

What war and my father taught me

The origin of the Dubuisson Model for Systemic Reorganisation 'MDRS'

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Autobiographical account and essay



The day I began designing the MDRS, I was working in Africa, in a country at war. Yet it was the face of a child I had met in China that came back to me. He had tried to take my comfort toy. We were the same height, but our chances in life were already different.

WHAT SHAPED MY OUTLOOK

I was born in Sri Lanka during the war and adopted at six months old. My parents gave me a family, a childhood in the Jura and the chance to discover how people lived elsewhere. My father taught me to find things out for myself and not to let my difficulties at school determine what I could become.

At eighteen, I slept in my car and washed in railway stations. I knew that you could work, have ambition and still lack the means to get through the next day. In business, I learnt to trace what prevented a project from succeeding, looking beyond contracts and figures.

THE BIRTH OF THE MDRS

In Africa, I saw wealth circulating without giving local people the means to live on it. I followed its path, from production to payment, through to what reached individuals and the State. The memory of Beijing brought me back to education: how can you learn when the need to eat already determines your entire day?

I wanted studying to be recognised and paid as work that builds the country's future wealth. This requirement obliged me to link education, income, businesses and public services. The MDRS took shape when these questions, accumulated over the years, found a common structure.

FROM AFRICA TO FRANCE

I then redesigned the MDRS for France, with its own strengths and difficulties. I wanted work to make it possible to build a life, services to be able to respond and future generations to have genuine choices. I wrote this book to recount that transition from human experience to a way of thinking about and organising a country.

'Years later, I was exploring how an organisation could spare children from having to ask chance to give them the time to learn.'

Chapter 8, 'The face of Beijing', p. 38.