



ECOLOGY PROJECT
INTERNATIONAL

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Creating more vibrant, resilient, and sustainable communities





ECOLOGY PROJECT
INTERNATIONAL

OUR MISSION: We inspire youth with nature and empower them with science, fostering tomorrow's leaders.

OUR VISION: We envision a diverse movement building communities that cherish and restore the ecosystems that sustain them.



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ECOLOGY PROJECT
INTERNATIONAL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS

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Principal, MDH & Associates

David Wilson *Vice Chair*

President, Triple C Management

Clara Rowe, *Secretary*

Director of Strategic Partnership, Land Life

Leslie Dallapiazza, *Treasurer*

VP (Retired) First Interstate Bank

MEMBERS

Steve Anderson, *Emeritus*

CFP, Navion Financial Advisors

Nicole Demeisi

Digital Transformation Project Lead -
Bayer Crop Science, Dusseldorf Germany

Sara Guenther, Ph.D.

Program Evaluation Specialist, Montana
State University

Joel Pontius, PH.D.

Consultant

Steve McCarthy, *Emeritus*

Founder & Vice President, Systems
Engineering Associates, Inc.

Julie Osborn

Co-founder, EPI

Paul Shore

Founder, PostScript Strategies & Author

Rebecca Shultz

EPI Alumni & Self Employed

T'Noya Thompson

Manager, NAAEE Research, Evaluation,
and eeBLUE

Jorge Torre

Development Director, Comunidad y
Biodiversidad AC (COBI)

Nicholas Vidargas

Attorney

Laura Iza

EPI Alumni & Self Employed

Charles Holmes

Self Employed

CELEBRATING PARTNERSHIPS

Dear EPI Community,

Partnership has always been at the heart of EPI's impact, and 2024 proved this more than ever. From our founding, we've believed that collaboration can truly change the world.

This year exemplified how partnerships amplify our impact. Strategic alliances with organizations like Moody Gardens allowed us to expand wildlife research at Pacuare Reserve, while local collaborations with community members shaped new conservation management plans. Corporate partners like Fyffes invested in the next generation of marine conservation leaders through our youth programs.

What excites me most are the grassroots partnerships across all our sites—from indigenous knowledge keepers in Mexico enriching our desert ecosystem understanding, to local researchers helping students track bison in Yellowstone. These authentic relationships keep our programs grounded and meaningful.

Our global team's seamless collaboration across five countries creates experiences that inspire nearly 5,000 participants annually, all working toward one unified conservation movement.

Looking ahead, we're building on this foundation with ambitious plans: removing barriers so more young people can access our life-changing programs, embracing technology innovations that enhance learning, and creating a networked model where our strongest programs support emerging ones. We're developing inclusive leadership pathways and strengthening alumni engagement so graduates become lasting champions for conservation in their own communities.

The challenges facing our planet require deeper collaboration than ever before. With partners like you walking alongside us, we're not just adapting—we're thriving and expanding our reach.

Together, we'll continue changing the world, one participant at a time.

Miguel Fuentes
Executive Director

ECOLOGY PROJECT INTERNATIONAL

LEADERSHIP TEAM



MIGUEL FUENTES
Executive Director



NOREEN HUMES
Development Director



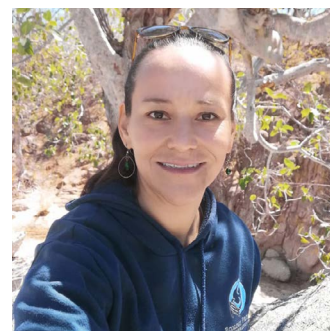
LISA MACKI
Admissions & Business
Strategy Director



JOE LOVISKA
Yellowstone Program
Manager



JEN MUSER
Finance & Admin
Manager



MARLU ROBLEDO
Mexico Program
Manager



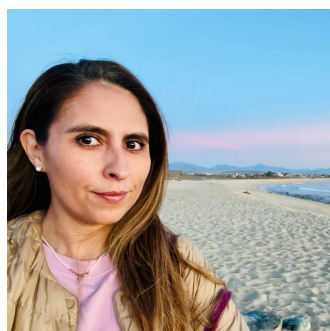
MELISSA SEGURA
Development Manager



NEALA SIEGLE
Marketing Manager



DAVE SCHIMELPFENIG
Program Operations Manager



ADRIANA VAZQUEZ
Human Talent
Manager



JUAN CARLOS ZUÑIGA
Costa Rica Program
Manager



EYLEN ZUÑIGA
Pacuare Reserve
Manager

PARTNERSHIPS AT THE HEART OF IMPACT

COLLABORATION THAT POWERS CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION.



In the year 2000, when EPI's founders set out to create a conservation education program for high school students in Costa Rica, many people warned them it wouldn't work. "High school kids? They'll get in trouble. They won't follow the rules. They'll mess up the research." But thanks to the support of key allies who believed in the vision, EPI was born. From the beginning, partnerships have not just supported our work, they have enhanced it and helped bring our vision to life.

EPI's mission rests on two core pillars: transformative education and direct conservation. We run experiential science education programs for high school and university students and educators across all our sites: Costa Rica, Mexico, Belize, Galápagos, and the United States. These courses take place in real conservation settings where young people become active participants in scientific research and environmental protection.

Pacuare Reserve is home to EPI's direct conservation efforts. This 1700-acre protected area on Costa Rica's Caribbean coast turned 35 in 2024. Pacuare's permanence and success over the decades are a testament to collaboration. The Reserve thrives thanks to public and private partnerships with the Costa Rican government, collaboration with scientific institutions, cooperation with the neighboring communities and schools, engagement with international volunteers, and participation in national networks like the Civil Society Organizations Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Costa Rica. Every conservation success at Pacuare is the result of these connections.

So, what do we mean when we say partnerships? We mean a shared investment in outcomes, a commitment to work together whether through funding, implementation, knowledge sharing, or long-term planning. We mean the individuals, foundations, companies, government agencies, and nonprofits who walk alongside us, shaping programs and multiplying impact.

In 2024, these partnerships made a measurable difference across all our programs and regions.



PARTNERSHIPS HAVE NOT JUST SUPPORTED OUR WORK, THEY HAVE ENHANCED IT AND HELPED BRING OUR VISION TO LIFE. WE MEAN A SHARED INVESTMENT IN OUTCOMES, A COMMITMENT TO WORK TOGETHER—THROUGH FUNDING, IMPLEMENTATION, KNOWLEDGE SHARING, OR LONG-TERM PLANNING—TO SHAPE PROGRAMS AND MULTIPLY IMPACT.

With your support, students discovered the power of science to make change, educators reimaged how to teach sustainability, and protected areas were strengthened with the help of both global and local allies.

From individual donors to international funders, from remote schools to major universities, every contribution matters. We are proud that many of our partnerships have lasted for years, grounded in trust and a shared sense of purpose. Others are just beginning, and we are excited for the possibilities they bring.

Looking ahead, the challenges are urgent: climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental injustice. But we believe the answers lie in more collaboration, deeper networks, and continued belief in the power of youth and science.

To each of you who has believed, invested, shown up, and stayed the course: thank you. Our work is only possible because you are in it with us. Together, we will keep building a more just and sustainable world.

GLOBAL PARTICIPATION

Engaging Youth and Communities in Conservation

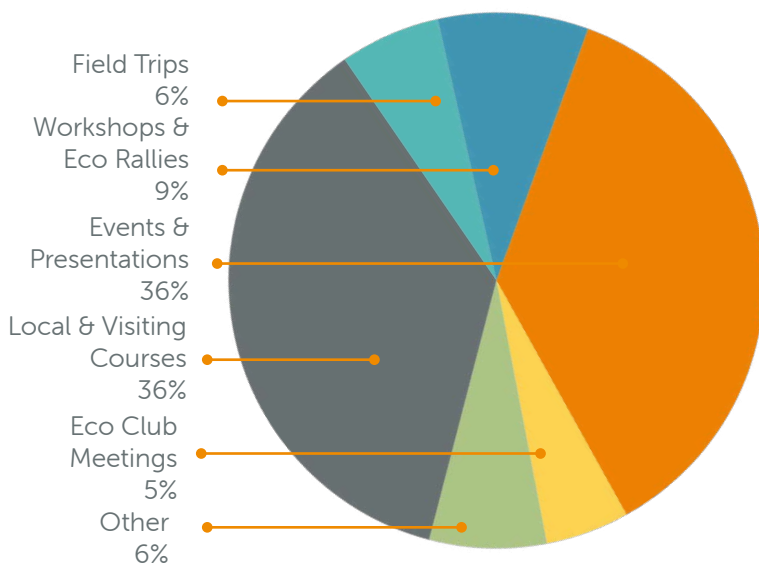
In 2024, we hosted 2 field trips, 10 workshops and eco-rallies, 28 presentations and events, 15 eco-club meetings, and 4 community service projects—providing hands-on experiences that empower youth and communities to take action for the environment. A total of 4,884 people participated in these activities, with 3,658 of them being local.

Global Reach, Local Impact

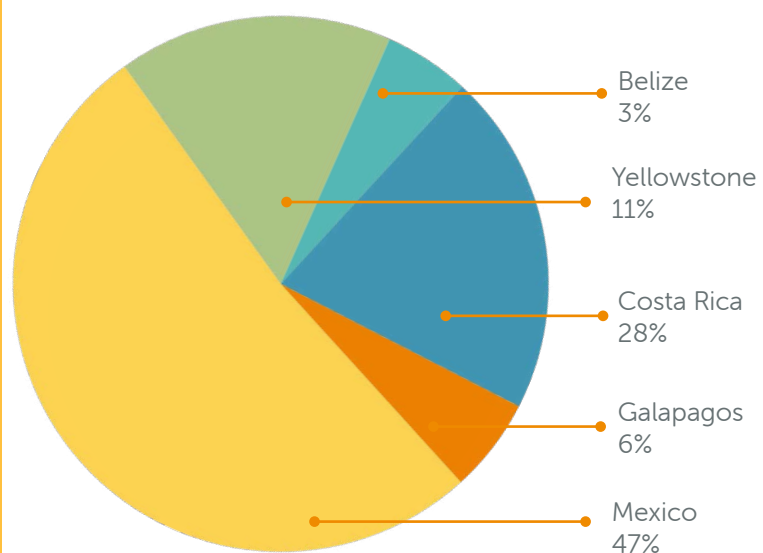
Since our founding, we've reached 124,997 participants across all programs. This year, Mexico led engagement with 50% of participants, followed by Costa Rica (20%), Yellowstone (16%), Galapagos (5.5%), and Belize (5%). Our 2024 offerings were diverse: 36% attended courses or presentations, 9% joined eco-rallies and workshops, and 5% participated in eco-club meetings. With 75% of this year's participants attending as locals, we remain deeply rooted in the communities we serve.

EPI has reached a total of **124,997** participants through field and community-based programs to date!

LOCAL & VISITING STUDENTS



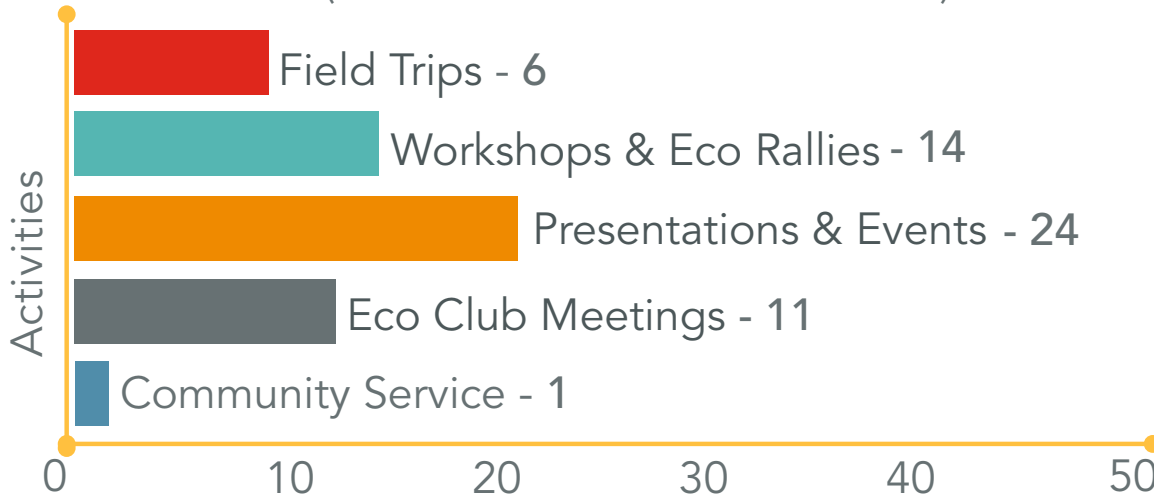
PARTICIPANTS BY PROGRAM



I WAS STRUCK BY HOW ENJOYABLE THE EXPERIENCE WAS. I LEARNED HOW TO ADAPT BETTER AND WORK IN A TEAM, I LEARNED HOW TO ASK SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS AND CONDUCT RESEARCH, AND THE MOST VALUABLE PART OF THE EXPERIENCE FOR ME WAS SHARING IT WITH ALL MY CLASSMATES, MY PEERS AND THE EPI INSTRUCTORS

-SANTIAGO, 17 YEARS OLD, MEXICO LOCAL ALUMNUS

ALUMNI & OUTREACH ACTIVITIES (EXCLUDES CORE FIELD PROGRAMS)



Thanks to our
partners and supporters,
**EPI engaged
4,884**
participants in field-based programs
& increased
their knowledge of
environmental action
strategies by
31%

GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

Alumni Activities: Opportunities to increase environmental leadership roles for alumni within their community/school/workplace—most participants in these activities will have participated in an EPI core field program

Community Service: Volunteer service work taking place in the community at large, led by EPI staff and/or alumni

Core Programs: EPI's flagship multi-day courses, partnering students and scientists in the field at every program site

Eco Club Meetings: A gathering of EPI alumni and other local youth to collaborate or plan future alumni/community activities

Eco Tour: Field courses or short trips for adults and families

Field Trip: Short (1-3 days) alumni excursions into the field to participate in research and observation

Festivals & Symposiums: Gatherings coordinated by EPI staff and volunteers that attract large numbers of participants, families, teachers, school administrators, partners, and community members

Outreach: Activities intended to reach a broader local audience who haven't yet or can't participate in our core programs

Presentations & Events: Educational opportunities for the public or a specific group of EPI constituents led by EPI alumni, staff, and scientific partners

Workshops: Short-term, curriculum-based activities that take place in the field or other locations outside of a school

A FUTURE SPARKED BY FIELD SCIENCE

HOW EPI SHAPES ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS BEYOND BORDERS



Before his Ecology Project International (EPI) course in 2021, Atticus Coyne planned to follow a familiar path—medical school, like many of his peers at his Washington, D.C. private school. But nine days in the wilds of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem changed everything.

Tracking bison, spotting wolves, and discovering amphibians lit a fire in Atticus. The immersive, hands-on experience introduced him to environmental science and a new way of seeing the world—and his future.

He also found unexpected connection. As an eighth-grade open enrollment student placed with high school juniors and seniors from Michigan, Atticus started the course knowing

no one. But the wonders of Yellowstone and shared fieldwork quickly united the group. “I didn’t expect to feel so included or inspired,” he reflected.

Energized by his EPI experience, Atticus spent the next two summers backpacking and mountaineering with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Around the same time, a family friend introduced him to Cooperative Casa Carey, a conservation group in Nicaragua—his birth country—focused on protecting endangered Hawksbill sea turtles.

Motivated by a growing sense of purpose, Atticus returned to Nicaragua to volunteer. “I was raised in an eco-house my mom built on a small farm outside Managua,” he shared. “Life was full of mango trees, gardens, and forests.” Returning brought back a sense of wonder and a

deeper commitment to conservation.

At the Padre Ramos Reserve, he helped protect sea turtle nests from poachers, ensuring hatchlings reached the sea. He also used his website development skills to build a digital platform for the Cooperative, helping them reach new donors and ecotourists.

Now a passionate environmental advocate, Atticus describes EPI as “a facilitator for the future.” His journey from Yellowstone to Nicaragua shows how time in nature can change everything.

Thanks to your support, students like Atticus are discovering new paths and making a difference. “There’s something about being outside that opens young people’s minds,” he says.

Imagine where the next EPI student might go!



FISCAL YEAR 2024

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

TOTAL REVENUE
\$6,026,062

TOTAL EXPENSES
\$6,320,685

Assets

Current Assets	\$1,415,276
Non-Fixed Assets (Property & Equipment)	\$1,628,564
TOTAL ASSETS	\$3,043,840

Liabilities & Net Assets

Accounts Payable & Payroll Liabilities	\$139,947
Pre-paid Programs	\$1,531,480
Other Current Liabilities	\$103,960
Long-term Liabilities	\$218,400
Equity	\$1,050,053
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$3,043,840

Figures as of December 31, 2024

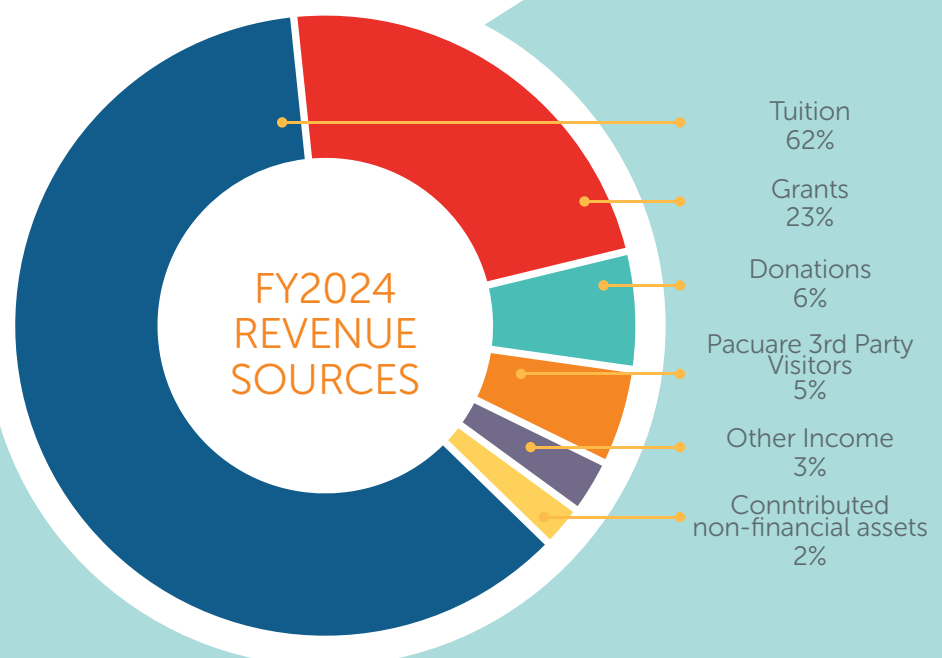
“THE CULTURAL EXCHANGE HAD A BIG IMPACT ON ME AND THE CALIFORNIOS VERDES WILL BE A GROUP I WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AND REMEMBER. I AM NOW MORE CONFIDENT IN WHAT I CAN ACHIEVE BOTH PHYSICALLY AND SOCIALLY

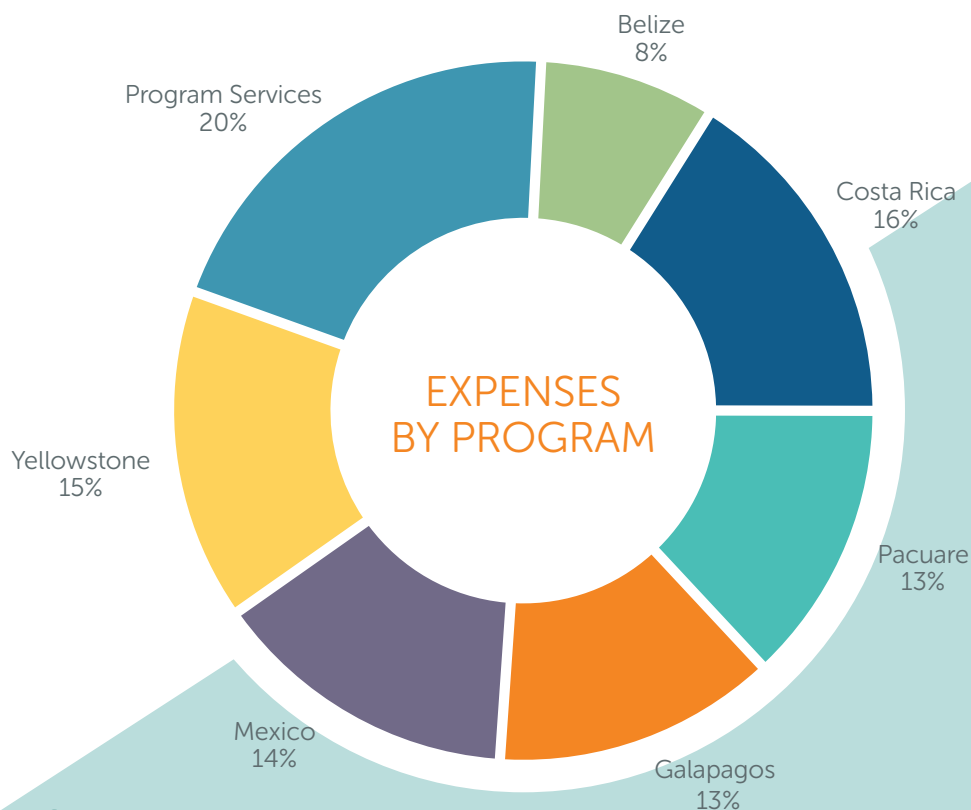
-CALLIE, 2024 EPI MEXICO PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

REVENUE

In FY24, EPI experienced a revenue resurgence, approaching a return to pre-pandemic levels. With 52% of our funding driven by student and educator tuition, this showcased the resilience of our core revenue streams, with donations and other income remaining steady.

Grant revenue continued to play a pivotal role, affirming our adeptness in securing diverse funding streams. Our commitment to a balanced blend of earned income, donations, and grants ensures the sustainability of our mission in environmental education and conservation.

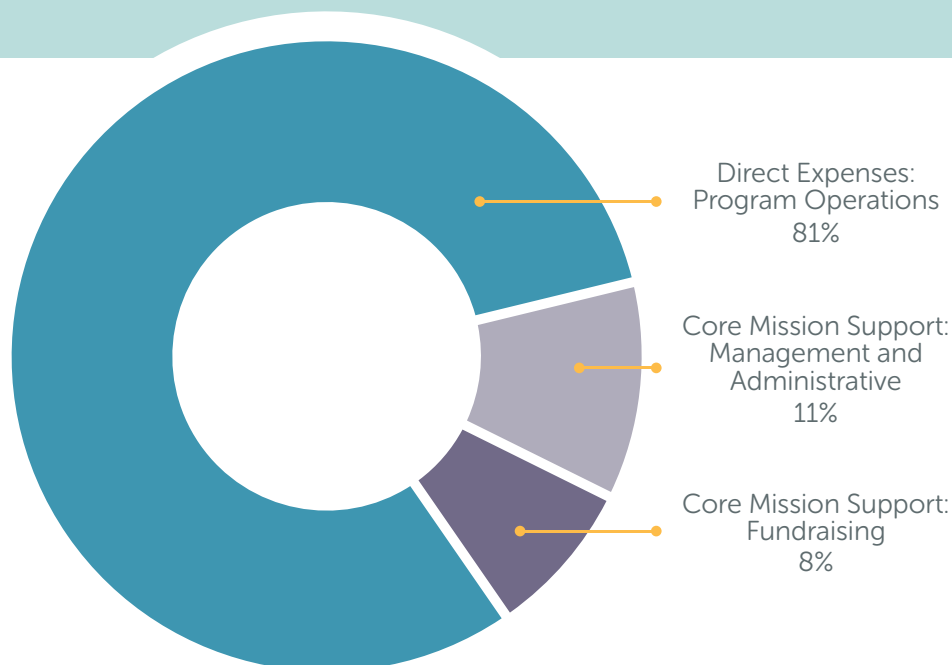




EXPENSES

As of FY2024, EPI is on track to approach its pre-pandemic program expense levels, nearing the five-year average of 80%. Despite necessary adjustments to maintain stability in 2020 and 2021, every expense, including crucial mission support, contributes to the development of impactful and transformative programs. Our expenses are categorized into four primary areas:

- **Direct Program Expenses:** The for each program is tailored based on factors like the number of participants, activities, and course duration.
- **Core Mission Management and Administrative Support:** Encompassing Finance, HR, Systems, and Board of Directors oversight.
- **Core Mission Fundraising Support:** Facilitating EPI's historic goal that 70% or more of our participants are underserved students.



PACUARE RESERVE

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF CONSERVATION & COLLABORATION

In 2024, Pacuare Reserve celebrated 35 years of protecting the vibrant biodiversity of Costa Rica's Caribbean coast. From the beginning, our impact has been made possible through partnerships—with donors, local communities, public institutions, and like-minded organizations around the world.

This year, those connections continued to flourish. With the Costa Rican Red Cross, we offered first aid training to staff and collaborated on programs that

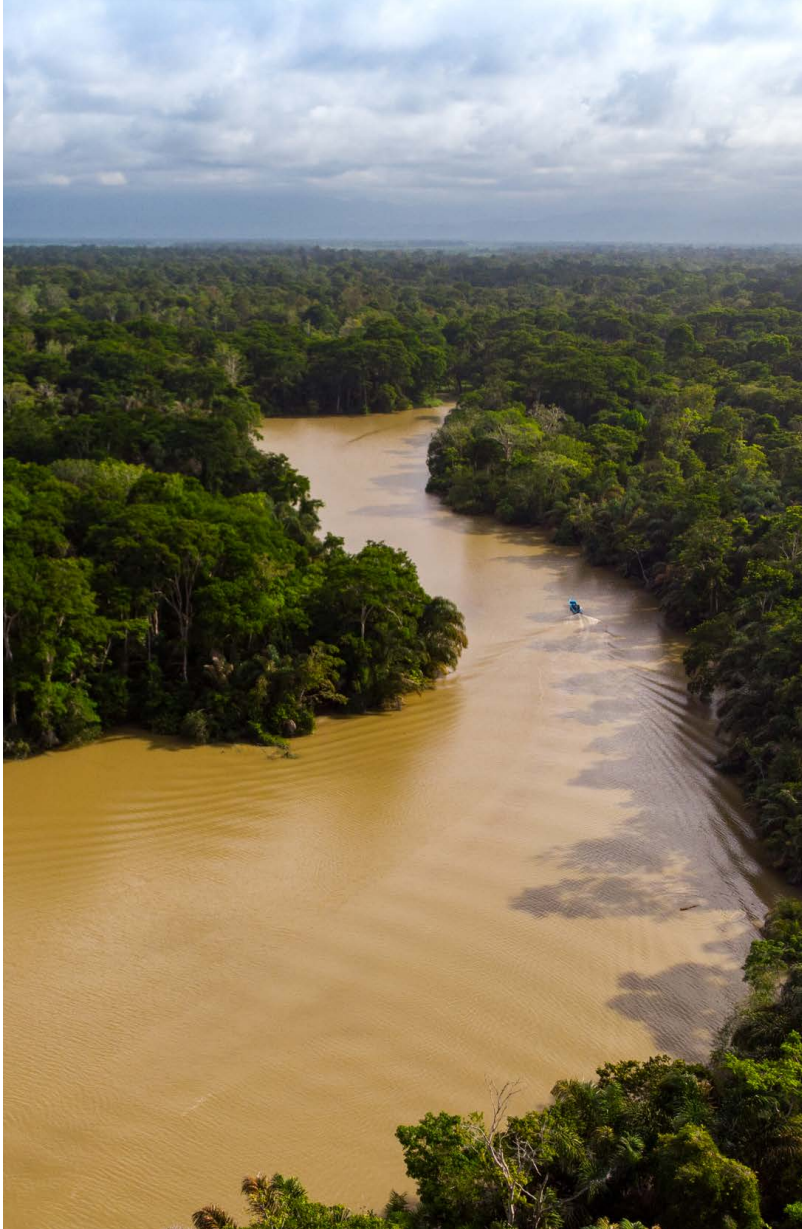
build community resilience and support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Ecology Project International (EPI), which manages the Reserve, was invited to speak at an international training event led by the Red Cross and United Nations, highlighting our shared commitment to sustainability.

We also participated in Costa Rica's National Forum on Sustainable Development through our role in the Civil Society Platform for SDG implementation. This platform connects us with organizations across the country, allowing us to share lessons and build momentum for change.

Locally, we worked with SINAC and community members to shape a new Reserve Management Plan that will guide our conservation efforts for years to come. Fyffes, a tropical produce company, supported our youth education programs, helping students become leaders in protecting marine and coastal ecosystems. And with the support of Moody Gardens in Texas, we expanded our wildlife research and began building a new observation post to monitor the rare agami heron.

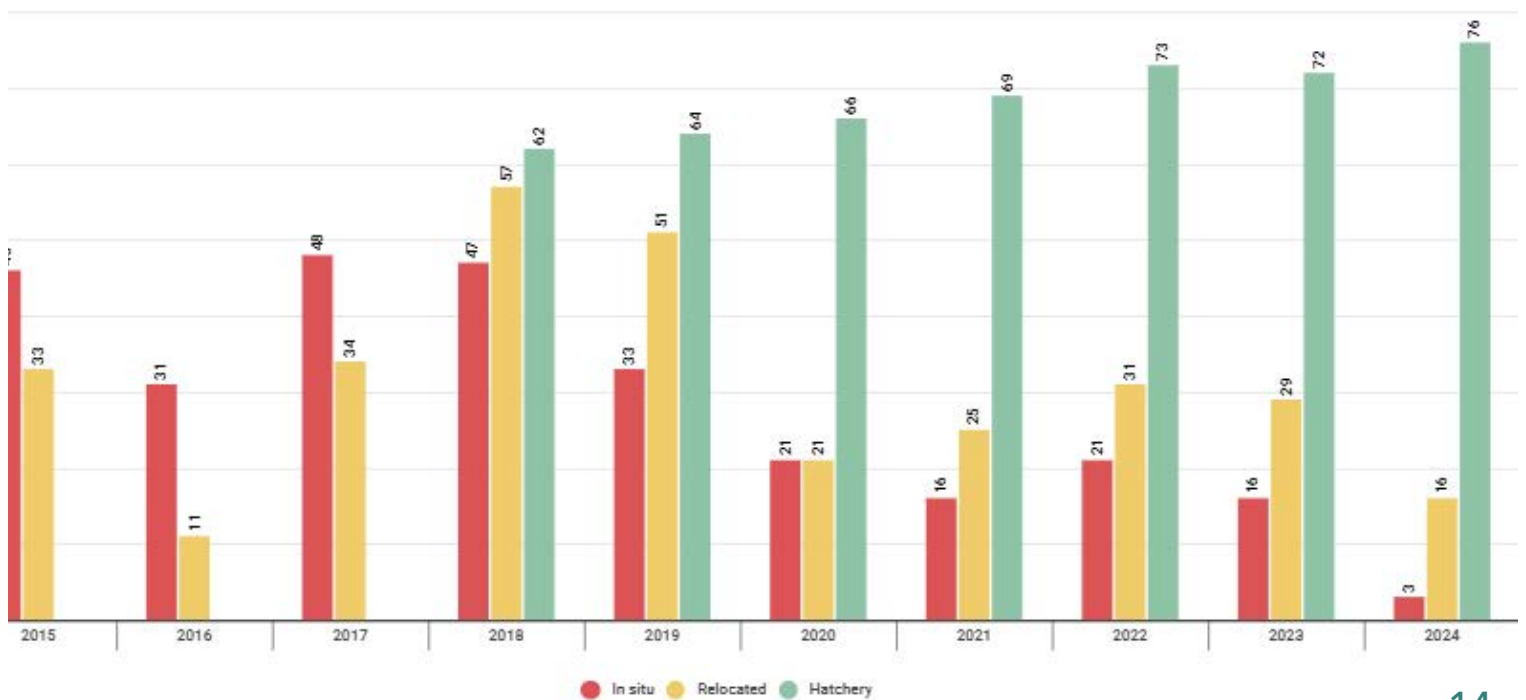
Every one of these partnerships brings us closer to a more sustainable future—proof that when we work together, we can achieve something truly lasting.

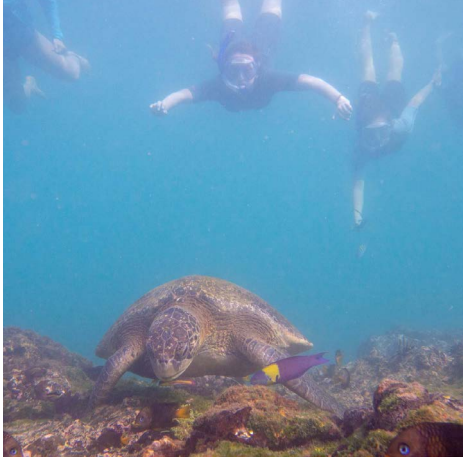




Photos: Batsu Estudio

LEATHERBACK HATCHING SUCCESS % BY METHOD





YOUR 2024 GIFTS

Our 2024 supporter lists include gifts of \$1,000 or more made during the calendar year: January 1 - December 31, 2024.

Aaron & Veronica Hirsh
 Alumbra Innovations Foundation
 Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Asociación de Empleados de Procter & Gamble
 Bridgemill Foundation
 Buzz & Lisa Hines
 Carly's Kids
 Chick-fil-A, Inc.
 Christopher Kennedy
 Clearwater Credit Union
 Cross Charitable Foundation
 Dan McCallum
 David & Nelda Hirsh
 Edward L. Anderson Jr. Foundation
 Family Health International (FHI 360) & the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
 Foundation to Decrease World Suck
 Fyffes Costa Rica
 Google
 Howard Hughes Medical Institute - BioInteractive
 Janel Crawford & Johannes Meerjanssen
 Joyfully Managed Life
 JP & Bridget Henson
 Julie Osborn & Scott Pankratz
 Justice Outside
 Leslie Dallapiazza
 Lisa Rooney-Zarri & Philip Zarri
 Logjam Presents
 M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust
 Mediterranean Shipping Company & MSC Foundation
 Montana Governor's Office of Budget & Program Planning, GEER II

Moody Gardens, Inc.
 North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)
 National Forest Foundation
 Nicole-Anne Boyer
 P.D. Jackson Family Foundation
 Pamela & Willie Hodges
 Patagonia
 Patagonia - Denver
 Patrick & Mary Ann Piette
 Paul Shore
 Rebecca Schultz in honor of Patricia Parker
 Richard & Lucille Adelman
 Rick & Lori Klein
 Ruth Moss
 Sahm Family Foundation Fund at International Community Foundation
 Salesforce
 Scientist.com
 Shawn Smallwood
 Shodeen Family Foundation
 State of Montana
 Stephen & Annette McCarthy
 Steve & Karen Wiel
 The David C. Wilson Fund
 The Drollinger Family Charitable Foundation
 The Ida & William Rosenthal Foundation
 The Merlin Foundation
 The Sartain & Tamez Family Trust
 U.S. Embassy San José
 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 William H. & Margaret M. Wallace Foundation

EPI LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to the members of our Leadership Circle who have generously designated EPI as a beneficiary in their wills. Their unwavering dedication to our planet serves as a shining example of commitment and inspires hope for a better tomorrow.

Laurie & Virgil Boss
 Erin Clark
 Buzz & Lisa Hines
 Ann Horton
 Steve & Annette McCarthy
 Christy & Donaldson Miele
 Julie Osborn & Scott Pankratz
 Catherine Parke
 Tom Quirk
 Robert Sartain
 Lin Smith
 Steve & Karen Wiel
 Jennifer & Norm Williamson
 Dale Woolhiser & Nancy Thompson
 Philip Zarri & Lisa Rooney-Zarri



We work hard to keep accurate information, but if you find your name misspelled or you believe you gave \$1000 or more to EPI in 2024, and do not find your name, please know this is not intentional and we'd love to hear from you to correct our information!

OUR TEAM

ADMIN & FINANCE

Miguel Fuentes Duran
Executive Director

Derek Laine
IT Coordinator

Lucinda McNutt
Finance & Admin Supervisor

Jennifer Muser
Finance &
Administration Manager

Gage Poore
Administrative Coordinator

ADMISSIONS

Christian Bazzano
Field Experience Coordinator

Kimberly Brevik
Medical Review Coordinator

Grace Davidson
Field Experience Coordinator

Tyler Eisenhand
Field Experience Coordinator

Keri Geiser
Field Experience Coordinator

Sara Hulbert
Enrollment Coordinator

Lisa Macki
Admissions & Business
Strategy Director

Tina Nourmiev
Admissions Assistant

Mariko Rizzuto
Enrollment Specialist

Jules Stuber
Field Experience Coordinator

Sarah Wood
Alumni Program Coordinator

COMMUNICATIONS

Morgan Ittis
Digital Marketing Coordinator

Diego Molina Moreira
Communications Coordinator

Neala Siegle
Marketing Manager

COSTA RICA PROGRAM

Olman Alvarado Zapata
Program Assistant

Maria Alpizar
Administration & Finance
Coordinator

Ana Hernandez
Program Coordinator

Katherine Martínez Campos
Program Coordinator

Giovanni Quesada Rodriguez
Admin & Program Assistant

Paula Román Hernández
Program Assistant

Juan Carlos Zúñiga
Costa Rica Program Manager

DEVELOPMENT

Erick Bolaños Alvarez
Communications &
Development Coordinator

Azul Cubero
Latin American Development
Supervisor

Angel Griego
Development &
Administrative Coordinator

Noreen Humes
Development Director

Meaghan Loos-Becht
Donor Relations Supervisor

Heather McKee
Global Grants Supervisor

Melissa Segura
Development Manager

Julia Whalen
Development Officer

MEXICO PROGRAM

Analia Briones Lopez
Alumni Program Coordinator

Fernanda Davis
Administrative Assistant

Anelena Gómez Tagle
Administrative & Finance
Coordinator

Blanca Gracida
Maintenance Assistant

Adriana Martínez Estrada
Program Coordinator

Carolina Navarro Reyes
Institutional Liaison

Marlu Robledo
Mexico Program Manager

María Robledo Mejía
Program Coordinator

Araceli Vargas
Recruitment Coordinator &
Enrollment Supervisor

PACUARE RESERVE

Karol Camacho
Operations Coordinator

Jennifer Castro Vasquez
Admin & Program Assistant

Johannis Cortés Jirón
Cook

Michael Knight Urbina
Operations-Maintenance
Assistant

Esteban Lobo Perez
Community Outreach
& Reservations

Claudio Quesada Rodriguez
Research & Conservation
Coordinator

Eduardo Rafael Rangel
Operations Coordinator-
Maintenance

Silvia Dessire Sanchez
Housekeeping

Hayi Valverde Jimenez
Beach Coordinator

Eylen Zúñiga Acuña
Pacuare Reserve Manager

PROGRAM OPERATIONS & EDUCATION

Laura Dinerman
Curriculum & PD Supervisor

David Schimelpfenig
Program Operations Manager

YELLOWSTONE

Morgan Hinson
Program Assistant

Carly Innis
Program Coordinator

Joe Loviska
Yellowstone Program Manager

Honor Stoner
Yellowstone Recruitment
Coordinator

Sophie Rogers
Program Supervisor

INSTRUCTORS

Karen Acevedo
Becca Allen
Jeremy Klank Araya
Ángel Arellano
Diego Azcoitia
Christian Bazzano
Paola Borgo
Chloe Burnstein
Natan Cabrera
Maeve Cain
César Castro Azofeifa
Nancy Castro Fernández
Yasuní Chiriboga
Kaleb Cohen
Joel Coronado
Maritza Cruz
Linda Flor Cuecuecha
Melissa Brand
Jackie Álvarez
Katherine Mena Madrigal
Amanda Hancock
Erica Hample
Adriana Hernández
Patricia Perles Ivars
Antonio Kasper
Abigail League
Sydney Lang
Kole Meinhardt
Kelsey Miller
Rebeca Montaña
María José Morán
Dylana Diana Nicholas
Nicholas Capille
Emil Grinage Jr.
Grace Gonzalez-Franco
Ranai Gonzales
Katie Goodenow
Maricela Pizarro-Porter
Eva Rentería
Libby Riddle
Mary Sellers
Cob Staines
Charlotte Terry
Christian Torres
Will Vest
Arath Vargas
Brandon Zúñiga
Ana Cristina Zúñiga Gevara
Mateo Madriñan
Micaela Peña
Raquel Bone Guzmán
Andrés Fiallo
Catalina Gomez Vives

Thanks to our independent
contractors & volunteers:

Milagros Bednarski
Milton Cruz
Claudia Rodríguez
Adriana Vazquez
Jon Kozesky
Amber Toth
Annie Hamilton
Bill Bakeberg
Patricia Mayrer



“ THIS EXPERIENCE WAS SOMETHING THAT I NEEDED. I HAVE BEEN TEACHING A LONG TIME AND FEEL REFRESHED AND EXCITED ABOUT TEACHING AGAIN. BAJA WAS BY FAR THE MOST BIO DIVERSE LOCATION I HAVE EVER EXPLORED. THE ABUNDANCE OF INTERCONNECTED ECOSYSTEMS WAS MIND BLOWING AND THE LEVEL OF EDUCATORS I WAS WORKING WITH WAS TOP NOTCH. I LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT THE CULTURE OF THE NATIVE PEOPLE, AS WELL AS THE NATURAL WORLD. WHAT MADE THIS AN EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE IS THE GUIDANCE FROM EPI INSTRUCTORS, AND THE GROUP OF PROFESSIONALS WHO WERE ON THE TRIP. I WILL FOREVER BE GRATEFUL FOR THIS EXPERIENCE!

-TRACY PHILLIPS, 2024 TEACHER PD PARTICIPANT

