Country Informational Reports
Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Country: El Salvador
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El Salvador is located in Central America.

It borders the North Pacific Ocean, Honduras, and Guatemala.

8,008 sq. mi. – slightly smaller than the state of Massachusetts.

The location subjects the country to many natural disasters including earthquakes and hurricanes.
People of El Salvador

✧ People are referred to as Salvadoran(s)

✧ Population: 6,090,646 (2012)

✧ Ethnic groups:
  ✧ Mestizos (Amerindian & Spanish): 90%
  ✧ White: 9%
  ✧ Amerindian: 1%

✧ Official language: Spanish
  Other language: Nahua (spoken by some Amerindians)
Economic and Social Conditions

✧ El Salvador uses the US dollar as its currency.
✧ Per capita income: $7,600 (2011 est.)
✧ The population of Salvadorans living below the poverty line: 36.5% (2010 est.)
✧ Literacy rate: 81.1% (2007 Census)
  ✧ 82.8% Male
  ✧ 79.6% Female
✧ A civil war lasting from 1980 to 1992 caused many people (mainly young, high school educated men) to emigrate to other countries, including the US.
  ✧ 8% of those under age 18 have parents living abroad
  ✧ 25% of families are led by women
✧ Considered to be one of the most violent countries in the world
  ✧ Murder rate: 71 per 100,000 (2011)
  ✧ Street gangs are prevalent
## Educational Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level/Age</th>
<th>Hours/Calendar</th>
<th>Language of Instruction</th>
<th>Required Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parvularia (Preschool)</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ages 4-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>Jan. 15 to Oct. 31 (public schools)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>age 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basica (Primary)</td>
<td>Late Aug. to early June (private school)</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Yes, up to age 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 1-9</td>
<td>Public School: 7 a.m.- noon with a 20 minute midmorning break</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ages 7-15</td>
<td>Private School: 7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. with midmorning and lunch break</td>
<td>Spanish. English is offered in bilingual schools.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachillerato General</td>
<td>Same as above with classes held during the day and evening.</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 10-11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ages 15-17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachillerato Vocacional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 10-12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ages 15-18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ages 17+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Flaitz, 2006*
Classrooms in El Salvador

✧ Significant differences between public and private schools.
  ✧ 90% of secondary schools are in urban areas
  ✧ 98% of private schools are city based

✧ Public school classrooms tend to be in poor condition with a lack of basic supplies.

✧ Decorations in the classroom including flags and pictures of Salvadoran leaders are typically not present.

✧ High teacher-student ratios.
  ✧ Primary level (average): 1:25
  ✧ Secondary level (average): 1:29
Public education is free however school fees, which include buying uniforms, can come to about $275 a year. This makes it difficult for all to attend school.

Bilingual or binational private schools can cost between $2500 to $3000 a year.

83% of children from urban areas attend school while only 66% of those from rural areas attend (2000). This is often because:
- many children in rural areas live far from schools.
- children must stay home or work to help their families.

English is most often spoken only in private schools. Wealthier families often have English tutors.

Public and private school curriculum often includes local and nation languages as well as mathematics, science, social studies/history, reading, music and art.

Grade repetition is common.
Teachers in El Salvador

✧ Teachers are held to high esteem similarly to doctors and other professionals.
   ✧ *English teachers are especially well respected.*

✧ Primary and secondary teachers attend university or receive technical institute preparation for three years prior to beginning their career in education.

✧ Teachers receive very low pay and many work under difficult circumstances.
   ✧ *Average monthly salary: $380 (2002 est.)*

✧ In an attempt to improve the quality of education in El Salvador, a law was introduced in 1995 that would offer pay increases to teachers based on performance and credentials as opposed to length of tenure.
Teacher has full control over class: authoritarian teaching style.

Active participation is discouraged.

Most common teaching strategies include:
- Dictation
- Rote memorization
- Recitation

Discipline practices include:
- Mild corporal punishment
- Removal of student’s desk outside of the classroom until class is over
- Notes home to parents (must be signed and returned)

New education reform is aiming to change these practices.
Views and Values

 Education is highly valued.

 Salvadorans have a reputation for hard work and tend to respect rules and regulations.

 Collectivist culture: rely on support from family, friends and coworkers and expect the same in return.
El Salvador and the United States maintain a positive relationship.

The United States continues to administer foreign aid to El Salvador for development assistance and disaster relief.

- The US allowed for Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for many undocumented Salvadorans following natural disasters such as earthquakes in 2001.
  - TPS was recently extended for many Salvadorans into 2013.

El Salvador supports the United States’ war in Iraq; having sent 360 Salvadoran soldiers in 2003.
Salvadorans in the United States

✧ About 25% of Salvadoran men age 25 or older living in the United States have gone to college.
  ✧ 81% of Salvadoran born men are employed in the US

✧ Many Salvadoran men occupy blue collar jobs.

✧ 25% of Salvadoran families earn $50,000 or more a year.

✧ 50% of Salvadoran families earn $30,000 or less a year.

✧ Top states for immigration:
  ✧ California
  ✧ Texas
  ✧ New York
  ✧ Virginia
  ✧ Maryland
  ✧ New Jersey
  ✧ Florida
State Proportion of the Salvadoran-Born Population in the United States

And Metropolitan Areas with 25,000 Salvadoran Born or More


State Share of the 1,095,000 Salvadoran Born**

- Less than 1%
- 1.0% to 4.0%
- 4.1% to 8.4%
- 14.9%
- 36.5%

**No state accounted for the following shares: 8.5% to 14.8% and 15.0% to 36.4%**

Number of Salvadoran Born in a Metropolitan Area*

- 25,000 to 100,000
- 100,001 to 135,000
- More than 270,000

*Refers to Metropolitan Statistical Area
References

**Books**

Flaitz, J. (2006). *Understanding your refugee and immigrant students: An educational, cultural, and linguistic guide.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. *(Slides 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 12)*

**Images**


References

Internet


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