WOMEN IN ACTION at the IAEA

R. Spiegelberg Planer, G. Voigt and E. Gyane

Women have always played a major role in society. Traditionally they give birth and bring up their children and take care of the household. However, women of different nationalities, different classes and also different faiths have been humanitarians and defenders of human rights and opposed war in political life or in peace organizations. In science, women have opened doors, found new approaches, discovered new techniques and theories and contributed to revolutionary achievements in many fields. To achieve that, in the last century, women have fought for their right to study, to vote, to work and to have a position in society. They are still fighting their way through ...

Thirty-four women have received the Nobel Prize for Science, including two in Physics (Marie Curie and Maria Goeppert-Mayer), three in Chemistry (again Marie Curie, her daughter Irène Joliot-Curie and Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin) and seven in Physiology or Medicine (Gerty Cori, Rosalyn Yalow, Barbara McClintock, Rita Levi-Montalcini, Gertrude B. Elion, Christiane Nüsslein-Volhard and Linda B. Buck). These women contributed to major achievements in science today. Many techniques and machines that today contribute to our well being and health derived from the work of those women.

And, we should not forget the IAEA staff – who shared the Nobel prize with our DG!

The women of the IAEA have been, and are active in many fields. They are safeguards inspectors; they were involved in the Iraq missions and other security tasks and missions; they have facilitated dialogue among our Member States in diplomatic negotiations; they have had a role to play in nuclear medicine, in the development of nuclear applications, in assisting Member States in the promotion of nuclear energy and in the development of standards of nuclear safety.

In honour of all women who have made a contribution to science through their work or have worked for the ideal of a clean and safe environment and life, this issue of ECHO celebrates International Women's Day by offering a glimpse at the women that are in action for the IAEA.

Twenty years and counting, or how to save the world and start a women's football team while you're at it

Laura Rockwood

I started at the Agency almost 22 years ago: I was 3 at the time. OK, not that young, but I was quite young and, while I had been a trial attorney for the US Government before coming here, I knew almost nothing about safeguards or non-proliferation. I remember going home at night worrying about whether my lack of knowledge could be responsible for a war, little appreciating the checks and balances of our organization. It's a rare situation in which the Agency rises or falls on the strength or weakness of just one individual.

I was not only new back then, but responsible for advising the staff of the Department of Safeguards, the likes of Dimitri Perricos and Svein Thorstensen, about work they'd been doing for years before I'd ever heard about nuclear material. Was it problematic being a woman and walking into a situation like that? Well, maybe: I remember entering a meeting room for the first time as the lawyer for the Agency, representing it in negotiations with Euratom, when one of my colleagues, in an abundance of perceived gallantry, said in front of one and all present, "My, how cute you look!" During the coffee break, I took him aside and, firstly, gently thanked him for the compliment, and secondly, suggested that he might want not to do that again during a meeting if he expected me to be of value to the Agency as its lawyer. There is a time and a place for everything.

I was also fairly new to the world of multiple cultures, having come from a relatively homogenous American environment. I remember my first introduction to a young Iranian diplomat, about my age: he would neither look me in the eye nor shake my hand; it was, after all, 1986. I remember having been incensed at the time. In the course of the next NPT Review Conference a few years later, this diplomat had occasion to call on me for procedural advice in my capacity as Second Secretary to the Safeguards Committee of the Conference. I was surprised and touched when, at the close of the conference, he approached me again, eyes downcast, hand over heart, and said, "I wanted to thank you very much for your professional and kind assistance." Enough said.

Recalling the days when we travelled to Iraq to map out and dismantle its nuclear weapons programme, I remember when, during one of the press conferences in Bahrain, the former Head of the Action Team, Maurizio Zifferero, was asked whether I was his wife. "No," he smiled and said, "my lawyer." Never was I treated with anything but the utmost of respect by any of the Iraqis with whom I came into contact. Nor did I ever have the impression that they treated me differently professionally because I was a woman. Of course, fighting for air time on CNN when surrounded by much taller (male) colleagues presented some serious logistical challenges!

I have, since those very early days, had the great luck to work on all aspects of the IAEA's safeguards system, from negotiating a novel safeguards agreement between Argentina and Brazil, and yet another with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; to working with the inspectors responsible for verifying the dismantlement of South Africa's nuclear weapons programme; to drafting the Model Additional Protocol; to sitting behind our Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, and our former Director General, Hans Blix, at the Security Council discussing Iraq, trying desperately to do what we could to contribute to a peaceful

outcome. I also had the honour to attend the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Mohamed ElBaradei and the staff of the Agency in Oslo, Norway, in December 2005.

The world sometimes has a way of doubling back on itself. I have most recently been working on safeguards issues in connection with Iran, and have travelled to Iran, worn the headscarf, and met with senior officials of Iran, the US and the European countries involved in trying to resolve this volatile situation. So it was that, in 2003, fate brought the Iranian diplomat back to Vienna – both of us a bit older and more mature. We have talked of safeguards and non-proliferation, Islamic culture and world peace. I have a better understanding of why he still doesn't shake my hand; but he does now look me in the eye.

I've come a long way since 1985. I have gained a degree of respect in my area of expertise and received professional recognition. As have women in the workplace in general. There's still a long way to go. I'm tempted to say, "Wouldn't it be great some day to have a woman Director General?" But wouldn't it be even better not to have to think that that would be so special?!

Women in Action – As Nuclear Safeguards Inspectors

By Eva Gyane and Florence Vives

We are two of the approximately 250 nuclear safeguards inspectors, also dubbed 'nuclear watchdogs' in some circles. You might ask - what does an inspector's job entail? In essence, we are the IAEA's eyes in the field where we carry out our mission in some 900 facilities encompassing more than 70 countries in the world. Our work involves verifying the inventory of nuclear material at facilities, carrying out independent measurements using different types of equipment, taking samples of nuclear material, examining operating records of nuclear facilities, and many other activities.

A prerequisite for becoming an inspector is a university degree in physics, chemistry or engineering and a good knowledge of the nuclear fuel cycle. None of us can be expected to be an expert in all the different aspects of nuclear technology. Continuous learning, which frequently involves on-the-job training, is essential. New inspectors receive several months' intensive training that enables them to obtain a good understanding of the Agency's verification rights and the criteria applied in the inspectors' verification activities.

We always carry out our work under the watchful eyes of facility operators and State authority personnel, which at times can be rather stressful. We have to be both tough and diplomatic in order to achieve our inspection goals. But we also need expertise using so-called soft skills when negotiating with State authorities. During inspections, all members of the inspection team rely heavily on each other and good team work is essential for a successful inspection.

Our work can be demanding, as it involves extensive travel, the carrying and handling of heavy equipment and work in complex physical and environmental conditions. We are exposed to radiation and we climb on top of ladders or fuel pond bridges. We need to perform in both hot and cold weather, using the same protective clothing. We deal with jet lag, changes in diet and being away from home for extended periods of time.

But, most of all, our job is highly interesting, diverse, challenging, exciting and motivating, and it gives us the feeling that we are directly contributing towards world peace.

We females account for less than 10% of the inspectorate. Ms. Florence Vives, who works for SGOA (Safe Guards Operation A), has answered some questions on her personal job experience:

• What is your professional/educational background and when did you join the Agency?

I am a Nuclear Physicist. I specialised in the study of neutron induced fission of 235U, 238U and 237Np while preparing for my PhD at the Joint Research Centre of the European Union in Geel, Belgium. Afterwards, I worked on the transmutation of nuclear waste at the Heavy Ion Accelerator in Darmstadt, Germany (GSI). In 2001, I joined the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) as a Radionuclide Officer. I joined the Agency in the Division of Operations A in August 2005.

• How did your background help you in your job?

I am an experimental nuclear physicist and my background enabled me to quickly apply my knowledge to Safeguards practice and techniques.

• What are the major challenges of your job and how did you overcome them?

I mainly go on inspections to Japan and one of the major challenges there is the language. Japanese people are very nice and cooperative but it is rare to find someone who speaks English fluently. So when you are in a city far from Tokyo and you have to buy your train ticket yourself or order your dinner at a restaurant it is difficult, because people hardly understand your demand and you don't know what to order on the menu, since you can't read Japanese. An important thing that has to be mentioned is the logistics behind an inspection in Japan that lasts three to four weeks: Since I go to several different locations during this period it is necessary to bring sufficient number private belongings. But of course one easily understands that it is not possible to undertake extensive trips by train with a single 30 kg-case, not including the laptop bag and the 'necessary inspector package' such as seals, cutter, flash cards, working papers etc..In order to overcome this challenge, I usually have three pieces of luggage. A large one that I send to the Tokyo Regional Office or to a hotel, a carry-on bag to take the necessary private belongings when I take the train, and a suitcase where I put all my working papers.

• Have you encountered any female-specific situations and challenges? Any particular com-

ments about relations with male colleagues?

In Japan, there are very few women working at the facilities as scientists or inspectors, and therefore when assigned to be the coordinating inspector (The role of a coordinating inspector is to lead the inspection team during the inspection and to assume the overall responsibility for an inspection.) I am often the only woman to deal with Japanese State inspectors. I enjoy very good relationships with my male colleagues, I would say that when in the field, you have to forget your gender, you are not a male or a female - you are an inspector.

• What do you expect to do in the future?

I expect to gain more and more experience in the safeguards field and especially in the safeguarding of MOX Fast Breeder Reactors of Japan, such as Monju, which is in my opinion a very challenging project.

Working in Nuclear Security – Illicit trafficking

Jessica Satterfield

I was 22 when I first boarded a plane to Austria. I had never lived farther than 30 miles from the house I grew up in when I was offered a one-year internship with the International Atomic Energy Agency. I would work with something called the Illicit Trafficking Database, something I had never heard of back then but that would soon become my life. For those who are not familiar, the Illicit Trafficking Database (ITDB) is a collection of all incidents and related events involving nuclear and other radioactive materials that have taken place internationally since 1993. The position sounded perfect for me – I had focused my research in college on the threat of nuclear terrorism, and had become fascinated with the subject. To work on such an interesting topic, and get paid for it, sounded like a dream come true.

After my internship expired, I was asked to come back and work as a Junior Professional Officer with the Office of Nuclear Security. Several months later, I found myself saying goodbye to home once again and climbing into an airplane destined for Austria. Since my return to Vienna as a staff member with the ITDB Office, my position has proven both challenging and intriguing.

The biggest challenge of my job has been getting accustomed to speaking in public. The thought of standing in front of a room full of diplomats made me tremble when I first came to the IAEA; however, it's now become a routine part of my job. Today, I consider speaking at international training courses on illicit trafficking one of the most interesting aspects of my job. Not only do these courses provide an opportunity to gather useful information from front-line officers who detect and report on illicit trafficking cases, but they also allow for face-to-face communication with these officers on specific illicit trafficking concerns. In this way, I am able to become directly involved in initiatives to increase nuclear and radioactive security around the world – which I consider a rare and exciting opportunity.

In addition to outreach initiatives designed to inform and educate, the most important aspect of the Illicit Trafficking Database is the information contained within. By assisting in the analysis of this information, I am able to contribute to the assessment of regional weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Once these weaknesses have been identified, they can be strengthened through officer training and enhanced technologies. For those illicit trafficking incidents that are of high concern, the ITDB Office can help identify possible routes and links to related materials and events. Through interaction with Interpol, we are able to obtain information on the criminal elements of trafficking cases and participate in a collaborated effort to prevent and respond to nuclear and radioactive materials smuggling.

In today's environment, anyone who reads or watches the news is familiar with the threat of nuclear materials falling into the wrong hands. In addition, many experts view the prospect of a "dirty bomb" being detonated in the center of a large city as not only possible, but probable. In my time at the IAEA, I've seen first-hand the vast international effort that is expended every day to reduce this threat – and I am proud to be a part of this effort.

Working at the Incident and Emergency Centre: different areas, different professions, same goals.

From Safety to Power and... back to Safety

by R. Spiegelberg Planer

From Copacabana to Copakagrana

I have started this article at least 10 times. Over and over I have tried to tell you something that would not be dry, but interesting. There are many stories to tell, but I decided to start with my own story.

In the middle of the 70s, I was one of five women among 100 men, studying electrical engineering at the University of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil. All good gentlemen, who would share their awful jokes with us – a truly equal gender environment! We shared time at the classes, a beer or a wine after that and many jokes, but we were much respected as colleagues and females. On the basis of my own firm resolve – and in opposition to the family because I already had a place in the State electricity company– I went to Rio de Ja-

neiro to study Nuclear Engineering in a beautiful place near the Sugarloaf Mountain and the sea!

I joined the Agency in 1989. The first thing one of my colleagues showed me was the statue of the woman in the plaza and with an ironic smile said: "we now have a Resolution on women...". I was very naive in those days and fortunately didn't understand the hidden meaning! It was the only such comment in many years at the Agency!

At that time, as today, I don't think gender was one of the major issues in the organization. In my view we have personalities – some very strong – that, coming from different cultures and environments, result in different behaviours and attitudes. Adding to that, since the middle of the 90s, our society evolved towards a very competitive and unfortunately, individualistic society, where cooperation and sharing is more difficult to achieve. However, those factors add to each other and I have been supporting the development of women and the due consideration of multicultural issues since I joined the Agency.

Let's go back to my experiences... first, I worked surrounded by numbers and statistics – many said I was Ms. PRIS (Power Reactor Information System). I took this as a compliment. A well-managed database on nuclear power plants is a powerful tool if it provides input to other Agency activities and I worked towards this goal. Projects on the economics of nuclear power plant operations, outage management and country power profiles were started and developed. I am glad to have had the opportunity to follow the implementation of many projects and to have had many interesting and pleasant experiences during technical visits and missions to Member States.

My first visit to South Africa in 1990 was a wonderful experience. One evening after work, we were taken to a town some kilometers away from Johannesburg to appreciate the kaleidoscope of traditional African society by watching people in traditional dress dancing the many rituals of different African cultures. I went into a time warp! I re-discovered the original traditions of my own country: ate feijoada (a traditional dish from Rio de Janeiro made of cooked black beans with meat), watched the African dancing and realized how much it had influenced my own country! I was truly delighted!

My first visit to China was in 1995, when I gave a lecture and had an exhibition stand at an international conference on nuclear power. I arrived in Beijing on Friday to fix everything for the conference on Tuesday, and... the posters only arrived at the last minute on Monday. With the kind help of my Chinese colleagues, everything was in place for the conference opening. In between phoning Vienna, the airlines and whoever could help, I learned a few words of Chinese which I began my lecture with!

Recalling moments like these makes me glad of my decision to stay at the Agency. The opportunity to work side by side with colleagues from different cultures, different people and personalities and the joy of implementing common goals and succeeding together is of immeasurable value. It is an ideal that worked out!

My career developed – not as fast as I would have liked – this is the Agency, not really an organization for making a career, but an organization where you work towards common worldwide goals.

At the end of 2003, I moved to another job at the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security. For me, it was like coming home. I had started my professional life as an operating safety analyst at the nuclear regulatory commission in my country. Working with the Incident Reporting System and the INES scale just seemed to fit well. However, time was short. I was called to take part in a Task Force that led to the establishment of the Incident and Emergency Centre (IEC) - and here I am, back at work with information and data! Again, looking at how the information received at the IEC can contribute to the activities of the department, bringing (hopefully!) new ideas and activities, with the hope that they will be implemented somehow, somewhere by someone!

Coordinating the reporting of events to the IEC has many facets. We have two systems at the IEC – one to report events that fall within the scope of the Convention on Early Notification and Assistance in Case of Radiological and Nuclear Accident (ENAC) and another system that communicates the safety significance of events to the public and the technical community (NEWS). Streamlining the two systems is one of my primary goals. I am also responsible for ensuring knowledge management of our activities, maintaining the 24/7 on-call system and ensuring that we all (Agency and Member States) are well informed and we, at the Agency, are ready to respond and to provide assistance on request. I take this responsibility with the seriousness it deserves. But no-one works in a vacuum whether woman or man.

Once again, sharing and cooperation are key words in my work!

Emergency Response

By Elena Buglova

A construction worker finds a small, shiny, metallic object at a building site. He puts it in his pocket, and later shows it to a colleague. By evening, the worker is in hospital, vomiting from radiation exposure. He had found a powerful, unshielded iridium-192 radioactive source. By accident, it had become dislodged and fallen out of the heavily shielded camera being used to X-ray welds at the construction site. Within days, Chile's radiation and health authorities placed an urgent call for help to the IAEA's Incident and Emergency Centre (IEC). In less than 24 hours an international team of experts was on its way to Chile...

... I got my practical experience in the medical management of radiation emergencies while dealing with the health effects of the Chernobyl accident. My home country is Belarus and, as you know, this

is the country most affected by the Chernobyl incident. I worked as a member of teams performing medical surveys of the population living in the contaminated areas. This experience showed me how important it is to provide a clear and understandable message to the public. The public listens to the professionals and it is our job to help them understand the risks and how to deal with these risks. We must not lose their trust.

Chernobyl is unique and was of great interest for the professional community. At that time, I was involved in scientific studies of radiation-induced health effects, protection of the public through establishing protection standards and justifying long-term protective actions. That was an exciting time for me since, as a young professional, I had the opportunity to work directly with world-renowned experts in this area. What was initially professional collaboration has often grown into close friendships over the years.

The Chernobyl accident occurred over 20 years ago and unfortunately, nowadays, the fields of emergency preparedness or radiation medicine are not particulary interesting to young scientists. This is one of the big issues we all need to work on, otherwise the "first-hand" experience and knowledge of those personally involved in the response to past emergencies is being lost.

I joined the Agency in 2002, starting in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit (which recently "grew up" into the IAEA Incident and Emergency Centre). This was another exciting phase of my life since it gave me the opportunity to use my experience as a medical doctor and as an expert in radiation emergency preparedness in assisting IAEA Member States in preparing for radiation emergencies and in some cases in dealing with the consequences of emergencies.

...The urgent request for assistance from Chile was received early on a Sunday morning. That morning the on-call Emergency Response Manager called me to the Centre. A decision was promptly made to send the requested assistance to Santiago. I immediately started to call experts from the IEC roster in France, Brazil and Argentina. I was lucky, I got them all at once and they were ready to help. By Sunday evening four of us were flying to Santiago, two from Vienna, one from Paris and one from Rio de Janeiro. Two experts from Argentina joined us the following day. Thanks to Chile's prompt response to the incident and our effective assistance the construction worker's life was saved.

Don't you agree that my job is exciting and rewarding? Especially as I am a member of a spirited team working in the stimulating and creative atmosphere of the IAEA IEC.

Women in Action

C. Ciuculescu

I was pleasantly surprised when asked to write this article. First of all I needed to review my life to date, and I realized how many things I have accomplished through hard and serious work. I came from a poor family in Romania; my parents worked in a shoe factory, and they taught me early in life that only my own hard work could bring me a better life.

After graduating from university, I was employed by the Romanian regulatory body. At first I worked in the nuclear power plant safety analysis section then later moved to the research reactor inspection section. There I learned to write inspection procedures, perform inspections, initiate and follow through on enforcement actions, and participate in drafting new regulations.

While working full time at the regulatory authority, I pursued and completed a dual Master of Science degree in Thermodynamics and Electrochemistry. In addition, in 2007, I will finalize my PhD on Spent Fuel Corrosion while continuing to work full time at the IAEA. For me, education is a continuing challenge and responsibility which arises both from formal educational institutions and from the experience obtained from applying technical knowledge.

The IAEA changed my life completely even before I became part of the professional staff. In the beginning, the IAEA provided the opportunity for experiential training in the nuclear field through a fellowship, and I also participated in Agency workshops and training courses on nuclear safety. I also had the opportunity to be part of a team which represented my country during an IAEA General Conference at the plenary sessions, as well as during bilateral meetings.

In 2002 I found a job opportunity on the Agency site that matched my experience and qualifications. Perhaps my greatest surprise was the phone call I received for an interview and, after several months, the announcement that my application had been approved. I cannot describe how happy and honored I was. It was recognition that all my accumulated work experience and education efforts were beginning to pay off.

When I joined the Agency in 2003, I became involved in the coordination of the Incident Reporting System for Research Reactors (IRSRR). At that time, 31 Member States were in this system. Taking into account that 48 Member States have now joined the system, this is considered as a significant success of the strong communication efforts among the research reactor community and the coordination efforts of the Agency team. As a technical officer for many TC projects, I achieved similar results from participation in the commissioning of a new research reactor in Nigeria in 2004 and participation in the Integrated Safety Assessment of Research Reactor mission for cold commissioning in Morocco in 2006.

Recently I led an expert mission and provided technical advice to the Member State where I was trained more than 10 years ago during a fellowship. Their positive response to my assistance served as confirmation of how far I have come, of the benefits of my years of hard work, and the continuing and expanding professional value of my IAEA experiences. As an additional challenge, at the request of the Learning Resource Center, I provided lectures during in-house training courses.

Outside of work I remain active by playing competitive badminton. I am a member of the VIC Badminton Club and was honored to participate on the team which won the gold medal at the Inter-Agency Games in Italy, last year.

Every day I learn something new from all the people that I meet in the office, during the various interesting missions, and in my free time. Of course the great honour that all of us received is the Nobel Peace Prize. Behind the hard work and along the way to success, I have learned the great value of working both for people and with people. I respect each person I meet, and I know that together we could work out any technical problem and solve any dispute in a diplomatic way. I know that my work is important and accountable, and I enjoy improving the quality of my life and the lives of others wherever I am.

WORKING IN THE LABS Managing a Laboratory and Chairing the JAC-subcommittee on Gender Concerns....

G. Voigt

Gabi Voigt with DDG-NA Werner Burkart

I first joined the IAEA in 2001 as a consultant to the Seibersdorf Laboratories working on its Environmental Programme. In 2002, I was appointed as Director of the Laboratories. While I am a geneticist and microbiologist by education, my life has taken some interesting twists and turns. I have spent the past 25 years of my professional life in the field of dosimetry, experimental radioecology, modelling and radiation protection at large. This also encompassed work in the fields of animal sciences, botany and medicine, and even included social/ethical sciences. Looking back, I consider my spectrum of experience as probably one of the reasons why I was seriously considered for the DIR-NAAL position. I suspect this led to the offer which I must candidly admit came as a surprise to me. Having worked for almost 20 years in one institution, I was eager to pursue new opportunities. In some ways, moving on was difficult as I had to leave behind my admirable boss, wonderful colleagues and a highly effective, very successful team. Fully aware of high job insecurity (the 7 year rotation policy), I packed my family and household into two trucks and made my way Vienna. I was exposed to a completely new environment with what I found to be very challenging rules and regulations. This also involved completely new ways of thinking. It took a while to acclimatize as I had come from a self-subsistent, freethinking and risk taking scientific community!

Equally unexpectedly, I suddenly found myself on the Agency's Joint Advisory Committee Subcommittee on Gender Concerns: How did this happen? During a presentation on Gender Mainstreaming, I could not keep my mouth shut (as usual). Subsequently, I was approached by the then chair, and was asked if I was interested in gender issues. And of course I was! In my previous job, I had been very active and had been part of a core group of female staff who established a special gender group with the help of our work council. This group proved to be very successful within the organization. I just recently learnt that this (my) group was awarded a special price on Gender Equality by the German government.

Once I started becoming involved in gender issues in the Agency, I was shocked to see that the proportion of females in senior management positions was so low. I wanted to see more of what happened in my previous Institute happen here. This prompted me to contact Ms. Anita Nilsson (Head of the Office for Nuclear Security) who had also been appointed several years earlier as the Agency's Focal Point for Gender Concerns. We decided to join forces and work closely together. Regular meetings were established; the JAC Subcommittee for Gender Concerns was revived and substantively reinvigorated and several Working Groups were established. Their input was subsequently transmitted to the Joint Advisory Committee and the Division of Personnel (MTPR).

Some of the milestones worth mentioning are; The subcommittee started to collaborate with the VIC Women's Group in organizing the annual observance of International Women's Day on 8th March. We launched a questionnaire "Gender Balance in the IAEA" to identify factors contributing to the low percentage of female Professionals in the IAEA, Also addressed in this questionnaire were questions pertaining to the perception of work/life balance issues in the IAEA. Simultaneously, I got involved in WIN (Women in Nuclear,) an international network of women working in the nuclear field. Yes, there are 'Women in Science'! I sincerely hope that, also as a result of my networking, serious and qualified female candidates will apply, and be accepted for Professional positions in the IAEA.

2005: Receiving the Women in Nuclear (WIN) Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Technology

Since joining the Agency, I have seen a lot of improvements on gender issues, and a strong, continuing commitment to those issues on the part of Senior Management. In that respect, I should mention an initiative to raise the awareness of our Member States. Hopefully, more female candidates will be applying for jobs via mission channels. I am also convinced that in-house training and mentoring programmes are essential and I see a revival of such training which I personally feel should be made mandatory for all managers. In closing, my advice to women at the IAEA is: empower yourself. Along those lines, be active. Do not allow yourself to get into situations which are clearly unacceptable, and be a bit more demanding. In order to further your career, be prepared to move. Tell the family how positive a 'change of scenery' would be. But while you are here at the IAEA, avail yourself

of the possibilities the Agency offers you for combining work and family life, As one who knows it first-hand, my experience in life goes like this. Nothing will happen without your initiative, and, even more important – NEVER GIVE UP!

Seibersdorf Women celebrating the 45th anniversary of the Agency's Laboratories in Seibersdorf.

Working at Mass Spectrometry, Safeguards Analytical Laboratory

Jane Poths

An attraction of the IAEA, reinforced from the first day of work at the Safeguards Analytical Laboratory (SAL), is the shared vision of enhancing world stability and nuclear science through nuclear safeguards. The growth of nuclear power is a hope for the future of developing economies and for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. An essential component of SAL's nuclear safeguards activity is providing the assurance that nuclear power can be implemented without diversion of nuclear materials. It is rewarding to see one's efforts accomplish something so concrete.

The diverse technical and personal backgrounds of my co-workers at the Seibersdorf Labs adds to the appeal of my working. Few other laboratories apply nuclear science to such diverse areas: plant and animal production, instrument calibration, analytical chemistry, and nuclear safeguards. Opportunities for interactions occur not only at our technical meetings, but also during the bus commute, in the lunchroom, and at monthly coffee socials. Seibersdorf is visible proof that it is people who constitute the heart and the success of any endeavour.

Starting a new job is usually challenging and exciting, and working in mass spectrometry at SAL is no exception. I am learning to "drive" the current analytical instruments, and to negotiate the ins and outs of sample and data management. Our team is preparing for the arrival of a new instrument, including room setup, support equipment and training. All of this work must be fitted in without disrupting the smooth sample flow of 1000 samples per year (see figure). This figure also shows that the mix of samples can and does change in relation to the requirements of our Safeguards customers e.g., for environmental analyses. Often there is only one chance for analysing a tiny, unique sample, whose preparation may be very labor intensive. A creative aspect of my job is identifying and putting in place new technical approaches to meet these challenges.

Finding new approaches is made easier by active participation in a wider scientific community. I feel fortunate to be receiving the support of the international nuclear community. With the shrinkage over the last decades of the analytical part of the nuclear community, it is like an extended family. I was amused to find that three of my new co-workers were friends from past collaborations – all on different topics! Many other nuclear friends support the IAEA, either directly, through participation in our Network of Analytical Laboratories, or occasionally, by providing advice and training. It is important to build the nuclear community back up by encouraging young people to take up nuclear science. The new Doctoral Thesis program at the Agency's Labs provides a vehicle for us to mentor the next generation.

AT Seibersdorf Labs

Lisa Elizabeth Zeiller

'Go to Lisa! She might remember'. This is what I often hear in the laboratories. I feel a bit like a dinosaur in Seibersdorf and in the IAEA. I am one of the old-timers and a source of institutional memory.

I have been working in the IAEA for 32 years now, nearly all my working life. A nice Austrian man convinced me to move to Austria and I was happy to find a job as a laboratory technician, with a relatively good salary (even compared to the jobs of my university colleagues), with six weeks holidays, duty free privileges and in an international environment.

I started as a G-4 (G-3 new scale) laboratory technician in June 1975 in the Hydrology Unit of the Department for Research and Isotopes (now NA) and today I am an Analyst at P3/11. So I have experienced some "career development". It was a lot of work, a lot of learning and not always easy, but I never had the feeling that it was easier for my male colleagues who also started as G-staff about the same time to be promoted to a professional position.

During all the years I always had challenging work, which never became routine and boring, and in general, I was lucky with my supervisors. I had seven direct supervisors (all males), not counting all the higher level ones. Most of them were very supportive and assigned me to interesting projects, also for TC, and allowed me to go on sometimes very exciting duty trips: I lectured at training courses, worked as an expert on analytical techniques and quality assurance, and as a technical officer for TC projects. I was involved in environmental sampling campaigns (e.g. Chernobyl, Mururoa) and represented the IAEA at conferences.

Ladies in the sampling team in the Chernobyl area.

Often I was not allowed to go to the conferences I wanted to go to, but this was not because of being female but because of the IAEA's approach of sending not more than two persons to the same conference. And for interesting, important conferences in general, the higher level management (which is still dominated by men) has priority. I saw the same thing at a regional conference in Azerbaijan last year: many men were sent and the few women present would normally have no

chance to go to international conferences or were from the organizing institute. The ratio of women to men is 1.5 to 10 on many occasions and has not improved very much in recent years.

Sediment sampling in Azerbaijan – a perfect teamwork

I still remember one of my first Agency meetings in HQ where a consultant gave me his ticket to reconfirm the flight and then was quite ashamed that I was one of the scientists at the meeting; or the face of the director of a laboratory in Latin America when he realized that I was the IAEA expert. He asked me later at the Christmas Party of the laboratory if I did not think I was too junior to be an expert. I am not sure he would have asked a man the same thing. My answer was: The analytical instrument has only been on the market for 10 years and I have 8 years of experience. Do you think an old professor at the university could have much more knowledge than me?

And there are many more stories: e.g. on a sampling campaign the accompanying technicians were carrying the 3 kilogram computer of my male colleague but did not consider carrying the heavy sampling equipment I was using. One DDG did not want to sign my travel request for lecturing on a training course. His comment to the TO organizing the course was: Come on, don't take your lover. I am sure this comment never would have been made if a female TO have chosen a male lecturer. I finally was allowed to go, because they could not find a man to cover my five lectures.

These are situations women not only in the IAEA have to learn to cope with. A joke, a friendly answer, but sometimes also an open discussion may help. There is a funny book which I would like to recommend: Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus, by John Gray. This book tries to explain the different ways of thinking of men and women. And this difference even increases and is more visible in a multicultural environment like the IAEA. I have personally experienced only a few situations where I felt discriminated against and even after 32 years I still like working for the IAEA. I like to transfer the knowledge gained over so many years of experience and I enjoy meeting new people and encountering new mentalities.

Our motto in one of my sampling missions was: Be flexible! And this is the advice I can give not only to women in the IAEA.

MEL women in action

OSVATH, Iolanda

Many poetic parallels can be drawn between women and the sea - the cradle of life on Earth, fragile yet immensely powerful - but whatever emotional links fuel their dedication, MEL women back it with highly skilled professional, scientific and technical minds. Finally it all boils down to action, and action can take MEL women to the remotest areas on Earth, as scientists, international experts or expedition leaders, but also to the realm of microscopic marine life, to the limits of the detectable or to future simulated virtual oceans. It does of course necessarily also take them to the rather complex world of administration, but that is another story... Technicians, scientists and administrative staff, women represent 40% of MEL's human resources. It is interesting to note that in the administrative and technical areas the gender balance is roughly 50-50, and that in the professional category 15%, i.e. 2 staff, are women, one of whom is

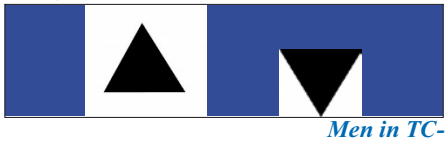
a cost-free expert. This reflects to a great extent the gender balance in the outside pool of experts, which will remain a limiting factor in spite of efforts to improve the in-house balance. If we are convinced that the moral, intellectual and personality traits of women and men alike are valuable assets in the workplace, which would give the Agency more robustness and flexibility and more credibility, the long-term solution might be to give more attention to passing the message on to younger generations: It is exciting to work where science blends with exploration, to push forward the understanding of how the ocean works, how it affects the climate and ultimately everyone's life, and to take part in the action that helps safeguard our environment. And, last but not least, it is rewarding to help those in need, to see progress achieved and to enjoy this as part of the team making it all possible.

Taking Stock – Three Years Later

Nelima Okhoya

Exactly three years ago to date as I write this article, Sandra Steyskal of TC-Europe proved that gender balance can be achieved. Despite the prevailing scenario which I have tried to represent with triangles, I am still hopeful.

Women in TC
Heavy at the bottom



Men in TC-
Thin at the Bottom

I do not feel disheartened at all because experience has shown that 50/50 distribution of women and men in an organisation is not achievable overnight. To really understand where I am coming from, I would urge anyone who has the time to try to review the literature on gender issues in nuclear science and technology. The pickings are rather thin. So whatever evidence there is of gender-sensitivity within the Agency is mostly based on ingenuity and many days of hard work by staff committed to the issues. There is no quick fix here.

I think the most important aspect of gender distribution in TC should not be about equal numbers of women in management positions but rather having women strategically located in decision-making positions that can influence the programme/project planning, implementation and monitoring and secondly how resources are allocated and utilised. In fact, there is dawning recognition that strategic positioning of women within the different ranks could be just as effective as increasing women in management positions.

In my view, an important consideration in how TC and the IAEA addresses gender will depend on the existence of institutional capacity within the Agency and its constituents for mainstreaming gender. In keeping with the evolving shift from a donor-recipient relationship to one of partnering with its constituents, then it follows that capacity for mainstreaming gender should be addressed within the Secretariat and in the Member States. So, as the Agency forges ahead with increased representation of women in the Secretariat, so there should be a focus on increasing women's participation in the nature and scope of technical cooperation at national level. Again, little has been done in this area making it a mammoth task. But I believe it can be done if management and staff do not yield to pressure to deliver and the desire for quick results.

"Hoping to contribute to the improvement in the quality of life of women (and men)"

Mari Ito

Water is an essential part of our life, indispensable as drinking water and for domestic use as well as, inter alia, for industrial and agricultural production. On the other hand, human activities have also had negative effects on the quality and quantity of water through, for example, unsustainable consumption, dumping or leaking of untreated wastes, wastewater, and chemicals, or land use change. The UN World Water Development Report (2003) suggested that the water supply would not be sufficient for up to a third of the world's population.

According to the WWDR, women have traditionally assumed many responsibilities related to water, such as collecting and storing water, cooking, cleaning, and maintaining sanitation. Recent international conferences have emphasized the fundamental role of women in water resource management, which has often been overlooked. For example, the Dublin Statement on Water and Sustainable Development (1992) recognized women as central players in "the provision, management and safeguarding of the water" in one of its four principles. The Ministerial Declaration (2001) from the International Conference on Freshwater in Bonn, Germany, stated "Both men and women should be involved and have an equal voice in managing the sustainable use of water resources and sharing of benefits. The role of women in water-related areas needs to be strengthened." The Political Declaration (2002) from the Johannesburg Summit included commitments to promoting women, based on equality with men, "at all levels in support of policy and decision-making related to water resources management and project implementation."

Under the Water Resources Programme of the IAEA, the Isotope Hydrology Section has assisted Member States in improving the assessment and management of water resources with the application of isotope technologies. Field and adapting technology is advanced through research by organizing Coordinated Research Projects, assisted by the Research Contracts Administration, and technical meetings. In cooperation with Technical Cooperation Department, isotope hydrology projects aim at capacity-building for managing water resources issues. Isotopic data and support services are provided through the Isotope Hydrology Laboratory and by developing global data networks, for example. Our activities are also undertaken through partnerships with other organisations, such as the World Bank, UNEP, UNDP, and UNESCO.

How could we then contribute to the improvement of the quality of life, that of women in particular? A request to write about our contribution has provided me with an opportunity to look at our work from this perspective. Firstly, improved water resource management, an objective of our work, would help enable easier access to reliable quality and quantity of water, thereby leading to an improvement in the health of men and women. Further, it could reduce water-related disasters or contribute to the sustainable management of ecosystems, which provide humans with various essential services. Secondly, women are encouraged to take a leading role in water resource management beyond their traditional responsibilities in several phases of our activities, which could facilitate the integration of women's perspectives, for example, as researchers in the CRPs or as experts to be fielded who provide technical assistance in the TC projects. The next steps we could take would include: encouraging counterparts to involve more women as project personnel or to nominate female candidates for training where they could acquire the technical and practical knowl-

edge and skills necessary or desirable for assessing and managing water resources. It would also be important to ensure that women are among the major beneficiaries of the projects.

The preamble to the Charter of the United Nations included the determination "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small..." in 1945. Since the establishment of the UN, the UN has led in actions for the protection and advancement of women's rights and has helped take measures to end discrimination against women in various forms. Working in a UN organisation, I believe and hope that our work and efforts in water resource management contribute to improvements in this respect. I sincerely look forward to the day when a need for the consideration of women based on equality with men, including in water resource management, belongs only to the past.

IAEA EFFORTS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Anita Nilson and Catherine Monzel

Left to right: Catherine Monzel, Anita Nilsson, David Waller, Doug Northey and Jill Cooley. Credit: IAEA

Gender equality at the Agency is a broad issue. It relates to our Secretariat and the representation of women, and it relates to women in our Member States. How can IAEA programmes ease the burden of women in poor resource settings and share with them the benefits of nuclear energy and applications?

Among the first actions taken with regard to gender issues at the Secretariat was the establishment of a policy on the equal treatment of women and men. In pursuit of achieving balanced gender representation, the Agency has been reporting on the status of women in the Secretariat to the Board of Governors and the General Conference since 1991. All Departments report each year on steps taken and results achieved in increasing the number of female Professional staff. Periodically, the Agency liaises with, and reports to, some of the organizations of the UN Secretariat on gender-related issues. In 1996, the Director General established a Focal Point for Gender Concerns. Anita Nilsson (Dir-NSNS) has served as the Focal Point since 2003, supported by Catherine Monzel (MTPR), as alternate. She monitors the status of women in the Secretariat (both in terms of representation and gender equality in the workplace), recommends policy changes conducive to a more supportive work environment, and reports on gender issues in the Agency.

The Agency approaches gender equality on three fronts: in reaching gender balance among staff, in mainstreaming gender into its programmes, and in ensuring a fair work environment for staff of both genders.

Initiatives to increase the representation of women in the Secretariat

Numerous General Conference Resolutions have called upon the Agency to *"pursue a target of equal representation of women across all occupational groups and categories [...], including in senior policy-level and decision-making posts" (GC [49] / RES/16 [September 2005]).* A handicap in the Agency's recruitment of women is the fact that, worldwide, relatively few women choose careers in nuclear science and engineering.

On 31 January 2007:

Women in Professional Posts
173 21.3%

Women in General Service Posts
723 60.7%

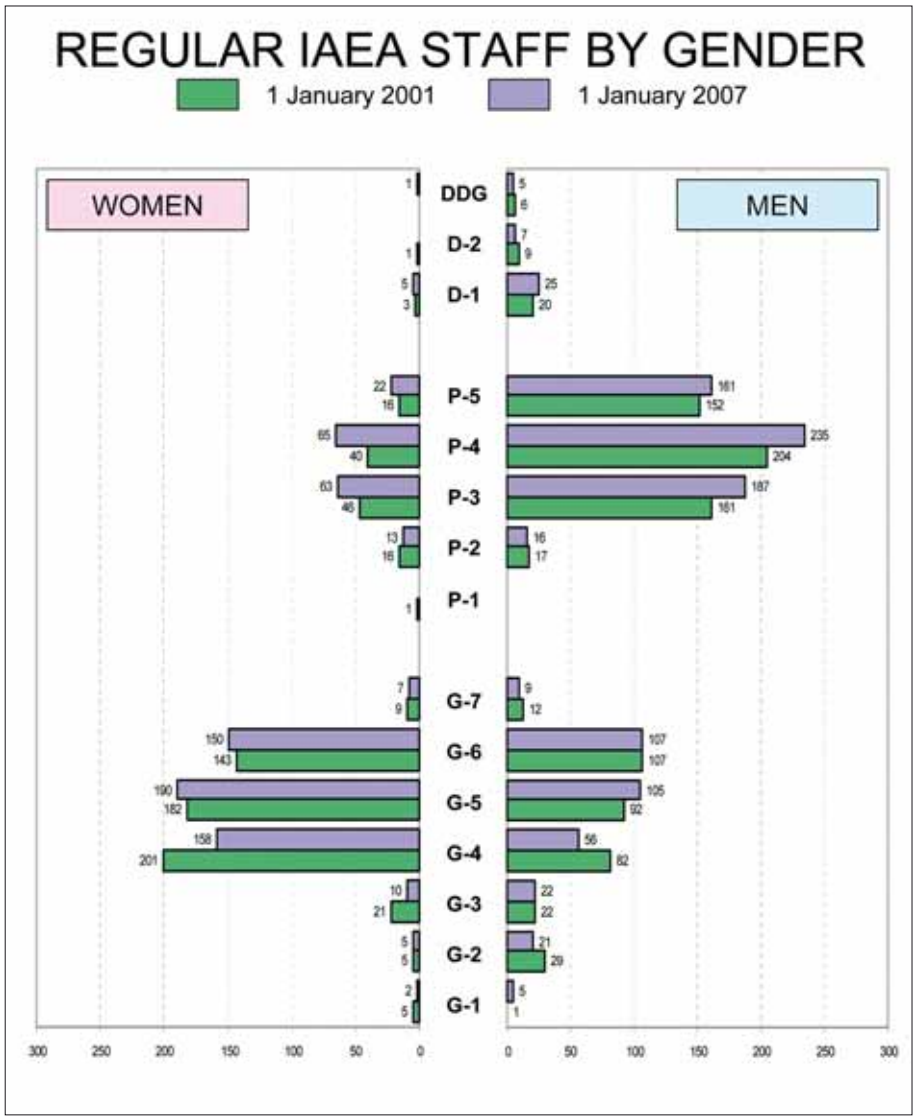
While among General Service staff, the Agency is close to gender balance with approximately 60% women and 40% men, on the Professional level it remains one of the UN-system organizations with lowest representation of women. It is particularly pronounced in the scientific and technological fields, where the percentage of women is only 14%, while the percentage in the administrative field is 31%. However, the overall share of women holding Professional positions has increased from 12.6% in 1989 to 20% in 2005.

*)see next page

Special emphasis is given to appointing women from short-listed candidates; however, often there are no well-qualified women applicants. In the period July 2003 – July 2005, women comprised only 17.7% of applicants for Professional posts. Several initiatives have been undertaken to find and encourage well-qualified women to apply for Professional posts at the IAEA. For example, in March 2005, the Secretariat called on Member States to nominate a Point of Contact to aid the Agency in recruiting more women to Professional posts, meeting regularly to brief them on recent initiatives and statistics, and the Points of Contact report on their activities. Other outreach activities include recruitment missions to Member States, production of publicity material (flyers, brochures) aimed at women; increased recruitment representation at conferences and meetings where women in science can be reached. Attention has also been given to the younger generation: the Junior Professional Officer (JPO), internship and TC fellowship programmes are aimed at giving young professionals or recent graduates (especially women) practical work experience and attempt to encourage them to apply for future vacant posts.

Tiny customers of the Child Care Centre at the VIC. Credit: IAEA

Recently, the function of Departmental Focal Points for Gender Concerns, based on a UN initiative model, was created to



further institutionalize gender-related activities in the Agency. They will assist the Deputy Directors General in their efforts to increase gender equality within their Department, and support the Agency Focal Point for Gender Concerns in gender-related activities.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a new initiative for the IAEA. Promoting gender equality and empowering women is one of the UN Millennium Development Goals. The goal is to mainstream gender considerations in the Agency's programming and increase gender equality in the Member States. It involves *"assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated."*

The Department of Technical Cooperation has been a pioneer in this topic, by undertaking work on a draft gender mainstreaming action plan for the Department; some of its projects specifically aim to improve the health and nutrition of women. This plan is to be implemented alongside the Agency-wide policy currently under review. The Departmental Focal Points will become resource persons within their Departments to aid management and programme staff in implementing gender mainstreaming once the policy is adopted.

Gender equality in the work environment

In order to support staff in balancing work with personal and family responsibilities, the Agency has put many policies in place for a more family-friendly work environment, such as:

- **Flexible working hours that allow staff, particularly mothers, to plan a working day;**
- **Part time work may be available for staff under certain conditions;**
- **Staff members can take advantage of a work from home policy in certain circumstances;**
- **Fully-paid maternity leave for four months and paid paternity leave for four weeks, with an option for unpaid leave for a similar period of time;**
- **The VIC Child Care Centre provides support for working parents, with opening hours corresponding to the Agency´s regular working hours;**
- **New mothers are granted two 30-minute breaks per day for nursing;**
- **A policy for the prevention of harassment and other forms of unfair or discriminatory treatment of staff is in place.**

A Learning Resource Centre offers spousal support in seeking employment in Austria, including transmitting CVs to locally-based recruitment organizations.

Women in Nuclear

WiN

WiN is a worldwide association that aims to emphasise and support the role that women have in addressing the general public's concerns about nuclear energy and the application of radiation and nuclear technology, including the promotion of career interest in engineering and nuclear technologies.

WiN's objectives are achieved through: regular meetings to exchange ideas and experience between the various WiN national groups at the annual WiN Global Conference and through mutual support across borders and the commitment of its members to sharing information and public information material on radiation, radioactivity and health effects; medical applications; nuclear energy; nuclear power plants and their safety; radioactive waste; nuclear and environment; uranium mining; radiation protection and energy and sustainable development. The WiN award given every year to honour nuclear communications programs in local, national and international forums was given to two IAEA staff members in 2005 – Anita Nilson and Gabi Voigt for their contributions to the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Technology.

WiN members – WiINners – are women and men working professionally in those fields and supporters of nuclear energy and the application of radiation and nuclear technology. The IAEA has about fifteen WiNners. Although many IAEA staff members have actively participated in WiN, some have already left the IAEA and continued to work for WiN goals in their countries, such as Annick Carnino. Currently, Rejane Spiegelberg Planer and Gaby Voigt represent WiN at the IAEA and are also members of the WiN Executive Board.

If you share the views of WiN – join us!

WiN is open to nuclear and radiation professionals and academics, as well as communications specialists from all over the world, pledged to adhere to its goals.

More information at http://www.win-global.org/

The VIC Women's Group (VICWG) and the VIC Summer Camp

Liselotte Natural-Waldheim and Elpidio Morales

In 1992, a group of some 80 women from the Vienna International Centre (VIC) based Organizations (VBOs) agreed that there were issues of concern to them which cut across the organizations – and they established the VIC Women's Group (VICWG). Terms of reference and a logo were agreed upon; the latter did not contain any parts of the official emblems of any of the Organizations, but summed up the ideals of the group in just four words: Women, Equality, Awareness and Freedom around an old Celtic symbol of equality or equilibrium. The VICWG sees itself as an "interest representation group" for all women working in the VIC, but neither as a "recreational club" of the Staff Councils nor as an offshoot of the "Focal Points for Women" established by the organizations they belong to. The founding members attached great importance to their independence and objectivity, through which they could best serve the women and the Administrations of the VIC. Since then, VICWG has worked under the leadership of a President and Vice-Presidents from each of the VIC-based Organizations, including a Secretary and a Treasurer who each have a Deputy. Each year, the accounts are audited.

Among the most visible activities of the Group is the preparation each year of a consolidated programme for the observance of International Women's Day (IWD) at the VIC which also comprises a special Health Lecture. Each year since 1995, the group has raised funds through at least two flower sales per year in the Rotunda, and has donated the net revenue to projects aimed at improving the living conditions of women in developing countries or war zones. These sales have become Rotunda events which are greatly appreciated by VBO staff and delegates. The VICWG maintains an informal but quite effective network for counseling female staff encountering difficulties, mostly in close cooperation with the Staff Counselor and the Medical Service, as appropriate.

In 1994, the VICWG established the first "After School Recreation and Study Programme", followed in 1996 by the "VIC SummerCamp" for the children of staff and diplomats of the VBOs. It had become apparent that there was a need for staff to be able to entrust their children to a safe environment during the long summer holidays. Often without any relatives in Austria, working mothers in particular faced a serious problem regarding what to do with their children during that time. The initial idea emanated from IAEA colleagues and was based on the then availability of the IAEA Country Club in Maria Gugging. Later, the camp was organized in a school in Stockerau and in the ÖBB Sportanlage, the sports club of the Austrian Railroadworkers, within walking distance of the VIC. Based on the need to have the Summer Camp organized under the leadership of a recognized Club, the VIC Working Parents Club (VICWPC) was established. With ups and downs during the last 11 operational years it has welcomed up to 200 children in some years, for up to ten weeks in the summer. In the first few years the vast majority of the children at the Camp had parents in the IAEA. The Camp is run on a non-profit basis. This is only possible because of dedicated volunteers such as Ms. Christine Bakhoum: with all the logistics needed this is clearly a full-time job all year-round.

For more information see our homepage http://vicsummercamp.unvienna.org.

The VICWG is open to all women at the VIC with no membership fee. It can be reached via VIC.WomenGroup@unvienna.org.

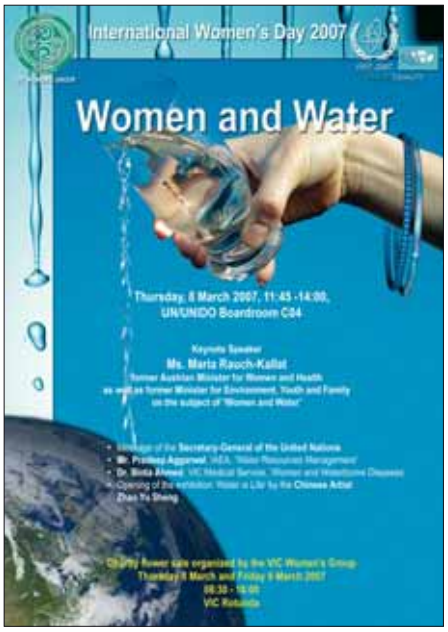
What we can learn from water for the workplace

Susan Doering

When you put just one drop of yellow colouring into a large glass of water you colour all the water because it has the capacity to absorb the colouring agent throughout. When you put just one helpful thought about a positive and efficient way to communicate into someone's mind it can colour their whole outlook and way of being in a dialogue or meeting; after all, we are 80% water!

All business and management experts, theoreticians and on-the-job CEOs alike, all now acknowledge that the hard facts and hard talking attitude is outdated and must be substituted – or at the very least supplemented – with emotion-based personal interaction skills. This is exactly where our water story comes in.

It can be particularly helpful to use this analogy before starting a difficult conversation or going into a challenging meeting: Take time beforehand to open your mind and let in one drop of yellow sunshine. Close your eyes for a few moments. Imagine a calm place outside somewhere in the fresh air; this can be in a favourite spot of yours or an imagined place where you would like to be, like a beach in the Bahamas. In your mind's eye look carefully at the place around you, feel the grass or the sand under your feet; hear the birds, the lapping of the waves and the wind in the trees; smell the fresh leaves. Especially feel the warmth of the sun on your body. Imagine a ray of sunshine beaming down on you and entering your head, your breath, your body, your mind. The one drop of sunshine will suffuse the water in your body and make you feel warm and good. When you open your eyes you will feel regenerated and energized and will be able to go into the meeting with a positive outlook. It can be very rewarding to watch the reactions you get.



Professor Emoto in *What the bleep do we know,* has shown in many fascinating experiments the astonishing power of thought on water, how good thoughts can actually change the shape of the properties of water so that when the water crystals are photographed, using a special technique, they form beautiful shapes when positive thoughts have been sent to the water, and ugly, chaotic shapes when negative, unpleasant thoughts were sent. Although this may be hard to swallow for many, especially the scientists among you, remember Hamlet's statement to Horatio that there are more things between heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy! You do not even have to believe it a priori, you can test it very simply. Watch the power of your thoughts when you put a drop of sunshine into your water.

Take another way in which we can learn something from water: the concept of "flow". Although this has become synonymous with the work (and works) of American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, he himself acknowledges that the idea is much older. In fact, it is a concept which is well-known to musicians and athletes who have never had a psychology book in their hands.

A good friend of mine, a wonderful pianist, once said to me: "When I am in the middle of a concert the music just flows out of me". Naturally, an enormous amount of hard work, analysis, experience and practice have gone before to prepare for the concert, but the point is, once he is out there on the stage, the flow takes over. He is on automatic pilot, the actual physicality of playing the piano is almost effortless, there is no need for intellectual activity, it has all been done, and aesthetic rapture takes over.

This is the state which we can all aim for when we become completely absorbed in our task, whatever that may be. It is the state of being which we strive for, because it is the only state in which we actually find happiness. So what is "flow"? It is the natural movement of the stream perfectly at one with its environment, forging ahead in the direction in which it is intended. It is water in motion, beautiful and oblivious of all else. It is found in the concentration of the scientist, in the way in which a small child plays endlessly with building bricks, turning them over, discovering the world. It is always associated with activity; flow does not happen watching television. Flow is creative tension.

We can all attain flow, also in the workplace. Even mundane tasks – the ones that really get you down – can be transformed by a new approach of concentration and dedication. We are reminded of the story of a Buddhist monk whose task was to wash the dishes after the monks had had their meal. He handled each plate with care and smiled as he put them away afterwards. Did he not feel this was a menial task which he wanted to get over and done with as quickly as possible? No, he afforded the same amount of concentration to this task as he did to praying or study, because he considered work for the community just as important as anything else. With this approach, each of us can enhance our lives at work by giving our full attention to the task in hand, accepting its importance as part of the greater whole and a contribution to the mission of the organization. This can turn a potentially frustrating or even stressful situation into a flow experience.

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