

March 2013

 PRINCETON UNIVERSITY



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Building Institutions, Escaping Development Traps

Reforming Brazil's Civil Service

When Fernando Henrique Cardoso won Brazil's presidential election in 1994, he inherited a civil service wracked by conflict-of-interest scandals, ballooning payroll and pension costs, and unwieldy regulations. Two ISS case studies describe how Cardoso addressed these challenges by creating a [Public Ethics Commission](#) and [reforming the public administration](#).

[Establishing a Code of Conduct](#)

To rein in the power of special interests and restore public trust in government officials, Cardoso worked with Brazilian lawyer João Geraldo Piquet Carneiro and others to create a Public Ethics Commission and to draft a Code of Conduct.

Piquet and his team devised these innovations to help officials identify and prevent conflicts of interest. The Code's 19 articles provided flexible, realistic procedures to separate officials' public and private interests, and offered clear guidelines on accepting gifts and on leaving public office for private positions. The commission developed algorithms to help identify where abuses were likely to occur and provided special assistance and monitoring in these instances. The commission also tried to change norms by publicizing some of its consultations with selected political appointees, enabling members of the public to discuss the new standards and to hold politicians and civil servants accountable. Although the reforms lost momentum under Cardoso's successor, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, it succeeded in changing practices in the upper echelons of Brazil's government.

[Public Administration Reform](#)

In 1988, a new constitution moved Brazil from military rule toward democracy. In their quest to define a new system, however, the drafters spelled out civil service rules in minute detail, making public administration rigid and inflexible. They created an unwieldy career system that granted tenure to employees after two years of service and awarded pension benefits to civil servants hired through private contracts. Gradually, the government's talent pool dwindled, even while the civil service grew.

To address these problems, Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira, Minister of

Featured Interviews

The ISS website features interviews with two former members of Brazil's Public Ethics Commission. [João Geraldo Piquet Carneiro](#), founding head of the Commission, describes how his team developed and implemented a Code of Conduct with senior government officials. Commission member [Marcilio Marques Moreira](#) discusses how the commission worked to curtail political favors and unethical behavior through a well-enforced and clear system of rules and guidelines.

In the News

Medellín, Colombia, once infamous for its high murder rates and drug trade, recently received the [Innovative City of the Year Award](#) from Citi and the *Wall Street Journal*. To learn more about the city's transformation, read an early ISS case study about former [Medellín Mayor Sergio Fajardo](#) and his successful reforms.

Share Your Feedback

The ISS web repository is an idea bank that enables practitioners and scholars to

Federal Administration and State Reform, worked to secure passage of a constitutional amendment that loosened constraints on hiring and firing. He also restructured ministries and public sector organizations, collected and centralized payroll and personnel data, proposed flexibility in tenure and retirement, strategically cut payrolls, set up regular training programs, and recruited to fill crucial policy and management positions with strong candidates.

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 103 reformer-focused case studies and more than 350 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.

ISS Readers Respond

"As a development practitioner working in Eastern and Southern Africa, I recognize all too well the allure and risks of adopting good practices from other countries. The case studies from ISS offer a clear and fresh departure from these short-sighted frameworks. It elevates the discussion about what works -- and what doesn't work -- in development, taking into account capabilities of domestic actors, pace of economic development, absorption capacity and, of course, historical context. It's a pleasure -- and great learning experience -- to read these materials."

- United Nations official

Follow us to keep updated with
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.

evaluate the pros and cons of different reform strategies and weigh the effects of context. ISS welcomes feedback on its cases, including suggestions of additional topics and questions to be considered, corrections, 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

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