



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Contested Terrain: Reforming Procurement Systems in South Africa

When he took office as South Africa's finance minister in 2009, Pravin Gordhan found that government officials responsible for purchasing goods and services wasted billions of dollars every year as a result of inefficiency, errors, and graft. To address this problem, he decided to centralize many procurement functions and he tapped longtime finance ministry official Kenneth Brown to serve as the country's first chief procurement officer. With the support of a skilled team, Brown tightened procedures and regulations, built effective oversight, reviewed and renegotiated costly contracts, developed new money-saving strategies, and launched efforts to create an online purchasing system. Despite opposition from people at some of the highest levels of government, Brown sharply reduced opportunities for corruption, increased transparency in the procurement process, and slashed the time required to process tenders.

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Protests outside the treasury on March 31, 2017 following the dismissal of Pravin Gordhan from his position as finance minister. Photo by Tristan Dreisbach.

Putting Justice into Practice: Communal Land Tenure in Ebenhaeser, South Africa

Following the 1994 transition from racial apartheid to democracy, the new South African government sought to recognize the land rights of the estimated 16 million black South Africans living in communal areas. The absence of a clear legal framework applicable to most communal areas hindered progress. In 2009, land reform Minister Gugile Nkwiti designated Ebenhaeser, a small community on the country's west coast, as a rural "flagship" project. Provincial officials helped organize a communal association to serve as landowner and negotiated an agreement with white farmers to return land that had originally belonged to mixed-race residents. The community developed a land administration plan that would pave the way for Ebenhaeser's residents to become legal owners of the communal territory, providing an alternative to the granting of the land to traditional leaders.

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ISS Featured Interview

While serving as South Africa's public protector from 2009 to 2016, **Thulisile Madonsela** transformed the office of Public Protector into a powerful and effective anticorruption institution. She released reports detailing corruption and financial mismanagement at the highest levels of government. In this 2017 interview, Madonsela explains how she restructured the office and prepared its staff to take on an expanding corruption caseload while fending off resistance from opponents.



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