

COSTA RICA FIELD PROGRAM

Over the past year, the Costa Rica field programs team delivered high-quality education and research, benefiting local schools and visitors. Courses ranged from 3 to 12 days, with participants engaging in over 50 hours of science and academics. **EPI's Costa Rica Sea Turtle Ecology and Felines & Primates programs immersed 680+ students in field science and conservation**, strengthening their knowledge and contributing to local ecosystem protection.



CONSERVATION RESEARCH

Sea Turtle and Nest Protection

Several studies conducted over the last decade indicate that Pacuare beach is one of the highest density nesting areas in Costa Rica and a key point for the Caribbean population of leatherback sea turtles, with 43% of this population's gene pool visiting the beach. Prior to EPI's collaboration with Reserva Pacuare, the rate of turtle egg poaching exceeded 90%. Since our students began participating in nightly surveys in 2000, this rate has been drastically reduced to 0.8% by 2024.



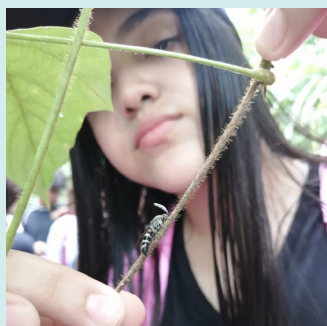
Camera Trap Project

Felines play a critical role in tropical ecosystems, as their presence reflects the health of the ecosystem. EPI students help researchers set up camera traps and participate in a long-term, far-reaching research project on felines and their prey in the Caribbean. Pacuare Reserve has a high density of felines and is considered a crucial region for the survival of these species, providing a living space and an important transit route.

Monkey Population Ethology Program

Pacuare Reserve is home to three monkey species: white-faced capuchin, howler, and spider monkeys. Researchers and visitors study their social learning behaviors, vital for conservation planning. With limited data on primate ethology in the Costa Rican Caribbean, participants collect key information on behavior, movement, and environmental factors to support future conservation efforts. Participants contributed 128+ hours of primate study in 2024.

FIELD PARTICIPANTS AT-A-GLANCE



253 COSTA RICAN PARTICIPANTS
390 U.S. PARTICIPANTS
4,539 FIELD DAYS



PROGRAM OUTCOMES

2,425 HATCHLINGS RELEASED
1,648 OVERALL SERVICE HOURS
10.3% IMPROVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY



Butterfly Program

In collaboration with Veragua Rainforest, this program consists of setting fruit traps and collecting butterflies along a 2 km trail. Students participate in selecting sampling sites, creating labels, collecting specimens, and identifying species. Data collected includes the number of butterflies collected and hours spent.

"We learned to use new applications and [to] work in groups. What interested me the most about Reserva Pacuare is that it is a secondary reserve where conservation efforts have been made for 34 years following very strict protocols." - Anthony, CTP Bataan

IMPACTS & AWARDS

EPI Costa Rica engaged students in hands-on environmental initiatives through programs like “Change My World with My Actions” and STEAM Immersion: Youth Skills Development for Community Change, fostering research and solutions for pressing ecological challenges. Participants tackled issues such as waste management, energy consumption, and biodiversity loss, proposing educational campaigns, recycling systems, and conservation projects. A new prototyping kit, developed with Veritas University, enhanced students’ technological skills. Additionally, the 2024 Alumni Award recognized Margarita Rodriguez for her seed bank initiative, supporting local farmers.

PROGRAMS & OUTREACH

STEAM Immersion: Youth Skills Development for Community Change

With support from the U.S. Embassy, we engaged 60 students and six teachers from three Caribbean high schools in mentorship, field activities at the Pacuare Reserve, and hands-on environmental projects. Their initiatives addressed key environmental issues, culminating in an in-person event “Biociencia”, featuring a rally, cultural presentations, and a planetarium experience. The best projects were awarded for their impact and innovation.

Change My World with My Actions

Change My World with My Actions, sponsored by Fyffes, engaged 20 students (ages 16–18) at Bataan Technical Professional High School in developing four projects addressing local environmental issues.



One project, “The Crime of Energy,” raised awareness about excessive electricity use, particularly fans, which are widely used but often inefficiently. Students proposed energy-saving strategies to reduce consumption and lower electricity bills. Another project, “Dark Side of Garbage,” tackled improper waste management in Bataan, highlighting public spaces used as open-air dumps. Students documented these issues and aimed to educate the community on the environmental and health risks. They proposed an awareness campaign, seeking support from local authorities and community members to improve waste disposal practices. Through these initiatives, students not only identified pressing local challenges but also proposed actionable solutions, fostering environmental responsibility and community engagement.



Prototyping Kit

Through an agreement with Veritas University, EPI Costa Rica developed an ideation and prototyping kit to enhance the technology and engineering skills of the young participants’ research proposals. Working in teams, the students developed a list of possible solutions applicable to the research problem. After selecting an idea, they identified its pros and cons to assess its feasibility. Then, using a variety of materials, they proceeded to create their prototypes.

NOTABLE

Alumni Award Winner, Margarita Rodriguez

Margarita Rodriguez, a 2023 Alumni Award winner, received financial support to create a seed bank initiative in her community of Copey. Her project aimed to educate local farmers on its importance for protecting essential crops. Margarita sought guidance from the Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE) and held community talks in 2024. Her efforts inspired great interest and leadership in sustainable farming practices in her community. Well done, Margarita!



“[I want to] feel part of something important and knowing that my actions will have a positive impact on the world helped me to change my perspective on life I know that I want to help not only the planet, but also my community and be an example of leadership for the children of Copey.” - Margarita Rodriguez

FUNDERS

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Fyffes
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PARTNERS

Lapa Verde Rainforest
Pacuare Reserve
Tirimba Rainforest
Veragua Rainforest