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# HIGHER EDUCATION SOLUTIONS NETWORK – ANNUAL REPORT (FY 2018)

Texas A&M University  
Center on Conflict and Development  
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## Contents

1. Executive Summary .....	2
2. Major Milestones and Achievements .....	3
3. Key Activities .....	6
4. Future (core) Activities and Funds .....	8
5. Engagement with Partners .....	8
6. USAID Engagement.....	10
6.1. USAID Buy-Ins .....	10
6.2. USAID/LAB Interactions .....	10
6.3. Other (Non-LAB) USAID/Washington Interactions .....	11
6.4. USAID Mission Interactions.....	12
7. Monitoring & Evaluation.....	13
7.1. M&E Updates.....	13
7.2. Deviance from M&E Targets.....	13
8. Lessons Learned/Best Practices .....	13
9. Environmental Monitoring .....	13

## I. Executive Summary

In accordance with the State of Texas statute requiring five year periodic reviews of state entities, the Texas A&M University Center on Conflict and Development (ConDev) was informed of its approval for another term of five years on January 29, 2018. During the period from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018, the Center continued highly active collaboration with USAID, the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, the Conflict and Development Foundation, the World Bank-funded Fond Social of the DR Congo, and Texas A&M University System partners.

The Center on Conflict and Development at Texas A&M University continues its mission to reduce armed conflict, sustain families and communities during conflict, and assist states to rapidly recover from conflict. This is accomplished through (1) multidisciplinary, interlinked research, teaching and practice (2) dissemination of results into development policy, program design and management, and (3) scholarly publication on the causes of conflict and its remediation through the application of science and technology. **The Center tests the general hypothesis that conflict at the interface of human communities is caused by perceived differential benefits from capital in its various forms, and that science and technology can be used to modify perceived benefits at those interfaces to reduce conflict and the damage it causes.**

During this reporting period, a new collaboration with USAID/Mexico was planned, and programs with the Howard G. Buffett Foundation (HGBF) in Rwanda and El Salvador expanded, as HGBF work in DR Congo reached completion. A ConDev-created NGO in the DR Congo, the Congo Peace Center, and ConDev were jointly awarded a new project for peace-building in Bas Uele Province, DRC. ConDev's academic courses increased from two to three with the successful completion of the fall term course, "Women, International Development, and Environmental Conflict." Several ConDev articles were published in prestigious journals, and two ConDev-supported students graduated with their PhD and MS degrees.

With the maturity of the Conflict and Development Foundation (CDF) from a charity into a permanent foundation under IRS regulations, a new 501(c)(3) non-profit partner, the Conflict and Development Research Foundation (CDRF), was formed to permanently support ConDev. Fiscal stability of the Center appears strong with establishment of the CDF-associated \$5 Mil. trust fund, the income from which will be partly allocated to sustaining five slots for PhD graduate research assistantships for ConDev research.

Additionally, ConDev established the Tony Laos Endowed Fellowship for Research on Conflict and Development in the Middle East. ConDev's Director was named to the US Department of State Advisory Board for Stabilization, expanding upon ConDev's participation in the US Department of State Conflict and Stability Operations Network.

## 2. Major Milestones and Achievements

The Center on Conflict and Development (ConDev) reached several major milestones and achievements during the FY18 reporting period, including:

1. On January 29, 2018, ConDev was notified, in accordance with an institutional 5-year review, that the Center is approved to operate as a unit of Texas A&M University for an additional 5 years. The commendation states, “The Center continues to have an impressive array of programs and geographic breadth of reach. Since its inception in 2014, the Center has made progress on broadening its portfolio beyond the USAID Center and funds from the Buffett Foundation. The Center is producing a significant contribution to the scholarly knowledge and literature of the field of conflict and development. It is developing and testing new concepts and technologies, all while incorporating students in the process as part of their education.”
2. ConDev’s contributions to USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict Network (ECCN) Steering Committee include joining the Education in Conflict and Crisis Network (ECCN) community to advocate for and advise USAID and other development organizations on promoting education in conflict prone societies. Due to the efforts of ECCN, USAID, its partners, and most development organizations have adopted policies to promote safe learning environments for school children.
3. The Congo Peace Center (CPC) and ConDev were awarded a \$1million sub-contract by the DRC Fond Social, a contractor to the World Bank. The work is being carried out in the Bas Uele Province, and aims to build local institutions to reduce conflict. Additionally the CPC has been recognized by the Government of DR Congo with an official license for its operation. Students from the George Bush School of Government are using ConDev’s DRC dataset as part of a class project. At the end of the Fall academic semester, eleven groups of students will make recommendations to ConDev and CDF staff regarding the next step forward for a development project.
4. A ConDev representative was named to the US Department of State Advisory Board on Stabilization, charged with supporting the State Department’s implementation of precepts included in the newly released multi-agency report on political stabilization.
5. Research on Commodity Price and Conflict in Sudan: ConDev researchers have established a causal link between commodity prices and conflict in Sudan. The research published in the Journal of Policy Modeling, used dynamic time series modeling and Bayesian algorithms to show that commodity prices that are not determined by the local markets are more likely to drive conflict. The results of this research may have policy implications on strategies of disbursing agricultural and food aid.
6. Research on penetration of governance and conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Using geocoded information ConDev researchers were able to establish a causal connection between penetration of governance and conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study uses weather shock

data as an instrumental variable to avoid endogeneity and to establish causal links. The research, which is currently under review at for the Journal of African Economies, has the potential to affect aid delivery mechanisms and USAID's efforts to promote civic engagement.

7. Research on promotion of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to develop Farmer co-operation in Eastern DRC: ConDev researchers have completed a study on the effects of ICT in Eastern Democratic of Congo. The study used information gathered from a "Transformative Solution" implemented by Domaine Monts de la Lune (DML), a local firm. The researchers find that while several challenges to farmer extension persist, the presence of ICT generated several unexpected outcomes, including improved communication of logistical and organizational information across long distances. In addition, the study finds that ICT enabled farmers' collective action in several capacities that addressed their greatest perceived challenges, including their response to crop theft and lobbying the cooperative's management entity to ensure cash-on-receipt payments for their crops. The study was presented in the International Food and Agri-Business Management Association Conference, where several organizations showed interest in adapting to DML's approach. Recently, Gadiraju Co-Op in India has adopted DML's approach on ConDev's counsel. The research paper is currently under review for publication in Information, Communications and Society.
8. Professors from Kandahar University and Jawzjan University in Afghanistan completed several professional development training workshops that built their pedagogical and technical capacities to deliver market-oriented curriculum to their Renewable Energy Engineering and Petroleum Engineering students, respectively. ConDev is also working with the Texas A&M Career Center to assess each of the Afghan University career centers and design Training of Trainer sessions to maximize their ability to support students' employability. These workshops were created by ConDev and its partners as part of ConDev's role in Youth Development and Strengthening of Local Institutions. ConDev's efforts culminated in the graduation of Afghanistan's first Renewable Energy Engineering cohort from Kandahar University. ConDev undertook these activities through funding from USAID's Afghanistan University Support and Workforce Development Program (USWDP), implemented by FHI 360.
9. ConDev's Youth Development and Strengthening of Local Institutions activities also consisted of providing scholarships to two Kandahar University lecturers to pursue M.Tech degrees from Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad. One finished his degree requirements early and was awarded his degree ahead of schedule. ConDev undertook these activities through funding from USAID's Afghanistan University Support and Workforce Development Program (USWDP), implemented by FHI 360.
10. ConDev established the "Tony Laos Memorial Fund for Middle East Research, endowed at \$300,000 and is expected to support annual awards totaling about \$15,000. CDF endowed the fellowship from indirect cost recoveries. A scholar from the Middle East was awarded the inaugural grant for her proposal entitled "The Economic and Environmental Impacts of Using the Renewable Energy Technologies for Irrigation Water Pumping and Nanoparticles Fertilizers on Agri-Food Production."

11. ConDev supported five Masters-level Capstone Courses at the Bush School of Government and Public Service. Each Capstone project's work impacts distinct communities – young entrepreneurs in Beni, North Kivu, DRC; internally displaced Syrians in Lebanon; Maize flour fortification for East African communities; public Health among marginalized Batua communities in DR Congo; and Health and Combatting Violent Extremism in Pakistani communities.
12. ConDev scientists initiated a three-year program to monitor and improve cropping systems under 65 solar-powered irrigation center pivots in Kirehe, Rwanda. The program serves 1400 farmers in a region hard hit by, and still emerging from, the 1994 genocide. Irrigation is sharply increasing incomes on most farms but new issues require continual research, adaptation and innovation -- soil salination, water logging, erosion and Southern blight. ConDev undertook these activities through funding from the Howard G Buffet Foundation.
13. ConDev Staff member Mark Smith successfully launched two key programs, funded by HGBF, for drug and violence abatement in El Salvador: (a) Renovation of Cusclatan Park, a center of criminal activity and drug trade, and (b) construction of a forensics chemistry lab to support police in drug law enforcement. Construction programs are on schedule and these innovations are expected to substantially reduce drug-related violence in El Salvador, especially its capital San Salvador.
14. ConDev negotiated and began implementing two multi-year buy-ins to collaborate with the USAID/Mexico Mission in conducting the following programs: Learning for Local Crime and Violence Prevention Systems and Focused Deterrence Impact Evaluation. The learning activity will take a holistic view of the Development Objective I portfolio and USAID's partnerships in the areas of Chihuahua, Juarez, Monterrey, Escobedo, Guadalupe, Zapopan, Tonalá, Morelia, and Tijuana. The second buy-in's activity will conduct an impact evaluation of focused deterrence activities supported by the Mission to prevent violence in Chihuahua, Juarez, and Monterrey.
15. Research on a development support program: At the request of USAID's U.S. Global Development Lab, ConDev is analyzing the successes and failures of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program – or CORDS. ConDev is conducting this study from a development perspective and from a whole-of-government perspective, in order to identify replicable components for future structure, programming and mission decisions. ConDev will produce a comprehensive report based on the findings.
16. ConDev researchers completed a research study titled “Historical and Geographical pathways of civil conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: An exploration through growing season weather shock and slave trade”. The study argues that SSA's conflict is driven by its geographical variation and is further exacerbated by its historical roots. Accordingly, the research investigates how historical slave trade and contemporary weather shocks jointly affect the likelihood of political violence. SAL researchers constructed a half-degree cell level disaggregated dataset of SSA countries over 1997-2014, including political violence, growing season weather shock, historical

exposure to slave trade, and a set of pertinent control variables. Exploiting weather variation during the growing season of the locally dominant crop, the study finds that (i) growing season weather shock, instead of whole year weather shock, significantly increases the likelihood of conflict incidence, onset, and intensity; (ii) more importantly, the effect of growing season weather shock on the risk of civil conflict is substantially amplified by the exposure to slave trade. The first part of the results contributes to the debates on the climate-war relationship; suggesting agricultural income as a potential channel through which weather shocks trigger conflict. The second part of the results shed light on the mechanisms on how geographical variation (climate anomalies in this study) and historical events (slave trade here) jointly affect the current political outcome. The research work contributes to the debates between the “geography matters” and the “history matters” views on long-term development.

17. ConDev scientists completed Nepal food security and conflict studies by generating geo-referenced maps and analysis. The maps portrayed the conflict affected areas of Nepal and their interactions with natural calamities. ConDev is preparing publications using these maps. The intended users are academic scholars and students.

### **3. Key Activities**

ConDev advanced progress on the following key activities during this reporting period:

1. As part of ConDev’s work with Youth Development and Strengthening of Local Institutions, ConDev, along with its partners (Global Consulting Solutions, University of Alaska Fairbanks, and Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station,) completed the curriculum revision for Kandahar University’s Bachelor of Renewable Energy Engineering Degree and is working on Jawzjan University’s Bachelor in Oil and Gas Engineering Degree (BOGE) programs. While the team continues to finalize the Jawzjan BOGE curriculum, in October, Kandahar University became the first Afghan institute of higher learning that graduated students with a degree in Renewable Energy Engineering. These key activities on curriculum development are part of two programs being funded by USWDP.
2. ConDev organized four professional development training workshops in India that totaled over 300 hours of pedagogical and technical development intended to strengthen the academic and institutional capacity of Kandahar and Jawzjan Universities. In partnership with the Gokaraju Rangaraju Institute of Engineering and Technology, The University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, and Vignan’s Foundation for Science, Technology, and Research, the exchanges provided hands-on training to the Afghan teams that emphasized new technologies and teaching methods that will create a more student-centered learning environment, which develops market-oriented competencies. ConDev also supported two Kandahar University lecturers with scholarships to pursue M.Tech degrees at the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, in Hyderabad. These activities furthered ConDev’s work on Youth Workforce Development as well as the Strengthening of Local Institutions. These key activities on youth workforce development are part of two programs being funded by USWDP.

3. ConDev and affiliated researchers developed a research agenda to collaborate with the USAID/Mexico mission on the Learning for Local Crime and Violence Prevention Systems program. The research plan focuses on analyzing the trends of violence and crime deterrence strategies in conflict prone Mexican societies. Data collection activities and field visits to target municipalities have been conducted by the research team. Recent activities include monthly calls with the USAID/Mexico team to discuss initial program activities, which have focused on the development of a quantitative model, as well as coordinating/conducting trips to target cities.

As part of the research plan for Mexico Learning Activities, ConDev Researchers identified six research questions. They are: What are the drivers of crime and violence in Mexico with emphasis on: Chihuahua (Chihuahua), Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua), Monterrey (Nuevo Leon), Escobedo (Nuevo Leon), Guadalupe (Nuevo Leon), Zapopan (Jalisco), Tonalá (Jalisco), Morelia, (Michoacan) and Tijuana (Baja California)? What are the specific trends if any, of crime and violence in Mexico, in context of social, political, and economic events? Do prevention activities by state and non-state actors contribute to the reduction of crime and violence? If so, through which channels? Are novel efforts of crime and violence prevention through community development and local systems framework viable? Specifically, does “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” reduce violence (emphasis on vulnerable population) through empowerment of social groups and community cohesion? Does participation and augmentation of the non-profit sector increase social cohesion and buy-in and reduce community-level crime and violence? If it does, then through which channels? What approaches and interventions if any are most sustainable and efficient in reducing crime and violence? Why are some approaches not successful?

4. ConDev’s research team is initiating activities for the Focused Deterrence program by identifying and working with partners from government, law enforcement, the private sector, and local actors in Chihuahua, Juarez, and Monterrey. Initial data collection activities and field visits to target cities are being conducted by the research team. This activity will institutionalize an evidence-based approach to reducing homicides and other serious violence.
5. Four graduate and undergraduate courses in Conflict and Development, Agricultural Economics courses 408, 608, 420 and 620 were taught in fall and spring, to an increasing number of students. Each course included several guest lecturers. Course name and descriptions are as follows:
  - a. **Economics of Foreign Intervention, Conflict and Development (AGEC 408/608)** – This course is intended to expose students to the economic models of conflict and development; dynamic socio-political models of conflict; conflict and vulnerable groups; quantitative techniques and methods in conflict and development research; interaction between poverty, natural resources and conflict in developing countries; and role of multilateral, bilateral, and strategic stakeholders in conflict resolution and promotion of economic development. For more information, contact ConDev Director Dr. Edwin Price.
  - b. **Food Security, Climate and Conflict (AGEC 420/620)** – Building on the rapidly accumulating evidence of the interaction of food security, conflict and climate, this



course exposes students to the economic models of food production and consumption in conflict regimes; the micro-economics of violence; the dynamic relationships of climate and agricultural production; potential impacts of climate change on food and socio-political security; food security among insurgent groups; conflict resistant food systems; and the shifting relationships between poor and rich nations in relationship to climate, food and conflict. For more information, contact ConDev Director Dr. Edwin Price.

6. ConDev continued to organize support and pursue partnerships to establish the “Stabilization Laboratory” (StabLab) within the Center. The StabLab will build a dataset to improve teaching and research capacity focused on Provincial Reconstruction Teams and military civil affairs development projects during conflict, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. New partners include the Texas A&M School of Law School, the Texas A&M Department of Military Science, and the College of Engineering.
7. ConDev staff conducted research on the returns to investment in coffee, including comparative analysis across a range of research investments in other perennial and annual crops, and more broadly in agriculture. The research is aimed at increasing the coffee industry’s investment in coffee research with specific emphasis on smallholder coffee farms. Declines in the industry in Central America have been a major factor in northward movement of migrants, causing conflict along the US southern border and within the USA. Improving incomes of smallholder coffee farmers is expected to reduce violence in the region. The researchers find that research investment increase yield over time.
8. ConDev held working group sessions with representatives from Texas A&M University’s School of Public Health and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences to plan a “Global Development Certificate.” The 15-credit hour certificate will have three courses taught by researchers affiliated with ConDev. The certificate will be jointly offered by the School of Public Health and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

#### **4. Future (core) Activities and Funds**

All the core activities and funds have been allocated and expended.

#### **5. Engagement with Partners**

During this reporting period, ConDev continued to engage with a variety of partners. Several highlights are noted below:

- I. ConDev is chartered through the Texas A&M Board of Regents as a partnership between the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the Bush School of Government and Public Affairs, and the School of Public Health. Representatives from each of these units

periodically meet to review ConDev's programs and are continually apprised of all ConDev activities through their occasional attendance at staff meetings, and are provided with copies of all minutes from meetings.

2. The proposed Stabilization Laboratory includes the Bush School, the School of Public Health, the School of Military Science, the Law School, the University Libraries, and the College of Engineering. Our pursuit of the Lab requires their continual support in order for the initiative to be officially regarded as a university priority with respect to possible USG funding. Jointly these Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) entities are engaged with numerous units within the US Department of Defense to develop the scope and funding for the Stabilization Laboratory.
3. ConDev supported five Capstone projects in the Bush School. Each capstone included about six graduating MA students working on projects that deliver research products needed by external organizations. ConDev was the client in three of the capstones, and supported two more.
4. ConDev provides personnel for several projects of the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, totaling about \$23 Mil. (as of 01/01/2018), as shown below. Each of these projects includes one or more local government entities, the HGBF, the Conflict and Development Foundation, and ConDev. The DRC Bilingual Christian University of Beni University Entrepreneurship project additionally includes the Mastercard Foundation as a donor partner. The list of projects that ConDev personnel contributed to is:
  - a. Afghanistan Kandahar Curriculum
  - b. Afghanistan Jawzjan Curriculum
  - c. Botswana EcoExist
  - d. DRC C&D Endowment (Congo Peace Center)
  - e. DRC, Beni University Entrepreneurship
  - f. DRC Goma Border Post Construction
  - g. El Salvador Forensics Laboratory
  - h. El Salvador Parque Cuscatlan
  - i. Ghana Center for No-Till Agriculture
  - j. Rwanda Corniche Border Post Construction
  - k. Rwanda Volcanoes Highway
  - l. Rwanda Nasho irrigation system
  - m. Rwanda Agricultural School Groundwork
  - n. Rwanda Seed Systems
5. Texas A&M Students have been impacted through: Three academic courses given by ConDev scientists (about 45 students); Bush School Capstone Courses (about 30 students); and public lectures to the Bethancourt Student Organization (50 students) and the Corps of Cadets (250 students).

6. ConDev partnered with the Congo Peace Center to successfully compete for a World Bank contract through the DRC Fond Social, to build local institutions and promote peace and stability in Bas Uele Province, in northern DRC near the Central African Republic and South Sudan.
7. ConDev staff continues to work with the AidData lab at the College of William and Mary, through the AidData Research Consortium by contributing to their efforts in terms of research and partnering in future proposals
8. ConDev partnered with four Indian universities through the Afghanistan Education Projects **being funded by USWDP**. ConDev envisions furthering these partnerships through research, extension and student exchange programs.

## 6. USAID Engagement

### 6.1. USAID Buy-Ins

1. **Research on School Safety and Learning Outcomes in Africa:** ConDev is completing its second collaboration with the Africa Bureau's Office of Sustainable Development, Education Division on issues of safe learning environments. The new study encompassing schools in Tanzania, Zambia and Rwanda reveals that school safety significantly affects the learning outcomes of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. This data-generated evidence has the potential to inform USAID programing and data collection efforts.
2. Collaboration with USAID/Mexico Mission on Crime Prevention and Violence Trend Research. ConDev is collaborating with USAID/Mexico to conduct two programs:
  - a. A multi-year learning activity of municipal crime and violence prevention efforts. The purpose of the learning activity is to support local stakeholders' capacity to examine the contribution of multi-sectoral, municipal violence prevention strategies and local system-strengthening efforts for sustainable reductions in crime and violence rates, and use the lessons learned to adapt policies and programming. Additionally, this learning activity will provide an understanding of crime and violence trends in Mexico as well as their drivers.
  - b. ConDev currently is working with USAID Mexico through a multi-year buy-in to conduct an impact evaluation of focused deterrence interventions in three municipalities of the northern states of Mexico. The activity ConDev is evaluating will adapt the principles of focused deterrence to prevent violence in Chihuahua, Juarez, and Monterrey.
3. **Maize flour fortification**, a \$10,000 buy-in from the USAID Global Health Bureau to the Bush School to support a Capstone research project. This study assessed the feasibility and impact of government legislation in Kenya and Tanzania to require maize flour processors to fortify their product to improve human health. Much of the industry is in the hands of small-scale processors, but there are some large-scale firms. The legislation may tend to favor large

processors, and could cause rural unrest if small processors that are easily accessed by rural farmers are put out of business. The study was performed by a team of graduate students, led by a faculty member. The results are expected to provide policy guidance regarding food fortification.

4. **Research Study on the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) Program buy-in.** USAID, through the U.S. Global Development Lab, has identified a need for more knowledge of the operations and leadership function of USAID during the Vietnam War, specifically in the implementation of the hearts and minds initiative known as the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program – or CORDS. CORDS, one of the most successful US government interventions in conflict, was marked by interagency coordination and (while funded) significant successes in achieving its objectives. Through executing an intensive research program and producing a comprehensive report based on the findings, ConDev is assisting USAID’s objective to learn more about the successes and failures of the CORDS program from a development perspective and from a whole-of-government perspective, in order to identify replicable components for future structure, programming and missions decisions. The CORDS program focused on stabilization and development in Vietnam during armed conflict and is therefore highly relevant to the current mission of the USAID/HESN Center on Conflict and Development at Texas A&M University.

## 6.2. USAID/LAB Interactions

1. Useful interaction between ConDev and USAID/Lab have continued. Monthly conference calls with our AOR and associates are being conducted. The continuing interaction has been especially useful in identifying and arranging buy-in opportunities, receiving guidance about our reporting, and providing feedback on ConDev activities through attending deep dive presentations about our current programs.
2. Current and near-term activity will include the review and analysis of research results, academic papers, and students’ other reports in order to prepare program and policy briefs. The assistance of Lab staff in reviewing and editing these briefs will be highly useful.

## 6.3. Other (Non-LAB) USAID/Washington Interactions

ConDev engaged various parts of USAID/Washington during this reporting period, including the below interactions:

1. Bush School Capstone project students and faculty advisors routinely work with USAID bureaus to plan and define their products. The projects typically end with a briefing to respective units at USAID. The capstone projects are finalized during the spring semester at Texas A&M, but the planning for capstones takes place in the preceding summer and fall. The capstones, and

ConDev support for them, is essentially a continuing year-round activity. During this reporting period, the following Bush School Capstone projects was implemented: The Capstone Course recently completed at the Bush School of Government was entitled Supporting Entrepreneurship in a Region of Conflict, Limited Connectivity, and Conservation Concern: A Case Study in Beni, North Kivu, DRC.

2. The US State Department Stabilization Advisory Board, on which ConDev is represented, has a multi-agency focus including the Department of Defense and USAID. ConDev values this opportunity for collaboration with the three USG Departments/Agencies, especially the opportunity to work with high-level representatives of USAID in a multi-agency, policy framework.
3. Through our buy-in, ConDev staff interacts routinely with the Africa Bureau. Occasionally ConDev interacts with the Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and Environment (E3), and the Office of Education with respect to FHI360 projects in Afghanistan, for which ConDev is a subcontractor.
4. Additionally, the Borlaug Institute at Texas A&M is engaged with USAID in the Feed the Future (FtF) Innovation Lab for Small Scale Irrigation project. ConDev supports this work by the Borlaug Institute by supporting faculty to contribute to the project. ConDev staff also supervises research on the economics of smallholder coffee production, a USAID FtF project based in the Borlaug Institute. The Rwanda Nasho irrigation system is an area where especially useful collaboration with other partners could be focused. The Nasho project needs technical support in the area of crop selection for production under center pivots. Agencies that work with soil and water conservations, grain legumes and cereal grains could be valuable contributors to the project. ConDev will contact possible partners in the coming quarter.

#### **6.4. USAID Mission Interactions**

During this reporting period, ConDev has had several notable interactions with USAID Missions.

ConDev has had extensive interaction with USAID/Mexico regarding two buy-in programs described in 6.1. above. These interactions are expected to continue through the duration of project implementation. Monthly calls are being conducted to discuss progress on both programs.

Also within this period, a ConDev staff member in El Salvador has had numerous interactions with USAID with respect to the HGBF interventions that address drug-related crime. USAID staff and the US Ambassador have been much involved in planning the projects and through occasional inspections. The interaction, however, has been in the context of HGBF cooperation with the local government and with USG entities in El Salvador. ConDev supplies the Chief of Party for the activities, Mr. Mark Smith, although the Center is not the driver of the activities.

While all core-funded in-country work has concluded, ConDev periodically informs the USAID Missions in Rwanda, Uganda, DR Congo, Ghana, and Guatemala of ongoing ConDev projects sponsored by other donors in those countries.

## **7. Monitoring & Evaluation**

### **7.1. M&E Updates**

With the shift of our activities to other programs and funding sources that do not support the cost of M&E personnel, the full-time position for M&E was eliminated when the previous holder of the position accepted a new opportunity in the Texas A&M University System. The M&E responsibility is now undertaken by the Director and Assistant Director. M&E data collection efforts for both of our Mexico research projects will be challenging as unique methods need to be utilized. The M&E for these projects will be conducted by the project PI's.

### **7.2. Deviance from M&E Targets**

All targets are being met during this reporting period.

## **8. Lessons Learned/Best Practices**

Various “transformative solution” grants and other grants by ConDev have resulted in a large number of reports. Some of these have been transformed into Policy Briefs to USAID, project reports submitted to USAID and publications of which copies have been forwarded to USAID. Both among the reports that have been submitted as well as raw reports that have not been further processed, there is a need and opportunity to further edit, refine and synthesize these results. This will be a major focus in the coming months.

## **9. Environmental Monitoring**

ConDev's work plan was reviewed by the U.S. Global Development Lab's Bureau Environmental Officer for potential environmental impacts and received a categorical exclusion for each included activity pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2).

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