

gies provide powerful tools of learning and have individualised the act of learning. They connect people wherever they may be to the most advanced sources of knowledge. They help people live with other people far apart through the net, with an awareness of inter-connectedness and interdependence, and a deeper sense of being part of a shared global community

On the other hand, however, there might be also pitfalls and possibilities of alienating human inter-relations. Caution need be taken that the technologies do not replace teacher-pupil relationships. Along with book-worms absorbed in conventional rote learning of factual knowledge, we have seen net-worms fully engaged in interaction with machines and computer

technologies. We are witnessing a net generation growing digital, who have developed new ways of understanding the world and communicating with others. However, in a world of high technologies, we need not only high IQs (intelligence quotients) but also high EQs (emotional quotients) to live together with other people through new means of communication. We have a simultaneous mission to guide the young to learn to live with other people, while living with technologies.

Communication

Learning to Live Together implies learning to effectively express oneself and to effectively communicate with others. Communication starts from the family at a very early age, with

parents as their 'first teacher'. Communication means expressing and conveying one's thoughts to others and doing things together with others. Quality of education depends partly on the quality of communication in a social network. We have to think simple yet fundamental questions: Could and how we as parents communicate effectively with our children, as friends on an equal footing? Could and how we as teachers communicate effectively with our pupils and live with them together? Could and how we as members of a community effectively communicate and live with other fellow folks? This point of learning to communicate implies not only the roles of language learning and acquisition of other instruments of communication, including technologies, but, more essentially, a renewed perception of inter-personal relations.

PILLAR FOUR: LEARNING TO BE A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

**PROFESSOR KONAI HELU THAMAN,
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC, SUVA, FIJI**

Humans have a great deal in common, such as the need for affection, cooperation with others, a place in a community or help in trouble. Because learning takes place within a cultural milieu and is conditioned by it, and because worthwhile learning has been going on in societies for thousands of years, there is an urgent need for us to understand what people in these societies and cultures perceive to be the purpose of learning, what is important to know and what makes a person learned or wise.

One extreme may be to say that schools teach our students to learn

and do things which are not only meaningless to them but may be destructive of the very culture that has sustained them and their ancestors for centuries, and that schooling, instead of creating more *poto* (wisdom) has, instead, contributed to an increase of persons who are *vale* (the opposite of *poto*).

Cultural tolerance will help us move closer to being *poto* as well as help others in their quest for *poto*. It will, I think, assist us to develop a more inclusive philosophy which implies cooperation among different cultural perspectives rather than the disap-

pearance of cultural differences and diversities. It may also help us leave behind totalising conceptions of Anglo-American and Eurocentric perceptions of education as well as the kind of attitude that is incapable of understanding that which is not identical to itself, or views anything that does not fit the scientific and often narrow, psychologically based conceptions of education as alien and irrational. I am not advocating that we adopt a Pacific perspective of learning, but rather that we expand our conception of learning and our knowledge of the actual conditions of learning, in different cultural settings. *Cont. p.46*

Brains and Paddle

by Konai Helu Thalman

thinking is tiring
like paddling against the waves
until feeling comes lightly
late into the pacific night
when the islands calm me
stroking my sorrows
i ask for silence
and they give it
i ask for forgiveness
and they raise my face

i carry with me scars
from loving and knowing
other planets
but when i fall asleep
the ocean sounds gather
my dreams into its depths
and then for the first time
i do not feel responsible
for the pain of the earth
or the darkness of night

today i wonder
what the difference is
between one sea and another
or how to recover morning
and conquer doubt
the pulse
of our separate brains
has the answer
it is in our becoming
that we are one

Tu'a 'ofa atu.

YOU NEED TO KNOW THE VILLAGE FROM WHICH YOU COME

**Professor Phillip Hughes, UNESCO
Visiting UNESCO Fellow
Chief Conference Rapporteur
Canberra, Australia**

There is a proverb which says: 'You need to know the village from which you come, before you can know the village to which you are travelling.' We are unlikely to be sensitive to the possibilities of the future if we are unaware of those in the present.

The village to which we are travelling is the 21st century. None of us can know its features. All we can know about it comes from our knowledge of this past century and on the understandings we have shaped from that knowledge. We will need a passport to the 21st century, that essential passport which all people and nationalities must carry, the passport of learning.

We will need a passport to the 21st century, that essential passport which all people and nationalities must carry, the passport of learning.

The world we see emerging is one where technology is increasing inequity and disadvantage, as it contributes so unequally to different nations and to different groups within nations. Yet technology is not an inanimate force beyond our control. Or, to be more accurate, it need not be so. It is our invention and its disposition can be at our choice. In this as in other areas we must be explicit about our choices. We do not want a world where war and violence are the means of solving our problems. We do not



Phillip Hughes

want a world where millions of people are dispossessed and have no home in any part of the village. Nor do we want a world where the only avenue of human enrichment is economic.

The Four Pillars, Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Live Together, Learn to Be, are the symbols of the need for a wider and more generous interpretation of the purposes of education.

The magnitude of human capacity exists in another light, the capacity to discover, to create, to invent, to heal, to preserve. We must recognise as central to success, the treasure that lies within us all and which we can share together.

Thanks to the UNESCO Commission and the Victoria Dept. of Education, Australia for the excerpts from conference presentations. For full texts or information about *Learning the Treasure Within*, try the following web sites:
www.unesco.org/delors
www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/news/unesconf/
<http://203.12.60.74/news/unesconf/index.htm>



A Society for All Ages

The international year of the older person

From page 41



International Year of the Older Person opening ceremony: L to R: Julia Alvarez, Ambassador, Dominican Republic; Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General; Kensaku Hogen, UN Under-Secretary General for Communications and Public Information; Nitin Desai, UN Under-Secretary for Economic and Social Affairs; Aurelio Fernandez, Counsellor for Social Affairs, Permanent Mission of Spain to the UN; Helen Hamlin, Chair UN Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on Aging; and Alexandre Sidorenki, UN Programme on Aging and International Year of the Older Person.

Older People Are Resources

by **Ambassador Julia T. de Alvarez**
Permanent Mission of the Dominican
Republic, United Nations

The increase in the numbers of older people worldwide in the next two decades will pose potentially enormous challenges for society. In order for us to be politically and socially innovative in dealing with our demographic destiny, the image of older people as full, useful and active citizens must become firmly implanted in the popular imagination. This does not necessarily mean romanticizing elders. We must view older people not just in the light of the extraordinary exploits of a few, but as possessing the very ordinary rights and obligations of all members of society; leading ordinary, productive lives; taking their place in the ranks of humanity as ordinary, valued human beings.

Those of us in our higher years . .

by **Helen R. Hamlin, Chair**
Non-Governmental Organization
Committee on Ageing

We enter a new phase in the life of the world and this challenge is offered to all of us regardless of our age, our ethnicity, our gender and our culture, and regardless of where we live on this globe. Those of us already in our higher years are acutely aware of our responsibilities as citizens, as community and family members, and as role models for the generations behind us and for those yet to come. We are aware of the need to demonstrate our worth as resources: to do this, we need and *want* to participate fully in all levels of society; to promote and ensure appropriate and adequate services to enable all to reach and experience a quality of life that assures dignity and self-respect.

Older People and the International Agenda

by **Aurelio Fernandez, Counsellor,**
Permanent Mission of Spain, United
Nations

The International Year of Older Persons joined other world events to place people at the centre of development efforts and to direct our economies to meet human needs more effectively. Our main objectives are to generate interest and awareness about the situation of older persons and, more generally, about ageing issues, and to facilitate the exchange of information.

Good examples of common issues are how to build education, training and employment strategies into the full life cycle; how to avoid vulnerability and social exclusion; how to strengthen our institutions and social networks; and how to improve channels of participation for all.

Towards education for all ages

by Gunhild O. Hagestad

Professor of Sociology, Agder College, Norway

As an educator, I find it astounding that the new longevity has spurred debate about educational policies to such a limited extent. Although "lifelong learning" has become a political slogan in societies, the visions behind it are limited. Furthermore, we have not contemplated the possibility that learning for a long life is a quite different kind of challenge.

Social change, which makes us immigrants in time, requires reskilling during adulthood. Often, we regard such adult education as a form of educational booster shot. We have had few fundamental discussions of adult learning as representing a chance to make up for missed life opportunities. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in article 26 that "everyone has the right to education". Is it a lifelong right? Do we provide new education trains for individuals who never got on the train in early life, or who interrupted the journey?

In our marvel at senior citizens who have mastered the language of cyberspace and meet at Internet cafes, we often forget that millions of old people never had a chance to read and write their own everyday language.

Not an insignificant number of them are on this continent! It is currently estimated that in the United States of America, as well as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, one fifth of all adults are "functionally illiterate"; this means that they do not have the minimal reading proficiency needed in daily life. In a global context, adult literacy rates have jumped from 48 to 70 per cent over the last 20-30 years, but there are still marked inequalities by region, age and gender. Clearly, an empowerment of the old, especially older women, depends heavily on the tools provided by education.

We have a long way to go in creating integrated learning communities in which old and young can teach each other. Most ageing societies have seemed quite ready to leave unused

the enormous educational potential that a vital older population represents. We see few or no policy efforts to connect children with older adults who are not struggling with the intense time binds that characterize many of their parents' lives. There are also few efforts to create settings in which children can teach older adults, be it basic reading or how to deal with computers. If successful, such settings could bolster self-efficacy, a sense of "Yes, I can!" for young and old.

We need to build fundamentally new perspectives on lives. Those of us who have lived a while recognize that the child is a part of us as long as we live. We now need to help children and young people understand that the old person is a part of us, too!



Multigenerational relationships in Africa

by Dr. Nana Apt, Director
Centre for Social Policy Studies
University of Ghana
Legon, Ghana

Africa is famous for its family ties. The literature on informal support systems abounds. Our family caring, our family strengths, are well written about. But frequently there are forewarnings of the weakening of traditional family structures. The family's capacity to cushion elderly persons in a meaningful relationship depends essentially on three variables: its social and economic situation; whether it falls within the ambit of a

social security system; and the actual nature and structure of the family itself.

Let me introduce some voices of African elderly people, and also African youth. Ten years ago, researchers in Nigeria asked elderly Nigerians to name the kinds of things that, in their opinion, give them the most status. The general agreement was money, character and education, in that order. These they considered most important. Only a few people among the older persons mentioned traditionally accepted status norms, namely, children and family. The majority of Nigerian elders are said to

be pessimistic about modern circumstances and about the present and future situation of elderly persons. In the final analysis, the conclusion drawn by the researchers was that, even though elderly Nigerians continue their traditional roles, these roles are now less important in an increasingly materialistic society.

It's not enough to talk about the bind of tradition, and it's not enough to talk about its disintegration. We must find ways and means of transforming it into a modern form that will make multigenerational relationships much more viable. From my work with
Continued on page 50