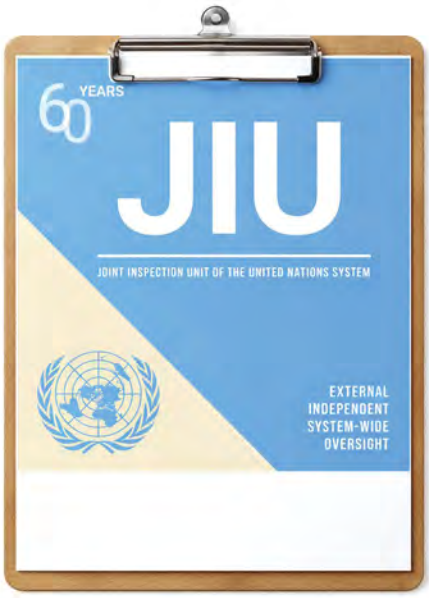
UNtoday since 1949
The official magazine of international civil servants
La revue officielle des fonctionnaires internationaux




# THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT AT WORK

**THE RISKS OF** CLIMATE ADAPTATION

**WORLD AUTISM DAY:** INCLUSION COUNTS

**EMERGING TALENT** AT VISIONS DU RÉEL

**EXPERIENCE SPRING** IN INTERLAKEN

**INVESTING IN** BILINGUAL EDUCATION

#858 APRIL | AVRIL 2026

KYOTO

# YOUR GREEN WORKPLACE

## Last spaces available



**Discover a sustainable building in the heart of the Nations district.**

The Kyoto building is more than just a destination; it's a working environment that helps your organisation grow and respects the environment. Office space available for rent from 300 sqm upwards.

JLL

SwissLife Asset Managers

KYOTO-GREENVILLAGE.CH

**# 858**
**APRIL | AVRIL 2026**

Founded in 1966, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) is the only external oversight body within the United Nations system. The idea of creating such a mechanism emerged after the financial crisis that affected the UN in 1960. In 1965, the General Assembly established an ad hoc committee of experts to examine the financial situation of the Organization and its specialized agencies.



This committee recommended the creation of the JIU to carry out field investigations, as well as independent evaluations, inspections, and analyses aimed at improving management, strengthening coordination among entities within the system, which promoted efficiency and the proper use of resources.

Over the years, the JIU has conducted numerous inspections and published many reports on a wide range of important topics, including the delegation of authority and the internal justice system, among others.

This issue of the magazine looks back at 60 years of the JIU, the way it operates, and its future prospects. It also includes an interview with its current Chair, Conrod Hunte, who addresses several issues, including a question that is often raised: why is the JIU sometimes perceived as "toothless"?

Fondé en 1966, le Corps commun d'inspection (CCI) est le seul organe de contrôle externe du système des Nations Unies. L'idée de mettre en place un tel mécanisme est née à la suite de la crise financière qui a frappé l'ONU en 1960. En 1965, l'Assemblée générale a ainsi créé un comité ad hoc d'experts chargé d'examiner la situation financière de l'Organisation et des institutions spécialisées.

C'est ce comité ad hoc qui a recommandé la création du CCI afin qu'il mène des enquêtes sur le terrain, mais aussi qu'il procède à des évaluations, des inspections et des analyses indépendantes visant à améliorer la gestion, renforcer la coordination entre les entités du système et promouvoir l'efficacité et la bonne utilisation des ressources.

Tout au long de son existence, le CCI a mené de nombreuses enquêtes et publié un grand nombre de rapports couvrant des sujets aussi variés qu'importants, tels que la délégation d'autorité, le système de justice interne, et bien d'autres encore.

Ce numéro du magazine passe en revue les 60 ans d'existence du CCI, son fonctionnement ainsi que ses perspectives d'avenir. Il donne également la parole à son Président actuel, Conrod Hunte, qui, dans un entretien exclusif, aborde plusieurs questions, dont celle qui revient souvent : pourquoi le CCI est-il parfois perçu comme un organe sans réel pouvoir?

Prisca Chaoui

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**
**RÉDACTRICE EN CHEF**

**FOCUS ON** | GROS PLAN SUR



**6**
A CONVERSATION WITH JIU CHAIR CONROD HUNTE

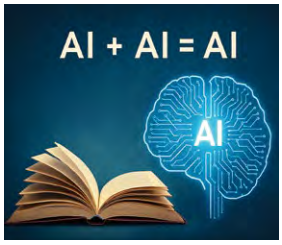


**10**
THE ROLE OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT



**14**
SIXTY YEARS OF SYSTEM-WIDE OVERSIGHT

**EXPLORE GENEVA** | EXPLORONS GENÈVE




**24**
AI + AI = AI



**28**
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES: GROWTH FROM THE CULTURAL FRONTIER




**32**
VISIONS DU RÉEL 2026: EXHIBITION OF DOCUMENTARY CINEMA

**DIPLOMACY** | DIPLOMATIE SUR



**42**
WHY DIALOGUE MATTERS IN A DIVIDED WORLD

**UN MEMORIES** | MÉMOIRES DE L'ONU



**46**
WHY TRUST STILL MATTERS

**GLOBAL AFFAIRS** | AFFAIRES MONDIALES



**18**
JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA CONSCIENCE 2026




**20**
DESIGNING NEW SYSTEMS TO RECOGNIZE NEW WAYS OF THINKING



**22**
WHY FASTER IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION

**PHOTO OF THE MONTH** | PHOTO DU MOIS



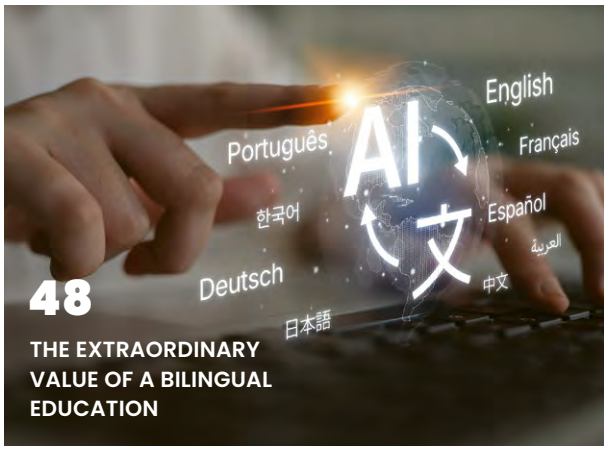
**36**
CHRONICLES OF EVERYDAY DIPLOMACY

**INSIDE VIEW** | VUE DE L'INTÉRIEUR




**38**
LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND IN INDONESIA

**EDUCATION** | ÉDUCATION




**48**
THE EXTRAORDINARY VALUE OF A BILINGUAL EDUCATION

**LEISURE** | LOISIRS



**52**
HOLIDAY REGION INTERLAKEN: MAKE THE MOST OF SPRING

**OTHER** | DIVERS



**54**
YOUTH IN THE LEAD: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN WESTERN NEPAL

# A conversation with JIU Chair Conrod Hunte

## JIU's authority lies in independence, objectivity, evidence-based analysis, and credibility with governing bodies, not in issuing binding instructions

ALEXANDRA **CAPELLO**, VINCENT **HERMIE** AND NUMAYR **CHOWDHURY** *

The Joint Inspection Unit's (JIU) 60th anniversary comes at a defining moment. The United Nations is facing financial austerity, heightened scrutiny from Member States, and growing expectations that reform initiatives—such as UN80 and UN 2.0—will deliver tangible results. In this context, accountability and independent oversight are no longer peripheral or technical matters, they are central to the credibility of reform. Appointed chair of the JIU at the end of last year, Conrod Hunte brings almost four decades worth of multilateral experience to the role. He states that the anniversary is not just a historical milestone, but both an opportunity to reaffirm the Unit's relevance and a moment to reflect on how system-wide oversight can help the UN navigate change responsibly and effectively.

> "THE JIU WAS NEVER MEANT TO ENFORCE DECISIONS. ITS AUTHORITY LIES IN ITS INDEPENDENCE

### Many UN entities have internal oversight functions. What makes the JIU different?

Most organizations rightly maintain internal audit, evaluation, and investigation functions. These mechanisms play an essential role, but they are designed primarily to focus on their own organization rather than the wider UN system. The JIU has a different mandate. We are the only external independent oversight body with a system-wide perspective across the participating organizations who have accepted the JIU Statute. That allows us to examine cross-cutting issues, compare practices between organizations, identify systemic risks and inefficiencies, and highlight opportunities for coherence and shared solutions. In times of reform and constrained resources, that broader lens becomes indispensable.

### Why is system-wide oversight particularly important in today's environment of austerity?

When resources are tight, every decision carries greater weight. Member States are rightly asking what value the UN system is delivering, and at what cost. Reform cannot afford fragmentation, duplication or weak follow-through. System-wide oversight helps governing bodies see where reforms reinforce each other and where they do not. It also helps ensure that efficiency gains are real, not cosmetic. Effective and independent oversight is not an added cost, nor is it optional; rather, it is a safeguard that helps reforms deliver results and sustain trust.

### You have stated that the challenge is often not a lack of reform ideas, but implementation. Can you elaborate?

The UN system is rich in ideas and commitments. The difficulty lies in execution and accountability. Oversight findings and recommendations are sometimes noted rather than acted upon, and governing bodies may endorse reforms without fully exercising their fiduciary role. That gap weakens credibility. The JIU's work seeks to support governing bodies by providing independent, evidence-based

© UN PHOTO/MARK GARTEN



UN Secretary-General António Guterres (right) meets with Conrod Cecil Hunte, Chair of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)

analysis that helps them ask the right questions, track implementation, and hold organizations to account for results, not intentions.

**How does your own background shape your perspective as Chair of the JIU?**

I have spent many years working with multilateral institutions, including as an ambassador and in oversight-related roles. That experience has reinforced for me the importance of strong governance frameworks, clear accountability, and credible oversight. Oversight works best when it is independent, constructive and focused on improving performance. That is the spirit in which the JIU operates.

**Some critics argue that the JIU is "toothless" because its recommendations are not legally binding. How do you respond to that view and are there ways to strengthen the JIU's authority?**

This perception comes up from time to time, and it is important to address it clearly. The JIU was never designed to be an enforcement body, and its effectiveness should not be measured by coercive power. Its authority lies in independence, objectivity, evidence-based analysis, and credibility with governing bodies, not in issuing binding instructions. As the name implies, recommendations are actions put forward for consideration of legislative/governing bodies and executive heads, yet there is a strong incentive to implement them to enhance performance and accountability.

The JIU reports directly to Member States through legislative and governing bodies, which are the entities empowered to make decisions, set policies, and hold secretariats accountable. In that sense, the JIU's recommendations derive their strength from the quality of their analysis and from the oversight role of Member States, and not from legal compulsion.

Experience shows that this model works. Over time, acceptance and implementation rates of JIU recommendations have increased, reflecting a growing recognition of their relevance and practical value. Many recommendations have contributed to tangible improvements in governance, management practices, and coordination across the UN system.

> "WHEN RESOURCES ARE TIGHT, EVERY DECISION CARRIES GREATER WEIGHT

© SHUTTERSTOCK



The JIU conducts evaluations, inspections and investigations across the United Nations system

That said, authority can always be strengthened, not by changing the nature of the JIU, but by reinforcing follow-up, dialogue and visibility, something we are currently doing with a new tracking system of recommendations and the JIU60 communication campaign. Continued engagement with governing bodies, more compelling communication on the intended impact of recommendations, clearer prioritization of recommendations, and stronger tracking of implementation all contribute to greater effectiveness and outcomes. Ultimately, the JIU's influence grows when its work is actively used by Member States and executive leadership as a tool for learning, change, and accountability.

© JIU




Mika Tapio, Executive Secretary of the Joint Inspection Unit since November 2025

**Looking ahead, what role should the JIU play as the UN enters its eighth decade?**

The JIU must continue to evolve while remaining anchored in its unique mandate. Our role is to help governing bodies understand system-wide risks, assess whether reforms are delivering results, and identify good practices that can be scaled across organizations. As the UN pursues ambitious transformation agendas, independent system-wide oversight will be essential to ensure that change is effective, coherent and credible. That is how the JIU can continue to add value in the decades to come. ■

* **Alexandra Capello** is Evaluation and Inspection Officer, **Vincent Hermie** is Senior Evaluation and Inspection Officer and **Numayr Chowdhury** is Evaluation and Inspection Officer at the JIU.

# GRICHTING HOTEL

## *Au coeur des Alpes*

Grichting Hotel And Serviced Apartments
23 Kurparkstrasse 3954 - Leukerbad
Tél: +41 76 462 60 13

**www.hotel-grichting.com**







Loèche-les-Bains

# The role of the Joint Inspection Unit

## Born of a financial crisis in the 1960s, the Joint Inspection Unit has become a central pillar of UN oversight

ALEXANDRA **CAPELLO**, VINCENT **HERMIE** AND NUMAYR **CHOWDHURY** *

In 2026, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) commemorates its 60th anniversary. Established in 1966 by the United Nations General Assembly, the JIU is the UN system's only external, independent, system-wide oversight body. As such, it is important to understand how the JIU works behind the scenes—and how oversight, accountability and learning contribute to a more effective multilateral system.

### From institutional experiment to system-wide actor

In the early 1960s, the United Nations was confronted with a serious financial crisis, which precipitated the proposal for an independent administrative and financial oversight body. Originally created on an experimental basis under General Assembly resolution 2150 (XXI) of 4 November 1966 and later extended under Assembly resolutions 2735 A (XXV) of 17 December 1970 and 2924 B (XXVII) of 24 November 1972, the JIU became a permanent body in 1976 when the General Assembly approved its statute by resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, establishing the Unit "as a subsidiary organ of the legislative bodies of the organizations" that have accepted its Statute.



© JIU

JIU Secretariat group photo at the Joint Inspection Unit in Geneva, March 2025

### A unique system-wide perspective

The JIU is the only external, independent oversight body with a mandate to examine issues across the United Nations system as a whole, through system-wide inspections and evaluations. Its working methods have evolved with the UN system itself, and the number of inspectors has changed over time, reflecting shifts in scope and complexity, while the range of participating organizations has expanded steadily.

Unlike internal oversight functions, the JIU is external to the organizations it reviews. It does not form part of management structures, nor does it report to executive leadership. Instead, the JIU reports directly to legislative organs and governing bodies, providing Member States with independent, evidence-based analysis to support their oversight responsibilities.

### Appointment and role of inspectors – who leads the JIU?

When the JIU was created on an experimental basis during the UN financial crisis, the Ad Hoc Committee proposed a "small inspection unit." During this temporary period (1965–1968), the JIU consisted of eight inspectors. When the JIU became a permanent subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly through Resolution 31/192 (1976), its structure

© UNITED NATIONS



changed. The number of Inspectors was set to "not more than eleven," which is still the rule today. The JIU statute defines the Unit as consisting of up to 11 inspectors, appointed by the UN General Assembly for a five year term each, renewable once. A Chair and a Vice-Chair are elected amongst the Inspectors for a one-year term. Inspectors serve in their personal capacity and act independently of any national or organizational interests, and are supported by a professional Secretariat based in Geneva, composed of Evaluation and Inspection Officers, Research Assistants, and administrative and IT support staff, which provides analytical, research, coordination and administrative support. Together, this structure enables the JIU to combine strategic oversight leadership with rigorous technical analysis.

### Why participation matters

Today, the JIU provides oversight services to the 28 UN system organizations that have accepted its Statute, soon to be 29 with the International Organization for Migration joining in 2027. This participation allows the JIU to address challenges that cut across mandates, structures, and geographies. The voluntary participation of organizations in the JIU framework is a defining feature of its mandate.

### From fragmentation to system-wide learning

Many of the challenges faced by UN system organizations are not unique to a single entity. Issues such as governance arrangements, human resources management, risk management, digital transformation, results-based management and coordination are pertinent to all agencies across the UN system. JIU's value lies in its ability to examine these cross-cutting issues from a system-wide perspective. Rather than focusing on one organization at a time, the JIU identifies common patterns and points to areas where greater coherence could improve performance.

### Relationship with other oversight functions – complementarity

Most UN organizations have their own internal oversight mechanisms, such as internal audit, evaluation and investigation functions. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) provides independent oversight of UN activities under the Secretary-General's authority, with a specific mandate covering internal audit, investigation, evaluation and inspection services within that institutional scope. The JIU, by contrast, looks across organizations to identify systemic issues and shared challenges, compare practices, and promote learning at a system-wide level. This is where it plays a unique role.

Importantly, several oversight functions within UN organizations have themselves been introduced or strengthened over time following JIU recommendations.

### Program of work – how the JIU decides what to review

Each year, the JIU adopts an annual program of work through a structured and consultative process. In defining its priorities, the Unit draws on its

The United Nations General Assembly in session on 4 November 1966, during the adoption of resolution 2150 (XXI), which established the JIU

> WHILE INTERNAL OVERSIGHT LOOKS INSIDE INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS, THE JIU LOOKS ACROSS THE UN SYSTEM AS A WHOLE

**STAY CONNECTED WITH JIU60**

Today, the JIU oversees 28 (soon to be 29) participating organizations across the UN system. The JIU covers a wide range of cross-cutting governance and management issues, and has issued hundreds of reports and recommendations since its creation.

- **Follow the JIU on LinkedIn:**
Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System | LinkedIn
**linkedin.com/company/joint-inspection-unit-of-the-united-nations-system/**
- Visit the JIU 60th Anniversary homepage: **unjiu.org/content/jiu-60th-anniversary**
- Explore the JIU website: **unjiu.org**

To receive updates on JIU publications, anniversary activities and outreach initiatives, you may subscribe to JIU communications by contacting **jiucommunications@un.org**

own analysis and experience, requests from legislative and governing bodies, suggestions from executive heads, and inputs from other oversight and coordination bodies within the UN system. Once approved by the Inspectors, the program of work is transmitted to the Secretary-General for issuance as an official United Nations document and shared with participating organizations.

> “INDEPENDENCE IS CENTRAL TO THE JIU’S CREDIBILITY

### How the JIU works

For each review, the JIU combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Its work typically includes interviews with stakeholders, surveys and questionnaires, analysis of policies and data, and close engagement with focal points in participating organizations. Draft findings are shared for factual validation, ensuring accuracy and balance. Final reports are then submitted to governing bodies for consideration, accompanied by recommendations.

### Nature of recommendations – authority without enforcement

Some recommendations address strategic issues such as governance, accountability, effectiveness or efficiency, and are formally tracked over time. Others are more operational in nature, encouraging incremental enhancements or the adoption of good practices. Together, they support continuous improvement across the system.

### Why oversight matters today

Oversight is sometimes perceived as a technical or procedural function. In reality, it plays a central role in strengthening trust between Member States and UN organizations, and ultimately between the UN system and the people it serves.

At a time when multilateral institutions face increasing scrutiny, financial constraints and complex global challenges, system-wide oversight helps ensure that limited resources are used effectively, that reforms are informed by evidence, and that lessons learned in one part of the system can benefit others.

For nearly 60 years, the Joint Inspection Unit has steadfastly supported this process to provide independent analysis, promote learning, and help the United Nations system adapt and improve. As the UN system continues to evolve, credible, system-wide oversight will be critical to providing Member States with impartial assessments on its functioning and delivery. ■

* **Alexandra Capello** is Evaluation and Inspection Officer, **Vincent Hermie** is Senior Evaluation and Inspection Officer and **Numayr Chowdhury** is Evaluation and Inspection Officer at the JIU.

**Destination terroir** | Morges Nyon Vallée de Joux

PDRA ouest vaudois

# Experience the bond with local culture and nature.

Join artisans and farmers from western Canton of Vaud for an engaging day of exchange and discovery. Learn about their crafts and agricultural practices, and end the day with a tasting of regional specialties.






**PAUSE NOIX**
From local walnut to gourmet oils
**Group activity from CHF 20.-**



**PAUSE VITICOLE**
Vineyards guided hike and wine tasting
**Group activity from CHF 50.-**



**PAUSE À L'ÉTABLE**
Local farmers behind your favorite products
**Group activity from CHF 35.-**



**PAUSE LAIT OU FROMAGE**
The secrets behind traditional cheese
**Group activity from CHF 35.-**



**PAUSE À L'ALPAGE**
Local makers and alpine meadows
**Group activity from CHF 35.-**

CONTACT AND BOOKING
Nyon Région Tourisme - info@nrt.ch - +41 22 365 66 00

**destinationterroir.ch**

© JIU




# Sixty years of system-wide oversight

## Over six decades, the JIU has helped shape how UN organizations govern themselves, manage resources, and learn collectively

ALEXANDRA **CAPELLO**, VINCENT **HERMIE** AND NUMAYR **CHOWDHURY** *

Inspectors and Executive Secretary of the JIU in December 2025

At the organizational level, JIU reviews have often acted as catalysts for concrete reform. Available documentation across several organizations shows that JIU findings and recommendations are routinely examined and discussed at the highest executive level.

In some cases, JIU management and administration reviews have become reference documents for newly appointed executive heads, providing an independent baseline assessment at critical moments of leadership transition. In UNAIDS, for example, a 2019 JIU review (JIU/REP/2019/7) prompted strong engagement by the Programme Coordinating Board, which established a dedicated working group to follow up on recommendations and later agreed to create an Independent External Oversight Advisory Committee, established in 2022.

Further to the JIU reviews of ITU and FAO (JIU/REP/2016/1 and JIU/REP/2023/5), the Member States have requested management to provide regular updates even on the informal recommendations contained in the respective reports. In some instances, governing bodies have directly entrusted the JIU with sensitive reviews—an indication of the confidence placed in its independence and analytical rigor.

Following governance concerns arising from the UNOPS management crisis, the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UNICEF formally requested the JIU to undertake a system-wide review of the governance and oversight functions of their respective boards. The resulting report, Review of governance and oversight of the *Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and*

*UN-Women* (JIU/REP/2023/7), now serves as a reference point for more harmonized approaches to governance and reinforced the value of collective reflection among governing bodies.

Similarly, the governing body of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) requested that the JIU conduct a review of its governance framework, further demonstrating the role of the JIU as a trusted external mechanism for independent institutional assessment and for providing insights into best practices across the UN system.

### System-wide practice: influencing policies and frameworks

Many JIU reports have helped shape system-wide approaches by consolidating evidence and proposing benchmarks. JIU benchmarks on enterprise risk management (ERM) (JIU/REP/2020/5), for instance, have been widely referenced by internal audit offices and governing bodies across the system, influencing how organizations design and assess their risk frameworks.

JIU reviews have also fed directly into broader UN initiatives. A system-wide review on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the UN system (JIU/REP/2018/6) helped elevate the issue within governance and management discussions across the UN system and supported more sustained institutional attention to disability inclusion.

The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at the main part of its seventy-fifth session.

Work on multilingualism (JIU/REP/2020/6) has likewise been used to inform the UN Secretary-General's multilingualism framework for 2025, demonstrating how JIU analysis can support policy coherence beyond individual organizations.

A system-wide review of measures and mechanisms for addressing racism and racial discrimination in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2022/1) also helped advance institutional reflection on equality and dignity in the workplace.

Similarly, a JIU review on mental health and well-being (JIU/REP/2023/4) informed deliberations within the High-Level Committee on Management and was reflected in the second iteration of the UN system's mental health strategy.

### Learning impact: setting standards and opening space

Beyond specific reforms, the JIU's system-wide reviews often serve as authoritative reference points for organizations, oversight bodies, and researchers.

Reviews on oversight lacunae in the UN system (JIU/REP/2006/2), change management (JIU/REP/2019/4), ethics (JIU/REP/2012/5), whistle-blower protection (JIU/REP/2018/4), investigation function (JIU/REP/2020/1), internal pre-tribunal-stage appeal mechanisms (JIU/REP/2023/2), accountability frameworks (JIU/REP/2023/3), sexual exploitation and abuse (JIU/REP/2025/2), and Ombudsman and Mediation functions (JIU/REP/2025/5) have addressed sensitive topics and developed benchmarks for the UN system that few other bodies are positioned to examine without institutional pressure.

> “ JIU REVIEWS HAVE OFTEN ACTED AS CATALYSTS FOR CONCRETE REFORM

In human resources management, JIU reports have influenced debates on non-staff contractual modalities and rights, contributing to clearer definitions and more coherent workforce planning (JIU/REP/2023/8). Earlier work on inter-agency mobility (JIU/REP/2019/8) and flexible working arrangements (JIU/REP/2023/6) have also shaped discussions on reform pace and sequencing.

### Looking ahead: oversight in the JIU's 60th Year

In its 60th anniversary year, the Joint Inspection Unit will continue to address some of the most pressing governance and management challenges facing the United Nations system. The 2026 Programme of Work includes the following system-wide reviews:

© JIU AND RESPECTIVE PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS, 2026




Logos of the participating organizations of the United Nations system under the JIU's oversight mandate, with IOM scheduled to join as the 29th one in January 2027

• Adapting to financing challenges: a retrospective review of how UN system organizations have responded to evolving funding constraints and financing models.

• The Three Lines Model: an assessment of how organizations have implemented the "three lines" governance model approved by the CEB in 2014, and its impact on the risk management and oversight activities of the organizations.

• Shared services: a system-wide review of shared service arrangements and their contribution to efficiency, effectiveness and value for money.

• Earmarked funding: an assessment of the role and impact of earmarked contributions on mandate implementation and organizational autonomy.

• Digital transformation: a review of governance, management and oversight of digital transformation initiatives across UN system organizations.

• Acceptance, implementation and outcomes of JIU recommendations: a quinquennial review to assess if and how JIU recommendations have translated into concrete results over time.

Together, these projects reflect the JIU's continued focus on financial sustainability, accountability, coordination and innovation, and its commitment to ensuring that system-wide oversight remains impactful in a rapidly changing multilateral environment, especially in the context of the UN80 initiative.

In the first half of 2026, the JIU will also make the latest information on the acceptance and implementation of JIU recommendations by report and by organization, publicly available on the website, as self-reported by the focal points of each organization. This has been made possible by a new system introduced in 2025 which, whilst maintaining a similar infrastructure as the previous one, has the necessary functionalities to support better data analytics, including live dashboards and a full download in excel of all the information.

As the UN system faces growing demands, financial constraints and complex global risks, the JIU's experience shows that independent, system-wide oversight remains essential as a source of evidence, learning, and informed governance. Sixty years on, the JIU continues to evolve, helping the UN system improve how it works, today and into the future. ■

* **Alexandra Capello** is Evaluation and Inspection Officer, **Vincent Hermie** is Senior Evaluation and Inspection Officer and **Numayr Chowdhury** is Evaluation and Inspection Officer at the JIU.

ÉVIAN • LAC LÉMAN

*(parenthèse enchantée)*

HÔTEL ROYAL

ÉVIAN RESORT

PALACE

THE LEADING HOTELS OF THE WORLD



# Journée internationale de la conscience 2026

## Une invitation urgente à repenser nos valeurs vécues et nos structures pour bâtir les fondations d'un avenir de paix pour les jeunes du monde entier

JEAN **FABRE** *

Rarement une journée internationale nous aura autant interpellé(e)s que le 5 avril 2026. Non seulement c'est le jour choisi par l'Assemblée Générale de l'ONU pour mettre la conscience au cœur de nos réflexions et actions, mais la résolution de 2019 qui l'instaure (A/RES/73/329) invite la totalité de la famille humaine et de ses institutions, entreprises et associations à promouvoir « une culture de la paix ancrée dans l'amour et la conscience ».

La conscience est la voix de l'humanité

© FREEPIK



**Avons-nous seulement réfléchi sur l'exemple que nous donnons actuellement aux jeunes ?**

Comment pouvons-nous imaginer léguer aux 2 milliards d'enfants de moins de 14 ans qui sont sous notre tutelle, une « culture de la paix » alors que nous façonnons leurs esprits et leur système émotionnel avec une déferlante de mauvaises nouvelles et de scènes de violences de toutes sortes sur les écrans qu'ils voient, là où ils ont la chance de ne pas les subir ?

Ce que l'on fait parle toujours plus fort que ce que l'on dit. Nous aurons beau mettre en avant la Charte des Nations unies, la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme, l'Agenda 2030 ou le Pacte pour l'avenir adopté le 22 septembre 2024 par les dirigeants du monde entier : quelles valeurs transmet-on aux jeunes s'ils voient que les adultes augmentent les dépenses d'armement, réduisent la coopération internationale, font la guerre, menacent d'annexer tel ou tel territoire par la force, profitent des pénuries de toutes sortes pour faire grimper les prix, ne font ni tout ce qu'ils doivent ni ce qu'ils peuvent pour arrêter les bouleversements climatiques, ne font disparaître nulle part les discriminations et les violences faites aux femmes, ne bannissent pas la pornographie de la toile ou la TV, sont impuissants à mettre fin aux trafics de drogue, s'adonnent à la spéculation, etc. ?

Combien de jeunes enfants et d'adolescents se désensibilisent en raison des nouvelles dont on les abreuve quand

## RÉINVENTONS LA PAIX AVEC LA JEUNESS

À Genève, le 5 Avril coincide avec le Dimanche de Pâques, la Fondation Love Force et l'Alliance Internationale pour les Objectifs de Développement Durable (AIODD) ont décidé d'organiser au Palais des Nations le Jeudi 2 Avril de 10h à 18h une rencontre internationale sur le thème « Réinventons la Paix avec la Jeunesse » avec la participation de 250 jeunes d'institutions d'enseignement suisses et françaises telles que L'École Internationale à Genève, Sciences Po Grenoble, le Lycée de l'Albanais, le Polytech Annecy-Chambéry, le lycée des Portes de Chartreuse, ou le Collège des Bauges qui ont réfléchi à cette question pendant plusieurs mois. Une journée de réflexions et de débats ouverte au public ponctuée par les voix d'enfants vivant dans des zones de conflit armé (dont les chants des *Gaza Singing Birds*), de mères palestiniennes, israéliennes et afghanes, ainsi que d'anciens enfants soldats, notamment du Soudan.

Parmi les autres temps forts de la journée il y a l'intervention de la Directrice Générale de ICAN, prix Nobel de la Paix en 2017, Melissa Parke, celle de la Vice-Présidente de la Ville de Genève, Mme Kitsos, celle du Professeur Didier Grandjean, Directeur du Centre Interfacultaire en Sciences Affectives de l'Université de Genève, celle du producteur musical M. Jonathan Belolo (YMCA), ainsi que du cofondateur de Pax Economica et de la Chaire UNESCO d'économie de la paix, le Professeur Dominique Steiler, et de la Directrice Générale de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève, Mme Tatiana Valovaya.




ils ne sont pas traumatisés ?
De plus, beaucoup de jeux vidéo auxquels s'adonnent les jeunes sont bourrés de tueries, d'explosions et de destructions, réalise-t-on que cela façonne le cerveau, les centres neurologiques émotionnels, et pour beaucoup cela conduit à une désensibilisation à la violence, une perte d'empathie, voire une croissance de l'agressivité ?

Qui aurait cru qu'à l'ère de l'interdépendance entre tous les êtres humains dans laquelle nous sommes entrés depuis quelques décennies, la plupart des gouvernants encourageraient leurs administrés à « être compétitifs » au lieu de « faire équipe » pour le bien commun et « prendre soin les uns des autres » y compris au-delà des frontières ?

Cela interpelle tous celles et ceux qui ont choisi de servir l'idéal de respect et de paix de l'ONU. Il nous faut mettre notre expérience au service de celles et ceux qui, contre vents et marées, cherchent les voies et moyens de parvenir à cette « culture » de la paix que nous devons, si nous les aimons, aux 2 milliards d'enfants de moins de 14 ans dont nos actes d'aujourd'hui conditionnent l'avenir !

L'important est, au-delà du 5 avril, de ne jamais cesser d'interroger nos consciences, et de comprendre à la fois au niveau individuel et collectif ce que nous devons faire de différent dans tous les domaines, y compris économique, pour cocréer les bases d'un vivre ensemble dans le respect mutuel et la solidarité, loin de toute compétition et des logiques de bloc contre bloc. Il nous faut concevoir des initiatives susceptibles de sortir les individus de la peur qui aveugle et qui aideront les nombreux Etats non engagés dans la confrontation à rétablir les fondements du multilatéralisme. ■

* **Jean Fabre** est ancien directeur adjoint du PNUD à Genève.

En ce 5 avril, cultivons la paix et la compassion

« PROMOUVOIR « UNE CULTURE DE LA PAIX ANCRÉE DANS L'AMOUR ET LA CONSCIENCE »

# Designing new systems to recognize new ways of thinking

## World Autism Awareness Day on 2 April reminds us when awareness isn't enough: inclusion matters

PATRICIA **NEMETH** *

Every day, in classrooms, workplaces and public spaces around the world, autistic children and adults navigate systems that were not designed with them in mind. This year's theme, "Celebrate Differences," invites an important question: how do we translate that celebration into structural inclusion?

© PIXABAY



Different ways of thinking are not gaps to be filled, but strengths to be recognized

### When awareness isn't enough: inclusion matters

In 2007, the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/139, designating 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day and inviting Member States, United Nations entities and civil society to help raise public awareness of autism. Grounded in the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the resolution underscores dignity, participation and the equal enjoyment of human rights. Nearly two decades later, awareness has grown significantly. The global conversation has evolved from visibility to acceptance, and increasingly toward inclusion. The task now is to translate that shift into practice.

Across the United Nations family, autism is now widely understood within the broader framework of neurodiversity and sustainable development. This perspective highlights the value of diverse cognitive styles in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. Quality education (SDG 4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10) and sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) all depend on policies that support full participation. Recognizing the contributions of autistic individuals is not only a matter of rights, but also of effectiveness. Workplaces and organizations that welcome diverse ways of thinking are better positioned to foster innovation, resilience, and social cohesion.

Behind policy frameworks are individuals and families navigating schools, jobs and daily life. For many, the primary obstacles are no longer about being seen, but about being able to participate - recruitment processes that inadvertently exclude, workplace cultures that prize a single 'ideal' communication style, or environments that overlook sensory differences. When these barriers are addressed through thoughtful design, participation expands and belonging becomes tangible rather than symbolic.

Structural inclusion goes beyond awareness campaigns or symbolic recognition; it requires embedding the expectation of cognitive diversity into systems designed from the outset. In practice, this involves recruitment processes that focus on skills rather than narrow social cues, flexible work arrangements, accessible communication formats and education systems attentive




© PIXABAY

Awareness is a beginning, inclusion is the goal

> AWARENESS RAISES VISIBILITY; INCLUSION TRANSFORMS SYSTEMS

to sensory and learning differences. It also means ensuring that autistic individuals are present and heard in the forums where priorities are set and decisions are taken.

These choices are anchored in the CRPD, which affirms the right to full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. For autistic persons, this principle translates into roles not only as ecipients of programs, but as co-creators of policies and services.

Putting this commitment into practice means rethinking how talent is recruited, retained and supported, with human resources policies serving as a critical entry point. Inclusive recruitment, accessible communication, flexible work arrangements and environments that consider sensory needs all widen participation. Training for managers, clear accommodation procedures, and mentoring structures further support staff. These measures are not extraordinary; they reflect sound, responsible leadership. By aligning human resources practices with inclusive principles, organizations enhance both fairness and performance.

Around the world, examples from the arts, sports and public life demonstrate what becomes possible when barriers are removed. Whether it is artists with developmental disabilities exhibiting their work on major cultural stages, or athletes with intellectual disabilities reshaping expectations in competitive sport, these stories show that talent is not scarce - opportunity is. Expanding access uncovers potential that was always present but too often constrained by expectation, design and habit.

> TALENT IS NOT SCARCE — OPPORTUNITY IS

Moving beyond awareness does not diminish its importance; it reflects institutional maturity and moves the conversation from recognition to action. Inclusion changes how systems are designed and how decisions are made. As the United Nations and its Member States advance the Sustainable Development Goals, inclusion must be understood as fundamental to sustainable progress. When workplaces and public systems enable autistic individuals and others within the neurodivergent community to participate fully, they become stronger, more innovative and more resilient. This shift matters not only because it upholds human rights, but because it shapes environments that respond to the full diversity of human experience. Awareness raises visibility; inclusion transforms systems. ■

**Patricia Nemeth** is UNFCCC Human Resources Officer.



© TOM FISK

How can we change our approach to manage climate risks more efficiently?

# Why faster is not always better in climate adaptation

## The gap between policy speed and governance capacity is emerging as an unacknowledged source of fragility when it comes to escalation of climate risks

SADAF **MEHRABI** *

> GOVERNANCE CAPACITY IS A CORE COMPONENT OF ADAPTATION, NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT

Climate adaptation is accelerating worldwide, but the institutions tasked with delivering it are not. Urgency has become the dominant frame in climate policy. Heatwaves, droughts, floods, and wildfires are no longer future risks but present realities. In response, adaptation strategies, funding cycles, and implementation timelines are being fast-tracked. Acting quickly is equated with responsibility, while delay is framed as failure. Speed, however, is not neutral. When adaptation outpaces the capacity of institutions to plan, coordinate, and sustain action, it can undermine the very resilience it aims to build.

Climate adaptation has largely been treated as a technical challenge: identify risks, deploy solutions, scale interventions. But institutions are not infinitely elastic. Staffing levels, regulatory oversight, and inter-agency coordination were not designed for constant emergency mode. This strain is rarely visible in policy documents, which tend to emphasize delivery metrics rather than assessing whether institutions can effectively govern these systems over time. Adaptation that cannot be sustained is not resilient but brittle.

Water systems make this failure mode visible earlier than most sectors. They sit at the intersection of climate risk, public health, and essential service provision. When adaptation falters in water due to unreliable supply, infrastructure

breakdowns, or inconsistent service, the consequences are immediate and politically significant. There is little buffer between governance failure and lived experience.

As climate pressures intensify, water agencies are increasingly asked to diversify supplies, harden infrastructure, manage demand, and plan for unprecedented variability. These demands often arrive without commensurate investment in institutional capacity. Staffing remains thin, planning horizons shrink, and engagement processes are compressed or bypassed. This results in adaptation measures that lack the governance depth required to endure, leading to fragility. This is not a problem of intent or expertise. It is a mismatch between the tempo of policy ambition and the pace at which institutions can absorb change.

Such adaptation measures may meet short-term targets but struggle to adapt as conditions evolve. Monitoring and learning are sidelined. Course correction becomes politically difficult once systems are in place. When challenges inevitably emerge, institutions lack the bandwidth to respond, and confidence erodes.

Such challenges arise in all sorts of regions. They appear wherever adaptation timelines are driven by crisis rather than capacity: in large cities racing to climate-proof infrastructure, coastal regions confronting sea-level rise, and rural or peripheral areas where institutional resources are stretched. Water systems reveal the problem first because failure there is impossible to ignore.

The risk is that climate adaptation becomes a cycle of rapid deployment followed by quiet underperformance. Systems are built but not fully integrated. Policies are announced but not institutionalized. Over time, the gap between ambition and delivery widens, not because goals are wrong, but because institutions are pushed beyond their limits.

Addressing this does not mean slowing action. Climate risks demand urgency. But urgency must be redefined. Acting quickly without institutional capacity is not decisiveness but a displacement of risk. The costs are deferred rather than eliminated, often borne by the same communities that adaptation is meant to protect.

What is needed is a shift in how adaptation success is understood and rewarded. Current frameworks emphasize speed and scale but rarely account for institutional and governance complexity. Funding mechanisms prioritize capital delivery while underestimating the operational demands that follow. Metrics capture outputs, not durability.

A more resilient approach would treat governance capacity as a core component of adaptation, not an afterthought. This means aligning timelines with institutional realities, investing in staffing and coordination alongside infrastructure, and recognizing that adaptation is an ongoing process of management under uncertainty.

Water offers a clear lesson for climate policy. Where institutions are supported to learn and adapt over time, systems are more likely to hold under stress. Where speed overrides capacity, adaptation risks becoming performative, visible in announcements, fragile in practice. The next phase of climate adaptation will be defined not only by how fast solutions are deployed, but by whether institutions can keep up with the demands placed upon them. Resilience cannot be rushed into existence. It must be governed into being.

If climate adaptation is to succeed over the long term, urgency must be paired with restraint, not in ambition, but in expectations of what institutions can absorb at speed. Otherwise, today's accelerated solutions risk becoming tomorrow's failures, built quickly but unable to endure. ■

> “ADAPTATION THAT CANNOT BE SUSTAINED IS NOT RESILIENT BUT BRITTLE

* **Sadaf Mehrabi** is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering at Iowa State University.

# AI + AI = AI

## The rapid pace of AI demands education systems that can adapt, innovate, and ensure equitable access so that no one is left behind in achieving SDGs

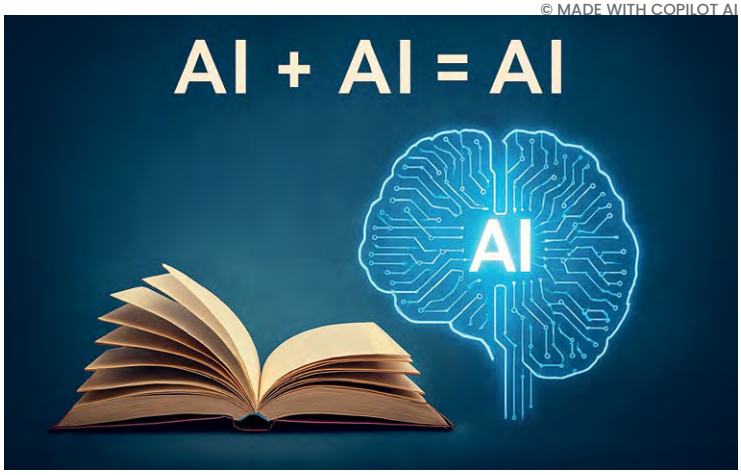
VISHAL **SHARMA** *

In today's fast-changing, AI-driven world, academic institutions are no longer simply places for teaching and learning. They are evolving into powerful engines of innovation. The expression "AI + AI = AI" captures this transformation. It suggests that Artificial Intelligence (AI) embedded within Academic Institutions (AI) creates A new era of Innovation (AI). In this era, traditional learning models are enhanced by advanced AI tools, reshaping education, research, and knowledge creation. This synergy is also central to achieving the goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda.

At first glance, the title AI + AI = AI may seem intriguing or even puzzling. However, it reflects the profound impact of integrating artificial intelligence into academia. This shift is not just a technological upgrade. It represents a fundamental rethinking of how education, research, and institutional systems function in a rapidly evolving world.

Harnessing AI to educate, empower, and accelerate progress

© MADE WITH COPILOT AI




### Why AI, and not just digital technology?

Artificial intelligence stands apart from conventional information and communication technologies (ICTs). While traditional digital tools primarily process data and automate routine tasks, AI is designed to replicate and extend human intelligence.

AI systems can perform complex functions such as understanding natural language, recognizing patterns, solving advanced problems, enabling autonomous vehicles, and making predictive decisions in previously unexplored areas. These capabilities are transforming everyday life and reshaping entire industries.

In education, AI is not simply an add-on. It acts as a catalyst for innovation. It is changing how knowledge is created, processed, and shared, enabling more dynamic, responsive, and impactful learning environments.

### Integrating AI into academic institutions

As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly dominant, its integration into academic institutions is no longer optional. It is essential. AI's ability to process vast amounts of data quickly allows educators and researchers to generate insights, improve teaching and learning, and focus on solving meaningful societal challenges.

To guide this transformation, UNESCO introduced two major AI competency frameworks during Digital Learning Week from 2 to 5 September 2024. One framework is designed for students and the other for teachers. These frameworks aim to promote the safe, ethical, and responsible use of AI in education.

The AI Competency Framework for Students prepares learners to become responsible and creative participants in the AI era. It is structured around twelve competencies that span four key areas, including a human-centered mindset, AI ethics, AI techniques and applications, and AI system design. These competencies develop progressively across three levels, which are Understand, Apply, and Create. This structure encourages learners to think critically and evaluate the broader social, economic, and environmental impacts of AI.

Complementing this, the AI Competency Framework for Teachers defines the knowledge, skills, and values educators need to integrate AI effectively and ethically. It emphasizes maintaining a human-centered approach while ensuring that meaningful human interaction remains central to learning. The framework outlines fifteen competencies across five areas, including a human-centered mindset, AI ethics, AI foundations and applications, AI pedagogy, and AI for professional development. These are organized into three progressive stages, which are Acquire, Deepen, and Create. This approach supports continuous professional development and helps educators navigate the evolving relationship between students, teachers, and AI.

### A new era of innovation

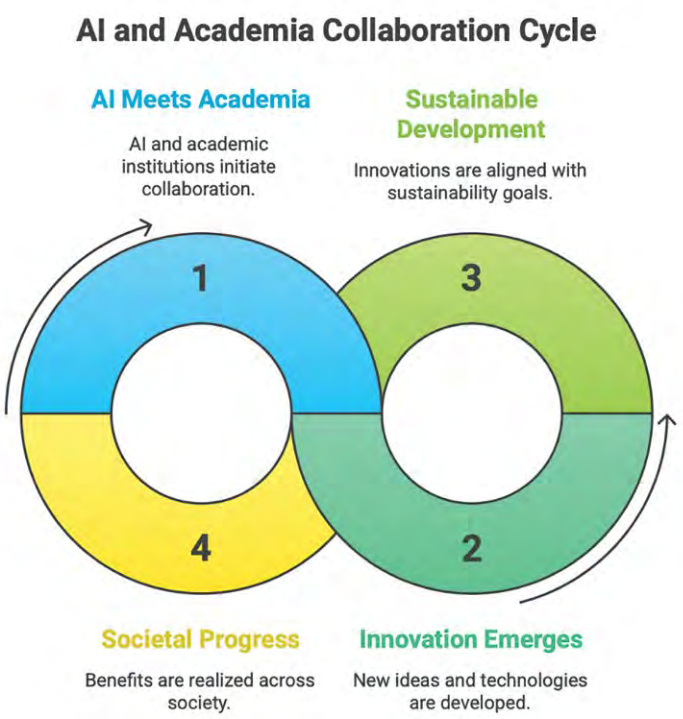
The integration of AI into academia is creating a new educational paradigm. Institutions are shifting from being passive repositories of knowledge to becoming dynamic hubs of innovation, discovery, and problem-solving.

AI enables personalized learning experiences, accelerates research, and improves institutional efficiency. At the same time, it challenges traditional ideas about the purpose of education and aligns it more closely with the demands of the 21st century.

To successfully embed AI in academia, several key elements must be addressed. Curricula need to be redesigned to incorporate AI literacy and ethics across disciplines so that all students develop a foundational understanding of AI. Institutions should establish interdisciplinary research and innovation centers that apply AI to areas such as healthcare, climate change, agriculture, and energy. Strong governance frameworks are also necessary to ensure ethical use, data protection, and accountability. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are required to assess learning outcomes, inclusion, and environmental impact. In addition, meaningful partnerships with governments, industry, and communities are essential to support innovation and ensure that AI applications address real-world challenges.

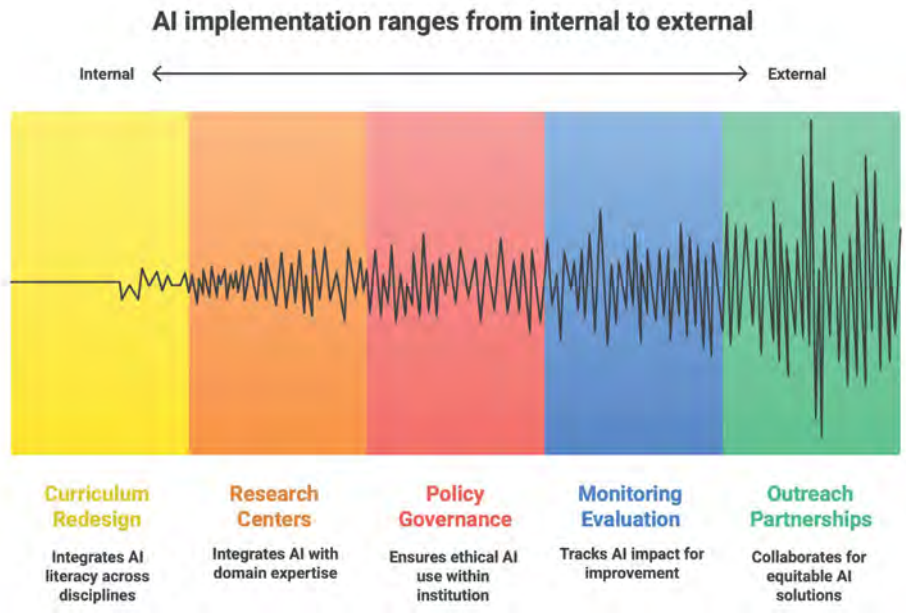
When implemented responsibly, AI can promote creativity, equity, and sustainability. It positions academic institutions as key drivers of social progress and contributors to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Despite its potential, integrating AI into education presents significant challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the digital divide. UNESCO warns that rapid AI adoption could concentrate benefits among well-resourced institutions while leaving others behind.




AI and academia collaboration cycle

> UNESCO FINDS 1/4 OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS LACK POWER, 1/2 OF SECONDARY LACK INTERNET




An AI implementation scale

Globally, many schools still lack basic infrastructure. For example, one in four primary schools has no access to electricity, and only about half of lower secondary schools have internet connectivity. In such contexts, AI adoption risks widening existing inequalities rather than reducing them.

There is also the risk of misallocated resources. Investments in advanced AI technologies may divert attention and funding away from essential needs such as infrastructure, teacher training, and basic learning materials, particularly in under-resourced regions.

Another major barrier is the lack of clear policy guidance. Only a limited number of countries have incorporated AI into national curricula or developed structured training programs for educators. As a result, many teachers lack the support needed to use AI effectively in the classroom.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for inclusive policies, capacity building, and international cooperation to ensure that AI narrows rather than widens global education gaps.

AI in academia is fostering a new generation of thinkers and problem-solvers who are equipped to use technology for the benefit of society.

As we move further into this new era, the integration of AI and academic institutions will redefine education and research in ways that are only beginning to emerge. It pushes the boundaries of traditional learning and transforms how institutions prepare students for future challenges.

In this context, AI is no longer just a tool. It is a central force shaping the future of global progress. ■

Education evolves with artificial intelligence

© SHUTTERSTOCK




**Vishal Sharma** is a Fulbright and Commonwealth Fellow, Head of Electronics & IT, GCW Udhampur, India.


ONE OF EUROPE'S MOST FASCINATING CASTLE LOCATED IN AN EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL SETTING, ON THE SHORES OF LAKE GENEVA RIGHT AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAINS.
CHILLON CASTLE
Veytaux – Montreux, Switzerland
OPEN ALL YEAR ROUND
© Photo: Régis Colombo / www.diapo.ch
CHILLON
SWISS CULTURAL HERITAGE
Chillon Castle
Avenue de Chillon 21
CH – 1820 Veytaux, Switzerland
Information: chillon.ch
info@chillon.ch
+41 21 966 89 10
chillon.ch
#chateauchillon
#chillon

© FREEPIK



Transforming imagination into economic growth, innovation, and lasting impact

# Creative industries: growth from the cultural frontier

## A new wave of creativity leading to inclusive growth, linking culture, innovation and economic resilience across regions and communities

BENJAMIN **LAKER** *

Creative industries are often discussed as cultural assets. Increasingly, they are proving to be something more strategic: engines of inclusive growth, youth employment and international cooperation. Across Europe and Central Asia, creative sectors are helping economies diversify while strengthening cultural identity and social cohesion.

### Creative industries as economic infrastructure

Creative industries generate jobs, stimulate tourism, support small businesses and contribute to urban regeneration. They are also one of the fastest-growing employment sectors for young people and women. When embedded into national development strategies, they act as economic infrastructure rather than discretionary spending.

This perspective was reinforced during a recent policy dialogue in Florence, which brought together policymakers, academics, artists and practitioners from across the UNECE region. Discussions highlighted how creative sectors adapted to recent global shocks by forming cross-sector partnerships, experimenting with new business models and relying on strong local ecosystems.

A key message emerged clearly: creativity flourishes when systems are designed to

# Obtenez enfin le compte bancaire suisse qui accepte votre profil — *sans refus, sans perte de temps.*

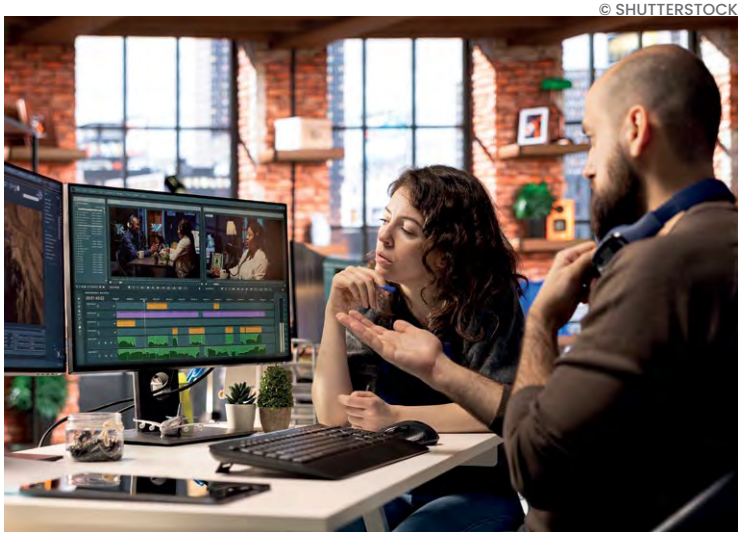


- Vous redoutez de perdre des mois dans des dossiers interminables ?
- Vous craignez de faire un faux pas qui déclenche des alertes réglementaires ?
- Vous avez déjà essuyé un refus injustifié ?

**Que vous envisagiez une première ouverture ou que vous ayez déjà été rejeté,** nous vous aidons à obtenir le compte suisse taillé pour vos besoins.

Demandez dès aujourd'hui votre consultation **confidentielle**

**Tél : +41 22 552 1315**
**www.myswissaccount.ch**


© SHUTTERSTOCK

Growth of creative industries presents endless career opportunities

support it, not when individual creators are expected to absorb constant risk alone.

### From research to policy to livelihoods

Evidence from Central Asia, emanating from work undertaken at the Centre for Euro-Asian Studies at Henley Business School, University of Reading, demonstrates how policy engagement can translate into practical outcomes. Capacity-building programs have supported creative entrepreneurs to develop digital skills, access new markets and build sustainable income streams. Artists and creative professionals are not only cultural contributors; they are small business owners navigating global platforms and local constraints.

> CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FUNCTION AS ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE, NOT CULTURAL LUXURY

These initiatives demonstrate how creative industries can move beyond cultural promotion to deliver economic transformation. They also illustrate the role of creative sectors in economic diplomacy, where cross-border collaboration fosters innovation while strengthening cultural ties between countries.

### Technology is reshaping creative opportunity

Digital platforms, artificial intelligence and immersive technologies are transforming how creative work is produced, shared and monetized. These tools offer unprecedented reach, but they also introduce new inequalities. Larger organizations are better positioned to invest in skills, data and promotion, while small creators struggle to compete for visibility.

Without inclusive digital ecosystems, technological change risks reinforcing market concentration rather than supporting innovation. Policy choices matter. Investment in digital infrastructure, skills training and fair regulatory frameworks can ensure that technology expands opportunity rather than narrowing it.

### Why grassroots ecosystems matter

The long-term health of creative industries depends on local foundations. Small venues, community studios, festivals and creative hubs serve as entry points for new talent and entrepreneurial experimentation. When these spaces disappear, pathways into creative careers narrow.

Supporting grassroots infrastructure strengthens local economies and preserves cultural diversity. It also creates environments where young entrepreneurs can develop skills, test ideas and build sustainable businesses.

### Looking ahead

Creative industries offer a model of growth that integrates culture, technology and entrepreneurship. As economies search for resilient and inclusive development paths, these sectors provide opportunities that rely more on human creativity than natural resources.

The challenge for policymakers is to move from celebrating creativity to enabling it. When creative ecosystems are supported through coordinated policy, inclusive digital strategies and cross-border cooperation, they generate not only culture, but jobs, innovation and sustainable growth. ■

* **Benjamin Laker** is Professor of Leadership at Henley Business School, University of Reading.

HP Media.

Votre régie publicitaire
depuis 1986




Contactez-nous pour votre
campagne publicitaire

Av. de Chamonix 7, 1207 Genève
**+41 22 786 70 00**
**info@hpmedia.ch | www.hpmedia.ch**

© KWADIMOFF




# Visions du Réel 2026: exhibition of documentary cinema

## Since 1969, Visions du Réel has been presenting audacious and singular works, imbued with past, present or future realities

MÉLANIE **COURVOISIER** *

Scenes of the Visions du Réel 2025 Opening Ceremony

Since its creation in 1969, Visions du Réel has established itself as one of the world's most renowned festivals in its field. The Federal Office of Culture considers it one of Switzerland's leading film festivals, alongside the Locarno Film Festival. Every spring, Visions du Réel turns Nyon into an international capital of documentary cinema. The festival aims to highlight emerging filmmakers while showcasing leading figures in cinema. It presents bold, previously unseen films, with around 160 productions, many of them world premieres. In addition to being a key forum for cinema, Visions du Réel has developed VdR-Industry, the only market of its kind in Switzerland and one of the leading platforms internationally for documentary production. This program selects and supports projects in development and serves as an important networking hub. VdR-Industry also takes part in major film

events such as the Cannes Marché du Film and the Berlinale.

Its most recent edition featured 154 films from a record 57 countries. Among the 129 new films presented, 88 were world premieres and a further 12 were international premieres. Fifty-eight debut films, including 28 first features, completed the selection, along with 31 Swiss co-productions, compared with 25 in 2024. Visions du Réel has thus confirmed its position as the second most important festival in Switzerland for launching new films and as a key international event for non-fiction cinema.

### Renowned guests at the 57th edition (17 to 26 April 2026)

For its next edition this month, Visions du Réel will welcome a number of distinguished guests and major figures from contemporary cinema, including Kelly Reichardt, Laura Poitras and Sergei Loznitsa. As guest of honor, Kelly Reichardt will take part in the festival with a masterclass, a retrospective of her work and a carte blanche. Her latest feature film, *The Mastermind*, will also be screened ahead of its limited theatrical release. A key figure in contemporary independent cinema, she will discuss her bold, meticulous and radical body of work, which often revisits major American myths and is marked by a refined, observational aesthetic and a rejection of spectacle through minimalist storytelling rooted in gesture, place and the passage of time. Emilie Bujès, Artistic Director of Visions du Réel, said: "It is a tremendous privilege to welcome one of the great voices of contemporary cinema. Film after film, Kelly Reichardt creates fragments of history and lives through remarkably refined and elegant narratives which, by rejecting spectacle and paying sensitive attention to detail, reveal a fascinating relationship with reality."

Visions du Réel is also honored to announce that American filmmaker and journalist Laura Poitras will be the special guest at the opening of the 24th edition of VdR-Industry, the festival's program dedicated to industry professionals. She is notably the author of a post-9/11 trilogy, concluded with the Academy Award-winning film CITIZENFOUR, a real-life international thriller about whistleblower Edward Snowden and global surveillance. Spanning more than two decades, her work reflects a strong political commitment and offers a critical analysis of US systems of power, as well as the abuses of the so-called war on terror. Her films document social upheaval as it unfolds. On Sunday 19

> "VISIONS DU RÉEL CHAMPIONS BOLD DOCUMENTARY VOICES SHAPING HOW WE SEE THE WORLD

The festival brings together like-minded enthusiasts of cinema

© NIKITA THÉVOZ



© KWADIMOFF




Bringing film to the next generation of filmmakers

April, the Oscar- and Venice Film Festival-winning filmmaker will take part in a public conversation in collaboration with SRG SSR, while her most recent film, *Cover-Up*, will also be screened as part of the official selection. This event will mark the official launch of the VdR-Industry days.

> THE PERCEPTION CHANGE AWARD HONORS FILMS THAT SHIFT PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL ISSUES

Sergei Loznitsa will also be a special guest at the festival, presenting a masterclass and a curated retrospective of his documentary work. With a filmography of remarkable range, spanning short and feature-length films and moving between fiction and documentary, he is a major figure in contemporary non-fiction cinema. His films have been selected at major festivals and widely acclaimed by critics and audiences alike. Drawing on the tradition of the Soviet avant-garde, he explores post-Soviet territories and memory through their upheavals and cycles of violence. Built around a rigorous formal structure and often incorporating archival material, his work observes the course of history, frequently marked by authoritarian excess, while examining the processes of memory that shape our understanding of past tragedies.

Three of his films take the pulse of Ukraine's political situation and the places where history is unfolding. With Maidan (2014), made in just four months and presented in a special screening at the Cannes Film Festival, he chronicles the demonstrations that sparked the Ukrainian Revolution in a structural portrait with no central hero other than a political community in the process of forming. In Donbass (2018), based on amateur videos found on YouTube, he depicts the takeover of the Donbass region by Russian-speaking militias in conflict with the Ukrainian army. Composed of 13 sequences arranged like tableaux, the film portrays the daily lives of residents caught between loyalty and separatism. Finally, in The Invasion (2024), he continues his chronicle of Ukraine with a film about the country's resistance to the Russian invasion. Filmed over two years, it depicts the lives of civilians across Ukraine and captures their resilience in the face of war.

### Perception Change Award: an award presented by the UN

Each year, Visions du Réel awards the Perception Change Award to a film that sheds light on issues shaping the world of tomorrow. The prize is presented with the support of the Diplomatic Club of Geneva, and the winner is announced at the festival's closing ceremony. ■

*This article was written in collaboration with the Diplomatic Club of Geneva.*

**Mélanie Courvoisier** is the Director of Administration and Operations at Visions du Réel.

# New Kia Sportage

Réservez un essai sur route auprès
de votre partenaire Kia.




Movement that inspires

En savoir plus.

7 ANS DE GARANTIE

**Emil Frey Genève les Vernets**

Rue François-Dussaud 13 | 1227 Genève Les Vernets
+41 22 308 55 08 | vernets@emilfrey.ch
www.emilfrey.ch/vernets

**Emil Frey** Genève Les Vernets
emilfrey.ch/vernets



# Chronicles of Everyday Diplomacy

ANTOINE **TARDY** *

Spring returns, and with it Geneva's annual surge of conferences and receptions.

Between formal agendas and informal exchanges, the work of diplomacy continues — yet what tone will this year's dialogue strike in a world of deepening divides? ■

**PHOTO**
ANTOINE TARDY



✱ **Antoine Tardy** is a freelance photographer based in Geneva. **Web:** antoinetardy.com **Instagram:** @antoinetardyphoto

# Leaving no one behind in Indonesia

## Gita Sabharwal, the UN's Resident Coordinator in Indonesia, on protecting communities from sexual exploitation and abuse

CLARE **FRANCIS** *

No matter who you are or where you serve, we all have a role to play in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse. We spoke with Resident Coordinator Gita Sabharwal, the UN's highest-ranking official in Indonesia, about what it means to "leave no one behind" by protecting communities from harm.

**What does a typical day in your role look like?**

There is no such thing as a typical day. Most mornings begin with bilateral meetings, often with government counterparts, where we discuss priorities and identify how the United Nations can best support national aspirations. These exchanges set the tone for the day, grounding our work in partnership, trust, and shared purpose.

I then turn to my team to scan emerging trends, interpret new data, and reflect on policies shaping Indonesia's development trajectory. These internal dialogues help us sharpen ideas, refine strategies, and translate our collective vision into actionable plans.

My days are also enriched by meaningful discussions with leaders from the private sector, fintech, academia, youth networks, and civil society. I am consistently inspired by how many influential figures across society are deeply committed to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

So, while no two days are the same, they are all anchored in a single purpose: ensuring that the UN's presence in Indonesia advances dignity, strengthens protection, and leaves no one behind.

**What are the major challenges to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse and how do you overcome them?**

Indonesia's diversity is extraordinary, yet, like many countries, it continues to grapple with gender-based violence. A recent national survey found that one in four Indonesian women aged




© UNIC/DEDY MARYANTO

RC Gita Sabharwal and H.E. Minister Rachmat Pambudy at the UNSDCF 2026–2030 signing ceremony, August 2025

15–64 has experienced physical and/or sexual violence in her lifetime.

In leading our efforts, my message to the team has been twofold: understand contexts and seize opportunities. When communities openly raise concerns about violence against women, it signals every person's right to live free from violence and exploitation. Community based action is the frontline of protection. However, prevention is possible when people know their rights and when they can access care and justice without barriers.

Encouragingly, Indonesia is moving in the right direction. The Law on Sexual Violence Crimes is a milestone and aligns with the UN's Six Core Principles on combating sexual exploitation and abuse. UN agencies (including UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, and UNICEF) play an important role by partnering with national and subnational authorities to strengthen protection services for women and children, including by enhancing the skills of specialized police units, amongst other initiatives.

In our Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with Indonesia, we reference this law directly in the clause on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). This alignment matters: it embeds PSEA in national priorities and strengthens collective accountability.

© UNDSS/PAULUS SULAKSONO




RC Gita Sabharwal meets with UN security and ancillary personnel during a PSEAH training held in Jakarta, March 2025





© UNIC/DEDY MARYANTO

Prevention and protection are core to the mission of the PSEAH Network

**What values guide your PSEA strategy, and how have you adapted it to the local context?**

We must lead by example across the UN system by upholding gender equality, respect, and a safe environment for all. Collective responsibility is non-negotiable. Every UN colleague, heads of agency, senior managers, staff, volunteers, and short-term personnel alike, must see themselves as guardians of our core principles. Protecting people from exploitation and abuse is a responsibility that cannot rest solely with technical specialists; it must be lived by all of us.

Each year, I personally review the results of the UN's annual survey on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse with my team. The findings serve as our compass to identify gaps, clarify priorities, and tailor our strategy to what matters most for people in Indonesia. Based on the most recent results, we prioritized:

**1.** Deepening internal awareness;
**2.** Developing a unified inter-agency PSEA standard operating procedure; and
**3.** Strengthening the capacities of PSEA focal points and the protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harrassment (PSEAH) Network.

**How do you and your inter-agency network engage personnel, partners, and communities on PSEA?**

Our PSEA focal points are central to this work. They serve as both agency representatives and members of the inter-agency PSEAH Network. Last year's system wide survey showed that nearly one third of respondents in Indonesia felt that focal points actively raise awareness—this is not just a statistic, but an opportunity to deepen outreach.

Through the Network, focal points also work closely with implementing partners who raise awareness of this issue among local communities. We provide training, including for faith-based leaders, who are particularly influential in Indonesia's social fabric and play a key role in shaping norms and understanding vulnerability.

The head of my office, together with the co-chairs from IOM and UNICEF, work closely with the PSEAH Coordinator to sustain momentum. My role is to support every focal point, staff member, and partner, because PSEA is a shared commitment.

**If you could ask for one thing that would most strengthen efforts to address SEA, what would it be?**

It would be this: let us move beyond compliance. Policies are essential, but they are only the starting point. Our next step is helping every UN colleague to speak about protection from sexual exploitation and abuse with confidence, empathy, and clarity, and to translate principles into day-to-day behaviors to strengthen protection.

**What message would you like to share with fellow leaders?**

Our credibility as leaders is measured not by what we champion when resources are abundant, but by what we protect when resources are scarce. PSEA is not optional; it is a promise we make and a reflection of who we are as an institution. ■

**USEFUL RESOURCES**

HOW TO REPORT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE:

bit.ly/4tnJv2E

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE UN RESPONSE:

bit.ly/4kqlymc

**Clare Francis** is an Associate PSEA Specialist and Speechwriter in the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the UN Response to SEA.

PEAK WALK
TISSOT

# PEAK TO PEAK AT 3'000 M.



GLACIER 3000
*High level experience.*

www.glacier3000.ch

# Why dialogue matters in a divided world

## Kazakhstan's new Permanent Representative Erzhan Kazykhan on the challenges shaping global politics

MOLLIE **FRASER-ANDREWS** *

Erzhan Kazykhan has served Kazakhstan in a wide range of capacities, including as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Foreign Minister, Assistant to the President, and Ambassador to the United Nations in New York, as well as to Austria, the United Kingdom, the United States, and international organizations in Vienna.

He currently serves as the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan in Geneva and Special Envoy of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, which means he sits at the intersection of foreign policy, international cooperation, and national reform priorities. Read on to hear about the challenges at the diplomatic helm of Kazakhstan in an era of global tension.

© ERZHAN KAZYKHAN



Erzhan Kazykhan, appointed Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan in October 2025

**Ambassador, could you briefly introduce your background and outline your priorities as Kazakhstan's Permanent Representative in Geneva?**

My professional background spans more than three decades in diplomacy, multilateral affairs, and public service. In Geneva, my role is to ensure that Kazakhstan's engagement with the United Nations and other international organizations is strategic, principled, and forward-looking. A key priority is aligning our domestic transformation – including political and constitutional reforms – with our international commitments in areas such as human rights, humanitarian law, health, climate, and sustainable development. Kazakhstan is committed to contributing constructively, building partnerships, and promoting dialogue that strengthens trust in multilateralism.

**President Tokayev has launched far-reaching constitutional reforms. How would you explain this transformation to an international audience unfamiliar with Kazakhstan's political system?**

Kazakhstan is undergoing a profound and deliberate political transformation aimed at building a more balanced, accountable, and human-centered state. These reforms represent a shift away from a super-presidential model toward a presidential republic with a stronger, more influential Parliament and clearer checks and balances among the branches of government.
A defining feature of this reform process is its nationwide and participatory character. Over six months of public debate, a broad-based Constitutional Commission

consolidated proposals from across society, reflecting an unprecedented level of openness and civic engagement. Given the scope of the changes, the decision was made to adopt a new Constitution, which was supported by the people at the nationwide referendum on 15 March 2026.

Human rights are at the core of the reforms. Constitutional guarantees are being strengthened, including judicial independence, the establishment of an autonomous Constitutional Court, enhanced protections for the legal profession, and reinforced principles such as the presumption of innocence and the non-retroactivity of laws.

At the same time, the reforms place strong emphasis on the principle of 'Law and Order,' underscoring that political modernization must go hand in hand with the rule of law, public security, and zero tolerance for corruption and impunity.

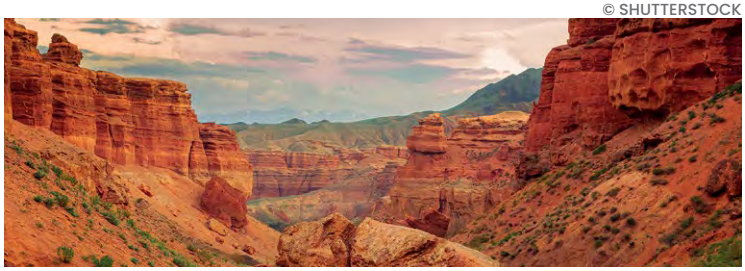
**In a period of growing global polarization, where does Kazakhstan see its role in the international system?**

Kazakhstan sees a clear role as a bridge-builder committed to inclusive dialogue, respect for international law, and effective multilateral cooperation. We believe that global challenges – whether related to peace and security, development, health, or climate – can only be addressed through cooperation rather than confrontation. As a middle power, Kazakhstan seeks to help translate global commitments into practical action by working closely with the United Nations, Geneva-based institutions, and partners across regions. Our strategy is grounded in pragmatic diplomacy, economic openness, and sustained political reform.

**What role does Kazakhstan play in promoting interreligious and interconfessional dialogue globally?**

Interfaith and intercultural dialogue has long been a pillar of Kazakhstan's contribution to global peace and multilateralism. More than twenty years ago, Kazakhstan initiated the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has since evolved into a unique and respected global platform bringing together leaders of major faiths.

© SHUTTERSTOCK



Charyn Canyon at sunset, South-Eastern Kazakhstan

In 2025, Kazakhstan hosted the Eighth Congress in Astana, reaffirming its role as a global hub for dialogue among religious leaders, policymakers, youth, and civil society. The main outcome, the Astana Peace Declaration 2025, reaffirmed a commitment to multilateralism, condemned extremism and the misuse of religion to justify violence, and emphasized dialogue as the only sustainable path to peace.

The Congress also highlighted the ethical dimensions of climate change, sustainable development, and emerging technologies, and recognized the vital role of women and youth as agents of dialogue and resilience. Looking ahead, Kazakhstan will host the Ninth Congress in 2028 and continue strengthening cooperation between the Congress Secretariat, the UN system, and international partners to promote dialogue as a cornerstone of global stability.

> "THE FUTURE OF MULTILATERALISM LIES IN INITIATIVES THAT DELIVER TANGIBLE RESULTS

**What is Kazakhstan's approach to advancing international humanitarian law through the Global Initiative launched with the ICRC?**

Kazakhstan views the Global Initiative to galvanize political commitment to international humanitarian law (IHL) as a timely and inclusive effort to reinforce respect for existing IHL norms amid growing armed conflicts and humanitarian crises.

Launched jointly with the International Committee of the Red Cross and five partner States – Brazil, Jordan, China,


© MFA OF KAZAKHSTAN

Regional Ecological Summit will take place in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 22–24 April 2026

France and South Africa – on 27 September 2024 in New York, the Initiative is open to all countries. To date, 103 States have joined, reflecting its broad, cross-regional support and shared recognition of the need to strengthen compliance with IHL.

Importantly, the Initiative does not aim to create new legal instruments or additional mechanisms, nor does it single out specific countries. The process will culminate in a High-Level Conference in 2026 in Jordan, preceded by preparatory discussions in Geneva, with the objective of adopting an ambitious, balanced and action-oriented political declaration focused on preserving humanity in armed conflict and strengthening respect for international humanitarian law.

> KAZAKHSTAN SEEKS TO HELP TRANSLATE GLOBAL COMMITMENTS INTO PRACTICAL ACTION

### How can Geneva-based health institutions engage with Kazakhstan's Global Coalition on Primary Health Care?

Geneva-based health institutions and partners play a central role in advancing Kazakhstan's Global Coalition on Primary Health Care. The Coalition is conceived as an open and voluntary platform that complements WHO's normative and technical leadership, while reinforcing sustained political commitment to PHC implementation at the highest levels.

Engagement can take several practical forms. Partners can participate in informal policy dialogues and briefings hosted in Geneva, contribute evidence, research and country experience through WHO-led platforms, and help shape joint messaging that links PHC to universal health coverage, health security and system resilience. There is also scope for collaboration on side events, thematic discussions and coordinated statements in the lead-up to key global milestones, including the 2027 UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage.

Kazakhstan works closely with WHO and Geneva-based stakeholders to ensure that the Coalition acts as a bridge between political leadership, technical expertise and country-level action.

### What outcomes does Kazakhstan seek from the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana?

This April, Kazakhstan will host the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana, the first climate and environmental forum of this scale in Central Asia. Endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2023, the Summit aims to articulate a shared regional vision and translate it into practical cooperation with international partners.

Our objective is not another declaratory forum but agreed political commitments and an actionable regional program that strengthens resilience, attracts international support, and positions Central Asia as a constructive contributor to global climate efforts.

### How does Kazakhstan view the future role of the United Nations and multilateralism?

Kazakhstan considers the United Nations indispensable and views its reform as a strategic necessity. A key contribution is the UN Regional Center for the SDGs in Almaty, which strengthens the UN's field presence in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

We believe the future of multilateralism lies in initiatives that deliver tangible results on the ground, rebuild trust among nations, and demonstrate that the UN can remain an effective anchor of stability, dialogue, and shared responsibility in an increasingly fragmented world. ■

* **Mollie Fraser-Andrews** is the Editorial Coordinator of UN Today.




# HERE, YOU CAN GROW UP WITH TWO NATIVE LANGUAGES.

International French / English
bilingual school from 3 to 19 years old.

Institut International Lancy

Work and succeed together iil.ch

© SHUTTERSTOCK



Diplomacy, dialogue, and global understanding are key to a multilateral environment

# Why trust still matters

## What makes multilateralism work in practice and why the human dimension remains a critical asset for the United Nations

WALTER BRUNO **GYGER** *

Multilateralism is under strain. Trust between states is eroding, institutions are questioned, and negotiations too often end in paralysis. In many conference rooms today, one senses fatigue and frustration. The temptation is strong to blame structures, mandates, or geopolitics. Yet experience shows that while institutions are indispensable, deadlocks are rarely broken by institutional reform alone. They are broken by people, by process, and by the quality of human relations.

> "POWER POLITICS HAS RETURNED WITH FORCE

This conviction was forged during my diplomatic career in the mid-1990s in Geneva. In September 1995, the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent was about to open. Four years earlier, the previous conference in Budapest had been cancelled at the last moment because of political tensions. That failure still weighed heavily on the movement. Once again, unresolved political issues threatened to derail the process. Positions had hardened. Delegations were under pressure. The diplomatic community in Geneva was tense and divided. Formally, everything was ready. Politically, nothing was.

Although the conference did not belong to the United Nations system, its dynamics were immediately familiar to anyone working in multilateral diplomacy. States with conflicting agendas, humanitarian principles under political pressure, and an institution struggling to preserve its convening power. What was at stake was not only the success of one conference, but confidence in multilateral cooperation more broadly.

The decisive moment did not come in plenary. It came, as it so often does in Geneva, in the corridors.

In a series of quiet conversations, often informal and sometimes improvised, representatives of key delegations and colleagues from the ICRC and IFRC secretariats began to explore what was still possible. Not what would sound principled in a formal statement, but what could work in practice. The atmosphere was discreet and pragmatic. Listening mattered more than speaking. Words were chosen with care. Timing was crucial.

What gradually emerged was a compromise that did not resolve all underlying differences, but reopened the process. It allowed delegations to move forward without losing face. Just as importantly, it was crafted jointly by Member States and international staff. The solution was not imposed. It was co-owned. Responsibility was shared. No one claimed victory, but everyone accepted ownership.

Looking back from today's perspective at the United Nations, the substance of a compromise clearly matters. But the way it is achieved matters just as much. Trust among colleagues, diplomats and international staff alike, was the foundation. That trust had been built long before the crisis, through regular contact, professional respect, and a realistic understanding of each other's political and institutional constraints. When the moment of deadlock arrived, those relationships made flexibility possible.

This experience taught me how central the personal factor is in multilateral diplomacy. Institutions provide the framework, but it is individuals who decide whether to escalate or de-escalate, whether to hold the line or to explore alternatives, whether to block a process or to keep it alive. In Geneva, where delegations and UN staff work side by side over many years, this human dimension is not a luxury. It is a decisive operational asset.

Equally important is the quality of cooperation between country representatives and international civil servants. When that relationship becomes purely transactional, processes stall. When it is based on mutual confidence, discretion, and professional integrity, the United Nations can play its most valuable role: that of honest broker, facilitator of solutions, and guardian of fragile processes.

These Geneva lessons stayed with me. They later informed my broader reflection on governance and diplomacy, including the practical diplomatic toolkit I present in my book *Dare We Hope? Building Lasting Peace*. The central message is simple: without sustained attention to process, trust, and inclusion, even the best-designed negotiations risk failing, or producing outcomes that change little on the ground.

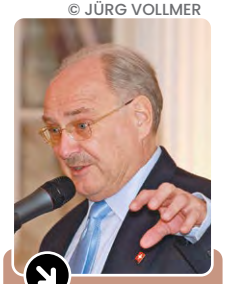
Today's multilateral challenges are more complex and more polarized than those of the 1990s. Power politics has returned with force. Yet the Geneva lesson remains valid. When formal channels are blocked, progress often begins quietly. In the corridors, in personal exchanges, and in the shared commitment of diplomats and international civil servants to keep talking when walking away would be easier.

For younger UN staff and diplomats, this is not a message of nostalgia, but one of confidence. Multilateralism is not saved by grand speeches. It is sustained every day by professionalism, patience, and moral courage, shown by those who invest in relationships, protect the process when it comes under pressure, and believe that cooperation remains worth the effort.

When multilateralism works, it rarely makes headlines. But it works because people make it work. And that remains one of the most demanding, and most meaningful, callings of international public service. ■

* **Walter Bruno Gyger** is former Head of the Swiss Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, former Swiss Ambassador and Author.

© JÜRG VOLLMER



**WALTER BRUNO GIGER**

His career was one of diplomacy and international engagement

> “THE TEMPTATION IS STRONG TO BLAME STRUCTURES, MANDATES, OR GEOPOLITICS

# The extraordinary value of a bilingual education

## Educating bilingualists is an investment in both cognitive resilience and the empathetic power required to bridge our world's cultural divides

CONRAD **HUGHES** *

One of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals is Quality Education for All (Goal 4). But what is quality, and who decides?

We need to protect linguistic diversity by nurturing home languages

Research into bilingualism has increased exponentially over the last few decades as cognitive and neurological benefits are explored. It could be one of the most powerful educational gifts we can give young people.



© FREEPIK

### Cognitive benefits

The mental exercise of switching from one linguistic circuitry to another pushes a level of cognitive flexibility that is remarkable: bilingual people move in and out of two (or more) language systems with their intricate semantic codes. In doing so, they perform formidable mental arithmetic, leaving the bilingual brain less prone to the early onset of Alzheimer's and other types of mental degeneration. Researchers such as Ellen Bialystok have shown that the mental reserves the bilingual brain creates allow for system recuperation; if one system falters, the other can override and take control of executive functioning. In other words, a bilingual brain is almost like having two brains that can work together or even compensate for one another. This alone is a strong reason for bilingual teaching in schools.

### Neurological benefits

The actual morphology of the brain is affected by bilingualism. Compelling studies have shown that there is better and more efficient white matter connectivity and neuroplasticity in a bilingual brain than in a monolingual one.

The bilingual brain actually creates more grey matter in the early phases of exposure to a new language. Parts of the cortex are solicited much more, meaning that, on the whole, the brain operates more efficiently. Because neural connections have been trained into particularly efficient configurations (essentially by reinforcing

more neural connections), less oxygen and glucose are required to think, making the bilingual brain more economical and higher performing.

### Social benefits

Learning another language is learning another culture and another set of values; it is an opening not only of the mind but of the entire spectrum of being. As the great Austrian-British philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein said, "The limits of my language are the limits of my world." Knowing how to communicate with other people in their language is a tremendous strength, much needed in a world that is increasingly polarized and in which loneliness and social isolation are growing problems. Nelson Mandela echoed this sentiment in his powerful book *Long Walk to Freedom* by explaining how, if you talk to a person in a language they understand, that goes to their head but if you talk to them in their language, that goes to their heart. Mandela's role in unifying South Africa after years of exploitation and separation was connected to his remarkable ability to speak several languages and to appreciate the cultural codes of other people. This is one of the reasons why he came to have such universal appeal as a global leader.

So-called 'hacks' for learning languages online in a minimum amount of time miss the point: the whole enterprise of learning another language is a long and passionate discovery of another world through other people.

### Intellectual benefits

When you are brought from basic interpersonal communication skills to the higher level of cognitive academic language proficiency, you are able to read literature in the original language. Although I do not believe as an educator that one cannot grasp the essence of great literature in translation, there can be little doubt that the sensitivity, the precision of



**CONRAD HUGHES**

Has published four books on education throughout his career


## BILINGUAL PRESCHOOL & PRIMARY SCHOOL

Inspired by the Montessori and Reggio Emilia approaches.
At La Nouvelle École, we nurture children's natural desire to learn.

la nouvelle école

## CRÈCHE & ÉCOLE PRIMAIRE BILINGUE

Inspirées des pédagogies Montessori et Reggio Emilia.
À La Nouvelle École, nous cultivons le désir naturel des enfants d'apprendre.

Bilingual FR - EN | Old Town | From 2-7 yo

Bilingue FR - EN | Vieille Ville | De 2 à 7 ans

### WHY CHOOSE US?

- Bilingual education in an immersive environment
- A nurturing, respectful environment
- Active, child-led pedagogies
- Guided teaching in small groups
- Emphasis on nature and sustainability
- Bilingual holiday camps



### POURQUOI NOUS CHOISIR?

- Une éducation bilingue dans un environnement immersif
- Un cadre bienveillant et respectueux
- Des pédagogies actives centrées sur l'enfant
- Un enseignement guidé en petits groupes
- Un accent mis sur la nature et la durabilité
- Camps de vacances bilingues





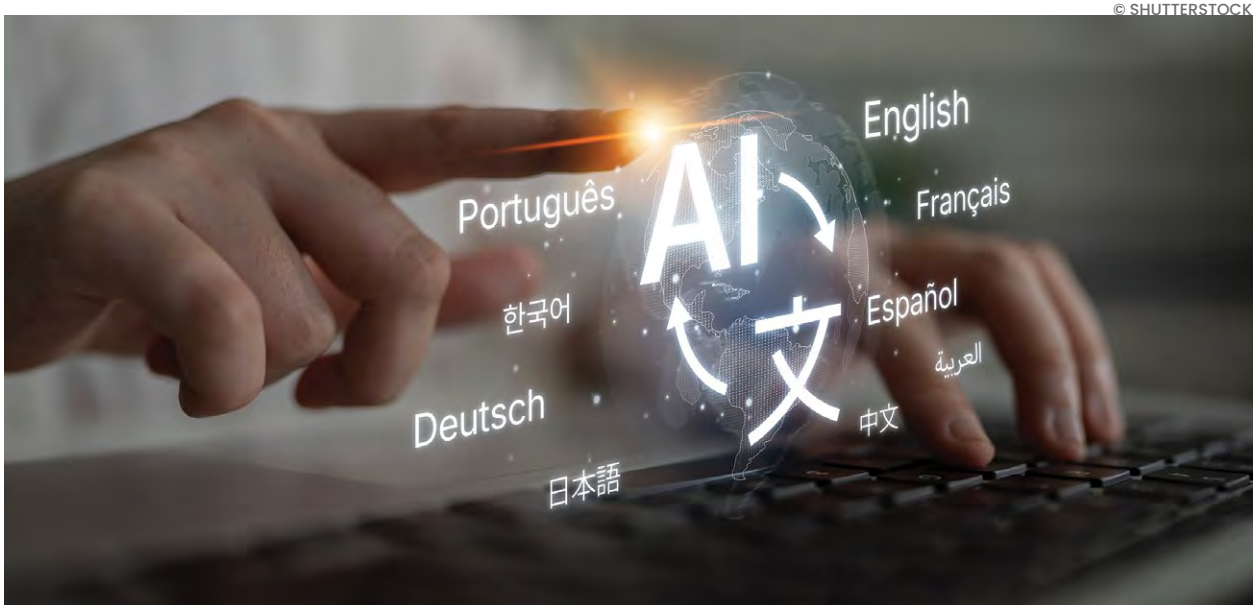
### CONTACT US

(+41) 078 240 00 42 - ADMIN@LNESCHOOLS.COM
WWW.LNESCHOOL.COM
RUE ETIENNE-DUMONT 1, 1204 GENÈVE

### CONTACTEZ-NOUS

(+41) 078 240 00 42 - ADMIN@LNESCHOOLS.COM
WWW.LNESCHOOL.COM
RUE ETIENNE-DUMONT 1, 1204 GENÈVE

© SHUTTERSTOCK




Education helps to build bridges between languages and cultures

aesthetics, the subtleties, and the poetry of writing can only really be picked up in the original. Giving students that avenue into the great literary traditions of another culture is a formidable advantage that enriches the experience of reading and learning greatly.

### Languages are dying

Let us not forget that according to UNESCO, the linguistic wealth of the planet is being depleted dramatically: one language dies approximately every 14 days. Out of the 7,000 languages spoken today, we estimate that at least 50%, and up to 90%, will become extinct by the year 2100. This is particularly acute in so-called Global South nations such as India, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, and Cameroon. The fact that educational systems (largely relics of 19th-century colonial monolingualism and deculturation efforts) force children to learn in European languages like Spanish, English, and French, are wiping out other languages and have been doing so for over 100 years.

> BILINGUALISM PHYSICALLY SCULPTS THE BRAIN, CREATING A RESILIENT COGNITIVE RESERVE

Citizens from countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America will very often speak several languages because they have had to learn the language of the colonizer above and beyond their home languages. They are naturally plurilingual, meaning they exhibit many of the advantages mentioned in this article. However, the pressure to comply with global languages and to perform academically in these languages sidelines the development of other home languages. This brings questions of justice and parity to the fore. We are currently killing off the planet's linguistic diversity and, therefore, reducing the powerful legacy of plurilingualism. Imagine how depressing a scenario it would be to have only one language spoken throughout the world, not only as a symbol of monocultural dominance but of intellectual poverty.

### A call to action

This is why it is so important for all of us in education to keep bilingualism alive in schools, to encourage the learning of home languages, and to foster a truly biliterate or multiliterate environment. It is very much in keeping with the international-mindedness of the United Nations and the dream of a polyphonous world where we might bask in the light of each other's cultural heritage, histories, and, ultimately, our languages. Bilingualism is a gift and something we should preserve. ■

* **Conrad Hughes** is Head of the International School of Los Angeles, Author and a Senior Fellow at UNESCO's International Bureau of Education.

BSG
BRITISH SCHOOL OF GENEVA

20 YEARS 2005-2025

Admissions Open for 2025-2026

Early Years | Primary | GCSE | A Levels

# English National Curriculum for students aged 3 to 18

**10 minutes from the UN**



## Excellence in Education, Tailored to the Individual

- **Brand new Early Years Centre**
  For children aged 3–5, offering a nurturing start in a British and French curriculum setting
- **Full British academic pathway**
  GCSEs and A Levels, recognised worldwide
- **Student entry to top universities**
  UK, Switzerland, USA, Canada, and Europe
- **English language and learning support**
  To help every student thrive
- **Conveniently located**
  Just 10 minutes from the United Nations and central Geneva
- **A welcoming, international environment**
  Ideal for expat families seeking academic excellence and continuity

**Book a school tour**

British School of Geneva - Av. de Châtelaine 95A | 1219 Genève - CH - Tel: +41 (0)22 795 75 15
admissions@britishschoolgeneva.ch - www.britishschoolgeneva.ch

# Holiday Region Interlaken: make the most of spring

## Why not visit Europe's adventure capital, nestled in the heart of the Swiss Alps?

SAMIR **BOULAOUCHE** *

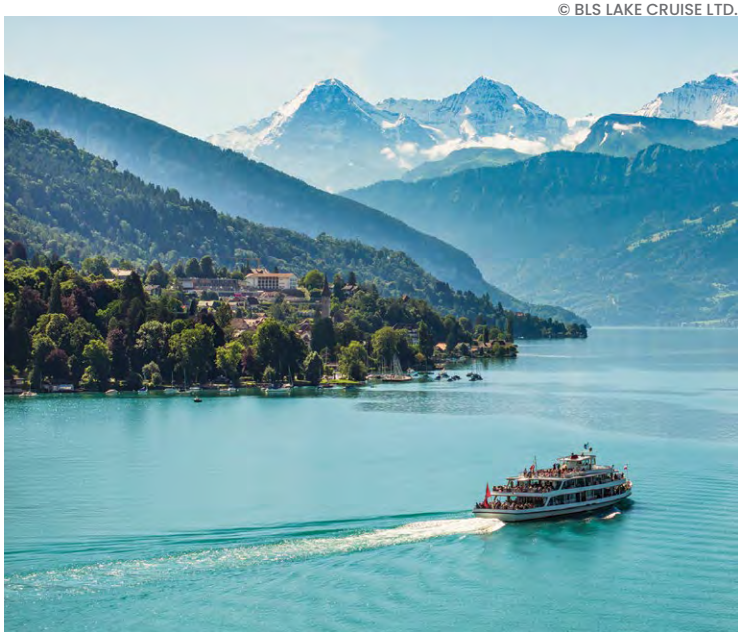
Interlaken is situated in the beautiful Bernese Oberland, between Lake Thun and Lake Brienz and framed by a breathtaking alpine panorama dominated by the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau. Known worldwide as one of Switzerland's most iconic travel destinations, the Holiday Region Interlaken is the perfect base for all kinds of excursions, outdoor adventures and relaxing escapes.

While the surrounding peaks may tempt visitors into the mountains, spring in the Holiday Region Interlaken reveals a completely different side of the destination: lighter, brighter and full of variety. From playful family experiences like a digital Easter egg hunt to scenic lake cruises and culinary event boats, and from peaceful moments on the water to pure relaxation in a lakeside wellness hotel, the Holiday Region Interlaken offers countless ways to enjoy the season.

Let yourself be inspired by the fresh energy of spring and discover Interlaken from new perspectives, between lakes, mountains and unforgettable moments.

Our tips for relaxed spring holidays:

© BLS LAKE CRUISE LTD.



MS Stadt Thun cruising on Lake Thun with Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau in the backdrop

### A digital Easter adventure for the whole family in Interlaken

On Easter Sunday, the digital Easter egg hunt on the map feature of the Interlaken Guide brings locals and visitors together in a fun and playful way, inviting everyone to discover Interlaken from a completely new perspective. Especially for families but also for adult groups, this activity is a great opportunity to spend time outdoors together while exploring exciting spots around town.

Using the map in the Interlaken Guide, participants can find several digital Easter nests, which are easy to locate thanks to the built-in navigation function. Each nest contains a letter, and those who search carefully can collect all the letters and put them together to form a secret solution word. This turns an ordinary walk through Interlaken into a small Easter mission — one that is just as entertaining for kids as it is for adults.

© MIKE KAUFMANN



Springtime in Interlaken

Once the correct solution word has been submitted, participants can pick up a small Easter-themed gift as a reward at the Tourist Information Interlaken. On top of that, everyone who submits the correct answer will automatically be entered into a raffle to win an attractive grand prize. The Easter egg hunt combines movement, discovery, and quality family time, making it the perfect spring outing in Interlaken.

### Radiant spring moments on Lake Thun and Lake Brienz

As spring paints the first warm colors across the mountain peaks, the season of unforgettable experiences begins on the lakes. Enjoy relaxing scheduled cruises that glide through sparkling waters and nature coming back to life. Perfect for taking a deep breath, unwinding, and recharging.

For something truly special, the wide range of themed event cruises offers memorable highlights for everyone. Savor bold flavors on the Fajita Boat, while young explorers will love the colorful Globi Adventure Cruises. Music lovers can look forward to delightful hours at the Classical Brunch, where fine cuisine meets beautiful melodies. More culinary treats await on the Afternoon Tea Cruise, while the Game Boat promises plenty of fun for both kids and adults. And for lively evenings on the water, events like the Pub Quiz or Rock The Boat bring fresh spring energy and great entertainment.

Hop on board and discover spring at its very best: light, vibrant, and full of shine.

### Find your Swiss time-out: by the lake, in the mountains

At the BEATUS Wellness- & Spa-Hotel in Merligen, nature and hospitality come together in perfect balance. Located right on Lake Thun and just 35 minutes from Bern, the hotel offers a peaceful escape for guests looking to unwind, recharge and enjoy Swiss quality.

A year-round heated saltwater pool, panoramic wellness, and personalized treatments help you slow down and feel well cared for. The restaurant's seasonal cuisine features local ingredients, vegetarian options and wines from Switzerland and nearby regions.

Whether you're traveling solo, as a couple or welcoming guests from abroad – this is a place to feel at home, far from routine. The BEATUS is more than a hotel. It's a place to arrive. And to stay. ■

> "ENJOY RELAXING SCHEDULED CRUISES THAT GLIDE THROUGH SPARKLING WATERS

* **Samir Boulaouche** is a Content and Communication Manager at Interlaken Tourism.



© YATRA GEARS

# Youth in the lead: social entrepreneurship in western Nepal

## In far western Nepal, young people are leading the way in social innovation and becoming key to the community's growth

ANJALI **KARKI** AND KATY **MUNDEN HAYS** *

^ Camping equipment makes it possible to enjoy more of the outdoors

In a remote valley of western Nepal, a small city buzzes with cars and bicycles on their daily commute. Children walk to school wearing backpacks and uniforms. Hikers strike out across the mountains for adventure and spiritual pilgrimages, outdoor experiences made possible by startup YATRA Gears. Its young adult founders, Bhuwan and Umesh, are demonstrating a commitment to innovation, economic growth, and the good of their community.

### Community challenges

Historically, this region has struggled with multidimensional poverty (39.5%, according to UNDP), lack of jobs and education, and natural disasters. Over the past two decades, Surkhet District has grown from a rural, inaccessible village into a regional center for commerce, and visitors are trekking here to experience its natural beauty. Its remote location offers both transportation challenges as well as opportunities for tourism and service industries.

In our community development work with children and youth at the BlinkNow Foundation and Kopila Valley School, we

have observed young people in Surkhet driving change, innovation, and partnership. Brothers Bhuwan (a Kopila Valley graduate) and Umesh are two of the young business owners leading the way. After a childhood spent steeped in nature, they are making it possible for more people to experience Nepal's natural beauty, bringing environmental awareness and tourism to the area.

### A spark of inspiration

Like many young people in Nepal, Umesh and Bhuwan found that even after achieving a secondary education, jobs were scarce. It is estimated that 14% of Nepal's young people have immigrated to other parts of the world to find work. The brothers were determined to continue their learning with university degrees. After graduation, Bhuwan moved to Kathmandu to study Digital Marketing at King's College. Umesh decided to stay local and pursue his MBA.

However, Umesh and Bhuwan both carried a passion for community, as well as the great outdoors.

Bhuwan relays the moment of inspiration that led to his entrepreneurship: "One day, Umesh and I were reminiscing about our childhood on a phone call. Swimming in the rivers, hiking up the hills in our hometown, exploring in the wild. We talked about how challenging it was to go camping since we didn't have any camping equipment. And we have noticed that this same barrier is a problem for many people who wish to enjoy the outdoors in our town. It led us to wonder, what if there was a way to rent or buy trekking and camping equipment in Surkhet? Over the next few months, we kept discussing this idea, and we became adamant that we need to make it a reality."

Bhuwan wrote a business plan, and then he sought out funding. He and Umesh had some savings to invest, and they also applied to Kopila Valley's Student Entrepreneurship Fund, receiving a modest, interest-free loan for NPR 50,000 (about $350). Combining these resources, YATRA Rental & Gears was born.

YATRA, named with a Nepali word for 'journey,' is now a regional provider of tents, sleeping bags, and trekking essentials for schools, corporate travelers, adventure enthusiasts, pilgrims, and bikers. Schools are organizing hikes, nature camps, and overnight trips for their students, and travelers are increasing in number in this under-resourced region.

Bhuwan has continued his university studies in Kathmandu while providing vision and digital marketing for the business. Umesh is onsite and oversees the daily operations of YATRA, and their parents assist with customer service.

### Community and Nature Benefits

YATRA's work is part of a growing movement to contribute to the social, cultural, and economic life of the community. The demand for outdoor gear has grown, highlighting the need for accessible and local outdoor supplies. Businesses like this are impacting tourism as well as education. New opportunities are available for schools, which are now integrating classroom learning with outdoor learning and environmental care at a much higher rate. This new access removes barriers to outdoor activities and helps schools to adopt innovative styles of learning.

> "INCREASED EXPOSURE TO NATURE AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES BUILDS EMPATHY IN PEOPLE

With increased exposure to nature and outdoor activities, students often perform better academically and develop more empathy. Research reported in Frontiers in Psychology "suggests that experiences of nature boost academic learning, personal development, and environmental stewardship." Time outdoors is helping students to improve engagement in school, according to Tutors International, and we see increased care for fellow students and families as well.

The impact of businesses like YATRA extends from tourism and education to culture and spirituality. The renting of outdoor gear is a resource for those seeking to explore the Karnali region, a remote but beautiful part of Nepal. Travelers can also engage with nature and rituals like the annual Badimalika and Maha

© YATRA GEARS




One of the many bike groups benefiting from young entrepreneurship

Buwa, a grand religious pilgrimage in the Badimalika region of Nepal. This sacred event draws thousands of devotees who trek for days across Nepal's mountainous terrain, enduring the elements to reach a revered temple site and offer their prayers. They camp under open skies, often in challenging conditions. Gear rental has made this possible for pilgrims by providing tents, sleeping gear, and essentials for this sacred journey.

For many of YATRA's customers, experiencing outdoor adventures is a fun outing, a learning experience, or a spiritual journey. For Umesh and Bhuwan, it's a chance to serve travelers and to highlight the vast natural resources of their region, which has been severely lacking in investment until recent years.

### Growing youth entrepreneurship

This story reflects a growing trend. Across Surkhet and the larger Karnali region, young people are leading the way in social entrepreneurship. Some have started food businesses or regenerative farming enterprises to increase local food access. Others are creating advocacy groups and working with the local government to manage trash better, taking charge of family businesses that meet vital needs, and leading organizations that uplift and empower women.

In the broader global community, research demonstrates that youth entrepreneurship significantly contributes to economic development by generating employment, fostering innovation, and stimulating local economies. And despite barriers such as inadequate access to capital, regulatory hurdles, and entrepreneurial education, the youth in Surkhet remain positive and excited about the possibilities of business ownership.

This work is resulting in progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), as well as SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).

### Lessons learned

We asked what advice these young entrepreneurs could share with others. Bhuwan says, "Here are three keys to success in our YATRA journey.

**1.** We anchored our work in a personal connection – when a business idea grows from our own life stories, it naturally carries authenticity.

**2.** We are solving a problem that matters locally – when the solution meets a real need in the community, support follows.

**3.** We blend vision with persistence – great ideas need not only imagination, but also the steady, day-to-day work that makes them real.

As they partner with communities to solve problems, we see that young people are key to social progress, in Nepal and around the world. They have found their voices and passions, they believe that ethical business systems are possible, and they are ready to make a social impact. Other communities and organizations could inspire youth entrepreneurship by combining education, seed funding, and mentorship.

Both brothers credit their success to a supportive community at Kopila Valley School, support in the broader Surkhet community, and the availability of startup funding. Bhuwan says, "The fact is that when a community believes in you, you grow differently – strong with willpower and a heart to dream." ■


*

**Anjali Karki** is a Kopila Valley School graduate, and **Katy Munden Hays** works on the communications team for the BlinkNow Foundation.


> "THE FACT IS THAT WHEN A COMMUNITY BELIEVES IN YOU, YOU GROW DIFFERENTLY




UNtoday

Palais des Nations, 1211 Genève 10
admin@untoday.org
www.untoday.org

**EDITORIAL TEAM**

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF |** RÉDACTRICE EN CHEF
Prisca Chaoui

**EDITORIAL BOARD |** COMITÉ ÉDITORIAL
Ian Richards, Muriel Scibilia, Alex Mejía,
Valérie Coutarel, Gemma Capellas Espuny

**ADVISOR TO THE BOARD |** CONSEILLÈRE AUPRÈS DU COMITÉ
Anyuli Mercedes Gonzalez-Oliver

**EDITORIAL COORDINATOR |** COORDINATRICE ÉDITORIALE
Mollie Fraser-Andrews

**LAYOUT |** DESIGN
Gabriela Bondone

**WEBMASTER**
Mollie Fraser-Andrews

**SPECIAL THANKS TO:**
Richard Turner

**ADVERTISING |** PUBLICITÉ
**HP media SA**
Avenue de Chamonix 7, 1207 Genève
Ghislaine Houter • ghislaine@hpmedia.ch • +41 22 786 60 00

**THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS.**
The opinions in this magazine are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the United Nations or its specialized agencies. The publication of this magazine relies solely on the financial support of its advertisers.

**LA REVUE OFFICIELLE DES FONCTIONNAIRES INTERNATIONAUX.**
Les opinions exprimées dans ce magazine sont celles des auteurs, et non forcément celles de l'ONU ou de ses institutions spécialisées. La parution de ce magazine dépend uniquement du support financier de la publicité.

# EUPOROS SA,
## LA RÉFÉRENCE DANS LE COMMERCE DE MÉTAUX PRÉCIEUX DEPUIS 2010




## INVESTISSEZ DANS VOTRE AVENIR!

EUPOROS

Contactez nous : +41 22 552 13 15
World Trade Center II, 1215 Geneve

www.euporos.ch

# forax

## Fuel up first, pay later directly tax-free

mineral oil tax & VAT-removed




*or*




### Tamoil Card

Valid at all Tamoil & Hergol stations

TAMOIL HERGOL

### Shell Multi-Network

Valid at all Shell, Eni/Agip, Agrola & Migrol* stations

AGROLA MIGROL

* All Migrol stations with an attached Migrolino or Mio shop nationwide

Apply now

**www.forax.com**