

## LOCAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD WINNERS OF THE EQUATOR PRIZE 2024

The [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#) and its partners [have announced the winners of the 15th Equator Prize](#), recognizing eleven Indigenous Peoples and local communities from eight countries spanning Asia, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

The winning organizations demonstrate how innovative, nature-based solutions can enable communities to achieve their local development goals while building community resilience addressing economic, environmental and political challenges.



The Equator Prize 2024 winners also highlight the theme of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples: "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact." Five winners are Indigenous-led initiatives, all committed to biodiversity conservation and cultural heritage preservation. It is essential to honor and support Indigenous Peoples and local communities as Earth stewards given their essential role in unlocking effective climate solutions and leading the way for a nature-positive future for humanity and the planet.

The winners, selected from a pool of over 600 nominations from 102 countries, hail from Brazil, Bangladesh, Colombia, Iran, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal, and Zambia.

The website presents fact sheets on each project of the Equator Prize 2024 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.

Each winner will receive US\$15,000 and the opportunity to take part in a series of special virtual events associated with the UN General Assembly, Summit of the Future, the UNDP [Nature for Life Hub](#), Biodiversity COP 16 in Colombia, and Climate COP 29 in Azerbaijan. The two awardees from Brazil will receive additional direct financial support from Instituto Alok in the amount of US\$5,000 to scale up further their initiatives.

[The eleven winners of the Equator Prize 2024 are the following organizations:](#)



[Asociación de Productores del pueblo Arhuaco de La Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta – ASOARHUACO](#). Colombia. In 2015, the ASOARHUACO, an association of Arhuaco agroforestry producers was established, to enhance their livelihoods and preserve their ancestral territory. ASOARHUACO focuses on sustainable agroforestry, cultivating organic coffee, cocoa, and sugarcane, and has successfully tapped into European markets. By the end of 2023, the initiative had acquired 14 properties totalling 1,732 hectares.



[Coletivo Ambientalista Indígena de Ação para Natureza, Agroecologia e Sustentabilidade – CAIANAS](#). Brazil. CAIANAS was formed in 2015 and focuses on enhancing quality of life and environmental protection in the Cerrado and Pantanal regions. CAIANAS empowers Indigenous families and their territories with cultural and ethno-agroecological practices. They tackle challenges like hybrid seeds and soil infertility by recovering traditional seeds, implementing agroforestry, and restoring degraded areas.



[CredorSave Loans](#). Zambia. CredorSave is a community-focused social fintech enterprise leveraging technology to offer affordable climate finance to Indigenous small-scale farmers in Rufunsa District, Zambia. Their goal is to shield farmers from climate change impacts by providing financing for climate-smart agriculture and household biogas energy. This reduces reliance on rain-fed agriculture and charcoal. Their pay-as-you-go biogas model has health, social, and environmental benefits, with bio-slurry serving as organic fertilizer, reducing wood consumption, and promoting forest regeneration.



[Federación Mesa Nacional del Café – FEMNCAFÉ](#). Colombia. FEMNCAFÉ, comprised of 28 coffee associations, focuses on the economic, social, and community reintegration of the signatories of the 2016 Peace Agreement in Colombia and local communities. They have developed a new coffee model emphasizing environmental and social justice to achieve this. Its objectives include reducing inequality among coffee farmers, democratizing technical knowledge, and fostering climate-resilient agriculture through model changes and conservation efforts. Through these efforts, they aim to address agrarian inequality, boost rural economies, and combat climate change.



[Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners \(ILEPA\)](#). Kenya. ILEPA are united in a community-based, non-profit organization in Kenya, focusing on the Maasai pastoral community in Narok County. Established in 2008, ILEPA initially addressed land rights issues but has expanded to encompass environment, health, development, and livelihood support. Through innovative programs like tree nurseries, beekeeping initiatives, and hay production, ILEPA integrates Indigenous knowledge to foster sustainable livelihoods and climate resilience.



[Miras Parishan Kazeroon](#). Iran. MPK was formed in 2014 in response to the depletion of the Parishan Iran's largest freshwater wetland. Started by four local activists, MPK is a leading advocate for wetland protection, restoration, and mobilization of environmental activists. They established the Parishan Wetland Education and Research Center in 2019 to promote communication, education, and research for climate resilience. MPK's participatory approach empowers local communities and fosters collaboration with government and non-governmental entities, expanding their efforts to protect other wetlands.





[Moroccan Biodiversity and Livelihoods Association \(MBLA\).](#)

Morocco. The Association MBLA was founded in 2014 to safeguard the natural and cultural heritage of Morocco's High Atlas Mountains while promoting sustainable livelihoods for rural communities. Central to their mission is the preservation and revitalization of local seed systems, which are crucial for agricultural resilience in the face of climate change. Through initiatives like Community Seed Banks (CSBs), they conserve over 500 seed varieties, supporting biodiversity, food security, and climate adaptation. MBLA's innovative approach integrates scientific research with community-driven conservation practices.



[Reserva Natural La Planada – Resguardo Indígena Awá Pialapí Pueblo Viejo.](#)

Colombia. Located within the Awá Pialapí Pueblo Viejo Indigenous Reserve, This valuable ecosystem has 3,200 hectares and since 2010, it has been under the custody of the Indigenous Council, which oversees its management and conservation in 10 communities. These communities, made up of 490 families and with a population of 1,900 people, are united in their mission: to safeguard the ancestral lands of the Awá people through judicious management of resources and conservation of their rich cultural heritage. The Reserve has enriched the local economy and improved land management, and it also serves as a bastion for biodiversity conservation and safeguarding the cultural legacy for generations to come.



[Réserve Naturelle Communautaire de Dindéfelo \(RNCD\).](#)

Senegal. The Réserve Dindéfelo, established by 12 local villages, seeks to safeguard their distinctive natural surroundings. Differing from the government's forest reserve designation, the community proposed a Community Nature Reserve, delineating zones for human habitation, agriculture, and wildlife. Through community engagement, the initiative has effectively preserved biodiversity, protected chimpanzees, conducted reforestation, and mitigated bushfires. The RNCD stands as a beacon of community-driven conservation, demonstrating the potential of local empowerment in safeguarding natural habitats for future generations.



[Sundarbans Eco Village in Bangladesh.](#)

Bangladesh. The Eco Village, implemented by the Bangladesh Environment and Development Society (BEDS), exemplifies a holistic approach to environmental sustainability and community development in the disaster-prone Sundarbans coastal region of Bangladesh. The results include the restoration of 150 hectares of mangrove forests, provision of renewable energy solutions to over 3,100 families, and ensuring safe drinking water for 12,000 people through solar-powered filtration systems. The project also promotes community-based ecotourism and the production and marketing of mangrove-based products. This initiative also contributes to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation.



[União dos Povos Indígenas do Vale do Javari – UNIVAJA.](#)

Brazil. Established in 2007 and formalized as a non-profit in 2010, UNIVAJA represents Brazil's second-largest Indigenous territory, the 8.5-million-hectare Javari Valley. The organization advocates for constitutional rights, preserves traditional knowledge, and safeguards the territory, which is home to up to 16 Indigenous Peoples, including those living in voluntary isolation. UNIVAJA employs innovative approaches like digital technology for tracking incursions and transparent financial management. Despite confronting organized crime and resource pressures, UNIVAJA is committed to preserving the Javari Valley's unique ecosystems and cultures, playing a role in protecting the Amazon's integrity and Indigenous rights.



The Equator Prize, organized by the Equator Initiative within the [United Nations Development Programme](#), is awarded to recognize outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. As sustainable community initiatives take root throughout the tropics, they are laying the foundation for a global movement of local successes that are collectively making a contribution to achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). As local and indigenous groups across the tropics demonstrate and exemplify sustainable development, the Equator Prize shines a spotlight on their efforts by celebrating them on an international stage.

[This year's awardees join a network of 285 communities who have been recognized since 2002.](#)

### To know more

[News of the 2024 Winners Equator Prize](#)

[Equator Initiative website](#)

[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](#)

[Case Studies](#)

