

# Pioneers of Organizational Ombudsmanry in International Agencies

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## ABSTRACTS

This paper describes the foundational activities of four Organizational Ombudsmen (OO's) who have been instrumental in developing the role in International Agencies. Each Ombudsman was provided with a standardised set of questions designed to explicate the challenges and opportunities of establishing such offices in often highly politicised environments, and their responses are provided in their own words. The article concludes with a brief summary of how professional developments in policy and training have been valued, and how developmental challenges and opportunities appear essentially timeless.

## KEY WORDS

Ombudsmen, pioneers, International Agencies, challenges, opportunities

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Introduction

As Organizational Ombudsmen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we stand on the shoulders of giants. The forerunners in our profession in many sectors have established significant and lasting foundations upon which Organizational Ombudsmanry has not only evolved but flourished. Although the implementation of Organizational Ombudsman offices in International agencies<sup>1</sup> has, for many, been relatively recent, there were some notable exceptions. In this article, I will review a few international agencies' Ombudsman offices through the words of those associated with their early and crucial development. In particular, the Ombudsmen interviewed here give their perspectives on similar questions, asked commonly of each. The aim was to identify commonalities and divergences in the way offices have come into being and subsequently evolved.

Mindful of the increasing numbers of Organizational Ombudsmen (OO) offices in international agencies, and of the consciously evolving nature of the JIOA series on pioneers of our profession, I opportunistically interviewed several of these pioneers. In some cases it wasn't possible to speak directly with the people concerned — in these instances, those approached kindly wrote answers to the set of standardised questions (see Table 1) asked of each.

Table 1. Standardised Questions for Pioneers of International Agencies

1. What was the impetus in developing the Organizational Ombudsman role in your organisation/sector?
2. What were the significant early events and/or developments that laid a foundation for the evolution of your role?
3. What were the challenges you faced in implementing the role?
4. Who were your key colleagues/allies outside your organisation and how did they make a difference to your (ability to) work?
5. What did colleagues in the organisation assume your role to be? Did that affect the way you worked?
6. Who were your organisational allies?
7. What kinds of cases did you see at first? How did these cases' characteristics change over time?
8. Were there significant legal issues impacting on how you worked?
9. How did the development of professional associations (e.g., University and College Ombuds Association [UCOA], The Ombudsman Association [TOA], the International Ombudsman Association [IOA]) influence your work?
10. What have been the major events/issues that have impacted on your work and role in recent years?
11. How do you see the future of the Organizational Ombudsman profession?

Interviews for this article took place in early 2013 and follow-up discussions were undertaken thereafter. In the descriptions below, answers given are weaved into a broad narrative though specific answers are given where they provide insight into the organization's or the pioneer's thinking.



### JIM HENDRY

#### Ombudsman for the World Bank, 1983–1986

Dr. James B. Hendry was the second Ombudsman for the World Bank (WB)<sup>2</sup>, serving in that role from 1983-1986. The first to hold that role was Gene Webb who, as a lawyer, had served as counsel for complainants involved in the World Bank appeals process. Jim takes up the story:

*"I was an economist by profession and worked in the World Bank for 21 years until compulsory retirement aged 65 in 1986. I had been a manager in the WB and therefore knew the culture, had the respect of colleagues and managers.*

*Becoming Ombudsman was a terminal assignment of 3 years. I couldn't be fired, had routine salary increases and guaranteed access to the President and Vice Presidents. I had very little idea of what an Ombudsman was!"*

In describing his induction and immersion into the Ombudsman role, Jim stated that the culture of the World Bank was a significant support in getting established — and in the role's evolution:

*"The WB was a special kind of corporate organisation — a not-for-profit with a prominent concern for staff morale and welfare. There was a heavily European attitude to dispute resolution which was more positive than the norm in the US. The WB was looking for a supplement to the formal appeals process. Also, thinking on the role was influenced by an article in Harvard Business Review (Silver) on the role of corporate Ombudsmen (May-June 1967)."*

Additionally, having direct and practical support from colleagues in related administrative areas proved to be of considerable help:

*"I didn't feel any part of the Bank was against the Ombudsman role. The President of the Bank (Alden Winship Clausen) was very supportive and the main point of contact was the Vice President for Personnel. I had access to anybody and had complete support from the top. I had a very good relationship with the social worker in the medical department. She was very easy to work with and helped 'diagnose' some health overlays to visitor presentations. Also the head of the Personnel Department and Personnel Officers were very helpful."*

It seems that Jim came into the role with his credibility clearly established through his considerable expertise and long service as a WB staff member. Indeed, he described his main challenge at that time as simply that of learning how Ombudsmen worked. In this regard, he described being helped considerably by his effective collaborative relationship with the then Ombudsman of the International Finance Corporation, and the early development of the Corporate Ombuds Association (COA):

*"In the early 1980's an assortment of early OOs (Mary Rowe, and Ombudsmen from Anheuser Busch, Southland Corporation, etc.) found each other and became the COA. In 1984 we held our first conference in Falmouth, Massachusetts — around 50 people attended. Most were full-time ombudsmen. The COA became the TOA, which became IOA<sup>3</sup>".*

Gaining visibility in the role was an essential early initiative, and Jim was interviewed early on for the WB in-house magazine. Additionally, the President of the WB sent a very supportive letter to all staff explaining the role and principles of the Ombudsman's office. The other main instruction for staff on the role of the office came through word of mouth.

From a staff of 3,000, Jim would see 60-plus visitors annually. Casework during his tenure focussed on performance evaluations, career development issues, probation, and the exercise of disciplinary measures. Jim added,

*"I had two cases where management asked me to look into something, and the President and Vice Presidents would also ask for inputs and advice from time to time. I never saw a case of sexual harassment but I did see many cases arising from managers being cowards in performance management. I never had a whistleblower."*

Although he did not see any sexual harassment cases, Jim was instrumental in the first major initiative of the World Bank to prevent sexual harassment. Jim also described one case in which there were angry and very diverse reactions of employees to the prospective re-admission to the workplace of a person accused of a crime.

Jim was very supportive of the COA. The World Bank made important financial contributions to the first research program of COA. Jim's engagement with the profession lasted long after he retired from the WB Ombudsman role in 1986. For the next several years he became the first professional Executive Officer for the COA. (Having been on the Board of COA during his Ombudsman tenure at the World Bank, Jim described knowing well the administrative difficulties of having the Association run piecemeal by a handful of volunteers.) Jim arranged the conferences, collected dues, and — notably — wrote and edited the first professional Handbook for Ombudsmen, which COA

sold for \$150 each. In looking forward to the future of the profession in 2013, Jim was clear that the Organizational Ombudsman profession remains a good, viable alternative to formal dispute resolution systems and should therefore be encouraged to grow. He saw an enduring challenge to the profession as being that of perceived neutrality.

Dr. Jim Hendry remained active, engaged and of good humour to the end — with his loss we as a profession lost a beloved, visionary early practitioner, a role model as effective and supportive as he was modest.



### **JAMES LEE**

**Ombudsman to the United Nations Programmes and Agencies (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA] and United Nations Office for Project Services [UNOPS], 2002-2007**

Dr. James (Jim) Lee became the first UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Ombudsperson in 2002, following a career in which he taught English in France, Sweden and Ethiopia (where he became Assistant Dean of Arts in Haile Selassie I University) before attaining a Ph.D. in medieval French from Vanderbilt University. He is fluent in English, French, Italian and Spanish with a working knowledge of Amharic and Russian. He joined the United Nations Development Programme in 1985 and became chief editor in 1987, working primarily with the Executive Board. Jim still has great pleasure in working for what is now the Office of the Ombudsman for United Nations Funds and Programmes, serving UNDP, UNFPA, The United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], UNOPS and The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women [UN-WOMEN].

The impetus for developing the Organizational Ombudsmen role in UNDP came in the 1990s, when there was a growing awareness in UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS that staff were not well served by the Internal Justice System (IJS). In 2000, management reviewed the IJS — a team of three people talked to all stakeholders and made recommendations. A key recommendation was that a professional Ombudsman office should replace the Ombudsman Panel of 12 volunteers in place at that time. Jim was coordinator of the Ombudsman Panel, followed by Linda Schieber (both were volunteers).

Jim noted how a volunteer basis for the ombudsman role really didn't work in a hierarchical organization. As resources diminished over time, volunteers on the Panel became afraid to speak out. Cases were discussed openly among Panel members — visitor confidentiality was minimal. Accordingly, among other steps, Jim stopped general discussion of ongoing cases with names attached.

Ultimately, the administration created the Office of the Ombudsperson. Jim was asked to be the first Ombudsperson and was appointed by the three executive heads and the Staff Association. He believes he was chosen because he *"...had the trust of many, I could speak the truth, and as Editor of Executive Board reports, I knew how to give advice and empower people. I also had years of dealing with conflict at the university level in several countries"*

Jim describes the functioning of the office in its early days as presenting significant challenges, as well as opportunities. For example, on the plus side was

*"... The growing perception of the need for an ombudsman. Plus the idea had the buy-in of the major players- the administrations of the three programmes and the staff association. There was an issue of the length of the term of office — a five-year term was unprecedented in the Funds and Programmes (the maximum length of contract was two years) so I was placed on rolling two-year contracts. A key early element was the quality of the relationship between the administration and the OO.*

*On the other hand, while the need for the office was fully appreciated and understood, the work of the office was not. And there were widely differing expectations of the office — e.g., most staff wanted a classical ombudsman and expected that the ombudsman would have the power of determination of outcomes. I did speak out on some issues but did not, of course, have the power of determination."*

A key issue in the early days of the office was its relationship with human resources divisions and other colleagues:

*"Many were obstructive and didn't want an ombudsman — even some in senior management. My role was seen as interference and an indication of possible human resources failure. Personalities can play a huge role. The weaker the human resources division, the greater the importance of the role of the ombudsman.*

*Key colleagues included my colleagues on the Ombudsman Panel, in administration and on the Staff Councils. I made a lot of friends in TOA/IOA — where I learned all about the North American concept of an Organizational Ombudsman. The report of the Redesign Panel on the administration of justice in the United Nations under the leadership of Justice Louise Otis was very important in firmly establishing the role of the ombudsman in the informal resolution of workplace conflict."*

As we've seen with other offices, while having easy access to senior management was a major plus in daily operations, such proximity can lead to misperceptions of dependence and partiality, making it a challenge to demonstrate independence and objectivity in the functioning of the office. In this regard, Jim's colleagues readily attest to his principled willingness to speak up in the face of bad behaviour. As Jim himself says,

*"You can't be neutral about something that's wrong. I don't have the power of decisions about cases, but I do have the power of embarrassment. It was easier to function and to exert appropriate pressure because I was a well-known figure."*

As with the other international agency pioneers discussed in this article, Jim's caseload reflected increasing trust coming from senior management, and the potential differences among the cases coming from headquarters and country offices:

*"Initial cases were interpersonal and about entitlements. Cases grew in complexity over the years. There were also increasing calls for help from senior management — there was growing trust and recognition of the role. Mediation (mediated conversations) was part of our work from the start — very often in troubled country offices."*

It was clear from the outset that the office could not deal with cases of sexual harassment or other forms of gross misconduct which required formal investigation. Nevertheless, Jim described a major early achievement of his role in helping to implement the policy on sexual harassment adopted across the three agencies covered by his office.

Jim also described the added value of TOA/IOA affiliation and training as the role of the Organizational Ombudsman became more firmly established:

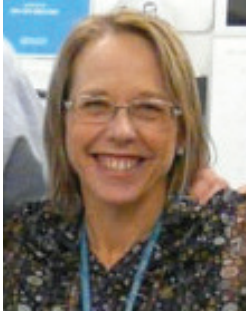
*"I joined TOA when I took up office in 2002. I had known what an Ombudsman was supposed to do. When I was appointed, I 'googled' TOA (and found the link also to Patricia Durrant [the first UN Ombudsman]). The TOA training courses were excellent — particularly Ombuds 101 — they gave indications of best practices and brought together Ombudsmen from widely differing practices. TOA was also trying to attract international audiences and when IOA was created, it was very useful in helping me to understand the role of Organizational Ombudsmen. In the United Nations, we are something of a hybrid because we have cases dealing with the misapplication of UN staff regulations and rules, which replace national legislation, and by which we are all governed."*

As a veteran in his field and in his sector, Jim has a clear view of the challenges and future of the Organizational Ombudsman profession:

*"It is moving in the right direction — at least in the UN. There is huge job potential for the further development of conflict resolution and prevention. It is encouraging that younger people are more and more aware of the possibilities of the profession. Professional conflict resolution in schools and workplaces is a response to violence and bullying. I am also very happy about certification — we need to make professional standards more rigorous. At the same time, succession is a big problem and we must all make a special effort in the UN to circulate vacancy announcements in a timely fashion to avoid having to look around for people with the right profile to be an ombudsman."*

Finally, Jim had positive things to say about those with whom he had worked during his tenure and well into what he calls his 'active retirement':

*"The office has expanded and all colleagues have brought their own strengths. Veronica Luard, Mame Diagne and Helmut Buss have all brought new perspectives and expertise to the role of the Ombudsman in informal conflict resolution in the workplace. All the principles we established are in force today and have been enriched by each successive Ombudsman. Other key colleagues have included Selome Yifru, Sheila Smith, Linda Schieber, Kentaro Kanyomozi, Eskandar Rastegar and Judit Revesz. I must also mention the special role of Nancy Ross and Sharon Gordon-Smith. It is a wonderful team composed of people from all over the world and I continue to learn so much from each of its members."*



## GEORGIA SHAVER

### Ombudsman to the World Food Programme, 2005-2010

Georgia Shaver was the first Ombudsman for the World Food Programme (WFP), taking office in 2005. She came to the role having previously served in the organization from 1980, primarily in field programme support and management positions, including in Mozambique and Ethiopia.

The notion of an Ombudsman function for WFP initially arose during a change management programme WFP embarked upon in 1997 and subsequently, during a Global Staff Survey in 2004, the idea emerged again. The then Executive Director acted on that recommendation by internally advertising the Ombudsman shortly thereafter. Georgia noted that early support came from key colleagues in management and HR in the organization. That support attracted her to the role:

*"Fortunately the Executive Director/Chief of Staff and the then HR Director were keen to implement as many recommendations as possible from the Global Staff Survey and were all familiar with the Ombudsman function and were very supportive. The organisation was also able to add a new position at a senior level."*

Georgia takes up the story:

*"Starting from scratch was a huge challenge. There were no other Ombudsmen based in Rome to contact but fortunately there was the Ombudsman 101 training combined with the UN Ombudsman meeting one month after I started the job that helped with implementing the role. It was challenging finding the right assistant (and that took a lot of time so I had to carefully find a temporary person, choosing a retiree who was highly respected by the staff), getting the right office, quickly getting the promo material ready, organising information meetings, putting together the data base, choosing the right information to collect, etc. It got very tiring having to explain over and over the role of the Ombudsman, the requirements, etc. I guess the biggest challenge was doing it on my own having been used to managing large offices with a lot of people to call upon to do the work!"*

Support for the establishment of the office and the role came from a variety of sources, both internally and externally:

*"In my first month I met with all key colleagues (HR, Chief of Staff, Deputy Executive Director, Executive Director, Head of Legal, Inspector General, etc.) and asked them to explain to me what was the role and function of the Ombudsman. Having been trained, these meetings and gathering their impression/assumptions allowed me to clarify and inform. In addition I had to write the terms of reference of the Ombudsman and these same people were part of the working group and through this exercise we were able to be on the same page."*

*Though over the five years organizational allies shifted slightly with the introduction of the Ethics Office, at the beginning they included the Inspector General, the HR Director, the Chief of Staff, the head of Legal and of course the Executive Director. Again towards the end of the mandate*



*and with a change in the ED I would say that at the beginning of her mandate she was an ally but became less so as she embarked on other interests. Many managers became supportive of the function, all of the Deputy Executive Directors (there are four) and several of the investigators working on harassment issues, a few legal officers and the staff relations officer in HR.*

*My key allies outside of WFP were the Ombudsman/mediators in the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), UNDP and the World Health Organization (WHO). They made a difference by being so generous with their knowledge, experience sharing, the sharing of job descriptions, data bases, filing systems, intake reports, job grading, etc. They made the office structuring that much easier and their tips and experience sharing helped me to avoid the pitfalls and progress more rapidly with laying the foundation."*

As often found when a new Ombudsman joins, or a new office is opened, there are visits from staff experiencing chronic difficulties in search of resolution, first in the headquarters office and then from further afield:

*"My first cases were those long standing, intractable problems that no one else could solve. It was a case of 'let's try the new kid on the block and see if we can get something'. Also, many 'friends' came to visit (former colleagues with whom I had worked) — at least those based in Headquarters. After several months however the cases became more diversified not only by issue but geographically, contractually, and by gender."*

Georgia considered that the training and affiliation with IOA gave her a significant advantage:

*"The IOA definitely influenced my work through the Ombudsman 101 training that I was fortunate to have received within one month of my having taken up my appointment. Also being a member of IOA boosted my standing within my organisation as membership in associations is respected."*

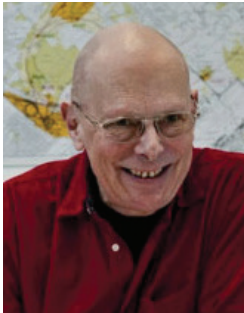
Nevertheless, early gains in the evolution of the office and function faced significant challenges, not least with the pressures of organizational transition and down-sizing, and those associated with new leadership:

*"Within my first year we had a down-sizing that impacted on my work by increasing the number of cases and requiring me to be better informed on rules and regulations with respect to contract non-renewal, separation packages, etc. A change in leadership (Executive Director) was challenging given the less-than-enthusiastic behaviour shown. When the ED starts making it difficult to meet her it is almost impossible to break this impasse. Her attitude towards all officers dealing with conflict, accountability/transparency, etc. was the same. The opening up with respect to collaboration by the HR Director (second during my term) helped tremendously to resolve issues. Confidence between me, the Ombudsman, and other important functions was important to ensuring a positive impact on my work and role."*

Georgia eventually retired from WFP and her Ombudsman role in 2010 and has since been designing and teaching courses on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) at The American University of Rome. She is also engaged in consultancies for WFP and, more recently, with the African Union Commission. When asked about how she sees the future of the profession, she replied:



*"In WFP the future is strong. Mediation has been added that completed the conflict resolution options for the staff. It would be an important next step if more funding could be provided to the office as well as more staff so that all functions could be rolled out with the same energy, i.e. training, publicity, activity report follow through."*



## VINCENT VUILLEMIN

**Ombudsman for CERN, 2010-2013<sup>4</sup>**

The European Organisation for Nuclear Research (Organisation Européenne pour la Recherche Nucléaire — known as CERN) is the multi-national research facility based in Geneva, Switzerland, with responsibility for investigating the limits of achievable knowledge in particle physics. It is an extraordinary undertaking involving more than 3,000 staff with users, engineers and its research constituency boosting numbers to 11,000, coming from more than 100 countries. In 2013, CERN astonished the world with its

definitive identification of the Higgs Boson — a key element in the particle 'glue' that enables the development of mass and form.

For 50 years since its inception, CERN had no code of conduct, no harassment or diversity procedure, and no Ombudsman. The only option for resolving disputes was to invoke formal complaints in accordance with the staff rules and regulations. The impetus for development of the Ombudsman role came from a wish to achieve an integrated HR policy, including enabling an open channel through which people could experience a zero-barrier office for informal, confidential case resolution. Establishing the office was also seen frankly as a good image for the organisation and as a practical opportunity for non-aligned explanation and exemplification of the new Code of Conduct.

An integrated strategy including a Code of Conduct, an Ombudsman office, a Diversity Program and a Competency Model, along with a policy for formal and informal resolution of harassment became operational with strong support from the CERN Council President and the Staff Association. However, Vincent noted that establishing the office was not without its challenges:

*"It was a challenge to find a convenient office, close to common areas but also a bit remote so people could come incognito, and to then make appropriate modifications to the premises. It is by far not easy at CERN to grab an office, as all of them belong to various departments. Then, getting the mandate correct — it had to be written by HR and the central legal service, accepted by the Staff Association and then various officials at CERN. It actually took some time to get it finalized [but] the mandate is in line with the IOA Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.*

*Then after that, doing everything at the same time — web site, posters, flyer to be distributed to all personnel at CERN, and tour all management meetings of the CERN Departments. So I dedicated a lot of time in the first few months to raising awareness about the Ombuds, as I was the first Ombuds at CERN ever. Raising awareness was most important as, in a scientific laboratory, there was little culture towards the new CERN Code of Conduct and Ombuds work. Attracting attention and helping people understand the advantages of coming early in the problem required a lot of information. So I started to write articles for the CERN Bulletin.*

*Taking useful courses as soon as possible, from IOA and in mediation, was very important. That was really a total change for me, coming from the managerial side. That was a big challenge to change my mind from the managerial mind to a mediator one, neutral and impartial. I was used to deciding and now I should not interact so much but favour the decisions taken by the people themselves. My managerial tendency lead me in the beginning to interact and mix myself too much with the process of listening, understanding, coaching, and trying to extract what the people wanted and what could be their decision."*

In common with other technological and normative agencies, the supposed technical skills versus people management skills of managers have been a focus for some negative perceptions at CERN. Vincent noted how many feel that people management was seen as a weakness in management generally. He also noted how

*"Publication of the Code of Conduct was by no mean sufficient to guarantee its application. A lot of information, awareness raising and education still had to be provided, I would say, especially in an Institution where the scientific culture predominates."*

Vincent noted how important his fellow Ombudsmen were for developing his confidence as an Ombudsman practitioner:

*"In Geneva I have profited from regular contacts with Ombuds of the international organisations here. Their advice is always a plus in reflecting on difficult cases. I felt less alone with such regular contacts, which very often gave me the courage to continue, and the feeling also that I was on the right track on my action. Moral support and feedback from them was most appreciated, given the fact that I did not receive much feedback from inside the house. Also, my overall connection with the IOA and the United Nations and Related International Organizations (UNARIO) Ombudsman network supported me a lot, as I felt part of an overall community of peers."*

Main organizational allies within CERN included the Head of the HR Department and HR advisers. Additionally, Vincent said he found real benefit in some urgent cases from collaboration with the CERN medical service. Yet it appeared at the time of interview that supposed concerns for ensuring the absolute independence of the office may have contributed to an apparent lack of feedback from senior management (although Vincent was convinced that the Director General and his team were positive supporters of his role).

The case mix has been evolving since the office started, with more than 50 percent of cases seen by Vincent being related to the IOA 'Evaluative Relationships' broad category. He also noted how growing confidence in the Ombudsman was reflected with the high initial numbers of visitors on limited contracts slowly giving way to more visitors on indefinite contracts. Two features have stood out for him, however, relating to gender and to the issue of mediation:

*"I have seen, proportionally to their populations, a greater percentage of women than men. Looking at reports from other International Organisations, it appears that this phenomenon is related to the percentage of women in the Organisation. If there is an equal number of men and women in them, then the percentages of conflicts is the same, 50% men and 50% women. If the number of women is less, then the percentage of conflicts involving women is higher, generally double that involving men."*

*I also handled a very small number of mediations, although the trend was increasing. Contrary to the general feeling that mediation is a widely used process, I must say that for me as an Institutional Ombuds I did actually very few of them. I should probably have more widely explained what the process is. I actually called them 'facilitated discussions' even if I used the same process along with the same rules. The reason is that as soon as people hear that mediation takes place, they expect a result in terms of success or failure. I wanted to avoid the bad feelings resulting from a failure of mediation. A 'facilitated discussion' does not generate perception of such defined outcomes."*

In common with others approached for this article, Vincent felt that IOA and UNARIO membership conferred tangible benefits:

*"The umbrella of the IOA, and of the UNARIO as well, allowed me to have an international and respected framework for my mandate and my ethics. So, rules and the mandate associated with the CERN Ombuds did not appear as homemade but well established internationally. It was, and still is, an important certification of my actions. CERN also appreciated that another channel towards international contacts was open."*

Since retiring in late 2013, Vincent has been enjoying retirement, studying "a lot of zen, writing on the Chan masters and also travelling" (at time of writing, along the 'silk route' in China). Vincent noted, "I find myself with no spleen from CERN and like a peaceful zen monk."

Finally, from his pioneering perspective of a practitioner based in a temple of science, Vincent makes some clear suggestions on future developments for the profession:

*"I believe that the mandates [of Organisational Ombudsmen] are very restrictive and could be improved by allowing more pro-active actions from the Ombuds. Sometimes I was at the limit of my mandate in order to effectively resolve cases. Also, the notion of 'change agent' should be favoured, and not only the possibility of forwarding systemic recommendations.*

*Regular meetings with the management would be an asset, and could be fostered by IOA Standards of Practice. That would help Ombuds to participate in any culture change if needed.*

*Managers are sometimes the pure product of the culture of the Institution. In order to change the way some managers act, one would have to promote a culture more directed towards respectful human relations. This is much more difficult to realise and there the participation of the Ombuds in such strategic plans would be most interesting. The Ombuds could then have standing invitations to strategic meetings concerning human resources for example, either as observer or as an active member.*

*In summary, the Ombuds work should not be considered by the Institutions as a single conflict resolution tool but also as an active participant in a policy for a respectful workplace environment. I would think that incentives in that direction by the IOA and UNARIO would help."*

## Concluding Comments

Our pioneers have revealed that, aside from establishing benchmarks for Ombudsman office development in their own organizations, they have also been pioneers in addressing many developments within our profession. Some of the issues raised in their responses to similar questions seem timeless, including concerns about managers and performance management, the role/s and impact of human resources departments, and the necessity of facilitative structures in which Ombudsman offices are contextualised, particularly the importance of good relationships with and support from senior leadership..

Additionally, it has been revealing and reassuring to see the added value associated (by Ombudsmen *and* their organisations) with adhering to IOA Standards and Principles, and with the training and regular collegiality that IOA provides. The pioneers interviewed also indirectly indicate how the IOA Standards of Practice are most usefully seen as a work in progress. The evolutionary stance of our pioneers in some areas of the Standards — e.g., independence, informality and neutrality, and our working boundaries as Organisational rather than Classical Ombudsmen — may challenge our contemporary views of these concepts. Nevertheless, we have all moved forward in our thinking and practice as a result of their experience. It may be a surprise that there are so many commonalities in the challenges and opportunities they have described — it seems the needs behind the establishment of these offices remain as strong and as ubiquitous as ever.

## References

1. International agencies referred to in this paper include agencies and programmes within the United Nations, Bretton Woods institutions, and international NGOs and scientific collaborative institutions.
2. Jim Hendry died on 25th April, 2014, aged 92. His role as Ombudsman, his remarkable contributions to the Ombudsman profession, and his extraordinarily productive contributions to the world are described in his obituary by Mary Rowe in pages 7-8 of this volume.
3. IOA was actually formed from the merger of TOA and UCOA.
4. Vincent was interviewed by email in 2013, prior to his retirement from CERN.