



## INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

Building Institutions, Escaping Development Traps

### [Bihar, India: Modernizing the State and Connecting to the People](#)

In late 2005, Nitish Kumar became chief minister of Bihar, one of India's poorest and most populous states. Mismanagement of financial resources, obsolete methods of reporting, a low-skilled workforce, and weak accountability hindered the state's administration. In response, Kumar launched a series of reforms, using information and communication technology to streamline operations, boost revenues, and deliver better citizen services. Kumar's investments in technology capitalized on the growth in mobile phone usage to process applications for basic services such as food ration cards, scholarships, and pension payments.

By 2012, Bihar had earned national and regional acclaim for its e-government innovations and citizen satisfaction with public services had improved vastly. In February 2015, Nitish Kumar returned to office for a third term as Chief Minister of Bihar.

#### [Read More](#)

*ISS previously published three case studies about reforms in Bihar State, describing efforts to [build a coalition for reform](#), [improve administration](#), and [reduce criminal activity](#), respectively.*

#### Featured ISS Interview

[Anup Mukerji](#), Bihar State's development commissioner, talks about his work as a principal secretary in the Rural Development Department. The department manages anti-poverty programs in Bihar, including housing, entrepreneurship, and employment programs. In his interview with ISS, Mukerji also describes efforts to reduce corruption, increase transparency and efficiency, and improve service delivery and reporting.

#### New Translated Case

In 2007, the Mexican government began to reform and standardize the country's systems of vocational education and training to better fit the needs of workers and employers. It also helped launch a public-private collaboration to set standards for job skills. ISS recently translated its 2014 [case study](#) about this model in Spanish.

*ISS publishes translations*



Piles of paperwork at a government office in the state capital, Patna. Photo by  
Rushda Majeed

## New Online Course Enrolls 2,000

This spring, ISS launched its first massive open online course (MOOC), entitled [Making Government Work in Hard Places](#). Led by Professor Jennifer Widner, the free 8-week course engaged more than 2,000 aspiring reformers from around the world.

Working in teams or on their own, students explored solutions to common governance challenges, watched video lectures, discussed ISS case studies, and contributed ideas and insights. Although the course wraps up this month, Princeton will offer it again in Fall 2015.



[Read](#) a feature article about the course on the Princeton University website.

*of its case studies when possible.*

[See all translated cases](#)

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## ISS: 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 nearly 150 case studies and more than 380 interviews, all of which are available free online. These materials describe reform efforts in more than 60 countries and have attracted more than 40,000 visits to the ISS website from people in 195 countries in the last year. Governments use ISS 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 case studies in the classroom to engage students in the operational and strategic aspects of public sector reform.

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