

LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD WINNERS OF THE EQUATOR PRIZE 2023

The [UN Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#) and partners announced the winners of the 14th Equator Prize, [recognizing ten Indigenous peoples and local communities from ten countries](#).

Winning organizations demonstrate how innovative, nature-based solutions can enable communities to achieve their own local development goals, while building community resilience, even in a time of economic, environmental, political and public health shocks.

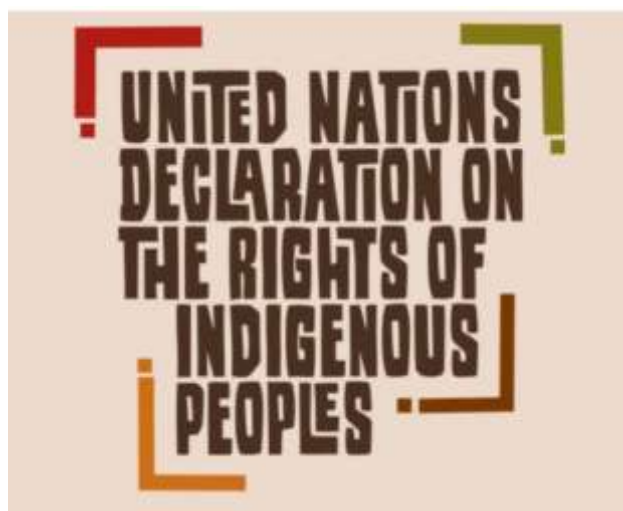


This year's winners also highlight the theme of the [International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples](#): "Indigenous Youth as Agents of Change for Self-determination." Four winners are youth-led initiatives, all are committed to promoting intergenerational equity within their communities, and most work towards accelerating the creation of protected and conserved areas to safeguard nature and accelerate progress on the 30x30 goals. Facing unprecedented planetary crises, it is crucial to shed light on the essential contributions of environmental stewardship carried out by Indigenous peoples and local communities including indigenous youth.

The winners, selected from a pool of over 500 nominations from 108 countries, hail from Bolivia, Brazil, Burundi, Ecuador, Guatemala, Greenland, Liberia, Nepal, the Philippines, and Zambia. The website presents fact sheets on each project of the Equator Prize 2023 winners. The website link of the winning organization is also highlighted in the sheets, allowing to know more about the approach and results of the practices in progress.

The winners of the Equator Prize 2023 are the following organizations:

Tergar Charity Nepal (TCN) . is a locally-driven organization focused on improving food security and livelihood in the remote Himalayan community of



Samagaun, Northern Nepal. They promote crop diversification and sustainable crop management while implementing bioclimatic passive solar greenhouses for enhanced food security. [Community Development And Wellbeing | Tergar Charity | Nepal](#)

Comuna Playa de Oro. Ecuador. Based in Ecuador's Esmeraldas province, Comuna Playa de Oro is an ancient Afro-Ecuadorian settlement that thrives despite facing threats like illegal mining, deforestation, and encroachment. With a population of 350 individuals, they safeguard 10,000 hectares of forest in the Chocó region and engage in sustainable activities such as ecotourism, sustainable agriculture, and bio-enterprises, preserving both their natural surroundings and cultural heritage.

The Young Emerging Farmers Initiative (YEFI) – Zambia. This youth-oriented organization empowers young people in rural and urban areas through sustainable agriculture, creating 1,000 jobs and establishing over 50 youth-led enterprises. Through tree planting, forest conservation, organic farming, and agroecology practices, YEFI has regenerated 10,000 hectares of degraded land, reduced nitrous oxide emissions, improved soil structure, and promoted resilient ecosystems.

Perfect Village Communities Burundi (PVC Burundi). This community-led social enterprise acknowledges the correlation between environmental degradation and decreasing community health. By empowering local communities, with a particular emphasis on women and youth, PVC Burundi promotes self-sufficiency through the use of natural, locally-produced alternatives for land restoration and sustainable food production. PVC Burundi's efforts have resulted in the successful regeneration of 5,000 hectares of land through the planting of over 500,000 diverse seedlings and trees, contributing to the restoration and preservation of the local environment. <https://www.perfectvillage.bi/>

Kapunungan sa Gagmay'ng Mangingisda sa Concepcion – Philippines. Established in 1986 by a fishing community, this organization combats the depletion of mangrove forests and threats to the coastal ecosystem through community organizing, environmental education, policy support, and law enforcement. Their efforts have successfully rejuvenated the ecosystem, with 10,000 to 12,000 hectares of mangrove forests thriving again, bringing back vanished species and creating a sustainable environment for future generations in their communities and across the province of Zamboanga Sibugay, Philippines. [KGMC | Zamboanga City | Facebook](#).

Inuit Circumpolar Council – Greenland. This organization brings together 180,000 Inuit Indigenous peoples from Canada, Greenland, Russia, and the State of Alaska in the United States to protect the Arctic ecosystem and to defend land and ocean rights using ancestral Inuit knowledge and practice. The



organization aims to establish an Inuit-managed protected area in the Píkiilasorsuaq region, preserving its ecological integrity and facilitating unrestricted movement between historically connected communities. [Inuit.org](https://inuit.org/) | [ICC Greenland](https://iccgreenland.org/).

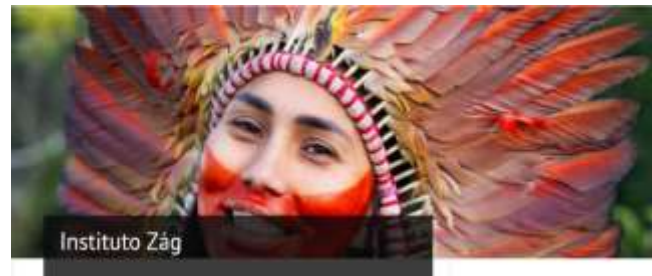
Instituto Zág – Brazil. This Indigenous youth-led organization focuses on reforestation and preserving traditional knowledge related to the Araucaria tree, known as Zág. Their reforestation activities, including invasive tree removal, promotion of ancestral traditions, aim to safeguard the Araucaria as a source of nutrition, medicine, and cultural identity, recognizing the deep interdependence between the Zág tree and the Xokleng people.

Uru Uru Team – Bolivia. Initiated in 2019 by Indigenous youth from the Uru community, Uru Uru Team aims to safeguard Uru Uru Lake from severe pollution caused by nearby city waste. Through capacity building and the establishment of a community garden, they have created an effective model that preserves biodiversity, Indigenous knowledge, and cultural identity, successfully reducing lake pollution by 30%.. <https://www.facebook.com/UruUru01>

Asociación Tikonel – Guatemala. Tikonel has contributed to the sustainable management of 3,776 hectares of land through initiatives such as soil conservation, reforestation, and agroforestry, while also providing cookstoves to 50 families and training programs for over 8,000 community members on sustainable forest management. They collaborate with the National Forest Institute and work with local organizations and MSMEs for the empowerment of Indigenous peoples through production and sale of wooden and textile articles. <https://tikonel.org/asociacion/>

Kpanyan Community Land Development and Management Committee – Liberia. In 2019, the Kpanyan Committee became the first community in Southeast Liberia to gain formal ownership of their traditional land, protecting over 40,000 hectares of highly biodiverse forest and implementing sustainable agriculture to enhance food security and climate resilience. Their success inspired seven other districts in the region to register their Customary Land rights, leading to the development of sustainable land use plans stretching over 700,000 hectares of mostly forested land. [South East Landscape, Liberia - IDH - the Sustainable Trade Initiative \(idhsustainabletrade.com\)](https://south-east-landscape-landscapes.com/)

The Equator Prize winners in 2023 will receive US\$15,000, and the opportunity to take part in a series of special virtual events associated with the UN



General Assembly, SDG Summit, UN Climate Ambition Summit, the UNDP [Nature for Life Hub](#), and COP 28 in Dubai.

This year's awardees also join a network of [275 communities](#) who have been recognized by the Equator Prize since 2002.

[The Equator Initiative is a multi-sector partnership](#) that brings together the United Nations system, governments, civil society, and grassroots organizations. The Equator Prize, organized by the Equator Initiative, is awarded to recognize outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The sustainable community initiatives showcased by the Prize are collectively contributing to achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). As local and indigenous groups demonstrate and exemplify sustainable development, the Equator Prize shines a spotlight on their efforts by celebrating them on an international stage.

To know more

[Equator Initiative website](#)

[Winners of the 2023 Equator Prize](#)

[Ten countries to bag the 2023 Equator Prize | \(ndp.org\)](#)

[International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2023 | \(DISD\) \(un.org\)](#)

[Equator Prize 2023 winners pave the way to Global Biodiversity Framework | \(undp.org\)](#)

[All Winners – Equator Initiative](#)

[Stories | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

[Joint Statement by the UN Mechanisms of Indigenous Peoples | DISD\)](#)

[Indigenous Peoples | Division for Inclusive Social Development \(DISD\) \(un.org\)](#)

[Nature-based solutions database in equatorinitiative.org website](#)

[Case Studies Database - Equator Initiative](#)

[Equator Initiative – Photo Stories](#)

[Equator Initiative Publications](#)

[United Nations Development Programme website](#)

