



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Adriana Gómez Gómez**  
*Executive Director*  
**Digital Health Champion**



*Recognition awarded by the Inter-American  
Development Bank, March 2022*

## Dear TeenSmart Family,

Growing up is hard—and so often, the biggest challenges are the ones teens handle alone. The path through adolescence requires taking on new responsibilities, learning new skills, stepping into the unknown, and pushing limits. TeenSmart is here to support teens on that journey.

TeenSmart helps young people find their own voices in a world that rarely wants to listen. TeenSmart encourages youth to clarify their values and act accordingly; to practice healthy behavior; to stay in school; to work hard; and to become active agents of change in their communities.

We are experiencing an **ever-increasing demand for our free, award-winning teen support and health education online services**. Just like our teens, TeenSmart and our Jovensalud.net services are growing.

**We aspire to reach more than 1 million young people in Central America, Mexico and beyond, with the hope that they will regularly use the JovenSalud platform as a trusted resource to make positive life decisions and become the leaders of tomorrow.** This is the only free public service of such depth and quality in the region. According to UNICEF (2022), 1 out of 3 digital learning platforms developed during COVID-19 are no longer functional. Conversely, TeenSmart's platform has provided uninterrupted and meaningful support for 13+ years to 100,000 + Central American teens.

The challenge to continue growing with an ever-changing landscape of youth needs is huge and exciting. The adolescents we serve are the first 100% digital generation, and yet there are still tremendous gaps of digital literacy and access throughout the region. With your ongoing support, TeenSmart will continue to grow and—like the youth who we support—to thrive!



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Use, Satisfaction, and Impact of JovenSalud

- More than **16,500 new adolescents** discovered our online platform JovenSalud.net, a trusted source of information and support that they can access to until they turn 24.
- Total users dropped slightly from 2021 because of geographic focus, but still represented a growth rate of 75% since 2018. Users completed **more total courses** than last year, and **retention rate increased**: 22% of 2021 new users came back in 2022, up from 14,5% the previous year.
- **6,000 teens enrolled in online life skills courses**, the JovenSalud intervention with the strongest track record for significant impact on positive decision making.
- **15,000 online coaching sessions** were facilitated by our trained coaches for more than 4,000 young people.
- **300+ graduates completed** our new online social-emotional health course, **"Building my Emotions" (Construyendo mis Emociones)**, and, upon completion, reported **less depression and less suicidal ideation**.
- 500+ young people experiencing the migration of a parent or close relative participated in the pilot testing of **"My Future Without Borders,"** sponsored by the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**. Participants reported strengthened family communication, greater emotional bonds and new support networks.

## Scaling Up: Lift Campaign

- Stage 1 of our **transition to scale** began, supported by the Grand Challenges Canada (GCC). This project, which we call our Lift Campaign, is making it possible to more systematically promote Jovensalud.net services to youth throughout Central America, Mexico and beyond, and to develop new regional alliances needed to achieve and sustain growth. **TeenSmart piloted this new marketing approach** in Honduras, initiating and cultivating new relationships with allies who helped attract 300 new Honduran youth to our platform.
- Select TeenSmart staff members were awarded scholarships to complete a 10-week learning process with experts at the Propel Fellowship to learn more about digital transformation and digital marketing. **Their final presentation was one of three winners for Best Pitch!**
- **New investment partners** such as the Troper-Wojcicki Foundation and Focus Central America joined forces behind TeenSmart's mission.

**We accomplished all of this thanks to the continued support of our JovenSalud Alliance members, partners, sponsors, and donors—like YOU!**

**And because of that support, we continue to work towards scaling JovenSalud services throughout the region. Thank you!**



# 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 become healthier, more educated, productive, and active in improving their communities.



# OUR SERVICES FOR TEENS



## LOOKING FOR ADVICE?

Personalized life coaching from health professionals.



## MICROMESSAGES

Short mobile interventions with daily cues-to-action to improve habits.



## UNDERSTAND YOUR HEALTH

Questionnaires so teens can learn about their own health.



## HEALTH DIRECTORY

Organizations that provide face-to-face support for teens.



## INFORM YOURSELF

Scientifically validated information and resources to support knowledge and decision-making.



## ONLINE COURSES

Courses to develop life skills.



## ONLINE CHATS AND FORUMS

Spaces for interaction among youth about various topics.



# OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Through [www.jovensalud.net](http://www.jovensalud.net) and collaborative alliances



- Technology libraries in vulnerable sectors



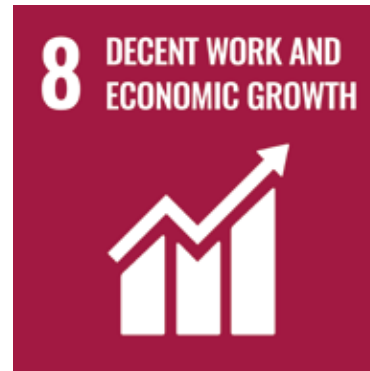
- Sexual and reproductive education programs
- Empowerment of women and awareness-raising for men about masculinity



- JovenSalud is a technological platform evolving towards scaling up with free, inclusive and confidential access for the region's youth



- Services and tools for wellness, mental health, and sexual/reproductive health.
- Prevention of alcohol, drug and tobacco use
- Roadway safety



- Initiatives that promote staying in school, the importance of education, and skills for employment



- Special interventions to prevent violence



- Interventions that promote staying in school and education for sustainable development
- Development of skills for employment



- Interventions that empower and motivate youth as community leaders
- "My Future Without Borders" project raised awareness among youth with migrant parents about migration risks



- We use an multi-sector alliance model that seeks collective, regional impact for healthy youth leaders





# CONNECTING WITH TEENS





# YOUTH'S CHALLENGES IN LATIN AMERICA



In 2022, more than a full year and a half into the COVID-19 pandemic, youth in Latin America inhabit a region in which:



Over one in seven adolescents suffer from a mental disorder.



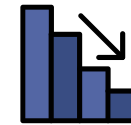
More than 60% of mental health services have been suspended or limited.



170 million students have been fully deprived of in-person education for roughly 1 out of 2 effective school days.



80% of sixth graders lack basic reading comprehension skills.



Pandemic-related learning losses are projected to cost today's students 12% in lifetime earnings.



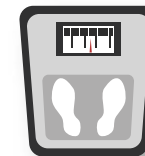
Teen pregnancy continues to rise: One in four births was an adolescent pregnancy.



39% of JovenSalud users reported depression, 20% reported self-harm, and 21% suicide attempts.



25% of JovenSalud users reported being sexually active, and 60% report that they do not always use a condom.



43% of JovenSalud users do not exercise even once per week.

# HOW WE REACH TEENS AND THEY REACH US

Teens anywhere, anytime, can use their devices such as cell phones, tablets or computers to access free JovenSalud.net services for information, learning opportunities, and counseling.

During 2022, TeenSmart promoted access to JovenSalud.net via a hybrid model of digital and in-person marketing and program delivery. This included engaging positive youth development organizations (mostly schools and NGOs) in promoting and using our JovenSalud.net online services in their organizations, as well as reaching youth directly through digital campaigns via social media, press, online advertisements, and others.

Access to the Internet and mobile devices is widespread and growing but still a challenge in communities in Central America. In 2022 TeenSmart reached teens through WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.

BELIZE

HONDURAS

EL SALVADOR

NICARAGUA

COSTA RICA

PANAMA

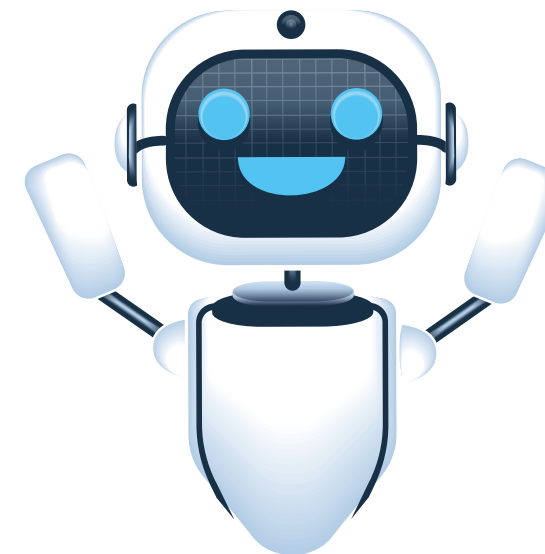


## What we learned from our teens:

- 71% have their own cell phone
- 26% have a computer and/or tablet at home
- 39% have internet on their phone
- 40% have internet at home

## TeenSmart asked a random sample of 400 participating teens about their social media use:

- 85% of teens use WhatsApp
  - 78% Facebook
  - 66% YouTube
  - 60% Instagram
- 
- 274 Nicaraguan youth used the TSI mobile library in 2022 to graduate from online courses and 2,000+ used their cell phones to sign up for JovenSalud during health promotion activities.
- 
- JovenSalud chatbot Ariel had more than 12,000 interactions with youth via Facebook, our homepage, the JovenSalud Platform, and WhatsApp.
- 
- In 2023, a new bot is joining Ariel's team. "Joy" has been trained as a coach assistant thanks to the technological support of Accenture.



# — BUILDING ALLIANCES: OUR KEY TO REACHING YOUTH

Our **Promoting Alliances** are the key to scaling and expanding our services in **Central America, Mexico, and beyond.**

## EXPANDING TO HONDURAS

In 2022, **TeenSmart began stage 1 of its transition to scale**, supported by the Grand Challenges Canada (GCC). This project is making it possible to more systematically promote Jovensalud.net services to youth throughout Central America and to develop new regional alliances to achieve and sustain growth.

TeenSmart piloted this new promotion approach in Honduras, initiating and cultivating new relationships with political, advocate, and promoting allies, including: the Ministries of Health and Education, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Ferema Foundation, TIGO Company, World Vision, Menonita Association, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Fundación FICOHSA, Glasswing, Teach a Man to Fish, Bayán Association and Fundación Azteca.

With their support and through a mass media campaign, **300 new Honduran youth registered on JovenSalud** as a kickoff to these new relationships.

More alliances and activities to come in 2023 in **Honduras!**



TeenSmart staff with Honduran Health Minister Dr. José Manuel Matheu and Dr. Clara López



# HOW JOVENALUD HAS STRENGTHENED ITS ALLIANCES

To support our new partnerships, TeenSmart studied what's worked in the past. We carried out a study of best practices in the development of our past and present alliances, and received input from 122 of our allies about their needs and relationship with us.

Of these organizations, 81% said that JovenSalud.net's online services and content add value to their curricula, especially in the following areas:



**Emotional support for teens**



**Violence/bullying**



**Safe use of technology**



**Self-esteem**



**Substance use**



**Sexual and reproductive health**




**Life skills**

# DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS

TeenSmart launched three digital campaigns during the second semester of 2022, attracting 3,107 new users and almost 500 prospective promoting partners in Mexico and Central America.

 **“Transforma Tu Mundo” (Transform Your World):** Young people can fill their lives with color and apply transformative solutions to their problems and needs.

Watch an example of a video of a campaign [\*\*HERE\*\* !\[\]\(99f58673407353e96a019fbca558fd72\_img.jpg\)](#)

 **“La Pelota Está en Tu Cancha” (You’ve Got the Ball):** A campaign during the FIFA World Cup, showing that teamwork and discipline are key to being a soccer success and achieving one’s goals.

 **“Seamos Luz” (Be the Light for Teens):** JovenSalud services as a space for emotional support at Christmas and New Year’s Eve.

These campaigns reached more youth thanks to significant promotional support from various organizations, including: the Carlos Slim Foundation, IOM México, Roche, Hospital Clínica Bíblica, Fundación Monge, Marina Pez Vela, schools throughout Central America, Radio Batalets, and the Central American Council of Health Ministers (COMISCA).





# TESTIMONIALS: RECRUITMENT AND IMPACT



"The truth is that I was skeptical about this website, but it helped me a lot with my problems. It has provided advice and support. The virtual coaches help you see the importance of what you do or how you feel. Coaches also answer you in less than a day, and there are courses that you can take that help you manage your problems."

**-Sergio, Mexico**

"I found out about JovenSalud through Facebook. I wasn't sure at first that I would like it, but I love the platform. I contacted the TeenSmart staff in my country and told them that I wanted to support and volunteer. From there, I became a leader of JovenSalud and a co-creator of the content for the new intervention 'My Future Without Borders.' The whole experience has been a delight!"

**-Mary Guadalupe, Nicaragua**



# OUR RESULTS 2022

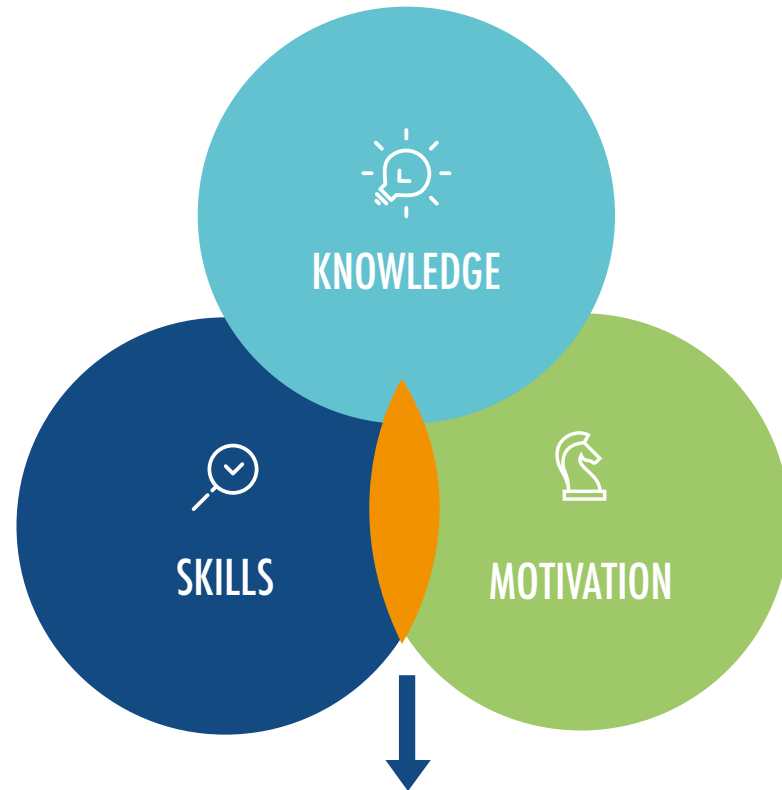
## USE • SATISFACTION • IMPACT

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





# MODEL OF CHANGE



THIS IS  
HOW **CHANGE** HAPPENS

## OUR MODEL 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 2018	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Cumulative
Total registered users	Number of youth	51 848	9 444	13 191	7 999	18 384	16 504	117 370
Health profile	Number of instruments completed	49 892	11 295	14 070	5 879	8 204	5 997	95 337
Online courses completed	Number of courses	6 488	1 604	2 776	1 219	3 220	3 124	18 391
Online queries	Number of queries	87 058	9 368	14 287	145 00	22 916	14 942	163 071
Youth using ¿Buscas Consejo?	Number of youth	4 215 annual average	3 944	5 694	3 032	5 623	4 366	NA
Usage conentration of ¿Buscas Consejo?	Number of queries por person	3.5 annual average	2.37	2.5	4.65	3.1	3.42	NA
Usage conentration of ¿Buscas Consejo?	Number of queries por person	81 accumulated	130	72	127	120	151	NA
Income (USD)	Dollars	1539186 accumulated	328.328	352.514	356.533	396.457	508175	NA
Expenses (USD)	Dollars	1661452 accumulated	350.490	385.454	356.533	389.925	504.629	NA

 **USE:**  
TEENSMART BY  
THE NUMBERS

# OUR USERS' **SATISFACTION**

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>Satisfaction 4-5 STARS</b>
GENERAL SATISFACTION	85%
CONOCE TU SALUD	86%
VIRTUAL COURSES	86%
¿BUSCAS CONSEJO?	83%
INFÓRMATE YA	86%
FORUMS	84%

TeenSmart evaluates satisfaction continuously and randomly using  
a five-star rating system.



# IMPACT: COACHING

## We listened. We coached. We supported.

Coaching services continue to be one of our most popular services for personalized youth empowerment. In 2022, we registered...

**15,000** coaching requests for more than **4,000** young people

**1,193** high-risk cases for suicidal ideation or intent and/or sexual abuse who then received personalized and localized follow-up for additional support.

TeenSmart has provided **163,071** coaching sessions over the years.



Overall, **94%** of teens say that the coaching service has had a positive impact on their life because:

- 1** They felt supported.
- 2** The coaches helped them reflect on their problems in a non-judgmental way.
- 3** The coaches empowered them to believe that they would be able to solve their problem.

# TESTIMONIAL



“¿Buscas Consejo?” has allowed me to have courage and set limits, especially at home, with my dad. That's why I recommended the service to a friend. She has problems with her mother and at home, and it reminded me how much JovenSalud supported me when I felt alone and when I didn't understand the changes that were happening around me. Today I am writing to thank TeenSmart and to tell you that I am already enrolled in college—and that I have been free of self-harm for a year. I also had a relationship with a boy whom I loved very much, but it is over. The separation was painful, but I understand that it was for the best. You helped me a lot and I want you to know it.

***-JovenSalud User, Panama***

# IMPACT: COURSES



FOCUS	NUMBER OF GRADUATES	EXAMPLE OF IMPACT
Healthy behaviors	645	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved family relationship &amp; communication</li> <li>• Healthier nutrition</li> </ul>
Violence prevention	387	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved healthy expression of anger</li> <li>• Use of strategies to handle anger and frustration</li> </ul>
Prevention of drug and alcohol consumption	218	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced alcohol consumption</li> <li>• Elimination of misconceptions about alcohol</li> </ul>
Exercise and nutrition	229	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased hydration</li> <li>• Increased life satisfaction</li> </ul>
Mental-emotional health	366	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced self-perception of depression</li> <li>• Increased self-esteem</li> </ul>
Safe browsing and 21st Century skills	216	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced screen time</li> </ul>
Facing challenges related to the migration of loved ones	589	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater interest in talking about migrant relative(s)</li> <li>• Increased expression of affection and empathy for migrant relative(s)</li> <li>• Greater emotional bonds and new support networks in their countries</li> </ul>
Sexual and reproductive health	128 (10-13yrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased skills such as saying "no" when pressured to engage in risky behaviors</li> </ul>
	247 (14+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased knowledge related to inappropriate relationships</li> <li>• Increased skills such as correct condom use</li> <li>• Increased practice of breast and testicular self-exams</li> </ul>



# TESTIMONIALS



My computer teacher introduced me to JovenSalud during my first year of high school. Today, I am a graduate of four JovenSalud.net online courses. These courses have helped me a lot: they've taught me to focus on myself and also to give advice to those around me. They have clarified many things for me and have improved my lifestyle habits. I am more stable now, and I love myself—maybe too much! My friends say that I have very high self-esteem. I like that because I'm modeling that the first priority is to love ourselves. Thank you, JovenSalud!

***-Jeiby, Nicaragua***

My experience with JovenSalud has been excellent. I started using it in 2014 when I started high school. I have used the coaching service and have taken virtual courses. I have also used the phone help lines that I learned about from the JovenSalud Health Directory to help a friend. I highly recommend JovenSalud because it is very useful in our lives. I am taking the ConoceTe course for the second time and I love it. Always do your best, and the best will come!

***-María José, Costa Rica***

# IT TAKES A **VILLAGE**: KEY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2022

## Transition to Scale 1-Grand Challenges Canada

In 2022, TeenSmart was chosen to be part of Grand Challenges Canada's invitation-only scaling program in order to scale and sustain public access to JovenSalud.net. and as a result, TeenSmart is now developing, testing and evaluating promotion and investment partnership models to scale throughout Central America and Mexico. More news to come in 2023!



TeenSmart staff with Jose Manuel Perez, Honduras Country Representative for the United Nations Population Fund, and his team.



TeenSmart staff with Ilich Valladares of the Honduran Ministry of Education.

# My future without borders:

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

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). The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), aware that family separation can be particularly difficult for children, adolescents, and other vulnerable family members who remain at the point of origin, selected TeenSmart's "My Future Without Borders" to be an implementing partner for its project in Nicaragua: Financing of Innovative Solutions for the Migrant Population.

"My Future Without Borders" developed, implemented, and evaluated a psychosocial care intervention for young people between 10 and 24 years of age whose families have been separated by migration.

- TeenSmart's intervention included a co-participatory design that included youth; a baseline survey; an online course; and a sequence of micromessages delivered directly to participants' phones.
- 400 youth participated with a 93% satisfaction rate. Users reported strengthened family communication, greater emotional bonds, and new support networks in their countries of origin.
- Because of the program's impact, the vision is to scale this intervention to more communities in Nicaragua and to El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

Video story available





# Technology Transformation—Troper-Wojcicki Foundation

The pandemic marked the acceleration of TeenSmart's 2020-2025 strategy to Lift TeenSmart's capabilities in order to scale and expand its services throughout Central America, Mexico and beyond. Technology was identified as the first strategic component for lifting up. TSI technological transformation have been supported by the Troper-Wojcicki Foundation, created by spouses Denis Troper (working at Google) and Susan Wojcicki (CEO of YouTube).

This economic investment is allowing TSI to:

- Make a paradigm shift in JovenSalud services regarding user experience
- Introduce artificial intelligence
- Modernize
- Ensure easy accessibility on mobile devices and through communication channels where youth usually find themselves: their digital media and social networks
- Build the capacity of our IT department by incorporating new full stack and app developers

## Our Trusted Longtime Allies

In 2022, as in so many previous years, TeenSmart continued to work collaboratively with incredible allies of many years:

- **Hospital Clínica Bíblica:** We worked together in rural areas of Costa Rica, putting life skills content into the hands of youth and complementing the hospital's extraordinary social impact projects.
- **Marina Pez Vela:** Through our partnership to benefit the rural community of Quepos on Costa Rica's Central Pacific coast, we organized a large community event for youth and adults. Various local service providers joined in to create an unforgettable family day.
- **Roche:** We continued working together to improve teens' sexual and reproductive health and to prevent breast cancer through the virtual course "Conóciate" (Know Yourself) and innovative social media campaigns.

## In-kind & volunteer projects with...

**Accenture:** The development of Joy, a counselor bot.

The Accenture-TeenSmart team won Accenture's Social Innovators Accelerator contest in 2022 and took the Ariel chatbot to the next level. Now, in addition to "Ariel" who responds to user's questions with information kind of like a "help desk," JovenSalud users will also have "Joy," a new bot that will assist with our coaching service "¿Buscas Consejo?" (Looking for Advice?). Ariel & Joy allow TeenSmart to respond immediately to teens, as well as to keep up with increasing demand and shorten wait times for coach replies.



**Johnson & Johnson:** Pro-bono consultancy on fundraising campaigns.

TeenSmart received the strategic support of marketing managers from the offices of Johnson & Johnson in the United States and Europe. They provided a digital marketing strategy to create awareness of TeenSmart's work in 2023 in order to attract new prospective donors from those regions.





## Delta Analytics: Predictive Models

For the second year in a row, TeenSmart has received the support of five data analysis professionals through the Delta Analytics Data Service Grant. This year, they developed four predictive models for risky behaviors that will predict obesity, participation in fights, underage drinking, and alcohol abuse in JovenSalud users and offer early preventive interventions.



### Examples of our findings:

1. Age is the most important factor for effective prevention. The 10-13 year old group is vital for the development of healthy habits, protective skills and support networks.
2. Perceiving oneself as depressed (sadness sustained over time) is a common factor in 4 of 6 predictive models. Therefore, proactively addressing youth who report depression could prevent/reduce the likelihood of suicide attempts, excess weight, and alcohol use/abuse.
3. Drug use is another common factor, with harmful effects on brain development and decision-making.
4. Alcohol, drug and/or tobacco use at an early age, added to violence, predicts sexual abuse and early sexual activity.





# LOOKING FORWARD



# WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

TeenSmart's vision to scale and expand systematically through Central America, Mexico, and beyond has involved a transition and significant improvements in the areas of technology, promotion, delivery of services, and operations.

In 2022, TeenSmart worked with a hybrid model that implied the convergence between the "good old" and the "good new"—the integration of best practices from our past and present, as well as from other organizations that our new leadership staff have worked with. All this has required listening, decision-making, leadership, flexibility, celebration of differences.

The future will be a continuation of this transition. TeenSmart will continue to strengthen its mission, impact, organizational structure and best practices; consolidate a staff of leaders who are experts in their fields; and develop technologies that will attract, reach, and retain many more new youth.

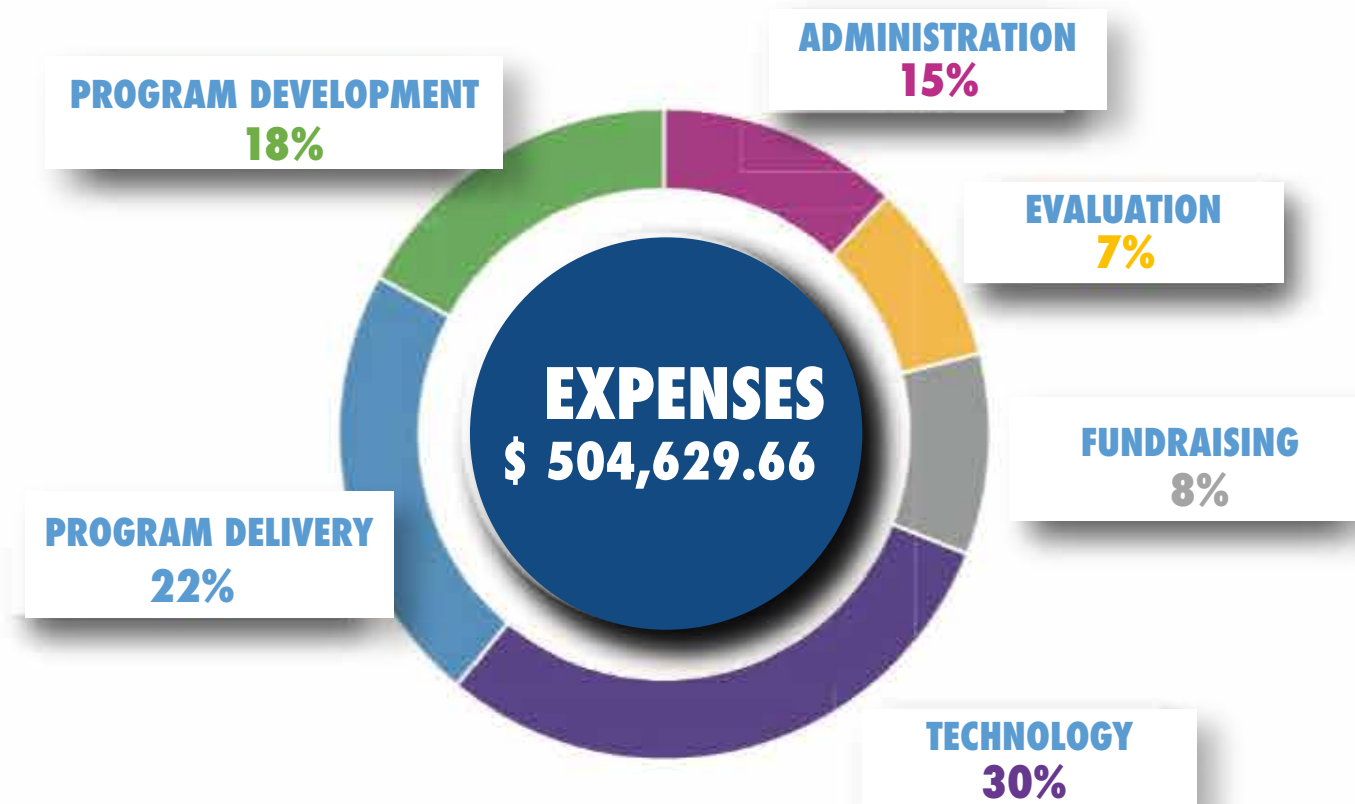
## 2023-2025 strategic priorities are:

- Shift to mobile-first to ensure that teens can find us easily
- Include gamification as a methodology for impact

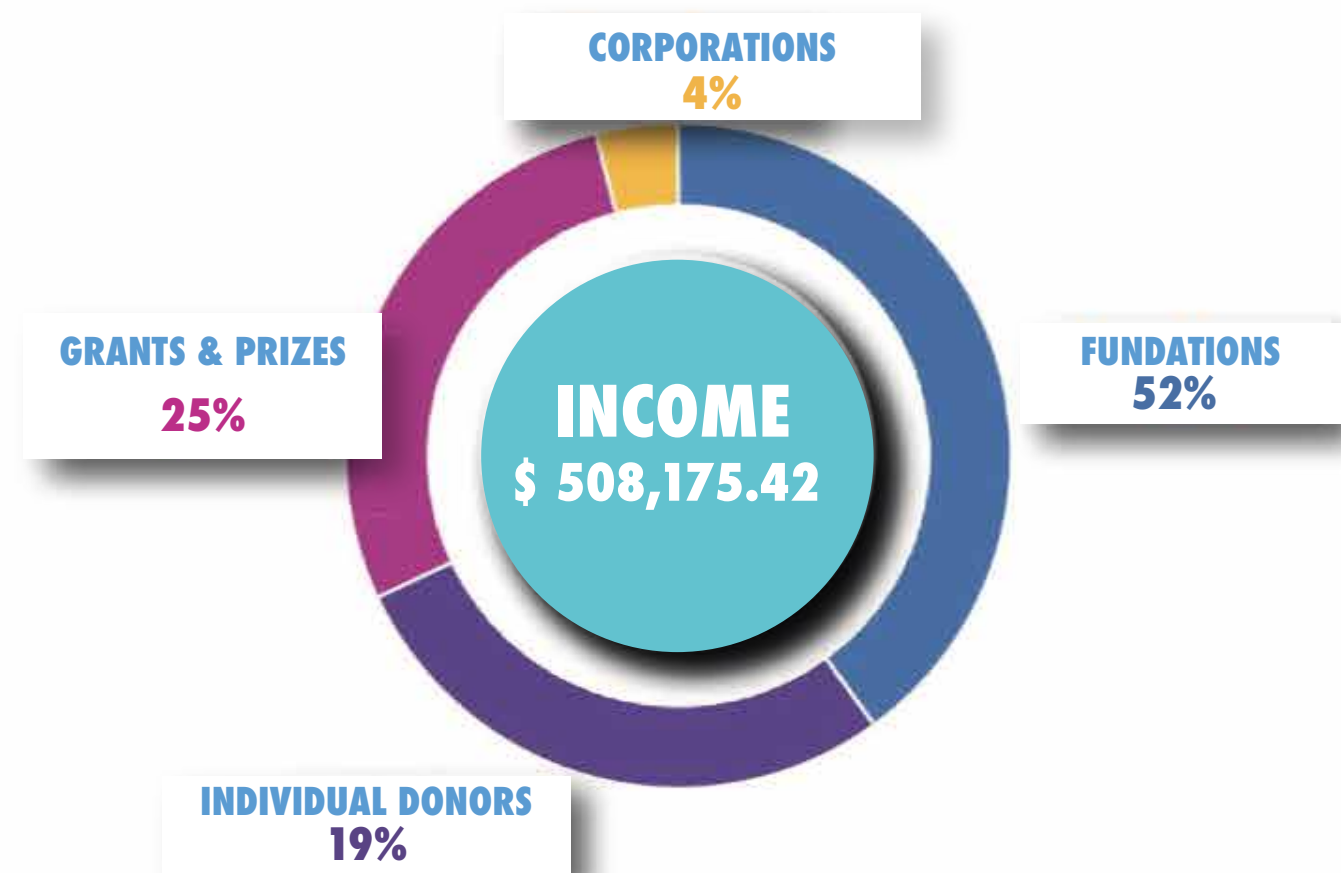
- Continue including AI Technology
- Develop capacity for sustained, large-scale promotion in fundraising and alliance-building
- Reimagine the role of implementing partners (schools & NGOs)
- Organize operations for sustained growth by making strategic investments in people and systems



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Technology & Program Delivery (including Promotion & Marketing) are the main focus of the Lift Campaign. Admin expenses represent only 15% of expenses according to best practices for NGOs.



TeenSmart is now a \$500,000 budget organization. Thanks to the Fundraising Lift Strategy 2020-2025, annual operative income increased 43% when compared to 2020.



# YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

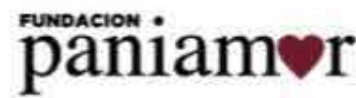
This is how your future support could help us LIFT:

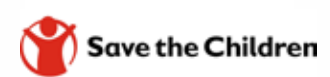
- Consider a **legacy gift**; put TeenSmart in your will. **You will be receiving more news about this option soon!**
- **Double** your current gift.
- Make your donation a **monthly gift**.
- Give an **in-kind donation** such as event space, food, T-shirts, or tablets.
- **Spread the word.** Get your 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** for more information.



# OUR PARTNERS

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







# --- BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Christian Thwaites, **Vice President**

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Maria Sara Roberts

Randolf Kissling





# OUR STAFF

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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