



# TWC Update

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## Forever off the Streets

For children who work on the streets, the future is grim. Their lives are punctuated by violence, deprivation and insecurity. Many of them come from homes full of abuse. They grow up too fast. Their beginnings of poverty, malnutrition and trauma, lead to dropping out of school and repeating the cycles of violence and deprivation that began their lives. Sadly, their own children's lives become carbon copies of their own. Most of these children live in the slums surrounding Puebla. For Laura Ruiz (*pictured below*), life was characterized by uncertainty and fear. Her father was an alcoholic who squandered their family's income. Her mother was emotionally withdrawn and hyper-critical. At age 16, she and her older sister worked long hours selling trinkets at traffic lights. Her two younger brothers washed windshields for money. Her two younger sisters played in the nearby alleys and vacant lots. None of the children were in school.

JUCONI staff first met Laura and her sister while they were working, but it was not easy to establish a relationship. The girls were distrustful, as their hard lives had taught them only disappointment and betrayal. JUCONI educators built a friendship with them through filling commitments and, in time, reached out to the rest of the family. The eight family members lived in a one-room shack. Laura's father, who had never attended school, was often out of work. A bitter and degraded man, he drowned his insecurities in alcohol,



returned home drunk and inflicted violence on the family. Laura's mother was emotionally cold. She spent most of her time at her mother's house, leaving her children to fend for themselves.

JUCONI educators visited the Ruiz family weekly (*pictured above*) and helped each family member open up, face their fears and painful histories and begin to envision and work toward a more positive future. JUCONI modeled positive parenting and became a critical support system for the mother and father – who needed to learn how to parent without abuse. During 18 months, the family made significant progress. As relationships improved, violence and addictions subsided. For the first time, Laura's father felt he belonged; he drank less and was able to bring in a stable income. Eventually, the family could afford a new home. JUCONI helped Laura improve her ability to read and write. Today, she is enrolled in a 24-month course to be a beautician. Laura has stopped working on the street altogether and now dreams of opening her own hair salon. JUCONI will be there to help her succeed.



*"Responsible investments in services for young children and their families focus on benefits relative to cost. Inexpensive services that do not meet quality standards are a waste of money. Stated simply, sound policies seek maximum value rather than minimal cost."*

Center on  
Developing Child  
Harvard University

## Transform One Child, Transform Mexico

JUCONI's impact on the children and families it serves through direct programming in Mexico and through the training of organizations both in Mexico and abroad depends on the ongoing support of donors. In recent years, while funding from international foundations and governments has become increasingly scarce, the demand for JUCONI's services has grown. Thus, the support of individual donors has become more and more critical to the sustainability of JUCONI's programs.

Earlier this year, in conjunction with their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, JUCONI launched a fundraising campaign in Mexico targeting individual donors called, "Transform One Child, Transform Mexico." The five-week campaign was spearheaded by JUCONI board members and other close friends of the organization and included a series of events in Puebla and Mexico City. Macarena Perez, attendee at a breakfast in Mexico City, is pictured right. Through the campaign, more than 1,500 new individual monthly donors pledged their support, reducing JUCONI's reliance on funding from international foundations and governments to less than 50 percent of its budget.

Although the response to "Transform One Child, Transform Mexico" far exceeded JUCONI's ex-



pectations, additional support from everyday people in Mexico and abroad will be necessary to ensure that JUCONI continues to better the lives of socially excluded children and their families for another 20 years.

## TWC Joins Giving First Online

Together with the Children is now participating in Giving First, an online community of Denver-based charities supported by the Community First Foundation. By visiting our profile at [www.givingfirst.org/twc](http://www.givingfirst.org/twc), you can learn more about our organization and make tax-deductible donations. The Community First Foundation pays for all associated fees, so that 100

percent of your donation made online at Giving First will be given directly to Together with the Children and used to support JUCONI's programs in Mexico.

**DONATE NOW**  
THROUGH  
**GIVINGFIRST.ORG**

## Reception Held for JUCONI Board Member

On March 29, 2009, Together with the Children hosted a social and informational gathering at the home of TWC Board President Melinda Cain in honor of visiting JUCONI board member Joanna Serra (*pictured right*). Mrs. Serra was one of the founders of JUCONI and has served in various capacities on JUCONI's Board of Directors for 20 years. Before a group of 30 guests, Mrs. Serra shared her passion for JUCONI's work, highlighting the incredible achievements made by the children and families who have partici-

pated in JUCONI's programs. Mrs. Serra also emphasized the increasing need for our support of street-involved children and their families in the face of growing levels of violence in today's world.

Together with the Children would like to thank all of the attendees for their support and Melinda Cain for hosting this wonderful event.



## JUCONI Trainers Visit Tanzania and Kenya

In 2001, JUCONI initiated its Technical Support Program (TSP) with the goal of sharing their successful methodologies with other organizations, schools, and government agencies who work with socially excluded children both in Mexico and abroad. Since that time, the Technical Support Program has expanded significantly, providing training and assistance to more than 35 programs in seven countries. Last year, 2,250 children benefited from improved services as a result of JUCONI's TSP.

In 2008, Mkombozi, a Tanzanian organization that works with vulnerable children and families, and the Undugu Society, a Kenyan organization that operates a children's shelter, visited Mexico for several weeks to observe and learn about JUCONI's model for working with street-involved children and their families. The visit was sponsored by Railway Children UK, a former longtime supporter of JUCONI. To provide follow-up training to these organizations, several members of JUCONI's team then traveled to Tanzania and Kenya in April and

*"In my over 30 years as a family therapist, professor, author, and consultant, I have never worked with a more exceptional organization than JUCONI, Mexico."*

Dr. Janine Roberts

Professor Emerita, University of Massachusetts

Past-president, American Family Therapy Academy



May of 2009. Alison Lane, Vice President of Development, and Jorge Villar, Director of Education (*both pictured left with staff of the Undugu Society in Kenya*) offered these two organizations additional instruction on working with populations that have been affected by violence.

## Upcoming Events

### Photo Exhibit and Wine Tasting

TWC volunteer and photographer Jonathan Degenhart will visit Mexico this summer to teach JUCONI's street-working children about digital photography. The children's photographs will be featured at our fall wine tasting at the Denver Mexican Consulate. Date TBA.

### Insight Trip

Insight Trips to Mexico offer an in-depth tour of JUCONI's work with street-involved children and their families. The next trip will be November 2, 3, and 4. For a detailed itinerary and pricing, please contact Together with the Children.

**Judith**  
Judith tenía 6 años cuando empezó a vender dulces en la calle. Pasa su vida en un hogar violento donde la obligaban a encargarse de todo. JUCONI la contactó cinco años después. Mediante terapia personal y familiar le ayudó a sanar las heridas emocionales que la apartaban de la sociedad. Ahora tiene 19, le encanta leer, estudia en la universidad y confía en ser la primera de su familia en obtener una licenciatura.

**EXPANSIÓN**  
GRUPO EDITORIAL

Se puede salir de la violencia.  
**Hazlo Posible.**

Fundación JUCONI es una organización mexicana que trabaja con éxito desde hace veinte años para reintegrar a la sociedad a niños y familias afectados por la pobreza y violencia.

[www.juconi.org.mx](http://www.juconi.org.mx)

Fundación JUCONI, A.C.  
Juntos con los niños y sus familias.

PREMIUM  
Premio Anual del Poder Judicial  
Primer Lugar en Mejores Prácticas de Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil

Above: JUCONI was awarded free publicity in more than a dozen of Mexico's premier magazines via an annual competition conducted by *Expansión* media. More than five million people will see JUCONI success stories on a monthly basis.



Together with the Children (TWC)

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