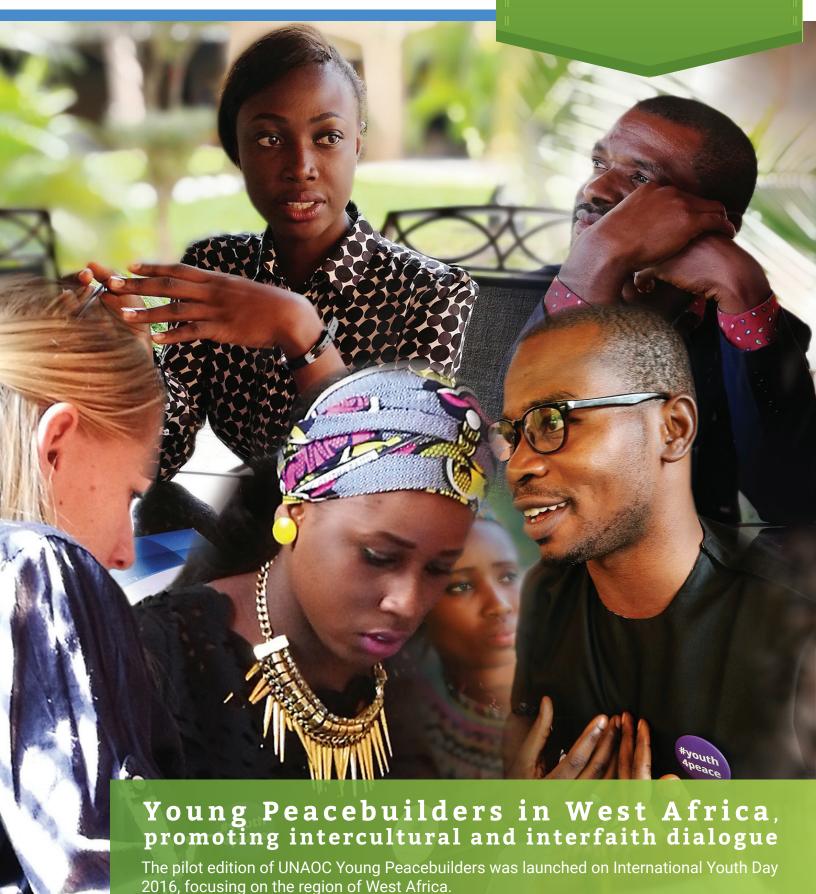


IN FOCUS

JANUARY 2017





UNAOC launches a new global programme to support the development of young peacebuilders, with a first edition in West Africa

"This training has really showed me how one-on-one interactions and personal connections can really make strong impact in somebody's worldview and mindset. I'm going to teach 50 adolescent girls in Lagos to use theater to communicate to fellow students about intercultural and interreligious coexistence."

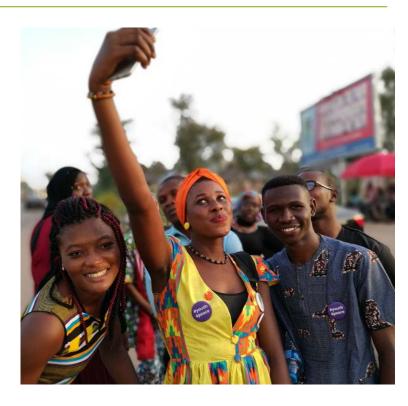
Olaoluwa Abagun, Founder and Executive Director of Girl Pride Circle, Lagos, Nigeria, an NGO that advocates for girls' rights and empowers girls with leadership and advocacy skills

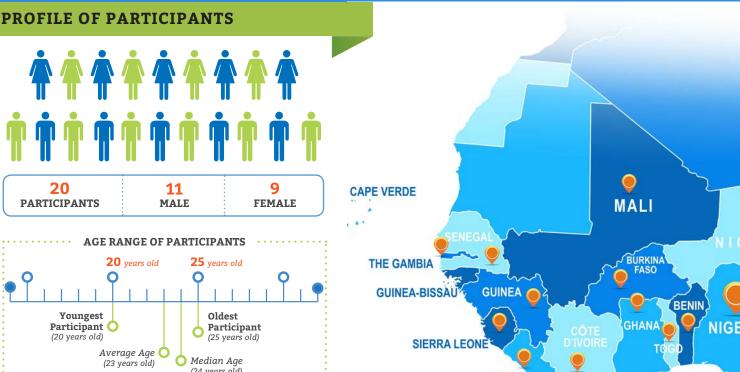
The pilot edition of UNAOC Young Peacebuilders was launched on International Youth Day 2016, focusing on the region of West Africa.

Through a competitive call for applications, 20 young men and women from 11 countries in West Africa were selected among more than 450 applicants to take part in the program. After 7 weeks of preparatory engagement facilitated through an online platform and curriculum, participants were excited to finally meet face-to-face, at a workshop in Abuja.

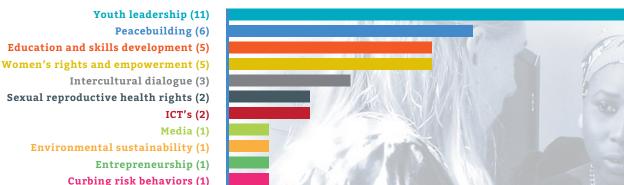
In the early stages of the involvement in peacebuilding, participants were eager to learn more about it and intercultural dialogue:

What is the difference between violence and conflict? How can we engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue? What are tools we can use to analyze and transform conflict? What are common identity-based conflicts in our regions? How can we deconstruct stereotypes?









These are all pressing questions they had, and which were explored in the different interactive sessions of the workshop.

There were many firsts among the group: first time to travel outside of their country, first time to represent their organization at an international workshop, first time to take part in a training that integrated highly interactive and participatory methods, and tools such as theater and photography to transform narratives.

By the end of the week, participants overwhelmingly confirmed that the methodology had been a highlight of the workshop, sharing how they felt the learning "really came from them" and that "it didn't feel like learning because we were having fun". A key outcome of the workshop was the consolidation of the network, as well as the creation of personal action plans in which participants outline specific actions they will take in the

upcoming months to apply learning and advance intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding in their communities.

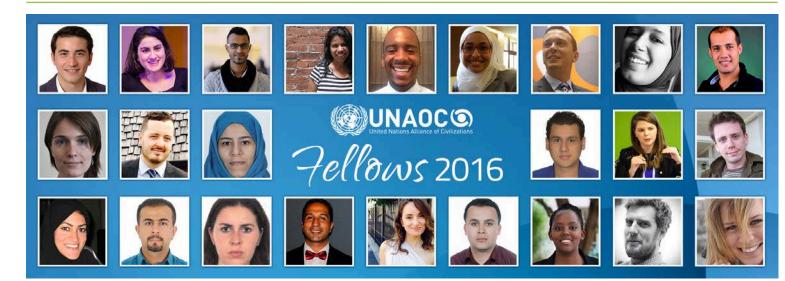
Implemented in collaboration with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY), the program seeks to grow the youth peacebuilding movement. This collaboration is an example of the meaningful partnerships between young people and UN agencies on all issues related to peace and security, which the UN Security Council called for when it adopted resolution 2250 in December 2015.

The program also addresses key recommendations made in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE), namely by providing educational opportunities for young people to strengthen their competence in peacebuilding.





Fellowship Program 2016: prevention of radicalization & xenophobia through education



Thanks to the financial assistance of Germany and Spain, as well as the support of Morocco, Egypt, Qatar and the League of Arab States, UNAOC Fellowship Program enabled young professionals and civil society leaders from the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)**, and their counterparts from **Europe and North America (EUNA)** to learn from one another and address issues related to intercultural understanding and interfaith dialogue.

In 2016, activities and discussions of the Fellowship focused on "Education as a tool for the prevention of radicalization and xenophobia." Participants have been selected for their professional achievements in the field of education in their home countries. They will to the United States, Germany, France, Spain, Morocco, Egypt, and Qatar. They will meet with international organizations, governmental institutions, religious leaders and a wide range of journalists, NGOs, think-tanks and civil society actors involved in education and in the prevention of radicalization and xenophobia.

UNAOC Fellows' perspective: "Taking part in an intercultural exchange program is something I have been dreaming of my whole life!"

Annegret Meinel is a secondary school teacher in Germany. She's been helping young immigrants from the MENA region to learn English and German. Recently, Annegret has also been helping refugees from Libya, who in return regularly invited her to break the fast of Ramadan with them. Her experience led her to reflect on the generalization and the stereotypes used by politics and media against migrants and refugees from Muslim background in Germany. "We need to teach media and journalists to be more careful about the words and the metaphors they use to talk about migrants. In my opinion, to fight hate-speech we also need to invest in the prevention of it at school."

Of her trip, she says she is bringing back good practices on how to encourage intercultural dialogue, as well as knowledge she gained by being exposed to different perceptions and paths of life. Her favorite moment was the couple of days she spent with MENA Fellows in Spain. "I was really looking forward to meeting them and to learning more about their perspectives. Most of them come from countries I know very little about, like Iraq or Yemen." She adds that meeting the MENA Fellows changed her perception of the world. Countries that were very foreign to her suddenly appeared more familiar and accessible.



MEASURING INTERCULTURAL PERCEPTIONS

A survey was conducted with the 2016 UNAOC Fellows before and after their trip to measure the evolution of their perceptions.

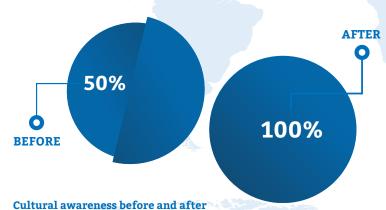
MENA Fellows traveled to the United States, Germany and France. EUNA Fellows went to Morocco, Egypt and Qatar

Survey: Europe and North America (EUNA) Fellows

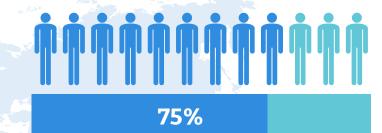


100%

100% of EUNA Fellows had a positive overall perception of the MENA region after the Fellowship

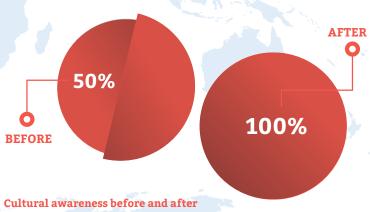


After their trip, EUNA Fellows' awareness of the cultural diversity between Morocco, Egypt and Qatar significantly increased. Before their trip, 50% of the EUNA Fellows thought that culture, religious practices, and traditions were quite similar, whereas after their trip, 100% rated these features as different.

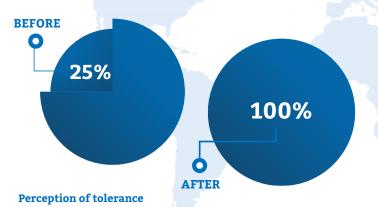


Survey: Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Fellows

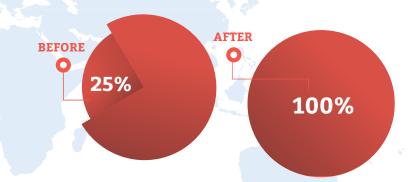
75% of MENA Fellows had a positive overall perception of the EUNA region after the Fellowship



After their trip, MENA Fellows' awareness of the cultural diversity between the United States, Germany, and France significantly increased. Before their trip, two thirds of the MENA Fellows thought that culture, religious practices, and traditions were quite similar, whereas after their trip, 100% rated these features as different.



After their trip, 100% of the EUNA Fellows thought that society in Morocco, Egypt and Qatar were welcoming and diverse, whereas before the trip the rate was as low as 25%.



Perception of tolerance

After their trip, almost all of the MENA Fellows perceived society in the United States, Germany and France as open to dialogue and tolerant, whereas before the trip less than 25% thought so.





"I believe that deeper insight into the complexities of the MENA region would help decipher any biases that I may hold against this area while gaining greater knowledge of the Arab and Muslim world."

Trent Lawrence, U.S.A



"I believe that it is everybody's duty to build bridges between cultures. Knowing more about other cultures through dialogue is the best way to strengthen ties between countries."

Mustafa Al Soufi, Yemen



FELLOWSHIP: From Iraq to Ireland, the promotion of inclusiveness and diversity remains key to countering hate speech in the media

Rebaz Mohammed is from Iraqi Kurdistan. Ian Plunkett is from Ireland. Both are 2016 UNAOC Fellows working on countering hate speech and radicalization in the media. Rebaz has been working for the last ten years with civil society in Northern Iraq for the defense of women's and minorities rights. He was among the first responders to provide food and shelter to Yazidi families fleeing ISIS. As a fervent human rights advocate, the 33-year-old lawyer is committed to developing a more inclusive and tolerant society in his country. "I grew up surrounded by different ethnicities and faiths. My friends and colleagues are Arab, Kurd, Turkmen, Assyrian, Sunni, Shiite, Christian, Yazidi. I think my role, as a member of the civil society, is to relentlessly promote inclusion and dialogue, to strengthen social peace and avoid a new civil war."

Through the project he runs for the Danish NGO "International Media Support", Rebaz seeks to prevent the spread of intolerant and violent discourses by encouraging a change of perspective in local media. "We have launched this project with the ambition to encourage more diversity in the media, to promote different perspectives but also to support grassroots journalism." One of the main focuses of this project is the prevention of hate speech, particularly when it targets minorities, migrants and internally displaced persons. "We contact TV stations to offer free trainings to their staff to help them understand the importance of inclusion and tolerance, and the dangers that lie in populism and hate speech. In most cases, journalists are actually pretty open to our offer."

On his end, lan, 27, currently heads public policy communication for Twitter in the Middle East and Africa. He mainly focuses on issues related to countering violent extremism online and harnessing the power of digital platforms to foster tolerance. "I work on issues related to radicalization and countering violent extremism with civil society organizations to help them build their digital capacities in order to amplify voices of tolerance and respect." According to lan, development of cross-cultural cooperation is key in countering hate speech. "With the rise of ISIS and the spread of radicalization and right-wing xenophobia across Europe, the time for action is upon us, and although technology is often scapegoated as an accelerant of this wider malaise, I firmly believe it as the potential to be a great force for social change."

His participation in the 2016 Fellowship Program, he says, provided him with a unique opportunity to explore the political, social and cultural diversity of the MENA region and to develop strategies for renewed intercultural and interfaith dialogue in the service of peace and respect. "I have personally gained a great deal from the program, specifically on the necessity of amplifying narratives of hope and respect in the face of increasing radicalization and xenophobia."

NairobiPlayProject and PEACEapp for refugees' integration



Kenya is addressing the challenge of integrating urban refugees into its economic, social and cultural fabric. Young refugees are the most affected and impacted by this situation. Their alienation and marginalization led to unemployment and idleness. Only a few initiatives equip them with the necessary skills to access employment opportunities and secure better living conditions.

When settling in new countries, it's imperative that urban refugee youth are incorporated into programs, which promote community-building and social integration, rather than siloed initiatives which can foster tension, xenophobia and a lack of empathy from host communities.

In this context, UNAOC, in partnership with the Nairobi Play Project and with UNHCR's collaboration, is supporting a series of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) development workshops aiming at providing urban refugees, originally from Eritrea and Ethiopia, and local Kenyan youth with peace building skills and technical abilities while building opportunities for intercultural dialogue and better understanding between both communities.

Among the youth participants to PEACEapp with Nairobi Play Project, 8 young Ethiopians, 8 young Kenyans and 8 young Eritreans were interviewed on their experience.





#SpreadNoHate initiative: preventing hate speech in the media

Within the framework of the #SpreadNoHate initiative and on the margin of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, UNAOC organized a 4th Symposium on the treatment of migrants and refugees in the media, and their integration in host societies.

In line with the UN Global campaign against racism and xenophobia "Together: respect, safety and dignity for all", the event entitled "Combating xenophobic language in the media and fostering inclusive integration of migrants and refugees" served as an opportunity to prepare some discussion that took place during the UNGA High Level Summit on refugees and migrants. The debate enabled media experts, United Nations Officials, and representatives of NGOs to address xenophobia in the media and come up with concrete recommendation to prevent and counter hate speech.

Held on 15 September 2016 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the side event was co-sponsored by the European Union (EU), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Malta to the United Nations. Over 120 people, including several representatives of Member States and NGOs, attended the symposium. The discussion was broadcast live on UN Web TV and reached close to 228,000 people online globally with the UNAOC hashtag #SpreadNoHate and close to 478, 700 impressions.

In addition, UNAOC is closely working with the European Union on the 5th #SpreadNoHate Symposium to be held in January 2017 in Brussels. This symposium will focus on countering hate speech in the media against migrants and refugees, specifically in the Mediterranean region.



Damien Cave.

UPCOMING

EU-UNAOC Symposium on HATE SPEECH Against Migrants and Refugees in the Media

Thursday, 26 January 2017 **♥** Brussels, Belgium

> #SpreadNoHate > www.unaoc.org | HateSpeech@unaoc.org



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Youth Solidarity Fund: Capacity building training in Addis Ababa

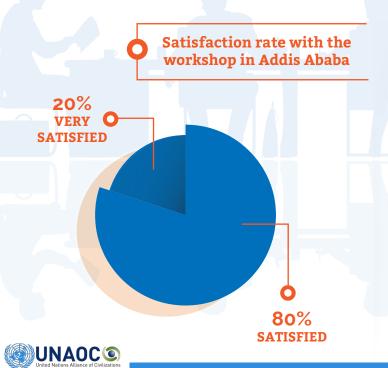


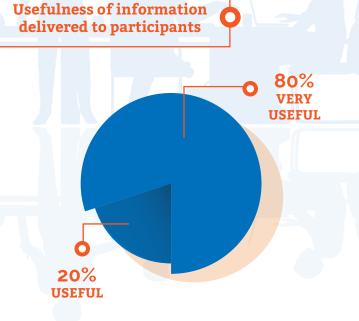
UNAOC held a week-long capacity building workshop for recipient organizations of the Youth Solidarity Fund (2015-2016) in Addis Ababa, from 24 to 28 October 2016. The overall aim of the workshop was to consolidate and leverage lessons learned from the Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF) project implementation phase and to support the sustainability of youth-led initiatives

through skills enhancement, dissemination of project results and networking for partnership and solidarity.

Participants travelled to Addis Ababa and exchanged with other youth leaders from organizations based in 7 different countries in Africa and Asia.

All participants indicated that the information presented during the workshop was useful and that their skills in the topics discussed had improved. A highlight of the week was the opportunity to learn from other youth leaders' experiences and gain new motivation.





Youth Solidarity Fund Capacity Building Training



The workshop was also the opportunity to identify young people's best practices in conducting intercultural dialogue projects, and to highlight the importance of providing funding and technical support to youth-led organizations working in this field.



Engage diverse youth in intergenerational programming that works on preventing violence rather than addressing post-conflict situations at the community level.

"We engaged diverse youth (Hindus, Christians, Muslims) a practice that is not common in Pakistan. And we engaged them in an intergenerational programme: With local government, community and religious leaders, these youth were trained and formed community protection groups dedicated to changing attitudes of community members towards each other. Encouraging them to embrace a culture of tolerance and peace, they worked on preventing violence rather than addressing post-conflict situations."

Samina Khan, "Building community resilience to prevent conflict", implemented by Organization for Community Development, Pakistan

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Abiodun Rufus Unegbu, "Intercultural Learning for Peace", implemented by Leadership Initiative for Youth Empowerement (LIFE), Nigeria

Heba Salem, Palestine

IMPORTANCE OF YSF FUNDING

on peace.

"We had been working on youth issues for a while but always lacked support and resources. Getting support from UNAOC and YSF allowed us to continue working on youth issues but at the same time transfer our leadership skills and knowledge that we had gained to other younger emerging youth leaders in six districts of Nepal, including from marginalized communities, and motivate them to take action in their own community, working on different ethnic and cultural issues that affected their identity and development."

Bijeysh Ranjit, "3D Project: Dialogue, debate and discussion", implemented by SAATH, Nepal





YaLa Workshop on media and citizen journalism

"We broke into small groups to discuss media bias as it relates to our respective countries and cultures. Our group discussed how to define terrorism. It wasn't a heated debate as much as an opportunity to share perspectives.

Shaina Hirsch, Israel

A group of 31 young journalists from Israel and Palestine (West Bank and Gaza) met at the America House of the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem on 26 July 2016 for an inspiring learning day on dialogue for peacebuilding.

YaLa Workshop was designed to challenge and engage young leaders through simulations and discussions, and endow them with a variety of negotiation skills and a comprehensive framework from which to successfully approach real life negotiation situations.

Supported by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) through its Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF), the workshop

brought together local participants of the region for a 4-month online training at the YaLa Academy's Aileen Getty School of Citizen Journalism.

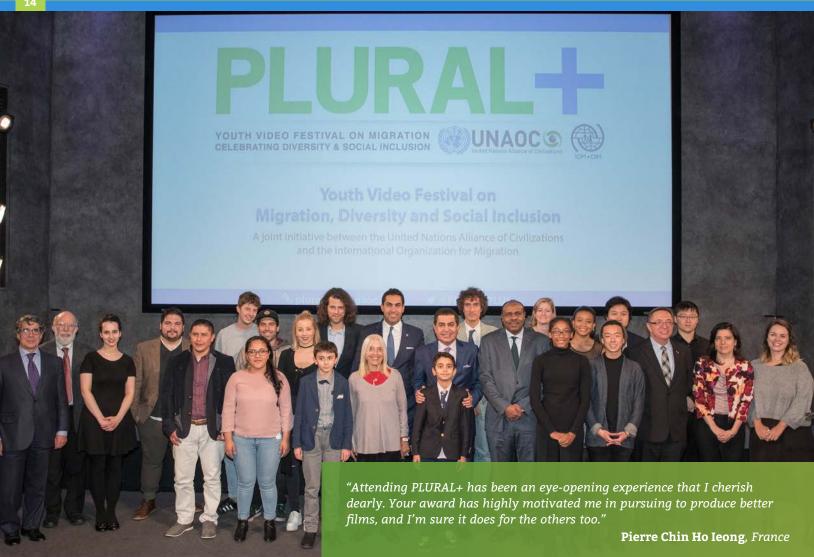
"The workshops were a total success. It gathered participants from Gaza, the

great ideas and the sharing of some amazing stories was the best".

West Bank, Jerusalem and Israel so it was a multicultural one. It brainstormed

The workshop started with a keynote lecture by the journalist Alan Abbey. Then an interactive day of learning activities led by the co-recipients of the 2016 IIE V.J. Goldberg Prize for Peace in the Middle East, Sarah Perle Benazera and Ohood Murqaten, focused on consolidating the ties and trust built during the online program as well as on increasing their storytelling skills, cross-cultural communication capacities and citizen journalism competences.





PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival on Migration, Diversity and Social Inclusion

PLURAL+, Youth Video Festival on Migration, Diversity and Social Inclusion, is a joint initiative of the UNAOC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the support of a wide network of international partners. It aims to foster dialogue, partnership and action on critical issues and opportunities faced by youth worldwide. The Festival recognizes youth as powerful agents of social change, and supports cooperative efforts to reduce tension in a world too often characterized by conflict and division.

PLURAL+ videos are now featured at film festivals across the world, including the Tribeca Film Festival, the Hamptons Film Festival, the Seattle Film Festival, Chinh India Film Festival, the Royal Film Commission of Jordan, and the Refugee Film Festival in Kenya. Watched over one million times on the Internet, PLURAL+ videos were also displayed at high-level meetings at

the European Commission and the United Nations Headquarters

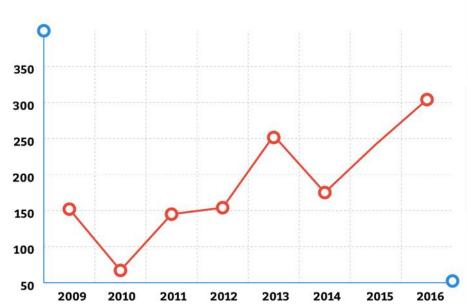
On 27 October 2016, young media actors from over 10 countries participated in the PLURAL+ 2016 Festival and Awards Ceremony held in New York. This year, PLURAL+ 2016 received over 300 entries from 69 countries. Among them, 31 videos of young people from 21 countries were awarded.

The winning videos focus on migration, diversity and social inclusion. The four videos screened at the PLURAL+ International Jury Awards Ceremony, focused on social exclusion in school (Excluded, USA), the root causes of migration (Migration, Italy), un-documented migrants in New York (The Price of our Dreams, USA) and the plight of Syrian refugees (I Am Aliya, Slovenia).

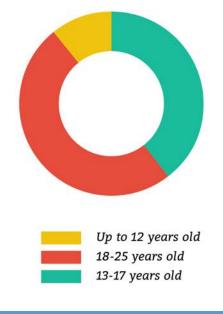
PLURAL+ 2016 Entries



Number of PLURAL+ Entries Received Per Year



PLURAL+ 2016 Entries by Age





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More than One Story: building bridges with a card game

The Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA) alumni organization, More Than One Story, developed a unique and powerful card game, which contributes in building bridges between people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures.

Developed by youth and the Department of Culture and Leisure of the Municipality of Simrishamn as a tool for social inclusion and integration, the card game is being used in over 70 municipalities all over Sweden. More Than One Story has proven to help overcoming fears and prejudices, prevent people from being isolated, and foster tolerance and open-mindedness.

The IIA alumni organization More Than One Story is also building an international network that is spreading the use of the card game to increase peace around the world. With UNAOC's support, the organization partnered with IIA Alumni from three different countries to spread the game in five different languages.

As a result of their partnership with the NGO Welcoming America, More than One Story spread to nonprofit organizations, and universities, including 100 card games to the New York Public Library. Thanks to the partnership with the organization Vaga Lume and UNAOC's support, over 150 communities in the Amazon rainforest and hundreds of educators and volunteers in Brazil are now playing More Than One Story. UNAOC also facilitated the partnership between More Than One Story and the organization Irenia by printing 1300 samples in Spanish, Basc and Catalan that will be distributed in relevant events, including the yearly Assembly of the Spanish Network of the Ana Lindh Foundation. The documents will be also used in numerous workshops and schools in Spain. In addition, through UNAOC facilitation, More Than One Story was also translated into Hebrew and used as a pilot in the "Kehila". Tel Aviv and Jaffa Democratic School in Israel.

Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA) Recipients at the United Nations Headquarters

Through the **Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA)**, UNAOC not only provides support to highly innovative grassroots projects but also raise their visibility within the United Nations and beyond. Two IIA Recipients were recently invited to speak at the UN Headquarters:



"Receiving the Intercultural Innovation Award from UNAOC/BMW Group represented an important step in raising our profile within the United Nations. We were recently invited to speak at the UN Headquarters for an event on harnessing the power of entrepreneurship and innovation, with panelists from organizations including Google and ReWalk. This kind of recognition helps us with our mission of using educational tools and entrepreneurial platforms to create real connections between Muslim Arabs, Jews, and Christian Arabs from resource scarce communities, who typically lack opportunities to interact."

Bat Sheva Moshe, CEO Unistream



Seth Selleck, Youth Coordinator, Municipality of Simrishamn Department of Culture and Leisure



"As an Intercultural Innovation Award recipient, saying that you are part of UNAOC's network gives you great credibility with other UN agencies. This year, Safecity has very much increased our presence within the UN system, having been selected by the United Nations Foundation to present at the Solutions Summit during General Assembly week and also with presenting at Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. This greater visibilty helps Safecity with achieving our goal to make public spaces safer and equally accessible to all, especially for women and girls."

ElsaMarie D'Silva,
Founder and CEO of Safecity

All Together Now: preventing kids from racism



All Together Now, Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA) alumni organization, just launched Kids Together Now, a new webbased app aimed at reducing the incidences of racism among children.

With the support of UNAOC and BMW Group, the Australian charity replicated the app and made it freely available for Australian teachers. Through this project, students will play one storyline each week in class over a period of eight weeks. Each storyline provides a hypothetical situation in which social exclusion may occur, such as in the playground, at the beach, or during sporting activities.

However, while the storylines are hypothetical, they also represent examples of real-world social exclusion that happen far too often in Australian schools.

Kids Together Now has been produced with academic rigor under the leadership of Professor Melanie Killen (University of Maryland, USA), Professor Fiona White (University of Sydney, Australia) and Dr. Naomi Priest (Australian National University, Australia).

Give Something Back to Berlin for migrants

Give Something Back To Berlin (GSBTB) is a project platform and network that makes social engagement and neighborhood work accessible to the migrant population of Berlin, with the help of hundreds of volunteers from over 60 countries with different backgrounds.

First placed awardee at the 7th UNAOC Global Forum, GSBTB hosted His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf and Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden during their first State visit to Germany in over 14 years. The organization seized the opportunity to present its work on migration, integration and the welcoming of refugees to the King and the Queen.



Media and Information Literacy (MIL) for critical thinking



The constant and increasing exposure of young people to media presents an educational challenge, which requires specific skills and critical thinking. Evaluating text and image for bias, and constructing and deconstructing a text based on principles of logic are teachable skills. Media literacy instruction is not widely recognized for its importance as an aspect of civic and peace education and few instructional programs have been developed as part of basic modern education. Therefore, UNAOC decided to develop Media literacy programs that can be implemented in schools and aiming to help develop a discerning and critical approach to news coverage, promote media awareness and development of Internet literacy, deconstruct stereotypes, and counter hate speech.

UNAOC's Media and Information Literacy (MIL) initiatives have been presented at several conferences across the world, including the EU co-organized Media and Learning Conference in Brussels on March 2016, the Jordan Media Institute on October 2016, and the UNESCO-led Global Media and Information Literacy Conference in Sao Paulo on November 2016.

UNAOC, UNESCO and NORDICOM have published the annual book of the Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue Global Network of Universities (MILID). The publication features articles by scholars from eighteen universities collaborating on the UNESCO-UNAOC Global Cooperation Program on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue.

This year, they published the reference book "Opportunities for Media and Information Literacy in the Middle East and North-Africa". The book is now available in English and Arabic and can be downloaded at milnuesco.unaoc.org

UNESCO-UNAOC Global Network of Universities on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue has over 20 universities affiliated and actively participating to the network's development of MIL resources.

UNAOC-UNESCO Media and Information Literacy clearinghouse has more then 6,000 subscribers.



UNAOC IN FOCUS is the first edition of UNAOC's programming-focused newsletter.

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- Young Peacebuilders in West Africa:
 promoting intercultural & interfaith dialogue
- **Fellowship Program 2016:** countering hate speech and radicalization in the media
- NairobiPlayProject and PEACEapp for refugees' integration
- **#SpreadNoHate initiative:** preventing hate speech in the media
- **10 Youth Solidarity Fund:** Capacity building training in Addis Ababa
- Youth Solidarity Fund: YaLa Workshop on media and citizen journalism

- **PLURAL+, Youth Video Festival** on Migration, Diversity and Social Inclusion
- More than One Story: building bridges with a card game
- 17 Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA)
 Recipients at the UN Headquarters
- **All Together Now:** preventing kids from racism
- Give Something Back to Berlin (GSBTB) for migrants
- Media and Information Literacy (MIL) for critical thinking



UNAOC aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and to reduce polarization at local and global levels. It helps develop more inclusive societies, in which diversity is experienced as an asset.

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