

LEAD-UP INTERNATIONAL

Annual Report 2023

*TRANSFORMING LIVES,
TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES*



LEADUP
INTERNATIONAL

lead-upinternational.org



A LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER

Dear Friends of Lead-Up,

It is an honour and a pleasure to reach out to you today and thank you for your continued support and interest in Lead-Up International.

I am humbled and proud to share with you this annual report that our Head of Programmes and Operations, Mariana Samayoa has meticulously compiled.

The idea for Lead-Up was born in 2012. Monty Roberts gave me the green light to apply his methods to a pilot program, with the aim of improving working equine welfare through shifts in attitude and behaviour towards non-violence, of the handlers and owners. The results were phenomenal and encouraged us to go on. That was more than ten years ago. A few years of research and trial and error, and Lead-Up began to emerge as the successful program that it is today.

I am indebted to our Lead-Up team, board and our extended community for all the hard work and support in creating this incredible, innovative and groundbreaking approach to violence prevention. I am particularly grateful to Mariana Samayoa, who has worked so diligently in further formalizing the program; organizing and structuring all aspects to such a high standard, taking Lead-Up to another level.

And we are indebted to you, our Lead-Up supporters and friends, who have understood the significance of the work that we do. Violence reduction can be a sensitive issue, especially in countries like Guatemala where emotional wounds are still painful from the level of violence, so normalized in its society. To tackle violence prevention requires a certain amount of introspection and reflection and is something that many find uncomfortable and unsettling. We are truly grateful to people like you for appreciating the need for programs like Lead-Up and for understanding our approach, which focuses on connection with our true selves, reminding ourselves that we are worthy and that change comes from within. Thank you for believing in us and for supporting the youth whose lives are being transformed through Lead-Up.

Finally, I'd like to celebrate the horses, who really are the teachers in Lead-Up. They provide that essential feedback to the youth and help them to connect with their inner peace and inner strength and motivate them to create change in their lives and in the lives of those around them.

Please take a few minutes to read this beautiful report and learn more about Lead-Up's achievements in 2023, and our aspirations for the months and years ahead. I invite you to join us in our mission by sharing this report with your network and spreading awareness about Lead-Up's impactful initiatives.

With gratitude,

Katie Cunningham
Founder and CEO





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VISION

A WORLD WHERE **YOUTH** MAKE A
TRANSFORMATIVE
IMPACT THROUGH
PEACEFUL LEADERSHIP AND
NON-VIOLENCE.





MISSION

BRIDGING DIVIDES AND
BREAKING CYCLES OF VIOLENCE
AND POVERTY, THROUGH PROGRAMS
**FOR YOUTH IN PEACEFUL
LEADERSHIP WITH HORSES** AND
EMPOWERMENT IN ORDER
TO DRIVE **SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.**



YEARS OF GROWTH

HIGHLIGHTS 2023

Since Lead-Up began doing workshops in 2015 we have reached over **670 youths in 10 different countries** through **66 workshops**.

IN 2023 ALONE WE HAVE...

Successfully completed our **first UN sponsored grant project**.

Reached **76 young people in Guatemala**.

Worked directly with **over 60 family and community members in Guatemala**, to increase understanding, cooperation and reconciliation.

Offered over **120 individual psychosocial support sessions** to young people and their families

Provided mentoring and funding for the development of **2 youth-led community projects** in Guatemala.

Carried out **11 Discovering Non-Violence workshops** in 4 countries across 4 continents with over a **110 young people**.

Expanded our international partnerships to ensure sustainability and growth with **2 new partnerships in the UK** and **2 new partnerships in South Africa**.

YEARS OF GROWTH

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

During 2023 in Guatemala, **youth self-described the impact of our programs in their lives...**

100%
REPORTED
IMPROVEMENT
IN THEIR
INTERPERSONAL
SKILLS

94%
SELF-REPORTED
THE REDUCTION
OF THE USE OF
VIOLENCE AS A
RESPONSE
TO CONFLICT

97%
IMPROVED
THEIR
SKILLS FOR
EMOTIONAL
SELF-REGULATION

100%
DEVELOPED
PEACEFUL
LEADERSHIP
SKILLS

97%
SELF-REPORT
APPLYING
PEACEFUL
LEADERSHIP
SKILLS IN THEIR
EVERYDAY LIFE



***“THE PEACEFUL LEADERSHIP
I LEARNT AT LEAD-UP
HASN'T JUST HELPED ME BUT MY
COMMUNITY TOO... IT MEANS THAT
WE ALL LOOK FOR THE
GOOD IN EACH OTHER
SO WE CAN WORK TOGETHER”.***

Guillermo, Lead-Up Champion
Guatemala

PROGRAMMING

PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES

Lead-Up International's approaches, programs and projects are focused on **Positive Youth Development** and the interruption, through formative experiences, of patterns of violence and poverty. With a **Youth-led Approach** rooted in Community Empowerment, Capacity Building and Mentorship, Lead-Up seeks to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of our actions.

Our youth led-approach prioritizes the youths' needs, interests, and perspectives which is achieved through their active involvement in planning, decision-making and efforts to improve our programs, initiatives and activities.



Lead-Up utilizes a **trauma informed approach** that realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in beneficiaries, families, staff and others; resists re-traumatization and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices and settings.

All Lead-Up programs in Guatemala **are supported by a certified psychologist** and all activities carried out by the organization are based on the principles of trauma informed approach, namely:

- **Security.**
- **Trustworthiness and transparency.**
- **Peer support.**
- **Collaboration and mutuality.**
- **Empowerment, voice and choice.**
- **Cultural, historical and gender issues.**

OUR PROGRAMS

Three Evolving Programs Shaped by Youth

This year we continued to fine tune our programs with the feedback of our young participants.



Discovering Non-Violence

Based on the feedback of participating youth, this year we incorporated an introductory meeting before the discovering non-violence workshops in Guatemala, where youth met other participants, received information about the workshop and carried out the pre-workshop questionnaires.

Internationally, based on the needs of working and studying youth we adapted the workshop schedule to be able to carry out a one day version of our 2-day workshop and ensure youth participation and continuity. Similarly we have developed a series of follow-up activities and actions to reinforce the learnings and continue to support the youth in countries where our full programs are not yet available.

Embodying Peaceful Leadership

Based on youth feedback we have reinforced the selection, follow-up and support process for youth during their supervised internships, and we have adapted the M&E questionnaires to reduce the time spent on evaluations.

We also implemented role-play activities to practice the learned skills before implementing them in their everyday lives and in their internships.

Being the Change

We have begun designing a pilot program for Being the Change that diversifies our support and community engagement and incorporates the youths' need for diverse and equitable opportunities as well as more structured technical and logistic support for youth-led project and activities.

OUR PROGRAMS

The Champions Program -GUATEMALA-

The Champions' Program is an ongoing mentoring initiative in Guatemala that provides youth with follow-up **support**, access to **psychosocial services, mentorship**, and development **workshops**. It fosters exchange and mentorship among youths, enabling them to teach and support one another as they grow through **peer-to-peer learning**.



OUR PROGRAMS

The Champions Program -GUATEMALA-

This program supports the positive development of the young people by helping them:

- **Form strong relationships and meaningful connections.**
- **Experience a sense of belonging.**
- **Support one-another.**
- **Cultivate a positive self-image and self-esteem.**
- **Develop healthy coping skills to deal with hardships.**
- **Feel hope that things can change and improve.**



*"SOME SPIRITS DON'T NEED TO SPEAK
THE SAME LANGUAGE
OR USE THE SAME KIND OF VESSEL TO
COMMUNICATE. HORSES TAUGHT
ME HOW TO BE MORE CONFIDENT WITH WHAT I
WANT, AND TO BE MORE DIRECT WITHOUT
CAUSING HARM".*

Lindokuhle Ntshaba, Participant in
Lead-Up South Africa



IMPACT STORY

OLIVER ESAÚ
VICENTE MORALES
Guatemala



Oliver experienced a childhood marked by constant changes and a sense of instability. The ups and downs of his parents' relationship resulted in multiple separations and reconciliations, until the day finally came when his mother decided to leave. As a result, Oliver and his sister found themselves in the care of their grandmother, who took on the responsibility of looking after their welfare. He now recognizes that this was one of the hardest things he had to face, to grow up without the constant presence of his parents.

IMPACT STORY



The unconditional support of his grandmother was one of the pillars that helped him grow up, he also remembers with affection the presence and example of his uncles and the excitement of seeing his father on weekends.

After a few years, Oliver made the decision to move in with his father. Although their relationship was difficult at first, everything began to change when he participated in the Lead-Up program for the first time in 2017. During that experience, Oliver formed a special bond with a horse named Bolero, who seemed to understand and reciprocate his affection by resting his head on his shoulder. That moment of deep connection allowed Oliver to let loose, express his emotions and share without fear of judgment. From that experience, his confidence to communicate and express himself with his father was strengthened, which, in turn, helped to improve their relationship.

IMPACT STORY



Oliver acknowledges that accepting the support offered to him, both in terms of psychosocial support and participation in workshops and follow-up processes, was a determining factor in his personal growth. Without his openness and willingness to change, it would have been very difficult to repair relationships in his family environment.

Last year, Oliver rejoined the Lead-Up project after a break. In this new stage, confident in the impact that Lead-Up activities can have on the lives of young people, he participated again in workshops such as "Discovering Non-violence", in the vocational program, in the monthly activities of the champions and finally in a community activity. Among all the valuable experiences he has had, he highlights the opportunity to meet other young people with diverse stories, which has given him new perspectives, motivation and inspiration.

IMPACT STORY

The tools and learnings he has acquired through his participation in Lead-Up, such as conscious breathing, the use of the emotional thermometer, emotional management and self-awareness about the areas he needs to improve, have been fundamental in his daily life. These tools have not only positively impacted his relationship with his family, but have also influenced his studies and professional performance.

For Oliver, being a Lead-Up champion means applying all these learnings in his daily life, internalizing the changes, practicing them and sharing them with others to become the change he wants to see in the world.



FINANCIALS

2023 Financial Overview



\$ 117,119

Total Revenue



\$ 14,597

Individual Donations



\$ 101,192

Foundations



\$ 1,330

Others and interest



\$ 141,035

Total Expenses



\$ 108,943

Management & Programs operations



\$ 1,099

Fundraising & Communications



\$ 30,994

Direct programs expenses

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Cash and equivalent	\$61,876
Account receivable	\$ 3,079
Total current assets	\$64,955
Fixed assets	\$ 7,921
Total assets	\$72,876

LIABILITIES AND FUNDS

Account payables	\$ 1,950
Funds	
With donor restrictions	\$30,618
Without donor restrictions	\$40,308
Total funds	\$70,926
Total liabilities and funds	\$72,876

PARTNERSHIPS

LA AZOTEA (GUATEMALA)

CLUB ECUESTRE LA RONDA (GUATEMALA)

EDUCATION FOR THE CHILDREN (GUATEMALA)

LOS PATOJOS (GUATEMALA)

EBONY HORSE CLUB (UK)

CAVALIER CENTRE (UK)

THE BRITISH HORSE SOCIETY (UK)

ECOSYSTEM COLDHARBOUR (UK)

SARDA CAPE TOWN (SOUTH AFRICA)

AMY FOUNDATION (SOUTH AFRICA)

LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATORS

TEAM

Catherine Cunningham
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mariana Samayoa Martinez
HEAD OF PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS

Naomi Howgate
HEAD OF PHILANTHROPY AND DEVELOPMENT

Gloria Velaso
COUNTRY COORDINATOR, GUATEMALA

Paola Faulkner
COUNTRY TECHNICIAN, GUATEMALA

Marivel Corazón
ADMINISTRATIVE COLLABORATOR, GUATEMALA

Camilo Mendoza
COMMUNICATIONS COLLABORATOR, GUATEMALA

Gustavo Illescas
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COLLABORATOR,
GUATEMALA

INTERNATIONAL BOARD

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Jerry Sparby
DIRECTOR





**“LEAD-UP,
THROUGH
WORKING
WITH THE
HORSES HAS
ALLOWED ME TO
BECOME MORE
SELF-AWARE
AND FURTHER
ENCOURAGE
ME TO CONTINUE
TO BE A
PEACEFUL
LEADER
DESPITE THE
CONFLICT
THAT EXISTS
AROUND ME.”**

Jhemar Jonas, Lead-Up
UK Youth Ambassador

This document is a joint publication between Asociación Equipo de Apoyo (Lead-Up Guatemala) and Lead-Up International.

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Asociación Equipo de Apoyo (Lead-Up Guatemala) is a Guatemalan registered non-profit organization that operates in Guatemala.

Lead-Up International is a US registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization that operates in the US and internationally.

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