



## Supporting the Courts, Embracing Human Potential

Until 1994, South Africa had 11 departments of justice. Court officers were burdened with administrative and transactional procedures, duplication at the national and regional levels was common, and case backlogs ballooned, in some courts by the hundreds. One would never guess South Africa's "Big Five" game animals could help transform the Department of Justice. But the lion, elephant, rhinoceros, leopard and buffalo did just that by inspiring a unique training program that is restructuring court support services in South Africa.

Re a ga Boswa — which means “we are rebuilding” in the Sotho language — is a comprehensive effort to transform the courts supported by USAID. The new Court Support Services Model has a single national office for policy, planning and budgeting and a separate center for procurement, financial administration, human resources and other services. By separating the administrative and technical functions of courts, prosecutors, judges and court clerks have been able to dedicate their focus entirely on case quality, jurisdiction and service. In addition, clear lines of accountability and reporting have been established between the judiciary, prosecution and court services.



Photo: USAID/Reverie Zurba

Staff members of the Department of Justice attend training that is helping restructure South Africa's court support services.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the program applied the roles of the “Big Five” game animals to the Habits Training Program, which helped 120 court staff members hone self awareness, self regulation, motivation, focus, communication, team work and service skills. Re a ga Boswa employed a story called “Changing Landscapes” to illustrate the roles animals play during a migration to new pastures — and show how they can apply to the workplace. The lion, elephant, rhino, leopard and buffalo act respectively as: rainmakers, providing the necessary conditions for the landscape to grow; focused pathfinders, supporting change; performance-oriented service stalkers, changing the landscape; and open and caring partners, witnessing the diligence and discipline of other actors. These roles recur throughout training, including a board game that tests negotiation skills and patience.

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The Habits Training Program marks the first time Department of Justice employees received on-the-job training. As a result of the program's success, the Minister of Justice has committed to provide each department employee an hour of training every week. “We don't look at managing courts anymore, we service them as our customers,” said Brigette Shabala, director of court support transformation.

As part of the \$42 million the Department of Justice has invested in the program, 60 employees will migrate from regional to individual courts to manage the new Court Support Services System, and the model will soon be expanded in three additional provinces. Says Dr. Biki Minyuku, director of Re a ga Boswa, “The best investment we have made is in the minds of people. People are our most strategic resource.”

Success Story

