

Inside

Social Investments

Helping immigrants achieve greater prosperity

Art & Music

Made in Berlin, coming to New York

Social Investments

Overcoming homelessness: a veteran's story

Passionate about...

Changing perspectives



Economics | Environment | People & Society

Social Investments

Anchoring achievement in Mexican communities



Learning for life

A major new initiative to expand and strengthen educational opportunities for Mexican children, youth and families in New York City

Photograph: Getty

In a nation whose history has been defined by immigration, New York City represents an up to the minute expression of its power to define a global city of success. The genius of New York City has been its ability to attract and mobilize wave after wave of immigrant groups into a sustained enterprise of social, economic and cultural consequence. Any faultline that compromises the potential of personal ambition leading to advancement puts the whole proposition at risk.

Mexicans are the fastest-growing immigrant group in New York City today. Newer to the city than other Latino groups, the Mexican population still lacks the cohesive community fabric and established support system that enable success. As this immigrant group quickly expands, worrying trends about the lack of Mexican economic mobility and educational attainment in New York City have emerged.

Due to a population largely composed of school-age youth, education issues are especially resonant within the Mexican community. Mexican and Mexican-American students have the lowest rates of school

enrollment, academic engagement and degree attainment of all public school students in the city. According to census data, two in every five Mexicans aged 16 to 19 in the city have dropped out of school. The district-wide rate is less than one in 10.

In place of education many of these young people find employment, but in low-skilled and low-paying work with very limited prospects for growth. Without educational achievement, they are trapped in jobs that do not afford them a concrete pathway out of the poverty that afflicts many Mexican households in the city. They face a future of social and economic marginalization. On a broader scale, without intervention, this trend threatens to create a permanent underclass.

The rapid growth of New York City's Mexican population intensifies the need to address the barriers to educational engagement and economic success for this community. With a long-standing tradition of social responsibility in the Americas and a history of supporting immigrants in New York, Deutsche Bank is bringing new thinking to the challenges involved.

Growing fast ...

There were over five times as many Mexicans in New York City in 2010 than in 1990

324,000

57,000

... but dropping out

Two in five Mexicans aged 16-19 drop out of school



Source: census data

Called to action

Motivated by a belief that education is the most important resource for ensuring the future of societies, Deutsche Bank supports numerous initiatives around the world to help children and youth achieve goals otherwise unattainable for them due to lack of resources and opportunities.

In the Americas, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation concentrates on improving the outcomes for historically disadvantaged student groups in the New York City public school system. It does this by supporting programs that ensure children and youth are in school, ready to learn and able to acquire the knowledge and skills to further their talents and be productive in the workforce.

That support stems from a conviction in the power of people to affect change for themselves and their communities. When the issue of underachievement in education by Mexicans and Mexican-Americans was brought to light in an article that appeared in the *New York Times*, the bank was moved

Continued on page 3 »



Discover more
Read new research on the
education, employment and income
trends for children and youth of
Mexican origin in New York City



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« continued from page 1

to act. “This issue resonated with us because of our business and philanthropic interests in Latin America and the bank’s commitment to immigrant communities in New York City,” explains Jorge Arce, Chief Country Officer for Mexico and director of Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation.

A new strategy

To gain a better understanding of the causes and effects of disconnection, Deutsche Bank commissioned new research on the education, employment and income trends for children and youth of Mexican origin in New York City and their families. It found that the efforts of the young, whether native or foreign-born, are not translating into positive outcomes.

“It’s hard to rationalize the alarming dropout rate of foreign-born Mexicans who do enroll in New York City public schools, or the growing number of Mexican young people born and raised here who are not succeeding in our schools,” observes Lazar Treschan of the Community Service Society of New York, lead author of the report.

Following consultations with nonprofit, private and public sector leaders, employees, and clients with a connection to Mexico and the experience of Mexicans in the US, Deutsche Bank has launched a new initiative that aims to improve the long-term educational and economic well-being of children, youth and families of Mexican origin in New York City.

The Anchoring Achievement in Mexican Communities initiative targets young learners (pre-school through grade 3) who do not have the proper support to be ready to enter and perform in school, and high school students who need support to remain in learning activities that better equip them for advancement in the world of work.

At the heart of this effort are “neighborhood networks” of community nonprofits, schools,

libraries and others. By bringing these groups together and anchoring them in communities as integrated hubs providing high-quality educational programs and services, Deutsche Bank hopes to increase student and parental engagement in learning, and improve academic performance and employment prospects.

The bank is committing approximately \$1.5 million to this endeavor over the next three years. Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation recently awarded planning grants for nonprofit organizations to develop or replicate models to achieve the program’s goals. Three-year implementation grants will be awarded in the coming months to help the best ideas take root.

For multiple generations

The inclusion of parents and guardians is designed to address the circumstances that give rise to educational disadvantage within this community.

Immigrant parents may have little involvement in their children’s education due to the demands of work that in many cases is low-paid and involves multiple jobs. Language can be a barrier to contact with the school. Parents may have limited educational experience themselves, especially if they were required to forgo education for work from an early age. Factors such as these can inhibit aspiration and achievement in the next generation.

“A two-generation approach is needed because attainment in the Mexican community is contextualized around the family unit. Parents need to be involved and given opportunities for educational engagement as well,” says Nicole Rodriguez Leach of Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation.

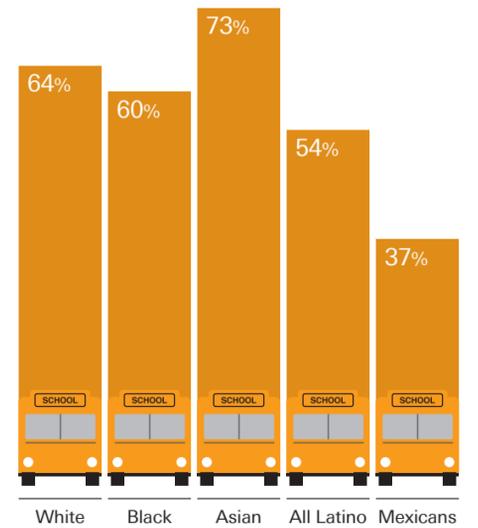
Those parents came to New York looking for a better life. This initiative recognizes that education is an essential part of that journey. ■

“The rapid growth of New York City’s Mexican population poses an important challenge and an opportunity for community-building. The empowerment of the most vulnerable of New Yorkers through education will improve quality of life for their families and the next generation of Americans in the city”

Carlos M. Sada
Consul General of Mexico in New York

Out of school

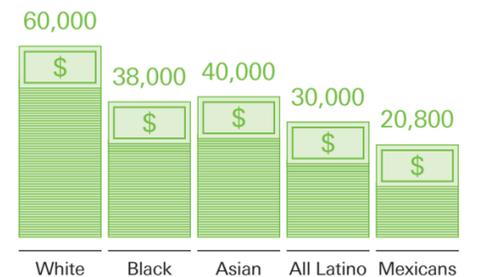
Mexicans have the lowest rates of school enrollment within NYC youth aged 16-24



Limited futures

Low educational attainment leads to jobs that do not pay high wages and offer limited prospects for advancement

Take-home
Median earnings for full-time year-round workers



How it’s earned
Industry of 16-24 year old Mexican workers in New York City

Low-paying services	46%
Retail	20%
Blue collar	19%
Education, health, social services	8%
High-paying services	8%

Source: Community Service Society of New York, 2013



Make the Road New York, a planning grant recipient, promotes the full participation of immigrant parents in gaining for their children the access and opportunity necessary to achieve educational excellence Photograph: Katie Lyon-Hart

“A two-generation approach is needed. Parents need to be involved and given opportunities for educational engagement as well”

Nicole Rodriguez Leach
Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation