



UNESCO UNITWIN
Network for Inter-Religious
Dialogue and Intercultural
Understanding (IDIU)

Newsletter #5

Hello from the convenor

Dear IDIU Network members,

We are already well into 2026, and I hope that wherever you are in the world, when you read this, you are well.



Recent global conflicts compel us to reflect on what a changing world order means for intercultural dialogue in our times, and I would love to hear your thoughts. We hope to organise another online meeting of our Network in the near future, so please stay tuned for our emails to try and coordinate a suitable time for us to connect.

There are also several exciting conferences that network members are planning for the year, so I encourage you to save the dates and register to participate and attend when you can. Details below! It is always uplifting to be able to share ideas and perspectives with international colleagues, and of course, an important part of why the UNESCO Chairs Networks exist.

In that spirit, we will continue our new tradition of spotlighting one of our members. Our enormous thanks to Professor Dimitri Spivak for agreeing to be featured in this issue.

I encourage you to continue sharing your achievements and aspirations with the network, and to read about the work of our Network members below.

Fethi

Network Opportunities



Save the Date and Call for Proposals: UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competence Conference 2026

You are invited to the UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competence annual Conference in Senegal from 28 September – 2 October 2026. The theme of the conference is: *Exploring Intercultural Competences in African Contexts* and you are encouraged to

contribute. There is updated information [on our website](#) or

[read how to submit your proposal before 1 April here](#)



4th World Conference for Religious Dialogue and Cooperation

The 4th World Conference for Religious Dialogue and Cooperation will be held from 22-26 June 2026 in Skopje, North Macedonia. [Read more and register](#)

Chairholder Spotlight

Professor Dimitri Spivak, UNESCO Chair in Comparative Studies of Spiritual Traditions, their Specific Cultures and Interreligious Dialogue, D.S. Likhachev Institute of Cultural and Natural Heritage, Russian Federation <https://unescospb.ru/>



How does your Chair approach the themes of inter-religious dialogue and intercultural understanding?

Well, intercultural dialogue forms an integral part of the UNESCO Mission, along with three other keynote tasks. At the same time, it does not form a specific Strategic Objective of the Mid-Term Strategy, being distributed between four Objectives presented in it. We feel comfortable with this theoretical construct because it promotes the ubiquitous nature of dialogue. Linking intercultural dialogue to the diversity of

heritage forms another direction which tends to be focal for social scientists in this country.

Is there anything you would like to share with the Network?

We are preparing now for a forum of UNESCO Chairs in Russia, which will take place on March 12. It is convened by Coordination Committee of our UNESCO Chairs. The agenda seems to be most promising. The UNESCO Headquarters will be represented by Mr. Sobhi Tawil.

Another project that our fellows have been invited to take part in, is the Russian-Chinese Encyclopaedia of Cultural Science. It is basically a project of the Heritage Institute in Moscow. Each entry will be defined by two parallel texts, one written by Russian scientists and another by our Chinese colleagues. It will be interesting to compare our visions of basic concepts of culture.

Is there anything you'd like to share with the network?

We appreciate the unbending resolve of Fethi and his team to maintain the equality of all Chairs. We call it multi-polarity in this country. In general terms, our Network seems to be quite effective. It is a pleasure and an honour to be an integral part of it.

What are you reading right now OR do you have a favourite book?

I'm reading now a book recently published by Mr. D. Ivashintsov, who is a professor of our Chair. It's entitled '*Talk with Artificial Intellect*'. Mr. Ivashintsov mentions two other authors on the front page of his book: GPT-4 and Grok. It's interesting to read it in counterpoint with '*Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI*' by Y.N. Harari.

If you could travel anywhere tomorrow, where would you go?

In the course of my life, I strove to visit warm, sunny places. Only recently I've realized I feel more comfortable in cold, misty and rainy places. So, the next place I would go to would be Lake Baikal.

If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

Serendipity. English speakers are lucky to have this important notion in their tongue.

Network News



International Conference on the ‘Anthropological Turn in Policultural Education: Values, Identities, Educational Strategies’ 11 February 2026

About one hundred academics and researchers attended in St Petersburg.



La Rumba congolaise ? Plus qu'un art ! Professeur Roger Koudé explique...

In this video, Professor Roger Koussetogue Koudé, UNESCO Chair in Memories, Culture and Interculturality at the Catholic University of Lyon, speaks about the geopolitical dimensions of the Congolese Rumba and its value as a common good for humanity.

[Watch the video on YouTube](#)



Futures Dialogues January and February webinar recordings available to watch

Two more webinars from the UNESCO Futures Dialogue Series are now available to watch in French and English. **You can find the recordings through these UNESCO pages:**

- [Transcending boundaries: Futures thinking for addressing systemic challenges](#), and
- [Futures of Knowledge](#)



UNESCO policy guide to address violent pasts through education

UNESCO have published a helpful guide to support policy-makers addressing violent pasts and their legacies through education.

[Read more here](#)

You have received this email because you are a member of the UNESCO UniTwin Network for Inter-religious Dialogue and Intercultural Understanding (IDIU).

Feel free to share this newsletter with your colleagues and networks. Visit our website for regular posts at <http://unitwinidiu.org>

We receive news and updates from Network member emails and newsletters. Thank you to everyone who has shared news with us. If you would like to send news and events or feedback, please email jasmin.chen@deakin.edu.au

To contact the Convenor directly, email feti.mansouri@deakin.edu.au.



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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the unceded lands and waterways on which
Deakin University staff live and work.