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**silver lining**

813 - OCT 2021

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Interview with the  
Director-General – P.5

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## Every cloud has a silver lining

In this issue, we have a rare interview with Ms. Valovaya, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. You will be captivated by her personal journey and her insights into how various agencies in Geneva work and collaborate. We all must adapt to the new Geneva as a meeting place of international minds and negotiations. Her positive outlook for the future and ability to see silver linings in challenges is contagious. And her view on what added value magazines such as newSpecial have in Geneva matches with our philosophy of "by staff for staff".

And as always, we have numerous other articles inspired by our regular contributors and readers. Don't miss a dossier with several articles on planning and living in retirement that coincides with the International Day of Older Persons, taking place each year in October.

Enjoy reading our magazine, we are sure you will find all of our articles interesting! ■

## Même le plus noir nuage a toujours sa frange d'or

Dans cette édition, nous avons un entretien rare avec M<sup>me</sup> Valovaya, Directrice-Générale de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève. Vous serez captivés par son parcours personnel et ses idées sur la façon dont diverses agences travaillent et collaborent à Genève. Nous devons tous nous adapter à la nouvelle Genève en tant que lieu de rencontre d'esprits et de négociations internationaux. La vision positive de l'avenir de M<sup>me</sup> Valovaya et sa capacité de voir les bons côtés dans les défis sont contagieuses. Et son point de vue sur la valeur qu'ajoutent des magazines comme newSpecial à Genève correspond à notre philosophie: «par et pour le personnel».

Comme toujours, nous avons de nombreux articles inspirés par nos contributeurs et lecteurs réguliers. Ne manquez pas un dossier avec plusieurs articles sur la préparation pour la vie à la retraite qui a lieu chaque année en octobre.

Bonne lecture de notre magazine, nous sommes sûrs que vous trouverez tous nos articles intéressants! ■

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Ms Tatiana Valovaya's photo, exposed at the Rath Museum.

Exclusive interview

# Ms Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva

*newSpecial* had the opportunity to interview Ms Tatiana Valovaya.

**THE INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED BY  
MARKO STANOVIC**

**Can you tell us something about yourself that we don't already know? Maybe something about your university years?**

My first profession was a journalist. I worked as a journalist, but by education, I was an economist and a specialist in international economic and monetary relations. What you may not know about me is that I wrote the first book in Russian about the European Monetary Union. I was one of the first researchers who worked on the subject of European integration at that time.

When I was 25 years old, I started working as a journalist at the *Economic Gazette*, a major economic weekly in the Soviet Union (1983-1989). This was during Perestroika and President Gorbachev. I was a young economist and journalist, and we were encouraged to write honestly and truthfully, ask questions and analyze materials on economic reform. Many economists who I interviewed later became ministers and prominent scientists. This was a very interesting period in my life. But I started writing when I was 18 years old – as a student I wrote for the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*



Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva.

newspaper which, in those days, sold more than 5 million copies daily.

As a result of my writing, in 1989 I was invited by one of my interviewees, a prominent officer of the Government of the Soviet Union – who had been nominated first Soviet ambassador to the European Union – to become the person in charge of economic and monetary relations and also of public relations for the Embassy in Brussels. It was an interesting period for Europe and the world: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Maastricht Treaty, the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the appearance of new sovereign states. In those times, there weren't many specialists on European integration in the Soviet government, so the Ambassador was pleasantly surprised when he read my monograph, *The European Monetary System* (Moscow, 1987).

I stayed in Brussels for five years, and then I returned to Russia to continue my academic career but eventually joined the Russian civil service, and for a long time

I was the Head of the Department of International Cooperation of the Russian Government.

#### How has COVID-19 impacted the work of UNOG?

It has impacted not only the work of UNOG but of the whole United Nations system and the whole global multilateral system. We had to reduce drastically in-person meetings and other multilateral activities. We also had to reduce travels. However, I am proud to say that Geneva was one of the first duty stations in the UN system to resume in-person activities with hybrid meetings, as early as June 2020. The main activities and conferences were held in-person and virtually. So, COVID-19 has changed our work, but we were prepared. As an international organization, we already had the experience with working online as well as in teams from different countries and continents. We had the technological base for implementing this new mode of work.

#### Has “teleworking” been a “good” or “bad” experience?

Well, it was an *unavoidable* experience. It was the only way to move forward efficiently with our work. Telework is an open way of working that unites teams and people with whom otherwise one could not collaborate. For example, in many of our multilateral events such as the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations, we wanted to have a discussion with young people in Geneva. The online mode was very good because it allowed youth from all over the world to participate,

regardless of cost of airfare and accommodation, or visa and quarantine requirements. In fact, we decided to have more meetings with much higher inclusivity and participants from all over the world.

We always have to look for the silver lining in everything we do. Teleworking means that you can reach a larger audience, be more inclusive and unite more talents. But of course, there are also disadvantages. We need to meet face-to-face to build trust, understanding and confidence. That's why nothing can replace traditional, in-person ways of working, including for multilateral activities.

#### Do you think staff could return to work on a “hybrid” basis, i.e., working a few days from home and few days from the office?

UNOG was prepared for this way of working even before COVID-19. Staff had the opportunity to participate in the UN flexible working arrangement schemes and could work from home up to three days. Before COVID-19, we had some 25 percent of our staff participating in flexible working arrangements, thanks to good Internet connectivity and technological advances in online work collaboration. Looking past COVID-19, I can see more staff using these possibilities. It would depend on the type of job and life

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Ms. Tatiana Valovaya of the Russian Federation was named Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), on 30 May 2019. A journalist, economist, and diplomat with 35 years of experience, Mrs. Valovaya began her career with the Government of the then Soviet Union in 1989 and has served since then in various capacities, including as the Third and Second Secretary at the Russian Permanent Mission to the European Union in Brussels (1989–1994), and Deputy Director and subsequently Director of the Department of International Cooperation of the Russian Federation (1999–2012). She worked as a reporter at “The Economic Gazette” in Moscow from 1983 to 1989. Before joining the United Nations, she was Member of the Board and Minister in charge of integration and macroeconomics of the Eurasian Economic Commission.

Ms. Valovaya graduated from the Department of International Economic Relations of the Moscow Financial Institute and holds a PhD and a Doctorate of Economic sciences from the State Financial Academy, Moscow. She has written extensively on international monetary relations, European economic integration and economic cooperation with Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

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situation of the staff member, and could be especially advantageous for staff with young children.

### **How is SHP progressing, and what are the staff reactions to new working arrangements in building “H”?**

Considering the extraordinary COVID-19 situation, the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP) is progressing very well. Despite the circumstances, we managed to advance with the project. The situation was also complicated by the general financial situation of the organization, which was challenging last year and in the beginning of this year. But nevertheless, we managed to finalize very important stages of the plan. Last September, we launched temporary conference facilities. This year we vacated our historical Palais and moved to the new H building – some of us permanently and some temporarily. So, the plan is progressing well.

With regard to staff reactions, what is important is to have a dialogue. There were many questions and issues raised that were discussed honestly and transparently with the staff during the transition period. I hope that this dialogue will become permanent. I also hope that the perception of the project by the staff will improve. Now that staff are working in the H building, they can see that it is a modern and efficient facility. I am convinced that it is also a safe and secure building. Of course, there are still certain questions being raised, for example with regard to temperature and ventilation. It is a new building, and it takes time to finalize everything.

I would say that in general, the staff seem satisfied, but that it takes time to get accustomed to the new way of working. We are not the only ones in the system who are working in this new

“open space” working arrangement. There are other agencies. The important thing is to answer all the questions and provide timely information. Regarding the sensitive issue of open space and COVID-19 virus transmission, we consulted with specialists in occupational safety from CERN, and they shared with us their computer application that can assess the risk of virus transmission in open spaces. We have used this application, and it shows that the risk of COVID-19 transmission in building H is very low. However, I would like to reiterate that we take this issue very seriously, and not only we consult with doctors but also use alternative methods for assessing risks associated with open spaces to make sure that our staff stay safe and healthy.

### **How does UNOG DG connect with other UN agencies in Geneva, and what can you do to**

**make them interact more with each other, and bring all UN employees in Geneva together?** We are always trying to work together with other UN agencies in Geneva. For example, with respect to COVID-19, I am the designated security official for all UN agencies in Switzerland. I have been organizing and leading special meetings that are now attended not only by UN agencies, but by other multilateral organizations in Geneva, such as the European Broadcasting Union and the World Trade Organization. These have really become regular interagency meetings where we can discuss the developments related to the COVID-19 situation. It is a good example of all UN agencies working together.

Lately, I have been meeting with other heads of agencies in Geneva to discuss the future of conferencing, including hybrid or in-person attendance. Some agencies want

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Ms Tatiana Valovaya's photo, exposed at the Rath Museum.

to keep the online conferencing mode after COVID-19 because it is an easy, inclusive, and cost-efficient way of meeting. We also consult with each other on how to organize meetings of governing bodies, and we work together to provide solutions that would be good for the common system. We also meet during various events, bilaterally or even informally at lunch, to discuss matters and exchange opinions. In November 2021 we will co-organize a multi-agency event on SDGs and sustainable finance that will be attended by heads of UNCTAD, UNDP and others.

**Do you read magazines such as *newSpecial* and what features do you like the best?**

I read a lot and normally like to read magazines and newspapers online. I find personal stories interesting. The UN family is a family of outstanding people and personalities. Each person has their own interesting story. Why did they join the UN, what type of experience did they have, what were the challenges, the benefits? I do not think magazines should replace the traditional

information work of broadcasters. They should rather be entertaining, as people like to read about other people, and one can learn a lot from others' experiences.

**As Honorary President of the United Nations Society of Writers (UNSW), what could be done to encourage more creative writing by UN staff?**

People sometimes think about writing, but then they have doubts about whether they can do it, or whether they will have the time, so encouraging them to put on paper what they already have in their mind would be a good idea. For example, one could organize creative writing events and competitions to help people transform their ideas about writing into concrete actions.

**How do you like being UNOG's DG and what are your biggest challenges?**

I find it a great honor to work for the United Nations, and Geneva is very inspiring for international work. Our biggest challenge right now is the COVID-19 pandemic, and we need to find solutions to keep the staff safe while delivering

our mandates. We need to find a balance between staff safety and the organization of work, including the technical issue. It is not always easy or simple.

The other challenge is how to reinvigorate the global multilateral system and support member states in multilateral cooperation.

Even before COVID-19 we had challenges to multilateralism such as nationalism, but I am optimistic. I also love history, and one of history's great lessons is that after every crisis, such as the World War I and II, the humanity came up with stronger ideas about multilateralism. The League of Nations was born after WWI, and the United Nations after WWII, and I really hope that after this current crisis is over, the global multilateral system will be strengthened, because we can see in real terms that the challenges we are facing, such as pandemics or climate change, are global challenges that need global solutions.

I really hope that the current situation will help us create solutions

to develop a more effective and more inclusive global multilateral system.

**Any last thoughts for our readers?**

Ask yourself if you do what you have to do, and if you do it at the maximum level and capacity. Do you really do the most that you can? That's the question that everyone should be asking regardless of whether they work in journalism, academia, diplomacy, or international civil service. Ask yourself what you do best and what you really should be doing.

Also, I think we should always look for silver lining in every situation. Complaining does not lead to anything, but looking for the silver lining can help us overcome challenging situations. Try to find something fun to do in addition to your work. Whatever happens is for the best. Tragic events can give us courage, strength and fortify our character. They also allow us to draw lessons and learn from the experience. ■





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# Do no harm. Ever.

Turning our outrage into action.



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**DR CATHARINA BOEHME<sup>1</sup>,  
DR GAYA MANORI GAMHEWAGE<sup>2</sup>**

Most medical and health care training incorporates the principle of “do no harm”.

In recent years, the principle has been increasingly used by development and humanitarian agencies. We can harm communities we serve unintentionally by not fully understanding the impact of our development or humanitarian interventions and aid.

The more rare, yet most tragic lapse of this principle is when anyone in our workforce is alleged to have subjected communities we serve to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Regardless of the outcome of the investigation of any such allegation, it is imperative that organizations have a duty to make sure their prevention and response is up-to-date and effective.

WHO is committed to protecting vulnerable populations from SEA at the hands of WHO staff and collaborators. Like all UN organizations, WHO has zero tolerance for the sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of the communities

we serve; and harassment (SH) of our own workforce. But recent allegations of SEA have plagued several UN agencies and NGOs. This article focuses mainly on SEA.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) represents a fundamental and catastrophic failure of protection harming to those we are mandated to protect and it jeopardizes the reputation of our organization. SEA is linked to a power differential between perpetrators and victims. Poverty, conflict, hunger, lack of livelihoods and cultural factors all create the risk of SEA. Even in the most difficult of circumstances, organizations trusted to deliver development or humanitarian aid must do everything in their power to understand this risk, not underestimate it, and put in place measures to prevent SEA and to take swift action when incidents are reported.

Within the World Health Organization there is an intensified effort to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PRSEAH). In July 2021, The WHO Director-General

assigned a Director dedicated entirely to build institutional capacity for WHO to effectively and adequately prevent and respond to SEAH. At the same time, an organization-wide Task Team comprise all Accountability Directors (Compliance, Ethics and risk Management; Legal; Investigation Services; and Human Resources and Talent Management); Health Emergencies Programme; The Ombudsperson; and nominees of all six WHO regional directors including several WHO Heads of Country office amongst others.

From July to December 2021, in the start-up phase, WHO aims to implement a set of 79 activities to achieve seven outcomes. These activities are drawn from recommendations made by WHO’s Member States, oversight bodies, donors, and practices in the development and humanitarian sectors.

## **Defining a future-orientated policy framework**

This new work looks to review, integrate and strengthen organizational policy, code of conduct and procedures and implementation for PRSEAH. The policy review progress is currently well under way and will help align WHO policy related to SEAH with the IASC and the UN system as a whole. The policy will be developed into a policy framework that includes procedures and guidance for implementation. The framework will also enhance better internal coordination across the three levels of the Organization – global, regional and country Levels, as well as in our health

operations for routine work and health emergency response.

## **Shifting to a victim/survivor-centred approach**

WHO is prioritizing a victim/survivor-centred approach that looks to the needs and wants of people who are subjected to SEAH, and more broadly to gender-based violence. Such an approach includes prioritizing their rights, needs and wishes; ensuring victims/survivors have access to appropriate, accessible and good quality services including to health care, psychosocial support, social support, livelihood support, security, and where applicable, legal services. A survivor-centred approach helps to promote a survivor’s recovery and to reinforce her capacity to make decisions about possible interventions (UNICEF, 2010).

All victims/survivors have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, choose a course of action in dealing with the violence, to privacy and confidentiality, non-discrimination, access comprehensive information to help make her/his own decision. Support to victims/survivors must avoid of victim-blaming attitudes, should not make them feel powerless or experience shame and stigma, be free from discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, or other factor, protect against the risk of revictimization/abuse. WHO is working with the UN Victim’s Right Advocate to ensure, WHO adopts systematically a victim/survivor-centred approach. WHO is working bilaterally with UNFPA and other agencies



to enhance the reliability and predictability of support provided to victims/survivors.

### Enhancing detection, reporting & response mechanisms

The best intervention is prevention. To do this a realistic risk assessment for SEA is needed. WHO is working with experts and its country offices to enhance the assessment of risk of SEA so that meaningful prevention and mitigation measures can be taken before any contact is initiated with populations and communities. There is a need to ensure easy-to-use and safe reporting mechanisms, including at community level – either directly by victims/survivors, or through trusted community-based networks. All WHO workforce are required to report any suspect incidents of SEA to our investigation services. Going forward, measures will be taken to simplify reporting, strengthen our investigation service so as to speed-up investigations as much as is possible, and to ensure that whistle-blowers are free from retaliation.

### Capacitating our workforce

Our workforce is dedicated to serving people and protecting health. But with mounting attention on cases of SEA, it will be important to capacitate staff, contractors, service providers, implementation partners and our leaders to play a proactive

and effective role in the prevention and response to SEAH. This means developing our first-ever agency-specific training this year and delivering it and regular refresher courses soon after for all our workforce (about 14,000 people). It means supporting our Heads of Country Offices, our Health cluster Coordinators and Incident Managers who lead health emergency operations to have the systems, knowledge, resources and experts to prevent and response to SEA.

Our entire workforce needs to be engaged in preventing and responding to SEA. This requires transparent communications and dialogue with our entire workforce. Monthly engagements are planned with staff and monthly newsletters keep stakeholders updated.

Alongside their engagement for SEA, staff capacitation and engagement are needed to address sexual harassment and other forms of misconduct in the workplace.

### Strategic international collaboration

WHO as the UN specialized agency for health, has a leading role to play in the SDGs. It leads the Global health cluster and has a leading role to play in disease outbreaks, health emergencies, epidemics and pandemics. This requires strong and strategic work with the IASC and the UN

system. In the coming period WHO will strengthen its presence in UN and IASC working groups and will ensure that the organizations' considerable technical experts and knowledge are leveraged to ensure UN and IASC systems.

### Harnessing shared learning

There is a lot we still don't know about SEA. What really prevents it? What really works? How can we really become victim/survivor centred? How can we capacitate and scale up this work? The answers to these and other complex questions require data and evidence gathering, and coming

together of partners and stakeholders in open dialogue and discussion to answer them.

WHO will therefore contribute to data and evidence gathering and will host regular lessons learning exercises, webinars and discussions around complex issues. ■

- 1 Chef de Cabinet, WHO
- 2 Director, *a.i.*, Prevention & Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment, ODG, WHO

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Our website:  
[Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/prevention-and-responding-to-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment)  
UN Victims' Rights Advocate  
UNSG's Special coordinator on SEA  
IASC's work on SEAH  
To report any incidence of SEAH

## UNITED NATIONS GLOSSARY ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE:

### Sexual exploitation

any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, threatening or profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual exploitation and abuse also includes sexual relations with a child, in any context, defined as: Child - a "human being below the age of eighteen years."

### Sexual abuse

the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Sexual exploitation and abuse also includes sexual relations with a child, in any context, defined as: Child - a "human being below the age of eighteen years."

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to prohibited conduct in the work context and can be committed against UN staff and related personnel. In context of the United Nations, sexual harassment primarily describes prohibited behaviour against another UN staff or related personnel, which may also include nationals of the host state. It is defined for UN staff by ST/SGB/2008/5 and similar directives for uniformed personnel and involves any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

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# Athletes are not superhumans

“Mental health has a stigma that is tied into weakness and is absolutely the antithesis of what athletes want to portray.”

Dr Thelma Dye Holmes



© David Mark  
Swimmers need the facilities to train.

## LISANNE HOPKIN, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT INTERN

This summer, the Olympics and the Paralympics made their grand return. Getting both events to happen has been a challenge for Tokyo, and the rest of the world. Covid-19 has been no help at all. However, being able to watch the games has made me feel like the world is a bit more normal again. And yet, this is not the most important message that I took from the Olympics.

Since the London Olympics in 2012 – I’m too young to remember any of the ones before London – I have been a huge fan of the gymnastics. I think the grace and the strength each athlete displays is incredible, and I always watch the television, transfixed. Throughout the Rio Olympics in 2016, much like she did with everyone else, Simone Biles caught my eye. She’s such a powerful and elegant gymnast, and she’s

unbelievably talented! To be able to take away four gold medals at your first Olympics seems so otherworldly. I wanted her to do well, and I wanted her to achieve the best in everything that she did. So, when the gymnastics came around in the Olympics this year, I was eager to see her do well again.

When she didn’t complete the Amanar vault, I was worried. Ever since Samir Ait Said broke his leg while performing the vault in 2016, I haven’t been able to completely focus on vaulting. Would Simone Biles suffer the same fate? Fortunately for me, and for her, she did not. She withdrew from the team event, and subsequent gymnastics events, and only returned to compete in the beam final. What was the reason behind Simone Biles withdrawing from all these events? Mental health.

Simone Biles was not the first athlete I’d seen withdraw from

an event this year citing mental health reasons. Naomi Osaka had just withdrawn from Wimbledon, as had Emma Raducanu. These women made me wonder; just how much pressure are athletes under? How many suffer from mental health issues? And how much of a role has Covid-19 played in it all?

When I started my research, I only knew about a handful of athletes who struggled with mental health issues: Simone Biles, Naomi Osaka, Adam Peaty, Michael Phelps, Emma Raducanu, and Serena Williams. As I researched more, more athletes’ names appeared on my screen. And it wasn’t just current athletes either. There were athletes who’d competed in the 1970s. 50 years. 50 years of athletes with mental health issues and it still feels like we expect athletes to be superhuman and always in the best shape. Athletes dedicate their whole

lives to being the best they can be. They start training, and competing, at such a young age. There were quite a few teenagers, some of them only 13, competing in the Olympics this year. In fact, a lot of Olympians start competing at that age. They spend almost every day of their lives practising, learning, and improving. This becomes their job. It’s their way of living. Athletes always have to be in physically good condition. Their job demands it of them. However, I believe that they must be mentally fit too. They have to be confident in themselves. When an athlete wins, it’s great. They’ll feel like they’re on top of the world, undefeatable. But when they lose an event, it can be heart-breaking, and it maybe feels like their reality of being an athlete is not so concrete. Their world is a little out of balance. How athletes are able to pick themselves up again and again, I will never know.

Covid-19 has meant that a lot of people feel isolated and lonely. We’re social beings, so not having the opportunity to spend as much time seeing people as we’re used to has been difficult. This has a knock-on effect on your mental health. Isolation can lead to poor mental health, which can lead to pushing people away, which makes us even more isolated. It’s a vicious circle.

Covid-19 means that we’ve also had to learn and adapt over time. Regulations keep changing, new information keeps being released, sometimes it’s good news, sometimes it’s bad. Again, this can be damaging to our mental health.





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Every athlete needs to be able to compete.

Especially the bad. A lot of us need that support from our family or friends when we get bad news, but Covid-19 has made this almost impossible.

When it comes to athletes, they rely on their face-to-face training with their coaches, and the

equipment that they need in order to be able to train. Not every athlete can resort to exercising in their back garden. A swimmer most likely needs to be able to get to a swimming pool to train. If they're lucky, they have a pool in their garden, or house. But again, Covid-19 has stopped a

lot of athletes from getting out and being able to do what they love. It's been especially tough for Paralympians. Those who have respiratory illnesses are the ones who have most likely struggled the most. Covid-19 has been difficult for everyone, but for people with underlying health conditions, it's been devastating and agonizing. British swimmer, Ellie Robinson, gave an interview after the S6 50 metres butterfly final where she proved just how difficult this year has been for athletes. She says that she spent the last year seeing a psychiatrist, on medication, feeling incredibly low, but desperate to compete again. Determined to not give up, to get to the pool whatever it took, Robinson claims that her finish was, and is: 'a story of triumph, this is not a story of defeat'. Despite not finishing with a medal, Ellie Robinson was incredibly proud of herself for getting through the last year and

doing so well in the Paralympics despite not having had the best year with her mental health.

Athletes are incredibly adaptable people. They have to be. Their jobs are constantly changing, they will not always win, and they will not always be physically and/or mentally well. The rest of the world has always watched them in awe, wished them well when they were physically hurt, and been unbelievably thrilled when they succeeded and did well. But now, I believe that it is time that we see athletes as normal people, who do struggle with their mental health, who will not always triumph the way we want or expect them to, who are resilient and talented, but emotional and complicated people. Just like the rest of us. And sometimes, they are mentally hurting too. ■

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# Enjoying cultural heritage is a human right

Return of cultural heritage to former colonized countries and destruction of monuments and sites in conflict-affected areas are today's main challenges in the field of Art and Cultural Heritage Law. But new technologies will be the next big challenge.

## BRIGITTE PERRIN, UNIGE

The law and policy regulating the manifold manifestations of art and cultural heritage have thickened swiftly in the past few decades to respond to the recrudescence of old threats and the appearance of new challenges. Today, a new continuing education programme in International Cultural Heritage Law is launched at the University of Geneva through its UNESCO chair in the field.

Policy and legal developments have occurred to regulate the activities of the actors of the cultural heritage world – artists, art market professionals, collectors, museums, formerly subjugated indigenous communities, banks, insurance and transport companies, investment funds and free ports – and to accommodate their pressing demands as regards their rights, prerogatives, and obligations.

Prof. Marc-André Renold is the holder of the UNESCO Chair in the International Law of the Protection of Cultural Heritage and the Director of this new Certificate. Dr Alessandro Chechi is Senior researcher and lecturer at the Art-Law Centre of the University of Geneva and the main coordinator of the new programme.

## What are today's main challenges in the field of Cultural Heritage Law?

**MARC-ANDRÉ RENOLD:** One of the main challenges connected to heritage is the question of the return of colonial cultural objects to African States. Our current focus is also on the destruction of cultural heritage in States which undergo conflicts, like Afghanistan today. Conflicts are an issue for the people, but in connection to people, very often we are observing the destruction of cultural heritage. In Afghanistan, the Taliban have damaged an important part of cultural heritage in the past



© Wonderlane, Flickr

and we fear this might continue. A dedicated module of the new programme will address this theme.

The destruction and looting of monuments and sites in conflict-affected countries triggered the adoption of various policy and legal instruments at the national and international levels in the past decades, not only to stop the loss of and trafficking in cultural objects, but also to fight organized crime and to prevent money laundering and terrorism financing. Crucially, this worldwide effort does not only concern States and international organizations, but also the actors of the global trade in cultural objects, which are called on to *inter alia* exercise enhanced due diligence and controls and comply with anti-money laundering regulations.

**ALESSANDRO CHECHI:** Connected to art, new technologies are clearly the next challenge, but the return of cultural heritage to former colonies remains an even bigger challenge. Geneva is the perfect place to discuss the return of objects as missions and embassies of the States concerned are located here. States are claiming objects that were stolen as far as 200 years ago, but the museums who acquired these objects, often by donation or bequests, did so in good faith. So, somewhat understandably, they resist restitution claims. Also, some countries facing claims don't want to return the objects when they think they could be stored in better condition in their own museums.

COVID is another challenge of course. The sanitary situation and the regulations around it affect the intangible cultural heritage, which is



one of the expressions of the right to participate in cultural life. The right to perform cultural activities or to enjoy cultural life is restricted, although it is recognized as such by courts and mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Furthermore, the pandemic is an amplifier of problems in our field: illicit trade is somehow also facilitated.

### Can new technologies help meet the challenges facing art law?

**AC:** We have the perception that new technologies are a good thing. But they are also used by criminals to satisfy their needs. Cryptocurrencies are favoured by money launderers, while drones can be used by clandestine diggers to spot archaeological sites. Moreover, cultural objects are sold illegally on internet platforms. The use of the internet cannot be regulated easily, but cooperation between States should be fostered in this regard.

**M-AR:** New technologies are clearly a progress, and we will have a module on this topic in our certificate. One topical concern is NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens): everyone talks about them in the art market right now. NFTs are dematerialized works of art. Instead of owning a painting or a sculpture, you will own a unique web link. This could lead to a dematerialization of the art market, where people are only buying the right to a work of art. People have been acquiring these NFTs for impressive amounts of money. The market is changing, but we will have to see if it is for the long term or not. On the issue of authenticity, so important in the art market, the question will not anymore be to know if a work of art is an original or a fake, but rather to know if the token is real or has been tampered with! Forgers have existed forever in the field of classical art; they may just change their ways of proceeding.

### And what about cultural heritage specifically?

**M-AR:** New technologies could be good news for cultural heritage: the real object could potentially be returned to the country of origin, and at the same time continue to be exchanged on the virtual market...

**AC:** I remember an expert saying that any evolution of the art market has an impact on individual objects, so if the market would give more value to the virtual object, there is a risk that traditional institutions would care less of the material object, which may no longer be restored or protected. 200 years from now we may completely lose interest for material objects, and just be content with a tablet setup with links or holograms.

**M-AR:** I think that original pieces will still be important, but that will not prevent artists to create virtual works of art. The market will change and so will museums: they might become much more of a life experience than a repository of objects. This change in what museums are for the public has already started.

### Can the law do something against this tendency?

**AC:** The law might intervene in the future. Every state has an obligation to take care of cultural heritage, but it can be interpreted differently depending on countries. According to the evolution of the market, the law will evolve, but not always in a protective direction. Moving to virtual can be considered as positive. The political climate, as well as economic or health restrictions, will influence these decisions.

**M-AR:** International treaties as well as general principles and customary international law exist but they are always subject to interpretation. It's a moving environment. Litigation

in national or international fora is sometimes what makes the law evolve. The University's role is to train people to reflect on these issues and stay critical. Participants active in culture or governments will help the law to evolve in a positive way. We will bring in international law and some aspects of the relevant national laws, for a better understanding of actual practices. Participants will also bring us their experience from their countries.

### Many peace-related organizations have their headquarters in Geneva. How can you involve them?

**M-AR:** These organizations are typically those that would benefit from such a programme as they will learn the tools to be more efficient in the field. An interesting example is *L'Appel de Genève*. This Geneva-based non-governmental organization aims to convince non-State armed groups to comply with the rules of international humanitarian law. They have come to realize that non-State armed groups are often very much involved in the protection of cultural heritage in times of armed conflicts.

Furthermore, environmental NGOs might also develop an interest in cultural heritage. This is the case because, for instance, climate change can affect the natural environment as well as the built environment, including sites, buildings, and monuments. There will be representatives of international organizations and NGOs teaching in the course. ■

More information:  
<https://www.unige.ch/formcont/cours/cultural-heritage>



Écoutez le podcast *Faut-il vider les musées?* avec le Prof. Marc-André Renold

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# The technological predictions of nineteen eighty-four

What did George Orwell get right and what did he get wrong?



PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

When the well-known English author George Orwell wrote his futuristic dystopian novel, *1984*, in the post-war era back in 1948 (published one year later in 1949), he imagined an entire society complete with many abstractions – sociological, political and technological. Writing about a man named Winston Smith who works in the Ministry of Truth, what did George Orwell get right, and what did he get wrong with regard to his futuristic technological ‘predictions’?

George Orwell imagined several technological devices which would have been relatively impossible to contemplate, at the time he was writing his novel.

First and foremost, on the very first page, George Orwell describes how every home, room and corridor is equipped with a ‘telescreen’, described as an ‘oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror’ set in the wall. This two-way device is used for broadcasting as well as observation and monitoring – you can be ‘seen as well as heard’. In an era when most televisions were still black-and-white boxes of small dimensions, the idea of large screens using two-way broadcasting and transmission was extraordinary. However, modern flatscreens and curved screens are not so very far from occupying entire walls in some houses.

And in the modern-day era, devices such as Siri, Echo and Alexa have low-grade

monitoring for their wake-up command, and may soon become equipped to do much more – for example, monitoring elderly people’s movements in their home or for sleep monitoring.

Writing before the modern digital era, George Orwell imagines an office cubicle in the Ministry of Truth, which is still largely paper-based. Although the modern-day Internet was unimaginable in the post-war era, George Orwell predicts a primary role for information, which is exchanged, collated, corrected and constantly republished in updated, revised format on paper. The nature, interpretation and alterability of information is one of the key themes of ‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’. This transmission, storage and access to information resembles something similar to the role of information in modern webpages, which are of course published digitally, rather than on paper.

In his office, for his work, Winston uses:

- the telescreen, which permits the recording, input of information and corrected information via dial-up means, as well as broadcasting and giving signals to return to work;
- a pneumatic tube for moving paper around the building (cutting edge technology for the time, but used today in supermarkets);
- a ‘speakwrite’ with a microphone, broadly the equivalent of a modern Dictaphone;
- paper disposal tubes called ‘memory holes’ which carry paper away towards distant furnaces;
- automated novel-writing machines and ‘kaleidoscopes’ which ‘rough in’ the plots of novels.

In the countryside and in the street, George Orwell also imagines concealed ‘microphones’ which can be used to pick up, recognize and track voices, which force his characters to conduct their conversations in whispers, even in the wooded countryside. Although the listening/recording capabilities of modern-day

mobile phones are still open to question, George Orwell could not have foreseen that the miniaturization of phones means that most consumers now willingly carry a microphone around in their pocket with them.

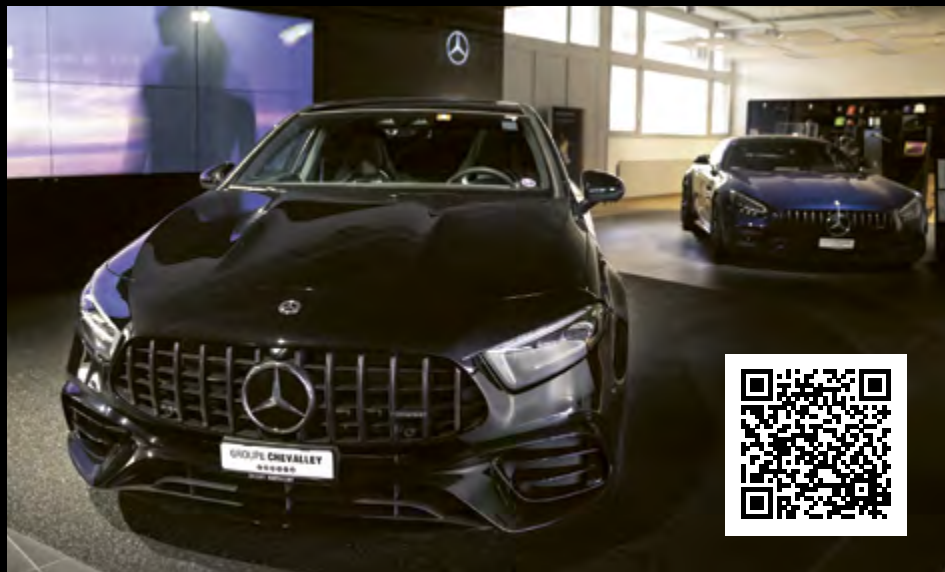
Regarding tracking the movements of individuals, the movement of mobile phones carried by individuals can be followed via Call Detail Records (CDRs), which have been used to track and identify the movement of murderers (e.g. in France), the migration of Syrian refugees across Europe, or the movement of people away from Ebola-infected areas in Sierra Leone.

Sequential locations recorded in CDR data can help identify population trajectories because CDR data are individual specific, allowing individual movements to be traced. With the aggregation of individual movements in CDR data, patterns, trends, and spatio-temporal distribution of the whole population can be tracked. By overlaying such information with secondary data, big data now enables the analysis of relationships between human mobility and other social factors.

CDRs are available from many mobile operators, which often have a legal duty to retain them for several months. In most jurisdictions, police warrants, or other authorizations are necessary to enable authorities to access CDRs for purposes of crime investigation or national security. In the sense, primary responsibilities for data collection often remain with mobile operators in the first instance, rather than the state, as foreseen by George Orwell.

In conclusion, George Orwell was an extraordinarily prescient man and was able to imagine in broad brushstrokes how several modern-day devices operate and how they can – or could – be used. The character and role of information is one of the key themes of ‘Nineteen Eighty-Four’, and a theme which remains startlingly relevant to us today. ■





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# Retour sur le séminaire de préparation pour la retraite

Au fil des années, le séminaire organisé par le centre de formation et de multilinguisme de l'ONUG est devenu incontournable pour les futur(e)s retraité(e)s, toutes organisations internationales confondues. Nous rencontrons Mira Perrier, qui est en charge de ce programme et Jesús Guerrero qui l'accompagne dans cet exercice.

**CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG**

**Comment abordez-vous les paramètres sur la spécificité du fonctionnaire international qui part à la retraite?**

L'appellation de fonctionnaire international impose une approche vraiment particulière. Il importe de connaître très précisément les différentes formalités à accomplir, lorsqu'on passe d'un statut régulier de fonctionnaire international, disposant d'une carte de légitimation, à celui de retraité. Nous savons que la plupart des questions qui seront posées auront trait à une installation en Suisse ou en France et nous essayons donc de trouver des experts capables d'apporter des réponses pertinentes. Nous avons donc établi une relation de confiance et de partenariat avec les différents interlocuteurs. Nous les contactons et je tiens à souligner qu'ils nous réservent un accueil chaleureux. Les autorités suisses, en tant que pays d'accueil, sont très rapides et efficaces. En particulier, la réactivité de l'expert en fiscalité suisse nous permet de programmer rapidement et efficacement des interventions de sa part. Notre intervenant en fiscalité française est toujours le même depuis 2016. De ce fait, certains automatismes se sont installés et cela facilite grandement les interactions entre les participants et nos experts.

**De l'avis unanime, l'édition virtuelle 2021, marquée par la pandémie, a constitué une réussite tant par la qualité des intervenants, des sujets abordés, que par la grande qualité de l'organisation. Comment avez-vous préparé ce séminaire?**

**MIRA:** Je commence à préparer ce séminaire environ 6 mois à l'avance. Nous savons que la majorité des demandes émane de personnes qui résideront en Suisse et en France, une fois leur retraite arrivée. Nous avons donc identifié un certain nombre d'experts qui peuvent répondre à des questions dans les domaines de la fiscalité, de la sécurité sociale, des formalités de testament et de résidence, etc.

Nous contactons nos intervenants en fixant une planification. Pour la dernière édition, marquée par la pandémie, il est vrai que nous avons dû un peu changer nos plans. Nous avons annulé une session en présentiel prévue en mars 2020. Nous avons tout de même organisé trois sessions en octobre 2020 sur le fonds de pension et les impôts en Suisse. Ces domaines sont en effet les plus importants en termes d'attente et de demandes.

La crise sanitaire nous a naturellement fait modifier notre approche pour nous diriger vers



un séminaire virtuel. Tout le monde étant déjà à peu près habitué à cet exercice, a été d'accord.

Nous avons reçu plus de 1000 inscriptions provenant de plus de 25 organisations internationales différentes et la participation virtuelle a permis à des collègues qui travaillent sur le terrain de pouvoir y participer. Il faut préciser que ces 1000 personnes ne participent pas toutes en même temps à tous les modules mais cela reste tout de même un nombre important à gérer avec la capacité limitée de notre équipe.

Vous comprenez donc que beaucoup d'épisodes se déroulent «dans les coulisses» de l'événement et que chacun doit occuper une fonction précise. Jesús est le modérateur et je dirais que je suis la cheville ouvrière de tout le processus. Je suis davantage en contact avec les participants pendant les inscriptions, les questions techniques, le partage des détails.

Il faut également souligner que pour la première fois en 2021, nous avons collaboré avec le BIT car ces derniers mettaient aussi en place un séminaire identique les années précédentes. Cela nous a permis de mutualiser nos ressources et nos connaissances et, *in fine*, d'offrir un meilleur service à nos participants.

Le séminaire a duré trois semaines en avril 2021 et cette collaboration a permis de partager cette charge de travail importante car nous avons également d'autres dossiers à traiter.

Il est intéressant de souligner qu'il y a un tronc commun pour tous les participants qui est le fonds de pension ou le domaine médical. Que vous soyez à Genève ou sur le terrain comme nos collègues du UNHCR ou du OHCHR, vous êtes concernés par ce tronc commun. Il y a une autre partie pour les retraités qui vont s'installer en France et encore une autre pour les gens qui vont rester en Suisse



Penser à ses conditions de vie plutôt qu'à ses conditions fiscales et se préparer à la retraite est un gage de réussite de sa vie future.

et à Genève en particulier. La fréquentation des sessions varie donc, parfois fortement en fonction des thématiques abordées

### Les prochaines sessions seront-elles entièrement virtuelles?

**JESÛS:** Il y a du pour et du contre. Comme évoqué, l'avantage du virtuel est que, quel que soit l'endroit dans le monde où vous vous trouvez, vous pouvez participer au séminaire. Ce qui pose une difficulté est le manque de service d'interprétation en ligne alors que si nous le faisons à Genève, nos collègues du service d'interprétation nous assistent. Sous son format traditionnel, impliquant des réunions en salles de conférence, les participants doivent se déplacer ce qui génère un coût en particulier pour les personnes qui ne travaillent pas sur place.

Pour cette raison, nous allons continuer la forme virtuelle l'année prochaine en raison des conditions sanitaires. Nous allons décider pour 2023 sous quelle forme se déroulera le séminaire. Il est évident de constater que l'offre virtuelle permet à beaucoup plus de monde d'accéder au séminaire.

L'exemple d'un collègue français en poste au Congo qui souhaite se retirer en France me vient à l'esprit, il pourra participer au séminaire et poser ses questions.

Nous sommes les seuls, au siège de Genève, à offrir ce service à nos collègues. A New York, ils ont arrêté le séminaire pour le remplacer par un programme en ligne de vidéos et de présentations.

### Quels sont les retours des retraités, prévoyez-vous, dans les années futures, des réponses individuelles et qui sont, le cas échéant, les partenaires vers lesquels vous réorientez les demandes?

**MIRA.** Pour les questions individuelles et personnelles, nous prévenons nos collègues au début du séminaire que nous n'avons pas la capacité de répondre aux questions post séminaire. Nous précisons également que les sessions, disponibles sur notre site web, sont constituées comme un point de départ utile à tous les questionnements. A la fin de chaque présentation, des informations, coordonnées des experts et organismes sont indiquées. Nos collègues sont invités à les contacter

directement pour des demandes plus ciblées. Nous ne sommes pas experts dans ces domaines complexes et seules les personnes qui disposent de cette expertise peuvent donner les bonnes informations. Nous pouvons les réorienter le cas échéant, et même parfois les assister partiellement en sachant qu'il leur est demandé de faire eux-mêmes la démarche.

### Un dernier mot?

**JESÛS:** Chaque année, la plupart des personnes focalisent sur le fonds de pension et posent les mêmes questions notamment leur préférée est: je voudrais aller vivre dans un pays où je ne paie pas d'impôts» comme en Autriche ou au Portugal. Odette Foudral la présidente de l'AFI/AFICS et les collègues du fonds de pension répondent que c'est beaucoup mieux de payer l'impôt et de rester dans un endroit où vous avez une vie sociale, familiale, des structures médicales plutôt qu'aller vivre dans un pays où on ne paie pas d'impôt mais en étant isolé, pas intégré, sans maîtriser la langue. Le choix que vous allez faire est très important pour votre vie future, prévoyez le plus longtemps possible à l'avance.

Nos collègues qui nous lisent et qui atteignent la cinquantaine doivent, à mon sens, déjà se préparer, pendant une dizaine d'années, anticiper et englober ainsi la totalité des paramètres, y compris celui de comprendre qu'il n'est pas possible de prendre une retraite dans de bonnes conditions si celle-ci n'a pas été anticipée.

Assister au séminaire bien à l'avance permet de connaître, de «digérer» les informations et prédispose une meilleure réussite pour cette transition que constitue la retraite. D'ailleurs, beaucoup de collègues nous disent que c'est dommage qu'ils ne soient pas venus avant.

Prendre la retraite dans de bonnes conditions, c'est un choix de vie, c'est beaucoup plus que prendre une décision financière. ■

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# L'ONU célèbre en octobre la Journée Internationale des personnes âgées

Nous avons pu recueillir quelques témoignages.

DOSSIER PRÉPARÉ PAR ODETTE FOU DRAL  
ET CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG



Odette Foudral présidente de l'AAFI /AFICS'.  
Lorsqu'on part à la retraite, on a deux façons de voir l'avenir.

Soit on a bien préparé les choses et on est alors plein de projets... souvent d'ailleurs trop. Il faut dire que notre espérance de vie est optimale, n'en déplaise aux caisses de pension (sauf la nôtre qui a largement anticipé). Alors c'est une nouvelle vie qui commence, sans horaire, sans contraintes autres que celles qu'on s'impose soi-même. Notre monde, enfin celui d'avant que nous espérons retrouver bien vite, offre toutes les opportunités dès qu'on a mis de côté les décisions importantes vis-à-vis du versement de la pension. Pour ce qui est des impôts, il faut bien se dire, et je reprends ici une phrase de mon père. «Si on en paie c'est qu'on peut en payer». Alors on râle un peu et puis ça passe.

Par contre si on n'a rien planifié tout semble insurmontable et on prend souvent de mauvaises décisions comme par exemple, celle d'arrêter sa couverture maladie, souscrite auprès de l'organisation internationale.

Alors se préparer c'est vital! Surtout ne boycotez pas le séminaire de préparation à la retraite sous prétexte que vous avez trop de travail!

Après, l'avenir vous appartient dans ce monde ultra connecté qui supprime la distance avec la famille et les amis.



Pour ma part, j'ai choisi la première option et même si la vie nous joue parfois de vilains tours, il suffit de mettre un pied devant l'autre sans regarder dans le miroir.

Cela peut vous paraître simpliste mais cela ne coûte rien d'essayer l'optimisme.

Georges Kutukdjan (Unesco Paris)  
Je n'ai pas été perturbé par une cessation d'activités professionnelles bien que les projets dont j'ai eu la charge aient été passionnants. Si la vie professionnelle a été épanouissante, alors l'attachement à une organisation du système des Nations Unies demeure pour toujours. Le travail d'équipe avec des collègues généreux et bienveillants, les nobles causes

que nous avons prêté serment de défendre, une vision mondiale des problèmes et des besoins des peuples, la souffrance dans toutes les parties du monde... qui ne se réduisent jamais plus aux frontières d'un pays qui reste et restera le nôtre mais ne gommara jamais notre ouverture au monde et la défense des principes universels.



Mariam retraitée depuis 11 ans  
*Mali*  
Je suis à la retraite depuis 11 ans et je réside dans mon pays d'origine le Mali. En tant que HR manager



de profession, j'ai toujours insisté sur l'inclusion d'une préparation à la retraite dans les programmes de formation et de facilitation pour les retraités. À l'époque, nous avons appelé ce programme «Life after Unicef». Et comme j'aime bien l'adage «Walk the Talk», j'ai commencé à me préparer quelque 3- 4 ans avant en formalisant une formation en Career Counselling et en Teambuilding facilitation, activités que je comptais mener après la retraite par passion. Par conséquent j'étais préparée et ai même décidé de partir une année plus tôt.

La retraite m'a permis de rééquilibrer la répartition de mon temps utile entre moi-même, ma famille, les autres activités sociales, associatives ou humanitaires. Je passe plus de temps avec mes enfants et surtout mes petits enfants. Au début de ma retraite mes principaux «clients» pour les formations et facilitation furent les Nations Unies, mais elles ont finalement glissé vers les activités associatives avec une participation active aux différents forums focalisés sur les pistes de solutions à la crise multiforme que traverse mon pays, et vers les activités humanitaires avec une ONG que j'ai mise en place pour alléger les souffrances de certains parmi les plus démunis y compris les victimes de la crise.

Un seul message: se préparer au moins 2 ou 3 ans avant le départ à la retraite, mentalement pour éviter toute sensation de vide ou d'inutilité ultérieure.

- Au niveau professionnel: se mettre à jour si on choisit de mener des activités nécessitant des compétences particulières.
- Au niveau médical: rapprocher les visites de contrôle pour éviter les mauvaises surprises.
- Au niveau de la planification: prendre davantage de congés rapprochés afin de reconnecter avec sa famille si vos obligations professionnelles vous en avaient éloigné.

Gilles Berchiatti, français et Frontalier. Retraité de chez Rolex.

La retraite est une étape de la vie que l'on gère souvent mal. On repousse l'échéance et règle générale les gens commencent à s'informer seulement 6 mois avant. Mon conseil aux frontaliers et aux personnes qui vont partir à la retraite: ne sous-estimez pas le nombre de démarches à faire et leur complexité. Chaque cas est unique selon que vous soyez du secteur privé, public, associatif ou celui des Organisations Internationales.

Maintenant oui! Ces cotisations sont abusives et injustifiées pour les frontaliers. Et,

sauf erreur de ma part, cela s'applique également aux fonctionnaires internationaux. Un procès a d'ailleurs été gagné par un employé du CERN pour les abolir. Le plus important pour nous frontaliers est de comprendre tous les choix que nous avons concernant la retraite française, on peut choisir de la prendre immédiatement, de la décaler ou de ne pas la prendre, sans y renoncer, tout en gardant la possibilité de la réclamer ultérieurement. Si un frontalier prend sa retraite en France, il faut savoir que c'est le lieu de résidence qui compte pour savoir à quel organisme adresser votre demande de retraite. Attention: si vous résidez en France, une demande de retraite française sera automatiquement déclenchée.



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## a UNIQUE healthcare facility in the heart of lausanne

Founded in 1932 and nestled in the picturesque Alps, Clinique de Montchoisi sits on the stunning shores of Lake Geneva and has become well known in the canton of Vaud. At its heart, Clinique de Montchoisi has one goal – to offer excellent care in a technologically advanced environment.

In addition to its wonderful setting, Clinique de Montchoisi is also known for providing its patients with outstanding medical care. The team comprises some of the most prominent medical specialists from Switzerland and around the world. The facility devotes their focus to ophthalmology, orthopaedics, ENT and radiology specialisms. A department dedicated solely to orthopaedics is equipped to treat all conditions related to the hips, knees, shoulders, hands, ankles and feet.

Clinique de Montchoisi is committed to offering each patient personalised care in a warm and welcoming environment. It is this approach, along with the enthusiasm and cohesion of the employees and medical staff, that has led to Clinique de Montchoisi becoming a centre of excellence in the region.



SWISS MEDICAL NETWORK MEMBER

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© Martine David

Ceci aura d'énormes répercussions fiscales! Les temps ont changé! à 60 ans on est au summum de ses connaissances et on est en forme physiquement. C'est le début d'une vie et non pas la fin. Toute ma vie j'ai été un actif surdimensionné. J'aide beaucoup autour de moi, déjà au sein de ma famille avec mes parents qui ont plus de 80 ans. Malheureusement, aujourd'hui il y a une tendance à mettre les anciens de côté. C'est affolant. Lors de ma dernière expérience professionnelle, les jeunes qui arrivaient en entreprise avaient tendance à nous écarter. Pourquoi la couleur des cheveux fait que l'on deviendrait tout à coup incompetent? Nous on respectait cette relève, mais la réciproque n'était pas toujours vraie. Mon message aux personnes partant à la retraite: soyez le manager de votre vie, ayez des projets, continuez à transmettre votre savoir aux générations futures et surtout renseignez-vous plusieurs années d'avance pour planifier votre retraite et votre nouvelle vie!

### Mary Johnson Sydney NSW Australia

I worked for the ILO for 31 years, only 7 of which were at headquarters. It was undoubtedly a great gift to me to be brought back to HQ in Geneva before retirement. There is a significant advantage in retiring from HQ, where there is more time and opportunity to have coffee with colleagues and retirees from whom to seek advice - both formally and informally. Many colleagues who retired from a field station did not allow themselves the time to seek sufficient amounts of advice; almost as a matter of pride they kept working up until the last minute and retirement seminars were not always available. Retiring requires long thought and a lot of time to look

out the window - many issues are complex and the implications of a choice or decision are not immediately apparent.

One of the most important aspects of getting ready for retirement was to imagine what I would do after retirement - my project was to change how I lived my life. No more going to an office, reports or meetings - I wanted to become proficient in drawing and painting. One of those intense, high end art schools in Florence was followed by a similar school in Sydney, and I continued taking lessons for almost the next ten years, gradually getting to the stage of exhibiting and selling my paintings quite well. In this second part of my existence I have lived the life of an artist, without starving in a garret, thanks to the wonderful UN Pension Fund.



I have now been retired for 18 years in Australia but until COVID changed our lives I spent 4 months every year in Europe. The friends I have made through art school do not know much about the United Nations. I love my artist friends but I came to realise that my ILO and other UN colleagues are among the most clever and interesting people you can meet in life and it has been very important to keep in touch with them. Being an active part

of the Australian Association of Former International Civil Servants has been a very good thing. Family and friends kept from my school years are the most precious social relations.

I have observed my fellow retirees - each decade brings considerable change, physically and intellectually. The first 10 years of retirement are the best, physically and mentally. Don't put off anything that involves pleasure and adventure. Get as proficient as possible in information technology before you retire. A year or two after retiring some UN retirees seem to have a crisis - they realise they are just citizens, not particularly important or relevant and not "in charge" of anything. That is the moment to find an issue that draws you in and to which you can contribute. In Australia there are plenty of issues that need addressing!

After turning 70, you have a lot to do with doctors and after 80 anxiety about one's ability to manage one's living arrangements can become a real issue.

My only advice for future retirees is - take your time to prepare yourself, ask questions and more questions, dream a little and look at the longer-term implications of your choices. It is well worth it! ■

<sup>1</sup> site web: <https://afics.unog.ch>  
adresse mail: [aafi-afics@un.org](mailto:aafi-afics@un.org) (secrétariat)



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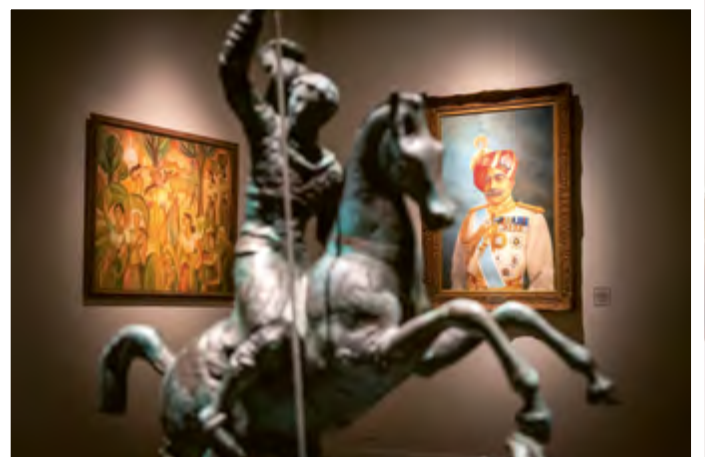
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*Au Musée Rath*

# DIVERS EGALES UNIS

*Un regard artistique sur les valeurs universelles de l'ONU*

*An artistic look at the UN universal values*

Une sublimation artistique du partenariat entre  
Genève et les Organisations Internationales.

*An artistic elevation of emotions due to the partnership  
between Geneva and International Organisations.*





# Les dangers à éviter pour un départ à la retraite réussi

Entretien avec M. Nicolas Chalochet, directeur opérationnel de Planifique, une entreprise Suisse qui accompagne individuellement les retraités.

Chaque départ à la retraite constitue un changement de vie. Dans notre contexte particulier avec la Genève Internationale et la France, l'absence de maîtrise de la double fiscalité suisse et française peut coûter très cher.



© Petra Schürze Photographie

ELISABETH WILSON / CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

**M. Chalochet (centre de la photo), parlez nous des origines et du nom de votre société.**

Amis de longue date avec mes associés Paul Dao et Cedric Teppati, nous sommes tous les trois passionnés par le coaching financier. Après avoir passé quelques années au sein d'une fiduciaire spécialisée auprès des frontaliers, nous avons décidé de nous tourner vers la planification retraite, et de créer une entreprise à notre image. Pour trouver le nom de notre entreprise, deux mots revenaient sans cesse: planification et magnifique. Ce qui a donné Planifique, pour une retraite magnifique. Planifique était née!

**Quelle différence y a-t-il entre Planifique et les autres cabinets «conventionnels» de préparation à la retraite?**

Ces cabinets ne maîtrisent ni la fiscalité franco-suisse, ni la retraite française. Beaucoup de futurs retraités qui les ont sollicités, ont pris conscience du fait qu'ils ne disposaient pas de tous les outils pour être accompagnés correctement, à fortiori dans le cas de frontaliers travaillant en Suisse. Donc il fallait répondre à un besoin réel d'accompagnement individualisé. Grâce à nos nombreuses années d'expériences avec nos clients frontaliers, nous avons développé une expertise très pointue du milieu frontalier qui a répondu à une demande croissante d'accompagnement pour le départ à la retraite venant de France voisine. Nous faisons de la planification retraite pour les Suisses mais, l'engouement des frontaliers a été tel, que nous avons décidé d'être les meilleurs dans cette niche.

**Quels sont les pièges que vous avez pu constater lors du départ à la retraite?**

A cette étape cruciale de la vie, les personnes sont souvent un peu perdues. Des catastrophes fiscales et financières peuvent s'en suivre. Nous aidons les retraités à calculer leurs ressources, et à bien peser leur choix en rente (pension) et capital. Pour les frontaliers, nous calculons avec précision les conséquences financières et fiscales lorsqu'ils choisissent de basculer vers la retraite française. D'ailleurs, faut-il la prendre ou pas, et si oui à quel âge? Planifique répond à toutes ces questions pour que les abus avérés du «marché de la retraite» cessent.

**L'absence de maîtrise de la double fiscalité suisse et française peut-elle coûter cher?**

Absolument! Je pense aux frontaliers qui ne savent pas qu'ils ont droit à la retraite française. Nous la récupérerons rétroactivement pour eux. D'autres personnes aimeraient partir plus tôt que l'âge légal prévu et ne le font pas, de peur se retrouver avec de faibles revenus à la retraite. Elles continuent à travailler jusqu'à 67 ans pour être sûres d'avoir des revenus suffisants. Nos experts vont leur expliquer comment partir avant l'âge légal et feront leur planification financière en conséquence. Cela nous arrive souvent de faire gagner aux personnes deux ou trois années de départ par rapport à ce qu'elles avaient prévu.

**Quel est le pire piège qui attend les fonctionnaires internationaux?**

Prenons le cas d'un fonctionnaire international qui a travaillé dans plusieurs pays et qui a droit à plusieurs retraites. On a constaté que les personnes qui ont décidé de prendre leur retraite en France vont, la plupart du temps, réclamer toutes leurs retraites en même temps. C'est la pire des stratégies. Notre travail est de déterminer à quel moment il faut demander sa retraite, et ce pour chaque pays, en fonction de chaque régime. L'impact sera complètement différent d'un point de vue fiscal en France. Pour ceux et celles qui ont travaillé en Suisse, il faut parfois décaler la retraite française d'une ou de plusieurs années. Nous leur calculerons également le meilleur moment pour prendre les deuxième et troisième piliers. Un international peut avoir cinq retraites différentes. On échelonnera leur retrait à cinq





© Petra Schulte Photographie

dates différentes, sans impacts fiscaux. Les gens peuvent exercer des choix, mais ne le savent pas.

**Comment rendez-vous service à la personne, aux couples, aux célibataires, sur le point de prendre leur retraite?**

Tout d'abord, c'est un soulagement total face à la lourdeur des différentes administrations. Nos clients savent que nous allons les accompagner dans toutes leurs démarches administratives. Quant aux frontaliers nous prendrons en charge toutes les démarches à effectuer simultanément en France et en Suisse. Nous évitons ainsi aux aînés des erreurs fatales, tout en ayant des gains financiers car certains choix sont irréversibles et coûtent fiscalement très cher. Le plus important pour moi: c'est la sérénité et la tranquillité d'esprit que l'on apporte aux retraités. Ils sauront à quel âge partir à la retraite et de quelle somme exactement ils disposeront par mois.

**Les autorités françaises s'intéressent-elles à votre travail et tentent-elles de**

**créer des synergies avec votre expertise «frontaliers»**

Le milieu frontalier est très petit. On parle de 100 000 personnes en activité. Cela équivaut à une centaine de personnes par mois qui partent à la retraite. C'est trop peu pour intéresser la France aux frontaliers travaillant sur Suisse. La même situation prévaut pour la Suisse, mais c'est normal. Donc les frontaliers se retrouvent entre deux pays, sans support, ni accompagnement. Gérer sa retraite avec cette double fiscalité franco-suisse est très complexe et trouver des personnes qui maîtrisent ce double système est encore plus rare.

**Auriez-vous un exemple précis à nous donner?**

Dans notre région c'est la CARSAT Rhône-Alpes qui s'occupe des retraites françaises. Elle ne s'est toujours pas adaptée aux frontaliers travaillant sur Suisse. Elle ne va pas dans ses calculs considérer la retraite Suisse et évaluer les impacts et conséquences de ces deux systèmes l'un envers l'autre. Un frontalier réclamant sa retraite française peut se

retrouver à payer d'un seul coup la CSG-CRDS à hauteur de 9,1% sur toutes ses rentes suisses. Et, s'il retire son deuxième pilier en capital, il sera imposé à 6,75%. Faites le calcul: si cette personne encaisse en capital 700 000 euros à sa retraite, elle va se retrouver amputée de 110 950 euros!

**Que faut-il comprendre de la CSG/CRDS, que l'on soit frontalier, expatrié ou membre d'une organisation internationale?**

Les personnes prenant leur retraite en France sont souvent mal informées sur la CSG/CRDS et font mal leur déclaration de revenus. En choisissant de ne pas payer cet impôt, elles se feront invariablement attraper tôt ou tard et devront payer cet impôt. J'ai eu le cas d'une dame de 80 ans qui se faisait poursuivre rétroactivement sur plusieurs années. Elle devait 50 000 euros. Nous avons pu mettre un terme à sa détresse administrative et ramener la situation à zéro. Quant aux fonctionnaires internationaux, ils ne sont pas assujettis à la CSG/CRDS.

**Votre société propose cette approche auprès des frontaliers. Quelle est votre expertise en la matière pour les fonctionnaires internationaux dont le mode de fonctionnement est différent et parfois complexe?**

Nous sommes en train de développer notre expertise vis-à-vis de l'ONU et de ses Agences Spécialisées. Les séminaires annuels de préparation à la retraite sont indispensables, mais ne fournissent pas l'accompagnement administratif individualisé que nous offrons sur deux pays. Nous aimerions, en complément de ces prestigieux séminaires, collaborer sur cette phase finale d'accompagnement des futurs retraités onusiens. La plus-value que l'on apporte aux frontaliers doit être rapidement étendue aux fonctionnaires Internationaux! ■

site web: [www.planifique.com](http://www.planifique.com)



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# SAUAN TAKEOUT BENTO & SUSHI



# The third edition of the Health for All Film Festival is here!

Since its first edition in 2020, the Health for All Film Festival aims to recruit a new generation of film and video innovators to champion global health issues, inviting independent film-makers, production companies, NGOs, communities, students, and film schools from around the world to submit their original short films about health.



**LORENA BERNAL,**  
**WHO FILM FESTIVAL**

In an extraordinary demonstration of creative energy and enthusiasm for telling public health stories, each edition in 2020 and 2021 attracted an average of 1250 short film submissions – both amateur and professional – from 110 countries. In 2021, more than 40% of the short films featured themes related to COVID-19, revealing the pandemic’s pervasive and universal consequences. Our film festival has therefore demonstrated that audiovisual language can be used more and more to concretely contribute to health promotion and health education.

WHO is delighted that acclaimed artists from the film and music domains, as well as humanitarian activists, have accepted the invitation to participate in the Health for All Film Festival jury. ■



“WHO Health for All Film Festival was founded on the idea that solidarity starts with shared experiences, the individuals and communities who are sharing their stories in this festival are shining a powerful light on the different ways that people around the world experience health and health care. Each film exposes its audience to new situations, they are building blocks for mutual understanding, respect and empathy.”

**Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus<sup>2</sup>**



## Meet some of our past winners

### Susana Serrano (El Salvador)

Film: Phosphôros

GRAND PRIX – Universal Health Coverage Category



Susana Serrano directed Phosphôros as a student, a beautiful tribute to the heroes and heroines dressed in white while saving lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is a film that talks about the reality that health workers experienced in the fight against the pandemic in El Salvador.

“All the inspiration came from my mother and my sister, they are both health workers. I

witnessed the sacrifice and the tough moments. My mom was coming home during the hardest times and would lock herself in her room to avoid infecting us. I met a lot of health workers in my community who didn't survive, it was a horrible time.” Serrano commented on his short film for El Diario El Salvador.

The Salvadoran student recorded the stop motion film using her cell phone, in Serrano's words:

“I didn't have a computer, I didn't have all the film equipment to be able to carry out this production, but there was my phone. It was the main tool that helped me bring these characters to life, and with which I made this production”.

Susana Serrano was recognized for representing the youth by UNICEF, which also congratulated her via social media.

### Anita Abad (Nigeria)

Film: Efun/Flesh

Special Prize Health Educational Film



Anita Abad directed Efun /Flesh, a film highlighting the human right for women and teenagers to say NO to female genital mutilation. FGM reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women. It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children. The practise also violates a person's rights to health, security and physical integrity, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death.

“Efun is a Bini word that means Flesh. I was motivated to make Efun after a conversation with a victim who pleaded to be anonymous. She is still traumatised by the practice which was carried out on her when she was a child, she doesn't enjoy sex with her partner and this has greatly affected her self-esteem.

I had a conversation with my father on this topic and he mentioned that at the period when I was born, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was very common in the South-South of Nigeria, where I come from, but as parents, he

and my mother stood against it being carried out on any of their female children. I realised many victims were living with the trauma of this practice; many others have died in the process. So, I decided to use film as a tool to seek redress, giving women the chance to make their own choices and not being forced to undergo harmful cultural practices.” Commented Abad on his short film for The Nigerian Tribune.

1 Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme

2 WHO Director-General



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“What I have learned in emergencies is that it is communities the ones that make the difference, very often we come from outside, you know we bring assistance, we bring doctors and nurses, we bring equipment and we bring supplies but in the end, it is communities that make the difference and I don't think we tell those stories often enough. Having short films, movies and animations that illustrate the impact of emergencies and what people do to fight them, I think it makes it more real for people. It gives it life and gives it a sense that we are all in this together and that is what I would like to see.”

Dr. Michael Ryan<sup>1</sup>



## Call for short films open from 28 October 2021 to 30 January 2022

When submitting a short film, the copyright owner of the film has to choose one category of competition among the three described below:

- 1. Universal health coverage (UHC)** – films about mental health, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and other UHC stories linked to communicable diseases not part of emergencies;
- 2. Health emergencies** – films about health emergencies, such as COVID-19, Ebola, disaster relief and health in conflict-settings;
- 3. Better health and well-being** – films about environmental and social determinants of health, such as nutrition, sanitation, pollution, gender, and/or about health promotion or health education.

For each of these three GRAND PRIX categories, candidates can submit short documentaries, fiction films or animation films of three to eight minutes in length.

Additionally, some special prizes are attributed to short-listed videos not receiving a GRAND PRIX. In 2022, the three special prizes include:

- **Special Prize on Health Innovation** – films presenting one or more innovative solutions with a proven positive impact in the health and wellbeing of people. These can include social innovations (e.g. new or improved approaches or ways of working); digital solutions; and new technological solutions – or a combination thereof – that promote health and wellbeing.

- **Special Prize on Rehabilitation** – films telling stories about the life changing impact that rehabilitation has on people's lives. Rehabilitation addresses the impact of a health condition on a person's everyday life and ensures that people remain as independent as possible, while continuing to participate in education, work and meaningful life roles. Most people will require rehabilitation at some point in their lives, whether they have experienced an injury, disease, illness, or decline in function with age. COVID-19 highlights that rehabilitation is also required in the continuum of care for people with infectious diseases.
- **Student film prize** – films produced by students who can justify that the films were made during their university studies.

### Eligibility criteria and festival rules:

- Only short films completed between 1 January 2019 and 30 January 2022 are eligible for the Film Festival 3rd edition. Any production made by United Nations staff members or exclusively done with UN funding is not eligible. A submission can be in any language; if the film is not in English, English subtitles must be included.
- Please read the complete application rules if you'd like to know more about our terms and conditions in the festival homepage at [www.who.int/film-festival](http://www.who.int/film-festival) or scan the QR code in this page.

THE GLOBAL HEALTH PODCAST FROM TDR

# EPISODE 6: REIMAGINING RESEARCH LEADERSHIP

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# United in Music

For Tostoï, music is the shorthand of emotion. For Shakespeare it is the food of love. For most of humanity, it is a powerful shared experience that is even more precious after so many months during which the COVID-19 pandemic forced us apart.

## ROB STEPNEY<sup>1</sup>

Since the relaxation of pandemic restrictions this summer, music has been key in bringing people together, especially in Geneva during the period of the 'Fête de la musique' from 17 to 20 June 2021. The piano duo OXY MORE – a name which references the conjunction of apparent opposites, in this case continuity despite contrast – provided a perfect demonstration of how to connect and inspire people, and promote wellbeing and mental health that have been so strained by social distancing.

The global pandemic has affected the performing arts more than many segments of the population. So the return of OXY MORE – comprising Philippe Boaron and Dinu Mihailescu, who gave a magical live performance on Saturday 19th June at Geneva's Studio Gabriele de Agostini – was especially welcome.

The two talented Switzerland-based pianists started their collaboration in 2017. In 2019, the OXY MORE duo was formally established by their current producer, Patrick Jeanneret, joined by their musical advisor – the Swiss composer Adrien Koumrouyan. The duo has since had the opportunity to work with internationally acclaimed musicians such as Paul Coker and Philippe Cassard, and made its debut at the Victoria Hall in Geneva in 2020.

The team's vision is to bring classical music to various venues, touching different audiences and



© Roger Uhlmann

making it communicate through a modern approach. At the Studio Gabriele de Agostini, the audience listened in the dark as the pieces moved seamlessly from one to another, without pause or applause, appreciating the continuity across diverse musical traditions, and relishing an immersive, perhaps meditative experience.

"This performance was a whirlwind of the senses. The recital may be over, but the contemplation is only beginning," said Dr. Najia Musolino, trainer with the Happiness Program at the The Art of Living Foundation. The many nations represented among the composers were more than matched by the multinational nature of the Geneva-based audience. And the ability once more to share the magic of live performance with the artists and with each other made it an experience as moving as it was memorable.

The first OXY MORE album, recorded at the Rosey Concert Hall in spring this year, reproduces exactly their live performance. Based on the idea of contrast yet continuity between all the elements of a musical program, it takes the listener on a journey where sounds become a path to extraordinary emotions. With two subtly-lit pianos on stage, the music flows uninterrupted, bringing the audience from the time of Bach to the present day through the works of composers such as Claude Debussy, Sergueï Prokofiev, György Ligeti, Camille St-Saëns and Philipp Glass.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability once more to perform and listen to music offers an ever-more significant opportunity. It encourages the audience to go beyond the appreciation of "music as art". When

people across the globe face the greatest challenges seen in our lifetime, such performance exemplifies the resolution and coherence needed to achieve our common goals of peaceful cooperation and mutual enrichment. ■



© Alessandra Jeanneret

<sup>1</sup> Writer, editor and contributor to poetry anthologies <http://www.robstepney.com/index.html>

<https://www.ibprod.ch>  
pat@ibprod.ch





# The big climb to fight COVID-19

In February 2020, at 4,700 meters above sea level on Mount Kilimanjaro, our group of climbers huddled in a mess tent.

## TIM CHALLEN, UNFCU

We deliberated about the novel virus COVID-19. Will the virus spread widely across continents? Will we see lockdowns in Europe and America similar to the one in Wuhan? I looked across at Dr. Joseph Msaki, our medic from the Marangu Hospital. “What would happen if COVID-19 reached the Kilimanjaro region?” I asked with some concern. Dr. Msaki was quietly cradling a cup of tea with his frozen fingers. Deep in thought, he looked up and replied, “Pray for us.”

Since 2006, I have organized annual climbs of Mount Kilimanjaro. After being shot and severely injured during an armed robbery in Nairobi, Kenya, I was determined to positively change lives. Each climb highlights a social issue that affects disenfranchised youth, bringing together an average of 25 climbers per ascent. Some climbs, bigger than others, demonstrate the effectiveness of international partnerships with

UN agencies and the private sector. Despite and because of COVID-19, we needed a really big climb this year.

An idea becomes reality At the start of 2021, having delayed this year’s climb due to COVID-19, I called my good friend Ingrid Beutler, who is a former climber. I had met Ingrid when she worked at the UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace, before she moved to the International Olympic Committee. Ingrid is now a consultant working in the field of ethics and sports, and always full of pragmatic advice.

“Ingrid, I want to organize a climb that calls for solidarity in the face of COVID-19. We need to demonstrate togetherness,” I said with some verve, half-expecting a sigh in response. I believe 90% of my ideas fall through a net, but this one stuck with Ingrid. “Great idea,” she responded. “I am on the board of Sport and

Sustainability International. This can be an activity that kick-starts our mandate,” Ingrid purposefully continued.

Fifteen years of organizing climbs, leading 600 people to the summit of Africa, have well-prepared me for what came next. One enters what I call the Catch-22 planning dimension: unanswered emails; ‘we’ll support if they support;’ and ‘get back to us when you have a more concrete plan.’ However, 15 years of climbing and participating

in numerous conferences built up my connections. Marketing skills and honed diplomacy also opened doors.

## Forging a team

Slowly, we start building momentum. Adam Rogers, another former climber who worked at UNDP communications, jumps on-board. Dennis Nielsen, who creates UN collateral through his company Phoenix Aid Design, adds energy to the project, as does Matthias Burkhalter from the Women’s Brain Project. Simon





Mtuy, world record holder for the fastest unassisted climb and descent of Mount Kilimanjaro, agrees to be our Chief Guide.

After six months of outreach, we have a concept, a plan, and a growing list of partners and climbers. Our climb, in partnership with GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Africa Union Center for Disease Control, will raise visibility and funds for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. Forty climbers will make the 7-day trek, including 10 East African youth, renowned mountain athletes, UN and sports officials, and members of the private sector. We have environmentalists and arctic explorers joining us. Doctors from the Barcelona Institute for Global Health and from Meds for More in India will also support our mission. A sanitation and medical protocol on the mountain is established.

The goal and its enablers Climbers will reach the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro, known as the 'Summit of Africa,' on 24 October, UN Day. H.E. Ambassador Tarishi of the Tanzanian Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva has pledged her government's assistance. The African Union plans to have its leaders send messages of support and will organize parallel activities. Also full of encouragement, the FAO-led Mountain Partnership will assist with visibility.

UNFCU is sponsoring the participation of African youth climbers. UNFCU Foundation is supporting projects from which the participating youth are being selected. The foundation works to sustain a path out of poverty for marginalized women and youth through health care, education, and livelihood training. Ethiopian Airlines is sponsoring flights for the mountain athletes and assisting with travel arrangements.

For his part, Dr. Msaki will climb again. A few months ago, he

sounded even more disheartened when we spoke on the phone. Now, he talks enthusiastically about making it past the steep rocky slope that held him back last year. In addition to raising funds for vaccines, we aim to facilitate the purchase of medical equipment and solar panels for Marangu Hospital.

### Reducing inequalities

The Big Climb, as we have now named it, has persevered and grown. We recognize that humanity is at a difficult crossroads. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), said the world faced a 'catastrophic moral failure' because of unequal COVID vaccine policies. This spurs us on. Millions of vulnerable persons in poorer countries continue to wait for their inoculation. This is whilst vaccinations have already reached the arms of younger, healthy people in richer countries.

We have yet to see the full social consequences of COVID-19. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), tourism-dependent countries will likely feel the impact of COVID-19 for much longer than other economies. I know how much our Kilimanjaro guides and porters depend on climbs to pay for their children's school fees and family medical bills. A New York University (NYU) study found that people with anxiety or depression were more likely to report an increase in harmful alcohol use during the pandemic. For this reason, I believe I lost a close friend a couple of months ago. He was one of our guides.

Another friend, Richie, who organized most of the transport logistics for our climbs, succumbed to the virus at the age of 47. Three young children are now fatherless in Arusha, Tanzania. His wife Grace courageously continues the businesses and takes care of the

family single-handedly. The emotional impact of COVID-19 is devastating.

### Drawing inspiration

My sister Sophie passed away three years ago, after a long and hard battle with cancer. She had worked as a nurse at the UK's National Health Service for 29 years. Had she been alive these past 18 months, I know she would have been on the frontlines against COVID-19. Her commitment to other people's good health continues to inspire me. She had so wanted to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. I will keep her in my thoughts and prayers with every step I take.

We have a responsibility to all those who lost their lives to keep climbing, to make the most of the lives they wanted to live, to look after one another. On UN Day, we are going to light a torch on the Summit of Africa in their memories and to overcome the darkness of this terrible virus. ■

To learn more about The Big Climb, visit [www.thebigclimb.org](http://www.thebigclimb.org)

1 Tim Challen is Assistant Vice President of Marketing Global Affairs at the United Nations Federal Credit Union (UNFCU). Based in Geneva, he is also the founder of Kilimanjaro Initiative, a non-governmental organization that works with youth in informal settlements in East Africa.

### Nepalese trail runner and sky runner Mira Rai will participate on The Big Climb. A former child soldier

Mira turned to running as a way to overcome personal challenges and promote gender issues. She has since won numerous races around the world. In 2017, Mira was named National Geographic Adventurer of the world. She was recently appointed Mountain Partnership Goodwill Ambassador by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). [www.miraraiinitiative.org](http://www.miraraiinitiative.org)



### How has COVID-19 impacted your community in Nepal?

It's been 2 years, not just Nepal but the whole world is facing a worse situation from Covid-19 which has affected everyone's regular life. It is even worse for those people who have to work on a daily basis to survive. It has also affected tourism & sports as well. As a sportsperson neither can I train myself nor can I travel to another place or country to compete in races. Despite all the odds, I have received full support from my team for the training and to be prepared for the upcoming competition. Since there has been hardly any races since the pandemic began, the trail running community has also suffered a lot.

### What keeps you going during difficult times?

During these difficult times, my family and my team have been very supportive. My mentor Richard Bull and my team have been very helpful to keep me going to achieve my goal regardless of the situation. My friends also keep pushing me forward. Since I have already faced so many hurdles in my early childhood days hence I will not stop dreaming and chasing it to turn into reality. Thus, it's my determination and self belief that keeps me going that I will achieve what I have dreamed of.

### Why is it important for you to participate on The Big Climb?

I am always available for a good cause, and I am very much delighted to receive the invitation for The Big Climb team. It will be very important for me because this will be my first mountain expedition though my home is in the land of Everest. I am pretty excited to meet new people from the outdoor community who have similar mindsets to make a difference in the community for the better. It doesn't matter how big or small the difference is, what matters is your thoughts.

# The year without summer

For those who stayed in or near Geneva these past four months, do you feel that you were deprived of your summer?

## GEMMA PAYOT VESTAL, WHO

Due to changing travel rules brought on by COVID-19, I decided to have a staycation, meaning still have a vacation without going out of town. And this gave me the opportunity to actually experience Geneva and its sights as a local.

While walking in Plainpalais one rare sunny day this past summer 2021, I chanced upon an 8-foot statue of the *Frankenstein* monster frozen in the act of escaping towards Mont Salève. There was nothing on or near the statue that explained anything, but I knew it was the *Frankenstein* monster just from what I read about it way back in my high school days. That discovery triggered my curiosity to find out more. It turns out that the first murder committed by the monster occurred in Plainpalais, so it felt appropriate that the statue be placed there. And the monster supposedly ran up Mont Salève to hide there, hence the reason why the monster looked like it was making a stride towards the mountain.



The sculpture symbolizes both the character Frankenstein and those who are homeless or who have no established home and work.

Completely curious about this bizarre yet interesting sculpture, I aimed to know more. I found out that the creator of the *Frankenstein* monster in the Plainpalais quarter is a masterpiece of an initiative group of artists called KLAT, which was founded in 1997 by five Geneva Art School students<sup>1</sup>. The group was commissioned by the city of Geneva to create this monster sculpture, which stands at 8-feet tall. In an article published online at *Le News*, writer and editorial consultant Bill Harby mentioned that the artist collective created the monster sculpture dressed in a ragged clothes to symbolize both its character in the famed novel and to represent the homeless or those who have no established home and work.<sup>2</sup>

The author of *Frankenstein* was Mary Shelley (1797-1851) who was just 18 years old when she vacationed in Geneva in the summer of 1816 with her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron. However, that summer was plagued by torrential rains with frightening thunder and lightning as Mount Tambora in Indonesia had erupted and caused globally widespread rains and storms. As the time was 205 years earlier, these young people did not have internet, Netflix, smartphones, nor social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc., to keep themselves entertained while being cooped up inside in their rented lakeside homes for days. It's been said that Lord Byron then came up with the brilliant idea of a writing competition on who could write the best horror story reflective of their current conditions. This was



A glimpse of Villa Diodati from Lord Byron Park, where one can see a stunning angle of the Jet d'Eau.



A lovely grotto in Old Town Geneva.

how Mary Shelley conceived *Frankenstein*, a book about a scientist who created life and was horror-struck by the hideous creature he had made. The book was anonymously published for the first time in 1818.<sup>3</sup>

From further quick internet research, I found out that Villa Diodati is a mansion rented by Lord Byron in the wealthy and heavily guarded village of Cologny. Walking from Plainpalais through the Old Town to Rive where I caught Bus A to Cologny-Mairie, I discovered another interesting piece of art – a grotto with a potable water fountain emerging from the mouth of a snake, which is curled up around some moss-covered rocks and shrubs. What a beauty.

The short walk from the Cologny-Mairie bus stop to Villa Diodati located on Chemin de Ruth 9 presented another pleasant surprise – a work of art that I would describe as a literal “see-through lady” because one can actually see-through this sitting figure of a beautiful maiden. The official name of this piece of art is “Femme assise” or “seated woman” in English, which is a sculpture by Cédric Le Borgne, a French artist specializing in plastic material. The see-through sculpture is made of mesh and has a total height of 1.75 meters and weighs approximately 4 kilos. “Femme assise” is free from any framework and part of Cédric’s series named “The Travellers”.<sup>4</sup>





© Gemma Vestal

Femme assise near the town hall in Cologny.

Just a hundred meters from the see-through sculpture was Villa Diodati. Trees covered it, so it was not picture-perfect. When Lord Byron rented this villa, the Shelleys rented a nearby smaller house closer to Lake Geneva. Villa Diodati still looked grand, but entrance was not possible as it is privately owned. However, the smaller house that the Shelleys rented is no longer standing.

Luckily, though, next to the lot was Lord Byron Park, a big meadow overlooking Lake Geneva. It was from this park where I got a good view of Villa Diodati and where I got to reflect on Mary Shelley and her book from 205 years ago.

The population of Geneva in 1816 was about 30,000, while in 2021 it is over 600,000. Mary eloped with Percy when she was only 16, while he was 21 and married to another woman. In this current era, Mary Shelley might have every right to chime in on the #MeToo movement. Their views from the balcony of Lord Byron's rented villa would have been understandably stunning in 1816, but the Jet d'Eau, Geneva's famous landmark, was not around then as the first water jet wasn't installed until 1886.<sup>5</sup> Also, the very noticeable and stately Palais des Nations, housing the United Nations Office in Geneva, on the other side of the lake was not around during Mary Shelley's time. And the two world wars have yet to happen. And of course, the challenges and tragedy of COVID-19 pandemic have not even been remotely conceived in any writer's mind at that time.

Nonetheless, the 205-year-old horror story that Mary Shelley weaved has real-world

impact that still resonates even more so in this day and age. Just think of the ethical considerations and social consequences of technological interventions in human biology, such as cloning, genetic engineering, cryonics, and other unorthodox experiments which are, more or less, the concept of *Frankenstein*.

Leaving the park and heading towards the lake via Chemin Byron to Quai de Cologny, then Quai Gustave-Ador, I was recalled to present moment awareness by my dog's panting sounds and his desire to cool off by jumping into Lake Geneva. I noticed hundreds of Genevois and tourists bathing in the pleasantly refreshing lake – all savoring the gloriously hot summer day which has become such a rarity in this year without summer. ■

1 <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klat>

2 <https://lenews.ch/2016/10/17/frankensteins-monster-spotted-in-geneva-at-his-first-murder-site/>

3 [https://mary-shelley.fandom.com/wiki/Geneva,\\_Switzerland](https://mary-shelley.fandom.com/wiki/Geneva,_Switzerland)

4 <http://www.cologny.ch/cedric-le-borgne-femme-assise>

5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jet\\_d%27Eau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jet_d%27Eau)



© Gemma Vestal

A better glimpse of Villa Diodati from Lord Byron Park.





# Hike to the Dix hut

Alarm is set for 6 am. We have a quick breakfast, pick up a friend, and off we go. Direction: Valais.

## OLGA FONTANELLAZ

Our hike starts at the bottom of the Grande Dixence Dam which lies high up in the alpine valley of Val d'Hérens. From here, a lift brings us to a mass of artificially retained water forming the Lac des Dix. The 285 m of concrete dominates the mountainous landscape. The Grande Dixence Dam is a technical masterpiece. Started in 1953, it took more than 10 years to complete it. With water from 35 glaciers and five pumping stations, the Grande Dixence Dam is the tallest gravity dam in the world and the tallest dam in Europe. The Franco-Swiss filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard even devoted his first documentary "Operation Concrete" to the construction of the dam.

The first part of the walk goes along the Lac des Dix for about

5 km. It feels strange to walk on an almost level surface. With its milky turquoise colour, the lake is magnificent. Depending on the time of the year, its colour turns from turquoise to milky grey. We follow the path going through a series of passages dug in the rock; dark, cool, and humid. Larger tunnels are lit, but the others have just a bit of light coming through. Why did we not bring a flashlight with us? Openings in the passages display a splendid view of the lake and the surrounding mountains.

The wide, flat path continues in the midst of marmots chirping and running to hide in their holes. Strolling along the pastures covered with alpine flowers and even Edelweiss, we have to find our way through a herd of peacefully grazing Hérens cows. A typical breed of this valley, Hérens



cows are known for their fighting spirit and battles for the prestigious title "Queen of Queens" take place every year in the valley.

We come across a waterfall that feeds the lake. Its roaring water resonates in the air. If in the beginning the path climbs steeply

up grassy slopes, later on it continues on a moraine.

After crossing a small bridge, the trail starts to climb along the white-red-white marked path, with the paint barely visible. The transition from the flat to the steep is brutal. But the views



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Access

The Dix Hut is located at 2,928m in Val d'Hérens in the canton of Valais in Switzerland. It's accessible from the Grande Dixence Dam (5h, easy hike) or from Arolla via Pas de Chèvres (difficult hike).

### Accommodation

The Dix Hut is open in 2021 from 19 June until 25 September. Accommodation is in dormitories with mattresses, pillows and duvets. For hygienic reasons, all visitors are required to bring a light sleeping bag. Reservations required.

<http://cabanedesdix.ch>



are splendid, with the Matterhorn and the Dent Blanche appearing behind the glaciers. We walk on a small ridge with a steady climb to the summit near Tête Noire. At the top, the panorama opens onto magnificent views of Mont Blanc de Cheilon and the surrounding mountains.

The hut is finally visible! Almost too far as we start to feel fatigued and cannot wait to arrive. The weather becomes stormy, and the rain is threatening. We arrive at the hut when the first drops start to fall.

The beautiful mountain refuge lies on a rock with the best views you can get. The Dix hut is exactly as we like it! Built in stone, it blends into the landscape. Situated in front of the Cheilon Glacier at 2,928 m, its location is

exceptional. Originally built in 1908 on a lower location, the old wooden hut was dismantled in 1928 and moved higher up to its current location. In 1936, the hut was rebuilt from stone and was expanded in 1978 to its current size.

The Dix hut is probably the biggest hut we have ever stayed in. It's one of the three most visited huts in Switzerland, as it lies on the famous hiking road Haute Route Chamonix - Zermatt. The hut is full, but as always in Switzerland, everything works like a clock.

The warmth of the hut and a couple of schnaps are enough to bring back our energy. Shoes and clothes are put on the window to dry, and we are ready for dinner. The small talk with our

neighbours at the table is easy. We talk about our hikes in Switzerland and around the world. We finish the evening with plenty of ideas for the next few years...

In the morning, we could feel that our legs had worked hard the previous day. But it's time to return. Conclusion? It's a fantastic hike!

Olga moved in a different direction and together with her husband Errol they created a project to showcase the world's cultural diversity with a special focus on customs and traditions. When she is not travelling to some remote corners of the world, she enjoys hiking in the Swiss mountains.





© Aurelien Bergot

SLOVENIA

## Barbara Bulc...

...“wonder woman” of social chemistry

- *Ljubljana, 1965*
- *Social chemistry - SDG CoLab*
- *“The musical dawn at the Bains des Pâquis, which brings together the world and its diversity, a United Nation.”*

*newSpecial* is delighted to include profiles presented by Zahi Haddad, in his recently-published book “126 Heartbeats for International Geneva”.

We thank the author and his publisher, Slatkine, for this exclusivity.

“Why?” “How?” “Why not?” Since childhood, Barbara Bulc has been questioning the world. Explaining the interactions with her desire to make the world “more inclusive and regenerative.” Barbara wants to understand what brings us together. In Barbara’s soul, there is freedom to think, which allows her to see things differently: “We are living in a time of great change and we must transform our political and socio-economic systems. Adopt a state of mind that does not limit us in our development and allows us to live harmoniously with other species and the planet.” Thus, Barbara dissects human interactions and their organization “like so many atoms that assemble into molecules and release energy.”

To satisfy her curiosity, Barbara chooses chemistry very early on, followed by courses in social sciences and management. She studies how nature and living systems work, how humanity creates bonds and collaborations. “It is

social chemistry, a superpower that we have within us that helps us create new kinds of relationships necessary for the world we want to build.” At the age of twenty-eight, Barbara leaves Ljubljana to deploy this power in New York, where she develops North American operations for a Slovenian healthcare leader. Free to express her creativity, she sets up unique partnerships to provide patients with affordable generic drugs.

Eight years later, she gives herself a “greater cause” to serve and joins the Bill Clinton Foundation at a time when HIV/AIDS is really starting to shake the planet. “Our approach was to consider this pandemic as a global security issue and not just a health issue. It was therefore a question of rethinking global governance, in collaboration with representatives of governments, civil society and the business world.”

By creating these synergies and saving alchemies, Barbara moves

closer to Geneva, to that “one-of-a-kind center of diplomacy and global health,” the potential of which she sees as the transformation she imagines. To continue building bridges, she creates, with former Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, the Global Business Coalition in Geneva. An outfit that precisely associates private companies with organizations of Geneva International fighting against poverty. Without hesitation, Barbara sets foot in the Global Fund, the international fund fighting against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Then, with the Global Business Coalition and singer Bono, she launches the “RED” platform, bringing together major global brands, promising that “part of the proceeds from sales is donated to the fight against AIDS and, by exceeding our institutional limits, we have broadened the response to this scourge.”

Conscious of the urgency that humanity faces for its survival,

Barbara subsequently creates SDG CoLab to create new modes of cooperation. Invent, together, a new world with the participation of new agents of change: cities, young people, art, technology. SDG CoLab works in harmony for the accelerated achievement of the “SDGs” by 2030, the 17 “historic” Sustainable Development Goals defined by the UN.

“This involvement exists in Geneva, which can play an extraordinary role. This is why we all need to wake up and harness our collective consciousness to bring about the change we urgently need. But, of course, it all depends on the values that drive us.” And the ones Barbara grew up with are “caring for others and love.” In a perpetual release of positive energy. Molecular. ■



# The Circle

What risks did Dave Eggers foresee for us in a hyperconnected world?

The novel 'The Circle' published by Dave Eggers in 2013 explored many themes deeply relevant to our current lives and was sufficiently popular and topical to be turned into a film of the same name in 2017 (starring Emma Watson and Tom Hanks).

## PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

Describing the experiences of a young woman named Mae Holland who takes on a job at a firm called the *Circle* in the near future, what risks does Dave Eggers foresee for us in our hyperconnected future?

Dave Eggers' novel considers the value of knowledge and that of privacy, and the public availability and sharing of what has previously been 'private' knowledge.

The firm the Circle is loosely based on a mash-up of Google, Facebook and other social media platforms, although the author Dave Eggers denies he was writing about any one company in particular. The company offers a 'hyperconnected' workplace, complete with location monitoring, performance monitoring at work, email analysis, online services and profiling via its 'TruYou' service.

Regarding **work performance**, Mae receives daily statistics on "*the number of messages sent by other staffers, 1,192, and the number of those messages that she'd read, 239, and the number handled by her on average, 220, and by the pod's other members: 198.*" Today, employees using services such as Microsoft's Cortana receive detailed statistics about response times to email, proportion responded to/dealt with, time of access and other metadata. This can be useful information to help us understand and improve our individual working style and patterns, but do we know whether our employers receive the same information?

*[In the novel, work performance information is shared publicly among co-workers, triggering intense competition among workers and ultimately, sleep deprivation, as 'team' members and staff compete to outdo each other... A little*

*competition is often healthy and beneficial for many people, but too much competition can easily cross over into rivalry, to the detriment of team spirit. Or consider the unspoken competition among some 'friends' on social media, to have the 'most amazing' holiday, in the 'most exotic' place, applying photo filters to give 'the best' selfies!?!]*

Following her meteoric promotion, Mae Holland is inspired to go 'transparent' and is among the first to start wearing a small, **portable camera around her neck, SeeChange**, streaming live video and recording her every movement and conversation. This pioneering move sets Mae apart as a lead adopter and 'keen worker', embracing the corporate values of the Circle and distinguishing her from others, more employees who might be more reticent and reluctant to give up their privacy.

The only exemptions from this permanent recording are **three-minute 'intimacy breaks'** in the washrooms. However, Mae quickly realizes that her colleagues now engage in only conformist conversation on camera, giving bland, stock-standard responses to questions, while real opinions or revelations are only given in the toilets. This is perhaps not so very far from everyday life... And nearly any public figure or politician can tell you something about the dangers of being recorded near a microphone, as Gordon Brown famously found out in his 2010 election campaign, among others.

Mae's '**personal' and 'professional' lives become dangerously blurred**, a phenomenon many of us may have experienced on social media, as well as the pandemic and the loss of clear denominations in either space (office versus home) or time (slippage or loss of definition of 'working hours' with many of

us responding to emails late at night). How many of us now monitor or respond to work emails whilst on holiday? Clear demarcations of LinkedIn as a 'professional' network and 'Facebook' as our social network are now lost, as our networks of 'friends' and 'colleagues' may merge and overlap.

The firm, The Circle, then reaches back in time with its **efforts to digitize past records** via PastPerfect, a new product that tracks a person's family history. In the event, this service rakes up a past scandal about the parents of one of Mae's colleagues, destabilizing her mental health and threatening her reputation and future career path.

Although the film altered the ending of the book for dramatic purposes (unfavorably received by some of its audience), Dave Eggers has written an extraordinarily thought-provoking novel, which deserves to be read by everyone using - or planning to use - social media or work IT. The blurring and interchangeability of our personal and professional lives is one of the key themes of 'The Circle', and a theme which is becoming ever more relevant to us today, during the pandemic. ■

Note: the joy of any novel is that it speaks to us individually, and we interpret it partly according to our past experiences and outlook. This short write-up seeks only to sketch a few broad themes which may be relevant to some of us, as we come to grips with modern living.

## Other Sources/Points of View

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Land art

# Open-air art exhibition in the Twingi valley



## ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Art belongs not only in museums, but also on our streets and parks, roundabouts, in our gardens and houses. Art dispenses *joie de vivre*, facilitates communication among people, helps us de-stress, disseminates culture and gives us impulses to enhance our daily lives. Art is its own reward – “art for art’s sake” (l’art pour l’art) – as has been recognized by many civilizations. Without doubt, art has an inherent value, independent of subject-matter or political significance. It should be judged on its own terms – and on the impact it makes on us. As UN co-workers we have all the more reason to welcome and participate in all kinds of artistic events, celebrating human creativity in sculpture, mosaics, painting, architecture, photography, video, music and, of course, literature.

As a follow-up to my article on “*art en campagne*” in the September issue of *newSpecial*, I welcome the fact that these initiatives to expose art in the open air are becoming

fashionable, even a kind of felicitous “movement”, sponsored both by communities and private enterprises, as we know from the communities of Collex-Bossy/Ferney/Ornex. Every summer there are similar exhibitions in many Swiss towns, e.g. in Gersau<sup>1</sup> in the Canton of Schwyz, on the shores of Lake Luzern, “Art Trail” in Andermatt<sup>2</sup>, in the canton of Uri, the monumental sculptures of the Montreux Biennale<sup>3</sup> in the Canton of Vaud, “Art en Vue”<sup>4</sup> in Tête de Ran, in the Canton of Neuchâtel, and the poetic dialogue between Nature and Culture “Aufatmen im Park” in Bad Zurzach<sup>5</sup> in the Canton of Aargau.

In the Valais I know of three such initiatives – one in Martigny, sponsored by the well-known patron of the arts Léonard Gianadda, one in Belalp<sup>6</sup>, another in the Landschaftspark Binntal<sup>7</sup>, more precisely in the Twingi valley between the villages of Ernen and Binn in the Upper Valais, which my wife and I visit every summer, since we have a little chalet in the vicinity.

The Twingi Land Art was launched in 2007 and has experienced a growing success year after year. The artists come from many countries – Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, etc. The 2021 edition opened on 19 June and lasts through 17 October. It was somewhat impacted by Covid-19, as there were fewer participants than usual – only 12 international artists exposing their works along the old mountain road that connects Ausserbinn to Binn, with spectacular Alpine views, vertical cliffs, numerous cascades, left-over snow and turquoise streams.

We were amused and seduced by the sculpture entitled “Der Schutzpatron” (guardian angel), erected by the artist couple Karola Pezarro and Aris de Bakker from The Hague, Netherlands. Bearing in mind that the road to Binn used to be one of the most dangerous mountain passages, particularly because of falling rocks, the idea of a guardian angel seemed appropriate along with its golden halo. In a way, this unique sculpture articulated the





promise of a protecting force that accompanies us in our journey through life.

Another intriguing work of art was a simple balcony perched up on the bare rock, a straight-forward conception of a platform that invites us to climb onto it, strive to go beyond our capacities. We are challenged to rise above ourselves, take in the open panorama before us, to look down on the world and passers-by, nothing threatening us in the rear. On the other hand, the balcony is also a golden cage, and those below can observe us, laugh at us in our “prison”. The artist, Kaspar Bucher from Bern, reminds us of the paradoxes of being an artist, seeking recognition and acclaim, enjoying applause and suffering the indignity of being ignored or even rejected by people who simply cannot grasp the message.

Because of the Covid-19 lockdown some artists turned to nature and started collecting wood branches, roots and twigs in the forest. This gave Elian Zinner from Zürich the idea

of dressing up these wood stumps as if they were persons in different positions, manifesting feelings and emotions, self-confidence, fear, aggression. In her imagination, other wood stumps became animals or unknown creatures. Thus, her exhibit “my guests”, composed of seven *ad hoc* sculptures, brought transient inhabitants to the rocky landscape of the Twingi.

Yet another imaginative creation is Sarah Hillebrecht’s “Baumgold”. Sarah, who comes from the Hanseatic town of Bremen on the North Sea, has a particular relationship to wood, and thus she dresses a tree trunk with gold nuggets. One may think of the contrast between the beauty of nature in the raw and modern society’s craving for money. What is more valuable to us – the gold or the tree? Nature gives us forests free of charge, whereas gold is a currency to trade with.

We continued our leisurely stroll through the artistic parcours for a little over an hour.

Enriched with happy experiences, we drove back to the festival town of Ernen to attend a wonderful orchestral concert (everyone wearing masks) in the baroque Church of St. George, featuring works by Claude Debussy, Camille Saint-Saëns, Alexander Glazunov, Edward Elgar and Richard Strauss<sup>8</sup>. We particularly enjoyed Strauss’ humorous and seldom played *Duet-Concertino for Clarinet and Bassoon* in F major op. AV 147. Music is indeed a gift of God – and an art form to be cherished indoors and outdoors. ■

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La Suisse inconnue, à la découverte des 26 cantons

# Canton de Zoug: Menzingen

Une série de 26 impressions de lieux  
plutôt inconnus – loin du tourisme.

**CARLA EDELENBOS,**  
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Ma découverte de Menzingen commence au *Gubel*, une colline à quelque 900 mètres d'altitude d'où on a une vue panoramique sur les environs, le Rigi, le lac de Zoug et sur les milans rouges qui survolent les champs. De loin, j'aperçois même *Kappel*, le lieu de la bataille entre troupes protestantes et catholiques en 1531<sup>1</sup>. Dans l'église rococo du couvent de *Maria Hilf* des religieuses capucines, une fresque au plafond commémore quant à elle, la bataille meurtrière de *Gubel*, où les troupes protestantes se sont retirées après leur défaite à *Kappel* et d'où les troupes catholiques les chassèrent finalement. Des centaines de combattants des deux côtés y perdirent leur vie. Dans la petite chapelle à côté

du couvent, une inscription fut apportée à l'occasion de la commémoration œcuménique du 450<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la bataille: «1531 *gegeneinander* – 1981 *zueinander*» – «1531 l'un contre l'autre – 1981 l'un vers l'autre». Consolés par cette lueur d'espoir, nous buvons un café sur la terrasse du bistro avant d'entamer la descente. Cette fois, nous faisons l'étape à vélo!

Que Menzingen soit resté très catholique après les guerres de religions, se confirme immédiatement en descendant vers le village. Un ample bâtiment de style baroque nouveau domine l'horizon avec sa grande coupole; c'est l'Institut des sœurs de la sainte croix, fondé au milieu du 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle. La grande réussite des religieuses de Menzingen, qui appartiennent à l'ordre franciscain, a

été de fonder et de gérer des écoles pour filles ainsi que des institutions sociales et hôpitaux pas seulement à Menzingen mais aussi dans d'autres cantons de Suisse et même à l'étranger. À partir de 1851, des sœurs enseignantes dirigeaient de nombreuses écoles en Suisse centrale, y compris à Ennetmoos dans le canton de Nidwald<sup>2</sup>, un engagement qui se termina seulement en 1984 après plus d'un siècle. À Fribourg, comme à l'époque l'université n'admettait pas de femmes, elles fondèrent même une université privée pour la formation des religieuses, ainsi qu'un lycée pour filles. Elles ont d'ailleurs établi plusieurs cliniques pour soigner des malades, notamment à Genève où elles gèrent la clinique des Grangettes de 1957 à 1978. Par ailleurs, à partir de fin

2021, un musée montrant l'œuvre des religieuses de Menzingen sera établi dans une des chapelles de l'Institut des sœurs de la sainte croix.

En suivant le sentier didactique par le village, on voit bien d'autres bâtiments liés au couvent, par exemple la villa *Tharsilla* utilisée comme hébergement pour des candidates religieuses, ainsi que l'imposante *Haus Maria vom Berg* qui se trouve sur les hauteurs, un peu éloignée du centre du village. La maison constitue un bel exemple de l'architecture des années 1930s avec une entrée impressionnante composée de trois arches en pierre massive. Le bâtiment fut construit comme pensionnat et fonctionne depuis 1979 comme maison de retraite pour des sœurs de la sainte croix.



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En face, se trouve un joli jardin alpin aménagé à la même époque que la maison.

Dans le parc ombragé à côté de la maison de retraite se découvre une stèle moderne commémorant la fondatrice de l'Institut, la mère Bernarda Heimgartner. En ma présence, des jeunes étudiant-e-s profitaient de cet endroit pour faire la pause. Le parc fonctionne donc aussi comme lien entre l'ancienne génération et la nouvelle, une idée fort sympathique. En fait, l'école secondaire se trouve de l'autre côté du parc et date des années 1950s. Elle impressionne par ses formes directes et ses lignes claires. D'abord construit comme séminaire, le bâtiment héberge maintenant le gymnase cantonal.

De retour dans le village, on trouve l'église paroissiale St. Jean Baptiste, d'architecture baroque tardive du 18<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'extérieur et l'intérieur blancs donnent de la lumière qui contraste bien avec

les autels et les fresques baroques au plafond. Des vitraux modernes s'intègrent harmonieusement dans l'ensemble. Quelques anciennes jolies maisons se trouvent en face de l'église, ainsi que le beau restaurant *Gasthof Löwen*, avec 16 points Gault & Millau. Malheureusement, nous n'avons pas le temps de déguster un repas gastronomique.

En sortant du village, après une descente rapide, nous nous arrêtons un moment pour regarder un oratoire dédié à Sainte Otilia avec plusieurs *ex votos* célébrant la guérison des maladies oculaires. Après le petit lac de Wiler, on monte dans la direction du hameau de *Finstersee*, où on est surpris de trouver de nouveau une grande église. Mais ce que nous cherchons se trouve un peu plus loin dans la forêt: la cascade du *Mülibach*. L'endroit plaît par sa fraîcheur, et par la végétation presque tropicale – quel contraste avec les alpages, champs de blé et prairies ensoleillés que nous

venons de traverser! Après une pause pique-nique, nous empruntons un peu au hasard un autre chemin qui nous conduit à *Schwandegg*, où un panneau montre la source qui nourrit les huit fontaines du village. Depuis là, nous remontons vers les collines et passons devant – encore! – la maison générale de la fraternité sacerdotale St. Pius X, fondée en 1970 par le controversé Mgr. Marcel Lefebvre. La belle maison d'un art nouveau sobre est la résidence du Supérieur général de la fraternité et héberge le secrétariat. La présence de vases dans le champ bordant donne une jolie ambiance bucolique à la maison et sa petite chapelle.

Juste avant de quitter le territoire de Menzingen, sur les hauteurs à côté de Gubel, nous sommes surpris de nous trouver en face d'une ancienne installation militaire, qui servait pendant la guerre froide comme emplacement des missiles guidés anti-aériens. Après le démantèlement de ce

système de défense, l'installation est devenue un musée, ouvert pour des visites guidées uniquement.

Cette rencontre clôt notre découverte de Menzingen. Nous n'avons pas eu l'occasion de voir une maison des jésuites, une poignée de chapelles et la vue depuis le *Gottschalkenberg (1186 m)*, le point culminant du territoire de la commune – nous ne trouvons simplement plus l'énergie nécessaire pour la montée à la fin d'une journée déjà longue et chaude. Mais nous sommes contents d'avoir découvert ce coin du canton de Zoug et le rôle proéminent des religieuses de Menzingen dans la promotion de l'éducation des filles dont nous avons ignoré l'existence avant notre visite. ■

Depuis Genève, prenez le train en direction de Zürich. A Zürich, prenez le train pour Zoug et à Zoug le bus 2044 pour Menzingen. Durée du trajet 3h40 minutes.

- 1 Voir l'article sur *Hausen am Albis*, paru dans le numéro 811 (juillet/août 2021) du NewSpecial.
- 2 Voir l'article sur *Ennetmoos*, paru dans le numéro 812 (septembre 2021) du NewSpecial.





© Guy de Saint-Cyr

Entré en éruption le 19 mars dernier, le volcan Geldingadalur attire de nombreux touristes avides de sensations fortes.

Islande

# Naissance d'un volcan

En sommeil depuis 800 ans, dans la péninsule de Reykjanes, à une quarantaine de kilomètres au sud de la capitale islandaise Reykjavik, la zone volcanique de Geldingadalur-Krysuvik s'est réveillée courant mars dernier en début de soirée, provoquant une spectaculaire éruption qui, depuis, fait rage sans discontinuité.

## CLAUDE MAILLARD

L'Islande fait partie des pays comptant le plus de volcans actifs sur terre, et nulle part ailleurs on trouvera autant de volcans sur une si petite superficie. En effet, on en recense pas moins de 130 en activité sur une étendue moins grande que deux fois et demie celle de la Suisse. L'emplacement géographique particulier de l'Islande explique la présence

de ce volcanisme important car on y retrouve les deux facteurs essentiels à cette activité. Tout d'abord, le pays se trouve sur un point chaud, endroit où le magma issu du noyau terrestre jaillit à la surface de notre planète après en avoir perforé l'écorce. Mais surtout, l'Islande est située très exactement à la limite des plaques tectoniques nord-américaine et eurasiatique qui s'éloignent l'une





© Claude Mallard

La faille qui sépare les plaques tectoniques nord-américaine et eurasiatique s'agrandit de 2 cm par an.



© Claude Mallard

À l'extrême sud-ouest de l'Islande, la péninsule de Reykjanes offre des paysages sauvages de toute beauté.



© Guy de Saint-Cyr

D'impressionnantes fontaines de lave atteignant jusqu'à 300 m de haut jaillissent du cratère du volcan Geldingadalur.



© Guy de Saint-Cyr

Les volcanologues considèrent que la lave qui provient directement des profondeurs de la terre pourrait couler encore très longtemps.

de l'autre de plus de 2 centimètres chaque année. En résultent une activité sismique importante et une remontée du magma qui vient alors remplir l'espace qui sépare les plaques, donnant lieu à des éruptions volcaniques.

### L'Islande, géologiquement unique

La faille provoquée traverse l'Islande du nord-est au sud-ouest et, en conséquence, les principaux volcans se situent le long de cette fissure. Parmi les plus connus, on peut citer bien sûr l'Eyjafjallajökull qui a paralysé l'espace aérien pendant plusieurs semaines en 2010, et le Laki dont l'éruption de 1783 a engendré des conséquences dramatiques pour toute l'Europe. Avec plus de 20

éruptions depuis l'an 874, le volcan Hekla fait quant à lui partie des plus actifs de l'île. L'Askja qui était sorti de son sommeil fin 1961 reste sous surveillance, mais celui qui demande la plus grande attention se nomme le Katla dont des signes d'activité élevés laissent présager une prochaine éruption.

Pays de glace et de feu, l'Islande et ses immenses glaciers semble être en lutte permanente avec un volcanisme très actif. Les phénomènes liés à l'activité volcanique y sont omniprésents et même si dans le passé ils ont eu parfois des conséquences désastreuses, les Islandais ont également su tirer partie des avantages de ceux-ci. La géothermie en est le meilleur

exemple. Aujourd'hui, un tiers de l'électricité islandaise provient de centrales géothermiques. L'eau chaude est directement puisée en sous-sol et, outre l'intérêt écologique, les habitants bénéficient ainsi d'un chauffage à très faible coût. Il en est de même pour la culture des fruits et légumes qui permet de faire pousser sous serre des tomates et même des bananes en toute saison. Enfin, l'économie touristique drainée par cette activité volcanique est importante et attire beaucoup de visiteurs, que ce soit les excursions pour découvrir de plus près les volcans ou tout simplement les fameuses sources chaudes qui permettent notamment aux Islandais d'aménager des complexes importants, dont les bassins du Blue Lagoon.

Et c'est à moins de 10 kilomètres de là que se dresse le cratère du dernier né des volcans islandais, le Geldingadalur.

### Péninsule de Reykjanes

À l'extrême sud-ouest de l'Islande se trouve une péninsule que l'on appelle en islandais Reykjanes ou « la péninsule du cap des fumées » en français. Marqué par la tectonique des plaques et le volcanisme, l'endroit est balayé par les vents violents de l'océan Atlantique. Cette zone n'est qu'un désert de cendres et de champs de lave fumant par endroits, comme le solfatare de Seltun où l'activité géothermique est importante. Avec ses nombreuses fumerolles, ses marmites de boue bouillonnantes, mais aussi une



Proche du volcan Geldingadalur, la station thermale de Blue Lagoon dont les eaux proviennent de la centrale géothermique de Svartsengi.

terre de couleur rouge, orange, grise, blanche ou jaune, c'est l'un des plus beaux paysages d'Islande. C'est là également que la manifestation volcanique est la plus visible car c'est l'un des rares endroits au monde où l'on peut voir la dorsale médio-atlantique remonter à la surface. Essentiellement sous-marine, cette dorsale fait partie des trois zones d'activité sismique les plus importantes de la planète, avec la ceinture de feu du Pacifique et la ceinture alpine. Elle se situe au milieu de l'océan Atlantique et dans l'océan Arctique. Les crêtes les plus élevées de ce relief émergent à la surface pour «trancher» des îles comme l'Islande.

Dans ce coin de vallée, les eaux qui sortent de terre sont à près de 100°C et même jusqu'à 200°C quelques centaines de mètres sous la surface. L'activité géologique y est omniprésente avec, dans les années 2000, un important tremblement de terre qui a eu un impact d'envergure en vidant de 20% le lac de Kleifarvatn. Plus récemment, entre 2020 et début 2021, la région a été soumise à une intense activité sismique qui a eu pour conséquence l'éruption volcanique du Geldingadalur.

### Éruption du volcan Geldingadalur

Depuis février, la péninsule de Reykjanes est soumise à un

nombre impressionnant de tremblements de terre, dont 900 recensés pour la seule journée du 24 février avec, pour le plus important, une magnitude de 5,7. Après une légère accalmie, le 19 mars à 21 h40, le ciel nocturne de Reykjavik s'est illuminé de rouge. L'éruption volcanique venait de commencer. La lave s'échappe d'une fissure de 500-700 mètres à Geldingadalur, près du mont Fagradalsfjall dans le système volcanique de Krysuvik. Les coulées de lave font environ 1 km<sup>2</sup>, mais elles ne menacent aucune zone habitée ou route. Aussitôt l'éruption est devenue une véritable attraction touristique pour les locaux. D'un point de vue scientifique, on en sait un peu plus sur la nature de la lave, qui viendrait d'un réservoir situé à quelques kilomètres de profondeur, lui-même alimenté directement depuis la jonction entre la croûte et le manteau terrestre (à une vingtaine de kilomètres en dessous). Il se peut donc que l'éruption se prolonge pendant des mois ou des années et arrive à former un volcan bouclier (volcan au cône relativement plat caractérisé par des éruptions effusives produisant des coulées de lave fluide). L'épaisseur de lave atteint rapidement 20 m dans la vallée et le cône principal frise les 100 m de haut. Plusieurs fissures d'où s'échappent d'impressionnantes fontaines de lave apparaissent à

des centaines de mètres du cratère principal et d'autres vallées disparaissent à leur tour sous le magma. De plus en plus d'émissions de gaz toxiques émanant du volcan sont ramenées par le vent jusque dans les zones peuplées de l'agglomération de Reykjavik. Un mois après le début de l'éruption, on compte une dizaine de cratères qui crachent des roches en fusion jusqu'à 300 m de haut et d'où s'écoulent de spectaculaires cascades de lave. Depuis, le débit et la composition des laves semblent stables: affaire à suivre.

Spécialiste depuis une quarantaine d'années dans l'organisation de randonnées sur les volcans en activité, Guy de Saint-Cyr, via son agence «Aventure et Volcans», se propose de vous faire vivre au plus près l'éruption du volcan Geldingadalur. Une expérience inoubliable! ■

**Aventure et Volcans**  
BP 3154, 73 cours de la Liberté  
69406 Lyon Cedex 03 (France)  
Tél: +33 4 78 60 5111  
contact@aventurevolcans.com

## CHOPIN FESTIVAL

from 11 > 18 november 2021

<p><b>Thursday, November 11 at 8.00 PM</b> Salle Franz Liszt, Conservatoire de Musique de Genève Opening Concert « Chopin and his fantasies' charm » François Dumont piano Quintette Ephémère</p>	<p><b>Thursday, November 18 at 8.00 PM</b> Salle Franz Liszt, Conservatoire de Musique de Genève Closing concert « Chopin and his concertos' charm » Piotr Ryszard Pawlak piano Quintette Ephémère</p>
<p><b>Sunday, November 14 at 5.00 PM</b> Salle des Nations, Hôtel Four Seasons Hotel Geneva Piano recital, Andrzej Wiercinski</p>	<p><b>CHOPIN MASTERCLASS from François Dumont</b> Salle Bartholoni, Conservatoire de Musique de Genève From 12 to 15 November Friday, November 12 at 7.00 PM Concert « Chopin and Franck » Katherine Nikitine piano Juliette Salmona cello</p>
<p><b>Tuesday, November 16 at 8.00 PM</b> Salle Willy Buard, Townhall of Collonge-Bellerive Piano recital Winner of the International Rzeszów Competition in Poland</p>	

Tickets price: CHF 45 - 35 - 20 -  
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N. Leff



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Garry Aslanyan – newSpecial  
OMS, 20 av. Appia, CH-1202 Genève, Suisse  
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**Send your thoughts to:**

Garry Aslanyan – newSpecial  
WHO, 20, av Appia CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland  
By email: info@newspecial.org



newSpecial  
WHO, office 4139  
20 av. Appia  
1202 Genève  
info@newspecial.org

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**CE MAGAZINE EST  
DISTRIBUÉ DANS LA GENÈVE  
INTERNATIONALE ET LOCALE**

**Tirage combiné total** (impression et numérique): **>10 500 exemplaires**

Imprimé sur du papier certifié FSC.



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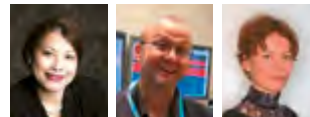
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**Éditeur / Publisher**  
Publicité / Advertising  
C.E.P S.A.  
Quai Gustave-Ador 42  
1207 Genève  
T. +41 22 700 98 00  
cepinfo@bluewin.ch

**Graphisme / Design**  
Atelier Schnegg+  
Michel Schnegg  
Rue du Simplon 5  
1207 Genève  
T. +41 22 344 72 90  
www.atelier-schnegg.ch

**Impression / Printer**  
Courvoisier-Gassmann SA  
135, chemin du Long-Champ  
2504 Bienne  
T. +41 32 344 83 95  
www.courvoisier.ch

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