



IMPACT

report 2017



This document is a joint production between
Asociación SERES and SERES Global.

©2018 SERES

Asociación SERES is a Guatemalan registered not-for-profit organization that operates in Guatemala and El Salvador. SERES Global is a US registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization that operates in the US and beyond.

For further information about SERES please visit
www.seres.org or contact:

Asociación SERES

Ira Avenida Norte No. 12, Impact Hub
Antigua Sacatepequez Guatemala
Ph:+502 7832 2469 | Email: info@seres.org

SERES Global

3865 Lakeshore Avenue
Oakland CA 94610 USA
Ph: +1 949 447 5566

All rights reserved. Parts of this document may be quoted or used as long as the authors and SERES are duly recognised. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted for commercial purposes without prior permission.

Design by Christa Ponce.

i n d e x

Introduction

Message from the President
Message from the
Director of Programs and
Operations

About us

Recipe for Success
Strategic Objectives
What We're Facing

Highlights & accomplishments

Who We Serve
Programmatic Highlights
Stories of Impact
Staff Snapshots

Financials

Leadership & staff



message from the president

Dear Friends,

4 I believe in the power of deep listening, powerful questions and young
6 leaders. I believe we must change the traditional development approach
8 here in the Global South from top-down to bottom-up. We must find ways to
10 create safe spaces for inspirational and practical training for underserved
12 youth everywhere, particularly here in Guatemala, El Salvador and Central
14 America, so that they can become leaders in their local communities,
16 combating the environmental degradation and social injustice that is rampant.
18 I believe SERES is the most courageous, grounded, grassroots organization
20 doing this work on the front lines today. I am humbled and proud to be a
22 SERES Champion and serve as President of the SERES Global Board of
24 Directors. We in SERES Global believe that by supporting the courageous
26 leading edge work being done by young local leaders, we are creating a
28 model, an invitation, a call to youth everywhere to step up and truly change
the world for the better. This challenge to youth to start to become systems
thinkers, to begin to question the structures in their communities and beyond
that hold them and others back, to find their voice and hear it resonate with
others as they join together and find ways to create just, resilient and vibrant
communities.

May this report evoke the same kind of hope and resonance in you as
it does in me. Embracing the theory, the numbers, the methodology and
especially the stories shared here makes me so proud of our leaders and
our SERES team. I invite you to join with us in taking a stand with and for the
transformation, for the change, for the creation of a “new” world these youth
are demonstrating is possible against enormous odds. I invite you to join me
and become a SERES Champion by supporting us with a one time gift of
\$1,000 or a monthly contribution of \$84 a month by going to <https://www.givingloop.org/seres>. Together we can, indeed, make a greater difference
and as our SERES youth are daring to be, be the change we wish to see!

Dr. Sherry Miller

President
SERES Global



*message from
the director of operations & programs*

In the past two years in my role at SERES, I have learned so much. One my greatest learnings has come from witnessing the potential of powerful questions and seeing how they truly are the means to all learning, change and innovation. In our SERES methodology we encourage our youth to have the tenacity to ask questions that they don't know the answer to, opening up to a world of possibility. Organizationally, we focus on questions like: how do we promote a learning culture? What aspects do we need to consider to take our actions to the next level? How do we best nurture and support a movement of sustainability leaders and change makers?

In my own leadership this year these powerful questions have compelled me to think deeply in my work with the SERES team and in conversations with friends and family. I have also seen how the asking of questions like these with the team (questions for which we do not have an answer) creates an opportunity to grow together and empowers each team member to engage in co-authoring our future. As our appreciative leadership framework teaches us, questions are a compelling vehicles for empowerment, for fostering risk-taking and for guiding value-based performance.

I believe that it is this process, asking questions without expecting answers, is one of the secrets to the incredible performance of our small team. Last year, we delivered over 36 multi-day programs reaching more than 760 youth on a budget of less than \$200,000. The results are, quite frankly, astounding. And they wouldn't be possible without the passion and commitment of our incredible team for whom SERES is much more than a job.

I close 2017 full of pride, satisfaction and hope and with many, many questions. On the top of my mind is this, what else is possible? I look forward to sharing the answer to that question with you in 12 months time. And so it gives me great pleasure to share with you through this Annual Report a glimpse into the life-changing work that SERES does each day.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sara Hurtarte'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial 'S' and 'H'.

Sara Hurtarte
Director of Operations and Programs

5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27



about **US**

4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
26
28
30

SERES is one of the leading organizations addressing issues of youth opportunity, education and sustainable development amongst at-risk and marginalized communities in Central America. Together with our funders, partners and youth leaders, over the past 9 years SERES has trained more than 3,000 young leaders, 90 multi-lingual youth trainers and supported over 100 youth-led community action plans that are taking local steps towards addressing some of our most pressing global challenges.

SERES cultivates and catalyzes youth leaders to create just and sustainable communities in Central America. We inspire and affirm young people to contribute to the enrichment of their communities, fulfil their potential, create positive relationships, and become engaged citizens. We target at-risk youth from low-income, marginalized areas in Guatemala and El Salvador, where climate vulnerability, environmental degradation, economic exclusion and limited opportunities are placing youth vulnerable to gangs, violence, and migration.

This year, we are thrilled to once more present our Annual Report. It's an opportunity to look back on what we've accomplished and celebrate the ways that our youth leaders, staff, partners and supports have translated our vision and mission into reality - expressed through the voice of the young men and women that make up this incredible movement.

Against the odds, these brave young people are making a stand for justice and equality for people and the planet. In this report, we honor their courage, commitment and passion and their tireless drive to bring about transformation and change the status quo.



“The spaces that SERES provides are places where we can be our full selves – the good and the bad – and that’s always something to appreciate. I feel valued because here it’s not your academic achievements that make a person, it’s the way you think and your ability to keep going...”

OUR PROVEN

recipe for

S U C C



4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
26
28
30

ESS



.....

Youth, as the least risk averse members of our societies, have a high capacity for creative thinking and innovation when given the space and opportunity to do so. SERES engages and trains young people to tackle the daunting challenges faced by vulnerable communities in Guatemala and El Salvador by providing a space and platform wherein proven, committed young leaders from impacted areas can grow their own strengths, build key relationships, and develop the necessary knowledge, cultural wisdom and resources for transformative learning and action.

.....

“The aspiration of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda is to create a just, prosperous and responsive world where all people regardless of age realize their rights and live with dignity and hope. During the coming decades the largest number of young people in human history is set to enter the workforce and their success will define development trajectories for the entire world, given our increasingly interconnected and globalized economies.”

(The Power of 1.8 Billion - page 79)

5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29



4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
22
24
28
30

recipe for

CHANGE



21st century leadership skills

+



citizen muscle

+



inclusive network



5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29

We believe that young people, regardless of personal circumstances, are powerful catalysts for positive change, placing a high priority on social inclusion, gender and cultural diversity, and providing young role models that work with our youth population. We provide programs in Spanish and English as well as four Mayan indigenous languages: Tzutujil, Kaqchikel, Quiché and Ixil. Over the last 9 years this work has built a diverse cadre of young leaders, characterized by a strong vision and commitment for achieving local sustainable community development, leading actions that demonstrate tangible benefits, such as less pollution, improved nutrition, better education, increased awareness about gender roles, more civic, cultural and environmental awareness, and reduced public health risks.

“I have felt included and connected from the minute that I became involved (in SERES). It has helped me grow in my own personal leadership. SERES never tells me what to do, but they support me to make the decisions that are right for me.”



Cantel Youth Ambassador,
Vice President,
Asociación SERES

strategic OBJECTIVES



1

Advancing *new forms of learning* to help local citizens to address sustainable development issues (nutrition, gender equality, and violence, etc)

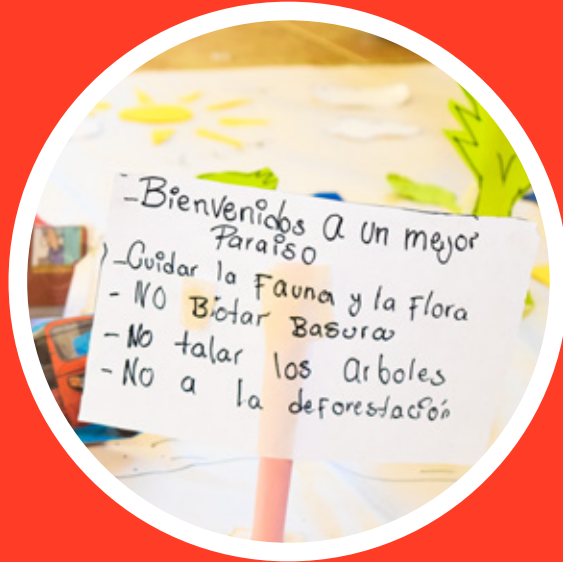
2

Building and supporting a *self-sufficient network of emerging leaders, social entrepreneurs and change agents* who are catalyzing new projects that will contribute towards building more resilient and inclusive communities

3

Providing *youth-led, Youth Resource Hubs* to support youth in their economic empowerment and sustainability

22
24
26
28
30



what we are **FACING**

SERES activities focus on two of the most populous countries with the highest youth demographic in Central America - Guatemala and El Salvador. A biodiversity hotspot, the region is under great threat. The countries are part of Central America's notorious Northern Triangle, and the world's most vulnerable region to climate change. These two countries, deeply impacted by decades-long civil wars, have been facing increasingly severe crises in recent years. Alarmingly high levels of poverty, crime and social disintegration alongside escalating levels of violence, political fragmentation and deeply entrenched corruption have weakened state capacity and the progress of democracy as a whole. Without effective policies, good leadership and true civil-society engagement, the region's vulnerability will only continue to increase with climate change effects. As seen in many parts of the world, this vulnerability has a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities, in particular women and children, who are all-too-often excluded from political and social mainstreams.

Take Juana, a typical indigenous girl. According to the latest UNICEF report, there is an 85% likelihood that Juana lives below the poverty line. Only 29% of Juana's peers will be enrolled in school and for those enrolled, they can expect to receive no more than 3 years of schooling on average. There is a 50% likelihood that Juana will be pregnant by age 19, and a 51% chance she cannot find formal employment¹, continuing the poverty cycle once again.

This situation is not just limited to indigenous girls. At 25% of the youth population, Guatemala presents one of the highest rates in the region of young people excluded both from the education system and the labor market, the majority of these from rural, indigenous communities. The reasons are many: lack of skills, lack of access to education and training opportunities, lack of jobs, and institutional and systemic racism, amongst others. Holistic solutions that can create systemic transformation are urgently needed.

¹ UNICEF (2017) ¡MÍRAME! Soy indígena y también soy Guatemala. Oficina de UNICEF, Guatemala City, Guatemala. UNICEF.



HIGHLIGHTS ACCOMPLISHMENTS



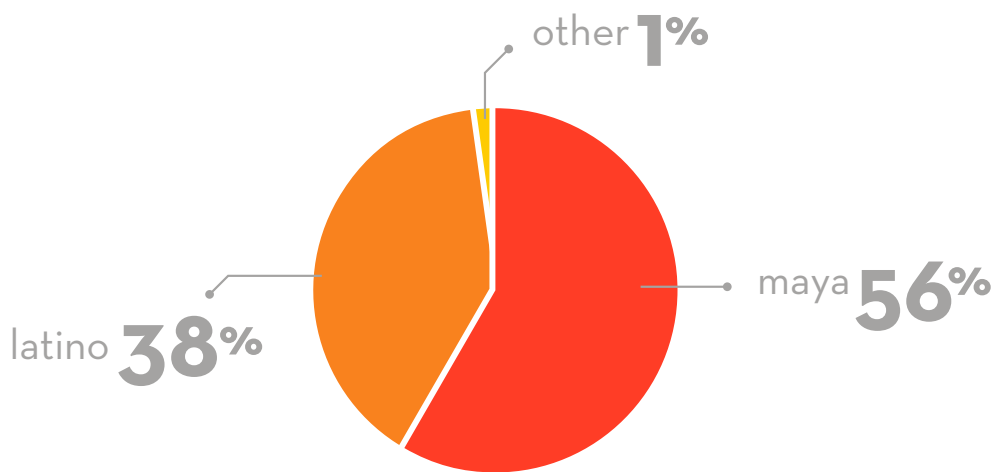
750 young people passed through SERES' training programs in 2017. Institutionally, SERES has a commitment to supporting vulnerable, economically marginalized groups and frontline communities. We give special attention to youth in select geographic regions within Guatemala and El Salvador - those facing the day-to-day challenges of poverty, crime and social disintegration alongside escalating levels of violence, a rapidly changing climate, political fragmentation and deeply entrenched corruption.

"I love that first of all, we work on ourselves to strengthen our ability to lead a group: to know our strengths and weaknesses, and what it feels like to face seemingly intractable situations. With the facilitator's help, I was able to discover things that I was doing that weren't working, and change those to have more positive outcomes."

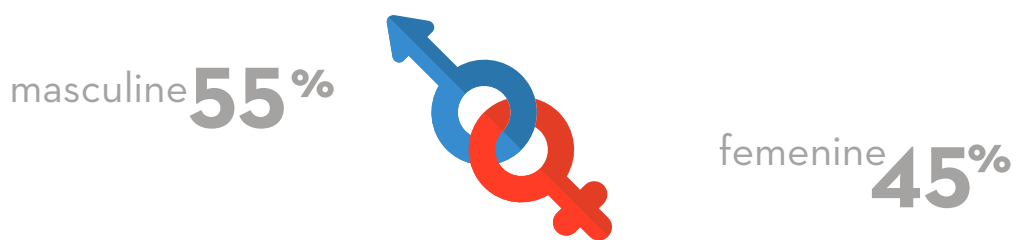


WHO WE SERVE

ethnicity



gender



5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29



4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
26
28
30

PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHTS

“I learned that we are all capable and we are all leaders. I have the ability to keep working for the wellbeing of my community, developing goals and plans that benefit all of us.”



Activate
San Andrés Osuna



5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29

programmatic summary

750
participants

24,875
indirect
beneficiaries

36
multi-day
programs

41
new youth
trainers



4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
26
28
30

11 Youth Ambassadors selected to attend the UNESCO Flagship Congress for Sustainability Leaders

11 Ambassadors and facilitators from the SERES team joined youth from all over Latin America and the Caribbean for UNESCO’s World Action for ESD program in Brazil. For many of our youth, it was their first time leaving Central America.

“To feel that I’m a part of a movement at the level of UNESCO has confirmed for me that I am doing valuable things. I’m fortunate to belong to this global movement for action”

Antonio Sánchez
SERES Co-Founder & El Salvador Program Coordinator

SERES Co-Founder Antonio Cruz Sánchez named Regional Finalist in the UN Young Champions of the Earth award

Young Champions of the Earth is a forward-looking prize designed to breathe life into the ambitions of brilliant young environmentalists. With over 600 applicants, Antonio’s application stood out for its outstanding potential to create positive environmental impact.



5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29

New
Leading with Impact program launched

In a strategic move to both increase the diversity of SERES' Youth Leaders network as well as build more financial sustainability through fee-for-service programs, in November of 2017 we launched a new program called Leading With Impact. A collaboration between SERES and swiss-based euforia, the program was a huge success. In 2018, we plan to run two more programs.

"This program has helped me see my work and decisions from a more systemic approach...I also learned how to develop curiosity to transmit more confidence to my team. If I let myself feel supported by them, I know that they will feel supported by me."

Participant
Leading With Impact 2017

Better Together
celebrating 52 active partnerships and collaborations

In order to accelerate progress in the communities where we work, we take an attitude of "radical collaboration", actively cultivating partnerships with local government, community-based organizations and other NGOs. In 2017, we celebrated over 50 partnerships, which played a critical role in enabling SERES youth leaders to develop and implement hundreds of local community action plans.

4 New Youth Ambassadors elected to the Board of Directors

SERES is unique amongst other organizations in that its graduates and alumni are voting members of the association, that each year elect four youth representatives to our Board of Directors. In 2017, the following four youth leaders were elected to the Board:

Yeymy Ruiz: Secretary of El Milagro Community Development Council, Coordinator for ECOJUVEM, member of the PRODEMOR network. Winner, 2017 Ambassador's Prize.

Marta Morales: Member of the PRODEMOR network, leader of church youth group. Winner, 2017 Ambassador's Prize.

4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
26
28
30



AXEL SALANIC

Member of Youth Municipal Council in Cantel for more than 5 years,
Member of Advisory Council for InterAmerican Foundation Project
“Guatemalan Youth Network Creating Opportunities for Youth”



JOHANA LOPEZ

Coordinator of Uspantan Youth Group,
Mentor for Save the Children IDEA program, Church Youth Facilitator



STORIES *of* IMPACT

“When willing, we all have the potential to use our influence for a worthwhile cause, leveraging our strengths to positively impact the world around us.”

- 5
- 7
- 9
- 11
- 13
- 15
- 17
- 19
- 21
- 23
- 25
- 27
- 29



AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT

ema lopez

Emalópez is an 18-year-old young Maya indigenous woman from San Miguel de Usantán, El Quiché, Guatemala. Ema first became involved in SERES in 2016, when her sister invited her to join a meeting of the local youth group. Since then, Ema has moved forward in leaps and bounds, enthusiastically attending as many events and trainings as she can and working hard to put all that she has learned into action.

“The Youth Summit was an incredible experience unlike anything I had done before”, Ema said. After that, she rapidly advanced through the SERES leadership processes, attending an Actívate youth congress, our train-the-trainers program and finally participating in the General Assembly as a newly-minted SERES local ambassador. In May 2017, she co-facilitated her first youth congress, then went on to attend an introduction to permaculture course in the Sustainable Livelihoods series.

“Every time I go to one of these programs, I take away something”

Growing up as an indigenous girl in Guatemala is not easy. Young women like Ema have the odds stacked against them. The department of Quiché where Ema lives has one of the highest rates of poverty and chronic malnutrition in the country. As a young indigenous girl, there is an 85% likelihood that Ema lives below the poverty line. Only 29% of Ema’s peers will be enrolled in school and for those enrolled, they can expect to receive no more than 3 years of schooling on average. There is a 50% likelihood that Ema will be pregnant by age 19, and a 51% chance she cannot find formal employment, continuing the poverty cycle once again.

Yet Ema’s is a different story. It speaks of courage and dedication, of overcoming all odds and investing in her community to change those odds for future generations. Ema and the other SERES leaders of Usantán are from various smaller communities throughout the municipality, and have focused their efforts on reforestation, environmental education, and creating healthy canteens in schools. Ema and the SERES Usantán group have many ideas for their future projects in order to improve the sustainability and well-being of their community. First and foremost, they want to focus on organizing the community to address the challenge of lack of water, a serious issue in Usantán and throughout many communities like it in Guatemala and El Salvador. She also says that she wants to find a way to reduce and eliminate the use of plastic bags in her community, and finally, Ema says she has a dream to establish a clinic for natural medicine in her community.



alex figueroa

Trapped between gang violence and state abuse youth in El Salvador - particularly young men - have a difficult road ahead. Yet many have found that SERES offers a third option - the opportunity as a young person to be seen in a positive light, rather than framed as a risk or problem.

Alex Alberto Perez Figueroa, 22, says that before participating in SERES, he was always fairly quiet: he didn't speak much in public, and, in part because of the all-too real fear of gang violence present throughout El Salvador, he didn't travel far from his community of Celina Ramos even to the central town of Suchitoto, a few kilometers away. Now, though, he is able to express himself in public, speaking up and singing out about the environmental and social issues that are important to him.

Alex first participated in SERES in 2009, when some friends invited him to participate in a three-day youth congress near Suchitoto. "I knew almost nothing about the environment and sustainability. But after I became involved in SERES, I was hooked." He describes the first Youth Summit that he attended in Guatemala as "impressive", meeting so many other young leaders from the region working to create more sustainable communities.



"It changed my life...my friends afterward noticed the difference, and how I had changed."

Right now, he's working on his action plan with the rest of the members of the SERES network in Celina Ramos. They want to focus more on reforestation projects, and continue the cleaning campaigns. In addition to his work with SERES in raising environmental awareness in his community and beyond with educational workshops and his music, Alex is currently studying the arts (music, painting, dance, etc.), teaches guitar, and is president of a youth group in his community.

5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29

staff
SNAPSHOTS



Founding Member /
Program Coordinator,
El Salvador

4
6
8
10
12
14
16
18
20
22
24
26
28
30
“One of my favorite memories from 2017 was the opening day of our Entrepreneurship program in El Salvador. Our facilitator invited the group to write all the questions that they had (for him) onto post-its. The questions filled the wall! The surprise came when the facilitator then advised the group that they had to answer their own questions! 2.5 hours later, the change in the room was palpable. It was wonderful to see how a group of strangers came together to create a rich, dynamic learning experience that lasted throughout the 6 days together.”

“In order to learn it’s necessary to be able to see oneself, and realize that what you have to learn isn’t going to come from outside”.



Fundraising
and Development Officer

“My favorite moment of SERES last year...can I have two? Is that breaking the rules? One - listening to Antonio and Abigail talk about the training they just finished - exhausted, exuberant, cheerful, proud. It helped me get to the core of SERES. Two: spend time with some of the young leaders at the most recent meeting. No person was the same. Their uniqueness was really refreshing. And seeing them bring all points of view to the circle and move to action was electrical. How lucky I am to have these rich experiences!”



Administrative Associate

“My favorite moment last year was when we ran a local fundraising activity. It felt great to be able to share with people the passion and enthusiasm that we have for this work, and at the end of the night raise more than our target! As we say in SERES, without limits!”



dora
PEREZ

Finance Office

glenda
XULU

Guatemala Program Associate

sara
HURTARTE

Director of Programs

5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29

“My favorite moment was (and is) our annual team retreat. It’s a space for our own learning and growth, giving us all much-needed downtime as well as an opportunity to share, and build up energy to work together towards achieving our strategic objectives.”

“Without a doubt the moment that fills me most with joy is when I see the satisfaction in the faces of our young women - when they host a town-hall meeting or run an event or implement their community plans. Seeing their success inspires me and makes me feel so proud because I know that getting there, given all the challenges that they face, is no easy task. But they prove to us and themselves that they can do it. Listening to them talk and seeing new ideas put into action fills me with energy!”

“My favorite moment was talking to Flor during our Annual Youth Summit and see her transform: from this quiet women to a leader with an active participation in her community.”



juan
pablo

Guatemala Program Associate

abigail
QUICH

Program Coordinator,
Guatemala

4 “The most incredible moment for
6 me last year was our annual Youth
8 Summit. To see such an inclusive
10 and diverse group - so many
12 young people from marginalized
14 populations - coming together in a
16 safe space that provided them with
18 the tools and support to discover
20 and tell their stories. To see how the
22 experience gave them agency and
24 confidence. I felt proud, knowing
26 I was supporting the emergence of
28 this incredible network!”
30

“Some of my most impactful
moments in 2017 happened in El
Quiché, a department in Guatemala
with one of the highest indigenous
populations. Working with the
group of young women there was
a joy and an inspiration, watching
them get involved in processes that
helped them see that they DO have
a voice and that that voice has an
important role to play in decision-
making in their communities.”



FINANCIALS*

**audited*

REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT

	FY 2015 (Guatemala only)	FY 2016 (Guatemala only)	FY 2017 (Guatemala only)
Foundation Grants	\$148,625	\$106,498	\$120,073
Prizes and Awards	\$25,000	-	-
SERES Global Grants	\$70,300	\$25,000	\$60,377
Individual Contributions	\$17,420	\$9,508	\$4,958
Fee-for-Service	\$75,160	\$24,504	\$58,149
Other Income (interests)	\$130	\$330	\$371
Total	\$336,635	\$165,839	\$243,928

EXPENSES

Direct Program Expenses	FY 2015 (Guatemala only)	FY 2016 (Guatemala only)	FY 2017 (Guatemala only)
Training Programs (Central America)	\$86,893	\$84,390	\$115,820
Training Programs (International)	\$58,000	\$4,591	\$0
Leadership Center	\$39,158	\$31,978	\$45,631
Grants	\$4,615	\$400	\$6,330
Operating Costs	\$27,970	\$39,194	\$16,923
Development	\$1,358	\$6,792	\$12,664
Management and General	\$14,935	\$25,076	\$25,076
Total	\$232,928	\$192,422	\$215,266
Net assets at beginning of year		\$129,324	\$102,740
Net assets at end of year		\$102,740	\$131,398

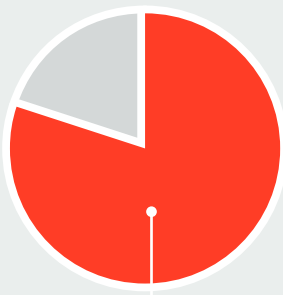
For Guatemalan-based operations for fiscal year ending December 31, 2017.

* Asociación SERES finances were audited by an independent auditor for the period July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

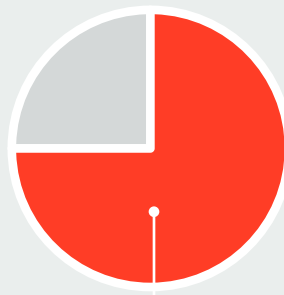
LEADERSHIP & STAFF

As an organization, SERES is committed to a culture of inclusion that fosters diversity and encourages everyone to strive towards leadership opportunities. As a result, we have strong female and local participation at all levels of the organization.

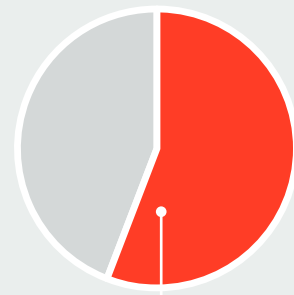
Closing the gender gap WOMEN IN SERES



80%
of staff
positions



75%
of our
leadership team

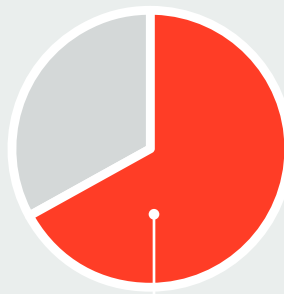


56%
of our Board
of Directors

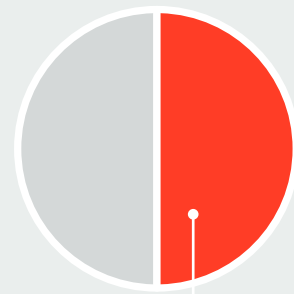
Local, Youth-Led



95%
of SERES'
staff are local



67%
<35 yrs



50%
Board Members
are SERES Alumni

Corrina Grace

Executive Director

Sara Hurtarte

Director of Operations and Programs

Antonio Sánchez

Program Coordinator, El Salvador

Abigail Quic

Program Coordinator, Guatemala

5

7

9

11

13

15

17

19

21

23

25

27

29

Dora Perez

Finance Officer

Luisa Paz

Administrative Associate

Jennifer Argueta

Fundraising and Development Officer

Glenda Xulu

Guatemala Program Associate

Susana Ruiz

El Salvador Program Associate

César Recinos

El Salvador Program Associate

Juan Pablo Sic

Community Manager

Marco Antonio Mendez

Land Manager

**Central American
Board of Directors**

Elizabeth Pellecer

President

Ana Isabel Cifuentes

Vice-President

Wilfredo Fuentes

Secretary

Sherry Miller

Treasurer

Corrina Grace

Board Member

Axel Salanic

Guatemalan Youth-Elect Representative

Johana López

Guatemalan Youth-Elect Representative

Yeymy Ruiz

El Salvador Youth-Elect Representative

Marta Morales

El Salvador Youth-Elect Representative

SERES Global

Board of Directors

Sherry Miller (President)

Adjunct Professor, Framingham University

Kathy Ruhf (Secretary)

Executive Director, Land for Good

Alissa Harrington (Treasurer)

Project Manager, BMW Connected eMobility

Alia Whitney (Officer)

Executive Director, Freedom FWD

Jacob Carter (Officer)

Doctoral Student, Center for International

Education, University of Massachusetts

Fernando Maldonado (Officer)

Farm Manager at Carite Farms

Rodrigo Barillas (Officer)

Executive Director, WINGS Guatemala



S E R E S

1ra Avenida Norte No. 12, Impact Hub
Antigua Sacatepequez Guatemala
Ph: +1 7832 2469 | info@seres.org

www.seres.org