



by John Santurbano

When I arrived at MUAC in 2018, I observed that the organisation was focused on reaching performance targets through continuous changes, mostly leveraging on technology. The pressure of 'key performance indicators' together with the challenging operational situation was generating high stress levels for everyone. When stress is high, people and teams naturally become more self-centred, and cooperation can be affected. In this environment, the wellbeing of people can become neglected. We had to take a step back to act where it is most beneficial for MUAC, including its most important aspect – the people.

MUAC is an organisation composed of smart, highly competent and professional staff. However, to collaborate effectively, 'emotional intelligence' is also important. Therefore, I promoted ways to enable more sustainable performance by focusing on personal and group development. In this way, the organisation can maintain its excellence more effectively. This means working together as a group, taking responsibility for personal and collective performance, acting with integrity, and cherishing growth and diversity.

In line with this vision, some changes had already emerged by the time I became Director. One of them was MUAC's 'Energy and Resilience Management' project (see the article in this issue of *HindSight*). These projects were driven by a handful of colleagues working on cultural development and human performance. These staff members were passionate about people, and they were trying hard to shift the organisation towards a culture that puts people, their wellbeing and performance where they belong – at the centre of the system. I felt that initiatives for wellbeing needed maximum support from the top management, so that's what I did and asked my management team to do as well.

In aviation, we need a culture and strategy that is built around its people. Wellbeing is a key enabler to achieve human performance that should not be seen as a 'nice to have'. Rather, it is essential both ethically and also for excellent business performance. Proof can be seen in a significant decrease of delays, increased customer satisfaction and high staff engagement in innovation.

#### **John Santurbano**

Director of EUROCONTROL's Maastricht Upper Area Control Centre