



Mid-Year Report 2024

A look into how your support positively impacts communities and ecosystems.



ECOLOGIC
DEVELOPMENT FUND

Program Areas

At EcoLogic, our mission is to empower rural and Indigenous communities in Central America and Mexico to restore and protect vital tropical ecosystems. As we reflect on the progress we've made in 2024, we're excited to share a few key highlights of our work. None of this would be possible without your continued support – thank you for standing with us!

**Sustainable
Agriculture**

**Environmental
Education**

**Organizational
Updates**



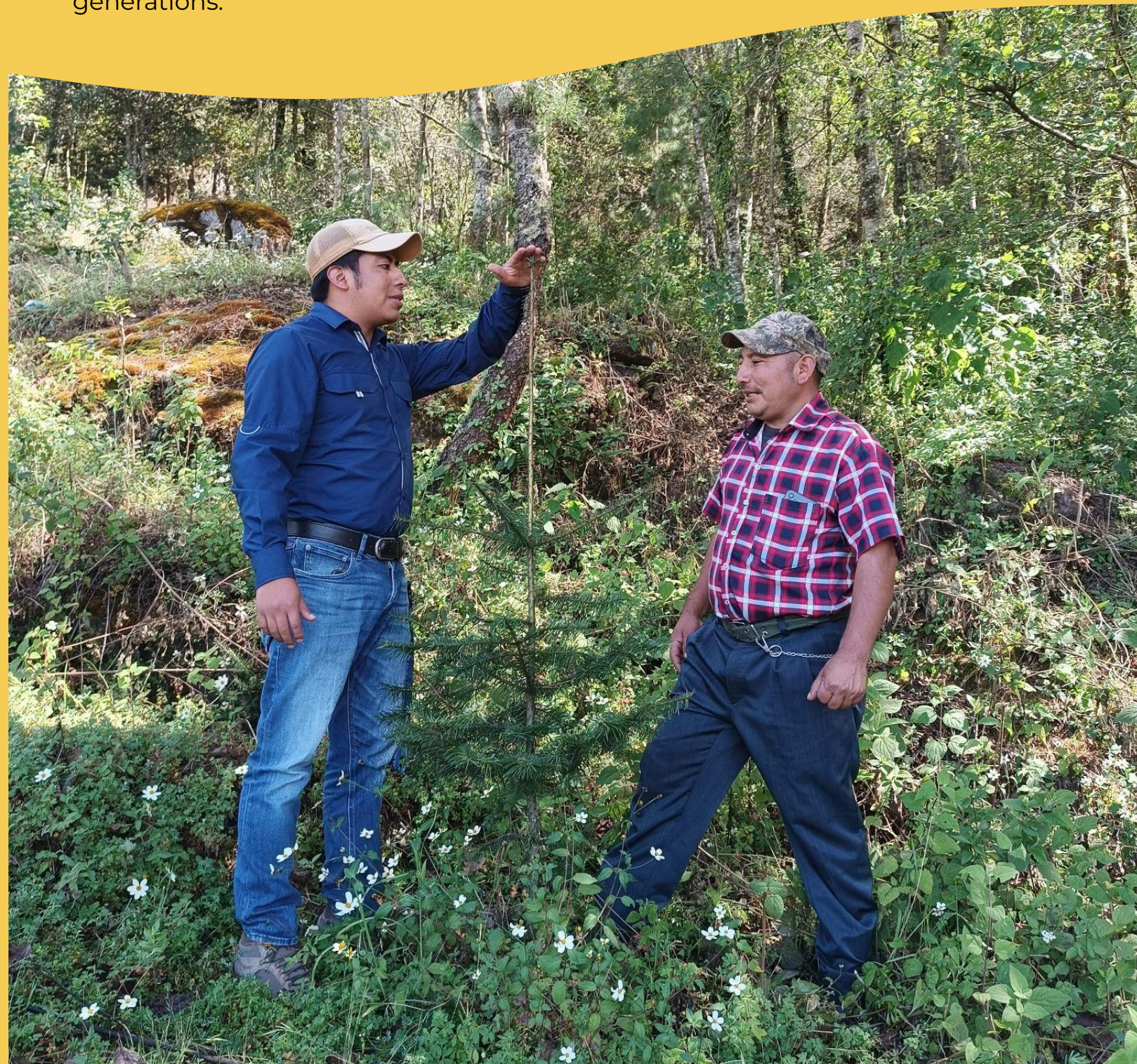
**Community-led
Forest
Conservation and
Restoration**

**Healthy Homes
and Community
Gardens**

**Financial
Incentives**

Community-led Forest Conservation & Restoration

Through our community-led conservation program, EcoLogic works closely with communities to conserve standing forests, reduce deforestation and degradation, promote reforestation and regeneration efforts, and mitigate threats to forests such as unsustainable agriculture and logging. The program emphasizes community-led initiatives, recognizing the critical role that local communities play in conserving and restoring forests for future generations.



Community-led Forest Conservation & Restoration

Scaling Tree Planting and Forest Protection

Totonicapán, Guatemala

In partnership with the Council of Natural Resources and Communal Goods of the 48 Cantones (Natural Resource Council), we have continued our tree production efforts for the 2024 cycle. This process includes substrate preparation, tray filling, seedling care, transplantation, fertilization, and irrigation. To improve survival rates, saplings are nurtured to reach a minimum height of 30 cm and are planted during the rainy season. From June to August 2024, we successfully distributed 128,948 saplings for reforestation.

The Natural Resource Council also identified and tapped a new water source to enhance the irrigation system for the communal tree nursery, which supports 13 greenhouses. The 13th greenhouse was recently completed, including the installation of a concrete floor, tray frame bases, and a new irrigation system. In addition, 8 other greenhouses have been repaired and maintained as needed.

Across different communities in Totonicapán, 62.61 hectares have been reforested with species such as white pine, red pine, cypress, alder, and cedar, accompanied by technical assistance to ensure success.

In 2024, 79 members of community groups were trained in reforestation and propagation techniques, 60 community members participated in the seed collection process, and 268 communities participated in the reforestation efforts, representing approximately 6,700 community members involved.

The community forest guards and brigades conducted 26 monitoring and surveillance patrols to help protect 11,200 hectares of forest. Using the ForestWatcher app, we identified deforestation alerts and recorded monitoring routes for more effective conservation efforts.

In February 2024, the forest fire season began in Totonicapán, with the communities of Juchanep and Paqui being particularly affected. We provided these communities with basic fire control toolkits and supported the volunteer firefighters with meals and water as they worked to extinguish the flames. Additionally, we equipped the community brigades of Nimasac and Parcialidad Ajpacajá in Chuicaxtún with essential gear for forest fire management.

To complement these efforts, we produced audiovisual materials to raise awareness about forest fire prevention, which were broadcast on both television and radio.



Community-led Forest Conservation & Restoration

Strengthening Forest Resilience: Combating Fires and Emerging Pest Threats

Olanchito, Honduras

Forest fire prevention remains a critical focus in this region. In collaboration with the Municipality of Olanchito, local communities, and strategic partners such as the Honduran Forest Service (ICF), EcoLogic has continued its efforts to prevent and combat forest fires. As a result, the 2024 fire season saw less forest loss compared to 2023. However, drought conditions have contributed to a surge in pest populations, adding new challenges.

Pine beetle outbreaks have already been detected, and we are actively collecting samples and implementing measures to control the spread in two affected areas. In addition, locust infestations, are impacting oak trees and pose a new threat to these ecosystems. We are closely monitoring the situation and working with local authorities to mitigate the effects of these pests.



Advancing Bird-Friendly Reforestation

Oaxaca, México

Building on our commitment to bird-friendly forest restoration, the community monitoring brigades have completed three patrols across the conservation areas of the three ejidos involved in our joint initiative. These patrols followed designated routes aimed at preventing illegal logging and reducing fire risks, particularly in light of the delayed rainy season caused by shifting climate patterns. As part of our broader efforts to enhance habitat quality, the brigades have also integrated bird monitoring activities, which will help us update the management plan to better reflect the area's existing biodiversity.

In support of our reforestation goals, we have made significant strides in our tree nursery, established last year. So far, 30,000 trees have been cultivated, including species such as guanacaste, jinicuil, nance, achiote, avocado, and zapote. Due to the prolonged drought resulting from the delayed rainy season, additional irrigation was necessary to help some plants thrive. Our local partners are committed to expanding production and diversifying species, with ongoing efforts to improve essential infrastructure, such as shade mesh, and continue seed collection.

Sustainable Agriculture

EcoLogic trains subsistence farmers in sustainable farming techniques to reduce slash-and-burn agriculture and improve food security.



Sustainable Agriculture

Growing Agroforestry and Biomass Reserves

Totonicapán, Guatemala

In the Tzanixnam community of the Totonicapán municipality, we successfully established 65 agroforestry systems. Our efforts encompassed identifying participants, distributing fruit and forest trees, providing in-depth training on the proper establishment of agroforestry systems, and ensuring appropriate plot management. Additionally, we collaborated with the Totonicapán Military Reserves, Totonicapán-USAC University Center, and the Luis Amigó Women's Group to establish a biomass production forest.



Expanding Agroforestry Systems

Ixcán, Guatemala

In 2024, we successfully implemented 37.5 hectares of new agroforestry systems, benefiting 71 participants and positively impacting 111 families—reaching a total of 665 individuals. These systems feature a diverse mix of species, including mahogany, *Inga edulis*, lemon, mandarin, orange, rambutan, soursop, red mamey, and plantain. Our team worked diligently throughout July and August to establish these parcels, taking advantage of optimal weather conditions after a drought period to ensure their successful growth and long-term sustainability.

Healthy Homes

EcoLogic works at the household level to respond to families' needs that intersect with natural resources.



Healthy Homes

Enhancing Community Resilience with Fuel-Efficient Stoves & Home Gardens

Oaxaca, México

With our local partner FARCO, we have recently completed the construction of 50 fuel-efficient stoves in the communities of San José Chiltepec and Vega del Sol. To support the effective use and maintenance of these stoves, we conducted four workshops, benefiting 50 participants from both communities and 10 volunteers from Rancho Faisán, who will receive stoves in the near future. These workshops provided hands-on training on fuel efficiency, environmental and economic benefits, and operational instructions to ensure their proper use and maintenance.

Additionally, we have successfully established 15 home gardens in San José Chiltepec. Our training sessions have been integral to this initiative, focusing on skills for producing organic compounds. This approach, which has previously shown positive results, includes the use of natural insect repellents and organic insecticides like garlic extracts.



Empowering Women with Fuel-Efficient Stoves

Totonicapán, Guatemala

We advanced our partnership with Stove Team International to design a fuel-efficient stove model tailored to the needs of women in Totonicapán. In 2024, we have successfully constructed 200 stoves and are in the process of starting an additional 40. We are also considering expanding this partnership to include the communities we serve in Ixcán, with plans to build an additional 100 stoves.

Environmental Education

EcoLogic develops and supports environmental education activities to promote knowledge, understanding, and action on the part of adults and children alike.



Environmental Education

Engaging Youth in Conserving Bird Habitats

Oaxaca, México

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](#) in 2023 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 2024, our alliance has made significant strides with eight schools across two ejidos, involving students from primary through high school. We engaged students in a variety of activities, including creating a Climate Mural to explore climate change factors and solutions, playing Bird Bingo to educate them about local avian species, and organizing a photographic exhibition in school courtyards. Over the year, we conducted 27 workshops, reaching 918 participants. These efforts highlight our ongoing commitment to conservation education and fostering community engagement.



Developing Student Leaders for Environmental Awareness

Olanchito, Honduras

We collaborated with 30 students to raise awareness about water scarcity in Santa Barbara, Tejas, and neighboring areas, illustrating how these issues affect water sources, watersheds, and local communities. Using creative tools, we assessed their understanding of water scarcity causes. The culmination of this effort was a short theater performance by seventh-grade students, which highlighted key problems such as deforestation, forest fires, illegal hunting, and mismanagement of water resources. Presented on the last day of the school term, the performance inspired adults to commit to further dialogue and action. The students are enthusiastic about continuing this initiative in 2024 to expand awareness across various platforms. [Learn more.](#)

Additionally, we launched Environmental Education Campaigns with final-year students from Olanchito, focusing on forest and landscape conservation. These students are actively involved in maintaining and cleaning 16 kilometers of firebreaks and reforesting degraded areas. We also partnered with the Municipality of Olanchito for their World Environment Day parade, where students showcased colorful posters with environmental messages and calls to action.

Financial Incentives

By providing access to payment for environmental services programs or helping establish micro enterprises, EcoLogic empowers communities to take ownership of their environmental resources while improving their economic well-being.



Financial Incentives

Securing Funding for Forest Conservation

Oaxaca, México

Following training and monitoring activities supported by EcoLogic, the ejido of Vega del Sol in Santa María Jacatepec successfully submitted a new funding proposal for Payment for Environmental Services (PES) from the Mexican government, which was approved. Initially, the ejido was hesitant to renew its Conservation Program due to uncertainties about the required steps and commitments for securing continued PES funding. However, with EcoLogic's guidance, they are now taking the lead in designing their updated Conservation Program, actively monitoring forest areas, and exploring alternative conservation strategies.



Empowering Communities with Payments for Environmental Services (PES)

Sarstún, Guatemala

Our continued efforts to support communities in the Sarstún region have led to notable progress in implementing conservation activities and securing payments for ecosystem services. In June 2024, five management plans were approved, and the community of San Juan received their first annual payments. To celebrate this milestone, we hosted [a small event with local authorities](#) where the payments were distributed. Community members expressed deep gratitude and reaffirmed their commitment to land conservation.

Through this program, the community will receive GTQ 2,700 (USD 344) per ha annually for the first 15 ha, with an additional GTQ 500 (USD 63) per ha for the remaining hectares over a 10-year period. This incentive structure provides crucial support for ongoing conservation efforts.

Financial Incentives

Boosting Women-Led Enterprises Conservation Efforts

Sarstún, Guatemala

With our partner APROSARSTUN, our team continued to work closely with the Office of Women in the Municipality of Livingston to support the development of women-led enterprises. In a region where farming and fishing are the primary sources of subsistence, the goal is to strengthen women's financial, organizational, and administrative capacities, providing them with opportunities to participate in the local economy and earn an income. In 2024, we developed three business plans for ventures in the communities of Tapón Creek, Lo de En medio II, and Sarstoon Creek. These plans focused on installing corn mills and raising local chickens for eggs to improve the income of rural communities involved in protecting conservation areas.



We also held a workshop on preparing homemade organic feed with the participation of 26 women. Homemade concentrate is made using local materials from the community to utilize the agricultural products produced in the village. These include corn, beans, tree leaves, Madre Cacao leaves (*Gliricidia sepium*), eggshells, sugar or molasses, and mineral salt. The participation of women's groups has been crucial, as it represents one of their first experiences in community group work, enabling them to contribute to each community organization.



Organizational Updates

Honoring Partnerships and Innovations in Forest Conservation

We are honored to have been chosen by the World Wildlife Fund as [a featured project site](#) for their 30th Anniversary Celebration in Guatemala. It was a privilege to host over 60 practitioners in the Communal Forest of Totonicapán, showcasing our shared commitment to conservation.

We are also proud to announce that we've been awarded the [2024 F5 Tech for Good Grant](#), which will significantly enhance our forest monitoring efforts through advanced technology.

Additionally, we are delighted that our colleague, Marco Acevedo, PhD, [has been appointed to the Advisory Board of Global Forest Watch](#), further strengthening our contributions to global forest conservation.



Fair Planet Publication: The Power of Indigenous Women

In June 2024, EcoLogic's Field Technician Severiana Domínguez was featured in FairPlanet with her article, "Empowering Women, Protecting Forests: A Success Story in Oaxaca, México." In the article, Severiana emphasizes the vital role of Indigenous women's leadership in forest conservation and sustainable development within the Chinantla region. She highlights how their efforts have significantly contributed to both environmental preservation and the safeguarding of cultural heritage. Read the full story [here](#).

Charting Our Future: Strategic Planning for Lasting Impact

We are currently engaged in a strategic planning process under the guidance and support of our Board of Directors. This initiative is designed to refine our organizational vision, establish clear priorities, and create a comprehensive roadmap for the next five years. By incorporating input from key stakeholders—including community partners, staff, and donors—we are committed to aligning our programs and resources to maximize our impact. This strategic planning effort will empower us to respond more effectively to emerging challenges and opportunities, ensuring that our work continues to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve while advancing our mission of environmental conservation and sustainable development. We look forward to engaging with you throughout this process and sharing the final version of our strategic plan.

To Our Supporters ¡GRACIAS!

Through your invaluable support, EcoLogic forges direct partnerships with rural and Indigenous communities in Central America and Mexico, empowering them to safeguard precious natural resources, foster agroforestry practices, and enhance their resilience and capacities.

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

We extend our deepest gratitude to you for your generous contribution to EcoLogic. It is thanks to donors like you that we can create lasting, positive transformations and drive sustainable change. Together, we are making a profound impact on both the environment and the lives of countless individuals.





Contact Us

US Office

P.O. Box 381571
Cambridge, MA 02238

617-441-6300

info@ecologic.org

www.ecologic.org

Regional Office

14 Avenida "A" 6-53 zona 3, Edificio Santiago, Apt. 14
Quetzaltenango, Quetzaltenango 09001 Guatemala

(+502) 7725-7776

Our Ratings!

