

Mexico – Secondary School Teaching Resource



Country Profile

Mexico is the biggest country in Central America and one of its neighbours is the United States of America.

It is a very beautiful country, with tall mountains, deserts and lovely beaches.

Mexico has a population of over 104 million (nearly twice as many people as the UK).

The country has quite a lot of money compared to poor countries, but it is not evenly spread. While the rich people have lots of money, some of the poorer people have so little that they don't always have enough food or can't afford to live in a house.

10% of the population live on less than 65p a day. Can you imagine living on 65p a day, when this has to buy your clothes, food and pay for your house? Because the poor people are fed up with being so poor, there is often violence in Mexico.

People in the countryside cannot get jobs easily so many of them migrate to the cities because they want to earn money and support their families. They build very poor houses on the edges of the cities and the areas are called 'shanty towns'.

Many people are so desperate for jobs that they try and cross the border into America without a passport, and this is very dangerous.

3.5 million children between 12 and 17 years old have to work. They cannot go to school because they must earn money for their families and cannot afford the school fees. There are 24.7 million children under 17 living in poverty in Mexico, many of whom are forced to live on the streets. The majority of these street children are very poor and are often hurt by violent people. It is a very sad situation. One of the reasons SOS Children began working in Mexico was to give some of these street children a permanent home, security and love.

SOS Children's Villages in Mexico

The first SOS Children's Village in Mexico opened in October 1971, after one and a half years of construction work. This Village was built in the capital city, Mexico City, and is home to around 120 children. There is also an SOS nursery school at the Village, which provides young children from the Children's Village, as well as children from the local area with a good pre-school education.

There are currently seven SOS Children's Villages in Mexico, although we are building a new one as part of our partnership with FIFA! There are also:

- Four SOS Nursery Schools
- One SOS Primary School for children with special needs
- Three SOS Vocational Training Centres to give older children the skills they will need to get a job
- Seven SOS social centres and three SOS Medical Centres which will provide the local people with health care and support

The '6 villages for 2006' Village: Morelia

Morelia is the capital of Michoacán state, located north-east of Mexico City, high up in the mountains (6,000 feet above sea level). Around 570,000 people live in Morelia, about the same number that live in Glasgow. It is a busy modern city, but still has lots of ancient and beautiful buildings.

The number of children without the support of both parents and those at risk of abandonment is constantly on the increase in and around Morelia. It is also very hard for people to adopt children here, making the problem of lots of abandoned, homeless children much worse.



As a result, SOS Children was asked to open this brand new Children's Village. The government found a suitable plot of land for the Village, and construction began in April 2005. It is nearly finished now, and the children can move into their new, loving homes within the next few months.



Case study: Eagerly Waiting for Their New Friends

The new SOS Children's Village Morelia will make a difference not only for the children that will live there, but also for those who live nearby. A young football fan, Ramón can't wait for this Children's Village to be opened by FIFA!

Ramón is a seven-year-old boy who lives in the neighbourhood Morelia, where the new SOS Children's Village in Mexico is being built.

His favourite sport is football and together with his friends, Juanito, Beto and Chinto they always play in the street, outside their houses, as there are no football pitches nearby where they can play safely. All of them would like to play on a real pitch someday!

When Ramón and his friends saw that new homes were being built in Morelia, they didn't realize this was going to be the new SOS Children's Village. One day they saw that there were some people standing near the half-built houses. They were so excited when they realized these people were famous Mexican football stars! They couldn't believe their footballers were visiting their neighbourhood!

Upon asking about the new Children's Village, they learned from an SOS worker this would be a place where many boys and girls would live with their families. Ramón and his friends were happy when they were told they would be able to meet these children.

"Maybe now we will be able to form our own football team!" they said. The SOS worker told them that the new Children's Village would have a sports field, and that they could come and play here. Ramón and his friends started screaming with excitement!

The children from the new SOS Children's Village in Morelia already have four new friends!

SOS Children's Mexican shopping list:

Just 7p pays for a week's education for a child at an SOS Social Centre

£17 pays for a child's school fees for a year at an SOS Primary School

£66 will cover the costs of a child's food for a year at an SOS Social Centre

£625 will pay for a week's worth of childcare training at an SOS Social centre which includes counselling and support

£400 will pay for one week's medical costs of a Mother & Child Clinic at an SOS Medical centre

Can you help fundraise for our shopping list?



Plátanos con Crema (Bananas with Cream) A Traditional Mexican Dessert SERVES 6

Ingredients

4 firm bananas
 3 tablespoons margarine or butter
 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1/2 cup crème fraiche

Instructions

Peel and diagonally slice the bananas into 1/2-inch-thick slices (about 2 cups worth)

Melt margarine or butter in a large heavy-based pan. Add bananas to melted margarine or butter. Heat for about two minutes or just until warm and tender, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle with brown sugar. Stir gently until sugar melts.

Carefully stir in vanilla essence and cinnamon. Serve immediately with crème fraiche