



UNDERSTANDING THE LINKS BETWEEN MULTILATERALISM AND DEMOCRACY TO TACKLE GLOBAL CHALLENGES MORE EFFECTIVELY

Researchers

Christine Lutringer
Laura Bullon-Cassis

Additional information

Timeline: 2024-25

Funding organisation: Kofi Annan Foundation

Keywords: Multilateralism; democracy; climate; technology; human rights; leadership; trust

Description

Multilateral action as well as international cooperation and dialogue are hampered by growing polarisation, assertive nationalist agendas, and strong ideological divides, which are particularly marked around issues of democracy. A significant erosion of the shared international normative framework bears on the multilateral system. This project asks: How to address the fraying link between democracy and the multilateral system?

The Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy and the Kofi Annan Foundation collaborate on a two-year project to further a common understanding – through open dialogue, exchanges of good practices from all continents, training and advocacy – of how democratic, ethical and inclusive leadership is essential to solving global challenges.

As part of the project, a series of expert thematic roundtables are organised in liaison with multilateral actors on the role of democracy responding to issues of global concern. This takes advantage of Geneva being the home of close to 40 international organisations to convene subject matter experts and build bridges based on research and dialogue. Some of the discussions will be held in other multilateral hubs such as New York, Vienna, Nairobi, or Brussels.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS OF THE PROJECT INCLUDE:

- An increase in evidence-based understanding of the links between multilateralism and democracy and of how strong accountability mechanisms and public trust at national level can increase the effectiveness of action at global level;
- A global community of aspiring young political leaders who have a deepened understanding of ethical and democratic leadership standards; increased awareness of the complex challenges that leaders face today; and strengthened skills and networks to respond to such challenges, including through the multilateral system;
- And heightened public interest in the question of the interaction between democracy and multilateralism, and the need to take effective, joint action to respond to the retreat of democracy and multilateralism.

