



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**MEXICO**

## SUCCESS STORY

# New dreams, new goals, new opportunities

**Livelihood opportunities for at-risk youth in Tijuana increased through USAID and YouthBuild International's innovative use of public private partnerships.**



[Photo: Jennifer Renquist]

*"The online courses helped me visualize my dreams and open doors that I thought were closed for me."*

*-Heriberto, 26.*

Heriberto is one of 120 youth supported by the USAID Global Development Alliance (GDA) "Jóvenes con Rumbo" (JcR) program conducted in partnership with Nacional Monte de Piedad, YouthBuild International (YBI) and Tecnológico de Monterrey. Heriberto was born in Camino Verde, Tijuana, a community that struggles with high rates of crime and violence that often leads to the marginalization of vulnerable youth in these communities.

His mother, a single parent, had to work full time in order to support Heriberto, who in turn had to live with an aunt for most of his life until she passed away from cancer. While growing up, Heriberto faced challenges in school and was not able to even complete primary school. Despite these set-backs, Heriberto showed a strong interest in computers and was always looking for opportunities to learn more about technology. He also enjoyed cooking at home, and dreamed about working in a restaurant.

It was his interest in technology that first brought him to the USAID-funded JcR program in 2013. Heriberto asked to be enrolled in the Intel Learning Course "Information and Communications Technology" (ICT). Along with the classes, Heriberto participated in human development and leadership activities and in an employment workshop that would help him find a job and help support his family.

Heriberto's outstanding performance in the ICT course and his interest in helping other youth from his community to learn how to use computers led Heriberto's selection to be one of the program's ICT facilitators, where he interned for over a year. With the help of his JcR tutors, he enrolled at the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA) and was able to obtain his primary and secondary education certificates.

To address the challenge of completing school and finding competitive jobs faced by a large number of Mexican youth, particularly at-risk youth and youth in high crime areas, USAID partner, YBI, signed an agreement with the private sector company Nacional Monte de Piedad and university Tecnológico de Monterrey (Tec de Monterrey), to support youth interested in learning hospitality and customer service trades to increase

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their technical skills and improve their ability to find higher paying jobs.

Nacional Monte de Piedad committed to offering scholarships to at-risk youth from the USAID JcR program. Heriberto was thrilled to learn of the possibility to link his two passions: computers and gastronomy, and was one of the first 20 youth from Tijuana to enroll in the Tec de Monterrey online courses in gastronomy and restaurant management. When Heriberto concluded the six-month course, he and his peers from JcR travelled to Monterrey to receive their Tec de Monterrey certificates (a trip paid for through private sector resources leveraged by YBI).

Thanks to this certification, Heriberto found a job as a cook in “Mamamía Pizza” in Tijuana, where he has been working for five months. Heriberto says that the online courses helped him realize his dreams and open doors that he previously thought were closed to him. Heriberto is very thankful for the Nacional Monte de Piedad scholarship, for the support of his JcR tutors, and for Tec de Monterrey’s teachers. Today, he is happy, committed to his job, and is working hard to become a restaurant manager.

In addition to Heriberto, over 120 youth have enrolled in the Tec de Monterrey courses with scholarships from Nacional Monte de Piedad, and the support of USAID’s partner, YBI.