

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The Monterrey region has a well-developed educational culture. The need to adopt modern technologies and business methods and interact with foreign companies is driving a demand for technical and business training. English is more widely used in Monterrey than it is in the rest of Mexico, and language training is also a growing market. The northeastern region has an excellent educational infrastructure, with a strong technological focus, and there are many bilingual colleges. This creates opportunities for exchanges and joint projects with Canadian educational institutions. In addition, many Mexicans like to study abroad, both for educational and cultural reasons.

In 1994, 1,600 Mexican degree students studied in Canada, which was 17 percent of all Mexican degree students studying abroad. In addition there were many students in short-term language programs who were documented as tourists. The economic crisis of 1995 made it much more expensive to study abroad. To some extent this has made Canada more competitive, because its top universities are less expensive than comparable institutions in Europe and the United States. Simple visa requirements, safe and clean urban communities, and a reputation for quality could lead to an even stronger position if individual Canadian universities were better-known.

The peso devaluation that began in 1994 is also creating opportunities for industrial training providers as companies in the region adapt to take advantage of the cheap peso. About 10,000 Mexicans pursued some form of industrial training abroad during 1995. There is a need for train-the-trainer programs so that Mexicans who travel abroad for training can transfer their new knowledge to others upon their return. A preoccupation with costs is also leading to increased demand for packaged courseware.

Book publishing is another promising market, especially since residents of Monterrey are better educated than other Mexicans. Books from Spain are widely available; in many cases they do not take into account the differences in language or culture. There is also a market for Spanish-language publications that have been adapted for Mexican readers.