



FUSADES

Building networks to strengthen economic competitiveness

With its pioneering *Competitiveness Initiative*, *Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social* (FUSADES) aims to help El Salvador regain its economic edge.

SETTING THE SCENE —Over the past seven years, El Salvador has seen a steady decline in its economic competitiveness. By 2012 it had fallen 43 places in the World Economic Forum's global competitiveness ranking, from 48th in 2003 to 101st. As a result, in the last five years, the country has demonstrated the least growth in all of Latin America. Unemployment has risen, the rate of investment as a proportion of GDP has fallen, and poverty has increased. Yet despite the country's

worsening economic position, this critical issue had not made it onto the government's list of priorities.

"I BELIEVE THAT IT IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE COUNTRY."

GERSON MARTÍNEZ,
MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS
—ON THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN
FUSADES AND THE MINISTRY.

WHAT FUSADES DID — Concerned about the lack of attention to the issue, FUSADES sought to set a national agenda for improving the country's global competitiveness

by developing a network of private and public sector actors in order to build consensus and create the necessary momentum. Since there was no real lobbying culture in El Salvador, FUSADES took on the role of network facilitator. Using evidence-based research and alliances with a wide set of stakeholders it established the *Competitiveness Initiative* to bring together a cross-section of social actors concerned with economic competitiveness.

The *Competitiveness Initiative* network unites people who can identify and prioritize actions to increase productivity, employment and social welfare, and subsequently economic growth, in the country. FUSADES developed a network-branded website www.competitividadelsalvador.org to promote the key issues through audiovisual materials, documents and presentations. The Competitive Initiative has grown significantly over the past few years and FUSADES convenes events, meetings, and regular interaction via social media to continue to raise its profile.



FUSADES also uses its strong media connections, holding regular press conferences, radio interviews, and television appearances. FUSADES offers a “Tools for Journalists” diploma in order to build strong alliance with the media, and has developed a media centre for web-cast interviews on FUSADES TV. FUSADES also publishes a quarterly economic report that is highly visible and informs discussion and debate.

THE OUTCOME —As a result of FUSADES’s work, the Competitive Initiative network developed an agenda of priority actions for 2012–2013 that targets such topics as education, innovation, infrastructure, and market access. It was accomplished through collaboration among diverse

stakeholders and resulted in several concrete proposals for action.

In the area of education and innovation, for example, the private sector proposed an agenda to support technical careers, create scholarships, and promote research and innovation at the nexus of education and business. In the area of public-private cooperation, FUSADES signed an agreement with the Ministry of Public Works to participate in the process, and the Infrastructure Committee is contributing to the completion of a national strategy. FUSADES also continues to be a trusted partner of many journalists seeking to gain a deeper understanding of key social and economic issues in El Salvador.

To learn more about FUSADES, visit www.fusades.org

For more information on the Competitiveness Initiative, go to www.competitividadelsalvador.org

TTI’s Stories of Influence Series

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