

# UNESCO JAPAN PRIZE WINNERS 2023

## EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The [2023 UNESCO-Japan Prize on education for sustainable development](#) has been awarded to three projects ongoing in Guatemala, Japan and Zimbabwe. Chosen by an international jury, the three initiatives showed outstanding work and dedication in incorporating sustainability into their education systems and engaging their communities.



The UNESCO-Japan Prize on [Education for sustainable development](#), funded by the Government of Japan, consists of three annual awards of USD 50,000 for each recipient. It was awarded for the first time in November 2015. The Prize and award winners recognize the role of education in connecting the social, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It was established by the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 195th session within the framework of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD and officially announced at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD (10-12 November 2014, Aichi-Nagoya, Japan).



In November 2023 UNESCO announced the following winners for the edition 2023 of the Prize:

### ***Long Way Home, Guatemala***

[Long Way Home](#) was chosen for its project "[Hero School](#)", which aims to provide affordable and high-quality education to marginalized communities while integrating sustainable values into lesson plans and curriculum, including climate change mitigation, improved access to quality education and clean water, food security, gender equality, and improved human rights. Students actively contribute to the community's well-being by constructing essential living conditions and structures such as smoke-reducing stoves, drinking water cisterns, safe waste disposal latrines, landslide-preventing tire retaining walls, and earthquake-resistant safe housing. The project garnered the jury's recognition for its transformative impact and educational approach. Their efforts in empowering students, training teachers in sustainable values, and addressing economic and environmental challenges in a holistic way were commended, particularly in providing marginalized communities with knowledge and resources for sustainable self-reliance.



Long Way Home has transformed over 100,000 used tires and tens of thousands of plastic bottles filled with rubbish into schools, health clinics, homes, and much more on three continents. Their school curriculum integrates UNESCO standards for Education for Sustainable Development and green building projects to empower



students to be change-makers, what they call heroes. With the community as their classroom, they are innovating local solutions to global challenges.

### ***Kanazawa University, Japan***

[Kanazawa University in Japan](#) has successfully contributed to the revitalization of remote communities with a decreasing and aging population, in Japan's UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Geopark. Through their project "Intergenerational Learning on ESD to revitalize remote communities inside Japanese UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Geopark" they have fostered intergenerational bonds and collaborated between local villagers and students, transforming each resident into an "educator" and the entire village into a living learning hub. Notably, the project garnered recognition from the jurors as an exemplary model of intergenerational and intercultural learning, contributing to the rejuvenation of rural areas in Japan. The jurors commended their promotion of sustainable practices among students and their practicality leveraging the knowledge of residents to spur eco-entrepreneurship and create new job opportunities.

### ***Zimbabwe Institute of Permaculture, Zimbabwe***

The [SCOPE](#) Programme, run by the non-profit organization Zimbabwe Institute of Permaculture, through their whole school approach – integrated land use design considers schools as self-contained ecosystems that are addressed holistically. Making all the school land productive, transforming degraded and ornamental spaces into productive food gardens that meet local needs. Students, teachers, and the community all work together to cultivate and harvest a variety of crops, improving food quality and lowering dependency on synthetic nutrients. Facilitating an inclusive transgenerational learning process that allows stakeholders to collaborate on the development of their school and its teaching and learning environment. The international jury noted SCOPE's outstanding contributions to sustainable resource management. Sustainable techniques such as seed conservation, crop diversity, mulching, rainwater harvesting, and school planting were commended for revitalizing school grounds into thriving self-sustaining agricultural and learning environments.

Funded by the Government of Japan, the prize was established by UNESCO's Executive Board in October 2014, and was renewed in November 2019 for a period of six years (2020-2025) with a biennial cycle.

Selection criteria looks for strong potential in transformation, innovative quality, and ability to embrace all three dimensions of sustainability: the economy, society, and the environment.

Laureates of the 2023 prize were recommended by an independent international jury. The three laureates were selected among the 92 nominations submitted by the governments of 51 Member States and 7 organizations in official partnership with UNESCO. Each laureate received an award of US \$50,000 at the [award ceremony](#) in November 2023, during the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

### **To know more**

[The 2023 UNESCO-Japan Prize on education for sustainable development](#)

[News in UNESCO website](#)

[Brochure resenting the Laureates 2023](#)



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