The Many Languages, One World Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum began as a joint vision of The United Nations Academic Impact and Dr. J. Michael Adams, who prepared global citizens through international education as the president of Fairleigh Dickinson University from 1999 to 2012. The United Nations Academic Impact was launched by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in November 2010.

After Dr. Adams’ untimely passing in 2012, Mr. Ramu Damodaran, Chief of the United Nations Academic Impact worked alongside Mr. Mark W. Harris, President and CEO of ELS Educational Services Inc. and Berlitz International Inc., to make the vision of Many Languages One World a reality.

“We chose an essay contest because it provides an opportunity to introduce contestants to principles of the United Nations Academic Impact and to discuss these issues in an official language of the United Nations which is not their native language,” said Mr. Harris.

June 2014 marked the beginning of the 70th anniversary year of the signing of the United Nations Charter. To commemorate this occasion, and as part of the United Nations Academic Impact global initiative, ELS Educational Services Inc. and the United Nations Academic Impact along with Adelphi University under the leadership of President Robert A. Scott, Ph.D. launched the first Many Languages, One World Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum.

Many Languages, One World promotes multilingualism and the creation of global citizens. “This has been a remarkable contest,” said Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, former Under Secretary General of the United Nations.
To qualify for the inaugural competition in 2014, participants wrote a 2,000 word essay discussing the ideas of global citizenship, cultural understanding and the role that multilingual ability can play in fostering these principles. The language of each participant’s essay had to be one of the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish), could not be his or her first language, and could not be the language of instruction during his or her pre-university study. All participants were also required to be full-time university students. Over 1,400 essays were successfully submitted, and 60 winners – ten from each language – were invited to attend the conference and Global Youth Forum in New York. During the event’s culmination, the essay contest winners convened at the United Nations and presented on key issues of the United Nations Academic Impact global initiative.

Speaking on the impact of the Many Languages, One World winners, Hasan Ferdous of the United Nations Department of Public Information said, “Their words give us hope. Their vision gives us courage. I’m confident that as we leave this hall with them in the driving seat, our future will be in safe hands.”

ELS Educational Services and the United Nations are proud to announce the second Many Languages, One World Essay Contest and Global Youth Forum for 2015, welcoming a new group of global citizens to New York for the experience of a lifetime.

For more information please contact John Nicholson at JNicholson@ELS.edu. An online press kit featuring photos and videos is available for download at http://www MANY LANGUAGES ONE WORLD.ELS.edu/press.

For more information in the United Nations Academic Impact please visit https://academicimpact.un.org/.

For more information on Dr. J. Michael Adams and his work with The UNAI please visit http://view2.fdu.edu/global-education/united-nations-pathways/united-nations-academic-impact-initiative/.