



The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Wants to Foster Innovation through Apps and Games Promoting Intercultural Dialogue

The UNAOC launches Create UNAOC 2012, a global competition organized with MIT Education Arcade and Learning Games Network; International Partners include Global Voices, Fondazione Mondo Digitale, Voice of America, ICT for Peace, John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, Doha Centre for Media Freedom, among others

NEW YORK, New York, 26 July 2012 — the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the MIT Education Arcade, and Learning Games Network today launched *Create UNAOC 2012*, an international competition for app and game developers to produce apps and mobile games that enable new avenues for intercultural dialogue.

The aim of the project is to identify opportunities through innovative tools that promote intercultural dialogue, drawing on unique cultural resources and experiences of developers around the world. Five finalist apps and games will be selected by an international jury, awarded funds for producers to refine their creations and played by delegates of the 5th Annual UNAOC Forum in Vienna, Austria, 27-28 February 2013. The global competition will accept submissions through the end of November 2012.

“Successful intercultural dialogue is essential to help us navigate the unprecedented challenges of the 21st Century world,” said Marc Scheuer, Director of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. “Apps and games afford powerful new tools and experiences to explore the dynamic and challenging processes that enable individuals and groups with different cultural backgrounds to engage in an open and respectful exchange of views, to share experiences and to develop a better understanding of each others' aspirations and better practices of living together. We are eager to see what young and new developers can contribute to the global conversation.”

The UNAOC and its organizing partners want to encourage developers to think of ways that new apps and games can be used to support such pursuits as gender equality, youth development, migrant integration, religious pluralism, better understanding among individuals of different cultural and religious backgrounds, biased media representation of cultures and religions, and education.

Apps and games submitted will be reviewed by an international jury and measured on whether: (1) potential users would be given a novel experience to creatively and thoughtfully share perspectives on intercultural and global issues; (2) how content and commentary relate to historical or current events, as well as (3) how the apps and games provide new perspectives that support intercultural dialogue.

Registration and Submission Requirements

Developers may register to participate in the competition between 27 July and 30 November 2012 at <http://www.CreateUNAOC.org>. Developers may register as an individual or as a team with a maximum of eight (8) collaborators. Registrants must be 13 years of age or older. A video walk-through (i.e., screen capture) or PowerPoint/Keynote presentation of a working app or game alpha or beta prototype built in HTML5 should be submitted for competition by 30 November 2012. *Note:* Developers are *not* required to submit actual working apps/games on authorized development devices to the UNAOC.

Five (5) apps/games in HTML5 will be selected as finalists by 3 January 2013. Developers will be notified and awarded \$5,000 (US) per app to complete development of a fully functional app/game by 15 February 2013. Apps/games will be played and rated by participants during the 2013 UNAOC Forum in Vienna, Austria (27-28 February 2013). A Grand Prize will be awarded. All apps/games submitted to the challenge competition will be featured on the website before and after the Forum in Vienna.

“We are excited by the global network of creative and technical professionals, scholars, NGOs, media companies, and others, who have come together to inform and promote the Create UNAOC Challenge,” said Jordi Torrent, UNAOC Media Literacy and Education Project Manager. “As we explore new ways to engage citizens of the world in the UNAOC’s charter work, our jurors and partners help to expand our understanding of new media and reach young people and producers who are pursuing exciting new projects that can be used to effectively support intercultural dialogue.”

International Jury and Outreach Partners

Create UNAOC jurors include: Deborah Bergamini, Member, Council of Europe (Italy), Jan Keulen, General Director, Doha Centre for Media Freedom (Qatar), Sanjana Hattotuwa, Senior Researcher, Centre for Policy Alternatives (Sri Lanka), Eric Klopfer, Professor, MIT (United States), Solana Larsen, Managing Editor, Global Voices (Switzerland), Anthony Lilley, Chief Executive Officer, Magic Lantern (United Kingdom), Alfonso Molina, Fondazione Mondo Digitale (Italy), Savita Nair, Professor, Furman University (United States), Wu Heping, Dean, College of International Exchanges, Northwest Normal University (China).

Initial outreach partners include:

Global Voices (Netherlands), Fondazione Mondo Digitale (Italy), Voice of America (United States), ICT for Peace (Switzerland), John Lennon Educational Tour Bus (United States), Doha Centre for Media Freedom (Qatar).

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United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions. It also helps to counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. The UNAOC was established in 2005, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations. A High-level Group of experts was formed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures today, and to recommend a practical programme of action to address this issue. The Report of the High-level Group provided analysis and put forward practical recommendations that form the basis for the implementation plan of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. On 26 April 2007, former President of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio, was appointed as the High Representative for the UNAOC by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to lead the implementation phase of the Alliance. The UNAOC Secretariat, which is based in New York, works with a global network of partners with States, international and regional organizations, civil society groups, foundations, and the private sector to improve cross-cultural relations between diverse nations and communities. It also works at the grassroots level, promoting innovative projects that build trust, reconciliation and mutual respect. The Alliance works in four program areas to support such projects: youth, media, education, and migration. For more information, visit: <http://www.unaoc.org>.

MIT Education Arcade

The MIT Education Arcade explores games that promote learning through authentic and engaging play. The program's research and development projects focus both on the learning that naturally occurs in popular commercial games, and on the design of games that more vigorously address the educational needs of players. Our mission is to demonstrate the social, cultural, and educational potentials of videogames by initiating new game development projects, coordinating interdisciplinary research efforts, and informing public conversations about the broader and sometimes unexpected uses of this emerging art form in education. MIT Education Arcade projects have touched on mathematics, science, history, literacy, and language learning, and have been tailored to a wide range of ages. They have been designed for personal computers, handheld devices and on-line delivery. For more information visit: <http://www.educationarcade.org>.

Learning Games Network

The Learning Games Network, a non-profit spin-off of the MIT Education Arcade and the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Games+Learning+Society Program with studios in Cambridge, MA and Madison, WI, bridges the gap between research and practice in game-based education and is committed to the development and distribution of games informed by research in the learning sciences, creative design, and technical innovation. For more information visit: <http://www.learninggamesnetwork.org>.

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