



Ryszard Struzak, long-time staff member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), has launched a second career in electronic communications at ICTP.

Forever Young

At first glance, his collar-length silvery hair seems to belie his youthful exuberance. But since 1989, Ryszard Struzak, now 73, has been one of ICTP's most frequent and enthusiastic visitors—first serving as teacher for the Centre's radiocommunication courses and later as co-director of the ICTP schools on digital radio and wireless computer networking. While at the Centre, Struzak has worked closely with Sandro Maria Radicella, head of the Aeronomy and Radiopropagation Laboratory (ARPL). ICTP's most recent wireless networking school took place in February. Some 26 participants from 15 developing countries attended. In Africa and in many regions of Asia and Latin America, low-cost radiocommunication technologies are the most cost-effective means to connect remote villages, universities and hospitals to the internet. For example, a simple antenna attached to a tin can—a cantenna, if you will—has helped bring the internet to universities across sub-Saharan Africa.

Thanks to Struzak and Radicella, ICTP has been one of the world's leading organisations in making wireless-communication science and technology available to developing countries. The work of the Centre recently received worldwide attention when it was profiled in the 28 February edition of the *International Herald Tribune* (see p. 8). The Centre's activities in the field are strongly supported by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN agency where Struzak worked for more than two decades until his retirement in 2003.

Born in Janow, a small city near Lublin in Poland, Struzak studied at universities in Lodz, Wroclaw and Warsaw, where he received doctorate degrees in both electronics and telecommunications. His education set the stage for a long and rewarding career as a university professor and international civil servant. "My collaboration with ICTP," Struzak says, "began in January 1989, when the Centre organised its first Course on Basic Telecommunication Science, but I had previously met Radicella at ITU headquarters in Geneva. From our first conversations I understood the spirit of the Centre."



Ryszard Struzak with Sandro M. Radicella

With Struzak's help, ICTP organised radiocommunication courses every other year until 1995, when more formal links were developed with ITU. From then on, courses became annual events with topics changing from one year to the next to keep pace with the rapid

advances in the field. Hundreds of young physicists and engineers have attended the Centre's radiocommunication courses, colleges, workshops and schools—mostly from African countries. Why the emphasis on Africa? "Because it is a continent that must become connected to the rest of the world if it hopes to achieve sustainable economic progress," Struzak says. "For me and Radicella it's rewarding to see how researchers attending the courses learn new things that they subsequently use in their home countries. Their level of preparation today is much better than it was 15 years ago. This too can be seen as a sign of hope for Africa." In the near future ICTP plans to help forge partnerships between India and several African countries. Struzak notes that South-South cooperation in science is just "one more sign of the progress that is taking place across the developing world — thanks in large measure to advances in electronic communications driven not only by satellites and optical fibres but also by tin cans and aluminium antennae."

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