



## EVENS PRIZE FOR PEACE EDUCATION 2013

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Since its establishment, the Evens Foundation has awarded biennial prizes in various fields to fulfill part of its mission. In this tradition, the Evens Prize for Peace Education was launched in 2011 as part of its Peace Education Program.

Through this prize, the foundation seeks to detect, recognize and disseminate good practices in the field of conflict management education, the current focus of its Peace Education Program.

Through the **2013 Peace Education Prize**, the Evens Foundation seeks to recognize and honor primary/elementary schools that have integrated and consistently implement peace education principles in their school policy and functioning, with particular focus on positive conflict management.

### FOCUS: LIVING HARMONIOUSLY TOGETHER AT SCHOOL

Leading theorists, researchers and practitioners in the field have often highlighted the necessity of comprehensive approaches in peace education. Ideally, peace education pays attention to methods, content and organizational structure. To be effective in schools, it should not be relegated to the classroom but address all aspects of school life.

Scholars have also identified school 'climate' as an essential factor in preventing violence at school, as well as outside school. They emphasize the importance of developing a positive school climate to reduce violence and create safe schools that facilitate teaching and learning. In this respect 'school climate' refers to the quality and character of school life: interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and school goals, values, norms and organizational structure. It refers to the clarity of collective rules and the capacity to engage in dialogue with pupils. Justice, trust and a sense of belonging to the school community are vital elements of a positive school climate.

### INSPIRATIONAL SCHOOLS

Many interesting and encouraging things are happening at grassroots level, in individual schools. Many school leaders and teachers are confidently and energetically questioning the educational system and policy. Visionary and courageous school directors are leading their schools through a process of structural reform. Rejecting the hierarchical model of school structure, they are enabling healthy dialogue, establishing constructive conflict management strategies and implementing a culture of peace in their schools. And newly founded schools are integrating peace education principles from the start.

The Evens Foundation believes that such success stories can be a source of inspiration for other schools and policymakers. In these times, when the educational sector is frequently questioned or criticized, the foundation wishes to highlight positive stories that open perspectives for the future of education. Since the foundation believes in the power and effectiveness of preventive work at an early age, this call for submissions is aimed exclusively at primary schools.

## GENERAL CRITERIA

### FORMAL CRITERIA

These criteria need to be fulfilled in order to participate.

1. Only officially recognized primary/elementary schools based in a member state of the European Union can participate.
2. The Evens Foundation is looking for schools that integrate peace education principles as part of their school culture, structure and long-term policy. One-off peace education projects will not be taken into consideration.
3. Allowing for possible adaptations to the educational and school context, the ideas and practice are transferable to other schools.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

#### **1. A collaborative approach to school life, and school-based decision-making**

The school implements and supports participation processes at different levels that engage pupils, staff and parents as active citizens who contribute to the management and maintenance of the school community. To foster a climate of cooperation, responsibility, respect and understanding, people are actively involved in decision-making and implementation. This enables all stakeholders to learn how to deal with divergent opinions and needs.

#### **2. A shared policy on school rules and sanctions**

The policy on school rules and sanctions is a shared responsibility. By including the different actors in the process of defining the rules of school life, a sense of ownership and responsibility is created among all those affected by the policy. The emphasis of such a policy lies on restorative sanctions that facilitate integration and social cohesion.

#### **3. Teaching methods that stress participation, cooperation, problem-solving and respect for differences**

Pupils are considered and encouraged to be creative, critical thinkers, capable of solving problems non-violently both individually and as members of a team. The development of self-motivated, creative young people is promoted; the children are given opportunities to participate actively in classroom activities. Creative and independent thinking flourishes in the learning environment since pupils are encouraged to make choices, and the talents of everyone are recognized. To promote openness and empathy in the learning process, pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and speak about their feelings and needs. The pedagogical approach strongly emphasizes listening to and appreciating a diversity of viewpoints. Even evaluation, too, may be organized in a more collaborative way.

#### **4. Dealing with conflict in a positive way**

Numerous conflicts arise every day within a school community: between pupils, between pupil(s) and teacher(s), between teachers, between the school management and teachers, etc. Positive conflict management is promoted among both adults and children, so that they learn to deal with conflict in a constructive way. Skills and methods to analyze and manage conflict in a non-violent manner are introduced, discussed and practiced. Pupils are offered the opportunity and the conditions (e.g. space, time, etc.) to solve their own conflicts (as far as possible). The basic principle of such a policy is a positive approach toward conflict. Conflicts are taken as learning opportunities that enrich and strengthen a school community. Instead of looking on conflict as inherently disturbing and inconvenient, conflict is seen as a naturally occurring phenomenon that offers constructive as well as destructive potential, depending on the way it is managed.

#### **5. Community outreach projects**

To strengthen relationships in the school and/or between the school and the broader community, pupils are offered the opportunity to organize class- or school-based community service projects that address pupil-identified needs of other people whether at school or in the broader community. Pupils are encouraged to help others in order to strengthen their empathic capacity. They are also taught to be responsible citizens.

Preferably, parents are involved in such projects, both to foster intergenerational dialogue and to share the school's vision outside the school walls.

The school also looks for opportunities to participate in (existing) community organizations, structures, activities: neighborhood councils, thematic platforms, etc.

#### **6. Opportunities for team-building and professional development for all staff, focused on creating a positive school climate**

The school vision and pedagogical project, as well as the organization and functioning of school life, are clearly articulated to new staff members. Much attention is given to team-building activities. There is a respectful and cooperative atmosphere in the school team in order to implement effectively the shared mission and pedagogical project. Given the wide range of expertise among teachers and resource staff, the school fosters collegiality and cooperation, while staff members share their expertise willingly and problems are shared as readily as successes.

In addition, all staff members are offered opportunities for professional development related to enhancing the school climate, according to their needs and interests. Parents and community members may also be given the opportunity to attend certain workshops.

#### **7. Parent involvement in school life**

Parents feel welcomed in the school, and are encouraged to voice their opinion and to participate in school life. The school staff engage in regular exchanges with parents about their children, school activities, the educational process, school policy, etc. Two-way informal exchanges between teachers and parents are part of daily school life.

In developing strategies to increase parent involvement in school life, the school bears in mind the diverse family situations and backgrounds of its pupils.

To encourage participation and to improve communication between the school and home, many methods are used: joint activities, parents acting as volunteers for certain activities, parents sharing their knowledge/experience, workshops for parents, etc.

Note: The foundation, aware of the ambitious character of the selection criteria, invites candidates to reflect on them, taking into account the possibility of perhaps not complying with all seven criteria but of making efforts toward each of them.

Submissions should be provided in English, in electronic form or by post, along with the application form, which is available at [www.evensfoundation.be](http://www.evensfoundation.be), before 15th March 2013, to Marjolein Delvou.

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If the project qualifies for consideration, the Evens Foundation will contact you before 31st March 2013 in order to organize a school visit.

The prize money of €25,000, awarded by an international expert jury and the Evens Foundation, will be shared between the laureate(s) and the dissemination of the good practice (in cooperation with the laureate(s)). The jury will decide how the amount will be allocated.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Marjolein Delvou.

