

# Center for International Development at Harvard University

<http://www.cid.harvard.edu/mexico>



## Mexico Program

The Mexico Program is an academic partnership between the Kennedy School of Government and the Graduate School of Public Administration and Public Policy (EGAP) of the Tecnológico de Monterrey (ITESM). Sponsored by ITESM and based in the Kennedy School's Center for International Development, its main areas of work include:

- Offering access for EGAP faculty to Kennedy School intellectual and professional resources to support curriculum development, case teaching, and faculty development;
- Providing EGAP's MPA students the opportunity to attend a two-week summer course in Cambridge;
- Fostering collaboration in research and teaching between EGAP and Kennedy School faculty;
- Delivering world-class executive education for government leaders in Mexico; and
- Creating opportunities for Kennedy School students and faculty to learn about Mexican public policy and public management issues and experience.

### Engaging with Mexico

A country of 100 million people and a major trading partner, Mexico is an important neighbor of the United States. It faces enormous challenges of social, economic, and institutional development, and how well it meets those challenges is critical for all its citizens. Mexico and the United States together confront difficult immigration, employment, and law enforcement issues, and the regional partnership through NAFTA further enhances their interdependence.

Mexico has recently undergone—and is undergoing—significant political changes, with the opening up of the political system, the electoral defeat of the long-ruling PRI, and the difficult elections of 2006. Economic reforms have opened the economy. Processes of decentralization have given state and municipal governments new responsibilities in development arenas. While many of these are exciting, hopeful changes, they create new challenges for developing leaders, policy analysts, and managers in the public sector and reveal the critical need for investments in these areas.

In 2003, the Tecnológico de Monterrey, a leading private university in Mexico, launched the Escuela de Graduados en Administración Pública y Políticas Públicas (Graduate School of Public Administration and Public Policy—EGAP) to help meet these needs. The Kennedy School signed a five-year agreement to work with EGAP and, in particular, its Masters Program in Public Administration. We are currently discussing a possible renewal of the agreement.

### Key themes

Identifying areas of shared research interest, the Mexico Program has focused to this point on several thematic areas, with teams of associated faculty from the two schools. These themes include poverty and social policy, innovations in governance, civil society organizations, and microfinance. These provide an increasingly strong framework for continuing collaboration in research, teaching, case development, and executive education.

**Poverty and Social Policy:** The research project “Poverty and Poverty Reduction Strategies: Mexican and International Experiences” culminated in a conference by that title in Monterrey in 2005. That book manuscript, edited by Mary Jo Bane and Rene Zenteno, is currently under review. The 2006 summer course focused on “Poverty in the South of Mexico.” In addition, the Program sponsored the production of a film on two poor communities in Oaxaca. *Si No Lluere (If It Doesn't Rain)* is intended to be used in the classroom as a video “case” to support a discussion of poverty. The film was selected for the August 2007 Woods Hole Film Festival. New teaching cases on Oportunidades and Liconsa provide classroom resources that draw on those Mexican social programs.

**Innovations in Governance:** A 2005 KSG-EGAP workshop held in Mexico City examined the experience with government reforms under the Fox administration, and the Mexico Program developed a teaching case on reform at the municipal level, building on Merilee Grindle’s research on local government in Mexico. The 2007 summer course focused on information technology-enabled innovations in government, such as citizen-centric government. In August 2007, the Mexico Program worked with the Kennedy School’s Ash Institute and EGAP to hold a joint conference on “Democratic Practices, Public Decisions, and Citizen Participation” in Monterrey, to explore innovations in citizen participation.

**Civil Society Organizations:** The Mexico Program has cooperated with Harvard’s Hauser Center for Non-Profit Organizations to help build capacity within EGAP and in closely related centers at ITESM for working with leaders of civil society organizations (CSOs). Working with an advisory committee of ITESM faculty and CSO leaders, the Mexico Program and the Hauser Center have developed and held training workshops for Mexican CSOs on “Identity, Legitimacy, and Accountability” and “Performance Measurement and Management.” The intention is that the associated CSO leaders and ITESM faculty will continue to work together and utilize the teaching modules and materials developed for the programs.

**Microfinance:** In a research project currently underway, scholars from the Kennedy School, EGAP, and other U.S. and Mexican institutions are studying demand for and supply of microfinance services in Mexico, looking at both household and micro-enterprise demand; supply from the commercial, non-profit, and government sectors; and aspects of the regulatory framework for the microfinance sector. The research will be presented in a conference in November 2007 in Monterrey for policymakers, practitioners, and academics. The first summer course also focused on microfinance, and two cases on microfinance in Mexico have added to teaching resources in that area.

### Opportunities for Kennedy School faculty and students

Under the auspices of the Mexico Program, a number of CID and other Kennedy School professors have had the opportunity to participate in seminars, teach executive programs, conduct research, or develop cases in Mexico. A small-grant program has supported student research; proposals are reviewed twice yearly, in November and April. During Spring Break 2007, four teams of Kennedy School and EGAP students worked together on consulting projects with a municipal government in the state of Nuevo Leon. A number of students have also worked as research assistants or course assistants in various programs. The Mexico Program sponsors seminars in Cambridge with Mexican academics and policy makers.

**For more information,** visit the Mexico Program website at [www.cid.harvard.edu/mexico](http://www.cid.harvard.edu/mexico) or contact Sandra Oliveira at [Sandra\\_Oliveira@ksg.harvard.edu](mailto:Sandra_Oliveira@ksg.harvard.edu).

