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WORLD OCEAN EXPLORER EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM WINS UNITY SOCIAL IMPACT PRIZE

UNITED STATES – The 2025 Unity for Humanity Grant Winners have been announced, and the World Ocean Explorer platform is among the esteemed group of winners, chosen by popular vote of the employees of Unity Technologies worldwide. This year, with a record number of applicants, World Ocean Explorer virtual immersion is among 10 winners and three honorable mentions spanning nine countries.

Unity for Humanity is a program that supports the work and empowers a global community of impact-driven creators using the Unity game engine, to solve complex issues and build inclusive solutions. Unity for Humanity empowers creators to make the world a better place by helping bring their visions to life and amplifying their impact.

"We are honored to have received this esteemed award," said Trisha Badger, Director of the World Ocean Observatory. "Thanks to each Unity employee who voted for our project, expressing confidence in our work and the potential of the World Ocean Explorer platform to inspire the next generation of learners and teachers, thinkers and doers to know more, to become more ocean literate, and to do more to protect and sustain our connected natural systems. World Ocean Explorer, one of a handful of web-based educational initiatives of World Ocean Observatory (W2O) is transformational and intergenerational. Thanks to Unity for Humanity, Unity's amazing 3D webGL technology which makes Explorer possible, and with the support from foundations and prescient individuals, Explorer is free to any student, anywhere, at any time, and soon in multiple languages. We're creating an immersive, web-based system to connect and inform the next generation of citizens of the ocean."

World Ocean Explorer, an educational project of the World Ocean Observatory, is a transformative virtual aquarium designed to deepen understanding of the world ocean and amplify connection for young people worldwide. Organized around the principles of Ocean Literacy and in conformance with Next Gen Science and Common Core State Standards, World Ocean Explorer brings the wonder and knowledge of ocean species and systems to students in formal and informal classrooms. Teacher-vetted, award-winning, endorsed for 2025 by the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 (the 'Ocean Decade') Explorer is in classrooms now via a

growing cohort of marine educators around the world.

"World Ocean Explorer is a powerful example of how immersive technology can democratize access to science education. I love how it brings ocean literacy to life for students around the world—especially in underserved communities—through a free, browser-based platform that's both engaging and deeply informative," said Kevin Truong, Senior Grants Program Manager for Unity Social Impact. All projects were judged by the employees of Unity Technology, and were reviewed based on vision, impact, inclusion, and viability. What the Unity Team liked about the World Ocean Explorer project: "Endorsed by the UN Decade of Ocean Science and awarded by Serious Play, Explorer already has traction and credibility. As a WebGL browser-based platform, Explorer is widely accessible, especially for low connectivity schools."

Recognition by Unity Technologies and support through their Social Impact work provides not only financial support to bring Explorer to more classrooms and in more languages, but also an amplification of the platform through Unity's reach to a wider audience as a means to create lasting change, and mentorship by the Unity technical team. "We are very much looking forward to receiving technical support from Unity as part of this prize. Optimization is always something that can be improved upon within the Explorer platform, and we will be working to integrate Spanish and Portuguese into the Deep Sea module by the end of 2025. We anticipate the Unity team helping us to streamline that integration," said Dr. Bjorn Grigholm, owner and creative director of Visual Solutions Lab and World Ocean Explorer platform developer. "Unity's rendering engine enables the integration of real-world imagery, streamable field videos, and interactive 3D models, enhancing the visual and educational experience. "Unity's WebGL deployment ensures accessibility across computer platforms (e.g., PC and Mac) through the Chrome browser, eliminating the need for application downloads. This innovation makes Explorer more attractive and accessible for classroom use, and more widely available to educators, students, and the public. We are excited to see what more the technology is capable of," said Dr. Grigholm. Visit worldoceanexplorer.org to learn more about the Deep Sea module and other theme-based explorations.

For 22 years, World Ocean Observatory (W2O) has been a leading organization advocating for the health and sustainability of the ocean through an accessible worldwide network of communication. Through education, advocacy, collaboration, public connection, and relentless communications, W2O is committed to building an expansive global community of *Citizens of the Ocean* to promote and conserve marine resources for the future of all mankind. Online at worldoceanobservatory.org.