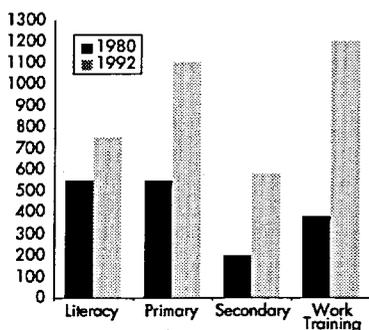


Education, education funding is expected to increase by 70 percent over four years. The new government, which will be elected in 1994, is expected to place an even greater emphasis on education.

### ENROLMENT IN ADULT EDUCATION COURSES IN MEXICO



## THE MEXICAN EDUCATION MARKET

Education and training services in Mexico are delivered by a combination of public and private institutions. The market can be divided into three segments:

- *formal* education, through public and private schools and universities;
- *business* education and skills training provided by employers; and
- *domestic* education purchased by individual adult learners.

The *Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP)*, the Secretariat for Public Education, oversees the formal education system. It administers the federal public schools and regulates the autonomous and private schools. Business education that meets employer obligations under government requirements is regulated by the *Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social*, the Secretary of Labour and Social Welfare.

## Formal Education

Formal education is provided free in public schools and attendance is mandatory for children between the ages of 3 and 14. Nonetheless, the drop-out rate is high, and the average Mexican receives only 6.5 years of education. The drop-out rate is about 60 percent in primary school and 75 percent in secondary school.

### THE MEXICAN FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Level	Ages
Elementary school	
pre-primary	3-5
primary	6-11
Middle school	
secondary	12-14
high or technical	15-17
Superior school	18+
technical	
university	
normal (teacher preparation)	

The public school system focuses on basic education. It is generally short of resources and is often criticized for its failure to provide adequate practical skills for employment or social advancement. These problems are being addressed through the National Agreement to Modernize Basic Education. This is an agreement between the state and federal governments and the national teachers' union. Teachers are designated as the main agents of change and the program will foster more teacher training, greater professional recognition and higher salaries. Under this agreement, control of public schools will be gradually decentralized to the state and community levels.

There are more than 16 million students registered at federally administered schools and more than five million at state schools. The formal education system also includes "autonomous" and private institutions. Autonomous schools are funded by government but they are

administered independently. They mainly include universities and technical schools.

There is also a private school system that operates in parallel with public schools, but without significant public support. There are approximately 2.6 million students enrolled in more than 17,000 private schools. Because they have lower student/teacher ratios, and are better equipped, they tend to offer better quality education and are regarded by many as the trend-setters for academic standards.

The 'superior' schools, which include universities, technical schools, and teacher training, are mainly autonomous (51 percent) or private (19 percent), with the remainder operated by the federal or state governments. Autonomous schools have an enrollment of just over one million students, about one-third of them in technical high schools and the rest in universities.

## Business Education and Training

Business education, which includes skills training, is conducted by employers, and is designed primarily to improve employee performance. It ranges from seminars promoting new management styles to on-the-job technical training. There is a formal requirement for employers to conduct such training, and many programs are registered with the federal government for this reason. Officially, there are more than 500,000 participants enrolled in about 4,000 training facilities, and another 500,000 in workplace training programs. These programs must meet government requirements. Many employers do not see much benefit from this process and often conduct unregistered courses.

Business education activity is growing rapidly as firms struggle to remain competitive in newly-liberalized markets. Free trade, privatization and deregulation have com-

