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Mexico, Conflict

Mexico: Violence is Rising and People are Starving

Mexico is a beautiful country where there are endless things to do and endless possibilities but when you go deeper into the country. Gangs, violence, conflict, and starvation is what is all around you and people are suffering because of this. A typical family consists of a mom and dad and normally around 4-7 children. They are living in rural houses made out of stone and usually grow their own crops and take care of their own animals for food. Their diet consists of meats, chicken, rice, beans, fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, and tortillas. Most food is considered home cooked meals that they prepare on their own.

Another issue that they face is income, most families in Mexico are poor and some of the children have to learn to work at such a young age to provide for their families. According to the Institute of Labor and Economics, "Nearly a quarter of Mexico's workforce is self-employed. In the United States, however, rates of self employment among Mexican Americans are only 6 percent, about half the rate among non-Latino whites." Mostly in Mexico people are self-employed and make a living by selling products directly to consumers. This causes a challenge because there are multiple factors that are out of their control. Some families don't receive all their nutrients in one day and this is a common thing. Families go to sleep lacking nutrients and still having to go check on the crops or to take care of their farm animals. Poverty is a big issue in Mexico and often gets in the way of getting all the nutrients you need everyday. It is common for people to walk to get groceries and supplies and the closest local stores are about 5-10 minutes walk. Children there don't have to worry about their next meal.

According to Britanica, 'School attendance is required for children ages 6 to 18 and is funded by the government so they will get an education. Nevertheless, nearly half of the Mexican population has completed a secondary (high school) degree, though secondary schools are virtually nonexistent in rural areas.' In rural areas of Mexico as well as in many low-income urban areas, teachers need only a secondary education to be certified to teach. Widespread rural poverty is a serious problem. An increasing proportion of the rural population is landless and depends on day labour, often at less than minimum wages, for survival. They worry about feeding the animals and providing for their parents and siblings. Children and adults have many struggles in Mexico and gang and conflict are one of them.

Statistics say that 1 out of 15 people in Mexico own a gun and most people use it for protection but if it gets in the wrong hands which it usually does people use it for the wrong reasons. In Mexico, you cannot go out in the middle of the day without always being worried about someone coming up with a gun and shooting you, or being caught in a crossfire with gangs or narcos. Everyday in Mexico about 93 people die due to unintentional deaths and are accidentally involved with a gang or a cartel. Conflict is a very common thing in Mexico and is almost a norm in Mexico. Some people are born into conflict and sometimes are forced to kill and stay there for the rest of their lives.

In some places a local gang or drug cartel controls the production of crops in a given area. The farmers learn to work under pressure or grow crops out of fear for the safety of their family. They give all their food as a payment and it leaves them nothing which leaves them hungry. According to the BBC, "Mexico's homicide rate has been rising every year since 2014 but it remains well below those of other

countries worldwide. Globally, it ranks at number 19 in the list of countries with the highest rate of intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, according to the most recent figures gathered by the United Nations.”This usually leads to conflict in the town and people dying because they were accidentally caught in the crossfire. According to Britanica, “Chief crops include corn (maize), sugarcane, sorghum, wheat, tomatoes, bananas, chilies, green peppers, oranges, lemons and limes, mangoes, and other tropical fruits, along with beans, barley, avocados, blue agave, and coffee. Traditional farming methods still prevail in many regions, especially in those with predominantly indigenous populations, such as the Southern Highlands. In these areas, intensive subsistence agriculture based on corn, beans, and squash—the fundamental trinity of Mesoamerican agriculture—is practiced on small plots of land, often part of communal village holdings.”

If there were no gangs or conflict in the area then people wouldn't be afraid to walk the streets alone in the day time or even the night time. Farmers would increase their productivity because they would get more people to help them work because they can be trusted now. Less people would be left to starve because they don;t have to pay up to local cartels or gangs. Less crops would be stolen and people would have more food to eat and nutrients to consume.

NPR stated in 2018, the number of drug-related homicides in Mexico rose to 33,341, a 15 percent increase from the previous year and a record high. Conflict is increasing in Mexico and causing more and more deaths each day. Due to the gang violence the main providers (males) are being killed which in turns causes hardships for the families that are left behind. Some are left to starve. Rural areas in Mexico are getting worse because of conflicts between cartels, the government, and gangs.

The government is very messed up in Mexico and more conflict is being caused because of politicians and top dog cartels. In Guadalupe Santa Ana a conflict between the local government and local cartel ended with a local elementary school was fired upon. This school was targeted because the Mayor's daughter was graduating. There were 7 casualties that day and 4 of them were children. This attack was directly related to the mayor being involved with the cartel. This is just one example of how conflict is induced by cartels and politicians and because of this local people are losing their lives and families are being left with a missing family member.

A good solution to all this conflict is to practice being kind. A 2015 Wilson Center, the interventions that proved to be the most effective to reduce violence are not those that target entire urban areas or even specific neighborhoods, but those that directly target the small networks of individuals already engaging in or most likely to engage in violent behaviors. Among interventions focused on deterring particular individuals or behaviors, four of the most effective ones that have been identified include: focused deterrence, cognitive behavioral therapy, targeted gun violence reduction, and drug treatment with drug courts to reduce violence.

If everyone that is involved with this conflict to go into rehabilitation centers because most of them are not mentally okay. If there were more rehabilitation centers open to helping people causing pain because of their pain it would be more helpful to them and to people they affect. To change the mentality of most people raised in Mexico because most of them practice the wrong things and it leads them to doing worse things in the future.

Rural farm owners and families could contribute by being open to these things because people in Mexico think that if you need therapy you are less than them and crazy. That is how they were raised so I think if

they are open minded and willing to change and to make a change there wouldn't be as much conflict. We could contribute by giving funds for rehab centers and for schools.

Another policy that could happen is more gun control policies and there having to be practices to own a gun in Mexico. I think that a lot of conflict and violence is really influenced by how people were raised and what morals they stand by. Women are targeted in Mexico because they are seen to only cook and clean the house and the man goes to work, comes back and sleeps. In Mexico there are also arranged marriages and people are forced into doing things they are not comfortable doing. In Mexico you are not taught to release your emotions, you are taught to suppress them and do what has to be done.

When people do release their emotions it is usually in anger and this leads to violence and shootings and unnecessary deaths. Then all this conflict and rage is passed down to younger generations being in gangs or people being in cartels. They cause violence and conflict on other people and that leads to more anger and conflict. That conflict gets in the way of people eating and getting all the nutrients they need. There is a constant pattern in Mexico full of anger and suppressed emotions that the only way people know how to release it is through violence. This huge problem and mentality is influencing other problems in the country. For example poverty, starvation, malnourished children, and government issues that affect innocent people.

Mexico has many issues and many things going on and they all stem from one thing; conflict. The way to fix these problems is to break this tradition of poverty, misogyny, and sexism which is a really normalized thing in Mexico. By breaking this issue we can target the young generation because they would be more open to listen. It might not be too late for them because the older generation has those traditions already infused into them.

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