



## Inspirational Mexican Environment Project Wins Volvo Adventure 2009

?????:Rod Abson

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A team of Mexican children and youth have been recognised for their inspirational project that has helped to protect a local wetland, engage children in environmental education and develop a sustainable aquaculture business to help pay for their ongoing education. HUNAB team from the Yukatan coast of Mexico were selected out of the top 10 Finalists for the Volvo Adventure 2009 US\$10,000 first prize with the UK's Isle of Man team in second and India in third.

Scouts from Brazil were also amongst the top 10 teams of 13 to 16 year olds selected from over 400 entries from 56 countries to go to Gothenburg, Sweden for the Volvo Adventure Final where the teams share their projects, engage in workshops on the environment and explore Swedish culture.

Mexican students Francisco Chuc, Griselda Gambrielson, Julio Martinez, Sugeily Pech and Vianey Kantún gave the performance of their lives on stage at the Volvo Hall of a project that was universally praised by the International Jury whose citation read:

*Through the imagination of children, a truly sustainable entrepreneurial model has come to life with benefits for their families, environment and local economy. Using only 900 litres of water, each child has taken responsibility for a small aquaculture pond, providing a sustainable harvest and a nursery for repopulating the local waterways once they have been cleaned. This ingenious project has allowed the children to earn extra money to support their ongoing schooling and helped to spread the aquaculture ponds to other students and improve their environment. These young leaders are deserving winners of the Volvo Adventure Final 2009.*



With a multi-layered, well researched and exceptionally argued case built around aquaponics and hydroponics in the Yukatan wetlands, the HUNAB campaign (HUNAB means the humans and nature living in harmony) which has been

underway since 2005 has convincingly demonstrated that economic and environmental sustainability can go hand-in-hand.

Commenting on the victory of her team, Maritza Aurora Morales Casanova said, "We have been working on our environmental project for five years and this is the end of the beginning of a very exciting future" adding, "Mexico has endured a lot of bad news recently and we hope our victory in the Volvo Adventure can help bring back a smile to the face of all Mexicans, as well as inspiring young environmentalists all over the world."

Said HUNAB team captain Griselda Gambrielson (15), one of 4 Directors of the project aged between three to 17-years-old, "We were very proud and honoured just to be here in Gothenburg for the Volvo Adventure World Final, but winning the first prize is amazing." She added "US\$10,000 is fantastic when the average monthly salary is US\$50 but the money, which we will reinvest in our project is less important than our message, at home and abroad."

Concluded Griselda "This has been a real team effort including our class mates back home in Yukatan and we would like to thank every other team for their congratulations and also a big thank you to Volvo for making this possible."

Amongst the finalists was a Scout Group from Brazil whose project 'Sun light heater with recycled material' combined the use of recycled bottles and other materials to help to reduce waste and generate solar hot water.



Rod Abson of the World Scout Bureau was a member of the Jury saying "The projects presented here from ten different countries are truly inspiring and clearly demonstrate that not only do young people care about the environment, they are capable of taking action in many ways. We would like to encourage more youth-led projects to be recognised by entering the Volvo Adventure." During the Volvo Adventure Final Rod ran a workshop which helped the students to explore what impact they have on the environment and how they can contribute positively towards reducing their ecological footprint.

For more information on the Volvo Adventure, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, and to enter your youth-lead environment project, please go to: [www.volvoadventure.org](http://www.volvoadventure.org)

The citations that were presented in summary to the top 10 finalists are provided below:

## **Brazil**



An innovative project demonstrating a practical way of re-using materials to establish a solar hot water system. This is a project with benefits to the local community and the Scouts are working hard to replicate this in other parts of Brazil.

### **China**

An imaginative project with very strong communications to raise awareness amongst their fellow school students and other young people to encourage them to consider how to make 'greener' choices with fashion and commercial products.

### **Egypt**

These motivated students recognised that water was being wasted in their school and local community and identified practical and creative ways to save water at home, school and in the community.

### **Hungary**

An inspiring and visible project to clean up and conserve the Szinva stream, with demonstrated ecological benefits for the habitat and native species. This project had flow on benefits for the community of the city of Miskolc, school students, other organisations, government, the media and other countries.



## India

With strong commitment to saving water from being wasted in their local community, these school students encouraged their fellow students to donate money to buy taps for places without taps. Using diverse and creative means, they spread the message widely through the schools and local community, they have made everyone aware not to waste a drop of water. These students are all 'A Precious Pearl' and deserving of third prize in the Volvo Adventure Final of 2009.

## Isle of Man

With a clear vision for the future and long-term planning, these students committed themselves to be carbon-neutral. Through meticulous surveys and measurements, they accurately calculated their impact and offset their emissions through creating 'cycling buses', making a recycled materials bike shed and reforesting a once barren land. Their communications have been so thorough that they have spread their message throughout the country. As second prize winners of the Volvo Adventure Final 2009 their



inspiring example can be shared with the world.

## Mexico

Through the imagination of children, a truly sustainable entrepreneurial model has come to life with benefits for their families, environment and local economy. Using only 900 litres of water, each child has taken responsibility for a small aquaculture pond, providing a sustainable harvest and a nursery for repopulating the local waterways once they have been cleaned. This ingenious project has allowed the children to earn extra money to support their ongoing schooling and helped to spread the aquaculture ponds to other students and improve their environment. These young leaders are deserving winners of the Volvo Adventure Final 2009.

## Russia

Concerned about the amount of waste and the damage being made to their picturesque resort community of Zelenogradsk, these dedicated students succeeded in finding a practical solution to the wastage of paper. Through training and workshops, the enthusiastic students learnt paper recycling and spread the message throughout the school and wider region with a demonstrated benefit.

## Turkey

These motivated students brought an unrecognised environmental challenge to the attention of many schools and communities across Turkey, finding an innovative solution with dual benefits. By collecting cooking oil from schools and homes, then re-directing it for use as biofuels, this well planned project helps protect the water, local sewage infrastructure and climate.

## USA

Concerned about the multiple impacts that were harming and killing the local marine wildlife, with particular attention to manatees and dolphins, these students identified multiple creative solutions to help these animals. Through the use of strong and imaginative communications these young leaders engaged both local and national celebrities to raise awareness and funds to support the local environment and reaching out across the seas to support neighbouring Haiti.