

# Training the Next Generation of Justice Sector Leaders

*Providing Defenders with the Skills They Need*

*As of January 2014, IBJ Rwanda had handled over 375 cases, reached 30,000 individuals through Rights Awareness campaigns, conducted trainings and roundtables for over 200 lawyers, and conducted two radio rights awareness campaigns reaching over 200,000 individuals.*

The Defender Resource Center (DRC) in Kigali is only two kilometers from the Supreme Court of Rwanda and the Ministry of Justice and stands as a model of local criminal legal aid infrastructure that IBJ hopes to establish countrywide.

Of approximately 700 lawyers in Rwanda, more than 200 have undergone IBJ trainings designed to protect defendants' rights and to prevent torture and mistreatment by the police. The growing corps of task force lawyers who volunteer on IBJ's behalf to defend the indigent demonstrate that, with their hard

work, it is possible to deliver comprehensive legal aid to those who would otherwise have no access to justice.

Building partnerships with the Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor General's Office, and the Kigali Bar Association, IBJ effectively delivers criminal legal aid to those most in need. With thousands of individuals reached through rights awareness campaigns and hundreds of cases handled by IBJ lawyers, IBJ continues its efforts to foster justice and the right to representation in Rwanda. IBJ also plays an active role in Rwanda's justice system by

working with the Ministry of Justice on plans for a comprehensive national legal aid policy.

In 2013 and 2014, IBJ's Fellow John Bosco Bugingo worked with other legal aid team members to expand the legal aid culture in Rwanda. By hosting meetings of the Criminal Defense Task Force and the Legal Defense Skills Training Workshop, IBJ is preparing the next generation of legal talents and future justice leaders.

IBJ team members serve as excellent examples to their peers in the Kigali Bar Association. They each show

## JUSTICE FACTS:

### Rwanda

**Rule of Law (Percentile Rank)**  
2013: 51

**2012 Prison Population:**  
55,618  
492 per 100,000



Country Manager John Bosco Bugingo mentoring a young lawyer at an IBJ training in Kigali



Criminal Defense Task Force Meeting in Kigali

a commitment to public service that gives ordinary citizens reason to hope that, slowly but surely, their access to justice will continue to improve. With few resources directed towards rule of law and many poorly trained and poorly paid law enforcement

officers resorting to torture as the cheapest form of investigation, it is imperative that IBJ continue to train young criminal defense lawyers and educate ordinary individuals about their legal rights.

On the 23rd of July 2014, with the support of the Finnish Human Rights NGO Foundation (KIOS), IBJ Rwanda Fellow John Bosco Busingo conducted a training event for 23 lawyers from different civil society organizations in Rwanda. The training workshop was organized by Inara Legal Aid Service (INALAS), one of the legal aid organizations in Rwanda that provides assistance to indigent and vulnerable populations.

IBJ's mission is to establish goals for enduring legal change by working with NGOs, government

ministries, bar associations and other organizations. We are immensely grateful to all our partners for sharing our vision and supporting our work.

## *IBJ answers prayers to provide legal representation*

On the 12th of February 2013 while on the streets of Remera Kigali, Nirere Dieudonne was arrested and tossed behind bars at Remera prison without an trial. Dieudonne remained there for over two years. 35-year-old Dieudonne is Catholic and an orphan — his parents were victims of the genocide. Being jobless at the time of his arrest, he had no funds for legal representation.

Before his incarceration, Dieudonne had no idea of the horrors that awaited him. He shared his experience of his two long years in prison with IBJ. "Life in prison is hard. Jail is not a place you are supposed to go. Being in a situation like that, you don't know whether you are going to make it out."

Dieudonne's 22 months of detention were spent in a large crowded hall living with numerous inmates. His previous hearings were unsuccessful due to the fact that he had no legal representative by his side when the trials were being conducted. His continuous prayer was to get a legal representative who would prove that he is an innocent man before a court of law.

Fortunately, IBJ legal representatives came across him at Remera prison and listened to his heart-wrenching story. IBJ was able to get him to court and after five weeks Dieudonne was declared innocent, for lack of evidence. It is almost certain that Dieudonne would to this day still have had no fair trial. With IBJ's legal protection, Dieudonne's sentence was reduced from seven years of imprisonment to a period of one year.

Dieudonne's case serves as a reminder of a larger issue. Many youth slip through the cracks of malfunctioning criminal justice systems, and an increasing number of cases result in unjust outcomes, primarily due to the lack of free legal representation.

It is essential that the exercise of police powers be rigorously monitored and controlled in order to prevent further brutality and injustice. IBJ's efforts seek to sensitize them on the rights of members of the community through various training programs. Maintaining a fair and accessible justice system is paramount at all times and is a supreme concern.