



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Building Institutions, Escaping Development Traps

Short-Route Accountability in the Philippines

In the early 1980s, the poor condition of infrastructure in remote areas of the Philippines hindered economic growth and heightened regional inequalities. A new [ISS case study](#) examines how involvement of residents of the northern province of Abra increased the efficiency and quality of public works projects in the region.

Recognizing the central government's inability to follow through on improvement projects in far-flung parts of the 7,100-island archipelago, in 1986, President Corazon Aquino created the Community Economic Development Program. This initiative changed the way the government managed its rural public works projects and empowered citizens in places like Abra to monitor the progress and quality of construction.

In the wake of the program's creation, two dozen volunteers in Abra formed Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government to ensure that officials and contractors carried out their jobs faithfully. Members visited construction sites, checked compliance with technical standards, and kept track of progress. By the end of its first year of operation, Concerned Citizens had monitored about one hundred projects, alerted central government agencies to 20 incomplete ventures, and provided evidence on which to base a high-profile inquiry against a number of local officials. It earned a presidential citation and national and international recognition. Although Aquino's program ended, the group continued its activities over the next two decades. By the end of 2012, it had monitored more than 600 infrastructure projects valued at about 300 million pesos (US\$7 million), including roads, school buildings, irrigation systems, and bridges.

Changes at Nigeria's Ports

In 2003, Nigeria's seaports were among the least efficient in the world. Businesses suffered, investors stayed away, and shippers diverted their loads to ports in neighboring countries. A new [ISS case study](#) describes

Featured ISS Interviews

[Juan Miguel Luz](#), associate dean of the Asian Institute of Management, describes how the Department of Education of the Philippines reduced corruption in textbook procurement and increased controls in textbook quality and delivery. His comments provide insights into the challenges of monitoring services and holding both civil servants and suppliers accountable.

[Nasir El-Rufai](#), the former director general of Nigeria's Bureau of Public Enterprises, explains how his office worked with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to fight money laundering in the country. During his tenure as minister for the Federal Capital Territory, he promoted the involvement of the private sector in service provision in an effort to improve the quality of service delivery.

Share Your Feedback

The ISS web repository is an idea bank that enables practitioners and scholars to evaluate the pros and cons of reform strategies and to weigh the effects of context. ISS invites feedback on its cases, including suggestions of additional topics and questions to be considered, corrections,

how the government improved infrastructure, mitigated corruption, and reduced the procedural entanglements caused by dozens of government agencies competing for slices of the ports' revenues.

President Olusegun Obasanjo invited private companies to manage Nigeria's port terminals in exchange for commitments to invest in port infrastructure and to remit a share of profits and other fees to the National Ports Authority. The ambitious reform was not easy. Opposition from Nigeria's legislature nearly derailed the transition, and acrimonious negotiations with labor unions threatened the smooth transfer of managerial responsibilities to private operators. To achieve its reform goals, the country's privatization bureau relied on a transparent and closely monitored concession process, political support from the presidency, and controversial legal arguments. Private terminal operators brought substantial new investments and improved port operations, though complementary reforms in customs and regulation still had to take place before Nigerian businesses could realize the full benefits of the new system.

Improving Government Accountability and Leading Reform

Innovations for Successful Societies (ISS) helps public servants, policy makers, and scholars share institution-building strategies that work in especially challenging contexts. Interview-based case studies facilitate these exchanges and provide a basis for scholarly research. To date, ISS has published 113 reformer-focused case studies and 364 interviews, all of which are available for free on a web repository.

Thousands of people around the globe access these web resources each month. Governments use the materials to learn from each other, inspire discussion in their ranks and recall the steps they took to implement a reform. Universities and training programs use the cases in the classroom to engage students in the operational and strategic aspects of public sector reform.

and how case studies are being used: iss@princeton.edu.

Where ISS Has Worked

Africa: Botswana, Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia

Asia & Pacific: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Vietnam

Europe & Central Asia: Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Georgia, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Northern Ireland, Slovenia

The Americas: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, United States

Middle East & North Africa: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco

Contact Us

83 Prospect Avenue
Princeton, New Jersey 08544
U.S.A.

Phone: +1 609-258-5258
Fax: +1 609-258-7762
Email: iss@princeton.edu

Follow us to keep updated on
Innovations for Successful Societies:



www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties

Innovations for Successful Societies (ISS)
is a joint program of Princeton University's
Woodrow Wilson School of
Public and International Affairs and
Bobst Center for Peace & Justice.

[Forward this email](#)