

United Nations Academic Impact and United Colors of Benetton: destination future with young university students and faculty from around the world

The winners of the Diversity Contest will be announced at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter. Their projects will be fully funded by Benetton Group's UNHATE Foundation

Ponzano, June 25, 2015. Submissions ranged from "Education for Employment: Tribal Girls in India" to "Access to Water and Integration in Burundi", from "Education for Religious Understanding in Pakistan" to "Workplace Opportunities for Muslim Women in Germany." Creating a better world, one practical project at a time, in the eyes of young people, is clearly possible and this is the first step towards really making it happen.

Young people the world over have been focused on this, taking part in the **Diversity Contest**, an initiative aimed at universities, young teachers and students around the world **sponsored by United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)** and Benetton Group's **UNHATE Foundation**. They presented concrete projects that have in common social commitment and an active desire to tackle the world's problems and make it a better place.

The 10 winning Diversity Contest projects will be announced on **Friday, June 26, in New York** at the United Nations, **on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter**.

The winning **projects** will be **fully funded (to the sum of 20,000 euros each) by the UNHATE Foundation**.

The projects will be previewed via a video in which young university students will present their ideas. Thanks to the UNHATE Foundation, these ideas will become realities.

The Diversity Contest is part of a broader, two-phase project, which involved young people from all over the world who tell positive stories about our society through the unhatenews.com website. Developed with the help of creative talents from Fabrica, Benetton Group's communications research centre, under the direction of Erik Ravelo, the project allowed for the creation of a broad and varied "mapping" of how the new generations want to build their world.

In the first phase of the project, which began in November 2014, United Colors of Benetton - in collaboration with the United Nations Academic Impact and through its own UNHATE Foundation - invited young people around the world to post on unhatenews.com "news" stories that they would like to see become reality. For starters, the focus was to be on contemporary issues of global importance and on themes central to



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United Nations priorities (the "Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda"), including development and the environment, the war on terror and the building of democracy and human rights with a special focus on women's rights.

By submitting their proposals to the site, young people - through their sharing of texts, photos and videos - have become an active part of a community that participates in the news process and produces an 'ideal' media that is abreast of the times. Among the 100 most clicked "news" items, 10 were chosen by UNHATE Foundation - in line with United Colors of Benetton's social philosophy - and contest entrants were invited to turn them into sustainable projects, to be implemented in 2015. Five stories were selected from those dealing with issues related to diversity, human rights and development while the other five were specifically on women's rights.

In the second phase of the project, UNAI launched the Diversity Contest. This international competition invited universities, teachers and students aged 18-30 to develop and present projects - based on the stories selected in the first phase - addressing local communities and promoting the idea of tolerance, harmony and respect for diversities. The 10 winning projects were selected by a panel of experts including Robert Bullock, Director of the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government (State University of New York, Albany); Irene Da Costa, film director and critic; Tunay Firat, Partnerships Specialist at UN Women; La Niece Collins, Information Officer, UNAI; Mariarosa Cutillo, manager of corporate social responsibility for the Benetton Group and CEO of UNHATE Foundation. The winning projects will be published on the UNHATE Foundation website (unhate.benetton.com) and on its social channels, as well as on the UNAI website (academicimpact.un.org).

About United Nations Academic Impact

United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) is a global initiative that aligns institutions of higher education with the United Nations to promote the values and goals of the organization through activities and research in a shared culture of intellectual social responsibility (academicimpact.un.org).

UNAI is open to all institutions of higher education granting degrees or their equivalent, as well as bodies whose substantive responsibilities relate to the conduct of research. Its essential frame of reference is:

- i) To bring into association with the United Nations, and with each other, institutions of higher learning throughout the world.
- ii) To provide a mechanism for such institutions to commit themselves to the fundamental precepts driving the United Nations mandate, in particular the realization of the universally determined Millennium Development Goals
- iii) To serve as a viable point of contact for ideas and proposals relevant to the United Nations mandate.

iv) To promote the direct engagement of institutions of higher education in programs, projects and initiatives relevant to this mandate.

About Benetton Group and United Colors of Benetton

Benetton Group is one of the best-known fashion companies in the world, present in the most important markets with a network of over 6,000 stores; a responsible group that plans for the future and lives in the present, with a watchful eye to the environment, to human dignity, and to a society in transformation. The Group has a consolidated identity comprised of colour, authentic fashion, quality at democratic prices and passion for its work: these values are reflected in the strong, dynamic personality of the brands *United Colors of Benetton* and *Sisley*.

United Colors of Benetton's commitment to social issues has always been central for the brand that, through its communications campaigns and collaborations with leading non-profit organizations, makes the public reflect on social issues of universal relevance.

About UNHATE Foundation

The UNHATE Foundation, desired and founded by Benetton Group, seeks to contribute to the creation of a new culture against hate, building on Benetton's underpinning values. The core principles through which the Foundation operates are: the fight against hate and discrimination in all its forms; the support of new generations, where youth are the main actors and beneficiaries of concrete projects, communication campaigns and education activities; the dissemination of the social impact of Art, as the key tool of the Foundation in its activities against hate and discrimination. UNHATE Foundation is another important step in Benetton Group's corporate responsibility strategy: a contribution that will have a real impact in the international community, involving a variety of stakeholders: the new generations, institutions, international organizations and NGOs, civil society and the general public.

About Fabrica

Fabrica is a communication research centre. It is based in Treviso, Italy, and is an integral part of the Benetton Group. Established in 1994, Fabrica offers young people from around the world a one-year scholarship, accommodation and a round-trip ticket to Italy, enabling a highly diverse group of researchers. The range of disciplines is equally diverse, including design, visual communication, photography, interaction, video, music and journalism.

unhatefoundation.org
unhatenews.com
academicimpact.un.org
un.org/en/hq/dpi/

facebook.com/benetton
twitter.com/benetton
youtube.com/benetton

WINNERS AND TOPICS OF THE TEN UNHATE NEWS PROJECTS

MACFAST University Group: Sanesh Varghese, Tiji Thomas, Angel George, M.S. Samuel, Pradeep Vazhatharamalayil, Shibu Itty Mathew, **INDIA.** empowerment of indigenous women in India through education

This group of faculty members at MACFAST University seeks to empower young indigenous women by preparing them for university programs in fields such as medicine, nursing and engineering.

Royal Roads University: Landon Zeeman and Jennifer Farquharson, **CANADA.** Empowering Palestinians to tell their own stories

These Canadian students, inspired by the successful photo journal Humans of New York, will develop a similar website, People of Palestine, through which Palestinians can tell their stories about their experiences, history, culture and ideas.

Ambedkar University Group: Mesha Murali, Rohan Sengupta, Shikhar Vyas, Vinitha Jayaprakasan, Sonam Grover, **INDIA.** LGBT rights.

These Ambedkar University students will carry out a gender and sexuality sensitization campaign at three universities in Delhi to confront sources of discrimination and challenge intolerant and non-affirming policies that impact students.

Agnes Scott College: Varsha Thebo, **PAKISTAN.** Increasing interfaith understanding.

This Pakistani student seeks to promote harmony among Christians, Hindus and Muslims in Sindh Province in her native country by using texts from each religion to demonstrate that each faith stresses peace and harmony.

China Foreign Affairs University: Yang Jingchen, Xiong Ying, Hang Su, Zhu Jiao, **CHINA.** Safe spaces for women to discuss difficult issues.

This group of Chinese students will organize safe, confidential settings in which female students can speak anonymously about traumatic life experiences and break the silence that often surrounds mental health issues.

National Autonomous University of Mexico: Rosa Maria Ramia de Garay, **MEXICO.** Promoting understanding of discrimination faced by women, members of the LGBT community and indigenous peoples

This Mexican student will install multimedia booths in public places that will provide an immersive experience to show people what it feels like to face different forms of discrimination on a daily basis.

The New School: Lara-Zuzan Golesorkhi, **GERMANY.** Employment opportunities for Muslim women.

This German student will provide skills training for Muslim women in Germany, who often face discrimination in the employment sector, but also work with employers to increase their hiring and inclusion of Muslim women in the workplace.

Columbia University and the National Autonomous University of Mexico: Atenea Rosado Viurques, Amanda Braga, Ana DinoRamos, Andrew Van Rompaey Peñagaricano, Axel BautistaPérez, Cristina GonzálezFitch, Kendra Strouf, Camila Ruiz Segovia, **MEXICO/UNITED STATES.** Immigrant women's stories.

This transnational group of students will document the experiences of Mexican and Central American women who immigrate to the United States to increase understanding of the many barriers and challenges they face as well as their contributions to society.

Northwest College: Sebudisi Mafabatho, **SOUTH AFRICA.** Xenophobia.

The project proposed by this South African student will shed light on the plight of migrants in South Africa through a series of debates and discussions with the purpose of creating awareness and improving the treatment of migrants throughout the world.

University of Peace and Reconciliation Group: Lwesso Fiston, Lwesso Jean-Paul, Noella Miburano, Harushimana Teddy, **BURUNDI.** Water and ethnic conflicts.

This group of students from Burundi wants to increase harmony between ethnic groups who often clash over access to water by teaching water resource management and conflict resolution skills.