

## Heroines of Earth

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As part of the Beahrs ELP assignments, we were expected to work on a project of a creative idea we developed. We were sorted into thematic groups based on our interests and areas of expertise.

I picked the environmental education team and was incredibly excited. I met very passionate, creative, and exceptional environmental professionals. Our group was a unique amalgamation of a water and environmental awareness specialist from Palestine, a senior specialist in agriculture development from Brazil, a passionate environmental leader specializing in agribusiness management from Angola, a lawyer with passion towards environmental education and ecological awareness from Brazil, and an Indonesian conservation biologist who masters in quality control, all accompanied by a multimedia specialist who describes himself as an artist.

As the journey of brainstorming, agreeing on a main theme, and engaging the whole team began, I found myself leading with passion and applying what I was learning in the program, from facilitating discussions effectively to reaching consensus. Working on this, I was always reminded of this quote:

***“You can't have strong leadership without passion.”*** Patrick Dixon

Because our group consisted of people from different time zones, setting our own meeting schedules to effectively work together was a challenge—but the diversity of the group members' origins, backgrounds and fields of expertise worked towards the project's best interests.

The idea we came up with was ***Heroines of Earth***. The project focuses on the two main causes I personally am very passionate about: the environment, and women empowerment.

Following the Rausser College of Natural Resources's motto, “***See the Bigger Picture. Make a Better World,***” we decided through “***Heroines of Earth***” to shed light on women saving our planet and playing a lead role in tackling some of the planet's biggest environmental threats.

We thought that it is time to connect our souls and energy to our planet Earth and to embrace all surrounding voices. So we came up with this idea to listen to these

heroines, hearing about their unique perspectives and experiences and passing their messages to the world.

We plan to promote and empower these women to enhance their actions. Many of them are invisible heroines due to the lack of recognition received as well as the challenges they face, but all of them influence a huge number of people and achieve impressive results.

To give you just one example of the women we feature on our website, here is a story about our youngest heroine: Emily from Brazil, a very inspiring young lady, and a 17-year-old student who lives in the rural area of the State of Bahia in Northeast Brazil. Watching her video explaining about her project, I couldn't stop smiling; even without reading the transcription I could hear the excitement she holds in her heart for her project.

Emily received a scholarship and enrolled in the Family Agriculture School (EFA) which adopts a scheme in which students rotate between school and their homes. This approach ensures that students learn techniques in school which can be adopted later in their family farms, integrating education and practice. In this scheme, Emily has learnt about agroforestry systems, different ways to use water sustainably, and agro ecological approaches respecting the local conditions, culture and environment. She has brought this knowledge to her family farm and to the community she lives in and has become a young environmental champion. In the surroundings where Emily lives, monoculture and use of pesticides is predominant, but Emily has shown a different path to implement agriculture in a responsible, diverse and sustainable manner. The unique *caatinga* biome in the semiarid region where Emily lives is under severe stress and climate change has affected the livelihood of farmers. Emily set a good example which has brought hope for a better future, which is more inclusive, diverse and sustainable.

Our main objectives of the project were to identify true heroines who take care of the waters, lands, forests, and seas of our planet, and to promote their small, frequent, and specific actions. Through their stories, these heroines will serve as role models and draw attention and more financing to such actions, therefore leading to influencing policy-making as well as inspiring many other women to become proactive in promoting our planet's environment.

Through our experiences of working in the environmental field, we found out that a major issue with regard to implementing projects is the lack of connections between women doing great work and who have outstanding ideas and initiatives, or organizations that might be interested to invest in or assist such projects. The website will serve as a tool to solve the problem of environmental illiteracy and the invisibility of

women leaders around the world by establishing bridges and partnerships with organizations, institutions, sponsors and leaders around the world, and using digital platforms and wide-ranging social networks.

When you visit the website [www.heroinesofearth.com](http://www.heroinesofearth.com), you will find a number of heroines mapped in their specific locations so that this will assist future financing. So if for example you are looking to know more heroines' stories from Palestine, then you can simply click on Palestine on the map and find the list of heroines from this specific country. This will also help if you are working on an environmental education project and are looking for stories about heroines in a specific area or if you would want to read more about possible projects in a specific area.

Our ultimate goal is to use this website as a tool to meet environmental goals that also reduce poverty and social conflict through connecting the heroines to interested organizations and funding resources. We started by selecting heroines from the countries of the group members' countries: Palestine, Angol , Indonesia, and Brazil. We created a website that tells these heroines' stories in a very creative yet user-friendly way.

We aim to expand this educational leadership project to the rest of the Beahrs ELP class of 2021 as a first step. We intend to expand this worldwide one day.

The website will also be accessible for other heroines to apply or be nominated in the future. Once this is the case, you can apply to be a heroine on our website. Once your application is submitted, a team of the environmental leaders will review your application; if the application is complete and all requirements are fulfilled, you will be placed on our heroines' map. You can also nominate a heroine. If you know of a heroine that you want to nominate you can apply and fill in the application.

There is also a "Causes" item in the menu; if you visit this area of the website, you can find brief descriptions of causes related to the heroines. This is where there is the opportunity for fundraising. So if you are interested in a cause, here is where you show your contribution by donating or simply sharing this cause with an organization that might be interested in funding such a cause.

On the website, there is also room for you to share your blog. Share your blog with us at [heroinesofearth@gmail.com](mailto:heroinesofearth@gmail.com) and we will be happy to review it and post it.

Heroines of Earth is designed in a way to initiate many collaborations and connections and assist people to get to know more about very valid causes. Visit our website

[www.heroinesofearth.com](http://www.heroinesofearth.com) to read some inspiring stories about our heroines and check our YouTube channel “Heroines of Earth” and get involved.