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# ADVANCING RWANDAN ADMINISTRATIVE JUSTICE PROJECT

Support strengthening administrative justice in Rwanda.

The Advancing Rwandan Administrative Justice (ARAJ) Project is a joint initiative of the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMASS Boston) in collaboration with the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research-Rwanda (IPAR) and the Legal Aid Forum (LAF) to help improve the state of administrative justice in Rwanda by identifying problems with the quality and legality of official administrative decision-making affecting individual citizens and businesses, and use the information to spur and inform critically needed training, civic awareness, and legal/policy reform initiatives. It focuses on legal barriers and injustices that individual citizens and businesses encounter at the administrative interface where permits are issued, public benefits are obtained, and regulatory decisions and sanctions are handed down. This is where basic rights to a reasonable, transparent and legally grounded administrative process often break down, including the ability to present evidence, learn the reasons for a decision, and know how and where to pursue an internal appeal. Once objective, policy-relevant information about the nature and extent of administrative decision-making problems is obtained, it will be possible to develop smart, targeted, and prioritized interventions about how best to tackle options for reform.

The three areas of focus for this research and analysis, all entailing substantial decision-making authority at the district government level, are:

1. Public and private employment regulation;
2. Land expropriation; and
3. Public procurement.

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## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The ARAJ Project will objectively assess the nature and scope of Rwandan administrative justice issues and use policy-relevant evidence to:

- Improve training programs on administrative decision-making for legal professionals and public officials,
- Raise public awareness of citizens' rights in the administrative process, and
- Explore possibilities for legal and policy changes that would measurably strengthen such rights.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- Information on administrative decision-making collected and disseminated to the public will raise societal and governmental awareness of problems with administrative procedure that need to be addressed.
- Aided by improved training and information, measurable improvements in the quality of official government decision-making should result in (1) fewer challenged decisions in the administrative process with courts and consequent savings in government time and money, and (2) improved citizen legal literacy on proper grievance channels.
- Better quality decision-making with a discernible positive impact on public opinion and trust in government.

## PROJECT INFORMATION

- Project Dates: 2017-2020
- Funding: \$943,326
- Implementing Partner: University of Massachusetts Boston
- Geographic Focus: National and in 5 Districts (one from each Province) TBD