Project Terms of Reference

The Central America Security Challenges and Opportunities Practicum will identify, analyze and prioritize options for solving Central America's urgent security issues, which have profound implications for regional governments – particularly those of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras – and their partners.

KEY QUESTIONS

What are the necessary conditions for solving Central American security challenges?

- How can political corruption be mitigated?
- What steps can be taken to create and vet non-governmental organizations (NGOs) domestic and foreign? How can coordination among existing NGOs be improved?

What challenges will an increase in the number of deportees sent to Central American countries pose, and how can these be addressed?

- How can the United States and Central American countries do to mitigate the effects of an increase in deportees who have committed violent crimes in the United States?
- How can deportees be reintegrated into national and local economies?
- What steps can Central American countries take to address the unique challenges faced by deportees in vulnerable groups (such as youth) upon return to their country of origin?

What works and does not work in crime prevention?

- What are the drivers that contribute to the perpetuation of criminal activities and how can governments address their proliferation in criminal hot spots?
- What strategies are needed and how can resources be allocated efficiently to combat criminal activities in Central American countries?
- How can Central American countries more effectively implement strategies to improve the criminal justice system?

Are there ways to improve government control over areas in which it is absent?

- Are there low-cost means of improving connections between rural populations and their central governments?
- To what extent do large infrastructure projects improve government control? Are there unintended consequences of such initiatives that could harm overall security?
- Are there government surveillance initiatives that can help improve security from a distance?

GOALS

The Practicum team's goal is to produce actionable recommendations and useful research memoranda to assist the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in their 2017 policy priority of addressing Central America's urgent security challenges.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In addition to researching published material, the Practicum team will consult with a broad range of government and non-government experts on crime prevention, infrastructure development initiatives, deportee reintegration, and the necessary conditions for solving these security challenges. The experts in question will include members of U.S. and Central American government agencies, non-governmental entities, and other academic and regional NGOs in Washington D.C., as well as those in Tegucigalpa, Guatemala City, and San Salvador.

PRODUCTS

The Practicum team, divided into four sub teams, will develop and deliver products reflecting the expressed needs and interests of the IDB, including brief memos, background papers, oral briefings, and, if the IDB wishes, PowerPoint presentations.

OTHER CLIENTS

The IDB is our principal client. While recognizing the sensitive nature of conversations surrounding the normalization process, we would like to offer briefings on our key findings to other entities and we welcome suggestions on individuals or organizations that should receive them as well.