

Greycells – Activity Report 2021



Association of Former International Civil Servants for Development

General Assembly 2022

Activity Report 2021

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1) INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE; “PEOPLE, PLANET & PROSPERITY.

The intergenerational dialogue was again one of Greycells' core activities in which the involvement of its members was fundamental to its success. From the original idea on the topic, there was extensive mobilisation to develop a technical note, a tentative programme and suitable panellists. There was also mobilisation to identify a suitable audience and technical support. The dialogue took place on 28 June in the Piaget Hall of UniDufour.



This edition of the intergenerational dialogue represented a particular challenge as it was decided to organise it in a hybrid form, i.e. in person and via the Internet in order to have the widest possible global reach. The intergenerational dialogue was broadcast via the Greycells Facebook and Zoom accounts.

The financing of the dialogue was made possible by combining Greycells' own resources with generous support from the City of Geneva and the Foundation for Geneva to whom we are very grateful.

The opening was addressed by Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Ms. Christina Kitsos, Administrative Councillor of the City of Geneva and the keynote address was given by Ms. Gro Harlem Bruntland, on behalf of The Elders Association. We also had the participation via Zoom of Sir Arthur “Richard” JOLLY, Honorary Professor and Research Associate of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex; former UN Assistant Secretary-General and former senior executive at UNICEF.



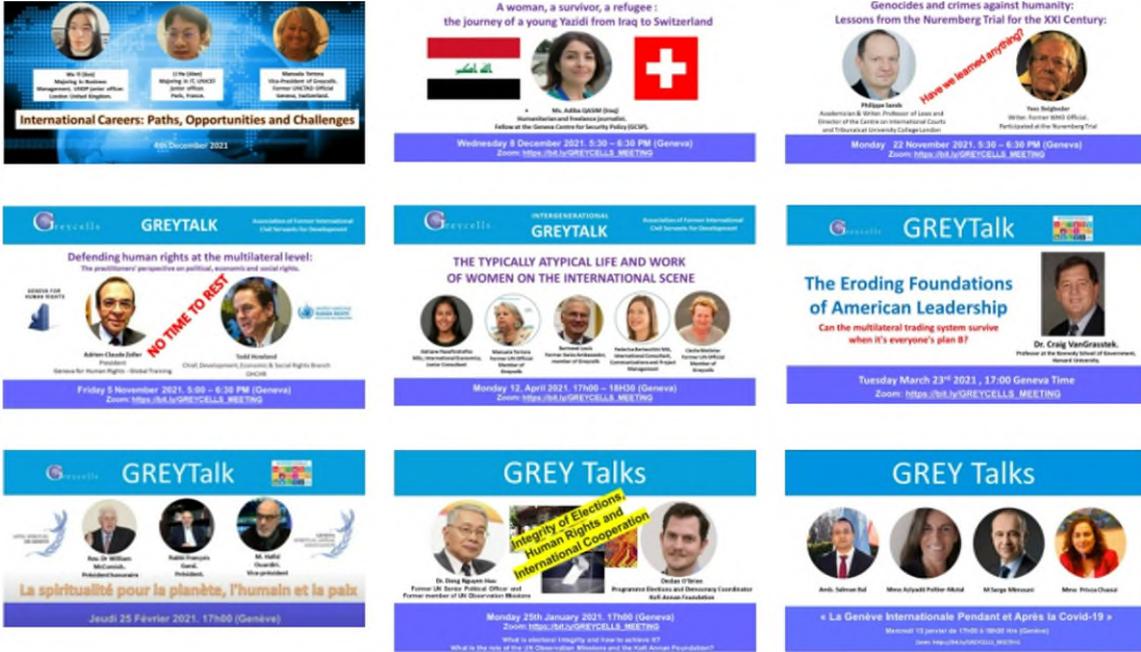
The closing session in which conclusions were developed was delivered by Ambassador Salman BAL Director of the International Geneva Welcome Centre (CAGI), Mr. Paul LADD, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNSRID) and Ms. Corinne MOMAL-VANIAN, Executive Director, Kofi Annan Foundation (KAF). The facilitator of the intergenerational dialogue was Mr. Jeremy Seydoux, a local television reporter in Geneva. The full programme of the dialogue is annexed to this report. The film of the dialogue is available on the Greycells website, as well as all previous intergenerational dialogues: <https://greycells.ch/>

2) GREYTALKS.

Another major activity of Greycells in 2021 was the regular organisation of Greytalks on development topics with renowned local and international speakers. The following 9 Greytalks were organised in 2021. These Greytalks, as well as the previous ones and those to date in 2022, are available at the Greycells website.

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Greytalks were followed live by a variable audience but each of the recordings were viewed numerous times on the Internet.



3) Greycells partnership with the Kofi Annan Foundation in the "Changemakers" programme.

In 2021, Greycells initiated a partnership with the Kofi Annan Foundation for our members to "mentor" the first generation of the initiative to support 12 talented and active young people who have launched development projects. Through our tireless focal point, Enrique Sierra, Greycells participated in the different stages of selection of the young people among several dozen candidates. Thanks to the participation of Greycells members who volunteered, the following pairs of mentors and Changemakers were created:



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The Changemakers travelled to Geneva where they were able to have bilateral meetings with their respective mentors who were present at the project final session.



This first collaboration with the Changemakers initiative of the Kofi Annan Foundation served as a pilot test. The Changemakers provided feedback and the mentors developed proposals to make both the collaboration and communication between Greycells and the Kofi Annan Foundation more efficient. Based on such feedback and proposals, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed upon on which the future collaboration will be based and on which the relations for the 2022 cohort are already supported. Greycells has opened a specific space on its website to follow up and maintain contact with the different cohorts of Changemakers.

4) Greycells partnership with UNToday.

Thanks to the opportunity provided by UNToday, the official magazine of international civil servants, Greycells members have written articles, mainly for the "UN Memoirs" section.

The nine articles written by members are shown below. A specific space for collaboration with UNToday has been opened on the Greycells website where you can read the full texts as well as on their website: <https://untoday.org/>.



The coordinated UN

My UN career started in Liberia in 1990, in the midst of the civil war, and ended in 2008 in Senegal, as the UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa. Along the way, I have seen many attempts for the UN to act as "one UN." Fast-forward to...



Tous égaux, mais certains plus que d'autres

En octobre 1991, j'ai été nommé à la tête du bureau de l'OIT à N'kiri - mon quatrième lieu d'affectation en moins de 15 ans de service. Je connaissais les différences entre catégories de personnel, mais j'étais persuadé qu'elles partageaient l'essentiel, à savoir m...



Working globally... living locally

A retired "frontalier" recalls how living in France and working in Geneva illustrates what the United Nations is all about. I first came to Geneva almost 50 years ago on mission from New York. The beauty of Lac Léman, the majesty of the Alps and Jura and the efficiency...



Living to tell the tale when defending ILO standards

In 1995, while on a mission to Biogata, promoting and defending ILO standards and its position on pension systems reform, I lay awake with jetlag around 3:00 a.m. in my hotel room when I saw a slip of paper being slid through the door. It was a warning note. "You ILO..."



Chronicle of an unforeseen international career

From a small town in Colombia to advising the world on how to handle quality issues in international trade, My UN Experience: It is never too late or is it? I joined the International Trade Centre (ITC) in 1980 at age 41 and retired almost 20 years later. I was at...



Le drapeau de l'ONU en guise de bouclier

1989, au terme d'une décennie d'affrontements violents entre des groupes armés, les Contras, et le gouvernement sandiniste, les deux parties s'engagent dans un processus de paix. Ce processus donne lieu à l'organisation d'élections sous la surveillance de l'ONU pour...



La vision de l'autre côté

Un destin international dans la Genève locale Rien, dans ma formation ne me prédisposait à m'intéresser à la Genève internationale. Je suis entré au service de la Ville de Genève d'abord en qualité de juriste du Conseil administratif, puis Secrétaire général adjoint,...



All UN memories lead to music

It was Beethoven's 5th Symphony; I remember the opening chords... Solemn, stern, powerful, the notes filled the hall with a vibrancy unusual for the setting. It was not the score that surprised me; it was the harmony that emerged as the music filled a space that started...



Les batailles d'un Fonctionnaire international

Relever le défi pour se faire une place Après l'Université Paris II Panteon-Assas, j'avais reçu une offre de contrat de courte durée au IFT après un stage au service juridique. C'était le début d'une carrière pleine de défis et de combats acharnés mais qui est...

5) Greycells partnership with the Eduki Foundation.

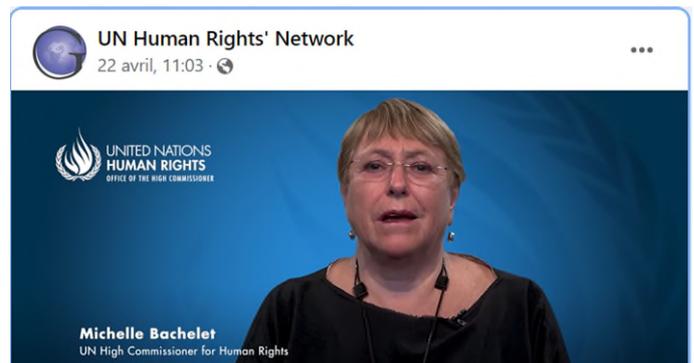
As in previous years, Greycells was invited to be part of the jury for Eduki's national competition. In 2021, the theme of the competition was "Take Action for Peace!

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the activities of the competition, including the award ceremony, were conducted virtually, but this did not prevent the competition from arousing enthusiasm and the projects submitted by many Swiss schools were of excellent quality and, above all, motivating. Greycells created a special space on its website to follow up the collaboration with Eduki, both in its national competitions and in other activities..



6) Greycells & "Friends of Human Rights" Network (OHCHR).

Greycells hosts at its Facebook page the UN OHCHR reporting page, managed by former staff, personnel, and external collaborators, UNInterns and UNVolunteers, aiming to raise awareness and promote the initiatives and mandate of the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



Greycells is in constant communication with OHCHR staff and stagiaires to put up posts on human rights, related to current events around the world.

7) Greycells & Master on European and International Governance (MEIG) of UNIGE.

As in previous years, Greycells was invited to host a session on the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The session was conducted virtually with René Kirszbaum and Alejandro Bonilla García.



8) Greycells & the exhibition "100 ans +1 de vie internationale - une region transformée"

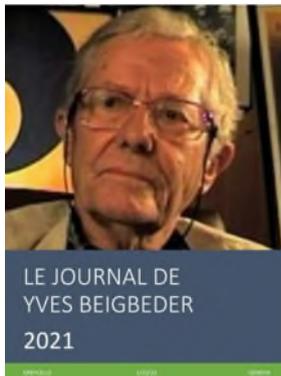
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The exhibition "100 ans +1 de vie internationale - une région transformée" organised by John Burley was presented from 29 September to 24 October 2021 at the Maison du Quartier de la Gare, Divonne-les-Bains, France, one year later than planned due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Greycells members attended the opening ceremony and visited the exhibition on several occasions. The material presented at the exhibition enabled the production of a flipbook for wider dissemination. Greycells created a space on its website to place the flipbook and a pdf version.

9) Greycells & Yves Beigveder Journal.



Our dear member, Yves Beigveder is a keen observer and analyst of international events and regularly shares his thoughts with members of the association and the public via social media. Yves calls each issue a "Chapter" and by the end of 2021, he was already on Chapter 92.

Manuela and Alejandro edited all the chapters shared by Yves in 2021, i.e., chapters 42 to 90 and a "Flipbook" "La Journal de Yves Beigveder" was created as well as a PDF version. Greycells will do the same exercise with the 2020 chapters and with those shared by Yves in 2022. The 2021 journal is already available on the Greycells website and as soon as the 2020 and 2022 versions are finalised, they will also be made available on our website.

10) Greycells & SYNI

In 2021 Greycells has continued its collaboration with Syni, which is a service sector of the Labor Department of the City of Lausanne. Syni allows professionals looking for employment to participate in training and qualification missions in the Federal Temporary Employment Program (PETF), in the international cooperation sector. Virginia Humud-Guerrero has delivered training activities on applying for UN positions via Zoom.



12) Greycells & "Promotions Seniors 2021" of the City of Geneva.



At the invitation of the City of Geneva, Greycells participated at the "Senior Promotions 2021" on 16 October. This event gets together women and men who will reach retirement age this year, or who will reach it in 2021. It took place at the "Bâtiment des Forces Motrices" (BFM). It was chaired by the Administrative Councillor Christina Kitsos. Micheline Calmy-Rey and Henri Dès were this session special guests. Since the event is also an opportunity to offer information to people who are entering a new stage in their lives about different activities that might be of their interest. David Dror and Alejandro Bonilla held the Greycells stand



13) Greycells & ECOSOC

In 2021 it was time to update Greycells' information to continue to benefit from the 'Special Consultative Status' with The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Greycells updated in due time all its information.



14) Greycells & UNECE

In 2021 Greycells participated in and contributed to the virtual sessions organised by the Standing Working Group on Ageing. Greycells' contributions focused on the sessions dedicated to "ageing in the digital age".



15) Greycells & UNOG

Greycells maintained excellent relations with all UNOG units. He participated in the numerous virtual meetings organised by the Perception Change Program. Greycells made substantive contributions based on its vast experience and took the opportunity to publicise Greycells' activities. Greycells particularly appreciates the support provided by the unit in charge of NGOs and the library and archive which are very useful for the documentation of our activities.



16) Greycells & the NGO Committee on Ageing

In 2021, Greycells continued to collaborate with the NGO Committee on Ageing by supporting motions and statements at meetings dedicated to the recognition of and respect for the rights of older people. Greycells provided elements to be considered in various statements and disseminated the actions carried out by the Committee. In return, the Committee has publicised among its members the activities carried out by Greycells.



17) Greycells & CoNGO

Greycells is a member of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organisations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO). In 2021 CoNGO and Greycells advertised each other's activities. CoNGO made the Greytalks and the intergenerational dialogue 2021 widely known.



18) Greycells & CAGI

In 2021 Greycells continued to benefit from CAGI's support in multiple ways. Greycells appreciated all the information distributed by CAGI related to the evolution of the pandemic, as well as the measures taken by the Swiss authorities. Greycells also appreciated the information from CAGI's Cultural Kiosk and PechaKucha events. All information



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received was shared with Greycells members. Greycells benefited from the events organised by the unit in charge of the NGOs in various subjects. Greycells appreciates CAGI's support and dissemination of the Intergenerational Dialogue 2021 and the participation of its director, Ambassador Salman Bal.

19) Greycells & The Foundation for Geneva and the Diplomatic Club of Geneva.

The President of the Executive Committee of Greycells is a member of the Geneva Diplomatic Club in his personal capacity, which allows him to keep up to date and participate in its interesting activities, as well as to expand Greycells' network of contacts. As mentioned earlier in this report, the Foundation for Geneva generously contributed to the funding of the Intergenerational Dialogue 2021.



20) Greycells & the International Gender Champions

The President of the Executive Committee of Greycells became an “International Gender Champion” which is a leadership network of 309 Champions and 286 alumni that has for objective to break down gender barriers. Such network was created by our Honorary President, Michael Moller. The Gender Champions declare annual commitments to advance the elimination of gender barriers and those made by the President of the Executive Committee are all related to Greycells' actions and initiatives.



21) Greycells & the Forum Suisse De Politique Internationale

Considering the common objectives, shared principles and value added of the FSPI, Greycells has continued to contribute to publicize PSPI activities, their “Déjeuners-Débats” and in 2020 their Zoom interviews.



22) Greycells & the Club Suisse de la Presse

The President of the Executive Committee of Greycells is a member of the Swiss Press Club in his personal capacity, which allows him to keep up to date and participate in its interesting activities, as well as to expand Greycells' network of contacts.



23) Greycells & Plateforme des Aînés de Genève

As a member of the *Plateforme*, Greycells has been present at all their meetings and followed-up on their responses to COVID-19. At every session, Greycells has shared relevant information and publicized our activities.



24) Greycells & the 1h par M² Initiative.

Greycells has continued contacts with Ms. Sabine Estier Thévenoz, founder and promoter of the intergenerational initiative, to support the student room. UNIGE supports the initiative and alternatives are being explored to promote the initiative among associations, organisations, and NGOs with which Greycells has contacts.

