



---

## **Global Recycling Foundation announces Recycling Heroes & Young Green Ambassadors awards of Global Recycling Day 2024**

---

**London, March 18, 2023 Immediate release** - The Global Recycling Foundation today announces the ten winners of their Recycling Heroes 2024 award along with five special awards for Young Green Ambassadors marking the seventh Global Recycling Day on 18<sup>th</sup> March.

Ten winners of US\$1000 each and five special awards of US\$250 recognising Young Green Ambassadors are selected from nominations received from individuals, business leaders, sole traders, multinationals and Schools who despite continuing hardships have managed to sustain their efforts to promote the value of recycling.

Ranjit Baxi, Founding President of the Global Recycling Foundation, said: "This year's list of Recycling Heroes should be a cause for celebration. Not only does it demonstrate the enthusiasm and ingenuity of our winners, but the special category of Young Green Ambassadors introduced to acknowledge the initiatives of many schools, demonstrates that our young people today, who are the leaders of tomorrow, are showcasing the way forward and recognising the importance of recycling to protect our fragile planet."

### **Recycling Heroes - The winners:**

**Abiona Toluwalase of Lagos, Nigeria** is a dedicated environmentalist and founder of the Zero Plastic Straw Community, an initiative aimed at combating plastic pollution and promoting sustainable living practices. Since its inception in October 2021, the Zero Plastic Straw Community has made significant strides in reducing plastic waste by providing 6 recycling giant bins, promoting and donating 50 eco-friendly alternatives to plastic straws among school students and local communities. Through educational campaigns, clean-ups, and advocacy efforts, Toluwalase has engaged over 5,000 individuals in recycling practices and the fight against plastic pollution

**Dipesh Pabari leads The Flipflop Project, Lamu Archipelago, Kenya**, which has pioneered an innovative model for sustainable plastic waste management in the region with a replicable circular economy approach for small island and peri-urban communities. Dipesh is a clear leader – smart, determined and passionate about a waste-free future. He has pioneered an innovative model for sustainable plastic waste management in the region with a replicable circular economy approach for small island and peri-urban communities.

**David Katz, founder and CEO of Plastic Bank, Vancouver, Canada** - an internationally recognized solution to ocean plastic. His idea has enlivened an opportunity for the world to collect and exchange plastic as a currency. Today, his social enterprise is a global network of over 550 collection communities with more than 40,000 members. David champions sustainability with social recycling.

**Mike Mackay, MD, Despray Environmental, Netherlands** is the World's leading expert in Aerosol Recycling technology. Despray have advanced aerosol recycling having recycled over 560 million cans to date. We stand alone as the World's safest and most advanced aerosol recycling technology. Despray can capture 100% of the propellant GHG along with the liquid waste which are both used for waste to energy. What remains is a dense brick of metal that is 100% recycled.

**Soap Aid Ltd - Melbourne, Australia** was founded in 2011 in and has a unique dual mission: to save children's lives while diverting hard soap waste from landfills, thereby contributing to environmental conservation. Soap Aid has recycled over 3 million bars through the Soap Aid Hotel to Hands Programme - Equivalent to 300 tons of waste that was recycled and did not end up in landfills. Also over 1 million bars of soap distributed to indigenous communities in Australia, preventing thousands of children from contracting diseases such as trachoma and pneumonia.

**Rahmanullah Shirzad, Afghanistan** is an Advocate for the integration of climate change considerations into national and local policies, promoting sustainable development practices in Afghanistan and seeks to provide training and resources to equip individuals and organizations with the skills and knowledge needed to implement climate-friendly practices.

**Hellena Sailas, CEO of Arena Recycling Tanzania,** Hellena's efforts have led to the establishment of plastic waste collection centres, beach clean-ups, and the construction of sanitation facilities using eco-bricks in primary schools, benefiting thousands of individuals and communities. Her commitment to creating a positive impact on the environment and the community is evident by the numerous initiatives and projects undertaken.

**Green Women Compost Production Company, Tamil Nadu, India** Green Women Compost Production Company has been a graduation for a handful of Self Help Group women members who had taken the task of working in the Solid Waste Management site of the Government local body who aspired to upscale this activity to a Social Enterprise Business model by not only upscaling the recycling of solid waste but also the liquid waste for the production of Co-compost on a commercial scale. We have also upscaled our institution from a Self Help Group to a Green Women Compost Production Pvt. Ltd. Company.

**Jessica Alexanderson, Seattle USA, President Scrap University Kids** is not only on a long-standing ocean-waste recycling mission, she is creating a youth movement through educating schools about metal recycling with her Scrap University Kids series of books and initiatives. She's on the road to mobilising US schools to recycle over One million Cans, and that is just the start.

**Nicola Jones, South Wales, UK** has worked in the steel industry in UK for 25 years and nearly all of that time dedicated her career to the recycling of steel packaging. Nicola is also heavily involved in linking the process of recycling at home to the physical melting down of the packaging that the steel mill recycles into the furnaces in Port Talbot. She has used her expertise to shape policy & regulation throughout the UK and is a member of many advisory & strategic working groups. Nicola developed the education program for Tata Steel that delivers workshops to schools, colleges and universities.

## **Young Green Ambassadors – special category**

**Henry Green Primary School, Dagenham, London, UK** for sustainability work in school led by Pupils in the Green team. We have been driven over the past two years to make change, raise awareness and reduce waste in our community. The Green Team have promoted reuse drives for books and clothing, raising funds for Cancer research by collecting over 3300 used batteries for recycling and cleaning drives by plogging.

**Otilo Foundation, Nigeria** has significantly reduced carbon emissions by recycling approximately 65,000 metric kilograms of cartons and plastic waste from November 2023 to February 2024. This effort saves approximately 97,500 metric kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions, contributing to environmental sustainability and waste reduction initiatives.

**Lianae Petzer, Kabega Primary School, Gqeberha, South Africa** has been an active recycling ambassador since she was in Grade 1 in 2018. She would collect recycling and bring it to school as part of the recycling initiatives which Kabega Primary has in place at the school. She would set the trend for her fellow learners to follow by her continued recycling which she collects from family, friends and the surrounding community.

**Sainath Manikandan and Sai Sahana Manikandan, Abu Dhabi, UAE** are students of GEMS United Indian School, Abu Dhabi, UAE in Grade 10 & 8 respectively. Sainath and his sister Sai Sahana Manikandan have started their own campaign, PEPC Campaign with the main aim to reduce, reuse, recycle, repair, rethink and refuse. They are collecting Papers, E-wastes, Plastics and Cans for recycling. As an environmentalist and green activist, they strongly believe that we can change our existing practices into green and sustainable solutions using technology.

**Ege Topkoc, Dubai, UAE**, an 18-year-old senior at the American School of Dubai, UAE. He released a free game on the App Store called “Recycling Toss.” It’s a fun and educational game that teaches young kids about recycling. He piloted the game with 5th grade students, which saw a 68.7% improvement in their recycling knowledge.

**For further information contact Global Recycling Foundation team:**

[info@globalrecyclingfoundation.com](mailto:info@globalrecyclingfoundation.com)

Ranjit Baxi +447860525159

[www.globalrecyclingday.com](http://www.globalrecyclingday.com)

### **About the Global Recycling Foundation**

The Global Recycling Foundation supports the promotion of recycling, and the recycling industry, across the world to showcase its vital role in preserving the future of the planet. It will promote Global Recycling Day as well as other educational programmes, awareness projects and innovation initiatives which focus on the sustainable and inclusive development of recycling.