

Mexico Retirees Bag up Groceries to Compensate for Low Pensions



Mexico City, April 06 (teleSUR-RHC) Mexican pensioners have been forced to come up with a novel way to supplement their low monthly state allowance.

Some 22,000 retirees across the country now volunteer as bag-packers at supermarket check-outs. Though the work is unpaid, the tips they receive goes some way to topping up the 1,187 pesos (some \$80) pension they receive each month – half of the minimum wage in Mexico.

“My pension is not enough, and I don’t see any difficulty in being a volunteer packer, even though I only have one arm,” retiree Prudencio Diaz told AFP.

Mexico, Latin America's second largest economy, only provides 25 percent of its 11 million retired people, aged 66 or above, with a pension. This is due to the high number of informal positions in Mexico, which leave workers outside of the social security system, as well as the possibility that they were not able to contribute with taxes for the stipulated time.

Women are also at a particular disadvantage as they are more likely to have dedicated themselves to domestic duties and so they are not paid into the pension system. Volunteers can receive between 148

and 296 pesos each day, “without this money I wouldn't manage to live,” explained Diaz.

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