

Visit to Mexico February 25-March 3, 2006

Mexico

Mexico is a vast and extremely diverse country, rich in culture and history. Over the last 40 years, thanks to an increased participation by its citizenship to solve social problems, a variety of organizations have emerged. This has provided for an unprecedented opportunity to try new approaches to old problems, strategies that can also be applied to countries outside of Mexico.

The GPC country visit will take participants around this fascinating country where they will have the opportunity to visit award winning projects, meet with leaders of business and civil society and engage with local GPC members and Synergos partners. It has also been specially designed to allow participants to connect this experience to their own work.



Tentative Agenda

Oaxaca, February 25-27, 2006

Theme: Overview of the Mexican Social, Economic and Political Environment

Representatives from the public, private and non-profit sectors will introduce and discuss the broader issues of Mexico.

Theme: Nutrition

Site visits will include:

- **Un Kilo de Ayuda.** Set up to fight malnutrition in children under 5 years of age, GPC Member Jose Ignacio Avalos created Un Kilo de Ayuda, which supplies carefully balanced packages to 26,000 children in rural Mexico every two weeks. Of the children starting out with high risk malnutrition, only 6% remain severely malnourished after 11 months in the program. Within 5 years, Un Kilo has become operationally self-sufficient.
- **Puente a la Salud Comunitaria.** Puente seeks to empower the people of rural Oaxaca to improve their own health without extensive reliance on outside agencies. This program, set up and run by GPC Member Katherine Lorenz, focuses on sustainability through the promotion, planting, and consumption of amaranth and facilitates an environment in which the communities are able to better their own health.
- **CENTEOTL.** This local civil society organization works in the areas of sustainable agriculture, alternative income-generation, environmental protection, and social development directed towards indigenous children and youth. Our visit will feature a tour through the organization's amaranth cultivation and processing sites. Amaranth is a nutritious grain that can be produced in culturally and environmentally sustainable ways.

Theme: Income generation

Site visits will include:

- **MICHIZA.** A State Organization of Coffee Producers from the Mixteca, Mixe, Chinanteca, Chatina, Cuicateca and Zapotec regions (all Mexican indigenous groups) founded on 1985. MICHIZA promotes the wellbeing of the indigenous people of the State through organic agriculture, soil conservation, and environmental preservation.

Special Events:

- Welcome reception in the beautiful home of Rodolfo and Norma Ogarrío, Board Members of the Oaxaca Community Foundation.
- Private sunset tour of Monte Alban, hill-top remains of the ancient capital of the Zapotecs and one of the first cities in Mesoamerica.

Mexico City, February 27– March 1, 2006

Themes: Microfinance, Corporate Social Responsibility, Using Media to Promote Social Causes, Water

A day long event of interactive seminars and workshops will allow participants to explore “Innovative Approaches to Poverty Alleviation in Mexico.” Successful models, that can be applied globally, will be featured in the areas of microfinance, promoting corporate social responsibility and using media to promote social causes.



Programs that will be a part of the discussion include:

- **Compartamos.** The fastest growing and largest microfinance institution in Latin America with around 250,000 clients. The organization, started by GPC Member Jose Ignacio Avalos, has been a pioneer in not only proving that “the poor are credit-worthy”, but that the “microfinance industry is investment-worthy”. Compartamos has a Standard & Poors rating of A+. Around 45% of the capital stems from local bonds and 30% from local commercial banks.
- **Fundacion Televisa’s Social Development Program.** GPC Member Emilio Azcarraga, President and Chair of the world’s largest producer of Spanish language television programming, Grupo Televisa, and Claudio X. González Guajardo, President of Fundacion Televisa, will demonstrate to the group how using media and sports can raise awareness and substantial funds from the general public to support social causes. Immensely popular *telenovelas* (soap operas) with widespread global reach spread social messages, like issues around breast cancer. National soccer teams donate computers to rural schools and support nutrition programs when each team scores.

We will also explore the theme of Water while in Mexico City.

Special Events:

- Guided tour of the photo exhibition “Eternidad Fugitiva” at the Palacio Belles Artes, a white-marble Art Nouveau structure which hosts productions of opera, ballet and the famous Ballet Folklórico.
- Private dinner hosted by GPC Member Emilio Azcarraga at the Museo Franz Mayer, a beautifully restored 16th-century building which contains an extraordinary collection of antiques, mostly Mexican objects from the 16th through 19th centuries.

Tijuana, March 2 – 3, 2006

Themes: Health, Education, Corporate Social Responsibility, Environment

Annually vast numbers of Mexicans migrate from poor rural areas of the country and settle in Mexico along the US border. This has put immense social, economic and environmental pressure on this region. Synergos’ US-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership was started in 2002 and is dedicated to improving the quality of life in low-income communities. This unique partnership, a cross-border collaboration between a group of 9 Funders and 21 Community Foundations, operates under a shared belief that strategic collaboration, long-term sustainability and a passionate commitment is required in order to address the region’s persistent challenges.



Site visits will include:

- **Mobile health clinic in Colonia Las Aguilas.** Supported by US based Medtronics Corporation, this clinic is a wonderful example of corporate philanthropy that brings together the issues of education, health and community development along the border. With most of the residents originally from the Southern region of Chiapas, it is a truly unique example of migrants from Mexico’s poorest, southernmost border state finding a new home on the country’s northernmost border.
- **Environmental projects in Cañon Los Laureles.** This area has experienced unprecedented growth due to migration, a community of 5,000 squatter inhabitants has grown to 45,000 in just 7 years. As a result there has been a detrimental impact on the environment which is trans-boundary. The group will visit projects that have empowered the community to get involved in rescuing the land and resources around them.

Special Events:

- A dinner in a private home with Board Members of the Fundacion Comunitaria Tijuana (Tijuana Community Foundation).

Please contact Melissa Durda (mdurda@synergos.org or on 646-963-2132) by January 15th to learn more and reserve a space!