



photo: Partners of the Americas



photo: Pathways Clearinghouse



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PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY IN THE AMERICAS is a policy-level dialogue that links 16 Western Hemisphere governments and societies that collectively seek to empower small businesses, facilitate trade and regional competitiveness, build a modern and inclusive workforce, and encourage green, sustainable business practices. Through this initiative, countries share best practices and collaborate to spread the benefits of economic growth more broadly to all of our citizens. Through shared leadership, Pathways partner countries are committed to deepening cooperation on the following four pillars:

- **Empowering small businesses** by providing access to financial and technical support mechanisms for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- **Facilitating trade** by improving regulations and the infrastructure that small firms need to trade more competitively across borders.
- **Building a modern workforce** by supporting worker rights and fair labor standards as well as promoting the education and training, jobs and entrepreneurship that will prepare our citizens to achieve their full potential.
- **Promoting sustainable business practices and environmental cooperation.**

Pathways Partners

Pathways was launched in September 2008 by the leaders of twelve Western Hemisphere countries. A total of 16 countries now participate, including: Belize, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and the United States. Brazil and Jamaica have observer status. The Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean are strategic Pathways partners. Annual meetings have been held in Panama, El Salvador, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago. Two member countries co-chair each Pathways pillar and organize activities throughout the year that advance an action plan.

Pathways Innovation Challenge

The **Pathways Challenge Competition** discovers, field tests, and support solutions that have a proven track-record of successfully overcoming labor and environmental barriers that small and medium enterprises in Latin America face. Launched in early 2014, the Challenge is implemented by the World Environment Center

Pathways Achievements

U.S. government agencies, implementing partners and the **Pathways Clearinghouse** have provided critical technical assistance to advance the goals of the initiative and achieve the following:

- Expanded the U.S. Small Business Development Center model to Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and Peru, building on the foundation of the Small Business Network of the Americas.
- Strengthened public-private partnerships in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Commerce to advance border management reforms, resulting in more efficient customs procedures in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, and Uruguay.
- Scaled WeConnect International's efforts in Mexico, training over 700 women business owners and facilitating one-on-one buyer/seller meetings for over 200 women; resulting in over \$7 million in deals closed.
- Fostered a framework agreement between Fruit of the Loom and the Central General de Trabajadores that led to the training of approximately 300 factory workers and managers on collective negotiations, interest-based problem solving, and leadership.
- Trained 179 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) about environmentally-sound production processes of and provided 69 new recommendations for cleaner production to SMEs, in partnership with universities, governments, and industries in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Peru, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic.