



# **EcoLogic Development Fund**

## ***2023 Year End Report***

**How your support impacts  
communities and ecosystems  
in Mexico and Central  
America.**

# 2023

Program  
Overview by  
the Numbers

**COMMUNITY-LED  
CONSERVATION &  
RESTORATION**

**224,460**

trees grown for  
reforestation

**SUSTAINABLE  
AGRICULTURE**

**52**

new hectares of  
agroforestry  
for sustainable  
farming

**HEALTHY  
HOMES**

**227**

fuel-efficient  
stoves installed  
in rural homes

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
EDUCATION**

**306**

youth trained in  
environmental  
education

**FINANCIAL  
INCENTIVES  
FOR  
CONSERVATION**

**\$156,758**

generated for  
communities



# A SPECIAL ¡GRACIAS! TO YOU

Thanks to your incredible support, EcoLogic has nurtured and grown meaningful partnerships with rural and Indigenous communities in Central America and Mexico. **Your dedication has played a crucial role** in empowering these communities to protect their precious natural resources, embrace sustainable farming practices, and build resilience and skills.

Your unwavering commitment has made you a crucial ally in the mission of preserving and restoring some of the world's most precious ecosystems, along with the communities that depend on them.

We want to express our gratitude for your generous contributions to EcoLogic. **It is because of donors like you that we can bring about lasting, positive changes and drive sustainable transformation.** Together, we are not just impacting the environment but also touching the lives of countless individuals. **Your continued support means the world to us, and we feel privileged to have you on this journey with us, making a real difference in the world we share.**

In this report, you will discover firsthand the incredible impact that your contribution has had on our programs and initiatives. We hope that you take pride in knowing that your support has truly made a difference.

**Thank you for being a vital part of our journey towards a brighter, more sustainable future.**



# COMMUNITY-LED FOREST CONSERVATION & RESTORATION

EcoLogic undertakes reforestation by growing and planting native seedlings and saplings in places where forests have been lost or degraded. This year EcoLogic and community partners have grown **224,460 trees** for reforestation and supported the conservation of **114,829 hectares** of forest.

## Story of Change

*“Somos guardabosques de la comunidad de Santa María Tzejá, del municipio de Ixcán el Quiché. Nosotros aprendimos a utilizar la plataforma de Global Forest Watch para realizar el monitoreo del bosque del Cerro Cantil. Miramos que el trabajo lo realizamos de manera más dirigida ya que la aplicación nos envía las alertas de incendios o deforestación al teléfono celular y nosotros llegamos al lugar de la alerta por la ruta que nos proporciona, además podemos dejar grabados los tracks de la ruta.” - Hugo Reyes*

*“We are forest rangers from the community of Santa María Tzejá, in the Municipality of Ixcán, El Quiché. We learned how to use the Global Forest Watch platform to monitor the Cerro Cantil forest. We see that we carry out the work in a more targeted way since the application sends us the alerts about forest fires or deforestation events to our cell phone and we arrive at the place of the alert by the route it provides, we can also leave route track recorded.” - Hugo Reyes*

## Combating Deforestation with Tech in Central America

EcoLogic initiated a regional capacity-building process in Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico starting in March 2023. The goal has been to connect communities with needed technology to respond to deforestation and fire events using early warning systems with the support of Global Forest Watch. In November, we facilitated a learning exchange between EcoLogic's partners in Honduras and Guatemala, training 45 individuals in the use of drones and the ForestWatcher App for more effective forest monitoring.



## Seeding Change in Northern Honduras

With our partner AJAASSPIB in northern Honduras, we provided seeds and equipment for the school nursery at the María Dilma Quezada Institute to produce 15,000 trees with the support of local students. These trees have been used to reforest degraded watersheds in the communities of Santa Barbara and Tejeras. Enrique Padilla, director of the Institute shared in a recent interview: *"We hope to be able to continue with the nursery in 2024. We have been able to reforest the upper part of the watershed. During the dry season, we directly feel the impact of deforestation, as each day water flows have been decreasing. With this project, we have been reducing the impact of climate change."*

## Reforestation Campaign in Guatemala

After producing 145,000 trees, 90,000 of which were distributed for reforestation mid-year, we have continued tree production for the upcoming 2024 cycle. Two greenhouses in 48 Cantones were equipped with trays and metal frames, aiming to contribute to the restoration of 223 hectares of communal forest. A total of 26 monitoring and surveillance outings were conducted to conserve the 11,200 hectares of forest. In 2023, 79 members of community groups were trained in reforestation techniques and propagation methods at the 48 Cantones nursery facility.

[Watch the project video on YouTube.](#)



## Story of Change

“Soy Moisés Pérez Godínez de la comunidad de Nuevo San Lorenzo. Durante el presente año implementé mi sistema agroforestal diversificado con plantas de inga edulis, naranja, limón, mandarina, guanaba y plátano. El año pasado fue un año difícil, debido a que por la sequía perdimos nuestra cosecha de cardamomo. En una reunión de promotores agrícolas voluntarios con EcoLogic, discutimos cómo diversificar las parcelas para que al perder un cultivo podamos contar con otra alternativa económica. Gracias a EcoLogic por cumplir la propuesta que se realizó a inicios de año.” - Moisés Pérez Godínez

“I am Moises Pérez Godínez from the community of Nuevo San Lorenzo. This year I implemented my diversified agroforestry system with Inga edulis, orange, lemon, mandarin, guanaba, and banana plants. Last year was a difficult year, as we lost our cardamom harvest due to the drought. In a meeting of volunteer agricultural promoters with EcoLogic, we discussed how to diversify the plots so that when we lose a crop we can have another economic alternative. Thanks to EcoLogic for fulfilling the proposal that was made at the beginning of the year.” - Moises Pérez Godínez



## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

EcoLogic trains subsistence farmers in sustainable farming techniques to reduce slash-and-burn agriculture and improve food security. EcoLogic and community partners have established **52 new hectares** of agroforestry on **134 parcels** and produced **13,270 plants** for agroforestry.

## New and Old Growth in Sarstún

In Sarstún, Guatemala, we established 6 new hectares of agroforestry systems and 5 hectares were dedicated to reforestation, all led by the communities. This included tree distribution, training on the design of each agroforestry system, planting, and georeferencing of each parcel. In addition, 5 follow-up visits were conducted to agroforestry systems established last year in the Lo de En Medio II. Remarkable growth was observed, and we began training on pruning techniques for shaping. We also worked on the establishment of one community enterprise focused on raising local chickens for eggs to improve the income of rural communities involved in the protection of conservation areas.



## Bearing Fruit in Ixcán

In Ixcán, Guatemala, we established 46 new hectares of agroforestry systems, introducing medium-growth fruit trees such as avocado, banana, lemon, tangerine, orange, chicozapote, soursop, and rambutan. These were strategically interplanted with Mahogany and fast-growing *Inga edulis* for shade and improved soil moisture retention, crucial during this year's severe dry season. Adapting to unprecedented drought and heat conditions this year, we collaborated closely with our partner farmers, recommending reduced pruning and postponing certain planned activities until the arrival of rains. The resilience of our previously established agroforestry systems proved significantly more robust against the heat wave compared to conventional cardamom production methods.

# HEALTHY HOMES

EcoLogic works at the household level to respond to families' needs that intersect with natural resources. EcoLogic and community partners have installed **227 fuel-efficient stoves** in rural homes and established **79 diversified home gardens**.



## Story of Change

*Mi nombre es Fernando Recancoj técnico de EcoLogic. En Totonicapán estamos implementando un nuevo modelo de estufa ahorradora con cámara de combustión tipo Rocket, gracias a la colaboración con la empresa Stove Team, con esta estufa pretendemos la reducción de un 50% del consumo de leña en comparación con el fogón abierto. - Fernando Recancoj*

*“My name is Fernando Recancoj, EcoLogic technician. In Totonicapán, we are implementing a new model of the energy-saving stove with a Rocket-type combustion chamber, thanks to the collaboration with the company Stove Team International. With this stove, we aim to reduce firewood consumption by 50% compared to the open stove.” - Fernando Recancoj*

## Sustainable Family Gardening in Totonicapán

In the community of Chuicaxtun in the Municipality of Totonicapán, Guatemala, we implemented 49 family gardens measuring 16 square meters each commenced with groups of women. Heirloom seeds were obtained to ensure the reproduction of radish, onion, tomato, cilantro, pea, beetroot, Swiss chard, and spinach.



## Fuel-Efficient Stoves in Olanchito

In Olanchito, Honduras, we installed 25 new fuel-efficient stoves in the community of Calderas. The result is the reduced consumption of firewood and a healthier home – with the stoves providing opportunities for cleaner, safer kitchen spaces. Here, you can [see a brief video](#) about our efforts in this specific community. The stoves are built and designed by technicians at AJAASSPIB, like “Maestra Fogonera,” or master stove-builder Meliza Nuñez. The recent installation in Calderas features a new “3-D design,” which Nuñez notes makes the model more efficient than the last iteration.

## Building on Success in Totonicapán

After successfully piloting 10 stoves of the Justa Chapina model in August in Totonicapán, Guatemala, in November and December we moved forward with the construction of 100 stoves. This process was delayed due to the political unrest in Guatemala. We were not able to transport materials to the communities due to protests and road closures. However, we have now been able to overcome this challenge and started the construction process.





## Story of Change

Conozca a Don Eliseo Hernández de San José Chiltepec, Oaxaca en México, profesor jubilado y productor local que pone el ejemplo y sabe que nunca es tarde para aprender. Ha participado activamente en las capacitaciones que realiza EcoLogic para la preparación de bioinsumos e incorporará lo aprendido en la producción de piña, plátano, limón y hule disminuyendo así el uso de agroquímicos para el manejo de plagas y enfermedades y contribuir al cuidado del medio ambiente.

Meet Don Eliseo Hernández from San José Chiltepec, Oaxaca in Mexico, a retired teacher and local producer who sets an example and knows that it is never too late to learn. He has actively participated in the training that EcoLogic carries out for the preparation of organic inputs for agricultural production and will incorporate what he has learned in the production of pineapple, banana, lemon, and rubber, thus reducing the use of agrochemicals for the management of pests and diseases and contributing to the care of the environment.



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

EcoLogic develops and supports environmental education activities to promote knowledge, understanding, and action on the part of adults and children alike. EcoLogic and community partners have trained **306 youth** and conducted **73 workshops**.

## Making Learning Fun in Totonicapán

We conducted an environmental education session tailored for 20 teachers from the Municipality of Totonicapán, Guatemala. The workshop was designed to be interactive, engaging participants in the creation of TikTok videos incorporating the key environmental messages. Mario Villatoro, Head of Environmental Education at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, expressed his appreciation for EcoLogic's invaluable support in training these educators. "Their role is pivotal in effectively conveying these important themes to the young minds in educational settings."



## A Learning Experience in Honduras

In Honduras, we worked with 30 students to raise awareness about water scarcity in Santa Barbara, Tejeras, and surrounding areas, showcasing how these issues impact the water source, the watershed, and the community. An initial assessment was conducted to understand their knowledge regarding environmental and water-related problems. We then employed creative tools to tease out their knowledge about the causes of water scarcity. The final event was a short theater piece crafted by the seventh-grade students, highlighting the main problems prioritized by the youth—deforestation, forest fires, illegal hunting, and water resource mismanagement. Presented on the last day of the school term in November, the performance sparked a commitment from adults to engage in further dialogue to address these challenges.



## Educational Partnerships in Oaxaca

EcoLogic and its local partner organizations, Fondo Ambiental Regional de la Chinantla, Oaxaca (FARCO) and Paisajes Naturales y Territorios Antrópicos, A.C. (PANTERA), launched a new initiative to conserve neotropical migratory bird habitat in Mexico, the Alliance for the Conservation of Birds of the Papaloapan (Alianza para la Conservación de las Aves del Papaloapan). The alliance focuses on raising awareness among local students about the importance of migratory birds, local fauna, and their habitat. In early December, we started working with 8 schools in 2 ejidos, with students ranging from primary school to high school. Activities include: a) Climate Mural: We will address the factors causing climate change while seeking solutions; b) Bird Bingo Tables: Students will play bingo to learn about the region's birds; and c) Creating a photographic exhibition in the school courtyard.

## Training Future Leaders in Sarstún

In Sarstún, Guatemala, from July to October, we supported APROSARSTUN in hosting two interns, Carlos and Oswin, from the Ak'Tenamit School, as part of their capstone experience leading up to their November graduation focused on Community Development. Shadowing our field technicians, they gained insights into our community-driven conservation approach. Carlos focused on assisting the beekeeping project in San Juan, while Oswin contributed to constructing a community oven in collaboration with the Women's Committee. They also learned about the use of GPS and georeferencing of agroforestry plots. Both interns were deeply honored to be hosted by APROSARSTUN, and they are committed to "paying it forward" as they chart their future career paths.



# FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR CONSERVATION

Culturally appropriate market-linked approaches, like beekeeping and sustainably growing cash crops like cardamom and cacao, encourage conservation by making it more beneficial financially. In 2023, **\$156,758 was generated for communities** through the sale of honey, small enterprises, and their participation in incentive initiatives.



## Story of Change

*Queremos agradecer a EcoLogic por el apoyo en las gestiones para obtener la certeza jurídica de nuestro bosque de 18 ha. Ahora ya pudimos realizar las gestiones ante CONAP e INAB para la gestión de incentivos por conservación y estamos a la espera que en el mes de diciembre pueda salir nuestro primer pago. - Saul Castro*

*“We want to thank EcoLogic for the support in the efforts to obtain legal certainty for our 18 hectare forest. Now we were able to carry out the procedures with CONAP and INAB for the management of conservation incentives and we are waiting for our first payment to be issued in December.” - Saul Castro*



## A Sweet Harvest in Ixcán

In Ixcán, Guatemala, we have been working to train and equip a group of 12 beekeepers from the community of Santa Maria Tzejá. With EcoLogic's support, they have acquired the necessary equipment (stainless steel honey extractor, uncapping knife, extraction net, and stainless steel strainer) to harvest honey for the summer of 2024. They have organized themselves to ensure the honey quality, planning to appoint a community operator for the extractor to oversee and verify the quality of the harvest, aiming for high-quality production. Beekeeper Victor Reyes Argueta expressed, "Thank you EcoLogic for providing us with support and technical guidance throughout the honey production process."



## Lifting Up Women in Totonicapán

In Totonicapán, Guatemala we initiated programs to enhance local social and economic capital. Eight individuals, particularly women interested in non-timber product marketing, were trained in the commercial cultivation of Pinabete (*Abies guatemalensis*) trees. Each participant received 100 Pinabete trees. Additionally, we collaborated with Stove Team International to train four individuals as fuel-efficient stove masons, using a model that was specifically designed to meet local needs. After training, we provided tools and materials to build 100 fuel-efficient stoves, with families selected for implementation. In addition, coordination meetings were held to identify nine women leaders from the community of Caxaj to preserve native tree and plant species, explore traditional uses, and contribute to conservation.

# ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES



## 30th Anniversary

On October 19 we held a virtual event to celebrate our 30th Anniversary. It was a fun and informative gathering with a keynote speech from Dr. Jamison Erwin from the UN, a panel discussion moderated by Jessica Brown, Director of the New England Biolabs Foundation, music from a Guatemalan Indigenous singer-songwriter, and we heard updates from our partners in the field. You can view the recording [here](#).



## Nature for Life Hub


Our partnership with Creative Action Institute and NEBF was shared with a global audience through the UNDP's Nature for Life Hub. Our virtual session, "Creative Action: The Power of Arts-based Methods to Promote Whole of Society Approaches," was part of the Nature for Life Hub held from November 7-9. You can [view our session recording here](#), titled "All in For Nature: Promoting Whole-of-Society Approaches for Nature," specifically around 2h39min. In addition, they also shared our video "Growing Natural Leaders" in Session 2 under the topic All in For Nature: Women Hold Up Half the Sky. Fast forward to about 1h55min [during this session](#).




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