

Bridging Skills and Innovation Gaps in Latin America: Country Implementation of the Competitiveness Lab

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Many factors, interacting in complex ways, determine a country's competitiveness, or its ability to increase productivity. The World Economic Forum benchmarks these factors every year in The Global Competitiveness Report, showing how countries advance or fall behind on each factor, ranging from basic education and health to innovation and the transfer of technology. Building on a long tradition of competitiveness research and benchmarking, the Forum designed the Competitiveness Lab project to help bridge gaps in competitiveness through focused public-private work that is facilitated by the Forum and leads to agendas with actionable reform.

The Competitiveness Lab's Insight Report of January 2015, 'Bridging the Skills and Innovation Gap to Boost Productivity in Latin America', was well received, and the Forum was encouraged to continue with

a second phase that moved beyond diagnosis and into action. The Lab's Phase II, a country-level initiative, debuted in Colombia in 2015 and Mexico in 2016, with multi-stakeholder workshops prioritizing the Insight Report's recommendations and identifying which one recommendation could successfully be promoted through public-private collaboration. While the World Economic Forum believes that making progress in competitiveness requires sound diagnosis and detailed analysis, it demands, above all, multi-stakeholder collaboration. Garnering efforts from relevant private- and public-sector entities and agencies in specific projects is one way to design actionable and impactful initiatives to close the gaps. This report presents the Colombia Competitiveness Lab in detail, and a summary of the Mexico Lab, which is published in Spanish as a companion report. Both plans have been incorporated into the respective competitiveness agendas under steering board-member leadership. The Forum looks forward to implementing the jointly developed work plan and collaborating in the future with Colombia and Mexico, as well as other Latin American countries, within the Competitiveness Lab model.

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