

# La Juventud de Juárez: Construyendo una comunidad de cambio

Ciudad Juárez, México • 7-8 de abril 2011

## YOUTH:WORK

trabajando con los jóvenes de México

### *Youth of Juárez: Building a Community of Change*

*April 7-8, 2011*

*Ciudad Juárez, México*

*Hosted by:*

International Youth Foundation (IYF)

*and*

Fundación del Empresariado Chihuahuense, A.C.

*In partnership with:*

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

#### **Purpose of the event**

This two-day event will launch the Youth:Work Mexico (YWM) program in Ciudad Juárez and provide the opportunity to learn from programs that have impacted youth nationally and internationally. During the first day, YWM partners, participants, and youth from around the region will be joined by high-level officials and leaders from Mexico, the U.S., and other countries in Latin America. The event will situate the program within the international and national context of positive youth development, and offer methodologies that serve as alternatives to violence and provide mechanisms for social change.

Over the course of the two days participants from Mexican civil society, private sector and public sector agencies will join USAID, IYF and other stakeholders to:

- Analyze youth at-risk dynamics in Mexico and the Latin America and Caribbean region
- Draw lessons learned from programs which have had clear success in specific areas, such as youth employability, entrepreneurship, sports and leadership, and the arts.
- Explore methodologies that highlight the process of advocating for public policies that impact youth in education and employment.
- Create an environment of collaboration among participating organizations in order to develop a strategic plan for building a community of change in Ciudad Juárez.

#### **Overview**

In the past four years, more than 34,000 people have died due to drug-related violence in Mexico, with the largest incidence of violence taking place along the U.S./Mexico border. Too many of these victims have been young people. Gang activity is on the increase with children as young as 12 being recruited into their ranks.

The impact of this violence and criminal activity is high unemployment, inadequate educational opportunities, and an overall poor quality of life. In Ciudad Juárez alone, it is estimated that over 100,000 young people ages 12 to 19 do not attend school. Youth development programming is urgently needed to specifically target these



vulnerable youth and provide the options for education and employment they need and stop them from becoming another statistic in the escalating death toll. Providing enriched school/after-school programs and greater economic opportunities in the region will contribute to stability; reduce crime, violence and gang activity; and promote economic growth.

In the face of these challenges, many initiatives are underway across Mexico and the Latin America region to support and serve youth who seek to improve their lives. These initiatives have a common purpose: *to provide viable options for youth* – especially those who are vulnerable or at risk. YWM is one of these important initiatives and aims to provide youth with market-relevant skills, basic education, life skills, and an understanding of how to succeed in the modern world. YWM will provide a platform for raising awareness of critical challenges facing youth at risk and society at large and influencing programs and policies which serve youth.

### **About Youth:Work**

The goal of the global Youth:Work program is to improve livelihood opportunities for disadvantaged young people around the world by supporting: improved access to high-quality, integrated training to increase youth employability; greater youth employability and entrepreneurship support services and networks; and an improved enabling environment for youth employability. Youth:Work also promotes cross-project learning and networking events; targeted training and capacity building; rigorous monitoring and evaluation; support for partnership and leverage development; and other special initiatives.



### **About Youth:Work Mexico**

Youth:Work Mexico, launched in 2010 by IYF and USAID, aims to address youth challenges in Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana, some of Mexico's most violent and crime-ridden communities. Working with local civil society groups, the initiative will help create safe spaces for disadvantaged young people, strengthen and expand after-school and summer programs, and prepare Mexican youth for viable futures through self or salaried employment. The program plans to equip youth with the education, training, and life skills needed to participate actively in the workplace and decrease their vulnerability to engage in violent or criminal activity. It will also leverage private sector resources and expertise and increase community involvement to support these efforts.



### **About IYF**

The International Youth Foundation invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts for change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities. To learn more visit [www.iyfnet.org](http://www.iyfnet.org).



This program was made possible in part by the generous support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through Cooperative Agreement No. **AID-523-A-10-00002**. The views expressed by the author of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.