

Annual Report

2023



Foreword

It's been nearly two years since the inception of The Iris Project, and I'm so happy to be able to share with you an update on the impact that we're having. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our funders, whose support has enabled us to stand beside these amazing young individuals. Across the world, young people are making big changes happen with very few resources. Sam, Steve, and Maria, the recipients of our inaugural prizes last year, are a testament to this phenomenon. Their projects nurture nature at scale and provide education, employment opportunities, and improved livelihoods within their communities.

Our goal was always to enable talented, devoted young people to champion the protection and restoration of nature in the places where they live. Through our grantees and the capacity-building programmes we have cultivated, we have learned that a grant-making approach founded on trust and flexibility, coupled with bespoke mentorship and capacity-building, is undeniably effective.

However, a glaring gap persists in philanthropic funding dedicated to youth-led projects. I want to encourage environmental funders everywhere to engage with us, learn from our funding model, adopt transparency, and collaborate to rectify the fact that currently, only 0.80% of institutional climate funding supports youth-led initiatives. We must take steps to address this. Young people represent a huge opportunity.

This year's winners, Dipta, Dipisha, and Nusra, working on water conservation, sustainable sanitary products, and indigenous-led forest restoration, are more proof of the strength of youth innovation in addressing the most significant set of challenges of our time.

This annual report highlights the role that young people are already playing in the fight of our lives to avert environmental breakdown and climate catastrophe. The Iris Project is evidence of the effectiveness of allocating funding, time, and support to initiatives led by young people across the globe.

By Ben Goldsmith, Iris' Father

Contents

Our Vision

To build and enable a global community of young environmental leaders who have the motivation, confidence, capacity, and resources to drive tangible environmental and societal gains, both locally and globally.

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1. Our Community

The Iris Project is **led by youth for youth** and is run by a paid Advisory Panel and team who live across four continents. In September we brought on four new advisors and said goodbye to the remarkable Sophia Kianni, Elizabeth Swanson, Sagar Koirala and Alanieta Atama, as they pursue new opportunities.

Core team



Millie Edwards
Director



Anouk Delaprée
Communications
Coordinator



Ankica Sokolic
Ecosystem
Coordinator

Advisory Panel



Shreya K.C.
Nepal



Francisco Lara-fletes
Costa Rica



Ezekiel Nyanfor
Liberia



Alicia Amancio
Brazil



Yazid Mikail
Nigeria



Ankica Sokolic
Macedonia



Sumarni Laman
Indonesia

“

Supporting youth-led projects with trust and flexibility is the foundation for the partnership between Global Greengrants Fund UK and The Iris Project. Together, we empower young people around the world to take action to tackle the environmental and climate challenges we face today, to help shape their own futures.

Nisha Owen, Executive Director,
Global Greengrants Fund

How We Work

A **Steering Committee** of eight environmental experts meets quarterly to monitor the ongoing project progress. Global Greengrants Fund (GGF), our fiscal sponsor and host, provides us with consultancy support, including invaluable guidance on best practices in participatory grant-making processes, and ensures The Iris Project adheres to GGF UK governance processes, including conflict of interest, safeguarding, and data protection policies.

“
The small international community that we built, the opportunity to see everyone's progress, and now the chance to contribute to expanding that community with four new advisors. Acquiring new skills, especially regarding communication and capacity building, and being more comfortable with my English, both written and spoken.”



Ankica Sokolić

What have you most enjoyed about being an Iris Project advisor?

“
The sense of purpose and impact. Contributing my expertise to a meaningful cause and witnessing the positive changes the project brings has been incredibly fulfilling. Additionally, collaborating with like-minded individuals and being part of a collective effort to drive change has made the experience rewarding and inspiring.”

“
Relationship building and fostering a safe space to be vulnerable and dream.”



Elizabeth Swanson



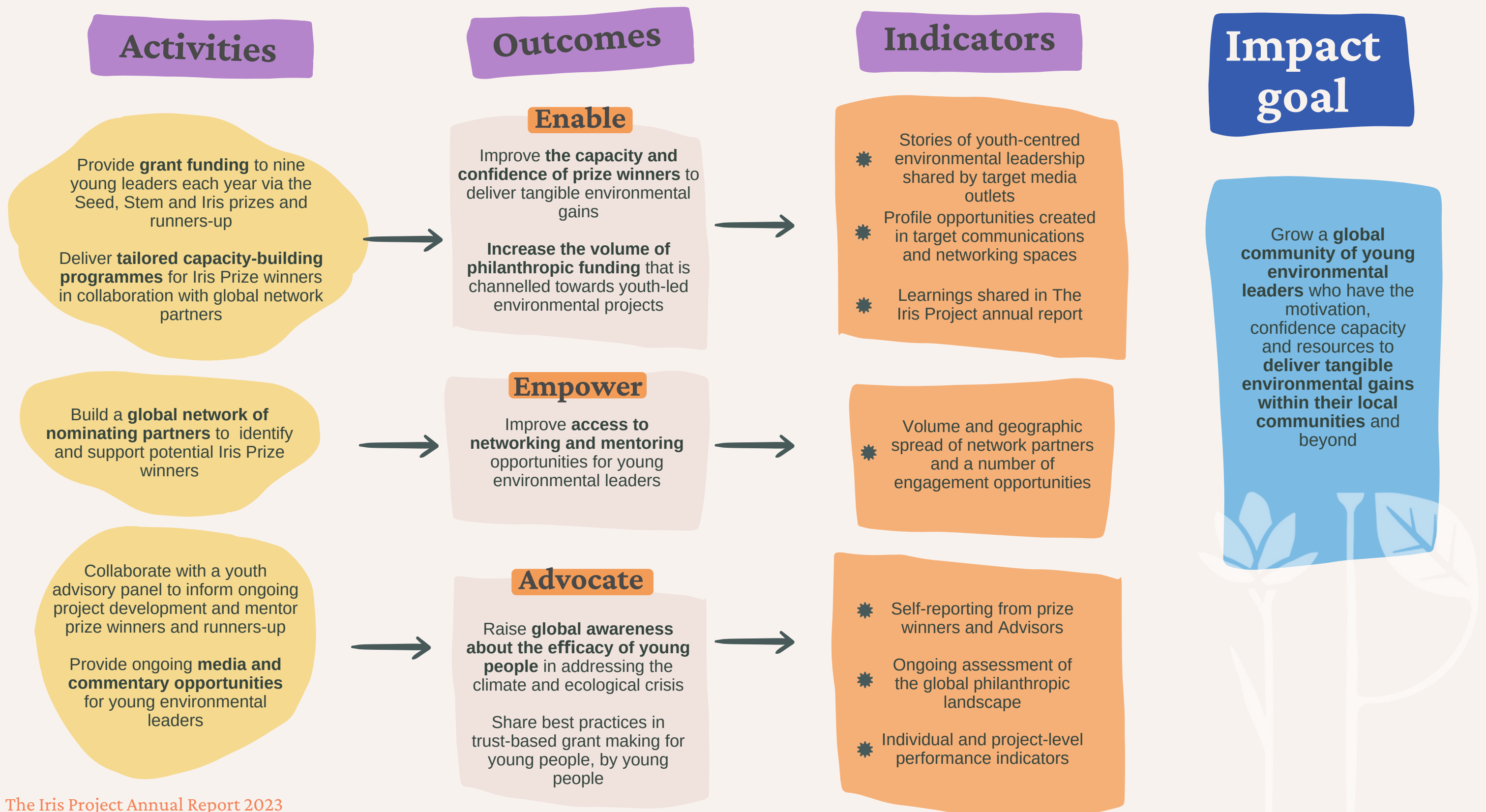
Sophia Kianni

Governance Structure



2. Our Theory of Change

Our theory is simple: enabling global youth through advocacy, grants, networking, and media engagement results in **three key outcomes:** increased resources for youth-led initiatives, enhanced capabilities among awardees to tackle environmental challenges, and the formation of robust networks of environmental stewards. Ultimately, our vision is a world where empowered youth drive meaningful environmental change, supported by a collaborative network.



Our Theory of Change: Enable

Outcome 1: Improve the capacity and confidence of prize winners to deliver environmental gains.

All of our prize winners receive individualised capacity-building support to help them maximise their project impact and are invited to take part in CoalitionWILD's 6-month Leadership Development accelerator programme. Through these training modules, The Iris Project ensures its prize winners are not only equipped with subject-specific knowledge but also with the broader skills and understanding required to navigate the challenges of environmental work.

Open Briefing: Physical & Digital Risk Training

In response to valuable feedback received from last year's winners, we have taken significant steps to enhance the support provided to our 2023 awardees. Each individual or team has been provided with personalised, one-on-one sessions to address physical and digital risks and security concerns. This training aims to empower our grantees by helping them identify and navigate potential threats from their project efforts. The challenges surrounding protecting community rights to a clean environment are growing more complex and daunting on a global scale. Governments and corporations around the world are tightening their grip on civil society, perpetuating an atmosphere of repression. Those in positions of authority continue to employ violence as a means to silence activists who courageously champion the safeguarding of their communities.

Training Partners

GREENHOUSE maker
change



COALITION
WILD



100%

of participants rated trainings positively; reported increased knowledge; and feel confident to use what they have learned

YouthPawa, Stem Prize 2022 Winner

Our Theory of Change: Enable

Outcome 1: Improve the capacity and confidence of prize winners to deliver environmental gains.

Communications

We empower our prize winners by equipping them with the tools and platforms necessary to amplify the reach of their projects. We aim to foster productive and educational conversations about climate change and to help our prize winners raise vital funds to continue their work.

This is primarily delivered through our Climate Communications Programme, a collaborative effort in partnership with MakerChange Studio. Through this programme, we provide tailor-made and specialised communications support to our prize winners, should they need it.

This year, we piloted the programme with our 2022 Stem and Seed Prize Winners, Steve and Maria. Steve worked with the designers at MakerChange to develop YouthPawa’s brand and build them a social media toolkit and a new website. Similarly, Maria’s Clean and Efficient Energy for All Project became the Mudzi Cooking Project. We developed the brand, a toolkit, and a website, which we subsequently trained Maria to operate and manage herself.

In collaboration with our partners, Greenhouse PR, we also offer media training to empower our prize winners and equip them with the skills necessary to convey their initiatives and accomplishments to a broader audience effectively.

“

Having an established website, my work is being noticed and recognised. I feel more confident in both myself and my project. The website has been pivotal in promoting my work; it has unlocked many new opportunities. It is my biggest treasure, and I know I will achieve even more and reach even more people.

Maria Kameta, Seed Prize Winner 2022



Featured in Reuters, Mongabay, BBC News, The Kenya Times, and MailOnline.

758K
Estimated Views



Our Theory of Change: Empower

Outcome 2: Improve access to networking and mentoring opportunities for young environmental leaders.

Mentorship

Each prize winner is paired with two Iris Project Youth Advisors to guide them and provide continuous project advice and feedback. Our approach as a trust-based and flexible grant maker places full autonomy in the hands of the grantee, allowing the prize winners to determine how and when they wish to access mentorship support. Our mentors, in turn, adapt to these preferences.

We regularly survey our Prize Winners to ascertain their experience of the mentorship offering, and at the last point of us doing this, they all rated their experience as being excellent. The surveys have proven to be a useful tool to help us further improve our support, for example, following one recent piece of feedback we are planning to incorporate advice on how to scale projects in next year's programme.

We also support our youth advisors in expanding their networks and accessing career and educational opportunities. Many have made valuable connections through The Iris Project, leading to panel appearances and media engagements. For example, Alanieta connected with organisations like FRIDA, The Young Feminist Fund. Yazid expanded his network by engaging with groups like Nature4Climate, while Sagar increased his media appearances and shifted to full-time environmental activism. Ankica's experiences, including volunteering in Croatia, contributed to her landing a job in a related field and securing a spot in an international master's course.



**Advisors at UN Asia Pacific
Climate Week and COP28**



? How would you rate your overall experience as a mentor?

1=Poor
10=Excellent

8.8

Average

Networking: The Iris Project Ecosystem

We launched The Iris Project Ecosystem in January 2023 as a private Slack channel to promote innovation and collaboration. This network encourages all prize applicants to connect with other youth-led organisations, offering weekly resources, expertise, funding, and capacity-building opportunities. Currently, we have 182 registered members and have shared nearly 500 opportunities.

“

The Iris Project Ecosystem has played a pivotal role in fostering the growth of our project. In just three months, our involvement in the Slack community has empowered us to apply for grants totalling over \$200,000. This invaluable support has enabled us to devote ourselves full-time to our project.

Alyssa, Stem Prize Runner-Up, Cambodia

Our Theory of Change: Empower

Outcome 2: Improve access to networking and mentoring opportunities for young environmental leaders.

In April, we supported Youth Advisor Yazid in travelling from Nigeria to Kenya to meet his mentee Steve, and participate in a mangrove activation event in Mombasa. This in-person meeting allowed Yazid to witness the tangible impact Steve is making in his community, fostering a genuine friendship and a lasting bond. When surveyed, Steve described his mentorship experience as "invaluable and transformative," attributing much of his project's success to his mentors' guidance. Similarly, Maria has described having great relationships with her mentors, calling it friendship, and finding the advice highly beneficial.



“Whenever Steve has an activation, we jump on a call to motivate him and celebrate the successful event while helping him build on the challenges he faced during the process. This time , I was there physically to do all this, and it was fantastic! I interacted with his team, and planted my first mangrove on behalf of Iris and The Iris Project team.”

Yazid Mikail, Iris Project Advisor, Nigeria



“Somebody once told me that a mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you than you see in yourself and helps bring it out of you. That he/she is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself. They say every kid needs a mentor. Everybody needs a mentor, and I am privileged to have one through The Iris Project. Honestly speaking, my journey so far has been one full of eye-opening experiences, full of smiles and positive vibes, full of lessons and understanding new perspectives of life.”

Steve Misati, Stem Prize 2022 Winner

Our Theory of Change: Advocate

Outcome 3: Increase the volume of philanthropic funding towards youth-led environmental projects.

This year, we took a step further in enhancing the sustainability of the projects we support. All three of our 2022 Prize Winners received one-time repeat funding of \$10,000 USD each. This strategic move is designed to bolster the long-term viability of their individual projects. By including this repeat-funding approach, we are committed to ensuring that our support leaves a lasting imprint, extending the impact of these initiatives.

We've also increased our grant portfolio from three in 2022 to nine in 2023. This increase in financial support magnifies the positive influence of the projects we support and serves as a compelling testament to the benefits of a trust-based approach to funding.



\$81,000

Volume of grants disbursed



Across **8** Countries

Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Argentina, Cambodia, The Maldives, and Sierra Leone

\$40,000

Spent on capacity building

with an additional \$30,000 forecast to be spent before the end of the grant year, ensuring projects have the resources, skills, and knowledge needed to succeed.



3. Empowering Youth-Led Initiatives through Trust-Based and Flexible Funding



Yazid Mikail, Iris Project Advisor, Nigeria

Context

With less than 1% of institutional climate funding currently being directed towards young people, significant opportunities are being missed to support one of the best solutions we have when it comes to tackling the climate and nature crisis. By neglecting to provide young people with the necessary funding and support, the world is being deprived of the transformative impact that young people can make. There is a trust deficit in the youth funding space, which is partly responsible for this lack of funding.

Young people often face scepticism when it comes to accessing funding for their climate initiatives because many funders do not truly understand the impact that young people can have. This lack of trust limits their opportunities to make a real impact, either through restricting access to funding or creating time-consuming applications and strict due diligence processes that young people often don't have the time or resources to fulfil.

Insights

Our 2022 Prize Winners identified common challenges in accessing funding. Maria noted funders' mistrust and underestimation of youth-led projects. Steve echoed these sentiments, mentioning perceived risks, competing priorities, and a lack of trust in the climate and nature sectors. Similarly, driven by a pressing need for funding, Sam emphasised mismatched funder priorities and doubts about youth abilities.

Trust-based and flexible funding is essential for young projects, as demonstrated by our prize winners' success. Unfortunately, few funders adopt this approach. We believe in the power and potential of young people and aim to demonstrate to other funders that the time has come to invest in young people and unleash their potential.

Impact

Young people are dynamic, energetic, and dedicated, bringing new perspectives to the climate and nature crisis at a time when addressing it has never been more urgent. Trust-based funding, mentorship, and capacity-building support can unlock their potential and enable them to become more effective agents of change.

In only nine months, Seed Prize winner Maria launched the [Mudzi Cooking Project](#) in Malawi, constructed over 1,000 energy-efficient cooking stoves and 20,000 briquettes, creating jobs improving livelihoods for women and young people, all with a \$5,000 USD grant and whilst having her first baby. The Iris Project's support boosted her confidence, youth involvement, and volunteer recruitment, leading her to secure additional grants from the Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Programme. Stem Prize winner Steve, too, made the most of The Iris Project's support, recruiting young leaders and establishing training initiatives. CoalitionWILD's mentorship and training markedly increased his confidence and effectiveness in engaging stakeholders and increasing funding for his Mangrove Eco-Restoration project. Iris Prize winner Sam's success story echoes this pattern. Winning The Iris Prize affirmed his work, enabling him to create employment opportunities for other young leaders. In the following section, learn more about the impact generated by our 2022 prize winners, exploring their remarkable contributions and the enduring changes they've initiated across their communities.

We have reached a critical tipping point for the planet and future generations, where outdated funding models are no longer viable. As our work over the past 18 months has shown, the time to invest in young people who are willing and able to contribute meaningfully to climate solutions is now.



Steve Misati at Mangrove Action Project training

Lamu, Kenya

4. Achieving our Goal: Updates from our 2022 Prize Winners



REUTERS World Business Markets Sustainability Legal Breakingviews Technology Investigations

Society & Equity | Industry Insight | Circular Economy | Social Impact

How waste pickers are helping to win the war on plastic pollution

By Mark Hillsdon
July 17, 2023 12:41 PM GMT+2 · Updated 4 months ago

Industry Insight from Ethical Corporation Magazine in partnership with Thomson Reuters.



The Kenya Times
By the People, for the People

News Business Health Entertainment Law & Order Sports Opinion Lifestyle Sci-Tech

How Instant Love with Mangroves Turned Young Kenyan Data Scientist into a Conservationist

Misati founded Youth Pawa, a nature restoration and ocean conservation organization focusing on climate justice advocacy and youth empowerment.

by Jackson Okata — June 14, 2023



In the High Court of Justice (England and Wales)
Number 549 of 2017
PRITESH ASHOK KUMAR JETHA SHAH
- In Bankruptcy ("The Debtor")
c/o 8272/96, 238 Boreada Lane, Spring Valley,
Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya.
Date of Birth: 28 December 1972
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Stephen Cook (IP No: 8627) and Anthony Cook (IP No: 9401) of Cook Gully LLP, 6 Snow Hill, London, EC1A 2AG, England, were appointed Joint Trustees of the Debtor on 20 December 2017 and 5 December 2019 respectively and that they act either jointly or separately.
Creditors of the above-named Debtor who have not already proved their debts are invited to do so by sending details of their claims to the Joint Trustees at Cook Gully LLP, 6 Snow Hill, London, EC1A 2AG, England.
Should a creditor or interested party possess any information regarding the assets of the Debtor, please contact the Joint Trustees. The Joint Trustees are prepared to pay a reward for information that proves useful in recovery of the Debtor's assets.
For further details contact Alexander Zografakis on telephone +44 (0)20 7248 2120, or by email at alexander.zografakis@corigafts.com.

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Estimated Reading Time: 4 mins
In 2019, in the company of his friends, Steve Misati created a mangrove ecosystem along the Kenyan coast, a project that made him fall in love with the ocean and



The Iris Prize 2022: Sungai Watch

Sam Benchghib, 26-years-old, Indonesia



Impact & Achievements

Team Advancements & Technological Progress

- With the Iris Prize grant, Sungai Watch strategically expanded its team, **enabling swifter waste collection** and processing for recycling within a 3-day window. Before growing the team, they had to wait to sort everything or send waste to landfills because the facilities were overcrowded.
- With the **additional \$10,000** in repeat funding, Sungai Watch has prioritised technological advancements in barrier design. This innovation aims to significantly enhance their plastic capture efficiency, paving the way for expansion into Indonesia's more polluted rivers as well as internationally.

Youth & Community Integration

- As part of their **community-centric approach**, Sungai Watch hired five local Indonesian women to help manage and sort through the waste collected in many of their barriers. Wayan, Maria, Kadek, Made, and Eka are paid above-average wages and provided with health insurance and are now integral full-time team members.
- Their hiring policy integrates several individuals under 30 into the team, showcasing the organisation's commitment to harnessing opportunities for young people.

Environmental Strides

- Through enhanced waste processing capabilities, Sungai Watch reduced its landfill dependence, **aligning with its vision of a zero-waste-to-landfill operation.**
- Teams are deployed daily to ensure the cleanliness of each river barrier. Trash is then sorted into 30 material categories at regional centres to maximise recycling efforts.

Media Recognition & Expansion

Thanks to winning The Iris Prize, Sungai Watch's efforts were spotlighted by Reuters and Mongabay, enhancing their global outreach.

What were the most important lessons you learned from this grant?

“When applying to The Iris Prize, we thought about what the most impactful project would be. There were many ideas, but we always seemed to be directed toward **hiring more team members**. As a cleanup organisation, **more people means more impact**, and if this grant has shown us anything, hiring good talent is extremely important. We are seeing this with the repeat funding and being able to hire a crew of engineers to help us improve our barrier technologies. By working with a professional consulting firm for a few months, we will have an amazing new barrier technology soon.”



Mentored by



Sophia Kianni



Ankica Sokolić



The Stem Prize 2022: YouthPawa

Steve Misati, 24-years-old, Kenya



Impact & Achievements

Ecosystem Restoration

- **19,622 mangrove propagules** have been planted, with a 94% success rate. Generally, success rates for mangrove planting efforts tend to fall 50% to 70%.
- **8.5 acres of once-degraded mangrove land** in Mombasa have been brought back to life, leading to the re-emergence of indigenous wildlife.
- An increased number of fish, crabs, and oysters have returned to the ecosystem. Butterflies and birds have been chirping in the ecosystem for the first time in many years.

Community Engagement & Empowerment

- Steve received invaluable insights from residential training in Lamu with the **Mangrove Action Project**. With new knowledge and evidence-based practices, Steve transformed the community's approach to mangrove planting.
- **33 community members** are involved in the project, **19 women and 4 men**.
- An estimated **120 fishermen** have reaped indirect benefits from the enhanced aquatic life near the rejuvenated ecosystem.
- **4 high school students** have been assisted with partial school fees, showing a direct commitment to education.
- The community has witnessed an encouraging **15% increase in youth leadership roles**.
- Steve facilitated workshops and capacity-building sessions, improving the local community's knowledge.

Organisational Advancements

- YouthPawa is **officially registered as a Non-Governmental Organisation**.
- With the \$10,000 in repeat funding, Steve established a monitoring and evaluation system to monitor ecological, social, and economic indicators to share with stakeholders and the wider community.
- Pioneering efforts have led to the inception of **alternative income streams such as sustainable bee-keeping and mangrove ecotourism**.

What were the most important lessons you learned from this grant?

“The importance of adaptability in project management. Initially, I had a rigid plan centred solely around mangrove planting and monitoring. However, as I progressed, I recognised the need for a holistic approach encompassing **community engagement and livelihood development**. For example, when observing the positive ecological changes in our restored mangrove area, I realised the potential for creating alternative livelihoods through ecotourism. This led me to shift some of our project resources towards training locals to offer guided mangrove tours, diversifying income sources for the community, and reinforcing their commitment to mangrove conservation. The grant taught me to remain **flexible**, open to opportunities, and willing to adjust our strategies based on evolving project dynamics, ultimately enhancing our impact.”



Mentored by



Yazid Mikail



Elizabeth Swanson



The Seed Prize 2022: Mudzi Cooking Project

Maria Kameta, 22-years-old, Malawi



Impact & Achievements

Youth Leadership & Engagement

The Mudzi Cooking Project stands out for its youth-centric focus. **The team comprises members aged 23 and below. 130 youths, aged between 15 and 21,** have become climate change ambassadors.

Community Engagement, Education & Advocacy

- **190 young people and 100 women** have been trained in constructing efficient cooking stoves.
- **1,500 cooking stoves** have been assembled, benefiting approximately **6,000 individuals**, with **75% of them being children**.
- **4 briquette-making enterprises** have been established, with comprehensive training extended to women and young people.
- **10 teachers** were trained on climate change pedagogy, creating school climate change clubs with **3,251 active members** engaging in green initiatives.
- Crucial community figureheads, including Village Heads and Leaders, received comprehensive education covering climate change, the science behind efficient stoves, and the benefits of using briquettes.

Tangible Impacts

- Observations have shown a **marked decline in wood usage** with a significant inclination towards briquettes.
- **A reduction in deforestation was reported** around the Chisinga zone of the Kasungu National Park.
- **Economic empowerment was evident**, especially among the briquette enterprise participants.
- The Mudzi Cooking Project has now received formal recognition as a **Community-Based Organisation**, with the Chisinga community exhibiting a strong preference for briquettes. Demand for stoves is also witnessing an upward trajectory.

What were the most important lessons you learned from this grant?

“I have learned more than I would have ever thought. When I started the project, I had no idea about project management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. All I had was an idea to improve the life of my community. With the grant, I have developed skills in all my weak areas. I have also secured three more grants thanks to these new skills.

The most outstanding skill I have gained is being **flexible**. The Iris Project was not strict on how the funds could be used; this allowed me to shift the funds to improve weak areas and support the entire project without financial restrictions.”

24,000+

**Briquettes
Produced**

\$5,000

Prize Amount

\$10,000

Repeat Funding

Mentored by



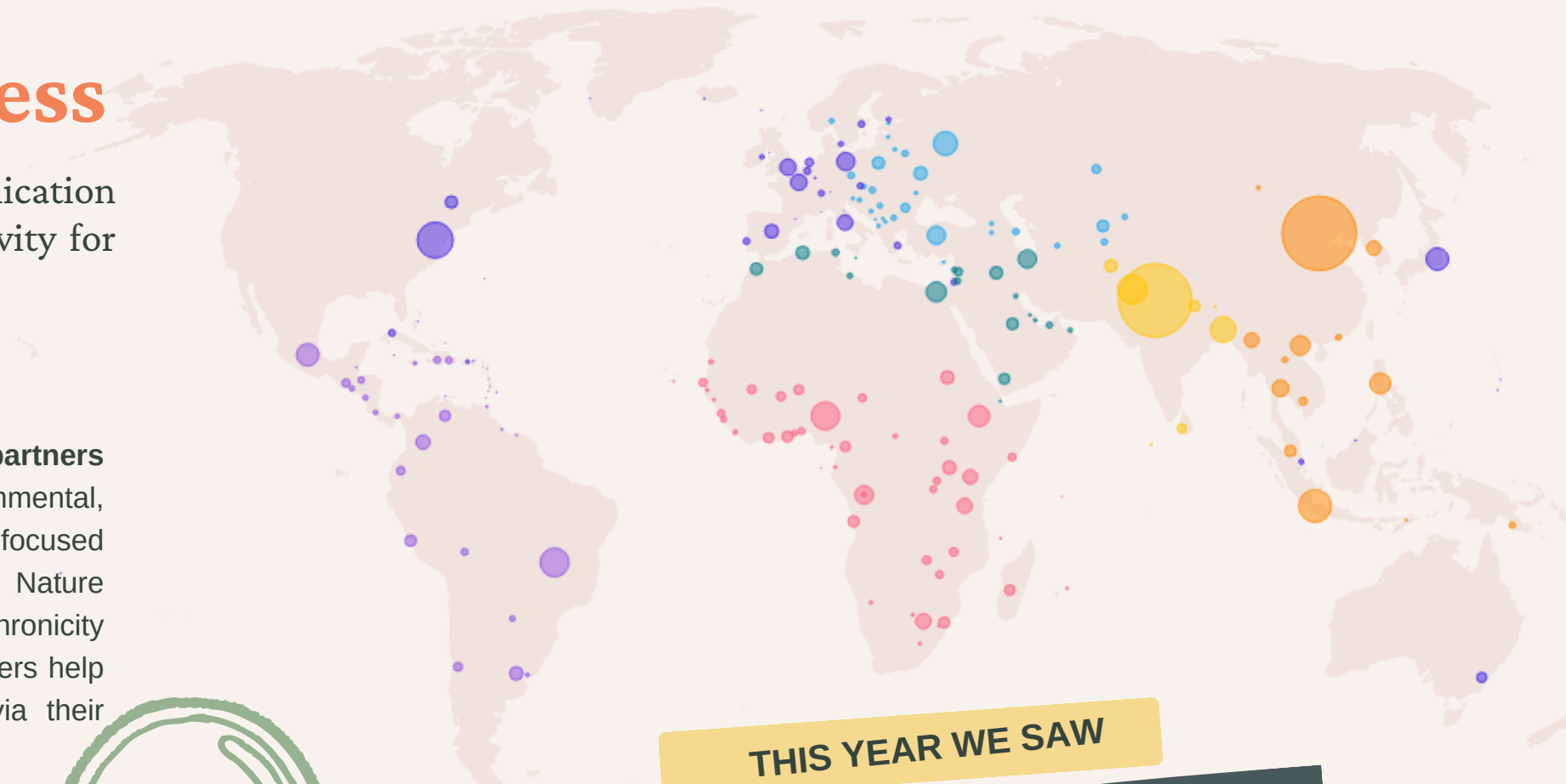
Alanieta Atama



Ezekiel Nyanfor

5. The 2023 Awards Process

This year, we have taken strides to improve our application process, reaffirming our commitment to fostering inclusivity for The Iris Prize.



Our Network

A global network of **over 60 nominating partners** and ambassadors, which includes environmental, youth, indigenous, and education-focused organisations and NGOs such as The Nature Conservancy, If Not Us Then Who, Synchronicity Earth, and Helena Gualinga. These partners help us spread the word about the prize via their networks and at events.

Reach & Accessibility



We translated the application form and eligibility criteria into Spanish, French, Arabic, and Portuguese while maintaining acceptance of applications in any language. We also introduced the option of audio and voice note submissions in addition to written submissions.

THIS YEAR WE SAW

a 120% increase in applications, with submissions from 33% of the world's countries.



Our Advisory Panel

As well as via digital efforts such as posting on social media, our Advisory Panel spread the word about the prize opportunity at events in their countries. This year, Ezekiel spoke in high schools and universities across Liberia, Alanieta travelled to rural communities in Fiji to ensure those without digital access had the opportunity to apply, and Sagar travelled to several climate conferences, speaking on panels about The Iris Prize.



Media & Digital

The digital content we create, such as the prize opening film, the winner's films, and the awards show, enables our partners and network to share engaging content to raise awareness about the prize and our winners. The Iris Prize 2023 Awards film has been watched **40,010 times**. Reuters, Mongabay, The Kenya Times, and the BBC featured The Iris Project and our winners in international press this year.

About the selection process

Our selection process ensures that every application is meticulously reviewed to meet our eligibility and scoring criteria. We take a collaborative approach, with our Advisory Panel and team participating in the evaluation process. We work in groups to maintain a comprehensive and unbiased assessment, nominating 5 to 7 outstanding projects from this initial review from each prize category, ultimately creating a shortlist of 20 initiatives for further evaluation by our expert Judging Panel. To further enhance transparency and credibility, every shortlisted candidate is requested to provide two references, adding an extra layer of validation to the selection process.

2023 Prize Winners

Our prize winners are all between the ages of 17 and 23. They are working on initiatives that revolve around locally-driven, community-integrated solutions to address some of the most pressing environmental challenges within their communities. Over the next year, we'll be working to support these projects through our mentorship and capacity-building programmes, remaining flexible towards additional needs where they occur. To foster growth, creativity, and sustainability in the youth environmental movement, we support projects at various stages of development. By supporting a diverse portfolio of initiatives and nurturing both early-stage ideas and more established projects, we can position ourselves to have a broader impact over the long term and solidify our expertise as youth funders across various parameters.



Aliza Ayaz
Iris Prize Judge

“
This year's projects in The Iris Prize competition have illuminated young minds' profound understanding and commitment towards addressing the pressing issues of climate and inequality. It's a reminder that our youth recognise the urgency of these global challenges and possess the ingenuity to forge transformative solutions. It's time for us to shift from speaking for our future generations to empowering them to speak and act for themselves. The Iris Project aims to catalyse this change, and recognising these outstanding projects marks a significant step in that direction.



March
Prize open

May
Prize close

June
Application review to create prize shortlist

July
Judging Panel review shortlist

August
Due diligence & winners films produced for awards ceremony

September
Winners announced during Virtual Award Ceremony



Awarded for an established project, with the potential to replicate and scale.

Prize amount
\$15,000

I Ketut Darma Dipta, a 17-year-old from Bali, Indonesia, won The Iris Prize 2023. **LIQUIFY** provides innovative water solutions, empowers youth through education, and raises awareness about the global water crisis. The solution involves implementing recharge wells, water catchment systems, and gravity filters in communities lacking clean drinking water access. As Dipta is a minor, we have partnered with The Samdhana Institute, entrusting them as the fiscal sponsor for LIQUIFY. Their expertise will guide the management of the grant and provide essential support to Dipta through comprehensive budgeting and financial training.



Yazid Mikail



Sumarni Laman

Mentored by

What the judges said: The clarity of vision of such a young person is compelling, and the sophistication of the solution and deftness of its local implementation deserves encouragement. The project has good flow from the problem to the solution and has clear scaling potential.

Where the funds are going: Dipta believes education is the first step towards understanding and tackling the global water crisis. LIQUIFY will reach 50 schools across Bali with The Iris Prize grant, providing 500 books and hosting workshops for over 2,000 students. The recently launched “Forever” Project will provide a clean water supply from a natural spring to a local village of 171 residents. In 2024, LIQUIFY will install 20 catchment systems and recharge wells in critical community areas, including schools and village community centres. They will also donate 50 gravity ultrafiltration filters to farmers. Access to clean water for agricultural purposes is crucial for sustainable farming practices.

“

Winning The Iris Prize is a huge honour and boost for Liquify’s journey. With this incredible opportunity, we will be able to expand Liquify’s ripple effect and impact even more lives through education and sustainable water solutions.





Awarded for an existing project, established on a small scale.

Prize amount
\$10,000

Dipisha Bhujel, a 21-year-old from Nepal, won the Stem Prize 2023. Sparsa is a social business producing and selling compostable menstrual pads made from upcycled banana fibre. Sparsa aims to minimise plastic waste, reduce pollution, and contribute to local environmental preservation by offering an alternative to conventional pads. Sparsa prioritises local sourcing, creating economic opportunities for farmers and communities involved in banana farming. With the revenue generated, Sparsa supports menstrual awareness campaigns, promoting the use of biodegradable menstrual products and challenging societal taboos.



Mentored by

Ankica Sokolic

Shreya K.C.

What the judges said: Sparsa addresses multiple critical issues simultaneously. By offering biodegradable menstrual pads, they are contributing to reducing plastic waste, focusing on local sourcing, which creates economic opportunities for farmers and communities, and addressing societal taboos surrounding menstruation. They are empowering women to manage their periods sustainably. This not only improves women's well-being but also promotes gender equality and women's rights. This is a very well-rounded and impactful initiative.

Where the funds are going: The construction of Sparsa's first banana fibre processing factory in Nepal signifies a remarkable milestone towards environmental sustainability. With the funding from the Stem Prize, Sparsa can procure the necessary machinery and equipment for the pad production factory. It will enable efficient production processes, including adopting energy-saving technologies and waste-reduction measures. Sparsa hopes to advocate for implementing this sustainable model worldwide. Once proven successful, in collaboration with The Prakash Lab of Stanford University, the open-access knowledge will be published and available online.

“
We are happy and grateful to win the Stem Prize. The prize will help us to amplify our impact in the field of environmental protection and women empowerment in Nepal and beyond. Moreover, the prize will help us to adopt energy-saving technologies and minimise carbon emission throughout the manufacturing process while lowering the final price of our biodegradable pads.”





Awarded for a new idea, not yet established.

Nusra Juriah Abed, a 23-year-old from Kenya has won the Seed Prize 2023. Project Mila aims to address the problem of unsustainable waste management practices in Mombasa, Kenya, by converting black soldier fly larvae into organic waste for protein feed and nutrient-rich fertiliser. Nusra's solution will contribute to sustainable agriculture by providing an environmentally friendly alternative to livestock and aquaculture.

Prize amount
\$5,000



Alicia Amancio

Ezekiel Nyanfor

What the judges said: This project is impressive, and it showcases the potential of addressing multiple challenges with a single solution. It is scalable, making it adaptable for various communities. It's a remarkable endeavour, offering a straightforward, nature-based response to a pressing community issue. The innovative use of food waste and fly larvae protein for various applications adds an original dimension to this initiative.

Where the funds are going: The project plan is two-fold. Firstly, focussing on waste management and circular economy, Nusra's primary focus is to establish a black soldier fly facility. This facility will play a crucial role in converting organic waste into nutrient-rich frass and larvae. These valuable byproducts will be harnessed for sustainable agriculture practices and the creation of green spaces. Secondly, community engagement and awareness, they will foster active community involvement. This will unite the community through participatory clean-up initiatives and comprehensive awareness campaigns. These campaigns will address environmental challenges and emphasise the potential for local solutions and collaborative efforts to effect positive change.

“
Being part of the dynamic Iris Project ecosystem and a seed prize winner is one of the most incredible moments of my life and a foundational part of Project Mila. I'm so excited to get started.”



2023 Prize Runners up

For the first time, we are in a position to support 6 runners-up with monthly group mentorship, financial and capacity-building support to start, grow or amplify their projects.



Iris Prize

Prize amount
\$3,000

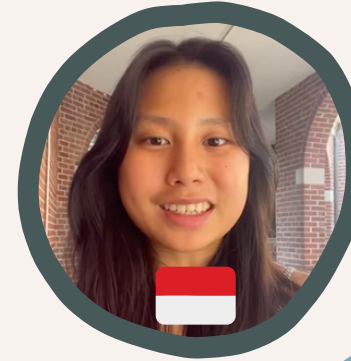
KleanerAir Monitoring and improving air quality in Nairobi, Kenya.

Purity Christine, 22-years-old, Kenya



Eco House Restoring and conserving bio corridors in the Parana Forest.

Santiago Cabezon, 24-years-old, Argentina



Seed Prize

Prize amount
\$1,500

The ACE Project Creating an eco-friendly alternative to Portland cement by using fly ash in bricks.

Sheina Ashley Pribadi, 17-years-old, Indonesia



Bangs Circular in collaboration with EFA. Combatting the decline of honeybee populations in Sierra Leone's Tiawi Island Community by establishing a sustainable and community-led honey enterprise.

Aruna Bangura, 23-years-old, Sierra Leone

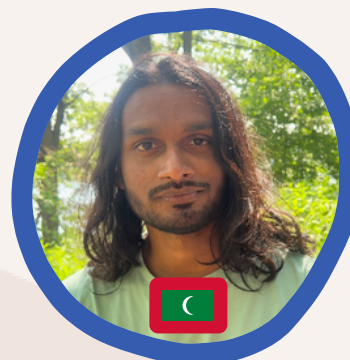


Stem Prize

Prize amount
\$2,000

Re-made in Cambodia An innovative sustainable fashion projet that transforms river waste into up-cycled fashion collections.

Alyssa Erin Kardos Loera, 24-years-old, Cambodia



Moosumi Magazine Raising awareness about environmental issues and fostering a connection with nature through conservation storytelling.

Ahmed Ijunad Junaid, 24-years-old, The Maldives



6. Understanding Our Impact: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

To ensure we deliver on our mission, we've established a solid **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)** framework to enable us to:

- Regularly **evaluate and enhance** the quality of support we offer to the young people involved in The Iris Project, using reliable evidence.
- **Understand** the environmental impact of the projects we support.
- **Validate** our theory of change, which in turn confirms our model of pushing for more funding for youth-led environmental initiatives.



We subject our work to qualitative and quantitative assessment to ensure we consistently offer the best assistance to the projects we support. For prize winners, we adopt a flexible approach. Rather than setting strict criteria, we have periodic assessments during which we encourage them to express their impact in their own words. This approach reflects our principle of awarding funds based on trust and our commitment to a more inclusive and equitable way of understanding impact. This approach has proven worth, given the insightful updates the prize winners have shared from their endeavours and documented throughout this report.

The data we have gathered is integrated throughout this report, illustrating our impact within the various areas outlined in our theory of change. The instruments we employ to amass this data comprise:

Iris Project Impact Tracker

This is the backbone of the project's MEL efforts. It is a centralised database designed to provide a holistic view of the project's trajectory against its theory of change.

Advisory Panel Tracker

Understanding the experiences and insights of the advisory panel is crucial. This tracker offers a window into their journey with the project, ensuring they remain engaged, valued, and influential in the project's strategic decisions.

Prize Winner Survey & Blogs

We ask Prize Winners to complete a feedback survey and write a blog for our website twice during the grant year. This helps us get a full view of our prize's benefits, from understanding what drives young environmentalists to seeing the real and less obvious results of their work.

End of Year Report

This report tells us how our Prize Winners have used the prize money and what they've achieved. They let us know about the people or places they've helped, any big changes their projects have brought about, and any clear results they can show. They also tell us if anything unexpected has affected their work.

Training Evaluation

The training evaluation system, anchored in a centralised database, captures quantitative and qualitative feedback from training participants. This system offers dual benefits – it not only ensures that the training remains relevant, engaging, and actionable but also provides strategic insights for resource allocation, content refinement, and future planning.

7. Looking Forward: The Future of The Iris Project

Our long-term vision: To become the go-to model for trust-based, youth-focused environmental philanthropy, utilising insights from our grantmaking to inform our advocacy efforts and support other like-minded philanthropists as they look to expand their grantmaking in this space.

Create an effective, responsive and replicable model for supporting and catalysing youth-led environmental action globally

- Funding, capacity building, and mentorship for up to nine youth-led initiatives annually.
- Repeat funding options for prize winners to ensure project sustainability.
- Balancing scaling grantmaking with tailored one-to-one support.
- Ongoing emphasis on monitoring and evaluation for continuous learning and to enable iteration of our funding model.
- Sharing insights on youth-focused philanthropy with a broad network of stakeholders (funders and practitioners).

Identify and support youth-led environmental initiatives wherever that support is needed most

- Highlight global and thematic diversity of the youth-led environmental movement
- Expand network reach to ensure funding opportunities are accessible in hard-to-reach and marginalised areas
- Encourage geographical and thematic diversity in prize applications, with a specific focus on supporting initiatives in The Global South, which disproportionately need our support (and where that support will go furthest) whilst still considering brilliant projects from The Global North.

Showcase the ripple effect of youth-focused funding

- Publish case studies and success stories from our prize winners to provide proof of the impact of youth-led environmental leadership.
- Showcase broader societal impacts of supporting young leaders.
- Continue creating and publicising annual reports with comprehensive examples of youth-led environmental project successes.
- We will continue to put youth front and centre of The Iris Project and will bring our advisors into our advocacy efforts, ensuring we can influence and inform philanthropic grantmaking in as many countries and spaces as possible.

Increase the scale of youth-led climate funding and support globally

- Collaborate with youth-led partners to promote and showcase the impact of youth-focused environmental funding.
- Advocate for increased funding in the youth environmental sector and influence other funders to contribute.
- Conduct research and engage with stakeholders to pinpoint obstacles and opportunities for enhanced funding.
- Participate in events such as the Climate and Biodiversity Conferences to increase outreach and project awareness.

8. 2023 financials

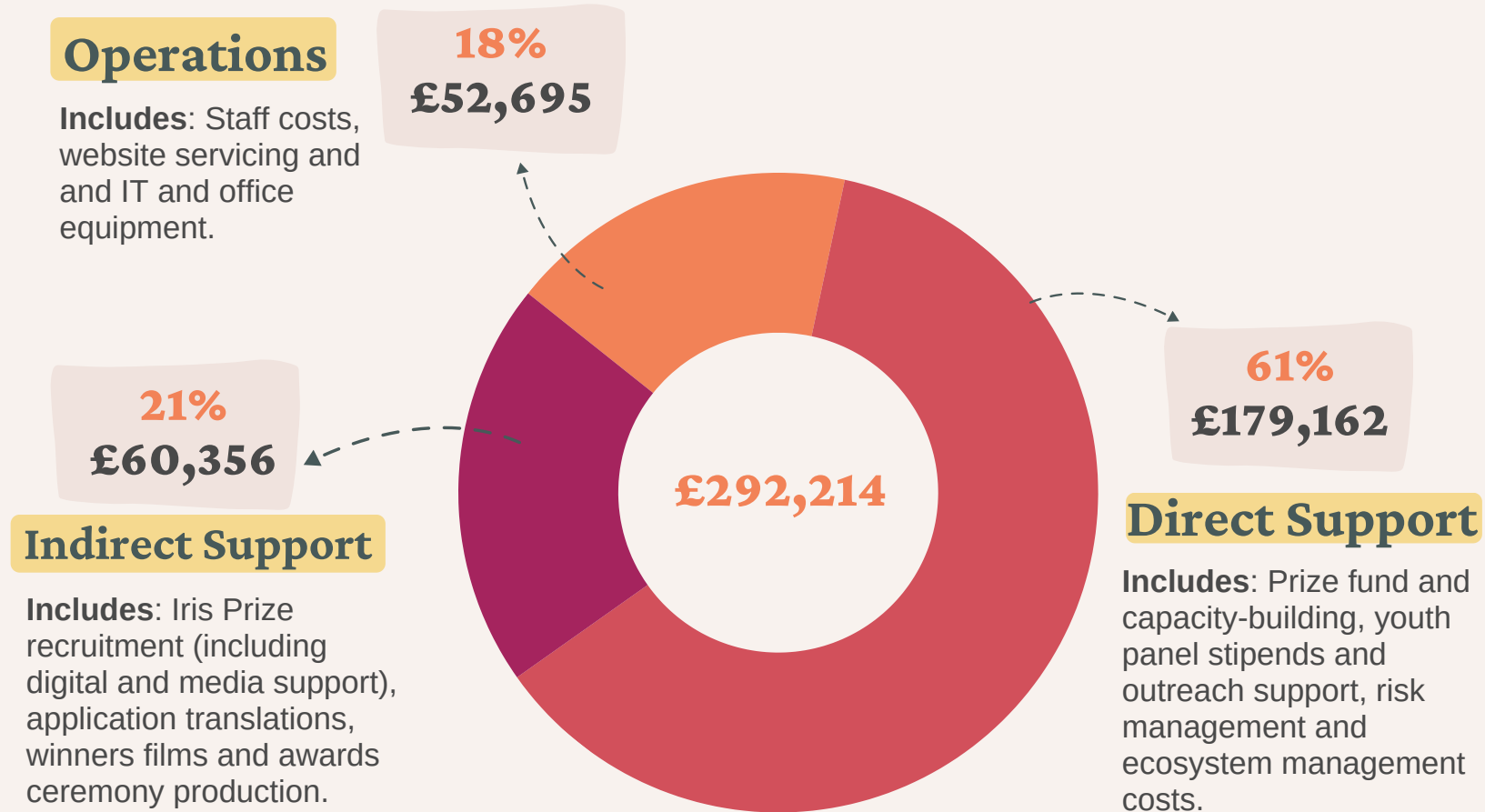
We appreciate the foundations and individuals whose unwavering support has been instrumental in carrying The Iris Project through its second year. Their endorsement of our trust-based and flexible grant-making approach has been pivotal

This year's funding stemmed from individuals and foundations offering unrestricted, multi-year grants. We are profoundly grateful for this support as it empowers us to navigate financial decisions in tandem with The Iris Project's continuous evolution.

Fortunately, we have not yet had to spend any money from our 'risk' contingency fund - which enables us to provide emergency funding relief to any grantee or Advisor who might require it. This money (£8,000) will therefore be carried across to Year Three, along with our remaining funds (£83,020) - the majority of which is forecast to be spent on our Year Two winners and runners-up, in the third year of The Iris Project.

Funding Breakdown

Iris Project Year 2 (Jan - December 2023)



9. Acknowledgements

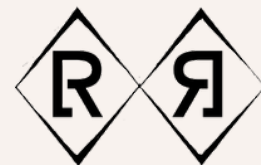
We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to our advisors - those who have supported us from the outset of The Iris Project and those who have joined us this year. You make The Iris Project what it is today; thank you for supporting us and for helping to shape our vision. Thank you to Iris' family, our nominating partner network, our generous donors, our Steering Committee and our expert Judging Panel. All of your contributions have been invaluable, and we're so proud to see the project grow in scale this year as a result of your advice and support.

We would also like to specifically name and thank our fiscal sponsor Global Greengrants Fund and our core delivery partners, Greenhouse Agency, CoalitionWILD, Open Briefing, MakerChange Studio and RLI Consulting, without whom none of this would be possible.



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GREENHOUSE



RLI Consulting

Reflect ▶ Learn ▶ Improve

**COALITION
WILD**



open briefing

**maker
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