PARTNERS FOR RESULTS
Highlights of the World Bank’s work in Central America

July 2012 – June 2013
BEYOND LENDING

Most people believe the World Bank is merely about loans. The truth is the Bank is more. Much more.

The Bank is a source of unequaled expertise on how to help countries get ahead. In Central America, teams of our specialists help prepare, implement and finance projects from infrastructure (road construction) to innovation (in education, public administration and much more). These teams are made up of committed individuals who have a passion for helping solve the complex problems that affect our region.

Today, the Bank is involved in a wide range of projects from improving nutrition programs, “greening” growth, crime prevention, anti-corruption efforts, as well as improving tax and expenditure policies.

The World Bank also serves as a meeting ground, bringing together diverse players to help countries tackle difficult issues. Over the past six months we have convened workshops and conferences to address citizen security, growth, competitiveness and logistics in the region. These events bring to the table people from the public and private sectors, civil society, academia, local governments and from countries around the globe with similar experiences.

This publication highlights some of the most noteworthy activities of the World Bank in Central America between July 2012 and June 2013. The selection focuses almost exclusively on non-lending activities, thus showcasing the many other ways the World Bank contributes to the development efforts of member countries.

For more information on the activities included in this publication, and on the Bank’s work in Central America, please visit: www.worldbank.org/lac/centralamerica

C. Felipe Jaramillo
World Bank Director for Central America

CAN A CELL PHONE SAVE YOUR LIFE?
Central America

More than four hundred software designers and developers got together in January for the first-ever Hackathon against Domestic Violence. In all six capitals in Central America, as well as in Washington, D.C., experts on domestic violence met with computer programmers and aficionados to define and develop creative ways for technology to combat a crime that affects as many as one in three women in their lifetime.

From January 26-27, 2013 in a 48-hour marathon of project development, design and coding, the “hackers” developed prototypes for more than forty apps, including panic buttons to alert friends, text messaging systems that put victims in touch with abuse hotlines without requiring a voice call, websites that help victims connect with potential employers, better databases of available services, and even a video game to help children and teenagers understand and recognize domestic violence. Look for these solutions and more to become fully developed apps distributed across Central America.

In addition to the software solutions, the Hackathon fostered new partnerships and raised awareness about domestic violence.

FIGHTING MALNUTRITION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE SHARING
Central America

Chronic malnutrition of children is a major issue in Central America, with stunted growth affecting nearly half (48%) of children under five in Guatemala, 29% in Honduras, 22% in Nicaragua and 19% in both El Salvador and Panama. Stunting reflects the cumulative and permanent effects of early childhood malnutrition and leads to long-term shortfalls in educational achievement and economic productivity later in life.

To provide guidance on “How to Protect and Promote the Nutrition of Mothers and Children”, particularly during emergency situations, the World Bank developed an innovative Toolkit. This Toolkit includes policy guidance, benchmarking and case studies that illustrate how countries
CUTTING DISTANCES
Central America

Did you know that it is more expensive to ship tomatoes from San Jose, Costa Rica to Managua, Nicaragua than it is to ship them ten times farther to San Jose, California? This is due to bottlenecks associated with transport, customs clearance and rural roads.

To help understand the reasons behind this obstacle to Central America’s competitiveness, the World Bank produced a series of studies on logistics and integration. What came out strongly was the need to address logistics barriers – mainly at border crossings – through joint efforts between governments.

At a regional level, there are also opportunities to improve coordination and information exchange and standardize regulations, control mechanisms, health procedures and operating hours at border crossings.

Efforts must also focus on improving infrastructure to shorten distances in Central America, which are particularly burdensome for small farmers.

In February 2013, the World Bank, INCAE Business School and the Ministry of Trade of Costa Rica co-hosted regional business and government leaders in Costa Rica to address these issues. Participants from all Central American countries, including trade and transportation ministers, discussed potential measures to reduce costs at border crossings by increasing customs’ efficiency and capabilities and improving border infrastructure. They also examined various policy options and agreed to continue to work together and with the private sector to improve competitiveness through greater regional integration.

Central American countries face logistical challenges that are holding back the region’s competitiveness.

in the region have implemented priority interventions in times of crisis. These findings were shared during a regional nutrition workshop held in Panama in December 2012, with the participation of country authorities and international agencies. Knowledge sharing to address nutrition and food security in times of crisis continues through ongoing technical assistance and exchanges.

Other examples of recent World Bank support for knowledge sharing on nutrition initiatives in Central America include:

• In Honduras, the Bank organized a regional workshop in August 2012, which included a field visit to learn more about early childhood nutrition, its importance in child growth and development and Honduras’ early stimulation model. As a result of this exchange, Guatemala is looking to implement a similar model.

• In Guatemala, community discussions and consultations with experts led to the development of a communications strategy that included the production of a wide range of materials in eight local indigenous languages to improve child nutrition in the country. These materials are being used by multiple stakeholders, including Government, development partners and civil society.
JOINING FORCES TO STRENGTHEN CITIZEN SECURITY
Central America

Crime and violence is a serious challenge for Central America’s Northern Triangle, with Honduras and Guatemala the first and seventh most violent countries in the world, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. This violence is increasingly impacting development, good governance, and poverty reduction. Governments in the region are thus eager to develop an integrated regional response to this regional challenge.

The Bank is helping bring together relevant actors to discuss solutions to crime and violence at a regional level through:

1. **Promoting a regional network of ideas against crime.** To discuss the problem of crime and violence affecting the entire region and share lessons on preventing violence, the Mayor of Cali, Colombia, the Colombian High-Level Presidential Council for Coexistence and Citizen Security, and the World Bank organized a regional conference in June 2013. The 450 participants included not only local and national government officials struggling with this serious issue but also international agencies concerned about the negative effects of crime on development and non-governmental organizations from small cities that promote a host of music and sports programs as means of reducing crime and violence. As a result of this conference, a network was created to continue the exchange of ideas to address citizen security across the region. Through this network, Central America and the rest of the region have the opportunity to replicate these innovative experiences and ideas to further reduce violence across the region.

2. **Supporting a courageous task—digging for the truth.** Covering stories about organized crime and corruption is an especially risky challenge in Central American cities, as journalists who try to expose the interests behind the violence are frequently threatened, kidnapped or killed. To promote dialogue on how to write stories about violence as a development challenge and facilitate the building of support networks among journalists, the World Bank partnered with the Foundation for New Ibero-American Journalism (FNPI), founded by Colombian writer and Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez, to co-organize a one-day seminar for journalists. Twenty-five journalists from Mexico, Colombia and Central America gathered in Cali, Colombia in June 2013. The participants discussed the challenges of reporting crime, shared their experiences and learnt from their peers. But most importantly, they realized they are not alone in these efforts and must work together to cover common, transnational issues.

The World Bank serves as a meeting ground to bring together relevant actors to discuss solutions to crime and violence.
COSTA RICA CONTINUES TO INNOVATE TOWARDS CARBON NEUTRALITY

Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a global pioneer in developing policies to protect the environment. This is exemplified by its (Bank-supported) “payment for environmental services” program, where the country pays landholders to protect forests or plant new trees on their land. Now, two Bank initiatives are helping the country reach its ambitious goal of becoming the first carbon neutral state by the year 2021.

The first one supports Costa Rica as it designs a participatory program to expand the scope of the payment for environmental services scheme. It is expected that this plan will allow Costa Rica to protect or reforest an additional 341,000 hectares of privately owned land, thus preventing 29.5 million tons of carbon emissions – an important step to mitigate climate change.

The second one is helping Costa Rica reduce emissions from other sectors of its economy. The Bank is providing assistance to design a voluntary market which would allow companies to buy carbon emissions certificates to offset the negative environmental impact of their productive activities. This includes designing the rules of the market, developing a tracking and registry system, and launching a green marketing campaign to encourage companies to embrace carbon neutrality.

IMPROVING THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

Costa Rica

Costa Rica was recently recognized as the only Latin American economy in the list of top 10 reformers implementing positive regulatory changes around the world in the 2013 Doing Business Report (DBR). This is an important recognition of the country’s leadership when it comes to local small and medium enterprises.

The report also sheds some light on areas for improvement which the Government is working to address. To help address the shortcomings identified in the DBR, the Government of Costa Rica signed a Cooperation Agreement with the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation to improve business regulations for local entrepreneurs.

This Agreement included a detailed reform memorandum outlining areas of regulatory improvements in nine of the ten indicators measured by the Report.

Results to date include improving access to credit information by guaranteeing the borrowers’ right to inspect their personal data. Through the creation of online approval systems, the process for businesses to obtain construction permits has been cut from 188 days to 160 days. The Government also devised an electronic payment system for municipal taxes and streamlined the process for starting a new business by shortening the time to obtain a sanitary permit for low-risk activities. As a result, local entrepreneurs can now pay taxes more efficiently, and start a business or obtain building permits faster, giving them the opportunity to spend more time with their customers and less time dealing with red tape.
GETTING MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON SECURITY
El Salvador

Improving the effectiveness of public expenditure starts with a good understanding of where and on what exactly is money being spent. This is true also for security and justice, a sector facing a particularly difficult situation as homicides have increased in recent years. Yet, more often than not, data on the sector is unavailable.

To carry out the first ever Public Expenditure Review focused on the justice and security sector in the Latin American region, a Bank team partnered with local stakeholders and the Inter-American Development Bank to understand public expenditure and performance along the entire cycle of the security and justice sector, namely: (i) prevention, (ii) policing, (iii) investigation and prosecution, (iv) judging and sentencing, and (v) imprisonment and reinsertion.

Groups of different stakeholders were then created to explore each of these five broad areas, allowing the Bank to collect data previously unavailable on key performance indicators in each area of the security and justice chain. Combined with information available on public spending, the public expenditure and institutional review provided common ground for discussion among stakeholders on potential actions.

The next step, which the Bank continues to support, is for the existing working groups of stakeholders to identify and build consensus around key priority actions in each area to help improve the effectiveness of public spending on security.

AN OBSERVATORY TO PROMOTE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
El Salvador

In a world of global competition, small open economies must develop capabilities for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to more fully engage and compete in the world. This requires improving human capital to effectively use technology—particularly university graduates in applied science, engineering and technology disciplines. Research and technology transfer programs are needed, as well as collaboration with the private sector in financing and supporting the translation of ideas into viable products and services.

To support this transformation, the World Bank undertook a comprehensive review of the STI system in El Salvador. This included a capacity and needs analysis for an STI observatory focused on data collection activities. To connect El Salvador with regional best practice on STI observatories, the team included members from Colombia and the regional STI indicator network.

Focusing on relevant data and benchmarks across the STI system created an impetus for various actors to come together to share perspectives on how science and technology can foster development. The process also identified areas of underutilized stronger capacity, for instance at the national statistics office. By including regional leaders from other countries, the engagement expanded policy and practitioner networks that can provide informal just-in-time support to El Salvador.
SHEDDING LIGHT ON GUATEMALA’S EXtractive INDUSTRIES

Guatemala

Guatemala’s mineral wealth could make an important contribution to the country’s development. Still, efforts to extract these resources tend to clash with the local populations’ suspicions about who will ultimately benefit. The lack of trust in institutions and insufficient transparency in revenue management needs to be addressed in order to move the country forward.

Extractive industries accounted for close to 2% of Guatemala’s GDP in 2011, a share that is expected to increase over time. The World Bank has been supporting Guatemala’s inclusion in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), which seeks greater transparency of company payments and government revenues in the extractive industries. In 2011, Guatemala became an EITI candidate country, and in mid-2012, officially established the national EITI Commission, made up of representatives from the Government and private sector as well as civil society and investors. The first report reconciling revenues from 2010 and 2011 was published in February 2013. Guatemala is expected to become fully EITI compliant by August 2013.

To strengthen the dialogue among different stakeholders and increase ownership of the process by indigenous and other ordinary citizens, two priorities have been identified. These include training on EITI and extractive industry management and communication activities targeting media and indigenous groups in the areas affected by oil, gas, and mining projects. A formal course on extractive industries in Latin America attended by approximately 30 community and indigenous leaders was held in November 2012 through a partnership with the Peruvian Catholic University and with contributions from the Guatemalan Government and extractive companies.

ACCELERATING GUATEMALA’S GROWTH

Guatemala

With 51% of its population living in poverty, Guatemala urgently needs to accelerate growth and ensure that it is more inclusive. A growth rate of 3% simply won’t be enough to achieve significant progress.

With that in mind, the World Bank and the Government of Guatemala organized a high-level policy forum to discuss fresh global perspectives and the latest thinking on economic growth. Forum participants included academics and representatives from the public and private sectors and civil society, including international speakers affiliated with the Growth Dialogue network.

A two-day symposium focused on key areas to improve growth and address constraints for the country’s long-term development prospects.

The two-day symposium focused on key areas to improve growth, including industrial and export diversification, investments in infrastructure, an urbanization strategy, rural-urban linkages, the relationship between infrastructure, logistics, and growth, human capital and social development, public sector leadership, governance and the role of the private sector, and competitiveness in today’s world.

The result was a lively debate on new ideas to feed into the strategic planning process of the Government and build consensus on how to address binding constraints and improve the country’s long-term development prospects.
JOINING THE EITI FOR ENHANCED TRANSPARENCY IN EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Honduras

As Honduras has recently taken measures to explore and develop its extractive industries sector, the Government has quickly moved to establish its commitment to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as a global transparency standard that would help improve governance, accountability and enhance public trust. To this end, a Multi-Stakeholder Group involving Government, civil society and the private sector was created to guide the process in a manner that would respond to the various interests involved.

The World Bank supported the country in its preparation and application process which was completed in record time: Honduras was formally admitted as a “candidate” country in May 2013. The World Bank will continue supporting Honduras to attain “compliant” status by financing key activities in the coming months, such as outreach to a broader group of citizens (especially within different regions of the country); training for government agencies, civil society and private sector; and preparation of audit reports confirming compliance.

PROMOTING ENHANCED AID EFFECTIVENESS: TAKING STOCK OF THE G-16

Honduras

A study on the 14-year history of the Donor Group gathers its trajectory, impact on the development agenda, and experience in responding to national crises

The G-16 Donor Group was originally created in 1999, in the wake of the devastation of Hurricane Mitch, to engage with the Honduran Government and civil society to follow-up and monitor progress based on a mutually agreed set of reconstruction and development priorities. Over the years, the Group has maintained its relevance as a platform for dialogue and coordination among donors, as well as engagement with Government and other stakeholders.

As part of its Presidency during the first semester of 2013, the World Bank led a study on the 14-year history of the G-16: its trajectory, impact on development agenda and portfolio, and experience in responding to national crises. The study puts forward specific recommendations and explores alternative arrangements to improve donor coordination and aid effectiveness as Honduras enters a transition period and a new Administration begins in January 2014.
“LIFE AND WORK OF PIKINERAS WOMEN”
A DOCUMENTARY TRAVELING THE GLOBE

Nicaragua

The Miskitu women in the northern Atlantic region are among the poorest and most marginalized groups in Nicaragua. Many of these women eke out a living in the fisheries sector. Called Pikaneras, they travel to the Miskito Keys, sometimes for weeks on end, to gather lobster and bring them to market on the mainland. During these trips, they not only face harsh climatic conditions, but also rigid cultural beliefs about women and the sea, and about their role in the patriarchal Miskitu society. In 2007, when the region was devastated by Hurricane Felix, women fishermen were among the highest casualties. As part of a project to help the region recover from Hurricane Felix, the Bank financed micro-credits, training and modern fishing boats for these women and their cooperatives. Because the plight of these women is so little known across Nicaragua, the project also sponsored, together with the UK DFID and AECID, a feature length documentary film about the progress and the chronic challenges of the Pikaneras. The film tells the tale of this vulnerable community from the eyes of four women, but also conveys the resilience of the Pikaneras against seemingly insurmountable odds. From an early showing to a packed theater in Managua, Pikaneras has travelled to film festivals in Spain, Finland, Morocco, the Netherlands and all around Latin America, where it has received several cinematic awards.

“Life and work of Pikaneras women”

Nicaragua

STRENGTHENING CONSUMER PROTECTION FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES

Nicaragua

The need for effective consumer protection in financial services in Nicaragua became even more apparent after the global financial crisis and the “no-payment” movement in 2009. These events opened the door to an array of misunderstandings about hidden microloan fees, very high service charges and ultimately abusive financial practices. The damage to the financial system was severe and immediate with very high loan losses for several institutions, and bankruptcy of one of the leading specialized microfinance banks.

Responding to a request from the banking supervision agency in Nicaragua, SIBOIF, the Bank mobilized funds from the FIRST Initiative to improve consumer protection, specifically for the banking and microfinance sectors. With a combination of technical assistance and workshops to raise awareness and build capacity across the sector and with the regulators, these efforts resulted in the passage of a new consumer protection law in June 2013 with state-of-the art coverage of financial services and contracts. Related transparency regulations are soon to be put in place to allow consumers to have better and easier-to-understand information about the contracts they are signing and provide explicit warnings about non-compliance. This work contributed to improved soundness and stability of the financial system and better consumer protection for financial services in Nicaragua.
PANAMA, THE “HUB OF THE AMERICAS”
Panamá

With the expansion of its famed Canal, Panama is well-positioned to grow into one of the most important maritime transshipment points in the world and becoming the “Hub of the Americas”, leading not only in maritime trade, but also in added-value logistics services, air transit, and short shipping. The World Bank is supporting this goal through the development of an action plan to implement the Government’s multi-sectoral maritime and logistics strategy.

With funds from the Spanish Ministry of Economy’s SFLAC trust fund, the World Bank helped Panama’s Maritime Authority carry out a diagnostic of investment priorities in the short- and medium-term to improve the country’s competitiveness and organized a workshop with more than 80 public and private sector representatives to identify priorities in infrastructure and institutional investments across sectors. Based on these consultations, the Bank delivered a set of quick-win recommendations to the Maritime Authority and built a publically accessible website with the details of all the assessments, workshops and analytical work for all stakeholders to use.

In the coming year, the World Bank will support Panama’s Logistics Cabinet in implementing the recommendations.

ENERGY SUBSIDIES: IGNITING THE REFORM AGENDA
Panamá

Panama spends more than US$200 million on electricity, gas and water subsidies every year. The Government approached the World Bank for policy advice on how to rationalize these subsidies, improve their targeting and create the incentives to increase the efficiency of the energy sector. The World Bank responded with technical assistance focused in particular on gas subsidies, given the volatility of gas prices.

Over the course of five months, the World Bank conducted an in-depth evaluation of each subsidy and its incidence across socioeconomic groups, as well as possible reform options, and proposed an analytical tool to simulate different reform scenarios. The Bank also arranged for international energy and social protection experts to travel bi-weekly to Panama to brief the multi-sectoral technical Working Group, led by the Ministry of Finance (MEF, Public Policy Directorate) and made up of the National Secretariat for Energy, the Public Utility Authority, and the Ministry of Social Development. The Bank experts shared international experiences and their applicability to Panama. These meetings brought the various agencies together to share data candidly, discuss analytical work, examine regulatory issues and agree upon a shared roadmap for the reform agenda.

One leading member of the multi-sectoral technical Working Group acknowledged that the World Bank’s involvement helped foster policy discussion among an array of stakeholders. This initiative was just one example of the way the World Bank can leverage non-lending technical engagement and its convening power to play a helpful role as an “honest broker” on multi-sector policy issues to help achieve national objectives.
South-South Exchanges

PREVENTION OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

A study tour, sponsored by the World Bank, gave Honduran authorities the opportunity to learn about El Salvador’s successful municipal efforts in violence prevention underway over the past ten to fifteen years. Honduras recently approved its Comprehensive Citizen Security Policy 2011-2022, which recognizes the critical role played by local governments in managing public safety. Given the geographic proximity and similarities in social contexts, the trip persuaded Honduran participants of the need for prevention as the main strategy for the Honduras Safer Municipalities Project.

STRENGTHENING NICARAGUA’S MINISTRY OF HEALTH

In 2012, the World Bank facilitated a knowledge exchange between the Ministries of Health of Nicaragua (MINSA) and Argentina to strengthen Nicaraguan local capacity on results-based financing, external auditing, and essential public health functions. The grant provided an opportunity for long-term cooperation, which will support implementation of the national health strategy in Nicaragua and strengthen MINSA’s supervision capacity. It also contributed in establishing a network of policymakers and introducing different health payment mechanisms. Participants also learned about information systems for health services and drug distribution.

ADDRESSING LAND ISSUES IN HONDURAS TO ENSURE A PATH TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR ALL

Despite significant progress, it still takes seven procedures and 23 days to register a property in Honduras. This could be further improved with better information technology and streamlined procedures. With this in mind, high level technical staff and policy makers from the Property Institute in Honduras went on a cross-regional study tour, sponsored by the World Bank, to learn from experts in FYR Macedonia and Romania about successful land administration reform. They also discussed private partnerships for management of the land registry and coordination with municipal agencies for cadastral maintenance. The last step is a workshop in October 2013 to facilitate a deeper discussion with greater participation from all implementing partners and experts.

NICARAGUA SOUTH-SOUTH WATER

Water sector specialists from Indonesia travelled to Nicaragua in October 2012 to learn about the country’s rural water and sanitation program. The delegation saw how Nicaragua supports its local rural Water Supply and Sanitation committees, integrates social work into investments, and emphasizes sustainability.
The Central America Country Management Unit plans to deliver seven operations totaling US$360 million in FY14. The lending program will include operations in a variety of sectors such as social protection, health, infrastructure and fiscal reforms and will contribute to the broader goals of poverty reduction and shared prosperity in the Central America countries.

### New Planned/Actual Lending Operations in FY14 (US$ Million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Amount (US$ Million)</th>
<th>Delivery Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
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<td>Fiscal Space for Expanding Opportunities DPL 2</td>
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On the non-lending front, 17 activities are currently under preparation, which are expected to be completed by June 30, 2014.

### Economic and Sector Work (EW) and Technical Assistance (TA) planned for FY14 Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Economic Sector Work/Technical Assistance</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
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<td>Poverty Study</td>
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<td>Transition Strategy and Program</td>
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Ongoing lending portfolio in Central America. Forty-nine projects are currently under implementation, representing US$2.23 billion of net commitments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
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<tr>
<td>FPD</td>
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<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SDN: Sustainable Development
HDN: Human Development
PREM: Poverty Reduction and Economic Management
FPD: Financial and Private Sector Development

opportunities for all