



Emphasizing **Education!**

2016 PILOT STUDY

In July 2016, we began a pilot study on our initiative, giving us an opportunity to test our target population's reaction to the program. By testing our project, it helped us determine whether we needed to spend more time or resources on particular aspects of the program. It also helped us verify if any adjustments to our implementation plan or adaptations to the program were necessary.

More importantly, it helps us confirm our plan is a good fit for our county population, and helped us discover minor adaptations that we will be modifying as appropriate and necessary, during the full implementation process.

This testing helped us ensure we are well prepared to measure the success of our program.

We are now laying the first phase to establish an independent regional Think Tank, set out to influence policy ideas and decisions through social research with the following service:

- **Social Research Analysis**

A program devoted to social research and innovative policy solutions, which will help analyze current and emerging border issues and produce new ideas that matter for our region. Our researchers' will be drawn from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, South Texas College, Texas A&M University satellite campus in McAllen, and other institutions who wish to participate with experience in economics, health, manufacture, government, academia and hold diverse points of view for the better of our region. Our goal will be to provide good-quality research, fact-based analysis for opinion leaders, decision makers, the media, and the interested public on the variety of challenges facing an increasingly interdependent US/Mexican border.

Our organization will additionally include the subsequent service:

- **Entrepreneurial Mindset**

A manufacture and microenterprise development program designed to work with interested community members. Main emphasis will be on students in low-income areas, which are often plagued by crime, violence, high dropout rates, and lack of opportunity across Hidalgo County.

In this program, we will work in collaboration with *Reynosa Maquiladora Association and Manufacturing A.C. Foundation (INDEX)*, *South Texas College Technology Campus* and *The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering Department*, to manufacture an ecological wood charcoal production plant as part of our job creation plan. The vision is to benefit Hidalgo County residents obtain training, employment, develop their own businesses, and become financially independent.

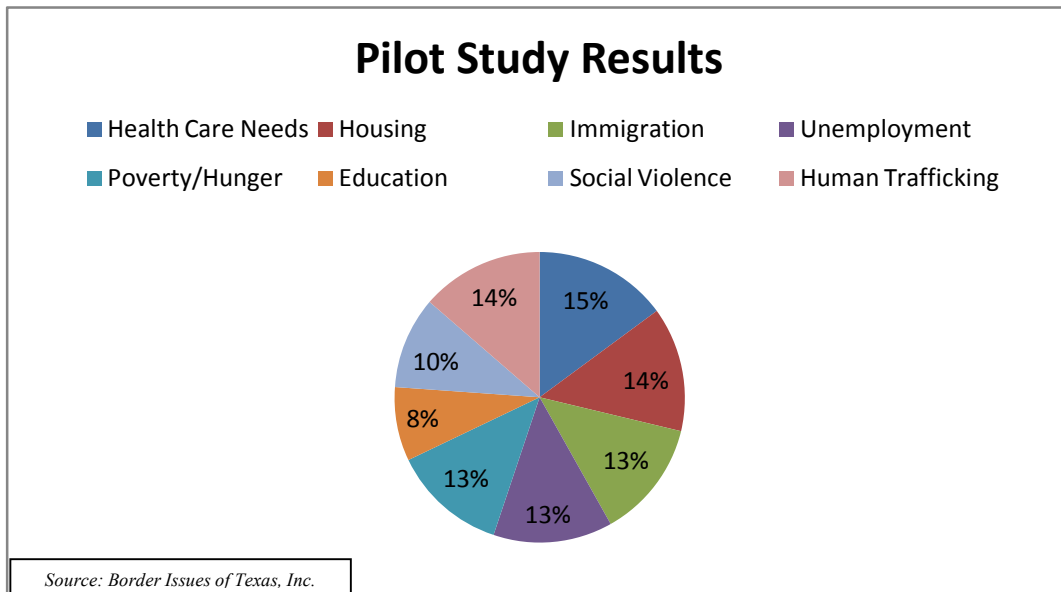
Hidalgo County Pilot Study Results

July – October 2016

This testing helped us ensure we are well prepared to measure the success of our program, and found the following evidence:

- 83% of the surveyed participants had health care necessities and needed orientation
- 77% were facing housing difficulties
- 76% affirmed that human trafficking is on the rise
- 74% had employment uncertainty
- 73% had immigration concerns

- 71% suffered from Poverty/Hunger
- 57% were bothered about social violence
- 46% were concerned about education access



- 91% of those surveyed were eligible for assistance, because many of the participants suffered from illiteracy sequels, difficulty accessing services, and lack of information, particularly in (outer city) rural areas.

In this study, we concluded that undocumented immigrant populace in the county play an important role in these results; Hidalgo County being one of the main immigrant entry points, according to the *U.S. Border Patrol; National Border Patrol Council*.

We propose the following solutions:

- Conduct surveys to uncover specific questions, evoke discussion, and compare results on a diverse range of topics for further research.
- Promote literacy, to gain the language skills necessary to become self-sufficient, and find and sustain employment.
- Create opportunities, as possible, to integrate and channel immigrants to micro business development to sustain productivity and economic growth in the county
- Guide individuals to a self-empowerment state of mind

The planning of this project was initiated three months ago. Our goal, is to find adequate resources to create access to such opportunities for the disfranchised community members, who don't have access to basic information and opportunities to enhance life in the community.

Your active participation will be the success of this initiative, proposed by our organization.

Services provided during our pilot study:

Voting Registration

95 new voting registrations
16 change of address

Health Care*

7 individuals were referred to wound care specialists
5 individuals to eye care specialists
2 individuals to cardiologist clinics
17 individuals to clinics for the uninsured
1 individual for cancer screening
1 individual to chronic kidney disease classes
9 individuals to medical transportation

Education

4 individuals to GED classes
6 individuals to ESL classes
5 individuals to financial aid
7 individuals to continuing education

Housing

15 individuals were referred to housing provider agencies
3 individuals to home buying counseling
2 individuals to acquire building permits
2 individuals for foreclosure advising
4 individuals for hose rehabilitation

Employment

20 individuals were referred to different employment agencies
14 of the 20 individuals were successfully employed
2 senior citizens were referred and hired through the Senior Employment Program

* Note: We collect data via surveys during our visits, and follow-up each case as much as possible, to ensure service success.

*We solely provide information and connect individuals to vital community services.