



Rare inspires...

the people who live in the planet's most biodiverse places to embrace conservation.

Rare believes...

that conservation is not a biological challenge; it is political, social and economic. Conservation is about people. A lack of alternatives and awareness deters people from protecting their natural environment far more than a lack of will. When offered practical alternatives and the right motivation, sustainability can be boundless.

Rare Enterprises

Linking Conservation to Livelihood

Rare believes if you empower local people in ecologically important areas to take ownership in preserving their natural heritage – and more importantly, enable them to *profit* from conservation – you can achieve the sustained commitment needed for long term impact. To this end, Rare has developed an ecotourism model that marries economic and environmental sustainability in fragile natural areas.

The Rare Enterprise program offers local entrepreneurs the tools needed to launch a small business, compete in the global tourism market, and link profits to conservation. This includes training in market assessment, business planning, operations, and customer service, as well as ongoing support to ensure long term success.

Rare currently supports three enterprises in important protected areas of Central America: Community Tours Sian Ka'an in Mexico; La Ruta Moskitia in Rio Platano, Honduras; and a recently launched venture on the island of Grenada in the Eastern Caribbean. In addition to these current programs, Rare is refining a replicable enterprise model and toolbox for use by other local communities as needed.

With the support of several partners, such as the United Nations, Aveda, and the MacArthur Foundation, Rare Enterprises has changed the lives of people in some of the world's most biodiverse areas – giving them better control over their livelihoods and their community's valuable natural assets.

Commitment to Tikal

Pays Off

Our local partners in Guatemala sustain successful ecotourism enterprise

For five years, Rare has helped local communities in Tikal, Guatemala build an ecotourism business capable of competing in the global travel market. "Conservation Tours Tikal" has now repaid its startup loan from Rare, begun to operate without technical assistance, and assumed full management of this conservation-minded business.

Tikal is located in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve, which contains one of the largest areas of tropical rain forest in the country, as well as in Central America. A large area of the reserve still comprises dense broad-leaved forests with more than 300 species of trees, as well as a considerable number of threatened and CITES listed species. This UN-designated World Heritage site faces numerous threats from logging, unsustainable extraction of *xate* for the ornamental floral trade, and other unsustainable livelihoods. Ecotourism has proved a strong alternative for local communities.

Ninety percent of revenue from CTT benefits local communities in the Peten region where Tikal is located. CTT also donates 10% of profits to community-based conservation efforts, including clean-up campaigns in local watersheds and environmental education programs in rural schools.



Hector Aldana (left), a Rare-trained entrepreneur, now shares responsibility with fellow Guatemalan Nery Maldano for managing CTT.

How does Rare Enterprises work?

Generating new jobs and competitive ecotourism businesses is not easy. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 33% of new U.S. businesses fail within four years. Rare Enterprises is committed to doing the groundwork necessary to ensure long term success. This means that a thorough **Site Assessment** is conducted to determine whether or not the Rare Enterprises model is an appropriate and timely response to a community's situation and its conservation needs. If so, then an **Ecotourism Assessment** is conducted to ascertain the feasibility of an ecotourism enterprise at that site. This involves a market study of both supply and demand and an analysis of the competition.

At that point, Rare Enterprises works with the local community to **Enhance Success Factors** by providing the tools that would best fill the gaps whether it be improved trails, eco-friendly lodging, skills building, or public use planning.

Once an ecotourism business is up and running, Rare Enterprises offers to **Provide an Enterprise Loan** to expand the range of services available to include, for example, a butterfly farm, a fishing boat or kayaking equipment.

Finally, Rare Enterprises provides the tools to **Measure Enterprise Success**. Rare is focused on providing a return beyond cash flow – or a "triple bottom line" that measures the social and conservation return on each enterprise in addition to the clear financial benefits.

Making an Impact

Rare's enterprises are owned and operated by a combined 10 indigenous community groups, employing hundreds of local residents, and impacting thousands of biosphere reserve inhabitants. *Community Tours Sian Ka'an* in Mexico, for example, has:

- generated more than \$80,000 since its launch
- booked more than 1,000 visitors
- provided economic support to 75% of families in participating communities, as well as a percentage of profits to local conservation activities
- built a strong local constituency for conservation in one of the world's most biodiverse regions

Community Tours Sian Ka'an recently received one of only three placements on **Condé Nast Traveler magazine's "Green List."** The List recognizes four programs that provide equal benefits to the consumer, the local economy, and conservation.

