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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Sustainable technology awarded at 2025 Young Inventors Prize ceremony**

* **French-American chemist Marie Perrin wins the World Builders prize for her method to recycle rare earth elements from fluorescent lamps**
* **Ugandan team Sandra Namboozo and Samuel Muyita awarded Community Healers prize for biodegradable sachets that reduce fruit spoilage**
* **US sisters Neeka and Leila Mashouf receive Nature Guardians prize for turning industrial CO₂ emissions into sustainable textiles**
* **Spanish team Granado, Sosa and Chimeno named People’s Choice winners for smart labels reducing food waste**

**Munich/Reykjavik, 18 June 2025** – During a ceremony held today in Iceland, the **European Patent Office** (EPO) has awarded **three special prizes** as part of the **2025 Young Inventors Prize**. These recognise outstanding achievements by inventors aged 30 and under whose **work supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). A fourth distinction, the **People’s Choice winner**, was awarded to Spanish inventors Granado, Sosa and Chimeno, after having ranked first in the public vote.

The ten winners of this year’s Young Inventors Prize — known as the Tomorrow Shapers — were selected by an independent jury from over 450 candidates worldwide, each receiving EUR 5 000. From this group, the jury awarded special recognition to **Marie Perrin** (France/US), **Sandra Namboozo and Samuel Muyita** (Uganda), and **Neeka and Leila Mashouf** (US) naming them World Builders, Community Healers, and Nature Guardians, respectively, with each receiving an additional EUR 15 000. The team of Spanish inventors Granado, Sosa and Chimeno was also chosen by public vote as the People’s Choice winner, earning a further EUR 5 000.

**World Builders prize**  
**Marie Perrin (28)**, a French-American chemist based in Switzerland, was awarded the World Builders Prize for her invention– a cleaner method to recycle rare earth elements (REEs) from discarded fluorescent lamps. Rare earths are essential to electronics and green tech, but difficult and environmentally damaging to extract. Perrin’s method, commercialised through her company REEcover, **avoids harmful solvents** and complex purification, making it easier to reuse resources instead of relying on new mining. The process achieves selective recovery of europium while preserving the ability to reuse chemicals, significantly **reducing toxic waste compared to conventional methods**.

*“It has been a true privilege to stand alongside such inspiring young innovators from across the globe, and I hope it encourages more young women to see themselves as inventors and changemakers,”* said Perrin.

The World Builders prize honours innovators advancing sustainable access to essential resources, such as water, energy and infrastructure. Their work drives circular economy solutions that promote prosperity while reducing environmental impact.

**Community Healers prize**  
**Ugandan entrepreneurs Sandra Namboozo (26) and Samuel Muyita (28)** received the Community Healers Prize forhaving developed a biodegradable sachet that triples the shelf life of fruit without refrigeration. The sachets release plant-based compounds that slow down ripening and help to **reduce food waste.** The duo founded Karpolax to commercialise their work and support smallholder farmers. In pilot tests, Karpolax-treated mangoes remained fresh for 33 days, compared to just 11 days for untreated fruits.

*“Winning a special prize is a powerful validation,”* said Namboozo and Muyita. *“It shines a global spotlight on a simple truth: innovation rooted in empathy can change the world.”*

The Community Healers prize recognises changemakers focused on social equity through solutions in food security, healthcare, education and fair working conditions.

**Nature Guardians prize**  
Twin sisters **Neeka and Leila Mashouf (28)**, from the United States, were awarded the Nature Guardians prize for a carbon capture process that mimics photosynthesis. Through their company **Rubi Laboratories**, they developed an enzymatic method that **converts CO₂ emissions into biodegradable cellulose for textiles** **and other products**. The company’s closed-loop system uses carbon from manufacturing waste streams to produce regenerated fabric without fossil-based fibres or dyes.

*“It took countless trials, errors and optimisations to make it all work,”* said Neeka. *“From producing enzymes that had never been made before to testing them in conditions no one had ever explored.”*

The Nature Guardians prize celebrates innovators dedicated to protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, addressing climate change, ocean health and wildlife conservation.

**People’s Choice winner**

Spanish entrepreneurs Pilar Granado (29), Pablo Sosa Domínguez (29) and Luis Chimeno (28) are the People’s Choice winners. Their innovation of smart labels that indicate food spoilage based on bacterial growth was selected by public vote for its potential to help reduce food waste and increase food safety, while promoting sustainability across the supply chain.

*"We are very excited and grateful for the recognition! It is a motivational boost for us, as this award shows that we are on the right track and that our solution could really change the world, taking a positive step towards a more sustainable and safer supply chain for all",* said the team.

The People’s Choice is chosen by the general public. Voting opened online on 6 May when all the Tomorrow Shapers were announced and closed just before the ceremony started.

**The Young Inventors Prize celebrates worldwide innovators 30 and under using technology to address global challenges posed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

**The winners of the 2025 edition were announced today during** [**a ceremony livestreamed**](https://www.epo.org/en/news-events/young-inventors-prize/2025-event?mtm_camp=pressrelease&mtm_key=yip2025&mtm_med=press) **from Iceland.**

Find more information about the inventions, their impact and the inventors’ stories [here](https://younginventorsprize.org/?mtm_camp=pressrelease&mtm_key=yip2025&mtm_med=press).

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**About the Young Inventors Prize**

Aimed at individuals 30 and under, the Young Inventors Prize showcases the transformative power of youth-driven solutions and recognises the remarkable young people paving the way to a more sustainable future. Established in 2022, trophies were first handed out during the European Inventor Award ceremony. As of 2025, the Prize has moved up a gear with its own dedicated event, held separately from the Award. Among the 10 Tomorrow Shapers selected for each edition, three receive special prizes: World Builders, Community Healers, and Nature Guardians. In addition, a People’s Choice winner is selected through an online public vote. Each Tomorrow Shaper receives EUR 5 000, while the three special prize winners are awarded an additional EUR 15 000. The People’s Choice winner also receives an extra EUR 5 000. [Read more](https://www.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award?mtm_camp=press-multi&mtm_key=yip2025&mtm_med=agency) on the Young Inventors Prize eligibility and selection criteria.

**About the EPO**

With 6,300 staff members, the[European Patent Office (EPO)](https://www.epo.org/en?mtm_camp=press-multi&mtm_key=yip2025&mtm_med=agency) is one of the largest public service institutions in Europe. Headquartered in Munich with offices in Berlin, Brussels, The Hague and Vienna, the EPO was founded with the aim of strengthening co-operation on patents in Europe. Through the EPO's centralised patent granting procedure, inventors are able to obtain high-quality patent protection in up to 46 countries, covering a market of some 700 million people. The EPO is also the world's leading authority in patent information and patent searching.