

Latin America: Prospects for Cooperation on Migration, Trade, and Other Issues

Project Terms of Reference

Challenges in relations with Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean and South America have rarely been so broad and important. This practicum will identify, analyze, and prioritize the options that the United States and other regional actors will have in dealing with issues, including migration, security, trade, and governance, that profoundly affect the Western Hemisphere, especially the “Northern Triangle” of Central America.



KEY QUESTIONS

Violence and Organized Crime

How can ongoing efforts to reduce violence and organized crime be made more effective, particularly in communities from which migrants are departing in large numbers?

- What types of violence are present in the region, what are their causes? Who are the most affected populations and why?
- How do criminal groups destabilize the region and how do they affect human trafficking and migration levels? In what areas do criminal groups *stabilize* local communities, and how?
- Who are the violent actors and what are their origins, characteristics and goals? What vulnerabilities do those actors have, and how could their violence and the impact of their activities be reduced?
- What policies or programs – and at what levels – have already been implemented to tackle this issue and with what results?
- What is the governments’ role and how does it affect the epidemic of violence in the region? How important are perceptions vs. reality?

Corruption

How serious is corruption in these countries at the federal, provincial, and local level – and how does it influence migration?

- What are the kinds and causes of corruption, and what are the incentives to crime vs legal economic activity?
- What is the dynamic between corruption and local institutions such as police departments or local government offices, and perceptions of them? How extensively have criminal groups undermined them?
- What efforts have been made to reduce corruption, and why have they failed or worked?

- How are the US, Central American governments, and Mexico addressing corruption problems, and what have been their results – and why?
- What has been the impact of mixed international-national organizations such as CICIG and MACCIH, and what lessons have been learned from their experience?

Poverty in Border and Provincial Areas

What can be done to reduce poverty in border and provincial areas in Central America?

- What is the impact of poverty in border and provincial areas, and why? How important is the economy in border and provincial areas as a driver of violence and corruption – and therefore as a driver of migration?
- What are the current economic opportunities available – and why – for different demographics at the border/provincial areas?
- Considering previous initiatives, what has been successful and what can be improved?

GOALS

Produce concise analysis and actionable policy recommendations to assist the IDB in its 2019 policy priority of addressing migration in Central America – specifically through useful research memoranda and actionable recommendations that address the underlying causes of migration in Central America. Based on an understanding of ongoing policies and programs, the Team hopes to identify ways that they can be improved, better synthesized, and augmented.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In addition to researching published material, the team will consult with a broad range of government and non-government experts on the region and U.S. policy. These include government agencies, non-governmental entities, and other academic and regional NGOs in Washington D.C. and, if travel can be arranged, in the region.

- **Primary sources:** Interviews and focus groups with NGOs, human rights groups, community center workers, policy experts, academics, lawyers, migrants, refugees, TPS immigrants, former leaders of gangs and violent groups, former human traffickers.
- **Secondary sources:** Published academic papers, policy memos, NGO knowledge products, think tank articles, speeches from key figures.

PRODUCTS

The Practicum Team, divided into three working sub-teams (list attached), will develop and deliver products reflecting your expressed needs and interests, as outlined in this paper, including brief (1- to 2-page) page memos, background papers, oral briefings, and, if you wish, PowerPoint presentations.

OTHER CLIENTS

The Inter-American Development Bank Country Department Central America, Haiti, Mexico, Panama and the Dominican Republic (CID) is our main client. While recognizing the sensitive nature of

conversations, we would like to offer briefings on our key findings to other entities such as Embassies, NGOs and think tanks.

TOPIC AREAS AND TEAM MEMBERS:

- 1) Violence and Organized Crime
 - Diletta Deli
 - Melina Villavicencio Mancero
 - Audrey Lopez-Valdivia

- 2) Corruption
 - Esther Osborne
 - Ricardo Sanchez Ortegón
 - Matthew Kent

- 3) Poverty in Border and Provincial Communities
 - CJ Woods
 - Ilka Walker-Vera
 - Diana Dau David