

PRESS RELEASE

UNICEF, UNEP, Sonico the Social Network, SONY and the Albatros Foundation Launch the LACVOX Research contest for adolescents

Panama July 30, 2009 – The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with SONY, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and with assistance from the Albatros Media Foundation, is launching an investigative journalist competition for young adults in the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

The objective of this contest is to inspire thousands of adolescent communicators across Latin America and the Caribbean to learn about the environment and at the same time explore the subject of indigenous conservation methods. Additionally, the contest should motivate young people to research how the indigenous people have used their land, and how they preserve nature and the importance it has for their culture and traditions.

From July 30th to October 5th 2009, young journalist between the ages of 9 and 18 will have the opportunity to compete for the prizes the LACVOX contest will award to the best television report, best radio report, best photo, best poster (hand drawn) and best print article. In addition to individual or independent group contestants, schools as a whole are invited to participate in the above mentioned categories.

The winners will receive prizes from Sony which include: digital cameras, video recorders, tape recorders and a flat screen LCD TV.

“Sony Interamerica is developing a social responsibility initiative focusing on promoting educational values for and with children,” said Richard Fairest, president of SONY INTERAMERICAN. “Our partnership with UNICEF extends all the way back to our Tokyo Headquarters, which support UNICEF on a global level”.

The objective of this contest is to reinforce LACVOX, the Regional network of Adolescent Communicators. This network of young journalists, which is coordinated by UNICEF’s Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, links young people from different countries throughout the region and is based on the principles of youth participation and development as promoted by UNICEF and its partners.

The social networking site Sonico has also joined this initiative through a dedicated web page designed to spread information about the contest among its 40 million users in Latin America. “This contest emphasizes the importance of giving young people ways to express themselves freely and as such appeals to our company’s values,” said Sonico founder and CMO Tomás O’Farrell. “We are delighted to be part of this initiative together with UNICEF and UNEP.”

According to Nils Kastberg, Regional Director of UNICEF for Latin America and the Caribbean, “UNICEF values the right to freedom of expression as an important participatory tool which empowers and promotes children and adolescents as key players in their own development and at the same time helps to improve their relationships with their families, schools and communities. It also strengthens their transition to adulthood”.

In addition, the Convention on the rights of the Child commemorates its 20th anniversary in November 2009 and the contest and the awards to celebrate the winners are an important part of the activities designed to mark this important milestone.

“ Our work with young people aims to help them develop skills, learn about the environment and exchange information,” says Mara Murillo, Deputy Regional Director for the United Nations Environment Program. “We want to promote a generation of citizens with environmental consciousness and with the capacity to take positive action.”

For more information

Ana María Ortiz, aortiz@unicef.org, UNICEF América Latina y el Caribe
Rody Oñate, rody.onate@unep.org, PNUMA América Latina y el Caribe
Ambar Collado, Ambar.Collado@am.sony.com , Sony Interamerica
Florencia Sabatini, florencia.sabatini@sonico.com, Red Social Sonico
contactenos@albatrosmedia.net, Fundación Albatros Media,

www.unicef.org/lac

Sonico Lacvox http://www.sonico.com/publico/unicef_lacvox

Lacvox Blog <http://www.lacvox.net/>

lacvox@unicef.org

About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world’s largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.