Strategic Plan
2018 - 2023
The ACEER Foundation is the leading experiential learning organization in the Peruvian Amazon, delivering innovative, transformative education programs to help develop the next generation of cross-disciplinary conservation leaders.

Our programs represent a model for the rest of Peru and the Amazon Basin, with a focus on capacity building and community engagement. We are powered by a robust, professional staff of scientists and educators and governed by an engaged, diverse board of directors.

We operate following a well-developed strategic plan and enjoy a stable and ever-expanding funding base. We continuously monitor and evaluate the impacts of our programs and clearly communicate our mission using consistent education and outreach.
The future of our environment and indigenous perspectives rests in the hands of our children. As a father and educator, I believe our students need unique hands on experiences to care about our planet and look up to people that protect it. I can think on no better way to connect children to the natural world than bringing the Amazon Rainforest Home.”

Jon Cox
ACEER FOUNDATION, PRESIDENT
ACEER has been a dynamic force for rainforest conservation since 1991, when it was founded with the objective of biological conservation through research, education, and collaboration with and empowerment of local communities. We pioneered the use of canopy walkway systems for ecological science with the first canopy walkway in the western hemisphere. Scientists have discovered new plant and animal species at ACEER-supported facilities and new medicines at our ethnobotanical gardens.

Our focus includes cultural conservation alongside biological conservation, with the understanding that the social and environmental systems of the Amazon are tied together. We know that rainforest destruction and climate change are leading to mass extinctions of plants and animals, but global climate change is also contributing to the extinction of indigenous Amazonian cultures. Since 2013, ACEER has been collaborating with the National Geographic Society, the University of Delaware and Dickinson College to help indigenous groups like the Ese’Eja people of Peru preserve their culture.

Today, we continue to offer transformative experiential learning opportunities focused on conservation to a local and global audience. ACEER has touched the lives of more than 1 million people worldwide, and our reach continues to grow.

“We are the ancient owners of this land because we were the first to descend from the sky on a thread of cotton. Without the forest, there is no life...and no Ese’Eja.”

Mateo, Ese’Eja Elder
Our Mission

The ACEER Foundation designs and implements transformative, experiential learning that develops local and global environmental leaders who work to conserve and restore functioning landscapes in the Amazon Basin and beyond.
Many of the jungle communities in my home of Puerto Maldonado are forced to rely on destructive mining practices as their main source of income. With help from ACEER, I’ve been able to educate and help these communities transition into sustainable eco-tourism based economies.”

Rut Mottoccanchi
ACEER Emerging Conservation Fellow
“I’ve seen what is possible with eco-tourism, we are able to make a big difference. Unfortunately once the mining is done, the land is often destroyed, losing its aesthetic and biological value. We must start with education, and ACEER has given me a platform to communicate and teach.”

Adela Indriago
ACEER Full Conservation Fellow
Our Approach

The ACEER Foundation designs and implements transformative experiential learning programs. We continuously monitor and evaluate program impacts and the alignment of programs to the organizational mission. As part of the evaluative process, ACEER underwent a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis in 2017.

The SWOT Analysis presents a snapshot of organizational and programmatic pathways immediately available and pitfalls that may be encountered, as well as assets that can be drawn on for assistance. The results of the SWOT Analysis informed the creation of a series of action items which will form the framework of our approach.
One of the most powerful aspects of the ACEER’s activities has to do with its responsiveness, as exemplified by previous strategic plans and analyses such as the SWOT described previously, and the more recent changes in our programming necessitated by the gold-mining situation in Puerto Maldonado, and followed almost immediately by the global pandemic. In the face of such conditions, we still continue to move forward with focused and strategic activities.”

Nora Bynum
ACEER Foundation, Executive Director
Our first approach is to develop a learning ecosystem focused on environmental education and grounded in a collective impact framework. A collective impact framework states that when addressing a complex issue, no single initiative, no matter how excellent, can make a significant impact on its own.

Our collective impact framework centers on maintaining established organizational partnerships and growing and cultivating these partnerships into the Conservation Learning Web.

The Conservation Learning Web connects conservation-based learning in the classroom to the field and equips educators to lead students through active, experiential learning in diverse settings. The Web supports youth by facilitating access to new pathways and explorations for future learning and careers. Pathways and opportunities for exploration enable young people to become engaged and skilled in conservation as they progress through childhood into adulthood.

“"We use our strength in connecting conservation, scientific research and traditional knowledge for the use and empowerment of Peru’s local Amazonian peoples, their communities, and their own initiatives. Our work functions as the powering force to help them find and follow a path for sustainability on their own land and on their own terms.”

Carmen Chavez
ACEER FOUNDATION
Our second approach is to bring the conservation of the Amazon to local communities in the USA, bridging conservation objectives and cultures and fostering mutual understanding.

We will facilitate collaborations with local education organizations and teachers, piloting bilingual programs in Spanish and English that bring lessons learned in the Amazon to classrooms in the USA. These education programs will include the integration of scientific research being conducted by ACEER staff on the ground in the Amazon.

- All My Relations - The Puppet Show
- Eyes on Nature - Camera Traps
- Our Water World - Leaf Pack & Foldscope
- Indigenous Voices - Cultural Mapping
**Action Item 3**

**EXPAND DIGITAL OUTREACH AND FUNDRAISING**

Our third approach is to push our resources towards digital outreach and fundraising to address rising global conservation challenges including climate change, mass species extinctions, and loss of traditional ecological knowledge.

We will increase the visibility and scope of our new Conservation Fellows program, advocating for Amazonian conservation while contributing to the development of young conservation practitioners.

We will pursue private funding sources and grants for programmatic and operational support. By expanding our digital outreach and fundraising initiatives, we will develop a robust and resilient program that furthers our mission while expanding our global reach.

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“**My first exposure to Amazonian conservation was an ACEER-sponsored project with the Ese’Eja people of Peru as an undergraduate at the University of Delaware. The project sparked my passion for biological and cultural conservation and storytelling, and I used the skills I learned in the Amazon to enter and finish a Ph.D. program focused on the conservation of Amazonian indigenous lands. ACEER opened the door to conservation for me, and now I have the opportunity to apply my technical expertise and passion to really make an impact as a researcher.”**

Brian Griffiths
ACEER Conservation Fellow
Metrics and Funding Streams

Our funding stream is made up of a combination of private donors and endowments (68%), external grants (21%), and the ACEER community development fund (10%).

Our sustainable coffee roasted by House Cup Coffee in Havertown, PA initiative in collaboration with One Tree Planted enables ACEER to plant one Amazonian tree for every bag of sustainable coffee sold and makes up 1% of our funding stream.

Our projected future funding is, at a minimum, the same as our past, reported funding stream since these are long-term funding programs.

In the coming years, we will increasingly target external grants and private donors through our digital fundraising and outreach campaigns, and the increase in external and private funding will form the first metric of ACEER’s outputs.

Our other output metrics will be based on our three action items, where success in each item will be:

1. An expansion of the Conservation Learning Web by 10% each year
2. The formation of new local collaborations
3. An increase in the reach of our digital outreach efforts, measured by a 10% increase in public engagements through our social media accounts and website.

These outputs will be monitored and evaluated on a quarterly basis, and programmatic adjustments made as needed.
The Amazon rainforest is the world’s richest natural pharmacy and is teeming with huge reserves of therapeutic agents. Education on the values of a living Rainforest is imperative for the future health of everyone. We are proud of the work ACEER is doing at the village level to educate on these values.”

Olivia Newton-John
Amazon John Easterling
ACEER Foundation Board Members