**MiSAC - IAFSW JOINT SCHOOLS COMPETITION 2024**

***Neglected Tropical Diseases and Climate Change***

For the first time, in 2024, a partnership was set up between the *Microbiology in Schools Advisory Committee UK*, (MiSAC) and the *International Association for the Future STEM Workforce* (IAFSW) operating in ASEAN Plus Three countries, to conduct the well-respected MiSAC school competition in Asian countries. IAFSW considers MiSAC’s competition topics, aimed at lower secondary school level and with a focus on issues of global importance, to be instrumental in increasing awareness amongst teenagers of the importance of microbes and their roles in our lives.

The 2024 competition topic, ***Neglected Tropical Diseases and Climate Change***, has particular resonance for the countries within the IAFSW network as so many NTDs are present in these countries. Technical information, in the form of video clips on selected NTDs, were received from medical experts. Aimed at Grades 7-9, the competition was advertised though IAFSW and associated networks. As always with a new competition, it takes time for teachers to become aware of the opportunities available to students - who had to produce a web-page on one NTD, according to the requirements of the competition. All this had to be done professionally, in English, a non-native language.

The competition received 51 entries from Brunei, The Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand and judging was chaired by Dr Margaret Whalley (MiSAC) along with members of IAFSW, SEAMEO SEPS and medical experts. Judges were very impressed by the quality of entries, their scientific content and creativity of design in producing visually-appealing and informative web pages. 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes were awarded; each student contributing to the winning entries receiving $120, $60 and $30 each. Commendations were also made for scientific content, visual impact and innovative design. Winning and commended entries can be seen on the MiSAC website.

Following the success of this year’s competition, the MiSAC-IAFSW partnership looks forward to running the 2025 competition on ***Human Fungal Disease and Antifungal Drug Resistance*** - another topic of considerable interest for populations in Asia.