

# Educational Services



## THE OPPORTUNITY

Mexico offers substantial opportunities for Canadian suppliers of education and training services.

- Mexico's population of 100 million is growing at more than 2 percent per year, half of whom are under 20 years old. The labour force is growing faster than the population.
- Only about 20 percent of Mexican students complete high school, and there are less than 1.5 million university students.
- The government is trying to improve quality and reduce the drop-out rate, especially at the primary school level.
- Rapid industrial restructuring is creating unprecedented demands for business, language and technical skills.
- Canada enjoys a reputation for educational excellence, and is also considered a good place to come to study because of social and cultural reasons.

## MEXICO'S SKILLS CRISIS

Mexico's population of about 100 million is growing at the rate of more than 2 percent per year. Half of all Mexicans are under 20 years old, and almost three-quarters are under 30. The labour force of more than 31 million workers is growing even faster than the population. Mexico has also become highly urbanized as the population has

gradually moved into the cities to participate in the industrial economy.

These demographic trends would create an immense need for both general education and job skills training even under normal circumstances. But the economic environment in Mexico today can hardly be described as normal. In the late 1980s, the Mexican government abandoned decades of protectionist policies and implemented a series of sweeping economic reforms.

These reforms brought about a massive restructuring of Mexican industry, as producers scrambled to modernize to meet the influx of foreign competition. The implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on January 1, 1994 and the subsequent devaluation of the peso in December of that year, combined to accelerate this restructuring process.

These trends have multiplied the demand for skills and overtaxed Mexico's underdeveloped education and training institutions. Most employers are also expanding their own training efforts, often using outside assistance. At the same time, individuals are advancing their own career prospects through privately-delivered adult education programs as well as enrollment in foreign universities.

## SUMMARY REPORT

In addition to this market summary, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has prepared a market profile entitled **Opportunities in Mexico: Educational Services**. This market information on Mexican educational services has been produced and published by Prospectus Inc. under contract with DFAIT, along with other market profiles and summaries on business opportunities in Mexico. It is available from:

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