



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Preparing for Peace: Croatia Rethinks National Defense

In 2000, five years after the end of a long and bloody war for independence, Croatia had made little progress in adapting to the realities of peacetime. Both the defense ministry and the armed forces were far larger than their new roles required, and their lack of accountability to elected civilian leaders was out of step with modern standards. But a new government saw an opportunity for change. Despite opposition from the military as well as from veterans and politicians who had benefited from the old system, reformers succeeded in establishing civilian oversight and a new culture of transparency, slashing the size of the military, and drafting laws to revamp defense institutions. These efforts paved the way to Croatia's membership in NATO and the European Union.

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*Statue in downtown Zagreb, Croatia.
Photo by Tristan Dreisback*

Benin's National Evaluation System

Beginning in 2007, Benin's leaders instituted a system to evaluate the implementation of public policies across different ministries, assess impact, and recommend improvements. One of the first countries in Africa to democratize in 1990s, the government had long struggled to strengthen the quality of public management. Working with limited resources and political support, a newly created Bureau for Evaluation of Public Policies gradually expanded national evaluation capacities and increased internal demand for policy evaluation. By 2015, the bureau had become a permanent part of the administration, completed more than a dozen evaluation studies, and inspired similar initiatives in Togo, Burkina Faso, and Mali.

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ISS Featured Interview

In a 2009 interview with ISS, **Omponye Kereteletswe**, the coordinator of public sector reform in Botswana's Office of the President, provides a brief history of reform efforts in Botswana and discusses the importance of performance measurement and performance management in public service reforms. He also describes strategies for building public support for reforms and the value of getting public feedback on the process.

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