

TRADITIONS D'AVENIR is born from a simple humanitarian consideration:

The large pandemic, such as Aids, malaria, tuberculosis are specially striking the southern populations, often in rural areas, living in traditional economies and societies with ancestral health systems.

We are not talking about few millions individuals but close to two and a half Billions human beings whose daily incomes do not exceed 2 US\$, and whose only possible access to treatment are to use what is available in their direct surrounding.

Despite important financial efforts, why the international help is lacking of efficacy with known scientific treatments?

Which are the misunderstandings and oppositions between the international organizations and the populations assisted?

Why cultural realities of those populations, their understanding of the disease, their therapeutic behavior, are not considered, and included in the large Health international conferences and Fora?

Why their traditional practices are immediately considered, by the western way of thinking, as marginal, concurrent or fought?

Why not implement meetings with those hundred of thousand health actors in order to help and guide them to join modern and public health systems?

From those reasons and evidences, a group of physicians, researchers and politicians, together with Senator Michel GUERRY have created TRADITIONS D'AVENIR.

As a parliamentarian, Senator GUERRY participates to several international programs such as the World Bank one, in relation with several governments from developing countries. In 2007, he has offered to gather those health professionals, giving them, for the first time, the opportunity to express their difference, exchange experiences, express their needs but also think about their integration in a national health system.

On this idea, the founders were rapidly supported and joined by different personalities, such as Professors Jean-François GIRARD, then Director IRD, Sankaran Valiathan, head of ICMR India, Luc Montagnier, Nobel Price of medicine 2008, Visha Katosh from the Indian Government and also from University of Guatemala, Professor Armando Caceres ; politicians like China Health Vice Minister from China, Professor Wang Guoqiang and former French, PM Jean Pierre Raffarin

The Gatherings received the patronage from the French Senate, UNESCO, UNAIDS and also First Lady of the Republic of Cameroon, Lady Chantal Biya, President Synergie Africaine; her country having accepted to host the first edition in Yaoundé.

The Yaoundé Gatherings

Two years have been necessary to prepare, finalize a program and select participants according to their activities in this field: medical doctors, health system actors, ethno

sociologists, politicians, specialized journalists, and traditional practitioners, patient NGO managers, sometimes themselves affected by the disease.

Two years of meeting, listening, convincing and fund raising!

It is only in November 2009 that the first Gatherings took place in the capital of Cameroon; bringing together a selected limited number of participants (a hundredth) coming from the five continents and several professional background.

All of them ready to exchange on the central topic:

“The patient from low income countries facing available therapies”

Upon request from local authorities, before the Gatherings, a Workshop was organized in May 2009, assembling health professionals from Cameroon, willing to voice their concerns on the subject and not able to attend the international conference.

Those pre-Gatherings have permitted a better understanding of the daily needs of patients in Cameroon, the organizing country, and also, to better structure the November meeting.

The key points expressed during the workshop :

- The actual cultural, social and community environment of the patient
- The danger and omnipresence of quackery
- The warning on fake drugs
- The deficiencies related to malnutrition and lack of hygiene
- The increasing importance of patients NGO

Those points were regularly raised during the International Gatherings;

During those, also the inter personal relationship between patient and local practitioner able better understand the patient within his community.

Another common point: the weight of social and cultural taboo surrounding the disease and patients who have to fight; In November, comments were expressed on the social cultural differences of a world which cannot accept a unique way of thinking, as Universal

- For example: the use of words whose meaning differs from one culture to another one, like traditional medicine covering traditional Chinese or Indian medicines and also medicine based on oral tradition like the ones from Africa and Latin America.
- How important it is to save and protect those ancestral knowledges, to develop adapted validation programs.
- To encourage all local efforts related to medicinal plants, community or regional plantations and uses, inducing significant incomes.

- To erase the communication difficulties with international agencies, sometimes isolated and far away from field realities.
- To mobilize, in a coordinated manner, the media on disease prevention and national health strategies, without forgetting their obligation to fight against ostracism, intolerance and taboos. Therefore, bridges are needed to improve exchange and implement cross cultural education programs.
- Last, to implement social coverage for those debilitated populations, regardless of the therapies in use.

The Lima Gatherings

Second Gatherings co produced by TRADITIONS D'AVENIR, the LIMA Gatherings happened in October 2010.

They took place in Chaclacayo, a close suburb of Lima, under the hospices of *Es Salud* and the authority of Dr Martha VILLAR.

Es Salud, a medical organization covering 8 millions Peruanos, was assisted by the *Colegio Medico de Peru*, by Dr Michel Sauvain, from the French "Institut de Recherche et de Developpement" IRD and by the Pan-American WHO.

More than 150 National health professionals have participated, coming from the Amazon Forest, the Andes and the Coast. Many participants, impregnated by their prestigious ancestral civilizations, made the same type of comments related to the local beliefs, their will to be active parts of the natural forces, to be part of the cosmos, in its relation to disease and individual health.

Therefore, through the knowledge of active medicinal plants, the traditional practitioner has to integrate the community rites in his practice.

Aside from presentations and discussions, several patients' testimonies were presented, illustrating specific cultural behaviors,

During those days in October 2010, the participants not only recalled the confrontation of the population to the great pandemics, but also that they had to face other scourges, such as Leishmaniosis, Dengue, parasitic diseases of all kinds.

Sometimes the local treatments of those scourges have real efficacy, even though not validated.

The Peruvian Authorities, attending the meeting and conscious of those realities, have expressed their desire to produce legal frames in order to extend social coverage for those patients using those health systems.

Senator Michel GUERRY, Dr René OLIVIER and Tradition d'Avenir General Secretary, Pierre NOEL, attending the Gatherings, have presented to the participants the outcome from the Yaoundé Gatherings, November 2009, doing so contributing to the exchanges.

This was also an opportunity to further develop health-training programs, mobilizing major international media.

Perspectives

In the coming years, "TRADITIONS D'AVENIR" will continue organizing regional or international exchanges on: "the patient in low income settings facing available local therapies".

Representatives from Latin America, Africa, and India have contacted "TRADITIONS D'AVENIR" in order to build on its expertise, work and network.

Other meetings will happen with a number of themes:

- Validation of treatments, identifications and needs
- The economy of harvesting and production by small farms, of medicinal plants.
- Prevention and its cultural aspects
- Fight against fake medicines
- (Teaching and education programs)

Restitution conferences are planned with committed local, national or international institutions.

"TRADITION D'AVENIR" is not a scientific organization, nor is it a Foundation; it is a political tool oriented toward a complementary health definition in low-income regions, committed to improve communication between communities and decided to have a different speech, not adhering to the classical certitudes and dominant thinking.

"TRADITIONS D'AVENIR" was born from an idea, an idea to be shared!