



News Release

UNESCO Art Camp and Dialogue, Temple University Rome Campus, February 24 through March 3, 2024

In the midst of wars in various parts of the world and the controversial political debates on immigration and refugees, a bright candle will be lit at Temple University Rome where 19 junior artists who have sought refuge in Europe and who represent countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, will join artists from Italy and Andorra, to share and learn from each other's experiences and perspectives on humanity through art and oral dialogue skills that will be developed during the week-long camp.

The UNESCO Art Camp and Dialogue will be held between February 24, and March 3, 2024, at Temple University Rome Campus. The project is the product of a wonderful collaboration among the Andorran National Commission for UNESCO with the support of the Italian National Commission for UNESCO, Assistant Director General of UNESCO for Education, Ms. Stefania Giannini, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Rome, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural Diplomacy, Madam Hedva Ser, Dr. Amid Ismail, Dean and Laura H. Carnell Professor, Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry, and a team from the Dialogue Institute, Philadelphia, USA.

The UNESCO Art Camps have been in operation for over 15 years and have been focused on engaging individuals from conflict areas living in

Europe, Malta, and the Middle East as part of the UNESCO program "Road to Peace" adopted by the UNESCO's Executive Board in 2022.

Madam Hedva Ser, founder of the UNESCO Road to Peace project with the Government of Andorra and UNESCO Social & Human Science, commented that this "new initiative builds bridges among people based on cultural education and understanding through art." The idea of combining art with dialogue was developed by Dean Amid Ismail who as an immigrant to the US and Canada has deep feelings for the plight of refugees and how they can contribute to their adopted society. Dean Ismail commented that "we share a common human bond, a humanistic destiny and legacy focused on our desire and need to create, learn, and live in peace with our families, neighbors, and society, regardless of our differences." Dr. David Krueger of the Dialogue Institute, which has focused all its programs for decades on inter-religious and cross-cultural dialogue, shared his excitement for engaging in dialogue through art and exchanges of ideas. According to Dr. Krueger "the essence of dialogue is a challenging task that requires deep listening to others before any judgment is made." The same feeling is echoed by Mr. Jean-Michel Armengol from the UNESCO Andorran National Commission's Project that has chaperoned the Art Camp since its inception in 2008. He commented that "every Art Camp make me feel deeply about the depth of our common bonds as humans." Chiara Cardoletti, UNHCR Representative for Italy, the Holy See and San Marino, added that "the number of people forced to flee their country is constantly growing. For this reason, innovative initiatives like this are important. Art represents a very powerful means of allowing people to relate to a difficult situation such as that of exile and at the same time offers refugees the opportunity to express themselves and bring out their talent."

Dean Emilia Zankina, Temple University Rome, decided to host the event because it represents the mission of Temple University to provide transformative opportunities through experiential learning. The UNESCO ArtCamp and Dialogue fits this mission, and she hopes that the new Temple University Rome model will be repeated in many other parts of the world.

Funding for this novel program was provided by the **Enlightened World Foundation**, a mission-focused foundation in the US that promotes interreligious and global dialogue.

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