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## 2023 Youth Innovation Challenge winners

### MEXICO

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*Perseida Tenorio and María Guiebeu Ballesteros*

**Solution:** *Escuela itinerante del agua por la vida* (Water for life mobile school)

**Winners:** Perseida Tenorio Toledo and María Guiebeu Ballesteros Ávila

#### **Solution summary**

**The water for life mobile school** is a solution which creates local change agents in Indigenous and marginalized communities to provide solutions to different water related issues, including lack of access to potable water and contamination of water reserves caused by the absence of drainage systems.

With its focus on creating capacities, the mobile school arms young people with ideas on potential solutions to their communities' water related issues. Through this initiative, young people acquire the tools, skills and knowledge needed to implement different ecotechnologies for rainwater capture, water purification, treatment of soapy waters and reintegrating water to rehabilitate degraded areas.

#### **Description of the organization**

Perseida and María Guiebeu, both originally from the Tehuantepec Isthmus in Oaxaca, Mexico, formed the team in 2020 that launched the *Escuela itinerante del agua por la vida*, with the purpose of sharing tools for water and soil regeneration in Indigenous and marginalized communities, while at the same time promoting bonds conducive to the stewardship, protection and regeneration of said resources. Their work,



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which focuses on training young people and children as “guardians of the water and earth,” has generated the following results: community waste management projects; installations of biofilters in schools (organized by the students themselves); rehabilitation of public spaces and—most important of all—the participants’ adoption of their identity as protectors of the earth.

From the very outset, encouraged by an experience that proved so enriching, the team reached out to new areas and, by means of the “Sowing water” initiative, began sharing ecotechnologies to help resolve water-related needs and issues in the mobile school’s host communities.

### Team members

#### Perseida Tenorio Toledo

Perseida is a Zapotec woman from the Tehuantepec Isthmus in Oaxaca, Mexico. Wishing to clean up the river in her village, she dedicated herself to learning about soil and water regeneration. This education took the form of intensive workshops, courses, and programs in the forests of Chiapas, Mexico, as well as in Ecuador, Costa Rica, and Austria. Perseida is a research fellow in Food Industries Engineering at the Monterrey Institute of Technology’s Querétaro campus.

#### María Guiebeu Ballesteros Ávila

María Guiebeu is a molecular biologist. Of Afro-Mexican descent, she is a native of Matías Romero, Oaxaca, Mexico. She completed her graduate studies at the Metropolitan Autonomous University, with a specialization in bioremediation from the University of Sao Paulo (Brazil). In addition, since 2017, she has been an instructor of young women’s self-defense at the *Colectivo Comando Colibrí* (Hummingbird Commando Collective).