

At the Root: Successes of Community-Based Conservation Efforts in Central America and México

A look into the work of EcoLogic Development Fund and how sustained change may be achieved



EcoLogic
DEVELOPMENT FUND



Overview

EcoLogic Development Fund (est. 1993)

Mission: To empower rural and Indigenous Peoples to restore and protect tropical ecosystems in Central America and Mexico

Vision: Rural communities lead in the creation of a sustainable world for both people and nature.

Our Approach: Our approach fosters holistic and sustainable development in which conservation, human well-being, and community development are mutually reinforced.



Sarstun

Communities Restoring the Nature of Sarstun



Tonicacapan

Forest of the Water Spirit



Ixcán

Indigenous Peoples for Thriving Ecosystems in Northern Guatemala



Huehuetenango



Aguan River Valley



Atlántida



Olanchito



Oaxaca

Project Proposal: SWOT Analysis

After celebrating 30 years in the community-conservation space, EcoLogic has embarked on a strategic planning through SWOT Analysis



EcoLogic's Approach

We work in partnership with rural and indigenous-led organizations and communities to provide access to:

1. **tools and training** to build awareness, skills, and capacity within communities;
2. **incentives** that catalyze the adoption of sustainable practices; and
3. **networks** with local, regional and international actors and initiatives.

Our approach fosters holistic, sustainable development in which conservation, human well-being, and community development are mutually reinforcing.

How EcoLogic Protects Forests in Mesoamerica



Action Areas and Tools

We conduct participatory planning with our local partner and community members that map out a process to jointly implement strategies and tools to reach the communities' conservation and development goals. EcoLogic offers a comprehensive package of integrated tools and services that help communities execute their plans and balance conservation with human needs, including:

Project Breakdown: Research Summary

Summaries, Literature Reviews, Hyper-links, Compilations...



Overview

This is a working document of compiled background information and supporting evidence for EcoLogic's current action areas. The document is organized into the six action areas (see content outline to the left) with subcategories within each denoting sub-programs (for example, (Healthy Homes > Home Gardens, Fuel-Efficient Stoves). The content of each summary is derived heavily from EcoLogic's [Action Areas](#) summary page on the website, as well as from a variety of peer-reviewed and scholarly articles collected in an effort to highlight the present research backing up EcoLogic's strategy.

The goals of EcoLogic's Strategic Retreat are to assess the mission, vision, programming, and external affairs of the organization and henceforth create a 5-year strategy. It is essential to consistently refer back to EcoLogic's mission and vision, as the goal of the program-specific SWOT Analysis is to understand how present strategies address the mission, and how future strategies can be assessed from this point forward.

For easy reference and as a visual reminder...

EcoLogic homepage: <https://www.ecologic.org/who-we-are>

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Sustainable Agriculture

Agroforestry

Agroforestry systems are amongst EcoLogic's most crucial strategies towards helping alleviate current pressures on forest cover and natural environment. In most project areas, the aim is to reduce slash-and-burn agricultural practices and improve food security. In a broad sense, agroforestry refers to the practice of interspersing agricultural land-use systems with natural perennial plantings (trees, shrubs, palms, etc.) – blurring the boundaries between 'natural biodiversity' and agricultural production. In this way, agroforestry builds forest and other perennial ecosystems into the agricultural plot. This tactic takes many different forms, but has many benefits including improving quality and increasing crop yield, as well as lessening the harsh environmental effects of agriculture.



EcoLogic summarizes the benefits of agroforestry as:

- Replenishes soil nutrients and helps retain moisture
- Reduces erosion
- Increases crop yields
- Decreases production inputs, such as fertilizer and pesticides
- Reduces time spent weeding
- Creates habitat buffers and limits pressure on standing forests, thus helping other species and promoting biodiversity.

What Did I Learn?



Community-Led Forest Restoration

Reforestation + Assisted
Natural Regeneration



Economic Incentives

Payment for Ecosystem
Services, Beekeeping and othe



Healthy Homes

Fuel-Efficient Stoves +
Home Gardens



Environmental Education

Awareness campaigns across
groups and identities



Sustainable Agriculture

Agroforestry



Capacity Building

Tools and training for
sustained impact

Planting the Seed: Locally-contextualized solutions

I. Assessment and Dialogue through Participatory Planning Processes

II. Internal Structure



Strength in Partnerships

Thriving on the ground means establishing strategic partnerships with local organizations, Indigenous governances, municipalities, etc.

Where there is not an established partner association or organization, EcoLogic has helped create several

This process empowers local institutions with the financial and technical assistance that EcoLogic provides and ensures that the majority of technicians, employees, and volunteers working onsite are local.



Nourishing growth: Sustained Community Involvement



Incentives and Capacity-Building



Environmental Education



At the Root of it All:



Acknowledgements

Thank you to Professor Reibstein

Executive Director Barbara Vallarino

Classmates of EE 538

For whom this is all for... the communities living in and beside some of our most precious and complex ecosystems

"Trees have been one of the most important factors of our lives. For the air, because without air we would not exist as people; animals, and everything else – plants, water, nothing would exist. [...] Because of this, we might say it is our duty as citizens to manage and conserve the environment."

-Isabela Alonzo Martín (San Mateo, Ixtatán, Guatemala)

"Where does life come from? From the Earth. From the Earth we came and to the Earth we shall return."

-Don Agustín (48 Cantones, Totonicapán, Guatemala)

Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

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