

Report

Community Involvement and Public Education Workshop

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Rapporteur's Report

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In the workshop on Community Involvement and Public Education, participants discussed both formal and non-formal ways in which messages on corruption – or anti-corruption - are transmitted. Values are communicated in many ways, including by family members and role models, formal education curricula and community programs. Each of these is explored below.

1. Messages on corruption, and anti-corruption, come from many sources.

- a. **Role models.** Parents, teachers, political leaders all send messages, some positive and some negative. Participants provided examples of contradictory messages, for example, schools might offer programs in ethics while parents teach children that corrupt practices are how the world works. The reverse is also possible, parents might provide a positive message that is contradicted in school.
- b. **Formal and Informal Sources.** Families, community programs, schools, NGOs, government institutions and religious organisations disseminate messages regarding corruption and ethics. Very often these messages are inconsistent. Part of the challenge of fighting corruption is to sort through and address the mixed messages.

2. Analytical exercises are effective means of communicating an anti-corruption message. Panellists provided two examples:

- a. **The ICAC in New South Wales** has developed an interactive CD ROM for young children (early elementary level). The cartoon story narrated by animals takes children through the woods and offers choices on paths to take. By clicking on various animals that provide „advice“, children decide how to proceed. They are confronted with both positive and negative messages and must analyze their options.
- b. **Poder Ciudadano in Argentina** developed a game for high school students called „Cheating and Bribing“. Analysts found that students were critical of parents and adult society for being corrupt. At the same time, students found their personal behaviour, and propensities to cheat on exams, to be quite acceptable. Through a series of exercises the game forces students to analyse the circumstances that facilitate corruption, and

demonstrates that their own behaviour is not so far afield from that of adult society. It encourages an analytical approach to identify the root causes of corruption.

- 3. Formal Education Programs provide valuable lessons.** Two programs that have been developed in Australia offer a wealth of information on how messages of transparency, ethics and anti-corruption can be taught within the formal education system.
 - a. The ICAC in New South Wales** has developed anti-corruption curricula for all grade levels from primary through secondary school. It utilises both traditional and innovative methodologies to communicate its message. Geared to the problem solving capabilities of students at each grade level, the program uses textbooks, exercises, videos and stories that must be solved. It uses real-life situations that pose moral dilemmas. Some of the more innovative approaches include using T-shirts as well as poster competitions. Poster competitions have proved effective and have had a multiplier effect. The competition involved students submitting posters with anti-corruption messages and images. The winners are not only announced, but their posters are sent on a travelling exhibit. Over 70,000 persons viewed posters in a recent competition. Additionally, winning posters were copied, enlarged and mounted on sides of busses. In this way the messages were communicated to parents and the community at large.
 - b. Australia National University** offers a Master's level course. Designed for mid-career professionals, the course work ranges from 1 month to 2 years and attracts students from across Asia. Given the international and cultural diversity of the student body, the program faces first-hand the dilemma of balancing various viewpoints and country circumstances regarding corruption and anti-corruption. For example, what issues are most relevant for public servants vs. NGO representatives or law enforcement officials vs. advocacy groups? Are these the same across countries? How to balance the focus between prevention vs. prosecution? How to teach ethics? How to debate the value of democracy as a means to counter corruption given the problems associated with deregulation, privatisation, patronage and campaign finance – forms of corruption that are often associated with democracies?
- 4. Community Education Programs are replicable.** Representatives from various community organisations in Cambodia, Hong Kong and Morocco discussed local activities to raise public awareness and fight corruption. Posters are a common form of communicating the message to the public at large and use creative, as well as culturally significant symbols to convey the damage done by corruption.
 - a. Cambodia.** The Centre for Social Development in Phnom Penh has organised public awareness workshops, worked with over 30 NGOs as a means to involve citizens in the formulation of anti-corruption legislation and supports teaching anti-corruption curricula in the school system. It is working with the Ministry of Education to develop curricula, design pilot programs and offer teacher training on the topic.
 - b. Hong Kong.** The ICAC has used the community to fight corruption in the police force. By establishing neighbourhood police stations and encouraging citizen involvement, the program has been effective in reducing corruption. Efforts also include mass media campaigns and working with the schools to promote citizen involvement.
- 5. Closing thoughts to remember.** Panellists offered several universal words of wisdom, including:

- **Be careful about demonising corruption.** When corruption is made to be evil, it becomes a problem of „others“, rather than „of us“. If it is portrayed as too evil, we will not recognise or admit that it is something in which we also participate.
- **Corruption is not necessarily a problem of good vs. evil, but rather something in between.** We were reminded that country circumstances differ, that we do not all live in free countries and that defining, analysing and countering corruption will depend on political space.
- **Corruption distorts equity, corruption limits human rights.**