2018 ANNUAL REPORT
September 1, 2017 - August 31, 2018

Conservation for the next generation

ECOLOGY PROJECT INTERNATIONAL
MISSION | Improve and inspire science education and conservation efforts worldwide through field-based, student-scientist partnerships.

VISION | An ecologically literate society where the world’s youth are empowered to take an active role in conservation.

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EPI’s UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GALAPAGOS NATIONAL PARK MEANS UNPRECEDENTED ACCESS TO THE ISLAND’S WILDLIFE.
Dear Friends of EPI,

While learning about bison and wolves with his middle school students this summer, teacher Mike Bruse saw first-hand how his students were affected by spending a week outside with EPI, away from home, unplugged, and conducting research with their peers. As their teacher, he felt engaged and enlightened, but also challenged on many levels. Mike declared, “When you are challenged, you are changed!”

To create change, we must embrace challenge: this is the heart of EPI.

You catalyze this change with your support of EPI. You provide youth and their mentors opportunities to get out of their comfort zone and connect deeply with nature. When students participate in hands-on science and realize within their hearts that they can do it, that their actions make a difference, these teens are inspired.

In 2018, your generosity also catalyzed change for girls, helping EPI focus on solutions to common barriers girls face in STEM fields through our “STEM4Good” campaign. Read more about some of the inspiring girls who are dedicated to science and conservation in the following pages of our Annual Report.

Your generosity has enabled thousands of youth to open their minds and hearts to inspiration that they bring back into their communities for action and impact. Together, we are bringing people together from diverse places and different ideological backgrounds to create unity and action for something we all care about profoundly.

With our deepest gratitude,

Lisa Hogen
Chair, Board of Directors

EPI students have the rare opportunity to collect data on Yellowstone’s grassland dynamics in order to better understand the effects of bison grazing in the park.
In 2018, more than 5,300 students across five countries in North, Central, and South America engaged in hands-on science and conservation projects with EPI. They dove into authentic research on vulnerable wildlife, helped study and eradicate invasive species, engaged their communities, and made a difference in the world. They crossed cultural and geographical boundaries and empowered one another to protect the land, animals, and resources we all love.
Our 2018 Programs

In the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, students contributed to Yellowstone National Park’s understanding of bison, the U.S. national mammal, and its role in the ecosystem. Students measured grazing effects, classified herds of ungulates, and collected data on snow depth and other migration triggers. Summer groups worked with the U.S. Forest Service to restore wetland habitat and collect baseline data on amphibian populations. They also worked with local ranchers to remove fencing and improve wildlife migration opportunities.

Students in Hawaii worked with The Nature Conservancy in Waikamoi Preserve to remove invasive pine and ginger from the rainforest. Youth also contributed to Maui Cultural Lands efforts to restore traditional and sustainable taro agriculture. On the Nā Pali Pupu Pae reef, students collected field data on key reef fish species.

EPI students worked with the Galapagos National Park to monitor four different populations of the threatened giant Galapagos tortoise. Youth supported biodiversity protection by helping researchers and park rangers locate wild tortoises, collect and identify seeds dispersed by tortoises, eradicate invasive plant species, and restore habitat. Students also conducted marine biodiversity surveys for invertebrates and fish, collected data on microplastics, and helped protect nesting sea turtles.

On the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, the world’s fourth most important nesting habitat for vulnerable leatherbacks, students monitored nesting sea turtles. Youth helped improve nesting habitat, gather biometric data during nightly turtle censuses, and protect nests against human and environmental threats. On the Pacific coast, students joined an in-water sea turtle monitoring project with researchers from Latin American Sea Turtles to help capture turtles and collect biometric data, tissue, and blood samples, then release them back into the water. Students also helped restore mangrove ecosystems by monitoring the health of native plants, collecting seeds, and planting mangroves.

1. YELLOWSTONE
2. BAJA
3. BELIZE
4. HAWAII
5. COSTA RICA
6. GALAPAGOS ISLANDS
In 2018, we engaged 13,849 participants (a 9% increase over 2017) for nearly 27,000 participant days, including more than 5,300 field participants. Your support made it possible for 81% of our participants to be local residents of our program sites.

Nearly half of our field participants engaged in multi-day, field-based activities. We brought our curriculum model to the rest of our field participants through single-day workshops, eco-rallies, and community service activities.

Our alumni comprise the other 8,500+ participants, who joined us after their course for activities like symposiums, festivals, eco-club meetings, and other educational events.

**EPI Field Participants by Country**

- **U.S.* 21%**
- Ecuador 16%
- Belize 4%
- Costa Rica 8%
- Mexico 51%

*U.S. include both visiting and local students in Yellowstone and Hawaii, and all Ecotour and Teacher Fellowship participants.

**Thanks to our supporters, EPI reached 13,849 participants & increased environmental literacy* by an average of 9%**

*Represents the average increase in environmental literacy (knowledge, competencies, and dispositions) from pre-course to post-course in all EPI programs.
STEM4GOOD: ENGAGING GIRLS IN SCIENCE

Thousands of girls from across the U.S. and Latin America participated in EPI’s multi-day field programs this year. They used hands-on conservation service and research activities as a lens through which to understand management and ecological issues that affect our planet. For many of these students, this was their first time engaging in real field science, working directly with female mentors. Here are some of our favorite outcomes:

1. BUILT SELF-CONFIDENCE
   “EPI helped me find my voice and learn how to share my values with my community. Before, I let other people’s voices drown mine out.” Channen, a local Yellowstone participant, is one of many students who felt included and empowered as a result of EPI’s STEM4Good initiatives.

2. ADDRESSED STEREOTYPES AND IMPLICIT BIAS
   EPI staff participated in inclusivity trainings piloted by Yellowstone Program Supervisor, Rachel Garwin. Those resources have now been incorporated in trainings across EPI’s program sites and students continue to benefit from our staff’s increased understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

3. INCREASED VISIBLE ROLE MODELS IN STEM FIELDS
   Throughout 2018, EPI highlighted female scientists and conservationists, many of whom are our powerhouse instructors and research partners. We also celebrated Joëlle De Weerdt, founder of ELI-Scientific, as the 2018 John Denham Award Winner. Her science and education programs engage local communities and the Nicaraguan government in conservation projects.

4. PROVIDED PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES WITH REAL-LIFE CONNECTIONS
   We offered 11 all-girl courses and opportunities for all students to work directly with female instructors and research partners. These female-led conservation service and research activities offer a lens through which to understand management and ecological issues that affect our planet.

STEM4GOOD CAMPAIGN SUPPORTERS HELPED CONNECT YOUNG WOMEN TO SCIENCE-DRIVEN FEMALE ROLE MODELS THROUGHOUT 2018.
We operate as a lean organization, with 80% of every dollar covering direct program expenses. All of our expenses, including core mission support, are essential to producing robust, life-changing programs. Various aspects of our activities are interwoven to create the impressive results we achieve together, as illustrated by this chart:

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

**REVENUE**

EPI is a tuition-driven organization with half of our $5.1M budget derived from earned income, providing a match for every dollar donated. While every student pays tuition to invest themselves in project outcomes, EPI ensures programs are affordable to youth from all economic backgrounds.

**DIVERSE RESOURCES**

The diversity of our revenue sources helps promote sustainability of our activities, which is critical to long-term success.

**EXPENSES**

We group our expenses into three main categories:

- Direct Program Expenses: The size of each program budget is determined by a variety of factors, including number of participants, activities, and length of courses
- Core Mission Administrative Support: Includes Finance, HR, Systems and Board Oversight
- Core Mission Fundraising Support: Allowed 81% of our participants to be under-served students

The growth and effectiveness of our work depends on a solid core. Investing in these core support services is prudent and essential for long-term success.
AT-A-GLANCE

Total Revenue
$5,097,782
from 2017: $4,895,261

Total Expenses
$5,767,143
from 2017: $5,704,496

ASSETS

Current Assets $798,553
Property & Equipment $1,345,066
Other Assets $88,160
TOTAL ASSETS $2,231,779

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities $1,247,850
Long-term Debt $0
Net Assets $983,929
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS $2,231,779

The data above is a consolidated balance sheet. Find more details at ecologyproject.org/about/financials.

BETWEEN BELIZE’S MANGROVES AND REEF EXISTS A HABITAT OF VITAL IMPORTANCE. STUDENTS MONITOR THE SEAGRASS BEDS THAT PROTECT CORAL REEFS AND PROVIDE ESSENTIAL HABITAT FOR LOBSTER, TURTLES, FISH, AND MANATEES.
Our 2018 supporter lists include gifts made during the calendar year: Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2018.

EPI strives to recognize all contributors accurately. If there is an omission or mistake, we apologize and ask that you notify us.

LOCAL AND VISITING STUDENTS COME TOGETHER TO SHARE EXPERIENCES AND FIND COMMON GROUND.
THIS COURSE CHANGED MY POINT OF VIEW ABOUT THE CONSERVATION OF OUR ANIMALS, PLANTS, AND RESOURCES. THE EXPERIENCE ALSO CAUGHT MY ATTENTION ABOUT POTENTIAL OCCUPATIONS I WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE IN THE FUTURE—MAYBE I’LL BE A SCIENTIST, OR AN EPI INSTRUCTOR!

- LOCAL BELIZEAN PARTICIPANT, 2018
GLOBAL STAFF

Scott Pankratz
Executive Director & Co-Founder

Jenny Mish
Grants Coordinator

Melissa Peterson
Finance Coordinator

Ann Quirk
Development Supervisor

Joan Scheffer
Chief Medical Screener

David Schimelpfenig
Global Field Program Supervisor

Clara Thomas
Development Coordinator

Brant Warren
Program Operations Director

Kyle Watson
Recruitment Manager

Jennifer Williamson
Finance Director

Kris Wright
Human Resources Manager

Catherine Yturri
Finance Office Assistant

Jessica Zephyrs
Communications Coordinator

FIELD PROGRAM

BELIZE
Jerry Enriquez
Program Manager

Connally Canto
Program Assistant

Corey Constantino
Program Coordinator

Shauna Llama
Administrative Coordinator

HAWAII
Megan Edgar
Program Coordinator

Miguel Fuentes
Regional Program Director

Edson de la O
Communications Assistant

Katherine Martinez
Local Field Program Assistant

Paula Roman
Visiting Field Program Assistant

Melissa Segura
Communications & Outreach Supervisor

FIELD INSTRUCTORS & INTERNS

On the front lines of our organization are our talented field instructors and interns who teach, protect, share stories, swim, hike, and most of all, inspire the next generation of conservation leaders. Learn more about our unparalleled field instructors.

Diana Vargas
Administration & Finance Manager

Mario Zumabado
Administrative Assistant

Juan Carlos Zuriga
Program Supervisor

PACUARE
Eylen Zuriga Acuña
Pacuare Reserve Manager

Pablo Aguilar
Field Station Assistant

Michael Knight
Field Station Assistant

Esteban Lobo
Community Outreach & Reservations

Heike Russell
Sales & Marketing Coordinator

Cindy Ureña
Administrative Assistant

Rocio Valentin-Gamazo
Science & Conservation Coordinator

Hayi Valverde
Station Coordinator

Ana Maria Loose
Program Director

Klavdija Jenko
Fellowship Coordinator

Lady Marquez
Alumni Program Coordinator

Sofía Padilla
Administration & Finance Coordinator

Karina Pillá
Administrative Assistant, Galápagos

Juan Sebastián Torres
Program Coordinator, Galápagos

YELLOWSTONE
Erin Clark
Program Director

Adam Bavier
Recruitment Coordinator

Daniel Fleming
Program Coordinator

Rachel Garwin
Program Supervisor

Erin Roghaar
Program Supervisor

MEXICO
Andrea Gaume Amao
Program Manager

Salvador Prado Flores
Administrative Coordinator

Blanca Gracida
Maintenance Technician

Maria Robledo Mejía
Program Supervisor

Carolina Navarro
Partnerships & Alumni Coordinator

Yuriuki Ochoa
Community Projects Coordinator

Heidi Porras Peters
Program Coordinator

Roberto Retana
Program Assistant

Karla Rochin
Campus Coordinator

Flor Vazquez
Recruitment Coordinator

Istar Vignar
Communications Coordinator