

Educational Travel Company Rustic Pathways Wins Two 2026 GoAbroad Innovation Awards

Rustic Pathways won two 2026 GoAbroad Innovation Awards, for Climate Action and Adventure-Based Programming, and holds a 4.7 out of 5 GoAbroad rating.

MENTOR, OH, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Rustic Pathways](#), an educational travel company specializing in teen travel and school group travel for students ages 14–18, has won two [2026 GoAbroad Innovation Awards](#) for Innovation in Climate Action and Innovation in Adventure-Based Programming.

GoAbroad presented the awards on May 28, 2026, in Orlando, Florida, during NAFSA week, selecting winners by a vote of its Innovation Awards Academy from more than 300 nominations. Rustic Pathways also holds a 4.7 out of 5 rating on GoAbroad, an international education review directory.

Two awards, two categories, one cycle

GoAbroad's Innovation Awards recognize innovation in international education. Rustic Pathways won two distinct categories, one for a program that widens access to climate leadership, one for the learning model behind four decades of its programs.



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Rustic Pathways students whitewater rafting in Thailand, part of the Global Adventure Learning Model recognized with a 2026 GoAbroad Innovation Award.

Innovation in Climate Action: the [Climate Leaders Fellowship](#)

The Climate Leaders Fellowship won an award for Innovation in Climate Action. The Climate Leaders Fellowship is run in partnership between Rustic Pathways, the Rustic Pathways Foundation, and Stanford University's Deliberative Democracy Lab. Since 2021, it has used a pay-what-you-want tuition model that lowers the financial barrier so the students most affected by climate change can help lead the response to it.

To date, 1,583 fellows have contributed more than 47,500 hours toward locally designed climate initiatives spanning waste reduction, food systems, biodiversity protection, and renewable energy advocacy.

"We built the Climate Leaders Fellowship on a pay-what-you-want tuition model because the students with the most at stake in climate change are too often the ones priced out of programs like it," said Shayne Fitz-Coy, CEO of Rustic Pathways.

Innovation in Adventure-Based Programming: the Global Adventure Learning Model

The Rustic Pathways Global Adventure Learning Model won Innovation in Adventure-Based Programming. The model, which has been refined since 1983, underpins Rustic Pathways programs. Student participants report the following in post-program surveys:

- Improved ability to interact with people from different backgrounds: 96%
- Greater confidence navigating challenging environments: 92%
- Increased confidence persisting through college, six months after returning: 87%
- Continued international engagement: 95%

Student-reported figures from Rustic Pathways post-program surveys, as published by GoAbroad.

A multi-year GoAbroad record

The two 2026 Innovation Awards are Rustic Pathways's most recent GoAbroad recognition. GoAbroad has also named Rustic Pathways a Top Rated provider or program several times across 2024 and 2025, including Top Rated Adventure Travel Provider in 2024 and again in 2025,



Climate Leaders Fellowship students at the Guatemala summit, the program recognized with the 2026 GoAbroad Innovation in Climate Action award.

and Top Rated programs in Thailand, Greece, Mongolia, Costa Rica, Japan, and the Dominican Republic.

About Rustic Pathways

Rustic Pathways is an educational travel company specializing in teen travel and school group travel, founded in 1983 and operating student programs across 38 countries for travelers ages 14–18. With 155,829 alumni, the company designs experiential programs built around community partnership, environmental stewardship, and measurable student outcomes.

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