

Woodland Park Zoo conservation program becomes UN Equator Initiative case study

SEATTLE- Woodland Park Zoo's international field conservation program, the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program (TKCP), was featured in a new case study published by the [United Nations Development Program's Equator Initiative](#). The case study is one in a growing series by the Equator Initiative that describes vetted and peer-reviewed best practices intended to inspire the policy dialogue needed to take local success to scale, improve the global knowledge base on local environment and development solutions, and serve as models for replication.



TKCP has been working for 20 years with local communities in Papua New Guinea (PNG) to protect endangered species and a diverse and valuable habitat. The program manages a community conservation area and locally-owned forest, the first of its kind in PNG and a model for community-based conservation in other parts of the country.

Case studies developed by the Equator Initiative highlight the work of former winners of the Equator Prize which recognizes local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities. TKCP was awarded the Equator Prize in 2014 for its extraordinary community-based conservation initiatives and livelihoods development. "We were incredibly honored to receive the Equator Prize in 2014 and we are thrilled the Equator Initiative chose to publish a case study on our program," said Lisa Dabek, PhD, founder and director of TKCP and senior conservation scientist at Woodland Park Zoo. "We hope the study helps other conservation organizations incorporate more community-based initiatives into their programs to ensure sustainable health and prosperity for living landscapes, biodiversity, people and culture."

The Yopno-Uruwa-Som (YUS) Conservation Area, which TKCP helps to manage, covers over 187,000 acres of habitat committed to conservation by local landowners to protect endemic and endangered wildlife species, including the Huon tree kangaroo. To support these communities, TKCP has partnered with the private sector and PNG government on a conservation livelihoods program and a coffee harvesting project, which has already brought in more than \$75,000 for local farmers and their families. Farmers use this additional income to pay for their children's school fees, family health expenses and basic household necessities.

"Conservation is ultimately about people," said Dabek. "If we do not focus on community-based conservation and sustainable living, we will not succeed in conserving endangered species. That is why, over the years, TKCP has grown and evolved into a comprehensive program that includes local landowners in decision-making and works directly with the indigenous communities to provide them the

skills, knowledge and resources they need to manage the area effectively and protect native species, like the tree kangaroo, forever.”

In addition to the Equator Prize, TKCP received the Association of Zoos & Aquariums’ (AZA) International Conservation Award in 2002 and 2014, and TKCP’s Conservation Strategies Manager Karau Kuna won the 2016 Whitley Award, a highly esteemed international nature conservation prize. In 2016, Dabek was nominated for the prestigious Indianapolis Prize in recognition of her groundbreaking wildlife conservation efforts through the program.

Read the full case study published by the Equator Initiative [here](#). To learn more about TKCP, visit www.zoo.org/tkcp.

Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, award-winning Woodland Park Zoo is famed for pioneering naturalistic exhibits and setting international standards for zoos in animal care, conservation and education programs. Woodland Park Zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats through more than 40 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. By inspiring people to care and act, Woodland Park Zoo is making a difference in our planet’s future ecological health and sustainability. For more information, visit www.zoo.org.

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