

# U.S. - Mexico At a Glance

## Culture

November 2013

The Cultural Affairs section brought Erica Woda, founder of the NGO Level the Field, to Mexico City and Oaxaca to work with at-risk youth and train coaches on using sports to empower youth.

Through the Mexico City Music Committee, Mexican youth from a variety of walks of life have been inspired by the talents of U.S. artists including Aerosmith, Bob Dylan, the Killers, and Lionel Richie.

The Cultural Affairs Office of the Public Affairs Section offers a broad range of programming around strategic issues that expands and deepens mutual understanding and fosters closer ties between the U.S. and Mexico.

Through **Strategic Programming on Policy Issues**, the Embassy promotes an exchange of ideas and viewpoints on a variety of issues of mutual interest to both countries such as gender equality, economic empowerment, human rights, access to information technology, and countering drug abuse and trafficking in persons. The Embassy brings U.S. experts to Mexico to talk about these issues and engages in programs including conferences, roundtables, lectures and other public events often organized in cooperation with Mexican academic, cultural, and professional institutions.

The Embassy's **International Visitor Leadership Program** sends an average of 50 current or potential leaders in government, politics, education, and other fields from Mexico to the U.S. each year to meet and confer with their counterparts and to experience the U.S. firsthand. Among Mexico's prominent participants are former Mexican President Felipe Calderon and Emilio Zebadúa González, head of the Mexican Secretary of Social Development. Through the **Voluntary Visitor Program**, the U.S. State Department funds domestic travel for Mexican professionals to visit the U.S. on specific topics of bilateral interest.

The **Music Committee**, comprised of representatives from agencies around the Mission, uses music as a tool to build bridges between our two nations and enhance Mexicans' interest in and understanding of American culture. The committee brings youth from disadvantaged background and those studying music in contact with U.S. artists visiting Mexico through master classes, receptions with the Ambassador and concerts.

The Embassy also uses **Sports Diplomacy** as a way to build bridges and enhance people-to-people ties. Sports are a fun and effective way to reach strategic audiences such as at-risk youth and teach values including leadership, teamwork, nonviolence and community engagement. Activities include bringing U.S. sports experts to Mexico, planning programs with visiting U.S. athletes, and organizing game-watching events.

In June 2009, the **Association of Mexican Alumni** was formed to reach out to the nearly 7,000 Mexican former participants in U.S. Government-sponsored programs. Members are invited to join State Alumni, the global online community by and for alumni.

The **Benjamin Franklin Library** is the oldest public-access library supported by the United States government abroad. With a lending library of 25,000 volumes; a large selection of American periodicals; and state-of-the-art Internet and electronic research facilities, the Benjamin Franklin Library continues to be a major source of information on contemporary American society.

Through the **Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation**, the Embassy is helping to preserve and restore the Father Tembleque Aqueduct, the most important work of hydraulic engineering build in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the Americas.