

WINNERS

2021 YOUTH WITH REFUGEES ART CONTEST TOGETHER THROUGH SPORT

This document introduces the winners of UNHCR's 2021 Youth with Refugees Art Contest, alongside their artworks and testimonies. This year, the contest celebrated the power of sport to bring people together and create a sense of hope. Participants aged 10-30 could submit drawings on the general theme or design their #dreamball.

UNHCR received 1,600 submissions from 100 countries. One in three participants were themselves refugees, asylum-seekers or internally displaced people. A jury of 15 athletes, sport journalists and artists helped select the best designs.

In the #dreamball category, UNHCR is awarding 5 global winners—whose balls are being turned into real footballs and sold online to support sport programs for refugees—and 24 special mentions. In the general category, UNHCR is awarding 10 global winners and 18 special mentions.

The 5 winning balls are available for sale [here](#). All drawings are featured in a special UNHCR digital exhibition. All designs and drawings can be downloaded on [Refugees Media](#). For questions, please contact youthart@unhcr.org.



Gerald, 23, Italy - refugee from Cameroon

“I arrived in Italy five years ago. After a few months, I became a volunteer and I started helping the less privileged in my community. I was later employed as a cultural mediator to work with the doctor in our reception center. I’m currently the advisor for Unified with refugees programming for the Special Olympics. In my drawing I simply tried to show that sport is for everyone, just like the time on a clock, and does not look at our skin color or physical condition. Sports bring hope and joy to those who practice it.”



Hala, 14, Saudi Arabia - refugee from Palestine

“I’ve loved drawing since I was young. About a year ago, I was attracted to the art of mandalas and I started painting a lot. I always try to invent new ideas, as I have never shown what I draw to anyone except for my parents. Finally, I hope to God that there will be no refugees and that everyone will return to their homeland and live in it with love, happiness and peace.”



James, 10, Ireland

“I play for Kilcock Celtic in County Kildare, and my dad coaches the team. We are due to start training again with the club as it was closed for a long time due to the pandemic. I am looking forward to training and playing with my team again. My artwork for this competition symbolizes hope. Hope is something that is very important at the moment for everyone – hope and positive thoughts.”



Skarly, 12, Brazil - refugee from Venezuela

“My drawing represents the union in sport. At the time that I was drawing, I felt like I was exercising my mind. I’m a refugee from Venezuela. I’ve been in Brazil with my brother and my mother for one year. At the moment we’re in a temporary shelter. I’m already enrolled in the 6th year of elementary School.”



Nadira, 16, India - refugee from Afghanistan

“I was born a differently abled person. The sport world makes us, especially refugees and people who are called disabled but not differently abled, endeavour for the best. I have been passionate about drawing from an early age as it provides me with a tranquil space to freely express myself and the courage to face and overcome any issue in my life. I drew to show the inclusive aspect of sport and how it is capable of bonding people together. I wanted to show how sport can transform people’s lives along with bringing hope and joy to everyone, everywhere.”



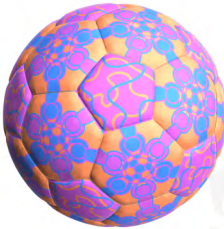
**Hidaya, 18, Jordan - refugee,
Za'atari Camp**

"The marathon is not limited to healthy people, as the racetracks for people with special needs have also entered."



**Nyakuot, 15, Ethiopia - refugee from
South Sudan**

"I drew a butterfly as I like the color of it."



Abigail, 15, USA

"I love art. Art and sports are similar with the way they bring people together. That is what I wanted to illustrate in this design."



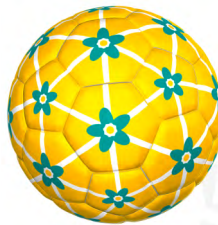
Maria, 16, Colombia

"In my design I drew hands joined as in a team and a colorful heart . If they are united, it makes the arms connect with the lines next to the heart. Symbolizing how our love and support can help refugees and all the people in the world overcome difficulties."



Karla, 24, Ecuador

"I like to express myself through different forms of art, be it drawing, painting, dance or music. It doesn't matter who we are, where we are in the world, how distant we feel, what really matters is that, if we all do our bit, as in a team of football, at the end of the road, the achievement is of, by and for all."



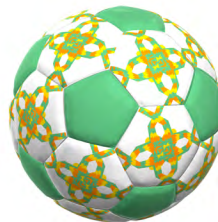
Wang, 21, Taiwan, China

"The yellow means the earth. When we play soccer we need to play it on the grass. The flowers represent everyone in the world, and the white lines connect all of us, just like the theme of this contest "together through sport", and the white lines have another meaning. It means pure and non-toxic. I hope we can overcome all the difficulties."



Sara, 16, Mexico

"I believe that every individual in this world has something special to inspire others. Covid-19 brought a lot of tragedy in my surroundings, but it was dance and sports that helped me feel. Regarding my drawing, it represents how we are composed of different colors and forms. Each one inspires and energizes us to keep going."



Alejandro, 24, Guatemala

"My drawing is made up of an arc that represents the finish line in all road races in athletics. Everyone begins the journey freely wanting to finish first, and some do it just to feel their own satisfaction regardless of whether they are awarded or not. I joined this arc with four others which in turn intertwine, forming a slightly abstract butterfly with different geometric figures."



Marzieh, 30, Iran

"I like drawing but I never took drawing courses, and I drew this like a logo of unity and the effective power of sport to bring people together."



Aysha, 13, Tunisia - stateless from Libya

"My dream is to live a stable life and go back to school. I want to be a surgeon later. I designed the dream ball with my computer."



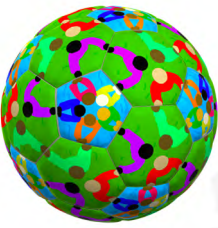
Maria Polytimi, 10, Greece

"These designs are entitled: "Reconciled communities". I created two different painting patterns. The designs are inspired by global geography, but above all it is a tribute to African aesthetics."



Ala, 15, Jordan - refugee, Za'atari Camp

"This drawing was drawn to combine sports and hope, as if he were catching the moon and throwing it into the basket. It is nice for a person to have a wide imagination and freedom of opinion and expression."



Carles, 13, Spain

"I am a student who is fond of drawing. My drawing deals with the mutual help that we must bring and share with others (such as refugees) by symbolically shaking hands. One shows solidarity in the land (green) and the other in the water (blue)."



Lina, 20, France

"In host countries, solidarity with refugees should be a priority. Also, many refugees are children. While some children are lucky enough to be able to go to school and play sports for instance, others have to flee their country. I admire them because they are courageous."



Sanchi, 13, India

"I love to innovate and create things that can help the community. Art is my hobby and my passion, and to create my ball design I used both of these skills and made 2 illustrations in a pentagon and a hexagon. I have depicted the theme – Together Through sport – in my illustrations as I believe that sports have an essence of togetherness and team spirit regardless of any discrimination."



Hyeon, 11, Korea

"I am an active middle school student who loves her friends and loves playing sports. Just like different friends get close through sports, my design represents the process in which the global community can gather as one. I hope that one day we shall reach world peace and that day shall be as thrilling as scoring a goal in soccer."



Asinat, 10, Greece - refugee

“I very much enjoy drawing and colour. I wanted to show how the different colours can come together, even if they are very different, and be together in sport.”



Jeylani, 17, Kenya - refugee from Somalia

“I am a student in Shabelle primary refugee school in Kakuma camp. I am talented in drawing and design. My picture represents the power of sports.”



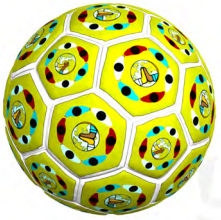
Ikuho, 15, Japan

“I thought about “Enlivening sports from Shizuoka” with volunteers from the men’s and women’s rugby teams, Shizuoka Revs and Azalea. I made it with images of Japan such as cherry blossoms and Mount Fuji.”



Tae Hwan, 11, Korea

“I am Tae-Hwan, an 11-year old who came across UNHCR and their mission at Kidzania in Seoul a few years ago. Ever since I have been putting away some of my allowance as a donation to UNHCR.”



Suzanna, 20, Netherlands

“Sport can be a source of happiness. As a kid I really enjoyed playing football with others. The activity, the fanatic spirit and the connections made my days, and still do. Playing sports is something social, something with sentiment which can open unexpected bursts of change.”



Thuria, 19, Sri Lanka - refugee from Sudan

“This is my entry for the #DreamBall design contest. It was somewhat inspired by the UNHCR logo - one could say that the hands are holding refugees gently, and the heart highlights the fact that refugees are people with feelings and hopes.”



Omar, 17, Jordan - refugee, Za’atari Camp

“I study in the eleventh grade in Za’atari camp. My hobbies are taekwondo and drawing. I am training in taekwondo with the Korean organization in the camp and I received self-defense training, but for a year and a half we have not received any training due to the pandemic.”



Anya, 27, Australia

“This year’s theme has a special place in my heart. I am aware of how powerful sport can be because sport unites us and has the ability to empower people and communities. I was involved in developing Cambodia’s first women’s wheelchair basketball program, and was amazed with how sports promote inclusivity and transformed the women’s livelihoods.”



Tobu, 24, Uganda - refugee from South Sudan

”Art is what I do to earn a living and survive in this community. The painting above is about “football to save girl child” aimed at reducing violence against girls. Many girls in our community faced violence from boys and men respectively. They lack of money to buy school material and sanitary pads. Many have been left single mothers, tortured and others end up dropping out of schools. Our Art group came up with the idea of organizing a soccer competition to raise money to buy materials and reduce violence against the young girls and some women in the community.”



Beatriz, 16, Chile

“The scenes that you see in some refugee camps I see in my own backyard. Even though I am privileged I try to sympathize to what millions of people suffer every day. For me sport can get you through tough times by bringing people who share the same interests together. Sports are a way of uniting people that wouldn’t necessarily interact with each-other. That is why when I see a little girl riding a bike either in a refugee camp I see hope, happiness, inclusion, union, and a feeling of family and safety.”



Lina, 20, France

“I am studying business in Marseille. I love classical dance, drawing and geopolitics. In my drawing, I tried to show the contrast between a world that is happy and united by sport and a war scene, which is the sad reality many refugees still live in. The one element belonging to both world is a man running at the centre of the drawing. On the left he runs for his life, on the right he runs to win a race. I wanted to show the effort, the action and the hope too because the man, although split in half, is the same person.”



Ishrat, 13, India

“I am a football fanatic, so this competition is a great opportunity to merge two things I love greatly. This painting of mine shows 3 refugee children standing in front of their future selves as sports stars. The message I want to get across for every child facing challenges in life- Your hopes and dreams have more power than the obstacles that burden you. Sport gives every child and youth the power to reach for the stars.”



Abdul, 19, Spain - refugee from Mali

“I think that the theme of sport and integration relates to my story because I’m a refugee footballer. I can say that sport helped me integrated quickly in Spain, a country that I love. The orange background represents Spain. The hands bring the different nationalities together. The sports that refugees play in Europe are represented at the bottom. Since football is my favorite sport, I drew myself super big to show my passion for sport.”



Jamil, 21, Greece - refugee from Afghanistan

“I started drawing and painting in 2017 in Greece while I was living in a refugee camp. I made this painting to show how sport can bring people from different countries and different backgrounds together. Sport helps overcome the injuries of the pandemic. UNHCR create a common space to bring people together like always. A place where people can coexist, cooperate and contribute to the enrichment of our cultural heritage.”



María, 16, Colombia

“Here they come! A team? It’s way more than that. They may not be from the same family, country, ethnicity, religion or culture. But even if they came from different planets their passion for sports would still get them together. I really loved having this opportunity to send a message through this painting, my idea was to show how sports can change lives and help overcome difficult situations. It’s also important to become a part of that hope, giving all our love and support to refugees.”



Fatma, 23, Ethiopia - refugee from Eritrea

“I’m a self-taught amateur artist. Over the years drawing became the only way of expressing my feelings and tell my story. Recently I have pushed myself even further and mastered digital drawing skills. My drawing highlights the importance of sport in our lives. It promotes a lifestyle that everyone should do to lead a healthy and pleasant life.”



Olivia, 17, Germany

“This piece of art named “Chest Bump“ is meant to illustrate the positivity and enthusiasm the refugees and locals share when they are doing any kind of sport. It serves as an optimistic prospect after the Covid-19 pandemic when there is no distance limit anymore. Personally, I am into running and CrossFit and would love to do more training in a multicultural environment.”



Alejandra, 15, Panama

“Some of my hobbies are painting, drawing, playing the guitar and video games. This drawing is inspired by the union that sport brings despite the distance. I try to convey how sport promotes inclusion and that despite the distance we can all be united. My drawing shows in one part a footballer showing support to a young refugee, who represents all refugees passionate about sports.”



Akwaboah, 23, Ghana

“I stay near a refugees camp in the Greater Accra region in Ghana. I have really observed my brothers and sisters living in this area and through this art contest, I’ve come into a conclusion that my people too can feel at home and included through sport... In my drawing I illustrated young refugees of all skin colours, gender, disabilities, etc...They are all moving towards a free zone where their shuttered dreams can become a reality through sports. The UNCHR is the symbol of hope and future for all refugees and asylum seekers...”



Gomez, 22, South Africa - refugee from DRC

“My artwork is dedicated to all those who have been United through sport. To all those who look beyond social, economical and physical barriers to be united through sports. I would like to commemorate this peace to humanity.”



Amaya, 17, Sri Lanka

“I’ve always found comfort in sports when things get tiring with my studies. But it’s undeniable that I’m one of luckiest because whereas I use sports to deviate myself from studies, some use sports as a comfort for the oppressed life they lead due to many reasons as civil wars, natural disasters, mental health issues & pandemics like covid-19. In the lives of refugees sports can play an important role as it can be their only comfort in the face of immense troubles. That’s why I see sports as a bulletproof umbrella which shields both refugees and us from our various issues. That umbrella of sports reminds us the importance of smiling together.”



Simon, 24, Uganda - refugee from South Sudan

“I’m Simon leaving I Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, Yumbe District. My illustration shows inclusion, happiness, peace, sharing and love. Too often, the physically disabled are left out in many sports activities, but sometimes having moments together with them through sports can make them feel whole and esteem their self worth. The illustration emphasizes their involvement with the physically able to participate in sports activities for unity and peace.”



Nikola, 16, Russia

“Well, I am just a 16 year old student who likes to draw from time to time. Speaking of the drawing, I just wanted to draw two boys of different skin colors in football uniform of the same team so as to say that you can play sports like football with everyone, no matter what you skin color is. Well, I think this message is nice and kind.”



Ibrahim, 22, Libya - refugee from South Sudan

“This picture shows us the importance of sport and its impact on the reunification of all people from different colors under one banner, which is humanity. The slogan of sport is No to hatred, whether we believe in different religion, No to racism, whether we are white or black, or No to hatred, whether we are men or women, everyone has the right to practice sports with love and peace.”



Balham, 30, Burkisa Faso - refugee from DRC

“I study mining engineering and I am also a draftsman. This drawing represents the joy of living and facing adversity during this Covid-19 pandemic period. Regardless of our skin color and our disability, we must be strong and united to face this disease. It is through football that we can come together with the joy of living and overcome this disease.”



Leticia, 13, Brazil

“My idea was to represent the fight for peace and liberty of the refugees. I also wanted to show that everybody should have the right to play and practice sports not worrying about anything. So, I decided to draw all the people that try to make refugees’ mental and physical health better, protecting them while they are practicing sports freely.”



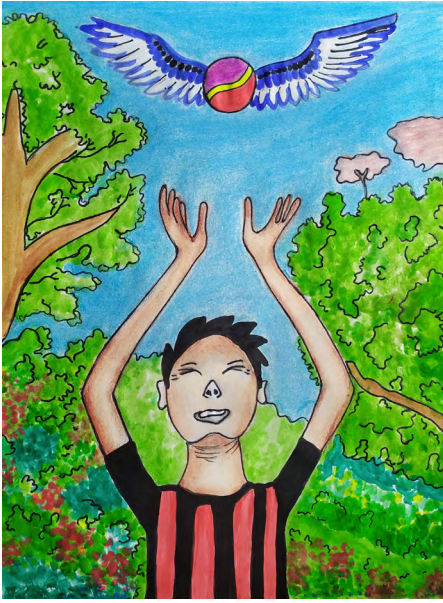
Hiu, 17, United States

“Hope and inclusion are my themes in my art work, because sports is a good way to heal after a difficult period and also a good way to bring people together. I hope my art can bring out the concepts of taking care of your mental health and be happiness to the audience, no matter how great your pressure and difficulty are, because happiness and healing are the most important things in your mental health, and happiness will be transmitted to the people around you.”



Faezeh, 25, France - refugee from Afghanistan

“In a world where the coronavirus has caused mental problems and distanced people, exercise is one of the most important ways to maintain mental and physical health, cohesion and togetherness. The yellow light around a woman who exercises reflects the positive energy, feeling of peace and hope for a bright future that is created in us through exercise.”



Suraya, 14, Bangladesh

“In my art, there is a refugee boy who loves sports. Whenever he catches a ball, he smiles as he sees his family in it. Just a tiny ball is enough to make him happy. Just a tiny ball is enough to help him fight against all odds. This ball comes to him as an angel of hope and happiness. All the green trees, the blue sky, red flowers are with him. He is never alone and will never be. The ‘Angel’ ball is his protector. Even in our bad days, this angel keeps us together, always.”



Ulfat, 26, Afghanistan

“I have been working with a local NGO as a partner of UNHCR where I played a vital role in promoting peaceful co-existence among refugees, returnees, IDPs and host families. In this unprecedented moment of COVID-19, we are reminded of the importance of solidarity, and are called to act in a way that unites us as a community.”



Olinmah, 21, Nigeria

“I took drawing as a hobby and I’ve really been trying to share some positivity with my drawings. My drawing is about how sports bring us all together. Seeing how sports aren’t so different and how we can all help each other to excel in various sports. I have a dream to bring people together, to bring a lot of smiles to a lot of faces. This is me taking a big step in accomplishing that. I really do believe we can all come together through sport.”



Angelo, 10, Hong Kong, China

“I love to share my love for everybody through drawings!”



Mohammad, 10, Jordan - refugee

“I am a kickboxing player. I love sports and football, so I drew a football player.”



Or, 19, Hong Kong, China

“Run, run, run”



Reina, 11, Japan

“I drew people from many countries huddling together. This means that sports bring everyone together.”



Shiming, 13, Spain

“There are many people of different genders and different races in this world, but everyone is equal in front of sports, because the rules of sports are the same for everyone, so that’s what brings us together!”