

State of the Community: Every Decision Counts

12-13 September 2017

UNESCO, room IV

State of the Community: Every Decision Counts will bring together academics, professionals and youth to investigate sustainable solutions, anchored in the knowledge provided by the social and human sciences, for our interconnected world. The conference takes place under the aegis of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) programme, and builds on the outcomes of the World Humanities Conference, held in Liège, Belgium, in August 2017.

The conference is organized around three interconnected areas in which well-identified threats go hand in hand with new opportunities to support societies in responding to the challenges of the 2030 Agenda for inclusive and sustainable development. The possibility of a civic culture based on democratic citizenship is often perceived to be undermined by technologies of surveillance, control and communication that trivialize public debate; by exclusive and aggressive identities that leave little space for social pluralism; and by the decline of traditional modes of political organization. At the same time, new technologies for networking and exchange, along with more horizontal forms of politics, offer the hope of alternative and more fluid identities that can underpin new forms of social solidarity, including across the borders of states and nations.

How these tensions play out, and whether extremism, discrimination and inequality become more or less prevalent, will depend on the ability to reconcile globalization and traditional structures, legitimate individualism and social solidarity, the pace of innovation and the need for social debate about technologies and their application. Democracy critically depends on the strength and viability of institutions as nurtured by the people they serve, and thus on the civic convictions of citizens themselves.

The title given to the conference derives from the 2016 State of the Community conference, also held in collaboration between UNESCO MOST and the Dhillon Marty Foundation, which organized a student competition for "Phrase of the Year". "Every Decision Counts" was the winner of the 2016 competition, highlighting the significance of the impact of every decision each citizen makes on the individual and the well-being of society. The jury for the Dhillon Marty Competition: 2017 Phrase of the Year will also convene during the conference and announce the competition winner.

The conference will operate in English and French, with simultaneous translation.

Provisional Programme

Tuesday, 12 September 2017

09:30-10:00 Registration

10:00-10:10 Opening Remarks

Sonia Dhillon Marty, Dhillon Marty Foundation

- 10:10-10:20 Opening Remarks
John Crowley, UNESCO
- 10:20-10:30 Presentation of **Our: Collective Future Project**
Erin Moore, Associate Professor in the Department of Architecture and in the Environmental Studies Program at the University of Oregon
- “Our” is an installation and event by architect Erin Moore, in collaboration with author and philosopher Kathleen Dean Moore. “Our” is a framework made of nesting space for the larvae of solitary bees that houses the collective ecological future of the city as written in the futures of 100 individuals. Deconstructed into 100 bee nesting blocks distributed throughout the city, “Our” embodies the boundlessness of the ecological design site in architecture, the biodiversity of the living city, and the indivisibility of our ecological future.
- “Our” will be assembled in the UNESCO Foyer with 100 futures labeled by number inside the nesting holes. Towards the end of the first day, conference organizers will present audience members with numbered folding cards. Audience members will be invited to match their number card with the written future that they will find in “Our” and to place their number card in its place. At the conclusion of the conference on 13 September, audience members will be invited to take a nesting bee block that is labeled with instructions for installing it in the city.
- 10:30-11:30 Keynote Address: **Making Deliberative Democracy Practical**
James Fishkin, Janet M. Peck Professor in International Communication and Director of the Center for Deliberative Democracy, Stanford University
- 11:30-13:00 **Dhillon Marty Competition: 2017 Phrase of the Year**
Presentations by shortlisted candidates to the jury, composed of **Countess Setsuko Klossowska de Rola** (UNESCO Artist for Peace), **Marie Poinot** (Head of Publications, Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, *TBC*), **Vincent Defourny** (UNESCO)
- 14:30-16:00 **Panel I: Technology: Opportunities and Challenges**
- The transformative and disruptive technologies of the 21st century – including robots, artificial intelligence, the internet of things, biotechnologies – do not just offer new ways of doing things, or even simply new things to do. As they provide rapidly changing options to address needs for security, food and shelter, and emotional contact, and reshape the spaces of democratic practice, disruptive technologies also raise questions – speculative and increasingly practical – about what it means to be human. Alongside analysis of technological transformations in areas such as energy, agriculture, transport and information, the resources of the social sciences and the humanities are required to make sense of a world in which technologies are available to enhance human potential – but not equally available everywhere and to all; in which some non-human entities may interact with us in ways that are difficult to distinguish from ordinary language; and in which important aspects of our identities are constructed through participation in algorithmically governed networks.
- with the participation of* **Georges Kepenekian** (Mayor of Lyon and Vice-President of the Metropole of Lyon), **Marie-Hélène Parizeau** (Professor of Philosophy, Université Laval, Québec), **Louis Montagne**, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, af83), **Peter-Paul Verbeek** (Professor of Philosophy and Technology, University of Twente)

moderator: Sonia Dhillon Marty (Dhillon Marty Foundation)

16:15-17:00 Reception

Wednesday 13 September 2017

09:30-10:00 Registration

10:00-11:00 Keynote Address: **Humanity and its Futures**
Andrés Roemer, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Societal Change and the Free Flow of Information

11:00-12:30 *Panel II: Identity, Why and for What Good?*

Identity plays a central role in contemporary social and political debate. We care about how others recognize and misrecognize us, both as individuals and as members of groups. Most people wish to be able to define the terms in which they are perceived, and may feel hurt or devalued when required to fit in to others' preconceptions or stereotypes. On the other hand, overemphasis on ethno-religious understandings of group identity may foster political tensions. Finding a reasonable balance in this regard implies pluralizing identity: recognizing that who we are, how we are perceived, and how we categorize others, are processes with multiple dimensions that respond to diverse contexts and situations. It is important to elaborate a language in which the well-known results of research in the social and human sciences can be connected to public debate in order to provide a basis for an inclusive and civic public culture.

with the participation of **Lionel Veer** (Ambassador of the Netherlands to UNESCO), **Astrid von Busekist** (Professor of Political Science, Sciences Po, *TBC*), **Sonia Dhillon Marty** (Dhillon Marty Foundation), **Bahjat Rizk** (Cultural Advisor, Permanent Delegation of Lebanon to UNESCO)

moderator: John Crowley (UNESCO)

12:30-13:00 Award of the **Dhillon Marty Competition** for **2017 Phrase of the Year**

14:30-16:30 *Panel III: Deliberative Democracy*

Can we have a democracy of thoughtful empowerment rather than a democracy of sound-bite manipulation that serves simply as an adjunct to technocratically conceived "governance"? "Deliberative democracy" summarizes a range of ideas and institutional developments that seek to engage the public in thoughtful and informed discussion oriented not just towards aggregation of interests but also, more ambitiously, towards the elucidation of the public interest. How can the normative idea of deliberative democracy, which reflects key democratic values of equal citizenship and public reason, be approximated in real-world conditions at various geographical scales? Can new technologies and new methods of organization, mobilization and discussion play a role in revitalizing really existing democracy?

with the participation of **James Fishkin** (Janet M. Peck Professor in International Communication and Director of the Center for Deliberative Democracy, Stanford University), **Yves Sintomer** (Professor of Political Science, Université Paris 8), **Go Okui** (PhD candidate, University of Kyoto)

moderator: George Papagiannis (UNESCO, *TBC*)

16:30-16:40 Closing Remarks
John Crowley, UNESCO

16:40-16:50 Closing Remarks
Sonia Dhillon Marty, Dhillon Marty Foundation