

# OUR VOICE

I'm very excited to introduce this one hundredth issue of *Voices of Mexico*, after almost 30 practically uninterrupted years of publishing the magazine, which first came out in 1986. Its mission demonstrates the vision and commitment of the National Autonomous University of Mexico: offering our readers articles of the highest quality, crossing our linguistic border, with reflections on Mexico's past and present, our links with our international surroundings, and other issues of general interest that impact the complex reality of an increasingly interdependent world.

Our magazine began circulating before English was recognized as the language of knowledge, building a strategic bridge with the United States and Canada, our neighbors and partners. It has gradually gathered the contributions of colleagues, specialists, public officials, artists, writers, analysts, and other distinguished celebrities of Mexico and our sister nations.

Many are the benefits of this great effort of dissemination, which brings us closer today to an important readership on several continents. Outstanding among them are the creativity and originality of the "Art and Culture" and "The Splendor of Mexico" sections. The content has also been widely recognized, twice receiving the prize for Best Magazine of Political, Economic, and Financial Analysis, and once named as the Best Political and General Information Magazine by the National Chamber of Mexico's Publishing Industry (Caniem).

While the countless pages found in the 100 issues of *Voices of Mexico* have echoed many authors, its essence is expressed in the shared work of its editors, translators, designers, and contributors, who, with dedication and great love of their work, have ensured this project's continuity, allowing us to celebrate the publication of its one hundredth issue. To all of them, I want to express here my thanks and congratulations.

I feel obliged to single out two people whose role in *Voices of Mexico* has been invaluable; their passion for this publishing adventure clearly demonstrates that when there is communication, trust, respect, and success follow: Diego Bugada Bernal and Heather Dashner Monk.

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The articles selected for this issue put special emphasis on migration, taking into account the fact that its global human dimension will mark this century. According to PEW Research Center data, by 2013, 232 million international migrants existed the world over, undoubtedly the largest movement of human beings since World War II.

As one of the international issues, I offer up for your judgment a brief text with my reflections about the diverse treatment given to labor migrants through three instruments to promote regional integration in the Americas and in Southeast Asia.

Mexico's history itself cannot be explained without examining the incessant flows of different population groups, who, transiting through Mesoamerica, left their mark by creating great civilizations, among them the Aztecs, the Olmecs, and the Mayas. They were followed by European migrants who began arriving in the first decade of the sixteenth century and have continued to come until our time, settling in the territory of what is now Mexico. For many reasons and with many aims, in addition to these migrants came others from Asia and Africa. All together they have contributed to the melting pot of cultures that makes up contemporary Mexico.

The passage of time has transformed the country into one of the most emblematic for the study of the complexity of the phenomenon of human mobility: today, we are a nation of origin, of transit, and of destination for migrants.

So, please read through the pages of the six contributions that make up the “Special Section” to delve into the uncertain horizon that unfortunately prevails within the migratory debate in North America. At the same time, we must also remember that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed as an instrument to facilitate the free transit of goods and services, but not to promote —much less facilitate— the mobility of the work force.

Among the central arguments expressed by the experts contributing to this issue is the cross-cutting theme of the absence of a regional agreement to coordinate, order, and manage undocumented migration; this absence is rooted fundamentally in a lack of political will and the mistrust not only of the United States, but even of Canada, with regard to Mexico. In the Canadian case, for example, the promise of eliminating the visa requirement for Mexican tourists has still to be kept. For some analysts, this measure has allowed the Canadian government to maintain greater control over the asylum process, limiting the number of visas granted, thereby greatly decreasing the number of requests submitted.

On another note, despite the fact that in 2014, 5.6 million undocumented Mexicans resided in the United States —a smaller number than the 6.9 million estimated to have been there in 2007— the U.S. labor market has continued demanding workers for low-paying jobs. In addition to these workers’ laboring under exploitative conditions, they are excluded from access to the Obama Care health system, and a large number of their children in U.S. schools swell the drop-out rates, reaching up to 30 percent, as one of the authors points out in this issue.

Despite the fact that shaping of the United States was marked by the incessant arrival of immigrants of different origins and beliefs, economic crises have sparked and strengthened perceptions that oscillate between discrimination and xenophobia against irregular immigrants, to the point that this has become one of the most important issues in the 2016 federal electoral process. For this reason, we invite you to pay special attention to the contribution covering the decisive role of the mass media in this critical scenario.

Our usual rich “Art and Culture” section could do no less than to pay tribute to migrants in several articles. One underlines the benefits of participatory art, in which migrants express themselves as actors in their own communities, giving rise to an interesting comparison of the experiences of Mexicans and Central Americans who settle in the United States, and the Africans and Asians who have arrived to Belgium requesting refugee status.

In addition, since the reflection about our borders is directly linked to migration, we look at them from multiple perspectives: one, which underlines their vitality from the point of view of visual art, as a manifestation of young creators on the San Diego-Tijuana border; and another, for example, as the denunciation of the vicissitudes faced by Central American migrants who enter Mexico as a way station in their pursuit of the coveted American Dream.

To conclude, I would like to underline that the asymmetries among the North American partners persist, at the same time that many irregular migrants and their families’ suffering is on the rise in light of the intensification of deportations from the United States, and, although to a lesser extent, even from Canada.

The current dimensions of human mobility show up the inequality and imbalances in the world today. This is a warning to us that it is imperative we protect life as a universal priority and, as a result, seek out common solutions aimed at eradicating violence and establishing peace.

This one hundredth issue of *Voices of Mexico*, then, is a tribute to all the migrants around the globe.

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