

## **SERES Alliance Memorandum of Understanding**

Between:

### **SERES Global**

(a 501(c)(3) public charity registered with the U.S. IRS, EIN: 47-1287984)

and

### **Asociación SERES**

(Guatemalan association, NIT: 8026063-2)

Concerning the establishment of a partnership (herein referred to as the SERES Alliance) between **SERES Global** and **Asociación SERES**, where the two entities will work together in order to achieve their mutually established goals as outlined in this MOU.

#### PREAMBLE

Asociación SERES (“AS”) has been running sustainability leadership, education and empowerment programs in Guatemala since 2009. It is a registered Guatemalan charitable organization (NIT 8026063-3)

In recent years, AS has found that the need and demand for its programs and activities have grown beyond Guatemala’s borders, most notably to El Salvador and other countries in Central America, but increasingly to organizations and institutions throughout North America.

In July 2013, the members of AS approached a group of individuals from the US, seeking their support to help spread this work and impact a greater number of individuals and communities from a more diverse geographic region. These individuals – seeing the increased vulnerability of countries such as Guatemala and El Salvador to the impacts of climate change – agreed to help. They came to see that AS's work has an impact that is much farther reaching than the lives of individuals in Guatemala. SERES Global (“SG”) evolved informally from this genesis to provide support and advocacy for AS and the broader vision.

SG’s role was to provide strategic and programmatic advice to AS, raise awareness in the US about the impact of AS's activities, and connect individuals, institutions and organizations that express interest in learning more about or replicating the programs that AS has developed in other regions in Central America and beyond.

In 2014, conditions such as poverty, malnutrition, violence and inequality in the Central American isthmus became increasingly visible through the humanitarian crisis around youth migration from Central America to the US. Organizations such as the International Federation of Red Cross and the US Environmental Protection Agency have reported that the situation of migrants crossing the border is only likely to worsen in the face of

climate change, *unless real progress can be made on developing healthy, sane and safe communities in which people want to live.*

Given this urgency, SG and AS agreed to deepen and formalize their relationship into a more collaborative, co-learning partnership that can use AS'ss years of experience and expertise in Guatemala to achieve results on an international scale by supporting local leaders to build healthy, thriving communities and bring regional stability to areas beyond the AS region. As one next step, SG applied for and received IRS 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit status in the US, with a functioning board of directors. They and AS decided to form the **SERES Alliance**, and shall collaborate cooperatively in accordance with the following agreement.

In this model, the SERES Alliance is not intended to be an exclusive partnership. Other organizations may be invited to join the SERES Alliance, provided there is full agreement by all existing Alliance partners. New partners may be added at a later date through the creation of a separate MOU or via a new agreement involving all participating parties.

### VISION and PURPOSE

The SERES Alliance is dedicated to the shared vision of investing in and fostering the emergence of young local leaders who are empowered to build secure, sustainable, thriving communities. We believe that investing in young leaders through providing support, guidance, advocacy and partnerships is a long-term, sustainable investment that will deliver 10, 20, 30 years down the road, creating lasting impact not only on the local economic, environmental and social conditions, but also on wellbeing and stability at a regional level.

The purpose of the Alliance is to mutually advance members' work toward this vision through their respective roles, mandates and opportunities, and according to specific roles and responsibilities. Working together, the members of the SERES Alliance will support integrated, experiential leadership training programs and activities that are executed at the local level and focused on: raising awareness about environmental, social and economic challenges (local, regional and global); providing young people with leadership, conflict resolution, mediation and peace-building skills; and empowering local leaders and investing in their solutions for building local peace and prosperity.

Included in the vision of the SERES Alliance is the development of the SERES Center – a sustainable development learning and leadership campus that will be a world-class leader in education and innovation to move beyond sustainability into a resilient, thriving future. The SERES Center will serve as a venue for cross-fertilization among local leaders, community-based practitioners, researchers, global change-makers, and the philanthropic community.

### PARTNER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **SERES GLOBAL:**

1. Conduct outreach and raise awareness about the SERES model and the work of Alliance members;

2. Seek strategic relationships and agreements with other organizations and individuals wishing to replicate AS's process in other countries;
3. Facilitate collaborative relationships among SG, AS leaders, change makers, organizations, universities, research institutes and individuals from the global north;
4. Support impact in target regions by, for example, assisting AS to build its reputation as a training organization for other NGOs, NFPs and CBOs (community-based organizations), to help them implement more effective and long-lasting projects;
5. Raise funds to support SG's activities which include but are not limited to provision of grants, goods, services and training to Alliance members;
6. Provide mentoring, guidance, and support to AS, as well as to its graduates as they move into more influential positions of leadership working on systemic change on a national and regional level;
7. Provide technical advice and coordinate professional mentoring and capacity-building activities to help AS and other Alliance members develop a financially sustainable business model;
8. Engage AS in SG's development of the SERES Center and in implementation of its programs; and
9. Provide fiscal support in the form of:
  - a. Grants in response to requests that meet criteria established by the SG board
  - b. Pass-through of US charitable donations designated for AS
10. Participate in a shared leadership process and advocate for promotion of the SERES vision - to empower local leaders to build sustainable communities.

**ASOCIACION SERES:**

1. Raise awareness within Central America about AS's development model;
2. Provide a model demonstration of programs that exemplify the Alliance's vision and approach;
3. Provide facilitators and trainers to work with other organizations in the region, globally and at the SERES Center, drawing from AS's experience and programs;
4. Inform and participate in the design and construction of the SERES Center and implementation of its programs;
5. Use and account for funds received from or through SG;
6. Participate in a shared leadership process and advocate for promotion of the SERES vision.