

April 2026 - Business and Lifestyle Magazine



# ISHKAMA

GLOBAL CHANGE

**IGC ANNUAL  
CONVENTION  
INDIA 2026**

**LnD  
AFRICA  
CONFERENCE  
2026**

Reshaping Africa's  
Collective Image

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**

**MARGARET  
JACKSON**

*Founder LnD Institute*

[www.ishkama.co.uk](http://www.ishkama.co.uk)

[@Ishkamal](https://twitter.com/Ishkamal)

[@ishkama\\_igc](https://www.instagram.com/ishkama_igc)

[@Ishkama](https://www.facebook.com/Ishkama)



# Contents



**3.**  
**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**  
MARGARET JACKSON

**8.**  
**GOVERNANCE BEYOND BORDERS**

- Shaik Mohammed Tajuddin Aref

**10.**  
**BEYOND THE LEAVES: ESG CREDIBILITY**

- Natasha Bouwman

**12.**  
**CELEBRATING NEURODIVERSITY SINCE 5 YEARS!**

- Amb. (Dr.) Minakshi Koch

**14.**  
**WE THOUGHT INHERITANCE TAX WAS ONLY FOR THE WEALTHY**

- Ravi Singh

**17.**  
**BEYOND PERIOD POVERTY**

- Dr (HC) Valerie W. Naidoo

**19.**  
**WHAT MAKES A BOARD MORE THAN ITS MEMBERS**

- Craig Keddie

**20.**  
**GLOBAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER SERIES**

**21.**  
**THEN IT WAS A CALL, NOW IT'S A LIKE - A YOUTH'S TRIP DOWN NOSTALGIA LANE**

- Melany Castagnolo

**22.**  
**INVESTING IN YOUTH: A STRATEGIC PATH TO GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Ali Asghar Wazir

...and more

# From the Founder's Desk



**Prof. Dr. Amb. Abhnash K Bains**  
*CEO and Founder - IGC/ Ishkama Ltd*

Welcome to the April 2026 edition of Ishkama Global Change (IGC) Magazine.

As we turn these pages together, I want to begin with heartfelt gratitude. Thank you to our writers, editors, designers, volunteers, collaborators, partners, and loyal readers who

continue to believe in our vision. Your time, talent, and commitment help us amplify voices, celebrate communities, and inspire meaningful change across borders.

This month has been filled with reflection, celebration, awareness, and action. We celebrated Easter, a season that reminds us of hope, renewal, compassion, and new beginnings. We marked World Health Day, recognising the importance of wellbeing and equal access to healthcare for all. Throughout Autism Awareness Month, we renewed our commitment to building a more understanding, inclusive, and supportive world for neurodiverse individuals and their families. We also celebrated Baisakhi, honouring gratitude, resilience, community spirit, and cultural heritage. As we approach Earth Day, we are reminded that caring for our planet is a shared responsibility that requires urgent and united action.



I was honoured to attend and speak at the UK-Nigeria Creative Roundtable & Awards 2026, an inspiring event that highlighted the importance of global collaboration in preserving cultural heritage, promoting ethical leadership, and strengthening communities through partnership. Heartfelt thanks to Founder HRM Florence Okonkwo, with special appreciation to the Actors Guild of Nigeria and ElegantFlix 3DM Magazine for their outstanding contribution. I was

also pleased to attend the second round of the event, where I had the privilege of meeting the President of Nollywood and Guild, further encouraging meaningful dialogue and cross-cultural creative partnerships.

I was also humbled to receive the Social Impact Leader Merit at the International Women's Day Dinner and Awards 2026. My sincere thanks to Counsellor Amb. Funmi Ademilua and The Good Samaritan Foundation for this recognition, which I dedicate to the hardworking team of Ishkama Global Change.

I had the privilege of attending several inspiring events that celebrated leadership, culture, and global connection. I was honoured to join the Exclusive Women of Influence Circle CIC event, a powerful gathering dedicated to women's vision, purpose, and collective strength. I also attended a beautiful Literary Talk & Poetry Session hosted by the High Commission of India, London and The Nehru Centre, featuring inspiring conversations with Dr. Manju Lodha and renowned author Tejendra Sharma.

This month, our IGC for Autism initiative raised awareness and funds to support music and art classes for children, helping create confidence, joy, and opportunity through creativity.

It is also with immense pride that we share that Ishkama Global Change CIC has been nominated for the Community Organisation Award (Multi-Brand) at the National Diversity Awards 2026. This nomination reflects the collective effort of every mentor, volunteer, supporter, and community member who has walked this journey with us.

As we continue this journey, we kindly ask for your support. Whether through partnership, volunteering, sponsorship, sharing our work, or joining our programmes—every contribution matters.

*"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."* — Muhammad Ali

# Editor's Note

*As autumn settles over South Africa and the season shifts, this April issue of Ishkama asks the questions that matter most — about boards, belonging, humanity, and the world we are collectively building.*

There is something quietly profound about autumn. Here in South Africa, as the trees release what they no longer need and the light turns amber and gold, I find myself in a season of reflection. Change is not always dramatic. Sometimes it arrives gently, in the colour of a leaf, in the turning of a page, in the slow, deliberate recognition that the world we inhabit is shifting beneath our feet.

This April, Ishkama is proud to feature Margaret Jackson founder of LnD Institute who continues to do extraordinary work, dismantling the narrow and often distorted image the world holds of Africa, and replacing it with something far more honest: a continent of dynamism, of intellectual generosity, of leaders and thinkers who are reshaping what is possible through learning and development. When access expands, potential does not trickle, it floods. I am deeply grateful to be part of the planning committee for the LnD Africa Conference 2026. It is the kind of participation that reminds you why this work matters.

In this issue we continue our Advisory Board Series, with Craig Keddie shining a light on diversity of boards. These are not merely questions of equity they are questions of organisational survival, relevance and wisdom. Natasha Bouwman advocates for the integration of ESG and sustainability not as a compliance exercise, but as a fundamental reimagining of how we do business, and why.



**Vanessa Haripersad**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

The Annual IGC convention arrives in India this year. We are looking for speakers, sponsors and exhibitors. We are delighted to feature our two remarkable Youth Chairs in this issue, who remind us that the future does not wait to be invited. It arrives with ideas, with urgency, and with a vision we would be foolish to ignore.

April is also Autism Awareness Month, and we honour in these pages the richness of neurodiversity — the reminder that the world is made more whole, more creative, and more compassionate when every mind is welcomed, valued, and given space to contribute.

**Thank you to Prof. Abhnash,** and to the entire editorial team whose dedication, creativity, and tireless effort make Ishkama not just a magazine, but a movement. Every issue is a testament to what happens when passionate people refuse to do ordinary work.

With Best Regards  
Vanessa



ISHKAMA GLOBAL CHANGE  
Registered Office: 32 Colwyn Crescent,  
Hounslow, London, TW3 4AW  
Telephone: 020 8572 1412  
Email: [ishkama.igc@hotmail.com](mailto:ishkama.igc@hotmail.com)

Chief Editor: Vanessa Haripersad  
Creative Director: Rinki Sharma  
Designer: Arundhuti Dey  
Editor: Broomling Technologies  
Sub-editor: Sharda Patidar  
Distribution: Ishkama Global Change  
Founder: Abhnash Bains  
Contributors: Abhnash Bains, Rinki Sharma, Vanessa Haripersad, Seshasai Kotipalli

**DISCLAIMER:** The contents of IGC Magazine are the responsibility of the authors. None of the subjects or matter are intended to hurt the sentiments or beliefs of any community. IGC respects and treats everyone with dignity and equality. Also the editorial team do not take responsibility of any endorsements presented by the authors. The Magazine and its publishers do not agree to any claims or disputes under any circumstances.

# MARGARET JACKSON

*On destiny, developing people, and the gift you were born holding in your hands.*

Some careers are chosen. Others choose you. For Margaret Jackson, founder and managing partner of the LnD Institute, the path from childhood ambition to her life's true calling was neither straight nor predictable. And she would not have it any other way.

As a young girl, Margaret's imagination was fixed on the world of finance. Numbers, markets, the architecture of money, these were the things that lit her up. An academically gifted student, she pursued science in high school, then followed the thread into economics at university. She was, by every measure, on course. And then, quietly, everything changed. It was during an in-service placement during university where she was placed in the HR

department that something shifted. Sitting in that office, working alongside people, watching the human machinery of organisations turn, she felt it. A pull that was less like ambition and more like recognition. This was where she belonged. She pivoted, pursued HR with singular focus, and never looked back.

*Lead from behind — so you can shepherd your people and have full view of everything unfolding before you.*

— MARGARET JACKSON, ON HER LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY



Corporate life followed, and with it the growth, the grit, and the achievements that shape a leader. But when Margaret became a mother, she made a choice that required a different kind of courage: she stepped away from the corporate world to be present for her children.

It was in that season of stepping back that two new doors opened; a consulting practice of her own, and an invitation to train others. Destiny, it turned out, had been patient with her all along.

Today, Margaret leads with a philosophy that is as generous as it is strategic: lead from behind. Like a shepherd at the rear of the flock, she believes the best leaders position themselves where they can see everyone, where they can guide without overshadowing, protect without smothering, and trust without losing sight.

Her greatest challenge, she admits, is one that says as much about her character as it does her work. She pours herself into developing people, training them, shaping them, watching them grow, only to see them recruited away. For a time, it stung.

But Margaret arrived at a perspective that is both hard-won and quietly profound: "I am not developing people for myself. I am developing them for the world." Now, she gives her blessing freely, and releases each person with grace.

Loyalty and accountability anchor everything she does. They are not aspirational values posted on a wall, they are the bones of how she leads, how she consults, and how she shows up every day.

**Her counsel to young African women is simple, direct, and rooted in something deeper than strategy:**

*"Do not be afraid. You were created with a gift in your hand. What can you do with the least amount of money someone can bless you with? Remember — you are fearfully and wonderfully made."*

#### **BUILDING A LEGACY**

2020, while the world retreated, Margaret moved forward. She looked across a continent of over a billion people — 54 nations, hundreds of languages, millennia of intellectual tradition — and saw something the global learning and development industry had largely overlooked: an entire continent's wisdom left out of the conversation. So she built the room herself.

Lnd Africa, the pan-continental conference and community she founded, was never just an event. It was a declaration: that Africa does not need to import its learning models wholesale from the West.

That African professionals deserve a platform to learn from each other, define their own standards, and shape the future of work on their own terms.

*"If we waited for someone else to create that space, we would wait forever. So I made the decision not to wait but to step forward and build it."*

— MARGARET, FOUNDER, LND AFRICA  
THE AFRICAN L&D IDENTITY

#### **Learning as a Communal Act**

Ask Margaret what distinguishes African L&D from its Western counterparts and she doesn't hesitate. "African L&D is rooted in relationality," she says.





April '26

“The idea that learning is not a transaction between a trainer and a learner, but a communal act.” She points to Ubuntu philosophy – I am because we are – as the philosophical heartbeat running through African approaches to knowledge transfer, mentorship, and development.

It’s a distinction that matters enormously on the global stage. “Africa is not a market to be taught,” she asserts. “It is a continent with its own intellectual traditions that deserve to sit at the table as equals, not as recipients.” A leadership programme designed for a multinational in New York, she notes, will not land the same way in Lagos or Lusaka. Nor should it.

This philosophy challenges the tendency of global L&D frameworks to treat “best practice” as a single, exportable product. For Margaret, context is not a footnote, it is the foundation. African organizations have their own rhythms, languages, and dynamics. Ignoring them doesn’t just produce poor training; it produces a kind of epistemic erasure.

The antidote, she believes, lies in community. When professionals gather, not just to consume content, but to co-create meaning, something shifts. The knowledge exchanged is immediate, practical, and deeply relevant, shaped by the lived realities of the people in the room, not abstracted from them.

**What “Future-Ready” Really**  
*“Africa is not a market to be taught. It is a continent with its own intellectual traditions that deserve to sit at the table as equals — not as recipients.”*

— MARGARET  
FUTURE-READY • THE 2026 THEME

### Means in Africa

This year’s LnD Africa conference arrives in Johannesburg under a theme of urgent relevance: what does it mean to be future-ready on this continent? In the West, the term conjures images of automation, remote-work infrastructure, and reskilling for knowledge economies that already exist. For African workers and organizations, Margaret argues, it means something simultaneously more foundational and more ambitious.

*“An African worker who is future-ready in 2030 is not just digitally literate. They are adaptive, entrepreneurial, and capable of creating opportunity in environments that are still being built.”*

— MARGARET

“It means building the enabling conditions: digital access, quality foundational education, adult learning ecosystems, while simultaneously leapfrogging legacy systems the way we did with mobile banking,” she explains. That analogy is instructive. Africa didn’t build the same banking infrastructure as Europe and then digitize it; it skipped straight to mobile money. The same pattern of bold, context-specific innovation could define how the continent approaches learning in the next decade.

“An African worker who is future-ready in 2030 is not just digitally literate,” Margaret says. “They are adaptive, entrepreneurial, and capable of creating opportunity in environments that are still being built.” It’s a vision of resilience and agency — not passive recipients of a pre-packaged future, but active architects of their own.

# 54 NATIONS

LnD Africa serves professionals across the entire continent — bridging anglophone, francophone, and lusophone contexts.

# 2020 FOUNDED

Launched amid global uncertainty, LnD Africa began as a bold wager that Africa’s L&D professionals needed their own platform.

# JHB 2026 HOST CITY

Johannesburg — where enterprise, innovation, and structured L&D practice converge — hosts this year’s flagship gathering.

TECHNOLOGY & AI

### Owning the AI Narrative

If there is one area where Margaret is particularly insistent, it is artificial intelligence. The risk she identifies is not that AI will fail African workers, it is that African professionals will remain merely users of tools designed elsewhere, rather than co-creators shaping how those tools work.

“Leading AI adoption starts with owning our story,” she says plainly. “If African L&D professionals only

use AI tools that are designed elsewhere, we will always be users, not creators." The practical implications are significant: AI platforms trained on limited datasets may recommend solutions that don't fit African workplace realities, perpetuating the very invisibility LnD Africa was created to disrupt.

Her prescription is specific. African L&D professionals should contribute local case studies, African language data, and real work scenarios to the systems being built. They should be at the design table, not waiting to see what's delivered. At an individual level, she encourages practitioners to build simple AI fluency: writing effective prompts, personalizing learning at scale, using platform data to identify skills gaps. "A trainer in Ghana can use AI to create customized learning modules for different teams," she notes, "instead of delivering the same content to everyone."

But her vision extends beyond individual skill-building. Organizations, she believes, need to be intentional using AI to forecast workforce skill needs three to five years out, and beginning to train employees now. And as jobs change, L&D professionals have a responsibility to work alongside leaders and policymakers to ensure no worker is left behind.

*What keeps me up at night is the adult learner who has been left behind — the 45-year-old in a rural community whose job is changing around them, with no accessible, affordable, or culturally relevant pathway to reskill.*

— MARGARET  
BRIDGING DIVIDES

### **The Learner Who Cannot Wait**

For all the energy Margaret brings to technology and continental strategy, it is a single, specific

person who anchors her sense of purpose. Not an executive. Not a policy-maker. A 45-year-old in a rural community, watching the world of work transform around them, with no accessible, affordable, or culturally relevant pathway to reskill.

"Formal institutions were not built for them," she acknowledges. "And the digital revolution is moving faster than the infrastructure to support them." It's an honest reckoning with the gap between aspiration and access and it's what drives her toward models that don't wait for institutions to catch up.

What excites her most, she says, is the emergence of community-based learning models: micro-learning hubs, mobile-first content in local languages, peer-facilitated learning circles being pioneered across the continent. "We don't always need a university. Sometimes we need a trusted person in the community with the right tools."

The network effects of LnD Africa itself have begun to embody this principle. Connections between professionals in Ghana and Rwanda. Collaborations between Kenya and Nigeria. Knowledge flowing from South Africa back to communities across the continent. "That is where the real transformation happens," she says "in the conversations between sessions, in the relationships built."



### **THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS Beyond the Room**

Margaret's philosophy of design is distilled into a single question she asks of every programme she creates: What will be different because of this learning? It is a deceptively simple standard





April'26

that most L&D professionals would claim to hold, but far fewer actually build around. For her, inspiration without action is an incomplete product.

“It is not enough for people to leave a room inspired they must leave equipped,” she insists. That means programmes are practical, applicable, and measurable. And it means LnD Africa’s definition of impact goes well beyond attendance figures and engagement scores.

The conference tracks behavioural and organisational change: how participants implement what they’ve learned, what initiatives they launch, how their organisations evolve. The real measure of success? “When the conversation does not end in the room it continues in boardrooms, classrooms, and communities across the continent.”

It is a standard that reflects something deeper about what Margaret is building. LnD Africa is not a gathering. It is a catalyst an ongoing, cross-border dialogue that refuses to dissolve when the final session ends.

**A Movement Waiting for You**

To the L&D professionals across Africa wondering whether LnD Africa is worth their time, Margaret’s answer is simple and direct: “This is where your community is.”

Johannesburg 2026 promises to be more than a conference, a space to be challenged, inspired, and connected to people who understand the context and the aspiration. The invitation is open. The movement is already underway.

**LND AFRICA • JOHANNESBURG • 2026**

**LnD Africa Conference 2026**

21st - 23rd October 2026 | Johannesburg - South Africa

Theme: **Reshaping Africa’s collective image: Global access and opportunities through L&D**

EARLY BIRD RATES (FULL PACKAGE)			
<b>In person</b>	Professionals – \$344 / R6,200	<b>Online</b>	Professionals – \$138 / R2,480
	Students – \$258 / R4,650		Students – \$103 / R1,860
STANDARD RATES (FULL PACKAGE)			
<b>In person</b>	Professionals – \$380 / R6,800	<b>Online</b>	Professionals – \$152 / R2,720
	Students – \$285 / R5,100		Students – \$114 / R2,040

Register: <https://lndafrika.org/lnd-africa-2026/>  
[www.tushiyah.co.za](http://www.tushiyah.co.za) / [www.lndafrika.org](http://www.lndafrika.org)

[f @L&D Africa Conference](#)
[in @L&D Africa Conference](#)
[@LnDAfricaConference](#)
[@LnDAfricaConf](#)



**LnD Networking Breakfast at the Tryst in Johannesburg**



**SHAIK MOHAMMED TAJUDDIN AREF**  
SENIOR CONSULTANT - REVENUE &  
COURT MATTERS  
FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN, AL-SHAJAR  
CHARITABLE TRUST, KADAPA  
IGC (U.K) - COUNTRY CHAIR,  
GOVERNANCE INDIA

# Governance Beyond Borders: Advancing Ethical, Inclusive, and Resilient Systems in a Transforming Global Order.

In the contemporary global landscape, governance is experiencing a significant transformation driven by technological advancement, economic interdependence, and evolving societal expectations. Governance today extends beyond traditional administrative structures and must operate as a comprehensive framework grounded in transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and sustainability.

Modern governance systems are increasingly required to address complex, transnational challenges while maintaining institutional integrity and public trust. This necessitates a shift towards adaptive, responsive, and people-centered approaches that balance efficiency with equity and long-term sustainability.

Experience in public administration and international institutional coordination demonstrates that governance is most effective when it integrates policy robustness with practical implementation and human-centric service delivery. Large-scale operational environments, particularly those involving multi-agency coordination and public welfare, highlight the importance of real-time decision-making, structured communication, and institutional accountability.

In this context, five key dimensions emerge as critical to strengthening governance systems:

## 1. Transparency and Digital Accountability

The integration of digital governance frameworks enhances transparency, improves service delivery, and strengthens accountability. Data-driven decision-making supports informed policy implementation while fostering public confidence.

## 2. Inclusive Governance and Social Equity

Equitable access to resources and services remains central to sustainable governance. Inclusive policy frameworks must address

*“Large-scale operational environments highlight the importance of real-time decision-making, structured communication, and institutional accountability.”*



the needs of diverse and vulnerable populations, ensuring balanced and just development outcomes.

### **3. Ethical Leadership and Institutional Integrity**

Effective governance is anchored in leadership guided by integrity, responsibility, and long-term vision. Institutional mechanisms must reinforce ethical conduct and uphold the rule of law.

### **4. Resilient Governance and Crisis Preparedness**

Global challenges such as public health emergencies, climate change, and economic disruptions underscore the need for governance systems that are resilient, adaptable, and prepared to respond to uncertainty.

### **5. Cross-Border Collaboration and Global Cooperation**

Contemporary governance challenges often transcend national boundaries, requiring colla-

borative approaches across regions and institutions. Partnerships among regions such as India, Africa, and the Gulf offer significant opportunities for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and sustainable development.

Global platforms such as Ishkama Global Change (IGC) contribute meaningfully to advancing dialogue, cooperation, and innovation in governance practices, enabling stakeholders to engage in constructive and solution-oriented discourse.

Governance in the 21st century must therefore be recognized as a shared global responsibility requiring continuous reform, collaborative engagement, and adherence to ethical principles. The focus must remain on developing systems that are efficient, inclusive, resilient, and aligned with the broader objectives of sustainable development and societal well-being.



**NATASHA BOUWMAN**  
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND  
CORPORATE & ESG LEAD AT  
CATAWIKI

# Beyond the leaves: ESG credibility begins at the roots

Sustainability spans environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. In ESG, attention often gathers around the visible elements: reporting and disclosures. These matter, but they are only the leaves. What truly sustains the whole is the root system beneath them: strategy, governance, oversight and the discipline to focus on the issues that matter most. This is what supports long-term sustainability, while keeping the short and medium term in view. When regulation changes and expectations shift, as they are doing at an unprecedented pace, the priority should be to strengthen the foundation, the roots. That is what enables organisations to respond with resilience, credibility and agility.

### A recent rule shift reveals

In Europe, sustainability reporting regulation has been in flux, including through the recent simplification of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) under the Omnibus. The CSRD was introduced to address a long-standing problem in ESG reporting: that sustainability information was often insufficiently standardised, comparable and reliable across companies and sectors. At the same time, its original design also raised legitimate concerns about cost, complexity and proportionality. The 2026 simplification measures narrowed the scope of mandatory CSRD reporting to EU companies with more than 1,000 employees

and over €450 million in net annual turnover, intending to shield smaller companies from the compliance burden.

Despite this, not all was lost for the companies who prepared for CSRD but are now out of scope. By identifying their material ESG issues, developing a strategy to address them, and putting oversight and governance structures in place they now better understand their impact, risk and opportunity landscape and have strengthened internal alignment

*“Starting with strong integrated strategic foundations, allows the organisation to respond to any reporting requirements with clarity around its most relevant sustainability-related risks and opportunities.”*

on these topics. In other words, even if regulations and reporting frameworks change, the value of an integrated ESG approach remains. A clear integrated ESG





April'26

strategy would serve any company well to navigate any regulatory and reporting developments that lie ahead.

### Why integration matters

Sustainability is structural, not a parallel agenda. For that reason, sustainability strategy should not sit apart from business strategy as a standalone exercise. Within one business strategy, with long-term resilience and value creation at its core, there should be a clear focus on the ESG issues that are most material or relevant to a business. It also requires alignment among those involved in management and governance on what those issues are. That, in turn, requires collective and integrated thinking about the business in the short, medium and long term. As well as considering the risks and opportunities linked to relevant ESG matters across each of those horizons.

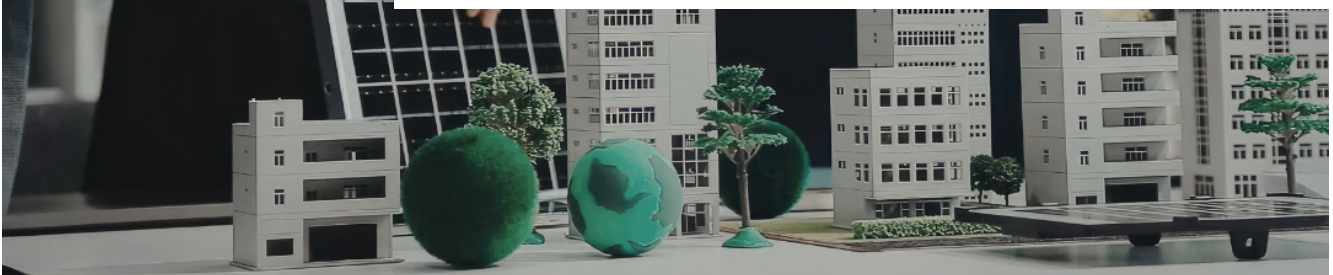
This is also why substance matters more than form. Reporting has value, but it should not lead the strategy. When disclosure becomes the starting point, organisations

are easily pulled in too many directions, reacting to overlapping frameworks and changing expectations. Starting with strong integrated strategic foundations, allows the organisation to respond to any reporting requirements with clarity around its most relevant sustainability-related risks and opportunities. Once the foundation is clear, disclosure becomes more manageable and consistent, regardless of which frameworks or requirements apply.

A number of voluntary frameworks and standards provide useful guidance to companies in building their foundations. These include the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) standards and the Integrated Reporting (IR) Framework. They build on earlier reporting initiatives and sit alongside other important frameworks and standards,

including those developed by the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) and the Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB). Together, they reinforce the importance of integrated thinking and encourage more focused, decision-useful disclosure that connects sustainability-related risks and opportunities to long-term value creation. They also encourage companies to present sustainability information in a way that is clearly identifiable and connected to core strategy, risk management and value creation.

The central question is therefore whether sustainability considerations are genuinely embedded in how the business is governed, how decisions are made and how resilience is built over time.

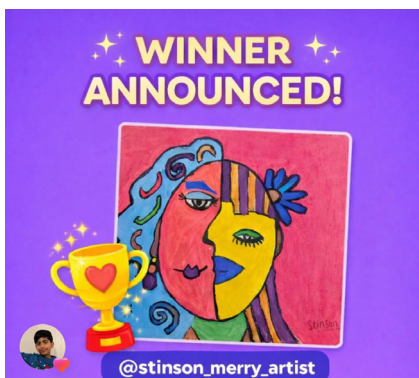




**AMB DR. MINAKSHI KOCH**  
FOUNDER/ LEAD

*About the Author:*

*Amb. (Dr.) Minakshi Koch is the Founder of the IGC for Autism Project in Ipswich, UK. She serves as an Autism Family Support Practitioner and Specialist Teacher, and holds the position of IGC Global Chair for Autism Awareness.*



**Art contest winner Stinson.**

# Celebrating Neurodiversity since 5 years!

IGC for Autism has been supporting families since 2021 and is open to all families with a neurodiverse individual. Our aim is to connect families with others who share similar experiences, creating a strong and understanding community where we work together to find practical solutions.

We currently support around forty-five families who regularly connect online, share their stories, and offer guidance to one another. Each year, more families join us to participate in our sessions and meetings. We distribute flyers in community centres, churches, and libraries to ensure that families in need can easily find us.

Our motto is simple: to make everyone feel welcome and part of a community where no one feels lost.

With the increasing number of autism diagnoses, accessing services through government-funded agencies has become increasingly difficult. Long waiting lists often delay essential therapies and support. IGC for Autism bridges that gap. We provide practical solutions, peer support, and hope while families are waiting for formal services – easing stress and helping children and parents feel empowered rather than alone.

My journey began when my own child was excluded from a specialist setting. I fought to help others understand how challenging his life already was, and how

exclusion would only push him toward a more difficult future. My concerns and solutions were dismissed, and I was handed what felt like a book of excuses.

At that moment, I had a choice: fight only for my child, or fight for many. I chose to fight for every child.

I wanted to create meaningful change – to make a difference in the lives of other mothers and their children. What I did not realise then was the level of resilience, love, and determination that would be required.

I began fundraising to organise sessions and workshops that would help mothers better engage and support their children. In a short span of time, I met the most extraordinary families – parents who would go to any length for their children’s wellbeing.

Today, I am proud to be the Founder and Lead of an Autism project in Ipswich, United Kingdom. With the support of experienced and passionate advocates like Dhanalakshmi Kadari, and dedicated volunteers such as Sakshi Kasurde, this journey has become stronger and more impactful.

We are grateful to now receive funding from the National Lottery and the Co-op Community Fund, which enables us to provide arts and music classes for our children – opportunities that nurture

creativity, confidence, and joy.

The journey has been long and challenging, but deeply worthwhile.

If you are looking for support, connection, or simply wish to be part of a compassionate and understanding community, we warmly invite you to join us.



*“I met the most extraordinary families — parents who would go to any length for their children’s wellbeing.”*



**Pictured above : From left- Amb Dr. Minakshi Koch, Swathi, Prajwala, Gayathri, Visala and Poorni**



UN Sustainable Development Goal 16



**RAVI SINGH**

**About the Author:**

*Ravi Singh BA (Hons), FCCA is a UK-based Tax Consultant specialising in Inheritance Tax, estate planning and probate. With over 30 years' experience, he advises individuals, families and business owners on structuring their affairs to minimise tax exposure and ensure efficient wealth transfer across generations.*

**Email:** [ravi@ravisingh.co.uk](mailto:ravi@ravisingh.co.uk)

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ravi-singh-1a270a4b>

# We thought Inheritance Tax was only for the wealthy

It's a familiar refrain.

"We're not wealthy, so Inheritance Tax won't apply to us."

For many years, that was largely true. Inheritance Tax was seen as a concern for high-net-worth families with substantial estates, complex investments, or large business interests.

That perception no longer reflects reality.

Today, an increasing number of ordinary families are being drawn into the Inheritance Tax net, often without realising it.

Consider a typical example.

A married couple in their late 60s. They have worked steadily, lived sensibly, and accumulated assets over time rather than through sudden wealth.

Their home is worth around £850,000. They hold savings and investments of approximately £250,000.

Total estate: £1.1 million.

Set out simply, the position can be illustrated as follows:

Example: Typical Family Estate	
Asset Type	Value (£)
Main residence	850,000
Savings & investments	250,000
Total estate	1,100,000

Estimated Inheritance Tax Position (if full allowances apply)

Description	Amount (£)
Total estate	1,100,000
Less allowances (NRB + RNRB)*	(1,000,000)
Taxable estate	100,000
Estimated IHT @ 40%	40,000

\*Assumes both nil rate bands and full residence nil rate bands are available and applicable. Actual position depends on individual circumstances.

At first glance, this may appear manageable.

However, this outcome depends on specific conditions being met. If the full allowances are not available, the position can change significantly.

Illustration: If full allowances are not available

Description	Amount (£)
Total estate	1,100,000
Less basic allowances (NRB only)	(650,000)
Taxable estate	450,000
Estimated IHT @ 40%	180,000

The full residence nil rate band is not always available. For example, it may be reduced or lost if the property does not pass to direct descendants, if the estate



April '26

exceeds £2 million, or if the property has been sold or ownership arrangements are more complex. In such cases, only the basic nil rate band may apply, which can materially increase the tax liability.

This is where many families are caught out.

They assume that Inheritance Tax will not apply, based on a general understanding of the rules, without considering whether those rules fully apply to their own circumstances.

The underlying issue is straightforward.

Tax thresholds have remained largely static for many years, while property values have risen steadily, particularly in London and the South East. The effect is a gradual but persistent widening of the tax net.

Another common assumption is that leaving everything to children will resolve matters.

In practice, a straightforward transfer without planning often results in a straightforward tax charge.

The missing element is structure. This does not necessarily require complex arrangements. In many cases, effective planning involves reviewing how assets are held, ensuring wills are aligned with current objectives, and considering the timing and nature of lifetime gifts.

The challenge is timing.

Families often only become aware of the exposure at a point when options are limited and the tax position is largely fixed.

Inheritance Tax is no longer confined to the wealthy. It is increasingly a consequence of asset growth, particularly in residential property, rather than deliberate wealth accumulation.

The relevant question is not whether you consider yourself wealthy.

It is whether the value of your estate, on paper, places you within the scope of the tax.

For many families, the answer is now yes.



LEAD. INNOVATE. IMPACT.

# BE A GLOBAL SPEAKER



## AT IGC BUSINESS CONVENTION 2026



ISHKAMA GLOBAL IMPACT CONCLAVE

Advancing SDGs Through Leadership, Action & Equity



### BOOK YOUR PLACE

Share your expertise.  
Inspire change.  
Lead the conversation.



### BE A GLOBAL SPEAKER

Join visionary leaders  
driving impact and  
innovation worldwide.



### STALL HOLDERS

Showcase your brand.  
Connect with  
changemakers.

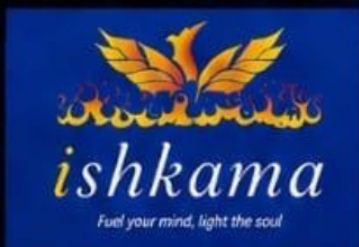


DATE:  
6<sup>TH</sup> TO 8<sup>TH</sup>  
AUGUST 2026



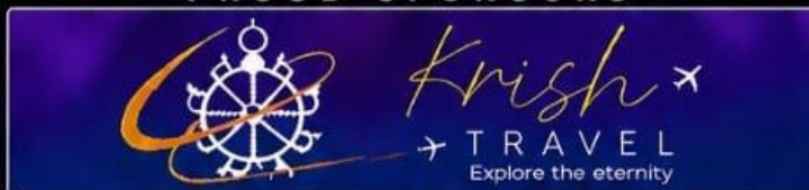
VENUE:  
RADISSON BLU,  
DWARKA, NEW DELHI, INDIA

BE HEARD.  
BE SEEN.  
★ MAKE AN IMPACT  
WORLDWIDE.



Prof. Dr (Amb)  
Abhnash Bains  
(Founder)

PROUD SPONSORS



REGISTER  
NOW!



Dr. Minakshi Koch

+44 7440191633

020 8572 1412



www.ishkama.co.uk



ishkama.igc@hotmail.com



**DR (HC) VALERIE W. NAIDOO**  
WELLNESS EXECUTIVE- WFN

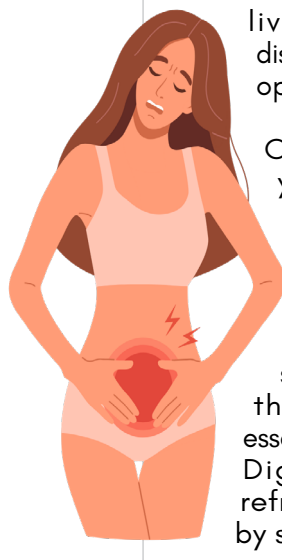
**About the Author:**

*She's a Wellness Executive at WFN; founder of 2 Menstrual Health stations under the Great Red Movement. Her innovative spirit led to launching the first Menstrual Art pop-up gallery in South Africa. Valerie is the CEO of Wallstreet Coaching Foundation, she's a career coach and has launched several work readiness programs to bridge the gap between academia and the workplace. She also the founder of 21 Suits Global Wellness movement and very passionate about women empowerment.*

# Beyond Period Poverty: Towards Dignified Menstruation

While “period poverty” focuses on the lack of menstrual products, Dignified Menstruation is a broader human rights approach. In South Africa and across the African continent, menstruation is still entrenched in silence, stigma and systemic inequality. While the concept of period poverty has gained immense traction in recent years, a more holistic framework referred to as Dignified Menstruation is emerging.

Dignified Menstruation goes beyond access to menstrual products. It is a human right-based approach that addresses the full spectrum of lived experiences across social, economic, cultural, psychological, and political domains and is shaping how menstruators navigate their lives. As highlighted by the Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation, the concept of dignified menstruation seeks to ensure that all menstruators live free from stigma, discrimination, and structural oppression.



Over the last couple of years, menstrual health initiatives in Africa have focused largely on hygiene such as providing menstrual pads and improving sanitation facilities. While these interventions are essential, they are not enough. Dignified menstruation reframes the conversation by shifting from “managing

a problem” to upholding dignity and rights.

While the South African government has made progress by providing free period products in schools, many learners continue to miss classes. This isn't just down to a lack of pads; it's driven by stigma, poor sanitation facilities, lack of support and the dread of being bullied. Ultimately, this underscores that menstruation is not merely a health matter, but a deeply social and political one. Across Africa, similar patterns emerge. In rural communities, menstruators may still face restrictions on movement, participation, or interaction during their periods. These practices are not always rooted in poverty but in deeply entrenched cultural norms and gender inequalities that echo findings that menstrual discrimination is not only about economic status, but about systemic exclusion. Menstruation is linked to ideas of impurity or shame. Young girls often learn from an early age that their bodies and menstruation are something to hide. This social conditioning has long-term consequences on self-esteem, confidence, and identity.

In South Africa's diverse cultural landscape, beliefs and practices vary widely. While some communities are progressively challenging stigma, others still uphold silence around menstruation. The result is a fragmented experience where some menstruators feel



empowered, while others remain marginalised.

The concept of Dignified Menstruation challenges these harmful norms by advocating for open dialogue, awareness, education, support and community engagement. It recognises that transforming menstrual experiences requires changing mindsets and not just distributing products. Menstruation also has significant economic implications. In South Africa, many women and girls from low-income households cannot consistently afford menstrual products. This affects school attendance and performance, work productivity, and overall economic participation. Recent research conducted by the University of the Free State found that over twenty menstrual products tested contained endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs). This further exacerbates stigma, as those who cannot afford safer alternatives, such as medical-grade silicone menstrual cups, may be left with limited choices.

In the workplace, the lack of menstrual equity is a huge blind spot. Few organisations have policies that acknowledge menstrual health needs or show any signs of becoming a period friendly workforce. Women may work through severe pain, fatigue, or discomfort without support, fearing judgment or discrimination even from other menstruators.

Dignified Menstruation calls the following to action:

- Menstrual justice in the workplace, this includes access to clean facilities, flexible policies, and supportive environments.
- It also challenges the economic burden placed on menstruators, advocating for policies such as tax exemptions on menstrual products (a step South Africa has already taken).
- Broader social protection measures.
- Across Africa, informal economies dominate, and

many women work in environments without basic sanitation. For them, managing menstruation safely and privately is a daily struggle. Addressing this requires integrating menstrual dignity into labour rights, urban planning, and public infrastructure.

Education is one of the most affected sectors. Studies across Africa show that menstruation contributes to absenteeism and dropout rates among girls. In South Africa, despite policy interventions, many girls still miss school during their periods. However, dignified menstruation goes beyond attendance. It is about ensuring that girls can participate fully and confidently in school life. This includes access to accurate information, supportive teachers, and safe spaces.

Importantly, education must also include boys and men. Dignified menstruation recognises that achieving equality requires collective understanding. Engaging men and boy's helps dismantle stigma and fosters supportive communities.

Dignified menstruation is a fundamental human right tied to health, education, work, and dignity, and is essential to reproductive justice and gender equality. In Africa, menstrual experiences are shaped by intersecting factors such as poverty, disability, geography, and gender identity, leading to varied challenges. The Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation (GSCDM) highlights the importance of inclusivity across all identities and life stages, particularly for marginalised groups facing compounded discrimination. Achieving menstrual dignity requires addressing structural barriers within policies and institutions that sustain inequality.

Despite progressive policies in countries such as South Africa, gaps in implementation persist, particularly in rural sanitation, school distribution, and workplace support, alongside broader challenges of limited funding and weak enforcement across Africa.

However, growing collective action is reframing menstrual dignity as a social justice issue, promoting inclusion and structural change.

Recognising 8 December as International Dignified Menstruation Day presents an opportunity for African countries, including South Africa, to strengthen advocacy, challenge stigma, and advance dignity for all menstruators.



CRAIG KEDDIE

*About the Author:*

*Craig Keddie works at the intersections: pattern recognition across systems, sectors, and stages rather than depth in any single one. His collaborations span disciplines and geographies, usually with founder-led businesses and a small number of peers, on ventures where the right question matters more than another answer.*

Most advisory boards are built by adding expertise.

A founder reaches a stage where the business is outgrowing what one mind can hold and starts looking for people with experience that they do not have themselves. Finance. Marketing. Operations. Sector knowledge. Each of those is a real gap, and filling each with an experienced person is an obvious way to close it.

The logic is sound, but the result is sometimes puzzling.

The advisors are clearly capable. The meetings are full of substance. And yet, what the board produces, taken as a

## What Makes a Board More Than Its Members

whole, often amounts to less than what the individuals brought into the room.

The gap is usually not in what was said. It is in what happened between what was said.

Each advisor sees a business through what they are most practiced at noticing. One sees where the risks sit. Another sees where the growth could come from. A third sees what would break under pressure. Each observation is accurate. None of them automatically connect. They arrive as parallel inputs, and the founder is left to combine them into something coherent while running the business. This is often where meetings sound productive but produce little.

This is where another kind of diversity starts to matter. Not diversity of expertise, but diversity of how people think.

A board composed solely of specialists will produce a lot of specialist thinking. That is valuable, but it is incomplete. There is also a need for people whose contributions are not in a domain but between them. The person who asks the question that connects. The person who slows things down when a decision is being rushed. The person who sees how three unrelated suggestions might combine into one coherent plan. The person who notices that the real problem is not the one being discussed.

This kind of work depends on the specialists. It does not replace their contributions, nor is it a different flavor of the same thing. It is what happens between expert inputs, and it only exists because the inputs do.

One is the advisor who works at the intersections. Translation between parts that do not naturally speak to each other. Bringing the breadth of input into focus for action. The role is dependent on the specialists; the spark always comes from somewhere else. But it is what turns a collection of good inputs into something a founder can actually use.

Another is the advisor who calibrates to altitude, adjusting to the stage of the business rather than repeating what worked elsewhere. A business at an early stage needs different input from a business further along, and different again from what works inside a larger organization. The useful contribution is to pitch input at the level the business can act on, and to favor what moves things forward over what produces another artifact for the board to discuss.

Boards that work tend to have a mix of these contributions, more often by accident than by design. Nobody is quite sure what made the difference, only that when the right people are in the room, things make sense.

# Global Advisory Board Member Series

This month it is: **Shabana Aziz-Rajan**



**Q1: What inspired you to join Ishkama Global Change Advisory Board and how does this role align with your personal and professional mission?**

**A1:** I feel a strong alignment with Ishkama Global Change (IGC's) vision and mission and its impact as

a global social enterprise in helping organizations amplify and address social causes while developing and growing their organizations by facilitating access to resources globally.

As a member of the Advisory Board I am able to bring my expertise in Leadership, Governance and Operations to IGC collaborating with the Advisory Board members and its membership to create a sustainable business model.

**Q2: From your perspective, what are the most urgent global challenges that Ishkama is uniquely positioned to address?**

**A2:** IGC is uniquely positioned as a Global Social Enterprise to address social issues that are aligned to the UN's 17 sustainable goals through its diverse membership across the globe. Some of the world's most urgent social issues like climate change, poverty and inequality, mental health and education.

**Q3: Can you share a pivotal moment in your career that shaped your approach to leadership and change?**

**A3:** My mentors at the start of my career were influential in shaping my approach to leadership and change by sharing their experiences, providing guidance, helping me develop soft skills and providing a safe space for me to practice what I have learnt with their actionable feedback.

**Q4: How do you see the role of collaboration evolving in driving sustainable and impactful global transformation?**

**A4:** Collaboration allows for bringing together a diversity of experiences, expertise and resources including technology that is reshaping the world.

**Q5: What advice would you offer to emerging leaders who are passionate about creating meaningful change in their communities and beyond?**

**A5:** My advice for emerging leaders is to identify all stakeholders within the community, and understand their roles and responsibilities, issues faced by the community and work collaboratively with these stakeholders to address the issues.



**MELANY CASTAGNOLO**  
IGC YOUTH CHAIR ARGENTINA

**About the Author:**

*Melany Castagnolo is a 18-year-old writer passionate about exploring unspoken thoughts and overlooked questions. Through her writing, she aims to challenge perspectives and encourage readers to reflect on ideas they may not have considered before. Drawing inspiration from everyday life, she captures the complexities of human emotions and experiences, offering a fresh, youthful voice in contemporary discourse.*

## Then It Was a Call, Now It's a Like - A Youth's Trip Down Nostalgia Lane

At first glance, it may seem contradictory for an eighteen-year-old girl to feel nostalgic about a way of loving that she never truly experienced. After all, I belong entirely to the digital age, where connections are formed through screens, notifications, and carefully timed interactions. However, despite growing up in this environment, I often find myself idealising a more "old school" way of expressing romantic interest—one that appears more direct, spontaneous, and emotionally transparent. This contrast between past and present is not only personal, but also reflects a broader cultural shift in how relationships are formed and maintained. As societies evolve alongside technology, so do the ways in which individuals approach intimacy. This raises an important question: in a world that offers countless ways to connect, what is actually the best way to show interest in someone?

In contemporary society, romantic interest is often initiated through social media platforms, particularly Instagram. The process, although normalised, can feel unnecessarily complex. It typically begins with sending a follow request, especially if the other person's account is private. From there, one must wait: wait to be accepted, and possibly wait again for the other person to follow back. Only then does the "real" interaction begin. Even at this stage, communication rarely starts directly. Instead,

there is an unspoken sequence to follow—liking a story, reacting to a post, or replying to a temporary update. If the other person responds, a conversation may slowly develop. In the best-case scenario, where every step aligns perfectly, this sequence eventually leads to a connection. However, the process itself can feel more like a strategy than a genuine expression of interest, as if emotions must be filtered through a set of informal but widely understood rules. In contrast, earlier forms of communication appear significantly more straightforward. If someone was interested in another person, they would simply ask for their phone number, either directly or through a mutual acquaintance. From there, the next step was clear: a

***"I often find myself idealising a more 'old school' way of expressing romantic interest—one that appears more direct, spontaneous, and emotionally transparent."***

phone call. This interaction left little room for ambiguity. Either the conversation flowed naturally, or it did not. In this sense, the outcome was immediate and easier to interpret.

While this approach required a higher level of confidence, it also eliminated many of the uncertainties that characterise modern interactions. There was no waiting for a response to a story or interpreting the meaning behind a delayed reply—just a direct exchange between two people. The simplicity of this method can be associated with a social context in which communication technologies were more limited, but interpersonal interactions were, in many ways, more intentional. Both methods, however, come with their own advantages and disadvantages.

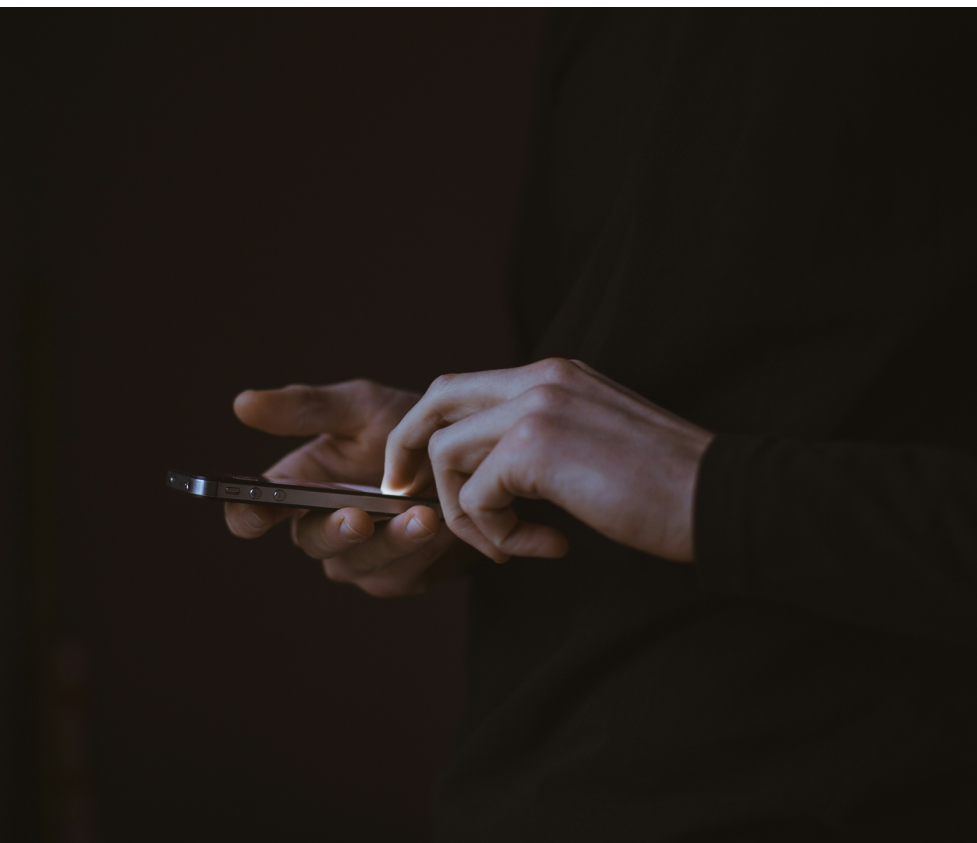
One of the main benefits of the modern approach is the reduced level of exposure. Social media creates a buffer that protects individuals from direct rejection. For instance, not being accepted as a follower or not receiving a response to a message does not carry the same emotional weight as being explicitly turned down in a conversation. This indirectness can make it easier for people to express interest without feeling overly vulnerable. On the other hand, this same feature can also be a disadvantage. The process is slower, often leading to overthinking and uncertainty. Questions such as “What if they did not see it?” or “What if they are not interested?” can linger without clear answers. As a result, what begins as a simple

intention to connect can turn into a prolonged state of doubt. The more traditional method presents

*“This raises an important question: in a world that offers countless ways to connect, what is actually the best way to show interest in someone?”*

the opposite dynamic. Its greatest disadvantage lies in the intensity of direct rejection. A lack of interest becomes immediately apparent, which can be difficult to handle emotionally. However, this clarity is also its greatest strength. Without the ambiguity present in digital interactions, individuals are less likely to overanalyse every detail. If there is mutual interest, the connection tends to develop more quickly and naturally.

Conversations can become longer, more meaningful, and less fragmented than those that occur through brief online exchanges. In this sense, the directness of past interactions may have facilitated a deeper sense of presence and engagement between individuals. It is important to acknowledge, however, that these comparisons are based on somewhat idealised and hypothetical scenarios. In reality, both past and present interactions are shaped by numerous variables, including personality, social context, and cultural expectations. Not every phone call in the past led to a meaningful connection, just as not every interaction on social media is superficial. Nevertheless,



these contrasting models help illustrate broader tendencies in how romantic interest is expressed and perceived across different historical moments.

Despite their differences, these two approaches share a fundamental similarity: both require a certain level of courage. Whether it involves sending a follow request or making a phone call, expressing romantic interest always entails a degree of vulnerability. There is an inherent uncertainty in not knowing how the other person will respond. This emotional risk is unavoidable, regardless of the method used. In this sense, the act of showing interest itself—rather than the medium through which it is expressed—is what truly defines the experience. Even within a highly mediated digital environment, the fear of rejection and the hope for connection remain constant.

Ultimately, it is difficult to determine whether one method is objectively better than the other. Each reflects the social norms and technological context of its time. From my perspective, however, the modern approach can sometimes feel overly complicated. The multiple steps and indirect signals can make something as simple as expressing interest seem unnecessarily exhausting. At the same time, I do not fully align with the directness of the past either. While I admire its clarity, I also recognise that it requires a level of boldness that can be intimidating, especially



in a context where such directness is no longer the norm.

Perhaps the most reasonable conclusion is that it is not necessary to strictly follow one model or the other. Instead, a balance between both approaches may offer a more authentic way of connecting with others. For example, while initial contact might still occur through social media, there is value in incorporating more direct forms of communication as the interaction develops. Asking for a phone number, having long conversations, or even expressing affection through handwritten letters are practices that can add depth and sincerity to modern relationships. These gestures, although less common today, can create a sense of intentionality that is often missing in purely digital exchanges.

In the end, showing romantic interest is less about the method and more about the intention behind it. Whether through a message, a call, or a letter, what truly matters is the willingness to reach out and connect with another person. While I may never fully experience the “old school” way of loving that I often idealise, I can still choose to incorporate elements of it into my own reality. In doing so, I create a personal way of expressing interest—one that exists somewhere between the past and the present, combining the accessibility of modern tools with the emotional clarity of more traditional forms of communication.





**ALI ASGHAR WAZIR**  
REGIONAL CHAIR FOR  
PAKISTAN - IGC  
(COMMUNITY  
EMPOWERMENT &  
OPERATIONS LEAD,  
PAKISTAN)

**About the Author:**

*Ali Asghar serves as the Regional Chair for Pakistan at IGC, where he leads initiatives focused on community empowerment and operational excellence. In this role, he is dedicated to strengthening community engagement, enhancing program implementation, and driving impactful development efforts across Pakistan.*

# Investing in Youth: A Strategic Path to Global Development

Youth empowerment has emerged as one of the most critical drivers of sustainable development in the 21st century. With nearly half of the global population under the age of 30, investing in young people is not merely a social responsibility but a strategic imperative for economic growth, social stability, and innovation. Empowered youth are not only beneficiaries of development—they are catalysts who shape resilient communities and progressive nations.

At its core, youth empowerment refers to equipping young individuals with the skills, resources, opportunities, and confidence needed to participate meaningfully in society. It encompasses access to quality education, employment opportunities, healthcare, and platforms for civic engagement. However, empowerment goes beyond access; it requires fostering critical thinking, leadership, and a sense of agency that enables youth to influence decisions affecting their lives and futures.

Education remains the cornerstone of youth empowerment. A robust

and inclusive education system equips young people with the knowledge and competencies necessary to navigate an increasingly complex world. Beyond formal education, vocational training and digital literacy have become equally essential in preparing youth for evolving job markets. In many developing regions, however, disparities in access to education continue to hinder progress, particularly

*“When youth voices are heard and valued, policies become more inclusive and reflective of diverse perspectives.”*

among marginalized communities. Addressing these inequalities is crucial for unlocking the full potential of youth populations.

Economic empowerment is another vital dimension. High rates of youth unemployment and underemployment pose significant challenges globally, often leading to frustration, social unrest, and lost economic potential. Governments and private sectors must collaborate to create inclusive economic opportunities, support entrepreneurship, and foster innovation



## *“Providing access to financial resources, mentorship, and markets can enable young entrepreneurs to transform ideas into impactful ventures.”*

ecosystems. Providing access to financial resources, mentorship, and markets can enable young entrepreneurs to transform ideas into impactful ventures.

Equally important is the role of civic engagement in youth empowerment. Young people must be encouraged to participate actively in democratic processes, community development, and policy dialogue. When youth voices are heard and valued, policies become more inclusive and reflective of diverse perspectives. Platforms that promote youth participation not only strengthen governance but also cultivate responsible and informed citizens.

Technology has significantly reshaped the landscape of youth empowerment. Digital platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for learning, networking,



and advocacy. Social media, for instance, has enabled young individuals to mobilize communities, raise awareness on global issues, and drive social change. However, the digital divide remains a concern, as unequal access to technology can exacerbate existing inequalities. Bridging this gap is essential to ensure that all youth can benefit from the digital revolution.

Furthermore, empowering youth requires a supportive environment that prioritizes mental health and well-being. The pressures of modern life, coupled with socio-economic challenges, have increased stress levels among young people worldwide. Creating safe spaces, promoting awareness, and ensuring access to mental health services are critical components of a holistic empowerment strategy.

International collaboration plays a pivotal role in advancing youth empowerment. Global partnerships, knowledge exchange, and investment in youth-focused initiatives can accelerate progress and address shared challenges. Organizations, governments, and civil society must work collectively to create policies and programs that are inclusive, sustainable, and youth-centered.

In conclusion, youth empowerment is not a one-time intervention but a continuous process that requires commitment, innovation, and collaboration. By investing in education, economic opportunities, civic participation, technology, and well-being, societies can harness the immense potential of young people. Empowered youth are the architects of a more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable future—one that benefits generations to come.



*Important Dates of April:*

- **2 APRIL:** World Autism Awareness Day
- **4 APRIL:** World Corporate Health Day
- **5 APRIL:** Geologists Day
- **7 APRIL:** World Health Day
- **15 APRIL:** World Art Day
- **25 APRIL:** World Veterinary Day
- **29 APRIL:** International Dance Day



# World Health Day: Small Steps Towards a Healthier Life

7 APRIL

*“Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live.” – Jim Rohn*

Every morning, we wake up with plans, responsibilities, and goals to achieve. We rush through our day, often skipping meals, ignoring rest, and putting our health aside. It feels normal, almost necessary, in today’s busy life. But have we ever paused to think—what is the use of success if we are not healthy enough to enjoy it? World Health Day, celebrated on April 7, reminds us that health is not something to think about later, but something to care for every single day.

Health today has become more important than ever. With increasing stress, pollution, and fast-paced lifestyles, people are realizing that neglecting health can lead to serious problems. Earlier, many people only thought about health when they fell sick. But now, there is a visible shift. People are becoming more aware and are trying to take better care of themselves before problems arise.

One of the biggest changes we see is in food choices. People are moving away from unhealthy, processed, and fast foods. Instead,

they are choosing fresh fruits, vegetables, and homemade meals. There is more focus on balanced diets that include proper nutrition. Many individuals now understand that what we eat directly affects how we feel. Good food not only gives us energy but also keeps our body strong and our mind active.

Another popular trend today is detox water. Many people add ingredients like lemon, cucumber, mint, or berries to their water. It may seem simple, but it encourages people to drink more water and stay hydrated. Hydration plays a key role in maintaining digestion, improving skin, and keeping the body refreshed. These small habits show how simple changes can make a big difference in our overall health.

Along with healthy eating, people are also focusing on staying active. Exercise is no longer seen as an option, but as a necessity. Whether it is a morning walk, yoga, cycling, or going to the gym, people are trying to include physical activity in their daily routine. Even short workouts at home are becoming popular. Staying active helps improve strength, boosts immunity, and reduces the risk of many diseases.

Mental health is also gaining attention in today’s world. Life can be stressful, and it is important to take care of our minds as much as our bodies. People are now talking openly about stress, anxiety, and emotional well-being. Practices like meditation, deep breathing,

and spending time with loved ones are helping individuals feel calmer and more balanced.

***“Because a healthy life is not just about living longer, but about living better, happier, and stronger every day.”***

Taking breaks and maintaining a healthy work-life balance are becoming essential.

World Health Day reminds us that health is not just an individual responsibility, but also a shared one. Governments and communities need to ensure that everyone has access to healthcare, clean water, and

proper nutrition. Many people around the world still struggle to get basic health services. This day encourages efforts to make healthcare available and affordable for all.

At a personal level, we must understand that health is built through daily habits. It is not about making big changes overnight, but about taking small steps consistently. Choosing healthy food, drinking enough water, staying active, and getting proper rest are simple yet powerful ways to maintain good health.

In the end, World Health Day teaches us a valuable lesson: our health shapes our life. When we are healthy, we can think clearly, work efficiently, and enjoy every

***“But have we ever paused to think— what is the use of success if we are not healthy enough to enjoy it?”***

moment. Without health, even simple things become difficult.

Let us use this day as a reminder to take care of ourselves. Let us make better choices, adopt healthier habits, and encourage others to do the same. Because a healthy life is not just about living longer, but about living better, happier, and stronger every day.



# World Art Day: Can Colours Speak Louder Than Words?

15 APRIL

*What if you could express everything you feel without saying a single word?*

Think about it for a moment. When you are happy, sad, confused, or even lost—do words always come easily? Not really. Sometimes, feelings are too deep to explain. This is where art steps in. World Art Day, celebrated on April 15, reminds us that art is not just about paintings or drawings—it is a powerful way of expressing emotions, thoughts, and stories that words often fail to capture.

Art is all around us. It is in the designs we wear, the music we listen to, the decorations in our homes, and even the small doodles we make during a boring lecture. It adds colour, creativity, and life to our everyday routine. Without art, life would feel plain and mechanical. Art brings excitement, imagination, and joy into even the simplest moments.

In today's world, art has taken on a deeper meaning. It is no longer just a hobby or a skill—it has become a form of therapy. Art therapy is now widely used to help people deal with stress, anxiety, and depression. When someone is unable to express their emotions through words, they often turn to colours, shapes, and patterns.

A simple drawing can reflect feelings that are difficult to explain.



Have you ever noticed how someone who doesn't talk much can still express so much through art? A quiet person may create something that speaks louder than a conversation. Through painting or sketching, they share their inner thoughts, fears, and dreams. It becomes their safe space, where they can be themselves without any judgment. This makes art not only creative but also deeply personal and healing.

Art also plays an important role in making life more enjoyable. It adds fun and colour to our daily experiences. Whether it is decorating a notebook, painting a wall, or creating something handmade, art makes ordinary things special. Festivals, celebrations, and even social media today are filled with creativity and artistic expression. It helps people connect, share, and celebrate life in a vibrant way.

Another beautiful thing about art is that there are no rules. You do not have to be perfect to create something meaningful. Anyone can pick up a brush, a pencil, or even use digital tools to create something unique. Art allows freedom. It encourages people to explore, experiment, and express without fear of making mistakes.

This freedom makes art enjoyable and stress-free.

World Art Day also celebrates the contribution of artists who inspire us. Artists help us see the world differently. Through their work, they tell stories, raise awareness, and express ideas that connect people across cultures. Their creativity helps society grow and think in new ways.

In schools and workplaces, art is now being used as a tool to reduce stress and increase creativity. Activities like painting, crafting, and designing help people relax and refresh their minds. Even spending a few minutes drawing or colouring can improve mood and bring a sense of calm. It is a simple yet effective way to take a break from the pressures of daily life.

Art also teaches us patience and focus. Creating something takes time and effort. It helps us slow down and enjoy the process rather than rushing to finish. This is especially important in today's fast-paced world, where everything feels urgent.

So, the next time you feel overwhelmed, ask yourself—can I express this through art? Pick up a pen, play with colours, or create something new. You might be surprised at how much lighter you feel.

World Art Day reminds us that art is not just something we see—it is something we feel. It is a way to heal, to connect, and to bring colour into life. After all, sometimes the most powerful expressions are the ones that are never spoken.

# May 2026 Horoscope: A Month of Change and Growth

*May 2026 feels like a gentle shift toward growth, clarity, and emotional balance. It is a month where many people may feel more focused on personal goals, relationships, and inner peace. The energy of this month encourages reflection, but also action. Some signs may experience new beginnings, while others may find closure or stability. Let's explore what May 2026 has in store for each zodiac sign.*

**Aries:** A time to slow down and rethink priorities. You may feel the need to pause and reflect before making important decisions. Focus on balancing your energy and avoiding unnecessary stress.

**Taurus:** Your season brings confidence and stability. This is your time to shine, take control, and move forward with determination. Financial and personal growth look promising.

**Gemini:** Curiosity and communication will guide your path. You may feel more social and expressive. New ideas and conversations can open unexpected opportunities this month.

**Cancer:** Emotional clarity and stronger connections ahead. You may focus more on relationships and family. It is a good time to express your feelings and build trust.

**Leo:** Career focus and recognition are likely. Your efforts may finally get noticed. Stay confident but also open to teamwork and learning from others.

**Virgo:** A month for learning and personal growth. You may feel inspired to explore new ideas or skills.

Travel or education could play an important role.

**Libra:** Balance emotions and avoid overthinking situations. You may need to focus on inner peace. Let go of things that are no longer helping you grow.

**Scorpio:** Deep emotions and strong relationships take center stage. This month may bring intensity, but also meaningful connections. Trust your instincts.

**Sagittarius:** Energy shifts toward routine and self-care. It is a good time to focus on health and daily habits. Small changes can lead to big improvements.

**Capricorn:** Creativity and joy return to your life. You may feel more relaxed and open to fun experiences. This is a great time to express yourself.

**Aquarius:** Home and family matters become important. You may spend more time with loved ones or focus on personal comfort and emotional security.

**Pisces:** Communication and new ideas flow easily. You may feel inspired to share your thoughts and connect with others. Short trips or new plans may arise.

Overall, May 2026 is a month of gentle transformation. It encourages us to move forward with awareness, patience, and positivity. No matter your sign, this is a time to trust yourself and embrace the changes coming your way.



**IGC**  
PROMOTING UNITY

APRIL 2026

**BUSINESS NETWORK EDITION**

For more information, visit us at [www.ishkama.co.uk](http://www.ishkama.co.uk)



Heal your Mind, Body & Soul

© ISHKAMA GLOBAL CHANGE  
All Rights Reserved

Founder: Abhnash K Bains

Editor: Broomling Technologies, Chief Editor: Vanessa Haripersad, Director: Dr. Rinki Sharma  
Advisory Board: Pavani Ladiwal, Pankaj Ladiwal, Content Writer: Sharda Patidar

X @ishkama1

f @ishkama

@ishkama\_igc