

# First ever TEDxVerbier - Bear Grylls, Daphna Joel, Erik Bethel, Geraldine Fasnacht, Rowena Samarasinhe and Tim Smith

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## TEDxVerbier First Ever Event-The Context of Connectivity

The first edition of TEDxVerbier, The Context of Connectivity, will be hosted in the Swiss Alps, on 3 September, 2022. An entertaining evening of new ideas, high production values and concepts with the power to create positive change in the world – confirmed speakers so far include: Erik Bethel, Geraldine Fasnacht, Bear Grylls, Professor Daphna Joel, Rowena Samarasinhe and Tim Smith – further speakers to be announced.

Charles Taylor, TEDxVerbier organiser, said: “We are incredibly excited to announce the launch of TEDxVerbier, a non-profit with a mission to establish a series of events in Verbier to spread ideas which have the power to create good. The vehicle for this will be engaging and entertaining general interest conferences presented in the TED format with high production values. At the heart of the vision are our world-renowned speakers, each a global leader in their field.

“Our theme this year is The Context of Connectivity. Everything in our universe is connected – whether at a macro or a micro level. Our speakers will be exploring this idea against the background of their own expertise and experience and showing how, in their context, understanding connectivity leads us to ideas about how to progress further as an animal indigenous to this amazing planet and, ultimately, to create positive outcomes for our species and our habitat.”

High profile speakers confirmed so far include:

Erik Bethel is a global finance professional in both private and public sectors. In 2020 he was nominated as the US Ambassador to Panama, having already represented the US at the World Bank. There, he spearheaded technology initiatives including AI, blockchain and the tokenization of World Bank loans. Erik’s prior experience in investment banking and private equity focused on emerging markets. He was a Managing Director at Franklin Templeton Investments, executing private equity transactions in Latin America. Before that, he was in Shanghai as Managing Partner of SinoLatin Capital and Managing Director of ChinaVest. Earlier in his career, Erik held a variety of Emerging Markets-focused private equity and investment banking positions at J.P. Morgan and Morgan Stanley in New York and Mexico City. Erik Bethel holds a BSc in Economics and Political Science from the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis and an MBA from The Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania. He speaks Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin.

Geraldine Fasnacht, Paris Match’s Adventurer of the Year 2021, is known worldwide as a pioneering professional freeride snowboarder, base jumper and wingsuit pilot, based in Verbier. Her motivation comes from the remote and awe-inspiring natural landscapes where she has tested her limits: freeride snowboarding in Antarctica, wingsuit flying from the Matterhorn. Geraldine continues to push her boundaries with passion, while all the time taking a deep philosophical interest in the balance and risk which are so central to her lifestyle.

Bear Grylls is probably the most recognisable adventurer on the planet. A former special forces soldier, he was one of the youngest to climb Mount Everest despite breaking his back in a free-fall accident only months earlier. Since then, Bear has carved out a record-breaking career in television, including the legendary Discovery Channel show *Man vs Wild*, not to mention *Running Wild with Bear Grylls*, now in its seventh season on National Geographic. His *Running Wild* guests have included President Obama, Will Ferrell, Ben Stiller, Roger Federer, Julia Roberts, Prime Minister Modi of India and many other stars. Bear also hosts the Emmy-nominated, interactive Netflix series *You vs Wild*, where it's the viewers who decide which adventure he faces. This was one of the most viewed Netflix shows of 2019 and has now been made into an interactive movie. Bear is also a family man and a number one bestselling author who has sold over 20 million books. He is Honorary Colonel of the British Royal Marine Commandos and the first ever Chief Ambassador to 57 million young Scouts worldwide.

Professor Daphna Joel, PhD, is head of the psychobiology department at Tel Aviv University. In 2013, she was appointed chair of the PhD committee of the School of Psychological Sciences. One of her main research interests is whether there is a "male brain" and a "female brain"; whether human brains can be divided in a binary way. Prof Joel's research tells us that they cannot, opening the way for fascinating further study.

Rowena Samarasinhe is an international sports lawyer and advocate for sport as a power for good. She is the CEO of World 12s, a new 12-a-side rugby union tournament, a non-executive director of sports businesses across the world and has worked on some of the largest global events in sport. She is passionate about changing perceptions in the industry; she has a unique perspective, from grassroots to high performance to the boardroom. She sits on the Leadership Circle for ActionAid's Arise Fund, supporting women in disasters and emergencies.

Tim Smith is an Open Science advocate who launched CERN's Open Data Portal to share Large Hadron Collider big data with the world. He also worked to nurture Zenodo, an open data service for world-wide science, as part of the European Commission's OpenAIRE project. Tim strongly promotes Open Source software, fostering InvenioRDM, a turn-key research data management repository platform, Indico conference manager, and the MALT project for CERN's core IT services. Tim came to CERN at the end of the 80s, obtained a PhD in Particle Physics and performed research at the Large Electron-Positron Collider accelerator for 10 years. He then joined the IT Department to lead teams innovating in computing farm management and physics data management.

For more details visit [www.tedxverbier.ch](http://www.tedxverbier.ch), Facebook, Instagram @tedxverbier, LinkedIn

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For further press information, comments, interviews and images please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About TEDxVerbier:

TEDxVerbier, September 3, 2022, 17:00pm - 22:30pm CEST (UTC +2hrs) Cinéma de Verbier, Place Centrale, Verbier, Valais (fr), Wallis (de), 1936, Switzerland. This independent TEDx event is operated under

license from TED. All the talks from TEDxVerbier will be uploaded to the TEDx Talks YouTube channel, but will also be promoted through TEDxVerbier social media channels and website. Once the first event has been completed, material from it will be used to promote subsequent events - one of which is already in its planning stages.

About TEDx, x = independently organized event:

More than 3000 TEDx events are held annually; the TEDx Talks YouTube channel has over 34.4 million subscribers globally. TED and the TEDx events which it licences are a global movement, capturing people's imagination and driving the spread of ideas which are new, engaging and, ultimately, have the power to create positive change in our world. In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At a TEDx event, TED Talks video and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and connection. These local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, where x = independently organized TED event. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events are self-organized. (Subject to certain rules and regulations.)

About Charles Taylor:

Charles Taylor is an Anglo-French retired infantry captain and former world-record-holding ocean rower. He has experience in a wide range of fields including the security industry, banking, insurance, publishing, management consulting and tech start-ups. He has been living in Verbier since August 2019 and enjoys ultra-running, snowboarding and cooking. He believes that humankind must fulfil its duty in protecting the future of our habitat and eliminating non-consensual violence between its members.