TAE'THIR CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

THEME

"Resisting Defeatism"

Humanity has endured endless tests throughout the recent decades, with the past year proving particularly devastating. The ongoing genocidal wars in Gaza and Sudan, the ruthless wars in Lebanon, the protracted war in Syria, the continued invasion of Ukraine, and other crises around the world along with the senseless loss of human life, has cast a long shadow over our collective consciousness.

2024 was further marked by escalating violence, political instability, and deepening humanitarian crises, which have testing the limits of our ability to remain sane and united. The political instability in the Southern Mediterranean sub-region, with the consolidation of autocratic and oppressive regimes, further exacerbates the sense of helplessness. At the same time, the rise of illiberal regimes and the normalization of far right and anti-rights discourse across Europe increasingly challenge democratic values and human rights. In this context, could the call to resist defeatism inspire us to envision futures where dignity, justice, and freedom are not just ideals but also tangible realities?

Resisting Defeatism deliberately juxtaposes two opposing poles: defeatism, which implies passive acceptance of difficult circumstances, and resistance, which suggests a refusal to be shaped by external forces. These two forces are not mutually exclusive; they can coexist within the human experience. In today's context, this dialogue between defeatism and resistance takes on profound significance, particularly in the face of political, societal, and environmental challenges. **How does resisting defeatism shape new possibilities in the face of adversity?**

Defeatism sometimes emerges as a coping mechanism in response to overwhelming hardship. It allows us to function amidst chaos but at the cost of silencing our inner hope and imagination. Resistance, in contrast, is an act of defiance that reignites our capacity to dream, create, and act.

In the realm of the mind, the tension between intellect and imagination often defines the contours of our internal struggles, where resistance to change or understanding emerges from the interplay of these forces. As such, far from being an act of escapism, imagining and theorizing new possibilities is a radical gesture that challenges despair. It allows us to envision alternative ways of being, thinking and feeling; creating internal spaces where hope can exist even in the absence of external change. **Resisting defeatism, therefore, is about refusing to let the weight of the world strip us of our ability to dream and act.**

The binary opposition between resistance and defeatism is not a simplification of one as virtuous and the other as passive, but rather an invitation to explore and question the underlying tensions, imbalances, connections, and moments of rupture between these two forces. It asks us to examine the complexities and nuances in our responses to adversity, recognizing that both defeatism and resistance can coexist, evolve, and inform each other in ways that challenge our perceptions and actions. **How can we embrace the complexity of these two forces, recognizing that they are not absolute but evolve and shape our actions over time?**

Arts and content creation can play a major role in supporting and promoting human rights among young people in the context of a massive decline in liberties. Artistic work and content creation can challenge dominant narratives and inspire critical thinking, enabling individuals, particularly youth, to envision alternative futures, making the arts and content creation vital forces in shaping a collective imagination. *Tae'thir* project aims to respond to the lack of physical and virtual spaces for dialogue and creation by encouraging the promotion of a culture of human rights in the Mediterranean through the artistic and digital practices of young people. Both contemporary art forms and digital content creation serve as dynamic mediums through which the complexities of "Resisting Defeatism" can be explored, interpreted, and communicated.

This theme asks participants to reflect on the ways their creative practices can push against defeatism and nurture resistance, fostering collective hope in the process. This desire to aspire collectively for change and the confidence in the power that artists and digital content creators can have to promote human rights principles, despite the current context of our Mediterranean region, is the silver lining that our project *Tae'thir* is structured around.

We shall examine the theme of "Resisting Defeatism' from different perspectives:

- Can art and content creation create "impossible spaces" that challenge the laws of reality? How can these spaces become havens for hope and action, free from the constraints of the real world?

- How can emotions such as sadness, anger, or love ignite collective resistance? How can art and content creation redirect these emotions to become catalysts for change instead of pathways to defeatism?

- What role do artists and content creators play in society, given their inherent propensity to raise questions stemming from their own inquiries? Similarly, what significance does art and digital content creation hold in society? How can we consistently challenge the status of artwork, the artist's role, and the position of art within our societal framework?

TAE'THIR PROJECT

Promoting human rights in the Mediterranean through young people's digital and artistic practices

Tae'thir project – '**influence' in Arabic** - is the continuation of a long-standing reflection on the **evolution of new forms of mobilization and advocacy for human rights** in the Mediterranean. The project is led by Réseau Euromed France (REF), the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), les Instants vidéo numériques et poétiques and the Ligue de l'enseignement des Bouches du Rhône . The four organizations referred to as a consortium have been working for years on issues linked to the defense of human rights, the promotion of active citizenship and access to art and culture for all in contexts that are becoming increasingly restrictive.

Tae'thir project aims **to open up spaces for the exchange of ideas and creativity** by encouraging the promotion of a culture of human rights in the Mediterranean through the artistic and digital practices of young people.

The project was launched in September 2023 in Marseille for a 3-year period and is financially supported by the Agence française de développement, Interministerial Delegation for the Mediterranean – French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and the Fondation de France. The first cycle of the *Tae'thir* project kicked off in February 2024 and is still underway. It will conclude with the presentation of digital works and art productions in Marseille in October 2025 during Les Instants Video 2025 Festival.

This call for applications is in the framework of Cycle 2 of the *Tae'thir* project, which will engage young artists and content creators from 17 Mediterranean countries in a cycle of activities based around:

- An **online training/reflection cycle** offering participants an in-depth exploration of human rights issues—patriarchy, criticism, and censorship—while fostering awareness, critical reflection, and connections to art and content creation. It also provides a platform for participants to exchange and share experiences on these issues.
- A **mentoring cycle** with the aim of supporting participants in the process of producing and disseminating their artistic and digital productions by helping them to structure and formalize their project in all its aspects (financial, technical, and the project brief drafting). Participants will be given personalized support in compiling an artistic/content creation dossier.
- A **multi-stakeholder workshop in Marseille** with the aim of promoting exchanges between artists, content creators, and local actors. This key moment in the program will enable participants to build connections, develop new collaborations, and benefit from valuable opportunities to enrich their artistic and content creation practices and increase the visibility of their projects.

Only 10 to 11 digital works and artistic productions will have the opportunity to:

- Be financially supported with a maximum of €3,000 to be allocated per project. The announcement of the award of the sub-grant is due in September 2025 following the completion of the three aforementioned activities.
- Be presented to the public in Marseille, France in May 2026.

NOTA BENE

*We do not view the human rights situation in the Mediterranean region as homogeneous. We are aware that it overlooks the unique socio-political contexts and challenges faced by each country in the region. Each nation has its distinct history, culture made of multiple identities, political system, and social dynamics, which shape its human rights landscape in unique ways.

***In this project aimed at promoting human rights through art and digital content creation, it is our fervent wish to emphasize that **art should not be instrumentalized.** Our approach values artistic integrity, creativity, and the authentic expression of ideas and emotions. We believe in the power of art and digital creation to inspire change organically, without manipulation or coercion.*

***Moreover, we believe in the power of **collaborative learning**, where knowledge is shared horizontally, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding. We encourage open dialogue, active listening, and the exchange of diverse perspectives, ensuring that everyone involved learns from one another. By nurturing a collaborative, inclusive space, we aim to amplify the impact of our project and cultivate a rich tapestry of creative expressions that resonate with the essence of human rights.

****Our organizations actively oppose discrimination. We take affirmative action and implement measures to ensure **non-discrimination** based on race, ethnicity, political opinion, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. We are committed to fostering an inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment, ensuring a safe space for dialogue and debate among all our members, participants, and staff.

CONDITIONS TO APPLY

The call for projects is open to **young artists and digital content creators aged between 21 and 35** according to the following allocation:

- *About 70% of projects will be led by youth from the following countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean:* **Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.**
- *About 30% of projects will be led by youth from the following countries of the northern shore of the Mediterranean:* **Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain.**

Candidates do not have to reside in the aforementioned countries but to originate from them.

- *Propose an original artwork or digital content creation in resonance with the theme of the project: "Resisting Defeatism"*
- *The artwork or digital content creation must be completed for its presentation in May 2026.*

Work in the following forms is eligible:

Creative writing
Digital content creation
Installation and visual art
Sound creation
Performance
Vidéo installation

CALL CALENDAR

Opening of the call for participants: **6 December 2024**

Closing of the call for participants: **5 January 2025**

Announcement of pre-selection results: **13 January 2025**

Interview with pre-selected candidates: **15 January – 10 February 2025**

Announcement of final results: **12 February 2025.**

PROJECT TIMELINE

TAE'THIR CYCLE 2

(February 2025 – May 2026)

KICK-OFF WEBINAR: Late February 2025

- Meeting and presentation of participants, consortium members and advisory board members

ONLINE TRAINING AND REFLECTION SESSIONS: (March 2025 - June 2025)

- 2 lectures on **patriarchy** + 1 reflection session on **patriarchy**
- 2 lectures on **critique** + 1 reflection session on **critique**
- 2 lectures on **censorship** + 1 reflection session on **censorship**.

MENTORSHIP:

- Identification of needs session: March-April 2025
- 1st mentorship session: July 2025
- 2nd mentorship session: October 2025

Project draft submissions:

- Draft 1: April 2025
- Draft 2: September 2025
- Final artistic / content creation dossier: October 2025

WORKSHOP WEEK IN MARSEILLE: July 2025

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AWARD OF THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT: September 2025

FINAL EVENT: May 2026 - Presentation of selected artworks and digital productions

Applicants must commit to the project timeline indicated above.

HOW TO APPLY

Please use the provided link to access the online form and submit your application.