



## The Nahuatl, Durango of Mexico

The Náhuatl people of Durango and Nayarit are known as Mexicaneros. The word “mexicanero” is composed of the root “Mexican” and the derivational suffix “ero.” The root corresponds to “Meshikan” (the ‘x’ is pronounced ‘sh’), the word that people use to refer to their language. A person would be called a “Meshika.” The suffix ‘ero’ comes from Spanish, which is added in order to designate one who speaks “Mexican”. Other Spanish words are constructed similarly, such as zapatero - someone who makes zapatos (shoes), or jardinero – someone who takes care of a jardin (garden). It should be noted that the ‘r’ sound does not appear in the sound system of Mexicanero. It’s also important to add that this is a dialectal variation of Náhuatl in which all words end in ‘t,’ hence the name Nahuatl. Durango Nahuatl should not be referred to with the usual ‘tl’ ending, because it is offensive to Mexicaneros.

The Mexicaneros are a small group of approximately 1,300 people, who live in a remote area in the Western Sierra Madre mountains, along the border of Durango and Nayarit. They grow crops and raise livestock. Corn, squash and amaranth form the basis of their diet, though they also hunt game and gather wild fruits. Although they have incorporated various elements of Catholicism into their religion, they’ve retained their pre-Columbian worship practices with regard to the sun and moon, Venus, the eagle, and the deer. At this time, there are only three known believers in the group. More than 10 years ago, a process of pre-evangelism through community service was initiated. At that time, community development projects like the provision of drinkable water, a dental clinic, and literacy were used. A Bible translation project has also been started in this language.

**Primary Religion:**

Christian

**Disciples (Matt 28.19):**

2%

**Churches:**

0

**Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):**

In process

**Population (date):**

1,300 (2003)



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Item Name	Item Note	
<b>Have They Heard The Gospel?</b>		<b>Profile Summary</b>
Call Themselves Christian (%)	90%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	2%	
Comment (Jesus As God & Only Savior)	3 believers and 3 missionaries work in the region;	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	70% animism	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%	
Number Of Pastors	0	
Comment (Pastors)	0	
Number Of Missionaries Working	3	
Comment (Number Of Missionaries)	3 missionaries work in the region; 1 national missionary and two expatriates	
Response To The Gospel	Very slowly because they don't have the Gospel in their own language	
Number Of Churches	0	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Church planters, veterinarians, evangelists, dentists, and anthropologists are needed. The young people in the community desire change and are open to modern influences. This is an opportunity for them to hear the gospel.	
<b>Countries Where People Group Lives</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Country Name	Mexico	
<b>Geography &amp; Environment</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Map Features	map and a picture sent separately	
<b>Literacy</b>		<b>Group Description</b>
Comment (Literacy)	First language literacy rate: 16% only in Durango (without considering Nayarit) Second language literacy rate: 40% only in Durango (without considering Nayarit)	
<b>Religion &amp; Response</b>		<b>Status of Christianity</b>
Attitude To Christianity	Somewhat Receptive	
Comment (Attitude To Christianity)	Somewhat resistant at the beginning of missionary work between 1987-1995. After this time, the people began to be somewhat receptive.	
Attitude To Religious Change	Somewhat Resistant	
Comment (Attitude Religious Change)	When the mother tongue is used, receptiveness seems to increase.	