

UN environment agency recognises three students for contributions to sustainable innovation



Green innovators receive young environmental leader award. Photo: UNEP

12 November 2012 – Three young students are being honoured for their contributions to environmental conservation and the promotion of sustainability in their home countries, the United Nations Environmental Programme ([UNEP](#)) has announced.

At a ceremony in Leverkusen Germany, UNEP declared Adriana Maria Villalobos Delgado of Costa Rica, Mwanyuma Hope Mugambi of Kenya and Dang Huyn Mai Anh of Viet Nam this year’s recipients of the Young Environmental Leader Award for their impactful environmental projects.

“All of the 2012 Young Environmental Envoys clearly demonstrate that young people across the world have the motivation, creativity and knowledge to provide concrete solutions to the world’s most critical environmental challenges,” UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner [said](#) at the award presentation, held on Saturday.

The laureates were selected on the final day of the Young Environmental Envoy Programme, a week-long programme co-organized by UNEP and pharmaceutical company Bayer, which brought together close to 50 young leaders from 19 developing countries for a study tour in Germany.

Ms. Delgado, a 20-year-old chemistry student at Costa Rica's Universidad Nacional, pioneered a system for extracting active ingredients for medicine from discarded shrimp shells in an effort to introduce more effective methods of waste management to her country's shrimping sector.

Ms. Mugambi, a 23-year-old student of environmental sciences in Mombasa, developed a project combining the artisanal skills of local Kenyan women with the growing supply of discarded polythene bags littering her city's streets as well as the municipal dump. She and her team of volunteers brought in local women to sew purses, bags and table mats from the plastic bags found in the community, providing the women with marketable skills as well as a source of income through the sale of their products.

Dang Huynh Mai Anh, meanwhile, developed an innovative approach to educating Viet Nam's households in reducing their energy consumption. After extensive research, the 20-year-old business administration student from Ho Chi Minh City designed, produced and distributed a 'Green Book for Housewives' providing valuable information on the economic savings that private households can make through efficient energy usage.

"With the right kind of support, these innovative projects can be scaled up and replicated elsewhere, thus providing an important contribution to an inclusive, low carbon, resource efficient green economy, which is vital if the world is to meet the resource needs of a global population of nine billion by 2050," Mr. Steiner added.

Since its founding, the UNEP programme has accepted over 500 young innovators from around the world to partake in the study tour.

The programme now covers a wide range of countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Venezuela, and Viet Nam.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN agency honours four students for innovative environmental projects](#)