

# (Re)Connecting Youth

*Exchanging Global Lessons*

## FRONTERAS UNIDAS PRO SALUD, A.C.

*Tijuana, Mexico*

### THE CHALLENGE

In recent years, the number of youth not in school, training, or work in Tijuana, Mexico has climbed to over 43,000, with migrants from other parts of Mexico and Central America moving to the border region in search of jobs. As a result, **nearly 30 percent of the region's youth, ages 15 to 28, are not in work or school.**

### THE INITIATIVE

Since 1992, Fronteras Unidas Pro Salud A.C. has supported the health, wellbeing, and social development of vulnerable populations in Baja California, Mexico, primarily through the provision of sexual and reproductive health services. In 2014, Pro Salud expanded its programming to support vulnerable youth in pursuing productive livelihoods. To do so, it adapted the Órale model first developed in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico by the International Youth Foundation. Órale's highly interactive, peer-to-peer methodology combines soft skills instruction, employability training, and job placement services. Pro Salud complemented Órale's employability focus with its proven health expertise, time-honored relationships with community-based organizations, and networks among potential employers.

From 2014-2017, the eight-week program was delivered to ten youth cohorts. Trainings were held four hours a day, five days a week at schools, churches, and community centers, with youth in rehabilitation centers and juvenile detention facilities also benefiting. Workshop sessions were led by young adult facilitators with backgrounds in psychology, social work, and related fields, each of which had received forty hours of training, complemented by coaching. Participants were also paired with a youth mentor, who offered one-on-one support to help them navigate obstacles. Finally, each benefited from the support of a job placement counselor, also under 30, who provided four months of follow up support to help him or her transition successfully into school or work.

### IMPACT

Over three years, more than 730 youth benefited from Pro Salud's adaptation of Órale, with 84 percent graduating from the program and 81 percent returning to school, securing employment, or both. More than 100 companies participated in the program, employing graduates as receptionists, waiters, kitchen staff, secretaries, sales clerks, machine operators, and more. Based on an external, six-month follow up study, 88 percent of employers expressed satisfaction with program graduates' performance, with 94 percent saying they would hire Órale graduates in the future.

To learn more, visit: [yfreconnectingyouth.org](http://yfreconnectingyouth.org)

“Before we had to go to businesses and talk about giving young people opportunities. Now they come to us. They tell us the youth have a different attitude.”

—**Marcela Merino**  
*Executive Director*  
Pro Salud



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