

25 July 2019

## **UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office**

### **Call for Submissions: Transformative Stories, Transforming Lives**

#### **Background**

Narratives are an important lens through which children learn to see and make sense of their world. Historical narratives inspire and provide lessons from the past, while fictional tales expand the imaginative potential of what might be possible. Stories reflect and also shape a child's world and their place in it. Gender relations are inscribed in and thus learned through the stories we tell, and traditionally children have been presented with narratives that have prescribed gender divisions. These cultural scripts often feature active, assertive, and aggressive male role models, while those models available to girls are more often passive and subordinate. These reflect and reinforce cultural expectations.

During 2019-2020 the UN Women Regional Office in Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) is paying special emphasis on the implementation of UN Women's normative mandate, particularly as 2020 will mark the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. On this occasion, and to celebrate this "quarter of a century" anniversary, UN Women ECARO is developing a regional collection of narratives inspired by historical and fictional female figures with the goal of promoting gender equality by challenging gender stereotypes. The collection will celebrate strong female characters to inspire girls to succeed by expanding their horizons of expectation while at the same time providing boys with a range of examples of strong women so that they, too, imagine a world of greater gender equity.

## **What's Different and Why We Need You**

UN Women seeks submissions for a collection of narratives about inspirational women from Europe and Central Asia directed at young readers. These narratives will be part of a collection aimed at encouraging young readers' self-actualization by providing stories of women and girls who have realized their full potential as citizens of the world. The collection's goal is to develop a sense of gender equality in young readers by providing inspirational stories of the accomplishments of women and girls and their positive contributions to their communities and society.

Not just another collection of well-circulated narratives, this project also seeks to 'recover' silenced voices and forgotten stories both fictional and historical. To this end, we invite and encourage a wide range of contributors - authors and primary school teachers, historians, journalists, young children, members from civil society organizations and youth groups, mothers and fathers - anyone with a story to tell of women and girls who have made a meaningful impact. We are seeking stories that advance gender equality and women's empowerment aimed at the young reader, and those which particularly have the potential to:

- Inspire young girls on a journey of leadership and realize their full potential
- Support young readers to become engaged citizens and agents of change
- Shift and transform gender norms, stereotypes and biases

Our hope is that these narratives of females who have made a difference serve to demonstrate the many ways in which today's women and girls, and men and boys can dismantle gender norms and biases and create more equal and empowering societies for the current and next generation.

## **Submission Process**

1. Submissions should be 2,000 words or less.
2. Submissions should be inspirational but not unrealistic: that is, they should not deny the existence of gender inequality even as they demonstrate the potential to persist and at times prevail.
3. Based on the belief in the transformative potential of narrative, the overall tone of the stories and the collection is optative - hopeful for the possibilities of the future.
4. All submissions will be reviewed by a UN Women ECA RO review committee.
5. The first phase of the selection process will be a review of abstracts.
6. Those selected to contribute based on the abstracts will be invited to contribute their full submissions.

7. The full submissions will go to the review committee for selection of the final 25 narratives.
8. Upon final selection, authors will work with the reviewers/editors to complete the final drafts.

### **Terms and Conditions**

- Open to all - all ages, genders and professions.
- Entry can be a traditional narrative - i.e., one in circulation within the community, or it may be a newly-authored narrative.
- Narratives must be female-centered - historical or fictional women, well-known or forgotten females who have made a difference.
- Plagiarism and copyright infringement in any section of application forms and in the process, will lead to automatic disqualification.
- The review committee's decisions are final at each stage.

### **Submission Dates**

1. Abstract (2,000 words max) and a letter of intent by Thursday 15 August 2019
2. Notification of selection by Friday 23 August 2019
3. Full submission of 1<sup>st</sup> draft by Thursday 19 September 2019

Please submit your abstracts to: [ECA.programme@unwomen.org](mailto:ECA.programme@unwomen.org) and in the subject header clearly indicate "**Fairy Tales**"