I experienced having to answer questions from young people who denounced the contradiction between universal rules and their own personal and daily lives. Eventually, I have come to prefer to centre my initiatives concerning human rights on concrete and tangible questions such as illiteracy, social prejudices and revision of history textbooks.

This work on human rights was closely related to my personal research in the field of contemporary history, as my research covered not only problems of decolonisation, but also ethical and intellectual resistance to Fascism. There was a fertile contamination between these two subjects. This led to an essay on the problems of education in Africa, in which I incorporated the outcome of international meetings organized by UNESCO on this enormous problem and my own personal experiences arising from various visits to the African continent, and in particular to universities. In this book, it is not only the problem of women's access to education that is examined, but also the fundamental role of women in the process of education.

Personal and professional encounters and challenges

In 1972, I was elected to the Executive Board by a unanimous (but one) vote (they teased me by saying that Italy had abstained from the vote for reasons of discretion). I felt I knew all, or most, of the operating methods of the Board since, for ten years, I had been the deputy of Ambassador Pompei and had been entrusted with questions on 'programmes' for which the National Commission was more specifically qualified. On the morning of the first meeting, the women members of the Board (three out of forty) found on their table a splendid pink

rose. Personally, I appreciated this gesture, even if it was a bit outdated, but I was not surprised by the reaction of those who saw this as a kind of reverse discrimination.

During my previous participation as a deputy on the Board, I had had the occasion to meet two extraordinary women. One was Indira Gandhi, who was Minister of Communications in India at the time. We would find ourselves together at the coffee breaks and chat about everyday life, things such as the difficulty of protecting oneself from the cold by wearing a coat on top of a sari, or the best way to maintain short hair. Indeed, to the great dismay of her fellow citizens, Indira had cut her hair. However, in the midst of these daily banalities, a sort of lightning passed through her eyes, and in her voice, when she spoke of the requirements of, and the need for, development for which her country had assumed a leadership role.

The other person who deeply impressed me was an English lady, Dame Mary Smieton, whom the members of the Council had designated 'Our lady of good advice'. She was of a certain age and of great competence, who, better than anyone, was able to understand the reasons and arguments of all sides and, on this basis, could identify elements of consensus.

Much later, I left the calm of my retirement to become Vice President of the National Consultative Committee on Human Rights. I thus had, ten years down the road, the privilege to once again use the experience I gained at UNESCO to organize a national meeting on the subject of 'Human rights today: how to live them, how to teach them'. The meeting took place in the 'Accademia dei Lincei', the most prestigious institution in Italy. It was a success, but personally I was struck by the acceleration of techniques compared to the slowness of awareness of the problem.

Sixty years ago, I finished my daring and naive article by writing that UNESCO needed a large breath of fresh air. I was probably influenced by the famous image of the Bergsonian 'supplément d'âme'. Much later, I was very happy to see philosophy officially take its place in the programmes and the organigram of UNESCO. The new sector had been entrusted to Jeanne Hersch, who left her Chair at the University of Geneva for two years to take on this task. She concentrated a large part of her work on the realization of an extraordinary book, 'Birthright of Man', a thematic collection of texts, quotations and fragments concerning the whole of human experience; all peoples, cultures and history. A kaleidoscope of testimonies, which reveal a human world, both spiritual and carnal, in which women were in a position to enter and to act under the impulse of the motto 'I care'. Jeanne Hersch, who left us three years ago, is today considered, along with Hannah Arendt and Edith Stein, as a leader not only of a way of philosophical reflection, but also of taking charge of one's existence.



Kim Phuc Phan Thi

From a symbol of pain to one of hope

As an innocent victim of the Vietnam War at the age of nine, the photo of my severely burned body by napalm has, ultimately, helped turn my life into a worthwhile mission of helping other child victims of war. In 1997, Ms Ndèye Fall, the UNESCO representative to Quebec took the initiative for me to be appointed as a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the Culture of Peace. Having seen Shelley Saywell's documentary 'Kim's Story: The Road from Vietnam', which aired on Canadian television, Ms Fall told me that the daily life I had was indeed a process of transformation from being a symbol of war to a symbol of love, forgiveness and hope.

The most rewarding experience I have had with the Organization is the privilege to carry out my mission of raising people's awareness of the importance of an appreciation of peace. This mission is consistent with my desire to contribute to world peace, considering the pain and suffering I have gone through. I have also had the opportunity to meet many wonderful people within UNESCO and around the world. Many of these people are also working towards building world peace.

Through my work for the Kim Foundation International and partnership in fund-raising with other organizations, I have helped child victims of war in Afghanistan, East Timor, Iraq, Kenya, Romania, Uganda, and Vietnam. This help has allowed the children to acquire the education essential for their development. Education, in my opinion, is one of the most fundamental human rights. By giving them the education they deserve, I believe that I have helped contribute to the effort of

respecting and restoring justice in the world.

The Preamble of the UNESCO Constitution is definitely important in my work. It is important to help people become aware of how horrible wars can be, and how beautiful the picture of peace is.

The Kim Foundation International concentrates primarily on these goals.

In my opinion, the current international environment has many potential conflicts, many of them unnecessary. The best way to promote peace is by setting good examples. If we can overcome the challenge of avoiding conflicts within our lives and our work, others will tend to do the same.

My work with UNESCO has provided me with even more respect and trust from people around the world, in my professional and personal life. My desire to promote world peace is very consistent with this work that further shapes my world view towards a future with no violence and no armed forces.

Steady progress for gender equality

I believe that women and men associated with the Organization enjoy equal benefits and share equal responsibilities in representing it. I am confident that as a woman, I will be given all possible opportunities to pursue the goals of my work. Though my work with the Kim Foundation International is to help child victims of wars, I have increasingly realized the gender dimension of the burden caused by wars on children. Girls tend to suffer a great deal more than their male counterparts, mostly due to socio-cultural constraints in a poverty context. It is important to keep in mind that girls have different needs from boys and the chances of them overcoming the impacts of war-destruction and escaping destitution are often significantly lower. In my opinion, UNESCO has made steady achievements in the areas of women's empowerment and gender equality. However, there are pressing issues that deserve much more attention, such as violence against women and HIV/AIDS and are very closely related to women's subordinate status. Another crucial issue is that, although education is considered the key for women's empowerment, in many cultures education is still considered a liability for women rather than an asset, often the most important reason for women's low educational attainment.

I would say that young women who have the opportunity to work with UNESCO should recognize that they are fortunate to be in a position to make changes. They should try to see life through the eyes of underprivileged women and girls, encourage them to speak up, and help them formulate and implement strategies to overcome gender injustice in the family and in society.

Striving towards equality

I would like to see more effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policies. As I often go to the field, it is clear that there is still a considerable gap between policy and practice with regard to improvement in women's power relations with men. The biggest challenge, in my opinion, is to change people's gender-biased perception and practices. Mass media, advocacy and legal protection are important in transforming unequal gender relations, but often they work to reinforce gender-biased thinking.

I do think that the plight of women and children in many parts of the world deserves more attention from the Organization. Their extreme vulnerability and their human insecurity calls for a greater effort to relieve the burden caused by poverty, social and gender injustice, and many health and environmental threats.

In my personal view, the most significant contribution that I have been able to make to the work of the Organization is to promote it through media exposure. The story of my life is self-explanatory; my message of love and peace comes naturally from it. The lessons I would like to share with future generations involved in the same areas are numerous:

- keep your dream alive, and learn to forgive;
- make an effort to understand the destruction of wars in order to learn to appreciate peace;
- learn that many people in the world are still living under the control of their governments so do not take freedom for granted;
- learn to understand the pain in order to appreciate love;
- learn what poverty means for the underprivileged in order to appreciate what you have;
- learn to understand the desolation of hatred and corruption so as to learn the power of faith and forgiveness.

I have experienced these lessons and, if I can do it, everyone can.

Anaisabel Prera Flores



Commitment to a culture of peace

The path leading to UNESCO

I was born in Guatemala and have a doctoral degree in Law. I was always interested in my country's people and characteristics, patrimonial wealth, diverse cultures and in the meaning of a 'Mayan world', which constitutes a marginalized population, but, at the same time, is a source of inspiration and hope for the future. At the age of thirty, as the Secretary-General of the Supreme Court of Justice, I was nominated Minister of Culture in the first democratic period of Guatemala after a long civil war of thirty-six years. It was while I held this position that I represented my country as head of the official delegation to UNESCO's General Conference in 1987. At that time, I could not even imagine that this Organization would occupy such a special place in my life and that I would learn to become, not only a Guatemalan citizen, but a citizen of the world, capable of thinking globally and acting locally, and grow every day through the fascinating discovery of different cultures that I have had access to through UNESCO. I am still enjoying this privilege as Ambassador of Guatemala to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO.

Coming from a culturally diverse country, the essential equality of all human beings without distinction and the democratic principles established by UNESCO's Constitution, which I think is one of the most brilliant texts of all times, have been the keystones that have inspired my activities. It is important to mention that I

was chosen as a member of the Executive Board of UNESCO from 1989 to 1993 and vice-president from 1991 to 1993, based on personal capacities, not primarily as representative of my country. I think that my contributions related to Central America and Latin America in general, fitted into a progressive understanding of the world as a whole. This global vision, which UNESCO provides as no other body in the United Nations system can, is one of the facets of this ‘polymorphic’ learning that inspires my daily occupations.

A time of hope

I was born into a context of civil war and, at times, I knew at first hand what the claws and suffering of violence, confrontation and ill-will, imply. The longing for peace and understanding were, therefore, a part of my daily life from my childhood. Undoubtedly for all these reasons, I have contributed since the very beginning in UNESCO, to the definition and fomenting of the culture of peace, justice and dialogue, both as an attitude and a daily behaviour.

In 1994, as a delegate of the Congress of the Republic of my country, UNESCO’s Director-General, Federico Mayor, nominated me as special adviser for Latin America and the Caribbean and entrusted me with the supervision of the programme ‘Towards a culture of peace’. The ‘Culture of peace’ programme was the response given by the Director-General to Boutros Boutros-Gahli’s ‘Agenda for Peace’ in an atmosphere, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, of expectations for the ‘benefits and dividends of peace’. This period was, for me, a great experience of learning and knowledge of the world as a whole. It was a time of hope. We thought that the construction of peace was possible and that a new world without the arms-race could become a reality. Nevertheless, events demonstrated, once again, that vested interests were stronger than the desire for peace and solidarity in the world.

The ‘Culture of peace’ programme spread all over the world as an easily understandable concept for the immense majority of cultures and peoples, since it includes democratic values, struggle against poverty, endogenous development, justice and, especially, solidarity. We mobilized groups at global and local levels, such as women, young people, members of parliament, mayors, students and universities, artists, journalists and mass media, churches and religions, teachers, tourist organizations, armed forces and governments. It should be emphasized that although this programme no longer exists as such in UNESCO, the networks that were created continue to expand, inspired by the Declaration and ‘Plan of action for a culture of peace’, which was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1999. For example, in Guatemala, the group of ministers recently approved the ‘Public policy of a culture of peace’ for 2006-2015. The international movement for the culture of peace has been recognized in the outcome document of the 2005 Summit and approved by the General Assembly

of the United Nations, as a follow-up of the Millennium Summit. Among the different groups working for a culture of peace, undoubtedly, women and young people were the most enthusiastic, due to their real commitment to life and peace.

I shared the political responsibility of being a special adviser to the Director General of UNESCO with four other special advisers representing other regions of the world. Together, and in permanent consultation, we strived to help in solving many of the political problems that arose within the framework of a multilateral institution as complex as UNESCO.

Continuing the efforts towards a culture of peace

Having left UNESCO in 2000, I became Director of the International Foundation for a Culture of Peace, with headquarters in Madrid. Until 2004, I had the privilege of continuing my work on a culture of peace, helping to promote networks of civil society, universities, women and different other partnerships which had been formed in the previous years in UNESCO. I contributed to the elaboration of university courses and master degrees in a culture of peace, to the design of observatories in human rights and a culture of peace and support to publications on peace. The longing of young men and women to live in peace with others and with themselves is hampered by strong interests of different types which, unfortunately, are often major obstacles for the realization of that longing.

Today, both as Ambassador to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, I continue to promote these ideals with the conviction that if we build the defences of peace in the mind of all the men and women of the world, we can turn present trends and reduce the asymmetries that lead to extremism and violence. We need better knowledge of 'the other' in order to respect the cultural diversity of our world. In UNESCO, I helped reinforce the principle that we can neither judge nor despise anybody for their culture, race or religion. Nobody decides to be born; nobody chooses to be black, yellow or white, to be a man or a woman, or even to be born into a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Jewish family. Therefore, it is unacceptable that these circumstances foreign to our will become causes either of discrimination or arrogance.

Commitment to the young - and to a common future

The future generations are our permanent commitment. Life itself is a permanent evolution, both on a physical and intellectual level, as described by Charles Darwin in his diary from the Galápagos islands. We must always defend this infinite diversity so that young people can act according to their own thinking rather than in accordance with diktats emanating from close or distant authorities of power. This, in effect, would bring out what is most beautiful in the human being, that is, their thoughts and personal autonomy.

I suggest that UNESCO strengthen education for peace, tolerance, democracy and human rights for all citizens in the world. The Constitution of UNESCO is a point of reference that today is more necessary than ever in order to build a peaceful world. Future generations will need all moral and intellectual instruments to defend the values that assure the possibility of living together in peace. The young people of today will be the citizens of the world of tomorrow. Global citizenship without local anchoring is empty and local citizenship without global thinking turns out to be too narrow for the challenges of a world that, after the third industrial revolution, coexists and irremediably shares a common future.

Lourdes R. Quisumbing



Educating for human values and peace

UNESCO in my work and life

My first encounter with UNESCO was a dramatic event in my life. As the first woman Minister (later called Secretary) of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports of the Philippines, it was, with a special feeling of pride and honour, that I represented my country as head of the delegation to the UNESCO 24th General Conference in Paris in October 1987. I delivered my country's policy statement vis-à-vis UNESCO's sublime mission of peace and development and its major programmes of action. It was a euphoric era in Philippine history. On 24-26 February 1986, our people had put an end to a 20-year dictatorship by a non-violent power revolt, which stunned the world. Breaking from tradition, the first woman President was elected.

Little did I realize then that my involvement with UNESCO would change my life and provide me with the inspiration and direction to my future endeavours. Indeed, it is true that when one gets to know UNESCO, one loves it, and for me, that meant forever. After serving the largest Philippine government bureaucracy for four years (1986-1990), I opted to continue working with UNESCO as Secretary-General of a very small office of the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM). Rejecting the offer of President Cory Aquino to transfer residence to Paris as Ambassador to France and Portugal, I served the National Commission for eight years from 1990-1998, advocating for more

vigorous programmes and projects, and a bigger budget. Gradually, it gained prestige and recognition as one of the most dynamic national commissions in the Asia-Pacific Region.

In 1991, I was elected by the General Conference as Member of the Executive Board, the highest policy-making body of UNESCO, for a four-year term. From my country, I travelled to Paris to attend the Executive Board Sessions held twice a year and lasting three to four weeks. During these years I became more intimately acquainted and involved with the lofty ideals, as well as the complexities of the Organization, its structures and constituencies, its areas of influence and collaboration, its major programmes of action, and its problems, limitations, and challenges.

A memorable experience

For me, it was a rich and rewarding learning experience to meet and work closely with my colleagues in the 51-member Board comprising diplomats, experts, and luminaries from their respective countries. I was proud to represent the Philippines during the working sessions and in diplomatic receptions, where I gained more knowledge, better understanding and a deeper appreciation of diverse cultures and personalities.

I was treated with respect as an educator and as a woman by my colleagues and by the members of the Secretariat, led by the inspiring and charismatic Director-General, Federico Mayor. There were five to seven women on the Executive Board during my term. Every one of us felt very special as we took our places in the Executive Board room, each marked by a vase of exquisite flowers, oftentimes a single elegant rose. Two of us were later elected chairperson of the Board for consecutive terms: Ms. Marie Bernard Meunier of Canada and Ms. Attiya Inayatullah of Pakistan.

Listening more than speaking, I tried to limit my interventions to what was relevant, appropriate and significant. I immersed myself in the global agenda and in what contributions my country and I could make. As a result, when I spoke, I could sense that everyone in the room listened, including those in their offices tuned in to the Board proceedings. They gave me positive feedback. One woman delegate from Canada commented that I was ‘passionate and compassionate,’ a compliment I have tried to live up to since.

Concentrating my efforts on areas of my expertise, education, culture and values, my interventions and deliberations found their way into UNESCO documents. For example, ‘Values education as an integral part of basic education’ was integrated into ‘Education for All’ (EFA). The Philippines was recognized as the pioneer and leader in this field of education for having introduced a values education

programme in all the elementary and secondary schools in the country. I had participated in the 1990, World Conference on ‘Education for All’ in Jomtien, Thailand, and also in one of the first national initiatives in Jakarta, where we presented the Philippines’ EFA Plan of Action 1990-2000.

During one of our Executive Board sessions, Jacques Delors, Chairman of the International Commission of Education for the twenty-first century, presented his Commission’s report advocating lifelong learning, and the four pillars of learning as the ‘heartbeat of society,’ and spelling out what could be the educational paradigm to resolve tensions and meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

I took part in the lengthy and sensitive discussions, oftentimes wearisome and taxing, on the Declaration and Framework of Action on the Principles of Tolerance and on the Culture of Peace Transdisciplinary Programme. This involvement led to my participation at international conferences on peace and non-violence in Sintra, Portugal and in Kwangju, Korea. Later, I was elected President of the UNESCO Advisory Committee on Peace, Human Rights, Democracy, International Understanding and Tolerance, meeting in Paris once or twice a year.

I was particularly fortunate to have met and worked with two remarkable women, Ms. Ingrid Eide, member of the Executive Board and Ms. Ingeborg Breines, adviser to the Director-General on Women, Gender and Development and later Director of the Women and Culture of Peace Programme. They invited me to join them in their efforts towards Women and Gender Equality, Empowerment of Women, and Women’s Contribution to a Culture of Peace. Thus, I spoke both in a panel at the UNESCO Headquarters Plenary Hall during Women’s Day and at an expert group meeting on ‘Male Roles and Masculinities in the Perspective of a Culture of Peace’ in Oslo, presenting a paper on the effects of early socialization on gender roles; hosted the Manila Women Experts’ Conference in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995, and joined the UNESCO delegation to attend this Conference.

Educating for human values and peace

My twenty years with UNESCO have been extremely rewarding. I will never forget how fulfilled I felt and how proud I was of my country, when I received the Comenius Medal, an international award for outstanding contributions to educational theory and practice. It was awarded for the first time during the International Conference on Education in Geneva in 1994 to three educators: the renowned Brazilian educator Paolo Freire, whom I deeply admire, Petra Pitha of the Czech Republic, and myself. During the same conference, the ‘Declaration on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy’ was deliberated on and later adopted by the UNESCO General Conference.

In response to this Declaration, representatives from eight Member States of the Asia Pacific region met in Seoul, Korea in 1995 and founded APNIEVE (Asia Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education). It aims to promote international understanding and the values of peace, human rights, democracy and sustainable development in the region. I was elected founding President of the Steering Committee representing the Philippines and have served in this capacity for ten years (1995-2005). APNIEVE has produced three sourcebooks with modules based on the four pillars of education: learning to do, to be, to know and to live together - and trained more than 300 teachers and educators from about 30 countries in the valuing process and the holistic approach to teaching and learning. A fourth sourcebook is currently being developed.

APNIEVE has established linkages with The Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), The Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), The International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) from whom it has secured some support and assistance for its projects and activities. APNIEVE's contribution to international understanding and values education has been acknowledged and recognized by UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNESCO-Bangkok, UNESCO-APEID and our other partners and linkages, but its impact is limited due to the lack of a regular budget. Despite this limitation, APNIEVE has enabled me to participate in, and to deliver keynote addresses at several APEID international educational conferences in Bangkok and Shanghai on topics such as, Values education, Towards a culture of peace, Citizenship education, and Quality education for total human development, as well as in Bonn and Bangkok on Education for citizenship and the world of work: Towards sustainable future societies.

There is every reason to hope that with the commitment and dedication of its regional steering committee members and the sustained efforts of active chapters in Australia, China and the Philippines, APNIEVE will continue to promote the values of peace, human rights, democracy and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific Region and in the world.

During the 60th anniversary of its founding, I wish to congratulate UNESCO for having contributed to peace, security and development by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture; furthering universal respect for justice, and the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. I hereby express my deepest gratitude for the opportunity, the inspiration and the support to serve my country, the Asia-Pacific Region and the global community as a Filipino, as a woman, and as a citizen of the world.

Betty A. Reardon



Peace education, an invaluable tool for progress

Professional links to UNESCO

My first direct experiences with UNESCO were in the late 1960s and 1970s when I visited the Organization to learn about the activities related to my work as Director of the School Programme at the Institute for World Order (IWO), a New York based organization dedicated to peace research and peace education. From the onset, the work of the Institute was conducted within a framework of transnational cooperation, so the goals and projects of UNESCO were a significant factor in most of IWO's projects.

My substantive involvement began with the Division of Human Rights and Peace and also with the programmes in philosophy and the social sciences. Later, I worked on culture of peace and gender issues as a consequence of my work in the field of peace education. I participated in various experts' meetings through the years, some were preparatory sessions for major international conferences and such major UN events as the UNESCO Human Rights Conferences in Vienna and Montreal and in the World Congress on Disarmament Education in Paris in 1980, for which I conducted and submitted a preliminary study that became a background paper for the Congress.

In the early 1980s I conducted and submitted an initial evaluation for UNESCO of the University for Peace in Costa Rica prior to its establishment and have, from

time to time, participated in sessions related to UNESCO's relationship to that institution. A few years later, I served as a member of the jury for the UNESCO Peace Education Prize. Many years after my jury service, I was awarded an honourable mention at the prize ceremony in 2001.

During the preparations for the 1994 International Conference on Education (ICE) and the United Nations Year for Tolerance, I worked in a residential consultancy in Paris to assist Ms. Kaisa Savolainen in the development of some of UNESCO's contributions to the ICE and the Year of Tolerance. One result of that consultancy was a three volume teaching resource entitled, 'Tolerance: the Threshold of Peace,' published by UNESCO in 1997.

Another involvement was in authorship of articles in: 'Prospects' and other UNESCO publications, most notably several developed in association with Ms. Ingeborg Breines, 'Towards a Woman's Agenda for a Culture of Peace,' 1999 and 'Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective' in 2001.

For more than four decades, UNESCO's standard setting and guidelines have been central to my work as a peace educator and human rights and gender equality advocate. I have sought to advance the role of education as an instrument of peace and equality that are central to UNESCO's mission.

The most rewarding interactions I have had with UNESCO have been in my collaboration with UNESCO staff whom I have always found collegial and committed to the same goals that inspire my own work. I especially treasure the memories and the products of my most collegial and productive partnerships with Ingeborg Breines, Director of the Women and Culture of Peace Programme and Kaisa Savolainen, Director of the Section for Humanistic, Cultural and International Education. One special highlight was the launching ceremony at Paris Headquarters of 'Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective,' published as a joint effort of their two programmes. It was a privilege to work with women of such professional capacity and integrity, both of them having rich human qualities.

Facilitating cooperation in troubled times

It is important to recognize that dialogue and communication are essential to the pursuit of peace and security and that all collaboration must be preceded by and involve full and substantive discussions. In a number of cases, UNESCO has provided the only avenue through which educators and scientists from States separated by tensions and actual, or potential conflicts, have been able to meet to advance their common professional discourses. One such occasion for me was during a Caribbean regional meeting on education that took place in Cuba, and a later meeting of the project in Jamaica. The experience of engaging in

dialogue with Cuban educators was invaluable to me as a peace educator, striving to include multiple views and a global perspective in my work.

During the cold war, UNESCO was one of the very few venues that could bring together American and Soviet educators. That both States participated in drafting and agreed to the 1974 Recommendation on Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education concerning Fundamental Rights and Freedoms was a landmark event for the field of peace education and the creation of common ground on which educators from both States could base parallel and later cooperative endeavours. In my own case, it was through UNESCO that I first met Dr. Valentina Mitina, who was in every sense, my Soviet counterpart in peace education. We built a strong professional partnership that involved other educational organizations and institutions to which each of us related. We conducted common seminars and trainings in peace education. Through the initiative of Dr. Eva Nordland of Norway, and with the support of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO, we were able to lead teams in our respective countries in a project that produced: 'Learning Peace: the Promise of Ecological and Cooperative Education,' published in 1994 by The State University of New York Press. Dr. Nordland, the co-editor of that book was a strong advocate and associate of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project (ASP) and is well known to UNESCO. We are but a few of the peace educators whose work has benefited from the Organization's peace and security mandate.

Peace education, an invaluable tool for progress

As a feminist peace educator I have, of course, often reflected on this most significant line in the UNESCO Preamble 'wars begin in the minds of men' and have often quoted it in lectures and essays. While women leaders have not all opted for alternatives to armed force in the pursuit of national interest, it is evident that wars as such have, indeed, been conceived and executed primarily by men. In itself, this fact has significant implications for many of UNESCO's programmes. Of course, the gender perspective the Organization sought to bring to peace education and to its women's programmes is one way to approach this issue. So, too, is the initial exploration in expert meetings into the education and socialization of boys to understand better how these processes may influence male tendencies to accept and to apply force and violence to problems, so that education for practical alternative options and behaviours might be developed. Emphasis on the education of girls for social leadership and political participation is equally important when we read the phrase to mean, 'wars begin in the human mind' as was likely the original intent. With this reading, education for a culture of peace which attempts to deal with the very deep roots of war and violence in culture and psychosocial factors, becomes paramount.

Consequently, developing effective education and research directed towards the profound changes necessary for the achievement of a culture of peace will

require deep and broad assessment of the foundations and practices of education in general. Peace education and peace research, as espoused by UNESCO and all peace educators, must reach beyond the social sciences to embrace all areas of human knowledge and the widest range of socialization practices. If the foundations of peace are to be constructed in the human mind then the formation of the mind, modes of thinking and methodologies of teaching require a review and assessment. Changes in educational content need to be accompanied by changes in the philosophies and practices of education in order to educate and build strong foundations for the transformation of the global culture of violence towards the desired culture of peace.

Inspiration through partnerships

Most of my work has been in the area of developing ways of thinking and pedagogies to enable learners to conceptualize and work towards the realization of a world without war and gross violations of human rights. This work has been consistent with UNESCO goals and policies and often guided by the Organization's normative statements.

In my work with UNESCO, I have experienced the kinds of partnerships and cooperative work peace activists advocate between non-governmental organizations, international organizations, governments and national organizations. I have been able to observe and take advantage of the capacities and competencies of intergovernmental organizations, especially on occasions when I have worked with UNESCO in cooperation with other UN agencies such as the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA). This has given me a healthy respect for the unique possibilities that lie in UNESCO and in intergovernmental organizations. I have tried to include them in many of the activities I have organized such as the annual International Institute on Peace Education.

Validate women's efforts

In some respects, being recognized as an analyst and advocate of women's roles and rights in issues related to a culture of peace was certainly an advantage in my work with UNESCO. It has also provided me with the opportunity to voice the need for more attention to gender perspectives in all UN agencies and to call for more gender inclusive language. The need to bring the habits of mind and practice of gender exclusion to wider attention still remains throughout the UN system. While significant progress has been made in building gender awareness in all arenas of human society, the challenge of gender equality continues and the problem of women's exclusion from the public sphere is still deeply rooted. The route to gender equality lies in education, equal educational opportunities for boys and girls, of course, but also on substantive education pertaining to the

multiple issues of gender integral to all global problems, as well as the essential need to include a gender perspective in all proposals and policies for problem resolution. UNESCO has taken significant steps towards such inclusion and, as the major world education agency, carries a heavy responsibility to continue this work and to serve as a monitor to assure that relevant gender factors are included in all education programmes.

UNESCO's work on the education of girls and its use of the expertise of women who have been actively involved in peace processes and peace education have been substantively productive, have inspired others to become involved and have served to validate efforts women are taking in these fields in all areas of the world.

Global and long-range vision

I would advise young women and young men who are committed to the principles of the UNESCO Constitution, the values articulated in the UN Charter and the international human rights standards to be informed and actively aware of the status of gender relations and gender equality in all areas of their social and personal experience, to learn all they can of the norms of gender equality espoused and established by these international instruments, and to apply them in all instances possible to the goal of gender equality without which there can be no meaningful progress towards a culture of peace. Cooperation between men and women and the appropriate integration of men committed to human equality into women's efforts toward the realization of human rights and the overcoming of violence as a political tool, are essential to the success of such efforts.

I also hope that those entering this field over the next generation will keep a global and long-range vision as the framework of their academic and activist endeavours. I trust they will carefully consider actual and potential consequences of what they advocate and pursue, particularly in relation to the every day effects on local life and vulnerable groups. They should cultivate networks and partnerships among and between non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, national organizations and governments and local authorities and educators. They should also be guided by both current and long-range needs, and so be able to take advantage of both expected and unexpected opportunities to advance the cause of educating to achieve and maintain a culture of peace.

Finally, UNESCO should continue the efforts I have referred to above and should, as well, integrate into its work the essential complementary principle to gender equality, the abolition of war, by educating about alternative security systems, concepts of human security, and the possibilities offered by the principles of non-violence, integral to a culture of peace, for ending the war system. The ten principles of disarmament education set forth in the Final Document of

UNESCO's groundbreaking 1980 World Congress on Disarmament Education complemented by principles of education for gender equality hold the greatest potential for facilitating a learning that can capacitate the peoples of the world to construct the foundations of peace in the minds of men and women.

Françoise Rivière



Photo by UNESCO/Michel Ravassar

Combining utopianism and pragmatism

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of UNESCO, it might seem normal to reflect upon the Organization's achievements but, instead, I will concentrate on my own experience as a staff member, since I joined UNESCO some 25 years ago – almost by chance, I would say. On second thoughts, it may not have been purely by accident: not only my background (literature and political science) but also my interest (I left the academic life because I felt it was too remote from 'the real world') led me to an institution which combines utopianism and pragmatism, lofty ideals and an ambition to 'act'. That nice mix – which makes it so rewarding to work for UNESCO – may be the real reason for the very bad '*morale*' of its staff, which has been in crisis no matter what the administration and the Director-General are doing; you cannot help but feel passion for UNESCO and both love and hate for a job which is, in itself, a *raison d'être*.

During these 25 years, I had very different superiors, not to speak of three successive Directors-General – A. M'Bow, F. Mayor and K. Matsuura – with whom I worked very closely. But, whatever the nationality and culture of my 'boss' (French, Vietnamese, Senegalese, Brazilian, Moroccan, Spanish or Japanese), I never, I insist never, experienced any disadvantage or obstacle because I was a woman. I am not sure the situation would have been the same had I stayed in a national (i.e. French) environment. Never was I opposed, criticized or blamed because I was a woman; never did I meet the famous 'glass ceiling' (I entered UNESCO at an intermediate level - P4 - when I was 31; I have been Assistant Director-General

for more than 7 years now). So, I wonder whether multiculturalism might not be the best recipe for gender equality. We all know that gender inequality is linked to cultural obstacles and prejudices. It may well be that women are freer in situations where there is not *one* prevailing cultural code but a multiplicity of them, and the need for constant interaction and adaptation. From there, why not infer that equality comes from diversity!

Now, if I had a piece of advice to give to young women entering UNESCO, I would tell them: just be yourself. Don't try to situate yourself *vis-à-vis* the male model – either to imitate it or to oppose it. I am convinced that women have specific – gender-based – qualities that have to be fully displayed and exploited in order to build an alternative model, which may be more suited to actual circumstances. Usually, women have an ability to provide moral support and show solidarity, which is very precious in professional life; they may have a better ability to cope with interdisciplinary (and we all know that we need interdisciplinary approaches to deal with contemporary complexity); women are known to mix concerns for details and a synthetic grasp of things, to be both humble and obstinate – all these 'specific' qualities and skills originating in the need to combine the requirements of daily life with those of professional responsibilities. We have all heard about the double, or triple, 'work days' of women; we all know, as women, how difficult it is to accept being permanently guilty, betraying either your family or your job. But there may also be a virtue in this perpetual clash: that of teaching us how to reconcile the opposite, how 'to make it work' and find complementarity, where others see only contradictions.

I know that these remarks may sound conservative. To advocate for specificity is sometimes dangerous and, perhaps, used as an argument for those championing the 'traditional' role of women. Nevertheless, I still continue to believe that women's empowerment implies – first and foremost – a change in perceptions, understanding, expectations and beliefs *vis-à-vis* what women are, are willing to do, and are able to achieve.

I placed a lot of hope – personally – in previous efforts of UNESCO to promote the 'voice of women', a specific vision of the world which would complement the one usually offered through neutral (i.e. male) patterns of thought and research. I am a bit disappointed we were not able to do more. Worse, I have the feeling that in recent years UNESCO has lost part of its leadership on this subject, although – given its multidisciplinary mandate – it has a unique comparative advantage to foster gender-sensitive insights and prospects.

This being said, I am convinced that the best way to change the prevalent modes of thinking remains to *donner à voir* (*give to see*), i.e. to act as a role model. The success met by the L'Oréal-UNESCO award For Women in Science serves as a good example. You cannot change societies by mere decree; but you can provide

evidence that women have a role to play in science, and that they are able to perform such a role in an outstanding manner.

So let me conclude by saying that the best contribution women at UNESCO can provide to UNESCO's women's programme is to show that one can succeed despite being a woman or, even better, because one is a woman.



Sawsan Saleh

Implementing UNESCO's ideals in schools

My path to UNESCO

My professional career primarily concentrates on two fields: education and the empowerment of women. Married with three children, I worked in the field of heritage and in education before becoming an activist in the field of women's affairs. Currently, I serve as the vice-president of the Association of Women Action (AOWA), which aims at achieving women's empowerment and insertion in sectors such as education, economy, and social development. Additionally, I am a member of the General Union of Palestinian Women and I work on the committee for enhancing the participation of women in elections.

In addition to my activist involvement, I have worked in the Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science (PNC) since 1997 and am currently in charge of the UNESCO file, notably the dossiers of education and culture. In 1999, I became the national coordinator for the UNESCO Associated Schools Project (ASP). Currently, we have 38 schools registered.

I participated in both planning and organizing a project funded by UNESCO, which aimed at raising awareness of gender equality. Many different workshops took place in order to educate the coordinators of ASP. I believe that such an activity is vital in Palestine, especially now with the spread of the religious trend. Given the consistency of our work, we managed to make International Women's

Day on 8 March a celebration day in all schools. Dancing, plays and music take place in order to explain, in a pleasant atmosphere, the rights of women and their role in society.

Implementing UNESCO's ideals in the ASP

The UNESCO Constitution is very important particularly to Palestinians, and more specifically to Palestinian women, since we suffer much more from the conflict and we face huge responsibilities in addition to the insecurity and the loss of our loved ones. We have, therefore, initiated a project pertaining to the culture of peace, while taking into consideration the plan of action for the 'International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World' (2001-2010). From 26-30 March 2006, we organized a regional workshop in Amman on the culture of peace and cultural diversity.

I try to translate UNESCO's noble ideals through my work with the Associated Schools by introducing some crucial issues within their activities and projects, such as human rights, women's rights and their role in society, children's rights, personal freedom, cultural diversity, equity and justice. All these essential concepts are disseminated through radio, school magazines, theatre, school painting competitions and music.

My modest contribution is to explain to stakeholders what UNESCO is and to convey its principles and areas of intervention through the activities of ASP. In order to accomplish better results, I believe that UNESCO should take into consideration more, the situation of every single country before implementing a suitable guideline. Sometimes many of the principles and ideas are different from those implemented on the ground.

Encourage and support women

I commend UNESCO for considering gender issues a priority on the working agenda, for offering scholarships and fellowships for women in all fields of knowledge and for providing the opportunity for women from all over the world to meet in order to learn from each others' experience.

I would like to emphasize the importance of encouraging and supporting creative and brilliant women to improve their skills and abilities. I suggest UNESCO incorporates the social issues concerning women and devotes part of the budget to school curricula, scholarships for girls and on publishing books about pioneer women, and women's creative activities such as literature, music and dancing, to enhance the exchange of knowledge and experience between women all around the world and reinforce awareness of activities through theatre performances, dance and music shows.

My experience with UNESCO is a positive one due to its illuminating and developmental approach. The biggest advantage of the Organization is the opportunity of learning from its principles, workshops, publications and experts. Working with UNESCO has helped me widen my circle of interests and broaden my horizon. The motto, 'work locally and think internationally' helps strengthen the idea that that we are part of an enormous world sharing the human heritage, and that our problems are part of the world's concerns.

I advise the young women working at UNESCO to implement the Organization's guidelines concerning gender issues, to continuously propose gender awareness activities and to consider their work at UNESCO as a mission for development.

*Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn
of Thailand*



Photo by Camornrat Thepgumpanat

Empowering minority children through education

Edited speech from the 5th meeting of the High-Level Group on 'Education for all', Beijing 28-30 November 2005

I wish to congratulate UNESCO on the Organization's 60th anniversary. May the effort of UNESCO in promoting 'Education for All', both in sciences and education, be successful. I would like to thank UNESCO, once again, for honouring me with the ambassadorship for the Empowerment of Minority Children through Education and through the Preservation of their Intangible Cultural Heritage. This long title is in fact an important part of our main theme 'Education for all', which is the goal that we all hope to achieve.

I see education as a process in which a person gains knowledge and qualities, in order to survive, to upgrade intellectual capacity and to become a more effective person for his or her own benefit and also for the well-being of the whole society. Therefore education is a necessity. For this reason, minority children should be given an equal educational opportunity just like other citizens of the country, so that they can make progress in their lives and can benefit from the modern technologies of the globalized world.

However, there are still a lot of obstacles for the minority children as they strive towards successful lives. For example, they usually suffer from destitution, poor health, and remoteness from centres or resources of educational excellence and

from having different cultural backgrounds from the mainstream population. Their mother tongues are often very different from the official language of instruction in formal schools. They are also often deprived of the citizenship of the country they live in.

At present, all of us from international organizations, governments, companies, non-governmental organizations and individuals, are acting in partnership, trying to empower them through modern education. Nevertheless, we should always remind ourselves that it is very important for them to preserve their cultural heritage. They should be encouraged and supported to maintain their pride in having their own identities, identified as their own languages or dialects, literature, costumes, visual arts, performing arts and handicrafts.

They should be able to learn and pass on the knowledge of their forefathers' ways of living, for example, how to acquire the four traditional necessities: food, housing, clothing and medicine.

Here I would like to emphasize that there are other aspects of intangible cultural heritage, like moral values and virtues, handed down through so many generations. This is far more precious and, therefore, worth preserving. Unfortunately it is the most difficult thing to do, but we have to try no matter how hard it is.

I have touched upon just one aspect of "Education for All", fully aware, however, that there are still many more issues. Finally, I pledge that I would like to exercise all my effort to work hard, to be a good educator, to provide education for our next generation, particularly for the disadvantaged, and a brighter future for them.

Torild Skard



With her mother

Steeplechase towards equality

My UNESCO mother

UNESCO has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. During the Second World War, my family lived as refugees in the United States. My mother, Åse Gruda Skard, was Norway's first child psychologist and participated in the International Education Assembly (IEA) promoting the idea of an international organization for school and education after the war. When the San Francisco Conference was convened in 1945, mother was appointed as the only woman in the Norwegian delegation. In total, there were not more than fourteen women out of the 535 delegates and advisers, but they managed to get 'equal rights for women and men' into the UN Charter. Mother also worked hard to include cultural and educational cooperation in the tasks of the new organization, thereby creating a basis for the establishment of UNESCO.

Back in Norway after the war, mother organized an informal UNESCO club that held high-spirited meetings in our house. And in 1948, UNESCO asked her to head a summer course on the education of children from three to ten years in Poděbrady, Czechoslovakia. Mother took my sister Målfrid and me along. We were twelve years old and had an unforgettable experience of a foreign country and an international organization. I particularly remember the American anthropologist Ruth Benedict. She was a tall, slender woman, beautiful, but very frail. We walked slowly around the park, holding hands, while she listened carefully to

what Målfrid and I had to say. Her comments were soft and thoughtful. I was spellbound.

Mother collaborated with UNESCO again in 1962-68, as President of the World Organization for Early Childhood Education (OMEP), and I assisted her with translation English/French and secretarial work during Council meetings in Paris.

A dynamic National Commission

Though she wanted to very much, mother never became a member of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO. In the 1940s, 50s and 60s, Norway was still a very male-dominated society with few women in public office. The second wave of feminism, starting in the 1960s, brought changes. In a few years, the representation of women in Parliament doubled. When I was elected an MP in 1973, 16 per cent were women and I became the first female president in the Upper House ('Lagting'). When I left Parliament in 1977, the Government asked me to head the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO. I was interested in international questions and, as a teacher, social scientist and psychologist, I had experience with UNESCO's fields of competence. Additionally, the Government wanted a woman. In fact, a majority of women were appointed as members of the Commission to replace the traditional male majority. It was an enthusiastic and active group of extremely well-qualified people and we had seven exciting years of collaboration.

These were turbulent times with increasing tensions between the great Western powers, particularly the United States and the developing countries culminating, under Director-General Amadou Mahtar M'Bow in the controversy around the MacBride Commission studying the communication problems in the world (including the North-South divide) and the demand for a just international communication order. We spent a lot of time, from the Norwegian side, trying to mediate, find constructive solutions and promote consensus. In the National Commission we collaborated closely with the Norwegian member of the UNESCO Executive Board, Gunnar Garbo. As a media professional and former Member of Parliament, he was an excellent negotiator and was elected Chair of the Intergovernmental Council for the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) at its first meeting in 1981. The media issues were important and enthralling, but my heart was more in education and culture. UNESCO was doing pioneering work promoting respect and appreciation of cultural identity and the Norwegian Commission participated actively. In collaboration with the Nordic Sami Institute, we supported studies and meetings to increase the knowledge of Arctic cultures. 'The ghetto of the soul' was the title of an analysis of the socio-cultural situation of migrant workers in Western societies and we promoted exchanges of teachers in host countries and countries of origin

to increase mutual understanding. We contributed to exhibitions of children's toys and drawings and made a special exhibition on children and violence that travelled around the whole country. We collected material worldwide and published a book on women in different cultures: 'From harem to equality'.

Taking women seriously

The First World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975, where I participated as a member of the Norwegian delegation, recognized that women of the entire world shared the experience of unequal treatment and demanded intensified action to improve their situation. Promoting gender equality was part of UNESCO's mandate and it is noteworthy that the Organization launched a ten-year programme in 1967 to advance the status of women. The plan called for every sector of UNESCO to be involved, and a considerable array of activities were undertaken. The intentions of the plan, however, were only partially carried out. With the number of sectors with women projects gradually reduced, the main efforts remained in the area of education. The financial commitments were much less than foreseen. In fact, the women's programmes portion of the total budget declined during the period (from 0.9 per cent in 1967-68 to 0.4 per cent in 1975-76). In the Norwegian National Commission we decided to put continuous pressure on the Organization to increase its contribution to gender equality.

We created a Norwegian and a Nordic women's group to prepare interventions and proposals, collaborating closely with the Danish member of the UNESCO Executive Board, Hanne Søndergaard, who had extensive experience with women's issues. From 1978 on, the Nordic group, at every General Conference, presented an overarching draft resolution concerning gender equality in the Organization. We demanded increased efforts according to a 'dual,' actually a three-pronged strategy. A 'female dimension' should be included in all UNESCO programmes; special programmes should benefit women and there should be an equitable balance of women and men in all activities, among experts and staff. In addition, we proposed increased budget allocations in areas such as literacy and education, women's participation in political processes, women's culture and women's organizations. Though most Member States were rather indifferent with regards to women's issues, we found good allies in many regions and the resolutions were adopted.

In UNESCO's first Medium-Term Plan (1977-82) only two of the forty-four objectives related to women and we expected the Second Medium-Term Plan (1984-89) to be better. It was not. The Draft Plan consisted of thirteen major programmes, including one on racism. None, however, related to sexism, except a brief 'note on the lines of emphasis of the Plan in the field of the status of women'. What is more, there were only two programmes (out of fifty-four) relating to women: in education and human rights. It was stated that the female

dimension would be integrated into the whole range of programmes and activities, but it was not at all clear how this would take place in practice. We made a lot of fuss. In addition to the Nordic countries, we mobilized twelve co-sponsors from different regions and proposed a transversal Major Programme XIV on The Status of Women, six additional sub-programmes concerning women, among others in the areas of communication and the social sciences, and a number of actions to ensure the integration of women and women's perspectives in the other activities of the Organization. Major Programme XIV was different from the other major programmes. It included an analysis of problems and a strategy of action, but then it recapitulated the programmes and activities devoted specifically to women in the other major programmes, providing an overall picture of the efforts to improve the status of women. Resistance from the Secretariat was tough, but on the whole the proposals were adopted. The field was given increased importance, efforts were strengthened and the visibility and accountability improved. We felt it was a breakthrough.

A tough challenge

I did not know then that Major Programme XIV would become a basis for my own work. The Nordics believed that a coordinator of activities related to women was necessary to sensitize the Secretariat and UNESCO partners to the needs and possibilities of improvement in the advancement of women. The Director-General accepted the idea in 1978 and attempts were made to recruit a qualified person, but they did not succeed. In 1983, I was asked to take the job. I had not applied for the post, as I was happily writing books on women and politics and organizing campaigns to increase the number of women in local councils and the legislature in Norway. I was just finishing a book on women in Nordic politics, 'Unfinished Democracy', together with a team of researchers from the five Nordic countries. But, it was difficult to refuse a request from 'my mother's organization'. UNESCO's mandate and worldwide coverage were fascinating and the organization needed to improve its performance with regards to gender equality.

I knew the job as coordinator would be tough, but it was even tougher than I had expected. I was the first person in this kind of post. I was given high status as a director and a secretary, but no budget. I accepted the job on the condition that I was given an assistant and a person was nominated before I arrived, but she lacked the necessary competence. After a lot of effort I managed to recruit a qualified colleague (Alya Saada from Tunisia), but that was just before I left the organization. It was the mouse trying to change the elephant. The UNESCO Secretariat, with 2000-2500 staff members, was a large, Byzantine bureaucracy. The Director-General had great authority, and M'Bow was a forceful leader. He was the first African Head of the Organization and fought to promote the interests of the Third World. He was not against gender equality, but he was not

particularly committed either, and his support was occasional and ambiguous. The deep geopolitical and cultural controversies dividing the Secretariat, and the budget reductions imposed by the withdrawal of the United States, did not make things easier. Vehement battles regarding turfs and policies were the order of the day even among staff dealing with women's issues.

I was not only supposed to coordinate, but also to strengthen the efforts of the Organization towards gender equality. I went all around the House, starting from the top, to arouse interest and stimulate action. The mandate from the General Conference in Major Programme XIV was strong, but there was widespread ignorance and varying opinions about women's issues, and a good deal of resistance to change and confusion about the strategy. Even with good will, many staff members did not know what to do and were reluctant to take responsibility. My approach was to provide information, new insights and ideas relating to women's issues, appealing to people's intellectual curiosity and wish to improve the quality of their actions. I had to use every possible occasion: staff encounters and programming processes, international meetings, studies and reports. I invited knowledgeable visitors to share their experiences, convened an advisory committee of experts, met with the NGO community and provided information to members of the Executive Board. I did not have a programme of my own, but supported several of the women's programmes, particularly path-breaking were a series of studies of sex stereotypes in schoolbooks, of the presentation and participation of women in the media and of the role of women in science and technology. In addition, it was important to institutionalize the concern for gender equality in the Secretariat: include the unit of coordination in the budget and enlarge the intersectoral committee by adding (male) staff, integrating a female dimension in various activities in addition to the focal points for women's programmes. To improve accountability, the statistics regarding female staff had to be reformed and the participants in seminars and training courses had to be registered by sex.

Important allies

Even working day and night, there was no way a tiny coordination unit could manage all the required action. Fortunately, there were friends and allies who gave a helping hand. I was recruited by the Deputy Director-General Jean Knapp, a top-notch French intellectual, who had been cultural attaché in Oslo and spoke Norwegian. He was a charming gentleman, professional and reliable, who supported me whenever he could. Unfortunately, however, he was completely overworked. My post was attached to the Bureau of Studies and Programming (BEP) in the Directorate and several colleagues were ready to assist me: Françoise Rivière, Jacques Hallak and Jérôme Bindé from France, Gloria Lopez Morales from Mexico and Albert Sasson from Morocco. We formed a very nice team. I was fortunate to discover enthusiastic and collaborative partners scattered around the different sectors. An Italian-Australian student, Rosi Braidotti, later a professor

in women's studies in the Netherlands, assisted me with everything from typing to programmatic issues. I also received support from women's coordinators in other UN agencies and the Secretary-General of the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, Leticia Shahani from the Philippines.

UNESCO is a unique meeting place of minds and cultures. Experts and NGOs from all over the world were eager to participate in UNESCO activities and to exchange insights and ideas. Unforgettable women contributed in different ways to the promotion of gender equality. The first woman Prime Minister in Portugal, Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, the Tunisian-French feminist Gisèle Halimi, the Jamaican historian Lucille Meir, the Egyptian writer Nawal el Saadawi, the Nigerian UNESCO Ambassador Judith Attah and the female minister from Burkina Faso, Joséphine Ouédraogo and from Pakistan, Attiya Inayatullah – just to mention a few. They shared experiences from different parts of the world, opening up new perspectives and demanding additional efforts to promote gender equality. I learned a lot. Improving the status of women became more pressing at the same time as preconceived notions were challenged. I made personal friends among UNESCO staff and external partners, wise and dedicated men and women from all over the world, and some of them still enrich my life.

There was progress. Some might say it was small, but it was nevertheless essential, visible and clear – supported by the Director-General and Member States. In an extremely difficult budgetary situation, the women's programmes were not the first to go. On the contrary, they were strengthened both in absolute and relative terms (rising from 1.1 per cent of the total budget in 1981-83 to 2.8 per cent in 1986-87). In addition, a female dimension was integrated in a great number of activities.

Gender equality on centre stage

I left UNESCO as abruptly as I came. In 1986, I was appointed the first female Director-General of the Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation. I regretted leaving UNESCO, but I missed my family and I was not sure how long I could keep up the efforts without more support from the top management of the Organization. I stayed in touch, because UNESCO was part of my portfolio as Head of the Multilateral Department. Later I collaborated with the organization as Regional Director for UNICEF in West and Central Africa and as Special Adviser dealing with girls' education in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Constitution places UNESCO in the forefront with regards to the promotion of gender equality, but the Organization is far from living up to its mandate. After sixty years it is high time the Organization places women and gender equality on centre stage, giving the issues the priority and visibility they deserve. Improving the status of women should represent a major thrust in the Medium-Term Strategy,

with a problem analysis, a plan of action, objectives, activities and indicators of success. This should be followed up by resource allocations in the budgets and reports providing an overall picture of what has been – or not been – done, so that it is possible to learn from experience and improve performance. In addition, a gender balanced top leadership would be an important step forward.

The three-pronged strategy to promote gender equality should be maintained, entailing increased efforts in all sectors to address the needs of women, particularly the poor and vulnerable, and benefit from women's capabilities in programmes and projects. To achieve the EFA goals, it is important that UNESCO contributes actively to the education of girls and women. The Organization has a special role in promoting quality education that is relevant, culture-sensitive and girl-friendly. UNESCO, furthermore, has a responsibility developing women's/gender studies, integrating culture and development, supporting women's organizations and groups and reinforcing the role of women in communication and decision-making processes.



Sheilah Solomon

New challenges in the field

Personal history

I trust poets. The Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution was, and is, a statement of poetic truth where the words, 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed', have echoed in my mind ever since I first read them as a teenager. In that sense, I suppose I have always been 'involved' with UNESCO.

Getting involved in UNESCO 'activities' was, however, a more circuitous route. Trinidad and Tobago became unexpectedly independent in 1962 following the collapse of the Federation of the West Indies, which had just completed training me for a diplomatic career. That training was utilized within the small team sent to establish Trinidad and Tobago's presence at the United Nations – the equivalent of being thrown in at the deep end of a pool and told to swim. While acting as Director of the Division of Relations with International Organizations five years later, after returning home, I had the opportunity to organize the visit of the then Deputy Director-General, Dr. Adiseshiah, who called on the country to meet its obligation to establish a National Commission for UNESCO. Anxious to avoid further overseas postings, so that my three young children could be brought up with a Caribbean perspective, I agreed to move to the Ministry of Education to draft the Commission's Constitution and became the Secretary-General of the National Commission for seventeen years.

In 1985, I was elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO at the General Conference in Bulgaria. Two years later, the newly elected Director-General, Dr. Federico Mayor, invited me to become one of his advisers, specifically in relation to developing a new approach to the Programme and Budget, under the distinguished Sylvain Lourié. It was in that capacity that I became intimately acquainted with the internal bureaucratic culture, which all large organizations develop in their own image. I learned that, both within the House and among Member States, there existed a tug of war between the vision of the Preamble and the practical emphasis on UNESCO's role as a Technical Assistance Agency for 'promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further respect for justice, for the rule of law and the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations'. Five years in the Economic and Social Commission of the United Nations had taught me to recognize the hard-fought compromise language of political negotiators.

Facing new challenges in the field

Perhaps it is because of my trust in poets that Federico Mayor, a poet himself, offered me my next challenge, of almost surreal proportions: 'Sheilah, I want you to decentralize UNESCO!' My reply was: 'Me and who else??' Eventually, despite the expected opposition of all traditionalists, I was permitted a staff of five professionals, one co-coordinator for each continent plus a secretary and an accountant.

The magnitude of the task was born in on me during the first week when, working late in the office I received a call from the Ghanaian Director of UNESCO's Regional Office in Dakar who said that his staff had removed his shoes and refused to let him leave the office unless he could contact someone in authority at Headquarters, since the lift no longer functioned and two staff members had been injured. The real problem was that the 'regional' office was in fact a collection of separately established and administered offices of the Education, Science and other UNESCO sectors. No one had responsibility for overall maintenance, including of the all-important elevator.

Having the problem placed in such stark relief, in one of our largest field offices, helped my Bureau for Field Coordination (BFC) to stimulate collaboration among sectors and eventually acquire a reputation for cutting Gordian knots that had been years in the making. All of the coordinators were vital to that process, but I must pay a particular tribute to our European Coordinator, Dr. Kalman, who was an IT (Information Technology) genius. Without his design of a UNESCO-wide database capable of, *inter alia*, tracking the missions of all staff members, Directors-General would still, no doubt, be embarrassed to arrive in a country to

find several staff members on separate missions, unknown to him. Moreover, that database made it possible to encourage the sectors to make use of the missions of staff from other sectors for passing on information. Gradually, and I hope permanently, our BFC was able to establish the concept of UNESCO Field Offices, representing the Organization as a whole, rather than as sectoral outposts.

Another important thrust was to try to document what UNESCO, through its different sectors and in collaboration with National Commissions, had in fact achieved within each region. When I left, the Asia Pacific region had been documented as a model for creating a higher profile within Member States; pride within the House and respect among the UN Technical Assistance fraternity.

I firmly believe that breaking down the barriers between sectors, all of which are dedicated to dealing with the 'minds of men', was an achievement for which Mayor the poet can be proud. Out of that move towards integrated administration has come some creative integrated programming, not least in the marine sciences and emphasis on cultural and educational linkages of special importance to small island states. No doubt, many more examples exist of which I am unaware.

The quest to achieve the peaceful human mind

I have been asked to comment on my experiences as a woman in UNESCO. Having always considered myself liberated I have never focused on gender as an issue for me – although no doubt it may have been an issue for those with whom I had to deal. In practice, my greater challenge was to justify the wider combination of 'negative' factors: being a woman from an 'underdeveloped' country and one of the smallest States in the United Nations. What new approach could I possibly bring to the table? I see things in terms of ideas as driving forces and concentrated on reaching goals that I sincerely believed to be important for improving UNESCO's capacity to build defences of peace in the minds of men through its multi-faceted mandate. My advice to women, as to men, would be to reach out and empathize with each other in the common quest for a creating a more peaceful human mind.

My involvement with UNESCO has also influenced my personal life. The most striking result has been that both of my daughters have pursued international careers. The elder one, a communications specialist, volunteered for UN work in Pristina and Bosnia, became a human rights activist with legal training, working most recently with OXFAM in the Hague, responsible for programmes in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. The younger of the two, after working with gender affairs in the UN system, uses her political and diplomatic skills as a Special Adviser on the Caribbean and Pacific within the Commonwealth Secretariat. I myself, since retirement, have been concentrating on the role of civil society in promoting equity by establishing an organization called CAN! (Citizens Agenda Network), working nationally and within the Caribbean.

In conclusion, I see violence and intolerance as the most pressing challenges facing the world at this time and recall that it was a similar scenario which forced the nations of the world to reaffirm their commitment, through the establishment of UNESCO and the United Nations to building the defences of peace in the minds of men. This, pre-eminently, is UNESCO's urgent challenge.



Savitri Suwansathit

Long-term relationship with UNESCO

I was first involved in a UNESCO project in 1955 when I was a high school student at Darunee school in Chacheongsao Province, east of Bangkok. The school was one of the lead schools under the Thai-UNESCO pilot project ‘Comprehensive High School Feasibility Study’.

My mother, who had just come back from her studies in the USA, was assigned to head that provincial high school for girls. There were many foreign visitors and experts from UNESCO who came to visit our school. My friends and I had our part to play in welcoming them and we often interviewed them for our newsletters. Later on, I continued my education in Bangkok, and soon afterwards in the USA. When I went back, I began my career at the Ministry of Education as a teacher and as a foreign relations officer working for the National Commission for UNESCO.

I started organizing many regional and international seminars on cultural studies for UNESCO, involving cultural experts from Asia and Thailand. I coordinated with Mr. Kono, head of the division of Asian Cultural Studies at UNESCO Headquarters, who took his work very seriously and whose dedication to it, greatly inspired me. I also immersed myself in the vast, rich area of cultures, thus opening myself up to a new world of knowledge that no university in the world could offer. I began translating UNESCO articles and books and soon became addicted to UNESCO and developed a thirst for even more knowledge. This I consider my most rewarding experience with the Organization.

Throughout my career, I have held many positions related to UNESCO. I started off as a desk officer for cultural cooperation. Later, I became head of the multilateral cooperation section of the Ministry of Education and concurrently Deputy Secretary-General of the National Commission. Later I transferred to the National Culture Commission but continued to cooperate with UNESCO on the cultural activities. Between 1995-1999 and 2001-2003, I was Deputy Permanent Secretary for Education and concurrently the Secretary-General for the Thai National Commission for UNESCO. In all these capacities, I attended most of the UNESCO meetings and conferences, including the General Conferences. I also had the honour to chair Commission I during the General Conference in 1992.

For more than 30 years, I have been able to contribute to the translation of UNESCO ideals into practice, both nationally and internationally, through my association with the Thai National Commission for UNESCO. The contribution continues even today, after my retirement. The Thai National Commission is housed in the Bureau of International Cooperation of the office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education. There, the staff are in a unique position to work with policy-makers at all levels as well as with teachers and students nationwide. I found it natural to integrate UNESCO's ideals into many of the Ministry's projects and activities, either directly with UNESCO support, i.e. through UNESCO's sponsorship of seminars, case studies and training, or indirectly through linkages and associations, by content or by theme, such as 'Education for All', World Heritage, Water, Man and the Biosphere, or through other committees and global networks. When I was Inspector-General for Education, I nominated Ban Saen Sook School, one of the schools on the Thai-Cambodia border, to be included as a model school for social cohesion and peace on the IBE (International Bureau of Education) website on Education for Social Cohesion in 2001.

When I was in the National Culture Commission, I focused one of my policies and projects on the weaving and textiles of the villages and minorities in Thailand. This work received strong support from UNESCO. When I was in the Teachers Commission, I initiated a project on teachers as the protectors of the rights of the child, which was supported by UNESCO and UNICEF. I was also involved at various stages in the promotion of human rights education in Thailand.

Peace building

The concept of peace, and the importance of peace building in the minds of men, are easily understood and cherished by me from the Buddhist point of view. Buddhism stresses the importance of the state of mindfulness as a way to attain peace. I recently had a direct experience of training my mind during a Buddhist Lent. I have also taken up a very peaceful hobby, sketching and painting, and have exhibited a few times in Bangkok, Chiangmai and Surin. Through this and other means, I have always strived to communicate the messages of peace,

environment and cultural diversities. I value all of my work, significant or not in the eyes of others. I believe that devoting oneself to a good cause is valuable in itself, regardless of how small your part may be.

Involvement in UNESCO has been a huge, rich and sometimes an odd and mad series of experiences. You meet all kinds of people, listen to all sorts of reports, read incredible documents and try to sort out situations and make sense of them. You travel long distances, visit wonderful places, and work in different conditions, and yet try to live and be normal throughout. My experience illustrates that UNESCO affects you in indescribable ways, both personally and professionally. You learn and grow through these experiences, and that is what is important. One should go to UNESCO with a desire to learn, a willingness to share, a readiness to understand others and the ability to be polite, cooperative and courteous since these are necessary factors in international relations. Keeping calm and peaceful is important as well.

Overcoming gender biases with competence and confidence

As a woman, working both at the national level and at UNESCO, I feel there are advantages and disadvantages. I do not mind them. When I was not quite a year old, my father died. My mother, my grandmother and my aunt took care of me. So, I grew up believing in the ability and the sensibility of women. Men, I find, can respect women if we prove ourselves worthy of the situations or the tasks. Of course, some people are always biased and narrow-minded, men as well as women. But you yourself can be biased sometimes; so we all need to forgive others.

In UNESCO, you deal with people from different cultural backgrounds, so you need to mind your step, so to speak, more than you do generally in your own background. I think gender bias can be overcome with reason and with proven ability. Many of UNESCO's projects are effective in promoting reasoning and in throwing light on, not only the proven ability of women, but more importantly on the neglected or wasted abilities, and the often-dormant potential of the women of the world. Education and dialogue should be further promoted since, I believe, they are necessary for men and women to achieve gender equity and peace.

My advice to young women entering UNESCO is not to be afraid. Continue to learn from books and from experiences. Be mindful of your own thoughts and actions and observe people. Act where the action is needed most. The rest can wait. Believe in your own value and always give the best of yourself.

*Grand Duchess Maria Teresa
of Luxembourg*



Breaking the poverty cycle of women

A personal story

After having left my native Cuba in 1959, I settled down with my family in Geneva where I graduated in political sciences at the university in 1980. During my studies, I met my husband who became the Grand-Duke of Luxembourg in October 2000. We have five children. In 1997, I became a Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO. My preferred field of action is the education of women and children, as well as the promotion of micro-credits. I have visited many UNESCO projects in Bosnia and Bangladesh and given my special support through the 'Fondation du Grand-Duc Henri et de la Grande-Duchesse Maria Teresa' to the project, 'Breaking the Poverty Cycle of Women: Empowering Adolescent Girls to become Agents of Social Transformation', coordinated by Sayeeda Rahman. This project, which is now drawing to its close, has been exceptionally successful, since it enables thousands of young girls, living in Nepal, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, through micro credits, to start a professional life after they have finished their schooling and training and thus become independent.

The purpose of UNESCO is so philosophically and morally important that each of us should live by it in our daily lives. As Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, I chair humanitarian foundations and organizations that strive to achieve similar goals. In my official and private life, I constantly try to pass on the important message of UNESCO. According to my personal experience as a Goodwill Ambassador,

UNESCO is particularly successful everywhere it fights poverty. A poor person indeed has one preoccupation: getting food to survive. It is only when this first need is satisfied that we can think about philosophical or social issues. Another important field of UNESCO's activities is the education of girls and women, who, too often, are cut off from literacy and schooling.

In the present international environment, 'building defences of peace in the minds of men' needs to be pursued worldwide. It is especially important in countries that suffer from war and destruction. Peace is not only the absence of armed conflicts; it is also a state of religious tolerance, of social respect, of equality between men and women, of protecting and helping children, and of taking care of the sick. A society that does not live up to these goals is not at peace. Many things remain to be done, particularly in countries where women continue to be excluded from social and political life, children are sold to prostitution or to warfare, and sick and old people die alone, sometimes on the streets. There, the Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution is of great help since it keeps reminding us of the vital issues we have to live up to.

Implementing UNESCO's ideals in our daily lives

One cannot become involved with UNESCO, and all the wonderful people working there, both in the administration and as Goodwill Ambassadors, and remain unaffected. My involvement with UNESCO has shown me how important professional teamwork is and how necessary it is to send competent and committed people to the areas where help is needed most. Above all, the ideals of this great organization are something to which we can all subscribe, both in our personal and professional lives.

My involvement with UNESCO shows me how women are disadvantaged in too many countries because of the mere fact that they are women. This is absolutely intolerable!

Further action needed

Many things remain to be done before we can speak of gender equality, even in Europe. There are still fewer women than men in governments and parliaments and fewer female CEOs. Women are battered and have to seek refuge with their children. Women continue to be raped and forced into prostitution. Even worse is the dreadful situation of women in societies, where they are lapidated and excised, without any basic rights. There are so many battles that remain to be fought.

To young idealistic women and men who wish to work for UNESCO, I would like to say: you have the chance to work for one of the most interesting international organizations that helps people in dire poverty and that is responsible for

fascinating projects in the fields of education, sciences and culture. It contributes to the protection of the heritages of humankind, be they cultural, natural or intangible. Enjoy your work; communicate your enthusiasm; and never forget that your work helps make the world better. Open your hearts; listen and be respectful of other cultures and mentalities.

There are so many goals that I would like to see achieved by 2013. Appropriate educational programmes should put an end to the excision of women and there should be no more child soldiers or human trafficking. A special effort should also be made in the field of religious tolerance and respect. I am very worried about some forms of extremism.

One issue that is close to my heart is our common strive for a culture of peace and the respect of each other's cultural identity. I am deeply convinced of the importance of the thought formulated in the introduction of the UNESCO Constitution, 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed'. For me, UNESCO is the link between the ideals of peace, the respect for our planet and the hope for a better future for our children.



Aminata D. Traoré

Confronting the ravages of neo-colonialism

Confronting the ravages of neo-liberalism in Africa

I am an essayist and former Minister of Culture and Tourism of Mali. In the past few years I have taken part in the emergence and construction of a social and political conscience which is more sensitive to the ravages of neo-liberal globalization in Africa.

From my point of view, the most significant challenge, with regard to the current state of this continent, is eminently cultural. I try to prove this point in my essays, among which are 'The vice' (Actes Sud 1999) and 'The rape of the imagination ('l'imaginaire')' (Actes Sud-Fayard 2002). I was involved in the activities of UNESCO in the 1980s and 1990s as a consultant and, thereafter, as a resource person and keynote speaker during many meetings in Paris, Tokyo and Porto Alegre.

This partnership was, of course, a source of enrichment for me, not only because of the extent of the fields of reflection and activities of the Organization, but also because of the quality of the debates.

For peace to reign in the world, all we need is for the powers that be to have the objectives of UNESCO at heart and adhere to them with sincerity and without double-talk or slight of hand. The logic of profit that they profess, in all domains and, more and more often, in relations between nations, is the worst obstacle to

the realization of UNESCO's mandate. The majority of the local initiatives with which I have been involved, including the valorization of traditional knowledge and local material, suffer considerably from the unfair competition of rich and industrialized countries who invade our markets with subsidized goods while obliging our States to dismantle all barriers. African cotton is in this respect a case in point. I do not allow myself to become discouraged, however, and remain persuaded that culture and religion, which are now perceived solely under the guise of communitarism and terrorism, actually constitute the diversity and the richness of the earth.

I strongly believe in the power of social, political and economic transformation and, because of this, I attach the greatest importance to the construction of an autonomous and critical African approach. From this point of view I feel that a clear and honest reading of past and present events can dissipate many misunderstandings, and illuminate the path to be taken in solidarity and mutual respect. For example, Africa could have been spared many of its conflicts if it were not the victim of what I call 'the rape of the imagination ('l'imaginaire')'.

The idea of democracy, which the West has succeeded in selling to us and that translates as a struggle for power and nothing more, is setting the continent on fire. How does one convince others that transparency at the ballot boxes and the organization of elections do not, by themselves, constitute democracy? How to get the message across that it is useless to be at each other's throats for false pretences as long as access to, and control of, the riches of Africa which is of high interest to the masses and which is the only way to strangle poverty, are discussed elsewhere by anonymous and faraway actors who are not accountable to Africans? Peace will reign in Africa, and elsewhere, when the powerful of this world, who often have the last word in international organizations, bind the act to the word.

A strong global civil society, which is aware of the stakes and risks of untethered liberalism, can play the role of planetary counterweight to challenge the masters of the world and give sense to the preamble of the UNESCO Constitution.

Perplexed by undue influence on the UN System

The extent and the context of the sphere of activity of UNESCO are such that it is difficult for me as an individual who intervenes there only from time to time, to detect the importance and the impact of my specific contribution to its action. I only know that the exercises for which I was associated with UNESCO, comforted me in my position concerning the imperial necessity of tapping more deeply into our cultures in order to create a more just world. Since the trade and consumer society has revealed its destructive capacity, the re-articulation of economy and culture becomes possible. I hope that future generations will learn

from our errors and thus provide new chances for UNESCO in the fulfilment of its mandate.

The difficulty for UNESCO, as for other international organizations, to be in coherence with its mandate, because of the weight and influence of certain rich nations on the mechanisms of financing and decision-making, often leaves me perplexed. But, I also know that it is one of the rare organizations which is able to understand the sense of my search for alternatives to 'imitation' and my combat on the personal and professional level for a world which is more just and with more solidarity.

The challenge which beckons UNESCO and the international community as a whole, is considerable and without precedent: acknowledging the failure of the idea of a single model. Such a model cannot, in any case, serve human rights in general or those of women, nor cultural diversity and religious tolerance. News today abounds with examples which prove that other and different world views are necessary.

From 1975 to 1998, I occupied the post of Director of studies and programmes in the Ministry of the Female Condition of Côte d'Ivoire, the first of its kind in Africa. I was convinced at the time that the fight for gender equality would considerably enhance the situation of African women and of women in general. I then invested all my efforts, as did other women of my generation, in the realization of several micro-projects and in-depth discussions promoting equal opportunity for men and women in the fight for a prosperous and interrelated Africa. Even though many women have emerged on the political and international scene, the continent is unfortunately no more advanced today than at the time concerning the living conditions of its population. During this time men, who for the most part were better off than women, have lost what was seen as their advantage; they are now unemployed or, worse, destitute and often constrained to emigrate.

Neo-liberal reforms are not kind. They compromise all acquired social rights, including the progress made in the status and situation of women. The wage freezes for public office; the destruction of the agricultural and the crafts industries; the privatization of services, have caused serious damage. I deduce from this that an unjust world economic system cannot guarantee equal opportunity between men and women. Women, often more entrenched in their cultural roots, are better able to counter the dominant order and create the basis for a new relationship between nations. What can UNESCO do for women and girls who are entitled to education in countries whose education system is completely dilapidated at the end of three or four decades of structural adjustment?

Young women who work with UNESCO today must be perfectly aware of the paradoxes which hinder States, civil society and UNESCO from realizing that for which the Organization is mandated, the pursuit of society's ideals.

*Maria-Ekaterini
Papachristopoulou-Taitaikosta*



Challenges in the Balkans

My involvement with UNESCO is three-fold: as the founding president of the Association of Interbalkan Women's Cooperation Societies (AIWCS) an INGO that has a collaborative relationship with UNESCO; as founding president of the UNESCO Centre for Women and Peace in the Balkan Countries; and as president of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO (since 2004). This collaboration started at the beginning of the 1990s, when I asked the Organization for support on issues pertaining to human rights, peace-building and women's empowerment in the Balkans.

Indeed, at the beginning of the 1990s, in a period of dramatic changes in South Eastern Europe, the situation of the women and children in the Balkan region was at stake due to considerable economic hardships. More than that, an ethnic conflict had broken out in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia resulting in murderous and bloody fights, atrocities and genocide episodes that horrified the rest of the world.

Coping with challenges in the Balkans

It was in order to cope with these challenges that I, together with a group of committed women, founded the Society of Interbalkan Women's Cooperation in Thessaloniki. Our first emergency programmes benefited women and children in the neighbouring countries. Obviously, this action was a humanitarian act

and consisted in delivering aid to Bulgaria, Romania and Albania and later, in organizing summer camps in Greece for children who had suffered emotional and physical traumas during the conflicts. This action led to establishing similar women's NGOs in these countries.

In 1992, encouraged by the results of our regional cooperation with women's organizations, we set up the Association of Interbalkan Women's Cooperation Societies, with the founding members of this movement from Greece, Romania and Bulgaria, to be followed later by all the other Balkan countries. The Association aims at building bridges of friendship and collaboration among people in the area, increasing women's participation in development and promoting their empowerment. As a first priority we identified the need for programmes on human rights, lifelong education, and cultural diversity. This led us to address the specialized UN agencies and, primarily, UNESCO.

Following the approval of a draft resolution submitted to the 27th Session of UNESCO General Conference a, 'Memorandum of understanding' between UNESCO and the AIWCS was signed. The memorandum provided for the setting up, in Thessaloniki, of the 'UNESCO Centre for Women and Peace in the Balkan countries'.

The Centre is a non-governmental, non-profit organization acting for the benefit of women in South-East European countries and disseminating actively United Nations resolutions aiming at promoting peace, development, dialogue and women's advancement in the area. The Centre offers the framework and the expertise requested by most of the activities of AIWCS and it also runs the current activity of the Secretariat of the Mediterranean Women's Forum to which I was elected Secretary-General in 2002.

Activities of the UNESCO Centre for Women and Peace in the Balkan Countries

The Centre has carried out successful projects with conceptual and financial support from UNESCO, such as:

- A variety of activities inspired by the phrase in the Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution which refers to 'constructing the defences of peace in the minds of men.' We basically approached this issue through three kinds of projects: projects aiming at establishing links of solidarity, friendship and collaboration of women, by proposing common programmes and activities; projects providing information on neighbouring countries and their past development, aiming at improving the perception of the neighbours ('the others') and developing positive patterns of response in regional relationships; projects specifically designed for younger generations (annual international youth summer camps in Halkidiki and

Nymphon for students aged fifteen to twenty-five years) focusing on peace-building processes, on the values of the culture of peace, and aiming at promoting dialogue, solidarity, and building confidence among young people from thirty Mediterranean and Balkan countries.

- An international conference on ‘Trafficking in human beings,’ highlighting the standpoint and the actions of all parties involved in the fight against trafficking and sexual exploitation of human beings, namely the international bodies, the scientists, the justice system, the police and the civil society in all concerned countries.
- An international congress on ‘Women, migrations and intercultural dialogue’ focusing on the human rights and freedoms of woman migrants in the Mediterranean area.

In my personal opinion, renewed focus should be placed on projects addressing younger generations and women in conflict regions, because both these population groups can become factors of huge impact on present and future developments, as well as promoters of progress and change in the mentalities and in the minds of men and women.

What we have in common is more significant than what divides us

We pursue, with indefatigable commitment, the major goal of promoting dialogue. Indeed our projects have always promoted intercultural dialogue between people with different economic, social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, but sharing the respect for and the commitment to UNESCO’s ideals.

The two festivals ‘Women creators of the two seas, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea’ held in Thessaloniki, in 1997 and 2000, brought together 1,143 woman artists from thirty countries, who joined in a large and fruitful debate on solidarity and respect and on the need for permanent intercultural dialogue, as a reasonable way to peace. I always remember with deep emotion an event, which took place on the closing evening, when the participants were invited to join in a symbolic dance to traditional tunes from all participating countries, thus celebrating their friendship and mutual understanding. One artist commented joyfully ‘Men never end making war, so let us, women start building the peace and its culture’.

I am proud of our efforts in convincing the public, and in particular women, in all these countries of the importance of dialogue. We have common ideals and common responsibilities. This is more significant and more precious than what divides us. Therefore, common action, understanding and confidence are not only necessary, but also possible. We make things happen, we help objectives be achieved. This is our vocation and our most important accomplishment.

Appreciation of innovative approaches and strategies

Through the years of collaboration with various divisions of UNESCO, I highly appreciated the opportunity of becoming acquainted with innovative approaches and strategies which, besides being intellectually rewarding, are useful in the daily practice of my activities. I am also grateful for the chance to meet, and occasionally collaborate with, personalities whose knowledge and experience are a precious source of inspiration.

In Greece and in the Balkan region altogether, UNESCO enjoys general recognition of its paramount contribution to the enforcement of United Nations' ideals in its specific fields of competence. Therefore, as a woman, as a civil society activist and as a professional, I am honoured to be associated with the Organization. The auspices granted by UNESCO to some of our congresses, conferences and projects increased substantially the interest in those events, raised considerably the professional level of the individual contributions and ensured agreement with, as well as respect for, their conclusions.

As a women's organization, all our projects focus on women's advancement and, therefore, it is specifically in this field that the main bulk of our involvement with UNESCO stays. I appreciate particularly the strategy of UNESCO, which encourages entrepreneurial activities of women, promotes various forms of lifelong education and professional achievement and stimulates women's participation in all sectors - social, political, economic and cultural, in decision-making, as well as in lobbying for gender mainstreaming.

One very important lesson from the activities undertaken in this period is the awareness of women's tremendous interest for these issues. The other lesson is that when approaching issues concerning the empowerment of women, we have to involve men as well. Men also need to be responsible for achieving gender equality. However, we must keep in mind that such an enterprise is by no means an easy one and that, especially in certain environments, regions and communities it requires a sustained lobbying and a remoulding of mentalities.

Make things matter

I encourage younger people to put competence, dedication and pathos into everything they do, so as to make things matter. Everything must be done well, with a deep belief in its significance for the final outcome and with competence based on continued study and refreshment of professional knowledge.

More emphasis should be placed, in UNESCO, on programmes aiming at ensuring women's equal access to education, to scientific progress and to information

technologies. I also find that more support should be given to the promotion of women scientists to the highest decision-making levels.

There are two issues which I would like to see pursued with dedication and commitment, as they are essential to achieving 'de facto' women's empowerment: (i) the promotion of rural women's access to knowledge, to information, to adequate educational programmes and consequently to decision-making; (ii) the follow-up of programmes aiming at changing the stereotypes in the perception of women and their role in the contemporary society, through action addressing all groups of the population, including men and boys and all environments, such as parliaments, academic communities, media, and political parties.



Marianna Zardinoyannis

Peace begins at home

Links to women's initiatives

I felt especially honoured to be invited by UNESCO to be associated in its work as a Goodwill Ambassador since it represents a huge challenge and a major responsibility. Three years after the 'Women of Europe' award and, having spent many years of exertion in Greece and abroad in advocating the protection of children and families, committing to social and humanitarian issues, through the 'Foundation for the Child and the Family' and the 'Association of Friends of Children with Cancer' that I preside over in Greece, UNESCO's invitation offered the opportunity to combine my efforts with the priorities of the United Nations.

The experience I have gained from serving on the boards of international foundations, such as 'Mentor International' in the battle against drugs, chaired by H.M. Queen Silvia of Sweden, the 'Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement', 'Bibliotheca Alexandrina', the Special Olympics Europe-Eurasia, the 'Foundation for a culture of peace' in Spain, and representing in Greece the 'European office for missing and exploited children', has been of great value in my new mission. It also provides me with the possibility to combine the dynamics of UNESCO with these organizations in pursuing issues of global significance through cooperation and exchange of ideas.

Furthermore, my collaboration with such institutions as the 'Jordan River Foundation' under the presidency of H.M. Queen Rania of Jordan, the 'Fondation pour l'Enfance' presided over by Ms. Anne-Aymone Giscard d'Estaing, as well as with numerous others, has enabled me to establish an informal network of cooperation among women personalities at an international level who share common visions for the future of humanity, particularly in relation to women and children.

Fostering the future of our planet

Participating in UNESCO's activities is a source of profound satisfaction and an experience of special essence for me. The elements of UNESCO's objectives that strike me as especially admirable and of fundamental value are its breadth of vision, foresight, immediacy and innovative approach. Through the enormous volume of data the Organization processes and filters, it brings to light matters that will either have grave repercussions for humanity in the future or identifies essential sectors requiring support and protection. Issues pertaining to 'Education for All', the conservation of the intangible cultural heritage, the preservation of the world's cultural and natural heritage, the environment and the climate demonstrate that UNESCO is fostering the future of our planet, whilst respecting the past. The main reason for my enthusiasm is the sense of contributing to a mission of new ideas and causes, correct direction and innovative plans that know no borders.

UNESCO's programmes are praiseworthy, pioneering and promote the values of peace, civilization and human rights. They have continuity and consequence, bearing fruits all over the world. Projects in which I have taken part have convinced me of the great efficacy exercised and warm response received by UNESCO's endeavours, not only in the sensibilization and mobilization of public opinion, but also in the promotion of the Organization's aims.

Peace begins at home

The Preamble of UNESCO's Constitution, 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed', is the premise of my personal philosophy. Peace cannot be imposed nor can it be a decision taken at top level. Rather, peace is born from the roots, from the soul of each of us. The contrary method, which has more frequently been applied, may have been necessary, but has not sufficed. Legislation, regulations and decisions regarding peace and eradication of violence have proved sterile, for the very reason that attitudes have not changed. In order to achieve peace, we have to build a culture of peace; and this can be attained only if we begin at the base, with the individual. In the end, shaping mentalities is more powerful than laws. It is my opinion that the fundament on which we should act is primarily the family.

Induction to a humane attitude of consideration and respect for the other comes through the family and this is where the notions of democracy, tolerance and solidarity are born. Sharing bread at the common family table is the first lesson in concord and compassion. Education, in its broad sense, is the instrument with which character and attitude to life are formed. The conference on ‘The child and the family in the twenty-first century,’ organized by my foundation at the Sorbonne in Paris (1999) in collaboration with the University of Europe, focused on this important issue.

Through my foundation and, in general, through my entire activity in association with other organizations, it is my objective to promote culture and the education of peace in every possible way. Following my participation in the World Congress, the ‘Hague Appeal for Peace’(1999), I organized two major international conferences in Athens. One was entitled: ‘The child: victim of war and messenger of peace’ and the other, the ‘Athens-Delphi meeting for children and peace.’

I have always preferred to be judged by my actions and not by my words. I am always prepared to respond to whatever is asked of me by UNESCO, but endeavour, at the same time, to add my contribution to its work with proposals of my own. For instance, in the framework of ‘the Dialogue among civilizations’ programme, we organized, on my initiative, the exhibition of paintings entitled ‘Breaking the Veil’ at UNESCO’s Headquarters, featuring works by women artists of the Islamic world. I also supported the organization of the Purcell school concert.

In the programme for conservation of the world heritage, the exhibition ‘The unity of a unique monument: the Parthenon’ was organized, and in Venice the exhibit of photography for the conservation of the world’s cultural and natural heritage took place – which was also transferred to the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York. In Athens, we organized a major concert in support of conservation of the Agia Sophia church. For the ‘Bethlehem 2000’ programme I personally gave support to the building of the ‘Early childhood resource and training centre’ at Bethlehem in aid of the children of Palestine. For the same purpose I supported the dinner organized by the ‘Suzanne Mubarak women’s international peace movement’ in Cairo in May 2005, where funds were raised for setting up child trauma centres and for building schools in Palestine.

For the ‘International decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world’, my Foundation elaborated the ‘Chain for peace’ programme, instrumental in the recent completion of an educational centre in Belgrade, which is to operate as a model kindergarten. This project has been placed under the auspices of UNESCO and is to promote education for peace. A surgical unit was installed in Gračanica, Kosovo, as a result of a tele-marathon I organized for bringing aid to child victims of the war in the Balkans. As part of the ‘Innocence in

danger' programme, I initiated a long-lasting struggle against sexual exploitation of children involving important meetings in Athens, such as the international conference 'Sexual exploitation of children and paedophilia on the Internet', the '2nd European Meeting of Legal Practitioners in relation to Juvenile Justice' and the 'Athens Round Table of the business community against the trafficking of human beings'. A further significant undertaking initiated by UNESCO, to which I give my whole-hearted support, is the Library of Alexandria. It is a torch for civilization and a hive harbouring knowledge for all the peoples of the world.

My experience has taught me that our unshakeable faith in values and ideals is the essential factor for the achievement of our goals. Problems must be confronted by embracing them in a comprehensive manner. In our globalized society every problem concerns humanity as a whole, although the particularities of the traditions and culture of each nation must not be ignored. Teamwork and dialogue are the ultimate expression of a civilized society and essential elements for progress.

My participation with UNESCO has, on the one hand, strengthened my faith in the values I have upheld all my life, which are consciousness of the inestimable worth of collective responsibility and of social dedication, and has, on the other hand, reinforced my conviction that no endeavour is without hope. With the help of broad-based alliances and concerted efforts, the vision and the hopes of people may become reality.

Gender equality helps breed greater wealth of ideas, vision and action

I believe that in organizations such as UNESCO gender does not make the slightest difference, nor does skin colour, language or religion. We are all tested by the hard work we are called to give as our commitment. Nevertheless, gender equality and strengthening the role of women are issues that have preoccupied me for some time. Not only do they lead to a more just society, but also to a society with a greater wealth of ideas, vision and action. This is why I give every possible support to initiatives pursuing that goal, including through encouraging women to hold positions at the decision-making levels. My foundation also gives an annual award to heroic mothers of Greece and abroad, and sustains women imprisoned with their children.

With its profound awareness of contemporary problems, UNESCO has set in motion programmes of considerable impact for the empowerment of women and gender equality. Bearing in mind the novel circumstances brought about by globalization in the economy, culture, and politics, UNESCO stresses the role of women in the family, society and in the preservation of peace, progress and development. The awards granted to women scientists are a testimony to this, as are the conferences it organizes throughout the world, the diverse events, and its humanitarian intervention through its specialized women units.

I would exhort the young women working for UNESCO to never lose faith in their undertaking. Working for UNESCO is not merely a profession, it is a vocation. Contribute in your own way to the accomplishment of the goals of peace and culture in all its breadth. This is not the sort of gratification easily found in a job. UNESCO deserves every labour and every sacrifice. Also, do not forget that the world has changed, and is changing, mainly because of the anonymous 'workers of civilization', who are convinced that there can be a better world and are working towards it. I therefore believe that UNESCO's strategy for the period 2008-2013 will need to focus on guiding nations on arousing the public's sensibilities and on giving support to non-governmental institutions who exert themselves for the realization of these goals.

The protection of human rights, and particularly the rights of children, are issues I wish UNESCO would continue to pursue as priorities. These issues are multi-faceted and interconnected with the gravest problems international society faces. The right to life itself and equal rights to education continue to be a Utopia for millions of children in the world, because of poverty or of outdated traditions. Human trafficking, with millions of victims annually, particularly women and children, has taken on a vast dimension, placing it among the three largest industries of illegal profit in the world. Furthermore, paedophilia and sexual exploitation of children through the Internet threaten to become a scourge, since Internet knows no borders and international legislation is yet deficient. UNESCO has the experience, the technological means and the human factor at its disposal to play an even more decisive role in setting the proper bases for the confrontation and solution to these problems by giving even greater weight to its efforts in upholding human rights.

Kapila Datsyayan



The transforming power of the human mind

A multi-dimensional relationship with UNESCO

It is difficult to recapitulate my continuous engagement with UNESCO, for now over half a century, in a short essay. It has been my singular privilege to be first a listener, as a young student assisting the Indian delegation in 1949 at Avenue Kleber, then to be an active participator as a member of the Executive Board since 2004. In between, I have participated, in an individual capacity, as an expert and adviser in many expert meetings, regional conferences and as India's representative and Secretary to the Indian delegation to UNESCO General Conferences. As an academic on the faculty of several Indian and foreign universities and as an adviser and, finally, Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Education and specially the Department of Culture, I have participated in a wide spectrum of UNESCO programmes, in the five sectors of its competence, especially in the fields of education and culture. The experience has been varied and rich on many dimensions.

The voice of humanity transcending barriers

As I look back over these fifty years, I cannot help but have a sense of nostalgia for the younger and more manageable UNESCO. I recall the true spirit of free and candid dialogue amongst many intellectual giants of that era. They no doubt spoke with different voices, but were all individuals 'fired' by a common commitment

to restore the world to a peace which had been disrupted by the Second World War. It was patently clear that all were committed to the mission of UNESCO that it was in the minds of men that the defences of peace had to be built. National, territorial concerns and polarity of political ideologies could not be brushed away. Nevertheless, it was the voice of humanity, transcending barriers of race, religion and economic inequalities, which had to be reheard and re-instituted. The thrust was clearly on universal values underlying diverse cultures and civilizations. I recall listening with rapt attention to the debate when the project of the 'History of world civilizations' was launched. These UNESCO volumes, now in several editions, bear testimony to the need and continuing efficacy of underpinning the perennial dynamics of the dialogue of civilizations, and not clash of civilizations, as propounded by some in the last decade.

UNESCO's role at this fundamental level remains crucial and it is my understanding that at no point should it be allowed to be overtaken by narrower concerns of ideological positions guided by geo-political groupings of the day, economic criteria based only on material indicators and, of course, racial or religious prejudices. It was an affirmation of the unique role of UNESCO when it launched, at India's initiative, the second major programme of 'East-West mutual understanding'. The project and the publication played a seminal role in facilitating a better understanding of the diversities of cultures and civilizations, each distinctive and autonomous with an inbuilt system of fruitful and positive communication and dialogue with others, adjacent or remote.

Confrontation ignited by the opposite of UNESCO's credo

Over these decades, alas, one witnessed the hardening of positions, first between the 'first' and 'second' world, leading to many impasses during the cold war which affected UNESCO's smooth functioning and, later, the tension between those who believed in total individual freedom and those who advocated restraint and responsibility. Yet later, the bitter battles of words on the Israel Palestine issue and on account of the fallout of the Iran-Iraq War, as well as a host of other minor or major volcanic eruptions of violence, hatred and confrontations, in different parts of the world, were ignited by the very opposite of UNESCO's credo of making defences of peace in the minds of men. No defences of peace can be, or could be, created in the absence of tolerance, respect for the other's point of view and, above all, compassion for the totality of humanity as a world family which could sustain itself only through accepting the basic necessity of mutual interdependence and inter-relationships.

UNESCO's singular potential in the UN system

The challenges of the twenty-first century are no doubt different in quality and dimension than those of the decades of the 1950s, the 70s and 90s. But given

the will, determination and resoluteness of purpose in concretizing UNESCO's mission and its singular potential in the UN system, it can be the beacon light of affirming the vision of a future world order based, not on unipolar political, economic and social paradigms, but instead on the premise of accepting a plurality of approaches, methods and epistemologies. This is within reach, since new communication technologies have the potential for facilitating a greater and faster dialogue between the levels of societies, within nation States and across cultures. I have noted with appreciation UNESCO's recent initiative in ICT to take cognizance of linguistic diversity. It is with the above in mind that the sectors of education and culture have a vital role to play. I have been involved in the earlier flagship programmes of 'Life long education', 'Education to be' and now 'Education for All' (EFA). I firmly believe that plural models of education can be evolved taking into account the diversity of capacities at different levels of society and different configurations of socio-economic and cultural structures. Also, these plural models would necessarily have to take note of the latest finding in the field of neuro-biology, which strongly advocates the need for a balancing of cognitive and affective learning. This aspect was explicitly stressed in the recent conference on arts education held in Lisbon. Many eminent scientists took part in the conference, as did renowned educationists, such as Ken Robinson. From the different perspectives there was an advocacy for modification of educational methodologies. I had the privilege to be elected as the vice-chairperson of the conference. Thus, it is UNESCO which can be in the vanguard of evolving and recommending a variety of plural models and strategies for ensuring 'human development' as distinct from only economic development.

The intrinsic inter-relationships of bio-diversity and cultural diversity

After decades of endeavouring to create peace and harmony through the mechanism of politico-economic dialogues, UNESCO rightly came to the conclusion that issues of development (more the notion of development), could not be dissociated from the field of 'culture' despite all the difficulties of defining this most simple and complex term. The initiatives, taken by UNESCO in the 1970s to hold a series of seminars and conferences on cultural policies, were a welcome step. It was my pleasure and privilege to actively participate in many such meetings and also be the author of the monograph on 'Some aspects of cultural policies in India'. As welcome as this initiative was, the decades that followed brought about some momentous changes, especially as a result of the growing concerns with the degradation of the environment. The Rio and Stockholm Conference highlighted the issues of the intrinsic inter-relationships of bio-diversity and cultural diversity; it was time for UNESCO to launch the decade of 'Culture and Development' and institute a World Commission for this purpose. Once again, I participated in many regional meetings leading to the Summit Conference in Stockholm. It was clear from these meetings, the Summit and the recommendations that followed that an inter-sectoral approach was essential for ensuring a meaningful intervention

in resolving the new problems facing the twenty-first century. Environment, biosphere, cultural diversity and plurality were intrinsically interconnected. Cultural identity, linguistic diversity and systems of education had to be seen together. They had a semiotic relationship.

Also it was essential to build bridges of communication between traditional knowledge systems and the many resources of indigenous people and modern scientific methods. Culture could not be viewed only for its instrumental role, instead it permeated the domains of environment, ecology, biosphere reserves and, of course, education and social sciences. Translating this new comprehension into a plan of action has been a daunting task. UNESCO has been engaged in this through the instrument of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) and other programmes, including the modest 'Links' programmes. These are welcome steps. I was actively engaged in the conservation of the cultural heritage, specially the stupa of Borobudur and Angkor Vat. Earlier, it was this engagement which facilitated India's active role during the Nubia Valley and Abu Simbel conservation projects as well as UNESCO's support in India's efforts to help conserve and restore the archaeological remains of Bamiyan, alas, destroyed by mindless violence.

Semi-literate, but highly cultured

Of equal concern, requiring attention, has been the urgent need of conserving and fostering the intangible cultural heritage. While UNESCO's initiative to have a standard-setting instrument, i.e. a 'Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage' (2003), is timely; the implementation of the provisions of the Convention are not easy. There are complex problems of socio-cultural, economic structures, cultural contexts, modes of transmission of knowledge and skills, which have to be addressed. These require an in-depth comprehension of societal structures, modes of transmission and distinctive and inter-connected roles of genders. The mere identification of forms cannot be enough. It is my hope that the proposed inter-governmental committee will look at these issues with the sensitivity they deserve. The area of intangible heritage also cannot be dissociated from the models of education. It is here that a viable and meaningful link has to be made between the human repositories who are the carriers of the intangible heritage and the educational systems. Special attention has to be paid to the fact that women are the natural carriers of the intangible heritage. So far, no recognition has been given to these human repositories who can be utilized as teachers and leaders in the system of formal and non-formal education, specially in countries grouped together as the developing and the least developing countries. Intangible heritage is, more often than not, the rich wealth largely of the poor (with exceptions), and those relatively deprived in terms of socio-economic empowerment. Often, they are semi-literate but highly cultured. Thus the systems of oral transmission have to be recognized and given status and dignity. An equity can be established between the rich and the poor, the cultured and the highly

creative and the formally educated and the system of oral and written learning. Intangible heritage is a fluid dynamic and not a static flow. Its multiple streams must flow and not be frozen as exhibit pieces, de-contextualised from the cultural matrix. This is a formidable task. I hope that I can contribute in some meaningful way. Experience at grass-root levels brings with it a sense of humility before these age old traditions.

The transforming power of the human mind

Having enumerated a few of the areas of UNESCO's mandate, and some sectors, it is my hope and belief that UNESCO can yet fulfil its mission of creating the defences of peace in the minds of future generations. There is no other reservoir, except the human mind, for transforming the world from turmoil to harmony, from fragmentation to a whole, and from conflict to mutual appreciation, with respect and, above all, compassion and affection.



Sheila S. Walker

Involvement with the Slave Route Project

Researching cultural roots

I am a cultural anthropologist interested in the global African Diaspora. As a college student I participated in a summer exchange programme in Cameroon with the Experiment in International Living that gave me the opportunity to travel outside of the United States for the first time and to live with an African family. That experience began to make me aware of the African origins of much of my own U.S. African American culture, about which I had learned absolutely nothing during all my years of, first ordinary, then elite education.

The fact that we had a vibrant cultural heritage stemming from our African origins, one that had contributed enormously to the culture of the United States and beyond, was generally denied at that time, except by a handful of enlightened scholars. In fact, to the extent that our behaviour was not the same as that of middle-class northern whites, African Americans were characterized by some scholars and policy-makers as ‘pathological’ or ‘culturally deprived.’

My summer in Central Africa gave me the experiential basis to begin to contest such a perspective, and an academic year in France studying anthropology at the Sorbonne gave me the intellectual basis to begin researching the cultural continuum between Africa and the African Diaspora. Doctoral study at the University of Chicago allowed me to continue pursuing this interest. Beginning with fieldwork, participating in cultural events, and writing about Africa, my

interests increasingly turned to the African diaspora in the Americas, and are now broadening to include the Afrodescendant populations of the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Peninsula, the Persian Gulf, and India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

I began to learn about the extent to which the history of the African Diaspora and its role in the Americas and the Atlantic world have been distorted and minimized. I learned that the demographic, political, economic, technological, and socio-cultural development of all of the societies of the Americas can not be understood without considering the major contributions of Africans and their descendants to this development, and that, as a result of insufficient research about these topics, we know only a very incomplete story of the Americas.

I also became aware that the fact that this information is not taught, contributes to African Diasporans' lack of knowledge about contributions of our ancestors' to the creation of the modern Americas and to the enrichment of Europe as well as to others' lack of knowledge of the extent to which their history and contemporary culture are inextricably related to ours. This mutual ignorance promotes dysfunctional social relations rather than the more harmonious ones that could be fostered if a more inclusive and, therefore, more accurate story of the Americas were told. To help resolve this situation I have created a non-profit organization, Afrodiaspora, Inc., to produce video documentaries for television broadcast and educational use about the African Diaspora in the Americas and globally.

The Slave Route Project

My involvement with the UNESCO Slave Route Project began when I was invited to an expert meeting in Haiti in August 1991 about a Haitian initiative focused on the trajectory of Toussaint L'Ouverture from enslaved person to heroic national liberator. At that meeting we were determined that the project would have a better chance of success, as well as being more intellectually coherent, if it were inter-regional. As a result, the Republic of Benin, from which Toussaint L'Ouverture's father had been taken to Haiti during the slave trade, became the co-sponsor.

I became a member of the International Coordinating Committee that met several times in Benin to incubate the project before UNESCO institutionalized it with its launching in Ouidah, Benin in September 1994. I then became a member of the International Scientific and Technical Committee of the project that was to continue for ten years as part of the UNESCO Decade for Culture and Development. When the project was extended and the committee restructured in 2004, I was pleased to be one of the people selected to remain on it.

My involvement with the Slave Route Project has contributed significantly to my professional development by allowing me to collaborate, in various ways, with other international scholars concerned with the topic and to participate in

committee meetings in places in Africa, Europe, and the Americas that are essential for understanding the geographies of the slave routes and trades. I have considered the meetings to be mini-fieldwork experiences that advanced my understanding of the slave trade and slavery and contributed to my intellectual production in the form of lectures, publications, and documentary videos concerning the African Diaspora.

I have had issues with some aspects of the project, which have evolved as the project has evolved and as it has been reconceptualized for its second phase. My first objection was to the name. I object to reifying the condition of enslavement by reducing the existence of multifaceted human beings to the objectifying term 'slave.' The word suggests the enslaved person's passive and will-less acquiescence to his or her situation, and therefore facilitates seeing enslaved individuals as less than fully human and therefore deserving of their status. This connotation is especially problematic since it ignores the various styles of creative and resistant behaviour of enslaved Africans and their descendants throughout the period of slavery in the Americas, as so well symbolized by Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution that led to the founding of the Republic of Haiti, the first nation in the world to definitively abolish slavery.

I also regretted the emphasis on the victimization of enslaved Africans and their descendants in the Diaspora, as opposed to a focus on their sense of agency and their achievements against tremendous odds, as evidenced by the vibrant cultures they created all over the Americas. Since the fact of enslavement tended to be all that people knew of the history of African Diasporans, it seemed especially important to create a more balanced version of the story.

My attitude has evolved with my involvement in the project. While still focusing primarily on the resilience and creativity of the enslaved as the project is also doing more, I am now also concerned with promoting knowledge of the nature and importance of the commerce in the lives of enslaved African human beings - across the Sahara to North Africa and Europe and to the Indian Ocean islands and the Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf, and South Asia, as well as across the Atlantic Ocean - in order to highlight the importance of this major historical process in the making of the modern world. The pioneering step by the French Senate to declare the African slave trade and slavery a 'crime against humanity' as codified in the Taubira Law, is evidence of the value of this focus.

I am not suggesting that one should dwell on the horrors of the slave trade and slavery, although these realities must be honestly portrayed, or on the victimization of African descendants, although it is important to emphasize the contemporary repercussions of a half-millennium for the Americas and more elsewhere of systematic oppression. It is also essential to highlight, as the project is increasingly doing, the fact that the unremunerated labour of the 12-15,000,000

enslaved Africans and that of their descendants during almost four of the five centuries of the modern history of the Americas, was the basis of the developing of the wealth and power of the North Atlantic, as well as of the 'underdeveloping' of Africa. Much of contemporary global power dynamics is based on this fact.

Another area of my disagreement was that I contended that the composition of the International Scientific and Technical Committee should better represent the populations most concerned by a project called the 'Slave Route', i.e., the Afrodescendant populations that resulted from those routes. This issue struck me as especially important at a time when Afrodescendant communities in South and Central America, where the overwhelming majority of the African Diaspora is located, were organizing themselves, researching and teaching their own histories, and endeavouring to become more involved in the international discourse.

Thus, throughout my tenure on the committee, in addition to arguing for what I considered appropriate intellectual orientations, I have also lobbied for the inclusion of scholars from Afrodescendant communities. Being from the well-represented African Diasporan community of the United States, I have felt obliged to speak for those not present to speak for themselves. I have also urged an improved gender balance. I am pleased that the committee as reorganized and with new leadership for the second phase, now much better represents both Diasporic communities and women.

The African Diaspora and the Modern World

My other rewarding experience with UNESCO grew partially out of my concern with the inadequate representation of African Diasporan communities on the International Scientific and Technical Committee. As director of the Center for African and African American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, I organized, with support from the UNESCO Unit for Tolerance, a conference on the 'African Diaspora and the Modern World' as the only event held under the aegis of the United Nations International Year for Tolerance in the United States, which had not at the time resumed its UNESCO membership.

The conference, to which I invited researchers and educators from Afrodescendant communities to collaborate with leading international scholars in creating and enhancing knowledge about the African Diaspora, brought together more than sixty people from more than twenty countries in Africa, Europe, and North and South America and the Caribbean. The results are published in the edited volume, *African Roots/American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas*, and made visible in the companion video documentary, *Scattered Africa: Faces and Voices of the African Diaspora*. The book is widely used in college courses and the video has been shown in colleges and universities in the United States and in cultural festivals internationally, as well as at UNESCO Headquarters. The video,

in which people speak in English, Portuguese, Spanish, and French is available in DVD format with subtitles in those languages.

Making changes through constructive critiques

Afrodescendants whom I invited to the conference have subsequently been involved in Slave Route Project activities, and the conference video led to my being asked to produce a DVD about the global African Diaspora for the project. Thus, my lack of satisfaction with aspects of the project and efforts to find solutions have led, in addition to helping to make changes in the project, to positive results with respect to my professional contributions, interactions between Afrodescendant leaders and scholars of the African Diaspora, participation of new voices from African Diasporan researchers and educators in telling their own stories, increased visibility of the topic and a greater appreciation of its global significance.

I feel very fortunate to have been involved with UNESCO, and specifically with the Slave Route Project. I like to think that I have contributed something to both. UNESCO, because of its global mission and reach, is the only institution of which I am aware, that is capable of bringing together an international cohort of specialists and sharing information widely about the African slave trades and slavery and the resultant African Diaspora, that are such an important part of the development of the modern world and yet remain so inadequately known.

I sincerely hope that UNESCO will prioritize the continued implementation of the Slave Route Project until there is significant remedying of this problem of ignorance and the related problems engendered by that ignorance, which, given the incipient nature of current research and education on the topic, promises to take quite a while. For UNESCO to do so would be an excellent way of living up to its ideal of promoting respect between peoples and nations based on collaborative scientific research and education by tenaciously addressing an issue that involves, in one way or another, many more millions of people around the world than those who now consider themselves concerned.

Myeong-Hee Yu



The L'Oréal-UNESCO award for women in science

L'Oréal-UNESCO FWIS award and my life afterwards

It was late November in 1997 when I was told to clear my schedule in early January 1998 to go to Paris. The whole thing did not seem real until I attended the award ceremony at the UNESCO Headquarters for the first L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science award granted to women in science, previously called the Helena Rubinstein award. I had received several local awards and honours previously, but the L'Oréal-UNESCO award was quite different, not only because it was world-level recognition, but also because the message it delivered was very touching and clear: care and devotion. It also provided me with an opportunity to start looking into the problems of my current concern.

Recognition

The award was especially meaningful in Korea because neither women nor scientists have been given fair recognition. Thus, the award was special for the double minority, scientists and woman at the same time. I have always felt that women and scientists have something in common: we do not work for rewards, but for what we feel is right. Scientists do the research with a motivation that sometimes stems from pure curiosity. Many of us are fervent about our research, so much so that sometimes we forget to take a break. We live on the satisfaction of accomplishment. Women do not insist on rewards for their accomplishment.

Rewards hardly become a part of our design, but come only afterwards. However, if you feel repeatedly that your work and effort are underestimated and are not evaluated fairly, that can be a problem. At the ceremony, I realized that many people already had the same concern about this issue.

Through my three elder sisters, I learned, at a very young age, how society could treat women. I knew that having a family and a career at the same time was not an easy job. I also knew that recognizing women's work is not common. I chose to be a research scientist as my career primarily because I like to solve scientific problems, but subconsciously, I must have felt that the science field might be one of the few fields where the evaluation of achievement might be fair to both men and women. In most cases, I was correct in this assumption, but a few times I found myself second-guessing it.

Only a few women are represented in the field of science in Korea, which in turn, discourages women from choosing a scientific career. It is indeed a vicious cycle. One clear problem lies in the fact that scientific research by nature requires constant attention. Sometimes you think about your research the whole day. It can be a job requiring eighteen hours per day. Thus, doing good science can be very demanding. In addition, most women scientists who have a family to take care of have to juggle their time between work and home. A career as a woman scientist was considered odd in Korea. I have no doubt, therefore, that the Award inspired many young women in Korea who sought to be a scientist.

Balance and networking

Before I was exposed to this event of world-level recognition, I spent most of my time reading papers, advising my research assistant, and coaching my students in the lab. All our lab members really wanted to crack one problem: how the proteins execute biological functions. My two sons were at the elementary school and needed lots of care. I did not want to bring my work home, and vice versa. I could not think of anything else, but to carry on with my jobs at both places. In retrospect, it was like walking a tightrope. I could have asked myself why I would want to live that way, but I did not because I did not have any leisure to ask that kind of question. One thing that was clear was that I loved my job and my research, which taught me humbleness (this value is still important to me). I also love my children and my family. I just did not have sufficient time to be good at both. In a way, I had to be single-minded, though I felt deep in my heart that it was not the quality of life I dreamt of. Nonetheless, I have learned how important it is to balance things that might have an inherent conflict of interest.

Seven years have passed since I received the L'Oréal-UNESCO award. Since then, I have participated in various committees and became involved in more managerial work. In fact, I have been one of the front-runner women scientists,

not necessarily due to great scientific performance, but rather due to the great scarcity value that I have held. Nowadays, I head one of the largest research and development initiatives in Korea on functional proteomics. My main job is to establish infrastructure of proteomics technology in Korea with a mission of identifying novel proteins associated with human diseases. I distribute grants to principal investigators in universities, research institutes, and companies. I also serve on several government committees. Managing such a diverse job requires balancing and networking. Balancing is something I have always dealt with through my career, but networking was not something I had been seriously concerned with.

I had a brief experience with UNESCO through KUSA (Korea UNESCO Student Association) activities in my university years. The student association provided voluntary services to rural communities in one summer, and had a workshop with Japanese students in another. Since graduating from the university, my memory about those activities faded. However, being at UNESCO Headquarters for the award ceremony reminded me, once again, of the spirit of UNESCO, care for others through networking. Networking is once again on my agenda for cultivation. Networking is something women leaders tend to overlook. Developing a capability of networking requires constant reorientation and self-empowerment. Now I spend more time in serving as a manager than doing research. Balancing and networking among the participants are important constituents in my current managerial approach.

Moving forwards

When I received the award, I thought about how I was going to fulfil the responsibilities for both continuing good science and promoting women in science. As a research scientist, my answer was obvious at that time. I should continue to produce high quality scientific achievements and achieving this goal would definitely be my best contribution to women in science. After several years, my job extended beyond research. I needed to integrate various things to move forward. Integration can be at the level of individual success and synergy among the team. It can be at the level of value-creation, information, intellectual property protection of participating members and global networking. Concerns of the people I interact with became my concerns, and I need to integrate them squarely. I have learned the real meaning of ‘care and devotion’ that prevailed at the award ceremony in January 1998. It is uncertain how much I have contributed to the field of women scientists since then, but I always try to remember these two things when I carry out my job. The L’Oréal-UNESCO award provided me with quite a bit of motivation in my career afterwards.



Wei Yu

Mountains can no longer stop knowledge

Building a bridge between science and education

I am a scientist working as a researcher and a teacher. I was president of the Southeast University in Nanjing and then became Vice-Minister of Education in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Of all of my various jobs, I treasure education the most, particularly UNESCO's quality education for all programme, which concerns billions of children and aims at building peace in the human mind. I concurrently served as Vice-Minister and Chairperson of the National Commission of UNESCO from 1993 to 2002. In the following, I would like to present two cases to demonstrate how we have built a bridge between science and education, as well as a bridge between China and the rest of the world to promote 'Education for all'.

Towards the 'knowledge society'

We are in a transitional period of human history. The rapid development in science and technology and the deepening of economic globalization have brought about a transformation from a knowledge-based economy to a 'knowledge society', which represents a different stage of social development. In a 'knowledge society', knowledge is not only a major factor in influencing the economy, but also has extensive and far-reaching impacts on all aspects of social development ranging from the economy, politics, culture, education, science and technology, even to military affairs.

The pursuit of sustainable development has become a common goal for all countries. The most effective and essential way to answer this challenge is through capacity building, especially in science and technology. Human beings must guide the development of technology and human civilization with a clear mind and foresight. Such guidance is not only the responsibility of decision-makers or what we call social elites or intellectuals, but relies on the participation of all the members of the 'knowledge society'. This requires of us that we enhance the overall educational level of the entire social group. The grasp of scientific knowledge and technological know-how, especially information technology would become the foundation for a country, a society and an individual to survive and develop in the 'knowledge society'.

In a 'knowledge society', scientific and technological research covers not only scientific discoveries and their application to technical transfer in industries, but also the management and the transfer of knowledge. The applicable transfer of knowledge should not only meet the industrial demand to manufacture new products, but also the demand in health and education. Knowledge transfer and knowledge management should be regarded as a discipline, which also requires scientific research and the cultivation of talents. Nowadays, without the guidance from intelligent tools, it is impossible for us to manage a large amount of information, and our wisdom and intuition would often get lost in the vast sea of knowledge. Therefore, synthesizing knowledge is as important as data generation. The explosive increase of knowledge has posed a great challenge to the traditional means of knowledge diffusion. The enhancement of the educational level should no longer pursue the achievement of 'massification' and popularization of higher education, but aim at the establishment of a society of life-long learning. Education should give more attention to interactive, integrated and inquiry learning with the aim to enhance the motivation and ability of students for life-long learning. There would be a profound difference between education oriented towards a 'knowledge society' and education within a 'knowledge society'.

We must be awakened to the new mission of the scientists at the present time. The traditional role of scientists is to make scientific research, discover new laws and create new knowledge. In the industrialized society, the scientists are required to participate in technological transfer. In today's society, however, the scientists need to reach into the society and to get involved in educational reform, enhancement of public awareness and dialogues with decision-makers. We have to rely on science and technology, as well as educational development to jointly build a bridge between science and education in order to upgrade our capability for sustainable development, strengthen the comprehensive national power and alleviate poverty and discrimination. International organizations, State governments, NGOs, science and education communities and all those who have a strong sense of social responsibility are confronted by this urgent historical task.

China has set the strategy to ‘Revitalize the nation through science and technology’ and ‘the Strategy to strengthen national power through the cultivation of talents’ as its basic State policy, and is committed to promoting reform and development under the guidance of scientific advancement. The China Association for Science and Technology has put forward the ‘Action plan for the enhancement of the overall educational level’. The Ministry of Education has also initiated the ‘Action Plan for Educational Revitalization’, 2003-2007. These are the major strategic decisions by the Chinese Government and its people when facing historical opportunities and challenges.

Life-long learning on the platform of the Internet

In 1996, during a meeting with education consultants from the World Bank, one comment alarmed me, ‘either leap onto the information platform or be swept away by its waves; there is no option’. Representatives from all the developing countries must have felt the same crushing pressure I felt at the time. As a developing country, China should first adopt a positive attitude towards the development of information technology and actively participate in it. We should seek opportunities while facing challenges and try to realize technologic breakthroughs. It is the responsibility of governments, society, schools and families to give ‘tickets’ to as many students as possible to have early access to the information society, and provide them with opportunities to jump onto the information platform. Only through the sharing of knowledge can they truly participate in the development process.

In 1994, the China Education and Research Network (CERNET) was established. CERNET has developed into a high-speed broadband network, the second largest Internet portal linking over 900 universities and education institutions. Taking into consideration the remoteness of China’s western regions, the Ministry of Education decided to build the China Distance education system, a broadband multi-media transmission platform supported in K-band via satellite. So far, it can provide eight television programmes, eight radio programmes and over twenty sets of intellectual property digital broadcasting programmes. High-speed connection between CERNET and the satellite-based broadband multi-media transmission platform has been achieved. The interaction of the two systems constitutes a platform for distance education, which again has laid the foundation for the development of education in the western regions and the narrowing of the digital gap across the country.

Once the platform had been established, we considered how to link it with primary and middle schools so that they can also have access to the platform. We were not sure whether the primary and middle school teachers could grasp within a short time the basic skills to operate computers and receive online information, because nothing of this kind was attempted before. In 1999, thanks to close cooperation

between the Ministry of Education and the Zhou Kai Xuan's Foundation in Hong Kong, the National Centre for Educational Technology and China Central Radio and Television University jointly implemented 'the training project for female teachers in the future'. About 1000 female teachers from primary schools in poverty-stricken counties of western provinces were sent to Beijing in batches to attend a twenty-days intensive training. Having completed the training, every trainee was presented with a set of equipment including a computer and receiving facilities so that they could receive information resources via distance education satellite channel back home. The training project achieved great success and was a great encouragement. All the teachers grasped the basic knowledge about computers and learned Windows 98, Office 2000, surfing online, and receiving digital information via satellite channels. This was thanks to careful teaching and individual tutorship of teachers from the China Central Radio and Television University and the coordinated effort of all the teaching and logistic staff, but most of all, the extraordinarily hard work of the trainees. The project has not only provided the trainees with necessary skills, but also, more importantly, broadened their horizon, changed their mindset and instilled into them confidence and hope. They said they did not know the world was such an exciting place, neither did they believe that information technology could come into their remote and non-advanced hometown. They also expressed their confidence in teaching the children and building their home after returning back. The project also demonstrates that women have the ability to participate in and promote the development of the 'knowledge society'; what they need is only the opportunities provided by the society.

Mountains can no longer stop knowledge

On this basis, it was decided to carry out a poverty-reduction project of distance education between 2002 and 2004. 10,000 satellite distance education demonstration programmes were built in 13 western provinces and ethnic municipalities. In addition, 14 training bases for teachers were established with support from 14 major universities in western China. Each base offered quality training to teachers and technicians from poverty-stricken areas within the province. Meanwhile, the National Centre for Educational Technology established a resource centre to provide an intellectual property resource channel specifically for this programme. Central Education TV and other relaying digital channels provided support in terms of information resources.

Teachers and students there have warmly welcomed the modern distance education project in primary and middle schools. In the past, teachers in the remote west were not informed of the latest development in the field of education. They had to depend on what they had learned at school and were worried that they were lagging more and more behind. Now, with access to the network, great changes have taken place. The quality of education has been significantly improved and

teachers have regained their confidence. Some children have pictured their dreams on the computer. They told us: 'the mountains can no longer stop the knowledge'. Faced with such a scene, who would not be moved?

With nearly one million primary and middle schools across China, 10,000 experimental schools account for only a very small part. One computer for one school is also far from enough. However, a practical path has been discovered. The Chinese Government has decided within the current five-year plan to invest over ten billion Yuan to continuously implement modern distance education in middle and primary schools in the countryside. Organizations and countries, including UNDP, UNICEF, EU, Canada and the UK are also conducting different training projects for teachers in western China in order to provide further support in this respect. No matter what means is taken, quality education must be based on a platform connected with the Internet. As was pointed out in the Declaration and Action Plan of the UN 'World Summit on the Information Society', the right of each student to access the information platform is the premise to guarantee the quality of general education of a nation in the 'knowledge society'.

China is faced with great challenges in this respect. Teachers training and sustained support are absolutely necessary, which call for both extensive material and human investment. The popularization of ICT does not aim at teaching the students how to type, or the teachers how to turn book content into multi-media CAI. The main task is to help students and teachers to learn how to find information and broaden their vision in order to cultivate their ability to master, analyze and synthesize knowledge and to solve real problems. It is not enough to rely on the power of one single country to solve the problem of network resources. Instead, we must depend on the joint efforts of the international community. I think it is necessary for China to improve both the teachers' and the students' English so that they can make direct use of the resources on the international websites. While we must inherit and develop our own culture, we also need to understand and familiarize ourselves with the culture of other nations in order to make full use of the opportunities of international information and knowledge communion, to share knowledge and information, and to take part in the development process.

Learning by doing

Educational challenges arise not only from the building and the use of the Internet, but also from innovation in learning. Learning is becoming part of our lives, and a life style. Changing the way of learning, is changing the way of living. Science education does not merely mean teaching students more facts. It also means helping students cultivate a new way of learning, a new life style and the scientific attitudes corresponding with the advanced culture of the twenty-first century.

The reform of science education is a worldwide challenge. The reform of Inquiry based science education (IBSE) was a joint effort of some international scientists. With their sharp sense of responsibility toward the future and based on their own successful scientific practice, scientists put forward and carried out this reform in cooperation with the education community. In the 1980s, Leon Lederman, a Nobel Prize winner in physics from the USA proposed the study model: 'Hands-On'. In 1995, Georges Charpak, a Nobel Prize winner in physics from France introduced the model and developed the concept in his homeland. It later became known as 'La main à la pâte', meaning 'make the dough with your own hands', that is, 'work with your own hands'. Such educational reforms have achieved wide-acknowledged success.

In 1994, the 'Committee of Capacity Building in Science' (CCBS) was established in ICSU. In 2000, jointly hosted by the Ministry of Education, the China Association for Science and Technology, CCBS, ICSU and the National Commission for UNESCO, the UNESCO Office in China, scientists, educators, government officials and teachers from over 20 countries gathered in Beijing for a forum on science and mathematics education in primary schools. It was suggested in the 'Beijing Declaration' that a new action alliance be set up to coordinate worldwide efforts with the aim to encourage the younger generation to master scientific knowledge and have a scientific way of thinking. With the joint effort of the international science community, especially that of IAP, this significant education reform has been carried out in dozens of countries.

In 2004, UNESCO held the International Conference on Science and Technology Education in Headquarters, Paris, together with the America Advanced Science and Technology Association. In his opening speech, the Director-General, Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, underlined the need to make systematic reform of science and technology education. Walter Erdelen, Assistant Director-General of science, concluded the conference by emphasising the importance to promote the reform of science education in developing countries.

Through the 'Learning By Doing' programme of science education in China, children experienced the process of scientific discoveries and observing natural phenomena; the process of putting forward questions, designing experiments, doing experiments, making observations and taking records, explaining, discussing and delivering presentations, during which the students not only got to master scientific knowledge, but also experienced the process of scientific discoveries, which aroused their curiosity and helped them develop a scientific attitude, respect facts and respect other people, learn to cooperate with others, and develop critical thinking. Only through social practice can children cultivate proper social behaviour.

'Learning by doing' is not elite education since it does not seek to find and develop scientific elites. Instead, it is open to every child and respects the

differences between each child with the aim to turn them into qualified citizens of the future society. We hope to explore how today's education can help children get better prepared for tomorrow. A website at Southeast University connects all experimental schools and provide on line teachers' training and service. Such a reform requires great effort in teacher training and constant support from the science community. University students will be mobilized to participate in the programme as volunteers.

Cultivate the culture of peace in preparation for the future

Education is not a kind of consumption, but an investment, by the country, the society, the family and the individual. The investment in education rests upon the expectation for the future, not for short-term success or quick profit. Education embodies integrated responsibilities of the country and the learner. Education is more of a social activity for public benefit, than a commercial activity. The 'knowledge society' has pushed education towards a system of life-long learning, a status with unprecedented importance. Meanwhile, education has met with unprecedented challenges. It is the responsibility of the whole society to meet these challenges. Non-governmental organizations, education, science and business communities should join hands with the governments to strive for the revitalization of the nations and a better future for human society.

In addition to carrying out scientific research and technology transfer; scientists should also shoulder the historical mission of implementing science education, undertaking dialogues with decision-makers and the media, and upgrading the educational level of the general public. The science and education communities should be close battle companions, not separated individuals in this deep reform.

I sincerely hope and firmly believe that UNESCO will play a more important role in building the bridge in the human mind and cultivating a new culture of peace in order to enable us to meet the challenges now and in the future.

Gennet Zewide



Changing the education system

Influenced by UNESCO

I am an educationalist who was previously an assistant professor of business education at Addis Ababa University before becoming Vice Minister of Education in charge of higher education in 1991. My involvement in the work of UNESCO started as soon as I became Minister of Education of Ethiopia in 1992. Ever since, I have represented my country at UNESCO's General Conferences. Moreover, I have represented East Africa as a Member of the Executive Board for two terms [1993-1997 and 1998-2000].

The most rewarding experience I had with UNESCO was in the Executive Board meetings when the debates were stimulating and educational. I also learned a lot about UNESCO's mandate while making my own contributions to the identification and prioritization of programmes. The experiences shared in the debates with regard to education, culture, science and technology, information and communication had a tremendous impact on my personal and professional growth. I cannot deny that my world outlook, particularly on multiculturalism and pluralism has been profoundly improved.

Changing the education system

My exposure to the policy debates in the General Conference and the Executive Board, as well as valuable UNESCO literature that is widely and freely disseminated

to Member States helped me appreciate and translate the noble ideals of UNESCO. Thus the following are incorporated in the Ethiopian education system:

- Values such as the rule of law, equality of the sexes, pluralism, multiculturalism, tolerance and human and democratic rights are taught in our primary and secondary schools.
- Ethiopia, being a multi national country, currently uses about 22 different nationality languages as medium of instruction as opposed to using only one language about 12 years ago.
- Though our education is secular, we address the different cultural and religious aspects of the nations and nationalities in our curriculum.
- Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and universal primary education (UPE) has become the priority of the government. The participation rate of primary education has increased from 20 per cent to 79 per cent between 1992 and 2005.
- We also gave special attention to enhancing girls' education. By so doing, the participation of girls has tremendously improved.

I think UNESCO is successful in advocating the use of local languages in education and advancing multiculturalism. The arguments articulated in the various literature and debates on the necessity of multilingual and multicultural education to advance peace is strong and convincing and this makes UNESCO an authority on the subject.

The Preamble of the UNESCO Constitution has been of particular importance to my work as a Minister of Education in a country which has had a long history of civil war caused by the subjugation of the rights of many nations and nationalities by former undemocratic governments. Therefore, in formulating our education policy, we made sure that 'building the defences of peace' as expressed in UNESCO's ideals was the guiding principle in our curriculum as it is very relevant to us because of our history of civil strife.

Civic education is offered as one of the subjects in both secondary and elementary schools. Values such as peaceful coexistence, tolerance, democratic and human rights, equality between nations and nationalities, gender equality and the rule of law are emphasized in the curriculum. I strongly believe that democratic values instilled in the minds of the young through education will enable them to appreciate peace, to protect and to nurture it so that conflicts arising in the future can be resolved in a peaceful manner. In fact, with accessibility of primary education now more than ever, it will be a very effective entry point to instil the value and importance of peace in the minds of people.

Apart from my contributions to the debates in General Conferences and on the Executive Board for two terms, I was a key player in the establishment of

UNESCO's 'Capacity Building Institute for Africa' in Addis Ababa. Africa is a priority area for UNESCO. The establishment of the Institute confirms UNESCO's commitment to the continent. As the education systems in many African countries are characterized by poor teacher education programmes, inefficient management and administration and inaccessibility to schooling, the Institute envisages alleviating these problems through various capacity building programmes. Within a few years of its establishment, many ministries of education have benefited a lot from its multiple teacher education, educational management and distance education programmes. Furthermore, having a UNESCO institute in Africa helps to popularize UNESCO's ideals on the continent.

Empowering women

I am a member of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), which is a membership organization that brings together African women education policy-makers to stimulate policy reforms and advocates and creates a conducive environment for female education. Through my association with FAWE, as a member and chairperson for five years, I was involved in advocacy for female education and the formulation of strategies and measures to empower African women through education. Through the relentless work of FAWE, and its national chapters in many African countries, including Ethiopia, girls' education is high on the development agenda. FAWE has also become a focal point in the region concerning the education of women. FAWE as an associate partner of UNESCO participates in many of its activities relating to female education.

Gender equality is one of the four primary areas of UNESCO. Thus, efforts are made to mainstream gender issues in all strategies. Programmes are designed and targets are set to positively impact the lives of women. They are also encouraged to join the Organization. Certainly all these effort have enabled women to lead a better life today than 50 years ago. However, given the sixty years existence of UNESCO much more could have been achieved. For instance, nearly 50 per cent of the senior posts of the Organization could have been fielded by women; more women could have been the beneficiaries of science and technology and the gender disparities in education, especially at a higher level, could have been narrowed. Therefore, I suggest that a comprehensive programme with long and short-term goals to empower women within UNESCO's mandates of education, culture, science and technology and information should be formulated. UNESCO should play a pivotal role in order to convince and push Member States to implement the programme in the way UPE and MDGs are pushed through.

I advice the young women working in UNESCO, to continue to work towards gender equality within and outside the Organization.



Madeleine Zúñiga

Working with indigenous languages

Working with indigenous languages in rural areas

I am an applied linguist and have dedicated my professional work to educational programmes and projects for indigenous people in Latin America, mainly in Peru and Bolivia, but also in Guatemala and Ecuador. I have worked with Quechua, Guaraní and Maya people. My first concerns were concentrated on languages in education - the development of vernacular languages and the teaching of Spanish as a second language. Working with indigenous languages and rural areas strongly drew my attention to the rich cultural aspects in education. Thus, due to my bilingual education, I became deeply involved in intercultural education issues, both projects, as well as national education policies.

Rural education was a gateway to literacy programmes and young and adult education, with special emphasis on indigenous populations. These experiences are at the basis of my involvement in the world movement for 'Education for All'(EFA) and the 'Global campaign for education'(GCE). Under my initiative, and following the Dakar recommendations on EFA and examples of other regions, a steering committee of civil society organizations for EFA was established in Peru. It was the first step towards the establishment of our National Forum of EFA, with the participation of both State and civil organizations. I was elected as the vice president of this forum and held this position until March 2005. At present I represent the Foro Educativo in the Organizing committee of the GCE in Peru.

My first contact with UNESCO was back in 1977 when I was invited to a technical meeting on ‘The role of vernacular languages in education’. At that time I was conducting the ‘Bilingual education programme’ (Quechua–Spanish) for rural schools of the National University of San Marcos in Peru. The interaction and the open sharing with professionals coming from other continents, mainly from Africa, working within the same fields of interest, was most enriching. Since then, I have to thank UNESCO for giving me the precious chance to be an active member of global initiatives and commitments, from which I am still benefiting today. I was invited to be a member of the UNESCO Consultive Committee on Linguistic Pluralism and Multilingual Education (1994); researcher in the international survey on adult education for indigenous peoples (1999) and member of the experts group supporting the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012). As the vice president of the Peruvian national EFA forum I have attended several meetings of the collective consultation of NGOs on EFA, organized by UNESCO.

Reinforcing peace through cross-border programmes

Peru and Ecuador were involved in a short war back in the 1940s. Despite a declaration of peace, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, our countries held tense diplomatic relations and were on the brink of a new war. In the mid 1990s we finally signed a peace treaty that hopefully will last forever. As a consultant to the representation of UNESCO in Peru, I prepared a bilingual intercultural education project to be implemented with Quechua and Aguaruna people living in both countries in the Northern Amazon area. Unfortunately, neither government took up the project. Other educational and health programmes, however, were successfully carried out with Spanish speaking communities on both sides of the border. This has helped to reinforce peace between Peru and Ecuador.

I believe in building personal relations among peoples whose countries are in conflict through projects where they work and live together. Projects should involve people of different generations. They may be assisted by professionals in conflict solving, but I think that sharing daily life activities could bring people to understand each other as they are. They would thereby see for themselves that peace is possible, although not easy to achieve, and that it is highly beneficial for countries involved, as well as for the whole world. With peace, we would cease hearing constantly about conflicts and wars and instead hear about social and scientific achievements.

An adequate perspective on cultural and multi-cultural issues

Although there is a need to set priorities of attention, I would advise not to exclude working with some groups and programmes that, to a certain extent have been neglected in the past, like young and adult education, particularly education

of indigenous women. In the global scenario, Latin America may appear as a Spanish and Portuguese speaking continent, culturally quite homogeneous. Yet, there are about 400 different languages in this region and many versions of Spanish; each language and variety is a cultural expression. Literacy programmes are desperately needed, especially for indigenous women, whose role is crucial for sustaining quality basic education for their children.

In a certain way, UNESCO's principles, goals and objectives have set the foundations for all my professional life, at the core of which is the permanent struggle for the universal right to education. They have reinforced my own personal convictions about the fairness of working towards the full exercise of this basic human right.

From the bottom of my heart I would like the Organization to emphasize, as a top priority, the issues concerning cultural diversity, including linguistic diversity at all levels, local, regional, and global. I do not think I am wrong in stating that UNESCO is the only international organization that cares and deals with cultural issues from an adequate perspective. There is still little understanding of what cultural diversity really implies for sustainable human development or how to deal with it in specific contexts and situations. The great task is to go beyond the discourse to a well-defined and plausible plan of action that UNESCO should and could lead. The benefits of such a commitment would reach educational policies and programmes, as well as programmes concerning gender equality, women's empowerment and sustainable development.

We must make sure that projects and programmes of a different nature (economic, social, educational and scientific, etc.) are conceived and implemented seriously taking into account the local cultural context. There is now evidence that without the appropriate cultural insight, many projects and programmes fail to achieve the objectives pursued, or have small and weak impact on the target population, with the consequent disillusion or loss of credibility on the possibilities of life improvement. We must put humanity first, as the Organization has done since its creation, and then put cultural and linguistic diversity in action for the benefit of our rich and complex humanity.

Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad

UNESCO Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education (2003-)

Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Abdullah Al-Misnad, the Consort of His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar is the Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs. She manages activities and projects in basic and higher education and has established several high quality, non-profit private schools and learning institutions for children and young people in Qatar. In June 2003, she established the International Fund for Higher Education in Iraq to help the reconstruction of higher education institutions, which is jointly managed by UNESCO and the Qatar Foundation.

Christine Anyanwu

Laureate of the UNESCO Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize (1998)

Christina Anyanwu is currently the chief executive of Spectrum Broadcasting with radio and TV operation in Nigeria. Before that, she was the publisher and editor in chief of TSM “The Sunday Magazine” Lagos, Nigeria. Following the publication of an article about an attempted coup against the Nigerian government on March 1, 1995, she was arrested, first for life and then later for 15 years. All was swept aside by the sudden death of General Sani Abacha in June 1998 on the recognition of the grand injustice that her arrest and imprisonment represented. She was in 2004 given a national honour by the government for her selfless sacrifice on behalf of the nation and her inspirational leadership in the media.

Lourdes Arizpe

Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO (1994-1998)

Professor of Anthropology, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Dr. Arizpe at present serves as President for the International Social Science Council (ISSC). She received a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She was the President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences and Vice- President for the Society for International Development (SID). She also served as a member of the World Commission on Culture and Development and as a member of the Steering Committee for Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era (DAWN). As a research scholar her publications include “Women and Development in Mexico and Latin America”, 1988 (in Spanish) and “The Cultural Dimensions of Global Change: An anthropological approach” UNESCO, 1996.

Margaret Austin

Chairperson of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO (1999-)

Margaret Austin first became a teacher and deputy principal at a high school. She led a reform of the curriculum and administration at the same high school and then turned to politics. She was a Member of Parliament from 1984 to 1996. Ministerial responsibilities included Internal Affairs, Research Science and Technology and Arts and Culture. She later became Chancellor of Lincoln University.

Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux

Chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board (2000-2001)

Sonia Mendieta de Badaroux is holder of a postgraduate diploma (D.E.S.) in International Public Law (1975) and author of a doctoral dissertation on the various attempts at unification among the states of Central America at the Sorbonne University in Paris (1977). She initially earned a B.A. degree in Political Science and Literature at Brandeis University, in Massachusetts (1973). This international university experience was the stepping stone to a rewarding diplomatic career. She obtained from the Government of Honduras the rank of Ambassador in 1996.

Aziza Bennani

Chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board (2001-2003)

Prof. Aziza Bennani was Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Arts at the University Hassan II, Casablanca, where she taught Hispano-Moroccan and Hispano-American literature and civilization. She has published several books in Arabic, French and Spanish. She has held the position of High Commissioner for the Disabled and Moroccan Secretary of State for Culture. She is currently the Ambassador of Morocco to UNESCO.

Gloria Bonder

Chairholder, UNESCO Regional Chair for Gender, Sciences and Technology in Latin America, Argentina

Professor Gloria Bonder is the Director of “Gender, Society and Policies” in the Latin American Postgraduate Institute in Social Sciences, FLACSO. She has developed research and training on gender and education, science and technology and communication in several Latin American countries. She directs the Virtual Master Program on Gender. In the last years, she has worked as a consultant on women, science and technology for many national and international organizations such as the UN Division on the Advancement of Women (DAW), UNIFEM, ECLAC and WSIS.

Claudia Cardinale

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (2000-)

The Italian cinema actress Claudia Cardinale has lent her fame to the service of humanitarian causes. She was designated to be UNESCO’s Goodwill Ambassador in 1999 and works to improve the status and living conditions of girls and women through education.

Ulla Carlsson

Director of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media - an institute in co-operation with UNESCO

Dr. Ulla Carlsson is Director of NORDICOM (Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research) at Göteborg University in Sweden. She worked as a lecturer in political science before she joined Nordicom. She was also a member of the International Council of International Association for Media and Communication Research from 1988 to 1996.

Gloria Cuartas Montoya

Laureate of the UNESCO Mayors for Peace Prize (1996)

Gloria Cuartas Montoya, a social worker, received the first Mayors for Peace Prize (previously called the UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize) of the Latin America and Caribbean region in 1996 when she was mayor of Apartado in Colombia. Since then she has worked for UNESCO as a facilitator of the project 'Cities for Peace' and as Latin-American Councillor for Women until 2000. At present, she is a lecturer at the National University of Colombia, an independent advisor in social research projects at the Autonomous University of Colombia and a director of the project of the San Jose Peace Community.

Alissandra Cummins

Representative of Barbados to UNESCO's Executive Board (1998-2001)

Alissandra Cummins began her career as Research Assistant at the Museum of Mankind in the UK. She was President of the Museums Association of the Caribbean from 1989 to 1996, the Vice-Chairperson of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) from 1992 to 1998, and then its Chairperson from 1998 to 2004. She was elected President of ICOM in 2004 which was the first time that ICOM had elected a woman as President. From 1998 until 2001, she was a Member of the UNESCO Executive Board and became Special Envoy for Cultural Heritage in Barbados and Chairperson of the Barbados National Commission for UNESCO. She is now the Director of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society.

Aïcha Bah Diallo

Deputy – and acting – Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO (2000-2005)

Aïcha Bah Diallo was acting Assistant Director-General and Deputy Assistant Director-General for Education, and Director for Basic Education at UNESCO. She has served as Minister of Education in Guinea from 1989 to 1996. She was founding member and President of the Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE). She was Chief of Cabinet at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (1986-1989) and has also served as the Director of International Relations and Projects at the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (1984-1986). She was also former Chair of UNESCO Advisory Committee for Education in Africa and member of UNESCO Advisory Committee for the World Conference on Girls/Women Education.

Joan Domicelj, AM

Consultant to UNESCO

Joan Domicelj AM holds degrees in architecture (Sydney), urban design (Edinburgh) and urbanism (Paris). She served on the Heritage Council of New South Wales (1996-2001), the Australian State of Environment Advisory Council (1994-1996), the Australian Heritage Commission (1981-1986) and was President of the Australian International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (1990-1992), assessor in the Land and Environment Court (1981-1988) and mediator for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission. In 1999, she was made a Member of the Order of Australia. She held the post of Councillor of ICCROM in Rome (1996-2000), of Executive member, then Vice-President, of ICOMOS in Paris (1990-1996) and has acted as consultant to UNESCO and various Asian countries on the protection of cultural heritage.

Ingrid Eide

Member of the Executive Board of UNESCO (1989-1993)

Ingrid Eide was a co-founder of the Peace Research Institute in Oslo in 1959, one of the first centres of peace research in the world. She has served as a member of parliament and been Deputy Minister of Education. She has taught Sociology at the University of Oslo. She also headed the Division of Women in Development of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and has been President of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO. She has been a member of many international boards including UNRISD, and is presently on the Board of the United Nations Association in Norway. She is a long-term member of WILPF, and chair of the Nansen Dialogue Network and of the No to Nuclear Arms Campaign of Norway.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (1998-)

Her Excellency, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, President of Iceland (1980-1996), was the first woman to be elected as Head of State in a democratic election. She studied literature and drama in France and started to teach French at an experimental college. She was Director of the Reykjavik Theatre Company from 1972 to 1980. Since 1976, she has been a member of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Affairs of the Nordic Council, serving as its chairperson from 1978 to 1980. She is now UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador and Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders which was founded in Stockholm in 1996. She was also the Chair of COMEST, the UNESCO World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology. She has been a member of the Mondialogo School Contest since 2003.

Princess Firyal of Jordan

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (1992-)

Her Royal Highness Princess Firyal is an international patron of the arts and was designated Goodwill Ambassador in 1992. She is also a member of the Dean's Council at Harvard's Kennedy School, a board member of the International Rescue Committee and of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. She is a director of the United Nations Association in Jordan. Her Hope Foundation, founded in collaboration with UNESCO, supports education projects for street and working children. In September 2004, the Director-General conferred on Princess Firyal the mission of promoting UNESCO's "Education for All" initiative.

Francine Fournier

Assistant Director General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO (1990-2000)

Dr. Francine Fournier achieved her doctorate in political science at the University of Montreal. She taught at the political science departments of the Universities of Montreal and Quebec (Montreal). She was appointed Secretary of the Quebec Council on the Status of Women and later became President of the Quebec Human Rights Commission from 1979 until 1985. From 1988 to 1990, she was Secretary-General of the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO. After her engagement with UNESCO she was President of the Multipartite national programme of reconciliation for the Orphans of Duplessis.

Yael Harel

National Coordinator of UNESCO Associated Schools Project (1996-)

Dr. Yael Harel was head of Beit Berl English Department from 1989 to 1994. In 1996 she was the Convenor of the First European National Coordinators Conference in Beit Berl and was also appointed Israel's ASPnet National Coordinator. In 1997 she was awarded the UNESCO Outstanding National Coordinator (ONC) award. She was appointed Chair of the UNESCO Chair for Multiculturalism in Teacher Training in Beit Berl in 2004.

Nguyen Thi Hoi

Secretary-General of the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO (1998-2002)

Nguyen Thi Hoi started her career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Viet Nam. She was Deputy Director of the Department of International Organizations and Director of the Department for Culture and UNESCO. She was also appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the Republic of Austria and to Canada.

Attiya Inayatullah

Chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board (1993-1995)

Dr. Attiya Inayatullah served as an adviser on Population Welfare to President General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in the early 1980s, and became a member of the National Assembly in 1985. She served in the cabinet of Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo as a Minister of State for Population Welfare. She was twice again elected a member of the National Assembly and has served as Minister of Women's Development, Social Welfare and Special Education. She is currently a member of the National Assembly. She is the person who has served the longest on the Executive Board of UNESCO. She is a leading member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Zofija Klemen-Krek

Secretary-General of the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO (1992-2006)

Zofija Klemen-Krek graduated in political sciences and specialized in international relations and served e.g. as the advisor for international relations and foreign policy to the Presidency of SR Slovenia and Consul-General of SFR Yugoslavia in USA, as the first Slovenian women in such high positions. In 1988-1989 she was the President of the Conference for Social Political Activities of Women of Yugoslavia. From the independence of the Republic of Slovenia to her retirement she served as the Director of the Office for UNESCO (level of a State Secretary) (1995-2003 as an office attached to the ministry and 2004-2006 as an office within the ministry) and Secretary-General of the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO.

Countess Setsuko Klossowska de Rola

UNESCO Artist for Peace (2005-)

Countess Setsuko Klossowska de Rola was born in Tokyo where she studied at Sophia University. She is a painter whose work has been shown in Rome, New York, Paris, London and Tokyo among other places. She was the Cultural Patron of the 2002 Venice Congress marking the 30th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. She was also a member of the Jury of the Mondialogo School Contest, launched by DaimlerChrysler and UNESCO to promote inter-cultural dialogue, exchange, respect and tolerance. She is the Honorary President of the Balthus Foundation, a member of the Honorary Committee of

the Fès Festival of World Sacred Music and also a member of the Council of “Fondation Hommes de Parole”.

Ioanna Kuçuradi

Holder of a UNESCO Chair in Philosophy (1998-)

Dr. Ioanna Kuçuradi established in 1969 the Department of Philosophy at the Hacettepe University (Ankara) and the Centre for Research and Application of the Philosophy of Human Rights. She has received several awards, including Goethe-Medaille, Prize of the Turkish Academy of Sciences, Freedom of the Press Prize of the Journalists Association of Turkey, Grosses Verdienstkreuz des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland and Honourable Mention, UNESCO Human Rights Education Prize. She was member at the Committee of Human Sciences, UNESCO National Commission of Turkey, President of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, President of the High Advisory Council for Human Rights of Turkey and President of the National Committee for the UN Decade for Human Rights Education. She is currently President of the Philosophical Society of Turkey.

Yasmeen Lari

National Advisor for the UNESCO World Heritage Site, Lahore Fort project (2002-2005)

Yasmeen Lari is the first woman architect of Pakistan. She obtained her degree in architecture from the Oxford School of Architecture. She is the Executive Director of Heritage Foundation Pakistan, which was the recipient of the 2002 Recognition Award from the UN System in Pakistan. She was the first chairperson of the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners, President of Institute of Architects, Pakistan and Deputy Chairperson of Architects Regional Council of Asia. As Principal of *Lari Associates, Architects, Urban Designers* she has designed major architectural projects in Pakistan. She has been involved with several UNESCO cultural heritage projects in Pakistan and has authored a series of publications.

Noëlle Lenoir

Chairperson of the International Committee on Bioethics of UNESCO (1992-1998)

Noëlle Lenoir served as the French Minister of European Affairs from 2002 to 2004. She was the first woman and youngest person on the French Supreme Court for constitutional matters. She has been Conseiller d’Etat since 1984. She chaired the European Group of Ethics for Sciences and New Technologies for the European Commission from 1994 to 2001. She was Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Justice from 1988 to 1990. She is currently an Associate Professor and President of the European Institute at the Hautes Etudes de Commerce (H.E.C.) and has taught at Paris I and Paris II law schools, the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris (I.E.P.), the University College, London and Columbia Law School. She is currently of Counsel at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP’s Paris Office where she heads the European Law practice group.

María Clemencia López-Jiménez

Secretary-General of the Venezuelan National Commission for UNESCO (2003-)

María Clemencia López-Jiménez completed her studies at the Central University of Caracas, Venezuela, and at the National Institute for Defense of Venezuela and at New York University. She started her diplomatic career at the United Nations Venezuelan Mission in New York, in 1965 and served in different diplomatic posts in Geneva, Brazil

and Bolivia before being appointed as Ambassador of Venezuela in Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. She is Deputy Representative for Venezuela at the UNESCO Executive Board (2003-2007.)

Fatima Abdel Mahmoud

UNESCO Chair in Women, Science and Technology, Sudan (2003-)

Professor Dr. Fatima A. Abdel Mahmoud was the first woman minister in Africa and served as a Member of Parliament, head of USA – European Affairs Department since 1973. She established the Women’s Institute in Health and Development at Sudan University for Science and Technology. She also established the SOS village and the Abu Halima development centre in 1973.

Lydia Makhubu

Member of the UNESCO Executive Board (2001-2005)

Prof. Lydia Makhubu was the Vice Chancellor of Swaziland University from 1988-2003. She served as President of the Third World Organization for Women in Science from 1993-2005. In 1998, she received the UNESCO Comenius Medal for research and innovation in higher education. Currently Prof. Makhubu is the Chancellor of the Women’s University in Africa, located in Harare, Zimbabwe. Together with a group of African Women academics, they have established the Association for Strengthening Higher Education for Women in Africa. She is a member of the House of Senate in the Parliament of Swaziland.

Fiaame Naomi Mata’afa

Member of the UNESCO Executive Board (1998-2001)

Fiaame Naomi Mata’afa served as Minister of Education for Samoa for fifteen years (1991-2006) and at the same time as President of the National Commission for UNESCO. She currently is Minister for Women, Community and Social Development and also Minister for the Public Service Commission, Salaries Tribunal and the Ombudsman’s Office. Other key involvements include her work with various women’s organizations: the National Council of Women, Inailau Women’s Leadership Network, and the Young Women’s Christian Association.

Delia Vera Medina

National Coordinator of ASP network (1993-)

Delia Vera Medina has held the position of National coordinator of the schools associated with UNESCO in Cuba since 1993. In 1998 she was given the National Coordinator Excellence award. Beginning with her work as primary school teacher, Delia Medina has dedicated her life to education.

Rigoberta Menchú Tum

Laureate of the Education for Peace Prize of UNESCO (1990) and Goodwill Ambassador (1996-)

Rigoberta Menchú Tum is an indigenous Guatemalan, of the Quiche-Maya ethnic group, who has dedicated her life to fighting for the rights of indigenous populations. She received the UNESCO Prize for Education for peace in 1990 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. In 1992, she established the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation, which works on human rights and on fostering a culture of peace for indigenous people, as well as their human rights.

Margaretha Mickwitz

Member of and representative of Finland on the Executive Board of UNESCO (1987-1991, 1997-2001)

Margaretha Mickwitz began her work with UNESCO in 1965. In 1977 she became a member of the Secretariat, as Chief of the National Commissions Division (1977-80). She also served as Secretary-General of the Finnish National Commission for UNESCO. She has also held key positions in the Finnish Ministry of Education as Deputy-Director General and Director General for International Relations.

Eleonora Mitrofanova

Assistant Director-General for Administration and Finance at UNESCO (2000-2003)

Eleonora Mitrofanova, born in Stalingrad, holds a doctorate in economics. In the 1990s, she served as a State Duma deputy (1993-95) and as auditor at the Russian Auditing Chamber (1995-2000). In 2003, she was appointed as Russia's first woman Deputy Foreign Minister. From 2004 she has been the Head of the Russian Centre for International Science under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Jaroslava Moserova (1930-2006)

President of the General Conference of UNESCO (1999-2001), Permanent Delegate to UNESCO and Member of the UNESCO Executive Board (1995-1999, 2003-2006)

In 1989, Dr. Jaroslava Moserova was elected in the first free election to the Czech Parliament and the Czech National Council, where she served as vice-president and later, Chair of the Committee on Science, Education and Culture. She also served as Czech ambassador to Australia and New Zealand. She was appointed Secretary General of the Czech National Commission for UNESCO; elected Member of the Executive Board and later as the first woman President of the General Conference of UNESCO. She also worked as an artist, novelist, playwright, and translator. The French President Jacques Chirac honored her as an Officer of the Légion d'honneur.

Anastasia Nakkazi

Secretary-General of the Ugandan National Commission for UNESCO (1991-2004)

Anastasia Nakkazi was a teacher and headmistress before joining the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, first as Assistant Secretary General and then Secretary General until her retirement in 2004. She is currently patron of the Women Engineers, Technicians and Scientists of Uganda (WETSU), patron of the Uganda Libraries Association and a member of the Information and Communication Committee of the Ugandan National Council for Science and Technology.

Ute-Henriette Ohoven

UNESCO Special Ambassador for the Education of Children in Need (1992-)

A long-standing humanitarian advocate, Ute-Henriette Ohoven has focused her activities on cancer research and treatment for children in her native Germany. She is the principal organizer for UNESCO's Annual Benefit Gala and has been awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz of Germany, the highest civil order of Senegal, and the Picasso Medal of UNESCO in gold. Special Ambassador Ohoven has also been voted one of the 100 most influential women in Europe and currently stands as General Consul of Senegal and as honorary citizen of Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Roza Otunbayeva

Chairperson of the USSR National Commission to UNESCO and member and Vice-President of the Executive Board of UNESCO (1989-1991)

Roza Otunbayeva served as the Head of the USSR Delegation in UNESCO General Conferences in Paris from 1989-1991 and the Kyrgyz Delegation at the UN General Assemblies in New York (1994-1996), as well as the UNHCR Conference for CIS Refugees in Geneva (1997). Roza Otunbayeva has also served as Kyrgyz Ambassador to the United States and Canada and to the United Kingdom. In 2002-2004 she worked in the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Georgia as the Deputy of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General. She has served four times as the Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz republic. In January 2006 she became the co-leader of the political party Asaba.

Maria Luisa Paronetto Valier

Member of the Executive Board of UNESCO (1972-1976, 1985-1989)

Maria Luisa Paronetto Valier, after graduating in Greek literature from Padua University, concentrated on contemporary history. In the early 1950s, she started working for the Italian National Commission for UNESCO. The direct experience in the field of international cooperation spurred her scientific research concerning cultural conditions and development e.g. *Programmes of Education in Africa*, Bologna, 1973. She served for several years, first as deputy then as a member of the Executive Board. She is currently, since retirement, Vice President of the National Consultative Committee on Human Rights.

Kim Phuc Phan Thi

Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO (1994-)

Kim Phuc Phan Thi, a Vietnamese peace activist, was appointed Goodwill Ambassador to UNESCO on 10 November 1994. The photo of Mrs. Kim Phuc Phan Thi, as a child burned from a napalm attack, has circulated around the world and made her a living symbol of the suffering of innocent war victims. She has dedicated her life to the promotion of peace. In 1977 she established the Kim Foundation in Chicago and later, Canada, to help in healing child victims of war.

Anaisabel Prera Flores

Member of the UNESCO Executive Board (1989-1993) and Ambassador of Guatemala to France and UNESCO (2004-)

Anaisabel Prera Flores was born in Guatemala and has a doctoral degree in Law. At the age of 30 she became the Secretary General of the Supreme Court of Justice and she was nominated Minister of Culture in the first democratic period of Guatemala after the civil war. She was a member of Congress in Guatemala from 1990 to 1994. She also worked as Special Advisor to the Director-General of UNESCO with special focus on the culture of peace. She is currently Ambassador of Guatemala to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO.

Lourdes R. Quisumbing

Founding President of UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Network for International Education and Values Education (1995-present) and Member of the Executive Board of UNESCO (1991-1995)

Dr. Lourdes Quisumbing served as Minister of Education, Sports, and Culture in the Philippine government from 1986-1990. From 1990-1998, she served as Secretary General of the Philippine National Commission for UNESCO. She was also the Founding President of the Philippine Council for Global Education, Co-Director of the Commission on Women and Work, Asian Women's Institute, and Project Coordinator of Women in Asian Development, and the President of UNESCO-APNIEVE (1995-2005). She is the Director of the APNIEVE Training Team for Values Education and Values Integration. She holds a doctorate in Education and has received four honorary doctorates in recognition of her contribution to family life, women's studies and education. She received the UNESCO Comenius Medal in 1994.

Betty A. Reardon

Author of several UNESCO publications

Dr. Betty A. Reardon started working in peace education full-time as Director of the Schools Programme with the Institute of World Order in 1963. She founded the Peace Education Center at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City. She has authored and co-edited several publications also for UNESCO, including on Tolerance; Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective and Towards a Women's Agenda for a Culture of Peace. She has initiated and organized the yearly International Institute on Peace Education since 1982. She received the UNESCO Honorable Mention Award at the Peace Education Prize Ceremonies in Paris in 2001. She was among the 1000 women jointly nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

Françoise Rivière

Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO (2006-)

Born in 1950, Françoise Rivière, a former student at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, holds an agrégation in classics and graduated from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris (France). She began her career in 1974 as an assistant lecturer at Yale University, then at the University of Paris, Val de Marne. From 1977 to 1980, she was an educational adviser to the Bureau of Personnel of the United Nations Office at Geneva and then, from 1981, technical adviser to the French National Commission for UNESCO. Joining UNESCO in 1981, she held various positions in the Office of the Director-General and in the Bureau of Studies, Programming and Evaluation, where she became Director and then Assistant Director-General. In November 1999, she was appointed Director of the Office of the current Director-General and in May 2006 she became Assistant Director-General for Culture.

Sawsan Saleh

National ASP Coordinator, Palestinian Authority (1999-)

Prior to becoming a women's affairs activist, Ms Sawsan Saleh worked in the field of heritage and education. Since 1997 she has worked for the Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science and in that role she is in charge of the UNESCO portfolio. Ms Saleh also currently serves as the Vice-President of the Association of Women Action (AOWA).

H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (2005-)

H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is the third child of the present king of Thailand. She studied Pali, Sanskrit and Cambodian before completing a PhD in Development Education in 1987. She is actively involved in various national development projects aiming to improve health, hygiene, education, water resource management, agriculture, disabled veterans' affairs as well as the preservation of Thai culture and cottage industries. She heads the Department of History at the Chulachomkiao Royal Military Academy and is Executive President of the Thai Red Cross Society. In recognition of her 'outstanding commitment to education and to the welfare of children in remote areas' she was designated UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador in March 2005.

Torild Skard

President of the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO (1977-1984)

Torild Skard was elected as Member of Parliament in 1973 and served as the first female President of the Upper House from 1973 to 1977. When she left Parliament in 1977, she headed the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO. She was the first female Director-General of the Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation and also the first Coordinator of activities related to the status of women in UNESCO (1984-1986). She later became Regional Director for UNICEF in West and Central Africa. Torild Skard has authored several publications.

Sheilah Solomon

Member of the UNESCO Executive Board (1985-1988)

Sheilah Solomon was trained as a diplomat and later represented Trinidad and Tobago at the United Nations. She subsequently became Director of the International Organization Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1988 she was appointed the first Director of the Bureau for Field Coordination of UNESCO, a position she held until 1991. She presently acts as Coordinator of the Citizens' Agenda Network which is based in Trinidad and Tobago.

Savitri Suwansathit

Secretary-General of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO (1996-1998)

Ms Suwansathit has had a long and distinguished career as a civil servant in Thailand. She held appointments as Deputy Permanent Secretary of Education, Inspector-General of the Ministry of Education, Secretary-General of the Commission for Teachers' Civil Service and Deputy Secretary-General of the National Culture Commission. At present she acts as Advisor to the Minister of Education and sits on the council of two provincial universities. Ms Suwansathit is also a freelance writer, editor and painter.

H.R.H. Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (1997-)

Her Royal Highness Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg is of Cuban descent, but grew up mainly in New York and Geneva. While studying at the University of Geneva she met her future husband Henri, the reigning Grand Duke of Luxembourg. She has developed a keen interest in social and humanitarian problems, such as education for women and children, female empowerment and poverty alleviation, and chairs many humanitarian foundations working in these fields. She acts as President of the Luxembourg Red Cross, the Cancer Foundation and the AIDS Research Foundation, among others.

Aminata D. Traoré

Participant in UNESCO High-level Meetings

Dr. Aminata Traoré is a writer and a member of the African Social Forum and previously served as Minister of Culture and Tourism in Mali. She has been the Regional Director of the UNDP project 'Promotion of the Role of Women in Water, Environmental and Sanitation Services' (PROWESS) and currently heads the Centre Amadou Hampâté BA (CAHBA). She has published several books on Africa on globalization, migration and cultural diversity.

Maria-Ekaterini Papachristopoulou-Tzitzikosta

President of the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO (2004-)

Kitty Tzitzikosta is founding President of the Association of Interbalkan Women Cooperation Societies (1992), and of the UNESCO Centre for Women and Peace in the Balkan Countries. She is Secretary-General of the Mediterranean Women's Forum - UNESCO Network since 2002.

Marianna Vardinoyannis

UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (1999-)

Marianna Vardinoyannis is the founder and President of the 'Foundation for the Child and the Family' and the 'Friends' Association for Children with Cancer in Greece (ELPIDA). She sits on the Board of the 'Suzanne Mubarak International Women for Peace Movement', the MENTOR Foundation, and the President's Council of the Special Olympics 'Europe-Eurasia'. She serves as the Greek delegate to the 'European Office for Missing and Exploited Children' and is a member of the International Committee of the Foundation for a Culture for Peace.

Kapila Vatsyayan

Member of the UNESCO Executive Board (2001-2005)

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan is an expert on Indian dance and the performing arts. She was the founding director of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in Delhi. She has furthermore served as Secretary in the Indian Ministry of Education, Department of Arts and Culture and in this capacity she oversaw the establishment of many institutions of higher learning. Since 2003 she is chairperson of the Indian International Centre's Asia Project. She is the author of over fifteen major publications and nearly 200 Research Papers.

Sheila S. Walker

Involved in the UNESCO slave route project

Dr. Sheila S. Walker is Director of the African Diaspora and the World programme and Professor of Anthropology at Spelman College and a Senior Fellow at the Phelps Stokes Fund. She is the editor of *African Roots/American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas* and producer of the documentary *Scattered Africa: Faces and Voices of the African Diaspora*. She is also the executive director of Afrodiaspora Inc., a non-profit organization that is producing documentaries and creating educational materials about the global African Diaspora.

Myeong-Hee Yu

Laureate of L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science (1998)

Dr. Myeong-Hee Yu has Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley and had postdoctoral training at M.I.T. After returning to Korea, she has been working on problems of folding and stability in a human plasma inhibitor protein, alpha-1-antitrypsin. She has received numerous national and international awards including the Mock-Am Award from the Korean Society of Molecular Biology, the L'Oréal-UNESCO Award, the Seoul City Cultural Award, the Order of Science and Technology and the Ungbi Medal, from the Korean Government. She has been a member of the National Academy of Science and Technology since 2002.

Wei Yu

President of the Chinese National Commission of UNESCO (1993-2002)

Dr. Wei Yu is a natural scientist with a background in electronics and bioelectronics. She is a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineers and serves as Vice Chairperson of the China Association of Science and Technology. She was also President of the Nanjing Institute of Technology before being appointed Vice-Minister of Education in 1993, a function which she served until 2002.

Gennet Zewide

Member of the UNESCO Executive Board (1993-1997, 1998-2000)

Gennet Zewide has a background in education. She was assistant professor of business education at Addis Ababa University before becoming Ethiopian Vice Minister of Education in charge of higher education in 1991. One year later she was appointed Minister of Education (1992-2005). She has represented her country at UNESCO's General Conferences ever since. Ms. Zewide is presently her country's ambassador to India.

Madeleine Zúñiga

Member of the UNESCO expert group panel on the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-)

Madeleine Zúñiga is a linguist with an interest in intercultural understanding who has both published and contributed to various UNESCO studies about education in Latin America. She was a staff member of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Peru. Ms Zúñiga was the Vice-President of the Peruvian National Forum on Education for All from 2002 to 2004 and she currently works for the Global Campaign of Education in Peru.

Appendix II: Acronyms commonly used

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|---------|--|
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| AIERI | Association Internationale des Études et Recherches sur l'Information et la Communication |
| ALBA | Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas (Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean) |
| ALCA | Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas (Free Trade Area of the Americas - FTAA) |
| APCEIU | Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding |
| APEID | Asian Programme of Educational Innovation for Development |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| ASPAC | Asian Studies on Pacific Coast |
| CAI | Computer Aided Instruction |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| COMNET | Commonwealth Network of Information Technology for Development |
| CV | Curriculum Vitae |
| EFA | Education for All |
| ESCAP | United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific |
| EU | European Union |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GNP | Gross National Product |
| HM | Her Majesty |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| IAP | InterAcademy Panel |
| IBSE | Inquiry Based Science Education |
| ICSU | International Council for Science |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IGO | Intergovernmental Organization |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organization |
| IP | Intellectual Property |
| ITU | International Telecommunications Union |
| IWO | International Workcamp Organization |
| MA | Master of Arts |
| MINEDAF | Conference of African Ministers of Education |
| NC | National Committee |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OPEC | Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| PhD | Doctor of Philosophy |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| SID | Society for International Development |
| TESOL | Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages |
| TLC | Tratado Libre de Comercio (Free Trade Agreement) |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNEVOC | International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |

60 years of UNESCO's history are brought to life through the voices of 60 women who either have contributed, or who continue to contribute to UNESCO in different capacities. This volume gathers their perspectives, thus providing a unique documentation of the critical role women play in building UNESCO and in promoting its ideals.

“The vision of women, their intelligence, energy and experience, are indispensable to the creation of a more just, equitable, prosperous and peaceful world... This book is an inspiration to UNESCO, both for the historical perspective and the rich testimonials it presents, as for its many forward-looking suggestions and recommendations. I hope it will make a substantial contribution to realizing women's aspirations, to developing ways of improving gender equality, not least in UNESCO, and to fortifying hopes for a peaceful future at local, regional and international levels, drawing on and integrating the full potential of women.”

Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

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