



EQUATOR INITIATIVE



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Equator Initiative Annual Report 2014



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Table of Contents

A Message from Charles McNeill	3
Background on the Equator Initiative	5
Equator Initiative in 2014: The Year in Numbers... ..	7
Equator Prize 2014.....	8
Nomination Process.....	8
Selection Process.....	9
Equator Prize 2014 Award Ceremony	11
Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa	18
WIN and Community Dialogues	21
Nairobi: Sustainable Land Management Dialogues.....	21
Samoa: WIN Engagement at the SIDS Conference	22
New York: Equator Prize 2014 Community Dialogues.....	22
Sydney: WIN and Pacific Community Dialogue Pavilion at the World Parks Congress	24
UNDP Side Event with the Kenya Wildlife Service.....	26
Knowledge Sharing.....	28
Videos for the Equator Prize 2014	28
Case Study Compendium: <i>Community-Based Action in Small Island Developing States</i>	30
Staff Announcements.....	31
Appendix 1: Equator Prize 2014 Eligibility and Selection Criteria.....	33
Appendix 2: Meet the Equator Prize 2014 Winners	35

A Message from Charles McNeill

Dear Equator Initiative Partners and Supporters,

We are pleased to present this annual narrative report of the Equator Initiative partnership's activities and achievements to our valued partners and collaborators. The year 2014 was truly outstanding for the Equator Initiative. As we continued to recognize and advance local sustainable development solutions for people, nature, and resilient communities, indigenous peoples and local communities made their voices heard during a crucial time for the post-2015 climate and development agendas.

The Equator Prize 2014 received an unprecedented 1,234 nominations from 121 countries, triggering the most competitive selection process in Equator Prize history and unveiling the next generation of exemplary community-based innovations. The Technical Advisory Committee selected a diverse group of 26 laureates, comprising local organizations from the 'roof of the world', to islands being lost to rising sea levels, and many ecosystems in between. Representatives of winning organizations then took the stage in the Equator Prize Award Ceremony, held in New York's iconic Lincoln Center on 22 September 2014. The evening at Avery Fisher Hall had something for everyone, awards for, and videos featuring, community leaders, speeches by thought leaders like Al Gore, commitments to action by governments and world class musical performances. Drawing a crowd of over 2,400 leaders from around the world, the [Equator Prize at Lincoln Center](#) made a strong powerful contribution to both the Secretary-General's Climate Summit and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples held that week. During the associated Community Dialogues, the winning community representatives reflected on their successes and challenges, learned about how to leverage the Prize to advance their work, and laid the groundwork for a strong network to connect them in the years to come.

In collaboration with partners, we also held the first 'regional version' of the Equator Prize: the *Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa* highlighted successful community action in the sustainable management of drylands. The 12 winning groups were honored at an [Award Ceremony](#) in Nairobi, Kenya on 17 June 2014, the World Day to Combat Desertification. The groups also gathered to discuss the state of the art in drylands management, and charted a common vision in a powerful community statement.

In 2014, we substantially expanded [WIN](#), the *World Network of Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Land and Sea Managers*. After assuming management of the WIN in 2013, we positioned WIN as an important initiative for indigenous peoples and local communities to share their knowledge and promote successful practice in the global and local development. We hosted several community dialogues and peer-to-peer capacity-building workshops to foster dialogue and inform policy. At the International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), WIN brought together representatives from Equator Prize winning communities to reflect on challenges specific to SIDS. Community leaders decided to establish the WIN Pacific Network, dedicated to fostering community-level exchange in the Pacific region. We also launched the

publication [Community-Based Action in Small Island Developing States: Best Practices from the Equator Initiative](#), a compendium of case studies on Equator Prize winners from SIDS. Our presence at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, brought the voices of indigenous peoples and local communities to the most important global meeting of protected area professionals. The WIN & Pacific Community Dialogue Pavilion, held in partnership with IUCN Oceania, was often overflowing and featured inspiring presentations and fruitful debate around the role of indigenous and local communities in protected area management.

We are grateful for the support and guidance of our partners – you – who make the work illustrated in this report possible. UNDP is honored to participate in this partnership to support local innovation and leadership in sustainable development, as these communities strive for a more sustainable future for themselves and our planet. While looking forward to the Equator Initiative’s next phase of work in the context of the new 2015 development and climate agendas, it is also time for a personal reflection. Many of you know that I have just retired from UNDP after more than 20 years. It has been a distinct honor to accompany and, together with you, guide the Equator Initiative since its inception in 2002. At that time, indigenous peoples and local communities were at the sidelines of international conferences and negotiations. Today, thanks to a large and diverse set of actors, including the Equator Initiative, these meetings would not happen without representatives from local and indigenous groups. Looking over the 187 exceptional communities awarded the Equator Prize, countless activities and events leveraging support to community innovation, and an extensive body of knowledge on the groundbreaking power of local action, I am confident the Equator Initiative will continue to lead thinking and action in local sustainable development for many years to come. I look forward to continuing to lend my advice and support to this body of work.

Yours sincerely,



Charles McNeill
Senior Environment and Energy Policy Advisor
UNDP

Background on the Equator Initiative

The Equator Initiative is a partnership that brings together the United Nations, governments, civil society, businesses, academia, and grassroots organizations to build the capacity and raise the profile of local efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Equator Initiative is dedicated to celebrating successful local initiatives, informing policy to foster an enabling environment for local action, building the capacity of grassroots organizations to deliver results and scale-up impact, and creating opportunities for sharing experience and good practice. Knowledge sharing for the replication of good practice is the request heard from local and indigenous communities around the world. The Equator Initiative is responding through the WIN – World Network of Indigenous and Local Community Land and Sea Managers.

The Equator Initiative accomplishes these goals in three areas of work:



Every other year the **Equator Prize** recognizes outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Equator Prize shines a spotlight on successful community work on the national and international stages.



The **WIN World Network of Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Land and Sea Managers** facilitates learning and sharing good practices in managing ecosystems, protecting the environment and supporting sustainable livelihoods. It supports indigenous and local community land and sea managers to better conserve their biological diversity and use natural resources sustainably, improve knowledge transmission, and improve economic opportunities for their communities.



Knowledge sharing is a main goal of the Equator Initiative. We have a large series of research papers, books, and other publications focusing on local approaches to poverty reduction and conservation, informed by community-based initiatives. 152 case studies in over 30 languages have documented the Equator Prize Winners' innovative practices that deliver the win-win-win solutions that ensure social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

Partners

The Equator Initiative demonstrates an innovative approach to establishing partnerships by reaching across civil society, governments and the private sector. It moves beyond solely grassroots or government focused single sector initiatives to build effective multi-sectoral approaches for accessing and sharing the benefits of biodiversity for people, nature and resilient communities. The Equator Initiative's partnerships with sponsoring organizations exemplify this approach and include national governments, research organizations and NGOs. Each of these partners shares the vision of the Equator Initiative and brings distinct and complementary skills and benefits to the program.

Current Equator Initiative partners are:

- Conservation International – www.conservation.org
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – www.cbd.int
- Ecoagriculture Partners – www.ecoagriculturepartners.org
- Fordham University – www.fordham.edu
- German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) – www.bmz.de
- Government of Norway – www.regjeringen.no
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – www.iucn.org
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) – www.nature.org
- PCI Media Impact – www.mediaimpact.org
- Rare – www.rareconservation.org
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) – www.sida.se
- United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) – www.unep.org
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – www.undp.org
- United Nations Foundation (UNF) – www.unfoundation.org
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – www.usaid.gov

Equator Initiative in 2014: The Year in Numbers...

1,234 Equator Prize nominations received

121 nominating countries

233 Technical Advisory Committee consulted

16 languages in which nominations could be submitted

2,400 seats filled at Lincoln Center

24 minutes during which Al Gore mesmerized the public

85 volunteers

35 Equator Prizes awarded

8 special recognition prizes awarded

\$295,000 awarded in prize money

4 Community Dialogues hosted

70 Equator Prize winners participated in workshops and dialogues

24,568 case study downloads

1 publication

4,400 Facebook friends



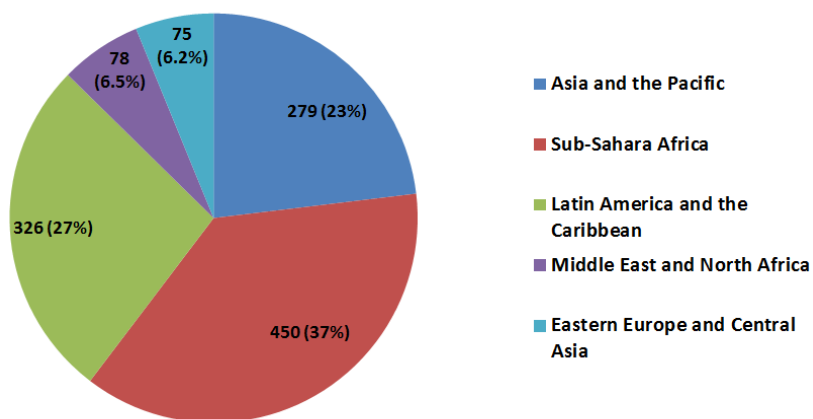
Equator Prize 2014

Nomination Process

The Equator Prize was held for the seventh time in 2014. The call for nominations was launched on 22 January 2014. Eligibility spanned all 145 countries in which UNDP is active. Nominations were accepted in 16 languages from organizations working in seven thematic areas (see chart below).

Assisted by its partners, UNDP Country Offices and the UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme, the Equator Initiative conducted extensive outreach efforts to reach communities on the ground and encourage them to submit nominations. Special efforts were made to transmit the call to countries that had never seen an Equator Prize winner before, among them many that had been eligible for the first time in 2012. In addition, we conducted specific outreach for the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa, held for the first time in 2014. The nomination and selection processes for this regional edition were integrated into the ‘global’ Equator Prize. The deadline for nominations was 22 March 2014.

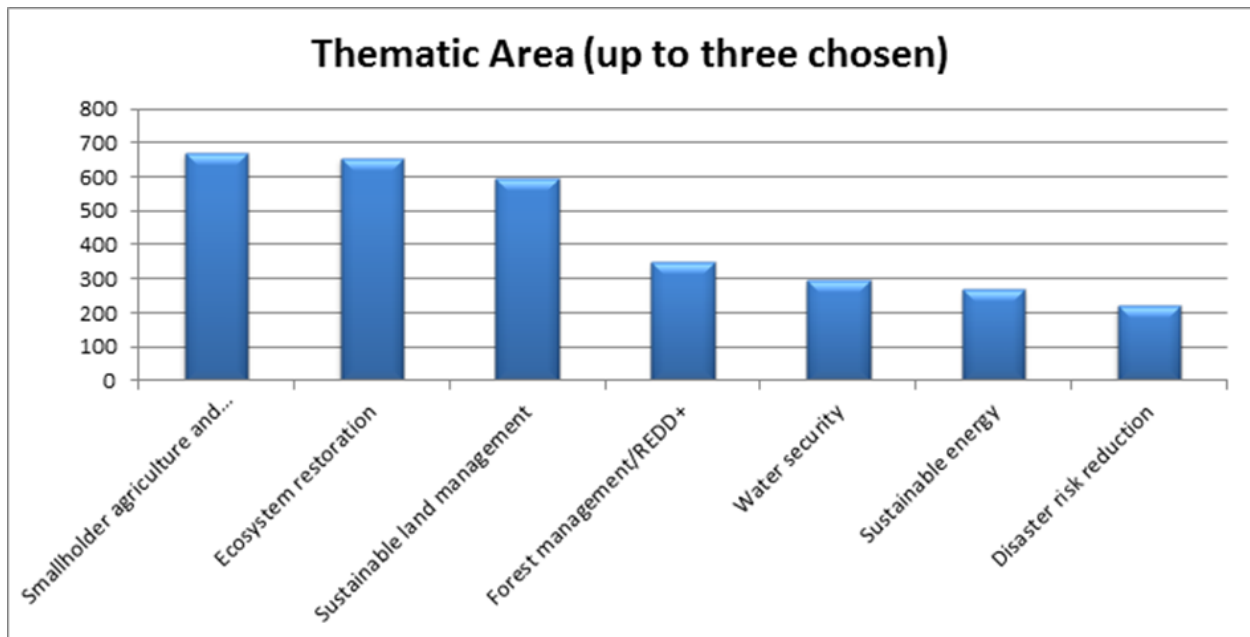
The outreach efforts proved very successful and led to an unprecedented number of submissions from community-based organizations: We received 1,234 nominations from 121 countries. This represents a 52% increase in the number



of nominations compared to 2012 (812 nominations), and a moderate increase in countries with nominees (113 countries in 2012).

Nominators were able to indicate up to three thematic areas to delineate the nominee’s main work areas. The pool of nominations comprised a large number of organizations active in smallholder agriculture and food security, as well as ecosystem restoration and sustainable land management. The other four thematic areas were lesser represented. While roughly reflective of earlier Prize cycles, we believe that the strong turnout of smallholder associations may be attributed to the specific outreach for the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in

Sub-Saharan Africa, which focused on climate change adaptation at the community level, and to the theme of the Equator Prize 2014, “Local Climate Action”.



Selection Process

The increase in nominations necessitated a bigger pool of reviewers than ever before. The Technical Advisory Committee was comprised of 233 sustainable development experts from around the world. Each nomination was reviewed and scored by three TAC members through an online review system. Given the extreme competitiveness, special emphasis was placed on a fair and consistent selection of the shortlist, including statistical tests to detect unusual scoring behavior by reviewers. The top 9% of Equator Prize 2014 nominations were then presented in a final, in-person meeting of 22 TAC members on 23-24 April 2014, where 25 Equator Prize winners and twelve alternates were put forward for verification. For the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa, ten winners and five alternates were entered to the final stage. During the verification process, the Equator Initiative team reached out to its partners, UNDP country offices, and Small Grants Programme (SGP) national coordinators, as well as references provided by the nominees to verify the content of the nominations. As a result, nine tentative winners of the Equator Prize and three tentative winners of the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa were replaced with nominees from the alternates list. All 35 winners have been endorsed by at least three independent sources. The winners were announced on 5 June 2014, World Environment Day, on the Equator Initiative’s website and through a UNDP press release, as well as on social media. For a full list of selection criteria, please refer to the appendix to this report.

Equator Prize 2014 Winners

Asia & the Pacific

Alliance for Integrated Development, Nepal
Conservation Area Management Committee, Parche, Nepal
The Pendeba Society of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China
Traditional Healer's Association, Chhattisgarh (THAC), India
Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program - PNG, Papua New Guinea
Tulele Peisa, Papua New Guinea

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Mediterranean Conservation Society, Turkey
Water Users Association "Ob Umed" (Water is Hope), Tajikistan

Latin America & the Caribbean

Asociación de Capitanes Indígenas de Yaigojé Apaporis, Colombia
Asociación Comunitaria Bolívar Tello Cano, Ecuador
Asociación de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana – AMWAE, Ecuador
Comunidad Indígena Manquemapu, Chile
Jeffrey Town Farmers Association, Jamaica
Koollel Kab / Muuch Kambal, Mexico
Mouvman Peyizan 3e Seksyon Kanperen, Haiti

Middle East & North Africa

Al-Heswa Natural Protected Area, Yemen
AGIR Association de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources, Morocco
Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Palestinian Territories

Sub-Saharan Africa

Amical Bè Ôko, Central African Republic
Fédération des Unions de Producteurs de Maradi (FUMA Gaskiya), Niger
Makoni Organic Farmers Association, Zimbabwe
Northern Rangelands Trust, Kenya
Organisation pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable, Cameroon
Plate-forme de Concertation pour le Développement Durable de la Baie d'Antongil, Madagascar
Uplift the Rural Poor, Uganda
Utooni Development Organization, Kenya

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

Association des Pépiniéristes et Planteurs de Tône-Ouest, Togo
Association Tchadienne des Volontaires pour la Protection de l'Environnement (ATVPE), Chad
Association Zoramb Naagtaaba, Burkina Faso
Fédération des Unions de Producteurs de Maradi (FUMA Gaskiya), Niger (*)

Heiveld Co-operative, South Africa
Integrated Development in Focus, Ghana
Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre, Zambia
Matumizi Bora ya Malihai Idodi na Pawaga (MBOMIPA) Wildlife Management Area, Tanzania
Northern Rangelands Trust, Kenya (*)
Shewula Trust, Swaziland
Union des Associations Villageoises de Gestion des Réserves de Faune Pendjari, Benin
Utooni Development Organization, Kenya (*)

Organizations marked with an asterisk () were selected both as winners of the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa, and to be represented among the global group of Equator Prize winners.*

Equator Prize 2014 Award Ceremony

The Equator Prize at Lincoln Center: An Evening to Honor Indigenous and Local Community Achievement and Build the Movement for Inclusive Climate and Development Solutions

Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center, New York City, 22 September

In support of the UN Secretary General's Climate Summit and the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, UNDP and partners hosted the Equator Prize 2014 Award Ceremony at Lincoln Center on Monday, 22 September 2014. Attended by more than 2,400 people, the evening was a celebration of leadership by indigenous and local communities working to meet climate and development challenges through the conservation and sustainable use of nature. The Academy Awards-style program featured a high-level reception, awards program, keynote speeches, videos, program launches, and musical performances.

The Equator Prize 2014 Award Ceremony opened with an introductory video narrated by Alec Baldwin, introducing the Equator Initiative partnership and outlining the opportunity of 2015 as



a catalytic moment for enlightened and forward-thinking policies in the areas of climate change and sustainable development. The Masters of Ceremony were Connie Britton (Actress and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador) and Edward Norton (Actor and UN Goodwill Ambassador for Biodiversity), each of whom congratulated the Equator Prize 2014 winners and appealed for greater recognition and empowerment of indigenous and local communities in meeting climate, development and environment challenges head-on. "Tonight we are celebrating heroes," said Ms. Britton. "We are going to meet indigenous and community-based organizations that are forging bold and creative pathways to a more sustainable and equitable world". In reference to the need for action on climate change and environmental degradation, Mr. Norton

added, “The time for taking stocks is many years in the rearview mirror...the time that we are at is for aggressive action.”



Opening remarks on the evening were provided by Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Helen Clark. The former Prime Minister of New Zealand welcomed an audience from across the spectrum, including government representatives, and in particular those in attendance for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. “Tonight is a celebration,” said Ms. Clark. She voiced her hope that

the message of the evening about the importance of backing and empowering the world’s indigenous and local communities be heard and acted upon. She closed with, “may their [Equator Prize winners] action inspire us, too, to be the change we want the world to be.”

Forests and Ecosystem Restoration

Framing remarks on Forests and Ecosystem Restoration were given by Founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace, **Jane Goodall**. She opened by saying, “All of you winners of the Equator Prize, what you have done is truly fantastic, and the example we need as we fight climate change and environmental destruction around the world.” Dr. Goodall shared



her perspective on the importance of healthy forests to meeting sustainable development challenges, and the threat of deforestation to global warming. She drew linkages between forests loss and the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services like water provision. Dr. Goodall was quick to say that forests are more than the services they provide. She made a clear connection between indigenous land rights and forest conservation, saying

“We find that, in those forests where indigenous peoples have land rights and government support, there tend to be forests that are well managed and healthy.”

Equator Prize 2014 winners in this category were announced by UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, **Vicky Tauli-Corpuz**, and President and CEO of the World Resources Institute (WRI), **Andrew Steer**. Mr. Steer opened with the statistic that more than 50 soccer fields of forest are lost every minute of every day. “If you want to stop deforestation, give legal rights to communities,” said Steer. “We have heroes amongst us tonight who are brave, who are changing the world.” Ms. Tauli-Corpuz added that indigenous peoples are at the forefront of the battle to protect forests and restore ecosystems. “Many



indigenous leaders have sacrificed their lives to protect their lands and forests.”

The State Secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Norway, **Hans Brattskar**, then announced that, as part of its 2016-2020 civil society support, Norway will contribute at least 100 million USD to support indigenous peoples and forest dwelling societies. This support will go to the protection of indigenous peoples rights to the forest and to ensuring their participation in the processes determining the future of these forests. He affirmed Norway’s understanding that supporting indigenous and civil society groups is of strategic importance to catalyzing transformational change in forest countries. He said, “Forest conservation will not succeed unless the peoples of the forest are an integral part of the solutions. By acknowledging them as the real custodians of the rainforest they must also be included, consulted, and have the rights of the forest recognized.”

Food Security and Agriculture

Framing remarks in the Food Security and Agriculture section were provided by Director of the Earth Institute, **Jeffrey Sachs**. “What a celebration tonight of indigenous communities and local communities and new technologies and all of the ways that we can advance and see the end of poverty, the end of hunger and protection of the environment,” said Sachs. He suggested that food security and agriculture is at the nexus of everything we need to achieve on sustainable development and that “climate change represents that absolute biggest threat to the world food supply.”



Equator Prize 2014 winners in this category were announced by Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), **Angel Gurría**, and Regional Director for Africa for the Open Society Foundations, **Akwe Amosu**. Amosu said,

“The winners here tonight, and many more beyond these walls, are showing a remarkable ability to marshal their resources and meet the twin challenges of food insecurity and climate change head-on.” Gurría added, “It is great to be here to honor communities that represent the full spectrum of innovation at the local level.”



Water and Oceans

Introducing the water and oceans section **Johan Rockstrom**, Executive Director of the Stockholm Resilience Center, noted: “What a humbling and inspiring experience this is to see the ingenuity of human commitment to work with nature for our common

prosperity.” Dr. Rockstrom suggested that we have become a large world on a small planet and that humanity has become the driving force of change on a planetary scale. He acknowledged that there is good news in that “we are the first generation now finally to see that we need a whole new development paradigm for human prosperity within a stable earth system, within our safe planetary boundaries...It is time to become stewards of the remaining beauty on earth.” Within that context, he outlined how water (the “bloodstream of the biosphere”) and marine and coastal resource management are central to the sustainable development agenda.

Equator Prize 2014 winners in this category were announced by **Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan**, and National Geographic Explorer in Residence, **Sylvia Earle**. Dr. Earle noted the unprecedented decline she has seen over recent decades in the health of oceans and marine and coastal areas. She added, “I am here as a witness that indigenous and community management and protection of marine and coastal areas is essential for the protection and health of the world’s oceans.” Her Majesty began by congratulating the Equator Prize 2014 winners in this category and acknowledging that a lack of water security is a key constraint to local development, and to global peace and security. She closed by saying, “As we have all seen tonight, there can be no sustainable development without indigenous and local community empowerment.”



Special Announcements

Dr. Naoko Ishii addressed the winners and underscored the importance of their work in making sustainable development a reality. She explained that through these winners we have “witnessed the power of local communities that utilize their local knowledge and expertise to best manage their natural capital--their lands, forests, and water--which is great to their livelihood, but is also great for the global environment.” Calling for increased investment in local action, Dr. Ishii announced the Indigenous Peoples Fellowship Initiative, to be delivered through the GEF Small Grants Program.

Barbara Hendricks focused her comments on the observation that areas inhabited by indigenous peoples are often better protected from destruction, as the resident communities “have a deeply-rooted awareness of the importance of intact ecosystems.” For these reasons, she said that the Government of Germany was pleased to announce a new initiative, in partnership with United Nations Development Programme and Global Environment Facility, to allocate 12 million euros to support a program of work entitled, the Global Support Initiative for Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and Territories.

Presenting a special recognition award for Women's Leadership, **Mary Robinson** noted that "women are at the forefront of positive change in conservation, in poverty reduction, and in meeting the challenge of climate change." Leading into the announcement of this year's winner, Robinson explained that "women are leading the way to a low-carbon future, whether in climate smart agriculture, sustainable energy, ecosystem restoration, forest protection. You name it: women are at the cutting edge of the solutions."



The day before the Equator Prize 2014 award ceremony, more than 400,000 people took to the streets of New York City to demand aggressive action to address climate change. **Bill McKibben** took the stage to report out on the Peoples Climate March and to make an appeal for climate action. "Make no mistake: yesterday was the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel age on this planet." McKibben urged for renewed energy in the push to move away from fossil fuels, saying that time is short. In reference to the numbers and the reality of climate change, McKibben added, "there are no real mysteries and there haven't been for decades". He suggested that we do not need more technology, but more political will. He went on to argue that there is no possibility of meeting the Millennium Development Goals or any other sustainable development targets on a planet that is quickly physically degrading. McKibben closed by saying, "We hope that those leaders that come tomorrow [for the Climate Summit] will be inspired by the likes of what we have seen tonight: these amazing stories of human courage and innovation and love."

Following an introduction by actress **Kyra Sedgwick**, **Al Gore** began the evening's keynote address by delivering what he described as his main message of congratulations to all of the award winners: "You are inspiring -- thank you for what you've done." Gore expressed enthusiasm about the People's Climate March in New York the previous day, saying, "It was a statement". Having been involved with the struggle to solve the climate crisis for many years, Mr. Gore explained that he had learned to "recharge his personal batteries with the hope and inspiration from the people at the grassroots level who are working every day to make this happen in the right way."



Mr. Gore cited examples of progress in recent years, especially in alternative energy and its potential scalability once consumers demand it. He cited the unlikely history of the exponential acceleration of cell phone adoption, and its parallel to the recent development of solar energy technology. Gore began his conclusion by asking attendees not to get discouraged: "We are going to win this...Don't feel like solving the climate crisis is this heavy burden that you've got to carry. I want you to feel the joy of having

work to do that justifies every effort you can expend to get it done.” Gore closed by quoting Wallace Stevens, saying, “After the last no, there comes a yes. And on that yes, the future world depends. We’ve had a lot of nos, but a yes is coming.” In meeting the climate crisis, Gore asserted, “A big part of the answer will be that the grassroots heroes and heroines of the kind of men and women that win the Equator Prize will have led the way to a sustainable future.”

Several musical performances were spread across the evening program, including Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee, **Jackson Browne**; Grammy Award winner **Justin Vernon** of Bon Iver; and Grammy Award-nominated **Feist**. Jackson Browne performed two songs: “Standing in the Breach” and, “If I Could Be Anywhere,” which was written on the subject of ocean conservation and inspired by a trip that he took to the Galápagos Islands with Dr. Sylvia Earle and Mission Blue. Browne said “it is very moving to be here”. Justin Vernon of Bon Iver opened by saying, “I’m incredibly humbled to be here this evening.” He performed two songs: “I Can’t Make You Love Me” and “Heavenly Father.” Leslie Feist was the final performer of the evening, playing “Where Can I Go Without You?” and “Mushaboom.” Between songs she acknowledged and thanked the Equator Prize winners, saying, “It is a real honor to be here tonight, a humbling honor.” Browne, Vernon, and Feist played a finale performance of the song, “It is One.”

For full coverage of the Award Ceremony, please click [here](#). Please find links to all the videos shown at the Award Ceremony in the “Videos” section on page 28.

Special Recognition Awards

Sustainable Forest Management

Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program - Papua New Guinea

Ecosystem Restoration

Al-Heswa Natural Protected Area - Yemen

Smallholder Farming

Amical Bè Ôko - Central African Republic

Sustainable Land Management in Drylands

Fédération des Unions de Producteurs de Maradi (FUMA Gaskiya) - Niger

Marine and Coastal Resource Management

AGIR Association de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources - Morocco

Water Access and Management

Water is Hope - Tajikistan

Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas

Asociación de Capitanes Indígenas de Yaigojé Apaporis - Colombia

Women's Leadership

Asociación de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana – AMWAE – Ecuador



Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

The Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) recognizes and celebrates local grassroots organizations that are improving the livelihoods of rural communities in dryland ecosystems in sub-Saharan Africa through sustainable land management.

The Equator Prize for SLM in Sub-Saharan Africa was awarded for the first time in Nairobi, Kenya, on 17 June 2014, to commemorate the World Day to Combat Desertification. Twelve winning initiatives from 11 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa received \$5,000 USD and were invited to Nairobi for a 3-day capacity building workshop and award ceremony. Three of the winners were also selected to receive the Equator Prize 2014, and were supported to participate in a series of events held in conjunction with the United Nations General Assembly.

The Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa is a Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded project, implemented by the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), ENDA Tiers Monde, UNDP's Equator Initiative, and UNDP Namibia. The project seeks to improve the socio-economic development of rural communities in Sub-Saharan Africa through sustainable land management, and to empower local grassroots organizations in sub-Saharan Africa to participate and influence the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), TerrAfrica, and other SLM processes, programs and policies.



The Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa Award Ceremony was held at the Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi. Twenty-four representatives from twelve winning initiatives were celebrated for their remarkable achievements promoting best sustainable land management practices in dryland ecosystems in sub-Saharan Africa. **Masego Madzwamuse**, Economic Justice Programme Manager at the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA) acted as Master of Ceremonies for the night's proceedings. The evening ceremony began with an inspiring song from renowned Kenyan singer and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador,



Achien'g Abura. Achien'g's song was followed by a video on desertification: its causes, consequences and potential solutions.

The evening's Keynote address was delivered by **Dr. Alice Kaudia**, Environment Secretary of the Kenyan Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources. Ms. Kaudia reminded the audience that the environment is a public

common good and that climate change will affect people from all walks of life, irrespective of location and social standing, while highlighting the adverse effects of desertification and land degradation in Africa. The Keynote speech was followed by a video focusing on the work of the Equator Initiative and the importance of the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa.

For the presentation of the awards, **Salimata Soumare**, Economic Governance Program Coordinator at the Open Society Initiative for Western Africa (OSIWA), and **Sarah Mwilima**, Head of Governance, HIV and Gender at UNDP Namibia Country Office, invited the Francophone and Anglophone winners, respectively, to the stage.

The presentation of the awards for the winners from Anglophone Africa was undertaken by **Veronica Muthui**, UNDP's Regional Technical Advisor at the Regional Service Center in South Africa, and Achien'g Abura. Ms. Abura also handed out the Awards for winners from Francophone Africa accompanied by **Emmanuel Seck**, Programme Manager at Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA).

Following the presentation of the awards, the winners were congratulated via a video message by **Monique Barbut**, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The winners were also commended for their good work by **Abdul Tejan-Cole**, Executive Director of the Open Society Initiative of West Africa. Mr. Tejan-Cole highlighted the impacts of land degradation and desertification on the African economy, and reminded the audience about the land grabbing crisis in the continent, proposing governments work side by side with local communities to sustainably manage dry lands and combat desertification.

Three representatives of the winning initiatives then took the stage to deliver a community statement prepared in English, French and Swahili. The statement reminded the audience of the need for greater community voices in national and global policy fora, and the importance of more effective partnerships to scale-up local best practice in the fight to combat land degradation and desertification in sub-Saharan Africa.



After the community statement, Achien'g delighted the audience with another one of her songs, before an announcement was made of the three winning initiatives invited to attend the Equator Prize 2014 Award Ceremony in New York, on 22 September. The selected groups are Utooni Development Organization and Northern Rangelands Trust from Kenya, and Fédération des Unions de Producteurs de Maradi Gaskiya, from Niger.

The last speaker of the night was **Sheila Ngatia**, Assistant Country Director at UNDP Kenya Country office. Ms. Ngatia spoke about the importance of empowering local communities and

specially women, with the skills and technology to promote a more sustainable use of resources and to increase productivity. She also called for governments to work with local communities and indigenous groups to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits.

The event concluded with Masego Madzwamuse thanking the guests for their assistance, and three songs by Achien’g Abura. The Award Ceremony was followed by a cocktail reception and a performance by Kenyan acrobats and dancers. For a highlights video of the Award Ceremony, please click [here](#).



WIN and Community Dialogues

The Equator Initiative sponsored four community-driven workshops in 2014, helping to share best practices between community participants, provide capacity-building and networking opportunities, and inspire the kinds of policy reforms needed to place local ecosystem-based initiatives at the center of sustainable development. In total, this year's community dialogues supported more than **seventy** Equator Prize winner representatives.

Nairobi: Sustainable Land Management Dialogues

Prior to the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa Award Ceremony, a series of community dialogues and capacity-building workshops were held with representatives of award-winning organizations. The SLM Dialogues, held from 13 to 15 June 2014, gave the participants the opportunity to present their work to one another, prepare community statements and elevator pitches, and discuss breakthrough strategies for sustainable land management and land restoration in the sub-Saharan region. Participants were also introduced to relevant organizations and mechanisms in the region, such as UNDP's Dryland Development Center (DDC) and the work of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Highlights from the SLM Dialogues include:

- Presentations from Equator Prize winners on *Strategies for the Sustainable Use and Protection of Drylands* such as the building of sand dams, the use of village banks with social funds, ecosystem mapping, ecotourism, and energy saving stoves.
- Introduction by Anne Juepner- head of the DDC- on the work of the DDC in Africa and its engagement with multiple stakeholders in the sub-Saharan region.
- Presentation by Frank Msafiri and Ernest Compaore on *TerraAfrica*: the World Bank's civil society coordination mechanism to share best practices and increase collaboration between civil society and governments.
- A session on *Engaging with the UNCCD and Media*, where UNCCD Civil Society Organizations Liaison Officer, Marcos Montoiro, spoke of the role of the UNCCD and its engagement with civil society and grassroots groups. His presentation was followed by a session with journalists teaching effective communication and media engagement best practices.
- A working session in which participants prepared a *Community Statement* which was read during the Equator Prize for SLM Award Ceremony.
- A field trip to the Kikuyu Escarpment Forest in the Rift Valley where participants (and a select group of



journalists) visited nurseries, reforested lands and an ecotourism camp. The field trip was an opportunity for knowledge exchange and active networking between Equator Prize winners and the journalists.

For full coverage from the SLM Dialogues in Kenya, please click [here](#).

Samoa: WIN Engagement at the SIDS Conference

WIN participated in the Third United Nations Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), held in Apia, Samoa, 1-4 September 2014. In collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), WIN held a capacity development workshop on traditional knowledge prior to the official conference. Support was provided to 10 representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities from Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Samoa to engage at the SIDS conference.

An orientation workshop supported the participants' understanding of the negotiation process and opportunities for engagement during the conference. Key results were the establishment of **WIN Pacific**, a regional sub-network; and the opportunity for an Equator Prize winner to deliver a statement on behalf of WIN Pacific at the SIDS official plenary.

During the conference, a side event with partners Rare, IUCN, CBD (Executive Secretary Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias) and the newly established WIN Pacific highlighted the importance of partnership, showcased examples of community work in traditional knowledge, and addressed issues of concern in the Pacific. WIN Pacific's **Papapaitai declaration**, developed at the SIDS conference, was shared and the publication "*Community-Based Action in Small Island Developing States: Best Practices from the Equator Initiative*" was launched.

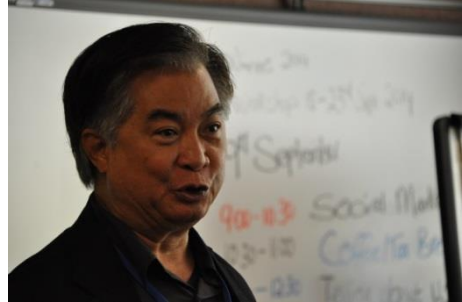
New York: Equator Prize 2014 Community Dialogues

Over 40 participants took part in community dialogues hosted at UNDP headquarters in New York City from 18 to 23 September. In conjunction with the Equator Prize 2014 Award Ceremony, this six-day event drew together leaders of local and indigenous organizations from 23 different countries. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to share best practices with one another as well as gain new skills during trainings led by Oxfam, UN-REDD, GEF and other guest speakers. The community dialogues provided participants the opportunity to prepare and practice elevator pitches, share knowledge, and engage in various moderated discussions led by Rare Fellows, UN-REDD, GEF-Small Grants Programme, Oxfam America, UN-NGLS, and UNDP staff.

Below are some highlights:

- Nina Kantcheva and Gayathri Sriskanthan of UNDP introduced the *UN-REDD Programme*, and discussed their work with local communities and indigenous peoples.
- Chris Patterson of Oxfam America presented on *Grant Seeking: Do's and Don'ts*, elaborating on successful strategies for Equator Prize winners to attract and sustain funding opportunities.

- Fellows from RARE, a partner to the Equator Initiative, conducted a workshop on *Social Marketing and Education*, focusing on developing local campaigns for conservation.
- Delfin Ganapin, Global Manager of the UNDP-Global Environment Facility’s Small Grants Programme (SGP), hosted *Local Action, Global Impact*, in which he presented GEF SGP funding opportunities for indigenous peoples and community-based organizations.
- Susan Alzner, Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), introduced the work of her office as a service to channel people’s voices into the proceedings of the UN, and provided background on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the Climate Change Summit.
- Mirna Cunningham, Indigenous Adviser to the President of the General Assembly and former Chairwoman of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, hosted a session on the issues discussed at the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, including the negotiations on the outcome document. With regard to the state of indigenous peoples in the world, she stressed that “things don’t happen because you have a document. Things happen because you are well organized.”
- Cassie Flynn, Climate Adviser to UNDP, familiarized the Equator Prize winners with the Secretary-General’s Climate Summit, the issues at stake and the negotiation process among the governments. She advised Equator Prize winners to consider seeking funds through three major channels for climate funding including GEF (Global Environment Facility), AF (Adaptation Fund), and GCF (Green Climate Fund).



For full reports of the Equator Prize 2014 Community Dialogues, please click [here](#).

Sydney: WIN and Pacific Community Dialogue Pavilion at the World Parks Congress

The World Network of Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Land and Sea managers (WIN) – hosted by the Equator Initiative in New York – partnered with IUCN Oceania to organize the WIN & Pacific Community Dialogue Pavilion at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney from 12-19 November 2014. Throughout the week, the pavilion hosted various events ranging from workshops, panel discussions, press conferences, receptions, book launches, film screenings, a live 3D community mapping exercise, and even a kava tasting!

In addition to attending the Congress, WIN participants were also given the opportunity to join a pre-Congress workshop, the “Gathering in the Gully”, held in the Blue Mountains, close to Sydney, from 9 to 11 November 2014. Led by the ICCA Consortium, representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities from around the world shared their experiences in the management of protected areas and mapped strategies for their engagement at the World Parks Congress.



During the *Gathering in the Gully*, WIN held a consultation on the design of a knowledge exchange facility including nomination, application and selection processes.

Highlights from the sessions held at the WIN and Pacific Community Dialogue Pavilion included:

- Sharing practice on *I-tracking and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities*, panelists addressed how tracking is used for community mapping, biodiversity conservation and sustainable environmental management. The use of new technologies and linking those technologies to traditional knowledge were discussed among the panelists and audience. Panelists included representatives from Mexico, Kenya, Indonesia and Australia.
- In a session on *Community Perspectives on Protected Areas*, representatives shared their lessons and achievements in community-based management of protected areas. Topics included the lack of recognition of First Nations in Canada, ecotourism in Kenya, access and benefit sharing in India, and communal land management challenges in Southern Africa.
- The Pavilion was overflowing for the event *Extractive Industries and Indigenous Peoples and Local Community - Can We Negotiate?* Moderated by Masego Madzwamuse from the Open Society Foundation for Southern Africa, the session explored how indigenous and local communities have negotiated with big industries to safeguard their rights, sacred sites and protect their environmental resources. Panelists elaborated on the delicate interplay between activism and cooperation with governments. Cases from the Philippines, the Cook Islands, Bolivia, Colombia, Australia and Namibia were presented.
- Held in cooperation with the Stockholm Resilience Center, the WIN Pavilion hosted a half day workshop on *Community-based Social and Ecological Resilience: Toward an Operational Framework*.

- In a session entitled *From Global to Local: Linking Local Conservation Objectives and Local Business Potential through Access and Benefit Sharing*, participants shared their experiences with access and benefit sharing at the community level, making a case for strong implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

Support was provided to 18 indigenous and local community representatives to attend the “Gathering in the Gully”, and eight to attend the World Parks Congress. For full coverage of the WIN presence at the World Parks Congress, please click [here](#).



UNDP Side Event with the Kenya Wildlife Service

The Equator Initiative hosted a discussion on 14 April 2014 at UNDP headquarters on the conservation and management of endangered wildlife in Kenya. Presenters included Jacinta Nzioka-Mbithi, Director of Marketing for the Kenya Tourism Board; Dr. Shadrack Ngene, Assistant Director of Wildlife Industry Governance and External Linkages for the Kenya Wildlife Service; Samson Parashina, Chairman of the Board of the Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (Equator Prize 2012 winner); and Josephine Ekiru, Cultural Conservation Ambassador and celebrated performer from northern Kenya.

The discussion was chaired by Nik Sekhran, Officer in Charge, Environment and Energy Group; and Patrick Keuleers, Director i.a., Democratic Governance Group.



Nik Sekhran opened by discussing the ways in which the illegal wildlife trade impacts development, conservation, and national security. In addition to destabilizing ecosystems, poaching fuels conflict and greatly diminishes the livelihoods of local communities that depend on charismatic species for ecosystem services like tourism.

“In Kenya, the average poacher makes an estimated 800 dollars per elephant, or around 80 dollars per kilo,” explained Mr. Sekhran. “Estimates put the value of a live elephant at over 1 million dollars per animal, given its estimated life span and the services it renders the tourism industry.” Patrick Keuleers went on to discuss the drivers of the illegal wildlife trade and the steps that UNDP is taking to combat the issue. He gave the example of the GEF program currently being implemented in Tanzanian National Parks. Mr. Keuleers stated that the program had achieved success by taking a holistic approach to the issue, working with both local communities and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to stem poaching. Jacinta Nzioka-Mbithi continued by outlining the natural heritage that has made Kenya such a draw for tourists. According to her presentation, Kenya boasts 59 National Parks and Game Reserves and six UNESCO World Heritage sites. Ms. Averay Cuesta continued by touching on Kenya’s biological and cultural diversity: the country is home to 60 endemic species of vertebrates and 44 distinct ethnic cultures.

Dr. Shadrack Ngene’s presentation focused on the ways in which the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) is working to combat poaching and mitigate risks such as habitat loss and human conflict that have detrimental effects on wildlife.

Dr. Ngene highlighted the importance of curbing demand for ivory abroad as the most effective strategy for the conservation of charismatic species like elephants and rhinos. The KWS aims to accomplish this through campaigns to sensitize consumers to the detrimental effects of the illegal wildlife trade.

Additional conservation strategies outlined by Dr. Ngene included collaring and tracking elephants; translocating wildlife away from places struck by human conflict; and establishing community and private conservancies.

One such community conservancy, The Masai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT), was a recipient of the Equator Prize 2012. The Chairman of the Board of the MWCT, Samson Parashina, discussed the holistic approach to conservation espoused by the MWCT.

According to Mr. Parashina, the protection of wildlife on the community-based level translates to increased employment and revenues from tourism, which are then invested in improving conservation, health, and education in the community.

Josephine Ekiru concluded the event by discussing her role as Cultural Conservation Ambassador in northern Kenya. Ms. Ekiru, the first woman elected to her position, talked about her work in stemming the violence that arose between neighboring communities as a result of poaching.

In 2011, Ms. Ekiru started a program for reforming poachers, the success of which led to an observed decrease in poaching and the implementation of similar programs in nearby communities.

“In my community, we have a saying,” asserted Ms. Ekiru, “land without wildlife is cursed land. Land with wildlife is blessed land.”

The session concluded with questions from the audience. The issue of corruption among the Kenya Wildlife Service was brought up, and Dr. Ngene addressed recent allegations of corruption against high-level KWS and government officials.

“We cannot rule out issues of corruption. I think the Kenyan government is very firm on that. Where there is evidence that you have been involved in this [trade], immediate action will be taken,” explained Dr. Ngene, “It’s very clear from the President that anyone who is caught assisting any poacher in any way will be dealt with.”

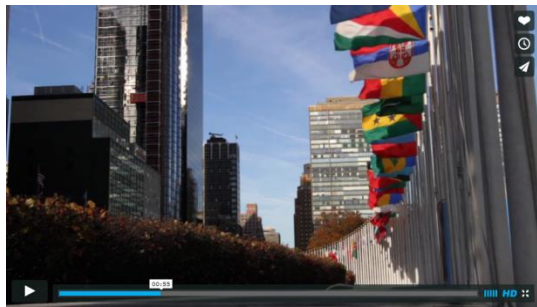


Knowledge Sharing

Videos for the Equator Prize 2014

In 2014, the Equator Initiative produced many new audiovisual products promoting the work of local initiatives successfully connecting poverty reduction and environmental protection.

[Introduction to Equator Initiative, narrated by Alec Baldwin](#)



Produced for the Equator Prize 2014 Award Ceremony, this video situates the Equator Initiative's work in the heart of climate and development agendas. At the dawn of 2015, a year that will mark a turning point for both of these agendas, community-based initiatives successfully respond to climate change, loss of biodiversity and poverty at the local level, often in the face of great odds. The Equator Prize shines a spotlight on these communities on global and national stages.

[Asociación de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana – AMWAE](#)



This video shows the achievements of the Equator Prize 2014 winner, Asociación de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana in Ecuador. This group of indigenous women in the Amazon Basin has worked to successfully shut down a bush meat market, promotes chocolate production and helps local women improve their livelihoods through artisanal handicrafts.

[Conservation Area Management Committee, Parche](#)



This video introduces the work of Equator Prize 2014 Winner Conservation Area Management Committee, Parche, from Nepal. The Committee has transformed the village of Sikles into a model for sustainable development, with organic farming, access to clean water and sanitation, hydroelectric power, and reforestation of large areas, alongside raising of environmental awareness.

[Utooni Development Organization](#)



Sand dams are concrete walls constructed across seasonal rivers to collect runoff water in the rainy season. Using this technology, local communities have more consistent access to water throughout the year. Equator Prize 2014 Winner Utooni Development Organization has built 1,500 sand dams throughout Kenya and trained local farmers in sustainable water management practices.

[Northern Rangelands Trust](#)



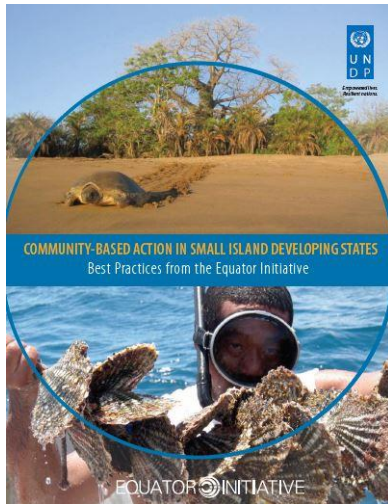
Facing dwindling resources and rampant wildlife poaching, local communities in Kenya have banded together to create the Northern Rangelands Trust, a network of 27 community-based conservancies. This Equator Prize 2014 winner puts pastoralists at the forefront of sustainable land management. Ecosystems have been restored and conflicts between communities reduced.

[Introducing the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)



When dryland ecosystems decline, so do rural livelihoods. Communities that depend on dryland resources for their day-to-day subsistence often come up with the most innovative solutions to land management challenges. The video introduces the winners of the Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa, which recognizes community-based leadership in managing drylands as a pathway to sustainable development. It was produced for the Award Ceremony in Nairobi, Kenya, on 17 June.

Case Study Compendium: *Community-Based Action in Small Island Developing States*



Equator Initiative case studies, publications, collaborative research, and video materials in 2014 constituted significant contribution to the Equator Initiative’s knowledge management in its twelve-year history. This year, the Equator Initiative launched the SIDS compendium. Released as a knowledge contribution to the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) held from 1 to 4 September in Apia, Samoa, the publication entitled “*Community-Based Action in Small Island Developing States: Best Practices from the Equator Initiative*”, features fourteen case studies of Equator Prize winners working to address the climatic vulnerabilities of small island states and their contributions to sustainable development. The stories range from conservation of marine resources and endangered species, to initiatives in ecotourism, reforestation and network development.

Staff Announcements

Joseph Corcoran

After seven years with the Equator Initiative, Joseph Corcoran, Programme Officer, bid farewell to New York City in the fall of 2014. Joe returned to his hometown of Vancouver, Canada, and will continue to support the Equator Initiative from there. Joe's contributions have been many and we are forever grateful for his strategic vision and dedication to the Equator Initiative. As the Editor-in-Chief of the Equator Initiative case study database, Joe steered the production of 152 case studies on Equator Prize Winners and their translation into over 30 languages. Many colleagues and interns over the years have benefited from his guidance as they started their careers.



A graduate of the University of Victoria, Joe has an M.A. in International Relations and Diplomacy from Leiden University in the Netherlands. Before joining UNDP, Joe worked for the Government of British Columbia and the British Columbia Center for Disease Control on topics ranging from addressing chronic homelessness, international public health, climate change, and intergovernmental affairs.

We are very happy that Joe will continue to work from his west coast office and wish him all the best in this new chapter of his life and career.

Martin Sommerschuh

Martin joined the Equator Initiative in February 2014 to manage the nomination and selection processes for the Equator Prize, and organize the community dialogues for the Equator Prize winners. A German national, he had worked as a Programme Assistant for the Equator Initiative in 2012, and then returned to Munich to complete his MA in Political Science, in which he focused on global environmental governance. He was drawn to community-based sustainable development while living in Ecuador, where he studied environmental issues and worked on the ground in the Andes and the Amazon basin. Before his return to UNDP, Martin supported the German development cooperation agency GIZ on resilience and transitional development assistance. He works on a broad range of Equator Initiative program activities.



Anwar Jawhar

Anwar Jawhar, a Kuwaiti national, joined the Equator Initiative as a Junior Professional Officer in January 2015. He completed high school education in Kuwait and moved to the United Arab Emirates to complete his BA in International Relations. After moving back to Kuwait he started a career in corporate banking giving him an insight into the financial sector in Kuwait.



After some years in the sector Anwar decided he wanted to chase a very personal goal he had long wanted to achieve: to become a professional triathlete and represent his country at a world championship. Sports has always been a huge part of Anwar’s life allowing him to challenge himself and push his limits doing what he is passionate about. Anwar successfully became the first Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) national to qualify and participate in a triathlon world championship in 2013.

Anwar has always had an interest in environmental conservation and climate change, and hopes to learn and contribute his ideas as part of the Sustainable Development team—working with the Equator Initiative.

Programme Assistants

A number of quality Programme Assistants and volunteers joined the Equator Initiative team during 2014, contributing diverse skills and expertise in a wide range of areas. Key contributions were made to the Equator Prize 2014 nomination and selection processes; the creation of audio-visual material; and event management and logistics in preparation of the Equator Prize 2014 Community Dialogues and Award Ceremony.

Elle Chang (Brandeis University, Heller School, Boston)

Syed Uzair Junaid (Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh)

John Mulqueen (Fordham University IPED, New York)

Kautilya Nalubolu (Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh)

Lorena De La Parra Landa (Fordham University IPED, New York)

Luke Peters (University of Minnesota Law School, Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Laura López Ricart (The New School GPIA, New York)

Elizabeth Shaw (Fordham University IPED, New York)

Leonard Strigel (Germany)

Crystal Vitagliano (Brandeis University, Heller School, Boston, MA)

Joshua Voges (Fordham University IPED, New York)

Appendix 1: Equator Prize 2014 Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Nominations may be submitted directly by the initiative, by a partner organization, or by any third party that is familiar with the activities and achievements of the initiative. Nominators were encouraged, where possible, to quantify results and include data which demonstrates impacts and positive changes in socio-economic and environmental conditions.

In order to be eligible for the Equator Prize 2014, nominees must:

- Have been in operation for at least 3 years
- Be a community-based or local group, operating in a rural area
- Be located within a country receiving support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), excluding countries with a high level of development

Eligible initiatives

- Community-based organizations
- Community-based enterprises and cooperatives
- Indigenous groups
- Non-governmental organizations
- Community-based initiatives associated with conserved areas or other biological reserves
- Women's groups
- Youth groups

Selection process

Equator Prize 2014 winners were selected by a Technical Advisory Committee of 233 leading international environment and development experts based on the following criteria:

Impact: Initiatives that have improved community wellbeing and local livelihoods through sustainable natural resource management and/or environmental conservation of land-based and/or marine resources.

Sustainability: Initiatives that can demonstrate enduring institutional, operational and financial sustainability.

Innovation and Transferability: Initiatives demonstrating new approaches that overcome prevailing constraints and offer knowledge, experience and lessons of potential relevance to other communities.

Leadership and Community Empowerment: Initiatives demonstrating leadership that has inspired action and change consistent with the vision of the Equator Initiative, including policy and/or institutional change, the empowerment of local people, and the community management of protected areas.

Empowerment of Women and Social Inclusion: Initiatives that promote the equality and empowerment of women and/or marginalized groups, especially indigenous people.

Resilience, Adaptability, and Self-Sufficiency: Initiatives demonstrating adaptability to environmental, social and economic change, resilience in the face of external pressures, and improved capacity for local self-sufficiency.

Special Recognition Categories

The theme of the Equator Prize 2014 was “Local Climate Action”. Special recognition was awarded in the areas of:

- Sustainable Forest Management
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Smallholder Farming
- Sustainable Land Management in Drylands
- Marine and Coastal Resource Management
- Water Access and Management
- Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas
- Women’s Leadership

Appendix 2: Meet the Equator Prize 2014 Winners

Asia and the Pacific

Alliance for Integrated Development – Nepal

Developed as a response to the overexploitation of natural resources, wildlife poaching and water pollution, the Alliance for Integrated Development is a collective of women-led community wetlands user groups that protects and manages the resources of Jagadishpur, an ‘important bird area’, a Ramsar site, and the largest manmade reservoir in Nepal. The alliance works to create sustainable livelihoods while also maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in this wetland ecosystem. Agro-forestry, organic farming, ecotourism and anti-poaching activities are improving incomes in ways that also protect several bird species (including migratory birds, vultures and cranes) that are on the verge of extinction. Radio programming and grassroots awareness-raising campaigns have sensitized the public to the links between wetland health and human wellbeing. Led primarily by women, the initiative has managed to control illegal hunting, promote organic farming, create a revolving fund, build a functioning and equitable irrigation system, and substantially improve and diversify local livelihoods.

Conservation Area Management Committee, Parche – Nepal

With the aim of sustainably managing local forests, the Conservation Area Management Committee, Parche is applying indigenous knowledge to local environment and development challenges. In addition to establishing tree nurseries and working with communities to harvest non-timber forest products, the organization has reduced wildlife poaching and is providing alternative energy access for the local population. More than 200,000 trees have been planted and over 100 micro-hydro units installed to generate sustainable energy. The committee is also working to sustainably and equitably manage water resources in way that facilitates local access to fresh drinking water. A focus on environmental education, with a particular emphasis on children and youth, is ensuring local ownership and awareness of conservation activities.

The Pendeba Society of the Tibet Autonomous Region – China

To safeguard the Qomolangma National Nature Preserve – an area roughly the size of Switzerland – this grassroots initiative employs locally-nominated volunteers (pendebas) from each of the 406 villages within the protected area to promote environmental conservation, improve family health, advance options for income generation, and organize collective action for common goods. Together, the pendebas initiative has helped decrease child mortality by 50%, reduce deforestation by 80%, and protect threatened species of endangered wildlife, including populations of the snow leopard, Tibetan wild ass, and Tibetan antelope. Pendebas have mobilized their villages to improve water and sanitation services, protect wetlands and water sources from livestock, establish hundreds of tree nurseries and reforestation campaigns, spread the use of solar energy, and prevent the killing of endangered animals. Activities are carried out with a strong sense of partnership within the communities and with local governments. At the

roof of the world, with six of the planet's highest peaks, the initiative is helping to safeguard a climate change hotspot, a wetland ecosystem, and the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Traditional Healer's Association, Chhattisgarh – India

In a region characterized by hunger and malnutrition, poor water and hygiene, and high communicable disease rates, the Chhattisgarh Traditional Healer Association is taking an inventive approach reducing infant mortality, improving maternal health, and facilitating local access to medical care. The association empowers “village botanists” to serve as agents of positive community-level change by showing them how to use traditional medicinal plants to meet modern medical needs. Work also focuses on getting formal scientific certification to traditional medicines that are proving effective in treating fever, colds, arthritis, malaria, gastro-intestinal diseases, and a range of public health concerns. Health services are provided to more than 50,000 families across 500 villages in 12 districts, and the average medical costs in communities served has been reduced by 70 percent. More than one million trees and half a million medicinal seedlings have been planted in 100 villages, restoring rare and threatened flora and fauna and improving local health and livelihoods in the process.

Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program – Papua New Guinea

To safeguard the Qomolangma National Nature Preserve – an area roughly the size of Switzerland – this grassroots initiative employs locally-nominated volunteers (pendebas) from each of the 406 villages within the protected area to promote environmental conservation, improve family health, advance options for income generation, and organize collective action for common goods. Together, the pendebas initiative has helped decrease child mortality by 50%, reduce deforestation by 80%, and protect threatened species of endangered wildlife, including populations of the snow leopard, Tibetan wild ass, and Tibetan antelope. Pendebas have mobilized their villages to improve water and sanitation services, protect wetlands and water sources from livestock, establish hundreds of tree nurseries and reforestation campaigns, spread the use of solar energy, and prevent the killing of endangered animals. Activities are carried out with a strong sense of partnership within the communities and with local governments. At the roof of the world, with six of the planet's highest peaks, the initiative is helping to safeguard a climate change hotspot, a wetland ecosystem, and the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Tulelei Peisa – Papua New Guinea

Facing sea level rise, food shortages due to saltwater flooding, and other threats associated with climate change, this council of chiefs has organized for the voluntary relocation of the indigenous peoples of the Carteret Islands. This is one of the first community-driven ‘climate change refugee’ relocation efforts in the region. Sustainable natural resource management is at the center of Tulelei Peisa's work. The council engages with host communities on the “mainland” of Tinputz to ensure adequate land, infrastructure, and livelihoods opportunities for relocated people. It is also ensuring that links are maintained with the culture, land and resources of the Carteret Islands. The community-based approach to relocation offers a positive resettlement

model for other atolls in the region, and has had the unexpected benefit of improving inter-island trade, which is serving to enhance local resilience and livelihoods.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Mediterranean Conservation Society – Turkey

Developed in response to marine ecosystem degradation, declining fish diversity and abundance, and associated losses to fishermen's incomes, the Mediterranean Conservation Society has created a network of 'no fishing zones' that put local fishing communities in the lead of marine biodiversity conservation. Focusing on the southern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, the organization is enforcing 'no take zones' and effectively communicating the value of sustainable fishing techniques in ensuring the long-term viability of the local fishing industry. Community-based enforcement strategies are complemented by cooperation with regional and national authorities. Fish stocks have grown dramatically, as have the average incomes of cooperative members. Patrolling activities confirm rejuvenated marine species diversity and abundance in the bay, an important nursing ground for species that include sandbar sharks.

Water is Hope – Tajikistan

Working with nine downstream villages that have collectively faced severe water shortages, extreme droughts, and seasonal crop failures, Water is Hope has established an equitable water distribution system based on traditional water rights, distribution rules, and the communal maintenance of local water infrastructure. The grassroots initiative has reintroduced traditional water management institutions (eroded during the Soviet era) that create specific rights, duties and functions for community-elected water canal custodians. These custodians ensure the fair distribution of water resources among the villages. This is a best practice in local governance and community-based decision-making, with more than 5,000 active community members contributing to regular group meetings, trainings and local infrastructure projects. Designed as a response to growing climate stresses, water resource conflicts, and the need for better irrigation systems and farming practices, Water is Hope is improving access to drinking water through a model of local self-reliance and community-based action.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Asociación de Capitanes Indígenas de Yaigojé Apaporis – Colombia

An alliance of 21 indigenous communities, Asociación de Capitanes Indígenas de Yaigojé Apaporis has legally established its collective territory as a National Park. The association has succeeded in protecting a substantial area of forest and put natural resource management in the hands of resident indigenous communities. Developed to protect forests and community lands from multinational mining companies, the association focuses on traditional land management practices that balance the economic needs of forest-dependent communities with ecosystem restoration and wildlife conservation concerns. A community-driven research program is ensuring that indigenous communities living on the margins of the Amazon of Yaigojé are gathering valuable environmental and wildlife data to better understand the ecological dynamics

of the territory and how to advance sustainable livelihoods while also ensuring the health and functioning of forest ecosystems.

Asociación Comunitaria Bolívar Tello Cano – Ecuador

Asociación Comunitaria “Bolívar Tello Cano” is reducing deforestation by providing a sustainable income-generation activity for local indigenous communities that does not require cutting down trees. The association has worked with researchers to pioneer a technique to extract the essential oils from the seeds of the Palo Santo tree. The oil has commercial value for use in perfumes and food flavoring, and is being harvested and marketed by a community-owned company. Association activities have created jobs, improved local livelihoods and reduced pressure on surrounding forests. A 4,500-hectare protected area has been created for sustainable harvesting activities, which has substantially reduced illegal logging. The association is a leading example of a community-driven partnership between indigenous communities, government and the private sector.

Asociación de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana – AMWAE, Ecuador

Developed in response to the uncontrolled poaching of wildlife in the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve (driven by local demand for bushmeat), Asociación de Mujeres Waorani de la Amazonia Ecuatoriana is promoting organic cocoa cultivation as a wildlife protection measure and a pathway to local sustainable development. The association has created a land management plan that emphasizes zero deforestation, organic cocoa certification as a primary economic driver, and the management of subsistence hunting activities to protect threatened and vulnerable wildlife species. Community cocoa is processed into organic-certified chocolate, creating local access to new markets and more lucrative revenue streams. The association has been so successful at reorienting the local economy that the bushmeat market has been closed down. Women lead both organic farming and business management activities. Organic cocoa cultivation is complemented by activities in fish farming, fruit tree cultivation, and the operation of tree nurseries, which support both food security and reforestation needs. Revenues from the cocoa business have been invested into local education, health and infrastructure projects.

Comunidad Indígena Manquemapu – Chile

An indigenous community conserved area, Comunidad Indígena de Manquemapu works on sustainable forest management and marine resource conservation as a way of meeting the economic needs of resident indigenous communities. Born of external threats from extractive industries, this community-based group is effectively managing a large area of larch wood forest by focusing on sustainable production practices and the marketing of local products. Working in both terrestrial and marine ecosystems, the community has established a fisherman union to monitor fishing practices along the coast and ensure sustainability standards are met. A revolving fund has been established to create small-scale enterprises, while organization revenues are invested back into local health and education projects.

Jeffrey Town Farmers Association – Jamaica

Developed in response to land degradation, natural disasters, and irregular water supply, Jeffrey Town Farmers' Association employs a multi-media approach to inform and educate farming communities on alternative energy options, sustainable agriculture techniques and disaster risk reduction. The association focuses on pineapple farming, water harvesting, and reforestation. Fruit-bearing trees are prioritized in land restoration efforts to ensure food security. Community incomes have improved through a range of alternative livelihoods activities that include livestock rearing, fruit cultivation, and agro-forestry. Pineapple plants have been used to stabilize hillsides that were previously susceptible to landslides, which caused environmental and economic damage to local communities. Demonstration plots are used for farmer training activities, particularly around drought-resistant crops. Solar street lights have been introduced in four communities and a new health facility was built to meet local medical needs.

Koolel Kab / Muuch Kambal – Mexico

Founded by Mayan women, Koolel-Kab/Muuchkambal is an organic farming and agroforestry initiative that works on forest conservation (they established a 5,000-hectare community forest), promoting indigenous land rights, environmental education, and community-level disaster risk reduction strategies. The association advocates for public policies that stop deforestation and offer alternatives to input-intensive commercial agriculture. An organic beekeeping model has been shared across more than 20 communities, providing an economic alternative to illegal logging. Drawing on Mayan identity, the initiative is a best practice in multi-stakeholder dialogue, forest protection, and free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). The initiative recently won a legal battle with the State government which ensures Mayan communities have to be consulted before large-scale agricultural projects can be approved.

Mouvman Peyizan 3e Seksyon Kanperen – Haiti

An initiative focused on yam cultivation, the Mouvman Peyizan 3e Seksyon Kanperen (Farmer Movement of the 3rd Section of Camp-Perrin, in English) works with more than 1,500 farmers to build technical capacity, improve food security, facilitate access to seeds, and otherwise improve on-farm productivity. More than 500,000 yam seedlings have been distributed to local yam producers, along with training on soil fertility and the use of natural insecticides to deal with caterpillar infestations in a way that does not result in chemical-intensive inputs into the local environment. In participating communities, incomes have increased by 400 percent since transitioning from corn and bean crops to yam cultivation. In exchange for yam seedlings, farmers are required to plant trees on their farms, increasing tree cover and biodiversity.

Middle East & North Africa

Al-Heswa Natural Protected Area – Yemen

The communities behind Al-Heswa Wetland Protected Area have successfully transformed a garbage dump into a functioning wetland ecosystem that provides a breeding site more than 100 migratory bird species, including flamingos. As a result, the Aden wetlands have grown into

among the most important wetland ecosystems in Yemen and in the entire region. The community-managed protected area redirects treated wastewater away from the sea to local farms, improving natural fertilization and reducing negative impacts on marine habitats. An entry fee system has been introduced to capitalize on ecotourism interest and ensure adequate revenues to effectively manage the protected area. Local livelihoods have improved, with jobs created in the areas of natural resource management, apiculture, small-scale business, and ecosystem restoration. Communities living adjacent to the protected area are leading monitoring and evaluation activities, regulating access, and ensuring that the restoration of this ecosystem is also creating sustainable livelihoods.

AGIR Association de Gestion Intégrée des Ressources – Morocco

A response to high rates of poverty, poor access to basic social services, and low employment opportunities, this association is working to strengthen the small-scale fisheries sector around Al-Hoceima National Park through capacity building, the establishment of monitoring and surveillance committees to combat illegal fishing and the introduction of sustainable fishing techniques (and elimination of illegal fishing practices). Communities are positioned as leaders in creating marine resource management plans and strategies. A sustainable fishing cooperative has improved local fishermen incomes and generated more than EUR 650,000 of revenue since it was launched. The group has created successful prohibitions on illegal fishing (including dynamite fishing, driftnets, etc.) through community monitoring systems. The use of geo-location devices has significantly reduced trawling in coastal breeding areas and led to the protection of over 1,900 hectares of coastal and marine biodiversity.

Union of Agricultural Work Committees – Palestine

One of the oldest non-profit organizations in the Palestinian Territories, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees supports Palestinian farmers to market their produce, develop agriculture and water resource protection programs, and restore and irrigate their lands. Agricultural extension services are used to train farmers in improved farming practices. The centerpiece of the initiative is a National Bank for Local Seeds, which dries, processes, stores, and documents local seeds with the vision of more organic, healthy and environmentally friendly produce. The seed bank currently has in its storage unit 270 entries from 36 agricultural products, belonging to 12 plant families. Families relying on dry-farmed crops have free access to seeds, with the understanding that double the amount be reinvested in the bank for other farmers once crops have been planted.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Amical Bè Ôko – Central African Republic

Created as a response to land degradation issues resulting from slash-and-burn agriculture, uncontrolled bush fires, and overgrazing, Amical Bè Ôko is a two-village initiative that focuses on reforestation of the degraded banks of the Kpaya River with fruit-bearing trees that are improving local health, nutrition, and food security. Reforestation efforts have restored

ecosystem functioning in this once degraded landscape. Bambara groundnuts are combined with oil from the fruit of raffia trees to make protein-rich milk for children, meeting a critical health need in the villages. The initiative has transformed local fishing practices, improved social cohesion, facilitated fresh water access, restored the river shoreline, and responded to a food security crisis, all with local resources. The natural cycles of the Kpaya River have normalized, providing local communities with water access during the dry season.

Association des Pépiniéristes et Planteurs de Tône-Ouest – Togo

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

Family farming and mushroom cultivation are the twin tools of Association des Pépiniéristes et Planteurs de Tône-Ouest in responding to the land degradation, low agricultural yields, and high rates of poverty that has resulted from decades of slash-and-burn farming. Mushroom farming – a traditional farming practice that had fallen into disuse due to deforestation – has been successfully reintroduced in this dryland ecosystem to address poverty, improve soil fertility, promote organic agriculture, and reduce incidence of fires during the dry season. Local incomes have doubled, with new revenue streams invested in over 90 villages into education, health, and child care. Association activities have helped to reduce bush fires and uncontrolled logging and restore soil fertility. The group has also undertaken reforestation efforts in 17 communities that have improved forest cover and restored ecosystem functioning.

Association Tchadienne des Volontaires pour la Protection de l'Environnement (ATVPE) – Chad

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

Association Tchadienne des Volontaires pour la Protection de l'Environnement was developed to address land and resource rights for women, in response to drought, desertification, and land degradation, and focuses on training in ecosystem restoration, drought preparedness, and agroforestry. Land rights are negotiated with local chiefs so that women assume management of degraded plots, which are then restored to become more productive. Training in agroforestry and the manufacture of solar cooking stoves provides women with alternative livelihood options. Youth are trained and serve as ambassadors in the wider community – public, political and religious realms – to sensitize people to the importance of environmental conservation and land rights for women. Farm production has tripled, which has served to reduce out-migration, particularly of youth.

Association Zoramb Naagtaaba – Burkina Faso

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

Developed in response to water scarcity, environmental degradation, declining agricultural yields and high rates of poverty, Association Zoramb Naagtaaba brings together 10 villages to restore degraded land through the reintroduction of traditional agricultural approaches. In demonstration plots set up by local farmers, sorghum yields have tripled and space has been created for farmers to learn first-hand about pond and hedge techniques that restore land and improve productivity.

In 2013 plant production increased by 55 percent and sales increased by 153 percent compared to 2012. Hedgerows have been used to recover storm water without any further erosion to the land. Tree-planting efforts are improving soil fertility and reducing run-off and degradation. Solar electric fences are used to protect crops from grazing livestock, while agricultural extension services are provided to reach farmers working their own land.

Fédération des Unions de Producteurs de Maradi (FUMA Gaskiya) – Niger

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa, and represented among global Equator Prize 2014 winners

Fédération des Unions de Producteurs de Maradi Gaskiya is a research-driven initiative that is bringing agro-ecological options to smallholder farmers. Composed of 17 unions, 325 self-help groups, and 12,742 members, the work includes promotion of high-yield crops, participatory planning, marketing of produce and organic certified seeds, and the diversification of agricultural production systems. Farmer incomes have improved significantly, with a percentage of union revenues invested into a revolving fund for community projects. Fast-growing and off-season crops are being introduced to provide food security and alternative sources of income for local women. Community radio has been used as a medium for information exchange, knowledge transfer and education.

Heiveld Co-operative – South Africa

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

Since 2001 Heiveld Co-operative has worked with small-scale rooibos tea farmers to provide organic and fair trade certification, as well as support with market access. In response to climate variability, farmers are cultivating drought-resistant varieties of rooibos. Collaborative work with research institutes has led to an industry-wide code of conduct on the sustainable harvesting and production of rooibos. The cooperative invests revenues back into community water access, education and health projects. Local tea farming incomes have increased by 400 percent, while soil erosion has been reduced in thousands of hectares of drylands where the tea is cultivated.

Integrated Development in Focus – Ghana

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

By equipping women with financial and technical resources to restore degraded lands and develop small-scale enterprises, Integrated Development in Focus is improving crop yields and local incomes. Women-led groups have planted three million trees and restored 350 hectares of land. Communal labor prepares and maintains individual plots of land on a rotating basis. Farmers are trained in organic farming techniques and supported to access new and more lucrative markets for their produce. Growth is ensured through a model whereby each woman who receives training is responsible for training five other women as a condition of support. Small-scale businesses have been launched in livestock rearing, composting and organic vegetable cultivation. Partnerships with local municipalities, chiefs and elders support fire management and environmental watchdog committees.

Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre – Zambia

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

Reaching over 10,000 small-scale farmers, Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre provides agricultural extension services, research, and support marketing local products to local farmers. Demonstration plots are used for hands-on learning and for agricultural research. The center maintains a production site where dairy cows, sheep and other livestock are raised and the milk is sold to a neighboring cheese factory. Through extension services and direct training to farmers, the center has helped improve local maize yields to levels well above the national average, resulting in greater food security and improved incomes. Crop rotation, reforestation, new irrigation schemes and agricultural diversification have all contributed to the conservation and sustainable use of local ecosystems. Biodiversity fairs have been used to help farmers share knowledge on crop diversity, apiculture, and agroforestry techniques. The center oversees a village savings initiative, which has allowed several women to start small-scale enterprises.

Makoni Organic Farmers Association – Zimbabwe

An organic farming cooperative developed to transition away from tobacco cultivation and chemical-intensive agriculture, Makoni Organic Farmers Association is an initiative of 450 farmers uses a three-pronged approach of capacity building (organic standards and techniques), scaling of good farming practices (in apiculture, mushroom cultivation, poultry rearing, and tree nurseries), and organic certification to improve local livelihoods and restore degraded land. The introduction of alternative organic livelihood options – along with the introduction of organic certification standards – have helped local farmers increase incomes and facilitated access to new, more lucrative markets. Where tobacco cultivation and pesticide use had rendered much of the agricultural land infertile, organic farming and the planting of multi-purpose trees have improved food security and nutrition, soil fertility, and biodiversity.

Matumizi Bora ya Malihai Idodi na Pawaga (MBOMIPA) Wildlife Management Area – Tanzania

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

A community wildlife management association of 22 villages, Matumizi Bora ya Malihai Idodi na Pawaga (MBOMIPA) Wildlife Management Area works with the 30,000 people living adjacent to Ruaha National Park on sustainable natural resource management and anti-poaching efforts. The association has brought community livelihoods focused on wildlife protection into harmony with biodiversity conservation and environmental stewardship. Revenue has been invested into health, education, and infrastructure. Ecotourism increased income tenfold in 2011. The association has adopted a “human rights of wildlife” approach, where the protection of wildlife is central to community wellbeing. Living fences are used to support food security by keeping elephants and other wildlife from destroying crops. MBOMIPA Wildlife Management Area is recognized as best practice in Tanzania and is being replicated in other regions to protect wildlife and promote sustainable livelihoods.

Northern Rangelands Trust – Kenya

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa, and represented among global Equator Prize 2014 winners

Northern Rangelands Trust is a network of 26 community conservancies – which together cover over 25,000 km² of land in northern Kenya – driving a movement of community-based conservation that puts indigenous communities at the forefront of land management, wildlife conservation, and sustainable livestock practices. Supporting more than 280,000 pastoralists, the trust has helped address endemic problems ranging from droughts, ethnic rivalries, a lack of access to government services (health and education), and wildlife poaching. New revenue streams through livelihoods diversification and improved land management practices have been directed towards local education and health infrastructure. Hundreds of hectares of degraded pasture have been restored, along with a degree of peace and economic stability in this historically volatile region.

Organisation pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable – Cameroon

Focused on women-led restoration of the degraded mangroves of the Equatorial African Rainforest, Organisation pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable is transforming the local fishing industry by providing energy-efficient alternatives to cutting down trees to smoke fish, a primary driver of mangrove forest loss in the region. Interventions are reducing deforestation, improving women's health, and expanding local incomes. A range of alternative production and processing techniques – improved kilns, alternative energy sources, and using herbs instead of mangrove wood – are ensuring the regeneration and conservation of local mangrove forests. These new processing techniques are also reducing the amount of time spent foraging for wood, as well as the frequency of respiratory illness. Incomes have improved by 33 percent, while deforestation rates are down by 90 percent.

Plate-forme de Concertation pour le Développement Durable de la Baie d'Antongil – Madagascar

Working in and around Antongil Bay – the largest in Madagascar and among the most productive in the Indian Ocean – the Plate-forme de Concertation pour le Développement Durable de la Baie d'Antongil brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to encourage the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources. Developed to address conflicts between artisanal and industrial fishing interests, declining fish populations, damage to marine ecosystems from illegal fishing and damaging devices, and the conversion of mangroves to rice fields, this multi-stakeholder platform is the first of its kind in the country and is providing a space for dialogue and coordinated resource management. Fish size and abundance has grown, endemic species have reappeared, marine ecosystem functioning has been restored, artisanal fishermen have been empowered, local incomes have improved, and a viable conflict resolution mechanism now guides resource access and use.

Shewula Trust – Swaziland

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

In response to high levels of poverty and unemployment this community of 13,000 people in the Lubombo Mountains decided to set aside more than 2,650 hectares of its land as a conservation area and ecotourism project. A tourism camp is managed by the community, with revenues invested into indigenous plant nurseries, wildlife management, and anti-poaching measures. Revenues have been invested into local schools, health clinics, and a community resource center. The camp has created a market for local food and handicraft products. Support has been provided to local farmers working with indigenous, drought-resistant crops and an environmental education program is helping reduce incidents of poaching in neighboring parks.

Union des Associations Villageoises de Gestion des Réserves de Faune Pendjari – Benin

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the buffer zone of the Pendjari Biosphere Reserve in northwest Benin, Union des Associations Villageoises de Gestion des Réserves de Faune Pendjari is moving the cotton industry towards organic and fair trade practices. Chemical pesticides and fertilizers were having deleterious effects on ecosystems and human health so the union is promoting organic certification as a pathway to sustainable development. While organic cotton fields produce smaller yields, the cotton can be sold at a higher price and farmers do not have to absorb the costs associated with chemical fertilizers. By investing in organic cotton, the association is creating a sustainable market supply chain for more than 450 producer groups. Crop rotation has improved food security and complements the cotton cash crop economy.

Uplift the Rural Poor – Uganda

Founded to improve the livelihoods of communities living adjacent to a series of three protected areas, Uplift the Rural Poor works to reduce pressure on forest resources and an important gorilla habitat, while also creating alternative livelihood strategies. The organization focuses on capacity building, community-driven participatory planning and monitoring, bamboo domestication and tree planting, potato farming, and safe water access. The primary achievement has been strengthening the relationship between rural communities and protected area management authorities responsible for Bwindi and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks and the Echuya Forest Reserve. The group effectively supports community participation in natural resource management and local development plans, putting decision-making authority in the hands of forest-dependent communities. Rainwater harvesting tanks (owned and operated mostly by women) have been built in 17 water-stressed communities. A series of village savings and loans programs has helped to create small-scale businesses, while also reducing debt and reliance on moneylenders.

Utooni Development Organization – Kenya

Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa, and represented among global Equator Prize 2014 winners

Utooni Development Organization uses the innovative, low-investment “sand dam” technology in the communities of southern Kenya. Over 80 self-help groups were formed and 2700 farmers trained in water management, food security, sustainable agriculture, tree planting, and alternative income generation. Over 1500 sand dams have been built - concrete walls built around seasonal rivers that store water in sand, raising the water table, and increasing the size of local aquifers and availability of clean water. This low-cost technology hedges against droughts so communities can manage water resources in harmony with local ecosystems. Tree cover, bird populations, fish stocks, and farmer incomes have all increased as a result.