



*Rick Steves'*  
**EUROPE**

# CLIMATE SMART COMMITMENT

## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

\$500,000 Invested in 11 Organizations





## \$500,000 Invested in 11 Organizations

In late 2019, Rick Steves' Europe launched our Climate Smart Commitment—a program designed to pay back the environmental debt created by our travelers flying to Europe to join our bus tours. Our goal: to creatively mitigate our carbon footprint by smartly investing a self-imposed carbon tax into non-profit organizations that fight climate change in two ways: by helping farmers in the developing world employ climate-smart agriculture technology, and by advocating in the halls of government to take the threat of climate change more seriously.

After three years of running our program, we continue to believe lasting change requires both hands-on work and advocacy. Climate change hits the poorest people in the poorest countries the hardest. Roughly half of the world's population is made up of smallholder farmers and in their desperation to grow enough food and earn enough income to support their families, their farming practices contribute substantially to climate change—and their resources are scarce. Without the US taking a global leadership role, the combined actions of all the world's non-profit organizations isn't enough. That's why we believe the US must implement smart policies that acknowledge the link between climate change and hunger (both at home and abroad) while supporting the transition to a climate-smart economy.

We're presenting this report to show our travelers (and those who might travel with us in the future) what we accomplished in the past year. Despite canceling all our tours in 2020 and 2021 because of the COVID pandemic—and shrinking our travel-related carbon footprint to near-zero—we couldn't bear to stop supporting the great work of our partner organizations. In 2021 we committed \$500,000 to fund our Climate Smart portfolio, and in 2022 we committed another \$500,000.

While climate change and smart development often seem abstract, the organizations in this report are perfect examples of how positive and life-changing action is being realized in faraway places. We are proud to offer those who take our tours the peace-of-mind that our "self-imposed carbon tax" effectively mitigates the carbon they emit to join us in Europe. Together, we're making a difference. With our support, these organizations have taken three villages out of extreme poverty, reforested multiple football fields of degraded land, prevented tons of carbon from being emitted, saved thousands of trees from becoming firewood, brought back biodiversity, improved living conditions, and helped enact major climate legislation. It feels good. It's ethical as a business practice. And it's simply good global citizenship.

This annual report shares what nine of our partner organizations accomplished in 2022. Despite the global pandemic, these organizations persevered, delivered on their missions, and fulfilled their pledge to be transparent with us. They inspire all of us at Rick Steves' Europe. We hope you enjoy reading about their work.

Happy climate-smart travels,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick".

Rick Steves  
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig".

Craig Davidson  
Chief Operating Officer

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# Agros International

2022 DONATION: \$119,000

DONATIONS TO DATE: \$369,000

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Our donations allowed Agros to continue to expand their agribusiness center in Nicaragua and help more than 500 farming families learn how to use hydroponics, vermicomposting, and reforestation techniques to improve soil conditions, increase their yields, produce healthier food, help with the reforestation effort, protect water recharge zones, and generate more income.

Current farming methods produce a third of all greenhouse emissions worldwide—but don't meet the world's growing demand for food and don't generate enough income for the farmers growing the food.

In rural Latin America, Agros believes that there is a solution to break the cycle of poverty for farming families: land ownership, market-led agriculture, financial empowerment, and sustainable climate-smart farming practices.

Since our partnership began, Agros has transformed their development model to incorporate climate-smart techniques, create new performance indicators and key data to track the effectiveness of their programs, and have had outstanding results. In the three climate-smart villages created since our partnership began (San José, Nueva San José, and La Bendición, Nicaragua), Agros has lifted the farmers out of extreme poverty and built entrepreneurial, prosperous communities out of what was essentially nothing (as Agros builds new villages from scratch).

In so doing, Agros developed a vermicompost production and training facility (which reduced the use of chemical-based fertilizers by 40%), created a nursery, carefully cultivated over 41,000 seedlings, reforested over 47 acres of land, registered 226 acres under a sustainable forest management program, installed a water irrigation system and community hydroponic modules, and built family-oriented greenhouses. Their certification with the Rainforest Alliance allowed the farmers to increase their incomes, their empowerment of women has diversified household income (they sell surplus produce to other community members and support women-operated businesses like bakeries), and their ecological latrines, showers, stoves, and water filters protect the environment—saving over 1.6 million gallons of water and 90,000 kg of wood per year.

Now Agros will take their model into the community at large. The next stage of our partnership will be to create a Harvest and Hope Center (HHC) in La Bendición, where farmers from the surrounding area can learn these same market-oriented, climate-smart agricultural skills, and begin a regional transformation away from extreme poverty and food insecurity.

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**Agros International works to break the cycle of poverty for farming families in rural Latin America.**

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## Beads for Education

2022 DONATION: \$10,000

DONATIONS TO DATE: \$10,000

Our donation allowed BEADS for Education (“BEADS”) to teach 125 students about climate-smart farming practices, expand their school farm and provide climate education workshops for more than 7,000 people in Kajiado, the Amboseli National Park region, and the Maasai Mara.

Due to the ongoing deforestation in Kenya, the traditionally pastoral Maasai communities have embraced farming for their food security needs. BEADS, through their Tembea Academy, teaches students creative and critical thinking while instilling a philosophy of returning everything that came from the earth back to the earth. Their school is completely solar powered, they grow all their own food (for 300 daily meals), practice no till gardening, don’t use pesticides, use greenhouses, and compost all their organic and paper waste.

In 2022, BEADS organized 10 town clean-up days—including the Maasai Mara Game Reserve and the coast of Kenya—to teach the students about the detriments of plastic waste and how their actions have a direct impact on the climate. In so doing, the students learned about wildlife and marine biology while experiencing the world like never before—as they visited game parks and marveled at the ocean for the first time (and some even learned how to swim!).

And the climate-smart work doesn’t stop there. During school breaks, each student volunteers to teach their families and communities how to generate higher yields and implement a more sustainable farming process by using less water, planting crops to attract and feed insects (along with pollinators), and reforesting the indigenous and medicinal plants that have been decimated. Then, each student petitions the Kenyan parliament to take action on climate change—with one previous student being so successful, she was invited to be a Yale Young African Scholar, selected to be an Ashoka Changemaker, and had her book on climate change and drought published and translated into four languages by World Reader.

Over the next year, BEADS plans to expand the number of clean-up days, add new solar panels to the school, build water catchment facilities and 4 new greenhouses, plant 1,000 trees, and girdle the garden with a fence to stop the antelopes from eating al fresco.

**BEADS sponsors girls from vulnerable Maasai communities in Kenya by paying their tuition from primary through University.**



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# Bread for the World

**2022 DONATION: \$20,000**

**DONATIONS TO DATE: \$240,000**

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Our donation allowed Bread for the World (Bread) to scale up their advocacy efforts and raise awareness in our government of how climate change makes more people hungry which, in turn, makes our world less stable. Climate change is a major contributor to global food insecurity, especially in low-income countries. Extreme weather events such as drought and floods are increasing, affecting food production, and making it harder for those living in poverty to feed their families and provide a nutritious diet.

In 2022, Bread achieved broad, bipartisan support in Congress for climate-smart investments in agriculture and climate adaptation for smallholder farmers through the Global Food Security Act (GFSA). They also brought a food systems approach—including climate-smart elements—to U.S. and global food and agriculture policy in the farm bill by holding a series of 25 regional farm bill dialogues and more than 100 additional meetings to engage diverse stakeholders, including young adult activists, on climate. And in October, they organized a Convocation on Climate and Hunger with African and European partners—including young adult climate activists focused on Africa—at the Desmond Tutu Conference Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. The Convocation was timed to be just ahead of the United Nations international conference on climate, COP27 and the Nairobi participants produced and endorsed a public statement, *A Faithful Voice on Hunger and Climate Justice*, which will be used to amplify their voice going forward.

In 2023, Bread will advocate for U.S. investments in climate-smart agriculture and food security programs to strengthen long-term food security in the US and around the world. As part of this, Bread will build on their successes advocating for climate-smart policies and investments by highlighting climate-smart adaptations used by smallholder farmers in countries and regions disproportionately affected by climate change. They also plan a series of dialogues with diverse audiences to better understand the perspective of the people working directly with hunger and the impact of climate change, and ensure their voices are part of the solution going forward.



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**Bread for  
the World is  
an advocacy  
organization  
working to end  
hunger at home  
and abroad.**

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**Citizens' Climate Education is an advocacy organization that educates policymakers and the public about smart solutions to climate change.**

## Citizens' Climate Education

**2022 DONATION: \$40,000**

***DONATIONS TO DATE: \$130,000***

Our donations helped Citizens' Climate Education (CCE) strengthen their nationwide coalition of climate advocates, create a powerful counterweight to paid lobbyists advocating for the fossil fuel industry, and educate policymakers and the public about smart solutions to climate change.

CCE believes that the solution to climate change is democracy. With more than 210,000 climate advocates organized into 400 local chapters and 70 Action Teams, CCE has cultivated one of the strongest grassroots movements working to advance climate legislation in the United States. CCE volunteers are trained to meaningfully engage their elected officials, host public outreach events, and build public support for action to fight climate change.

Over the past year, CCE was active in advancing various climate policies. Their efforts helped ensure historic climate provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022—which included \$386 billion in clean energy investment (the most significant in US history) and is anticipated to bring US greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 2005's levels by 2030. In addition, they also helped pass the Growing Climate Solutions Act in the 2022 omnibus bill.

In 2023, CCE hopes to add 30,000 new advocates, with a focus on engaging the frontline communities most directly affected by climate change along with other underrepresented groups. In addition, they aim to hold over 1,500 outreach events, secure 900 endorsements, and educate more than 180,000 people.





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# Food 4 Farmers

**2022 DONATION: \$40,000**

**DONATIONS TO DATE: \$140,000**

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Our donations allowed Food 4 Farmers (F4F) to partner with six cooperatives representing over 6,200 coffee-farming families in Latin America and increase their food security. F4F's goals: teach climate-smart practices, strengthen local food systems, improve incomes, reduce deforestation, restore local ecosystems, and create a healthier planet.

Industrial agriculture is responsible for about 80 percent of all tropical deforestation globally. F4F aims to disrupt this trend by helping small-scale farmers transform their monoculture farms into sustainable operations that provide food and income security without the need for increased acreage.

Through their Home Garden Program, F4F's families maintain almost 900 gardens and care for more than 120,000 replanted trees—using sustainable farming practices, including the making of organic compost and pesticides, growing a diverse range of organic food crops, improving soil health, using agroforestry to restore biodiversity, and building low-cost water management systems to sustain gardens through dry seasons. Their Beekeeper and Farmers Markets Program helps to diversify the farmers' incomes and reduce their dependence on a single commodity crop (coffee) by helping them establish supplemental on-farm businesses—which have the added benefit of reforesting land to provide pollinators with food and shelter. And their Community Promoter Program trains and empowers young women and men to bring these climate-smart techniques from the workshops to the farms and ensure the farmers thrive long-term.

In 2022, F4F was very productive. In Huehuetenango, Guatemala, the farmers produced 106,483 pounds of honey, were provided new varieties of seeds to increase food diversity, and experimented with edible mushrooms as a potential new crop—with one farmer offering up a room in her house to be an oyster mushroom “lab.” In Cauca, Colombia, the COMPEPCLAF cooperative organized two food celebrations, allowing 182 families to exchange food, recipes, seeds, and climate-smart farming techniques (while having the added benefit of showcasing the success of the programs to the entire community). In Quiché, Guatemala, the Maya Ixil cooperative replaced 168 beehives that were lost in the 2020 hurricanes and couldn't keep up with the subsequent demand for honey (the farmers need new containers to support sales). In Chiapas, Mexico, 26 women have established several home gardens—with one group harvesting 17 pounds of radishes, 22 pounds of cucumbers, 17 pounds of potatoes, and 66 pounds of chayote (a gourd that is a cross between a potato and a cucumber). And in Jinotega, Nicaragua, 39 home gardens are now active, 36 women are selling their produce at the Mercadito Nutri-Hogar—a women-run organic farmers market—and the recently built nursery is being used to train farmers how to multiply their crops, integrate fruit trees (called intercropping), increase bio-diversity, and improve the quality of their other crops.

Over the next year F4F will expand and strengthen their school garden programs, train 750 families at five co-operatives how to conserve and manage water (through collection, storage, conservation, and sanitation practices), and continue to engage women and young people to lead their communities to healthier diets, stronger local economies, and climate-smart farming practices.



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**Food 4 Farmers  
partners with coffee-  
farming families in Latin  
America to increase food  
security, teach climate-  
smart practices, reduce  
deforestation, and  
stabilize incomes.**

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**Global Communities provides families in the developing world with the tools to lift themselves out of poverty and contribute less to climate change.**

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## Global Communities

**2022 DONATION: \$75,000**

***DONATIONS TO DATE: \$300,000***

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Our donations allowed Global Communities (GC) to transition 488 households (2,928 individuals) in the dry western highlands of Huehuetenango, Guatemala from traditional open fires to climate-smart water filters and cookstoves, reforest 30,300 seedlings, and build drought-resistant, water-conserving gardens.

Taken together, these initiatives have created safer and healthier households that consume less firewood, emit less carbon, and directly stem deforestation (so far, our funding has allowed GC to provide enough fuel-efficient stoves and water filters to conserve over 6,800 metric tons of cut firewood and reduce CO2 emissions by over 18,200 tons over their useful life). And to ensure these communities thrive for the years to come, GC puts women at the center of the effort by training them to maintain the stoves, promote household health, and manage the reforestation effort.

Next year, GC will help communities in the Mara region of Tanzania implement climate-smart agricultural techniques to grow nutritious food and increase food security. By mobilizing their Women Empowered groups—which build the social and financial agency of women, develop entrepreneurs, and establish financial resilience during periods of climate-shocks—GC hopes to increase the adoption of climate-smart food production and build businesses based on climate-smart inputs (such as seeds and hands-on technical support) to ensure the sustainability of the project. Then, over time, GC plans to use this project as a model to expand and deepen their climate-smart agriculture work across other programs, improve livelihoods, and strengthen communities.





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# Rainforest Action Network

2022 DONATION: \$40,000

DONATIONS TO DATE: \$130,000

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Our donations allow the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) to challenge the multinational corporations that use unethically sourced resources and protect the Leuser Ecosystem of Sumatra, Indonesia from deforestation caused by the illegal expansion of pulpwood and palm oil plantations.

To do this, RAN works with community partners and local authorities to document illegal deforestation, the clearing and burning of peatlands, labor abuses, and other human rights violations. Then, by publishing reports and using high-profile local and international media coverage, RAN focuses public scrutiny on the multinational corporations that benefit from this behavior. RAN's work can be summed up in three campaigns: Stop Deforestation, Defund Climate Change, and Support Communities.

In 2022, RAN published their second annual Keep Forests Standing (KFS) scorecard and ranked multinational brands and banks as to their success in walking the climate talk (spoiler alert—most failed). And in Banking on Climate Chaos—their annual report on finance and fossil fuels—they called out the continuing disconnect between corporate action on climate change and the world's largest financial institutions by noting that the world's 60 largest banks have poured \$4.6 trillion into fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement. But not all was negative, as half the brands identified in the KFS scorecard have begun efforts to evaluate and disclose their true forest footprints. Also, progress was made toward recognizing the crisis facing Human Rights Defenders (who are often threatened, injured, or intimidated) with Unilever publishing—a Responsible Partner Policy that RAN hopes could set a precedent for global consumer goods manufacturers.

In 2023 our donation will help RAN with action and empowerment. One-half will be earmarked to directly help rural Indigenous communities build the local capacity to defend their land and their rights through RAN's Community Action Grants Program. The other half will be directed towards funding three of their current projects: publicly campaigning for corporations to implement policies to protect forests and human rights; partnering with local governments to document illegal corporate expansion into intact forests and human rights violations; and attempting to stop plantations from encroaching on the 80,000 hectare Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve and the 1,750,000 hectares of lowland rainforests that surround it (which are home to the largest density of Sumatran Orangutans on the planet as well as breeding populations of the Sumatran rhinoceros, tiger, and elephant).

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**Rainforest Action Network works to preserve forests, protect the climate, and uphold human rights by challenging corporate power and systemic injustice.**

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**The Rainforest Alliance works with rural communities in over 70 countries to conserve forests and support sustainable livelihoods.**

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## Rainforest Alliance

**2022 DONATION: \$30,000**

***DONATIONS TO DATE: \$110,000***

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Our donations allowed the Rainforest Alliance (RA) to expand their climate-smart agriculture work in Ghana—benefiting 3,600 local farmers across 76 communities by providing the climate-smart tools and training necessary to produce cocoa sustainably and conserve Ghana’s forest landscape.

In Ghana, unsustainable cocoa production is a key driver of deforestation and causes close to half of the forest loss in the high forest zone—resulting in an unbalanced ecosystem with more erosion, heavier rains, longer droughts, and lower crop yields. RA works to conserve Ghana’s forest landscape and support agricultural livelihoods of local farmers by providing them with skills and resources necessary to produce cocoa more sustainably and an incentive to manage their shade trees. Properly managed shade trees act as a carbon sink, improve soil conditions, restore tree cover, create a suitable habitat for wildlife, and improve the cocoa yield—resulting in more resilient crops and land, higher incomes for farmers, and greater food security.

Over the last three years, RA has enabled communities to implement climate-smart practices that improve soil conditions, establish 14 tree nurseries, produce 280,000 seedlings (including two additional tree species to increase biodiversity), restore 5 hectares of degraded land (two hectares of which bordered the Tano River within the Sui Forest Reserve), develop GPS technology that monitors tree survival rates and changes in land use and cover, and conduct 28 trainings for 3,600 farmers.

Our donation will allow RA to expand into new communities in the Bibiani-Anhwiaso-Bekwai district and continue to incentivize hardworking farmers, create tree nurseries, grow and register more trees, conduct more trainings, and transition accountability to local Landscape Management Boards to ensure climate-smart agriculture practices are followed and illegal deforestation is tracked.





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# Zeitz Foundation

**2022 DONATION: \$100,000**

***DONATIONS TO DATE: \$300,000***

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Our donations allowed the Zeitz Foundation (ZF) to continue implementing its Tree of Life Reforestation Initiative in Laikipia, Kenya, combining women's education and vocational training with reforestation, conservation, and biodiversity. In so doing, ZF offers women an opportunity for independent incomes and financial freedom while regenerating the landscape (with a goal of reforesting over 3 million acacia trees), enhancing soil stabilization and fertility, recapturing water, and ensuring the survival of a biodiverse ecosystem. This initiative follows ZF's sustainable "4C" approach by combining conservation, community, culture, and commerce—a philosophy shared globally through The Long Run network.

Since our partnership started, ZF has had outstanding results—despite COVID restrictions and an ongoing drought slowing down the planting of trees and delaying the launch of their Vocational Training Academy for Forestry and Permaculture. In the past three years, they created a nursery; sourced, germinated and planted over 400,000 acacia seedlings; built over 24km of fencing to protect the new forest area; purchased a water truck to enable manual watering during drought conditions; sunk a borehole to create new water access; and installed a solar pump, panels, storage tanks, and other plumbing works to generate up to 40,000 liters of water a day for the land, wildlife, and newly established nursery.

This work is vital, as over the last decade, Kenya has lost much of its forested land. The effect of this deforestation contributes directly to climate change, degrades the land, and affects not only the biodiversity of plant and animal life but also the well-being of the communities who rely on the land. It's a vicious cycle resulting in more hunger, more destructive agricultural activities (like the expansion of cattle farming), and less stability.

Over the next year, ZF expects to start construction of a 50-acre water dam to ensure water security in the area (as the prerequisite environmental surveys and licensing are completed), initiate construction of a new 4C Learning Centre, and develop an expanded curriculum for vocational training to attract and educate the next generation of sustainability champions.

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**The Zeitz Foundation develops and implements ecologically responsible projects in the Greater Segera Region of Kenya.**

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