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Six winners for the new Dutch prize for journalists from developing countries.

The Hague, The Netherlands, 2 October 2009. Six talented young journalists from developing countries have won the *Oscar van Leer Fellowships*. The Bernard van Leer Foundation has chosen six young journalists from developing countries to be the inaugural recipients of the Oscar van Leer Fellowships. The fellowships aim to increase the quantity and quality of media coverage of issues affecting young children.

The foundation had initially planned to offer three fellowships, but decided to increase the number after being overwhelmed by the response.

The fellowships were open to journalists in nine countries in which the foundation has active grant making programmes. Candidates had to send examples of their work and explain their interest in developing special journalistic expertise in covering children's issues. Over 350 applications were received.

Lisa Jordan, Executive Director of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, said: "The media plays a crucial role in spreading awareness of the actions needed to ensure all the world's children have a fair start in life. We were delighted to discover such depth and breadth of enthusiasm for children's issues among young journalists in the countries in which we work."

The six fellows will be honoured at a dinner marking the foundation's 60th anniversary celebrations on November 11. Guest speaker will be Veet Vivarta, the Executive Secretary of ANDI (Agência de Notícias dos Direitos da Infância, or News Agency for Children's Rights), a Brazilian non-profit organisation which works for social responsibility in the media.

The fellows will then return to the Netherlands in 2010 for a four-week training course on journalism and children's issues tailor-made by the Radio Netherlands Training Centre.

The six inaugural Oscar van Leer Fellows are Kanina Foss from South Africa, Namita Kohli from India, Carmen Matos from the Dominican Republic, Erick W Ndung from Kenya, Nick Oluoch from Kenya, and Tatiana Velasquez from Colombia. Biographies are available on request.

The selection of fellows was made by a selection committee consisting of Radio Netherlands journalist Ginger da Silva, former chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Jaap Doek, communication expert Annemiek Hoogenboom, early childhood development expert Elly Singer, and foundation trustee Peter Bell.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation is an international grant making foundation based in The Hague. It funds and shares knowledge about work to improve the life chances of children aged 0-8 who are growing up in circumstances of social and economic disadvantage.

The fellowships commemorate Bernard van Leer's son Oscar van Leer, who focused the foundation's resources on giving young children a fair start.

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For more information on the Oscar van Leer Fellowship: <http://www.bernardvanleer.org/ovlf>

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