



MEXICO FIELD PROGRAM

EPI Mexico facilitates inclusive, fun, and impactful learning experiences for youth and educators, supporting their growth through cultural exchange, science in the field, full immersion in nature, and professional development. From vibrant coral reefs to striking desert landscapes, participants enjoy a wide range of ecological phenomena while collecting data needed for conservation in Baja California Sur. Local and visiting participants complete the programs with invigorated passions for protecting the environment.



CONSERVATION RESEARCH

Saving Sea Turtles



EPI students and teachers collect data at one of Baja California Sur's most prominent beaches for sea turtle observations and research. Here, they learned how to approach, manage, and release sea turtles while gathering environmental data. Their data aids scientists in understanding the impact that climate change has on local sea turtle populations.

Under the Sea

With waterproof pencils and paper in hand, participants identify fish species, estimate the number of individuals, describe behavior, record water temperature and depth, and take pictures for REEF, a global marine research and conservation organization. EPI Mexico's contributions inform hypotheses about fish population changes over the years, identify factors influencing the presence or absence of certain fish, and support solutions to address biodiversity conservation.



FIELD PARTICIPANTS AT-A-GLANCE



300 MEXICAN PARTICIPANTS

124 U.S. PARTICIPANTS

931 FIELD DAYS

CONSERVATION SERVICE



Beach Clean-Ups

Not all of EPI Mexico's lessons are delivered in desert mountains or deep oceans. Diving into urban ecology gives students a first-hand look at human impact on the environment. EPI participants inform our understanding of La Paz's waste stream thanks to their help with beach clean-ups and waste analysis per the Ocean Conservancy's protocol. In 2023, 11 hours were dedicated to collecting waste from the beaches in La Paz.

Where are the Whales?

In the bay of Puerto Chale, students use binoculars to observe and document gray whale dimensions and behavior. Additionally, they photograph the whales for researchers to identify returning individuals. The research reveals that the bay attracts predominantly young whales before their first migration. Data collected by EPI participants helps scientists understand factors influencing whales' presence in the area and how to best protect the population.

"I learned sad things, like that one out of every thousand turtles survive, but also beautiful things, like how to enjoy the landscapes, the sunsets and the sea, and that we have to preserve it so that other people can enjoy it. I will never forget this experience." Jazmín Jiménez, 15 years old

ALUMNI & OUTREACH

Local EPI Mexico Alumni don't have to stop their involvement in conservation or leadership when their field experiences come to an end. For many, it's just the beginning. The Californios Verdes are a thriving and active ecoclub in La Paz, full of motivated EPI Alumni looking for ways to take action in their community. The group plays a major roles in educating the public and stewarding ecosystems for future generations.

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES AT-A-GLANCE

217 ATTENDEES AT THE FESTIVAL
"MY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY" IN LA PAZ

56 YOUTH MEETINGS HELD BY CALIFORNIOS
VERDES

458 COMMUNITY MEMBERS IMPACTED BY EPI
ALUMNI VOLUNTEER WORK

ACTIVITIES

Workshops and Field Trips

Hearing the community's need for more in-person opportunities for students to deeply connect with one another after the pandemic, EPI responded with four new field trip experiences for EPI Alumni. The topics covered in the field trips include birdwatching, sustainable ranching, hiking in the mountains, and aquaponic farming.

"He was transformed from the field. He loved everything—a new smile appeared on his face, and he made a special friend."
- Mother of a 14-year-old student with severe social anxiety resulting from the pandemic.

Awareness Events & Community Activities

Centered in the heart of La Paz on the beachfront malecón, EPI Mexico's annual "My Sustainable Community" festival is a collaborative educational event for people of all ages to enjoy. In 2023, 13 members of the Californios Verdes helped recruit, organize, and coordinate presenters and attendees to experience an afternoon celebrating scientific and environmental education. Another wide-reaching community event led by the Californios Verdes is the "Yo Amo Balandra" campaign, advocating for the preservation of Balandra Beach. Through educational sessions, interactive games, and 3D maps, they enlighten the community about Balandra's ecological significance, emphasizing the importance of mangroves and freshwater sources. In 2023, the group led five rallies, including virtual and classroom-based rallies.

DONORS

Alumbra Innovations Foundation
Esterito Community Fund at
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LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOWCASE THE IMPORTANCE OF SOIL HEALTH AT THE "MY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY" FAIR

NOTABLE Tierra y Agua



In collaboration with Alumbra Innovations Foundation, EPI Mexico developed two educational frameworks centered on the importance of land, ocean, and watershed conservation, titled "Tierra y Agua." EPI proposed three experiential lessons for implementation in various learning spaces outside of the classroom, including a remote hiking trail, a sustainable ranch, and an aquaculture farm. The project aims to create immersive learning experiences using a place-based education approach.

Inspired by these transformational activities, participating students designed environmental projects to benefit their school or community, which they showcased at the EPI Mexico Fair, "My Sustainable Community."



EPI Alumni Professional Development Opportunities

Through the USAID Civil Society Resilience Program, EPI Mexico received funding that will enable 30 EPI Alumni to engage in international cultural and ecological exchanges across EPI's global sites in 2024. The initiative also facilitates professional growth through internships with EPI and partner organizations. This effort significantly contributes to nurturing young leaders, fostering change agents, and promoting socio-environmental influence within their communities.