



ANNUAL REPORT 2022





LETTER FROM THE CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Dear friends,

SERES has been an organization supporting youth and community development for 13 years, following our values that transforming our societies, cultures, and communities requires a leaderful generation. Over the years, we have seen the thousands of youth from Guatemala and El Salvador take to become active citizens, have greater knowledge about themselves and their surroundings, and be concerned about their communities' present and future. This is what we call "the leadership journey".

We believe that any person can become an influential leader to create change, especially those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. When given the opportunity and the support, they can create the most needed change. However, this doesn't happen overnight or in a one-year project. This is a long-term commitment that we have decided to take together.

As we have seen thousands of youth develop the skills to become sustainability leaders, we reaffirm our theory of change that when youth go through their full leadership journey with SERES, they become more active, more engaged, and create lasting change with their projects and actions. I wish I could tell you the story of every youth that has gone through this journey, but I hope that within this year's annual report you are able to read and visualize some examples of these leaders that are in over 365 communities in Guatemala and El Salvador, representing over 200 ambassadors and 7,500 leaders that have shifted their actions and habits to be sustainability leaders.

We will continue our commitment to supporting the generation of young leaders that is shifting our communities, societies, and cultures. We invite you to join us!

Warmly,

Sara Hurtarte and Abigail Quic

Co-Executive Directors

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MISSION - VISION

Mission

SERES cultivates and catalyzes youth leaders to create more just and sustainable communities in Central America.

Vision

The SERES experience has inspired millions to contribute in personal and meaningful ways towards transforming our systems, societies and cultures to create a world brimming with well-being.



Goals for 2025

We are always looking for ways that invite us to rethink and reflect on our strategies and work. These are some of the questions that we continually ask ourselves to redefine and reshape our way forward:

- ◊ How are we reaching the youth as close to them as we can and having an impact literally in their backyards?
- ◊ How does SERES impact a few leaders in such a way that we can see transformational changes?
- ◊ How can we leverage SERES' success and uniqueness to bring financial sustainability?
- ◊ How can SERES promote a culture of learning, inspiration, and innovation to be able to adapt as needed in our context?

By 2025

We will give transformational leadership training to 2,000 young people from underserved communities. This will give them the tools, skills, and support they need to become influential and effective leaders of sustainable community development.

We will support 30 diverse and context-appropriate spaces designed by and for youth to provide services, resources, and opportunities for positive youth engagement around the SDGs.

We will use our knowledge, networks, and infrastructure to incubate and grow promising, locally led social and environmental businesses that generate at least 20% of their operating income.





A LEADER'S JOURNEY

One special journey some of the youth leaders experience is becoming SERES facilitators and mentors to other youth in the network, and when funders, donors, or partners ask us how the organization is listening to the needs of the communities served, the best example is that THEY ARE the organization.

We interviewed Steven Mijangos to learn about his journey from participant to facilitator and mentor. Steven has been showcased in many of SERES' communications; that is also why he has become a facilitator. Steven was from San Miguel Los Lotes, a community

devastated by the volcano eruption in 2018, but before this, his leadership journey started in 2015, when he attended our first leadership training, called Activate Community Congress.

He became a SERES ambassador, which is a group of youth with greater involvement in leadership positions in their communities and collectives and greater impact, and finally a junior facilitator in the region of Escuintla. He shares in the following interview the changes he has experienced as a leader and now as a mentor.

Can you describe who Steven was when you first joined SERES?

"I started in SERES around the age of 16. I remember having participated in the Activate of El Rodeo held in the community center; they came to the institute where I studied, and with that, I was interested in participating. I think that the Steven of that time was very different from the current one; I feel that he did not have that awareness of a community, of being part of a community, and of who I was in that community. But, during that same activation process, I I was able to ask myself questions, and it was those questions that led me to where I am now. I was not shy. I liked to talk, although not in front of "big people." do or about which I did not feel confident, and I feel that the Activate was exactly that: "it activated Steven's qualities that I had but was not aware of."

Once you started participating and getting involved, what were the first changes you saw in and around you?

"I think that the way I perceived myself as a young person, as a leader, and as an agent of change generated more confidence in me, and the way I saw my surroundings, the ability to talk to others, "talking" with intention, was part of those changes, knowing that I had something to say, in fact a lot to say.

"I believe that knowing those around me as a support network was extremely important, as was being able to rely on others, because at the end of the day, we are all the community, and the community is also the young faces."

How long did it take you to become an ambassador of SERES, and what did it mean to you to be part of this network?

"It took me 2 years to go from the Activate to the Catalyzers, but in 2018, I had the opportunity to be invited to the program, I applied, I was selected, and I finally became a SERES ambassador. I feel that as an ambassador, I found another platform to make my community visible; listening to the stories of other young people and their journeys was amazing. You are inspired when you are in a space like the ambassador network; you feel part of a community that supports you. One of the most evident changes was the commitment to the network, maintaining that closeness and also that experience that is being generated. Now with this role as an ambassador, community dialogues with local authorities were more frequent and with greater intention, seeking to replicate what other ambassadors were doing from their spaces."

You joined the SERES staff as a facilitator two years ago. Why were you interested in joining, and now that you are a mentor of other youth, what are some of the lessons you have acquired to share with them?

"I believe that the role of facilitator offers a deeper space for leadership, and I am able to reach more youth in the area. I was interested because of the previous facilitator, Juan Pablo Sic, who was a mentor and part of the inspiration to get on the facilitation ship. I think that something very significant to share with the young people with whom I have been close is that they can see themselves for what they are: active members of a community building their good lives. And that they can overcome the fear of being alone in the community by establishing youth support networks that are actors within the community."

What's next on your journey as a young person and leader?

"To continue knowing and nurturing my spirit with stories, people, and contexts that allow me to see much beyond my reality, I wish to continue converging with other youth who are in the process of transforming their environments. I wish at some point to coincide with young people with similar leadership journeys as me."



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022

0 Beneficiaries but 412 cultivated youth

We confronted the term "beneficiaries" after several conversations about the concepts used to describe impact, and reflected on how this term meant to us that people were merely recipients of aid rather than active agents of their own development. So from now on, in SERES, you will see the term "cultivated youth" to refer to the number of young people that have been actively involved in their leadership development, deciding to attend our programs and continue their leadership journey with SERES.

Youth cultivated

412 new participants are integrating into the SERES network, from 18 Activates in 16 communities in prioritized regions. There are 64 Maya and 232 mestizos or Latinos among the 205 women and 207 men.

All SERES programs have reached 980 young people, 544 of whom are female and 436 of whom are male. 372 identify as Mestizo or Latino, and 137 as Maya.

All SERES programs



Youth reached through events, workshops and diverse sessions.

We conducted **58** activities from the **Community Center**, where we reached **1062** participants.

From the community centers, an ecosystem of support and service to youth has been

promoted, which is conducive to strengthening collaborations with other organizations and leaders of community influence and creating supportive relationships with local governments.

In three municipalities, 1062 people have been reached through different activities done with local partners. These activities were done outside of the SERES Leadership for Sustainability curriculum and added to the services already available in the communities.

These are some of the activities:

- ◊ A group of 14 women were trained and formed to start a laying chicken business.
- ◊ Twenty-five young people and forty mothers took part in seven nutrition modules, which included cooking recipes with legumes because of their high nutritional value.
- ◊ Collaborative training with other organizations and foundations such as Unbound allowed 171 young people and adolescents to access short workshops on self-management, entrepreneurship, and the use of voice in leadership.
- ◊ In collaboration with ABPD, we reached 16 young people from the department of Chimaltenango who will now begin their youth journey in SERES.
- ◊ Complementary education of the national curriculum in educational centers in 4 communities of Escuintla, Guatemala: 17 workshops were car-

ried out with 4 educational centers, reaching 399 students of basic education on issues of citizenship, leadership, sustainability, food sovereignty based on our recognized curriculum, and personal finance.

- ◊ Impact walks in two communities to reconnect with nature were carried out in the natural reserves in Tecpán and Bosque Cincuera in Suchitoto with 72 people.
- ◊ A youth festival in El Rodeo Escuintla achieved the participation of 80 young people from the cooperative high school in El Rodeo and the teachers' cloister. It involved the participation of seven local government organizations: CONJUVE, SVET, UPCV, the National Police crime prevention unit, the municipal network of civil society organizations, the Health-Coesida Center, and the municipal youth office.



1,848 people participated in community projects developed by **14 SERES fellows**. **1,185 are women**, and **658 are men**. Two fellows have developed skills in database management and social media and communication.

The fellows worked on 44 projects, which grew out of 113 events or activities in 13 different communities.

The projects addressed different SDGs, arising from a mapping of community needs such as:



Water:

Access to drinking water for 20 families in a sector of the Chajalija village, Tecpán.



Food sovereignty:

Facilitating practical permaculture workshops with 80 people to create and conserve soil, insecticides, organic waste management, and community gardens.



Education, inside and outside the classroom:

Sessions on education for sustainable development in public educational centers as complementary sessions Popular education on environmental education with children, use of Office Windows programs, civic participation, politics, and leadership with young people, road safety education reaching 844 people.





Art and music:

Training of 633 children and adolescents in drawing, painting, sculpture, keyboard classes, and rap creation, all with a focus on ecology and peace.



Economic development:

Community initiatives such as tilapia breeding and bee-keeping, involving 30 people from the El Aceituno community in Suchitoto, El Salvador. Improvements to community infrastructure include the rescue and conversion of



Violence prevention:

Workshops focused on children's and women's rights, forms of violence, initiating complaint processes, and protocols for seeking support reached 318 women and children.



A glimpse of three successful projects



Project Name: Youth Civic Participation

About the project

Organization of political training workshops with 15 young people from the Jacobi Community, Zone 2, Uspantán. The aim of the project was to empower young people to actively participate in the community so that the community is inclusive of young people and they can be part of decision-making.

Impact

15 youth with greater awareness of civic duties and political context.

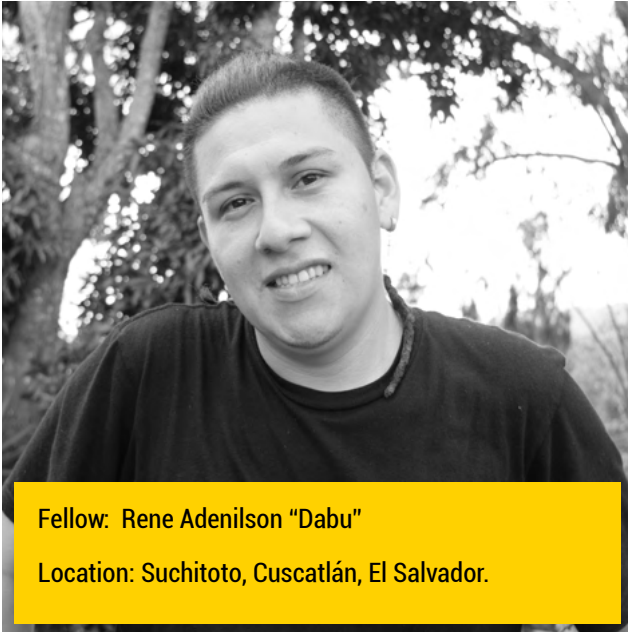
What participants had to say_

"The truth for me was that I understood politics only when political elections were held. However, now I understand that politics are part of our lives in all areas of our society."

Fernanda Camaja "I felt very comfortable in these three sessions, and I feel that I learned a lot about political and citizen participation."
Mauricio Chitop.

Fellow's experience

"In this project, I learned a lot about young people, first of all, that adolescents have another way of having fun and that it is important to find strategies on how they also manage to understand these topics. Adolescents have very little participation in society, but they have the desire to be involved. I am very satisfied to see their empowerment on this topic, even though they were unaware of it, and they demanded that I be more interactive, creative, and dynamic in my facilitation."



Fellow: Rene Adenilson "Dabu"

Location: Suchitoto, Cuscatlán, El Salvador.

Project Name: Creative production

About the project

The goal of this project was to train 30 students from Los Almendros Educational Complex in Suchitoto with themes on environmental care and protection using creative writing, RAP, sound production, and music with recycled containers.

Show different types of songs with environmental awareness content for their didactic work and reflection with students. Perform creative body percussion exercises and sounds to create rhythms. Produce songs for didactic use in schools.

Impact

99 kids from five communities in the municipality of Suchitoto did activities outside of school and made a song and soundtrack with a message about taking care of the environment and being aware of it.

100 people participated in two meetings as a closing event for the SERES youth center located within the facilities of the Suchitoto Cultural Center to share experiences between the participating schools and parents.

Fellow's experience

"It has been a great and fun experience because we have been working with such diverse groups of children and their ideas and development are amazing! This process of creative production has been carried out in several schools in rural areas with mostly students aged 10 to 11 years old, and they have shown their creativity in the composition of lyrics and rhymes. Music can fit with any theme and is a didactic tool."

[Listen to the song here](#)





Fellow: Sheyla María Mijangos Guerra
Location: La Dignidad, Escuintla, Guatemala.

Project Name: Violence prevention against women, adolescence and childhood

About the projec

The aim of the project was to promote and encourage among women, adolescents, and children in the community knowledge and information about violence, human rights, and child violence so that they know about the reporting route before any aggressor who wants to violate the rights of any woman or child in the community.

Impact

17 people increased their awareness about forms of violence and human rights.

What participants said:

"Women today do jobs that are for men and show that women can also do forced labor."

- **María Azurdia.**

"Women and men have the same rights and obligations, regardless of gender."

-**Mariam Chávez.**

Fellow's experience

"I facilitated in collaboration with other young leaders on topics like violence, human rights in general, civic obligations, and gender equality. We share tools to prevent violence in its different facets. Many of the women were unaware that they had sexual and reproductive rights and left satisfied with their new knowledge about these rights and ready to begin preventing others from violating their rights. They also learned where they can present their complaint if they are suffering any type of violence."

My biggest learnings were that I was able to:

a) practice my leadership in the workshops and promote spaces where women work as a team and how important it is for everyone to be able to support each other;

b) create good communication with all the participants and above all, integrate a male participant in the process;

c) speak clearly and concretely on the issue of sexual and reproductive rights; and

d) learn from the women, from their experiences around violence, without judging them."



MORE CATALYZERS MEANS

Within the leadership journey in SERES, youth are required to go through three different stages: first, participate in the Activate program, create their action plan, and commit to action; second, apply for the Annual Summit after having implemented one or more actions in their communities and get selected to enhance their community project and group; and third, after some time of being an active leader and holding a leadership position (informal or formal) in their community, apply for our catalyzer training.

This last program has been offered to a select group of leaders because we would only run two programs a year. However, after hearing from the youth and our facilitators, in 2022 we offered four Catalyzer programs. It might not seem much, but for us, it was an opportunity to help us reach more young people at a deeper level based on the leadership tools and capacities that SERES creates in youth, while young people join the network of ambassadors where they have more active roles within their communities and within the organization. These programs increase the possibility of creating more transformations on a broader and more lasting level.



Cultivating and empowering youth leadership requires long-term investment to see the impact of creating visible and tangible changes in the communities where we serve. This year, we have 69 new ambassadors on the network, compared to an average of 30 in previous years. The young people who reach this stage are the leaders who make changes at the community, municipal, and regional level, due to their deep involvement in understanding the current ecosystem of their community, by identifying opportunities to start a business, taking advantage of more opportunities offered in their communities, and occupying decision-making spaces such as ADESCOS/ COCODE from where they promote change.

We have a greater number of young people in spaces where we can support them by having a diverse network of experiences through semi-annual meetings and the mentoring program. This year, it was possible to promote a mentoring program for six months among peers, holding 22 mentoring sessions for young people in the network, provided by 7 youth ambassador mentors with years of experience in community leadership.

"Being a mentor helped me transform other young people; it also strengthened me as a young person to be an example for others, to be able to balance prob-

lems in order to provide solutions, and to be able to listen to others." **Sergio Cerón.**

Youth in leadership positions

Israel Telón has been an ambassador since 2019. He first became involved with SERES in 2015. In December 2022, he was appointed a member of the governing board of his village, Santa Apolonia.

Sergio Cerón is a member of the water system in his community; this entity is in charge of supervising and making decisions about the distribution and use of water.

10 ambassadors are members of ADESCOS in El Salvador: Evelin, Yeny, Rogelio, Juan Carlos, Adela, Daniel, Mario, Carlos, Abigail, and Leidy.

Rafael Sic, Juan Fernando, Ixkik, and Jai-ron Perez from Uspantán are involved in the opening of the **Municipal Youth Office**. Rony and Amilcar are young representatives of Zona Reina for the Municipal Youth Office of the same municipality.

Marvin, along with three other ambassadors, is involved in the **National University Council of El Salvador**.



In Jujutla, **five ambassadors hold positions of influence in the municipal mayor's office** (Wilfredo, Mariset, Amilcar, Rogelio, and Sumara).

Heidy Santa María is a representative of the network of ambassadors in the National Youth Front (FNJ) and the coordinator of the Advocacy and Lobbying Commission, which is focused on having spaces with government entities as well as political actors to promote law initiatives and others in favor of youth and being a space for incidence at a systemic level.

Three female youth ambassadors have **scholarships for courses for their professional development**. This year they all prioritized studying English, understanding that this language will open doors to opportunities that can position them in international spaces.

We hope that in the next two years we will have more stories of ambassadors in leadership positions like the ones before. More inspiration is coming!

SERES FELLOWS

The fellowship program in SERES started in 2018 as an opportunity for youth to have their first working experience in SERES, learning about self-management and project development. For the first two years, the fellows had an established schedule and physical place to carry out their activities. However, we were invited to invest more time in guiding, advising, and training the fellows regarding the use of digital platforms, project management, establishing clear goals and indicators, and resource management in their communities. We were looking for ways to find a balance between flexibility and meeting deadlines.

The youth's leadership shone when we created an ecosystem of support at the service of the community; that's when we shifted the model to creating a resource kit for fellows that included funds for them to implement community projects.

The most significant changes

In this second cohort of fellows, we changed the way they work and execute their community projects. Before they had a physical space with the resources they needed, they worked on a quarterly plan to implement activities from the ConXpacios (youth centers) in their municipalities. They supported the team to

achieve SERES programmatic goals, and they received a monthly stipend.

Currently, fellows don't have a physical space; instead, they work in their own communities, which helps to visualize a more meaningful impact. Additionally, the stipend is not paid monthly but rather quarterly on the basis of their project results. The projects are now designed and implemented according to the needs and biggest concerns of their communities, and most of them carry out dialogues with their authorities, youth, and elders to envision the opportunities.

Increased number of young people who have the opportunity to become fellows. We grew from five fellows in three municipalities for three years to 16 interns for 15 months.

Fellows receive a quarterly stipend once they present project results.

A greater number of projects carried out in the communities, 44 in total, with which they are solving urgent problems in their communities. Being quarterly projects, they have a greater opportunity to develop the ability to use the rapid prototype model, in which they integrate the learning from the first project into the next one to be planned and are able to include a wide range of strategies to address the issues presented.



Benefits for fellows

The fellows have gained and continue to gain life skills such as self-management, project management, facilitation with various groups, partnership building, and planning through the design and implementation of community projects and their internship journeys. They are also mobilizing their communities and bringing about significant changes.

By providing them with an opportunity for professional development, they have facilitated projects in their communities. Previously, the transformative leadership work they did was on a voluntary basis; they now receive a

stipend that helps them achieve their personal and professional goals. An economic stipend helps young people create better economic conditions and resilience for families, which creates relevance and the hope that transformation is possible.

By being fellows at SERES, they are exposed to different experiences that allow them to develop small business ideas and develop creative thinking. At the same time, at SERES, they have the opportunity to connect with other organizations that allow them to expand the opportunities they can get involved in and offer their skills to their community.

We have learned together

Learning from the different contexts and ways of working of each fellow has been enriching, as has the feedback for improvements to the fellows' journey. It has helped us to create better processes; integrating mentors by geographical area is necessary so that fellows feel supported in this process; without it, the success of the project would not be achieved.

Continue training more fellow cohorts and, where the budget allows, increasing the number of active fellowships. There is strong interest from the youth, as we have seen each fellow's leadership, commitment, and inspiration grow, so that they are the agents of change they want to see. If we have more fellows, we will see a greater result in the construction of more resilient communities.



SPOTLIGHT STORIES

Ingrid Lares

Ingrid Lares is a 25-year-old indigenous woman from Tecpán Guatemala. She began her journey as a young leader in SERES in 2021, attending the Activate Community Congress in its remote version, made up of seven modules of two hours each, and responding to the need for physical distancing due to COVID-19. She joined the network of ambassadors in December of that year, from which she has participated in various SERES training spaces and representations.

She has been an SERES fellow since April 2022. She has developed and executed seven projects during 2022 in which she addresses issues of prevention of sexual abuse in children, children's rights, road safety education, citizenship training with a group of women, access to drinking water for a sector of their community, and road access with the construction of a bridge. She helped 490 people and had 1,449 people participate in her workshops and events in three communities in Tecpán Guatemala.

One of her projects was to give access to drinking water in Chajalajya, with the objective of facilitating community actions to pipe spring water to a common tank to be

distributed in Sector 5 in the community of Chajalajya in the municipality of Tecpán Guatemala, with a population of 105 members. She had 20 people participate in improving the drinking water pipeline in said community, given its poor condition and the health impacts on those who receive the water.

During her analysis, this problem was diagnosed at the sectoral level of the community. Due to the lack of access to water, this situation was prioritized since the community members presented health and hygiene problems, among other problems that were highlighted by this urgent need.

Impact achieved

- ◊ **18 young women, the daughters of families that benefit from drinking water, were trained to know how to care for and use drinking water.**
- ◊ **Twenty families have directly benefited.**
- ◊ **Partnerships with Adicla, COCODES, and local leaders**
- ◊ **Leveraged in-kind support of around Q9,000.00 from the partnerships, apart from the labor provided by the beneficiary families.**



Ingrid Lares - Guatemala

The community commented

"I am very grateful for the opportunity you gave me because, from my own experience, it is very tiring sometimes to have to set aside more time to go and bring the water, and because of the place where we are going to bring the water, it is very risky. We try to take advantage of the resources that you provide and understand why water is essential for our health and our system. I learned how the water is consumed and realized that water is very important". -Adriana Lopic

"During the activities, I noticed how my daughter was participating in these spaces and how she was engaged. My family also liked the participation, the workshops from the institutions, and how she (Ingrid) helped with the tubes since we realized that it was not that easy for her, but we greatly admire her bravery and the way she persevered. Now my daughter is very interested in supporting and getting more involved." - Juana Socop
In her words, "During these projects, I realized the different attitudes of people from the

communities, in which they have the expectation that when they are supported with a project, it must cover one hundred percent of the costs; they want everything easy; and all the beneficiaries have to invest the same amount of time in the project. They do not realize that there are people who do not have the same abilities to join, and I realized that there were people who limited the opportunities for other people. I was about to give up and no longer carry out the project, but I decided to take advantage of this resource. I decided to move forward to see, and I put myself to the test because I knew I could do it, and the greatest satisfaction was to see the smiles of those ladies. Despite all the adversities at the time, it was the most beautiful satisfaction I could experience."

Ingrid has two more projects for 2023 to generate community economic opportunities through the creation of a chicken farm and another youth group dedicated to making chocolate, which will be the suppliers for her personal initiative, the restaurant La Olla de Tixten, which has won a small seed fund to grow.

Sergio Ceron

Sergio Cerón is a 33-year-old youth who lives in the El Aceituno community in the municipality of Suchitoto, El Salvador. El Aceituno is a rural community that currently has 216 inhabitants, according to the last community census. The community has a clinic, a communal house, a library, and a space for community production, as well as a soccer field.

Today the community is very organized; it has a library committee, an ADESCO, a pastoral committee (Catholic), a health committee with a promoter to attend to controls and basic diseases, and El Aceituno has been characterized as a safe place, a space where everyone knows each other and supports each other to move forward as a community. It is surrounded by nature and a small river, and most of the people are dedicated to agriculture, growing grains and vegetables for local consumption.

Sergio was born in El Aceituno and has lived all his life in the same place. He is the first of four siblings and has lived with his grandparents, but they passed away a few years ago, and for now he lives alone. He has been an organized young man and has been involved for as long as he can remember in improving his environment. He is passionate about en-

vironmental issues and how they relate to his profession, agronomic engineering.

In 2007, he graduated from high school and stopped studying due to economic limitations. It was not until 2016 that he was able to start his university studies through the scholarship support that he had won for the good community work that he had developed for several years.

For many years, his routine was working in the fields and returning home without realizing the community's needs, but when he shared with more people in various processes, he began to question why there were no spaces for development in the community. The meetings were held under the trees, and

this was where his dream of building a communal house began and how his leadership within ADESCO began; he became the youngest president of the entire municipality of Suchitoto at that time.

"They invited me to an assembly; it was under a tree, and there they elected the presidency of ADESCO; they proposed me and a 63-year-old man; but I was moved and impacted because I had won the hearts of the members with their votes, and from there the progress and development of the community in conjunction with ADESCO began."

Sergio's uncles were the first people to support him in his leadership and involvement.



Sergio Ceron - El Salvador

In 2018, he participated for the first time with SERES in an entrepreneurship workshop, where he met young people from Guatemala and other departments of El Salvador. It was there that he realized there were other ways of leading and taking actions in other spaces.

Today, the projects that make him feel most proud are the construction of the communal house, drinking water service, electricity, a clinic house, and a library equipped with computers. Some of the leadership positions that Sergio has held are: presidency of the community council; secretary and treasurer of the water system for several communities; partner of Asociación Progreso, a municipal organization; trustee of a youth organization at the municipal level; member of the community library committee; and SERES fellow and ambassador.

Sergio is an empathetic, participatory young man who likes to listen to people. He is currently the owner of two businesses: one is honey bee production, and the other is a broiler chicken farm, which he sells in the community. His vision for the venture is to increase chicken production and supply a portion of the municipal market, and with the bees, he hopes to develop its own brand of honey to increase sales.

Sergio's vision in 5 years is to see a community with a soccer field, build a church, have a technical garden where products can be harvested throughout the year, as well as have a community-level enterprise so that young people have sources of income without leaving their town.

He wants to see community ecotourism, where in addition to offering the community experience, recreational services, lodging services, direct harvesting of fresh products, and the sale of local foods can also be offered.

Organizationally, he wants to transition from being solely an ADESCO advisor to allowing other young people to take on that role and other community leadership roles.





A DREAM COMING TRUE

We've had a dream for the past eight years to build a resilience center for the region's leaders. After the eruption of Fuego Volcano, this almost came to an end, but we decided to move forward together.

In the past couple of years, we have been building, together with the community, the youth, and the team, a leadership center like no other. We call it Ulew Fuego, which represents the vision, hard work, and ideas of a generation of leaders who are able to see, experiment, learn, and implement sustainable solutions to build more resilient communities.

Ulew Fuego is the space that allows us to reach more youth in Central America, more community members, and more organizations and partners working towards sustainable development.

Ulew Fuego is able to host training sessions, outdoor activities, sustainable agricultural and conservation practices, apiculture

lessons, educational tours, and activities. includes one learning center, two cabins, demonstrative areas, a conservation corridor, and farming areas; community members from Guatemala and Central America will be able to have a truly sustainable experience.

We invited Sherry Miller, SERES President, and Corrina Grace, SERES Co-Founder, to a visit, and this is what they experienced:



"I visited our Ulew Fuego last week and left with increased commitment to and thankfulness for our SERES vision and mission, staff and way to be in the world! To walk the land and see all of the improvements and projects now happening transforming the land, and listen to the confidence, care and future plans of those there was living the dream. I remember when Corrina Grace, our co-founder, called me one day to say, "Sherry, I have found our land!". From that call it indeed has become our land and is becoming the land of some many, including many families from the local communities around. The conference center, the new cabañas for housing visitors, learners and doers, the new fields of maracuya (passion fruit) for harvest and sale one day, the water system, and the well and pump supporting it are a wonderful part of how the land is being transformed—of how we are listening to it! I left with a bottle of "our" honey that is being harvested there as well in the apiary we've created. What a vibrant and living testimony of dreams coming true. To SERES, Ulew Fuego, our planet and dreams being realized. YES, we can!" - **Sherry Miller, SERES Global President**

"The past few years have taught us that a lot can change in a short space of time despite this, I really wasn't ready for all of the changes that I would see when I went

out to visit Ulew Fuego — SERES living laboratory, training center and demonstration campus. I hadn't been since early 2019, and while I had read the reports and seen the photos, being out on the land with the team and hearing about all that they were working on left me — quite literally — jumping with joy!

There are of course the cosmetic changes — the trees have grown, the landscape has changed in subtle ways. Then of course there are the quite significant infrastructure and building changes. Water! Electricity! Accommodation! But under that, and perhaps most importantly of all, are what I can only describe as the energetic changes. The flow of people, the way the community has embraced and become part of what we are building, the way the team talks of their dreams and plans for the future. As we left, Sherry Miller and I asked the team how we could best continue to support them. They told us — we are doing so much here, and now we want to share this with the world. Help us invite people to come and see it.

So this is our cordial invitation to you. Come and visit Ulew Fuego and the SERES' team, walk the land with us, and help us continue to find pathways towards a more resilient and sustainable future for all." - **Corrina Grace, Co-Founder and Board Member.**



PARTNERSHIPS

We want to highlight two partnerships that allowed us to join forces and shift power:

The spiral of collaboration

This collaboration shows how, from one point of connection, we can build a wider network of opportunities that help us grow and share our experiences on a regional and global scale.

In 2021, SERES started looking into a way to work together with Educate2Envision (E2E), an organization that changes the way schools work to help young people become leaders. The missions of both organizations were mutually inclusive, with youth from resource-limited communities at their center. We hosted a series of youth exchanges from rural communities in the Northern Triangle of Central America, and in 2022 we developed the online program Youth Leading Transformation (JLT) with more than 15 youth from rural communities in Northern Honduras.

As we stayed connected and developed a partnership, E2E recommended that SERES be part of the Propel Fellowship experience, which for six months allowed us to establish a digital plan to identify technological needs within the organization and also establish

collaborations with other organizations in the region.

From our participation in Propel, we met the Santa Isabel Foundation in Colombia and had the opportunity to exchange and be part of the "Design of Life Plans for Inspiring Mentors," where four facilitators and six youth from SERES were able to learn about his conceptual framework of mentoring useful to support the SERES youth network.

From one connection, we were able to expand our learnings, exchanges, and impacts.

Weaving reflections together

El Directorio Guatemala partnered with SERES to host a series of talks on "Shifting Traditional Philanthropy," with a focus on grassroots organizations and some members of foundations in the region.

Because of this coalition, we have been able to not only create spaces for reflection, but also more real, vulnerable, and courageous spaces among sector leaders. And it has invited us to remember to always share our ideas and feelings with others, a calling that suggests it is possible to co-create proposals that serve a more collective goal.

PARTNERS

Global / International

Amarna Vida
Impact Marathon
UNESCO
Educate2Envision
Fundación Santa Isabel
ConnectEd
Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT - LATAM
Chapter
Target Foundation
Leopold Bachmann Stiftung
Dan & Jeanne Scott Family Foundation
Diversity Foundation
Rotary International Foundation
Propel Fellowship
Gratitude Fellowship

El Salvador

Alcaldía de Jujutla
Red de Organizaciones El Salvador
ADES
Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña

Guatemala

ProMujer
Fundación Unbound
FUDI
Antigua International School
Municipalidad de Escuintla/Unidad de Niñez, Adolescencia y Juventud.
USAID: Youth Participation Program.
Proyecto CAN
El Directorio Guatemala
ICTA
Natury
Rotary Club Escuintla
Proyecto de Industrialización del Bambú
Industrialization Project _ of the Bamboo
Red de Jóvenes por el Agua Guatemala

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Juanita Sic
YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

FINANCIALS

Revenue and Other Support (USD)	FY2021	FY2022
Foundation Grants	\$100,312	\$200,580
SERES Global Grants	\$142,660	\$68,000
Individual Contributions	\$2,095	\$1,735
Fee-for-Service	\$3,700	\$10,494
Other Income (interests)	\$155	\$157
TOTAL	\$248,922	\$280,966
EXPENSES		
Training Programs (Central America)	\$121,235	\$141,681
Ulew Fuego	\$53,381	\$64,484
Grants	\$23,078	\$27,949
Operating Costs	\$3,062	\$2,998
Development	\$8,998	\$14,839
Management and General	\$20,131	\$19,686
TOTAL	\$229,885	\$271,637
Net assets at beginning of year	\$52,337	\$70,686
Net assets at end of year	\$70,686	\$53,229

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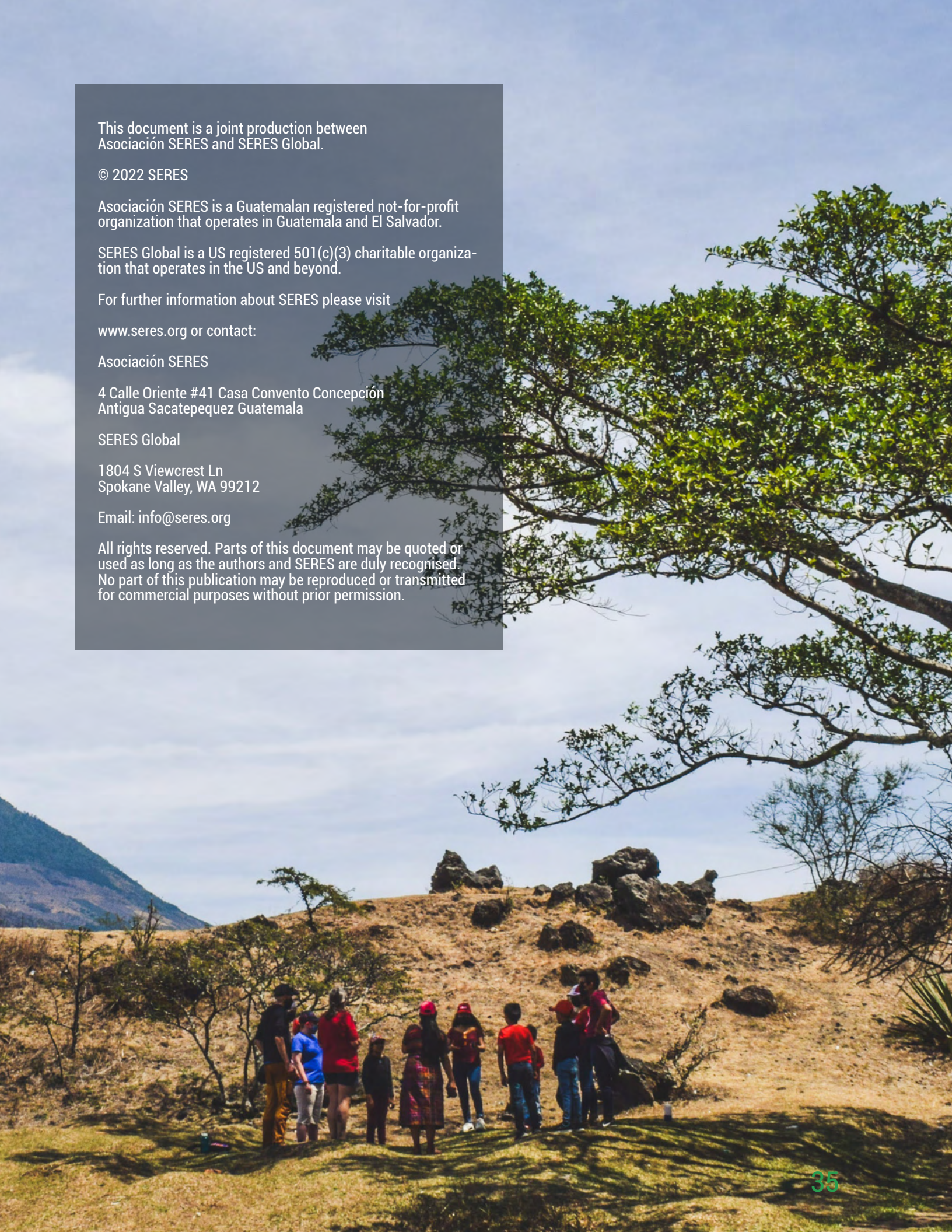
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