



## SUCCESS STORY

# SolucionES and Citi Bank provide opportunities for young girls

**Unity is strength: SolucionES reaches out to private sector to increase social investment in violence prevention.**



Picture: Mercedes Navarrete, Glasswing.

**"The Girls Club taught me to be a good person, to respect myself, and to know that I am capable of achieving my dreams", —**

Xiomara Rivas, 15, on the left, participates in Girls Club baking activities in San Vicente, El Salvador.

Xiomara Guadalupe Rivas, 15, does not hesitate when saying: "I'm happy because of the Girls Club." Xiomara lives just outside of San Vicente, a major city east of San Salvador, in a community where the local school only goes up to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. When she graduated, she wished to continue with her studies, but her parents decided she should stay home.

Unfortunately, her case isn't the only one. According to the Salvadoran Ministry of Education, almost 74,000 Salvadoran boys and girls abandoned school in 2013. 70,000 of those did not reach junior high.

Providing opportunities for young girls like Xiomara is part of the work of SolucionES, a public-private partnership between USAID and five major Salvadoran NGOs, who teamed up to work on crime and violence prevention under the Partnership for Growth presidential initiative.

As a member of SolucionES, Glasswing International has developed opportunities for business leaders to engage in innovative programs that create opportunities for youth. Citi Bank is one of the leading companies partnering with SolucionES to support girls like Xiomara. The bank sponsors Girls Clubs for 300 girls in 16 urban and rural communities.

The Girls Clubs strengthen self-esteem of young girls, between the ages of 12 and 18, most of them with little formal education and many who dropped out of school. The girls learn about sexual education and gender equality, while also acquiring skills about financial administration and entrepreneurship. They are taught how to bake and make jewelry, some of the technical skills that can help their family economy. "The Girls Club helped me realize that I can achieve my dreams," emphasizes Xiomara.

Because of the alliance with SolucionES, Citi Bank has become an agent of change by giving young girls the opportunity to set new goals and help them reach them. These young girls have found job opportunities, livelihood skills, and, as Xiomara explains, happiness and hope.

### Telling Our Story

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