

# Annual Report **2022**



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**IslaUrbana**  
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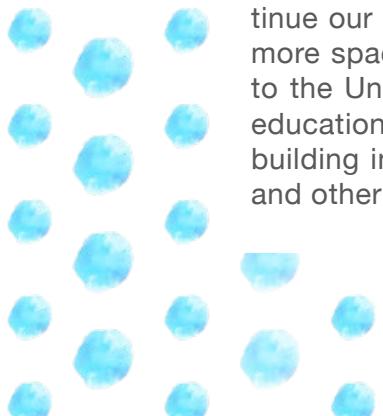


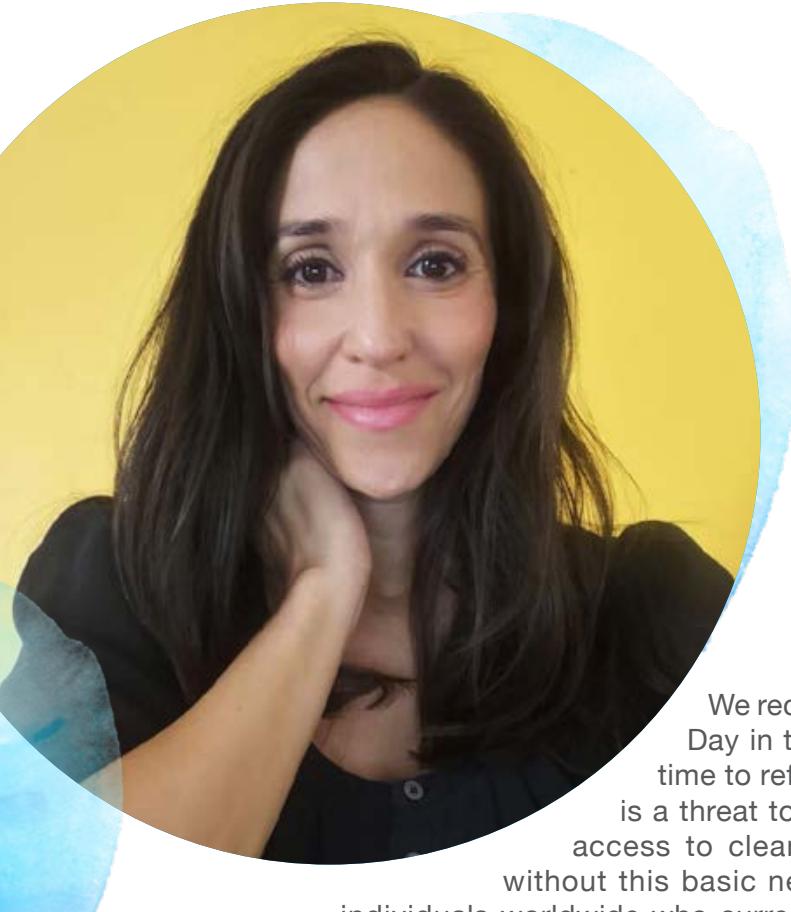


# DIRECTOR GREETING

Dear Isla Urbana USA supporter,

**2022 WAS QUITE A YEAR!** First and foremost, did you notice the name change? Last summer we proudly announced this transition from Isla Urbana Foundation, founded in 2010, to Isla Urbana USA we are very excited to be able to grow our initiative. As we continue our work in representing Isla Urbana in the US, IU USA's new entity looks to reach more spaces in our northern neighbor and expand the mission of Isla Urbana in Mexico to the United States —linking vital work in Mexico with American values of service and education. We are very excited to be able to build our initiative, which includes a focus on building inspiring young US leaders through our summer program, providing internships and other opportunities to students and young adults, together under our new title.





We recently celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the US and on that day we took some time to reflect on his words: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere". As we all know, access to clean water is a human right and living without this basic need is an injustice to the 771 million individuals worldwide who currently find it out of reach. In these next pages, you will see communities that have been transformed through access to clean water; in large part due to the support from donors and volunteers such as yourself who in essence have become advocates for their right to water.

With that in mind, IU USA will continue to focus our passion for water accessibility by building bridges and relentlessly supporting the important work that is being done in Mexico. Our hope is that this report not only updates you but also shows the strong connection between the importance of the work and the value of your support.

**Sincerely,**

*Sol Garcia*

Director Isla Urbana USA

# OPENING STATEMENT/ BREAKDOWN

This year, Isla Urbana USA raised

**\$195,222 USD**

for projects that will support the efforts  
of Isla Urbana in 2023

2022 accomplishments include:

**5**

systems installed in  
schools or community  
centers

**39**

residential systems  
installed

**1,723**

people involved in  
programs activities

**20**

community activities

**901**

people directly impacted  
by the programs

# DETAILS on SYSTEMS



**8 Residential systems  
were installed in Tlamacazapa, Guerrero.**

This is an indigenous population of artisans who are suffering from extreme water scarcity and water contaminated by arsenic and other toxins. 275 people were present in meetings or community activities. The direct beneficiaries were 40 people.



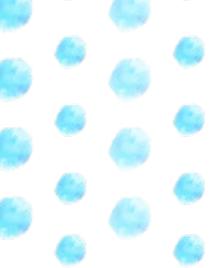
**4 Residential systems  
in San Juan Tlacotenco, Morelos and  
1 weather station in Bienstar San Juan  
Tlacotenco University,**

were installed by students from our summer program. Isla Urbana and the community of SJT have been working together to create a more autonomous and sustainable form of local water supply. This project was constructed through a process of learning, practice, implementation and evaluation. The direct beneficiaries were 16 adults and 145 students.

# 14 Residential systems installed by the Nandá jtsí (Rainwater in Mazatec) program in the municipality of San José Tengango, Oaxaca.

The Mazatec program has continued to grow this year, and more specialized members of the Isla Urbana team and collaborators have joined the efforts of the program. Isla Urbana has a team of 3 people in the sierra mazateca who focus on the monitoring of systems, as well as the installation supervision and the maintenance training of benefited families. In the past 2 years, 24 pilot systems have been installed in more than 10 communities of the municipality. 102 people were directly benefited.





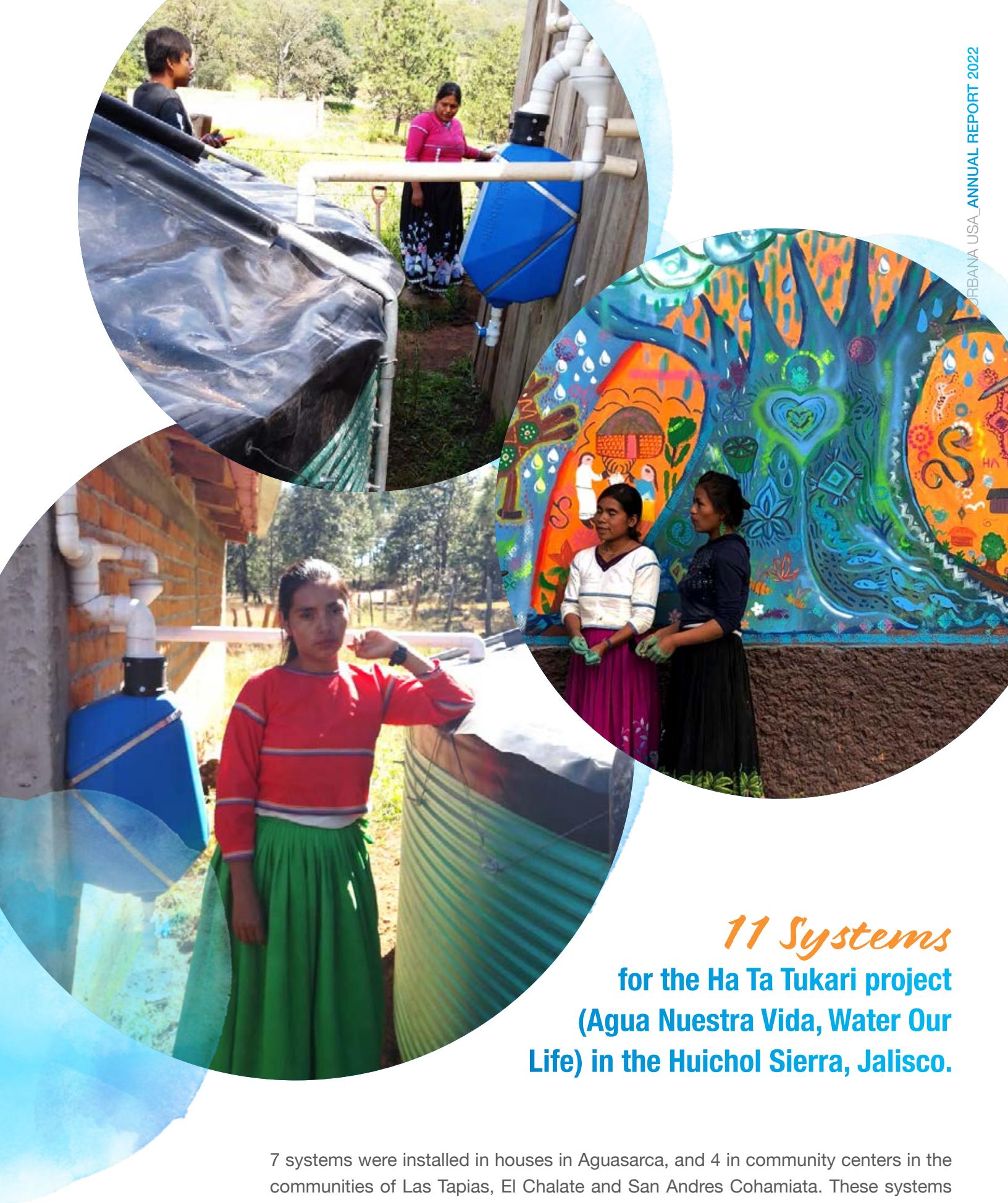
## *5 Residential systems* established in Actopan, Hidalgo. The towns of Plomosas, El Saucillo and Magdalena, in Actopan, the state of Hidalgo,

are made up of dispersed localities with a level of “high” and “very high” marginalization (CONAPO, 2013). There are families that have access to only 10 liters of water per person per day. 18 people were directly impacted.

## *1 School System* installed in Zapopan, Guadalajara

The school “Centro Educativo la Barranca” offers primary and secondary education to 360 students from low socio-economic backgrounds in a highly marginalized and vulnerable area in Zapopan, Jalisco. As well as providing ample clean water to the school, the system also acts as an excellent educational tool and a visible example of practical sustainability. Students will also be using water from the rainwater harvesting system to water their garden and will therefore be able to link rainwater harvesting with many integral themes of sustainability in their classrooms.





*11 Systems*  
**for the Ha Ta Tukari project  
 (Agua Nuestra Vida, Water Our  
 Life) in the Huichol Sierra, Jalisco.**

7 systems were installed in houses in Aguasarcá, and 4 in community centers in the communities of Las Tapias, El Chalate and San Andres Cohamiata. These systems have increased access to water in this zone. More importantly, these systems directly support the preservation of the Wixárika people's culture, by making it possible to carry out their main ceremonies and make traditional drinks—which are essential to preserve their customs and culture. 362 people were impacted directly and 5 workshops took place alongside the installation of systems

*1 Residential system*  
**installed in Tehuixtitla.**

This system was installed by students on our summer program. There were more than 20 people involved, including 3 people from the beneficiary family.

# STUDENT *Summer* PROGRAM



In 2022, we had students participate from Pennsylvania, Texas and North Carolina.

This year marked the return of our in-person student summer program after two years of running the program virtually due to the pandemic. **The program focused on creating agents for change and nurturing the students on their journey to empowerment through unique first-hand experiences.** The results were incredibly rewarding. In 2022, we had students participate from Pennsylvania, Texas and North Carolina - representing three high schools and the University of Pennsylvania while also receiving chaperones from Dallas World Affairs Council and Bull City Futsal in Raleigh, Northern Carolina.

The week included a visit to the community of Tehuixtitla, Xochimilco to meet the leaders of the community and install a residential rainwater harvesting system there. The group also visited San Juan Tlacotenco, Tepoztlán, where they observed the workings of a meteorological system that they helped fund. The system, established by students of the Universidad del Bienestar, created the opportunity for university students to monitor rainfall and climate for the first time in that area.

The students also participated in eco-tourism activities that allowed them to broaden their cultural knowledge and better understand the water situation in Mexico City.

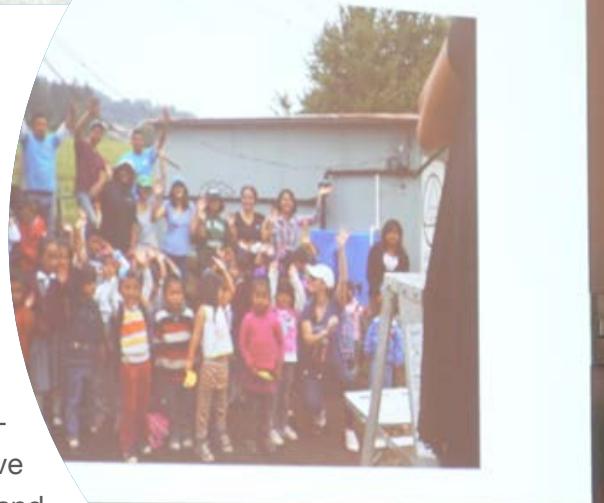


There were several activities in which the students worked in groups to develop their ideas. To close the week, students participated in a workshop designed to help them process their learning experiences so that they would return home as active changemakers in their communities. There, they had the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience with employees of Isla Urbana, as well as with other student leaders who have long been on the path of change agents. This group was one of the most motivated we have ever had, and the goal of them returning home happy, better equipped for the future and filled with more experience was undoubtedly fulfilled.

During their time with us, **the students learned more about the work that Isla Urbana does, including work done with schools around the country that face water scarcity. With this knowledge, students worked to fundraise a rainwater harvesting system that would be installed in a school through the Rain Schools program.**

2022's Summer Program showed us that coordination has now reached a point where we can accept larger groups of students. With that, we have decided to grow the program and extend it from 5 to 7 days by 2023! **Contact us if you are interested at [requests@islaurbana.org](mailto:requests@islaurbana.org)**

# STUDENT CHAPTERS



We now have 4 student chapters! All chapters were started by students who attended the 2022 summer program and decided to return to their own communities and start Isla Urbana chapters there! We have two new high school chapters, one in Dallas, Texas and another in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. These chapters have joined the existing ones at the University of Pennsylvania (UPENN) and the University of Maryland (UMD). **We are really excited to see, little by little, more students joining in to form Isla Urbana chapters in the US; building the objective of increasing awareness, supporting Isla Urbana's work, and discovering new routes for making a difference in their own communities.**

If you are or know of a student who might be interested in joining or starting a chapter at their school or university, **please contact [requests@islaurbana.org](mailto:requests@islaurbana.org)**



## Annual Campaign, Agua Vida

The Agua Vida Campaign focused on raising funds for rural and semi-urban communities in Mexico. This year Agua Vida was made up of two face-to-face events, in California (Agua Vida LA on October 21st) and Minnesota (Agua Vida MN on November 3rd), organized using the Givebutter online platform, in the final trimester of the year. The events celebrated the importance of both water and Mexican culture, framed with a Dia de Muertos theme. More than 200 people were involved behind the scenes, organizing the events and fundraising online from the US. The campaign had a huge amount of support from the guests who attended the events, from online donors, from our student community and from our sponsors. **We finished 2022 with nearly \$49,000 raised for Isla Urbana's projects in rural and semi-urban communities**, thanks to the Agua Vida campaign. A [video](#) was made especially for these fundraising events. Take a look and check out more information about events that supported our overall goal below:



## Agua Vida LA

Agua Vida LA took place on October 21st in Glendale, California. Easing back into in-person events, we were very excited to get together face-to-face and have such a great time. This was our 7th annual event, and definitely one of our funnest yet!

Approximately 75 people attended and bought tickets to participate in an auction and raffle. Each attendee enjoyed music from our DJ, M \*Flo, and ate food offered by Knockout Tacos at the spectacular Club TeGee venue located in Glendale. The night was full of good energy and also included a talk by the Isla Urbana USA director, Sol Garcia. **The event raised nearly \$15,000 USD, which was largely due to the efforts of the event's committee that began planning for it at the beginning of the year.**

We are so grateful to all attendees and donors! The support means so much to so many. We want to give a major thanks to our main financial sponsor, Compoveda Tequila, as well as our sponsor and co-organizer of the event, In Play Showroom, who has been supporting this event for the past 5 years. We also want to acknowledge sponsors Triarchy, Tabeeze and RRM Design Group for joining us on this journey.

Lastly, **we want to thank the many silent auction and raffle prize donors who gave us the added support!** Every item was a hit and added to the event. We also can't forget about our wonderful team of volunteers/event committee members who worked so hard to make this night come together.

## Agua Vida 805 Reunion

The 805-Ventura County community also gathered for a special reunion that contributed to the Agua Vida 2022 efforts just a few days after the Los Angeles event. This reunion was the first in-person gathering after its 2-year pause due to the pandemic. The group had a productive conversation about ideas for future events and heard from director, Sol Garcia, who provided updates on Isla Urbana's projects. Funds were raised at this event through the sale of artisanal clothing as well as items that were held for raffle—various prizes were given away!

# Agua Vida Minnesota

Agua Vida Minnesota took place on November 3rd with approximately 80 people in attendance! We are grateful for everyone who supported and joined us at Casey Lake Park. Attendees enjoyed amazing entertainment by Ina Yukka, a mother and son duo from Peru, a video update of the work this year as well as a talk by Isla Urbana co-founder and Isla Urbana USA Board Chair, Renata Fenton, an auction, and more.

All attendees enjoyed amazing Mexican food prepared by our Mexican and Latin group of volunteers as well as learning a few Latin moves on the dance floor. We were particularly impressed with our new Hispanic volunteer group and thankful for all their hard work in order to make the event possible. The silent auction was a great success as well, thanks to our supporters, everything was sold.

A special thanks to Premier Banks, Terry Furlong, the Mayor of North St Paul, for their constant support on every event so far and our generous funder Colleen Regan. Thanks to The Rotary Club of North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale for their attendance this year, it was great to have you! As well as each and every donor, attendee and volunteer. Thanks to all of you, we are very proud to announce we raised nearly \$20,000 towards our #AguaVida2022 end of year campaign!



We are very grateful to all of our 2022  
Agua Vida Sponsors:



# Art Event at American School Foundation

The American School Foundation A.C. Art Fair is an event organized by the school's Parent's Association with the purpose of shining light on artists in the community and raising funds for student scholarships. This year, the event was also open to artists from the school community and those close to it to get the opportunity to host an innovative art exhibition. In 2019 there was an attendance of more than 5,000 people, and after a two year hiatus, in 2022 they were once again open to the public and we were invited to participate.

Our participation included a sale of crafts and clothing made by rural communities we work with and three art workshops with muralist Ella del Bosque and the Casa Yuwi team. The workshops we hosted were completed on 3 cisterns that are now part of our rainwater harvesting systems installed in Tlamacazapa Guerrero.

We were excited to be a part of the event and to have the opportunity to meet the school community in person and share Isla Urbana's work. Seeing the children use their creativity throughout the workshops and leave their mark on the tanks as a gift to the three families in Tlamacazapa, Guerrero was extraordinary.



# MEET Our BOARD



## *Renata Fenton* Joined in 2020

Renata Fenton is passionate about Isla Urbana's mission to tackle water scarcity through rainwater harvesting because she has seen firsthand the impact access to autonomously procured clean water can have on vulnerable communities. **She is excited to continue exploring and bridging her cultural heritage from both countries and being continuously inspired by the water leaders she meets along the way.** Fenton is a cofounder and creative director at Isla Urbana in Mexico. She is an industrial designer and engineer with more than 13 years of experience working on rainwater harvesting technologies. Her interests are finding ways to innovatively apply socially and environmentally responsible design through multidisciplinary and participatory work. A self-proclaimed "design activist," her experience includes social innovation, design consulting, eco-technologies, and systems thinking, with a passion for all types of visual communication.

Renata holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial Design from The Rhode Island School of Design in the United States and a double master's degree in Innovation, Design, and Engineering from The Royal College of Art and Imperial College in the UK. When possible, Renata enjoys building things and seeking ways to be closer to nature.



## *Elisa Sabatini Joined in 2020*

For Elisa Sabatini it is an honor to serve on the inaugural board of Isla Urbana USA. **She believes the intelligent design of the rainwater collection systems of Isla Urbana can support many more families, schools and communities because they serve to alleviate poverty, mitigate water scarcity and address aspects of climate change.** Elisa Sabatini is President of Via International ([www.viainternational.org](http://www.viainternational.org)). Elisa has been involved for many years in areas of sustainable development including family health, nutrition, micro-finance, sustainable agriculture, community leadership education and immersive education. She is motivated by activities that promote human development, self-reliance and self-determination. Elisa has lived in Spain, Guatemala, and Mexico. In the United States she has resided in Colorado, Hawaii and California. She hails from the mountains of Colorado and has a home in Empire. Elisa has a Lagotto Romagnolo named Cienna who looks for truffles.



## Jaime Croteau Joined in 2022

Jaime Croteau is excited to bring her professional skills and experience to the mission of providing access to water for all in Mexico. She oversees development, communications, community engagement, grant administration and monitoring, evaluation and learning as the Vice President of Community Impact at the San Jose Conservation Corps ([www.sjcccs.org](http://www.sjcccs.org)), an environmental workforce development nonprofit in Silicon Valley. She holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from Cornell University, where she focused in Nonprofit Management. While she's always been passionate about environmental justice, Jaime developed an interest in community management of water in graduate school and found Isla Urbana when searching for volunteer opportunities in Mexico City. **After working in rainwater harvesting in Mexico, she saw the impact and the need for Isla's work and remained a supporter ever since.** In her free time, Jaime loves adventuring in the outdoors, exploring new places, enjoying craft beer and tacos with her husband and cuddling on the couch with her dog.

# INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



This year our internship program hosted 3 young people who completed a year with us. **Jan from Belgium, Jesse and Samira.** Samira continued on to be a student ambassador for the University of Michigan, where she is studying to be a doctor.

**Two interns joined us in the Autumn, Genevieve from the UK and Barritt from Ashland, Oregon.** In late 2022 they started to assist us with translating materials, grants, social media, supporting student volunteers and raising funds. They will continue this work and more in early 2023!

## Welcome!

### *Gen Glaister*

“I moved to Mexico City from London where I have a background in working with men caught up in the prison system. Whilst here I am writing a non-fiction book about prisons in the UK, but it was really important for me to do something which proactively supports Mexico too. I supported Isla Urbana with their Agua Vida 2022 fundraising campaign, have been carrying out grant research, editing written pieces and translations. It has been so interesting for me to learn more about the environmental effects of global water issues and **I have found integrity and ethicality to be at the core of Isla Urbana, as they always put the people and the communities they support first.**”

### *Barritt Reynolds*

“My name is Barritt Reynolds and I am a recent college graduate from Ashland OR, USA. After obtaining a degree in International Relations and Spanish this past summer, I decided to move to Mexico City in order to learn more about the non-profit sector there, improve my Spanish skills, and explore the country. My past experience with Social Media management, volunteer work with Rotary International, and my passion for environmental justice brought me to intern at Isla Urbana. At Isla, I work mainly on social media, communications and fundraising. **I am so excited to be working together with such an amazing group of passionate and cause-driven people** and I can’t wait to continue growing and learning with Isla Urbana!”

# a SPECIAL THANKS

## You are all part of the Isla Urbana USA community

We hope that this report has given you a better picture of the important work that's taking place in Mexico and the role that you are playing in it. In closing, we'd like to take a moment to highlight two special supporters:

Sip Tequila first contacted us in 2018 with the intention of assigning a worthy cause to receive a percentage of sales from their brand, Compoveda Tequila. **Today, for every bottle of Compoveda Tequila purchased at SipTequila.com, they donate 3% of their net sales to Isla Urbana.** This partnership has allowed us to install rainwater harvesting systems in schools and homes in urban and rural zones over the past 5 years. It's a partnership that is making significant strides and one that excites us in achieving key implementations of projects taking place in 2023. We are deeply grateful and hopeful as we look to a future with partnerships such as theirs.

We first met **Samira Mehta** in 2016, when she participated in the very first Summer Program as a High School student and then returned to participate an additional year before graduating. **She then went on to college where she started the first Isla Urbana chapter at a University, "Isla Urbana UPENN".** After graduating from UPENN, Samira took a leap and spent a year with us in Mexico City as an intern. During her time, she supported student volunteer efforts, co-coordinated the summer program and liaised between us and a partner nonprofit which she also volunteered for. After her year, she went on to medical school at UMich where she continues to represent Isla Urbana as an ambassador. **She hopes to someday return to Mexico to work with us as a future doctor!** She is a shining example of why investing in student leaders is important to us. We've had the honor of witnessing her growth over the years, while also playing a role in cultivating her journey. We couldn't be more proud of her!

**Every day individuals who come from different walks of life help fuel our work and remind us that no action is too small in this fight for access to clean water.** As we witness our community grow, we take note that each community member, donor, volunteer and supporter helped pave the way for more to be accomplished. You are all part of the Isla Urbana USA community. To the great things that took place in 2022, and to the future that's unfolding in 2023.

In gratitude,

*Isla Urbana Team*



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