

This Issue

In our fifth issue, *Voices* features one of the most hotly-debated topics for Mexico's future: modernization. Through interviews with four outstanding Mexican academics, we hope to provide our readers with a panoramic view of this multi-faceted process, so important to Mexico's economic and political life.

Another timely subject covered in this issue is Mexico-United States trade relations. A representative of the Mexican business sector provides the focus for us this time, as he explores the different angles and discusses the principal problems of these relations.

Our Special Report is on the use of medicinal plants in Mexico. Traditional medicine, whose sources go back to Pre-columbian cultures, is deeply-rooted in Mexican society. Thus, it is quite significant that a variety of institutions—including the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS)—are investigating these plants and working to set norms for their everyday use.

Regarding events in Latin America, we're running a series of articles covering subjects of special importance for the region: Central America's growing arms race, the impact of the foreign debt on Latin America's small economies, testimonies from political prisoners in Pinochet's Chile and the problems confronting the Continent's largest cities. Special mention goes to the article on Paraguay, where the government holds the record for the longest, continuous dictatorship in contemporary Latin American history.

In our sections on culture, the note on juvenile gangs is of special interest. This phenomenon is particularly significant in Mexico, where young people make up the majority of the population. As the article shows, juvenile gangs are not a passing fad, but rather are evidence to some of the structural problems affecting our societies.

Finally in our Science section, we have an article on the incidence of AIDS in Mexico. Reflecting the world-wide concern about this modern-day killer, a number of Mexican private and governmental institutions have launched a major information campaign designed to prevent the spread of the disease in our country.

Mariclaire Acosta

Voices of Mexico

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