Healthcare During Corona Pandemic in India

Dr Brijesh C Purohit

Photograph by Mark Ulyseas

Live
encounters

AUGUST 2020

SUPPORT LIVE ENCOUNTERS.
DONATE NOW AND KEEP THE MAGAZINE LIVE IN 2020!

Live Encounters is a not-for-profit free online magazine that was founded in 2009 in Bali, Indonesia. It showcases some of the best writing from around the world. Poets, writers, academics, civil & human/animal rights activists, academics, environmentalists, social workers, photographers and more have contributed their time and knowledge for the benefit of the readers of:

Live Encounters Magazine (2010), *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* (2016), *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers* (2019) and now, *Live Encounters Books* (August 2020).

We are appealing for donations to pay for the administrative and technical aspects of the publication. Please help by donating any amount for this just cause as events this year are threatening the very future of Live Encounters.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

Mark Ulyseas
Publisher/Editor
markulyseas@liveencounters.net

Donate

©Mark Ulyseas

Bali, Indonesia.

10 YEARS

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Brijesh C Purohit

Dr Arvind Gupta

Dr Bibhu Prasad Routray

Dr Kaustubh Dhargalkar

Joana Stella Kompa

Dr Howard Richards

Hedy Habra

Mark Ulyseas

Brijesh C. Purohit is currently a Professor at Madras School of Economics, Chennai, India. After completing his Ph.D in Economics from Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore he has gathered nearly 25 years of professional experience which includes teaching, training, research and consultancy. He has served at various reputed institutions in India at different points of time and was a South Asian Visiting scholar at Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, UK. He has published a number of books and articles in reputed national and international journals. His research and teaching interests include health economics and financing, public economics and insurance. *Thanks are due to Dr. K. B. L. Mathur for his very useful comments on the preliminary draft of this paper.*

Brijesh C. Purohit

Healthcare
During Corona Pandemic in India
Dr Brijesh C Purohit

Covid 19 has led to a large number of casualties, widespread suffering and disruption of all economic activities. Till July 25, 2020, globally there are 15,945,330 cases, and at the national level India recorded 1,336, 861 cases. Overall total number of deaths has reached a figure of 642,776 with 5,559,675 active cases after recovery and deaths. In India causalities are 31,358 with 456,071 active cases remaining.

Besides disruption of various sectors' output, employment and labour force, it has put a strong pressure on both public and private sectors' healthcare facilities. A new requirement for separate quarantine hospitals / facilities has emerged. Also to overcome the plight of doctors and paramedics (or our Corona warriors), there is a fresh thinking to adopt measures in health facilities to prevent this health manpower from falling prey to Corona infections and consequent fatalities. The fear and phobia of private sector hospitals to refuse to admit Corona infected patients has been highlighted in the media time and again.
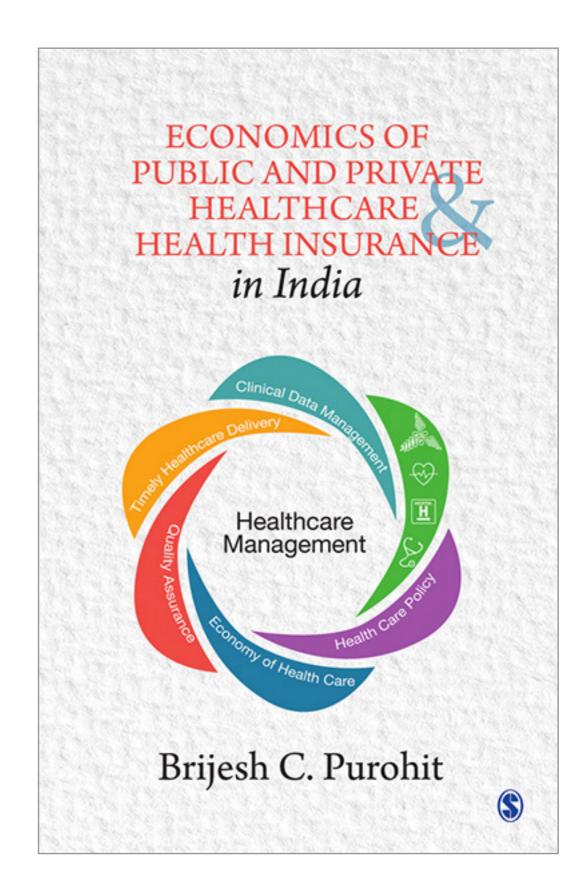
Yet we should not forget that our administrative measures would have been more successful to prevent spread of Covid 19, if we had a stronger public healthcare sector supported by private healthcare, as well as a better hospitals network, which might have led to a less catastrophic financial situation for Covid 19 infected cases.

Thus rising costs and falling incomes owing to a considerable expenditure on the preventive measures, private sector hospital facilities have faced a financial crunch and public sector hospitals are under tremendous pressure to overload their medicals/ paramedical staff. This has led to all out diversion away from non- communicable diseases and other hospital services to prioritize Corona patients. According to an estimate, short term operating losses are likely to be INR140,000 to 240,000 for a quarter and revenues to private sector hospitals is likely to be lower by 20-35 percent in fiscal year 2021 in contrast to comparable figures of preceding fiscal year[1]. According to some other estimates, a liquidity infusion of INR 16 billion to 22 billion will be required by the private healthcare sector in India[3].

Globally, World Health Organisation (WHO) reminded us by its reports that it could be a $9 trillion impact on global economy. Also it is pertinent to point out that in comparison to earlier global pandemics including SARS (in 2003), H5N1 (in 2006), H1N1 (in 2009), Ebola (in 2013) and MERS (in 2015), the financial impact distortion due to Corona is potentially threatening a worldwide recession. A WHO survey across 115 countries indicates that Corona pandemic globally has disrupted in more than 53% of the countries hypertension treatment, in 49% diabetes treatment and related complications, in 42% cancer treatment and in 31% for cardiovascular emergencies.[4] Many countries (around 58% and 42% low income countries) are now experimenting with other innovative methods of treatment including tele-medicines to deal with non-communicable diseases. These diseases are also responsible to kill 41 million people each year and 71 % of the deaths globally[5].

To overcome the current pandemic crisis, the measures adopted by the Indian government have been swift and successful in preventing number of deaths relative to its large population and in contrast with many other countries. According to a survey called "Oxford Covid 19 government tracker" covering 73 countries including India, our nation has scored cent percent scores. The government responses included screening and tracking of the Indian and foreign national travellers to India, quarantine for them and further followed by tracking their conditions and health progress. This was further followed by suspension of all travelling –domestic and international- on March 20 and complete lockdown on March 22 for three weeks and other phases of lockdowns (four phases) with some discretion left to Indian States to allow functioning of some transport and business activities in Covid 19 free zones. Yet we should not forget that our administrative measures would have been more successful to prevent spread of Covid 19, if we had a stronger public healthcare sector supported by private healthcare, as well as a better hospitals network, which might have led to a less catastrophic financial situation for Covid 19 infected cases.

© Brijesh C Purohit
2020 august © liveencounters.net

India ranks 145 among 195 countries in terms of quality and accessibility of healthcare services. This is largely attributable to low government expenditure which is just 1.5 percent of GDP. Indeed, Indian government is planning to increase its expenditure to be around 2.5 percent of GDP in near future. Some steps in this direction are seen through expansion of public sector facilities like advanced tertiary care facilities and increase in number of ayurvedic educational institutions. Yet main funding for real patient care like increasing availability of medicines, material and manpower is lacking at primary and secondary government facilities.

Further this support in corona times would have been enhanced with the presence of a stronger healthcare insurance mechanism.

At present India ranks 145 among 195 countries in terms of quality and accessibility of healthcare services. This is largely attributable to low government expenditure which is just 1.5 percent of GDP. Indeed, Indian government is planning to increase its expenditure to be around 2.5 percent of GDP in near future. Some steps in this direction are seen through expansion of public sector facilities like advanced tertiary care facilities and increase in number of ayurvedic educational institutions. Yet main funding for real patient care like increasing availability of medicines, material and manpower is lacking at primary and secondary government facilities[6]. Notable however, is a recent increase in public private partnership facilitated by many government sponsored health insurance schemes either at the national or state level. At the national level, for instance, we have, which among others include, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (initially called only Ayushman Bharat and later renamed (AB PM-JAY), ESIS (employees state insurance scheme), CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme), RSBY (Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana). Out of these plans, ESIS and CGHS are based on certain basic requirements (of occupation and income) and there is no choice for others not satisfying the basic eligibility to above two categories which are predefined by the occupation either in central government or in factory sector with certain income slab. Besides, we also have as many as 17 state sponsored schemes. In the near future, many of the state sponsored schemes might merge with PMJAY. From March 24 2020, the National Health Authority (NHA) has decided to cover Covid-19 treatment of the poorest of the poor in private hospitals under Ayushman Bharat — the central government's health insurance scheme for the deprived. An Ayushman Bharat beneficiary would be able to get himself tested for Covid-19 in any empanelled private hospital free of cost as per the NHA's decision. In case a suspected Covid-19 patient has to be isolated in a private hospital, the isolation would also be covered under the scheme[7].

Since the basis of these schemes is mediclaim mechanism in which cashless treatment to patient is done and the private insurance company manages care through empanelled private hospitals with expenditure reimbursed through the funding from central and state government which is 80-20 percent ratio. This indeed is a part of increasing public expenditure through insurance which has an intrinsic element of public private partnership partially taking care of inadequacy of public hospital network[8]. Thus in Corona period as far as expenditure to poor is concerned for Covid 19 treatment is taken care through national and other state sponsored scheme.
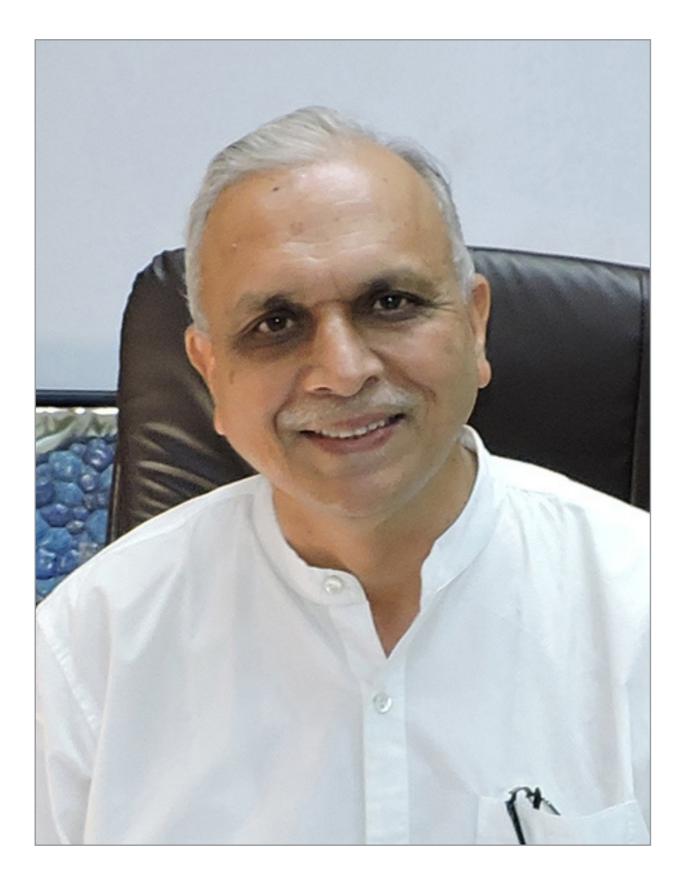
Yet prevention is better than cure as old dictum says, the role of social distancing now emphasised by government lockdowns and follow up legislation is quite significant to check rapid spread of corona infections as well as help in avoiding the consequent misery of the infected.

At the moment three types of governmental measures are desirable. These may include short term measures like increasing public expenditure to take care of extra load on public hospitals in terms of large diversion of medicines, materials and equipments which is at the cost of these resources away from other types of patient care. Partly the recent relief measure by the central government has done it to help frontline workers only. Under the package the government proposes to provide an insurance cover of INR 5,000,000 per person to frontline health workers-sanitation staff, paramedics and nurses, ASHA workers and doctors who are working to tackle Covid 19 illness and face the highest risk. This cover will be for three months with effect from March 25, 2020 and benefit nearly 2.2 million health workers[9]. However, this expenditure is only rerouting of public health expenditure. More needs to be done to provide care in the short run also by increasing medical supplies to public sector hospitals. Also fear psychosis of common man of catching corona infections in these hospitals need to be tackled by increasing preventive measures at these hospitals. In the medium term more equipments and additional staff and infrastructure should be taken care of by additional funding. Finally, in the long run additional medical expert cell and separate chain of hospitals should be planned to control excessive impact of such kind of pandemics.

End Notes
1. EY- FICCI (2020) "Covid 19 impact assessment for private healthcare sector and key financial recommendation measures for the sector"
2. Vishal Bali(2020) "How healthcare sector can navigate Covid 19 storm", Healthcare Radius, April 30.
3. WHO (2020), Covid 19 significantly impacts health services for non-communicable disease", June 1.
4. Kaivaan Movdawalla (2020), "Covid 19-Impact assessment for private healthcare sector and key recommendations on financial measures required for the sector", April 13.
5. See, a recent work Purohit Brijesh C. (2020), Economics of Public and Private Healthcare and Health Insurance in India, Sage publications.
6. See:https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/covid-19-treatment-to-be-covered-under-ayushman-bharat/articleshow/74784764.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst
7. Purohit (2020) , op.cit.
8. See, Economic Times, May 25, 2020

© Brijesh C Purohit

Arvind Gupta is the Director of Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF), a Delhi-based independent, non-partisan think tank focusing on research on foreign policy, defence and security-related issues from the Indian perspective. During 2014–2017, he was the Deputy National Security Advisor and Secretary, National Security Council Secretariat in the Government of India. He was associated with the National Security Council Secretariat as Joint Secretary from 1999 to 2007. During 2012–2014, he was Director General of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), an autonomous institute set up by the Indian Ministry of Defence.

Arvind Gupta

SURVIVING AND FLOURISHING IN A TURBULENT WORLD
DR ARVIND GUPTA

Covid 19 has caused massive disruptions in political, economic and social systems the like of which the world has not seen in living memory. Over 15 million people have been infected by the virus and over half a million have died. Most economies in the world are in a recession. A countless number of jobs have been lost. Tourism, civil aviation, education, sports, entertainment, manufacturing et cetera have mostly shut down or are working at reduced capacity. Global supply chains which fuelled globalisation have been severely disrupted. Covid 19 will deepen the faultlines of the old world order and hastened the birth of a new one.

A turbulent world

The strategic rivalry between China and the US is the defining feature of the current geopolitics. A new Cold War is in the offing. Multilateralism, the hallmark of the international liberal order, has come under stress. The withdrawal of the US from the World Health Organisation is a worrying symptom of the ill health of multilateralism.
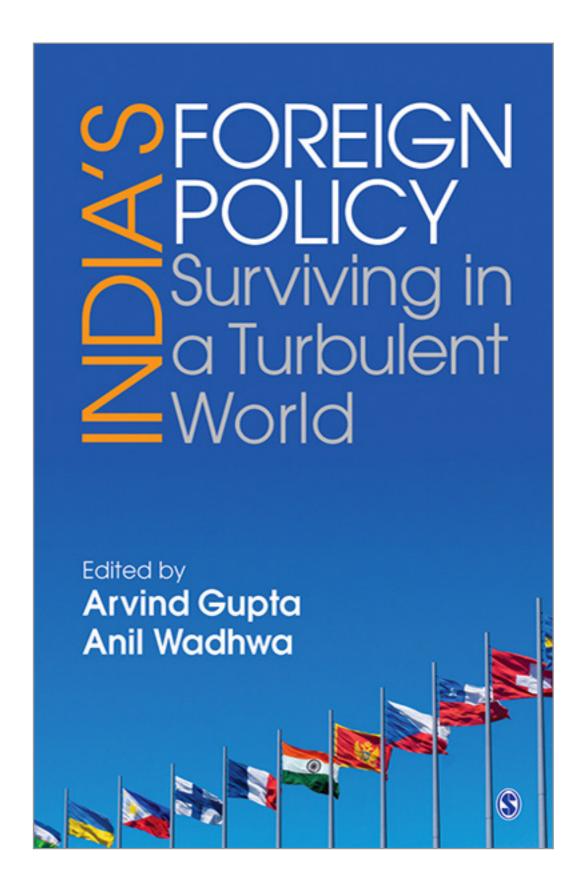
The US hegemony, which underpinned the liberal international order, is under challenge. From 1989 onwards, when the Cold War ended and until the global financial crisis of 2008, the United States was unchallenged. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States got embroiled in expensive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This considerably weakened its capabilities. The global financial crisis marked the rise of China which, in the last four decades, has emerged as the second most important country in the world economically militarily and technologically.

The new generation of Chinese leaders represented by Xi has chosen to assert China's power and challenge the US hegemony. China has ignored the international rules and norms of behaviour and instead unilaterally captured most of the islands in the South China Sea and established their sovereignty over them. Their territorial disputes with Japan, India and Bhutan have been sharpened. China has sought to change the status quo on the Sino-Indian border by the use of force. The Chinese challenge to the US hegemony is the main cause of recent friction and turbulence in the world. But, hyper - globalisation has also contributed to global instability. Globalisation has increased inequality in the world, sharpened the unhealthy competition for resources, de-emphasised human welfare in favour of profits, exacerbated climate change and damaged the environment. The failures of globalisation have also increased turbulence in the world.

India's foreign policy challenge

New India is aspirational India. It seeks a role for itself in the world. It wants to become prosperous again. It wants to emerge as a thought leader in the world. The present generation is less defensive than the earlier ones. India has to adjust to the changing global balance of power. Therein lie its challenges and opportunities. It needs to navigate the political, economic, social and security turbulence in the world carefully. It needs to build its capacities to deal with an uncertain world and carve out a space for itself. To achieve this vision, India will need to do several things on the foreign and national security front. First, it needs to ensure that it is adequately secured against complex security threats it faces. China-Pakistan nexus is one. Terrorism is another. China's growing imprint in the Indian Ocean and India's neighbourhood has many security dimensions. It needs strong armed forces. Second, it needs to have a strong economy and inclusive economic growth. Third, it needs to engage with the world more deeply without compromising its national interests. Prime Minister Modi has often talked about turning the crisis into opportunity. He has given a call for building an Atmanirbhar Bharat or a self-reliant India, based on India's innate strengths without giving up global engagements. Foreign policy will play a major role in realising self-reliance in a turbulent world. India's heritage and cultural strengths can be harnessed for building new India. What kind of foreign policy should India have to deal with a turbulent world? What are the underpinnings of India's foreign policy? How should India conduct its important relationships? What is the role of domestic factors in shaping India's foreign policy? How should India deal with its neighbours, the great powers? What is the role of science and technology in shaping India's foreign policy? How can India employ its culture and soft power to attain its foreign policy objectives? What should be India's role in shaping new multilateralism?

https://stealadeal.sagepub.in/books/just-arrived/indias-foreign-policy-arvind-gupta-9789353882952.html

© Arvind Gupta

First, it needs to ensure that it is adequately secured against complex security threats it faces. China-Pakistan nexus is one. Terrorism is another. China's growing imprint in the Indian Ocean and India's neighbourhood has many security dimensions. It needs strong armed forces. Second, it needs to have a strong economy and inclusive economic growth. Third, it needs to engage with the world more deeply without compromising its national interests. Prime Minister Modi has often talked about turning the crisis into opportunity. He has given a call for building an Atmanirbhar Bharat or a self-reliant India, based on India's innate strengths without giving up global engagements. Foreign policy will play a major role in realising self-reliance in a turbulent world. India's heritage and cultural strengths can be harnessed for building new India.

Divided into two sections, part A of the book looks at the intellectual underpinnings of India's foreign policy while part B looks at India's various relationships.

Prof S D Muni argues that a credible foreign policy discourse should be based on India's 5000 years of civilisational experience. Asoke Mukharjee traces the history of India's commitment to multilateralism and exhorts India to help shape positive multilateralism. Ambassador Veena Sikri tells us how India's soft power can be strategized. Giving a 360-degree view of India's security environment, Ambassador PS Raghvan calls for tighter integration between India security policy and its foreign policy. Arvind Gupta stresses the need to harness international cooperation to strengthen India's scientific and technological base. Dr V K Pralhadan points out how India's triple partition eclipsed India's natural geographical dividend and sees an emerging competition between the Eurasian and Indo-Pacific dimensions of India's foreign policy.

Emphasising the need to integrate non-traditional security issues in India's security policy, Dr Uttam Sinha dwells upon the importance of economic, environmental and health security in the overall security mix of the country. Dr Prasenjit Basu points out that colonisation reduced India's influence in the world and that to regain its voice in global affairs India must build a strong, vibrant economy.

Dr Ashok Behuria tells us how domestic factors impact India's neighbourhood policy. India's Neighbourhood First policy is correct but there are many shortcomings. Analysing the role of intelligence in defending India against myriads of threats like terrorism, the former RAW chief Vikram Sood says that the intelligence agencies need new skills, new technologies and more human resources. The world of intelligence is changing as threats morph and multiply.
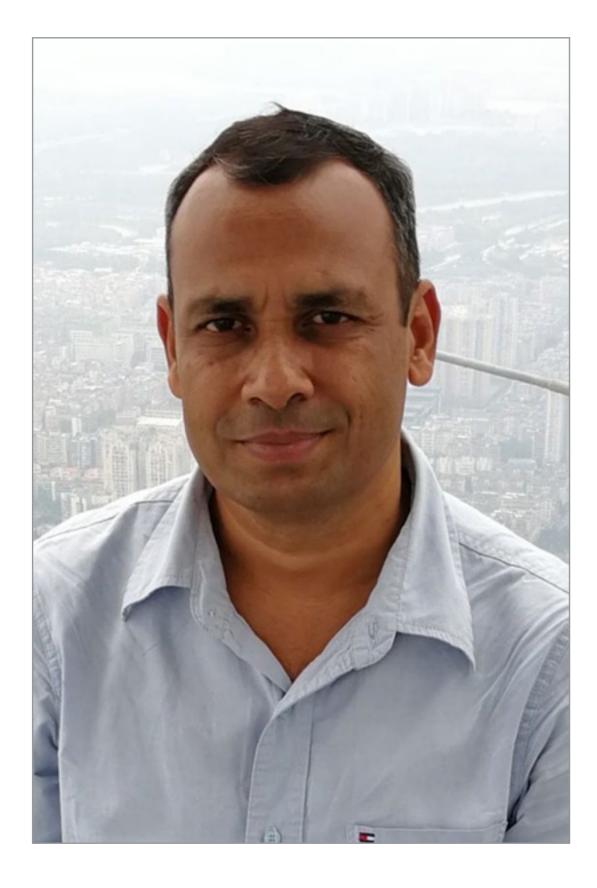
In part B, the contributors analyse India's important bilateral relationships. Examining the realities of international power politics, Ambassador Rajiv Sikri says that it is premature for India to think of itself as a "leading power" as there are many internal and external constraints which inhibit its rise to great power status. Ambassador Satish Chandra maintains that for better-informed neighbourhood policy, we need to vastly improve our understanding of the neighbouring countries. Ambassador Arun Singh, based on his familiarity with the US where he served as India's envoy, suggests that India should seek a comprehensive approach to its ties with the US taking into account the costs and benefits. Analysing the recent emergence of India-Japan comprehensive partnership, India's former envoy to Japan, Ambassador Deepa Wadhwa says that the relationship cannot be taken for granted and must be invested in.

China has emerged as the most serious and challenge to the well being of India. Professor Sujit Dutta examines the complexity of Sino -Indian relations. The importance of Russia for India cannot be overstated. Ambassador Ajai Malhotra, India's former envoy to Moscow, warns against the neglect of Moscow in foreign policy and feels that India's relations with Russia and with the US need not be a zero-sum game.

Ambassador D P Srivastava emphasises the importance of Central Asia for India and stresses upon the need for establishing connectivity with the region which is increasingly coming under the influence of China. Ambassador Talmiz Ahmad examines the security dynamic in the Gulf region and sees a role for India in regional security in conjunction with China and Russia. Ambassador Anil Wadhwa, a former secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, analyses India's Act East Policy and emphasises the need for deeper engagement with the ASEAN countries. Professor Gulshan Sachdeva argues for a renewed focus on Indo EU relations based on convergences in climate change and technology, trade and investment. Ambassador Yogendra Kumar looks at the growing salience of the Indian Ocean in Indian foreign policy. Ambassador Anil Trigunayat focuses on at India-Africa relations and new opportunities in the continent. Latin America is a relatively neglected area in India's foreign policy. Ambassador Vishwanathan recommends a greater focus on Latin America for Indian exports.

In a short review, it is not possible to capture the myriad nuances of each of the thoughtful essays in the book. The key message of the book is that foreign policy needs to be energised to achieve the goals of aspirational India. The book has suggestions for a fresh Indian narrative, a new vision for foreign policy and several suggestions on strategy. Written by experienced diplomats and experts, there is enough food for thought in the book for students of India's foreign policy as well as for policymakers. India will not only survive but also flourish in a turbulent world provided it builds its inherent strengths.

© Arvind Gupta

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray held the position of Visiting Professor and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) chair, India Studies at Murdoch University, Perth between July-December 2017. He served as a Deputy Director in the National Security Council Secretariat, Government of India and Director of the Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)'s Database & Documentation Centre, Guwahati, Assam. He was a Visiting Fellow at the South Asia programme of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore between 2010 and 2012. Routray specialises in decision-making, governance, counter-terrorism, force modernisation, intelligence reforms, foreign policy and dissent articulation issues in South and South East Asia. His writings, based on his projects and extensive field based research in Indian conflict theatres of the Northeastern states and the left-wing extremism affected areas, have appeared in a wide range of academic as well as policy journals, websites, and magazines. This article republished by permission of www.mantraya.org

NAGALAND: MIRAGE OF PEACE
DR BIBHU PRASAD ROUTRAY

Abstract

August 2020 will mark five years since hopes were raised by the Government of India (GoI) of a solution to the Naga insurgency. However, in spite of the periodic optimistic statements by authorities, a solution to the oldest insurgency of India is nowhere in sight. In the past months, schism between the parties in negotiation has widened considerably, casting a pall of gloom over the future of negotiations for peace. Bringing an end to the state of stalemate would require flexibility in the official approach and innovative methods of conflict resolution.

The 'encounter' in Longding

Acting on intelligence inputs, on 12 July, the Indian Army, Assam Rifles and Arunachal Pradesh police personnel carried out an operation in Longding district of Arunachal Pradesh and killed six cadres of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM). The intelligence input indicated that these cadres were camping in the area 'either to abduct an influential person or to carry out an ambush on the security force personnel'. Arms, ammunition and food material were recovered from the site of the encounter. The NSCN-IM reacted by stating that the Indian Army is trying to vent out its frustration after being humiliated by the Chinese PLA in the Galwan valley. It also said that the "goodwill spirit of ceasefire has been stamped to the ground (sic)"[1].

Bibhu Prasad Routray

The new official strategy is, however, a thorough reversal of the GoI's game plan unveiled in Nagaland in 2015. The strategy has changed in phases, each phase representing an ascending frustration of not being able to move forward with the peace process with the insurgents.

Countering insurgency

The encounter is part of a series of events that has taken place in Nagaland and the extended sphere of influence of the NSCN-IM in neighbouring states in recent months, as part of the official strategy to pressurize the outfit and also to target its financial resources. A number of cadres have been arrested, extortion modules have been busted, and weapons belonging to the outfit have been seized by the Assam Rifles personnel. On odd occasions, Myanmar military, acting in coordination with the Indian Amy, have driven the outfit's cadres out of their territory. A weapons manufacturing unit in Ukhrul (Manipur), supposedly belonging to the outfit, has been shut down. The governor of Nagaland has also issued a letter to the state chief minister expressing his dismay over the continued extortion drives by the Naga armed gangs. New Delhi hopes that a pressure tactic would force the NSCN-IM to restart the peace talks and give up its key demands for a separate flag and constitution. These demands, which are intrinsic to the NSCN-IM's vision for a new Nagaland, clash fiercely with GoI's own vision for an integrated India.

Changing Goalposts

The new official strategy is, however, a thorough reversal of the GoI's game plan unveiled in Nagaland in 2015. The strategy has changed in phases, each phase representing an ascending frustration of not being able to move forward with the peace process with the insurgents.

In the first phase, New Delhi signed a framework agreement with the NSCN-IM in August 2015 and for several months tried advertising it as a final agreement for peace. Hopes were raised that a 'deal' will finally bring peace to Nagaland. However, as serious negotiations started, the official negotiator came to realize that the outfit is no mood to surrender its core demands and hence, a swift conclusion to the conflict is difficult. To achieve this, a significant policy revision took place in the second phase. Series of attempts were made to split and weaken existing insurgent outfits. The government was largely successful in splitting the Khaplang faction (NSCN-K) in 2018 and partially weakening the NSCN-IM, which started losing cadres to other outfits. The net result of this strategy, however, was creation a number of new insurgent formations in the state. While some are pro-India and are willing to settle for a deal with New Delhi under the ambit of the Indian constitution, larger outfits, especially the NSCN-IM remained obdurate. Although for a while New Delhi toyed with the option of signing a final agreement with other insurgent outfits in Nagaland by leaving the NSCN-IM out, the futility of such a measure was obvious and the plan was abandoned.

It is at this juncture the third and ongoing phase was initiated. This roughly corresponded with the time when R N Ravi, the chief negotiator, then a deputy national security advisor, was moved to Kohima as the governor of Nagaland. Since then, from August 2019 to be precise, the government strategy has been directed at making the NSCN-IM fall in line and give up its key demands.

Conflict Economy

As per the government's assessment, the NSCN-IM's key strength is rooted in its acceptability among the common Nagas, which reflects in its sizeable cadre strength and its financial independence. In spite of not being in war with the Indian union in the last 23 years, vide the 1997 ceasefire agreement, the group reportedly maintains an army of over 7000 cadres. Bulk of them are based in Nagaland, while 300 to 400 mobile cadres are in adjoining states, which the group considers are its sphere of influence and also crucial for 'tax collection'.

Site of the 12 July encounter in Longding district, Photo Courtesy: NE Now News

A durable solution to the long-standing conflict will require magnanimity and flexibility from New Delhi. It will require statesmanship and vision from the top political bosses to fulfil the aspirations of the Nagas which have kept the fire of insurgency burning for over seven decades.

The highly efficient and wide ranging 'collection of revenue', which the Governor's 16 June letter said, leads to 'almost 200 percent cost escalation in transportation the moment a goods laden truck enters Nagaland', targets almost all the business and government establishments in the state. The NSCN-IM reacted by terming such tax collection 'legitimate'. Not surprisingly, the group, like all the other insurgent factions in the state, are financially self-sufficient and no longer dependent either on external assistance or trade in contraband for their existence. New Delhi's actions in recent months have targeted these two sources of strength of the insurgents, principally that of the NSCN-IM.

Back to jungle?

The 'condition of ripeness'[2], when warring parties consider fighting as unviable and hence, agree to negotiate, is generally construed as essential, albeit not sufficient, for success of peace processes. The Naga insurgency, however, does not fit into this model. While New Delhi can afford not to have a peace deal in the state for months and even years to come, decades of absence of formal war with the state has in fact accorded the NSCN-IM similar luxury. In short, neither party believes that they can be defeated in this protracted conflict and intractability of the conflict is not a hurting liability.

The outfit's experience for the past two decades has been of successful survival, even while being pitted against the fleeting state measures to contain its military strength and financial self-sufficiency. There is a distinct possibility therefore, that it will survive even this phase, unless New Delhi is willing to risk rocking the peace boat by sustaining its pressure tactic.

That's why return to jungle or resumption of fighting is not likely to be considered as an option by the outfit. Nor is the outfit inclined to try becoming an instrument of what the intelligence agencies believe to be China's renewed policy of destabilizing the northeastern region by providing logistical assistance to the surviving insurgent groups. Following the Nagaland Governor's highly publicized letter to the Chief Minister, the NSCN-IM reduced its tax rate from five to three percent, citing the Covid-19 pandemic, which till now has infected over 900 people (as on 15 July 2020) in the state. Back in 2017, the group had slashed its annual 'tax' collection for employees of the state government from 24 to 12 percent. Such minor adjustments marginally affect its net revenue collection no doubt, but add to its acceptability and ultimately, to conflict intractability.

The Future

The way New Delhi deals with this strategy of the NSCN-IM holds key to the future of peace in Nagaland. A convenient way would be to apply a derivative of the 'Kashmir model' in Nagaland, i.e. to initiate far-reaching strict punitive measures against the insurgents and their support base. However, remote Nagaland isn't Kashmir. Unlike Kashmir, where there is absolutely no desire among the local militants to 'settle the issue' with New Delhi, in Nagaland a solution broadly under the Indian constitution is desired by almost all sections of the society, which includes the insurgents. This state of affairs has been achieved through decades of hard work and sacrifices by both parties. Reversing these achievements, made thus far, isn't in the best interests of the nation. Hence, the state needs innovative approach of conflict resolution. A durable solution to the long-standing conflict will require magnanimity and flexibility from New Delhi. It will require statesmanship and vision from the top political bosses to fulfil the aspirations of the Nagas which have kept the fire of insurgency burning for over seven decades.

End Notes

[1] Sumir Karmakar, "Ceasefire has lost its meaning: NSCN (IM) after Arunachal encounter", Deccan Herald, 13 July 2020, https://www.deccanherald.com/national/east-and-northeast/ceasefire-has-lost-its-meaning-nscn-im-after-arunachal-encounter-860516.html. Accessed on 14 July 2020.

[2] I William Zartman, "Ripeness", Beyond Intractability, June 2013, https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/ripeness. Accessed on 14 July 2020.

Dr Kaustubh Dhargalkar is an entrepreneur-turned-academician, innovation evangelist and startup mentor. He founded three companies from 1990 to 2005 in the domain of productivity-enhancement technologies for manufacturing. Exited all his companies in 2005, took a year off to learn the science of Yoga. He holds a PhD in corporate innovation and design thinking. Currently, Kaustubh works with large corporates (HP, Daimler India, Citibank, Mahindra Group, Capgemini, Honeywell, Eaton, etc.) on 'how to enhance the innovation quotient'. He trains executives in design thinking and breakthrough concept creation. His views on innovation and strategy are sought by publications such as Knowledge@Wharton, Springer, Engineering & Technology (E&T) Europe, etc.

Reimagining Business in Disruptive Times – It's Logical

DR KAUSTUBH DHARGALKAR

In these disruptive (Post-Covid-19) times, business executives and entrepreneurs need to *reimagine* their business models going forward. Today, more than ever, there is a strong need for *reimagining* the way business needs to be conducted through deep empathy and exploring win-win situations for all stakeholders involved. How do you make this happen? Are there any underlying principles that can serve as building blocks for the creation of business models that would create these win-win situations? In my book, "It's Logical: Innovating Profitable Business Models", I have enumerated these principles. In the next few paragraphs, I am going to discuss some of them.

Dr Kaustubh Dhargalkar

Fundamentally a business has two dimensions, the Supply side and the Demand side. Let us examine how we can create win-win situations for all the stakeholders involved (on both, the supply side and demand side). First, let us look at the Demand side: Demand comprises the consumers. Due to the current pandemic, many companies have shut down or are on the brink. People have been laid off or have been subjected to pay cuts. The result is a cash-strapped consumer. Hence, companies have to be able to provide product/services at lower price points, without compromising on quality. How?

Principle #1 Double Whammy

Identifying revenue streams from both, your suppliers as well as your consumers. This enables optimization of costs and ensures a more affordable service for the consumer. Let us understand this through an example:

Duolingo, is a company that gamifies learning foreign languages. It follows a freemium model for the language learning material that it creates. On closer study, we realized that duolingo is actually a company that offers 'translation services'. The way it has structured its organization is very interesting. The documents that it receives for translation are broken down into small paragraphs/sentences/words etc. The contents are then animated to create small language learning tutorials, that are fun to use. Duolingo, then uploads these animations on the Google play store and the Apple App store, from where netizens can download and use them for learning the language. Imagine hundreds of thousands of individuals attempting the translations. Duolingo, at the backend captures all these attempts, chooses the best translations from across the games created from the original document, stitches them together and voila…. the entire document is ready, translated, not just at zero cost, but, with its freemium model, Duolingo makes money from 'paying' users too. It not only makes money from fees charged for translating the document but also from the users who pay to learn a foreign language. Since, the service is cross-subsidized (with revenue coming in from both ends), Duolingo is able to offer services at a much lower price.

Basically, what it means is that, "Can you figure out a business model, wherein your suppliers double up as paying customers?

Principle #2 Monetizing a third-party's NVA
Identifying someone else's NVA (Non-Value Adding Asset) and helping them monetizing it.

The most famous example of this principle is UBER. What did UBER do?

UBER launched its beta version in May 2010, with its operations in the city of San Francisco. Initially, the service was restricted to black luxury cars only.

Why only luxury cars? Outside a star hotel, one always sees hi-end vehicles with a T symbol. These are basically taxis that the guests can hire. Are these cars owned by the hotel? No, most of these are leased out by fleet rental companies s.a. Hertz, Budget, Orix etc. Do they have customers all the time? No, they are standing idle for a good amount of time (an independent study claims that around 35% to 40 % of the time they have no customers). Are they happy with this situation? Obviously not. The vehicles in question, usually, are BMWs (5 or 7 series), Mercedes (E-class and above). Any sane business person would want her/his expensive assets utilized to as close to 100% as possible.

The UBER founders, probably, realized this and created the now-famous geo-location platform and approached the fleet rental companies asking them, "Would you take rides when your cars are idle?"

Would the fleet rental company refuse? Why would they? That offer would enable them to monetize their expensive asset to the maximum possible and that too without hampering their existing business.

For the cab commuter, it's cheaper than hiring that expensive car.

A perfect win-win situation:

a)   The fleet rental company gets business during its idle hours (when its car is actually a non-value adding asset, NVA)
b)   The commuter gets a reasonable price for his commute
c)   UBER gets a commission and creates a transportation business without investing in a single vehicle

© Dr Kaustubh Dhargalkar

Post the success of this 'Monetizing a third party's NVA' model, with the fleet rental companies, UBER quickly sold the idea to individual cab owners. Gradually, people bought cars on their own and logged onto the UBER platform.

Going forward, businesses have to identify NVAs in the ecosystem, help monetize them and optimize their costs to reach out to a cash-strapped consumer (as mentioned at the beginning). In today's times, with broken supply chains, there are a lot of vendors who have installed capacity but no work. So, Uberization of industrial assets is the way forward. Synergies will have to be forged creatively.

Companies will have to look for such synergies not only within their existing domains, but across the entire ecosystem, what I refer to as '**Cross-domain Synergies**'.
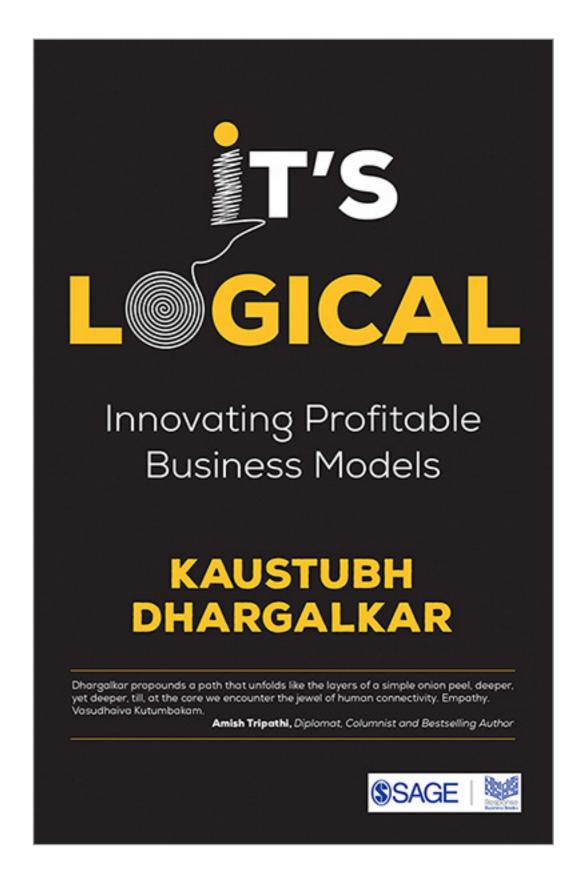
e.g. Visualize a scenario: You are an appliance manufacturing company in a developed country, say, Germany and currently you ship out completely knocked down (CKD) kits to a subsidiary in an emerging economy where they are assembled to create the final product. Such a manufacturer, usually, has a logistics partner company that transports these CKD kits from the parent company to the subsidiary. At present, both, the parent as well as the subsidiary companies are suffering due to the pandemic situation. Operations are in disarray, the market cannot absorb the current pricing. The subsidiary has almost shut down. To perk up demand, the pricing has to be optimized.

How to tackle such a situation?

By virtue of being a logistics company, your logistics partner has access to large warehousing space. So, can there be a tie-up between the manufacturer and the logistics company such that at the warehouses of the logistics company, compact assembly lines could be set up for final assembly?
OR
Can the logistics company be allowed to use the real estate of the subsidiary as a ware house, while the production lines could continue running. Since the logistics gets access to real estate, they would subsidise your transportation costs.

Thus, cutting costs for the manufacturer. The overall cost of manufacturing would drop by a good amount. Thus, creating a cheaper product for the consumer, with no compromise on quality.

i T'S LOGICAL

Innovating Profitable Business Models

KAUSTUBH DHARGALKAR

Dhargalkar propounds a path that unfolds like the layers of a simple onion peel, deeper, yet deeper, till, at the core we encounter the jewel of human connectivity. Empathy. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Amish Tripathi, *Diplomat, Columnist and Bestselling Author*

SAGE

https://stealadeal.sagepub.in/books/just-arrived/its-logical-kaustubh-dhargalkar-9789353884017.html
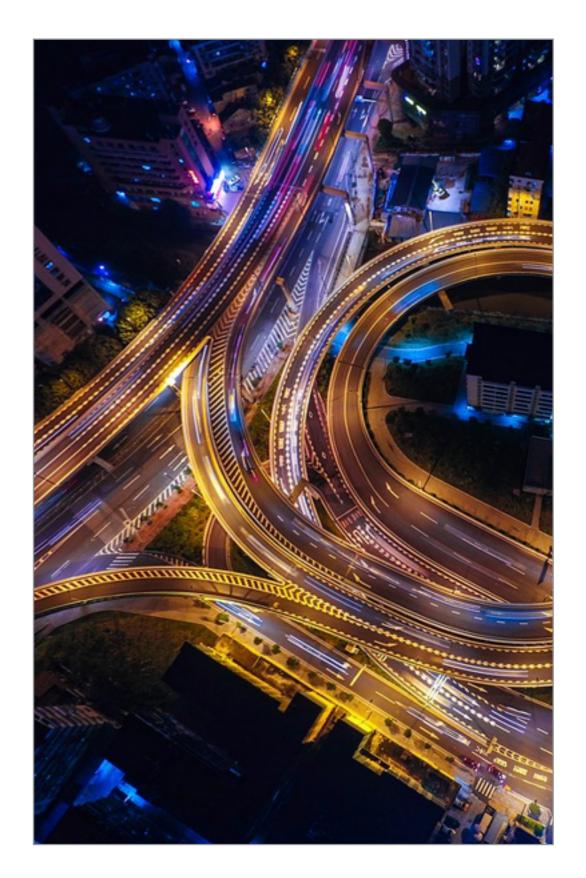
Principle #3 Pay as you use

Don't charge a customer a penny more than what she uses (no hidden charges).

Cloud computing has made this possible in the services domain. I feel the physical products domain too would accept this at much faster pace now than they would have otherwise. In the physical space too, we have seen companies like Furlenco which enables you to lease out furniture without having to buy it. Or a company like 'Rent the Runway' where you can rent expensive brands of clothing without owning it. These business models will have to be looked at in other domains too, where you are selling physical products.

Example, if you want to change the tyre of your car, today you have to buy the tyre for somewhere between Rs 3000 to 50000 depending on the car you own. Tomorrow, with sensors embedded in the car, the tyre company might say, "don't pay us the entire amount of the tyre: pay an upfront amount of say 20% and rest can be paid as you use the tyre". Today's cars are equipped with all kinds of sensors that can capture how the car is being driven and charge the customer accordingly like say Re. 1 per kilometer if you are driving on a smooth road and say Rs. 1.5 if you are driving on a rough country road. This kind of a model enables the consumer to acquire the product at much lower acquisition cost and a pay as you use option. For the company, it's an opportunity to generate revenue all through the life of the tyre. And also capture a lot of data about the performance of the tyre, which would be very useful for R&D. Data about the driving skills of the driver too could be captured , this data could be shared with the car insurance companies which could determine insurance premium according the driving skills of the individual. Thus, the tyre company could monetise the data collected to generating an additional revenue stream.
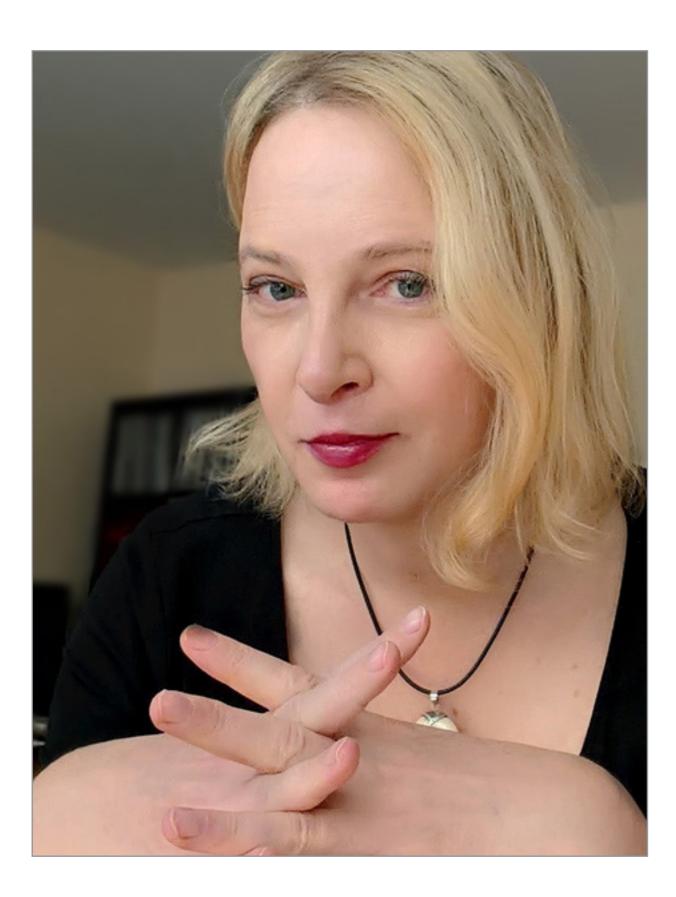
In essence, reimaginging business in disruptive times is no rocket science, It's Logical.

For more such underlying principles and a lot more insights, check out the book, "It's Logical: Innovating Profitable Business Models" by Dr. Kaustubh Dhargalkar. It proposes frameworks (with Design Thinking as the backbone) for creating Win-Win situations to visualize sustainable business models in times to come, which should prove useful in the prevailing, unprecedented circumstances.

https://pixabay.com/photos/streets-night-lights-circle-2278471/

© Dr Kaustubh Dhargalkar

Joana Stella Kompa is an educational reformer, Lecturer for Interactive Media Design, Program Director, and consultant for Problem-Based learning (PBL), previously working in Singapore, Shanghai, and Thailand. She obtained her M(Sc) in Applied Psychology at the University of Liverpool, worked as an expert for digital education in a workgroup of the EU-Commission, and is currently working as a Research Associate and Consultant for Digital Education at the Carl von Ossietzky Universität of Oldenburg, Germany.

Joana Stella Kompa

What we easily forget
when focussing on Digital Competencies:
Thinking Out Loud
during the COVID crisis
JOANA STELLA KOMPA

_____

Introduction: How have educators been coping these past months?

First of all, I like to express my empathy for my readers during the COVID crisis. COVID has affected us most destructively on a systemic and on a personal level – be it the fear of infection at the workplace (or dealing with its dire consequences), the challenges of homeschooling, the missing out on education, especially for the socio-economically most disadvantaged students, the lack of comprehensive safety-concepts for schools after the summer break; the list goes on.

In the media, the ubiquitous advent of digital education was much reported on. However, when it comes to pedagogical progress, so the verdict among many colleagues, *remote emergency teaching* does not necessarily equate quality digital education. As expected, it has been a mixed review.

On a more positive note, I made surprisingly good experiences using synchronous team-communication software to connect to students more directly. Email communication, which is experienced as more distant (due to inherent time-lag and time-loss due to formatting every single mail) is no match for realtime exchange, especially within group settings. Since digital natives are used to social networking and more instantaneous feedback culture, synchronous communication was a huge success. Synchronous team-collaboration tools are most definitely a keeper. Other digital options are plain practical.

Future teachers flourish as empathic learning consultants as much as they are analysts, managers, and supporters of learning processes within digitally-designed learning environments. These essential human qualities are embedded in mindsets and corresponding social practice, but not solely competencies. Competencies are dispositions (or prerequisites) for taking self-organized social action. They do neither define the motives nor goals of social action. This is how we need to see digital competence in the context of motivational beliefs and social goal-setting.

Blended Learning, for example, offers the opportunity to split classes in half and teach face-to-face on alternate weeks, offering online assignments in-between. This way, class sizes can be significantly reduced. One thing is for sure: By now, the world has learned how to conduct video conferences.

Do digital competencies suffice to achieve our educational mission?

In the back of my mind, I was wondering: During a global crisis that ubiquitously accelerates the use of digital technology, are digital competences still such a big deal, or do they become, in the meantime, commonplace? Digital access, or more precisely, the digital divide, still poses a major problem, like a lack of network bandwidth or missing soft-and hardware for students and schools. But these short-comings pose underlying socio-financial problems, rather than a lack of digital competence. While competencies focus on what people can or should be capable of, the COVID crisis hurts the bonds *between* people. Social distancing translates into varying degrees of social separation, psychological hardship, and distress.

Don't get me wrong. I dearly support EU's *DigCompEdu (European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators). DigCompEdu* is, in fact, firmly integrated into our ‚must-have' matrix of learning outcomes (or, fancier, our students', *future skills*'). However, the most pressing issues that keep us from advancing digital quality education are rooted in achieving our supreme educational mission, such as developing the personalities of our students and building an open, diverse, and democratic society. Educational missions are realized by what drives people, in particular, *mindsets, (the development of) social roles, as well as organizational and professional practice.* Competencies, by contrast, are commonly understood and framed as individual dispositions. They generally define what *individual* educators or students should be capable of, and therefore are rarely contextualized within social interaction.

Digital change is social change

International education consultant David Price caused many raised eyebrows when he stated provocatively at last year's Canvas Con in Barcelona that, *If a YouTube video can replace a teacher, it probably should.* 'Not only do we use new technologies, but technologies change our social roles and expectations, such as integrating formal and informal aspects of teaching. Roles are changing and teachers are no more sole providers of textbook-knowledge.

Future teachers flourish as empathic learning consultants as much as they are analysts, managers, and supporters of learning processes within digitally-designed learning environments. These essential human qualities are embedded in mindsets and corresponding social practice, but not solely competencies. Competencies are dispositions (or prerequisites) for taking self-organized social action. They do neither define the motives nor goals of social action. This is how we need to see digital competence in the context of motivational beliefs and social goal-setting.

Defining Mindsets

In my search for a deeper understanding of social innovation, I recently stumbled upon a paper by Dosi, Rosati and Vignoli titled, MEASURING DESIGN THINKING MINDSET, not so much for the quality of the study, but the relevance if its preliminary findings. Using Google Scholar as the sole database, the study's small sample number, plus most of the participants being design-experienced students, but not full-fledged designers, disqualified (IMHO) the study as A-level type research. Still, from a philosophical standpoint, I do think that the study, despite its qualitative shortcomings, has its merits.

For once, it suggested an empirical definition of potential mindset-configurations. An informal survey among my students rated the effect of mindsets on learning as high as 0.8 (very strong effect). In research, *prior knowledge* is already an established factor for predicting better learning outcomes. The idea of a mindset goes even further (Carol Dweck needs to be mentioned here), so this is certainly a relevant area of future research.

Factored as key properties of a design thinking (DT) mindset were identified items such as *Tolerance for – Being comfortable with Ambiguity – Uncertainty, Embracing Risk, Human centeredness, Empathy, Mindfulness and awareness of the process, Holistic view / consider the problem as a whole, Learning-oriented, Team Working, Open to different perspectives /diversity, Experimentation or learn from mistakes or failure, Abductive Thinking, Envisioning new things* or *Creative confidence.*

I was wondering if these mindset qualities are indeed the key ingredients for 21st-century education that we are currently looking for. The initial question could be reframed as: Are digital competences sufficient to create the social spaces of the future?

© Joana Stella Kompa

Rather than focussing on digital competence in isolation, we need to regain the perspective on creating the schools and universities that we like to teach and learn in. This entails that we have to connect the dots. Digital competencies need to be seen in the context of social motivation and goal-setting for realizing desired futures.

Thinking Out Loud: What kind of social spaces do we want? Where and how do we want to learn, live, and work?

In creating new digitally-supported social spaces, we need to normatively manage these spaces. There is no such thing as a normatively empty or neutral social space. The notion of cultural and economic power hierarchies, in particular within Silicon Valley tech giants, implies that we need to define the desired qualities of new social spaces, the modes of communication and interaction. Before arbitrarily applying tech, we need to ask: What kind of world and society do we like to live in? How should and can technology support our ideas? Which kind of socio-digital spaces scaffold the learning experiences of our students?

The definition of underpinning norms, values, and constituting frameworks to support *human agency,* to use Albert Bandura's term, are necessary to transparently clarify the standards against which a social space should be measured. As a consequence of self-imposed accountability, such an explicit understanding enforces a self-critical and reflective assessment of standards.

The current tech landscape: Not my world, not your world, not our world

The problem of large commercial social networks is straight forward. Because they have subscribed to the smallest common normative denominator of their global clients, like 'free speech', any competing (or diverging) ethical perspectives, such as communal and social responsibilities, had to surrender to the smallest denominator.

As unwanted side-effects of social networks, such as social aggression and disintegration surge, user populations diversify and the social costs of connection seem to outweigh social benefits, such monopolized network-models seem to have exhausted their developmental potential. Digital tribalism and the endless (re)production of polarizing information have become a business model driving huge networks. Until today, hate speech, severe personal insults, and even online murder threats only get acted upon by authorities in the most severe cases – if at all. None of the large social networks feel obliged to hand ID-addresses of criminals to authorities. To this extend, Facebook is a great example of how future social spaces should *not* be designed – as much as Amazon or Google are splendid examples of how we do not wish future markets to be monopolized.

As educators, we need safe spaces for our pupils and students. We need trusted spaces to build rewarding and deep relationships. We need our learning communities to navigate within trust-worthy institutions. It makes therefore no sense to educate young people in safe spaces but let the public sphere be ruled by the separate right of tech monopolies. Cybermobbing, Cybergrooming and other forms of cybercrimes have, as most sad examples, not been invented and tolerated by schools. Schools have been left alone to deal with problems that are created, in the first place, by large social networks.
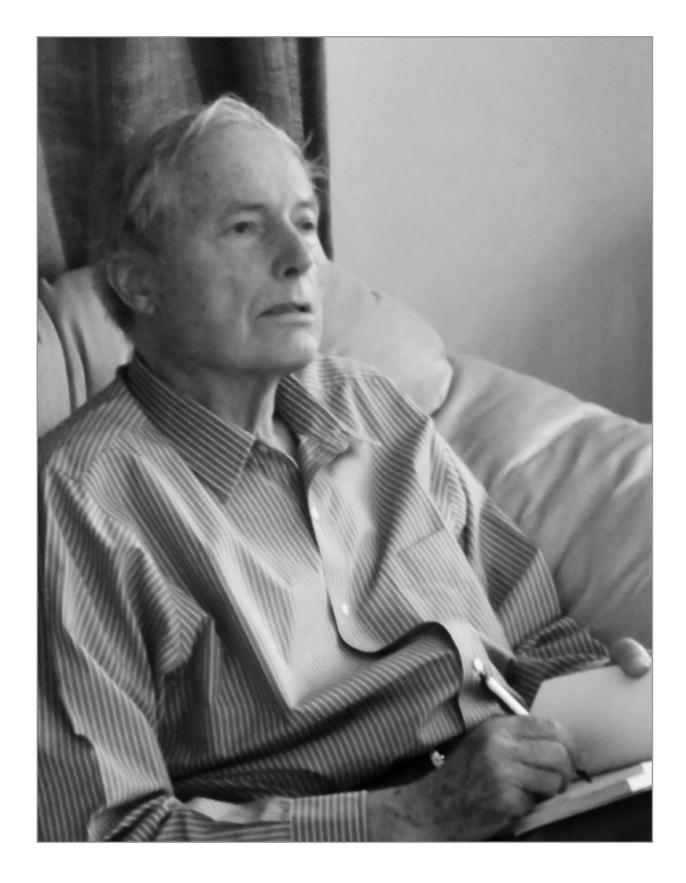
Future educators are agents of social change and innovation

We need not withdraw to the thin arguments of digital competences. Instead, we need to question the institutional readiness to support digital access for all, to build adequate digital infrastructure, support new social roles, opportunities for professionalization, as well as new jobs in dital education. Teachers will, e.g., not have the time to produce sophisticated Open Educational Ressources (OER). Communal media centers need to be established for that matter to support schools and universities. Schools need to be networked to share and optimize resources. In this light, digital competence is, far from being an individual problem, a social, economic, and political challenge.

Mindsets, social relations, and institutional practice form the pivot points of future education as they holistically encompass central aspects of professional and personal life. Digital competencies make only sense in the context of these pivotal factors. How would teachers without a growth mindset ever give digital media a try? How would educational leaders find the courage to set up media-professionalization and -creation centers? How would young start-ups find interest to invest in education-tech?

Rather than focussing on digital competence in isolation, we need to regain the perspective on creating the schools and universities that we like to teach and learn in. This entails that we have to connect the dots. Digital competencies need to be seen in the context of social motivation and goal-setting for realizing desired futures.

Dr Howard Richards (born June 10, 1938) is a philosopher of Social Science who has worked with the concepts of basic cultural structures and constitutive rules. He holds the title of Research Professor of Philosophy at Earlham College, a liberal arts college in Richmond, Indiana, USA, the Quaker School where he taught for thirty years. He officially retired from Earlham College, together with his wife Caroline Higgins in 2007, but retained the title of Research Professor of Philosophy. A member of the Yale class of 1960, he holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of California, Santa Barbara, a Juris Doctor (J.D.) from the Stanford Law School, an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) from Oxford University (UK) and a PhD in Educational Planning, with a specialization in applied psychology and moral education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto, Canada. Dr Richards is a Catholic, a member of Holy Trinity (Santisima Trinidad) parish in Limache, Chile, and a member of the third order of St. Francis, S.F.O   www.wikipedia.org

Dr Howard Richards

Why Saving the Biosphere
is Impossible Now,
and the Unbounded Approach
to Making It Possible
DR HOWARD RICHARDS

We are trying. We keep bees. We use reusable shopping bags, not plastic. We plant trees. We create new fertile soil with compost, manure, potting soil and worms fed with table scraps. We heat water with solar energy. We recycle glass and metal. We walk, bicycle, or take public transportation and keep our houses well insulated in the winter.

Millions of others are trying too. To cite one of innumerable examples: People living on welfare benefits, organized by eco-activists, cultivate organic gardens on the rooftops of apartment buildings in large cities

But we backyard and rooftop do- gooders are just the small fry. Not far from here a joint venture of two large corporations is building Chile´s largest wind farm. It will power with renewable energy the mining of copper that in turn will go into making electric cars in China. Renault has stopped making gas cars in China entirely and gone 100% electric. Nearly every government has a ministry to protect the environment. Saving the planet is part of the mission and vision of General Electric, BP, Google, Hindustan Lever, Nestle and nearly any great corporation you can name. It is featured in their reports to their shareholders. The deadly Fog of London is a thing of the past. Energy efficient green buildings are a common present day reality in Germany.

And yet …

Think unbounded. How long will economics remain in one silo, while biology stands in a second silo and anthropology in a third silo? The frustrations of ecology are, as illustrated in the bee example, almost invariably linked with an economics that does not see itself as anthropologists see it, i.e. as one cultural structure often useful for provisioning (i.e. for meeting human needs) among countless cultural structures.

Something is wrong. An estimated 24 billion tonnes of fertile top soil are lost due to erosion each year.[1] More soil is lost through poisoning by pesticides,[2] directly causing millions of human deaths. As of March 2020 parts per million of CO2 in the atmosphere stand at 414.5 as all efforts to stabilize it or reverse it are frustrated and global warming continues steadily upward.[3] A disastrous consequence has been an epidemic of fires, especially in Australia, California, central Africa and Brazil, leading to less vegetation, less oxygen in the atmosphere, more warming, less rainfall and less vegetation –a vicious circle. Indeed, something is wrong, basically wrong. Here I will illustrate what is basically wrong with an incident in the history of bees (or, more broadly, pollinators). Although important progress has been made *in spite of* adverse dominant cultural and social structures, the bee story illustrates why survival requires avoiding now inevitable collisions between economics and physical reality.

The bee story is about the deliberate introduction of a foreign bumblebee by the Chilean government collaborating with the private firm Xilema S.A. and the school of agriculture of the Catholic University of Valparaiso. Its name is B. Terrestris, a species of bumblebee from Israel. It was introduced by setting hundreds of queens loose in the wild, beginning in 1997-98, first at Quillota and then at numerous locations. The purpose was to improve the pollination of crops. *It is clear that when the decision to import was made and the contracts were funded the criteria must have been economic, or mainly economic. This is clear because at that time virtually nothing was known about native species performing similar pollination services. If how the indigenous peoples –many known as Mapuche ´people of the land´-- related to pollinators counted as knowledge at all, it would have counted as anthropology, and almost certainly would have been disregarded.*

Subsequent research has shown disastrous unintended consequences. I quote a detailed empirical study: ´ *Bombi. terrestris* were deliberately introduced by the Chilean government despite the presence of native *Bombus* species, with *terrestris* spreading rapidly to occupy a vast area of southern South America. The arrival of *B. terrestris* appears to have led to the rapid local extinction of the native B. *dahlbomii* (a similar native bumblebee HR) at a speed only plausibly explained by pathogen spill over.(i.e. bee diseases carried by the invader and lethal to the native HR)   Although the parasite(s) responsible has yet to be ascertained with certainty, both *A. bombi* and *C. bombi* (i.e. parasites found in *B. Terrestris* to which *B.Terrestris* is more resistant than the now extinct Chilean and Argentine bumblebees who had no defences against it HR) have been shown to be highly prevalent in the invasive species.' [4] . This is just one example of the havoc wrought in southern Chile and Argentine Patagonia, which now appears to be spreading northward. [5]

A volunteer opportunity: The scientists who are accurately tracking the damage done by what many call the dominant paradigm and we prefer to call the historically constructed basic cultural structure are understaffed and underfunded. As we speak there are teams of volunteer citizen-scientists helping professional scientists to gather data on the consequences and the consequences-of-the-consequences of short-sighted economically driven decisions in Chile, in Argentina and elsewhere.

More examples, when nations do not sign global agreements to stop global warming, do not comply with them even if they do sign them, sometimes revoke them after signing them, and refuse even to discuss global agreements to *reverse* global warming, their pretext is invariably economic imperatives. Inside their mental world, growth is imperative, and growth is achieved by investments where the potential gain justifies the risk. In the case of B. Terrestris in Chile, the gains from larger crops and higher revenues presumably were expected to justify many times over spending the money the project would cost, even taking into account the risk that it might fail.

If it were true that complying with imperatives deduced from contemporary dominant economic rationality, were the only possible way to mobilize resources to meet human needs, then humanity would be doomed. It would follow that the reliable production of food and other necessities that make human life possible, over time would destroy the natural ecosystems that make the biosphere possible.

Fortunately, *it is not true.* Unbounded organizing emphasizes a principle it did not invent: for any given problem the number of possible solutions is limitless, unknown, and moveable by human creativity.   If saving the spotted owl and its habitat would cost the jobs of a thousand coal miners, that is not the end of the story.   The number of routes to happy economic security for the thousand coal miners is still limitless, unknown and moveable by human creativity.

© Howard Richards

Historical awareness does not make us extremists. Our proposal is to work together across sectors to solve humanity's unsolved problems, without unsolving humanity's solved problems.
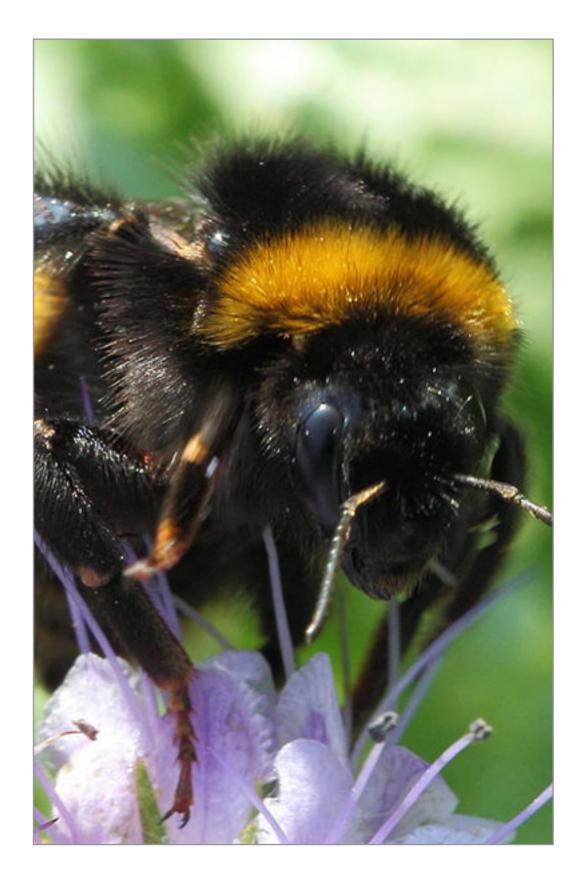
Fortunately, it is not true. Unbounded organizing emphasizes a principle it did not invent: for any given problem the number of possible solutions is limitless, unknown, and moveable by human creativity.   If saving the spotted owl and its habitat would cost the jobs of a thousand coal miners, that is not the end of the story. The number of routes to happy economic security for the thousand coal miners is still limitless, unknown and moveable by human creativity. Marx expressed well the social status of so-called economic imperatives in his critique of Proudhon: 'Economic categories are only the theoretical expressions, the abstractions of the social relations of production (we would add ´and circulation´ HR) ...Thus these ideas, these categories are as little eternal as the relations they express. They are historical and transitory products.' [6]

Historical awareness does not make us extremists. Our proposal is to work together across sectors to solve humanity's unsolved problems, without unsolving humanity's solved problems.
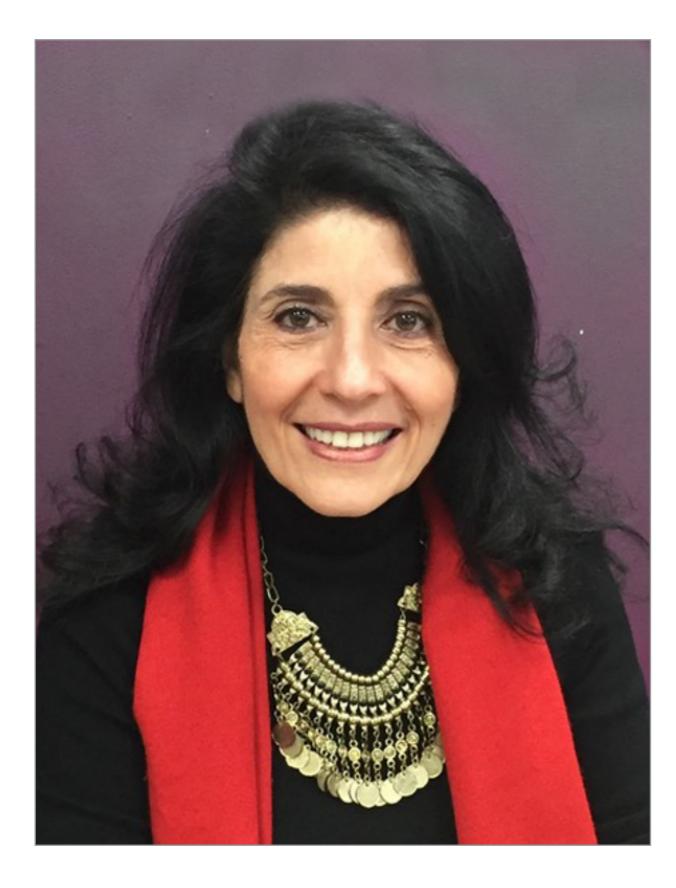
Hence the unbounded approach to making saving the biosphere possible is: (1) Keep on doing the good things we are doing now and do more of them, even though at crucial moments we collide with ´economic imperatives 'and lose, (2) Transform cultural, and therefore social and economic, structures so that such collisions no longer happen.

End Notes
1. https://www.globalagriculture.org/report-topics/soil-fertility-and-erosion.html (This is a portal opening to several sources that are periodically updated)
2. Md. Wasim Aktar, Dwaipayan Sengupta, and Ashim Chowdhury (2009).   Impact of pesticides use in agriculture: their benefits and hazards   Interdisciplinary Toxicology Vol. 2009, pp 1-12
3.This data comes from the site www.co2.earth. It is continually updated.
4. Dave Goulson and Eiizabeth Nicolls (2016).   The canary in the coalmine; bee declines as an indicator of environmental health. Science Progress Vol. 99 pp. 312 – 326   p 317
5. R. Schmid-Hempel, M., Eckhardt, D. Goulson et al. (2014).   The invasion of southern South America by imported bumblebees and associated parasites. Journal of Animal Ecology. Vol. 83 pp. 823 – 837
6. Karl Marx (1976/1847) The Poverty of Philosophy. London: Lawrence and Weishart, pp. 165-6. Volume 6 of Collected Works

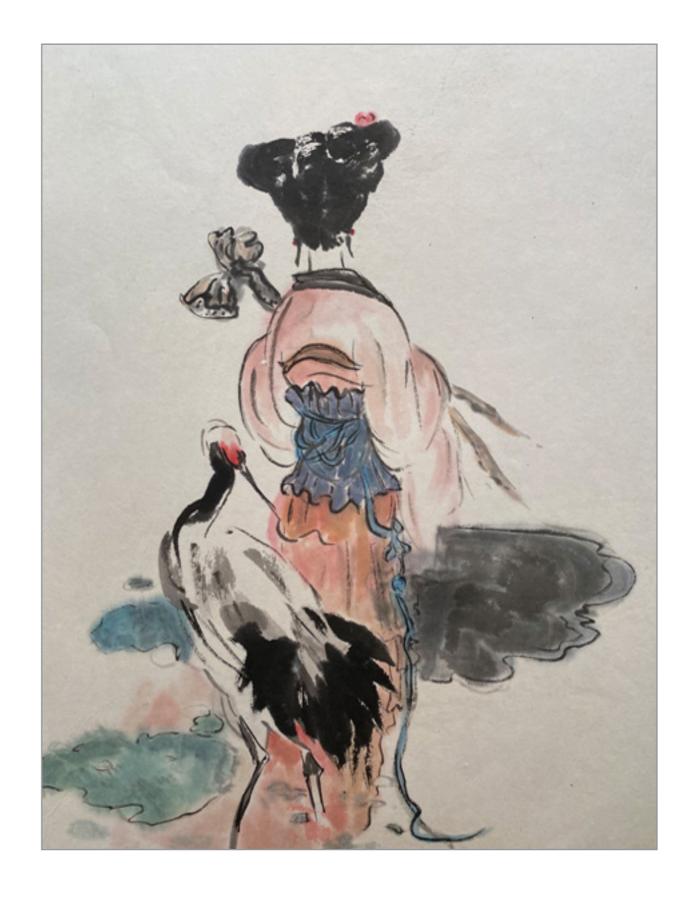https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bombus_terrestris_
queen_face_HC1.jpg

Hedy Habra has authored three poetry collections, most recently, The Taste of the Earth (Press 53 2019). Tea in Heliopolis won the USA Best Book Award and Under Brushstrokes, finalist for the USA Best Book Award and the International Book Award. Her story collection, Flying Carpets, won the Arab American Book Award's Honorable Mention and was finalist for the Eric Hoffer Award. A fourteen-time nominee for the Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net, her work appears in numerous publications. Her website is hedyhabra.com

Hedy Habra

Tai Chi
Chinese ink paintings on rice paper by
Hedy Habra

My mother's artworks covered the walls of our home in Heliopolis, Cairo. She was also an avid reader and instilled in me her passion for art and literature. As a child, I used to engage in dialogues with the characters in her paintings. After completing my pharmacy degree, and though immersed in the study of languages and literature, I'd spend all my free time taking art classes. I first loved to paint portraits from life with pastels but it was difficult to find people to pose for an extended period of time. I later on explored several styles of painting before developing a fascination for Chinese art. For the past ten years, I have been practicing in free style with Chinese Ink on rice paper. It took me a long time to learn to work faster with an economy of brushstrokes. As a poet, I greatly appreciate the fact that for the Chinese, poetry and visual art are inseparable. Not only are paintings often inscribed with poetry, but also each painting is a poem in itself. Painting represents silent poetry for many Chinese artists and it has come to mean the same to me. The absorbency of rice paper calls for an intense, deft and concise approach, as it is often the case with poetry. I have used these new skills to paint the cover of my three poetry collections. For me, both painting and writing flow in my mind within the moves of my daily Tai Chi practice. I love to paint figures and animals such as horses, tigers, birds as well as landscapes, but cranes and egrets remain one of my favorite subjects.
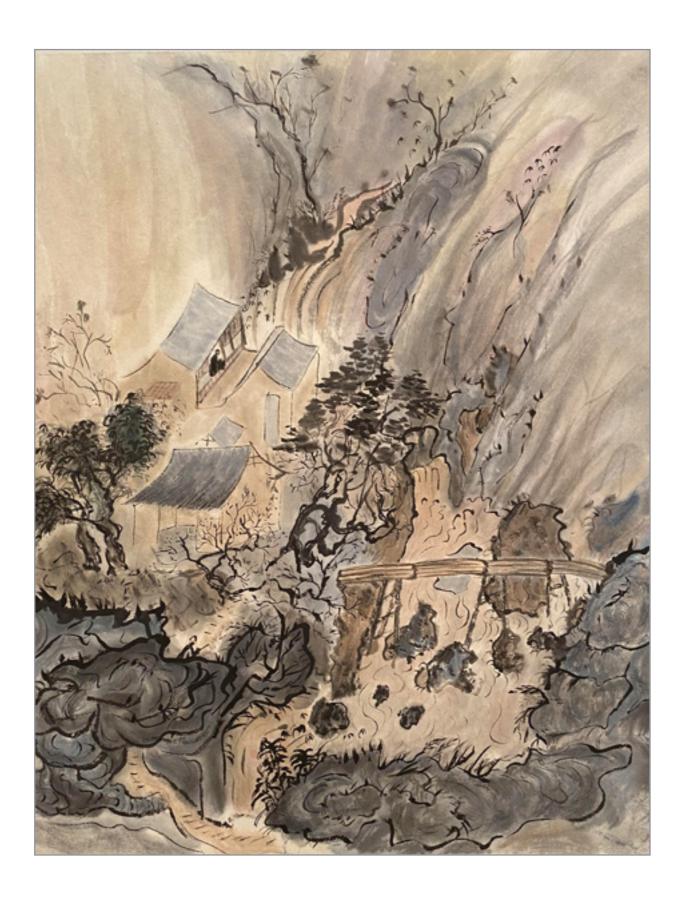
Li Bai

Women and crane

Woman and leopard

Poet freeing caged bird

Mountain Landscape with bridge

Rocky shores and pavilion with boats

Fiery blossoms and birds' flight over bridge

© **Hedy Habra**

Mark Ulyseas has served time in advertising as copywriter and creative director selling people things they didn't need, a ghost writer for some years, columnist of a newspaper, a freelance journalist and photo-grapher. In 2009 he created *Live Encounters Magazine,* in Bali, Indonesia. It is a not for profit (adfree) free online magazine featuring leading academics, writers, poets, activists of all hues etc. from around the world. March 2016 saw the launch of its sister publication *Live Encounters Poetry,* which was relaunched as *Live Encounters Poetry & Writing* in March 2017. In February 2019 the third publication was launched, *LE Children Poetry & Writing* (now renamed *Live Encounters Young Poets & Writers*). In August 2020 the fourth publication, *Live Encounters Books,* was launched. He has edited, designed and produced all of *Live Encounters'* 190 publications (upto August 2020). Mark's philosophy is that knowledge must be free and shared freely to empower all towards enlightenment. He is the author of three books: RAINY – *My friend & Philosopher, Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives* and *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey.*
https://www.amazon.com/Mark-Ulyseas/e/B01FUUQVBG
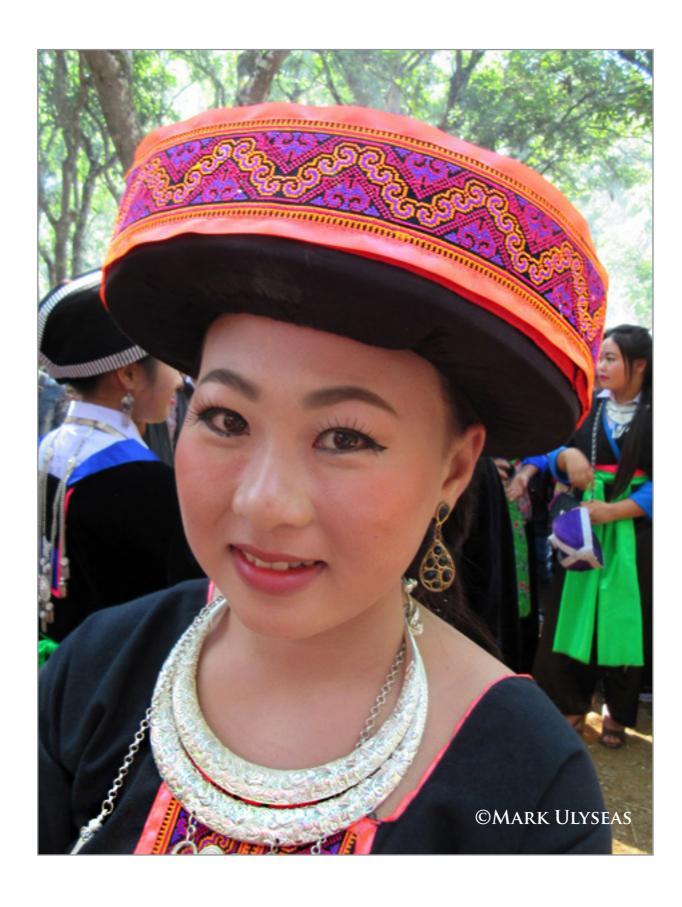https://liveencounters.net/mark-ulyseas/

Hmong Headgear
Hmong New Year festivities, Luang Prabang - Part I
Mark Ulyseas

The following photographs, the first in a two part series, feature the fabulous range of headgear worn by the women of the Hmong tribe at their New Year celebrations that occurred in Luang Prabang, Laos PDR, in the third week of December 2019.
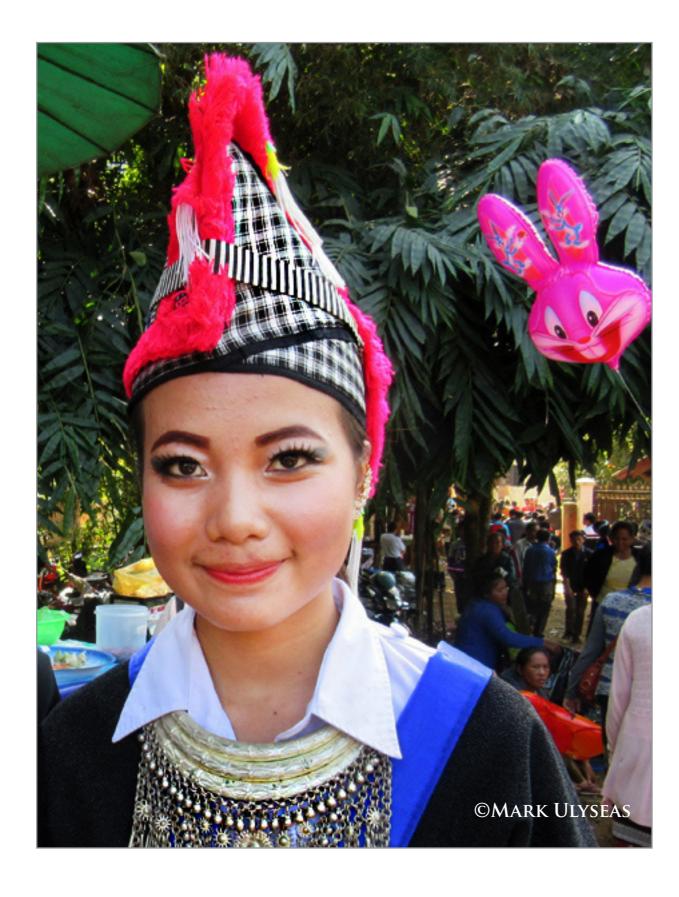
Hmong - 1

©Mark Ulyseas

©Mark Ulyseas

Hmong - 2

Hmong - 3

Hmong - 4   Hmong - 5

©Mark Ulyseas

Hmong - 6

©Mark Ulyseas

©Mark Ulyseas

Hmong - 7   Hmong - 8

©Mark Ulyseas

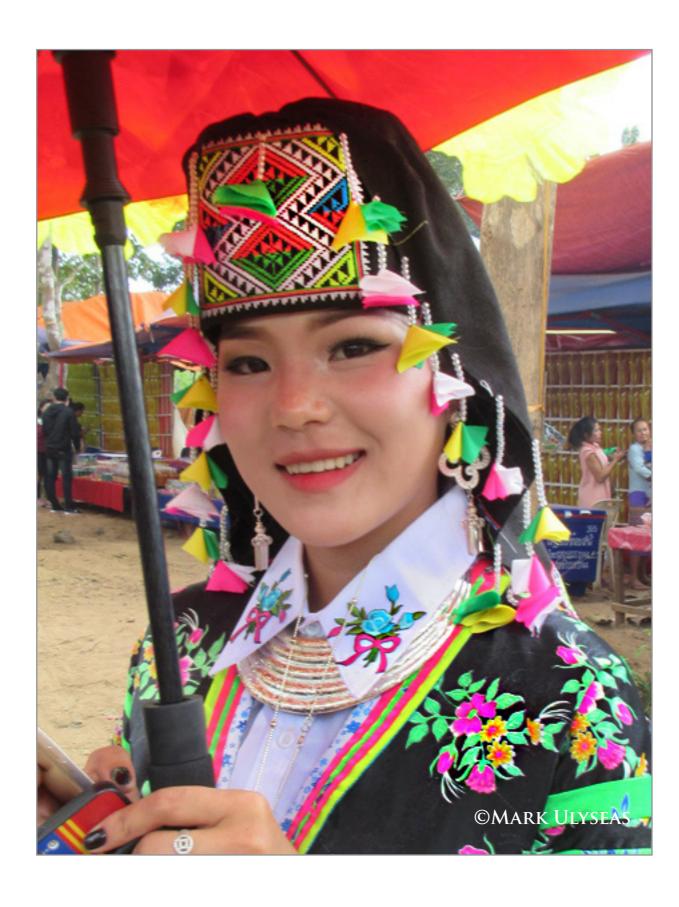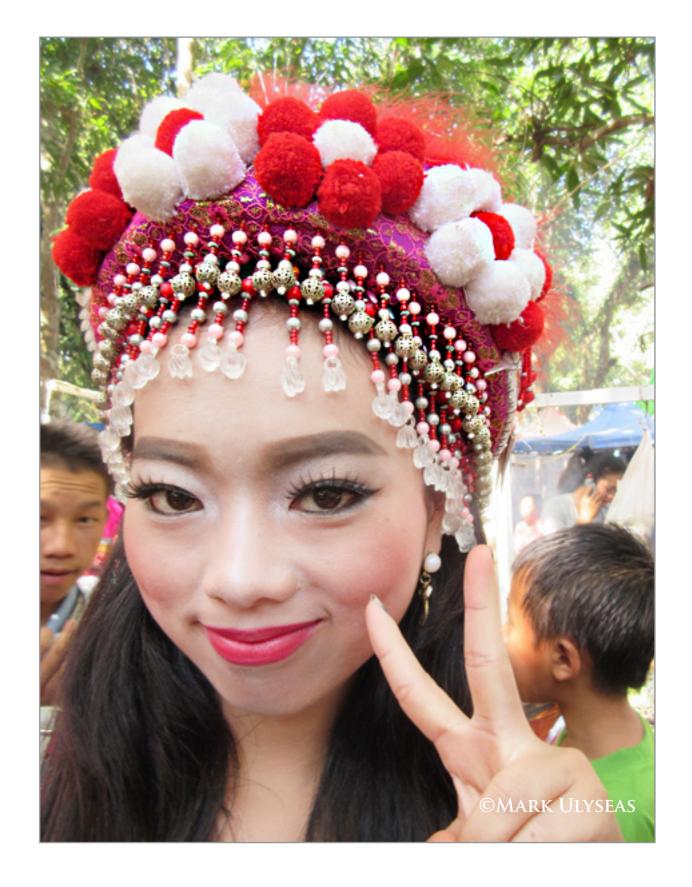©Mark Ulyseas

Hmong - 9   Hmong - 10

Hmong - 11

Hmong - 12

10
YEARS

Live encounters

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ULYSEAS