
















# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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# INTRODUCTION



Take a moment to think about everything you've been through during the pandemic. Your list might include stress, isolation, fear, grief, and loss.

**Now imagine experiencing all of that as a teen.**

With sharply reduced access to school, work and friends, the world's young people now hold their future in their own hands as no other generation has. They can't afford to wait for the world to normalize. They need tools for growth, support, and **EMPOWERMENT.**

That's why TeenSmart and its JovenSalud.net platform had our greatest impact yet in 2021. When our teens needed us most, **our award-winning tools for training, motivation and self-care were just a click away.**

With demand continuing to grow, **we're just getting started.**

**Join us as we celebrate the power of our youth.**



# A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Adriana Gómez Gómez  
Executive Director

## Dear TeenSmart Family,

We look back at each and every year with a sense of accomplishment—but 2021 was truly an unprecedented season of growth, progress, and change.

Why? Because of the strength of the young people we serve. As they faced continuing limitations on their ability to study, work, plan for the future, and spend time with friends, they used the tools of our JovenSalud platform to take control of their own lives. With formal education still in a state of flux, our direct relationship with teens grew ever stronger. Their ability to take charge of their own health and learning using the phones in their hands led to new levels of self-empowerment—and the world noticed, honoring TeenSmart with accolades.

Here's a glimpse of what we achieved in 2021 as we placed the innovative, award-winning tools of JovenSalud.net into the hands of young people in Central America, Mexico and beyond:

- **18,000+ new teens** signed up on JovenSalud.net (+134% compared to 2020).
- Regional digital marketing campaign **"Descubre JovenSalud"** recruited 8,346 new users from **20 countries** in under three months with LIFT Campaign funding from an extraordinary gift from an anonymous donor.
- **6,294 teens** registered for online life skills courses (+173% compared to 2020), accessing our intervention with the strongest track record for significant impact on positive decision-making.



- **22,916** counseling requests addressed from 5,623 youth (+63% compared to 2020).
- **94% of users** reported positive impact from the coaching service.
- **LIFT funds from the Hershey Family and from the IDB** achieved Phase 1 technology goals (JovenSalud app in iOS, Ariel chatbot on WhatsApp).
- **Marketing & Promotions Plan 2022-2025** created with INCAE MBA Student Consultants for scalability.
- **"Mi Futuro Sin Fronteras"** pilot project initiated with IDB support to serve Nicaraguan teens whose parents migrated to other countries.
- **New partnerships** (Delta Analytics, the University of Washington's Evans School & Cenfotec University) improved our data analysis.
- In 2022, we will have the financial and mentorship support of **Grand Challenges Canada** and the **Troper-Wojcicki Foundation** to systematically regionalize our services.
- TeenSmart was **selected by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as a Solve Global Challenges Winner**. JovenSalud.net was chosen from more than 1,800

solutions in 128 countries as one of the seven most promising innovations in the Equitable Classrooms category.

- TeenSmart was also **one of the 10 finalists of the TPrize**, selected from 204 applications from 34 countries. Organized by Tec de Monterrey and Universidad de los Andes with the support of MIT Solve, the TPrize is an award for entrepreneurs who generate solutions aimed at social and educational problems in Latin America and the Caribbean.

**We achieved all of this thanks to the consistent annual support of our JovenSalud Alliance members, partners, sponsors, and donors, like YOU!**

And because of that support, we're continuing to aim even higher.

By the end of 2025 **we aspire to reach over 1 million young people** across Central America and Mexico, hoping they will **regularly use the JovenSalud platform as a trusted resource for making positive life choices and becoming tomorrow's leaders**. This is the only free public service of this depth and quality in Central America, and we face intense demand. Please join us in celebration of 2021 and the journey ahead.

**Please join us in celebration of 2021 and the journey ahead.**





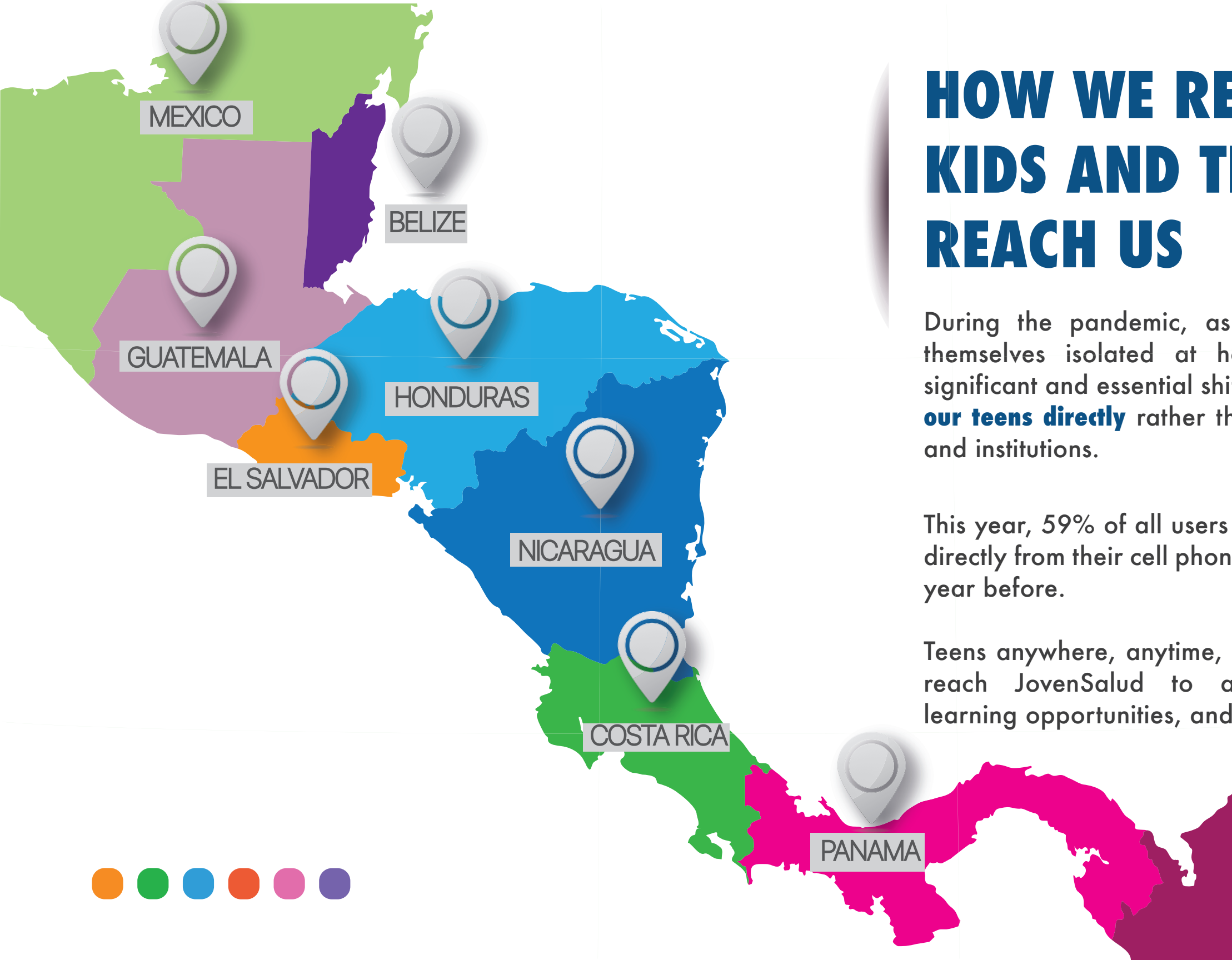
# OUR MISSION

TeenSmart International uses online technologies to empower youth to make smart decisions, live healthy lives and contribute to their communities.

# OUR VISION

Millions of youth becoming healthier, more educated, productive and active in improving their communities.





# HOW WE REACH KIDS AND THEY REACH US

During the pandemic, as most teens found themselves isolated at home, we made a significant and essential shift: **To reach more of our teens directly** rather than through schools and institutions.

This year, 59% of all users reached TeenSmart directly from their cell phones, up from 12% the year before.

Teens anywhere, anytime, can use a phone to reach JovenSalud to access information, learning opportunities, and counseling.

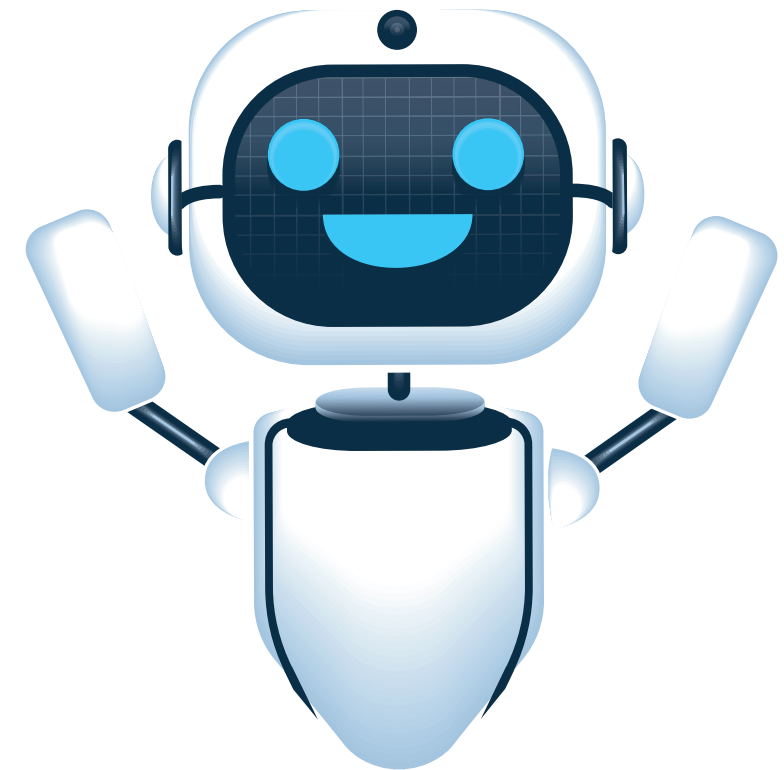


Teens reach us through the internet and cell phones. We reach teens through WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.

- 77% have their own cell phone
- 55% have internet at home
- 78% of teens use WhatsApp
- 77% of teens use Facebook
- 58% YouTube
- 48% Instagram
- JovenSalud mobile app available for Android & iOS
- 817 Nicaraguan youth used the TSI mobile library in 2021

In 2020, we started a process of integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) so we can more efficiently scale our services, and make them less dependent on human resources. We created the chatbot Ariel, which, in 2021, had more than 5,000 interactions with our youth via Facebook, our homepage, the JovenSalud platform, and most recently, via WhatsApp.

Ariel guides and enhances the user experience, provides information, and makes it possible for TeenSmart to scale up dramatically. Phase 2 of our digital transformation will include greater user experience and gamification, and the training of Ariel as a counselor assistant.



# DESCUBRE JOVEN SALUD

## REGIONAL DIGITAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN



Our new outreach initiative to engage or recruit more users directly—the August-November Descubre JovenSalud digital marketing campaign—added more young people to our platform than in any previous year: **18,000 youth, a 134% increase.**



**+100 press articles to promote our services**

**New promotions & marketing plan  
that includes alliances and digital marketing**



# YOUTH'S CHALLENGES in Pandemic-Era Latin America



Missed an average of 153+ in-person school days.



Experienced longer uninterrupted school closures than any other region in the world.



15%+ may never return to school.



50% reported reduced motivation, and 90% anxiety.



70% say they've needed physical or mental help—but only 40% have asked for it.



Of TeenSmart youth, 46% reported depression, 24% self-harm, 19% suicidal thoughts, and 15% suicide attempts.



Domestic violence, already 3x the global average, increased during COVID-19.



1 in 3 youth are overweight. Levels of nutrition and exercise worsened.



Teen pregnancy could increase by 500,000 (UNFPA).



Recruitment of youth for drug trafficking increased due to school closures and unemployment.





# OUR RESULTS 2021



USE



SATISFACTION



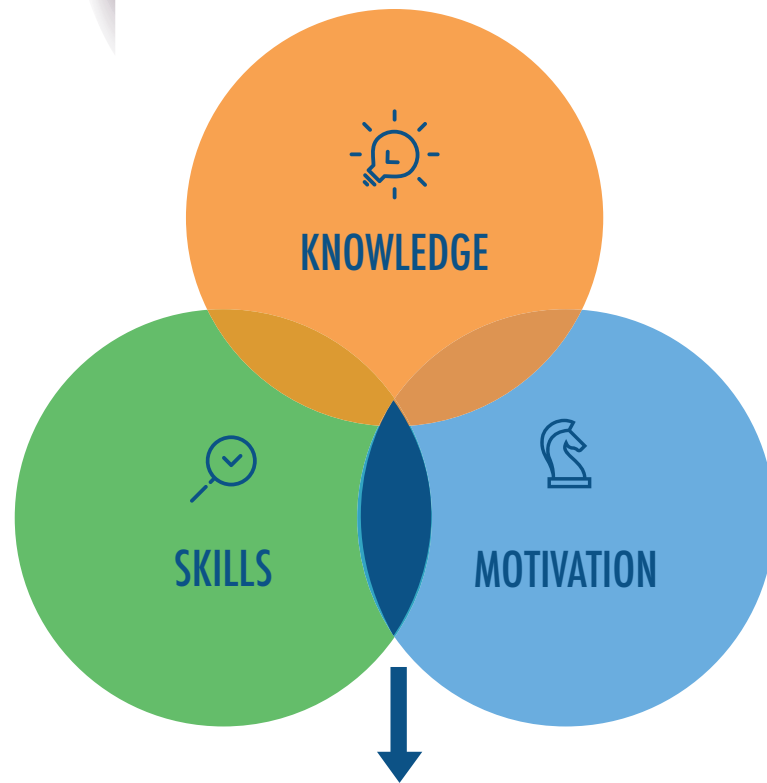
IMPACT



TeenSmart monitors and evaluates use, satisfaction, and impact of all its services.



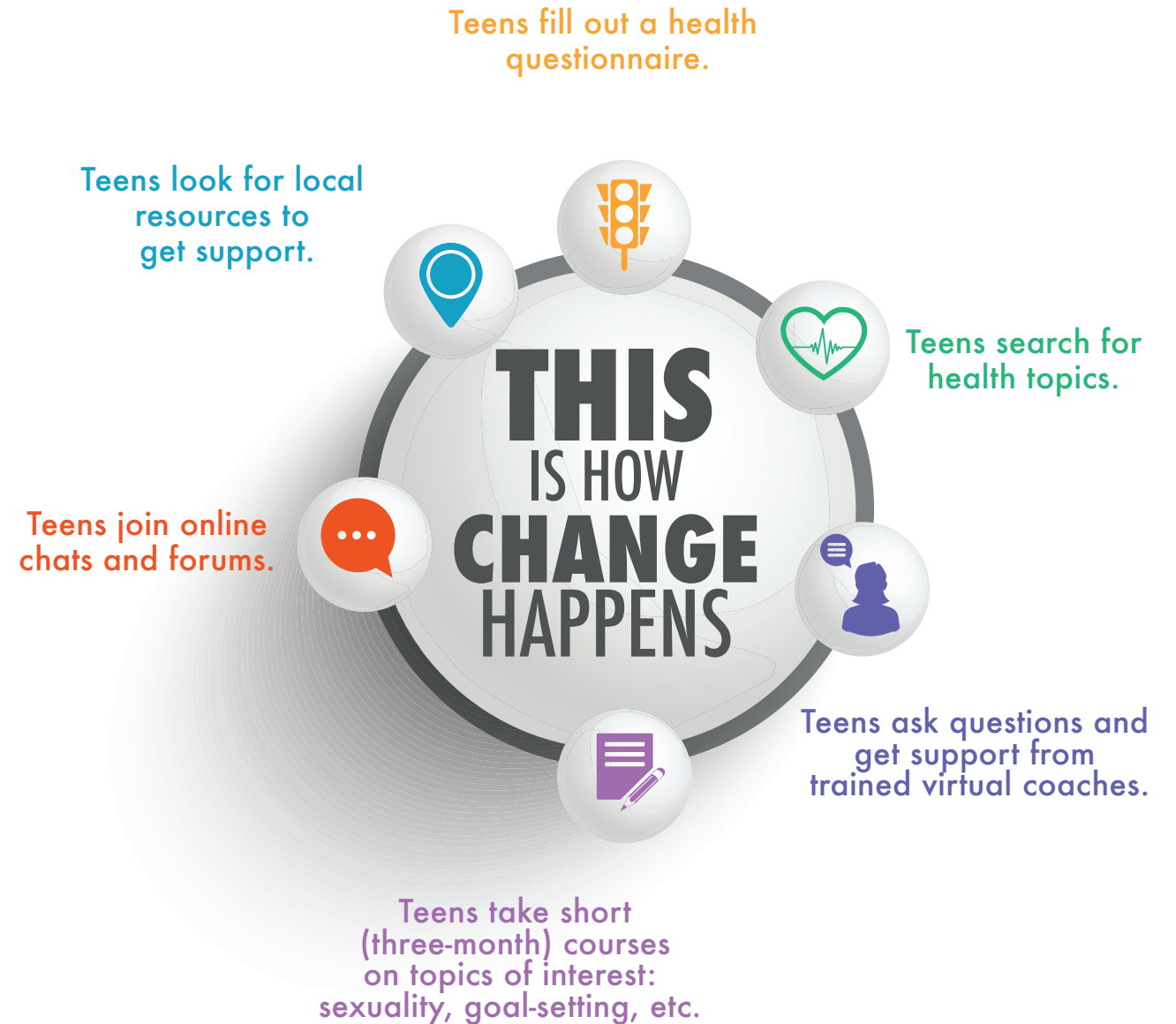
# THEORY OF CHANGE



THIS IS HOW CHANGE HAPPENS

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

When teenagers are **empowered** with knowledge, skills, and motivation, they will make smart choices to reduce or prevent risky behaviors. They also build life skills that promote education, employment, and social responsibility.



INDICATOR	Unit of measure	Before 2017	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Cumulative
Total registered users	Number of youth	39 159	12 689	9 444	13 191	7 999	18 384	100 866
Health profiles	Number of instruments completed	34 267	15 625	11 295	14 070	5 879	8 204	89 340
Online courses completed	Number of courses	4 149	2 339	1 604	2 726	1 219	3 230	15 267
Online queries	Number of queries	69 039	18 019	9 368	14 287	14 500	22 916	148 129
Youth using ¿Buscas Consejo?	Number of youth	3 728 annual average	7 141	3 944	5 694	3 032	5 623	NA
Usage concentration of ¿Buscas Consejo?	Number of queries per person	3.7 average	2.5	2.4	2.5	4.7	4.1	
Organizations served	Number of organizations	75 annual average	123	130	72	127	120	
Income (USD)	Dollars	1 196 159	343 027	328 328	352 514	356 533	396 457	
Spending (USD)	Dollars	1 337 805	323 647	350 490	385 454	356 533	389 925	

# USE: TEENSMART BY THE NUMBERS



USE





# OUR USERS' SATISFACTION



## SERVICE

## % OF 4-5 STAR RESPONSES

GENERAL SATISFACTION

87%



VIRTUAL COURSES

91%



¿BUSCAS CONSEJO?

84%



CONOCE TU SALUD

84%



INFÓRMATE YA

88%



# IMPACT: COACHING



## **We listened. We coached. We supported.**

Coaching services continue to be one of our most popular services for personalized youth empowerment. In 2021, we registered...

**22,916** coaching support requests from 5,623 teens

**2,583** high-risk cases for suicidal ideation or intent and/or sexual abuse with on-the-ground follow-up for additional support

**TeenSmart has provided 133,629 coaching sessions over the years.**

**94%** of teens feel that the coaching services have had a positive impact on their life. These are the main reasons why:

- 1 They felt supported.
- 2 Coaches helped them analyze their problems in a non-judgmental way.
- 3 Coaches empowered them to believe they would be able to solve their problem.



# TESTIMONIAL



I found this website through Facebook and I didn't know that there were people with so much interest in helping young people like me... it's admirable. I went to your website and completed the health questionnaire and read the feedback of my responses and I saw a lot of risk behaviors in me. I didn't want to fill it out because I knew that I was at risk, but I did it anyway.

I have been a very shy person, without friends. Since I was little, I remember that teachers called my mom because they were worried about me: I never spoke, I was always alone with my imaginary friends.

When I was 16, I started to look for guys on the internet and met guys from different countries. I decided to date a guy who lived close to me and it was the worst decision I ever made. He sexually abused me. I finally got over this relationship and moved on, but was never able to open my heart again... To write to you with honesty about my story is a wonderful relief. Some things I've shared, I never ever said to anybody. It feels amazing to be able to speak with you. I will continue to do so. Thank you so much.

**-21-year-old female**

# IMPACT: COURSES



## COURSE



## FOCUS: PROMOTING

Personal leadership  
and healthy  
lifestyle behaviors

Violence  
prevention

Alcohol and drug  
use prevention

Exercise and nutrition

Sexual and  
reproductive health

Mental health

Cyberintelligence  
& 21st century skills

## PARTICIPANTS WITH PRE-AND POST-DATA

**951**

**512**

**478**

**265**

**447**

**201**

**278**

## EXAMPLES OF IMPACT

-Improved family relationships & communication  
-Reduced risk behaviors  
-Improved organizational and communication skills

-Improved conflict management  
-Improved healthy expression of frustration and anger  
(or conflict resolution)  
-Improved awareness of how to relate to others

-Elimination of misconceptions about alcohol  
-Reduced alcohol consumption  
-Improved ability to deal with peer pressure

-Increased consumption of water and fruit  
-Improved nutrition  
-Increased physical activity

-Elimination of misconceptions about STDs,  
teen pregnancy and inappropriate relationships  
-Improved knowledge of condom use  
and support for abstinence

-Reduced self-perception of depression  
-Reduced suicidal ideation  
-Increased sense of control of their own life

-Increased use of safe social media practices  
-Reduced screen time

Two changes stood out in 2021:

- 26% of all courses in 2021 were received individually, not through an institution

- As a result of digital marketing, the registration in courses increased from 3,448 to 6,294 (up 45%). However, graduation rates declined, posing a new challenge that we will mitigate through innovative gamification and other incentives.

**IMPACT**



**18**



# TESTIMONIAL



I'm a single mother. My 10-year-old son and I found JovenSalud and took the CRECER Para SER course. It was so valuable for us. On a personal level, I learned about domestic violence. What I learned helped me resolve some problems in my home and in my community—to help some of my neighbors, guiding them so they could resolve conflicts they have with other neighbors.

I liked it a lot, and I'm so happy with what I learned!

**-Tatiana, 24, Costa Rica**

# ROCHE PARTNERSHIP



In 2021, we welcomed a new corporate investment partner. We are so grateful that Roche joined the JovenSalud Alliance and has committed to promote jovensalud.net services over the next three years as great resources for early prevention and developing healthy habits.

As a first activity, in 2021, Roche supported the development of new educational content for ConóceT sexuality course and Infórmate Ya library with a focus on breast cancer prevention, and together we promoted them through a very attractive social media campaign. As a result of this, 300 new users registered in the online course, ConóceT, and 102 visited our breast health content at Infórmate Ya.



*Pink*  
ATTITUDE



IMPACT



20



# IMPACT: MICROMESSAGES



Micromessages, or cues to action, are a new and innovative intervention TeenSmart launched to assist youth during the pandemic. Youth receive brief, personalized messages based on their personal interests and levels of risk. The messages, usually delivered two times a week over four months, are delivered directly to the youth's cell phone or other device.

We currently have four types of micromessaging offerings, and are working on a fifth focused on youth affected by migration.

MICROMESSAGE INTERVENTION	FOCUS: PROMOTING...	PARTICIPANTS	EXAMPLES OF IMPACT
No Estás Sol@ You're Not Alone	Mental health	2090	-Improved emotional control -Practice of strategies to improve mood -Improved family bonds
Yo Me Preparo I Am Prepared	Staying in school	530	-Increased knowledge of the potential to halve world poverty if all adults have a high school degree
Construyo Mi Futuro Building My Future	Employment and vocational guidance	424	-Reduced belief that everyone learns the same way and with the same study habits -Increased ability to create a modern CV
Yo Me Empodero Self-Empowerment	Strengthening life skills	100	-Improved communication skills

# TESTIMONIAL



My experience with JovenSalud and the Construyo mi Futuro project was marvelous. Through this sequence, my goals became clearer. It helped me gain knowledge about how to pursue a scholarship at school. From now on, I can confidently say what my dreams are, and I'll fight for them until I achieve them. Thank you, JovenSalud, for your unconditional support.

—Juvelkis, 16, Nicaragua



TeenSmart's methodology and the Yo Me Empodero intervention create a setting of trust and sharing among teens. It allows us to see more clearly the obstacles we have to overcome; to learn where we need to focus our attention; and to raise awareness so we can break down taboos and beliefs from the past. That turned us into teens who can make a difference, who know ourselves well, who love and value ourselves above all else. We became young people driven to get ahead, dreamers, and, most importantly, EMPOWERED.

—Josseling, 20, Nicaragua



No estás Sol@ provided me with knowledge about how to prevent and avoid COVID-19, and how to live through this pandemic context.

It was a great experience. Learning new things helps pique my interest to continue discovering more. It awakens my interest in learning. Most importantly, it gave me knowledge that I can put in practice in my life, especially during the pandemic.

—Alberto, 21



# MY FUTURE WITHOUT BORDERS



**TeenSmart's  
2021-2022 project for  
teens whose families  
have migrated**

We are excited to be developing new content to support youth who are suffering and affected by migration. In Central America, 378,000 people per year migrate northwards motivated by food insecurity, poverty, violence and a lack of safety (PMA et al, 2021).

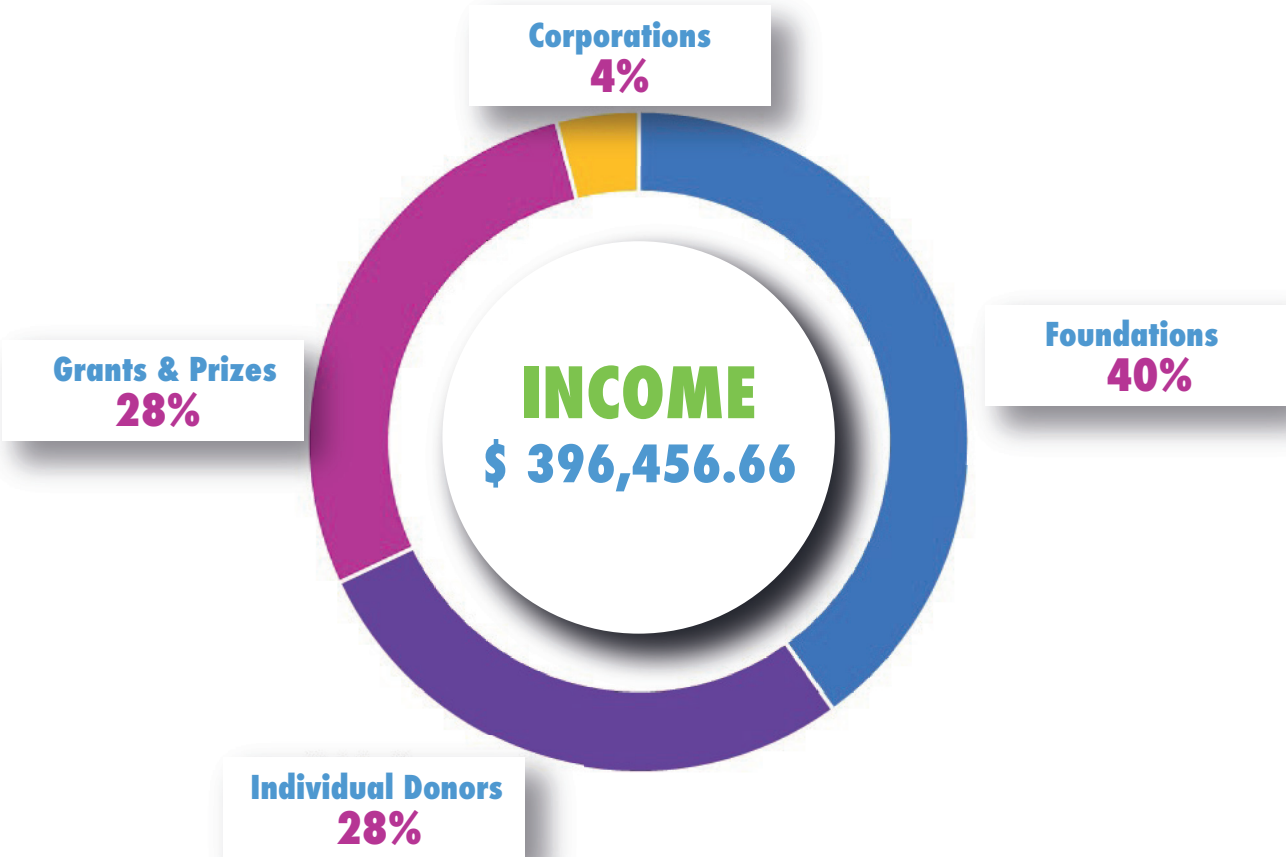
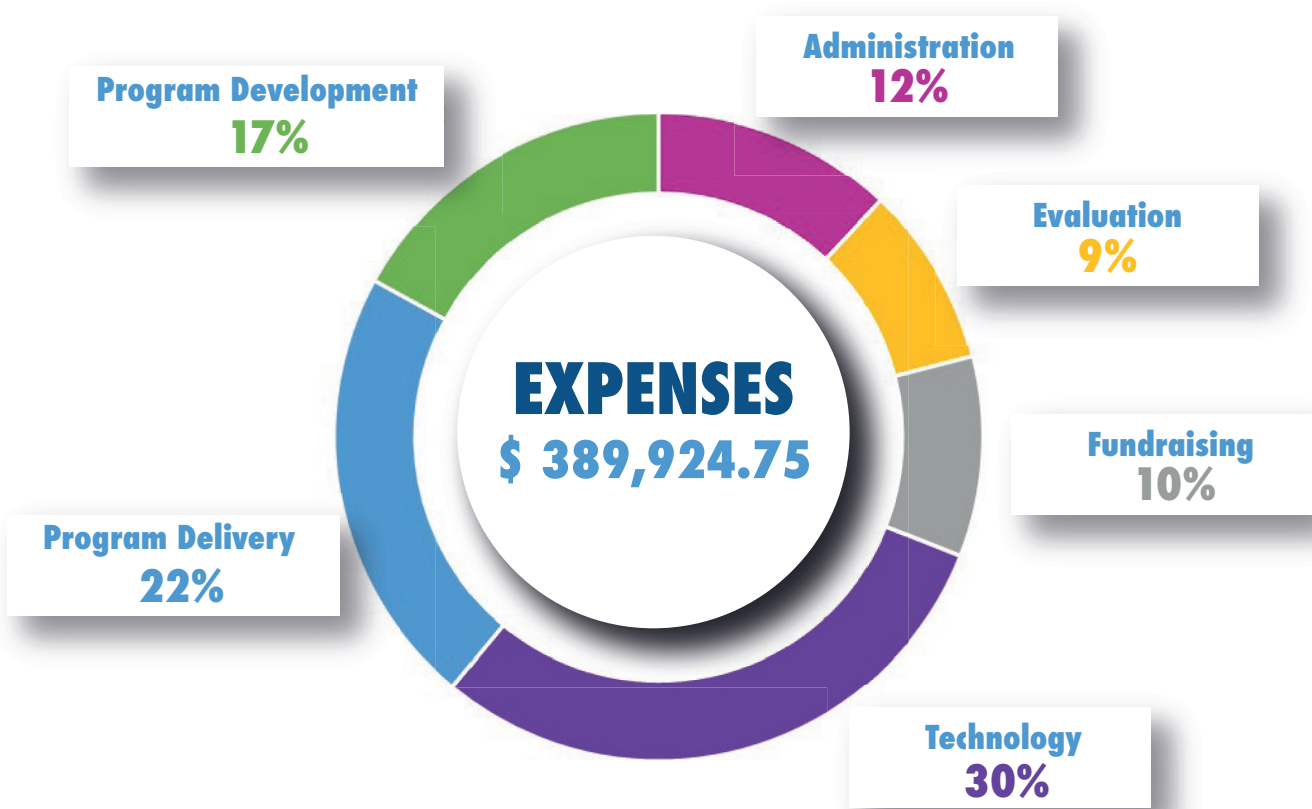
“My Future Without Borders” is an intervention supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Although we are pilot testing in Nicaragua, if effective, we hope to scale this intervention to serve the needs of youth throughout Central America, especially in the Northern Triangle.

Twelve teens currently experiencing migration are serving as co-creators in the development of the messages and methods.





# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



# OUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE



The Board of TeenSmart and its staff have unanimously agreed to scale Jovensalud.net services throughout the region. There are over 70 million youth in Central America and Mexico alone. A Strategic Plan has been developed to “LIFT” TeenSmart’s services to greater heights than ever before, and includes four strategic objectives: **transformation of technology, marketing and organizational structure and a LIFT Campaign to raise \$2.5 million over the next five years.**

**If we are successful, by 2025 we will achieve:**

- 1.0 million youth who are regularly using the JovenSalud platform as a trusted resource for making positive life choices and becoming tomorrow’s leaders.
- Hundreds of new schools and positive youth development organizations throughout Central America partnering with TeenSmart to promote access to free JovenSalud.net services.
- A select group of regional corporate partners promoting and investing in JovenSalud services and products through their branding and social responsibility.
- International organizations and ministries of health of each CA country advocating widely for the use of JovenSalud in all schools and health settings.
- Jovensalud.net will be a multilingual platform serving youth throughout the Americas.

# YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS



## This is how your future support will help us LIFT:

- Consider a **legacy gift**; put TeenSmart in your will.
- Double your **current gift**.
- Make your donation a **monthly gift**.
- Give an **in-kind donation** such as event space, food, T-shirts, or tablets.
- **Spread the word**. Get your friends to invest in TeenSmart and in Central America.
- **Share JovenSalud.net** with any Spanish-speaking youth you know.
- Contact us for **volunteer** possibilities or visit [teensmart.org](http://teensmart.org) for more information.





# PARTNERS



## Support for TeenSmart's services is provided in part by partners.





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TeenSmart EIN number: 20-0311647

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