Draw me a neutrino: the first KM3NeT art contest

Presenter: Marco Circella (INFN Bari), on behalf of the KM3NeT Collaboration

Executive summary

What is this contribution about?

We report on the drawing contest "Draw me a neutrino" recently organized by the KM3NeT Collaboration, the new-generation neutrino telescope project in the Mediterranean Sea.

Why is it relevant / interesting?

The contest was conceived as a way to:
• create awareness of particle physics and astronomy to a young community that may become interested in science in the future;
• engage and inform their families and teachers;
• provide an original approach to introduce research and science in schools;
• create/reinforce the link between the Collaboration with the schools and the public;
• promote around the world the science carried out by KM3NeT.

We believe that this idea can be beneficial for a variety of experimental activities.

What have we done?

We defined an original contest scheme originally launched in a number of countries where selected KM3NeT teams could support the authors in their preparation to the contest by disseminating in the schools and online explanatory documentation about the neutrinos and KM3NeT. After the many requests that we received along the way, we also opened a contest for the participants from the rest of the world. Contacts with the participants were kept through a dedicated multi-lingual website, through which the drawings could be also submitted. Juries comprising scientists, science communicators and artists were set up for evaluating the drawings; the evaluation was based on the originality of the drawing, creativity and harmony with the properties and origin of the neutrinos.

What is the result?

The attention that the contest received worldwide was remarkable. The website was visited more than 25,000 times in a few months. More than 500 drawings were received from authors of all ages from 16 countries in all continents, with most of the drawings coming from countries which do not participate in KM3NeT. From the answers to a questionnaire included in the participation form it was noted that for a large majority of the participants the contest represented their first opportunity to learn about neutrinos! And less than 15% of the participants knew about KM3NeT before the contest. A collection of the best drawings, selected by the national and international juries, have been put in exhibition in a virtual art gallery which can be still visited. The documentation collected from the contest, including the drawings themselves and the comments and questions submitted by the authors, have proved to be very useful for outreach activities.