



WorldLink

Linking people management professionals around the globe

Employees Must Feel Safe When Taking **Harassment Allegations to HR**

By Lyn Goodear

The rash of workplace sexual harassment allegations in Australia over the past year or more—and especially since the Harvey Weinstein revelations in the U.S.—appear to follow a pattern. An employee (usually a woman) makes a sexual harassment allegation that is followed by similar allegations against the same man by other women. The accused man denies everything and accuses the complainants of seeking notoriety, money or both. In many cases, the women claim to have made complaints to HR at the time the harassment occurred that were treated lightly and not acted on. The organization invariably declares that it treats workplace allegations with the utmost seriousness and places the highest priority on workplace health and safety.

Allegations involving sexual assault by Uber engineer Susan Fowler in 2016 played out roughly in line with that pattern. The Uber HR department allegedly told Fowler that she was the only complainant against a manager, a claim that later proved false. She was one of his many accusers, but the manager was protected, and Fowler was regarded as a troublemaker because she persisted.

Emery Lindsley, a food and beverage manager for the Omni Corpus Christi Hotel in Texas, was addressing her staff in 2012 when a senior executive allegedly approached the group, placed his hand over Lindsley's mouth to stop her from speaking, and offered uninvited comments to her staff, one of which was a question directed to a female staffer as to whether she was in a steady relationship with her boyfriend.

Lindsley reported the incident to the HR department in accordance with the annual mandatory anti-harassment training she had attended. A central claim in her legal action against Omni Hotels and Resorts was that her report was not acted on.

Not surprisingly, cases like these result in employees forming a cynical view that executives and big revenue earners are a protected species and that there is no point in complaining to HR if those employees breach company harassment policies. This view was given air in a 2017 *New York Times* article by Noam Scheiber and Julie Creswell, "Sexual Harassment Cases Show the Ineffectiveness of Going to H.R."

In the article, Scheiber and Creswell express an understanding of the "thankless bind" in which HR departments often find themselves. HR practitioners, they say, are responsible for fielding employee complaints, but also work for the company that could be liable for those complaints. They point out that HR practitioners are caught in an invidious conflict of interest and could see their own careers threatened if they look too hard when investigating certain people against whom complaints are made.

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The *Times* writers are generous to a fault in their assessment of HR's responsibility in these cases. HR practitioners are in no more of a conflict-of-interest situation than chief financial officers (CFOs) who refuse to execute instructions in breach of their professional accounting codes of conduct, chief marketing officers (CMOs) who refuse to misrepresent what they are selling, or chief operations officers (COOs) who refuse to fabricate product tests to manipulate regulatory requirements to gain a competitive advantage.

If these examples prompt thoughts of Volkswagen, it becomes strikingly apparent that no one gains when people in positions of responsibility pander to their bosses rather than act as professional caretakers of the organization. The CFO, the COO, the CMO and the CHRO might all report to the chief executive, but they each owe their primary allegiance to the organization, as does the executive at the top, the CEO.

What might have been bumper short-term bonuses for VW managers who put subservience to the wishes of their bosses above allegiance to their professional standards has turned into multibillion-dollar penalties to the company, as well as incalculable loss of reputation and damage to the brand. The millions of global citizens who own VW cars now own a product that does not hold the value it should. Some executives have been sent to prison, and more are likely to follow.



HR practitioners are in no more of a conflict-of-interest situation than chief financial officers who refuse to execute instructions in breach of their professional accounting codes of conduct.

The answer is not to excuse the inexcusable but to demand that professionals operate in accordance with ethical standards set by their professions. Those standards are there to protect not only the company but also the wider community that relies on the skills and expertise of the professions.

All this does not mean denying the simple fact that when HR practitioners stand up for fairness and natural justice on behalf of employees at all levels, they may well be standing on precarious ground with respect to their own careers.

It's not enough to say to them: "Do the right thing!" Certifying professional bodies, such as the one I lead, must say: "Act in accordance with your professional standards, having undertaken the required study to know what those standards are and why they exist."

In Australia, that means knowing the law and knowing how to apply it in workplaces. It also means exercising people-related skills such as bringing an open, objective mind to an investigation and demonstrating that you understand the business and care for the people who conduct that business. That's what respectable HR professionals do, and it's what properly trained practitioners in this country are now doing.

CHROs who find themselves reporting to CEOs who demand that their senior executives put allegiance to them above allegiance to the organization need to exercise the full range of their professional skills, including the capacity to be persuasive and, when required, to be brave.

[Lyn Goodear is the chief executive of the Australian HR Institute.]

The HR Professional as a **Servant Leader**

By Ajantha Dharmasiri, Ph.D.

Servant leaders primarily serve rather than be served. They follow the motto "those who serve deserve the leadership." They know their purpose and are passionate in pursuing it. Thereby, they show exemplary performance. Is this description relevant to HR professionals? I think so.

HR professionals must move beyond their functional silos to become broad, bold and business savvy. They should think and act like leaders. It is not positions or titles but actions that matter. They must be service oriented. That's why the concept of servant leadership aptly fits them.

Servant leadership is one way of looking at the dynamics of leadership. It is, perhaps, one of the most ancient forms of leadership found in all great religious founders. When you consider the 550 Jataka stories, for example, more than half the time a Bodhisattva is portrayed as a leader. In some cases, a Bodhisattva is portrayed as one who serves others. In brief, a servant leader is a servant first.

As in the case of most management concepts, this model of service got branded as "servant leadership" in the West. Robert Greenleaf, a U.S. scholar, is credited for defining the features and facets of servant leaders. "The servant-leader is servant first," he writes on the Center for Servant Leadership website. "Becoming a servant-leader begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious

choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first."

We in South Asia, and particularly in Sri Lanka, attempt to promote servant leadership in our HR initiatives. We see the "humanly rich" region that houses one-fifth of the world's population. Asian spiritual traditions meet the Western service mindset in creating value in a holistic sense. Having profit, people and planet in focus, HR professionals take initiatives toward employee engagement and customer delight. It goes beyond stakeholder satisfaction. The Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) of Sri Lanka is humbly happy to promote collaboration over competition in serving the deserving community. The time has come for HR professionals to think more about service in a strategic manner. They must craft HR strategies and commit themselves to execute such strategies—and they should be a servant in doing so. Are you ready for that?

[Ajantha Dharmasiri, Ph.D., is the honorary president of the Institute of Personnel Management in Sri Lanka.]

HR Breakthrough to Excellence

By Md. Musharrof Hossain

Experience shows that the growth of any developing country like Bangladesh depends on effective and efficient utilization of its talent.

Bangladesh is very fortunate to have that demographic dividend today. Since 2011, the Bangladesh economy has slowly grown after a period of adjustment. After companies realize the Bangladesh economy is on an upswing, organizations have to extend the industrial chain ends toward intrinsic motivation.

Meanwhile, with the growing diversity customers demand and the increasingly fierce market competition, technological innovation in organizations has become a necessary enterprise. Research and development also has become an important weapon for business success. Therefore, successful enterprises must concentrate on two fronts. First, companies must closely track the latest technology at home and abroad and consider how to imitate it or use it. Second, companies need to develop groundbreaking technologies and enhance their capabilities to innovate independently.

The growth process, internal management and organizational capacity play a central role in high-performance businesses in Bangladesh. Enterprises must continue to grow, achieve high performance and polish their core competitiveness.

The human resource profession holds a critical role for companies as they move toward implementing innovative strategies.

Innovative companies need people who are constantly thinking, who love innovation and the pursuit of novelty. Companies should embrace an organizational structure that allows teams to be highly innovative. They must create excellent product development and product launch processes, develop new products with unique features, and quickly promote their products to market.

An innovative enterprise business strategy requires creative employees. Employees need to be given comfort, freedom and a relaxed working environment in order to innovate. Therefore, innovative organizational structure should be flexible and adaptable. A flat organizational structure is more suitable for such enterprises. Innovative enterprises adopt different strategies and business models than the traditional ones.

Innovative companies need innovative HR strategies that are supported by the C-suite. These strategies must:

1. Include an innovative hiring process. Don't implement strict control over the HR process. Instead, institute new models to create new jobs and find superior talent.
2. Focus on joint training of employees. Develop joint training programs through innovative mechanisms, in particular the establishment of joint training with line managers.
3. Focus on long-term incentives, team evaluation and rewards. Advocate and pay attention to internal motivation as a way of encouraging innovative teamwork. Focus on long-term business results and results-oriented team incentives while giving full recognition through incentives.

4. Cultivate a breakthrough innovation culture. Culture is one of the genes engraved in the bones. Companies must emphasize the role talent plays in their company culture. Encourage eclectic talent and provide opportunities for employees to participate in or be responsible for a project.
5. Focus on results-oriented performance and micro-innovation. Recognize and create incentives to create a comprehensive micro-innovation culture.

Businesses can improve by supporting employees' knowledge and expertise, and by increasing the interdisciplinary cooperation of employees on innovative teams. Cross-discipline innovation will pay off. Innovative micro-enterprises can establish a dedicated in-house system of information sharing and access channels. This will lead to gathering an extensive collection of customer needs and feedback.

At the same time, micro-innovation allows for a "grassroots economy," one in which front-line employees grasp market and customer needs, perhaps even more so than the managers. Micro-enterprises allow employees to explore innovation and stress the importance of knowledge. An innovative staff, given full discretion, can create their own culture of learning and growth.

Md. Musharrof Hossain is president of the Bangladesh Society for Human Resources Management and founding president of the Federation of Bangladesh Human Resource Organizations.

HR Federation Launched in Bangladesh

The Federation of Bangladesh Human Resource Organizations (FBHRO) has been established as a wider umbrella in Bangladesh to work together for the development of human resources locally and globally.

The founding organizations of FBHRO are the Bangladesh Society for Human Resources Management, Institute of Personnel Management, Bangladesh Organization for Learning and Development, Human Resources Development Institute and Institute of Business and Economic Research. More HR organizations will join the federation soon.

The founding officers are:

- Md. Musharrof Hossain, president
- Quazi M. Ahmed, vice-president
- Farid A. Sobhani, secretary general
- Anwarul Azim, treasurer

The founding directors are:

- Hasnan Ahmed
- ABM Osman Ghani
- Mohammad Mashequr Rahman
- GMA Moinuddin Chowdhury
- Mohd H. R. Joarder
- Khadiza Rahman Tanchi

The federation has already been registered with the government of Bangladesh.

The HR Connection in the **Community of Asia Pacific Nations**

By Dina H. Loomis

In 1977, five human resource associations in five countries—Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore—formed the group now known as the Asia Pacific Federation of Human Resources Management (APFHRM).

Ten years ago, the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) hosted a bi-annual board meeting of APFHRM. On April 5–6, 2017, PMAP again hosted both the APFHRM board meeting and the “Asia Pacific HR Best Practices Forum” at the Sofitel Hotel in Manila.

The federation has grown over the years. The following countries were represented at the conference:

- Australia, by Lyn Goodear, CEO of the Australian Human Resources Institute, and Rosemary Guyatt, general manager of people and culture at the institute
- Bangladesh, by Md. Musharoff Hossain, president, Bangladesh Society for Human Resources Management
- Hong Kong, by David Li, president, Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management
- India, by Somesh Dasgupta, national president, National Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM) and chair of the International Relations Committee, and S.N. Singh, executive director, NIPM
- Japan, by Yayoi Oishi, attendee
- New Zealand, by Chris Till, then-president of APFHRM and then-chief executive of the Human Resources Institute of New Zealand
- Papua New Guinea, by Raymond John, president, Papua New Guinea Human Resources Institute
- Philippines, by Ramon Segismundo, president, PMAP; Rene Gener, executive director; Dina H. Loomis, trustee-in-charge of international relations; and Past Presidents Ernie Espinosa, Obet Policarpio and Jesse Rebutillo
- Sri Lanka, by Rohitha Amarapala, immediate past president, Institute of Personnel Management Sri Lanka, and Ajantha Dharmasiri, honorary president, Institute of Personnel Management
- Taiwan, by Weber Chung, executive advisor, Chinese Human Resource Management Association, and Rick Liu, president, of the association
- Thailand, by Wachiraporn Sangpayup, director, Personnel Management Association of Thailand, and Suchada Sukhsvasti na Ayudhya, attendee

Two member countries, Vietnam and Fiji, were unable to send representatives.

ASIA PACIFIC HR BEST PRACTICES FORUM

The Asia Pacific HR Best Practices Forum created quite a buzz among our members and HR professionals. The Visayas Ballroom of the Sofitel Hotel was filled to the brim—over 150 people attended.

Manoj Biswas, chief human resource officer of Larsen & Toubro Infotech Limited, opened up the forum with his talk, “Technology and HR in Today’s Era.” Biswas is a professional with a unique blend of human resource and business leadership skills. He was the leader of human resources at Accenture Philippines, helping it to grow to the second largest delivery center in the country with more than 30,000 employees.

He predicted that not only will organizations turn more and more to technology to link all business units, as well as regional headquarters, but that future “bosses” will be robots.

The second speaker, Kamesh Ganeson, has made the Philippines his second home and has established four global offices for ECC International, his consultancy and training services firm. His

significant and unique experience combines the roles of business owner, professional operations manager, process improvement expert and consultant.

Ganeson’s talk, “HR Metrics and Workforce Analytics,” reinforced the reality that technology is ubiquitous in every area of business. He emphasized the necessity of training and preparing people to move into higher positions of responsibility.

What caught my attention in reading his profile was his training titled “Complaints Management.” When I asked him why he made it a separate program instead of incorporating it into a customer service program, he replied, “No business can survive if your people are not ready to handle customer complaints properly.”

Lyn Goodear, CEO of Australian HR Institute, presented “The Impact of Technology on Workplaces Today.” Goodear sees herself as a teacher; her daily work revolves around engagement. She has taught in several education and business settings, including eight years working in the U.S. She believes that skilled HR practitioners can be the difference between a good business and a failed business.

She cited a few examples of how technology can go wrong and how human beings can make it right by using their intuition and work experience. One of the video clips she showed was from *Sully*, a movie based on the true story of airline pilot Chesley Sullenberger.

Three minutes into a flight Sullenberger was piloting, at approximately 2,800 feet, the Airbus A320 struck a flock of birds, disabling both engines. Without engine power and judging themselves unable to reach the nearest airports, Sullenberger landed the damaged plane on the Hudson River in New York City, saving 155 passengers and crew.

An investigation ensued, and despite initial findings that the plane could have reached the nearest airport, a second simulation showed that the remaining engine power would have either caused a crash into nearby buildings or would have landed them short of the nearest airport.

In this example, a human being saved lives by trusting his instincts and judgment instead of relying solely on the reading of the remaining engine power.

Imelda H. Centeno, the fourth speaker, is the senior vice president for human resource and organizational development of United Laboratories Inc. (UNILAB), the largest pharmaceutical corporation in the Philippines. She is a champion of total quality management and performance excellence and possesses the ability to handle multiple tasks in a fast-paced environment.

Centeno talked about the “Bayanihan Spirit,” which in the Philippine culture means “working together and helping each other.” She shared how UNILAB helps its employees own their own homes and assists them in times of emergency. As a result, employees stay on until retirement, and many of their family members also become employees.



Community of Asia Pacific Nations continued on next page

Colin Blackwell, an Englishman who is now a resident of Vietnam, is the chairman of the HR Committee of Vietnam Business Forum. His talk was “The Impact on Asian Economic Community (AEC) of the Free Movement of Skilled Labor.”

He was hand-picked by the World Bank to become a consultant to the top power players of Vietnam and its government officials. He cited the following professions with free movement of skilled labor: auditors, architects, engineers, dentists, medical doctors, nurses, investigators and personnel in the tourism sector.

[Manoj Biswas] predicted that not only will organizations turn more and more to technology to link all business units, as well as regional headquarters, but that future “bosses” will be robots.

He made some predictions for Vietnam in the areas of tourism, engineering and medicine. He said to expect to see more workers from the Philippines working in hotels in Vietnam. Also expect to see more Vietnamese engineers working regionally.

He also predicted an influx of medical specialists from the Philippines and Cambodia to assist with the rapidly expanding medical tourism market of wealthy Cambodians coming to Vietnamese hospitals for treatment.

Furthermore, he similarly predicted that there will be more skilled labor from the Philippines who prefer to work in Vietnam rather than in the Middle East. He mentioned that freer movement of labor presents both increased opportunity and competition. Overall, it is economically beneficial and will change millions of people’s individual careers for the better.

The final speaker, Ramon B. Segismundo, is chief human resources

officer at Meralco. “Mon,” as he is fondly called, is also PMAP’s 2017 president. His talk, “HR Best Practices, the Philippine Advantage,” was rich in substance, inspirational and well-received. His 14 minimum requirements of HR leadership are:

1. Link to vision/mission/values
2. Desired future of the organization
3. Proactively shape the company’s culture
4. Expert in all organizational, talent and leadership matters
5. Be an advocate in driving increased productivity and performance
6. HR’s processes have to be aligned with the organization’s culture
7. Promote learning and development opportunities
8. Foster convergence between HR and IT
9. HR leaders must be a business person first and an HR specialist second
10. HR leaders should strive to be the “consigliere” to their CEOs
11. HR leaders should promote thinking globally, acting locally
12. Serve as a role model for the rest of the organization
13. HR leaders must have an exit strategy
14. HR leaders must be “ready to die” for their organization

The strong impact of his message was brought about by his persona of a leader who “walks his talk.” I believe that his great assets are his humility, respect for others and openness.

In his closing remarks, Chris Till made special mention of Centeno’s discussion of the “Bayanihan Spirit,” noting that he would bring the idea back to New Zealand because they have HR professionals who cannot afford to own their own homes.

I was greeted by some participants who expressed their satisfaction with the choice of speakers and topics, and how the experience would impact their organizations. The positive feedback we received from several people in the audience was a source of joy and fulfilment for me, our executive director and the PMAP professional staff.

[Dina H. Loomis is the trustee-in-charge of international relations of PMAP.]

Hong Kong **Maternity Leave Benefits** Need a Shake-up

By the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management

While progress has been made in Hong Kong to improve its maternity and paternity provisions in the workplace, the city still falls short of international standards. Hong Kong has not enhanced its maternity leave provisions in more than two decades. We need to do more to fall in line with other comparable countries and to improve conditions for women in the workplace.

The Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management (HKIHRM) is conducting research on this issue and generating conversations to come up with collective ideas to move forward.

The 2014 report *Maternity and Paternity at Work: Law and Practice Across the World* by the International Labour Organization (ILO) shows that Hong Kong is lagging slightly behind with a mandatory 10-week maternity leave period. The statutory pay of 80 percent of daily salary is in line with most places in the study. However, the funding system in Hong Kong holds employers fully responsible, while in other countries, such as Singapore, the United Kingdom and Sweden, a contributory social insurance system provided by the government shares the cost.

Singapore provides 16 weeks of maternity leave with full pay throughout the leave period; paid maternity leave is shared between the government and the employer for the first two children and is fully borne by the government for the third child and beyond. The average global figures also revealed that 53 percent of the 183 countries and territories studied met the ILO standard of at least 14 weeks of paid

maternity leave, while 58 percent financed maternity leave cash benefits through social security.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam revealed in her maiden policy address last year that the Hong Kong government will begin a study of the enhancement of maternity leave provisions to better align it with the recommendations of the ILO.

There is growing consensus among Hong Kong’s business community that maternity leave provisions need to be revised as a way to attract and retain talent, increase brand equity, enhance staff engagement and promote a better work-life balance. According to an HKIHRM survey of HR professionals, *HR Pulse Check on Enhancement of Statutory Maternity Leave Provisions*, 70 percent agreed that Hong Kong businesses would support enhancing maternity leave benefits because it is seen as a good way to encourage and support more women to enter or reenter the workplace.

HKIHRM’s report provides an essential base for us to proceed to the next stage of an action plan of advocacy initiatives.



China Attracting Talent

China is moving up in global rankings that measure which countries are attracting and retaining top talent. An INSEAD report showed China moving to seventh place in the Asia-Pacific region, moving up two places. China is now 43rd among 119 countries, a jump of 11 spots. Part of the country's success has been luring back Chinese who were educated overseas. China's commitment to innovation has been a large part of the attraction.



Indonesia Paternity Leave

Male civil servants in Indonesia are now allowed up to one month of paid paternity to support their wives. The government says the new regulation is part of its efforts to promote gender equality in the country. Previously, men were only allowed two days, to be used to support their wives as they gave birth. Female workers are allowed three months of maternity leave.



Japan Women in the Workforce

A shortage of child care workers in Japan makes it difficult for women to go back to work after giving birth. In 2017, the number of children on a day care waiting list grew for the third consecutive year as women try to go back to work. In the midst of a countrywide labor shortage, the Japanese government has encouraged women to work and is planning to build more day care centers. Corporations have also developed programs to support working women, including telework opportunities, hiring women at the same level as when they left to start families and offering paid internships for training.



Malaysia Skilled Workforce

Malaysia aims to increase its skilled workforce in order to become a developed and high-income nation by 2020. The goal is to have 35 percent of workers considered skilled. The government reports that 51 percent of the 136,062 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) graduates were working as skilled workers in 2017. The government is also looking to expand the TVET program and train thousands of young people through the National Youth Skills Institute.



Singapore Work-Life Balance

Ninety-seven percent of companies surveyed in a Robert Half report said they are actively encouraging a positive work-life balance. The companies are offering additional leave or holidays (47 percent), flexible working hours (41 percent), company restrictions on use of mobile devices outside of office hours (29 percent) and onsite amenities such as childcare and gyms (27 percent). Promoting a work-life balance reduces stress and increases job satisfaction, which causes employers to stand out among a competitive field, the report states.



Vietnam Tourism Industry

Vietnam's tourism industry is booming, and the government has plans to lure more tourists, particularly from China and Europe. A tourism development fund of US\$18–22 million was established this year and focuses on specific cities in the two regions. Tourism in March 2018 was up 34 percent over the same month last year. Tourism for the year already increased by 31 percent in the first quarter compared to last year.

Sources: CNBC, HR in Asia, Human Resources Online, Nikkei Asian Review, *The Jakarta Post*, VietNamNet.

WFPMA World Congress 2018

June 17 – 20, 2018

Chicago, IL, USA



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Join the Global HR Community at the WFPMA World Congress 2018

The WFPMA World Congress 2018 will be held in conjunction with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Annual Conference & Exposition in Chicago, June 17–20, 2018. As an attendee, you have the opportunity to join a global network of human resource professionals to discuss the latest developments in HR.

You'll network with your colleagues from around the world who are facing similar challenges and walk away with new ideas and solutions to implement at your organization right away.

HR associations and their members will receive a special rate when registering for the WFPMA World Congress 2018 and will also have access to the entire SHRM Annual Conference & Exposition. Learn more at <http://annual.shrm.org/wfpma-world-congress-2018>. If you require a visa, please visit the U.S. Department of State website at www.state.gov for the most current information and instructions.

An invitation letter can be provided upon request, but only to individuals who are registered and attending the WFPMA World Congress 2018. We strongly recommend applying early.

Click the links below to start planning:

Visit the website.

Register now.

Use promo code **WORLDCONGRESS18** to register online at a special rate of USD \$1,215. If you are a head of nation, please e-mail the secretariat at wfpma.secretariat@shrm.org for your special registration code.

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Access the marketing toolkit.

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CEO, United Airlines



JOHNNY C. TAYLOR, JR.
President & CEO, SHRM



JEB BUSH
43rd governor of Florida

HR CALENDAR

June 6–7, 2018

Sri Lanka National HR Conference
Colombo, Sri Lanka
www.ipmlk.org

June 17–20, 2018

WFPMA World Congress
in conjunction with the Society for Human Resource Management
Annual Conference & Exposition
Chicago, Illinois
<http://annual.shrm.org/wfpma-world-congress-2018#register>

September 28–29, 2018

37th Annual National HR Conference (NATCON 2018)
The Westin Hotel, Pune, Maharashtra, India
<http://natcon2018.com>

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welcomes news stories, announcements of events and ideas for articles. These should be accompanied by a telephone number and e-mail address.

Melanie Padgett Powers

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of *WorldLink* will be published in July 2018 and will feature Central and South America and the Interamerican Federation of People Management Associations. © 2018. Material may be reprinted with credit to *WorldLink*, WFPMA.

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