

# SDG10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

## Government Initiatives for Persons with Disabilities in India:

**Legislative Support:** The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act provides legal backing to ensure equality, non-discrimination, and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

**Inclusive Policies:** The government has introduced inclusive policies in education and employment, aiming to offer equal opportunities and facilities for persons with disabilities.

**Accessible Infrastructure:** Efforts have been made to improve physical infrastructure and provide accessible facilities, ensuring inclusivity and enabling participation for individuals with disabilities.

## UPES University's Support for Persons with Disabilities:

**Accessible Campus:** UPES ensures an accessible campus environment, offering facilities and amenities to accommodate the needs of students and staff with disabilities.

**Inclusive Education:** The university provides support services, like accessible learning materials and assistance, to ensure an inclusive educational experience for students with disabilities.

**Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** UPES promotes diversity and inclusion, fostering an environment that celebrates the contributions of individuals with disabilities and providing necessary support.

## Future Goals and Impacts:

UPES University's dedication to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for persons with disabilities aligns with the government's efforts. By continually improving facilities, advocating for inclusive policies, and fostering a culture of diversity, UPES contributes to a more accessible and inclusive academic and social landscape.

In conclusion, while the Indian government is committed to providing equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities, UPES University's efforts in creating an inclusive campus and supporting services demonstrate its commitment to fostering an environment that values diversity, accessibility, and equal opportunities for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

## UPES alumna creates history, pedals from Kashmir to Kanyakumari on one leg

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/upes-alumna-creates-history-pedals-from-kashmir-to-kanyakumari-on-one-leg/>



Tanya Daga, a UPES alumna from the 2017 batch of MBA Oil and Gas, completed a charity cycle ride from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Pedalling with one leg, she concluded the gruelling journey in record 43 days on a road bike

“Count your blessings and learn to appreciate what you have in hand,” says Tanya Daga, who has scripted history along with nine other para-athletes by completing the Infinity Ride 2020 organised by Aditya Mehta Foundation to raise funds and support para-athletes. She is the only female para-cyclist in the group to complete such a demanding ride from the Northern to the Southern tip of India.

In 2018, Tanya met with a fatal car accident. Her family ensured the best of the medical treatment but despite undergoing multiple surgeries and more than six months of treatment, she lost one leg. What made the challenge worse was the lack of funds and poor support from the insurance company due to policy loopholes.

Reminiscing about how she found her calling in para-cycling, Tanya says, “I have been a sports enthusiast since childhood but had no plans to take it up as a full-fledged career. It was after my amputation when I had to choose between a desk job (which everyone suggested me to go for) and sports; I found my calling in the latter. In the process of figuring out my way, life took a beautiful turn when I got connected with Aditya Mehta Foundation through a referral and took up cycling.”



Tanya is the only female para-cyclist in the group to complete such a demanding ride from the Northern to the Southern tip of India

The Aditya Mehta Foundation is an Indian NGO that supports physically challenged people to pursue sports and supports them with all the necessary training, specialised sports equipment, and sponsorships.

“The counsellors at the foundation helped me to gradually gain confidence. Thereafter, I began setting up shorter goals. I worked on my endurance and first accomplished a milestone of 100 km. My coach Mr. Aditya Mehta mentored me all the way. I cannot thank him enough for everything he has done for me. I was shortlisted by the officials of the Border Security Forces in the top 10 list to participate in the Infinity Ride 2020 – a fundraising event that enables the foundation to nurture para-athletes and build a strong Indian Contingent at the Paralympics,” she adds.

Everything was going as planned. However, in the middle of the ride when Tanya had reached Hyderabad, she got the news of her father’s untimely demise. After attending her father’s funeral, she rejoined the team in Bangalore and resumed the ride. She was depressed but determined to realise her goal.

“It was my father who had encouraged me to prove that losing a part of the body cannot stop you from achieving your target in life. It was my father’s dream that I complete the mission. To fulfil his dream, I joined the expedition back,” says Tanya, dedicating this grand feat to her father, late Mr. Alok Daga.



A never-say-die attitude and a compassionate heart, Tanya is truly a force to reckon with

Picture Credits: Aditya Mehta Foundation

Tanya was conferred with the ‘Youth Icon of Rajgarh 2021 and Brand Ambassador of Women Empowerment’ award by the Rajgarh police, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Talking about Tanya’s journey of becoming a para-athlete, Priyadarshini Shivkumar, her close friend from UPES, School of Business days says, “Her struggle with self, convincing her parents that she would be able to manage on her own in that training camp and social stigmas around disabilities, it has not been easy. The initial days of para-cycling were crazy and hectic for her mentally as well as physically, owing to her medical history. I am proud of the massive feat she has achieved. What a wonder this girl is! I strongly feel she has a long way to go, and this is just the beginning.”

“I have always known Tanya as a strong-willed and determined woman”, shares Sujit Surendran, her classmate from MBA Oil and Gas at UPES School of Business. “I remember it was during our M Cube program (the orientation program for MBA students), she hurt herself while playing Table Tennis and due to a ligament tear, was advised not to play. But she did not quit. She played and even ended up winning a few matches. She also tutored and purchased books for the kids working at tea stalls near our campus. A never-say-die attitude and a compassionate heart, she is truly a force to reckon with”, he adds.

Talking about her future, Tanya says, “Adaptive devices like prosthetic limb cost a fortune. Like in my case, it took all my father had. I would like to raise funds to support para-athletes and work towards a more inclusive world, where people are not categorised and judged basis their physical disabilities and spread awareness that anyone can achieve anything in life.”

## Project Abhilasha

<https://www.upes.ac.in/social-impact/project-abhilasha>

Children are often deprived of education due to inequalities that emanate from socio-economic status, gender and cultural identities. The idea behind this project is to identify meritorious students from the marginalized regions of the state and invite them for a month-long residential coaching camp on the campus. The focus is on strengthening their grasp of subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, and Maths, thereby making them ready for engineering entrance exams.

## UPES brings disabled persons on common platform for ‘Sahayak Hackathon’

<https://garhwalpost.in/upes-brings-disabled-persons-on-common-platform-for-sahayak-hackathon/>

Dehradun, 1 July 2020: UPES achieved yet another milestone by organising ‘Sahayak Hackathon 1.0’ – India’s first ever completely virtual hackathon for the disabled sections of society. The pioneering event was organised by the ‘School of Computer Science (SCS)’, UPES, in close association with the ‘ACM & ACM-W (Association for Computing Machinery) Student Chapters’. The participants at the event comprised persons with visual impairment; autistic spectrum disorder; cerebral palsy; Parkinson’s disease; hearing impairment, etc. The subject matter experts guided the participants ‘online’ in conceiving and developing solutions to the various challenges being faced by persons with diminished abilities due to the ongoing pandemic ‘Covid-19’. The experts guided the participants in deploying modern technologies viz. Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Internet of Things, Biometrics, Cyber Security, etc., in creating possible solutions for the challenges.

Event Convener Dr Virender Kadyan – Assistant Professor, Department of Informatics at SCS, revealed that the two-day event saw participation of 816 contestants from 110 institutions spread across 21 states of the country and 3 Overseas Teams from USA. Dr TP Singh – Head, Department of Informatics, SCS, declared the event open and presented the competition ‘problem statements’ to the participants. The pre-selected seven problem statements for the event included ‘Social Inclusion’; ‘Sanitisation Solutions’; ‘Educational Technologies’; ‘Maintenance of Social Distancing’; ‘News/Information Delivery Systems’; ‘Doorstep Delivery of Essentials’ and ‘Shifting from Old to New Conditions’. Shubhi Sharma – Assistant Professor SCS & ‘Faculty Coordinator’ for the event, updated that PR teams working in close coordination with the design, editorial and VFX teams over a number of promotional articles, brochures, flyers, invitations, posters and videos prior to the event, the registrations for which had commenced from the last week of May onwards.

‘Sahayak Hackathon 1.0’ also saw the nation’s eminent personalities sharing their insights with the participants on a plethora of topics. Prominent amongst these included Rajive Gulati, Senior Programme Officer & Head Evaluation, UNTIL, who spoke on ‘Emerging Technological Innovations’;

Philanthropist Col Karminder Singh, Secretary, Patiala School for the Deaf & Blind; Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Director, ISLRTC, shared know-how on matters involving Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in India; Dr Himangshu Das, Director, NIEPMD; Arijit Bhattacharyya, Founder & CEO, Virtualinfocom; Nalin Singh, Founder & CEO, Natio Cultus. Hari Ramasubramanian – Business Development Lead, IBM ICE, updated on IBM's history of Projects for the disabled populace.

'Team Sparflakes' from Aarupadai Veedu Institute of Technology, Chennai, claimed the 'First Position' with a cash prize of Rs 25,000; while 'Team Grumm' from UPES, clinched the 'First Runner-up' award with a cash prize of Rs 15,000; and 'Team Braille' from Dagriation Solutions, Karnal, won the 'Second Runner-up' award with a cash prize of Rs 10,000, along with a round-trip travel tickets to Singapore for all the three winning teams.

Besides the winners, three other teams were shortlisted for their notable performance and conferred the titles – 'Most Innovative Idea Team' that went to 'Team Phoenix' – Chitkara University, Chandigarh; 'Team – The Minimalists' from SRM University, Chennai, was awarded the 'Most Sustainable Idea Team' title; followed by 'Team Bliscare' – GH Rasoni College of Engineering, Nagpur, was given the 'Most Cost Effective Idea Team' title.

Vice Chancellor, UPES, Dr Sunil Rai congratulated the Winners.

Briefing the media, Arun Dhand, Senior Director, disclosed that UPES has always endeavored to align with the National Policies and Schemes and this 1st version of 'Sahayak Hackathon' is an attempt to support the 'DIVYANGJAN' scheme which has been launched under the aegis of the 'National Handicapped Finance Corporation'. "The university was ably supported in this noble cause by its industry and external partners which included IBM; UNTIL – United Nations Technology Innovations Labs; ISLRTC – Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center; NIEPVD – National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities; Gaaana – a community-based platform to run online innovation & research challenges from Estonia; 'Creative Tim' and 'Learning While Travelling'," he added.

Dr Virender Kadyan appreciated the efforts put in by all team members – Shubhi Sharma, Sugandha Sharma, Pankaj Badoni, Dr Deepika Koundal, Anupam Singh and Chandramani Sharma.

## Sahayak Hackathon 1.0: Ideas to mitigate challenges faced by differently-abled

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/sahayak-hackathon-1-0-ideas-to-mitigate-challenges-faced-by-differently-abled/>



UPES ACM conducted Sahayak Virtual Hackathon with a brilliant theme for helping the differently-abled

The School of Computer Science at UPES, Dehradun, in association with UPES ACM and ACM-W Student Chapters, organised Sahayak Virtual Hackathon 1.0, India's first-ever state-of-the-art Hackathon directed at aiding Divyangjan – the differently-abled people – especially affected by an endangered economy, health implications, and limited prospects amidst the COVID-19 outbreak.

Says Varun Tondon, B.Tech Computer Science, Open Source and Standards, "When we thought that there is nothing to look forward to in this lockdown, UPES ACM brought Sahayak Virtual Hackathon with a brilliant theme for helping differently-abled people. Taking care of the needs of the differently-abled has been the most ignored issue by all of us. With Sahayak Virtual Hackathon, more than 816 students came together and brainstormed in order to find the best possible solutions." Kashika Chopra and Apoorav Srivastav from B.Tech E-Commerce Retail and Automation were also in Varun's team.

Ideas that employed the latest technology in the game were showcased – AI, ML, AR, VR, IoT, Biometrics, Cybersecurity, and Robotics to devise solutions, build prototypes, and develop applications that make a positive and palpable difference in the lives of the specially-abled during this pandemic.

Says Ms. Shubhi Sharma, "In line with social distancing guidelines, the Hackathon was hosted online in its entirety, using video-conferencing and instant messaging apps, and a top-end website. Over 816 participants participated in the month-long event. Extensive digital publicizing and consequent outreach strongly influenced the course of the Hackathon. Teams from 110 distinct institutions, across 21 Indian states, in addition to teams from the US, participated."

The event was kickstarted by convenor Dr. Virender Kadyan and coordinator Ms. Shubhi Sharma. Eminent speakers at the event were Mr. Rajive Gulati (Sr. Programme Officer & Head Evaluation, UNTIL), Karminder Singh (Philanthropist; Secretary, Patiala School for the Deaf and Blind), Mr. Sanjay Kumar (Deputy Director, ISLRTC) and Dr. Himangshu Das (Director, NIEPMD). Themes included Social Inclusion, Sanitization Resources, Educational Technology, Maintaining Social Distancing, News/Information Delivery Systems and transitioning to changed circumstances. Sahayak Hackathon 1.0 was declared open by Dr. T.P. Singh, Head Department of Informatics.

- Winner: Team 'Sparkflares', Aarupadai Veedu Institute of Technology, Chennai
- First Runner-Up: Team 'Grumm', University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun
- Second Runner-Up: Team 'Braille', Dagriation Solutions, Karnal



These teams won cash prizes of ₹25000, ₹15000, and ₹10000 respectively, and round-trip tickets to Singapore. Sponsors, reputed collaborators, knowledge partners, and other associates, all of whom helped SVH 1.0 scale an unprecedented pinnacle of success, include, IBM, United Nations Technology Innovations Labs (UNTIL), Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD), Gaaana, Creative Tim, and Learning While Travelling.

Says Varun, “From the very beginning, our aim was not to win this hackathon but to build something. It has been a wonderful experience to be a part of such a great event where we got to showcase our skills and contribute to the society at the same time and I am sure that every team would take their ideas further with the same level of enthusiasm as we participated in the hackathon. A big thank you to UPES School of Computer Science for giving us this platform to be able to do our bit for the differently abled and the gifted. It was a great learning experience!”

## [UPES teacher attends WHO workshop on disabilities](https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/features/upes-teacher-attends-who-workshop-on-disabilities-280259)

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/features/upes-teacher-attends-who-workshop-on-disabilities-280259>

DEHRADUN: Dr Neelu Ahuja, head of computing research Institute, R&D centre, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), attended a workshop organised by the Centre for Rehabilitation and Advancement of Disables (Cradle) in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, in New Delhi on August 10.

Dr Neelu Ahuja, head of computing research Institute, R&D centre, University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES), attended a workshop organised by the Centre for Rehabilitation and Advancement of Disables (Cradle) in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia, in New Delhi on August 10.

She has been working on a project involving IT interventions in developing tools and technology beneficial for people suffering from “learning disabilities”, especially dyslexia’–reading disabilities, ‘dysgraphia’–writing disabilities and ‘dyscalculia’–disability with numbers. Dr Ahuja’s suggestion of enhancing involvement of academia in general and the large student community in particular in this endeavour was appreciated and welcomed. During the question and answer session she stressed incubation and entrepreneurial support to youths so that they could contribute to improving the access to assistive technology for disabled and elders.

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

<https://twitter.com/UPESDehradun/status/1640293987087990786>

Meghna Sabharwal’s research has extensively focused on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Join her as she discusses the challenges women face in progressing to leadership positions.

Register: <https://bit.ly/3IFEiW6>

 School of Liberal Studies | Lecture Series #2

## Navigating Bias: Examining Barriers to Women's Leadership Advancement

Join us to hear from



**Meghna Sabharwal**  
Professor & Head - public and non-profit management program  
University of Texas, Dallas

Meghna focuses on DE&I in public HR management. She has authored 3 books and 55+ peer-reviewed journal articles, and won 4 best paper awards. Meghna serves on editorial boards of top public administration journals and is an Associate Editor of the Review of Public Personnel Administration and Public Integrity.

31<sup>st</sup> March, 2023 | 7:00 pm IST | Register to join

[Register Now](#)

## Hues of Holi @UPES

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/down-the-memory-lane/>

UPES EDITORIAL TEAM · MARCH 17, 2022



Students celebrating Holi on campus

Students celebrating Holi on campus after two years; Picture credit: Pradeep Jagwan

From splashing colours to dancing their hearts out, UPES students celebrated Holi on campus after two years with full enthusiasm while authorities made sure that it was a happy and safe Holi for every one

One of the most-celebrated festivals in India, Holi marks the end of winter and arrival of spring. The ritual starts by lighting a bonfire prior to the day of Holi, symbolising the triumph of good over evil.



The festival of colours was much-awaited by students, who celebrated it on campus after two years. Here's what they had to say about the celebrations on campus:

Kartik Khanna, MBA Logistics and Supply Chain Management student: "This is one festival that students have always looked forward to, planning it well in advance. On the day of Holi, students gather at the UPES hostel ground where everyone merrily plays with colours and water. Students dance on some famous songs as they enjoy celebrating with their friends."



Holi celebrations

Picture credit: Pradeep Jagwan

Jigyasa Pahwa, BA LLB Corporate Law student: "**Covered in colours everyone looks the same, everybody is equal, and strangers readily become friends.** UPES is my home away from home, not to mention that each festival is celebrated at the campus with great enthusiasm and zest. Holi is planned on a large scale at the campus. The authorities always make sure that it is a happy and safe Holi for each one of us. With vibrant colours, water balloons, exotic dishes, rejuvenating drinks, dance and music, we await this delightful festival. I cannot thank UPES enough for all the experiences that it has added to the book of memories of my college life."



Holi celebrations

Picture credit: Pradeep Jagwan

Rebecca Mishra, BA LLB Criminal Law student: "The general perception towards festivals is that they have a predefined ritual. In the context of Holi, it is playing with gulal and eating hot fritters while

dancing to rambunctious dhol beats. Well, UPES does all that and more! UPES students celebrate the festival with such gusto that that no one misses their near and dear ones. It is like having a small family away from home.”

## How co-teaching by international faculty is enhancing diversity at UPES

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/how-co-teaching-by-international-faculty-is-enhancing-diversity-at-upes/>

[EKTA KASHYAP](#) · FEBRUARY 25, 2022



UPES students get the opportunity to learn from experts hailing from different parts of the world, including Germany, Canada, and the United Kingdom

Instructional delivery plays a crucial role in shaping learners’ perspectives. Inclusive educational practices such as co-teaching can provide a unique learning opportunity for students. It is one of the methods of instruction wherein two or more faculty teach as a team in a classroom. There are different models of co-teaching, including One Teach, One Support; Parallel Teaching; Alternative Teaching; Station Teaching; and Team Teaching.

Co-teaching enables students to learn from distinguished faculty hailing from different parts of the world. According to Dr. Sheetal Khanka, Head, Department of International Affairs, and Associate Professor, Organisation Behaviour at UPES, “Diversity in a university provides a platform for students to explore the world beyond the immediate environment. Having an international faculty is an excellent opportunity to experience a subject in a truly global way. The course curriculum and syllabus remain the same, but an international faculty provides a fresh perspective, thus enhancing the students’ exposure.”

Continuing its pursuit of [providing the best learning experience](#) to its students, UPES has collaborated with several esteemed international faculty. A glimpse at some of the faculty’s notable work:

Jan Bauer is a Hamburg-based animation artist, illustrator, writer, and lecturer. He has worked on various formats over the last 20 years including television series, feature films, commercials, shorts, and educational videos for animation and live-action. His key competence is visual storytelling – the transformation of ideas into pictures. Besides being a storyboard artist, Bauer has experience as an animator, layout artist, director, and character and prop designer. He is also an internationally-recognised comic artist. His graphic novel ‘The Salty River’ has been published in four languages.

Bauer has taught at several institutions such as the University of Applied Science, Europe, and Bauhaus University, Weimar.

Vladimir Isailovic is a visual artist, designer, and teacher. Born in Belgrade, Serbia, he pursued his master's from the Institute for Art in Context, Berlin, Germany, and a Diploma in Fine Arts, from the Academy of Fine Arts of Bologna, Italy. Isailovic specialises in game design, video production, sound design, graphic design, painting, engraving, illustration, and curating. He won the Award for Woodcut, Biennale of Young Artists, Kanagawa, Japan and the Award for Installation: Hommage to Hitchcock, Fondazione Zucchelli, Bologna, Italy.

Manfred Naescher is a visual artist from Berlin, Germany. He has studied design in Canada and has several awards and grants to his name, such as the Cultural Foundation of Liechtenstein: Exhibition Grant. His extensive list of published work includes Still-Ten Watercolours, Faces, and Visiting Shadows, to name a few. Naescher has also conducted several workshops and drawing experiments.

Silvia Perdiguero Romero is well-versed in Spanish, English and Basque, developed throughout a career in, first, international media (BBC in Northern Ireland, EITB and Vocento in Spain, TeleMedia in Hungary, EuroParlTV in Brussels) and then in teaching and facilitation (Theatre of the Oppressed, The Art of Hosting Conversations that Matter). She has delivered workshops on several topics and voluntary work in Northern Ireland, China, Kenya, and Morocco – with programs like Beijing Broads, Active Citizens, ICAN, Grundtvig, and PEACE III.

Basel Naouri is an architect, musician, and designer of immersive spaces and experiences. Originally from Jordan, he is currently based in Berlin, where he is engaged in several projects in the fields of spatial sound, media architecture, and immersive spaces. Naouri's academic and professional work is focused on the cross-section between sound and architecture. He collaborates with architecture and design firms and museums as well as other artists, musicians, and architects on innovative projects, displaying his work in international design events and performances. Naouri is the founder and lead researcher of Timelab for transmedia design and lecturer and artistic researcher at Masters of Media Spaces at UE-A&D, Berlin, Germany.

Rekesh Raj Pandey, originally from Nepal and currently based out of Germany, is an experienced multidisciplinary designer and co-founder of 'Archraphix'. He is passionate about telling stories about brands, products, and companies. He specialises in 2D & 3D animation, VFX, projection mapping to team building and project management.

Bart Kuipers is a professional storyteller, all-round creative writer, teacher and freelance journalist dedicated to creating engaging content for a wide range of audiences. His work includes television screenplays work for children, LGBTQ+ themed short stories, literary critiques, and contributions to political magazines. Kuipers aim is to immerse, inform, and entertain through inventive language, moving narratives, and surprising angles. As an educator, he creates an encouraging environment, a safe space, in which students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and writings. Kuipers has worked as a Creative Writing Teacher at Boston University and has numerous published works to his credit.

Diversity in education has a direct impact on the students, benefitting them academically and socially. Interactions with faculty from different cultural backgrounds lead to enhanced awareness of the world, improved communication, critical thinking, and thought-processing skills. Students become more empathetic and innovative in their approach to building solutions. UPES will continue to offer an education that is both global and inclusive so students can become better prepared for the complex and pluralistic society.

## Mexico's Carlota to Gambia's Chu Yassa: Campus celebrates diversity with global culinary feast

<https://blog.upes.ac.in/mexicos-carlota-to-gambias-chu-yassa-campus-celebrates-diversity-with-global-culinary-feast/>

DIANA GEORGE · MAY 9, 2023



*One of the many stalls at the International Food Festival at UPES Dehradun*

UPES hosts over 60 exchange students from 27 different countries and the event was organised to celebrate the cultural diversity on campus and help foster unity through the medium of food

In a bid to celebrate the cultural diversity on its campus, UPES recently organised its first international food festival on April 24. Exchange students from countries such as Mexico, Bhutan, Ghana, South Sudan, and Nepal, among others, participated in the event.

Mouth-watering fares included Kewa Datshi and Fried Rice of Bhutan, Wai Wai Sadeko of Nepal, Swahili Buns of Ghana, South Sudan's Cassava Leaves, Cameroon's Ndoleh, Chicken Sauce and Fried Potatoes, Mexico's Carlota and Gambia's Chu Yassa.

Anusha Mirza, an exchange student from UAE in 3rd year Product Design, served delectable Chicken Shawarma and Hummus to the long queue of visitors thronging her stall.

She enjoyed making the dishes, she says. "It's been good fun participating in the international food festival. We all enjoyed making Shawarma and Hummus. We hope to participate in another event soon," she adds.

Jenisha Neupane of Nepal is in the final semester of her LL.M. course at UPES. She served her country's "go-to snack" Wai Wai Sadeko at the festival.



Jenisha Neupane (right) and her batchmates serve staple Nepalese snack Wai Wai Sadeko to visitors

“I would like to thank UPES and the Department of International Affairs for the international food festival,” Jenisha says. “Personally, for me it was a bonding opportunity with my Indian friends who volunteered to help me before and during the festival. All the participants had a gala time presenting their dishes. We got to taste numerous different flavours in a day,” she adds.

Calling the fiesta a “big hit”, Jenisha says that seeing so many different people enjoying local Nepalese food made her very happy. “People loved our food so much that they came for second and third servings,” she quips.



PhD scholar Armel M Nganda (right) and his friend treat UPES Chancellor Sunil Rai (centre) to Cameroonian dishes

“It was an enriching experience for us as we could showcase Cameroonian culinary know-how,” says PhD scholar Armel M Nganda who prepared two traditional meals Ndoleh and Chicken Sauce with Fried Irish Potatoes. Armel says he was pleasantly surprised to discover the similarities between Indian and Cameroonian food.

His dishes were sold out within minutes and he was elated with the positive feedback he received from students and faculty alike.

According to Dr Sheetal Khanka, Deputy Director, Department of International Affairs (DIA), UPES, the event was intended to be a “showcase of culinary excellence” that would help promote cultural unity on campus.

“It was an opportunity to learn about the cultures and traditions of different countries through the medium of local cuisines,” she added.

The novel idea was floated by some of the 60+ exchange students at UPES who felt that an event like a food festival could help connect different cultures on campus.

The idea immediately found a lot of backers, and a series of meetings and brainstorming sessions later, a plan had been put in place to bring the idea to fruition. With support from different stakeholders at the university, the event was held with much fanfare in the last week of April.

The incredible gala received positive response and earned so many rave reviews that the DIA is now considering making it a biannual event.

“We definitely would like to do this event more often. With the kind of positive feedback we have received, we will organise it two times every year, one in each semester,” Dr Sheetal confirms.

“The event was an amazing bonding platform for all UPES students, staff, faculty, and acknowledged the diversity we have. The international students received encouragement from everyone and their culinary skills were much appreciated. The UPES students got to know more about various cultures. Everyone enjoyed the food, music, songs, and dance celebrations during the event,” she adds before signing off.