



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES



Incentives, Political Will and Getting Things Done

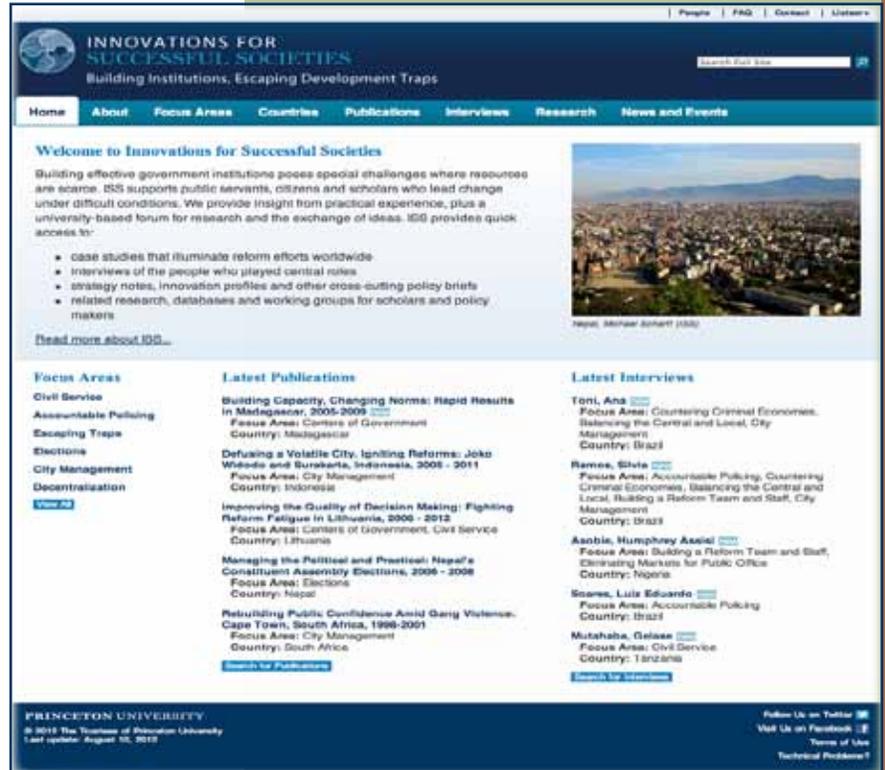
Why are some countries better able than others to deliver services and make core government institutions work? “Focus on political incentives,” say many social scientists. “It’s all about political will.” Even leaders who face strong demands to deliver, however, may have trouble implementing their plans. Where political will exists, institutional capacity may fail unless a reformer has strong negotiating skills and organizational savvy.

Reforms in Bangalore, a little over a decade ago, illustrates the interplay between politics, incentives and implementation. In the 1980s, Bangalore became an early center of India’s information technology (IT) development and enjoyed a reputation as a prosperous city with a large middle class. By 2004, more than 1,300 software and outsourcing companies had established operations in the city, employing more than 170,000 workers and accounting for nearly 44 percent of India’s total IT exports.

Paradoxically, Bangalore’s luster began to fade in the 1990s, as the city became a hub of India’s IT boom. Between the 1991 and 2001 censuses, the city’s population grew by 61 percent, mostly reflecting an influx of people from outside Karnataka, the state in which Bangalore is located.

The city’s rapid population growth and burgeoning business sector strained municipal services. Municipal government failed to rise to meet the challenges. Garbage went uncollected, roads became congested and power and water shortages were commonplace. Moreover, because public agencies that provided core services like water and electricity functioned as virtual monopolies, citizens and businesses had no credible alternatives.

Beginning in 1993, clamor for change grew. NGOs like the Public Affairs Centre began to conduct surveys, popularly known as citizen report cards, on citizens’ satisfaction. The results were striking. Not only were the overwhelming majority of Bangalore’s residents unhappy with these public agencies but they also identified a laundry list of problem areas ranging from corruption to poor customer service and service stoppages.



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

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V. Ravichandar, an urban activist, credited changes in the country's economic policies with this growing public demand for change. The new policies had helped raise income levels and expand exposure to trends in other parts of the world. Ravichandar observed that "a rising middle class started getting into a more demand-oriented, rights-oriented kind of framework, and saying, 'We deserve better...There needs to be more transparency.'"

Part of the problem was the structure of incentives. At the state level, chief ministers faced disincentives to change. Their positions were politically weak. Because they were political appointees, they risked dismissal at any time. This insecurity forced them to place a high premium on cultivating relations with party elites and to reject any actions that did not toe the party line or that alienated a significant electoral interest. As a result, chief ministers often balked at supporting civil servants who tried to make significant changes in government policy and operations.

At the city level, top administrators had short, unstable terms in office, which made it hard to implement significant changes. Mayors held one-year terms and were largely figureheads. Agency heads who tried to lead significant reforms risked losing their jobs if their actions disturbed powerful political interests.

In 1999, S.M. Krishna became chief minister of Karnataka. He had experience as a minister and as a legislator, as well as a reputation as a visionary. Krishna committed his administration to revamping Bangalore's public agencies and improving the quality of service delivery in the city. To achieve these goals, he assigned K. Jairaj, to "upgrade" Bangalore "to make it world class." While the particular content of reforms differed across public-service providers, Krishna's broad reform strategy

involved two core components. He provided political cover to enterprising civil servants who had what he referred to as the "bureaucratic guts" to shake up their respective agencies. He also engaged the private sector to provide expertise and resources in designing reforms while providing the political clout to overcome opposition.

Krishna took a series of concrete steps early in his administration. In selecting agency heads, he chose civil servants who had strong family ties to Bangalore and had held key positions in the city's government, believing they understood the city and had a strong emotional commitment to its resurgence. Importantly, Krishna publicly guaranteed the tenure of the senior officials who ran Bangalore's public agencies—a pledge that he largely kept, with some notable exceptions. Many agency heads said that Krishna's political support was a catalyst for action within their agencies, and that his effort to insulate civil servants from political pressure was crucial to their ability to implement reforms.

While empowering agency leaders and generally granting them broad discretion to establish agency-level priorities, Krishna held everyone publicly accountable. In the early days of his administration, Krishna's office called for the creation of a public body that would help to monitor and reinforce the reform efforts of government agencies. He helped launch the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF), a public-private partnership that designed reforms and held semiannual public meetings at which agency heads reported on their performance in meeting targets

The BATF changed the way people thought. As one commissioner said, "We set very specific targets for ourselves.... You went before 1,200 people and did a PowerPoint presentation and said what you will do in the next six months.... I mean, you can't go after six months and start giving all kinds of lame excuses.... As far as I was concerned, it was [a] question of my credibility and self-respect"

The BATF forums also helped ensure continuity of priorities and programs, because new agency heads were obliged to carry out the commitments made by their predecessors. In a system of municipal governance known for overlapping agency responsibilities, the BATF forums also imposed order on reform efforts and helped resolve differences.

In 2003, *Business Today* delivered its verdict on the Krishna-era reforms, proclaiming, "The future of Indian cities is here. We have seen it. And it is Bangalore." Public ratings of city services rose and the balance sheets of city departments improved. For details, visit the ISS website and see: "Keeping Up with a Fast-Moving City: Service Delivery in Bangalore, India, 1999-2004."



Kawar, India. (Sara Nason, Office of International Programs)

Political Party Consultation & Election Violence

Citizens recently went to the polls in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya to vote in the first elections of the Arab Spring. As citizens of these countries learned, founding elections pose special challenges. New commissions must build their own internal procedures, recruit staff, create voter rolls, delimit electoral districts, establish voting stations, print ballots, ensure the integrity of the vote and build mechanisms for dispute resolution. Impartiality and independence are vitally important throughout the process.

Believing that fair procedures enhance public acceptance and lower levels of election violence, many international bodies have invested in helping countries develop the underpinnings of free and fair elections. An ISS case study series on founding elections in Somaliland, Liberia and South Africa, however, suggests that, while this step is necessary, the correlation between procedural quality and the level of violence is not as strong as one might think. Most founding elections have procedural flaws that political party leaders could exploit or use to protest outcomes. What matters most is the character of political party consultation and public pressure on parties to abide by the rules and the results.

Three Founding Elections

Ten years after its separation from Somalia, Somaliland gave its citizens the opportunity to elect representatives to local and national governments, with three rounds of voting between 2002 and 2005. Prior to these elections, political power in Somaliland rested with groups of clan elders, called the Guurti, and neither political parties nor the groundwork for elections existed. Using a mixture of traditional consultative mechanisms and democratic innovations, the nascent National Electoral Commission successfully guided the development of political parties in coordination with the Guurti and overcame many logistical challenges to secure Somaliland's historic achievement. Consultation among party leaders and senior officials helped create a successful election. For details, see "Nurturing Democracy in the Horn of Africa: Somaliland's First Elections."

Liberia held its first post-conflict election in 2005, two years after the conclusion of a pair of civil wars that had raged since 1989. Though Liberians had gone to the polls in the years before the war, the infrastructure and expertise needed to oversee successful national elections had disappeared. To overcome the many schisms conflict had created, the electoral commission had to ensure the voting process was inclusive

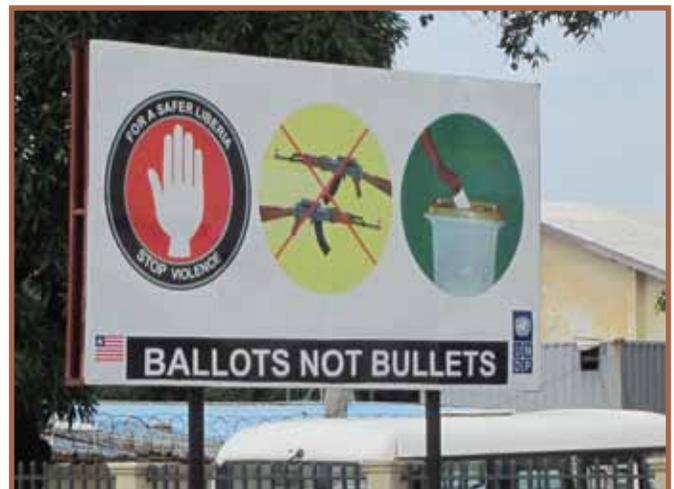
and legitimate. Failure on either count could easily thrust the country back into armed conflict. Under the leadership of former Supreme Court chief justice Frances Johnson-Morris, the commission led a national campaign to update the voter registry, while preventing the disfranchisement of the many citizens who lacked identification papers. Following a general election and runoff that election observers deemed free and fair, victor Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became Africa's first female head of state. For details, see "A Path to Peace: Liberia's First Post-War Elections."

South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission organized the country's first fully democratic elections in 1994 after the collapse of apartheid, the country's racially exclusive system of government. The commission had just four months to organize and implement elections according to a timetable agreed to by the major political parties. Once again, failure risked civil war. The commission scrambled to identify polling sites, open up territories of the country to democratic participation, and secure and distribute voting materials in time. Despite procedural weaknesses, South Africans accepted the results and formed the country's first government of national unity. Find the full story in "Organizing the First Post-Apartheid Election: South Africa, 1994."

Critical Success Factors

In all these contests, the existence of mechanisms for consultation between political elites and electoral bodies stood out as a critical factor for implementing successful elections.

- In Somaliland, the electoral commission held extensive negotiations with political parties to determine how the elections would unfold, and was guided by a principle of consensus in decision-making.



A billboard outside the National Election Commission Headquarters in Monrovia, Liberia. (Michael Scharff, ISS)



Elections, continued

- In Liberia, Johnson-Morris set up an Inter-Party Consultative Committee that met monthly to familiarize parties with rules and procedures for campaigning and for election day itself. Through the committee, political parties agreed on a code of conduct and set procedures that would take effect if no presidential candidate garnered a majority of the vote and if there was a tie for second place.

- In South Africa, the electoral commission used flexibility in the rules and deadlines to allow three additional political parties, each representing large constituencies, to contest the election. For example, one party signed up only a week before the elections and the commission had to affix stickers to ballots to ensure its inclusion. Without the commission's willingness to bend the rules to allow the party's late entry, the flawed elections might have completely foundered. To ensure broad participation in a country where many had never voted, the commission issued 700,000 temporary voters' cards, set up more than 600 polling stations, and recruited an additional 13,000 staff—at great speed.

Party Consultative Mechanisms

In recognition of the essential role of party consultative mechanisms (PCMs) in mitigating the risk of violence and enabling free, fair and successful elections, ISS has launched a new line of research devoted to the varied forms and impacts of PCMs. Through a series of case studies in the months to come, ISS will shed light on the design and implementation of effective consultation strategies. Jeff Fischer, previously Vice-President at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, will help guide this series.

New Case Studies Join City Series

Cities are hotbeds of energy and creativity in the effort to build government effectiveness and accountability. New case studies join the ISS city management series in September, including a three-part chronicle of reforms implemented in the Italian city of Palermo between 1994 and 2003.

In 1993, as the city reeled in the wake of a series of high-level anti-Mafia assassinations, Palermo residents elected Leoluca Orlando mayor with 75 percent of the vote. For decades, the Sicilian Mafia had held a strong political, cultural and physical grip on the city. Orlando's election affirmed that voters wanted him to continue what he had begun but could not complete during his first mayoral term (1985–1990): Purge the government of Mafia influence and restore Palermo's cultural and economic vibrancy.

Backed by a national crackdown on organized crime, the mayor used his second and third terms in office (1993-1997; 1997-2000) to engage civil society, civic groups and businesses in an effort to revitalize the city. He appointed technocrats on short-term contracts to rehabilitate basic services such as water, waste management and power, cleaned up procurement practices and improved the efficiency of the city administration. By the time Orlando left office in 2000, his administration had renovated or reacquired hundreds of public buildings and monuments, built a cultural center, kick-started entrepreneurial activity and tourism, built dozens of schools and integrated civic consciousness into classrooms. Although subsequent mayors abandoned or rolled back many of the reforms, Orlando's administration—by engaging citizens and reawakening civic pride—defined and led a “Palermo Renaissance.” That “renaissance” is back in center-stage after Orlando won the mayoral election once again this year. Mayors in other countries learned from

To learn more about rebuilding the social contract in Palermo, watch for a new

three-part chronicle of reform on the ISS website.

Johannesburg, South Africa, experienced a different kind of challenge. Like other South African cities, Johannesburg underwent a series of transformations after the introduction of majority rule in 1994. During the apartheid era, when racial discrimination was enshrined in national law, the Johannesburg metropolitan area was segregated into 16 separate municipalities. Wealthier white municipalities had better revenue bases and could afford high-quality services. Black and “colored” residents (people of mixed race) lived in poorer areas and received fewer services.

After the end of apartheid, Johannesburg's 16 municipalities merged into four Metropolitan Local Councils, governed by a citywide body, the Greater Johannesburg Municipal Council. The new government faced massive pressure to rectify urban inequalities. Within 18 months, the city faced a fiscal meltdown.

Johannesburg's city manager, Ketso Gordhan, had the job of developing a plan to restructure the city's administration in order to deliver services on a more cost-effective basis. The core of this three-year plan, known as “Igoli 2002,” corporatized Johannesburg's municipal services, turning them into quasi-independent units that would have clear delivery targets and significant flexibility in organization and operations, much like private companies. Each reported to a board, charged with oversight responsibility. Igoli was the informal name of Johannesburg and a Zulu term meaning “place of gold.”

A newly published ISS case study probes the effort to transform municipal government and the challenges Johannesburg officials faced in making this new public management model work and later changes in the strategy.

University Collaborations with Reform Leaders

ISS is one of several new collaborations that match the research strengths of top universities to the solution of practical policy problems. ISS is one part of Princeton University's effort to deliver on its motto: "in the nation's service and in the service of all nations."

Over 30,000 people from 177 countries used ISS resources in the program's first year. Indonesians topped the weekly visitor count in July and August, but users come from almost every country in the world.

"How does a university program actually get its work into the hands of reform leaders in other sometimes remote parts of the globe?" ISS employs a range of strategies to achieve that goal. It shares publications with the instructors who train the next generation of leaders and distributes its work to reformers through a listserv. It also participates in a variety of networks that help bundle resources useful to decision makers. Some of these networks, such as the Administration & Cost of Elections Project at International IDEA, are well established and have long brought scholars and policy makers together to solve problems and share insight. But ISS is also part of some newer networks. The past year has seen the start-up of several promising ventures designed to help scholars, policy makers and reform leaders collaborate to solve difficult problems that cut across academic disciplines and governmental functions.

The Open Government Partnership

In 2011, eight countries (Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States) launched a first-of-its-kind Open Government Partnership (OGP). Since then, 47 countries have joined the OGP by submitting public commitments and action plans to enhance transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and strengthen governance through new technology. For instance, as part of the partnership, Colombia created a portal for mayors and governors, founded a transparency secretariat in the president's office and made government data and budgets publicly available.

Through its website, conferences and outreach, the partnership connects public servants to ideas, anchors a network and provides a platform to support governments that strive to become more transparent, effective and accountable.

ISS is an official supplier of OGP resources, connect-

ing all OGP members to the ever-growing library of ISS case studies and analysis.

Visit: www.opengovpartnership.org/.

The Hive

The Hive, another new knowledge platform on fragility, conflict, and violence, will launch in October 2012. The Hive was initiated by the World Bank in cooperation with more than 25 other institutions, including the African Development Bank, International Labour Organization, United Nations Development Program, International Network on Conflict and Fragility, London School of Economics, Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, International Center for the Prevention of Crime, the Institute for Security Studies (South Africa) and the European Forum for Urban Security. It will create a community of practice and provide a face-to-face communication platform, as well as access to written resources.

To learn more, visit: www.thehivefcv.org.

Ideas for India

The International Growth Centre, directed by economists at Oxford University and the London School of Economics, has initiated a country-specific vehicle for sharing policy research. "Ideas for India" is a web-based "ideologically neutral space for economists and other social scientists to use their research to weigh in on key policy questions." It is designed to be inclusive, rigorous and responsive as it seeks to inject more evidence into policy discussions and debates.

To learn more, visit: www.ideasforindia.in/.

Global Health Delivery

When he directed Partners in Health, Jim Yong Kim (now president of the World Bank) partnered with celebrated public health specialist Paul Farmer and Harvard Business School strategy expert Michael Porter to think about how to improve health care delivery. The Global Health Delivery (GHD) project, based at Harvard University, enables health experts to share information and ideas about improving the services they provide. Although the substantive emphasis is different from our focus at ISS, the program has a similar *raison d'être* and provides a model of group problem solving and collaboration.

In addition to developing research, including case studies, GHD hosts moderated conversations and expert networks. For project information, visit: globalhealthdelivery.org/ and for the portal, visit: www.ghdonline.org/.



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