

Media Update

18 November 2016

United Nations

Press Release

International jury announces winners of art competition on "zero hunger"

Switzerland and UN join hands to empower young Pakistani artists for promoting the Sustainable Development Goal #2, "zero hunger".

An international jury announced awards for the winners of an art competition on "zero hunger" at the residence of Swiss Ambassador in Islamabad on Friday.

The competition named 'We the Peoples, We the Arts' was organized by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Embassy of Switzerland in partnership with the United Nations Information Centre to mark the 50th year of SDC's cooperation with Pakistan.

For the competition, students from the National College of Arts Rawalpindi, Department of Art and Design at the University of Peshawar, National College of Arts (NCA) Lahore, Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, and the Department of Visual Studies at the University of Karachi were invited to develop sculptures, miniature paintings and paintings on the theme of "zero hunger" Sustainable Development Goal #2.

A jury comprising Swiss and international art experts, the Embassy of Switzerland and the United Nations selected a winner for each category. A total of 64 art pieces were received for this competition out of which 23 were selection for the final exhibition, which aims to provide Pakistani students a unique opportunity to gain visibility at the international level.



Tooba Ashraf (NCA Lahore) was declared winner in the 'painting' division. Haseeb Ullah Zafar (NCA Lahore) made the winning sculpture while Gina Gul (Karachi University) won the award for the miniature painting.

Speaking at the opening of exhibition at his residence, the Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan Marc P. George said, "This initiative reflects the Swiss Government's commitment and support to our partners to jointly overcome the global challenge of hunger and poverty around the world."

The head of SDC Stefanie Burri said, "Switzerland, through this art competition, aims to bring in limelight the creative, artistic and innovative skills of the Pakistani youth. For this purpose we have invited Swiss and international art experts to the jury of this competition."

"This provides important exposure to the talented young artists by facilitating their access to the international, especially the Swiss, art and culture markets and networks. We hope that the young artists will make use of the opportunities, experiences, recognition, financial support and professional contacts that this competition will provide," she added.

The head of the jury Alexie Glass-Kantor said, "Art is a way of investing in rich cultural and historical knowledge and to critically explore the movement and migration of ideas; they are also an important discursive platform to engage with issues surrounding concepts of development and sustainability."

Alexie Glass-Kantor is the Executive Director of Artspace Sydney and Curator of Encounters Art Basel Hong Kong. Other international members of the jury included Karin Seiz, Co-Director of Galerie Urs Meile in Beijing and Lucerne, Priyanka Mathew, Principal Partner at Sunderlande New York, and Heike Munder, Director of Migros Museum for Contemporary Art in Zurich.

Vittorio Cammarota, Director United Nations Information Centre said, "We are happy to present the work of young Pakistani artists who are helping to promote the theme of zero hunger as we aim to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030."

"Young people are innovative and creative problem solvers, and they are the key to helping communities and improving the long-term well being of all citizens. We must continue to encourage initiatives that engage and empower youth, as they are a source of social cohesion that will help Pakistan navigate difficult times and achieve a better future for all," he added.

In 2016, the SDC marks 50 years of cooperation in Pakistan. Switzerland and Pakistan signed their first agreement on technical and scientific cooperation in 1966. For the last 50 years, the SDC has contributed to alleviating poverty in Pakistan and empowering people by strengthening governance, and enhancing rural development and livelihoods.

Under the new Country Strategy 2017-2020, SDC will focus its engagement in the areas of water governance and local state building in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

The SDC is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and is responsible for the overall coordination of development cooperation and humanitarian aid delivered by the Swiss Confederation.

The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the UN member countries to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030.

For information contact:

Ishrat Saleem
United Nations Information Centre
Phone: +92 323 4244 445
Email: consultant2.unicislamabad@unic.org

Asma Tariq
Swiss Embassy
Phone: +92 332 5133450
Email: asma.tariq@eda.admin.ch

Notes to the Editor:

Background:

This year, the Embassy of Switzerland is celebrating the 50th year of its cooperation with Pakistan through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). To mark this occasion, the SDC joined forces with United Nations Information Centre to promote Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Pakistan through visual arts. Young artists studying at five art schools of Pakistan participated in a competition to highlight the SDG



on “zero hunger” in categories of sculpture, painting and miniature painting. A jury comprising Swiss and international art experts, the Embassy of Switzerland and the United Nations selected a winner for each category. All entries have been judged using the same criteria: creativity, composition, theme and technique. The SDGs were set by the UN member countries to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all over the next 15 years.

The winning art pieces

Winner: Miniature Painting

Construct or deconstruct

Source

Gina Gul

22

Department of Visual Studies, University of Karachi

Using oil paints and acrylics, my piece shows factories and buildings that are causing destruction in the environment. Factories are rising instead of natural habitats. Like my painting has two different views, the situation can also be turned around.

Winner: Painting

Enlightenment

Tooba Ashraf

22

National College of Arts, Lahore

Time and time again, the cry for “ilm” can be heard reverberating throughout Pakistan, yet the groans of empty stomachs and painful cries for bread seem to be unheard. It is foolish to constantly try to enforce education and zero hunger in a state where even the most basic human need is considered luxury. The growl of an empty stomach drowns out other issues and reduces man to a state of an animal. It is crucial for us to first and foremost eliminate all forms of hunger from this world to achieve a healthy population which can be effectively educated and become more productive than ever possible before.

Winner: Sculpture

Unwanted scraps

Haseeb Ullah Zafar

22

National College of Arts, Lahore

Little bits and pieces fuse together to make something monumental, something solid, something concrete. If putrid flesh did not decay and vanish from the street but instead sat forever in front of our eyes, a constant reminder of our careless indulgence, the world would be a bit different. Would we maybe be a bit more cautious of picking up another knife, slitting yet another throat? The world in my view is in need of a mother, one who will not let anyone get up without finishing their meals, vegetables and all. One who won't stand for scraps being thrown under the table, because someone, somewhere needs

every little bit. My work is about waste and how it builds up in to something so much more than itself.

UNESCO

Press Release

UNESCO is assisting Pakistan to mitigate flood hazards, reduce soil erosion and control water losses for improved high value crops productions

Islamabad / Chakwal: Around 16Mha of land (20% of total area of Pakistan) is affected directly or indirectly by soil erosion (wind & water). Out of this, 11.2 Mha is affected by water erosion only. Due to many reasons including high intensity, short duration rainfalls and lack of awareness among professionals and farmers in the field of watershed management and rainwater harvesting techniques, a huge amount of rainwater is being lost annually as surface runoff from Pothowar region. This is not only the loss of water but also results in loss of fertile topsoil that may increase flood severity in lowland areas and silting in dams, rivers and ponds etc. thereby decreasing their storage capacity.

To further improve the technical capabilities, UNESCO Islamabad under its phase-II “**Strategic Strengthening of Flood Warning and Management Capacity of Pakistan**” is imparting “**Community Based Training Programme on Watershed Management for Flood and Drought Control**” to farmers and relevant Government and Semi Government professionals from Agriculture Extension, Soil Conservation, Water Management, NGOs and academia in district Chakwal, Punjab.

On day first of the training session, key experts gave brief history to participants on flood in Pakistan, echo hydrology approach for addressing flood and drought, onsite training on rainwater harvesting techniques and drip/bubbler irrigation system and field visit to water saving techniques at Barani Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) and Soil and Water



Conservation Research Institute (SAWCRI). On day second, participants were taken to the farmer sites for onsite soil conservation activities, rainwater harvesting techniques and high efficiency irrigation system at PEL farm, Kallar Kahar and Murid respectively. The farmers also visited on site to see the effect of gypsum application on soil moisture retention and crop yield.

Speaking at the concluding session of the training, Ms. Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative to Pakistan mentioned that after successful completion of this training, participants have now acquired knowledge of watershed management approaches which will result in reduced soil erosion through reduction in water runoff and improved storage of rainwater, hence mitigating flood hazard. Participants also learned practical utilization of stored rainwater through efficient means to grow high value crops for improving livelihood of farmers and poverty alleviation.

Dr. Muhammad Tariq in his vote of thanks extended his gratitude to UNESCO and mentioned the active participation from NGOs, professional and progressive farmers, which made this training workshop successful. He particularly appreciated the participation of women from farming community and from NGOs. At the end he congratulated the resource persons, Dr. Abid Subhani, Dr. Riffat Bibi, Mr. Shaid Munir, Engr. Marjan Aziz, Dr. Kamran and Ms. Safia Naureen Malik for awarding training on various components of the three day training session.

UNESCO had successfully completed phase-1 of the “**Strategic Strengthening of Flood Warning and Management Capacity of Pakistan**” which led to the establishment of the first ever flood forecasting model of the Upper Indus catchment – Indus Integrated Flood Analysis System (Indus-IFAS), new capability for flood hazard warning in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province for the Kabul River Basins, hazard mapping techniques for Lower Indus river and capacity development of Pakistan Meteorological Department, SUPARCO and other relevant government agencies. While Phase - II of the project is aimed to continue the capacity development of relevant Pakistan agencies (Federal, Provincial Irrigation Departments, and so forth) regarding flood management, especially forecasting, warning and hazard analysis and also to strengthen the human resource development in Pakistan through the project activities, which lead to establishing technical foundation in the country for the sustainable self-development and self-advancement of the flood forecasting and early warning system as well as the effective coordination and management during floods.

Media Contact:

Riaz Karim Khan, Programme Officer (CI), UNESCO Islamabad,
r.khan@unesco.org,
+ 92 (0) 345 5858 956

UNESCO

Press Release

UNESCO launched the second round of countrywide workshops under the theme of participatory policy making for the creative sector and UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

Peshawar: To stress the need for public policies that support the creative sector and to raise awareness about the importance of UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNESCO Pakistan launched a second round of country wide consultations in Peshawar. The two day workshop follows earlier countrywide consultations that were held in July this year in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad and has been organized with the support of Centre for Culture and Development (CKU) and funded by the Government of Denmark.

Earlier workshops were held to gauge the current status of the creative sector in Pakistan; this workshop goes a step further by engaging a range of stakeholders, including government representatives from both provincial and federal levels, professionals of public institutions, academics, as well as representatives of civil society organizations from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Bringing these stakeholders together for discussion highlights the importance of collaboration across different ministries at different levels of governments to create policies which are supportive, transparent and participatory with regards to the creative sector.



Pakistan has a diverse and rich culture which provides great potential for the creative industry. Devising cultural policies both at the provincial and national levels, can further help the young creative entrepreneurs in various industries to contribute to the economic development of Pakistan. In this regard, UNESCO's 2005 Convention, an international treaty that recognizes the distinctive nature of culture as an important contributor to economic and social development, once ratified, may provide Pakistan's creative economy a much needed economic boost.

UNESCO's efforts to address the lack of cultural policy in Pakistan were highlighted by Ms. Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO Representative to Pakistan. In the workshop's inaugural session she stressed that The UNESCO 2005 Convention affirms the **sovereign right of States to adopt policies and measures** that nurture creativity, provide access for creators to participate in domestic and international marketplaces where their artistic works/expressions can be recognized and compensated and ensure these expressions are accessible to the public at large.

Mr. Ayaz Khan, Director Colors/Media Production, Directorate of Culture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa further elaborated that "the workshop organized by UNESCO on developing policies for culture and creative industries will explore new horizons for the creative industries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." Mr. Zubair Torwali, researcher and writer from Swat also appreciated UNESCO's efforts in facilitating the designing of an inclusive, participatory and equitable cultural policy in collaboration with Directorate of Culture. This workshop will be followed by a similar program in Karachi and will conclude on November 24th with a final Cultural Policy Conference in Islamabad.

Media Contact:

Riaz Karim Khan, Programme Officer (CI), UNESCO Islamabad,
r.khan@unesco.org,
+ 92 (0) 345 5858 956
