

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910793094903321
Autore	Acosta Pablo
Titolo	Toward More Efficient and Effective Public Social Spending in Central America // Pablo Acosta
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Washington, D.C. : , : The World Bank, , 2017
ISBN	1-4648-1061-3
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (146 pages)
Collana	Directions in Development;Directions in Development - Human Development
Disciplina	301.32
Soggetti	Cost Effectivity Efficiency Incidence Analysis Institutional Development Social Spending Central America Social conditions
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references at the end of each chapters.
Nota di contenuto	Front Cover; Contents; Foreword; Acknowledgments; About the Authors; Abbreviations; Executive Summary; Overview; Main Findings; Main Recommendations; Note; Chapter 1 Introduction; Notes; Chapter 2 Context: Progress and Opportunities for Human Development in Central America; Notes; References; Chapter 3 Recent Trends in Social Spending across the Region and Sectors, 2007-14; Notes; References; Chapter 4 Coverage and Targeting; Education Coverage and Targeting; Health Care Coverage and Targeting; Social Protection and Labor Coverage and Targeting; Notes; References Chapter 5 Effectiveness and Efficiency of Public Social Services; Effectiveness and Efficiency of Education Services; Effectiveness and Efficiency of Health Services; Effectiveness and Efficiency of Social Protection and Labor Spending; Cost-Effectiveness of Public Spending: Relating Spending to Outcome; Notes; References; Chapter 6 Selected Institutional and Governance Arrangements in the Social Sectors; Education; Health; Social Protection and Labor; Note; References; Chapter 7 Policy Recommendations; Education; Health; Social Protection

and Labor; Cross-Sectoral and Cross-Regional Messages
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Sommario/riassunto

Central America has come a long way both in terms of economic and political stability. Increasingly the region is focusing on implementing productivity-enhancing reforms as well as supporting reductions in poverty and inequality. This report analyzes recent trends in public social spending in Central America from 2007 to 2014, conducts international benchmarking, examines measures of the effectiveness and efficiency of social spending, and discusses the quality of selected institutions influencing this spending. We examine total social spending, as well as detailing its four components: public spending on the education, health, and social protection and labor (SPL) sectors. In analyzing public social spending, the report addresses three crucial policy issues: (a) how to improve the coverage and redistributive incidence of public social spending; (b) how to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public social spending; and (c) how to strengthen the institutions governing public spending in the social sector. While based heavily on a series of recent analytical social spending studies in six countries in the subregion-Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama-this report also takes a broader regional perspective and includes some comparisons to countries in other regions.
