



## FACT SHEET

# USAID BRIDGES TO EMPLOYMENT

Salvadoran youth living in municipalities with high crime rates are two times more likely to be unemployed, a major driver of illegal immigration. Successfully integrating these youth into the workforce as fully qualified and productive citizens helps boost the economy, lower crime, and reduce illegal immigration.

USAID's Bridges to Employment Project works with job training institutions to improve the employability of youth between the ages of 16 and 29. By improving the quality and relevance of training services, youth are better prepared for the job market. USAID facilitates on-the-job technical training and soft skills development for youth in high crime municipalities, contributing to professional development and employment, entrepreneurial initiatives, and/or a continuation of their formal education.

Starting with an analysis of existing labor market demand, the project works with training institutions to prepare youth according to the needs of employers in high-growth sectors. In addition, the project addresses policy barriers and perceptions that limit at-risk youth employment opportunities and improves hiring and employment practices.

A key part of the project's strategy is to boost the training and employment opportunities available to youth in the high crime municipalities where they live, so that they do not have to

commute. Working with the National Youth Institute, municipal governments, and civil society groups, the project promotes national and municipal youth policies related to education, health, civic participation, and employment and responds to the specific needs of youth, including youth with disabilities, in each community.

As the private sector is the cornerstone for economic development in the country, USAID builds partnerships and collaboration with industry associations and companies to ensure that the technical training offered to youth matches labor market needs and facilitates internships and employment opportunities for youth.

The project works with a number of companies in modifying corporate policies and practices to make them supportive of youth and other vulnerable groups. For example, through an agreement with USAID, Rotary Club member companies in El Salvador will provide job opportunities for youth participating in the Bridges to Employment project.

Businesses can also request specific training for youth and hire them upon graduation. Another initiative provides decent employment opportunities for vulnerable youth in the IT industry and software development.

Through these alliances, USAID is working to maximize the opportunities available to vulnerable youth.

## USAID BRIDGES TO EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

TOTAL INVESTMENT: \$42.2 million

PERIOD: October 2015 – September 2020

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS: Nationwide

### PARTNERS:

- National Youth Institute (INJUVE)
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of Education
- National Commission for Micro and Small Enterprise (CONAMYPE)
- National Institute for Professional Training (INSAFORP)
- Technical and Professional Training Institutions
- Salvadoran Industry Association (ASI)
- Private sector employers, including Cisco and Microsoft
- Salvadoran Chamber of Information and Communication Technologies (CASATIC)

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