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**COURT ADMINISTRATION AS A TOOL FOR JUDICIAL REFORM:
AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

This paper focuses on court administration as a component of judicial branch reform in the United States and other countries.

Over the past fifty years, state and federal court systems in the United States have undergone a process of significant change. At the beginning of the twentieth century, courts were largely dependent upon the executive branch of government for administrative support and were for the most part externally dominated, disorganized, and poorly managed. By the end of the century, they had undergone a process of administrative innovation and improvement that changed the way they were managed. In other countries, judicial sector reform has been more recent. Events such as the birth of new nations, the dissolution of national boundaries, the collapse of government systems and the creation of regional and international organizations have all prompted reanalysis of court functions.

Research conducted during this project was aimed at discovering whether judicial sector reform in other countries has resulted in training needs in the field of court administration. If training needs were identified, a survey would then be carried out to ascertain whether sufficient training programs exist to meet those needs. The ultimate goal of the project was to determine whether lessons learned during the era of judicial branch reform in the United States might prove useful to the judiciaries of other countries in which similar reforms are underway.

Research was begun by reviewing literature on judicial reform in the United States. Documents prepared by agencies and organizations implementing international judicial sector reform programs were then reviewed, and personnel working in these programs were consulted. Court administrators in other countries were asked to provide information about existing court management training programs. Recent critiques of international aid programs were examined and adult educators were consulted to determine how to design an international training program free of identified problems.

Although a number of constraints, including a lack of objective data and literature, language, and difficulties in communication due to geographic distance, presented obstacles during this project, its general objectives were met. A wide variety of court administration training needs were identified. Few, if any, training programs were found to exist to meet those needs. Training programs that do exist have not been designed for implementation outside the countries in which they are located, and they do not appear to be flexible enough for use in legal systems other than those for which they were designed.

In conclusion, the creation of a flexible, adaptable court administration training program suitable for implementation in a variety of legal systems would fill a substantial need. To address criticisms levied against many international aid programs, principles of education for development and faculty development should be utilized. Flexible curricula should center around general core competencies such as those promulgated by the National Association for Court Management and value-based standards such as the Trial Court Performance Standards. Curricula should be designed in consultation with counterparts in recipient countries after needs assessments have been carried out. In addition, international trainers should be oriented to the cultural norms, legal traditions, and current political landscapes of the countries in which they

train. If these criteria are incorporated as part of an international court administration training program, lessons learned in this country during the judicial reform movement of the last fifty years can provide useful guidance to other nations on their own path of judicial sector reform.

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