Sir/Madam,

We are pleased to invite members of UNESCO’s Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) in your respective countries to take part in the global contest *Opening hearts and minds to refugees*, organized by UNESCO in collaboration with the Federal Research and Methodological Centre for Tolerance, Psychology and Education (Moscow, Russian Federation). The contest, which is aligned with the current "Global Citizenship Education" priority of ASPnet, aims to raise children’s and youth awareness on the rights of and respect for refugees.

ASPnet schools will be mobilized to encourage teachers and students to reflect the vision and spontaneous suggestions of young women and men to promote a culture of living together and international understanding that cherishes diversity in all its richness.

How

*Opening hearts and minds to refugees* invites children and young people to:

1. research and reflect on issues linked to refugees (who the people leaving their country are; how their life in their home countries was and what made them flee; how their new life in the transit or destination country is; what refugees and non-refugees have in common; how we could better help them to feel safe; welcome and included; how we could build bridges between non-refugees and refugees and exchange knowledge, skills and competencies, etc.;

2. foster critical thinking, tolerance and learning to overcome barriers and prejudice with a view to living together in our increasingly multi-cultural world;

3. stimulate creative expressions though various art forms.
Where and in which languages

The contest is open to all ASPnet member institutions since all countries are concerned by the refugee crisis, as countries of origin, transit or destination. It will be conducted in all six UNESCO official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). The ASPnet coordinators will be requested to make a pre-selection of artworks submitted (one per category, meaning four per country) and, if needed, translate into one of the six languages the contributions from the schools.

Age groups and awards

The contest is open to groups of students, students in pre-schools, primary, secondary and vocational schools and teacher training institutions. Each category will be awarded a first, a second and third collective prize, meaning three prizes per category, as follows:

1. pre-school: drawings or collage (on a double size A3 paper) – preselected works to be sent by ordinary mail;
2. primary: drawings or collage (on double size A3 paper) – preselected works to be sent by ordinary mail;
3. secondary and vocational short stories (one A4 page) or video clips (2 min maximum) – preselected works to be sent by email;
4. teaching training institutions: short stories (one A4 page) or video clips (2 min maximum) – preselected works to be sent by email.

Submissions should be the result of collective group work.

The collective prizes given to the schools will be determined according to each category, such as drawing kits, sport material, laptops/note books, games, and so on.

Symbolic awards will be given for children in the winning teams (t-shirts, cloth bags, etc.).

Decisions

The Jury will be composed of seven UNESCO officials (from each programme sector and from the two global priorities, Africa and Gender Equality); two officials of the Federal Research and Methodological Centre for Tolerance, Psychology and Education; and two Honorary and Goodwill Ambassadors. Entries will be judged on the basis of originality, creative imagination, artistic quality, adherence to the topic and rules established for the contest. The last stage, i.e. the nomination of the three finalist per category and per region, will be carried out by peer voting through the new ASPnet online platform.

Visibility

The winning contributions will be published online on a dedicated UNESCO portal, and feature an interview and a photo of the selected schools. The contributions may be used by UNESCO in exhibitions, publications or as promotional support material for action in favour of global citizenship, tolerance, inclusion and rights.

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Fees

No entry fees of any kind are required to enter and win the contest.

Timeline

Contributions shall be submitted by schools to the ASPnet National Coordinators by 1 February 2017, and by the National Coordinators to UNESCO by 1 March 2017, to the following e-mail address: SHS.inclusion-rights@unesco.org; and postal address UNESCO, SHS/TSD/INC, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France. Please indicate “ASPnet contest” on the envelope.

Submitted artworks should carry the name, city and country of the ASPnet school, the name list of the artist-student, as well as their age.

We look forward to seeing ASPnet schools in your countries engaging in this initiative, and we remain,

Yours faithfully,

Olan Tang

Nada Al-Nashif