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BIANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

International Safe Shelter

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LEADERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

Board of Directors

Patricia Gross, President

Nevin Kohler, Secretary

Katharine Perez-Lockett, Treasurer and Bi-Lingual Cultural Liaison

Karen Rodriguez, Bilingual Cultural Liaison and Social Media Officer

Ronisha Harvey, Technology and Website Officer

Associate: Laura Luce

Shelter Partners

Centro de Protección Mujer a Mujer

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México

Legion Honduras

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Jamaica Baptist Women's Federation

Kingston, Jamaica

Compassion for the Family

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

MISSION AND VISION

Our Mission

International Safe Shelter Foundation (ISSF) was founded in 2012 as a tax-exempt organization. We empower Latin American shelters that serve abused women to end domestic violence and link them with United States-based resources.

Our Vision

Shelters will be fully sustainable and linked with organizations in the United States.

OUR PROJECTS AND IMPACT

Latin America has the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world. This year, the call to stop domestic violence in Latin America is louder than ever. The Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Region is home to 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide in the world. To date, nearly 30 countries in the region have enacted laws against domestic violence or have characterized the violence as a crime. Surveys from various countries, however, indicate that an estimated 10 percent to 50 percent of women report being physically assaulted by their male partners.

This violence exacts a heavy toll. In Honduras, a woman has been killed every 36. In 2022, 297 women in Honduras were victims of femicide, and the National Emergency System registered 38,332 reports of domestic violence and 59,147 reports of intimate partner violence. In Mexico, at least 939 women were victims of femicide last year. A July 2022 news report revealed that there had almost been a 100 percent increase in the number of Jamaicans who reported experiencing domestic violence over the last five years (increasing from 4000 women to 8000). Over 10 women die a day as a result of femicide, a rate that has increased 137 percent since 2015—four times that of other homicides. Moreover, Gender-based violence remains pervasive in Jamaica, with four in ten women experiencing some form of intimate partner violence.

2022-2023 Highlights

Legion Honduras: Legion Honduras combined services with several medical providers and additional donors in their community to expand dental services to domestic violence victims. ISSF was able to provide grant funding to provide 78 women and children in Honduras with much-needed dental repairs. In addition to the dental program, ISSF also supported Legion Honduras through online training sessions, including a trauma-informed care session for children. ISSF brought in an outside trainer/speaker for the session and looks forward to continuing to support shelters like Legion Honduras with training needs by connecting them with appropriate instructors and resources.

Jamaica Women Baptists Federation: JWBF recently purchased the building to launch their new domestic violence shelter, but there are some remaining repairs before they can open the shelter. First on their list was to improve the overall security around the shelter with improved lighting. As a result, ISSF provided the first grant funding for the shelter to improve its security system, lighting, and electrical panels.

Centro De Protección Mujer a Muer: In 2022-2023, ISSF supported Centro De Protección with continued programming support. However, we were also notified that the shelter building was in deep need of repair. The initial request was for emergency repairs in both the bathroom and the kitchen of the shelter. Prior to the shelter transition, ISSF met with the director and managers of the shelter in El Paso, Texas, to provide some much-needed hygiene supplies, including shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothpaste (child and adult), toothbrushes (child and adult), diapers, sanitary napkins, bras and underwear, soap, 2 large professional grade wall fans, and 2 handheld fans. At the time of the visit, ISSF was notified that additional repairs were so significant at the end of 2023 that the shelter needed to be vacated until a later date. Centro de Protección did maintain the property and, in the meantime, rented out a smaller apartment home where they could continue to house at least 2 families at one time.

ISSF has been working with Centro de Protección Mujer a Mujer to support them during this time of transition.

Looking Ahead

In 2024-2025, We will continue to expand support to all 4 shelters, providing grants for both programmatic and construction needs. Centro de Protección plans to finalize the repairs to the Previous shelter by the end of 2025 so they can expand their support to a greater number of families. They are also continuing to support additional mountain shelters in Copper Canyon, Mexico. ISSF is currently exploring how best to support both shelters and the unique needs at each location, as well as expand support for transitional services once women leave the shelters.

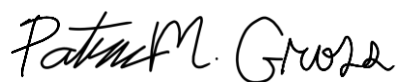
JBWF will complete a soft opening of their shelter in October 2024 for two women in need of emergency domestic violence shelter assistance. In early spring of 2025, JBWF will finalize the remaining repairs and open the shelter to up to 8 women and their families. ISSF has been working with them to determine what their programmatic and training needs will be after the shelter opens in the spring, but the priority will be to ensure the final stage of construction and repairs.

Legion Honduras has continued to collaborate with both local and international partners, such as ISSF, on their dental outreach program for survivors of domestic violence. They have also continued to expand their shelters and services and have started the construction of a new shelter in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. ISSF has funded the initial stage of this project and will continue to monitor how best to support it as the construction is completed and their training and programmatic needs expand.

Finally, ISSF has been collaborating with Compassion for the Family on how best to support their shelter in the South of Mexico. ISSF is hoping to collaborate with Compassion for the Family on a Give Back Service Program in April/May of 2025, where we will be helping to host a group of volunteers to visit the shelter and provide training services to the staff while learning more about the ends and outs of the real-life challenges and grassroots programs they have been supporting. ISSF is also continuing discussions on other types of programs that may allow for improved collaboration and support, including virtual training, medical programs for women to access care, or additional services.

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of our donors. We will continue to support women and children affected by domestic violence in Latin America in 2022 and beyond.

Sincerely,



Patricia Gross, MPH, MSW

President of International Safe Shelter Foundation

PROGRESS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2021, we created a one-year strategic plan. As a part of the bi-annual review, ISSF wanted to share progress in the first year of the Strategic Plan. The overall goal of the strategic plan is to increase the organizational visibility, presence, outreach, and follow-up by April 2022.

Project Output 1

Improve quarterly communications with partner shelters and potential shelter partners through regular email, phone calls, and solicitation. This output addresses the need to improve our overall shelter outreach and communication. Our main objective is to support domestic violence shelters in Latin America. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, our organization has increased its virtual presence and refocused on how we need to reach current and potential shelter partners. Our activities for 2021-2022 include:

- Designating a point of contact (POC) for shelter engagement with current shelter partners and ensuring monthly follow-up with new shelters.
- Identifying our process for identifying new shelters and partnering with them.
- Checking in quarterly with new shelters to discuss shelter needs and goals.
- Establishing a formal check-in schedule with current shelter partners to gather updates and obtain updated documentation (forms, receipts, project updates, and needs assessments).
- Reviewing Donor Financial Request Fund, implementing funding plan, and following up with the director of Centro de Protección Mujer a Mujer Domestic Violence Shelter (Mujer a Mujer) to ensure all project documentation is complete.

Project Output 2

Increase donors by engaging in online fundraising events and outreach through solicitation. This output focuses on our public profile and further engagement with donors. As virtual presence becomes more relevant in 2021, ISSF has developed specific output activities to engage donors further and improve their overall connection with the shelters we serve and opportunities for engagement. Our activities for 2021-2022 include:

- Identify social media analytic tools and use them quarterly to analyze our progress.
- Identifying at least one post per week each quarter and scheduling (4-5 posts).
- Appointing a Social Media Officer.
- Updating the website and social media to inform interested donors/parties.
- Sending donors a copy of our updated strategic plan and bi-annual report by December 2021.
- Scheduling a planning meeting for the annual fundraiser and other outreach events.
- Follow up to inform donors about shelter projects, progress, and spending via social media or email.

Project Output 3

Develop and implement an outreach plan for recruitment and increased visibility. This output focuses on recruiting additional board members to support the above objectives better. The ISSF team has always maintained a small group of board members and a small organization overhead. However, ISSF has reevaluated our strategic objectives, and the board needs to increase the number of members to meet the above goals and objectives. The overall goal of this objective will be to incrementally increase the number of board members to a total of between 8-10, with a strategic mix of associate members and officers. New officer positions will include a Social Media/Digital Marketing officer, IT manager, (Spanish) Bilingual Cultural Liaison, and Community Outreach Officer. Other positions will be considered as needed. To fulfill this output, the following activities have been created:

- Develop the message we want to share via email, Facebook, and in-person conversations with potential board members.
- Develop a recruitment calendar.
- Develop specific job descriptions (social media officer/digital marketing, community outreach, etc.).

PROGRESS TO GOALS

Output 1

In 2022, We signed on two new Shelters: Legion Honduras in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and the Jamacia Baptist Women’s Federation in Kingston, Jamaica. Legion Honduras has an active shelter in Tegucigalpa and is in the process of building another shelter. They also have an active domestic violence prevention and treatment program. The JBWF is in the process of refurbishing a new shelter and has active gender-based violence prevention programming in Kingston. We have been meeting them on a quarterly basis with Legion Honduras and periodically with the Jamaica Baptist Women’s Federation and Mujer a Mujer. In 2023, Patrica Gross, President of ISSF, completed a visit with Mujer a Mujer in El Paso to discuss shelter needs and provide donations of much-needed hygiene supplies and fans.

We have been reviewing all requests for funding as well as funding reports at each monthly ISSF board meeting and following up with each shelter as needed to ensure proper documentation on projects. Both the Jamaica Shelter and Mujer, a Mujer Centro de Proteccion, had delays in project implementation in 2022 and 2023. As a result, their ability to make new funding requests has been stalled until final reports and updates are submitted for their programs.

In 2023, ISSF signed an MOU with an additional shelter program in Mexico to provide training and support, especially related to give-back vacations, whereby ISSF could help recruit professionals to come and volunteer at the shelter. Compassion for the Family which has two shelters:

- Puerto Vallarta Shelter: The shelter averages between 18 and 24 children at any one time. Security risks prevent almost all children from attending public school. Currently, we are using a small upstairs living area as the classroom, but a much larger space is badly needed. The shelter has a very large roof that can be converted into a very usable space by constructing a perimeter wall and an open-air roof covering part of the area.
- Shelter In Tijuana: The National Network of Shelters in Mexico is urging us to open a shelter in Tijuana, Baja California. Tijuana has a population of over 1,700,000 and is one of the fastest-growing cities in the country. No shelter exists in the area, although there is a great need due to the level of domestic violence and human trafficking.

We are also continuing to recruit new board members (see more information below), and at the end of 2023, we recruited two new board members to support ISSF, Ronisha Harvey and Laura Luce. Ronisha supports our website design and management, and Laura is currently serving as an associate member to support our shelters and membership needs. Both board members are former Returned Peace Corps Volunteers with experience in Latin America and the Caribbean, and both are bi-lingual. We also experienced some turnover, as our previous Shelter Liaison, Ana, retired after completing two years of service to the board. In the meantime, Patricia Gross has been supporting the Jamaica shelter, and all of our Spanish-speaking board members have been supporting our Mexican and Honduran Shelters, with Katherine Perez-Locket taking the lead.

Output 2

Karen Rodriguez has been supporting ISSF social Media Advocacy throughout 2022-2023, and Ronisha Harvey has been supporting ISSF in updating our website and

managing our website analytics. In 2023, ISSF, through our 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, we were able to reach over 5444 people through social media with Gender Based Violence prevention and advocacy messages and videos, which is a notable increase from previous years.

We have also been exploring the benefits of different platforms and websites for fundraising and donor management. In 2022, we used Flipcause to support our annual fundraising efforts. We were able to utilize a free trial of the platform during our fundraising and found it useful in allowing donors more options in how they donate and how we can advertise our events. In 2023, we tried a free platform called Give Butter to help advertise our online auction as well as to support the management of in-person Zumba events. We are now examining how we can potentially update our website to integrate some of the same aspects that we enjoyed about these platforms or how to better integrate these types of platforms into our overall social media and internet outreach to clients.

Output 3

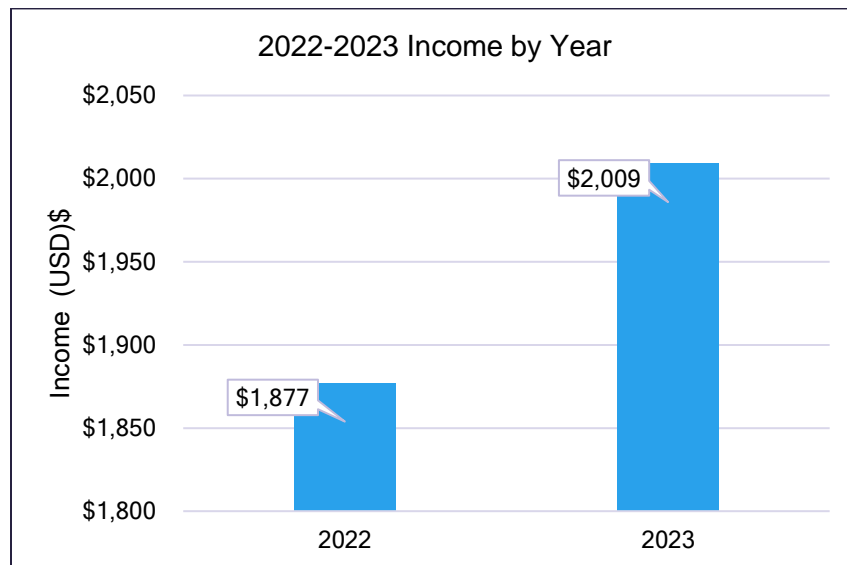
In 2022, our Bi-Lingual Cultural Liaison, Ana Pinada, left after she had completed her commitment of 2 years of service to ISSF. We are very thankful for the work she completed for us and her contributions to building relationships with our shelters, especially in Mexico and Honduras. However, by the end of 2023, ISSF was able to recruit two additional members to our team successfully: Ronisha Harvey and Laura Luce. Ronisha has recently been elected as our Technology and Website Officer. Ronisha is an RPCV from Morocco, and in addition to her wealth of technical skills related to data analysis and Information and Technology, she is also a fluent Spanish speaker. Laura Luce is currently supporting ISSF as an Associate Board Member. Laura comes to ISSF with over 20 years of experience as a Community Developer, Organizational Developer, Educator, Trainer, Facilitator, and Teacher working within international and domestic environments with elementary through higher education and adult participants. She is also an RPCV from both Guatemala and Honduras, as well as a former Master Peace Corps Trainer. It's exciting to continue our longstanding relationship with RPCVs around the globe as we expand our board and our services to women in Latin America in an effort to eliminate violence against women. In 2024-2025, As we continue to expand our services, we hope to recruit new board members to join us and support our work with the ultimate goal of reaching a minimum of 8 board members by the end of 2026.

ISSF FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2022-2023

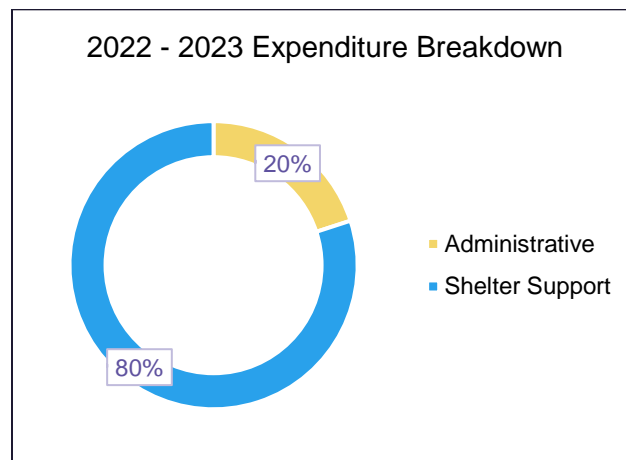
Income and Expenditures

	2022	2023
Income		
Total Donations*	\$ 1,877	\$ 2,009

**does not include in-kind donations*



	2022	2023
Expenditures		
Administrative		
website, email, technology services	\$ 346	\$ 341
Shelter Support		
Dental Program Support (Honduras)	n/a	\$ 700
Shelter Maintenance (Mexico)	n/a	\$ 330
Shelter Maintenance (Jamaica)	n/a	\$ 1,000
Total Expenditures	\$ 346	\$ 2,371



Financial Summary Notes

- Administrative costs for the 2022-2023 period remained at 20%, meeting the 30-70 goal of keeping administrative costs under 30%.
- Income expenditures do not include in-kind donations that were provided during the 2022-2023 period. For this reporting period, ISSF is not valuing in-kind donations to include officially in income reports. In-kind donations are important and contribute to the success and longevity of the organization.
- In-kind donations received during the 2022-2023 period included:
 - Spanish/English translation and interpretation services, to include reading, writing, and speaking
 - Website design and administration
 - Graphic design
 - Writing and editing services
 - Social media account maintenance
 - Financial accounting services
- Other minor monetary donations that could not be adequately accounted for were not included.
- Some minor expenses could not be adequately accounted for and were not included in expenditures.