

Findings And Lessons Learned
from the
UNDP Programme for Accountability and Transparency and the
OECD Development Centre on
Comparative Country Case Studies in Anti-Corruption

Corruption and its Perception

Corruption is much less of a taboo: relative openness to the topic is visible:

- in civil society response to the problem (media coverage in particular)
- in the political discourse

Very partial knowledge on corruption phenomenon, its causes and its consequences

- no systematic attempt to deepen and specialise this knowledge
- ? negative effect on:
 - the launching of reforms (accuracy/urgency of reforms not understood)
 - the perception of corruption in the population

Cynicism in any possible change

- lack of results of anti-corruption initiatives
- capitalization of popular expectations not followed by actions
- use of corruption allegations to get rid of political opponents

High level of acceptance of corruption

- mechanisms and representations that “legitimize” corruption

Government’s Initiatives

Often, anti-corruption remain initiatives: very rare comprehensive anti-corruption strategy

Difficulties of securing a sustained political commitment

- Corruption’s political functions
 - Reward of political supporters
 - Election financial support
- Difficulties of launching reforms
 - Uncertainty about the results
 - Fear of destabilization by opposition from vested interests
 - Initial cost of reforms

Difficulty of finding the actors: the unequal winners/losers equation:

- the groups/individuals benefiting from corruption
 - may have a key role in the reform process
 - influence on Government/Parliament: reforms stuck at the design level
 - powerful in the administration/a given agency: reforms stuck at the implementation level
 - are aware of the danger of reforms for their interests and likely to oppose it strongly

- the groups/individuals suffering from corruption
 - may not perceive the negative effects of corruption on them
 - are less likely to be organized (low-income, illiteracy)

Emphasis on creating/redesigning institutions rather than changing the system

- little correlation between:
 - the number of anti-corruption institutions
 - the toughness of their names
 - the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies
- the efficiency of the institutions depends:
 - on their legal capacity
 - adequate independence
 - adequate mandate
 - adequate powers
 - on their practical capacity
 - importance of the rule-of-thumb
 - adequate funding
 - on adequate coordination with other institutions

Awareness raising on corruption and its negative consequences: the missing link of anti-corruption initiatives

- Need for public information campaigns

Ongoing reforms with broader or distinct objectives than the fight against corruption per se

- should contribute to the fight against corruption by changing/eliminating some opportunities for corruption
- may be perceived as less challenging to vested interests

Non-government Initiatives

Social capacity matters for civil society successive involvement in anti-corruption

Depends on:

- Level of development (poverty/literacy)
- Level of inequalities
- Legal or informal constraints on civil society activities

As well as institutional setting

- Range of public activities opened to public scrutiny
- Institutional capacity to hold governments accountable
 - free and fair election
 - channels of redress and complaints

Large scope of underdeveloped but potentially very successful actions to be fostered

- Institutionalized partnerships between government and civil society

- Use of private sector's expertise to enrich government's anti-corruption policies.

Representativeness of the NGOs and need for realistic assessment of their capacity

- NGOs may represent sectional claims
- NGO may have their own cover agenda
- NGO may have as sole purpose the capture of a rent

The media

- Independence is a prerequisite but is not enough if:
 - Economic constraints: advertisement, oligopoly
 - Political pressure: use of libel laws, harassment of journalists
- Diffusion must be as wide as possible
 - newspapers and electronic media (especially when readership is constrained by widespread illiteracy)
 - in all vernacular languages
- Improving media coverage of corruption
 - Improve techniques of investigation
 - Establish follow-up mechanisms
 - To push governments to action
 - To avoid an increase of cynicism in the population

Role of the donors

- Expertise
- Facilitator of reform
- Need for coordination of donors