

PRESS RELEASE

Amsterdam, 5 December 2019



Lagos, Barcelona, Ixtepec (Mexico) and Kitale (Kenya) announced as winners of 2019 Transformative Cities People's Choice award

Four cities from three continents were declared winners of The Transformative Cities People's Choice Award for their work in the areas of water, energy, housing and food systems at a public award ceremony in Amsterdam on 4th December.

The four experiences were chosen from a selection of 12 finalists in an online vote by more than 5000 people. The award was launched in 2018 by the progressive think tank, Transnational Institute, to highlight people-led initiatives experimenting with new ways to practice democracy and secure access to basic rights. The second edition of the award was co-organised by TNI with Friends of the Earth International, Habitat International Coalition, The Global Right to the City Movement, RIPESS and ECOLISE. The result in 2019 is an *Atlas of Utopias* featuring 33 inspiring stories from 24 countries, from which the finalists were chosen.

The winners of the People's Choice Award are:

- Water category: [Environmental Rights Action \(Friends of the Earth Nigeria\) from Lagos \(Nigeria\)](#) which led efforts to resist water privatisation across Lagos, broadened citizen engagement in resolving the city's water crisis and increased government spending on water and sanitation in the city
- Energy category: [Barcelona Energia from Barcelona \(Spain\)](#) which has successfully challenged the private energy giants, expanded renewable, locally produced energy, put residents at the heart of decision making, guaranteeing them the right to energy, and has become the largest 100% public renewable electricity distributor in Spain
- Housing category: [Cooperación Comunitaria from Ixtepec \(Mexico\)](#), which galvanised the communities in Oaxaca to rebuild homes and businesses in the aftermath of the 2017 earthquake using traditional and modern techniques and materials so that they can withstand earthquakes and function in hot climates
- Food systems category: [Dajopen Waste Management Project from Kitale \(Kenya\)](#) which came together to transform waste into valuable recycled products to sell or to provide compost for food production. This has helped improve livelihoods, clean up local dwellings and the environment, and improved food and energy production.

Transformative Cities coordinator and TNI researcher **Sol Trumbo** said: "These experiences show the capacity and power of people-led initiatives to address today's global crises. They show there are public alternatives to the private corporate models that extract wealth, concentrate power and destroy the environment. We hope these and all the stories in our Atlas of Utopias inspire people everywhere to keep taking action and strengthen the people-based solutions we need."

Quote from winners

David Ngige, who received the Food Systems Award on behalf of the Dajopen Waste Management Project from Kitale (Kenya) noted: "Transformative Cities People's Choice Award is very important

because it brings together unacknowledged people from all over the world, to address the challenges and celebrate the achievements of the world's communities and societies."

Eloi Badia, Councillor of Climate Emergency and the Ecological Transition of the Barcelona City Council, receiving the award in the Energy Category on behalf of Barcelona Energia: "We have hacked the system and demonstrated that there are alternatives".

Isadora Hastings, who received the Housing Category award on behalf of Cooperación Comunitaria from Ixtepec (Mexico) remarked: "This award helps to highlight and share the achievements of Cooperación Comunitaria. After the 2017 earthquake, we worked with and integrated the knowledge of the community to rebuild their houses and upgrade them to resist future earthquakes."

Akinbode Oluwafemi, from Lagos (Nigeria), who received the Water Category award on behalf of [Environmental Rights Action - Friends of the Earth Nigeria](#) said "This recognition will motivate us to remain resolute in our quest for a definitive win in Lagos, because we know a win in Lagos will spur groups across Africa in similar conditions to fight on. We dedicate this award to the women, the labour activists, opinion leaders, youths, our international allies and several others marching shoulder to shoulder with us to resist water privatisation in Lagos, Nigeria and Africa."

The winners were announced at an award ceremony in the Ghanaian Church in Amsterdam on 4 December, hosted and moderated by the TV presenter Laura Flanders and streamed live. Viewers followed the ceremony from more than 10 countries. The event took place during an international conference '[The Future is Public](#), which brings together hundreds of city officials and social movement leaders from across the globe, to explore ways to advance participatory innovative economic models that can build community wealth, create decent jobs and address the climate crisis.

Following this public award, TNI will continue to support the many transformative cities by giving them more visibility and by facilitating processes of exchange and collective learning.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

High Quality pictures of the Award Ceremony (credit Jess Graham) [Download Link](#)
Website of the Transformative Cities initiative: <http://transformativecities.org>
Information about the Award Show and recording of the full event available at:
<https://transformativecities.org/transformative-cities-2019-peoples-choice-award-finale/>
Website Transnational Institute: <https://www.tni.org>
#TransformativeCities

CONTACT

To receive more information / interviews:
Denis Burke +31 622123908 English