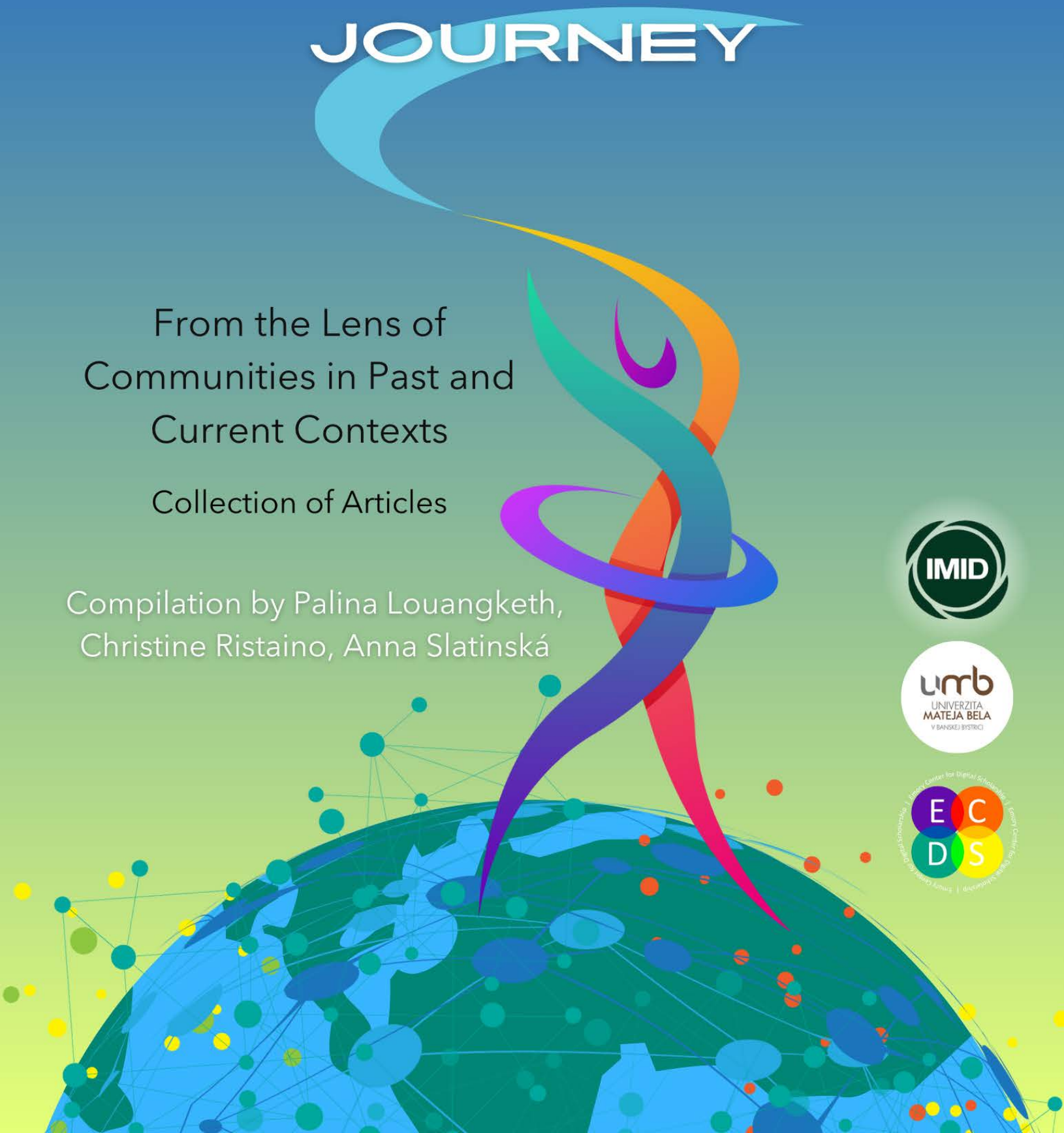
CLIMATE, CULTURE, AND THE HUMAN JOURNEY

From the Lens of Communities in Past and Current Contexts

Collection of Articles

Compilation by Palina Louangketh, Christine Ristaino, Anna Slatinská



Emory University
In cooperation with
Idaho Museum of International Diaspora
Faculty of Arts, Matej Bel University

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I. PREFACE

With nearly 4,600 miles between us, you might ask, how did a U.S.-based organization, Idaho Museum of International Diaspora, in a rural state like Idaho intersect with TG4, the National Irish Language Public Service Broadcast located in the western part of the Republic of Ireland – Galway, on the idea to organize a global conference? More specifically, how did Trevor Ó Clochartaigh, Anna Slatinská, and I meet? Let's take you on our *learning* journey of *discovering* our common connections and *exploring* creative pathways for our partnership rooted in cultural and diaspora topics. To do so, you will need some background information – i.e., past and historical contexts – of the importance of storytelling as a foundation to the cultures of those who have been displaced – the diasporas – from their origin homelands. The diaspora human journey stories across history and timelines of catastrophic events provide us with accounts of their remarkable lived experience of survival, resilience, and renewal as they resettle in their new host countries and cling on to their beloved cultural norms and traditions. I am a product of this diaspora phenomenon.

My family's 2-year journey of uncertainty from a small Southeast Asian land-locked country of Laos – a war torn country resulting from the American Secret War in Laos – inspired the birth of a special cultural and diaspora museum, Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID), with none like it in the world. The IMID was founded on the remarkable harrowing human journey stories of involuntarily displaced peoples ("diasporas") and the unique circumstances that have shaped the narratives of their lived experience around the world. My vision for its purpose was grounded in the realization that diasporas find solace through their cultures and community connectedness in the face of uncertainty and ambiguous loss. No words can entirely capture the depth and

breadth of their loss across the spectrum of the diaspora journey. More too often, they become silent stories living in the shadow of their silhouettes waiting to be released.

The IMID honors the human journey realities of diasporas, connects people and communities to diverse cultures globally, and celebrates diaspora cultures of past and current through creative opportunities, taking into account current challenges with human migration due to climate change. Today's cultural and diaspora museums play a vital and pivotal role in illuminating and connecting their stories, the stories of people who had to leave their homelands because of various reasons (environmental including) and existence in a new environment. In parallel to the work of the IMID, Trevor and Anna's path to learning and discovering global competence models of practice in media and higher education institutions intersected with a presentation related to internationalizing university curriculum design that I delivered at a public diplomacy congress (conference) in Donostia / San Sebastian, Spain in July 2021. San Sebastian is the place where I met Anna online and Trevor in-person. Trevor was the very first conference participant enthusiastic about joining IMID for future projects. He immediately raised his hand after I asked: *Who wants to join IMID on this journey?* The timing could not have been more ideal for this fortuitous opportunity that brought the three of us together and our realization of alignment in interests, goals, and ambitions. Trevor´s work in media and Anna's work to further a global skills training initiative for candidate teachers, translators, and interpreters at the Faculty of Arts at Matej Bel University (MBU), and my presentation introducing IMID's Global Diaspora Curriculum – launched and taught at Boise State University Honors College – that integrated diasporas and their human journey stories in the classroom setting planted a seed in August 2021. This seed sprouted and created more pathways for partnerships in which IMID's Global Leadership Council was formed in January 2022. Collaborative opportunities further enabled a larger scale project that ultimately resulted in the development of our first

eBook, *Global Cultures: Engaging Diasporas Around the World in Diverse Contexts*. In 2023, IMID's Academics and Research Team (ART) convened and created IMID's Academics and Research Program (ARP), which is foundational to the existence of the IMID and represents one of the core pillars of IMID operations. Additionally, 2023 also saw the birth of the IMID's Global Leaders Fellowship Program (GLFP, which is an immersive global leadership development program aimed to influence social impact at the foundational and systems-level). The program will provide a transformational experience for our GLFP fellows to experience the world through IMID opportunities, foster their global competence, and apply skills and knowledge domestically and internationally. The first time the fellows from the USA and Europe had a chance to take an action as a team was during our international conference Climate on Culture held in Galway in September 2024.

This larger scale project, piloted in 2023 in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) during IMID's inaugural multi day global conference, Museums: The Future of Diaspora Engagement, was followed by its immediate success in Ireland during IMID´s (second) global conference in Galway, titled Climate on Culture, co-hosted by IMID, TG4, Crew, ATU, Údarás na Gaeltachta, and Galway Culture Company. Held in September 2024, the conference engaged participants in learning how museums and other cultural and educational institutions can play a critical role in shaping society´s perspectives on climate change and its consequences on culture (thus the Climate on Culture theme) and the whole humankind, taking into consideration two major approaches:

- External and environmental conditions (e.g., weather) over a period; and
- Prevailing attitudes, opinions, standards, cultures, etc. in the context of geographical (local, national, international), cultural, organizational, industry sector, academics, political, technological environments and more.

The audience had a chance to learn from cross-sector leaders and practitioners who invited dialogue about the latest research results, projects and actions in global context; discovering how we are connected by understanding the major consequences of climate change on culture taking into account different perspectives (environmental, sociological, psychological, political, intercultural, educational, etc.) and the past–present–future of climate change and migration; and exploring opportunities and partnerships to impact positive changes so paramount for future generations. The conference design and flow follow the IMID business model of examining past and current trends to anticipate and plan for future scenarios, which encapsulates the IMID's three principles of learn, discover, and explore. These same concepts and design flow – from past to current and planning for the future – in the context of connecting and engaging the audience in climate change discussion and projects.

In conclusion, Anna and I owe a debt of gratitude to several scholars, professionals, and practitioners who have gifted their time and expertise to contribute their work of literature compiled in this eBook. To IMID's Global Leadership Council, we are grateful for the opportunity to continue this journey with you. To Emory University, thank you deeply for gifting us with your partnership and publication opportunities to turn our shared vision into reality. To TG4 and other above-mentioned co-hosts located in Galway (Ireland), the experience in your beautiful city and the Connemara region will forever stand solid as a foundation for more adventurous innovative partnerships to come.

Palina (Boise, Idaho, U.S.A.) and Anna (Banská Bystrica, Slovakia)

November 4th, 2024

II.

CLIMATE CHANGE. MIGRATION.

POLITICAL CLIMATE. RESILIENCE.

CULTURAL HERITAGE. WAR.

1. CLIMATE CHANGE: INTERCONNECTED IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY

by John Bieter and Peter C. McKeown

Abstract

These two articles provide examples of the interconnected nature of climate change. John Bieter focuses on the human causes of climate change that are forcing migration on a global scale and highlights the volitional disparity between the wealthy and the poor. Bieter explains how climate change can serve as a migration threat multiplier; how it magnifies other factors such as loss of livelihoods, poverty, and dwindling resources that lead to displacement. He notes the opportunities that also come from climate change like more arable land and new sea routes, but also includes the need for more governing policy from the International Organization of Migration (IOM). Peter McKeown focuses on the still under-appreciated need for adaptation to climate change and explains why it is less considered. Firstly, he argues that there is less incentive for powerful lobbies to promote personal actions as there is with mitigation, and secondly because it feels like an admission of failure. Thirdly, he maintains that 'bad actors' have promoted easy-sounding models of adaptation as an excuse for delaying mitigation. Finally, he contends that it immediately brings up the question of who needs to adapt, and who should pay.

Key Words

Migration. Migration Threat Multiplier. Adaptation. Loss and Damage Funds. Resilient Agriculture

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the relationship between climate change and migration remains foundational to the work of the Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID). To understand this relationship, one must first place climate change within the broader context of human movement. As individuals, we are born with an innate desire to move. From babies crawling, to teenagers driving, to families flying, each movement can represent a form of freedom and connection. At its simplest level, forces push and pull us towards the movements we make daily. However, one's level of volition to move, significantly determines their options and outcomes. Simply put, those who are more privileged have greater opportunities than those with little or no choice. Climate change migration reflects this disparity of volition. Placing our current experience with climate change within a broader historical view, helps us understand the similarities and differences of today's situation to the past.

Key Words

Climate. Migration. Human movement. Historical view.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars identify climate change as one of the factors that has impacted human migration patterns. Anthropologist Anders Eriksson of Cambridge University reports that "the first few hardy humans who left Africa might've gone earlier but couldn't. The climate was too arid and too hot, humans were bottled up." However, the trail of fossil bones and stone tools they left behind provides evidence that they eventually left. Eriksson and the rest of his Cambridge team argued that changes in climate coincided with some of the big human migrations — through Asia, then north to Europe and eventually all the way

to Australia and North America. Given that climate change has historically influenced population movements, what makes this migration different? A much faster rate of warm periods between ice ages, and changes in the atmosphere caused by humans, provide the answer. While this marks the first time in history that humans caused such a change, the result remains the same - people move.

Globally, as severe storms, hurricanes, increasing numbers of fires and droughts occur, more people are forced to migrate. The question becomes whether or not it is a temporary or permanent move. Those that have lived in one area for long periods of time are rooted there, their family and friends are there, it's part of their identity. If they have the resources to do so, most will plan to return and rebuild. However, this again depends upon their level of volition; to what degree do they have a choice? Those with limited resources have little to no choice. This disparity often creates divisions in communities; the poorest are forced to leave while the wealthiest decide whether or not to rebuild. Climate change is increasingly referred to as the great displacer. The question remains, where to go?

The evidence suggests that most move to the safest place, closest to their prior location. For example, if they live near the coast, they move further inland; or if they live in a rural area they seek another rural area not yet impacted by the effects of climate change. However, because these rural populations are often dependent upon agriculture, they remain especially vulnerable to migration pressure. If they cannot move to another viable rural area, moving to a city offers the next best option. Cities provide a plethora of opportunities that rural areas may not. They offer many more work options, educational possibilities, access to healthcare, and many others. Cities also present many challenges. Housing may be too expensive, particularly for those with low paying jobs. Complex transportation systems can make it hard to get around, especially when they first arrive. The urban pace may challenge their traditional rural rhythms of life. Most

especially, this experience of uprooting can mean starting all over again in a foreign environment. The move to a city can sever the family and communal relationships so essential to their identity. Nevertheless, they may be forced to do so. And after working to get settled, they may end up needing to move again. If too many people migrate to the cities, they become overcrowded, which challenges the food supply, infrastructure, and many newcomers can end up in slums with little water and electricity. For example, since 2000, as rural migrants moved into San Salvador, its population increased by more than a third. Facing the challenges of an overpopulated city pushed many migrants towards the daunting move of crossing borders in hopes of finding a better life. Examples of this migration include farmers in Central America migrating to the United States due to prolonged droughts, Bangladeshi migrants crossing into India due to rising sea level, and people from the Horn of Africa seeking a safe place in nearby countries due to severe droughts and food insecurity.

These examples also demonstrate how climate change can become a migration threat multiplier. As described by the United Nations Refugee Agency, climate change "magnifies the impact of other factors that can contribute to displacement such as poverty, loss of livelihoods, and tensions relating to dwindling resources." For example, in Burkina Faso in West Africa, shrinking water sources and arable land created conditions that lead to high levels of violence and displacement. A 2023 drought which left 2 million people internally displaced in Somalia serves as another example. The existing poverty and internal conflicts created a vulnerable population particularly susceptible to extreme weather events. The lack of water and food access lead to large scale displacement. These examples demonstrate how climate change may not only be a direct driver of displacement but a 'threat multiplier' as well. They also show how countries like these which have contributed the least to climate change, suffer some of the largest effects of it.

Given this increase in migration due to climate change, how are countries reacting? Similar to previous forms of migration, some are building walls while others are welcoming the newcomers. According to the *Global Climate Wall* report "seven of the world's biggest historic emitters of greenhouse gases (the United States, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, and Australia) spend more than twice as much on borders as climate finance." (Climate finance is defined as supporting other countries to deal with climate change.) Other communities respond by welcoming migrants and emphasizing the opportunities that this migration offers. For example, as the population ages in northern countries, more workers will be needed. This creates opportunities for both migrants and the economies dependent upon these workers. Migrants fill needed labor shortages in healthcare, agriculture, construction, and other economic sectors. Additionally, migrants often send money back to families and friends in their countries of origin which benefits those economies.

Climate change may also create opportunities for countries in previously unimagined ways. Historically, humanity has generally worked and lived along the 25th to 26th parallel because it remained the most comfortable zone for humans to exist and grow food. However, as climate change warms the environment, countries such as Russia, Canada, Iceland, and the Fenno-Scandinavian states may have access to land that was previously inaccessible. These countries "could see as much as fivefold bursts in their per capita gross domestic products by the end of the century." Even parts of the northern United States may benefit: for example, with warmer weather and wetter conditions, Alaska's agricultural production could significantly grow, along with the ability to offer a greater diversity of products. Examples like these demonstrate the financial opportunities for countries and the needed workers that would be employed. However, many fear for the impact these changes could have on the environment. They argue that if these countries continue with current practices, it will diminish biodiversity, threaten

water supplies, and release a tremendous amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Nevertheless, countries and businesses continue to explore opportunities that arise with climate change. One study found that sixty nine percent of businesses see investment in climate solutions as essential to a competitive advantage, and 70% see opportunities for growth and innovation.

As the world continues to adapt to climate change, governing policy will need to follow suit. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) started in 1951 as a response to the human displacement caused by World War II. Currently, this organization struggles with defining those displacements due to climate change. While the IOM currently does not accept the use of the term climate refugee, court cases are beginning to make headway in legally recognizing those affected. The case of Ioane Teitiota from the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati, has drawn the greatest attention. In his case in 2013, Teitiota argued that he qualified for refugee status in New Zealand because Kiribati no longer would allow him the livelihood that he had enjoyed previously. While he lost the case, he did successfully challenge the policy. The Court noted that its decision does not rule out the possibility "that environmental degradation resulting from climate change or other natural disasters could create a pathway into the Refugee Convention or protected person jurisdiction." The UN Refugee Agency expects increasing numbers of people to make the case that they are climate refugees. Consequently, legal policy will need to adapt to the reality of these climate migrants.

THE ROLE AND VALUE OF CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Within this challenging context, we also need to consider the question of climate adaptation, as a means of reducing vulnerability and the necessity of forced migration. Climate change and its many consequences are considered to be 'threat multipliers' for migration, and adaptation can ameliorate these threats and reduce the dangers faced

by climate migrants. Adaptation can be considered as any attempt to address the challenges that the climate crisis poses for communities and to strengthen their resilience against them. Ultimately, the aim of adaptation is to enable all people in all places to deal with whichever combinations of climate challenges they face so that the more dire consequences, including displacement, can be curtailed. Adaptation is considered the other major element of the global climate response, together with mitigation of emissions, but in the past has been something which has been lower on the public agenda than mitigation – the popular perception around the climate crisis is that of reducing emissions. Indeed, many people's first thoughts, certainly in the 'global North' are around reducing their personal footprints by reducing, say, home energy usage. Traditionally, climate change means people telling you to drive less, to fly less, to eat less meat, to install solar panels. Valuable though these may be, the do represent the extent to which the agenda has been captured by the cult of 'personal responsibility' which, as we know, has been deliberately inculcated by major polluters to avoid effective regulation.

The other side of the coin is to ask, what do we do to cope with the climate change which is already happening? My opinion is that the need for adaptation is less considered for several reasons. Firstly, because there is less incentive for powerful lobbies to promote personal actions as there is with mitigation, but secondly because it feels a bit like an admission of failure. Environmental groups may legitimately feel that to emphasize adaptation might feel people view them as doom-mongerers, or indeed, to dilute the benefits of urgent mitigation. The reality is that, no, we have not collectively decarbonized our societies as we should have in the past decades, and so climate change has already arrived, exactly as we were warned about and failed to heed. We can still minimize the impacts of course and have a moral imperative to do so to the greatest extent possible, but it is too late for impacts to be avoided.

Thirdly, adaptation has perhaps fallen down the agenda because of 'bad actors' who have promoted easy-sounding models of adaptation as an excuse for delaying mitigation. The argument has been advanced that we do not need to make difficult choices about transport or energy or food because we are a clever species, and can develop technologies that will allow us to adapt our way out of the problems. This is unfortunately a superficially attractive argument as it appeals to our vanity while giving us an excuse to put off difficult choices – a very appealing combination! In some cases, public figures have even presented adaptation and mitigation as an either-or choice. If intended honestly this is a very foolish position, because both are needed and the more rapidly emissions can be mitigated, the less adaptation will be needed. Adaptation is in any case necessary because of continued emissions and because of the persistence of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

We also have to 'hedge our bets' against feedback loops and tipping points, which could drive very rapid additional heating and which may, regrettably, be driving the faster than expected summer heating of the last two years, with claims that reduced carbon uptake by oceans or much wider incidence of wild-fire possible candidates and recent focus on possible rapid shifts to regional climate due to the breakdown of the AMOC, for instance. So, we need to adapt to what is already happening in the here and now, we need to adapt to at least the best case scenarios, and have warranties in place against further risks in the years to come.

WHO NEEDS TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE?

The final reason why we do not like to talk about adaptation is that it immediately brings up the question of who needs to adapt, and who should pay, a point which has dominated discussions of the Loss and Damage Funds at the last few COPs. At one level the first point has an easy answer: it is clear that globally everybody needs to adapt. We

in the wealthiest parts of the world are not immune. No matter how much money and prosperity you have, if your house is destroyed by wildfire then that is a serious impact on your livelihood. You probably have government assistance and insurance and other safety nets, so it is less destructive than if the same thing were to happen in another context, a less empowered context whether in terms of community or country, but it is still a major impact. Everybody, then, needs to adapt, and to accept that their leaders are unlikely to assist them until it is too late.

We worked with the IOM on the Ireland Country Migration profile, the first from an OECD country (Silchenko et al., 2023). This idea arose when we considered why this had only been considered a question for the developing and emerging countries, the LDCs, the SIDS… when everyone will be affected. We had a very good student who was connected to this work which assessed current questions around what does migration mean, in terms for example about movement within the country? If you visit Galway City Centre, the Spanish Arch is illuminated with an art installation in which a light is projected onto the surrounding buildings showing where potential sea level rise. What implications are there for a country where, as in many places, many cities are coastal? What are the implications for those seeking to move into Ireland, traditionally a land of exodus (my own grandfather had moved from Derry when he was young, before I moved back in the other direction in 2008).

Perhaps the most important element is simply that this exercise was engaged with the question of how things could change going forward, including in the climate context. Perhaps we can move from that unspoken assumption that we in stable, well-developed countries can easily adapt to climate impacts as and when we need. Perhaps we can but it will be a challenge to do so, and we need to plan for this, regionally, nationally and sub-nationally. More generally, we hope that the fact that the SDGs were formally endorsed by the University of Galway through a signing ceremony sets a marker that

these are important roles for civil organizations, not just governments, not just NGOs, as it also is for individuals and for businesses and the private sector.

Notwithstanding these points, it is of course the most vulnerable communities who need to adapt most, especially those whose livelihood depends upon natural resources which are threatened by climate change, and those who are already disempowered. By definition, adaptation will not then happen without very clear assistance, including through climate financing, and changes to the enabling environment. Helping others to adapt is a critical element of our ongoing responses to the collapse of our climate. Some of our research here has related to adaptation for poor rural communities, especially smallholders and others who are dependent upon natural resources, rain-fed agriculture, the presence of stable ecosystems, and maintenance fertile soils, all of which are threatened by climate impacts, among other intersecting threats. This is key to people being able to remain in their homes and communities, their ability to support themselves (including through farming, fisheries and other livelihood options).

CLIMATE CHANGE, RURAL COMMUNITIES AND MIGRATION

The ability for smallholders to continue deriving a livelihood from the land is also of essential for the food security of their wider communities and home nations, and failure to maintain those livelihood leads to the risks of out-migration. In some cases, migration may actually be considered an adaptation as people may see advantages or opportunities in it, but this is far from always the case (we explored some of these complexities in the Central American Dry Corridor in Huber et al., 2023). We have seen many examples of migration climate as a threat multiplier, interacting with many other factors to push damaging forms of forced migration, which we need to avoid. The other thing I think we need to remember is that adaptation of food production and food

systems is cultural. Food is cultural. It is about resilience in a place to which people have connections to their geographies, to their landscape, to their land, and to those things that the land produces. Therefore, there is also a question of heritage as well.

As an example, as a plant scientist I know that you can classify plants in many ways: scientifically, nutritionally, but also aesthetically, culturally, according to their symbolism and meaning. There has been interesting work on the connections between people and, for example, the crop varieties that they have traditionally made use of, in the area of agricultural biodiversity and genetic resources. If people have maintained varieties of crop, of tubers, of grains over the decades or even centuries then these form part of their cultural heritage. Studies of traditional varieties of, for example, Central European legumes will find varieties known in the local dialects or languages simply as 'granddad's bean', the family bean, the family grain. As it turns out, many of these older varieties are of great potential use as they may be more genetically diverse than modern varieties, with more resilience to stresses and threats, as well as other useful properties that counter the effects of drought or heat waves, or which enable them to prosper in nutrient-deficient soils.

So, when we talk about adaptation, one element of good news is that we do have many resources, technologies and techniques that can be enable adaptation, whether analyzing different traditional varieties to identify sources of existing resilience, whether dissemination of improved varieties or hybrids, or expanding access to appropriate technologies, including irrigation, water conservation, or techniques which preserve soils from being damaged through overexploitation or deforestation. The example of Connemara, to come back to what Oscar Wilde called the savage beauty, for me sums up that balance of the bleakness and the loss of the natural resource base and its interaction with, of human disaster and the and cultural and colonialist drivers of disaster. So, we have many of these technologies, but we must never forget that these exist within

cultures and communities and therefore need to be appropriate. They need to be made available in equitable ways which they currently are not, and barriers removed. This requires dissemination of knowledge, including for capacity building and of enabling supports. Adaptation is therefore a political issue first and foremost – we have adaptation tools but we do not have equitable means of access (above for those who did least to create the need for adaptation!), and as long as this unjust situation persists, there will be people and communities where *in situ* adaptation fails and out-migration occurs, whether voluntarily as an alternative coping strategy, or involuntarily.

IMPARTIALITY AND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS RESEARCHERS

The techniques which need to be made available for those with need of them could include microfinancing or changes to surrounding social barriers against full participation in adaptive systems for whatever reason. Many of us attending this conference are connected with research organizations, with universities, with museums, with bodies which have a role in in knowledge, and it is very important that we also recognize that our roles as researchers are also impacted by the SDGs (as noted above). It is critical that research bodies firstly see who is going to need to be the users of their innovations, and also that we are extremely critical about which adaptations will work. Many diverse approaches have been proposed, and we need to be really critical and focus in on actually assessing which are the ones which are most effective. That might mean being critical of ourselves and accepting that our own pet theories and areas of particular interest may not be what is needed, or at least be less effective than we would hope. As I remind my students, something can seem like a very good idea theoretically, but you have to support it with data and sometimes that means looking at the data and concluding that your idea just does not work, or at least it does not do so in the context in which it has been tested. We owe it to end users to make sure that that information

provided, tools or techniques promoted, are those which will actually help. We need to never lose sight of the need for critical thinking, including within our research settings.

One example related to some joint work we did with Project Drawdown a few years ago through a joint master's project with another excellent student at the time. The student assessed the impacts of regenerative agriculture, specifically by using a meta-analysis to look at the data behind claims that we can increase the amount of carbon stored in agricultural soils (Rehberger et al., 2023). This was an interesting project because it enabled our student to really drill down into the data behind the – very attractive – rhetoric and claims, to assess what has worked and where, but also cases where the benefits are not seen or where more data is needed to be sure.

Finally, once we know what works, what provides resilience, mitigation opportunities, adaptation, then we can also ask those difficult questions about financing. How do best practices scale out in a practical sense, across geographies and landscapes? This is not just about holding carbon in soils but in other benefits of sustainable land-use, such as maintaining on-farm biodiversity, water provisioning services. Here in Ireland, we are unusual for an OECD country in that we have many small family-run farms which provide many such services to the wider landscape and those who live and work in them, and who enjoy them. However, because agriculture needs to reduce its environmental impacts – which it absolutely does, as do all social sectors – there has been the perception of victimization among farmers who are blamed for their emissions and other environmental impacts with the perception that they are not rewarded for good management. We see agriculture as part of the problem but, despite the greater focus in some places on agri-environment schemes, not as part of the solution. This is why we need reliable data to identify, without greenwashing, what works, and builds up resilience and carbon within our landscapes and provides incentives and guidance in adaptation and improved practices. And, again, the cultural setting – we need solutions

that will help people within their own contexts and which cannot simply be top-down, and where transitions are needed they must be just ones.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, are that we have solutions for resilient agriculture which can provide rural communities with resilience against climate impacts and reduce the need for out-migration while achieving co-benefits such as the maintenance of carbon rich soils. Yet, this optimistic outlook has to be tempered by the vast difficulties in identifying what works in each place, both culturally as well as technologically, and providing the massive financial support for enabling these changes to take place. The questions of how everyone is helped to adapt to the breakdown of our climate, and who has the duty to support them to do so, are essential for the decades ahead, and key questions for all institutions which deal in knowledge to engage in, critically, impartially and urgently.

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2. FUTURE-PROOFING THE CULTURAL SECTOR: ASSESSING CLIMATE RISK AND ACTUALIZING THE UN SDGS

by Stephanie Capaldo

Abstract

Climate Change presents numerous risks to museums, and more broadly, to the preservation of essential cultural heritage assets around the world. Severe weather, flooding, fires, amplified humidity, increases in energy and utility costs, in addition to the reputational risks of inaction and the resulting negative impacts on communities—all constitute direct and indirect forms of risk. Consequently, in addition to educating and inspiring visitors toward a regenerative and equitable future, museums are equally tasked with revising operational planning to meet the ethical expectations of stakeholders and the realities of altered ecosystems. These efforts include evaluating and updating internal operations to both mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis, as well as measuring and documenting practices, impacts, and progress. As museums are working to find their place within an increasingly complex climate crisis, both in terms of interpretive responsibilities and operational challenges, many have found the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be a helpful North Star in navigating environmental and social impact management. Cultural institutions and the SDGs serve each other reciprocally. Museums preserve cultural and natural heritage and share vital stories, while the SDGs create a framework which museums can use to connect their messages with real world change, and measure impact for accountability and SDG attainment.

Key Words

Climate Crisis. Climate Risk. Cultural Sector. ESG. Impact Reporting.

A CRISIS OF BALANCE

In early 2023 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its seventh report outlining the environmental and social impacts, adaption strategies, and disparate vulnerabilities of human caused climate change. The panel reported increased impacts to "ecosystems, people, settlements, and infrastructure", including heat-related deaths, coral bleaching, drought, wildfires, severe weather, ocean acidification, sea level rise, and overall deterioration of ecosystem health and resilience. These impacts also include adverse socio-economic consequences on the most vulnerable and least culpable, such as reduced food and water security, economic disruptions, disease, and displacement (IPCC 2023, 10-13).

These most recent tragedies follow close to two hundred years of industrial rampage on biological and social systems. The dependency of industrialization on the exploitation of fossil fuels has altered not only the composition of the atmosphere, but several natural cycles that maintain life on Earth. Johan Rockstrom has illustrated that changes in climate must be understood more cohesively with various "planetary boundaries", their thresholds, and the ways in which each subsystem interacts with the others (Rockstrom 2009). Three of the nine central subsystems (climate, biodiversity loss, and nitrogen and phosphorus cycles) have already reached such thresholds and the resultant feedback exacerbate the long-term impacts of ecological change. These impacts are not included in many models, which intensifies the already immediate concern of planetary boundaries (ibid.).

There are numerous climate change risks to museums, and more broadly, to the preservation of essential cultural heritage assets around the world. Severe weather, flooding, fires, amplified humidity, increases in energy and utility costs, in addition to the reputational risks of inaction and the resulting negative impacts on communities, all constitute direct and indirect forms of risk. Consequently, in addition to educating and

inspiring visitors toward a regenerative and equitable future, museums are equally tasked with revising strategic plans to meet ethical expectations and environmental realities, evaluating and updating internal operations to both mitigate and adapt to the realities of the climate crisis, and lastly, measuring and documenting their efforts and impacts. These efforts can be optimized through the design of a Climate Action Plan. The primary goal of a Climate Action Plan is emissions reduction, the prevention of further environmental harm, and the protection of cultural heritage (Capaldo 2024).

Global markets are currently witnessing an exponential growth in ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) reporting. The E (environment) reports on a company's environmental initiatives in terms of resource efficiency, climate change, biodiversity, and water and air pollution. The S (social) dimension focuses on how a company interacts with society and its stakeholders. The G (governance) evaluates operational standards and responsiveness to employees and power structures within its organization (Makower 2022). A growing number of private and public companies have voluntarily disclosed their enterprises' impact on environmental health, social justice, and governance practices—in terms of financial risk and opportunity—for over twenty years now. However, growing pressure from consumers and increasing requirements from investors have inspired new regulatory standards introduced internationally. Examples of these requirements include the EU's European Sustainability Reports Standards (ESRS) and the newly consolidated International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB), both of which are set to begin in 2023, and the most recent SEC Carbon Disclosure proposal for the US released in March of 2022 (Pointb 2023).

For-profit businesses, however, are not the only organizations looking for ways to hedge various financial risks and further understand their impact on larger social and environmental systems. Non-profits, including museums and other cultural heritage organizations, are also trying to find their place within an increasingly complex

sustainability landscape. Museum patrons and public funding agencies have also come to expect careful consideration of environmental and social governance across these areas of public engagement. A growing awareness of global sustainability challenges has created new opportunities for museums specifically to develop meaningful initiatives that quantify and manage their social and environmental impacts, and thereby further support their continued growth within the communities they serve. Museums, particularly those situated globally, have found the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals to closely align with the various missions of public humanities institutions and to be specifically effective in establishing impact measurement and performance management guidelines, and as therefore serving as a useful roadmap (Callanan 2019).

FINDING A FRAMEWORK FOR IMPACT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations in 2015 which outlined a "shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future" (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2024). The plan is historic in both complexity and size, involving 17 general areas of "sustainable development goals" —further specified with 169 individualized targets, global commitments by all members of the United Nation Member States, and frameworks to support international partnerships and cooperation. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) "are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental" (United Nations 2015). They are a culmination of 25 years of global sustainability research and planning spanning back to the "Agenda 21" established at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the "Millennium Development Goals" (MDGs) adopted at the Millennium Summit in 2000 in New York, and the "Johannesburg Declaration on

Sustainability Development and the Plan of Implementation" accepted in South Africa in 2002 (ibid. 6-7).

The 17 SDGs outline a path for accountability to reach poverty eradication, health, education and food security, and economic, social and environmental objectives by the year 2030. They pay particular attention to the "specific challenges" of the "most vulnerable countries" and seek to empower those people and countries, including "refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants" (ibid. 8). Baseline measurements and progress towards these goals are measured by a set of global indicators developed by the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and overseen by the UN Economic and Social Council and General Assembly (ibid. 35). Unfortunately, the world is not currently on track to meet these ambitious yet vital aims, and the 2022 progress report outlined many disappointing realities. For example, more than four years of progress towards eradicating poverty, food insecurity, public health, equitable education, and reduced global inequality was erased by the Covid-19 pandemic, rising inflation caused by the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, soaring food prices, and supply chain disruptions. These, along with other underperforming targets in sanitation, access to drinking water, and sustainable energy and cities have led to further planetary crises in climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. The United Nations is recommending "accelerated action" of "4x the increase in the pace of progress" moving forward in order to attain the 2030 goals in less than seven years (United Nations 2022).

The UN describes the Sustainable Development Goals as the balance of "three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental" (United Nations 2015). While general sustainability discourse has similarly focused on those factors as a three-legged balancing "stool," academics and practitioners in the humanities have long noted the missing "cultural" element from the formal equation.

Because of the inherent interdependency between the three, each "leg": economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental health, must be given equal value and attention in order to attain any one individually, and certainly in order reach holistic sustainability. However, the significance of cultural sustainability underpins all three (see Lanzinger and Gralandini 2019). The maintenance of cultural beliefs, practices, heritage, and place identity is challenged by changes in the economy, stressors on power structures, and shifts in the physical landscape. Similarly, culture in turn has the power to shape economic, social, and environmental landscapes. This reciprocal relationship reinforces the larger social and environmental systems that can either impede or support sustainability, and therefore must be directly addressed in sustainability planning. The humanities therefore propose the three-legged stool grow a fourth leg, or that the triangle diagram morph into a square. Or perhaps more accurately, situate all three (economy, society, and environment) within a larger cultural sphere in order to visually illustrate the omnipresent place of culture in a sustainable world (Capaldo 2015).

The centrality of museums, libraries, and other cultural heritage institutions in cultural resilience has been of importance in the public humanities' discussion of "sustainability" for over a decade. Academic research has generally investigated the strengths and weaknesses of cultural sustainability within a broader societal and museum environment and focused on how stakeholders might influence policy to protect cultural representation and history within the context of "cultural sustainability" (Stylianou-Lambert, Theopisti et al. 2014). In turn, the concept of "sustainability" broadly and "cultural sustainability" more specifically, as discussed in the Sustainable Development literature, has also provided a new space for museums and the cultural heritage sector to illustrate the value of those institutions and argue for their survival. In these discussions, the "fourth pillar" of sustainability, culture, is conceptualized as equal to the social, environmental and economic pillars in public humanities discourse, and therefore

illustrates the unique role that museums play in preserving community heritage and supporting sustainability holistically (Loach at al. 2017). Even more significantly, this vital connection between cultural perseverance and sustainability must be supported by policy and currently sustainability policy is still structured around the economy, environment, and society, which puts cultural institutions at a deficit in political and financial support (ibid. 196).

Leading global cultural heritage organizations, such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the Network of European Museum Organizations (NEMO), and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) have each adopted the Sustainable Development Goals as a guidance for social and environmental impact and a common language with which to communicate values globally. In 2019, ICOM created an in-house Sustainability Working Group and announced its support and adoption of the SDGs at its conference in Kyoto, penning the "Resolution No. 1: On Sustainability and the Implementation of Agenda 2030, Transforming Our World." In this resolution ICOM explains "that museums, as trusted sources of knowledge, are invaluable resources for engaging communities and are ideally positioned to empower the global society to collectively imagine, design and create a sustainable future for all". They agreed to "recognize that all museums have a role to play in shaping and creating a sustainable future," and "endorse the urgent call" for sustainability. As such, ICOM encouraged the museum world to commit to the goals and targets of the UN SDGs by using the 2030 'Transforming our World' agenda as the guiding framework in internal and external practices. Ultimately, the resolution vowed to "empower ourselves, our visitors and our communities though making positive contributions" to achieving the Agenda 2030 goals (ICOM 2019).

Two years earlier, in 2017, ICOMOS formally integrated the SDGs into its strategic planning, appointed an SDG working group, and published its "Action Plan: Cultural

Heritage and Localizing SDGS," followed by a more precise "7 Priority Actions" in 2018. ICOMOS explained "Considering the urgencies the world's societies are facing today affecting the cultural and natural heritage…the 2030 Agenda is an imperative to transform the framework of cultural heritage protection" (ICOMOS 2023). The Action Plan revolves around three key areas: "1. Organizing internally and mobilizing external partnerships, 2. Localizing the SDGS by providing guidance and support to stakeholder communities, and 3. Monitoring progress through formal indicators" (ICOMOS 2017, 6-11). Relatedly, the Network of European Museum Organizations (NEMO) "encourages and supports museums to do their part and actively contribute to a more sustainable future." NEMO is a member of Museums for Future, the Climate Heritage Network, and the European Climate Pact and an active supporter of the European Union's Green Deal. It believes that museums are an integral part of advocating for the SDGs, particularly in the areas of poverty reduction, social resilience, gender equality and others (NEMO 2023). Here in the United States, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) has encouraged cultural institutions to consider Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Factors into managing their endowments. The AAM argues that museums and cultural institutions can help meet their missions not only through exhibits and programing, but also through their investment practices. Additionally, donors and patrons increasingly expect more transparency from the cultural organizations they support (AAM 2021).

Cultural institutions and the SDGs serve each other reciprocally. Museums are needed to assist in the attainment of the SDGs, such as preserving cultural and natural heritage, touching millions of people around the world with moving stories told by trusted narrators, facilitating cultural participation, encouraging multilateral partnerships among significant sectors, and contributing to local, regional, and even international economies.

Simultaneously, the SDGs help museums manifest and articulate their missions and values with clarity and purpose, specifically aspects of their missions that align with sustainability. The SDGs provide a common language which museums and all cultural institutions can use to convey the relevance and significance of their exhibits and activities. More directly, the SDGs create a framework for museums to connect their messages with real world change, build partnerships to enhance their impact, and explicit measurements for accountability and growth (McGhie 2019). ICOM's understanding of this relationship supports the notion of reciprocity as well, explaining that "The SDGs and museums are a great match: they help us think about the challenges and opportunities in the various contexts of our work—locally, nationally and globally—and they help us connect the problems and opportunities in different sectors together to create more public value" (ICOM 2019). ICOMOS agrees, arguing that cultural heritage and historic cities are an "enabler of social cohesion and inclusion," a "driver for equity and inclusive economic development," and can "improve livability, resilience, and sustainability" (ICOMOS 2023).

While each organization provides conceptual guides and institutional support for integrating the SDGs into missions and activities of cultural institutions, none yet offer specific metrics or measuring instruments by which to acutely quantify and manage environmental and social impact. It is not enough to generalize that a museum provides a public benefit because of its existence alone. Defined and precise accounts of how cultural exhibits and programing benefit society—not only in terms of social equity, economic prosperity, and environmental health, but also in relation to cultural sustainability—must be logical and comparable across organizations. These more precise descriptions and measurements could be used to improve impact internally and to communicate significance externally. Still, the fourth pillar of "culture" must be a

significant aspect of this measurement, or the unique value of cultural heritage institutions will not be understood or recorded.

INTERNALIZING SUSTAINABILITY VALUES IN OPERATIONS

Many museums have adopted sustainability principles, often limited to environmental values specifically, into their planning and narrative. Yet the measurement of these principles and the direct connections between the UN SDGs and the institution's mission varies. The Smithsonian is host to over 30 million visitors a year and is therefore committed to "walking the walk of sustainability", arguing that "the best way to teach is by example." It has been attentive to energy waste since 2005 and made alterations to its facilities to reduce petroleum consumption in their vehicle fleet by 35 percent and increased their alternative fuel use by 552 percent. Additionally, because the preservation of wildlife for future generations is a significant aspect of the Smithsonian's mission, they continue to care for "43,000 acres of land around the world" and support over "2,000 animals, including hundreds of endangered species." They explain: "the Smithsonian is doing its part to make sure that we can return our fragile planet in better shape than we received it. Economically, environmentally and ethically, sustainability is the right thing to do" (Clough 2012).

One of the foremost challenges to implementing the Agenda 2030 involves accurately measuring progress towards the SDG goals and specific targets. The grand challenges addressed by the UN SDGs necessitate expansive ambitions with broad reaching objectives. This makes calculating impact and determining progress difficult. This challenge can be confronted by identifying the specific goals and targets that directly relate to museums' mission and programming, ascertaining the stakeholders dependent on those targets, calculating level of risk, and then using the UN Indicators to guide institutional and regional specific metrics to accurately illustrate impact over

time. This process is guided by Duke University Fuqua School of Business, co-developed with the United Nations, SDG Impact Measurement and Management methodology.

The second most pressing complication is time. Given the 2030 goal of at least 50% reduction in GHG emissions, for example, museums that are just getting started are forced to expedite efforts to meet those goals within less than 6 years at this point. This often involves prioritizing sustainability goals over others and the willingness to invest time, resources, and finances towards objectives up front and wait patiently for long-term returns. While this can be a hard sell for many boards and executive leadership, emphasizing the "business case" for sustainability and clearly calculating and outlining long-term monetary returns on investment as well as climate risk alleviation to the executive director and board of directors for policy approvals.

Still, the SDGs and Agenda 2030's greatest strength, and opportunity for fundamental global change, lies in its creation of an internationally shared language. Sustainability researchers and professionals have struggled with finding commonality in definitions, methodologies, purpose, and objectives for decades. The SDGs have answered the organizational and communication challenges that the field and practice of sustainability demand within its complex interdisciplinary and cross-sector nature.

Museums play a crucial role in narrating the past, interpreting the present, and curating the future. They are essential change agents for an equitable transition into an increasingly challenging tomorrow. The stories museums share have historically rested on legacies of unjust power structures and devastating environmental damage. For those of us who recognize how these stories permeate the museum world, curate representation, and (re)define history, we have a responsibility to confront and challenge them. Commitments to cultural preservation are inextricably tied to regenerative environmental practices and social inclusivity; and those commitments have little

meaning if not layered with structures of accountability and ways of making pledges actionable. The cultural sector has increasingly responded to calls for re-designed programming and exhibitions that support their communities in climate awareness and action. It not only is poised to explore the ways in which societies have mitigated their climate impact and adapted to environmental harm, but also share how museums and historic sites are actively limiting negative impacts on the environment.

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3. INNOVATIVE PARADIGMS FOR HEALTH SYSTEMS: A ROADMAP TO RESILIENCE

by Megan Farrow

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the critical need for resilient health systems capable of withstanding future health crises. This paper explores the concept of resilience as the capacity of a health system to absorb a shock and mitigate the impacts while maintaining functionality. The pandemic revealed significant vulnerabilities within global health systems, including inadequate protection and support for healthcare workers, insufficient infrastructure, and fragmented service delivery. These weaknesses highlight the necessity for comprehensive strategies to enhance preparedness, bolster infrastructure, and foster a resilient workforce. The "absorb, adapt, transform" framework will be explored, modified, and expanded with the aim of developing an innovative resilience model that encompasses six key pillars: governance, finance and policy, infrastructure, community engagement, health service delivery, preparedness, and health system workforce. Through these six pillars, this resilience model offers a holistic approach to strengthening health systems, ensuring they are better equipped to respond to and recover from future shocks. The model serves as a blueprint for action, encouraging health systems to adopt dynamic and responsive strategies to navigate the evolving landscape of global health challenges. The resilience, or fragility, of our health systems has never been more relevant.

Key Words

Resilience. Health system. Strategy. Paradigm. Pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

The echoes of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to reverberate globally, and the unequivocal need for stronger and more resilient health systems has emerged. This imperative is one that calls for reevaluating and reshaping healthcare and public health delivery models, fortifying the workforce and bolstering the infrastructure, as we continue to navigate the aftermath of this unprecedented health crisis. The concept of resilience is not a novel one, but the concept as it applies to health systems is relatively new, gaining traction after the Ebola virus disease epidemic in 2014 (Paschoalotto 2023). When we consider the capacity of a health system to navigate future challenges with adaptability and strength, resilience emerges as so much more than a buzzword.

This pandemic was perhaps the most dire global health crisis since the great flu pandemic in 1918. COVID-19 brought with it unprecedented challenges, shocking health systems, causing an immense loss of life, contributing to economic and social disruptions, and starkly illuminating how ill-prepared we were for a health emergency of this magnitude (Haldane 2021; Kruk 2015; Paschoalotto 2023). In addition to the more than 20 million deaths resulting from the SARS-CoV-2 virus since 2020, the pandemic will also be responsible for an estimated $13 trillion in economic damage by the end of 2024 (Gupta 2023). The scale and complexity of the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare numerous vulnerabilities within existing health systems. The impacts have been devastating, underscoring the need for increased resilience in global health.

Resilience can be defined in a number of ways. Broadly speaking, resilience captures the capacity of a health system to absorb a shock and mitigate the impacts while maintaining functionality. For the purposes of this paper, the widely accepted "absorb, adapt, transform" components of health system resilience will be explored, modified, and expanded with the aim of developing an innovative model that will aid the strategic implementation of resilience into the foundation of health delivery (Kruk

2015; Paschoalotto 2023). The resilience, or fragility, of our health systems has never been more relevant.

HEALTH SYSTEM SHOCKS

Resilience as a means to determine a health system's capacity to respond to emerging healthcare and public health crises is a relatively new concept, and the COVID-19 pandemic challenged everything we presumed to understand prior to its onset. As new challenges emerged, so too did new opportunities for improvement (Paschoalotto 2023). Establishing health system resilience is both iterative and context-dependent, necessitating an understanding of system strengths and vulnerabilities, capacity building in areas identified as vulnerable, reinforcing existing strengths, and thoroughly evaluating health system performance following a shock (Kruk 2015; Paschoalotto 2023). Considering health systems through the lens of resilience allows us to more accurately predict their ability to withstand future shocks.

When a health system is ill-prepared to absorb a shock, the effects can be catastrophic. The increasing frequency of infectious disease outbreaks, coupled with human population growth across the globe, economic and political turmoil, climate change and natural disasters are a catalyst for future adverse health crises, the devastation of which may surpass that of COVID-19 (World Bank Group 2022). As we consider the most effective way to move forward after this pandemic, it is vital to identify effective strategies to better position health systems to withstand future challenges. Key considerations include enhancing preparedness, bolstering healthcare and public health infrastructure, and fostering a resilient workforce capable of adapting quickly to a rapidly changing global health climate.

IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated numerous vulnerabilities within health systems across the globe. Hit particularly hard were those professionals working in the healthcare and public health sectors. As a healthcare worker myself, it is not difficult to recall the desperation and despair the pandemic brought with it. While no longer the raging health crisis it was at its inception, the pandemic still left an indisputable scar on the healthcare sector.

In many cases, healthcare workers were not adequately protected or supported during the pandemic. We were performing our jobs in unsafe environments, often without sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and essential supplies. Staffing shortages contributed to increased workloads, anxiety, and stress (Amnesty International 2023; Farrow 2022). Healthcare professionals were left feeling vulnerable, exposed, and expendable, continuing to put ourselves boldly in harm's way while working diligently to ensure that the very sick (and contagious) received the care they needed as the battle against COVID-19 raged on. Too many tragically lost their lives as a result of these efforts.

While the immediate threat of the SARS-CoV-2 virus may be waning, the echoes of the pandemic continue to reverberate globally, highlighting the importance of resilience in responding to and recovering from crises. To address emerging risks, while also ensuring effective delivery of health services, it is essential to acknowledge the need for a resilient workforce capable of adapting to evolving circumstances. Building a resilient health system involves prioritizing the wellbeing of healthcare workers.

RESILIENCE AS A STRATEGY

Resilience captures the capacity of a health system to withstand the shock of a crisis, reducing loss of life, mitigating adverse health outcomes, and minimizing social and

economic disruptions. A health system's ability, or lack thereof, to manage a shock is directly impacted by a variety of factors, including processes, structures, resources, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic is a poignant example of the importance of resilience, as even well-established "resilient" health systems nearly collapsed, and the absence of resilience contributed to worst-case scenarios across the globe (Alameddine 2018; Amnesty International 2023; Farrow 2022; Kruk 2015).

Resilience as a strategy is complex, and should be viewed as both an outcome *and* a foundation, with several qualities and core functions. Resilient health systems are aware, obtaining relevant data through surveillance, tracking potential health threats and risks to their communities, and continually evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses to identify capacity building opportunities. Resilient health systems are both diverse and integrated, capable of addressing a broad range of health challenges, fostering relationships with diverse partners in order to establish trust between the health system and the community, and communicating clearly and effectively, sharing pertinent information in a timely manner. Another quality of a resilient health system is the capacity to self-regulate, containing and addressing health threats while continuing to provide essential health care services. Resilient health systems are also adaptive, with continual transformation and improvement contributing to long-term resilience (Kruk 2015; Paschoalotto 2023; Saulnier 2021).

HEALTH SYSTEM RESILIENCE MODEL

The model of resilience presented here attempts to illustrate the essential components of a resilient health system. The model is arranged as a circular diagram, with "Resilience Model" prominently displayed in the center. This emphasizes *resilience* as a core theme. Surrounding the center are six elements that collectively contribute to the overall resilience of a health system. There is an interconnected and overlapping relationship

between the six pillars of this model, each representing a different component of resilience.

Figure 1: Innovative model representing the six pillars of health system resilience.

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE, POLICY

Effective leadership is essential for achieving resilience in a health system. Decision making at the leadership level determines outcomes following a shock. The varying degrees of lockdowns and/or business as usual illustrated during the COVID-19 pandemic reiterates this concept. Adequate and sustainable funding is vital for bolstering infrastructure, investing in the workforce, and obtaining essential supplies and equipment. Policies should be clear and equitable, implemented with the goal of promoting positive health outcomes and mitigating strain on a health system (Haldane 2021). Effective governance, sound financial management, and robust policy practices are pivotal for health system resilience.

INFRASTRUCTURE

An adaptable and sustainable infrastructure is an important component of resilience for any health system. Infrastructure supports the elements necessary for the delivery of health services. Proactively bolstering the infrastructure ensures that health systems are better equipped to absorb a shock and withstand a crisis. During a shock, a health system should have the capacity to scale up when necessary, in order to accommodate a larger volume of patients and a higher demand for services. This requires adaptability, as service delivery models might need to be reconfigured to absorb the shock. A health system that strategically invests in and continually improves their infrastructure is better prepared to respond to challenges with resilience, even under stress (Alameddine 2018; Haldane 2021; Kruk 2015).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Health system responses to shocks must be relevant, context-specific, informed, and strategic in order to cultivate resilience and ensure preparedness. These responses are shaped by the interactions and decisions of various actors within the system, including patients, community members, healthcare workers, leaders and policy makers. A resilient health system leverages the trust and cooperation of the communities it serves. Community input is vital for establishing and maintaining trust. Community engagement informs decision-making, governance, and service delivery. An engaged community contributes to the overall resilience of a health system (Haldane 2021; Kruk 2015).

HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY

The capacity of a health system to maintain accessibility, quality, and continuity of care is an important component of resilience. During a crisis, resilient health systems are able

to reduce loss of life and mitigate adverse health outcomes. Embracing innovative strategies strengthens a system's ability to address emerging health challenges. As evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic and others, "pathogens do not respect borders" (Kruk 2015), either physical or geopolitical. Resilient health systems will need to be adaptable, establishing partnerships and coordinating integrated service delivery efforts to address future global health crises (Alameddine 2018; Haldane 2021).

PREPAREDNESS

A resilient health system is one that is prepared to withstand future challenges. Enhancing preparedness involves developing and implementing innovative approaches to resilience. Focus should be placed on preparedness protocols, procedures, and policies. Through strategic action, a health system can increase its capacity to manage shocks, while also increasing effectiveness and efficiency for health service delivery. A proactive approach to preparedness is crucial for a health system's capacity to respond to various challenges (Haldane 2021; Kruk 2015).

HEALTH SYSTEM WORKFORCE

Healthcare workers are the frontline defense against infectious diseases and other system shocks. This group faces increased risk of infection or death resulting from frequent and/or prolonged exposure to contagions such as the SARS-CoV-2 virus. In addition to the risks posed by exposure, a number of other challenges arose for healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among these were limited staffing leading to increased demands on fewer healthcare workers, inadequate supply and uneven distribution of PPE, insufficient training, limited capacity, rapid policy implementation, mental health challenges, and workers choosing to leave their

healthcare professions, compounding the issue of inadequate staffing. Effective healthcare delivery relies on the presence of an adequately staffed, well-trained, and willing workforce (Farrow 2022; Haldane 2021). Resilient people are the foundation of resilient systems.

The six interconnected and overlapping pillars of this model each represent an essential component of a resilient health system. This resilience model serves as a comprehensive framework for understanding and strengthening health systems. This model underscores the importance of integrating each of the six elements presented here, enhancing a health system's ability to anticipate, respond to, and recover from shocks. This model not only illustrates the components of resilient health system, but also serves as a blueprint for action, encouraging health systems to adopt a holistic approach to resilience that is both dynamic and responsive to the evolving landscape of global health challenges.

RESILIENCE IN ACTION

Haldane (2021) presents several replicable examples of resilience in action. Promoting resilience at the individual level involves supporting and protecting healthcare workers. This is accomplished successfully through appropriate scheduling, ensuring that adequate levels of staffing are maintained for all shifts. This solution provides healthcare workers with much needed periods of rest, and allows health systems to avoid forcing staff to work extended hours or cover additional shifts, reinforcing trust and feelings of support. Workforce capacity can also be expanded through the reallocation and/or recruitment of qualified staff. An adequately staffed, well-trained, and willing workforce lends itself to resilience.

At the systems level, fostering coordination between healthcare and public health sectors promotes resilience. A coordinated approach to health service planning and

delivery breaks down silos, avoids duplication of efforts, is more cost efficient and effective, and allows for timely responses to emerging risks through the tracking global health trends and data-sharing across sectors (Haldane 2021).

NEXT STEPS

The next potential global health crisis already looms on the horizon. Staggering numbers of measles cases are being recorded around the world. Measles is a disease that is simultaneously preventable with a double round of vaccinations and which is highly contagious, even deadly. The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to more than 60 million postponed or missed measles vaccinations worldwide, resulting in an exponentially larger risk of global outbreak (CDC 2024; WHO 2024). Now is the time for health systems to incorporate the strategies presented through the resilience model into their foundational structures.

Surveillance data should be used to inform decision-making and proactively bolster health system infrastructure. This involves fortifying the workforce by ensuring adequate staffing, training, and support for healthcare professionals. Policies and procedures must be strategically adjusted and clearly communicated to ensure consistent implementation across the entire health system. A coordinated approach should be adopted across sectors and borders. As outbreak responses are planned and executed, priority should be given to the most vulnerable systems and those with the highest numbers of measle cases and the lowest immunization rates.

The resilience of health systems is crucial for mitigating the impacts of future health crises. The comprehensive model presented here provides a roadmap to resilience for health systems, ensuring they are equipped to absorb, adapt, and transform in response to evolving global health challenges. Adopting this model will not

only improve immediate crisis response efforts, but also contribute to long-term health system sustainability and effectiveness.

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4. THE LEGACIES OF WAR: AN ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY DECADES IN THE MAKING

by Anna Phommachanthone, Lauren Morganlander, and Kendall Silwonuk

Abstract

New consequences from the American Secret War in Laos are discovered every few years. Even though the bombings ended in 1973, the effects still linger to this day. At least 183 different types of weapons were left behind, including cluster munitions and other explosives. After many decades of clearance, new challenges have come to light. Most recently, environmental changes in Laos may hold significance and bring a new challenge in the process of unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance. This paper will discuss the connection between UXO and climate change, Legacies of War (LoW) and ARTICLE22's support for protecting the environment and enhancing environmental awareness of the people in Laos, along with new environmental practices within demining organizations.

Key Words

Cluster Munitions. War. Environmental Effects. Advocacy.

INTRODUCTION

It has been over 50 years since the last bomb was dropped on Laos, and the people are still facing its impact today. On June 16th, 2024, in Luang Prabang Province, Laos, an incident occurred, resulting in the death and injury of three siblings, all under the age of 10. Their grandfather found the "bombie", more specifically a BLU26 submunition, in his

rice field. He thought it was harmless and brought it to the house. Their mother gave it to her children to play, thinking it had already been detonated. Believing the bomb was a small ball, the kids happily took it to play in the rice field. A few moments later, it exploded.

From 1964 to 1973, the U.S. dropped more than 2.5 million tons of ordnance on Laos. Approximately 30% of the ordnance did not detonate on impact, leaving about 80 million cluster bomb submunitions in the ground to this day (Legacies of War 2024). Many international organizations have come into Laos to help the people post conflict. Since 1983, Humanity and Inclusion (HI) has had programs in Laos. Mines Advisory Group (MAG) was the first international demining organization to do clearance work in Laos in 1994. Other organizations such as the HALO Trust and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) have entered the humanitarian demining sector in Laos, yet less than 10% of unexploded ordnance have been cleared (Legacies of War 2024). Over the past five decades, deminers from international and national organizations, like UXO Lao, have been tirelessly clearing land in Laos. However, the impacts of climate change on the environment have had many significant effects and have presented/created barriers to unexploded ordnance (UXO) clearance. In addition, UXO may also have a long-term effect on the environment through toxic chemicals slowly seeping into the soil and groundwater, causing health threats to both humans and animals.

The UXO crisis in Laos has halted the country's development, as clearance demands have great cost to time and resources. With every province contaminated with UXO, a central public waste management and recycling system still needs to be implemented. At the core of Lao traditions, finding new ways to reuse items and protect the land has always been taught. Locals in Northern Laos have found ways to melt down UXO shrapnel metals and make them into spoons. Restaurants such as Bio Bamboo, in the town of Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, place emphasis on

innovation to protect the environment; here, all the dishes are made from bamboo. Another innovative business located in the capital of Laos, Doi Kanoi, sources all food locally and protects and honors heritage recipes from generations past and regions around the country. Traditional emphasis on connection and appreciation for the environment is not lost in modern businesses. However, in many parts of Laos, single-use plastics are widely used, and there is a lack of education on adequately disposing of waste. Many throw their trash along the roads and in rivers. Burning trash is also expected where there is a lack of waste management infrastructure ("Laos in a greener direction" 2020).

The rise of climate change, lack of environmental awareness especially in rural communities, and UXO contamination have taken a toll on the environment in Laos. Still, impacts to the environment are at the forefront of discussion within the demining community, and there is increased emphasis on environmental protection coming from local businesses, governmental organizations, and international organizations working in Laos. Legacies of War (LoW) and ARTICLE22 have made the environment a key priority through our work in mine action.

CLIMATE CHANGE'S IMPACT ON UXO

Traditional farming practices in Laos have yielded great appreciation for the lush, beautiful natural land. Green spaces abound throughout the country, and traditional dishes, crafts, and building practices are all reliant on local production of food, silk, wood, and other resources. Income and livelihoods in Laos, as well as the incredible crafts produced, are closely dependent on the natural resources of the country.

With 70% of the Lao PDR's population relying on agriculture as their primary source of income, the slightest change in climate can create massive food insecurity in the country, leading to the rise of malnutrition and other health problems, especially in

rural areas (Seal 2023). According to the World Health Organization, "Lao PDR is particularly vulnerable to climate change, with projections of more extreme weather, 2-3 degrees Celsius rise in temperature by 2050, and a 10-30% increase in rainfall, particularly in the south" (Seal 2023).

The majority of the people of Laos already face the challenge of farming on unsafe land, contaminated with UXO. Every province in the country is contaminated with these dangerous weapons. With the increase in rainfall each year in the region, UXO have been found in areas where clearance has already been done or land previously deemed safe. Floods can significantly shift UXO placements from one location to another.

In 2018, Laos saw its largest tropical storm of the decade, Son-Tinh, which flooded 13 of the 17 provinces in Lao PDR. 132,000 households around the country were impacted (UNDP 2018). Alongside strains on food supply and income, due to flood damage destroying subsistence farms and cash crop yields for the year, road and bridge damage prevented transport access to markets and critical services. As this flooding threatened lives and livelihoods with immediate impacts on food and income, areas contaminated with UXO saw increased risk for incidents, as ordnance shifted by floodwaters and mudslides created uncertainty as to the location and spread of UXO contamination, even in previously surveyed areas.

Of particular concern during major flooding occurrences, such as during tropical storm Son-Tinh, are cluster munitions. These "bombies" are often found at shallow depths in the soil, so they can move more easily than larger unexploded munitions; their prevalence throughout contaminated land in Laos means that movement during flooding is likely. From the Son-Tinh disaster, an interagency Post-Disaster Needs Assessment notes: "Unexploded cluster munitions pose the greatest risk, as their average depth is around 25 cm, with large bombs considerably deeper. The movement of UXO is most likely where dam outbursts (such as in Attapeu Province), flash floods (in mountain and

foothill areas), or landslides have washed away the topsoil and other layers to a depth of 25 cm or more" (PDNA).

Where UXO movement occurs due to flooding, accidental detonation becomes more likely. As families face the need to rebuild homes, clear land from debris, they are often forced to relocate to land not deemed "safe" and clear of UXO. Repairs to roads, bridges, schools, and clinics become necessary, and lead to higher levels of risk and cost associated with doing so on land which can no longer be categorized as "safe". "In an effort to restore their livelihoods and sources of food, farmers may immediately return to cultivating their farmlands without certainty that the farms are UXO-free" (PDNA). Major financial costs due to the presence of UXO can hinder disaster relief. During Son-Tinh relief in 2018; a proposed total of 787 billion Lao kip (almost 35.5 million USD) was required to expedite clearance operations in flood-affected areas properly (PDNA). Priorities for such disaster relief include the immediate need for survey and confirmation of UXO presence in contaminated areas as well as risk education for people affected by the flooding.

As evident from this major natural disaster, flooding and landslides greatly threaten UXO clearance operations, as well as the lives and livelihoods of people living with UXO contamination in Laos. Extreme weather conditions exacerbate the threat of UXO, specifically cluster munitions, causing untraceable movement to their location and contaminating areas deemed "safe" after UXO surveying and clearance operations. Disaster relief requires additional costs directed towards UXO clearance, and repair work requires more time and money because of the threat of the spread of UXO contamination. The humanitarian demining sector is also impacted by these disasters associated with climate change; emergency response calls for additional surveying, clearance, and risk-education services of demining organizations. In Laos, most demining work is done by government and NGO partnerships, and climate impacts only burden

the resources of this already under-funded sector. Due to climate change and higher risks of environmental disasters, more money must be spent to complete UXO clearance in the decades to come.

UXO'S IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

As climate change makes completing demining work even more important, with new risks associated with UXO contamination in flood zones, the impact of UXO clearance on the environment cannot be overlooked. With the lack of environmental education and the amount of UXO still left on the ground in Laos, LoW and ARTICLE22 work to help enhance the environmental awareness of the people in Laos through work aimed at clearing the country from unexploded ordnances.

LoW is an educational and advocacy organization working to address the ongoing impact of the American wars in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. LoW raises awareness about the history of the American bombings of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, provides space for healing the wounds of war, and creates greater hope for a future of peace. This advocacy work includes workshops, speaking at United Nations events, and conducting fundraising for UXO clearance.

One of Legacies of War's priorities as an organization is fostering and maintaining strong relationships between partners on the ground and government funders. These are the organizations that receive the funding that we advocate for. On annual trips to Laos, we visit partners, such as UXO Lao, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), The HALO Trust, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), and World Education to get the most up-to-date information about the overall clearance work, listen to stories of local's whose land has been cleared and victims of UXO incidents.

Each organization has its own specific rules and regulations when it comes to protocol and safety while demining, but all of them follow a similar structure. With Laos's

terrain containing high vegetation, deminers or locals have to cut down and remove them before clearance can start. This can cause soil degradation and erosion. According to Katherine Harrison, “Beyond the environmental harm caused by the presence of UXO, the harm from the work of finding and removing UXO cannot be overlooked.” (“Laos in a greener direction” 2020).

NPA has been working towards greener initiatives since 2019 which resulted in climate and environmental policy for the entire organization. NPA in Laos has recently partnered with Zero Waste Laos, an environmental youth movement in Laos. One of NPA’s goals is to produce as little garbage as possible and prevent as little garbage and hazardous waste as possible from being burned or dumped along the roads. In their office, NPA limits the amount of single-use plastics and separates waste in different containers. Organic waste such as food scraps are separated and reused as compost or animal feed. During LoW’s trip to Laos, we observed that there were many separated containers for garbage in their offices and has since made the environment a priority within their work. NPA also works with Champasack University through its partnership with Zero Waste Laos to promote the learning of sustainable agriculture among the next generation.

To be more environmentally friendly, the environmental knowledge level must be determined within the NPA staff. Zero Waste Laos conducted a survey and found that most staff members have little knowledge about environmental protection. This is due to the fact that the majority of staff comes from "the most marginalized areas in Laos,” where UXO contamination prevents modern infrastructure and waste management from being implemented (Laos in a greener direction). The team at LoW directly witnessed rural clearance sites through these visits. Most sites are a few hours away from the nearest town. Clearance teams are stationed and set up camp near the clearance site for approximately 2-3 weeks at a time. This practice is necessary as many of the sites are

difficult to get to each day. While the team visited the HALO Trust in Savannakhet Province, they saw the tents they trained with at their office buildings. Their office area has several buildings, meant to train their employees on a variety of skills. Some of these include UXO detonation, UXO identification, setting up tents, and more. The majority of deminers are regular locals who want to see their country be UXO-free.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONNECTIONS IN LAOS

While formal education on environmental impact and green initiatives expands, caring for and honoring the abundant resources of the environment in Laos has happened creatively throughout the country for decades. Social enterprise and jewelry business ARTICLE22, partners with 15 families in Ban Naphia, a village in Xieng Khouang, Laos, to create jewelry from the metal removed during UXO clearance. The sales of this jewelry around the world help fund Mines Advisory Group's clearance efforts in two provinces in Laos, Xieng Khouang and Khammouane, and share the story of the American Secret War globally.

Utilizing and upcycling scrap metal is not new to these artisan families; artisans in Ban Naphia invented the process in the 1970s, clearing their farmland of scrap metal left behind from the war and melting down the metal to make soup spoons, which were sold for additional income. When founder Elizabeth Suda, was working with a nonprofit in Laos, she met the artisans making and selling spoons from hand-cast repurposed military-grade aluminum. Upon learning of this "upcycling" project, Suda wondered whether more products could be created from this metal, and help spread greater awareness of the impact of UXO; in collaboration, ARTICLE22 was started.

For the last 10 years, ARTICLE22's jewelry has been shared worldwide, and with it, the story of the American Secret War's impact in Laos. In the business's lifetime, sales of this jewelry globally have directly funded over 5 million square feet of clearance with

MAG. Its reach to thousands of customers yearly means that the discussion of UXO impact in Laos continues, and customers are invited to advocate for more resources for clearance from their governments. Additionally, these sales contribute to a Village Development Fund in Ban Naphia; to ensure all members of the village benefit from this collaboration with local artisan families, ARTICLE22 donates 10% on top of every order back to the community, and community members decide together how they want to spend it. In the past, funds have been spent on a roof for the community center and electricity for communal areas. In 2022, during the COVID19 pandemic, ARTICLE22 created a Health and Education Fund, an additional pool of money for families that need it during health emergencies. These social impacts are possible thanks to the upcycling entrepreneurship of artisans in Xieng Khouang.

Traditional art and handicrafts in Laos have been developed with natural materials over centuries; hand-spun silk is often dyed using local plants and fruits, woven into textiles for clothing, sold and exported. Paper-making processes do not require cutting down the trees and don't contribute to deforestation; the bark of mulberry trees can be removed, soaked, and dried in sheets to create durable and beautiful paper. Family businesses creating these sustainable crafts can contribute to raising environmental awareness and appreciation in Laos. ARTICLE22 purchases packaging material from such businesses, and in doing so, also raises consumer awareness on the environmental impact of these goods.

CONCLUSION

Laos is a country that has faced hardships in history, leading its development to be very slow. Due to barriers from the UXO crisis, the past five decades have been about building the country up by whatever means necessary. The one main goal Laos has is to be safe from UXO. Furthermore, Laos introduced its very own Sustainable Development Goal

18, “Lives Safe from UXO.” With climate change making the conditions in Laos more unpredictable, the environment and sustainability are topics that became urgent priorities in many organizations throughout the country.

Being environmentally friendly is not a new concept for the people in Laos, but it is a fairly new topic to consider for the UXO sector. Through observations from Legacies of War field visits, we noticed that there are more environmental initiatives that our partners are trying to implement. In terms of climate change affecting UXO clearance, this is still something to be researched more. There is still very little information known about this topic. Legacies of War partners up with academics whose research is related to demining and the soil. Through these partnerships, we bring awareness about this important topic. ARTICLE22 takes a more hands-on approach though sourcing only sustainably made paper and pouches to package their sustainably made jewelry from shrapnel metals. They also promote the sustainable practice of giving shrapnel metals a new life. Both Legacies of War and ARTICLE22 support the protection of the environment and increase environmental awareness for the people in Laos.

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5. DAILY BREAD: THE IMMIGRANT'S ROLE IN THE SYSTEM OF PLENTY

by Dillon O'Donnell

Abstract

It is common knowledge that undocumented immigrants supply the labor for agricultural work in the United States. What is often understated and unknown, is the history and daily risks that these workers undergo to gather the food products we enjoy. Idaho is known as a conservative state in the union; however, it hosts cities like Twin Falls which have been havens for undocumented immigrants since the turn of the nineteenth century. These workers are such an integral part of the state's economy that calls to crack down on their residency have faced opposition from the private sector out of necessity. The immigrant is a periodically sidelined individual in the United States, despite their essentiality.

Key Words

Undocumented immigrants. Agricultural work. Idaho immigrant history. Twin Falls. Agricultural-health risks.

INTRODUCTION

Most often, the source of produce and dairy on our dinner tables hardly comes as an afterthought. Instead, it appears to us a given; a product that exists and is ready for us. Such conveniences come at a price; with people whose stories are not shared footing the bill. The immigrant tale of the United States is lauded in public speeches as one of the strengths of the democratic experiment. While a true foundation of our country, the

reasons for emigration can be lost in the conglomerate perception of said voyagers. Bounties of food in average households are the handiwork of driven workers, dotting the homeland in dairy farms and stretches of crops.

The principle causes of the attraction to agricultural work for immigrants are many: anonymity, financial necessity, or residency. Idaho's claim to fame may lie in potatoes, but its cultural and economic history is buttressed by stalwart pursuers of the American Dream. Havens that sprung from the influx of immigrants to the Gem State, can be found in cities like Twin Falls, in addition to the prominent company there, Chobani Yogurt, founded by CEO, Hamdi Ulukaya. Places like this represent how empires are formed from humble and calloused hands.

THE MAGNITUDE

According to the Idaho Department of Agriculture, Idaho is ranked nationally at number three for milk and cheese production. An industry of this caliber requires a lot of manpower, willing to withstand conditions and risks that native-born Americans tend to avoid (Mia Maldonado. *Idaho Capital Sun* 2024). Undocumented immigrants comprise 30-45,000 people in Idaho's population, underpinning its position as an agricultural juggernaut. While the national rate of immigration has declined, Idaho's influx has remained fixed. These workers are often undocumented, supporting the Idaho economy also in other trades such as hospitality and construction. In the recent past, they were predominantly from Mexico, until 2010 where rates of immigration from Central America and Asia increased. On further note, the majority of the undocumented are active in the workforce with exceptions such as the elderly and juveniles. Contrary to common assumptions, the rate of English proficiency among the undocumented has risen from roughly 25% in 2007 to 58% in 2019 (University of Idaho. *McClure Center for Public Policy Research* 2024.). A slight majority of Idaho immigrants are without a high school

diploma equivalent, with the other 47% possessing said diploma, attending some college, or having a bachelor's degree or higher.

The disparity in qualification and fluency between native-born Americans and undocumented newcomers is an issue, among many others, that creates insecurity for their social mobility. However, by looking at their precarious existence from the perspective of the native, they surely enhance the economy. A self-evident truth of business potential lies with the labor force and whether its supply ebbs and flows, but these workers benefit beyond the goals of the owners themselves. The same study by the University of Idaho, cites their impact through their role as taxpayers and spending power (the funds remaining after taxes excluding savings and loans). In 2019, the aggregate spending power for Idaho was $71.1 billion, $5.1 billion of which came from undocumented workers. Applying their buying power to local and external businesses from Idaho, helps stimulate economic demand and thus produces the multiplier effect. This is when spending spurs further spending by the individuals in jobs that supplied the original goods. Another way immigrants are woven into the American system is with their role as taxpayers. Although they contribute with their paychecks towards the same federal programs as other Americans (i.e. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security), their undocumented status prevents them from participating in much of the same safety nets. While they may be able to enjoy the right of an education for their children, as with most undocumented workers, they are uninsured for rights like healthcare. They may be covered for exceptional circumstances such as with Emergency Medicaid, but otherwise they contribute to a society into which they cannot fully integrate (University of Idaho 2024).

For a demographic that exists on the periphery in some regards, the evidence of their integral position in the state comes from their interactions with political legislation. Repeated attempts by Idaho lawmakers to parse and prosecute undocumented workers

have come up against staunch opposition and lobbying from the private sector. This industry relies heavily on their workforce, and they continue to remain despite legal jeopardy. A principal reason is that as far back as the turn of the twentieth century, the dependence on foreign labor was as symbiotic as it is today.

HISTORY

Although geopolitical events can spur a need to emigrate, there must exist trades and refuges that accommodate the newcomers. 125 miles from Idaho's capital, Boise, is the Magic Valley, home to Twin Falls and dairy farms. The reason for agriculture being the bread and butter of the valley originates from the lack of minerals and woodlands for the respective mining and timber industries. It took ample development of regional infrastructure to bring water in for the growing Garden of Eden in the early twentieth century. As the sophistication of farming expanded, so did the need for a labor force that could sustain the burgeoning region. Some of the first people to work these occupations were Latinos, who transitioned from fur trapping/railroad construction to agricultural work. Until World War Two, the industry experienced its fair share of fluctuations, but nevertheless Twin Falls became a base for the hardworking and hopeful immigrants (Provost and Young 2021).

It certainly is a designation of pride that American towns, like Twin Falls, can provide a new future for undocumented workers. Despite this wholesomeness, exploitation would continue to occur towards the vulnerable. During World War Two, Japanese-Americans in the regional internment camp provided some of the labor force for the industry. However, after this federal labor program reached its cessation and the workers returned to the remnants of their old homes, new bodies were needed. Filling the void were Mexican-Americans, who took up residence in the CFLSA (County Farm Labor Sponsoring Association) barracks which by the 1970's and 80's were in grave

disrepair. These living conditions may not have been applicable to all undocumented immigrants in Twin Falls, but for those neglected unfortunates the community would often step in to help. These neighbors ranged from religious organizations to the Idaho Migrant Council who assisted with childcare and access to reading materials (Provost and Young 2021). Over time, new faces would arrive to the Magic Valley in pursuit of their American Dream. In the mid-1970's, many Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian refugees fled the turmoil following the Vietnam War. A recurring and main attraction to dairy work for these workers lies with a visa loophole. The general agricultural work visa, the H2-A, permits seasonal agriculture only, but for dairy there isn't a "season" in the same way for crops. Cows' udders can be squeezed throughout the year, thus providing immigrants a "seasonal" visa that allows them to stay in the United States. Reasons like this, as well as the safety that pastoral Idaho provides, were the impetus for new Americans to arrive. Still, Twin Falls has seen a swell in growth, for throughout the 2000's the original population of the city rose from 35,000 to 50,000 from immigration (Noorani 2022).

A notable example of Idaho's fertility with the American Dream, is with Chobani founder and CEO, Hamdi Ulukaya. Of Kurdish descent, Ulukaya was reared by dairy farmers in Eastern Turkey. After arriving in the U.S., he discovered a dilapidated yogurt factory in New York State. By concocting his own formulas from experience and perseverance, he developed a company which as of 2024, is currently underway to go public within a year. In 2012, Ulukaya expanded his yogurt empire to Twin Falls, where he built a company that is home to a new generation of immigrants (Ignatius 2022). Not only has his factory in the valley provided jobs to others like him, but he has become a key bulwark with others in the Idaho private sector that have defended against anti-immigration rhetoric. His story is poignant, but it doesn't besmirch his success to add that it is unfortunately the exception for many others.

RISKS

Not all dairy farms are corporate entities with better wages and conditions, for workers on smaller operations find themselves with less regulation and more risk. The same amount is comparable with agricultural-field work, where workers are often injured without healthcare or compensation. Eager for opportunity, undocumented workers congregate to this trade and their situation becomes played upon. Issues like climate change which may seem theoretical to those of privileged status -are in fact directly affecting the daily lives of the underprivileged. A series of interviews conducted during the summer of 2023 among Idaho farmworkers reveals how despite the adversity of climate-intensification there was little counteracting support for them.

If climate change wasn't existent in the lives of farmworkers, we would already have to acknowledge an occupation with daily risks distant from our own. These include: exposure to agricultural pesticides, constant likelihood of heatstroke, and biological infection from viruses and bacteria. Worsened by climate change are the heat (the highs lasting longer), prolonged wildfire seasons, and air pollutants. Assuming that a farmworker had medical coverage, financial security, and a job with more stringent regulations; these growing environmental dangers would still prove a daily burden. This cannot be said for the many undocumented workers who are uninsured, forced to economize every minute of their workday for the sake of wages, and who do not have a union representative as an advocate (Hyland, et. al. 2023).

Because the climate magnifies the prior burdens, one would argue that longer breaks for rest could even the scale. This is not an option for workers who have unpaid breaks, where the usual fifteen minutes is money lost. With the wildfire season lasting longer, the amount of smoke is increased, atop the heat, with workers inhaling more. Also, the worry of exposing oneself to cancer-causing pesticides forces many to remain fully covered despite how sweltering the temperature gets (Hyland, et. al. 2023). Some

of these difficulties and others may be aberrant from the crisis of climate, but much of them expose antecedent issues within the immigrant workforce.

The work is tough and undesirable, so naturally those with scant options will take it willingly. The quota of output is vast, and every minute, man, and piece of fruit is accounted for; longer hours are necessary. Perhaps most important, why provide profit-dwindling apparatuses that give the worker firmer footing? They're not even supposed to be here in this country anyway. These are the justifications and equations that factor into the system of production, and will continue to if unfamiliarity and profit-only incentivization is what persists. As long as there has been economic growth, the immigrant is there. When duties for the average American are surpassed due to being "overqualified", the immigrant is there. Where complacency and assumptions remain, the immigrant is there. They are truly the askew backbone of American society. It is a feather in our country's cap, that we can be the land of promise for so many. However, for as welcoming as we can be, our attention and understanding of the immigrant's plight can give relief to those with unsuitable circumstances. Idaho's official nickname is "The Gem State", and while its prospecting days may have passed, its abundance of integral individuals keeps the nickname accurate.

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6. WAR IN UKRAINE: CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A SYMBOL OF RESISTANCE

by Nataliia Metsenko

Abstract

Cultural heritage in wartime is under threat of destruction and loss due to various factors associated with military actions. War can lead to irreparable losses of historical monuments, museums, archives, libraries, and other cultural objects. This can occur through accidental destruction, artillery shelling, or deliberate destruction of cultural heritage as part of military strategies.
However, despite the threats and dangers, cultural heritage can also play an important role during wartime. It can become a symbol of the nation's resilience, reminding of its history, traditions, and identity. Preserving and protecting cultural heritage serves not only to conserve material values but also to maintain spiritual morale and unity of the nation in times of crisis.
Preserving and protecting cultural values play an important role in preserving historical memory and national identity, as well as in sustaining hope for a peaceful future.

Key Words

War. Cultural heritage. Identity. Ukraine. Symbols. Memory.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the Russian aggression in 2014, Ukraine has faced a serious threat to the preservation of its cultural heritage. Along with the occupation of territories, Russia seized all monuments and museum institutions located on them. The fate of cultural

treasures varied, but it was always negative. Russia looted museums, appropriated Ukrainian cultural assets, and exported artifacts despite the fact that the theft of cultural property, whether from private or state collections, can be considered a serious violation of international humanitarian law and a war crime (Kurmanova 2023). In the occupied territory of the Crimean Peninsula, Russia initiated unauthorized archaeological excavations, which practically destroyed the outskirts of Chersonesos Taurica. Chersonesos Taurica is an ancient Byzantine city-state in the southwestern part of Crimea. In 1892, a National Reserve was opened on the site of the ancient settlement ruins. On June 23, 2013, during the 37th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Cambodia, Chersonesos Taurica and its environs were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. In the Donetsk region, the memorial complex Savur-Mohyla was destroyed, and in Donetsk, the Contemporary Art Center Izolyatsiya (Isolation) was looted and turned into an illegal prison and torture chamber.

With the onset of the large-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, the situation regarding the preservation of Ukraine's cultural heritage has significantly worsened. Almost every day, museums, temples, archives, and monuments become targets of shelling and bombing. According to government data as of the end of February 2024 (Government portal 2024), over the course of two years of full-scale invasion, more than 900 historical and cultural objects have been targeted by the Russians. For example, as a result of the Russian attack, the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral in Odesa, which is a UNESCO World Heritage cultural site, was destroyed. In Kharkiv region, the National Hryhoriy Skovoroda Museum was destroyed due to a direct hit by a Russian missile. In Kyiv, the Teacher's House, a unique three-story building in the architectural and artistic forms of neoclassicism built in 1901 according to the design of architect Pavlo Alyoshin, was damaged by shelling. In Lviv, the historic district suffered from a missile strike - the

buffer zone of the UNESCO World Heritage Site "Lviv - the Ensemble of the Historic Centre".

Figure 1. Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral in Odesa. Source Ukrinform

Additionally, more than 20,000 cultural heritage sites of national and local significance are currently under occupation. At the same time, according to the World Bank's estimation, losses in the cultural and tourism sectors of Ukraine, including foregone income, amounted to $19.6 billion. These figures are only from the territories controlled by Ukraine and those that have been de-occupied.

Alongside attempts of wholesale destruction of Ukraine's cultural heritage, Russian aggression also involves manipulation of cultural symbols and historical memory. For instance, the annexation of Crimea was accompanied by attempts to rewrite the history of this region and alter its cultural landscape in accordance with Russian interests.

Despite the challenges faced by Ukrainian cultural heritage in times of war, it continues to play an important role in shaping societal identity. Cultural heritage sites in wartime acquire special significance and become important symbols of resilience, struggle, and memory.

CULTURAL HERITAGE, IDENTITY, AND WAR

The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted in Paris in 1972 at the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), defines the concept of cultural heritage as follows:

- monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and of man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological points of view.

In the document, "natural heritage" refers to:

- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of Outstanding Universal Value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
- geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science or conservation;

- natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

Ukraine has acceded to these conventions by ratifying them.

The topic of cultural heritage has attracted the attention of many experts from various fields of knowledge, including cultural studies, history, anthropology, art history, and others. One of the key questions in contemporary anthropology and sociology is how cultural heritage shapes identity.

According to David Lowenthal, conscious or accidental interaction with heritage changes its nature and context, but such changes can have significant consequences. In his opinion, in order to establish a tradition, to be sure of one's own identity, and to find meaning in the present, a person needs a stable past. At the same time, the scientist emphasizes that even extremely painful memories remain the most important part of emotional history, people who suffer from memory loss and are deprived of memories of their past are deprived of identity. Lowenthal emphasizes that identification with earlier stages of life is crucial for both mental integrity and health. Every people can increase its significance in their own eyes through collective and national identity, which can be strengthened by knowledge of history. Lowenthal also reflects on how, in times of oppression, identification with the national past often becomes a guarantee of preservation and strengthens new sovereignty. Thus, "peoples who have lost their past to conquest try by all means to regain self-respect," and "countries under threat jealously guard their physical heritage because they feel it is the embodiment of collective identity." He cites the example of the destruction of Warsaw by the Nazis and its restoration by the Poles, recalling the words of the head of the restoration project that it was the duty of the Poles to revive Warsaw, who wanted Warsaw to continue the ancient tradition.

One of the most important contributions to the study of this issue was made by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz. He drew attention to how symbols and meanings embodied in cultural heritage help people navigate the world and define their identity. He emphasized the role of interpretation in the process of cultural identity formation and showed how cultural symbols become key elements of our understanding of ourselves.

Another important researcher in this area is Pierre Nora, the author of the concept of "places of memory." In his works, Nora refers to symbolic places and practices that play a role in shaping the collective memory and identity of a society. He shows how historical events and cultural traditions become part of our common heritage, which defines our place in society and our belonging to it.

CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A SYMBOL OF RESILIENCE

War leads to the destruction and loss of cultural heritage as a result of hostilities, artillery shelling, seizure and vandalism. Historical monuments, museums, archives, libraries and other cultural sites are at risk of destruction and loss, resulting in the loss of valuable artifacts and historical documents.

The war poses a serious threat to cultural heritage, and the resilience and perseverance of the community can help to preserve and restore it. Cultural heritage and its elements can serve as a symbol of resilience and indomitability, which can be seen in Ukraine.

For example, a ceramic rooster that survived the bombing in a bombed-out house in the village of Borodianka, 60 kilometers north of Kyiv, became a powerful symbol in the war. A photo of a surviving kitchen cabinet with a ceramic rooster on it, taken by Suspilne correspondent Elizabeth Servatynska after the village was liberated, quickly went viral on the Internet and generated many memes.

Photo 2: A kitchen cabinet with a ceramic rooster from the deoccupied Borodianka. Source Elizabeth Servatynska

Photo 3: A kitchen cabinet with a ceramic rooster from the deoccupied Borodianka. Source Elizabeth Servatynska

According to the National Museum of Decorative Arts of Ukraine, it turned out that the ceramic rooster was produced at the Vasylkiv Majolica Factory in Kyiv region. The plant started operating in 1928 as the Keramik artel and was one of the most powerful artistic ceramics production facilities in Ukraine. According to the museum, the heyday of the plant was in the 1960s and 1980s. It was at that time that prominent Ukrainian artists such as Nadiia and Valerii Protoryiev, Mykhailo Denysenko, Prokip Bidasiuk, Mykhailo Bibik, Nelli Isupova, and others worked here. The museum noted that the Vasylkiv artists had their own workshops and could be free in their creativity without suffering from pressure from above. They created many original products in the Ukrainian tradition, and a few decades ago, majolica products decorated almost every Ukrainian home, were readily used in everyday life and presented for holidays and anniversaries.

According to the Vasylkiv Majolica Museum, the factory went bankrupt in 2004, and in 2019, a private workshop based at the factory closed. According to Serhii Denysenko, one of the artists at the Vasylkiv Majolica Factory, the surviving rooster is the work of the couple Valerii and Nadiia Protoriev. According to him, the rooster was made in the early 60s and was produced until the 80s. About several thousand of them were created in total.

Photo 4: Ceramic rooster. Source Vasylkiv majolica museum

The owner of the apartment where the legendary rooster survived is a single pensioner named Nadiya Svatko. In the first days of the large-scale invasion, she left for western Ukraine. She and her family moved into the house in 1985 after it was built. Her husband died shortly afterward during the liquidation of the Chornobyl nuclear power plant accident (Vaughan 2022). Later, her eldest son also died. The woman was left alone with her younger son, who died two years ago. It was he who nailed the cabinet on the wall with the rooster on it.

The photo of the surviving rooster spread around the world and became a symbol of Ukrainian resistance and resilience, and attracted worldwide attention to Vasylkiv's majolica. The rooster from Borodianka was also called the "Ukrainian Phoenix".

The cabinet with the cockerel was transferred to the National Memorial to the Havenly Hundred Heroes. Later, the cockerel became the centerpiece of the exhibition "Ukrainian Phoenix. Vasylkiv Majolica" exhibition at the National Museum of Ukrainian Folk Decorative Art, which featured 93 other ceramic products made at the Vasylkiv Majolica Factory. Ihor Poshyvaylo, Director General of the National Memorial to the Havenly Hundred Heroes, noted that the title and idea of the exhibition had several meanings: it was not only about the cockerel and its rebirth from the ashes, but also about the revival of Ukraine's cultural identity and historical memory. Director General of the National Museum of Ukrainian Folk Decorative Art Liudmyla Strokova noted that it was important to show that despite the horrors of war, the cockerel heroically survived and carries a positive message (National Memorial to the Havenly Hundred Heroes 2022).

Photo 5: Source National Memorial to the Havenly Hundred Heroes

Another powerful symbol of the resilience of Ukrainians were the paintings of Ukrainian folk artist Maria Prymachenko in the genre of "naive art" (primitivism). During the Russian army's offensive in the first days of the large-scale invasion, the historical and local history museum in the village of Ivankiv, Kyiv region, was destroyed, where 33 of the artist's works were stored.

During her lifetime, Prymachenko (1909-1997) created more than 800 paintings in her own unique style, where you can see fairy-tale and fantastic animals and birds, fictional creatures, and bright decorative flowers. During the 1930s and 1980s, about 60 exhibitions of her works were held. In addition, in 1937, her works were exhibited at the International Exhibition in Paris, and Pablo Picasso noted the artist's skill. Her paintings can be seen in galleries around the world. Her work was inspired by the Ukrainian monumentalists of the Sixties, Ada Rybachuk and Volodymyr Melnychenko, and Olga Rapai. Prymachenko also created a series of paintings about Chernobyl. The year 2009 was recognized by UNESCO as the year of Maria Prymachenko.

The artist's life was also touched by the war - her husband died in World War II.

Photo 6: One of Maria Prymachenko's paintings. Source The National Folk Decorative Art Museum

As a result of the bombing in Ivankiv, a shell hit the historical and local history museum where Prymachenko's works were kept, causing a fire. Nevertheless, the residents of the village managed to save most of the artist's works at the risk of their lives. In addition to the collection of Prymachenko's works, the museum also had other works of art, which, unfortunately, could not be saved.

Photo 7: The Ivankiv Historical and Local History Museum. Source Oleksandr Tkachenko

Two more paintings by Prymachenko, which were kept by her niece in the neighboring village of Bolotnia, have not survived - they were burned by shelling.

It is not the first time that the work of one of the most famous Ukrainian artists, who is a national symbol of Ukraine, has drawn the attention of the international community to Ukrainians, but in the context of tragic events. Today, not only is the artist's creative heritage, of which 650 paintings are kept in the National Folk Decorative Art Museum in Kyiv, under threat, but also tens of thousands of cultural heritage sites across Ukraine, which are threatened with destruction and damage every day as a result of shelling and bombing.

CONCLUSION

Cultural heritage and its objects are not only artifacts of the past, but also a powerful symbol of the resilience and endurance of Ukrainians in the current war. Cultural heritage, which is a source of strengthening national identity, is becoming a pillar of support for Ukrainian society in the most difficult days of its history. Dozens of cultural heritage sites have been damaged, looted, stolen, destroyed, and the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage in times of war is of existential importance to Ukrainians today to prevent attempts to erase their national identity.

In times of war, cultural heritage serves not only as a monument to the past, but also as a reminder of the nation's powerful potential for survival and revival, and draws the world's attention to military conflicts.

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7. POLITICAL CLIMATE AND THE CULTURE OF DIASPORIC CONSCIOUSNESS: JAPANESE AMERICAN INTERNMENT IN THE UTAH DESERT

by Konstantinos (Kosta) Kambouris

Abstract

This paper explores the connection between the political climate and the cultural consciousness of diasporic communities. It begins with a site analysis of the Topaz Museum and Topaz Internment Camp, delving into the United States government's state-sponsored detention of the Japanese diaspora within its borders. This study employs various methods, including ethnography, autoethnography, archival analysis, site analysis, and relational interviewing to uncover the significance of diaspora associated with internment experiences, the consciousness practiced by internees and Japanese communities, and the United States government during and after internment. By examining multiple meanings and agencies, this paper aims to elucidate the development of a diasporic consciousness among Japanese Americans of the time and space.

Key Words

Diaspora. Japanese internment. Topaz. Diasporic consciousness. Memorial.

INTRODUCTION

I drove into the small Utah town of Delta on April 5th, 2024, to learn more about the Japanese American internment experience at the Topaz Internment Camp and Museum. As I drove, I thought about the emotional and physical experience of being detained,

interned, and concentrated in the Utah desert. The decision to introduce internment was not based on justifiable ethical, moral, or even constitutional reasoning, but instead was based on a fear of ancestral heritage and connections. I imagined what internment must have felt like – to be stripped of homes, communities, and routines solely due to an identity associated with migration, a diasporic identity. As I drove through farms and vast fields with the majestic Utah Wasatch mountains as a backdrop, I thought of my personal experience of diasporic identity. I am a third-generation Greek American raised by parents, grandparents, and a Greek community in Salt Lake City who held their Greek diasporic identity close to their hearts and souls. In addition, the experiences I had visiting family in Greece, memorializing my family's migration to the United States (U.S.), and routinizing the bits of culture that could remind us of our Greekness were central to this diasporic experience.

In conjunction with my diasporic experience, it is often the job of folks in diaspora to go to school, get a job, buy a house, reap the "benefits" of the host society, and in the United States, be as "American" as possible. However, all of this is tantamount to speaking and learning Greek, knowing Greek history and politics, keeping the values of community and tradition, holding the ideals of family and heritage, keeping in touch with the Greek Orthodox faith, and finding time and money to visit Greece which binds all of those qualities together. Balancing the pogo stick of assimilation and diasporic consciousness is at the core of my diasporic experience. As I journeyed to Topaz, I pondered the intricate experiences of Japanese American internees. As these experiences were vastly different from mine, I attempted to envision the challenges faced by first, second, and third-generation Japanese Americans as they navigated the delicate balance between assimilation and maintaining a diasporic consciousness, all while enduring internment and displacement by the very government to which they claimed citizenship.

This paper examines the relationship between political climate and diasporic cultural consciousness. Furthermore, through one context of Japanese American internment, this paper examines how political climate and diasporic culture interweave through a site analysis. The site analyzed is the Topaz Internment Camp in Delta, Utah, and its illegal internment of Japanese Americans during World War Two (WWII). In addition to physically and intellectually analyzing the site and its genealogy, this paper suggests that multiple actors have agency in shaping diasporic consciousness and its memory. In this case, those actors are the town of Delta, Utah, the U.S. government, and, of course, the Japanese Americans. Giddens refers to agency as the social actors' "capability of doing those things in the first place." "Agency concerns events of which the individual is the perpetrator, in the sense that the individual could, at any phase in a given sequence of conduct, have acted differently" (Giddens 1984, 9). This paper hopes to illuminate each actor's agency (though inherently different from one another) in making the diasporic consciousness of Japanese Americanness.

A branch of diasporic scholarship examines diaspora and politics, specifically how and when states interact with people of a diaspora within their borders (Marinova 2017; Lyons & Mandaville 2010; Shain 1999). This paper hopes to expand upon the state-diaspora relationship by examining that of the Japanese diaspora and its interaction with the foreign policy of the settled state—in this case, the United States. Diaspora here is conceptualized as a fluid transnational process of making from migration. Diaspora, therefore, explains 1) the *idea* of an intersubjective truth of migration and 2) the *consciousness* of constructing and securing identities related to those intersubjective truths. Consciousness is the process of making a diaspora (Mavroudi 2007). The idea of diaspora is a self-biography of migration from a birthplace or ancestral homeland, and the consciousness is the practice of being diaspora through cultural artifacts, interactions, interests, and transnational connections with the homeland and fellow diasporans in

other countries (Kenney 2013; Baumann 2010; Tololyan 2007). In sum, this paper examines the agency of multiple actors and their roles in constructing diasporic consciousness.

METHODS AND READER'S REPORT

I started to unpack this relationship by visiting the Topaz Museum in Delta, Utah, and the remains of the Topaz Internment Camp. This examination began through email coordination with Scott Bassett, one of the primary guides at Topaz, a member of the Topaz Museum board, and a proud community leader of education in Delta City and Millard County. Scott was doing a tour for Brigham Young University (BYU) students on April 5th, 2024, and invited me to join this group. Due to Scott's passion, hospitality, and interest in Topaz, he served as an excellent interlocutor and kept my challenges in accessing the site very minimal. Thanks to the Topaz Museum and Scott, this investigation examined how the state of a settled diaspora played a role in forming diasporic identity and consciousness. This is supported through primary and secondary methods of data collection. My investigation began as a site visit to *feel* what Topaz was like as I read and listened to public and individual accounts beforehand. Therefore, some secondary data collection happened before the site visit. However, much of my data is primary data collected as I physically moved through the space. First, we went through the museum, then went on a driving tour of Delta and the area around Topaz with Scott, and finished with a visit to the remains of the internment site.

The primary data collected was a site analysis of the Topaz Museum, the site of Topaz internment, and conversation with interlocutors. My primary data also included photographs, audio recordings, ethnography, and auto-ethnography of my experience at the museum, driving through Delta with Scott, and walking the grounds of what used to be the Topaz Internment Camp. The secondary data I collected was through archival

work. First, through photographs of Topaz from the Marriott Library at the University of Utah. Secondly, through/from policy archives from The National Archives, the California Historical Society, and the United Nations. I started with secondary collection as I prepared for the visit, moved into primary as I was at the site, and went back to secondary to collect more data after the visit (Yanow 2014). I hope to interweave primary and secondary sources in my analysis.

ANALYSIS

Figure 1: Photo of the Central Utah Relocation Center (otherwise known as Topaz internment camp), located in Millard County, Utah, from 1942 to 1945 (Masaoka, 1942 to 1945).

Figure 2: Panoramic photo of the Utah Relocation Center (otherwise known as Topaz Internment Camp), located in Millard County, Utah. Taken on April 5th, 2024, as part of a site visit to the preserved land of the WWII internment camp (Kambouris 2024).

The first photograph above is of the Topaz Internment Camp between 1942 and 1945, during its operation in the Sevier Desert of central Utah. As shown, there were roads, buildings, and infrastructure systems. The buildings held nearly 8,000 internees and were a mixture of housing units, schools, government administration buildings, churches, temples, baseball fields, and other institutions that comprised a 1940s American community. The second photograph is of the same 31 square-mile plot of land, taken roughly 80 years later. In contrast to the first photo, the second photo has remnants of a road, fences, and some dilapidated concrete foundations. However, in 2024, there are no buildings, infrastructure systems, guards, or people at Topaz. What happened to this plot of land, why was it built, and who was it built for?

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL OVERVIEW

The unraveling of this site began on Sunday, December 7th, 1941, with the bombing of the U.S. Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii. WWII was in full swing on the European continent. The Axis Powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan wanted to expand their imperial scope and influence on the global stage. Japan viewed the U.S. imperial expansion into Hawaii and the Philippines in the late 19th and early 20th century as encroaching on their imperial Pacific sphere. Japan's Empire, during WWII, expanded its imperial reach throughout East and Southeast Asia, and the imperial powers remembered its previous interactions with the U.S. Two years into WWII, Japan bombed U.S. territory, bringing the U.S. into the war and starting battle on the war's Pacific front. This is a grossly simplified summary of the Pearl Harbor attacks. Still, it led U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Secretary of War Henry Stimson to make drastic and devastating decisions in the name of national security.

The first decision to address this national threat was Presidential Executive Order 9066, signed on February 19th, 1942. This order "Requires every possible protection

against espionage and against sabotage of national-defense material, national-defense premises, and national-defense utilities…I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War…whenever he or any designated Commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such places and of such extent as he [Secretary of War] or the appropriate military commander may determine. From which any or all persons may be excluded, and concerning which, the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate Military Commander may impose in his discretion" (National Archives of the U.S. 1942b).

The executive order allowed the Secretary of War or other "appropriate" military commanders to create military areas. Anyone deemed a public enemy within the military areas can be removed or detained. Based on a variety of archived documents and accounts, it can be interpreted that this policy was enacted so that authorities would have the option of detaining anyone with the face of the enemy – Japanese Americans. In one public document from a conference with General DeWitt of the Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, DeWitt deemed Japanese Americans "enemy aliens" having "no confidence in their loyalty whatsoever" after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. General DeWitt's detention agenda was laid out "without waiting for normal processes of the law," which included the ability "to go in and search the house or residence and premises of every alien beginning with the Japanese right now" (National Archives of the U.S. 1942). On the same day as the issuing of the executive order, Military Zone No. 1 was established and covered the entire U.S. West Coast, hoping to secure the coast from a potential Japanese offensive. The map below shows the area deemed a military zone.

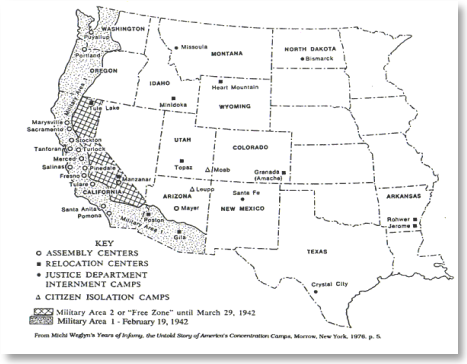


Figure 3: Map of military areas established through Executive Order 9066. This map also shows the assembly centers, relocation centers, and internment camps created due to the order ("Executive Order 9066 > WWII & Roundup | Exploring JAI," n.d.).

Executive Order 9066 only allowed the *possibility* of forcibly relocating people deemed a threat in the established military areas, and there was no mention specifically of *who* the threat was. Sentiments from public officials insisted that Japanese Americans "voluntarily" relocate East and away from Military Area No. 1 before future actions were put into place. Of the roughly 120,000 Japanese Americans living in the military zone, only about 5,000 voluntarily relocated East. This included selling their businesses and homes to evacuate because of their identity (Arrington 1997). Retrospectively analyzing this situation, in contemporary international lingo, the removal of "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence…and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border" are deemed internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Economic and Social Council of the United Nations 1998). Japanese Americans on the west coast of the U.S. were IDPs. What happened to the rest of the Japanese Americans on the West Coast? Through public policy, they were forced into internment.

Public Law No. 503 of the 77th Congress and Public Proclamation No. 4 of the Western Defense Command made Executive Order 9066 actionable. Public Law No. 503 was passed by the 77th Congress on March 21st, 1942, and proclaimed to "provide a

penalty [$5,000 or imprisonment up to year] for violation of restrictions or orders with respect to persons entering, remaining in, leaving, or committing any act in military areas or zones." Now that a penalty for excessive movement in Military Zone No. 1 was established, the Public Proclamation was made on March 27th, 1942, by the Western Defense Command and Fourth Army based in San Francisco, California, to begin formulating targeted removal. By the powers of the President and Secretary of War, and U.S. Army Lieutenant General J. L. Dewitt, Public Proclamation No. 4 proclaimed that "the present situation requires as a matter of military necessity that, commencing at 12:00 midnight, P. W.T., March 29th, 1942, all alien Japanese and persons of Japanese ancestry who are within the limits of Military Area No. 1…are hereby prohibited from leaving." Public proclamation set into motion the forced relocation of all Japanese Americans living in Military Zone No. 1 due to their being viewed as "enemy aliens" to the state with suspicion of espionage (California Historical Society 1942).

Comparing all three public laws and other publicly available documents, it is clear that the laws were ambiguous, opaque, and worded to be easily manipulated and expanded on by government and military officials to control the movement of the 120,000 Japanese Americans who didn't voluntarily flee. Of the roughly 120,000 Japanese Americans, 80,000 were second and third-generation with birthright citizenship. Meaning their parents or grandparents migrated to the U.S. The state's decision to create military zones and remove certain persons was the state directly interacting with a diaspora on their soil. Japanese Americans became a salient *political* diaspora in the U.S. The U.S. government reinforced the diasporic consciousness of Japanese Americans by subjectively associating their diasporization, through immense prejudice, with WWII enemy aliens. To the U.S., the Japanese diasporic experience was a foreign policy threat as people holding a diasporized identity of their enemy were on their soil, even though a large portion of the Japanese diaspora were American citizens

by birthright. To the Japanese, discrimination and prejudice were central to their diasporic consciousness during WWII especially.

According to my interlocutor, Scott, and external resources, not one internee was convicted of espionage or disloyalty at any time (Academy 2023). Focusing back on the map presented above, ten relocation centers were built across the American West to "temporarily" relocate Japanese Americans until further notice. One of those relocation centers was Topaz, in the Utah Desert. Most internees at Topaz were relocated from the San Francisco Bay Area in California. Public Proclamation No. 4 was made public on March 27th, 1942. The picture below shows an evacuation notice dated April 4th, 1942. Public policy impacted the relocation of Japanese Americans immediately.

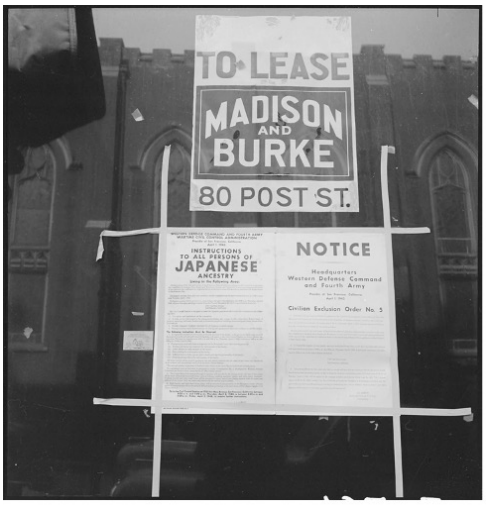


Figure 4: The original caption for this photograph, taken by photographer Dorothea Lange for the War Relocation Authority on April 4th, 1942, reads: "San Francisco, California. Civilian Exclusion Order Number 5, ordering the evacuation of residents of Japanese ancestry, was posted in a vacant store window on Grant Avenue in Chinatown. This establishment, like many others in Chinatown, was operated by proprietors of Japanese descent. Evacuees will be housed in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration" (National Archives of the U.S. 1942c).

Topaz is located about 16 miles northwest into the desert from the small town of Delta, Utah. It is roughly 135 miles south of Salt Lake City, Utah. I had an appointment with

Scott and a group of BYU students at 10:15 AM. As I drove into Delta, where the museum is, I was instantly reminded of any other quaint rural Utah town. There was an old main street with restaurants and gas stations, tumbleweeds blowing across the road, the high school, and large plots of farming land just outside the center of town. In the midst of rural Utah, a contemporary-looking concrete and glass museum stands out from the other buildings on Main Street: The Topaz Museum. I walked into the museum, met up with the group, and the tour began. To begin, Scott took us to the film room. He started by passionately lecturing us about what Topaz was and what it was built for. As the map above shows, there were ten internment camps across the American West.

The U.S. located the camps based on four criteria. First, they had to have access to electrical lines, which Delta had in 1935. Second, there had to be a mode of transporting the internees into the camp, which Delta had as it ran along the Union Pacific railroad's main line from San Francisco to Salt Lake City. Third, access to irrigation water was necessary, which Delta had via the Sevier River for their alfalfa, corn, and grain cultivation. The internees were expected to be as self-sustaining as possible while at camp. This meant raising livestock and growing agriculture for the camp despite harsh Utah desert conditions. Lastly, the camp had to be remote. Delta intersects along Highway 50 and 6, or “the loneliest highway in America.” The Topaz Internment Camp is 16 miles away from Delta. To quote a member of the group I was a part of, it is, "in the middle of nowhere" (Kambouris 2024). Or, well, I guess in the middle of somewhere, a complicated relationship between a state and a diaspora.

Topaz was a precise fit for a camp. However, there was nothing there in 1942; the buildings and barracks needed to be built. Executive Order 9066 and Public Proclamation No. 4 were urgent; they immediately authorized camps to be built. Topaz Internment Camp opened in September of 1942. Between April and September of 1942, most Topaz internees came from areas around the Bay Area in California. Initially, they

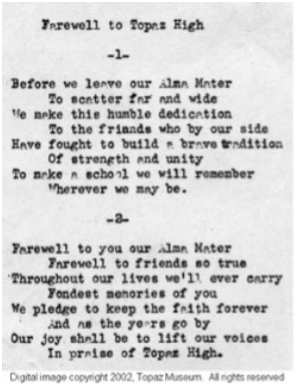
were held at Tanforan Racetrack in San Bruno, California, until Topaz was ready. Enduring the hot California summer, they lived in the horse stalls at Tanforan Racetrack until September. In September, they were transported by train to Delta. On our journey to Topaz, Scott drove me through the town of Delta, specifically where the Union Pacific train had let off the internees from Tanforan. Imagining the internees disembarking the train and heading into the desert to their temporary "home," Scott and I followed their metaphorical path to the Topaz Internment Camp. The journey of Japanese Americans to Topaz from Tanferee is an ideal-type explanation, meaning that this one interpretation of this experience does not represent *all* internees but does serve as helpful in creating a causal narrative (Jackson 2014).

Figure 5: Internees arriving at Topaz from the train depot in Delta (Topaz Museum, Sekerak, and Sekerak 1942b).

Figure 6: The internees raised cattle, pigs, turkeys, and chickens at one of the livestock areas (Topaz Museum, Sekerak, and Sekerak 1942-1945).

Once they arrived, internees were documented, processed, and sent on their way to live in their barracks. In one memoir and diary of an internee I purchased at the museum, she

said, "The first month was the hardest because adjustments had to be made to the new mode of life. The naked barracks and whitewashed stalls had to be fixed up into living quarters, and we had to get used to the lack of privacy of camp life" (Okubo 2014, 50). The internees *literally* built their new life in Topaz with a high amount of resiliency. In addition to making their airless and cramped barracks more comfortable, internees established councils, a Buddhist temple, a Christian church, baseball teams, school graduations, and several other organizations that resecured the routines of Japanese American diasporic life. One Topaz internee, Dave Tatsuno, spoke powerful words in one museum exhibit by saying, "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness" (Kambouris 2024). Mr. Tatsuno's was one of the many tragic yet resilient stories of Japanese American internment. Mr. Tatsuno was famous for having Topaz's only full-length filmed accounts; internees were not allowed to bring personal cameras. In 1997, this film was placed in the National Film Registry of the U.S. and has a special place on a Library of Congress shelf.



Farewell to Topaz High

-1-

Before we leave our Alma Mater
To scatter far and wide
We make this humble dedication
To the friends who by our side
Have fought to build a brave tradition
Of strength and unity
To make a school we will remember
Wherever we may be.

-2-

Farewell to you our Alma Mater
Farewell to friends so true
Throughout our lives we'll ever carry
Fondest memories of you
We pledge to keep the faith forever
And as the years go by
Our joy shall be to lift our voices
In praise of Topaz High.

Figure 7: Poetic farewell to Topaz High School written by students (Topaz Museum, Sekerak, and Sekerak 1942).

Figure 8: Three students at Topaz (Topaz Museum, Sekerak, and Sekerak 1942).

The administration permitted the internees to temporarily leave for work in nearby towns or permanently relocate Eastward. However, returning home wasn't an option due to its location within Military Zone No. 1. Nonetheless, selling their belongings and moving as displaced persons left few financial prospects for relocation, although some managed it. Internees could now exit temporarily through the main gate. They would venture into the Utah desert, gathering stones, arrowheads, and various artifacts, many of which are now showcased at the Topaz Museum. Scott said, "We have Arrowhead collections… I have never observed Arrowhead collections like that" (Kambouris 2024). In addition to arrowheads, students would search the Utah Desert for ancient shells that were remnants of Lake Bonneville, the ancient geologic formation of the desert. They would turn ancient shells into brilliant Topaz art. Detention, xenophobia, and state paranoia didn't restrict creativity at Topaz.

Topaz was known as the art camp, led primarily by one internee, Chiura Obata. Before being detained at Topaz, Mr. Obata was a professor of art at the University of California, Berkeley. Moving to Topaz with his family, Mr. Obata only stayed at Topaz for one year but drastically impacted the cultural legacy of Topaz and the Japanese diaspora. Mr. Obata organized The Topaz Art School, which had 16 instructors and taught around 600 students. Scott portrayed Mr. Obata's story by saying that "He [Mr. Obata] knew

that art was good for the soul" (Kambouris 2024). Obata's art and his students' art have interpretations of the American West, Japanese American perspectives, and, of course, life as an internee in Topaz.

Two diaspora narratives are associated with Mr. Obata's story. First, Mr. Obata was not and never had been a national security threat but a beacon of brilliance in the Japanese diasporic consciousness. However, he was detained solely due to his diasporic identity. Second, the construction of routines to secure self and identity was consistent before his internment as a professor of art, during his internment as a teacher and artist, and after as a father, husband, professor, and American citizen. Art is a brilliant metaphor for expressing diasporic identity, consciousness, and experience; Mr. Obata consistently did that throughout his life (Means 2018; Kambouris 2024; Topaz Museum 2024; Lakoff and Johnson 2008).

Figure 9: Painting by Chiura Obata titled *Dust Storm*. This painting depicts Obata's time at the Topaz Detention Center as a Japanese American internee in 1943. Being in the dry Utah desert, the detention center would experience devastating dust storms depicted here by Obata (Obata 1943a).

Figure 10: Painting by Chiura Obata titled *Regulations.* This painting depicts a mother and her children looking at the regulations placed on Japanese American internees at the Topaz Detention Center (Obata 1943b).

In the face of xenophobia and nativism, Japanese Americans have forged a resilient diasporic consciousness. This collective identity, cultivated through endeavors such as safeguarding cultural artifacts and fostering community ties, has evolved both within and beyond detention contexts since the inception of Japanese immigration to the U.S. Central to this consciousness is the intersubjective notion of diaspora stemming from Japan. Within this framework, individuals like Mr. Obata stand as powerful exemplars of agency in shaping diasporic identity. However, through the social and political exclusion of groups, state actors can also have agency in forming diasporic consciousness, as the policies that led to internment show. Dave Tatsuno, who was in the same museum exhibit mentioned above, also said in an interview, "With liberty and justice for all, except for us" (Kambouris 2024). Diasporic consciousness can take multiple forms of agency with a variety of motives.

Following Executive Order 9066 and Public Proclamation No. 4, many Japanese Americans decided to follow the orders of displacement out of fear or to show allegiance to their American identity. Some refused out of protest, including 23-year-old Japanese American Fred Korematsu. With Public Law No. 503, Mr. Korematsu faced jail charges

for resisting internment. He legally fought the case to the Supreme Court of the U.S., which determined on December 18th, 1944, by a vote of 6-3 that Executive Order 9066 was constitutional to protect the national security against "a state of war with Japan, and as a protection against espionage and sabotage," but was deemed unconstitutional in an *ex parte* court decision *if* the internees were loyal citizens (Certiorari to the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Ninth Court 1944). The court decision was revisited in 1983, and Korematsu overturned his conviction of nearly 40 years. The overturned conviction was helped by a 1980 U.S. government report investigating Executive Order 9066 and its impacts on Japanese Americans. In 1988, the Civil Liberties Act was passed by the 100th Congress of the U.S., recognizing the 1980 investigation, concluding that the "internment of the individuals of Japanese ancestry was by racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." In addition, victims of detention who still lived were given $20,000 in reparations (Congress.gov 2024; Internment Archives: S. 1009 2024; Savage 2019).

MEMORIALIZING TOPAZ AND DIASPORA

Taken on April 5th, 2024, from the memorial site purchased by Utah Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) chapters in 1976 to memorialize their experience of detention. Directly on the other side of the fence are the ruins of the Topaz Internment Camp (Kambouris, 2024).

Three actors hold agency in the process of diasporic consciousness associated with Topaz. The first is the town of Delta. Diaspora is built into the history of a town and its residents, like Delta. There has never been a Japanese American community in Delta after the internment, but buildings throughout Delta illustrate a contemporary culture of diasporic consciousness. As Scott and I drove the 16 miles to the internment site, he pointed out sheds, barns, and structures of homes that were former Topaz buildings. The barracks were sold to the community for meager rates after internment. Locals used the buildings for their farms or sometimes the base structure for their homes, physically engraining the diasporic memory of Topaz into the town. In addition to the barracks around town, the Topaz Museum shapes Delta's diasporic consciousness. Standing bright on Delta's Main Street, the Topaz Museum is a fabric of the contemporary town, and its history is a daunting piece of the town's historical past. The mere presence and opening of the museum exemplify what the Japanese diasporic experience *means* to the town of Delta. The museum also brings former internees and their families to visit the site, as was the case when I visited, keeping Delta in the consciousness of the diaspora.

Secondly, the state has agency in shaping a diaspora and having a diasporic consciousness of Japanese Americanness. U.S. officials who built the system of internment subjectively viewed Japanese migration at the time of WWII as a national security threat and Japanese Americans as "public enemies" of the state. The Japanese American experience at the time of WWII provides evidence to support the idea that states have agency in shaping diasporic identities. In this case, diasporic identity is built upon xenophobia and fear. The consciousness of diaspora practiced by the state included the systems of internment but also included the Supreme Court decisions, reparations, and acknowledgments of internment.

Lastly, Japanese diasporic consciousness was intertwined with Japanese American internment. Cultural artifacts, community building, and the intersubjectiveness

of a Japanese diasporic identity are the center of this perspective. Authors like Okubo, artists like Obata, individuals like Tatsuno, and activists like Korematsu all contribute to the practice of diaspora. In addition, diasporic consciousness can be observed in the memorialization which Japanese American organizations have placed on Topaz. Steele and Campbell write about the ethics of memorialization using ontological security, the securing of identity through time and space. Specifically, *which* identity should be memorialized here? In 1976, the Utah Chapters of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) purchased the plot of land in which the picture above was taken out of the grounds of Topaz to remember their collective experience. In addition, the National Park Service designates Topaz as a historic landmark, which the Topaz Museum manages. In sum, the federal government, Delta, Utah, and a Japanese American organization memorialize this site and have shaped the Japanese diasporic identity and experience in the U.S. (U.S. National Park Service 2019; Steele and Campbell 2023).

The WWII political climate in the U.S. created conditions for internment, resulting in a culture of Japanese diasporic consciousness. Japanese Americans and the U.S. government expressed diasporic consciousness in vastly different ways. Internment exemplifies how state actors and diasporans can shape the construction of diasporic identity. Meanwhile, Japanese Americans have been a forceful minority in the fabric of American culture and history. Around 11,000 internees lived at Topaz at some time (Arrington 1997). Of those 11,000, around 15% settled in Salt Lake City and Ogden, 50% settled back to California, and the others scattered across the country. The diasporic consciousness of post-internment communities impacted the political, cultural, and socio-economic fabric of the U.S. (Kambouris 2024).

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III.

CULTURE. LITERATURE.

EDUCATION. TECHNOLOGIES.

8. RAISING AWARENESS OF CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH AT TERTIARY LEVEL

by Petra Jesenská

Abstract

The main objective of this paper, titled *Raising Awareness of Climate Change through the Development of Communicative Competence in English at Tertiary Level*, is to explain and describe how environmental issues can be applied in the English-language graduate course, *Language Through Literature* in Future Teachers´ Training Programme and Translation/Interpretation Studies of the English language classroom at Slovak university. The course learning objectives are aimed at upper-intermediate and more advanced students who will gain an enhanced ability to relate literature and discussion on topical themes. Students will also enhance their ability to read and understand, in both intellectual and emotional terms, texts of varying degrees of difficulty, and will simultaneously develop their skills in providing logical arguments and discussions on various pressing and thought-provoking issues. Among the main skills which students will acquire involve raising awareness of climate change through the development of global skills in the English-language classroom.

Key Words

Climate change. Communicative competence. Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Language Through Literature is an elective academic course for Master's degree students conducted as a seminar aiming enhance students' ability to relate literature to discussion on topical themes. Students will also enhance their ability to read and understand texts of varying difficulty, in both intellectual and emotional terms. Last but not least, students will simultaneously develop their skills in providing logical arguments and adding to discussions on various pressing issues of the day. In addition to communicative competence, the main skills to be acquired by students are raising awareness of climate change through the development of global skills in the English language classroom and awareness for the environment in which the students live.

Methodology

Firstly, climate change is defined according to The World Health Organization. This is explained against the background of human activity contributing to climate change(s). Secondly, term organization and aims of the academic course are explained. Thirdly, planned and required results of teaching process are described, backed up by the syllabus of the English classroom.

Climate Change

Modern environmental issues are interconnected with climate change issues. The WHO webpage defines climate change as "more frequent and intensifying weather [...], including storms, extreme heat, floods, droughts and wildfires. These weather and climate hazards affect health both directly and indirectly, increasing the risk of deaths, noncommunicable diseases, the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, and health emergencies" (WHO 2023). This is due to various human activities, such as the

deforestation of rainforests and the burning of fossil fuels (coil, gas, oil). These activities increase levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, leading to global warming and other pressing issues meriting discussion in the classroom. The topic of ENVIRONMENT is one of six topics discussed amongst students during the course. It takes two classes (weeks) to discuss each issue properly. It is the second topic discussed in the course, following on from family. The issues discussed in the classroom during the course are: Family, Environment, War, Women, Authority, and Indifference. Discussions held during seminars are encouraged, stimulated, and sustained via thought-provoking literary texts and extracts based on the topics aforementioned. The language of instruction is English. The student workload is 90 hours in total, including 13 seminars (as the academic term takes 13 weeks of classes, 40 hours to prepare for a seminar argumentative essay analysing a particular topic, 19 hours of homework assignments, and self-study 18 hours). All materials necessary for the course (course information sheet, topical materials and warm-up activities, homework assignments, hyperlinks to videos and the internet materials and listening activities from their coursebook) are available in the Moodle. and in the library of Department of English and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. The course learning objectives are: On completing the course, students will have gained an enhanced ability to relate literature and discussion on topical themes. They will also have enhanced their ability to read and understand, in both intellectual and emotional terms, texts of varying degrees of difficulty. Students will have simultaneously developed their skills in providing logical arguments and discussions on presented topics (Jesenská 2020).

The aforementioned paperback coursebook *Reading Between the Lines* (McCrae & Boardman, 1993a), including integrated language and literature activities, is a suitable reference material for classroom work as it provides thematically focused literary texts and stimulating extracts on relevant issues. The language level of the book aims at

upper-intermediate (B2) and advanced learners (C1) of the English language. The book structure covers ten issues, but for lack of time, four of them are omitted (rebellion, ideals, ambitions, meaning). The topic in question, i.e. environment, is covered on ten pages (McCrae & Boardman 1993a, 15 – 25). As a warm-up activity, students are asked whether the topic is not a little bit boring these days, as it is repeatedly discussed on a daily basis. Afterwards are students asked to watch a short BBC video (see task below) to realize how humans influence nature, causing harm (not only) to themselves:

TASK: Watch this video, make notes and comment on it (on scientists who believe that as the video asserts, "our destructive relationship with nature is putting us at greater risk of pandemic diseases").

BBC One video (4:57):

https://www.facebook.com/BBCOne/videos/381663633001075 (28/09/2020). *Scientists believe that our destructive relationship with nature is putting us at greater risk of pandemic diseases*.

Then the content continues with a shot of a clear-cut Brazilian rainforest presented in their coursebook providing a thought-provoking question "These ecologists are worrying about us going and chopping down the Brazilian forest. But why? There is nothing there." (McCrae & Boardman 1993a, 15). The idea behind is to make students see that we, humans, are not the only "passengers" on this planet and that there is no other planet B. In this context the homework set for the following week is to read the *The Ecologist* manifesto extract in the book *Reading Between the Lines* (p.16), and to summarize the main points that have not been mentioned during class discussion concerning the destructive policy of chopping down the forests.

And then we proceed to William Cowper's 18th century poem *The Poplar Field* (1785), representing nostalgia for the poplars along the river that he knew from his childhood and that have "disappeared" (been cut down). The poplars personify the author's youthful hopes. He even compares himself to those trees asserting he would die one day the same way as poplars:

> *My fugitive years are all hasting away,*
> *And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,*
> *With a turf on my breast, and a stone at my head,*
> *Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.*
>
> *´This a sight to engage me, if anything can,*
> *To muse on the perishing pleasures of man;*
> *Though his life be a dream, his enjoyments, I see,*
> *Have a being less durable even than he.*
>
> (McCrae & Boardman 1993a, 17)

Cowper, in this poem (see above) contrasts past and present using expressions such as no *longer – farewell – before – now – once – no more* (McCrae & Boardman 1993a, 17). He used to sit under poplars that are no longer standing there. And now he literally sits on them. The blackbirds that used to live in those trees flew away. Cowper confesses that he used to be tall and strong and alive as those poplars once growing along the river Ouse. Now he feels that his life is coming to an end. And thus his life will pass away like the life of the poplars. Nothing is eternal. Only change is certain.

Similarly, the two photographs present a moment of comparison and contrast. Both show the same place, but the first was taken in early 1970s, while the other was

taken during 1890s. Students are asked to find the differences. Later on, they are asked to summarize dis/advantages of living in the 19th and 20th centuries (McCrae & Boardman 1993a, 18 – 19).

Every unit is concluded with a postscript (a famous quote on the topic). The environmental unit´s postscript comes from W. Somerset Maugham: "*Men have an extraordinary erroneous opinion of their position in nature, and the error is ineradicable*" (McCrae & Boardman 1993a, 25). It is another thought-provoking idea that is discussed among students on completing the whole unit.

Due to capacity constraints, it is not possible to describe all the activities in a class on a given topic. We have only included some for illustration.

CONCLUSION

Climate change is a topic that affects us all whether we realize it or not. It is coming more urgently than ever. University students studying for a Master's degree in English have the opportunity to speak their mind on the topic. In doing so, they cultivate not only communicative competence, but also an awareness of the Earth belonging to other (future) generations, who we already influence today, and so are therefore responsible and obliged to actively contribute to improving our environment.

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9. THE ROLE OF TRANSLATING ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTS IN ENHANCING CRITICAL READING SKILLS

by Anna Slatinská and Alena Štulajterová

Abstract

In ELT, teaching receptive skills is nowadays enhanced by developing soft skills, namely critical thinking and critical reading. The inclusion of environmental topics when practising reading, and subsequently translating English texts, have proved to be an effective education tool due to the urgent need to address environmental issues and promote sustainability on the one hand, and to accomplish the language improvement on the other. Critical reading and subsequent translation of environmental texts in ELT serves as a valuable means for enhancing language learning, critical thinking, raising awareness about environmental issues and fostering a sense of global responsibility among learners. The aim of this article is to explore the significance and benefits of practising critical thinking and critical reading skills through translating environmental texts in ELT, highlighting their impact on language proficiency and environmental awareness.

Key Words

Environmental texts. Critical thinking. Critical reading. Translation.

INTRODUCTION

In ELT, methodologists have been looking for new approaches to language teaching. One of the suggested methods is developing soft skills through the use of texts which

develop critical thinking [1] and critical reading, combined with their subsequent translation. Until recently, translation was out of favour with the language teaching community as it was labelled "boring", "uncommunicative", "difficult", "pointless" and the like, and suffered from too close an association with the learning of complex grammatical rules (Duff, 1994). Today, thanks to the communicative approach to language teaching, translation is gradually becoming recognized as a valid activity for language practice and improvement.

The reason why translation, even today, is ignored by many teachers as an effective language learning activity is mainly because teachers often feel that translation involves no oral interaction and therefore is not a communicative activity, and that it is not suited to the general needs of the language learner. Moreover, many of them consider the use of a mother tongue in foreign language teaching undesirable, or feel that translation is time-consuming, boring and irrelevant. However, this does not have to be the case.

If translation is combined with texts dealing with, for example, global issues such as climate change or the protection of endangered species, it is an effective tool not only for language improvement but also for developing critical thinking and critical reading skills.[2] In their language learning, English language learners often encounter a lot of texts with a wide range of topics, among which the environmental texts present a unique opportunity to integrate language learning with environmental awareness. Translating environmental texts can engage students in meaningful discussions, critical

[1] According to Straková et al. (2023, p. 9), "critical thinking is a prerequisite for economic and social survival in a world of accelerating change, increasing complexity and interdependence."
[2] Paul, R. and Elder, L. (2021, p. xxiii) state that students should "recognise the difficulties in developing as thinkers and commit themselves to life-long practice toward self-improvement. They embody the Socratic principle: 'The unexamined life is not worth living.'"

thinking, critical reading and reflective practice while cultivating a deeper understanding of environmental issues and solutions.

Developing critical reading skills in the context of translating texts focused on environmental protection involves understanding both the nuances of the source text and the importance of conveying its key messages accurately in the target language. Before the translation process, students should have a grasp of environmental terminology in both the source and target languages and they should keep a glossary of key terms related to environmental issues to ensure consistency and accuracy. Furthermore, students should understand the text and its context within the broader field of environmental protection. This involves researching relevant background information, understanding key concepts and current trends in the field.

When critically reading the text before its subsequent translation into the target language, students should be able to identify main ideas and consider the author's perspective and objective in writing the text. Understanding the author's point of view can help students interpret the content critically. Added to that, students should be able to question and evaluate the topic and thus develop a habit of questioning the text as they read. This will enable them to evaluate the argument presented and the evidence provided, and to reveal inconsistencies, unsupported claims, or misleading information. Translating environmental texts in ELT improves:

1. language proficiency: translating environmental texts can improve language skills such as vocabulary, reading comprehension, and critical analysis. By engaging with real-world environmental content, learners can discuss selected topics and thus enhance their language proficiency in a relevant and practical context;
2. environmental awareness: exposure to environmental texts through translation can raise awareness about environmental challenges, ecological systems, endangered species or climate change. It provides a platform for students to

explore environmental topics in a language they are learning, fostering greater understanding and appreciation for environmental issues;

3. promoting global responsibility: translating environmental texts in ELT encourages students to develop a sense of global responsibility and mutual interconnectedness. By exploring environmental issues in different parts of the world, learners understand the impact of environmental issues beyond their local context and obtain global environmental awareness.

IMPLEMENTING TRANSLATION IN ELT FROM THE TEACHER'S POINT OF VIEW

'Quality translation' attempts to prove that translation can be an interesting as well as a useful activity in language teaching. One of the main objectives of ELT is to develop student's ability to communicate in the English language. According to Duff (1994, p. 4), "translation develops three qualities essential to all language learning: accuracy, clarity and flexibility. It trains the learner to search (flexibility) for the most appropriate words (accuracy) to convey what is meant (clarity)." Translation is an eminently communicative activity, as it naturally invites speculation and discussion. Apart from the fact that translation provides a basis for discussion and thus contributes to the improvement of speaking skills, it is also ideally suited to the practicing of other language skills.

Depending on the students' needs, the teacher can also select material to illustrate particular aspects of language and structure with which the students have difficulty in English. By working through these difficulties in their mother tongue, students come to see the link between language and usage (Newmark, 1989). In addition to these merits of translation as a language-learning activity, there are also a number of other reasons for using this technique in class. One of them is the fact that translation is a very natural activity – more natural and useful than many of the fashionable activities invented for language learners. According to Štulajterová (2008, p. 3), "translation

shapes our way of thinking, and helps us to understand better the influence of the one language on another, and to correct habitual errors that would otherwise remain unnoticed. Translation enables us to explore the potential of both languages - their strengths and weaknesses." Another reason for using translation in the classroom is its ability to increase the students' power and range of expression by means of authentic and wide-ranging material, which brings the learner in touch with all styles and registers. Ultimately, to achieve language competence, which is the priority of language teaching, students need to be able to communicate both ways – into and from the foreign language. Translation is ideally suited to the practicing of these skills.

BENEFITS OF TRANSLATING ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTS IN ELT

Major benefits of translating texts focused on environmental issues include integrating language skills because translating environmental texts integrates language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening in a cohesive way. It offers students a complex language learning experience that combines linguistic proficiency with obtaining environmental knowledge.

Furthermore, translating environmental texts improves critical thinking and critical reading skills because students are encouraged to critically analyse and evaluate complex environmental concepts and discuss possible solutions. This process enables them to create their own perspectives on various environmental issues. In addition to enhancing critical reading skills, translating environmental texts develops awareness and evokes empathy towards nature which can motivate students to take a positive approach towards sustainability. As a consequence, it gives them a sense of responsibility to be actively engaged in efforts related to the protection of environment.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT TRANSLATING ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTS IN ELT

If the translation of environmental texts should help students achieve competence in the English language, it must be used sensibly in compliance with the relevant curriculum. We consider this purposeful approach very important. There is no point in merely handing out environmental texts to the learners with the instruction, *"Translate"*. Students should not be required to translate without having been given practice in the skill and without an awareness of the particular environmental topic. Furthermore, it is essential that the teacher always explains what the purpose of each activity is – the students need to know why the activity is being done.

Another important issue is the selection of material. The text must be stimulating and varied, covering a wide range of environmental topics. Genuine translation involves analysis of the meaning of the source text. The students should read the text critically and should be led to consider the expressive possibilities of the target language and to discover that it is not always possible to attain exact equivalence. In this way they will learn to evaluate possible versions to see which most fully captures all the implications of the original, and will find out that they need to look beyond single words, chunks of sentences, or even complete sentences to whole stretches of text as they make their decisions (Bell, 1995). Ultimately, they will learn to translate ideas, not words. This is one of the main reasons why we consider the translation of environmental texts a useful activity.

When selecting suitable material, the teacher should also consider its potential for encouraging discussion. According to Šavelová (2006), translation must finally lead to discussion – without this, the use of translation in ELT is purposeless. Pair work and group work are effective as they give students opportunity to compare and discuss their suggestions with their peers. All students should be equally involved in the task. The material should be stimulating, with oral translation prevailing over written. Writing can

often be done in the form of notes or terminological glossaries, to be used in later discussions.

Although we have stressed the importance of activities involving the translation of environmental texts, this does not mean that the translation of expressions or sentences out of context is irrelevant to language learning. Such material is suitable as a warm-up activity as it helps to enrich students' vocabulary or even professional terminology in the area. The aim of such a warm-up is to motivate students and to arise their interest in reading about environmental issues.

CONCLUSION

Translation as a method of language teaching is an often discussed topic among ELT methodologists and teachers of English. In our opinion, this activity should be considered in a wider range of situations than is currently the case. It can be used for language practice and improvement in a similar manner to role play, project work and conversation. We have attempted to show that translation can be introduced purposefully and imaginatively into the language learning programme. Translating environmental texts in English language teaching plays a vital role in enhancing language proficiency and critical thinking, as well as fostering environmental awareness and promotes global citizenship among learners. By integrating environmental content into language learning, educators can enrich the learning experience so that students' soft skills and language skills are improved, but also so that they become environmentally conscious citizens ready to contribute towards the protection of environment.

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10. CLASSROOM CLIMATE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

by Natalia Kovalchuk

Abstract

A positive classroom climate for foreign students is one of the essential requirements for successful learning. The influence of the classroom climate should not be underestimated, particularly for students from various diasporas. Classroom environment should provide every possible opportunity to build strong emotional and social connections between teachers and students, making them feel secure and respected, even before they engage in the actual learning process. A positive classroom climate must be a pre-requisite for fostering collaboration among a foreign student and their peers, initially at a personal level, while at the same time creating a favourable atmosphere conducive to learning. An effective approach to developing such an atmosphere should begin with establishing a sense of community, which is extremely important for academic progress of any foreign student who is trying to enter into the cultural environment of a particular country. When met with positive reinforcement, a foreign student will be able to concentrate on learning, progressing step by step and becoming part of the host community.

Key Words

Classroom climate. Academic performance. Foreign students. Diaspora.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, education researchers are more and more inclined to recognize the importance of classroom climate as a factor that can influence the academic performance of a student. As global migration processes have recently intensified and the number of international students in different countries has grown, the academic performance of international students has become a challenge for education systems. Studying abroad can be beneficial for the students' future career, deepening their knowledge of the learning process in general, developing and improving competences that will certainly be useful for a young person starting their career path. In addition, economic and cultural ties between the host country and the student's country of origin also contribute to cooperation and mutual understanding between the countries.

In this article, we will cover the factors that can potentially affect the classroom climate and, as a result, the academic performance of a student. When a schoolchild or a student finds himself or herself in another country, especially if it is not by their own free will, the first task is to attain psychological and emotional stability and a sense of safety. It was the case of thousands of Ukrainians, who were forced to move to European countries or even further, to North America, to escape the war. Therefore, the most urgent task is to provide psychological assistance and support to schoolchildren, students and their families who have arrived in another country and now have to arrange their lives under new conditions and new circumstances.

DISCUSSION

One of the spaces where a schoolchild or student may find support and a comfortable environment can and should be an educational institution. A child or a teenager has to

grow up in a society, communicate with peers, and navigate the school social environment and the learning process in general.

For a student from another country, it is important to become part of a new community. In this regard, the role of teachers and classmates in the new school is extremely important in creating a friendly neighbourhood atmosphere of mutual respect and mutual assistance, as well as to provide the preconditions for further positive academic performance, which is directly influenced by the classroom environment.

Teachers have a special role to play in creating such a classroom climate, explaining to the other students in the class the specific circumstances under which the new student has come to their class. Moving to a new school, even in one's own country, is always stressful for a student: encountering new teachers, unfamiliar peers, an unknown school building, a strange neighbourhood or a whole new city. If you add another country with a different language, people with a different mentality and cultural background, it becomes an even greater challenge for a student who is trying to become part of the foreign community in which they now find themselves.

Lacking necessary language skills becomes an additional trigger of nervousness in the early stages of schooling, and only the tolerant and friendly attitude of teachers and other students can help alleviate this feeling of uncertainty and confusion in a foreign cultural environment. Only when students have overcome all the psycho-emotional problems of the initial stage, have mastered the language of the country at a level sufficient for learning, and have confidence that they are an accepted member of this small school community, where they can count on help should they need it, can they benefit fully from their new schooling environment. Under such circumstances, a student can focus on learning and, accordingly, strive to achieve high results.

The first problem that students face in a new country is adaptation to new conditions. This process can take from 6 months to a year to adapt to a new country and

up to 2 months to adapt to a new school. Children adapt more quickly than adults, but this does not mean that a child or a teenager will avoid stress at school when speaking a new language. Most educational systems have developed so-called welcome programmes, or preparatory courses, which help foreign students quickly adapt to the language and cultural traditions of the host country. Here, the assistance of a teacher will be invaluable, helping the student to become part of a new team and learn a new language.

The process of adaptation puts a strain on all areas of human activity - physical, emotional, and cognitive. Encountering and adapting to something new and unfamiliar puts a lot of work on the brain and a significant strain on the psyche. It is like walking through a thicket where you need to make paths for the first time. But with each repetition, with each experience, the 'path' becomes wider and easier. Each experience enriches: new knowledge, skills, and contacts appear. A student should know who they can turn to in case of need.

A student who is experiencing stress during the adaptation period may be distracted and have difficulty in concentrating on the tasks. Therefore, it is important for parents, teachers or supervisors to emphasize that they understand how difficult it is now, that they are confident that the student will cope with all the tasks. All, and even the smallest, achievements should be appreciated and praised.

Community is important for the student; it is essential that the student be accepted in the local group. If the student has difficulties in communication, the teacher should explain that in the new environment they mustn't hesitate to ask for help, and should encourage other students in the class to cooperate and help the new student. The main markers of a successful adaptation process are restful sleep, cheerful mood and adequate self-esteem. All these measures will help reduce stress levels and facilitate a gradual transition to the learning process itself.

The influence of the classroom climate has been studied by many scholars (Gerdes, H., & Mallinckrodt, B. 1994; Jochems, W., Snippe, J., Smid, H. J., & Verweij, A. 1996; Tinto, V. 1997; Chung, K. H., & Hwang, I. H. 2004; Ganem, N. M., & Manasse, M. 2011; Dean, A. 2012; Eze, S. C., & Inegbedion, H. 2015; Lee, J. S. 2017; Longobardi, S., Pagliuca, M.M. & Regoli, A. 2022).

Some (Son, B. & Cho Y. 2020, 7-17) have studied the factors that affect academic performance. The referenced study particularly examined the impact of academic factors on academic satisfaction: school and learning environment, curriculum, courses, school system, and academic supervisors. The impact of social and cultural factors on students` adaptation was also one of the objectives to be achieved in the study. The social factors included living environment, social activities and interpersonal relationships, and the cultural ones - local culture and local language. Economic factors affecting financial stability and academic performance in the short and long run shouldn`t be underestimated as well. Personal traits, attitudes or background should also be taken into account as potential factors that may influence the foreign students' academic performance.

The results of this study showed that the variety of courses, the school system and the exchange of information in the school can significantly influence the academic satisfaction of foreign students. As for the social impact, relationships with local friends and extracurricular activities were found to be factors influencing the social adjustment of international students.

Regarding the impact of cultural variables, the results showed that prior interest in the host country's culture does not have a significant impact on cultural adaptation. This may be due to the fact that there are international students who have never been interested in the host culture, while after arriving they became very interested in the host culture and adapted to it quickly.

This study found that only academic satisfaction significantly influences academic performance, while the other proposed factors did not show a substantial impact. The results of the statistical analysis also showed that academic satisfaction scores differed by the country of origin. It is likely that these differences in academic satisfaction are due to the difference between students who come from countries with academic systems and cultures similar to the host country and those with completely different academic systems. It was also found that the level of social adaptation and cultural adaptation is considerably influenced by the number of local friends (Son, B. & Cho Y. 2020, 7-17).

The overall conclusion drawn by the authors is that only satisfaction with learning has a significant impact on academic performance, while the other proposed factors have a less significant impact on academic performance. Satisfaction with learning, in turn, is closely related to the classroom climate and the personal bonds that teachers and students, and in particular, students from abroad, have been able to build with their peers (Son, B. & Cho Y., 2020, 7-17).

Other authors (Longobardi, S., Pagliuca, M.M. & Regoli, 2022, 1355-1373) covered some other aspects of classroom climate (disciplinary behaviour and parental involvement), their contribution to academic performance, and their role in the relationship between students' socioeconomic status and academic performance. The main results show that disciplinary behaviour, on the one hand, directly affects students' competence and, on the other hand, partially mediates the impact of socioeconomic status, while parental involvement has a lesser impact on students' achievement. Regarding parental involvement, this finding confirms the thesis that parental involvement should be more intensive at the beginning of the study period (this also applies to international students). Later on, the degree of parental involvement may decrease, while the student takes responsibility (at least partially) for their studies, and

parents tend to give advice and recommendations to achieve better results. This student-parents collaboration also contributes to a favourable classroom climate.

CONCLUSION

Once the difficulties of the adaptation period have been surmounted and stable personal contacts have been established in the classroom, a foreign student will be able to integrate gradually into the local community and become a member of the diaspora of their country. They will be able to change the role of a passive observer into an active contributor to the development of the local community of compatriots. The desire to be such an active participant in the diaspora directly depends on the psychological state of a person, and in particular, on the school and classroom climate.

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11. ECO-THEMES IN MARVEL AND DC COMICS

by Veronika Gondeková

Abstract

The subject of the research paper is the investigation of environmental communication in popular culture products, specifically in comics. The aim of the paper is to probe the way ecological motifs and themes are captured and treated in the pop culture products of Marvel and DC publishers. The research base consists of encyclopaedic publications on characters from both comic book worlds, as well as chosen movie adaptations of their stories. The theoretical starting point is environmental communication and its application to the research base.

Key Words

Comics. Environmental communication. Ecology. Pop culture.

INTRODUCTION

Ecological themes and motifs are nothing new, both in academic reflection and in popular culture. Comic books and their adaptations (films and series) form the basis of today's popular culture, but these famous characters have been created quite some time before present day. The paper works with the assumption that ecological motifs were already part of the comic book world at the time of its creation. By 'ecological motifs' we mean elements inspired by nature as well as elements of environmental communication.

The paper intends to probe into possibilities for further research, rather than provide a summation of the material. The text focuses primarily on the characters of the Marvel and DC comics universes, drawing on the dictionary publications *Marvel*

Avengers: Kompletný sprievodca postavami (Cowsill 2021) and *Veľký sprievodca svetom postáv DC Comics* (Scott 2020). In terms of film adaptations, we focus our attention on selected heroes (DC) and on a selected period – The Infinity Saga (Marvel). Serial adaptations of comic books are not part of our research.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION AND ECO-THEMES

In our paper, eco themes and topics are understood as elements of environmental communication and nature-inspired themes. The topic of environmental communication is concerned with how to communicate appropriately about environmental topics and issues. The aim of environmental communication rests in shaping consciousness and communicating views with implications for decision-making (Wendland 2000, 110). An important, consequent factor is the thematic boundedness of environmental communication. It includes communication approaches, principles, strategies and techniques appropriate in environmental management and protection (compare Flor 2004).

In addition to identifying elements of environmental communication in selected comic book stories and their film adaptations, we also included natural elements in the concept of "eco-themes", e.g., a character's name or abilities that we can associate with a particular natural element (plant or animal).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

The research base of the paper includes two encyclopaedic books, *Marvel Avengers: Kompletný sprievodca postavami* (Cowsill 2021) and *Veľký sprievodca svetom postáv DC Comics* (Scott 2020), containing descriptions of the characters (their life, their abilities and how they acquired them), as well as the film adaptations. In selecting the films to

include in the analysis, we chose the ones which featured popular character. From the DC Universe, we've chosen movies about popular characters: Batman (the Christopher Nolan trilogy, the Tim Burton and Joel Schumacher movies), Superman (the Zack Snyder-directed films), Wonder Woman (the Patty Jankins-directed duology), Shazam! (a duology about Shazam and his family), and Aquaman (a duology directed by James Wan). In total, 14 films were included in our research.

Among the Marvel comics adaptations, we focused on the films of the first three phases of the Marvel Universe (the Infinity Saga), i.e. from *Iron Man* (2008) to *Spider-Man: Far from Home* (2019). In total, 23 films were included in the research base. The disparity between the number of films analysed is that the Marvel Universe contains more films and lasts for longer period than the DC Extended Universe.

WHAT ARE MARVEL COMICS AND DC COMICS?

Comics are defined in *Slovník súčasného slovenského jazyka* (2011) as "a story made up of a series of cartoon images with short text, usually direct speech in bubbles, published in periodicals, often in continuation; a syncretic genre combining visual, literary, dramatic and cinematic elements and techniques". [1] Comics are not only stories about superheroes. In our country, for example, Jaroslav Němeček's Czech comic strip *Čtyřlístek* (Four Leaf Clover), which has been published since 1969, is popular.

A graphic novel is a comic that is published as a book. It is primarily intended for an adult audience, and the stories it treats are often darker than comics. Graphic novels have elaborated graphic design and are also highly regarded in literary terms, e.g. Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1980-86), Alan Moore's Watchmen (1986-87), Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2000-01).

[1] Slovníkový portál. n.d. "Komiks." Accessed August, 20 2024. https://slovnik.juls.savba.sk/?w=komiks&c=X480

Marvel Comics and DC Comics are the so-called big two of superhero comics. Both publishers are part of larger entertainment conglomerations that, in addition to comics, produce films, TV series, books, merch or computer games featuring characters from their extensive catalogues.

Marvel Comics is an American media company that, along with DC Comics, is one of the two largest comic book publishers in the world. Marvel Comics is part of Marvel Entertainment. The company is headquartered in the state of New York. It was founded in 1939 by publisher Martin Goodman as Timely Comics. The publisher's first comic book was Marvel Comics No. 1, published in October 1939. It featured the heroes Human Torch and The Sub-Mariner. In the 1940s, the publisher introduced many characters, the most famous of which is Captain America. He first appeared in comics in March 1941. The Marvel Universe is known for collaborative stories where characters appear in other characters' stories or become other heroes and was first introduced in 1961. That year, Goodman commissioned writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby to create the Fantastic Four. The first comic was published in November 1961. In it, readers discovered a comic set in the real world, which was Lee and Kirby's way of making their heroes more appealing than to the competition. Many new heroes were introduced in the 1960s, such as Spider-man, the Incredible Hulk, and the X-Men. Nowadays, Marvel superheroes are popular all over the world[2].

DC Comics is an American media company that has some of the most iconic comic book characters in 20th and 21st century pop culture in its catalogue. It is a subsidiary of DC Entertainment. The company is headquartered in Burbank, California. Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson founded National Allied Publications in 1934. The following year, the company published its first comic book, which featured new material rather than

[2] Britannica. n.d. "Marvel Comics." Accessed August, 20 2024. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marvel-Comics

reprinted newspaper comics. Wheeler-Nicholson, along with Harry Donenfeld and Jack Liebowitz, founded Detective Comics, Inc. in 1937. Due to financial problems, Wheeler-Nicholson had to sell his interest in the company. A series of mergers followed until the company was purchased by Warner Brothers-Seven Arts in 1969. Since 1977, it has been the official publishing name of DC Comics. The DC Comics publishing house has catalogued characters such as Superman, Batman, the Joker and Wonder Woman. The first Superman comic book was published in 1938 under the title *Action Comics No. 1*. The success of the characters was further increased by licensing their likeness or name and producing various products. Today, the characters of the DC universe are known not only from comic books or consumer products, but also from movies and TV shows. The DC movie universe is known to be much darker than that of Marvel[3].

ECOLOGICAL THEMES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION IN RESEARCH MATERIAL

In the research material, we found more ecological and natural themes than manifestations of environmental communication.

We identified manifestations of environmental communication mainly in films. A prominent theme in both Aquaman films is ocean pollution. In the first Aquaman film (2018), the negative character Orm (the younger half-brother of the main character Aquaman/Arthur Curry) wants to unite the ocean kingdoms to fight and destroy the land because of human behaviour. Orm sees the 'drylanders' (people living on dry land) as 'the bad guys' who don't value the oceans and therefore deserve to be destroyed. In this storyline and in Orm's character, we can see a kind of warning to humanity that

[3] Britannica. n.d. "DC Comics." Accessed August, 20 2024. https://www.britannica.com/topic/DC-Comics

pollutes the oceans. We can see environmental communication in this story line and the fact that ocean polluting is a real threat in our/real world too.

In the second film, *Aquaman and The Lost Kingdom (2023),* Aquaman teams up with Orm against a common enemy, a mercenary named Black Manta who wants to destroy Atlantis. The ancient fuel, which in the movie is known as orichalcum, and which Black Manta uses in his machines, produces high levels of greenhouse gases, causing the Earth to warm, the oceans to acidify and extreme weather events to occur. Aquaman and Orm try to prevent it. The inhabitants of Atlantis stopped using this fuel because it was causing disruption not only to their ocean environment, but also to their land environment. In both storylines, we can see the message that we should take care of our environment and protect it. These two films and their plots are the clearest and best examples of environmental communication in the material analysed.

The storyline of a villain who wants to destroy the world, mostly the Earth, can be seen in most of the analysed films. The reason for the villain's actions is usually the desire for power and/or for revenge not for better of planet and people.

We also consider the inspiration of nature to be a manifestation of eco themes and motifs. Many of the comicscharacters, their name and abilities, are inspired by an animal or plant. The animal component often refers to the character's abilities and is also reflected in the hero's suit and its colour scheme. A character has a name with an animal component because its abilities resemble those of an animal, or she acquired them directly from an animal, e.g. by being bitten by a spider like Spider-man. Based on this statement, we can refer to the animal components in comic book characters' proper names as onomastic metaphors, since "the name of an animal is associated with a number of typical characteristics, ways of behaviour that are characteristic of the bearer of this of the name" (Kazharnovich 2021, 22). For example, Spider-man has spider-like abilities, can climb walls, produce webs. He got his abilities from the spider. Batman may

not have superpowers, but he is rich and can make bat-resembling suits and devices. Catwoman has the typical characteristics of a cat, can communicate with them, and got her abilities from the cats that revived her after her fatal fall. We can see this in the movie, *Batman Returns (1992)*. There are more characters which are inspired by animals, e. g. King Shark (which is a literal shark with human body who is both a god and king), Squirrel Girl (who has a tail like squirrel), Stingray (who looks like the animal), Tiger Shark (resembles a tiger shark), Black Manta (who has a suit which looks like the animal), Rocket (a genetically modified raccoon), Mantis (who has antennas like a real praying mantis), Black Panther (resembles a black, cat-like predator), Ant-Man (can make himself as small as an ant), Wasp (her costume resembles the insect) and so on.

In addition to animal-inspired characters, we also found plant-inspired characters, such as Poison Ivy or Groot. The abilities of these characters are based on the plant they are named after (Poison Ivy emits poison to paralyze her enemies, she is also a nature-loving botanist) or resemble the plant, e.g. Groot (which is a literal tree).

CONCLUSION

Ecological themes in the research material are manifested through plant or animal inspiration. These are found, for example, in the names, abilities or costumes of comic book characters, whether heroes or villains.

Comic book characters whose abilities, name or costume are inspired by the animal kingdom are significantly more numerous than those whose creators were inspired by plants. More nature-inspired characters are found within DC Comics than Marvel Comics, and animal inspiration is prevalent there as well. In DC Comics we can find superhero duo Hawk & Dove, but also Hawkman and Hawkgirl, as well as Batman and Man-Bat. We can say that nature motifs were the biggest inspiration for comic book characters within DC Comics.

Environmental communication is found only in two Aquaman films *Aquaman (2018)* and *Aquaman and The Lost Kingdom (2023)*. In the storylines, we found an ecological threat in the form of fuel used by the negative character (Black Manta) and the tasks of the positive characters (Aquaman, Orm, Mera) is to prevent him from destroying the planet Earth, its air and environment. We did not encounter other manifestations of enviro-communication in the research material.

As we wrote in the introduction of the paper, our research aims only to probe into environmental communication and environmental communication within such a large pop cultural phenomenon as comic books and their film adaptations.

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12. CREATING, INSPIRING, AND FOSTERING GLOBALLY COMPETENT YOUNG ADULTS THROUGH THE IDAHO MUSEUM OF INTERNATIONAL DIASPORA GLOBAL LEADERS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

by Palina Louangketh and Anna Slatinská

Abstract

This article examines a transition away from a traditional academic-based program design to a global competency-based program through the Idaho Museum of International Diaspora's (IMID) of Global Leaders Fellowship Program (GLFP). The GLFP is an immersive leadership development program aimed to foster the fellows' global competency in their role to influence social impact at the foundational and systems-level. Launched in August 2023, the GLFP enrolled four junior fellows (undergraduates) from Emory University based in Atlanta, Georgia (USA) and three senior fellows (postgraduates and a PhD student) as participants in the IMID's expansion of its internationalization of university curriculum initiative. This 2024 cohort of fellows represent a diverse group of students and aspiring professionals from different cultural backgrounds. Their participation involved a hybrid collaboration online and in-person, on a shared product including a presentation, workshop, project ideas, article, tutorial to younger students, call-for-action, etc. Recent scholarship on internationalization of universities and consequent development of students´ global competencies have shown a variety of benefits for both faculty and their students, including increased confidence to take action, improved ability working in multicultural settings, enhanced global competence, digital literacy, fostered cultural and emotional intelligence, creativity, problem-solving skills, soft skills, etc. To add to this body of research, the authors explore the fellows' perceived value of the GLFP, nature of products developed during the first GLFP, and self-reported changes in senior and junior

fellows' global competence. Specifically, the fellows worked together to co-create a series of talks, presentations and project ideas (including planning of an exhibition and film screening) which were presented during IMID´s second international conference, Climate on Culture, held in Galway, Ireland from 18th to 21st September 2024. Global fellows from the three universities in the USA (Utah, Georgia, Idaho) and one from Europe (Slovakia) used this experience and knowledge to produce their final articles in the IMID´s second eBook, a publication by Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia in the forthcoming months. After describing the program, the authors discuss implications of using globally centered fellowship programs in the context of internationalization of university curriculum design.

Key Words

Global competence. Young adults. Global leaders. Fellows. Fellowship program. Climate. Culture. Internationalization. University. Curriculum design.

INTRODUCTION

Today's changing world requires a special skillset for aspiring leaders to flourish as they embark on a journey to grow and develop into effective global leaders. The continuous evolving state of the world, impacted by globalization, informs the need for globally competent leaders. Leaders of today and tomorrow must have competence in cross-cultural awareness and practice which includes also:

- Commitment to learning about other countries' business, political, academic, and cultural environments worldwide;
- Learn the perspectives and behaviors of other countries – culture, trends and technologies;
- Ability and genuine willingness to collaborate with other cultures;
- Adaptability to the living and social standards in other cultures; and
- Skills to embrace diversity with cultural equality by suspending cultural biases. (Global Leaders Fellowship Program IMID, 2024)

As it is evident, preparing students for the time of unprecedented social, economic, environmental and digital global changes demands that we reconsider what matters most to teach and learn and how (Perkins 2014, in Boix Mansilla, V., et al. 2017). Focusing on global competencies in our curricula (instruction and assessment) brings new opportunities and challenges in the view of educating our students (future leaders) for global participation. Aligned with this idea, the Global Leaders Fellowship Program was established by Dr. Palina Louangketh in 2023 in order to support and facilitate the professional and personal journey of young adults in their pursuit of becoming active global citizens equipped with a range of skills, knowledge and competencies needed to take action in their local communities and/or global settings.

The GLFP has been incorporated into IMID´s mission in the context of its global internationalization initiatives and projects aimed at fostering global competencies of young global fellows both in the USA and beyond (ranging across different continents). Since the inception of the program in 2023, other partner universities from the USA and beyond have gravitated to this idea, aligned with their internationalization of university curriculum design activities, such as Matej Bel University (Slovakia) and USA-based schools – University of Utah, Boise State University, and Emory University.

GLOBAL LEADERS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In the words of Dr. Palina Louangketh, Idaho Museum of International Diaspora Founder and CEO/Executive Director (IMID 2024), *"the IMID's Global Leaders Fellowship Program (GLFP) is an immersive global leadership development program aimed to influence social impact at the foundational and systems-level. The program aims to provide a transformational experience for the GLFP fellows to experience the world through IMID opportunities, gain new global skills, and apply skills and knowledge domestically and internationally."* GLFP is a very practical program which has been

designed to prepare *today's students (either graduates or postgraduates, juniors and seniors), as aspiring Global Leaders Fellows, to navigate the challenges of tomorrow and lead with authenticity through a special skillset as they grow and develop into effective global leaders.*

The program has been designed according to its specific operations and phases (as seen below). The first fellows completed their 1-year program in September 2024 during the IMID´s second international conference, Climate on Culture, featuring the pivotal work of Ireland-based co-organizer, Trevor Ó Clochartaigh at TG4:

Programmatic operations:

August - October 2023: Student Recruitment

February - March 2024: Global Skills Development

May - June 2024: Leadership Modelling and Skills Development

July - August 2024: Leadership Platform Wrap-Up

September 2024: Posters and Presentations by Fellows (at IMID's annual global conference)

PHASES I Theoretical Foundations to Application of Knowledge and Skills:

October 2024 - January 2025: Foundational Phase

April 2025: Strategy Phase

May - September 2025: Skills and Expertise Application

The GLFP´s competency-based mastery learning platform should be underlined at this point, having a beneficial effect on both fellows and faculty members. The following aspects such as *limitation of stress situations, possibilities to self-realize one's potential,*

individualization of the program, equity enhanced, creativity supported, show that the climate of learning has been duly achieved.

The program provided fellows with the enhanced opportunity to Learn. Discover. Explore. as reflected in the table below (inspired and modified by IMID, 2024) revealing more about their 1-year immersive professional journey starting in the fellows´ home universities and finishing in September 2024 in Galway, Ireland at the end of IMID's second annual international conference, Climate on Culture:

Global Leaders Fellowship Program: Examples of the Fellows' Journey		
Learn.	**Discover.**	**Explore.**
Fellows learned about human journey stories of refugees and other populations that were forced to leave their homes, including climate migrants.	Fellows discovered the value of personal connections to people during their online and present team meetings as well as during the final four day long Climate on Culture conference where their immersive involvement with conference participants was observed.	Fellows explored opportunities for active engagement with communities and partners on relevant topics through IMID's educational and cultural programs.
Fellows learned about the extensive work of climate researchers and climate academics and the immense impact of their work on our future.	Fellows discovered the value of personal connections to history based on their pre and while conference discussions of various case studies (drawn from the past) presented during the conference.	Fellows explored the benefits of their active participation in GLFP and direct involvement (through different actions) in the Climate on Culture conference.
Fellows learned about lived experience of eyewitnesses, refugees and war migrants from different places (Ukraine, Somalia, etc.).	Fellows discovered the value of personal connections to cultures across the world which were given their voice(s) during conference workshops and sessions, all in line with elevating fellows´ acknowledgement and appreciation of the past, current, and future contexts.	Fellows explored the challenges which their professional journey might bring as well as resiliency strategies which can help them cope with different life situations.

CENTERING GLOBAL COMPETENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLFP

Global competence has been broadly defined as 'the comprehensive capability to live, communicate, and work in a multiculturally interconnected world' (Kang et al., 2018). In education, a commonly accepted definition conceives global competence as 'the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues; to understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others; to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures; and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development (Asia Society/OECD 2018, 5).'

In the table below (adapted from Boix Mansilla, V., et al. 2017) we can see what specific global competencies the global fellows fostered and specific examples for each domain.

Domains of Global Competencies	Description of Global Competencies in the context of GLFP
I. Deepening personal, local and global self awareness and identity	The global fellows explored their possibilities of acting as global citizens, critically examining their role in the global society, researching into how certain influences from one's own background (e.g. values, upbringing, class status, etc.) and access to knowledge, rights, resources and technology impacts individuals' and society's educational outcomes and quality of life overall.
II. Investigating the world	Fellows had a chance to examine differences and connections between values and worldviews, power structures and systems (e.g. in education, government, industry) across cultures, and using credible sources to ask deep questions and form informed and compelling arguments during conference sessions and workshops.
III. Recognizing perspectives	Fellows were involved in discussions and debates which led them to recognizing that people's personal backgrounds and cultural, economic, historical and social realities affect their perspectives, perceptions and actions. They were trained and encouraged to listen actively to people´s stories and to act with empathy and commitment to avoid ethnocentric attitudes and stereotypes.
IV. Communicating effectively	Fellows received a prior instruction in the field of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy which helped them see that the backgrounds we come from affect our communication. They were also instructed on how to initiate and sustain positive interactions, using available linguistic repertoires and effective communication strategies across various media.

V. Taking action	This most difficult domain in the area of global competencies has been achieved by the fellows´ personal and also collective action to address a globally relevant, ethical, social and/or environmental challenge, identified prior to the conference which was reflected during the project exhibition titled: Arrivals: What´s Left Behind, What Lies Ahead (led by leadership of IMID´s Academic and Research Program – Professors Jon Cox from University of Delaware (Newark, Delaware, USA) and Andy Bale from Dickinson College (Carlisle, Pennsylvania, USA). The global fellows had a chance to see the impact of the intervention on the community of Ukrainians and other immigrants living in Ireland who had to flee their homeland because of the war or other life-threatening reasons. All in all, the organized exhibition gave voice to different groups of people affected by a range of societal, environmental, economic, political, or other adversities.

GLOBAL FELLOWS AND THEIR ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN THE CLIMATE ON CULTURE CONFERENCE

In order to be more precise with the statistics concerning GLFP, there were 3 senior fellows involved in the program, two from USA (Utah, Idaho), one from Europe (Ukraine, Slovakia), and four junior fellows from USA (Georgia), representing the following institutions: IMID, University of Utah, Emory University and Matej Bel University.

In the next paragraph we provide the list of global fellows´ names and the topic presented during the timeframe of the Climate on Culture Conference from 18th – 21st September 2024:

Megan Farrow (senior fellow, founder and CEO | UpStride Solutions, LLC): Exploring Resilience – Strategies for Navigating Change

Kosta Kambouris (senior fellow, University of Utah): Unveiling Diasporic Exclusion: Fear, Political Climate, and the Agencies of Diasporic Culture

Nataliia Metsenko: Arrivals: What's Left Behind, What Lies Ahead (a film project, exhibition)

Yingyi Tan: Western Root, Eastern Shore: The Journey of American Ginseng

Mari Ismail: Shaping Somali Society: The Impact of the Somali Civil War on Religious Adherence and Identity

Moyo Odugbemi: Health and Wellbeing: Embracing Community in a Changing Climate (co-presented with Julianna Cruz)

Julianna Cruz: Health and Wellbeing: Embracing Community in a Changing Climate (co-presented with Moyo Odugbemi)

The global competencies development of the fellows would not have been successful without the extensive work and dedication of faculty members (from the respective universities above) who have been involved as facilitators, mentors, and professional coaches:

Dr. Palina Louangketh (Boise State University, IMID, Idaho, USA)

Dr. Christine Ristaino (Emory University, Georgia, USA)

Dr. Hong Li (Emory University, Georgia, USA)

Dr. Anna Slatinská (Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia)

Additionally, the work of the global fellows was observed and supervised by IMID ART (Academics and Research Team) – a group of scholars and researchers dedicated to advancing the mission and work of the IMID.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE

In order to provide the reader with more information about how global fellows perceived their involvement in the GLFP (aligned with their global competencies development), several (anonymous) reflection questions (seen below) were posed to each of the fellows in the GLFP. A set of questions were distributed by email to each fellow immediately following the conclusion of the Climate on Culture Conference:

- What are the major takeaways from your participation in the conference in the context of your GLFP activities?
- What benefits did it bring to you in terms of your personal and professional development?
- What key skills, knowledge and global competencies did you have a chance to cultivate prior to the conference (during your immersive one-year GLFP program initiated by IMID) and then during the conference?
- What impact did your involvement in GLFP have on you (on your life and studies and future goals)?

In the final paragraph below, some key reflection points of the fellows revealed their level of expertise and experience including personal and professional engagement in the GLFP aligned with their global competencies development.

Some examples:

"As a researcher pursuing work in diaspora studies, I found the conference immensely valuable in many ways. The main takeaways from the conference were 1) gaining

perspective on how the diaspora is used across contexts and 2) the immense interdisciplinary, environmental, and global realities of human migration. It was helpful to listen and reflect upon presentations in academic research, NGO work, media, cultural institutions, artists, and activists. These diverse perspectives opened up my personal perspective on how diaspora is processed. I learned that diaspora fits in between the individual and bigger political and environmental climates, continually and resiliently adapting across changing climates, and it is something I will remember in my research. During the fellowship, I had the privilege of participating in conference programming, connecting with individuals who are equally as passionate about diaspora studies as I am, and making strong friendships and networks. This fellowship gave me the communication skills to communicate ideas and actions across contexts and audiences and gave me diverse perspectives on a complex concept. I am indebted and grateful for the IMID, collaborators, and the impactful ripple effects that are conducted through this organization."

Kosta Kambouris, the University of Utah, PhD. candidate

"It was a privilege to participate in the IMID's Global Leader Fellowship Program over the past year, where I had the opportunity to develop and share my research on the history of the U.S.-China trade and cultural exchanges through the story of American Ginseng at the conference in Ireland in the end. Throughout the one-year GLFP program, I was fortunate to befriend other remarkable fellows who, despite studying diverse subjects, shared my passion for social justice and cultural exchange. The conference proved to be particularly enlightening, illustrating the connections between physical environments and cultural practices across different societies, with insights from speakers of various backgrounds. I gained an understanding of the myriad ways cultural institutions can influence climate action and how historical contexts remain pertinent to

current global issues. It also connects me directly to the renowned scholars and practitioners working in this field, who I enjoyed having conversations with. As someone who aspires to work in international relations, the GLFP offered not just a classroom to engage with the latest discussions on "culture," but also a valuable platform to express my thoughts on global interactions. This experience has reinforced my belief in contributing to a better future through dialogue, exchange, and embracing diversity."

Ying Yi Tan, Emory University graduate, Atlanta, USA

"The conference provided a deeper understanding of the role of international cooperation in addressing global challenges and the importance of engaging various stakeholders to achieve common goals. Participation in the conference expanded my professional network and gave me the opportunity to exchange ideas with experts in the field of global partnership, significantly enriching my vision and approach to my own activities. During the GLFP program, I developed strategic planning skills. The conference provided an opportunity to hone communication and collaboration skills in a multicultural environment. The program changed my perspective on my professional path, boosted my confidence."

Nataliia Metsenko, Matej Bel University, Slovakia

"Participating in the Climate on Culture conference through the GLFP was an eye-opening and deeply personal experience. As I presented my research on how cultural orientations impact health outcomes, I found myself reconnecting with my own heritage while exploring new concepts, like the Hispanic Paradox. My curiosity led me to seek out ideas that might resonate with the Irish audience, and although I didn't find direct comparisons, the cultural tour of Galway opened my eyes to the rich Irish heritage. Walking through one of the Gaeltacht regions, where Irish is the primary language, made

me realize how deeply language is tied to identity. It was a humbling moment when I introduced myself in Irish during my presentation and saw the audience's warm smiles—it inspired me to push further in my journey of cultural awareness. Beyond the research, I also had the chance to facilitate a day of presentations, which gave me a new level of confidence in public speaking and leadership. This conference, along with the immersive year in GLFP, has cultivated my skills in research, cross-cultural communication, and collaboration. It's reinforced my passion for understanding global perspectives and has given me tools that I know will shape my studies, future career, and how I approach global challenges moving forward."

Moyo Odugbemi

"For me, major takeaways from participating in this conference in the context of GLFP activities are two-fold. First, there was the culmination of all the planning, preparation and research for the eBook article resulting in a very successful workshop. Second, there was the opportunity to both meet and network with the cohort of fellows and conference attendees – many of these will be lifelong connections! I learned so much, both from the conference sessions but also from conversations with many individuals. This was such a diverse group of brilliant people and having the opportunity to spend the week with them added so much to my personal and professional development. The immersive cultural experiences in Ireland allowed me to learn the culture, perspectives and behaviors of another country, one of the competencies of the GLFP, and this is something I am looking forward to replicating with future conferences and career endeavours. My involvement in the GLFP has had profound impacts, and has influenced the direction of my future goals. I have been inspired to continue developing the skillset necessary to become an effective global leader."

Megan Farrow, Founder & CEO – UpStride Solutions, LLC

CONCLUSION

Integration of global competencies into university and other educational institutions´ courses has never been so important and relevant as it is now. The global unrest even accelerates this trend of preparing young people for the future with all its joys and urgent societal problems and equipping them with practical resiliency techniques and strategies. Despite its immense benefits, programs such as GLFP (established by IMID) require a solid vision including a substantial amount of enthusiasm, dedication and energy focused towards one goal – i.e., helping young people (future leaders) with their professional and personal journeys to become active global citizens equipped not only with skills and knowledge but also with global competence and its individual domains. The programs such as IMID´s GLFP present a successful example of how to internationalize the university curriculum design effectively, bringing innovation to traditional teacher-centered education, preparing students for life, by making their experience more genuine, creative, practical and globally enriching.

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13. DIGITAL NARRATIVES OF CLIMATE: REDEFINING CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

by Ugyen Tshomo

Abstract

This literature review examines how digital narratives, including virtual reality, augmented reality, and transmedia storytelling, reshape climate change communication by engaging audiences through immersive and interactive platforms. Drawing from media studies and ecological humanities, the paper explores how these technologies enhance public understanding and foster emotional connections that inspire environmental activism. Focusing on peer-reviewed studies published between 1999 and 2023, the review highlights the potential of digital storytelling to overcome the psychological distance of climate issues and to sustain long-term engagement. Findings suggest that these digital media not only promote ecological awareness but also encourage collective action for a more sustainable future. By synthesizing key trends and innovations in climate communication, this paper contributes to the growing discourse on the role of technology in shaping cultural attitudes toward environmental challenges.

Key Words

Digital narratives. Climate change communication. Immersive technologies. Transmedia storytelling. Environmental activism.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Climate change communication faces persistent challenges, particularly in engaging diverse audiences and translating complex scientific data into accessible and emotionally resonant narratives. Traditional media and scientific reports, while crucial for disseminating facts, often fail to inspire collective action due to their lack of emotional engagement and accessibility (Moser and Dilling 2011). Public disengagement, driven by the overwhelming scale of climate issues and the perceived distance of its impacts, continues to hinder effective climate action (Nisbet 2009). Recent studies have shown that the traditional modes of communication struggle to address the "psychological distance" of climate change, where people feel disconnected from its effects due to geographic, temporal, and social factors (Spence, Poortinga, and Pidgeon 2012).

With the rise of digital platforms, however, new opportunities for climate communication have emerged, offering more interactive, immersive, and culturally resonant storytelling mechanisms. Digital narratives, incorporating technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and transmedia storytelling, have the potential to reduce psychological distance and foster a deeper emotional connection with the audience (Schäfer 2020). By breaking away from traditional formats, these digital forms of engagement can create participatory experiences that emphasize personal agency and collective action (Van der Linden, Maibach, and Leiserowitz 2015). However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these new digital storytelling techniques can be systematically leveraged to address climate change and inspire sustained engagement. This literature review seeks to explore how digital narratives redefine the conventions of climate storytelling and contribute to the growing need for more dynamic and effective communication strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Digital Narratives and Climate Change Communication

In light of traditional media's ongoing struggle to effectively reach a diverse array of audiences regarding the pressing issue of climate change, digital narratives have emerged as a formidable tool for amplifying public awareness and encouraging proactive measures. This review investigates the role of digital storytelling platforms, immersive technologies, and interactive formats in transforming climate communication and promoting deeper engagement with the subject.

Digital Storytelling Platforms

Digital storytelling platforms—including social media and multimedia websites—have emerged as essential components of climate communication strategies. These platforms play a pivotal role in shaping and maintaining public attention toward climate issues. Research by Schäfer (2020) indicates that platforms like Twitter and Facebook facilitate the rapid dissemination of climate-related content, allowing for immediate interaction and dialogue. These channels enable the creation of viral content, reaching a broad audience swiftly. Moreover, social media campaigns and interactive websites have demonstrated success in simplifying complex climate data into engaging and understandable narratives, as highlighted by Smith and Leiserowitz (2014).

However, these digital platforms, much like traditional media, are not immune to cyclical patterns in public and media attention. McComas and Shanahan (1999) emphasize that media coverage of environmental issues, including global warming, follows an attention cycle where certain narrative elements dominate at different stages. In their content analysis of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* from 1980 to 1995, they found that during the peak of media attention, the focus was primarily on the

potential dangers and consequences of global warming. This narrative gradually shifts, with greater attention to scientific controversies and economic considerations during the maintenance and decline phases of media interest.

This cyclical nature of traditional media coverage has profound implications for digital storytelling platforms. While social media can quickly amplify climate narratives and mobilize public discourse, the platforms are also susceptible to similar patterns of fluctuating attention. Viral campaigns that gain traction during periods of heightened concern may lose momentum as other issues emerge, leading to the challenge of sustaining engagement over time. As McComas and Shanahan (1999) suggest, narratives must be carefully constructed to maintain relevance and urgency across the various stages of public attention cycles.

In addition to social media, blogs, and podcasts play critical roles in maintaining engagement by offering spaces for diverse perspectives—ranging from scientists and activists to everyday citizens—to contribute their voices to the climate discourse (Boykoff and Boykoff 2007). Podcasts, in particular, offer an intimate setting for in-depth dialogue and storytelling, making intricate topics more approachable and relatable (Weber et al. 2010). These platforms, while offering valuable new avenues for public engagement, must also navigate the challenges of fluctuating attention cycles, emphasizing the importance of crafting narratives that can sustain interest and impact over time, even as public focus shifts.

Immersive Technologies: VR, AR, and AI

Emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are reshaping how audiences engage with climate change narratives. VR, in particular, has been recognized for its ability to enhance emotional engagement by allowing users to experience the effects of climate change directly.

AR applications on mobile devices enable users to visualize climate change impacts in their surroundings. For instance, mobile apps (Surging Seas, Earth Now, Floodmap Mobile, Windy, Climate Viewer) that simulate rising sea levels or extreme weather phenomena illustrate the immediate consequences of climate change, contributing to a greater awareness among users. Additionally, AI-driven tools can create personalized climate narratives, tailoring messages to align with individual interests and behaviors, and enhancing engagement (Gordon et al. 2020).

Transmedia and Interactive Fiction

Transmedia storytelling—a method that spreads a narrative across various platforms—has proven effective in climate communication. Jenkins (2006) argues that this approach can create a more immersive narrative experience, captivating audiences through multiple media forms, including films, web series, and social media. The Climate Reality Project exemplifies this strategy by blending online content, live events, and social media outreach to construct a comprehensive climate narrative that resonates with a wide audience (Schäfer 2020).

Further expanding on the immersive qualities of digital storytelling, Smeda et al. (2014) illustrate the effectiveness of digital storytelling in classroom settings. Their comprehensive study demonstrates how digital storytelling, particularly in climate change education, fosters interdisciplinary learning and facilitates a deeper understanding of the subject by encouraging students to engage with complex concepts through personal and lived experiences. By involving diverse cultural perspectives and lived experiences, digital storytelling enables students to critically reflect on climate change's broader impact, particularly when comparing global north and south conditions. Similarly, Palioura and Dimoulas (2022) emphasize the power of integrating transmedia storytelling into education. Their study highlights how digital storytelling can merge

personal narratives with theoretical knowledge, making abstract environmental issues more tangible and accessible to students. This approach not only fosters critical thinking but also enhances student engagement by utilizing multiple media forms to convey complex concepts, particularly in fields like climate change education where real-world application is essential.

Moreover, Hunt (2023) notes that storytelling in the digital age has undergone a significant transformation, shifting from one-way communication to interactive, multi-platform engagement. Digital storytelling now allows audiences not only to consume but also to contribute to narratives, reshaping how stories are told and shared. This interactive evolution fosters empathy, facilitates learning, and allows for deeper connections across communities. As Hunt points out, the incorporation of multimedia elements such as video, audio, and interactive features enriches the user experience, making stories more immersive and impactful. Furthermore, the rise of user-generated content platforms like YouTube and TikTok has democratized storytelling, giving a voice to individuals and communities previously excluded from mainstream narratives.

In their article on transforming climate stories from "issue-based" to "action-based," De Meyer et al. (2021) argue that conventional climate communication, which often focuses on raising awareness through fear and concern, may not be as effective in driving behavioral change. Instead, they propose storytelling that emphasizes positive climate actions and builds agency by showcasing how communities, professionals, and citizens are taking steps to mitigate climate change. By focusing on action rather than just the issue, transmedia and digital storytelling platforms can shift the narrative towards empowerment and engagement.

Interactive fiction and games present another innovative approach to engaging audiences with climate change issues. By allowing users to make choices that influence the story's outcomes, interactive formats cultivate a sense of agency and involvement.

Research by Schouten et al. (2020) demonstrates that games centered around climate themes can effectively convey complex environmental issues, making them engaging and participatory. These interactive storytelling methods offer a unique combination of learning and engagement, emphasizing the personal impact of climate change while also providing an interactive experience that deepens the audience's involvement with the narrative.

Emotional Engagement and Cultural Impact

Digital narratives possess the unique potential to forge strong emotional connections with climate issues, thus driving behavioral change. Van der Linden et al. (2015) indicate that emotionally charged content—such as personal narratives and immersive experiences—can significantly enhance public understanding and urgency related to climate change. The integration of emotional storytelling with scientific data assists in bridging the gap between complex information and public perception (Nisbet and Scheufele 2009).

The cultural implications of digital narratives are equally significant. By weaving in cultural contexts and personal experiences, these narratives render climate issues more relatable and actionable. Research conducted by O'Neill and Nicholson-Cole (2009) underscores how culturally attuned climate messaging can resonate more deeply with specific audiences, thereby fostering increased awareness and engagement.

Barriers and Moderators in Digital Climate Narratives

Despite their promise, digital narratives encounter several challenges. Disparities in access to digital technologies can result in unequal benefits, particularly for communities in developing regions (Boakye, Wiafe, and Frempong 2023). Furthermore, digital literacy and generational differences influence audience engagement with digital content;

younger individuals often navigate digital media with greater ease than older populations, who may favor traditional forms of communication (Ballew et al. 2019).

Geographic and socio-economic factors also significantly affect the efficacy of digital climate narratives. Research suggests that communities directly impacted by climate change are more likely to engage with relevant content than those who experience less immediate effects (Spence et al. 2012). Recognizing these influencing factors is essential for crafting impactful digital climate communication strategies (Osei, Wiafe, and Frempong 2023).

SYNTHESIS AND GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

While digital narratives offer innovative methods for climate communication, significant gaps remain in understanding their long-term impact and effectiveness. Current studies often highlight the immediate benefits of these technologies, but there is limited research on their sustained influence on climate engagement. Additionally, challenges such as access disparities and digital literacy further complicate the scalability of these approaches, particularly in underrepresented communities. Future research should investigate how digital narratives can be tailored to address these barriers and foster ongoing engagement across diverse populations. Filling these gaps will be crucial for advancing climate communication strategies that harness digital innovations to inspire collective action and foster a more informed, proactive public.

CONCLUSION

The integration of digital narratives into climate change communication represents a transformative and increasingly essential approach to addressing one of the world's most urgent challenges. This literature review demonstrates that digital storytelling

platforms—ranging from social media and blogs to immersive technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR)—are powerful tools for engaging diverse audiences. These platforms not only disseminate climate information effectively but also foster public dialogue and deepen emotional connections to climate issues through immersive, experiential learning.

However, despite the promise of digital narratives, this review also identifies critical challenges, including disparities in access to technology, digital literacy, and generational differences that can limit their reach and impact. Geographic and socio-economic factors also play a significant role in shaping audience engagement. To fully realize the potential of digital climate communication, these barriers must be addressed, ensuring that digital narratives reach and resonate with all communities.

Future research should therefore prioritise evaluating the long-term effects of these narratives on public behaviour and awareness. Moreover, developing strategies to overcome the digital divide will be vital in creating inclusive and effective climate communication. By continually refining digital storytelling methods, we can enhance ecological awareness and inspire meaningful, collective action toward a more sustainable and equitable future.

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14. STEAM-based Photovoice: A Technique for Knowledge Transfer and Cultural Understanding

by Jon Cox, Andy Bale, Anna Slatinská

Abstract

This article explores the application of a STEAM-based photovoice approach in Kenya as part of the Artist-in-Residence program led by Studio Verde, which engaged nine artists and two organizers from various countries to collaborate with the Maasai community. One of the major aims of the whole project was to preserve and disseminate the traditional knowledge as well as cultural and natural heritage of the Maasai community via selected active participatory method. The project has successfully engaged younger community members in their communication with elder community members, strengthening the societal bonds and contributing to nurturing their cultural identity and intergenerational transfer of knowledge of medicinal plants. The results showed that Photovoice can be adapted to different needs and diverse communities to capture their stories, visualize their problems, and inform about their expectations and challenges for the future.

Key Words

STEAM-based Photovoice. Transfer. Knowledge. Culture. Heritage. Future generations.

INTRODUCTION

In an ever-evolving global landscape, the preservation and dissemination of traditional knowledge and cultural and natural heritage remain paramount. Integrating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) with Photovoice—a

participatory action research methodology—presents a powerful approach to knowledge transfer, cultural understanding, and community documentation, especially in the context of endangered cultures/species. This article explores applying a STEAM-based photovoice approach in Kenya to facilitate these objectives, showcasing its adaptability and effectiveness across diverse audiences.

AIM

To demonstrate that a STEAM-based photovoice approach is easily adaptable for a broad range of audiences, allowing participants autonomy in sharing their knowledge, cultural insights, and personal stories.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Kenya: Nashulai Maasai Conservancy

At Nashulai Maasai Conservancy in Kenya, a program led by Studio Verde engaged nine artists and two organizers from various countries to collaborate with the Maasai community. The initiative aimed to archive oral traditions and promote sustainable conservation, focusing on conserving wildlife, preserving culture, and reversing poverty.

Methodology: STEAM-based Photovoice

Photovoice empowers individuals to document and reflect on their community using photography and narrative. When integrated with STEAM, it becomes a robust education and cultural preservation tool. This was also why the Photovoice method was

chosen as the primary tool for documenting and disseminating more about the rich culture of Maasai community in Kenya.

Workshops and Activities

Kenya

Artists and community members in Kenya began collecting and learning about medicinal plants with Maasai elders. Inspired by early photography and Anna Atkins' cyanotypes, we conducted two medicinal plant cyanotype workshops. Participants aged 6 to 80+ coated archival paper with a light-sensitive cyanotype solution, composed plants on the paper, and exposed them to sunlight, creating images that were later rinsed and dried to reveal the cyan color.

Younger community members interviewed elders to document ancestral knowledge of the plants, recording the Maasai names, uses, and preparation methods on the back of the cyanotypes. This intergenerational exchange facilitated the transfer of traditional knowledge to younger generations, preserving their cultural heritage.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Knowledge Transfer

In Kenya, the STEAM-based photovoice approach facilitated the transfer of knowledge to younger generations by engaging them in documenting and reflecting on their cultural heritage. Workshop participants created cyanotype prints that captured personal and community narratives, ensuring the preservation and transmission of this knowledge.

Younger community members learned from their elders, benefiting from this enriching hands-on experience. They also practiced their empathy, showed respect and

tolerance, and enhanced their cultural and emotional intelligence while actively listening to the stories of the elder members of their community. Thus, they did not only develop their knowledge, skills, and competencies but also societal ties between older and younger generations.

Cultural Understanding and Reflection

The workshops and exhibitions encouraged a deeper understanding of culture by enabling participants to share their experiences and insights. The Photovoice technique supported personal reflection and group dialogue, enhancing participants' intercultural competencies and empathy. The group exhibition of cyanotypes in Kenya allowed community members to share and validate the process, underscoring the cultural significance and utility of Photovoice in preserving ancestral knowledge.

The table below shows some more details of what specific domains of global competence the workshop participants fostered (adapted from Boix Mansilla, V., et al., 2017):

Domains of Global Competencies	Description of Global Competencies in the context of Steam-based Photovoice workshops held in Kenya
I. Deepening personal, local and global self awareness and identity	The local workshop participants explored their possibilities of acting as global citizens, critically examining their role in their society/Massai community, researching into their ancestral heritage regarding medicinal plants and exploring their global significance in terms of promoting health and wellbeing of individuals.
II. Investigating the world	Workshop participants had a chance to examine their local traditions and natural heritage in the context of their global significance and value. The younger people explored various opinions across generations through their interviews with older people. They were prompted to ask deep questions and form informed and compelling information about medicinal plants during workshops and Photovoice discussions.
III. Recognizing perspectives	The Photovoice participants were involved in discussions that led them to recognize their own cultural and natural heritage as well as recognizing the fact that people´s perspectives and actions are often influenced by their background (personal, cultural, economic, social, etc.). The younger generation was trained and encouraged to listen actively to their elders' stories and to act with empathy, respect, and tolerance, minimizing any negative stereotypes or prejudices.

IV. Communicating effectively	The younger generation of workshop participants received prior instruction about how to interview people and what questions to ask. They were also guided through the interview process with supervision, allowing them to ask questions and carry out the process on their own in future sessions.
V. Taking action	This most challenging domain in the area of global competencies has been achieved partially through discussions with young people regarding their ideas and plans on how to preserve their ancestral cultural and natural heritage.

Future goals and aspirations

In Kenya, personalized cyanotype prints and public exhibitions provided a platform for participants to share their knowledge, future goals, and aspirations. These tangible prints serve as a future resource for ongoing education and cultural preservation. This visual storytelling method allowed individuals to express their hopes and dreams, contributing to a shared vision for the future.

Reflecting on the Past

By documenting the stories of underrepresented populations, the project provided a means for participants to reflect on their past experiences. The interviews, portrait sessions and the intergenerational exchanges in Kenya captured personal histories, offering a deeper understanding of individual and community journeys.

Documenting the Current State

The project documented the current state of diverse communities, providing a snapshot of contemporary life and challenges. This documentation serves as a valuable resource for future research and community engagement.

MAJOR PROJECT´S ACHIEVEMENTS

The project supported	
sustainable conservation	societal bonds between younger and elder communities
preservation of culture	creativity of workshop participants
reverse of poverty	communication skills of workshop participants
intergenerational transmission of knowledge and skills	a range of soft skills among workshop participants

CONCLUSION

The STEAM-based photovoice approach has demonstrated its adaptability and effectiveness across diverse audiences. This technique has successfully preserved cultural heritage, facilitated intergenerational knowledge transfer, and developed a deeper understanding of culture by allowing participants autonomy in sharing their

knowledge and stories. The positive response to the workshops and exhibitions underscores the potential of STEAM-based photovoice to significantly impact education, cultural understanding, and community documentation. As illustrated by the project, this approach can be a powerful tool for creating autonomy, reflection, and positive engagement within communities worldwide.

There is also a significant potential to apply the Photovoice method in the traditional school setting with different age groups of learners, ranging from lower to higher levels of secondary schools. We believe that in the future, more and more teachers will integrate Photovoice (or Steam-based Photovoice) into their classes either partially or on a full scale to build a stronger rapport with their students, give them a voice, document their stories, life journeys, joys, and challenges and support their emotional and mental wellbeing.

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Lecture:

Bale., A., & Cox., J. (10/19/23) PhotoVoice for Cultural Preservation. Nashulai Cultural Training Center, Kenya.

Workshops:

Bale., A., & Cox., J. (10/22/23) Cyanotpyes using Medicinal Plants of the Massai. Nashulai Cultural Training Center, Kenya.

Bale., A., & Cox., J. (10/22/23) Cyanotpyes using Medicinal Plants of the Massai. Oldarpoi Camp, Kenya.

Group Exhibition:

Artist-in-Residence Program, Co-Existence Netii Apa Storytellers Project, Nashulai Maasai Conservancy, Orpul Site, Kenya (10/30/23).
Photos Taken at the Photovoice site in Kenya:
Maasai warriors examine the cyanotypes created using medicinal plants of the Maasai culture.

Maasai warriors examine the cyanotypes created using medicinal plants of the Maasai culture

Artist in residence Naitiemu assists children and elders in developing cyanotypes

Maasai community member Christine Stoyian collects medicinal plants for the cyanotype process.

V. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

EDITORS:

Palina Louangketh, DSL MHS | Dr. Palina Louangketh's family refugee journey inspired her vision to develop the Idaho Museum of International Diaspora (IMID) to honor the human experience of survival and renewal – an innovative approach that will foster a community of relationships connected by cultures. In addition to her role as Executive Director of the IMID, she serves as a member of its Global Leadership Council. She is also a seasoned health care and public health leader with over 25 years of experience in strategic leadership, project management, change management, and quality improvement. She holds a Doctor of Strategic Leadership (DSL) degree from the School of Business and Leadership at Regent University with a concentration in Strategic Foresight. An alumna of Boise State University, she completed both her Bachelor of Science and Master of Health Science. Committed to her Bronco roots, she teaches in the College of Health Sciences, University Foundations Program, and Honors College at Boise State University. Additionally, she designed three courses aligned to the IMID's Global Diaspora Curriculum and teaches as a Professor of Multicultural Studies.

Christine Ristaino | Professor of Practice, Department of French and Italian in the College of Arts and Sciences | Emory University. Currently, Christine is the Director of the Emory College Language Center. She teaches courses on Italian diaspora, Baroque Italy, social justice in Italy utilizing memoir, comparative food studies, and language and culture. She currently teaches a creative writing-focused class on Italian memoir, as

well as co-teaches a class comparing Italy and China through the medium of food (noodles in particular). Ristaino is also an Atlanta author whose memoir, All the Silent Spaces, published in July 2019 by She Writes Press, confronts the topics of violence, identity, and discrimination. She writes and publishes articles, essays, OpEds, and non-fiction, and presents her work in various forums throughout the U.S. and abroad. Ristaino participates in social justice work, education reform, and violence prevention.

Mgr. Anna Slatinská, PhD | Dr. Anna Slatinská serves as a Senior Lecturer at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia, teaching at the Faculty of Arts (Department of English and American Studies). Her expansive interests and expertise include: English Language Teaching Methodology; Intercultural communication; Developing Global Skills: Language, Culture, Identity, and Cultural Heritage; and Service-Learning (as part of Erasmus project). She holds a Master of Art in Foreign Languages and Cultures | English Language and Literature: History (program) and PhD in Foreign Languages and Cultures | European Cultural Studies (program) – both from Matej Bel University. Dr. Slatinská has worked with the Idaho Museum of International Diaspora's Global Leadership Council, in which she is a founding member, to develop the IMID's flagship 4-day global conference that was hosted by Matej Bel University
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Stephanie Capaldo is an Interdisciplinary Lecturer of Sustainability Studies and Public & Environmental Humanities, and Director of Public Humanities at Boise State University. Her research explores the intersections of sustainability, environmental/climate justice, and impact management; with a focus in ESG reporting, analysis, and communication. She designs and coordinates the Public Humanities curriculum and serves on the University Sustainability Governance Council and Green Finance Sub-committee at BSU and advises organizations in the cultural sector on sustainability management and climate risk.

Jon Cox is National Geographic Explorer, Professor of Art and Design, University of Delaware, Fulbright Specialist at Matej Bel University, Founding Member, Idaho Museum of International Diaspora Academic and Research Program. Jon Cox is president of the Amazon Center for Environmental Education and Research (ACEER Foundation). Cox is a co-recipient of a National Geographic Society Grant to support a collaborative cultural mapping initiative with the Ese'Eja Indigenous community living in the Amazonia basin of Peru. Supported by prestigious institutions such as the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of
Health, Fulbright, and the National Geographic Society, Cox's current collaborative projects continue to make a significant impact such as the one titled Arrivals. What´s Left Behind. What Lies Ahead (together with Andy Bale and other collaborators). His work reflects a deep commitment to addressing societal challenges and fostering cross-cultural understanding through the lens of art and exploration.

Andy Bale received his MFA from the University of Delaware in 2005 and his BFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 1994. He has been a full-time Lecturer of Photography at Dickinson College since 2013, and served as an adjunct professor of Photography prior to that from 2005 until 2012. He also taught at Messiah College, Lebanon Valley College, and the University of Delaware. Bale has worked with children from ages 8-18 in workshops designed to help them explore their visual environment. Bale has exhibited regularly both in group and solo shows since 2004, and has served as the 2008 artist in-residence for the Fondation Espace Ecureuil in Toulouse, France, and the Guest Artist at SCAD's Lacoste, France campus that same year. Most recently, he was a photography team member for the Ese'Eja Cultural Mapping Project, supported by a National Geographic Legacy Fund Grant as well as the Photovoice instructor for the Arrivals. What´s Left Behind. What Lies Ahead. project. Bale's

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Kendall Silwonuk, an Ohio native, Kendall has traversed the globe, most recently visiting ARTICLE22 and Legacies Of War partners in Laos – from metal, paper, silver, and weaving artisans to Mines Advisory Group's clearance teams in Xieng Khouang and humanitarian non-profits providing victim's assistance in Houphan province. Her passion for promoting community impact and global peacebuilding has been fuelled by her work as an educator in Kunshan, China and Washington, DC, two of her homes for the past eight years. At Georgetown University, her studies focused on international humanitarian work and institutional peacebuilding, buttressed by Mandarin studies for most of her life. As a Mine Action Fellow with Mine Action Canada, Kendall brings her global perspective local as she shares the transformation she has witnessed first hand in Laos and Cambodia and the power of our individual stories to make a difference clearing UXO, advocating to customers, Congress members, and UN officials for sustained funding for UXO clearance. As General Manager of A22, Kendall has introduced this work to thousands of customers over the years and is growing ARTICLE22's impact and collaboration near and far from her current home in NYC.

Kosta Kambouris is an IMID Senior Fellow with the 2023-2024 Global Leaders Fellowship Program and a Ph.D. student in the Department of Political Science at the University of Utah. His research dives into the intriguing worlds of diaspora studies, (trans)nationalism, political geography, human security studies, interpretive methodologies, and ethnographic methods. Essentially, Kosta is on a mission to uncover how identities, practices, interests, and relationships journey and transform after migration occurs through the power of human experience. In his free time, Kosta loves indulging in good food, reading, TV series, walking, following basketball, and exploring new places.

Anna Phommachanthone is the current Manager of Operations and Community Outreach at Legacies of War. Legacies of War is an educational and advocacy organization working to address the on-going impact of the American wars in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Anna recently completed her Fulbright Research in Laos on the UXO clearance in March 2024 and has been a Mine Action Fellow through Mine Action Canada since 2022. Through her involvement in mine action for many years, she has gained on-the-ground expertise in the UXO sector in Southeast Asia.

Lauren Morganlander is a student-athlete at Williams College, majoring in American Studies with a focus on Justice and Law. As a Sustainable Development Intern at ARTICLE22, she collaborated to create a company wide sustainability report. She is passionate about law, business, and social impact and plans to pursue graduate studies in business management to advance her goals in sustainability and social justice.

Dillon O'Donnell. "For the last thirteen years, writer Dillon O'Donnell has lived in Western Idaho, occupying his time by writing everything from original stories to articles

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