

THE STORIES YOU NEED TO KNOW

Newsfeed

Soledad, a resident at Casa Xochiquetzal, in her bedroom at the home for elderly sex workers in Mexico City.



CONVERSATION

SHELTER FROM THE STREETS

Elderly sex workers find hope together

Not all retirement homes are the same. In a run-down neighbourhood in Mexico City stands Casa Xochiquetzal, a home for older sex workers – both former and current. Founded in 2006 by a former sex worker who was shocked to see her colleagues sleeping rough under tarps outside, it's the only one of its kind in Latin America.

Since its opening, more than 250 women have found refuge beneath its roof. Here, Soledad, one of the current residents, sits in quiet contemplation in her new home, which provides

women with food, health services and a safe place to sleep. There are house rules: residents are assigned chores, there are nightly check-ins and men and drugs are banned.

Above all, Casa Xochiquetzal gives women the space to rediscover themselves and learn about their human rights. "The home provides a space to age with dignity for a group of vulnerable women who are often invisible to society at large," says photographer Bénédicte Desrus, who documented the lives of the residents behind Xochiquetzal's closed doors. ▸

MC FACT

Mexico is one of the sex trafficking capitals of the world, with low conviction rates for those responsible*.