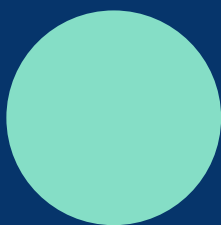




UNRISD

UNITED NATIONS
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT

IDEAS THAT **SHAPE**



UNRISD Annual Report 2025

**62 Years of Research
for Social Change**





UNRISD: independent research and innovative ideas for policy making.

UNRISD was founded in 1963 on a strong belief in social progress and the transformative power of ideas. Over more than six decades, the Institute has developed a distinctive model of independent research, collaboration and dialogue that challenges conventional thinking and advances new approaches to social policy and development.

Throughout its history, UNRISD has brought attention to neglected issues, amplified diverse perspectives and fostered inclusive debate on some of the world's most pressing challenges. By combining rigorous scientific inquiry with a commitment to influencing policy and shaping new paradigms, the Institute has consistently helped expand the boundaries of development thinking.

At a time of multilayered inequalities and increasingly complex and interconnected crises, the need for innovative policy thinking and research, has never been more critical.



Azita Berar Awad
Chair, UNRISD Board

We are built for this moment of **change.**

Investing in independent, policy-relevant research is not a luxury—it is a prerequisite for a UN that aspires to be more effective, equitable, and future-ready.

UNRISD has spent more than six decades developing exactly the capabilities that today's moment demands, consistently adapting to global transformations while remaining anchored in its mission of advancing social justice and sustainable development. In 2025, despite a challenging global context marked by growing inequalities, geopolitical fragmentation, climate crisis, democratic backsliding, and rapid technological transformation, UNRISD demonstrated its agility by delivering more than 80 research outputs and convening over 90 events, engaging 700 high-level speakers and 127 global partners, all of which informed multilateral debates and policy processes. Its work, produced in collaboration with a diverse global network of over 400 researchers—67% of whom are women and 62% from the global South—addressed key issues such as inequality, gender justice, care, taxation, just transitions and the social and solidarity economy.

It also reached wide global audiences through publications, multimedia, and creative and cultural initiatives, notably the first International Youth Forum (IFWY), which brought together over 300 young people across five regions. The year also included major contributions to global policy processes, including the Second World Summit for Social Development and COP30, as well as continued engagement in UN fora such as the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women. Across all its activities, UNRISD reinforced its role as a trusted convenor and producer of independent knowledge, committed to shaping inclusive, evidence-based and socially just global policy agendas.

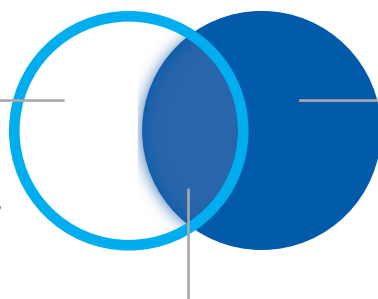


**Magdalena
Sepúlveda Carmona**
Director, UNRISD

The only UN entity dedicated entirely to research on **social development**.

UN embedment

Direct access to global policy frameworks, multilateral negotiations, and Member States.



Academic independence

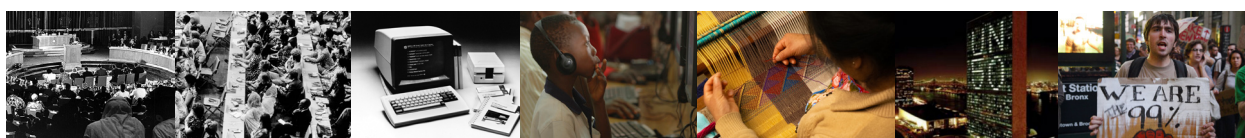
Autonomous governance, free from political agendas, asking the neglected questions about power and redistribution.

The UNRISD advantage

Turning complex social realities from the global South into actionable, evidence-based policy at the highest levels of global governance.

UNRISD is an autonomous research institute within the UN system with a mandate to address the social dimensions of contemporary development issues. Since 1963, we have asked the difficult questions on neglected issues in development processes—about power, politics and redistribution. Our ultimate goal is to support transformative change through positioning equity, inclusion and justice at the centre of sustainable development policy and practice.

62 years of research for social change



1960s

Pioneering Social and Human Indicators of Development

1970s

Exploring the Social and Political Dynamics of Modernization

1980s

Promoting a Holistic and Multidisciplinary Approach to Social Development

1990s

Anticipating the Social Effects of Globalization

2000s

Taking Global Responsibility for Social Development

2010s

From Crisis and Uncertainty to the Promise of Transformative Change

2020s

Overcoming Inequalities: Towards a New Eco-Social Contract

The polycrisis requires a new paradigm

Trust in existing social contracts is eroding. Addressing the triple planetary crisis and growing inequalities demands an immediate shift from fragmented reactions to structural transformations.

The Conventional Response

Fragmented
and Reactive

GDP-Centric
Measurement

Gender-Blind
Climate Policy

Residual Social
Protection

The UNRISD Vision

Intersectional
and Proactive

Life Economics and
Beyond-GDP Metrics

The Climate-Care Nexus

Universal Transformative
Social Policy

A holistic framework for socioeconomic transformation

Transformative Social Policy

Promoting universal, rights-based social policy as a driving force for inclusive and sustainable development.

Environmental and Climate Justice

Assessing and addressing the justice dimensions of environmental and climate change.



Alternative Economies for Transformation

Building better economic alternatives for a fair and sustainable future.

Gender Justice and Development

Researching the most pressing social issues and transforming policies to advance gender justice.

One unified vision. Climate, gender and economic and social policies are inextricably linked. UNRISD provides the holistic framework to help address the crisis simultaneously and design better policies to overcome inequalities.

Through four core pillars, we turn this vision into action:

01

**Transformative
Research**

02

**Global
South
Expertise**

03

**Convening
Power**

04

**Policy
Relevance**

Pillar 1

Transformative Research

Producing independent, policy-oriented evidence to drive systemic change rooted in equity, inclusion, and justice.

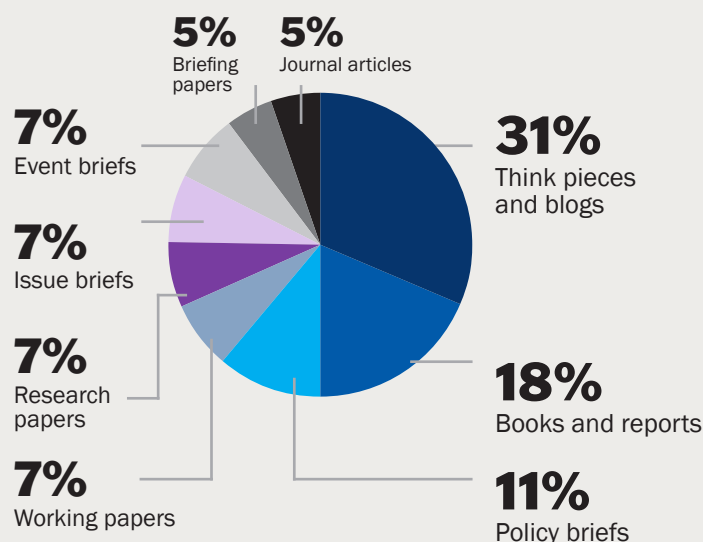
UNRISD produces independent, policy-oriented research that addresses the root causes of inequality. We provide the evidence required to reimagine development policy and advance more equitable and sustainable societies.

Serving as an incubator of ideas, we generate forward-looking analysis that challenges dominant narratives and helps shape more transformative rights-based approaches to social development.

53

Research outputs generating evidence for systemic change, downloaded **55.8k times.**

Our research portfolio in 2025



62%

of contributing authors hail from the global South.

67%

of contributing voices are women.

511

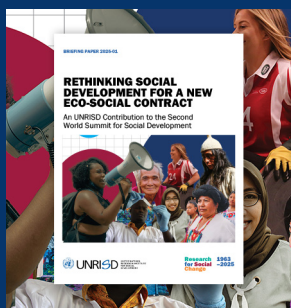
bibliographic citations across 9 languages.

44%

increase from 2024
95% academia;
led by **Africa (29%)**
and **Asia (24%).**

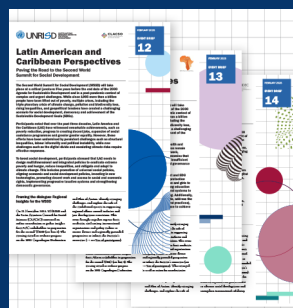
Highlights from the Library

Focus on the Second World Summit for Social Development



BRIEFING PAPER

Rethinking Social Development for A New Eco-Social Contract



EVENT BRIEFS

Regional Dialogues

Paving the Road to the Second World Summit for Social Development



THINK PIECE SERIES

Beyond Copenhagen

Rethinking Social Development for the 21st Century



WORKING PAPER

Inclusive Peace for Social Development

→ [Explore all publications](#)

Books and reports



REPORT

Ensuring Justice in Transition

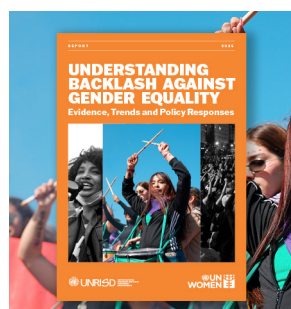
A Gender-Transformative Approach



REPORT

Just Transition and Care Work

An International Inquiry



REPORT

Understanding Backlash Against Gender Equality

Evidence, Trends and Policy Responses

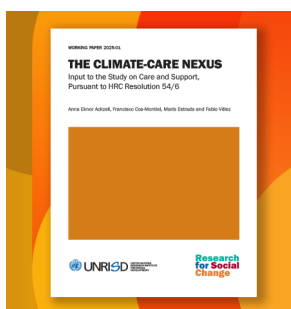


BOOK CHAPTER

Shaping a New Development Strategy beyond 2030

The Transformative Potential of the Social & Solidarity Economy

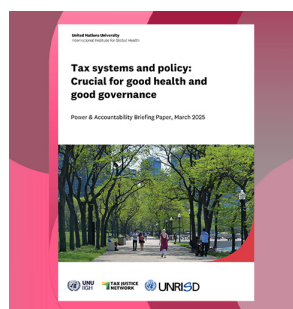
Papers



WORKING PAPER

The Climate-Care Nexus

Input to the Study on Care and Support Pursuant to HRC Resolution 54/6



BRIEFING PAPER

Tax Systems and Policy

Crucial for Good Health and Good Governance



POLICY BRIEF

Catalysing Care's Potential

A G20 Fiscal, Economic and Social Strategy for Equality



POLICY BRIEF

Leveraging Life Economies in the G20 Agenda

Pillar 2

Global South Expertise

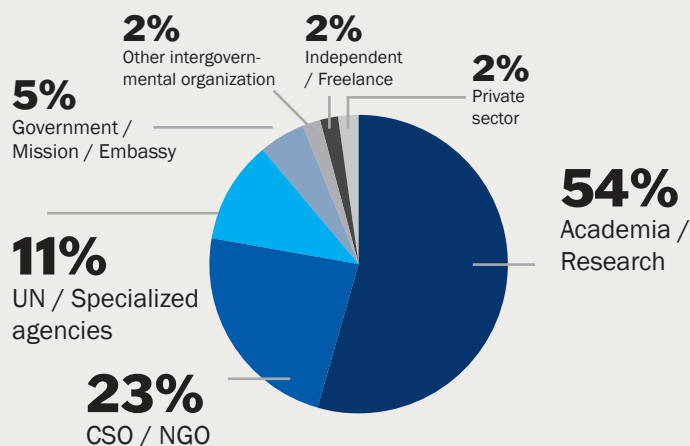
Co-creating knowledge to centre excluded voices and challenge dominant narratives.

Equitable global governance requires equitable knowledge production. UNRISD works with a diverse network of researchers, practitioners, and communities to generate cutting-edge interdisciplinary research and policy insights grounded in local realities. By co-designing research with scholars and institutions across the global South, we amplify underrepresented perspectives and help ensure that global debates are informed by the experiences, priorities, and knowledge of those most affected by development challenges.

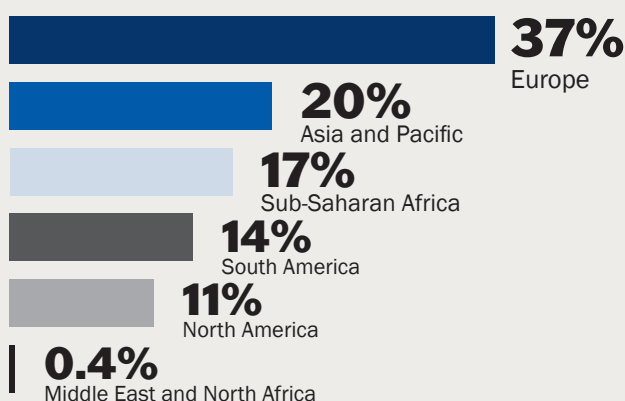
483

Network members driving global research.

Where our network works



Where our network is from



46%
of network members hail from the global South.

57%
of network members are women.

Top Voices in 2025

On the occasion of UNRISD's 62nd anniversary, we sought to celebrate not only a history of transformative ideas, but also the people behind them: researchers, advocates, and change makers who have either shaped, or been shaped by, UNRISD's work. Top voices from our network, including UN colleagues, academics, ambassadors, and partners, reflect on the breadth of the Institute's influence and the continued relevance of our research in global social development debates.

“

UNRISD occupies a special place within the UN family because its research and advocacy draws together issues that are dealt with across the UN in order to highlight the social dimensions of all development work. In the troubled times in which we find ourselves, this steady focus on people and what matters to them is more needed than ever.”

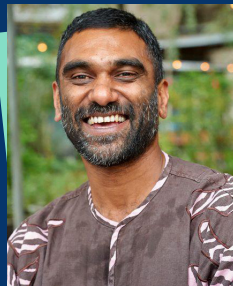
Naila Kabeer
Professor of Gender and Development
London School of Economics (LSE)
UNRISD Board Member



“

UNRISD has consistently provided a platform for activists, academics, policy makers and others to critically explore our broken social contracts, the root causes of breakdown and the rising inequalities of modern society. I am pleased to be part of the processes to think about policy and institutional reform to build greater social and climate justice.”

Kumi Naidoo
Human rights+environmental justice activist



“

UNRISD has produced excellent, cutting-edge research and policy analysis on social issues—blending rigor, bold vision, and UN values. Works like “The Visible Hands” and “Targeting and Universalism” by the inspiring Director Thandika Mkandawire and his team marked a generation—and remain a guiding reference in our work today.”

Isabel Ortiz
Director of Global Social Justice, Former
Director at ILO & UNICEF



“

Investigations for evidence are the foundation of planning and the path to success. No investigation, no right to speak and make decisions. In a new period of turbulence and transformation, we should seek truth from facts, realize that all humans share a common future, and make the right choice.”

H.E. Mr. SHEN Jian
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary (Disarmament),
Deputy Permanent Representative of
China to the United Nations in Geneva



“

Evidence-based policies are fundamental to using accumulated experience as the foundation for socially impactful policies. They are key to transforming global commitments into solutions tailored to local contexts. Investing in independent research provides objectivity and builds trust, while enabling the generation of locally driven knowledge to design and implement policies that are fairer, more effective, and sustainable.”

H.E. Mrs. Claudia Fuentes Julio
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary, Permanent
Representative of Chile
to the United Nations in Geneva



“

For over 30 years I had the great fortune to conduct and direct UNRISD research. UNRISD punched well above its weight, providing a unique space within the United Nations system to monitor the social and environmental impacts of policy, explore real world alternatives for equity and justice, and speak truth to power. To do so via an extensive global network of collaborating researchers, free from government and donor influence, was a truly remarkable achievement.”

Peter Utting
Former Deputy Director, UNRISD



“

Anyone who has worked in the UN system and is familiar with UNRISD's research would agree that the Institute provides a very unique and incredibly valuable space within the UN system where cutting-edge research on issues of social development can be conducted in an interdisciplinary manner and free from political pressure. This is not only an asset for the entire UN system—but also a public good that should be preserved and nurtured!”

Shahra Razavi
Director, Universal Social Protection
Department International, Labour
Organization (ILO)



“

UNRISD occupies a unique place within the UN System. Elevating voices of the global South, it has a track record of 'seeing around the corner', well ahead of the mainstream. From Transformative Social Policy to Eco-Social Compact, UNRISD has blazed the path towards a just, equitable, and sustainable future.”

Jimi Adesina
Professor and SARChI Chair in Social
Policy, University of South Africa



“

In a constantly changing world marked by uncertainty, extremism and disinformation, while facing climate emergency and social inequalities, it's our responsibility to defend strong and committed public services to strengthen equality and social justice. Independent research plays a fundamental role, producing reliable data and establishing dialogue between institutions, researchers, and citizens.”

Christina Kitsos
Vice-President, Executive Council of the
City of Geneva



“

UNRISD has always insisted that social relations, institutions and justice lie at the heart of development, that unheard voices must be brought into the development conversation, and that inequalities must be central to UN concerns.”

Sarah Cook
Professor, University of Nottingham
Ningbo China, Former UNRISD Director



“

Along the years, UNRISD has produced groundbreaking work that is then taken forward in academia and policy circles. UNRISD's work on care policies is a great example, first the conceptualization of the “care diamond” and then of “transformative care policies”, which was later taken on board by the ILO and by the UN System as a whole. UNRISD can certainly be credited for being amongst the first to put these issues in the policy agenda.”

Valeria Esquivel
Employment Policies and Gender
Specialist, International Labour
Organization (ILO)



“

Under a succession of inspired leaders, UNRISD has specialised in mobilising outstanding networks of theorists, researchers and practitioners on frontier development issues. These networks have a global impact by debating and spreading new ideas. I consider UNRISD to be an important thought leader of the UN system.”

Edmund FitzGerald
Emeritus Professor, International
Development Finance Oxford Department
of International Development University
of Oxford



Pillar 3

Convening Power

Bridging research, policy and practice through trusted spaces for cross-sector dialogue and exchange.

UNRISD acts as a leading knowledge broker at the intersection of grassroots realities, rigorous academia, and multilateral power, convening and catalyzing exchange across academic, policy, and practitioner communities to connect diverse forms of knowledge and build consensus where it is most needed.

Through seminars, workshops, panels, and conferences, we create trusted spaces for dialogue, mutual learning, and the exchange of diverse perspectives, with particular attention to under-represented voices and alternative policy approaches. By translating rigorous analysis into accessible dialogue, UNRISD strengthens the links between evidence, policy, and practice, fostering more inclusive and informed global debates.

91

co-organized events fostering dialogue and collective solutions for social development.

791

Featured speakers

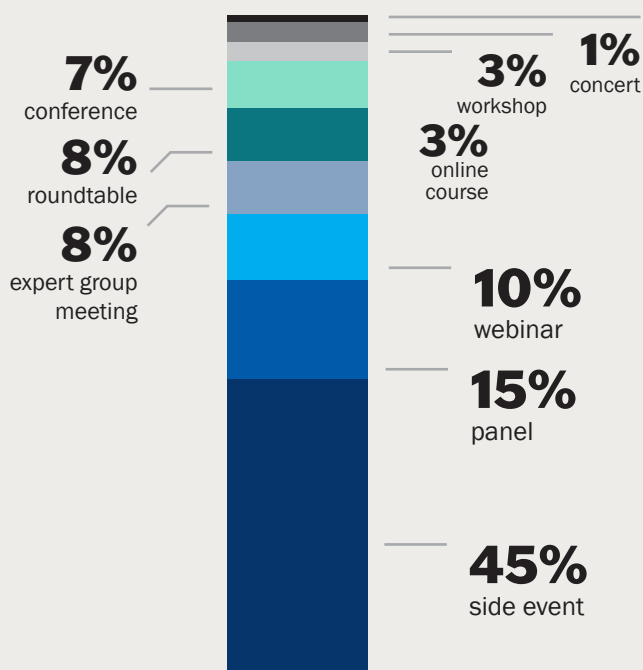
63%

of invited speakers are women.

62%

from the global South.

Our event portfolio in 2025



Highlights

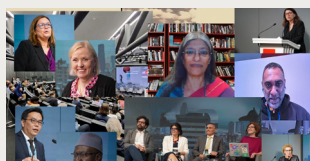
Key UN Policy Processes in 2025

Throughout 2025, UNRISD leveraged its convening power and research expertise to contribute to key United Nations policy processes through a series of high-level events that brought evidence, diverse perspectives, and innovative policy solutions into global discussions. These convenings addressed some of the most pressing social development challenges of our time, including social justice, financing for development, care systems, climate action, digital inclusion, social protection, and eco-social transformation.



Our most engaged events in 2025

In 2025, UNRISD convened a diverse range of events bringing together policy makers, experts, youth, and civil society, from high-level discussions on the future of social development, AI, and women's rights to cultural and youth events. A highlight was the first UNRISD International Youth Forum, that introduced new approaches for youth engagement.



Beyond 2030: The Future of Social Development in a Changing World



Shaping the Political Declaration at the Second World Summit for Social Development



Advancing Feminist Foreign and Development Policies: Where to?



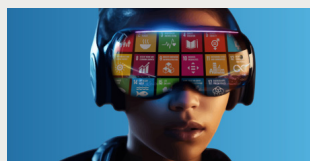
International Forum "We, the Youth" (IFWY)



UNRISD at the XVI Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean



World Social Work Day 2025—Advancing Social Rights for Persons with Disabilities



UN Virtual Worlds Day 2025: Delivering on the Pact for the Future



World Day of Social Justice: Special Concert at the UN

Pillar 4

Policy Relevance

Informing norms, policies and multilateral processes through advisory and evidence-based engagement.

UNRISD actively engages with the United Nations system, Member States, and multilateral processes to ensure that independent research informs the norms, policies, and practices that shape social development. Through advisory contributions, policy engagement, and strategic partnerships, we translate evidence into actionable insights that support more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development pathways.

By connecting research with decision-making processes, UNRISD helps strengthen global policy debates and contributes to the development of rights-based approaches to social and economic transformation.

UNRISD's advisory role

Advisory engagement is a core, though often less visible, component of UNRISD's work, accounting for 30% of the Institute's activities. Through participation in advisory bodies, task forces, and expert groups, UNRISD contributes directly to shaping global policy processes and strengthening coherence across key areas of sustainable development.

72

**advisory activities
informing
multilateral
processes**

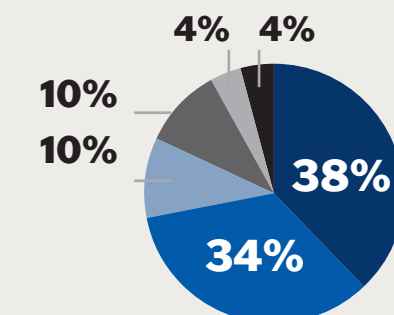
**accounting for 30%
of UNRISD work.**

40

**Working group and
taskforce memberships**

- 45% United Nations system and inter-agency mechanisms,
- 30% Academic
- 25% Global Alliances

Ways we advise



- Informal consultation
- Standing membership
- Training and learning
- Inputs to UN
- Peer review
- High-level consultation

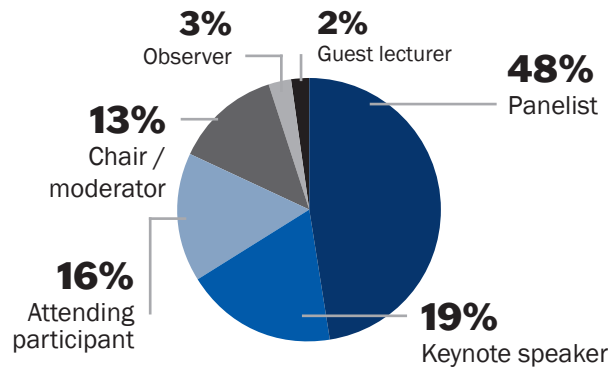
A Trusted Voice in Global Policy Debates

Providing expertise to global policy discussions is another important component of UNRISD's work. As a trusted voice on social development issues, the Institute is regularly invited to contribute evidence and insights as a speaker, moderator, and expert participant across the United Nations system, intergovernmental forums, and multi-stakeholder platforms, informing policy discussions at global, regional, and national levels.

60

External events bringing expert voices into global policy debates.

Ways we engage



Advancing multilateral cooperation through strategic partnerships and alliances

In 2025, UNRISD strengthened its institutional presence and influence through a series of high-level partnerships, cooperation agreements, and leadership engagements. By forging strategic alliances with governments, international organizations, and global platforms, the Institute reinforced its role as a trusted partner in shaping multilateral debates and translating shared commitments into sustained collaboration and impact.



Fifth Meeting of the Bureau of the Commission for Social Development, Sixty-Fourth Session

9 December 2025, New York



UNRISD Puts Gender Backlash in the Spotlight at International Gender Champions Biannual Meeting

5 December 2025, Geneva



UNRISD Joins the Newly Launched North South Futures Forum to Shape Progressive Multilateral Futures

4 December 2025, New York



UNRISD Director Engages with Spanish Government on International Cooperation and the 2030 Agenda

28 November 2025, Madrid



First Leaders' Meeting of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty

3 November 2025, Doha



UNRISD Joins Regional G20 Expert Group to Advance Life Economies Approaches

20 July 2025, Skukuza



UNRISD Strengthens Commitment at Global Coalition for Social Justice Forum

12 June 2025, Geneva



UNRISD Joins Global Leaders at Hamburg Sustainability Conference to Drive Just Transition

3 June 2025, Hamburg

UNRISD Model in Action

How we helped shape an inclusive, participatory and actionable Second World Summit for Social Development

The Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) provided a unique opportunity for UNRISD to demonstrate how its integrated approach generates impact—from research and dialogue to global policy outcomes.

UNRISD played a key role in shaping the policy discussions and outcomes of WSSD2, ensuring that evidence-based and inclusive perspectives informed both Summit negotiations and the Doha Political Declaration. This work strengthened partnerships, elevated perspectives from the global South, and helped ensure that evidence-informed social policy solutions were reflected in global discussions on sustainable development.



Generating Evidence for Action

UNRISD produced a substantial body of knowledge to support the Summit process, highlighting issues such as care systems, fiscal justice, digital inclusion, social protection, and eco-social transformation.

Key results

- **18 publications** linked to WSSD2
- **4 regional event briefs** produced
- **2 research papers** informed Summit discussions
- **70%+** authors from the **global South**
- **62% women** authors



Bringing Regional Voices into Global Policy

Through consultations across Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central Asia, and Northern Europe, UNRISD gathered regional and local stakeholder perspectives on inequality, social protection, climate justice, governance, and employment.

Key results

- **519 stakeholders** consulted globally
- **4 regional consultations**
- **50% women** participants
- **1 high-level consultation** with WSSD2 co-facilitators to present findings



Convening Across Borders, Sectors, and Ideas

Through a wide range of side events, roundtables, and solution-oriented dialogues, the Institute brought together governments, UN agencies, civil society, researchers, and practitioners in spaces designed to bridge knowledge and policy.

Key results

- **27 events** co-convened in partnership with **9 Member States** and collaboration with **47 international organizations** and civil society partners.



Shaping the Doha Political Declaration

UNRISD's research and policy engagement contributed to discussions reflected in the **Doha Political Declaration**, including commitments related to:

- Social protection
- Care systems
- Inclusive employment
- Climate justice
- Digital inclusion
- Economic governance

This demonstrates UNRISD's ability to **translate research into policy impact** and guide actionable commitments at the global level.

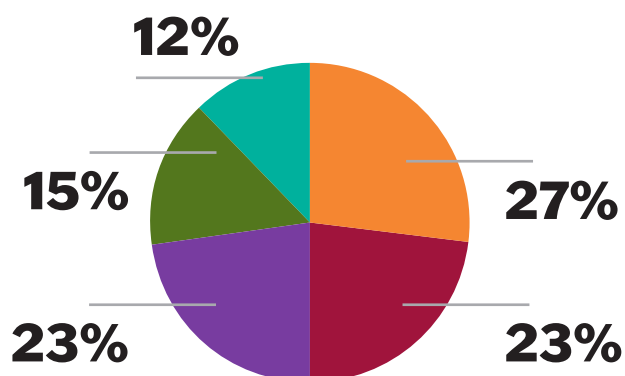
UNRISD research engine

Our research portfolio

5 **26**

Programmes Projects

- Transformative Social Policy
- Gender Justice and Development
- Alternative Economies for Transformation
- Environmental and Climate Justice
- Translating Research to Policy and Practice



Our priority concerns

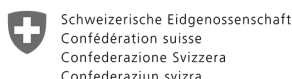
- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| AI and digital technologies | Justice |
| Alternative economies | Just transitions |
| Capacity development | Measurements and indicators |
| Climate justice | New eco-social contracts |
| Economy of care | Social and solidarity economy |
| Feminist foreign policy | Social development |
| Gender backlash | Social policy |
| Inequalities | Social protection |
| Intersectionality | Sustainable development |

Geographic focus

- Global
- Asia
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Middle East and North Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa

Funding partners*

Institutional partners



Selected project-specific partners



A selection of project funding partners is shown. We gratefully acknowledge all donors and partners who supported our work during the reporting period.

A Renewed Global Commitment to Social Development

In 2025, social policy resurfaced on the international agenda, taking centre stage at the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD2) in Doha. Despite a challenging context, a new consensus was reached among Member States, who agreed to increase investment in social protection and services, gender equality, decent work, social inclusion, and the elimination of poverty and hunger, while also ensuring sufficient and equitable financing. UNRISD played a pivotal role in this process by convening expert dialogues, producing background research and collaborating with UN partners and civil society to make the process more participatory, inclusive and evidence-based. The Doha Summit was clearly a highlight for UNRISD, and the renewed commitment to social development offers hope in difficult times. Moving forward, implementing the Doha Political Declaration must be based on diverse knowledge and robust research evidence. This will also require effective partnerships, strong alliances, and networks. The Transformative Social Programme (TSP) projects have contributed research evidence, training and alliance building, through the socialprotection.org knowledge platform, by mobilizing professional communities such as social workers, by generating knowledge on the role of elites in reproducing inequalities, by investigating economic policies for a green and fair transition, and by mobilizing the global health community on the importance of tax issues.

[→ See full programme](#)



Key Highlights 2025

Advancing Disability Inclusion and Transforming Care Systems

UNRISD contributed to global disability inclusion debates by centering social rights for persons with disabilities and a caring society that recognizes the autonomy of persons with disabilities, as well as their roles in receiving and providing care.

As part of the 2025 World Social Work Day celebration, speakers shared lived experiences and highlighted the crucial role of social workers, innovative inclusion projects, and inclusive economies and labour markets. Stakeholders issued a powerful call for centering on solidarity, addressing structural barriers and power imbalances, reshaping value systems, and co-producing action with local governments and policy makers. UNRISD also pledged to advance disability rights at the 2025 Global Disability Summit in Berlin.

● **Impact:** Reframed global disability inclusion debates toward inclusive economic and care systems approaches, highlighting structural barriers and the need for systemic policy reform and access to social rights.

Scaling Global Knowledge on Social Protection

In 2025, UNRISD's hosted platform, socialprotection.org, strengthened its role as a leading global platform for social protection knowledge and collaboration, growing its community to 17,346 members and expanding its repository to more than 14,900 publications. The platform convened global discussions through 47 webinars reaching over 9,000 participants, supported learning through 1,562 course enrolments, with 720 certificates issued. The platform also advanced strategic partnerships on universal social protection and supported global campaigns against hunger, poverty, and inequality.

● **Impact:** Strengthened global knowledge, learning, and policy dialogue on universal, inclusive, and equitable social protection systems.

Rethinking Economic Systems for Climate Justice and Post-Growth Futures

Supporting the CLIMACRO project led by the University of Lausanne, UNRISD informed research on post-growth macro-financial systems and climate-just economic transformation.

Project workshops explored democratic economic planning, monetary reform, and investment systems aligned with ecological limits. Key debates focused on managing inflation, debt constraints, and enabling green transitions in low-growth contexts.

● **Impact:** Contributing to innovative research on macro-financial reform for climate-just and post-growth transitions emphasizing policy and global South perspectives.

Harnessing Tax Systems for Global Health

UNRISD partnered with the United Nations University International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH), the Tax Justice Network (TJN), and the University of St Andrews on research on taxation and health.

A policy paper on tax systems and health governance was launched at the World Health Assembly and presented at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. The paper calls on the global health community to prioritize equitable and effective tax systems as essential for addressing health inequities and improving governance.

● **Impact:** Elevated fair taxation as a core driver of health equity and provides guidance for health professionals on why and how to engage in tax debates.



Advancing Alternative Economic Models in a Time of Polycrises

In 2025, progress towards the SDGs has been increasingly constrained by overlapping global crises—widening inequalities within and between countries, accelerating environmental degradation, protracted conflicts, democratic backsliding, and declining trust in multilateralism. These challenges have been compounded by powerful countervailing forces, including short-termist policy responses, regressive economic practices, geopolitical fragmentation, and the resurgence of exclusionary and authoritarian development narratives. At the same time, rapid technological change—particularly in digitalization and artificial intelligence—is reshaping markets, labour, governance, and power relations at a pace that continues to outstrip institutional and regulatory capacities. As the 2030 Agenda enters its final stretch, there is growing recognition that incremental reforms are insufficient.

Against this backdrop, Alternative Economies for Transformation (AET) programme has positioned itself as a strategic platform for strengthening counter-movement knowledge, practices, and coalitions that respond to these trends. In 2025, the programme advanced research, policy dialogue, and capacity-building on alternative economic models that place people, the planet, and democratic governance at the centre. Through its work on the social and solidarity economy, Life Economies, sustainability measurement beyond GDP and ESG, and youth through its research and capacity building projects such as APOHS and IFWY, AET has contributed to empowering actors and ideas working towards systemic transformation.

[→ See full programme](#)



Key Highlights 2025

Measuring Sustainability Beyond GDP

UNRISD advanced the Sustainable Development Performance Indicators (SDPI) as a practical framework for measuring sustainability beyond GDP and conventional ESG metrics, emphasizing social outcomes, contextual thresholds, and systemic transformation. New partnerships expanded the SDPI platform and its application in sectors such as tourism and cooperatives. UNRISD also promoted SDPI in major global policy processes, including the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit for Social Development, and the UN's emerging beyond-GDP agenda through the OHCHR Expert Roundtable on Embedding Human Rights in Metrics of Progress.

● **Impact:** Advanced growing global momentum for measuring progress beyond economic growth, helping shape policy discussions on accountability, sustainability, and human-centred development. This influence was reflected in the Doha Declaration, which explicitly recognized beyond-GDP measurement approaches.

Advancing the Social and Solidarity Economy

In the context of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025, UNRISD strengthened its leadership on the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), promoting cooperatives as key drivers of inclusive and sustainable development through research, policy dialogue, and engagement with global platforms such as COPAC and the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on SSE. UNRISD contributed to securing recognition of the SSE in the Doha Declaration and, through COPAC, supported international dialogue leading to the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/80/182, which recognizes cooperatives as key actors in development and establishes a recurring International Year of Cooperatives every ten years.

● **Impact:** Reinforced global recognition of the SSE and cooperatives as drivers of inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development, while contributing to major international policy outcomes.



BOOK CHAPTER

Shaping a New Development Strategy beyond 2030: The Transformative Potential of the Social & Solidarity Economy

Life Economies to Address Inequalities

UNRISD advanced the Life Economies framework in global policy discussions, particularly through the G20 Development Working Group, promoting economic approaches beyond GDP that prioritize social equity, ecological regeneration, and long-term resilience. Key achievements included contributing to a G20 side event on financing the SDGs and Agenda 2063 and co-developing a multi-partner policy brief with UNDP, AUDA-NEPAD, OECD, ADB Institute, and others. UNRISD also served as a knowledge partner under the Brazilian and South African G20 Presidencies.

● **Impact:** Positioned Life Economies within G20 policy processes as a credible framework for addressing inequality, ecological degradation, and structural barriers to sustainable development.



POLICY BRIEF

Leveraging Life Economies in the G20 Agenda

Youth as Agents of Change

UNRISD strengthened youth leadership through the Advanced Programme on Human Rights and Sustainable Development (APOHS) and the International Forum We, the Youth (IFWY), equipping emerging leaders with the knowledge, skills, and global networks based on its research on human rights, sustainable development, and peace.

● **Impact:** Empowered a new generation of global change makers and strengthened youth participation in sustainable development and multilateral cooperation.

Gender Equality Commitments in a Time of Backlash

In 2025, gender equality commitments were increasingly tested where implementation is decided: fiscal choices, institutional capacity and day-to-day delivery. This kept reinforcing a very simple truth: recognition alone is not enough because rights only become real when institutions, budgets and safeguards make them usable in everyday life.

Much of our work approached care as a governance question. Through connected regional and global processes, we linked care governance to fiscal debates, social protection design and the practical question of who carries responsibility for sustaining life, as climate impacts intensify care burdens and expose gaps in resilience.

The year also demanded a sharper response to anti-gender and anti-rights narratives. We combined evidence with spaces for candid policy dialogue on anticipating regression and protecting equality commitments. These dynamics were also visible in multilateral settings, where feminist foreign and development policy commitments were contested. In that context, we fed analysis into ongoing debates to keep attention on implementation, resourcing and accountability.

Throughout the year, the programme kept returning to three main priorities: producing analysis that speaks to power and political economy, convening partners who can act across institutions and sectors, and supporting pathways that move from norms to delivery, informed by grassroots lived experience and field realities.

Cultural change ran through this work, from challenging gender norms around care to strengthening counter-narratives in the face of organized backlash, grounded in the lived realities of those facing overlapping forms of disadvantage.

[→ See full programme](#)

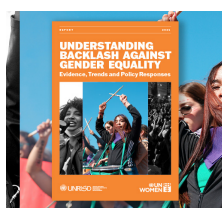


Key Highlights 2025

Countering Gender and LGBTQIA+ Backlash

UNRISD strengthened evidence and dialogue on growing backlash to gender equality and LGBTQIA+ rights. In partnership with UN Women, the Institute published *Understanding Backlash Against Gender Equality: Evidence, Trends and Policy Responses*, one of UNRISD's most-read publications of the year, providing cross-regional evidence and policy recommendations for governments, UN entities, and civil society. UNRISD also convened high-level global dialogues on anti-rights and anti-feminist mobilizations and expanded public engagement through the [Backlash Unfiltered podcast series](#), which amplified diverse perspectives on democratic and gender-just alternatives.

● **Impact:** Strengthened understanding of anti-rights backlash and informed policy and advocacy responses to safeguard progress on gender equality and human rights.



REPORT

Understanding Backlash Against Gender Equality: Evidence, Trends and Policy Responses

Advancing Feminist Approaches to Development Policy

UNRISD advanced feminist approaches to international development through research, training, and policy dialogue. A new report on Feminist Foreign and Development Policies (FFDPs) brought global South perspectives into debates on power, justice, and international solidarity, while training programmes and high-level events engaged policy makers, practitioners, and advocates in exploring feminist responses to growing challenges to gender equality and multilateral cooperation.

● **Impact:** Expanded policy dialogue and capacity on feminist approaches to development, strengthening gender-responsive perspectives in international policy debates.



REPORT

Feminist Foreign and Development Policies: Opportunities and Challenges from a Global South Perspective

Transforming Care Systems for Social Justice and Climate Resilience

UNRISD positioned care as a central pillar of social, economic, and climate policy through research, policy engagement, and partnerships across Latin America and global forums. Work supported the development of national care systems in Chile and Mexico, advanced evidence on the health and economic impacts of unpaid care. At the global level, care achieved major normative advances, including recognition as a human right by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and a UN General Assembly resolution identifying care as a structural development priority. These shifts were reinforced through engagement in CSW69, the G20, COP30, and just transition processes, where care was increasingly integrated into climate and development policy debates.

● **Impact:** Elevated care as a public policy and human rights priority, contributing to its integration into social protection, development, and climate policy frameworks.



WORKING PAPER

Impacto de las labores de cuidado sobre la salud de las personas cuidadoras en Chile—Asistencia técnica

Embedding Intersectionality in Public Policy

UNRISD strengthened capacities to apply intersectional approaches in public policy through regional training programmes targeting public officials, practitioners, and civil society actors across Latin America and the Caribbean. Delivered in partnership with the Organization of American States (OAS) and supported by AECID, the programme focused on policies for Afro-descendant populations and explored how gender, race, class, territory, and age interact to shape inequalities and policy outcomes.

● **Impact:** Strengthened the integration of intersectional approaches into public policy design and implementation, supporting more inclusive and equitable governance frameworks.

Navigating Inequality and Justice in Climate Transitions

Decarbonization efforts addressed some dimensions of the climate crisis, but they also generated new socio-ecological challenges. Who bears the costs, who benefits, and how transitions unfold are empirical questions requiring careful, context-sensitive analysis. Changing human–nature relations and the urgent need for a transition away from fossil fuels form an inescapable backdrop to contemporary political and social dynamics.

These challenges unfold amid a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape that complicates climate action. Climate skepticism, authoritarianism, and far-right movements threaten progress. National policies remain partial and poorly coordinated, while fossil fuel and other corporate interests continue to favor superficial reforms over structural change.

The Environmental and Climate Justice Programme carries out empirically grounded research to highlight the social justice dimensions of decarbonization, informing debates on just transition policy. Key outputs included policy briefs, webinars, and evidence-based recommendations emphasizing the uneven social and geographic impacts of transitions. Across all work, intersectional analysis remained central, with attention to marginalized workers, people with disabilities, informal labour, and social reproductive work.

Through this evidence-based approach, our 2025 work contributed to a more inclusive and effective framing of Just Transition, addressing social implications, geographic unevenness, and the need to bolster environmental governance, while supporting policy makers, civil society, and other stakeholders in navigating the complex social and ecological realities of the decarbonizing world.

[→ See full programme](#)



Key Highlights 2025

Centering Equity and Inclusion in Just Energy Transitions

UNRISD strengthened research and policy engagement on just transitions away from fossil fuels, focusing on equity, labour inclusion and global South perspectives. Work with researchers and civil society documented diverse transition pathways, including decentralized energy systems in Indonesia, renewable energy and women's empowerment in India, ecosystem-based food systems in Colombia, labour union strategies in South Africa, and the role of informal waste pickers in urban transitions. Findings were translated into policy briefs, training materials and policy inputs shared with policy makers, including contributions to COP30 Just Transition Work Programme discussions.

● **Impact:** Expanded evidence on inclusive just transition pathways, strengthening the visibility of global South realities in climate and energy policy debates.



A Gender-Transformative Approach to Just Transition

UNRISD advanced a gender-responsive approach to just transition policy through comparative case studies, think pieces and policy dialogue. Research from Brazil, South Africa and other contexts examined governance models, energy transition trade-offs and labour dynamics, highlighting tensions between efficiency, participation and social justice. Engagement in international platforms such as COP30, the Hamburg Sustainability Conference and the Regional Conference on Women supported dissemination and policy uptake.

● **Impact:** Strengthened integration of gender equality into just transition frameworks, informing more equitable and participatory approaches to energy transition policy.



REPORT

Ensuring Justice in Transition: A Gender-Transformative Approach

Placing Care at the Heart of Just Transitions

UNRISD deepened analysis of the relationship between care systems and just transitions through a global inquiry covering domestic work, healthcare, education, subsistence provisioning and environmental care. The work reframed care as a foundational element of social reproduction within transition processes and highlighted the need to recognize, value and invest in care work in climate and energy policy. This work directly informed international climate policy discussions, including engagement with the COP30 Just Transition Work Programme, where care was positioned within emerging debates on just and inclusive transition pathways. Findings were shared through the Just Transition Care Network and global policy dialogues.

● **Impact:** Advanced recognition of care as a core pillar of just transition policy, contributing to placing it at the centre of COP30 discussions and advancing more socially grounded and inclusive climate transition strategies.



REPORT

Just Transition and Care Work: An International Inquiry

From Global Commitments to Action

Translating Research into Policy and Practice

In 2025, the world continued to be in crisis-mode, grappling with unprecedented global warming, economic shocks, growing inequalities, geopolitical tensions and violent conflicts. Multilateralism and the international global order were under attack, and development aid has been shrinking. Many citizens lost trust and perceived existing social contracts as ineffective or unfair. In this challenging context, the UN convened two major summits, the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville and the second World Summit for Social Development in Doha, and adopted two landmark agreements, committing member states to place social development and the mobilization of financial resources for SDG acceleration at the centre of their development policies. COP30 in Belém, Brazil, emphasized the need for just transition policies to make decarbonization of our economies socially just and politically feasible, and the G20 summit in South Africa put a spotlight on wealth and income concentration in the hands of the few as one of the greatest challenges the world is facing. Supporting these processes and translating research into accessible formats, the Bonn programme contributed to evidence-based action and engaged diverse audiences, from students and researchers to policy makers and civil society, through lectures, training sessions, webinars, policy roundtables, high-level events in Germany and contributions to the major UN processes, centring on the vision of new eco-social contracts as a long-term solution for sustainability and social justice.

[→ See full programme](#)



Key Highlights 2025

Academic and Training Initiatives for SDG Capacity Building

UNRISD strengthened capacity development through academic training and knowledge exchange with partner institutions in Bonn. Contributions included sessions at the IDOS Shaping Futures Academy on intersecting inequalities and inclusive eco-social contracts, and engagements with UNU Master's students on inclusion, diversity and intersectionality as well as discussions on careers in international development.

● **Impact:** Strengthened understanding of intersectional inequality, diversity and inclusive development approaches among students, researchers and practitioners engaged in SDG implementation.



→ Head of Bonn Office presenting at Global Solutions Summit in Berlin T20 Session on Innovative Instruments and Options for SDG Financing

Strengthening the Bonn UN Hub Collaboration

UNRISD deepened collaboration within the Bonn ecosystem through joint activities with UNU-EHS, UNESCO-UIL and the Foundation for Development and Peace (sef:), focusing on future skills, applied research and institutional strategy development. A key milestone was a strategic consultation with UN agencies, NGOs and research partners contributing to the UNRISD Institutional Strategy 2026–2030, reinforcing alignment with partner priorities and shared research agendas. In May, UNRISD presented at the Global Solutions Summit in Berlin on SDG financing, and at the Hamburg Sustainability Conference in June on just transition pathways. Engagement with civil society included a WSSD2-related public event co-hosted with the German United Nations Association (DGVN), Global Policy Forum Europe (GPF Europe), Bread for the World (BftW), and Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF), bringing together high-level

political representatives and experts while strengthening UNRISD visibility in global debates on social protection, gender equality and sustainability.

● **Impact:** Strengthened institutional collaboration within the Bonn UN Hub, visibility of UNRISD research in high-level policy events in Germany, and public awareness regarding WSSD2.



→ UNRISD co-hosting a public event on Perspectives on the second World Summit for Social Development in Berlin.

Informing SDG Implementation through Eco-Social Contracts

UNRISD advanced global dialogue on eco-social contracts through presentations in international policy and research forums, including the World Social Summit in Doha, the High-Level Political Forum, and the 3rd UNITAR Research Conference in Brussels. Presentations highlighted feminist, Indigenous and social movement perspectives on governance, inequality and ecological transformation, drawing on a new open-access edited volume *Eco-Social Contracts for Sustainable and Just Futures*, co-published with Springer.

● **Impact:** Elevated eco-social contracts as a framework for addressing inequality, ecological crisis and governance challenges, channeling innovative proposals for equitable eco-social transitions into global policy and research debates.



BOOK
Eco-Social Contracts for Sustainable and Just Futures

Global Research and Action Network for a New Eco-Social Contract

In 2025, the Global Research and Action Network on a New Eco-Social Contract (GRAN-ESC) advanced its efforts to strengthen collaboration among policy makers, researchers, and activists worldwide. Membership levels remained consistent with the previous year. The website recorded 2,040 pageviews in 2025, indicating steady and growing interest in eco-social contracts and the Network's work.

The working groups remained central to GRAN-ESC's activities and continued to provide a vibrant platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and coordinated action. The working groups on Gender Justice and Transforming Economies and Societies met bimonthly, while the working group on Disabilities and Intersectionalities convened monthly throughout the year. The Working Group on Network Strategy and Foresight met three times to support strategic alignment across the Network. In addition, an ad-hoc Impact and Action working group was established to engage with the process leading to the Second World Summit for Social Development, sharing information and exploring opportunities for joint events and publications.

Working groups contributed to strengthened knowledge exchange, deeper collaboration among members, and a range of substantive outputs. A notable achievement was the seven-part blog series "[The New Hot War on Women's Rights: 30 Years Post-Beijing](#)", produced by the Gender Justice working group. In total, the Network published [nine thought-provoking blogs](#) during the reporting period.

Network members also represented GRAN-ESC at key global events. A member of the working group on Disabilities and Intersectionalities participated as speaker at [World Social Work Day 2025](#) on the theme "Caring Societies for All: Advancing Social Rights for Persons with Disabilities." The group also contributed to [Amnesty UK's 2025 Intersectional Panel](#) for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, underscoring the importance of disabled leadership and inclusive approaches to eco-social contracts.

A major new output related to the network is the edited volume on [Eco-Social Contracts for Sustainable and Just Futures: Mobilising Collective Power to Deal with the 21st Century Polycrisis](#), published by Springer and UNRISD in February 2026, and edited by four members of GRAN-ESC. This open-access volume presents eco-social contracts as a bold and actionable framework for addressing the major interconnected crises of our time, including climate change, biodiversity loss, rising inequality, and the erosion of public trust and democratic legitimacy.

Working groups

Gender justice

Transforming economies and societies

Network strategy and foresight

Disabilities, intersectionalities, eco-social contracts

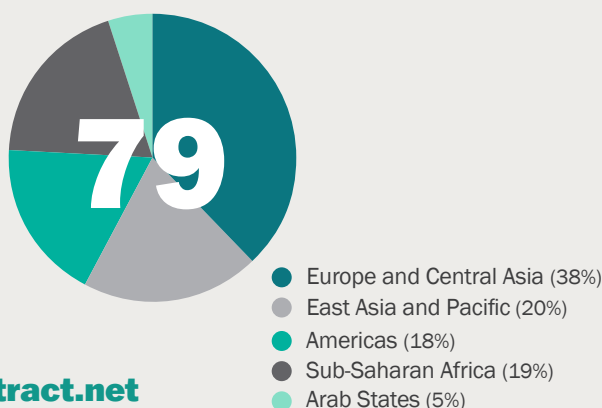
WSSD2 impact and action

Number of members



Join the network
www.ecosocialcontract.net

Countries represented



Sectors represented



Engaging the **next generation** of change makers.

Fostering ideas, creativity and youth action for social change

Transforming policy requires a mandate from the future. In 2025, UNRISD brought ideas, art, and youth engagement to the forefront of its work, creating dynamic spaces to inspire reflection, dialogue, and action on social justice and sustainable development. From the first-ever International Forum We The Youth (IFWY) and the Advanced Programme on Human Rights and Sustainable Development (APOHS) that empowered young leaders to co-create solutions for inclusive and ethical development to the special World Day of Social Justice concert that amplified the voices of youth and artists from the global South—these initiatives reimagined bottom-up participation, proving that complex research can be translated into powerful cultural expression.

YOUTH TRAINING

APOHS 2025: Empowering the next generation of sustainable development leaders

Since 2023, UNRISD and the Hyundai Motor Chung Mong-Koo Foundation have implemented the Advance Programme on Human Rights and Sustainable Development (APOHS), a flagship training for young professionals committed to human rights-based sustainable development. The 2025 edition (23 June–2 July), led by the Alternative Economies for Transformation Programme, convened 10 participants from across Asia, who engaged with experts from the WTO, OHCHR, WHO, ILO and WEF through interactive sessions and practical exercises, strengthening skills, networks, and leadership. Building on this experience, APOHS 2026 will expand into an eight-month, capstone-based format combining online learning, mentorship, and a Geneva study visit to deepen applied research and policy impact.



YOUTH FORUM

The International Forum, “We, the Youth”



The International Forum We, the Youth (IFWY), led by the Alternative Economies for Transformation Programme, marked a major milestone in youth-led global policy engagement in 2025. Through a structured, multi-stage process, over 141 youth representatives (“Explorers”) from six regional dialogues deliberated on shared global challenges and co-produced a Global List of Recommendations. This culminated in the endorsement of the Eunpyeong Declaration, outlining nine priority areas for systemic transformation across climate justice, digital ethics, economic transformation and social justice. The process engaged over 26,000 subscribers across 169 countries, demonstrating strong global reach and participation.

26K

subscribers across
169 countries.

From Dialogue to Global Policy Influence

IFWY transformed youth deliberation into policy influence by presenting recommendations at the UN World Summit for Social Development and contributing to climate advocacy at COP30. The election of 48 Youth Navigators established a lasting leadership structure to sustain engagement, representation, and policy follow-up.

300

catalysts selected through
peer voting across six
regional dialogues.

Youth Priorities for Systemic Transformation

Across six thematic areas, youth advanced an integrated vision for global change, prioritizing institutionalized participation in decision-making, equitable education, gender equality, ethical technology governance, climate justice, and universal access to essential resources as foundations for a more inclusive and sustainable future.

48

elected navigators,
representing 29 countries,
as youth representatives.

Accountability, Peace and Global Cooperation

Youth identified peace and cooperation as cross-cutting priorities, calling for stronger diplomacy, conflict prevention, and dialogue. They also proposed a Global Accountability and Transparency Index to monitor government, corporate, and international commitments, strengthening accountability in global governance.

6

regional declarations
and 1 global declaration
(Eunpyeong Declaration)
outlining 9 priorities areas.

Cultural Solidarity and Global Reach

The forum combined policy engagement with cultural diplomacy, including the historic Solidarity U&I Concert in Seoul at Gyeongbokgung Palace, the first ever K-pop event at this heritage site, which amplified youth messages to a global audience and reinforced the role of culture in policy advocacy.

The IFWY Regional Dialogues

Latin America
and the Caribbean

Africa and the
Middle East

Asia and
the Pacific

Europe

North America

Korean Dialogue



The IFWY Final Conference and Solidarity U&I Concert



Partners

MBC

green chorus
eunpyeong

한양대학교
HANYANG UNIVERSITY

DK
DEBATE KOREA

POLICY MEETS ART

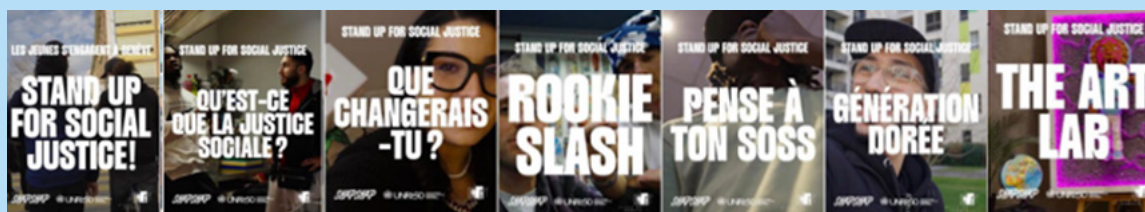
Stand Up for Social Justice! Special Concert at the Palais des Nations



Curated by UNRISD Communications and Outreach team, the second edition of *Stand Up for Social Justice!* transformed the United Nations into a space where culture, dialogue and activism converge. Held on World Social Justice Day 2025 and co-hosted by UNRISD and SHAP SHAP, with support from the City of Geneva, UN Office at Geneva and in collaboration with the Antiguel Festival, the event brought together in the iconic Human Rights room of the Palais des Nations, artists, activists and collectives from the global South and beyond, amplifying youth voices and reinforcing storytelling as a driver of social justice.

A focus on youth and the future of justice

The 2025 edition highlighted youth leadership and intergenerational dialogue, aligned with the Pact of the Future and the road to the World Social Summit 2025. A [short documentary](#) with Geneva youth, supported by the Mayor of Geneva and local partners, connected global social justice themes with lived local realities, reinforcing youth inclusion and civic engagement.



Artists amplifying social change

The programme featured artists whose work reflects resistance, identity and cultural innovation, including Brisa Flow (Mapuche artist blending rap and Indigenous knowledge), OCEVNE (Swiss R&B artist highlighting empowerment and collaboration), and Idjahure Terena (poet and researcher centering Indigenous memory and rights). The event ranked among the Top 3 most-viewed UNRISD social media moments of 2025. It reaffirmed art as a powerful tool for translating research and social development issues into accessible, emotional and collective expression.

Strengthening Bridges in International Geneva

With a sold-out audience of 700 for the second consecutive year, the event strengthened connections between international Geneva and local communities. By opening the Palais des Nations through art and dialogue, it enhanced visibility, trust and collaboration across institutions, cultural actors and youth networks.

OUR PARTNERS

A diverse coalition of partners driving independent research.

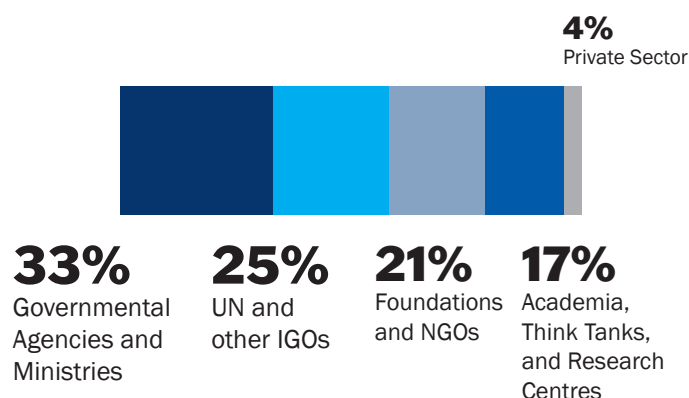
As an autonomous institute funded entirely by voluntary contributions, UNRISD's diverse funding base reflects the institutional trust it has built over time in the relevance and impact of its work. This independence ensures that its research remains guided by academic rigor and social relevance, rather than political influence.

\$3.1M

Total capital leveraged to activate policy transformation.

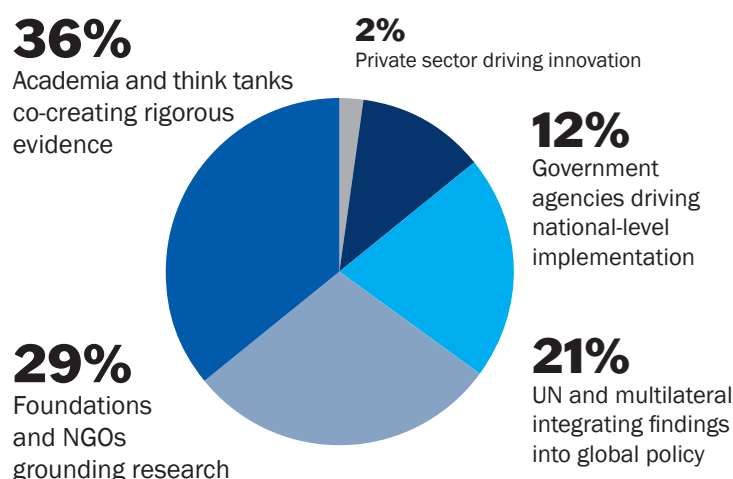
24

Donors



127

Strategic partners engaged in 2025



In 2025, UNRISD maintained high retention rates across 24 active donors, and strengthened its role as a trusted convener and catalyst for collaboration, engaging with 127 organizations across a wide range of sectors and regions. This diverse ecosystem reflects our commitment to co-creating knowledge, informing policy, and advancing inclusive and sustainable development.

GOVERNANCE

Inside UNRISD: Governance and people

The unique value of UNRISD lies in its dual identity: academic independence and UN policy relevance. Reporting to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) through biennial submissions to the Commission for Social Development, UNRISD is guided by a Board of independent academics who ensure that its research agenda remains grounded in scholarly rigor and social relevance, rather than political pressure.

Scientific autonomy at the heart of the United Nations Board members, 2025

Composed of prominent thinkers from across the globe, the Board provides strategic oversight and safeguards the Institute's mandate to ask difficult questions about power, politics, and redistribution within the UN system. Currently chaired by Azita Berar Awad, the Board reflects a deep commitment to diverse representation, with 60% women members and experts representing ten countries, 70% of whom hail from the global South.

70%
global South

10
countries

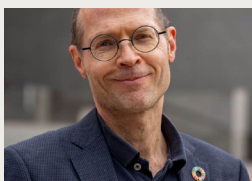
60%
women



Azita Berar Awad
Chair of the Board
Iran / Switzerland



Jenina Joy Chavez
Philippines



Olivier De Schutter
Belgium



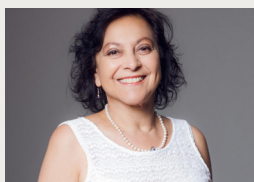
Naila Kabeer
Bangladesh



Graziella Moraes Silva
Brazil



Godwin Murunga
Kenya



Leila Patel
South Africa



Diego Sánchez-Ancochea
Spain



Dzodzi Tsikata
Ghana



Timo Voipio
Finland

Our team

In 2025, our staff represented 24 nationalities, with 60% originating from the global South, reflecting the breadth of perspectives that inform our work. Gender equity also remains a key strength of the Institute: women represented 74% of staff across all roles, while 54% of senior leadership positions—including the Director—were held by women. This diversity of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives strengthens UNRISD's ability to generate relevant, inclusive and globally informed research.

24
countries

60%
global South

74%
women

54%
women in
leadership
positions

System-wide Recognition of UNRISD's Gender Accountability Performance



At UNRISD, our commitment to diversity, inclusion and plural perspectives extends beyond our research and partnerships to the composition of our Board, our team and the way we work.



Best performer

Ranked in the top tier of all UN Research and Training Institutes for its consistent results across gender performance indicators.



Co-creation award

Awarded for UNRISD's direct role in co-designing the next generation of the UN's gender accountability framework (UN-SWAP 3.0) through sustained technical consultations.

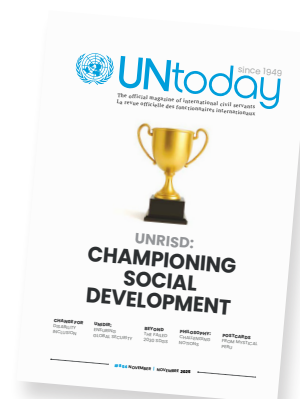


Small and brave award

Honored for the Institute's ability to deliver "massive institutional innovation" and high-impact results despite its small size and structural constraints.

UN Today: UNRISD Gets the Cover Page

On the occasion of UN's 80th Anniversary, UNRISD was featured in the cover of November's issue of UNToday. This special issue of the magazine featured three articles that highlight UNRISD's key contributions, the evolution of its role over the past six decades, and its vision for social development beyond 2030. In an exclusive interview with Director Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, readers will learn about the value of independent research in guiding the United Nations' action on today's global challenges and the directions the Institute plans to take in the future.



#IdeasThatShape: 62 years of bold questions and lasting change



Why independent research matters for a future-ready UN



Beyond 2030: Rethinking social development

Shifting paradigms: Shaping UNRISD's next chapter

As the world faces uncertainty, polarization, and accelerating crises, UNRISD's research agenda continues to evolve to address structural drivers of inequality and injustice. The current polycrisis shows that existing social development models are failing: too many are left out, and too few hold power. A new vision is needed—one integrating social, economic, and environmental objectives on an equal footing.

Building on this vision, UNRISD will continue its consultations to finalise its Strategy 2026–2030, ensuring an inclusive and forward-looking institutional direction. The Institute will also further engage with evolving United Nations reform discussions, including the UN80 process, to align its future work with system-wide transformations and emerging multilateral priorities.

IN FOCUS

New research horizons: AI and social development: Governance, equity, and inclusion

UNRISD has launched a research stream on artificial intelligence and social development, focusing on large language models, AI sovereignty and data sovereignty. It examines how AI is reshaping access to public services, work, education, social protection and civic participation, while also highlighting risks of exclusion and inequality linked to weak governance and unequal access. The new programme will also shed light on the environmental justice implications of AI expansion. The research explores how governments can regulate and govern AI in line with legal, ethical and ecological frameworks, emphasizing that AI sovereignty is about the capacity to shape and oversee AI systems responsibly, not only technological self-sufficiency. Launched in 2025, the initiative aims to inform inclusive, rights-based approaches to digital transformation, particularly in developing countries.

The world needs
bold ideas more
than ever.



**Stand
with us.**



UNRISD

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DEVELOPMENT

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Change**

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