

**1st National Forum on the North American Retiree Community:
Expectations & Opinions for Living in Mexico**

**Central and Southern States
(Jalisco, Guanajuato, Colima, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan)
Facilitator Report-Breakout Group 2**

INTEGRATION INTO THE COMMUNITY:

Expats living in Mexico expressed a common concern towards authorities as to the fact that they are seen and attracted to Mexico as tourists interested in “sun and sand”. They suggested that there should be publicity that points out the cultural diversity of the country and that of communities in economic distress. This last fact is of special importance because the expat community consider themselves philanthropists that like to be contributing members of the communities they adopt in retirement. Retirees from the coastal state of Colima suggested that more publicity should be done to “medical tourism” especially towards dental care services.

FACILITIES:

The community is concerned about facilities for “aging in place”. Some of them, especially from the state of Yucatan, pointed out to the need for Retirement Homes or some kind of Assisted Living Services with English speaking staff. Retirees from the Central Colonial States pointed out the need of urban infrastructure to move about in the city, such as facilities for the handicapped.

RULES:

The community is concerned about the lack of clear rules on immigration, taxes, real estate, and business establishment. They feel that the lack of clear rules turns away other Americans to move to Mexico; it also discourages the ones already living in Mexico to participate in a diversity of activities (both philanthropic and non-philanthropic) because they do not know if they are breaking the law.

IMMIGRATION

Expats pointed out that getting their immigration papers can be a difficult and tiring process since there are no clear procedures and it depends on the requirements that the person providing the service at the INM asks for. The representative from the San Miguel de Allende Community explained how they were able to change that situation by pressuring for clear procedures and how it only takes a day to get their papers.

TAXES

The community expressed that it is extremely difficult for them to fill out their tax statement/return form because the rules for foreigners are difficult to understand and not very clear. They suggested that SCHP information should be available both in Spanish and in English so that this can be an easier process.

REAL ESTATE

Retirees find it difficult and usually are skeptical about buying property since they do not know the law and real estate agents are not helpful in that matter. They suggest that there should be some kind of licensing for agents that can give service to the community, where this “professionalization” would include English speaking.

NEW BUSINESSES

A number of the participating members of the expat community are young enough to continue with their productive life in Mexico. Many expressed that they would like to start new businesses, but are hesitant to do so since they can't find clear information on what they can do or not and what are the rules and procedures to start up.

ENVIRONMENT

The representatives from all the communities expressed their concern for air quality coming from three sources: tire burning, field burning and trash disposal.

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSES

GUANAJUATO

It should be noted that the representative from the Guanajuato government didn't speak English so it is not clear how much of the dialogue she understood. Yet, she offered to strengthen the medical services in the state. She also said that the State was extending their services beyond San Miguel de Allende (where the biggest community is) into cities such as Irapuato and Guanajuato.

YUCATAN

The government of Yucatan is trying to create a database of expats because they estimate to have around 5,000 Americans living in the state, but have no certainty. This way they can offer specific help in institutions such as help desk just for them at the different government offices. The representative of this State's government pointed out that there is a hospital in Mérida certified by the American authority.

SECTUR

The representative of the Tourism Department welcomed the suggestion on changing the focus of the publicity. She talked about the campaign "The Heart of Mexico" and even asked the retirees for the help with testimonials in order to have publicity with original source information.

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