



Solution Search

Surfacing, spotlighting, and accelerating what's working to change behaviors for the environment





Why Reinvent the Wheel?

The world has no shortage of problems that need fixing. Environmental challenges are becoming increasingly pressing and can feel overwhelming.

But solutions are out there. Humans are problem-solvers by design, and people all over the world are already innovating—we don't need to start from scratch.

Imagine directing our attention to finding the most successful of these solutions, amplifying their impact, and helping to scale their design.

Solution Search is a contest, a global crowdsourcing effort, a convening of success stories, and a capacity-building initiative. It blends behavioral science, conservation, and community action.

Powered by Rare's Center for Behavior and the Environment (BE.Center), Solution Search enables global changemakers to address the most pressing environmental issues of our time.



Solution Search is a global program designed to find what's working and help it grow.

As part of the BE.Center, Solution Search surfaces, spotlights, and accelerates existing solutions that use behavioral science to help solve the world's most challenging environmental issues.

The program's model is designed to drive change. First, a global crowdsourcing contest identifies solutions. Then, trainings, mentorship, and networks amplify top projects.

By The Numbers

127
Countries



We have unearthed solutions from around the globe—from Kenya to Australia, from Bolivia to the Philippines, in major urban centers and small rural towns

786
Solutions



Our contests have surfaced hundreds of innovative approaches for solving the most urgent environmental challenges

788M
Media Impressions



Our entrants and solutions have been featured in prominent news outlets, international publications and more

Our Contest Design: Explained

1. Enter



Organizations submit entries through an online, open source, and transparent process. It isn't just about finding the most successful solutions from all corners of the world, but also about creating a public knowledge base about specific issues.

Think of: An encyclopedia of what's working

2. Judge



Solution Search convenes thought leaders from diverse perspectives for two rigorous rounds of judging. First, a technical panel narrows the entry pool. Next, our expert judges select ten finalists for the People's Choice award and vote for a Judges' Choice grand prize winner. These leading minds get access to the best solutions from around the globe, and the most promising approaches get increased visibility. It's a win-win.

Think of: Top food critics rating the best dishes

3. Vote



Finalists for the People's Choice grand prize are announced and voting by the general public begins on the Solution Search website. The contest is about more than just crowning a winner. It's about inspiring and mobilizing the finalists' networks to draw in more support for their work. The public voting gives the finalists a platform and reason to engage their local communities.

Think of: Hometown heroes on American Idol

4. Share



We spread the word about these leading changemakers. Solution Search connects finalists with conservation and development organizations, foundations, and other influential groups to get them onto more global stages. The team works hard to bring these solutions to as many audiences as possible.

Think of: A guitar plugged into an amplifier



Reaching Far and Wide

Over ten years and five contests, Solution Search has surfaced innovations taking place across multiple issue areas, geographic locations, and ecosystems.

Number of solutions by ecosystem and continent:



100

Entries

48

Countries



Contest:

Turning the Tide for Coastal Fisheries

This contest set out to identify and spotlight global community efforts to restore near-shore fisheries.

Winners

Grand Prize – Wildlife Conservation Society (Madagascar): Engaging communities to create locally managed marine areas to reduce habitat destruction

Runner Up – Off the Hook Community Supported Fishery (Canada): Linking small-scale fishers with consumers, government, and media to build market demand for sustainably harvested fish

Runner Up – Misool Baseftin Foundation (Indonesia): Fostering Marine Conservation Agreements with local communities to safeguard marine habitats from shark finning and destructive fishing

Finalists

Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (Zanzibar): Promoting environmental stewardship and marine conservation by linking Islamic faith to sustainable fishing practices

Punta Cana Ecological Foundation (Dominican Republic): Restoring corals and fisheries by providing alternative livelihoods for fishermen, reducing fishing pressure on the reef, and creating volunteer opportunities for tourists

Kubulau Business and Development Committee (Fiji): Integrating ridge to reef management as a solution to unsustainable fishing

Nimpal Channel Marine Conservation Area (Mirconesia): Harnessing the power of community governance to enforce sustainable management of traditional fishing grounds

Federacion de Pescadores de Navidad & Ilustre Municipalidad de Navidad (Chile): Establishing a marine sanctuary governed by artisanal fishers and local councils to protect fisheries

Fishermen Association of the Rural Municipality of Mangagoulack (Senegal): Forming a Community Conserved Area to rehabilitate fisheries, improve local diets, and raise incomes

PMMP Management Board (Philippines): Establishing a multi-stakeholder, co-management scheme to protect natural life cycles in the sea



Case Study: Fish Forever

Revitalizing oceans and the coastal communities that depend on them

Photo: Jason Houston

Rare’s first-ever Solution Search laid the foundation for Rare’s flagship program, Fish Forever. Fish Forever revitalizes marine habitats and livelihoods by empowering communities through clear rights, strong governance, local leadership, and participatory management.

How Solution Search made a difference:

- Insights from the first Solution Search, in 2011, informed Fish Forever program development.
- Rare integrated key elements from the Solution Search entries into Fish Forever, including **managed access in marine areas** and **low-cost stock assessments**.
- Fish Forever has since grown into a vast and successful program. Today, Fish Forever operates across **ten countries** in collaboration with **500 local governments** and **1 million fishers**.
- Beyond Fish Forever, contest solutions have also made their way into the marine portfolios of many international organizations and foundations.

SDGs impacted by this solution:

 <p>1 NO POVERTY</p>	 <p>2 ZERO HUNGER</p>
 <p>5 GENDER EQUALITY</p>	 <p>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>
 <p>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p>	 <p>14 LIFE BELOW WATER</p>



Contest:

Adapting to a Changing Environment

This contest surfaced locally-driven, nature-based solutions that protect biodiversity, enhance livelihoods, and help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Winners

Judges' Choice – **Society for Environment and Development (ENDEV)** (India): Soil testing, collecting and distributing salt-tolerant varieties of seeds to improve soil fertility and food security

Runner-up – **Sociedad de Historia Natural Niparajá A.C.** (Mexico): Promoting watershed restoration and recharging the aquifer by conserving the soil, controlling runoff, and increasing filtration capacity

People's Choice – **Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods, (SOIL)** (Haiti): Converting human waste into rich compost by providing ecological sanitation and jobs for communities lacking proper infrastructure

India Prize – **Academy of Gandhian Studies** (India): Promoting a low-cost and community-operated water treatment system

Runner-up – **Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change through Coastal Afforestation (CBACC-CF) Project** (Bangladesh): Developing participatory ownership and adaptation practices in coastal regions to protect mangrove forests

East Africa Prize – **African Christians Organization Network** (Kenya): Promoting the use of biochar-producing stoves to increase soil quality and enhance crop productivity

Finalists

EcoLogic Development Fund (Honduras): Supporting landscape-level conservation and sustainable land use to protect the area around the watershed

The Salto de Agua Farming Group (Mexico): Promoting Silvopastoral land management practices to maintain the soil quality and land productivity

Village Development Committee of Ando-Kpomey (Togo): Establishing community-wide forest maintenance practices to protect against deforestation and promote climate resilience

The Foundation of the People of the South Pacific International (Fiji): Building resilient coastal fisheries and island communities through community-managed marine protected areas



Contest:

Reducing Our Risk

This contest identified programs in the United States that mitigate the effects of natural hazards and illustrate Americans' resilience and innovation in confronting these disasters.

Winners

Judges' Choice – **The City of Ottawa** (Illinois): Implementing a sustainable Floodplain Management Plan and developing a top-rate FloodThreat Recognition and Response Plan

Runner-up – **Restore America's Estuaries** (Virginia): Leading an alliance of 11 community-based conservation organizations working to protect and restore the vital resources of our nation's bays and estuaries

People's Choice – **Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project** (Arizona): Implementing forest management and restoration to reduce the risk of severe wildfire and subsequent flooding in two watersheds critical to Flagstaff

Runner-up – **American Littoral Society** (New York): Restoring salt marsh islands in Jamaica Bay to protect the community from the effects of climate change

Runner-up – **University of New Orleans – CHART** (Louisiana): Teaching concepts of disaster resilience through literacy programs and educating populations with low reading and writing proficiency about preparing for storms

Finalists

Billion Oyster Project, New York Harbor Foundation (New York): Connecting New Yorkers to the harbor that the city depends on by training students in marine science technology, aquaculture, and reef management

Blackfoot Challenge (Montana): Promoting water conservation and reduced stress to fisheries during critical low-flow periods

Ecosystem Restoration Support Organization, Inc. (Florida): Mitigating damage from storm surges and wave action while protecting vital marine habitats, improving water quality, and educating citizens on shoreline protection

Make It Right (Louisiana): Building safe, sustainable, LEED Platinum certified homes above flood elevation levels and increasing below-ground water retention capacity

Climate Central (New Jersey): Providing critical information about sea-level rise and coastal flood risk tailored exactly to where people live and work

338
Entries

76
Countries



Contest:

Farming for Biodiversity

This contest uncovered programs that successfully increased biodiversity while protecting communities' livelihoods.

Winners

Judges' Choice – **National Disaster Risk Reduction Centre** (Nepal): Working with indigenous households to switch to climate-resilient land management

Biodiversity Impact – **Fundación ECOTOP** (Bolivia): Introducing successional agroforestry to tackle malnutrition and forest degradation

People's Choice – **Apis Agribusiness** (Ethiopia): Fighting youth unemployment and deforestation with organic honey production

Community & Social Impact – **Fairventures Worldwide** (Indonesia): Creating an economically-viable alternative to palm oil monoculture in Borneo

Food Security & Nutrition Impact – **Desarrollo Alternativo e Investigación A.C.** (Mexico): Saving local maize and bean species while increasing yields

Water Impact – **The Mountain Institute** (Peru): Reviving ancient Pre-Incan water systems to protect the Puna grasslands and strengthen water security

Finalists

A Growing Culture (Vietnam): Transforming the negative aspects of hog farming to protect the livestock, the community, and the environment

Sustainable Income Generating Investment Group (Kenya): Reviving interest in nutritious African leafy vegetables to promote local biodiversity, dietary diversity, nutrition, and environmental resilience

Manor House Agricultural Centre (Kenya): Utilizing biointensive agriculture to produce more food, improve nutrition, promote biodiversity, and conserve the environment

CanopyBridge- EcoDecision (Ecuador): Working with chefs, indigenous groups, and conservation NGOs to develop value chains for Amazon fresh foods that have substantial conservation benefits and great culinary potential



Case Study: Apis Agribusiness

“No trees, no bees, no honey, no money”

Photo: Apis Agribusiness

Apis Agribusiness, one of the Farming for Biodiversity grand prize winners, is bringing back traditional beekeeping in Ethiopia’s Oromia State. This work helps to reverse deforestation, improve livelihoods among rural communities, and tackle the youth exodus. The program trains and mentors unemployed youth in certified organic honey production and overall business skills, using the latest apiary technologies and an established market for their product, sold at a premium price.

How Solution Search made a difference:

- The contest prize money served as collateral for a bank loan, helping Jony purchase equipment to **process and export 20+ tons of honey**.
- Rare’s behavior change methodology became core to Jony’s approach, helping him **expand his solution** to employ 200+ rural youth and reduce migration to cities.
- 20+ farmers in Jony’s communities were **trained to begin similar projects** through Rare’s Campaigning for Conservation initiative.
- Apis Agribusiness founder, Jony Girma, traveled to Germany for the Solution Search award ceremony and workshop. During his visit, he met with potential buyers, which **opened him up to a new market**.

SDGs impacted by this solution:



197

Entries

47

Countries

Contest:

Climate Change Needs Behavior Change

This contest found proven solutions that are using behavioral strategies to motivate individuals and communities to adopt climate-friendly behaviors.



Winners

Judge's Choice – Solar Sister (Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda): Empowering women entrepreneurs with the tools to earn a livelihood by delivering life-transforming clean energy access to underserved communities

People's Choice – 1 Million Women (Australia): Growing a global social movement that mobilizes women and girls to make lifestyle changes to reduce their carbon footprint

Early Entrant Prize – EcoChallenge (United States): Gamifying community adoption of sustainable behaviors by allowing participants to join challenges and track their community's progress via an online platform

Finalists

Behaviour Innovation (Australia): Inspiring sugar cane farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices that reduce water contamination and strengthen the climate resilience of the Great Barrier Reef

Better Buying Lab, World Resources Institute (United Kingdom): Sparking adoption of plant-rich diets by helping food-service providers rethink how they design menus and present food options

JouleBug (United States): A mobile application that encourages users to take simple actions throughout their day to make climate compatible decisions, fueled by friendly competition and social sharing

University of Cambridge (United Kingdom): Restructuring the environments where food options are presented in order to encourage plant-based diets without the perception of limiting consumers' choices

The Kasiisi Project (Uganda): Tapping into the potential of children to promote fuel-efficient, low-emission cookstoves in order to inspire long-term adoption of sustainable behavior by their parents

RASAI (Pakistan): Breaking barriers to ride-sharing to reduce carbon emissions from cars, while offering affordable transportation options to commuters

Mediae Company (Kenya): Using the power of media and storytelling to encourage adoption of clean, efficient, low-energy cookstoves



Case Study: Solar Sister

“Climate change needs behavior change—which needs women”

Photo: Solar Sister

Solar Sister, one of the Climate Change Needs Behavior Change grand prize winners, nurtures women’s enterprises and leadership to bring sustainable energy solutions to off-grid communities in Tanzania, Nigeria and Uganda. Solar Sister provides African women with economic opportunity, training, market access, and peer support to earn a livelihood by delivering clean energy technologies directly to homes in their rural communities. Rooted in the proven power of social trust networks, Solar Sister’s approach creates a far-reaching ripple effect of climate resilience, sustainable income, health, education, environmental protection, and safety for millions.

How Solution Search made a difference:

- The prize money helped Solar Sister expand their operations and pilot new programs. Since winning the award, the organization recruited, trained, and supported **433 new Solar Sister Entrepreneurs (SSEs)**.
- Their initiatives, like ‘Sisterhood Groups’ and monthly ‘Community Champions,’ are increasing recruitment and supporting budding ‘clean energy’ leaders.
- As of September 2019, Solar Sister delivered **45,913 clean energy products** to remote communities, benefiting **201,393 people**.
- The exposure provided by Solution Search has contributed to Solar Sister Entrepreneurs’ growing international recognition as innovators at the frontlines of climate change mitigation.

SDGs impacted by this solution:





**But It's Not Just About
Winning a Contest**

Once the awards have been handed out, the BE.Center and contest partners equip finalists with behavioral science tools and new connections to help them enhance their solutions and deliver lasting change.

The BE.Center's Toolkit

The BE.Center harnesses the science of human behavior and offers a more complete toolkit for inspiring environmental action. In addition to conservationists' usual strategies for motivating behavior change—material incentives, information and awareness-raising, and rules and regulations—the BE.Center emphasizes **social influences**, **choice architecture**, and **emotional appeals**.



Leveraging Social Influences—

creating opportunities for social learning, encouraging public commitments, and making behaviors observable.



Designing Choice Architecture—

making desirable behaviors easier by purposefully structuring the context, timing, and presentation of options.



Appealing to Emotions—

leveraging positive emotions, such as pride and joy, and framing our messages to align with group values, identities, and interests.



In learning how to apply these 'levers' for behavior change, finalists are introduced to **behavior-centered design**, an approach that blends design thinking and insights from the behavioral and social sciences to help conservationists, environmentalists, and social changemakers design effective and transformative solutions.



Spotlight: Farming for Biodiversity—The Contest and Beyond

The innovations uncovered by Solution Search: Farming for Biodiversity set the stage for training leaders and changing behaviors in communities around the world



1 Contest

surfaced replicable solutions that connect agriculture and biodiversity. This program was a partnership between Rare, IFOAM – Organics International, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Germany’s Federal Environment Ministry (BMU)



338 Entrants

eligible to be selected to host in-country trainings conducted through Rare’s Campaigning for Conservation program (C4C), in partnership with IFOAM – Organics International



9 12-day Trainings

conducted across the globe, designed to equip local practitioners with social marketing and behavior change tools that can help increase biodiversity while safeguarding livelihoods



223 Trained Practitioners

reached and ready to conduct social marketing campaigns that promote their solutions in their home communities. Many of these campaigns are still active now



Last year’s Solution Search: Farming for Biodiversity gave me the chance to raise my voice and started a process I couldn’t imagine possible. A better world is possible and I’m committed to contribute in the transition towards more sustainable food systems.”

Kevin Farrera, Solution Search Food Security Prize Winner, campaigner and community leader from Chiapas, Mexico

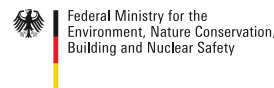
Convening for Impact

Over five contests, Solution Search has convened leading institutions spanning the private and public sectors, as well as civil society. Through these partnerships and collaborations, Solution Search has helped contest winners and finalists grow their networks and build momentum for expanding their solutions.

Partners



Sponsors



Technical Partners



Monique Barbut, Former CEO & Chairperson, Global Environment Facility

Charlotte Blank, Chief Behavioral Officer, Maritz

Juan Pablo Bonilla, Sector Manager, Climate Change and Sustainable Development, Inter-American Development Bank

Jim Cantore, Meteorologist, The Weather Channel

Jason Clay, Senior Vice President for Markets and Food, World Wildlife Fund

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary, Convention of Biological Diversity- United Nations Environment Programme

Henry Eder, Owner, Manuelita Holding

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Steve Gaines, Dean, Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, University of California, Santa Barbara

Varun Gauri, Senior Economist, Mind, Behavior and Development Unit (eMBed), World Bank

Jeremy Grantham, Founder, Grantham Foundation

Christopher Graves, President & Founder, The Ogilvy Center for Behavioral Science

Nicolás Gutiérrez, Program Manager, Marine Stewardship Council

David Halpern, Head, UK Behavioural Insights Team

Sarah Hayes, Senior Material Research & Innovation Manager, Patagonia Inc.

Rev. Mitchell C. Hescox, President, The Evangelical Environmental Network

Sir John Hood, President & CEO, Robertson Foundation

Pedro Álvarez Icaza L., General Coordinator for Biological Corridors & Resources, CONABIO (Mexico)

Dr. Naoko Ishii, CEO & Chairperson, Global Environment Facility

Brett Jenks, President & CEO, Rare

Jeremy Jones, Founder, Protect Our Winters

Ronald Jumeau, Ambassador for Climate Change, Seychelles

Manuela Kasper-Claridge, Head, Business and Science Department, Deutsche Welle

Gary E. Knell, CEO, National Geographic Partners

Elizabeth Kolbert, Staff Writer, The New Yorker

Anthony J. Kuczinski, President & CEO, MunichRe America

Aileen Lee, Chief Program Officer, Environmental Conservation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

Anthony Leiserowitz, Director, Yale Program on Climate Change Communication

Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Former Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Bonnie McClafferty, Director, Agriculture and Nutrition, GAIN

Danielle Nierenberg, Co-Founder and President, Food Tank

Per Olsson, Researcher, Stockholm Resilience Centre

Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

Henry Paulson, Former US Treasury Secretary

Ilona Porsché, Head, Blue Solutions Initiative

Eileen de Ravin, Program Manager, The Equator Initiative

Carter Roberts, President and CEO, World Wildlife Fund

Carl Safina, President, Blue Ocean Institute

Enric Sala, Explorer, National Geographic

M. Sanjayan, CEO, Conservation International

Michael C. Sapnar, President & CEO, Transatlantic Holdings Inc

Matt Silverman, President, Tampa Bay Rays

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, United Nations Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Mark Tercek, President and CEO, The Nature Conservancy

Spencer Thomas, Ambassador & Special Envoy for Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Grenada

Kate Walsh, Actor & Environmental Advocate

Elke Weber, Professor in Energy and the Environment; Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs, Princeton University

Katharine Wilkinson, Vice President, Communication & Engagement, Project Drawdown





Solution Search is brought to you by The Center for Behavior & the Environment.

The Center for Behavior & the Environment applies the best insights from behavioral science and design to tackle some of the world's most challenging environmental issues. Through partnerships with leading academic and research institutions, we translate the science of human behavior into practical solutions for conservationists worldwide.

Rare inspires change so people and nature thrive.

Learn more at <https://solutionsearch.org> and follow us @Rare_org.

