Changing the Rules of the *Game*

Mobilise | Support | Connect

People's empowerment sessions. Bangkok, 14th IACC
Thailand 10 to 13 November, 2010

Initiatives, Contributor Teams and Session reports

A Paradigm Shift

With the first decade of the new millennium having drawn to a close, transparency now has a firmly established place on global, regional and national agendas. It has become fashionable for political candidates to campaign on anti-corruption and good governance platforms. International agreements have been ratified and international firms progressively adopt compliance and oversight programmes.

Yet trust in institutions on which our future depends has eroded. At the individual level, widespread apathy is the result of continuing abuse and impunity. The challenges that threaten the rights and livelihoods of populations across the world have increased while hope for greater social justice has faded: Efforts to reduce poverty and deliver on promises for sustainable development, human security, the curbing of illicit trade and climate control have not yet resulted in positive change. Progress in all these areas is seriously threatened by corruption.

At the same time, a great number of people – citizens, activists, government officials and journalists – are working to fundamentally change the rules of the corruption game. Their individual and collective efforts **strengthen** people's participation in governance and **disrupt** systems of corruption. They **create** incentives for integrity and accountability, drying up the sources of abuse. Their work **wins** broad-based support from different sectors and they **accelerate** change. The individuals and organisations behind these initiatives are [game changers] who empower people in the fight against corruption.

Their strategies build on more traditional awareness-raising strategies and complement the policy reforms that have been the hallmarks of the fight against corruption. Yet they permit much bigger ambitions for sustainable change that improves livelihoods. When informed citizens can stand up safely against corruption, exerting their rights, accountability becomes tangible. Changes in laws and institutions that hitherto existed merely on paper are beginning to make a real difference in people's lives.

This paradigm shift towards a people-centred approach in the anti-corruption struggle has been evident from many submissions to the 14th IACC. Diverse actors and organisations have expressed their interest to share experience and learn from others who aim to empower people in the fight against corruption. These diverse perspectives are broadly described in the following section. As a demand-driven initiative, the 14th IACC will structure its new "people empowerment special sessions" along these three dimensions …

Mobilising people

The first dimension of this paradigm shift concerns an accelerating dynamic of mobilising people against corruption. Increasingly, citizens themselves are taking centre stage in creating change. People and communities articulate their demand for an end to impunity and better government. Citizens and NGOs are using new technology to make their voices heard, denouncing corruption where it threatens livelihoods. Community organisations and others are increasingly engaging people outside the capitals and in marginalised neighbourhoods in the fight against corruption. Others are using non-violent campaign tactics to hold leaders accountable.

What is common to many of these initiatives is their bottom up character, putting the focus on people's priorities not the setting of top-down policy objectives. Mobilising people has the potential to be a real game changer in the fight against corruption. However, despite their impressive range, these efforts to empower people need to be brought up to a massively greater scale to create sustained demand for better governance.

Supporting Victims, Witnesses and Whistleblowers

The anti-corruption community, including NGOs and law enforcement agencies have long acknowledged the bravery and importance of individual action against corruption. In recent years, a number of governments, businesses and civil society organisations have considerably stepped up their efforts to support those who have experienced corruption. Increasingly, individuals and communities are coming forward to take a stand against the abuse of public or private office. Initiatives supporting people range from educational activities and basic advice on filing official complaints to strategic litigation.

While there is an increasing number of assistance mechanisms in place for people to report and pursue corruption, far too many people around the world – among them often the most vulnerable – remain unaware of their rights. Too many are still outside the reach of information and professional advice that empowers them to confront abuse. In some countries, the shrinking space for civil society and an increasing number of threats to anti-corruption activists and investigative journalists are also preoccupying signs in this context. In particular the public image and personal security of whistleblowers remain threatened by inadequate laws and negative public perceptions in many countries.

It is a challenge for governments, businesses and civil society alike to respond to these trends and to massively expand their support to victims, witnesses and whistleblowers.

Connecting the [Game-changers]

While mobilising and supporting people are perhaps newer trends emerging from the anti-corruption community, change in policy and practice remains absolutely critical in many traditional areas. Effective access to information regimes, whistleblower protection, investigative journalism and the respect for fundamental political rights are particularly important enabling conditions for people-centred anti-corruption strategies. Empowered people will in turn fundamentally reinforce systemic change in these areas.

At the same time, traditional priority areas for those fighting corruption are re-shaped by external trends, notably the growing role of technology. New ways of collecting, disseminating and using information promise massive opportunities for transparency but also bring some new challenges for those promoting change. Game-changing strategies have emerged in this area in recent years.

[Game-changers] are people who work to empower others, in highly diverse country contexts and across all sectors. They use diverse strategies and tactics as well as innovative approaches to working with information technology. The challenge for these [game-changers] is to redouble their efforts to put in place the critical enabling conditions as they increase their work to empower people to fight corruption. A key ingredient of their success is collaboration with a wide range of actors.

Connecting the [game-changers] and building new coalitions against corruption will contribute to substantially scaling up their efforts and accelerate sustainable change.

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Session reports

Mobilising People - 11th November 2010, 15.00 - 17.00

A1 - People Count: Citizen Empowerment, Grass-Roots Action, Corruption Disruption

Everyday citizens bear the brunt of corruption and suffer from it. But they also have power and are proving they are not passive recipients of elite-driven initiatives, but drivers of accountability, reform and change. Mobilized citizens, engaged in organized nonviolent tactics, constitute a social force that can exert pressure on the state as well as on other sectors. They often target graft that is most harmful or common to the public, particularly the poor. Citizens make use of a multitude of tactics, such as demanding information, social audits, monitoring, social networking, low-risk mass actions, street theatre, protests and petitions.

People power may be particularly suited to a systemic approach to curbing corruption. It consists of extra-institutional pressure to push for change, when power-holders are corrupt and unaccountable, and institutional channels are blocked or ineffective. Thus, bottom-up approaches can complement and reinforce top-down administrative strategies.

This session of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions explored the dynamics of people power and civil resistance, and shared insights and experiences amongst the participants about mobilizing citizens, creative tactics, and overcoming apathy and fear. The session sought to share experiences of grass-roots campaigns and movements from activists, and created a space to discuss the need for strategy, general lessons learned, and pitfalls of rote copying of tactics. This session was coordinated by Shaazka Beyerle of the International Centre on Nonviolent Conflict.

Contributor team included:

- Arwa Hassan, International Development Specialist, Germany
- Dr. Iftekhar Zaman, Executive Director, Transparency International Bangladesh
- Vijay Anand, President, 5th Pillar, India
- Danang Widoyoko, Executive Director, Indonesia Corruption Watch, Indonesia
- Hussein Khalid, Executive Director, Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), Kenya

Problem(s)

Traditional top-down strategies to fight against corruption have some inherent limitations:

- Arising from the traditional definition of corruption ("the misuse of entrusted power for private gain") top-down approaches cannot convey the full systemic nature of corruption (involving a complex set of relationships, with established vested interests, that can cut across political, economic and social forces).
- There tends to be an over-emphasis on the state with less attention paid to other potentially corrupt groups in societies (such as big agricultural landowners, multinational corporations and oligarchies, etc.).
- Institutions accused of corruption are often made responsible for enacting the change to counter it. But those benefitting from graft are much less likely to end it than those suffering from it.
- The focus has been on processes (legislation, commissions, regulations, etc.) while possibly ignoring the biggest stakeholder in the corruption net – everyday people who bear the brunt of corruption, directly experience it, endure its harmful effects, and can play a role in controlling it.

Solution(s) and Impact

Case Study - Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), Kenya

Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) is empowering the poor in Mombasa to fight poverty by gaining access to information about budgets, curbing misuse of constituency development funds, demanding projects actually wanted by communities, and gaining accountability of local officials and members of parliament. Since 2007, through collaboration with the International Budget Partnership and veteran activists from the *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan* (MKSS) movement for the 'Right to Know' in India, it has developed a defining nonviolent method, the '**five-step social audit**', designed to pressure legislators to confront corruption and mismanagement:

- The first step consists of information gathering - records from the local Constituency Development Fund (CDF) office.
- The second step is training local men and women to become community activists who decipher documents and budgets, monitor expenditures and physically inspect public works.
- The third step involves educating and motivating fellow citizens about the CDF and their right to information and accountability. Community activists and MUHURI use nonviolent tactics to attract attention, directly engage people, and encourage them to attend a 'public hearing'.
- This includes puppet plays, musical processions, street theatre, and leafleting.
- The fourth step is inspecting the CDF project site.
- Finally comes the public hearing with CDF officials, the media, and in some cases, the member(s) of parliament. MUHURI first leads a procession through the community, replete with chanting, a youth band, theatrics and dancing children. During the forum the results of the investigations are presented, CDF officials are questioned and remedial measures are identified. Follow-up monitoring tracks progress.

Case Study - CICAK campaign, Indonesia

The CICAK campaign was launched in 2009 to defend the work and the commissioners of the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). The KPK came under threat since is work began in 2002 because it was not shy to confront the powers that be, and expose corrupt behaviour. The name CICAK has a dual meaning. It's an acronym for "Love Indonesia, Love Anti-Corruption," but also is a gecko lizard, referring to a derogatory wiretapped comment by the Chief of the Police's Criminal Department, who likened KPK to a gecko fighting the crocodile (police).

Since early 2009, efforts to harm and neutralize the KPK intensified, including parliamentary attempts to cut its budget and authority, police criminalization of some of its activities, investigations of deputy commissioners, and the arrest of its Chairman for murder. By mid-year, a group of civic leaders decided the time had come to protect KPF and they planned the CICAK campaign. One hundred civic organizations soon joined CICAK, a graduate student independently created a Facebook group, local groups formed in 20 of the country's 33 provinces, and well-known public figures came on board. In October, the police arrested two commissioners. But CICAK was ready to channel popular anger into civic mobilization. The Facebook group reached 1.3 million, and became a key tool through which to communicate with and rally citizens. CICAK organized actions in Jakarta and local chapters and high school and university students initiated their own events throughout the country.

Campaign tactics included demonstrations, marches to the Presidential palace, petitions, wearing a black ribbon, CICAK clothing and accessories, a song and ringtones, banners reading "Say no to crocodiles," street murals, sit-ins, gathering in front of police stations, a hunger strike, street theatre, concerts, and humorous stunts that garnered media attention, for example, jumping off the KPK building with parachutes.

CICAK called on the President to save the KPK and demanded an immediate independent investigation. As people power escalated, he agreed to the investigation, which subsequently recommended that the charges against the KPK officials be dropped. They were released; senior figures in the attorney general's office and police resigned, and other investigations were initiated.

Case Study - 5th Pillar, India

Since 2006, the Tamil Nadu-based Fifth Pillar is an emerging movement that is using the Right to Information (RTI) Act (2005) in India to fight corruption.

The movement has developed two defining methods. The first is the innovative Zero-Rupee note. It's a "nonviolent weapon" for ordinary citizens to refuse to pay petty bribes. It also sends a message of "noncooperation to corruption" and shows that the person is not alone; he/she is part of a larger movement. Fifth Pillar maintains that there's not been a reported instance in which the dishonest official didn't back down. Approximately one million notes have been distributed and it's available online.

The second defining method is to file an RTI. With the proper questions, it's possible to document misbehaviour, thereby holding officials accountable. Nonviolent tactics associated with the RTI include: workshops in urban centres and villages; assistance to write and submit RTIs; "people's inspection and audits" of public works; leafleting; and back-up for those

wanting to approach the state government's Vigilance Department and the Central Bureau of Investigation's Anti-Corruption Zone.

The movement also engages in tactics designed to heighten awareness, build interest, communicate messages, garner media attention, gain support, and exert civic pressure on authorities to protect the RTI. These include human chains, beach rallies, signatures on huge banners of the Zero-Rupee note, street corner meetings, village processions, poetry contests, Diaspora chapters, "peaceful agitation," badges for honest officials, humorous stunts, and reporting instances of corruption via SMS and the internet. In just four years, Fifth Pillar now operates in 20 out of 28 districts in Tamil Nadu and involves 14,000 volunteers.

Case Study – Transparency International Bangladesh

The "Social Movement against Corruption"

The "Social Movement against Corruption" was introduced by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) to empower citizens, promote participatory and accountable governance, improve public service delivery, and curb corruption. People power is wielded to achieve social accountability, in a process built through a number of steps and tools. The following tools and tactics designed to build civic unity, foster a sense of confidence at the grass-roots, engage citizens, disrupt corrupt practices, and gain support from people within corrupt systems and among power holders:

- Citizens Report Cards (CRC)
The CRC is a tool to measure the degree of satisfaction of service recipients about the content and quality of service provided by a selected institution, particularly in education, health and local government. The findings of the CRC are released usually with the participation of the authorities, which serves the twin purpose of wider public information and awareness as well as engagement with them in efforts for follow-up initiatives.
- Advice & Information
TIB has introduced a mobile advice and information service titled AI-Desk, usually provided in the premises of the relevant institution with a view to informing the service recipients about their rights and entitlements, range of services and rates thereof, if applicable, grievance mechanisms etc.
- Participatory Budget
Wider and freer disclosure of budgetary information helps higher levels of accountability, which, in turn, can help expedite the poverty reduction process.
- Face the Public (FtP)
The FtP is a forum for the public representatives, officials and other service providers to respond to questions and demands directly raised by citizens and service recipients in particular, especially with respect to the commitments made as well as the content and quality of the range of services provided by the selected institution.
- Civic Actions
The movement also conducts activities to animate and educate regular people, such as street theatre and youth concerts, as well as tactics targeting corruption, such as information gathering and budget tracking/monitoring.
- Committees of Concerned Citizens (CCC)
CCCs are local level citizens' watchdog forums. In conjunction, the CCCs are assisted by the YES (Youth Engagement and Support) groups; both of which are composed of volunteers.
- The Integrity Pledge

Through the above process complemented by a series of consultations and engagements among the stakeholders, an Integrity Pledge is outlined and signed by: the authority (public representatives/officials); service recipients (citizens); and CCCs. Each party to the IP commits to a series of actions and processes.

Results Indicators

TI-B reports that the following outcomes have been achieved in campaign areas:

- Unauthorized payments for services controlled;
- Improved quality of services;
- Fair, transparent and unbiased delivery of services;
- Corruption in procurement and construction reduced;
- Management quality improved;
- Accountable use of budget;
- Improved rights awareness among people;
- People are empowered & demand change;
- Public representatives and officials are committed to engage, and develop stakes and ownership to a participatory process of governance.

Resources

General sites

- www.nonviolent-conflict.org
- www.internationalbudget.org
- www.newtactics.org
- www.informationactivism.org
- www.tacticaltech.org
- www.transparency.org

Specific resources

- Bangladesh social movement against corruption: www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD492.pdf
- Fifth Pillar: www.5thpillar.org
- MUHURI: http://muhuri.org/
- Online documentary on MUHURI: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2zKXqkrf2E
- Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan "Right to Know" movement: http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/ai/rti/india/states/rajasthan.htm
- New Tactics: http://www.newtactics.org/en/RighttoKnow
- "People count: how citizen engagement and action challenge corruption and abuse": http://nonviolent-conflict.org/images/stories/pdfs/people_count.pdf
- New Tactics in Human Rights "Tactical Dialogue on Empowering Citizens to Fight Corruption" - online dialogue, resources, PPT, links to documents: http://www.newtactics.org/en/blog/new-tactics/empowering-citizens-fight-corruption
- People Power online game (anti-corruption scenario): http://www.peoplepowergame.com
- A citizen's guide to monitoring government expenditures: www.internationalbudget.org/resources/expenditure/index.htm

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A2 - Quit Playing Dumb: responsible citizens and accountable representatives

This session of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions explored the current challenges and obstacles for Mexican civil society to achieve accountability – the work against institutional opacity that has been done both across federal institutions and in the Mexican Congress. The session was opened by the chair offering an analysis of: the need to strengthen existing mechanisms for citizens to participate; the need to develop new ways to promote human and political rights; and the need to improve institutional practices for the parliamentary bodies.

To achieve accountability we needed to promote individual change. Our contributors from Dejemos de Hacernos Pendejos (DHP) explained how this challenge was faced, and how the movement promoted both individual change and people's participation that in turn became the essence of the organization.

The session also discussed how the current rules of the Mexican political system game lure congressmen to serve party leaders and private sponsors rather than constituents. The opening contributions sought to share the experiences on how DHP* has taken advantage of the acquired experiences to produce better outcomes against corruption with less resources, to use of new information and communication technologies and to develop its own particular marketing style of communication.

The contributors offered this case study example to start a conversation amongst the session participants in order to obtain new ideas and experiences on how to make people react, and how to reach and touch the deep heartstrings of the citizens in this type of work.

Contributor Team included:

- María Esther Azuela, Executive Director, Dejemos de Hacernos Pendejos (DHP)
- Roberto Trad, DHP Secretary, Dejemos de Hacernos Pendejos (DHP)
- José Adolfo Ibinarriaga, President, Dejemos de Hacernos Pendejos (DHP)
- Raúl Livas, Representative, Dejemos de Hacernos Pendejos (DHP)
- Alejandra Cullen, Representative, Dejemos de Hacernos Pendejos (DHP)

Problem(s)

Citizens lack mechanisms and vehicles to participate in the fight against corruption.

Crucially, cultural acceptance of corruption within a society is the responsibility of all the members of that society. Thus to combat pervasive corruption everyone, not just public officials and leaders in public life, need to be challenged, and empowered, to engage in anti-corruption work and reduce tolerance of instances of corruption. The problem is to devise strategies of cost-effective and replicable initiatives that empower people to take responsibility for their role in tackling corruption (i.e. with a socio-cultural approach instead of an institutional approach to combating corruption).

In addition, this approach will challenge people's moral fibre as well as their behaviours. This can be a message which people are reluctant to receive, and is further complicated in societies with ethnic, religious and language diversity.

Solution(s)

The solutions involve devising actions that give practical and achievable results. The scale of the initiative is not as important as the message that actions are being taken. Indeed smaller scale projects can be easier to encourage and maintain citizen participation, as well as being more feasible for the project coordinators to manage.

The core message and associated initiative messaging has to be compelling and fun in order to earn peoples' attention and to retain it. A planned investment in a marketing strategy will help yield significant results for brand recognition of the movement.

To enable the movement to grow and spread, the brand can be franchised allowing neighbouring communities to develop their own projects to raise accountability and transparency. For this to be successful, basic conditions of brand use need to be determined and agreed upon to maintain the credibility and core messaging of the movement.

Impact

DHP* initiative Operation 001. This project invited citizens to sign (online and in-person) a petition to the Mexican congress to demand an explanation as to why each congressman refunded to themselves the taxes on their Christmas bonuses. DHP* presented the petition with more than 4,000 signatures. The end result was positive change when in December 2009 this practice by parliamentarians was discontinued.

(http://www.dejemosdehacernospendejos.org/AboutUs.php)

Colombia offers an example of an initiative to spread messages against corruption on TV channels. The adverts show examples of situations when people commit corrupt acts without realizing it (e.g. somebody gave a bribe so their home electrical power would not be cut off).

Lessons

In the session it was difficult to share the Internet social networks benefits because all the participants commented that in their countries the Internet is not as available as in Mexico.

We need to understand the definition of culture (differentiating between political culture and traditional culture) and that there is a difference between approaching anti-corruption work the social way or the institutional way.

The core message of 'co-responsibility' is hugely powerful (because corruption is everywhere) and thus important to carry through across all communications.

Questions

How do we get to the grass roots, to the people who don't have Internet and modern communications technologies?

How does a campaigning organisation choose which action(s) to take?

How can an organization that does not make money, keep fresh, get things done, and get reactions?

How can we make people aware of their actions and the way to make the right choices, without being perceived as preaching?

How can we build enough momentum to raise the corruption issue into the electoral agenda?

Insights

People are more likely to become involved if they are given small actions that they can accomplish.

The corrupt are very powerful and for a single individual it is very hard to fight corruption. Thus working collectively can be very powerful.

It is important to look at trends that deprive people from their right to stand against corruption. Defend the space of respect for human rights, by facilitating the empowerment of those who own it.

Proposed Actions

Grass root campaigns

To devise approaches to citizens in the offline world which engage people in public spaces (public squares, coffee shops, sporting centres, etc.) with a view to promoting dialogue and engaging citizens to take part in symbolic action(s) of protest against specific instances of corruption by their local authorities.

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A3 - Squashed between a rock and a hard place: 5 positive actions to save civic space

This workshop of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions brought together civil society experts and non-violence practitioners to design 5 actions to counter the current trend that threatens civic space and the people operating in it.

Trust is based on mutual respect and is earned with accountability. In states where there is a lack of a safe space for civil society to operate (indeed in some situations the environment is hostile) mistrust can be seeded which hinders its efforts. Without an engaged civil society, where the deeds of repressive states go unchecked, millions around the world would lose the invaluable support it provides in areas such as humanitarian aid, education, health, etc.

The healthy functioning of civil society is often threatened through laws, official policies and other unofficial repression that may include: attacks on human rights defenders; restrictions on registration or funding of organisations; arbitrary searches, seizures or even closure of organisations; and barriers to the rights to free expression and assembly. In 2009, the international civil society organization CIVICUS tracked threats in 75 countries, and dozens of anti corruption activists are threatened or attacked each year, while countries review or change the laws that allow civil society space to operate.

Contributor Team included:

- Ingrid Srinath, Secretary General, Civicus, India
- Shaazka Beyerle, Senior Advisor, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, Australia
- Andrea Figari, Global Programmes Manager – Advocacy & Protection of Anti Corruption Advocates, TI Secretariat
- Casey Kelso, Advocacy Director, TI Secretariat, USA

Problem

In the post 9/11 era, and many times in the alleged interest of national security, a trend has been established of governments limiting civic space through policies, regulations or practices. Freedom House has noted four years continuous decline in freedom worldwide. Civicus' 2009 Civil Society Watch report has concluded that "the clampdown is real" when looking at current trends against civil society world-wide.

The geopolitics are changing, with the West less willing to speak up, caving in to economic interests such as energy, oil and trade. The financial crisis created a distraction to the public debate on greater or common goods, and powerful economies prioritise economic growth over standing up for values (e.g. China and human rights, India or Bangladesh on labour rights for workers producing goods for the West).

While increased use of technology and social media has helped to support movements to mobilise people, it has also provided a pressure point for governments to keep tabs on activists and involved citizens, using these to put more pressure – some call this "anaconda tactics". The International Center for Non Profit law has noted that several countries have passed new legislation limiting civil society activities, others are conditioning support to civil society based on their own political agendas, such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Honduras, Iran, Bahrain, Cambodia[1]. Since 2009, CIVICUS's Civil Society Watch report has documented dozens of incidents[2] of attacks to activists and organisations, in violation of rights to expression, information and association.

Solution

Civil society must recognise that this trend exists and align their strategies accordingly. Civil society organisations advocating for good governance should lead by example: with accountability, transparency and good internal governance – together with an agenda that speaks in the interest of the people. These strategies are a significant insurance against attacks to reputational or physical harassment of CSOs, because they earn trust from all quarters: citizens, donors and governments. CSOs could sign up to international charter i.e. a global report initiative or practice active accountability to their stakeholders to build trust and maintain the space they created for themselves.

CSOs should also focus their work on areas close to people's grievances, needs and demands – this cements their place in society and consolidates their claim for legitimate role in areas such as anti-corruption and development as well as leading to further citizen engagement, empowerment and mobilization.

Part of the solution also involves a consideration of how the space for civil society is created. States don't grant civic space, it is claimed by the assertion of voice and rights by members of society regardless of the attitude of the state. Thus civil society is not dependent on the goodwill of states, and even in the face of repression, innovative new ways can be employed to mobilise and empower people to stake their legitimate claim to civic engagement and the realisation of their rights.

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[1] http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/globaltrends/GloTrends2-2.htm

[2] http://www.civicus.org/ecivicus-newsletter/1623-civil-society-the-clampdown-is-real

Impact

It's necessary to demonstrate to people that change is possible. Changing behaviour, starting with small groups, and amplifying their example to wider audiences can help increase impact and expand citizen engagement and action. Demonstrating success at the smaller scale can have a significant impact with people to win credibility and support. CSOs are often questioned on their legitimacy, based on representation ("who do CSOs represent really, it's only a minority!") but this distorts the main point: civil society works for the greater good. Legitimacy does not only come from sheer numbers, but also from the interests they represent, from the positive impact they have on their stakeholders, from the values they defend. Civil society needs to remind their stakeholders (supporters, members, donors, governments) of their positive impacts to retain the space it has created or is trying to create.

In September 2010, 63 countries supported a UN Human Rights Council resolution on the Rights of Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, appointing a UN Special Rapporteur [3]. This is a significant event that adds one instance to raising awareness and documenting the limits to civil society restrictions and to seeking protection where violations to these rights exist.

Lessons

Mobilising is a challenge but successful examples of engagement provide hope that this change is possible. All big movements started small. People are not going to do much and be engaged in human rights or anti-corruption issues if they don't feel involved and if they don't trust civil society to partner with them in pushing the issues forward. People's concerns, and the associated outrage they bring, have to touch their own view of the world or their everyday life. The challenge is to try to reach that in a concrete and not abstract way. This challenge is also true in the North, where traditions and intensity on engagement differ from the South's traditions.

This is not just for the anti-corruption movement, but for civil society in general. The main barriers in reclaiming civic space are resignation and cynicism, apathy and fear. Apathy often comes from problem seeming too big for a difference to be made. Cynicism comes from it's always been there why change now. And fear is obviously of reprisal. Civil society can gain further confidence in that it protects its members and its operations with a heightened awareness of their vulnerabilities (i.e. infiltration, espionage, data or information hacking) and appropriate reactions to these vulnerabilities or risks.

Civil society works for the greater good: a unifying factor for civil society, which should do more work in coalitions and alliances of different groups representing various interests: faith based, labour interests, environment, gender, human rights, anti corruption, etc.

Questions

Is there a North/South divide as regards ability of NGOs to connect with citizens and promote advocacy for change?

Creating change is complex - everyone likes to complain but when you call them to collective action they don't join you. Why not? What's hindering people to become involved? Fear can play a role – as in countries with restrictive frameworks (in the Middle East, China,

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[3] http://www.icnl.org/knowledge/news/2010/09-30.htm

Venezuela, Iran, Pakistan). On the other hand, on issues where people feel a direct connection and become emotionally involved, it is not difficult to mobilise and engage people. The successful case of the Right to Information movement in India, started by MKSS in Rajasthan more than a decade ago, has continued to exist –although since 2008 at least several right to information activists have been killed.[4]

Insights

Acting in solidarity and partnering with other communities within the civil society movement is a good start. The international women's movement was deemed the best example of this, by offering support to other movements; they gained support for their movement. They supported debt relief, climate change, etc, and managed to integrate their agenda into all of these issues. By supporting other communities, they also gained others' support to their issues. If you're going to build any kind of coalition, we have to give as much as we want to receive. The April 6 Youth Movement in Egypt, one of the principle catalysts of the January 25 nonviolent revolution, came into existence in 2008 to support striking workers in El-Mahalla el-Kobra.

Actions – Five Positive actions and three reminders:

1. Be relevant: start with people's issues, grievances and needs.
2. Be safe: be savvy and aware of vulnerabilities and risks to you, your members and your organisation. Make sure you map your risks and strengthen your security to ensure your staff, allies and information are protected.
3. Be creative: by using a variety of new peaceful and nonviolent tactics and enlisting creative spokespersons (such as artists) and other allies to achieve meaningful results.
4. Be accountable: communicate your successes, tell people how these actions have made an impact.
5. Be aware: "rights assumed are rights demanded" and this gives your cause a renewed emphasis.

Three Reminders:
1. Civil Society needs to set the example and have good governance structures: to earn credibility.
2. Civil society needs to define itself being inclusive to welcome many different communities and avoid isolation or exclusion.
3. Solidarity with organisations outside of your own focus area is key: networking builds trust.

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[4] http://www.worldcarecouncil.org/content/eight-activists-killed-seven-months-india

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A4 - Civil Society Empowerment – Political Vuvuzelas or Development Partners? Reflections from Zambia

The independent and diverse capacity of institutionalised civil society is a balancing factor vis-à-vis government planning, decision-making and implementation. Civil society activity promotes checks and balances by demanding from the state transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in its actions in response to the aspirations of society.

The legitimacy and credibility of CSOs is essential, and the absence of common code of conduct and shallow operational procedures can undermine CSO positioning. Most of those that claim to be at the forefront do not back their advocacy with knowledge and lack capacity for engagement. We refer to these as "political vuvuzelas."

This workshop of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions explored two elements. In the first instance, the contributors opened a conversation to discuss collaborations and networking amongst anti-corruption campaigners, based on the question: What do we find on the ground?
1. Cooperation vs. competition? Is there genuine will to network?
2. Can civil society show the impact of their work?
3. What is the institutional environment and the state's reception of CSOs?

In the second part of the workshop the focus turned to: Empowerment - How can the deficiencies of CSOs be bridged?
1. How to restore public trust in civil society?
2. How to professionalise the work of CSOs understanding the dynamics of corruption? Is there scope for utilising citizen centred tools to hold their public representatives accountable (with social audits, citizens-leaders development pacts)?
3. How can CSOs position themselves as learning institutions?
4. Is there scope for cooperating with partners, who promote capacity development in the area of good governance, to complement CSOs in their own efforts?

During the conclusions the session participants sought to determine the best approaches that can be taken by CSOs for citizen empowerment.

Contributor Team included:

- Makani Mzyece, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit Zambia
- Goodwell Lungu, Executive Director, Transparency International Zambia

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Problem(s)

A recent NGO accountability baseline study and mapping of CSOs in anti-corruption in Zambia confirmed that most organisations (with the exception of TI-Zambia) could not explicitly demonstrate institutionalised "good governance," vis-à-vis absence of code of conduct, anti-corruption clauses in staff and consultancy contracts, shallow operational and procurement procedures and lack of transparency in terms of sources and use of funds.

One observes persistent fragmentation among CSOs fuelled largely by suspicion of each other's political agenda and the inherent desire to gain prominence, "quick wins" and funding over other "rival" CSOs. This hardly leads to continuous engagement, but can lead to a straw fire effect.

At organisational levels, most CSOs lack professionalism and skills for mainstreaming anti-corruption. Most of those that claim to be at the forefront do not back their advocacy with knowledge and capacity for engagement. We refer to these as "political vuvuzelas."

On the other hand, we recognise reputable organisations that have exposed leakages of resources through public expenditure surveys, are caught in the "launch syndrome", that is their findings which initially capture public attention rapidly fades away because of the tendency by them to address numerous thematic areas. These are either too ambitious and in most cases are driven by the desire for "quick funding."

All these highlighted challenges that compromised the legitimacy of CSOs to stand on a higher moral ground to challenge the state on aspects of transparency and accountability.

Solution(s)

Our conviction is that there are three things that would need to be addressed. The first and overarching responsibility is that of restoring public trust in civil society. CSOs would legitimise and improve their credibility in society if they were to commit to integrity pacts or code of conduct that emphasise on accountability and transparency in their internal governance with respect to their constituents, state and funders.

The second is to professionalise their work which requires acquiring knowledge and skills in understanding what corruption is, why it is harmful to development and what could be done in anti-corruption. Basic and enhanced knowledge and the ability to engage in collective action have a direct bearing on the empowerment of citizens. They need to be included in the application of tools such as social audits, citizens-leaders development pacts. Result based application of knowledge strengthens CSOs as legitimate anti-corruption partners of the people in their dual role of stage and actor. Professionalism makes them remain focussed and strengthens their comparative advantage.

The third point is that of CSOs positioning themselves as learning institutions. Again, we observe that knowledge management is a rhetoric item and hardly internalised in the programmatic of CSOs in Zambia. Notwithstanding TIZ's lead role, we have suggested the establishment of a CSO clearing house that would gather, process and share knowledge and information on best practices on initiatives in anti-corruption. Such institution is an opportunity for peer learning among CSOs in Zambia and further draws experience from successful initiatives across regions.

Finally, we are quite convinced that cooperating partners, who promote capacity development in the area of good governance, are ready to complement CSOs in their own efforts. Experience confirms that cooperating partners make their knowledge, networks and

facilities available. Examples are the interactive U4 in-country and online courses which combine broad and highly specialised training in anti-corruption, TI's specific thematic initiatives and those hosted by UNODC or by bilateral partners such as the German UNCAC project.

Impact

The Zambian experience confirms that state action can be influenced when CSOs take advantage of their inherent comparative advantage, which is collective action and networking. For instance, the OASIS forum and media revelations in 2002, led to the removal of the second republican president Chiluba's immunity to pave way for investigations into alleged corruption during his presidency.

In March, 2009 a consortium of ten CSOs led by TI Zambia petitioned the Zambian high court to set up a tribunal to investigate impropriety allegations against the then Minister of Communications and Transport in her involvement over the sale of the Zambian state owned telecommunication company-Zamtel and procurement of radar system for the National Airports Corporation. The minister was forced to resign after she was found to have breached the constitution and the ministerial code of conduct. Yet, she was appointed minister of education by the Zambian president few months later.

Lessons

1. Collective approach by CSO is the best to achieve results.

2. Absence of self-regulation / good governance structures undermines the work of CSOs.

3. Advocacy is meaningless unless backed by facts and involves ordinary citizens.

Questions

With reference to the registration of the London High Court judgment on former President Chiluba (even though it has not been enforced as yet) - does this positive outcome reduce the fear element from citizens who seek to challenge corruption by their elected leaders?

This effort was a clear demonstration that the fear factor and the "sacred cow" or 'big man' syndrome has been overcome.

One notices competition by CSOs to get the attention of donors for financing their anti-corruption work. However, there is no competition amongst Cooperating Partners who have an anti-corruption working group. This working group provides a platform where the donors share information on who they are supporting in anti corruption, and there is a clear division of labour and sectors among them.

Proposed Actions

From the GTZ point of view, we shall continue supporting CSO efforts towards self-accountability through codes of conduct and integrity pacts.

In assisting CSOs in professionalising their work and positioning themselves as learning institutions, through knowledge management and for this we have suggested that would gather, process and share knowledge and information on best practices on initiatives in anti-corruption. Such an initiative is an opportunity for peer learning among CSOs in Zambia and further draws experience from successful initiatives across several regions through a CSO clearing house and a media platform.

Finally, we are quite convinced that cooperating partners, who promote capacity development in the area of good governance, are ready to complement CSOs in their own efforts. Experience confirms that cooperating partners make their knowledge, networks and facilities available. Examples are the interactive U4 in-country and online courses which combine broad and highly specialised training in anti-corruption, TI's specific thematic initiatives and those hosted by UNODC or by bilateral partners such as the German UNCAC project.

Supporting Victims, Witnesses & Whistleblowers - 12th November 2010 - 15.00 - 17.00

B5 - Whistle blowing: Moving it to the next level

Whistle blowing plays a critical role in detecting and preventing corruption and other malpractice. However, rather than being seen as champions of the public good, whistleblowers are often perceived as disloyal to their employers or even as traitors or snitches. Their disclosures may not be followed-up and they often face reprisal at their workplace against which they are not adequately protected.

The need for more effective whistle blowing and adequate protection of whistleblowers is increasingly recognized. Yet there is a huge potential for more whistle blowing which remains unexploited. The aim of this session is to explore ways of moving the promotion of whistle blowing to the next level.

This workshop of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions, explored the issue of whistle blowing in two parts. Firstly, the session participants were given the chance to share experiences and views about the obstacles to whistle blowing and tackle questions such as:
- What is needed to effectively protect whistleblowers?
- What is needed to ensure reports of corruption are followed-up and acted upon?
- What are the key actors that need to be involved in the promotion of whistle blowing?

The second section of the session explored ways to overcome these obstacles, by discussing the questions:
- How can anti-corruption and whistle blowing advocates work together in defending the public interest?
- Do we need a global coalition to promote whistle blowing? If yes, who are the key stakeholders that should join such a coalition, and what should be the main focus of its activities?

Contributor Team included:

- Lorraine Martin, Open Society Democracy Advice Centre, South Africa
- Francesca West, Public Concern at Work, UK
- John Devitt, Transparency International Ireland
- Anja Osterhaus, TI Secretariat, Germany

Problem(s)

Whistleblowers are often perceived as disloyal to their employers or even as traitors or snitches. Their disclosures are often not followed-up and they face reprisal at their workplace against which they are not adequately protected. Some whistleblowers even risk their lives.

Whistleblowers often do not know where to go to get advice. They end up being alienated and isolated.

There is a need for a cultural shift in order to recognize the value of whistle blowing in disclosing corruption and other malpractice and in protecting the public good. There is also a need to share best practice regarding whistle blowing legislation.

Solution(s)

Whistleblowers need effective and comprehensive legal protection, adequate disclosure channels and proper follow-up mechanisms to their disclosures. Political buy-in for whistleblowers protections can be built by facilitating public pressure on the issue and connecting it to the anti-corruption agenda.

It is important to ensure that whistleblowers can make anonymous disclosures if they wish and that they are adequately advised and supported. Electronic reporting systems or platforms can be very useful to filter disclosures and ensure anonymous follow-up. Private sector buy-in for whistleblowers protection can be encouraged by linking the issue with risk management, compliance policies and with the CSR agenda.

Advice can be provided by professional organisations, advice centres or ombudsmen that are well equipped to deal with the particular nature of the problem. In addition, local support networks are needed at local level. At international level, it is important to share knowledge and best practice amongst campaigners and stakeholders through a virtual network or platform.

Impact

Major scandals and effective advocacy activities have resulted in whistle blowing legislation in many countries across the globe, from South Africa to the United Kingdom, from Romania to Liberia and from Korea to the United States. Civil society and professional organisations have set up help lines and advice centres to support whistleblowers in finding the appropriate disclosure channels and to protect them against retaliation.

In countries with adequate whistle blowing legislation and enforcement mechanisms, whistleblowers have been compensated for the damage they suffered and alleged offenders were effectively prosecuted. Increasingly, companies see whistle blowing mechanisms as a means for risk management.

Lessons

Legal protection is essential, but not sufficient. Laws need to be bulletproof and should not leave loopholes. Legislation processes can take many years, and often there is resistance and lack of political will to pass and enforce related bills. Bills that are not effectively enforced can be counterproductive because whistleblowers think they are protected and take too many risks. Whistle blowing legislation can conflict with privacy laws.

Advice centres need to warn whistleblowers about the risks they are running. While anonymity needs to be ensured, whistleblowers should be warned that the substance of their information may reveal their identity. Depending on the local context and the level of media freedom, the whistleblower might be best protected if he or she goes public.

Questions

How can resistance in governments against whistle blowing legislation be overcome? What to do if the government cannot be trusted? How can the public perception of whistle blowing be changed? How can whistle blowing by victims in human trafficking be protected (they are in a particularly vulnerable situation)?

Insights

Whistle blowing legislation and mechanisms in organisations have often been triggered by big corruption cases or other scandals that had a high cost on assets or even lives.

For whistle blowing bills and mechanisms in organisations to work, the support by the leadership is essential.

Even where specialized organisations that can give advice to whistleblowers do exist, they are often not used by the people who intend to disclose information.

It is important to distinguish between disclosures of wrongdoing that help to protect the public good and complaints that pursue a purely personal interest and are not founded in (suspicion of) wrongdoing.

Good reference: Brian Martin's 'Backfire model' studied whistle blowing around the world. He identified 5 phases whistleblowers go through and developed strategic response to the needs of whistleblowers.

Proposed Actions

A public campaign should be run to support whistle blowing, engaging media, civil society, business, activists, trade unions, politicians and other relevant stakeholders. Awareness should be raised about the benefits of whistle blowing, for example through publicising stories about the damage resulting from cases where information was not disclosed, or by publishing data about the financial benefit through disclosures.

An international platform should be established to facilitate knowledge-sharing. Best practice in whistle blowing legislation should be collected and made publicly available. A campaign should be run to promote best practice whistle blowing legislation and to advocate for the implementation of commitments in UNCAC and other conventions.

It should be considered to build a global coalition to promote whistle blowing.

At local level, support centres should be established and promoted to help whistleblowers with advice and practical support.

Supporting Victims, Witnesses & Whistleblowers - 12th November 2010 - 15.00 - 17.00

B6 - Empowering People: Securing Lasting Change

First started in 2003, Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs) have quickly developed into one of the TI movement's fastest growing approaches to fighting corruption. Currently operated by TI's National Chapters in more than 45 countries, they encourage victims, witnesses and whistleblowers to come forward and report potential cases of corruption. They then provide free legal advice and other support to people to help them pursue their complaints, wherever possible through official redress mechanisms. To date, more than 70,000 people have contacted TI through its ALACs. In the next two to three years, it is expected that up to 65 countries will have ALACs, including a number of OECD economies such as Ireland, Luxemburg, Turkey, and Finland.

TI National Chapters analyse the primary data reported by people and contribute to a much-enhanced understanding of the effects of corruption from a citizen perspective. This enhanced understanding also feeds directly into the development of more effective anti-corruption solutions that are implemented in partnership with government and the private sector. Cases have been reported by an extremely diverse client base (from the poorest to well-positioned whistleblowers), have affected numerous different sectors and have ranged from petty bribery to contracts of up to 500 million USD. Cases have involved issues of public procurement, abuse or misuse of public assets, privatisation processes, environment, judiciary, health, education, customs, and planning and development inspectorates.

This session of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions offered some of the real cases ALACs have received, demonstrating the cross-cutting nature of corruption as well as the tangible changes that empowered citizens can bring about. In conversation with the participants, the session used these case studies to explore in-depth the impact of this approach, which seeks to empower people and secure lasting change in the fight against corruption.

See for more about the ALACs - http://www.transparency.org/alac

Contributor Team included:

- Katia Hristova-Valtcheva, Programme Director, TI Bulgaria
- Titus Gwemende, Programme Manager, TI Zimbabwe
- Alejandro Urízar, Executive Director, Acción Ciudadana (TI Guatemala)
- Srdjan Blagovcanin, Executive Director, TI BiH
- Ivan Ninenko, Project Manager, TI Russia
- Nemanja Nenadic, Programme Director, TI Serbia
- Conrad Zellmann, ALAC Senior Coordinator, TI Secretariat

Session Notes: 5 Case Studies from TI ALACs in Zimbabwe, Guatemala, Serbia and Bulgaria.

Session report

The Problem addressed by ALACs: Tackling Apathy and Cynicism

As ALACs engage people directly, and help address the perhaps single biggest obstacle in the fight against corruption – apathy and cynicism – they have changed the rules of the corruption game. Providing people with a simple, credible and viable mechanism to take action against corruption, ALACs have achieved impact in two principal ways: Contributing to the empowerment of citizens, and to systemic change in public policy and practice.

Through ALACs, fighting corruption moves from being an expert-led process to becoming a participatory, civic initiative driven by people themselves. TI National Chapters using the ALAC approach respond to citizen concerns and demands, and help translate their concerns into actionable proposals and solutions against corruption. This changes the rules of the game by increasing accountability between elites and citizens in the fight against corruption, and by making a constructive contribution through the demand-driven development of sustainable solutions.

Solutions and Impact

Numerous significant changes have already been effected through the work of the ALACs, including, for example, the introduction of whistleblower laws, new administrative procedures for inspections and licenses, changes in court procedures, re-tendering on large infrastructure projects, as well as resignations and prosecutions in situations where impunity had been the norm. In our view, ALACs are indeed successful at translating citizens' concerns on corruption into structural changes for better local and national governance.

This session during the 14th IACC in Bangkok focussed largely on illustrating and discussing the impact that the work of ALAC in Zimbabwe, Guatemala, Bulgaria, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina has had. TI Russia then presented an innovative tool that builds on the ALAC model, but takes the approach online.

TI Zimbabwe ALAC case study

Problem(s) - case

TI Zimbabwe received 190 individual cases of complaints against the state owned electricity company citing lack of service provision and unfair (i.e. very high) service charges.

Solution(s)

The approach taken by this ALAC consisted of a study of the 190 cases. The ALAC then conducted training with citizens to help them demand accountability from the service provider as they were progressing their complaints. In addition, the ALAC provided training to public officials.

Impact

The results have been a success with more standard access to the electrical supply and lower charges to customers.

Lessons

The TI Zimbabwe ALAC has 45 accountability committees locally to allow local communities to present collective cases; the communities also collect and share information centrally with the national ALAC.

Insights

Providing the accountability training to citizens facilitated their empowerment to allow their voices to be heard.

Acción Ciudadana (TI Guatemala) ALAC case study

Problem(s) - case

The ALAC received a complaint from a citizen about nepotism and conflict of interest on the part of a public official – a local mayor had recruited several of his own relatives into municipal positions.

Solution(s)

The initial approach by the ALAC was to ask for information from the local authorities, which was repeatedly denied. The next step centred on an advocacy campaign, including a presentation of a report on a national level. Finally, the ALAC supported the citizen in bringing the complaint against the mayor at the national level.

Impact

Initially the national comptroller refused to study the case. However after persistence and involvement of the media, an inquiry was opened. There was a successful result in that several relatives of the mayor lost their positions.

Questions

How do you manage malicious complaints (perhaps conflict of interest on the part of the presenting client)?

On this point, the ALAC in TI Pakistan notes that it only supports cases where the client is being denied a specific right, cannot access a specific service.

Insights

This case study demonstrates clearly how individual citizens willing to act against corruption can make a huge difference. At various stages, this individual determination was facilitated by the guidance and support from the ALAC.

TI Serbia ALAC case study

Problem(s) - case

The ALAC was approached by a bidder who was consistently losing tenders for government contracts.

Solution(s)

Upon follow up and research of the case and it was noticed that there was always a bank guarantee, from the same bank, to a value of 3% which allowed the other bidders to have a systemic advantage over the client and his submissions.

Insights

Clients presenting themselves with cases to the TI Serbia ALAC are often in desperate situations and thus need additional support from the ALAC. This particular case shows impact in the highly technical area but often corruption-prone area of public procurement, on the basis of an individual complaint.

TI Bulgaria ALAC case study

Problem(s) - case

Two types of corruption prevail in the context of Bulgaria's election campaigns: vote-buying and use of employers to convince employees to vote for a particular party. Political parties are usually unresponsive to problems in these areas.

Solution(s)

TI Bulgaria initiated the establishment of Civil Society Coalition which consisted of more than 50 NGOs who observed the elections for members of the National and European Parliament in 2009.

In particular, the campaign involved:

1/ monitoring through direct supervision throughout the country carried out by 418 observers and

2/ the premises of TI served as the head office of the monitoring process where the hotline of ALAC 0800 11 224 was available for citizens to report abuse.

Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with NGOs and institutions were established including with the prosecution office.

Postcards with promotional information about the ALAC drew attention to the issue in order to encourage complainants to come forward.

Impact

Overall 123 complaints (17 for the EP and 106 for NP) were made via the hotline of ALAC of which 49 regarding organizational infringements, 31 alleging vote-buying and 12 regarding illegal advertisement during Election Day.

During the Election Day, the ALAC received complaints and staff advised citizens on their electoral rights. Complaints were processed and forwarded to the Central Election

Commission and to District Election Commissions. 18 complaints about vote trading were forwarded to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which were investigated by the Ministry and the National Prosecution Office.

Due to the received information from the hotline, double voting in some towns and villages in North-Western Bulgaria was averted.

Lessons

Establishing the MOUs also assisted with other campaigns of the chapter.

Insight

This example shows the successful application of the ALAC approach in a thematic area.

TI Bosnia and Herzegovina ALAC case study

Problem(s) - case

Two cases of un transparent privatisation processes for an oil refinery and a power plant, brought by a trade union and a shareholder association.

Solution(s)

Since the contracts were secret, a public campaign was organised through the media and international organizations to get answers from government. When some information was being released, major undervaluation of the assets came to light. The information was made public and a case was brought to the prosecution office, involving the potential mishandling of millions of EUR of public assets.

Impact

This case is still being worked on.

TI Russia case study

TI Russia operates ALACs in Moscow and two further cities. This example describes an innovative initiative building on the ALAC infrastructure.

Problem(s) - case

Russia is a vast country, with a large population and with room for local decision-making, e.g. in town halls. In addition to directly corruption related issues, ALACs themselves tend to receive a significant number of contacts regarding relatively minor concerns, where the relationship to corruption may be doubtful. However, as they represent important concerns for the individuals concerned, it is important to address them in an efficient way. Public apathy in the face of lack of accountability and persistent problems must be overcome by offering many people a direct means for engagement, while not overburdening the capacity of a local civil society organisation.

Solution(s)

TI Russia is currently piloting the use of an online platform accessible at http://karta.vibor33.ru/, where internet user can report instances related to public roads maintenance, housing, ecology, public safety and social issues such as kindergartens. Via the hotline, email and twitter users can report and categorise problems. On the site itself problems are made public, indicating possible solutions as well as the authorities responsible to fix the problem. ALAC lawyers stand ready to advice on more complex cases.

Impact

This project is still in its pilot phase, after which it is planned to roll it out in other Russian cities. What is already clear is that people have begun to upload numerous examples to the website, indicating that this may indeed increase the engagement of citizens and accountability of the authorities.

Questions

In response to a question on security, Ivan clarified that people can make anonymous reports on the site if they so wish. Regarding another question, Ivan explained that promotion of the website takes places mainly through word of mouth and online.

Insights

In the view of TI Russia, this project demonstrates that a large number of typical issues that an ALAC would receive can be resolved by a community of users themselves, and/ or by showcasing 'typical' solutions, thus assisting people, increasing accountability and making the core corruption-fighting task of the ALAC more effective and efficient. The example also highlights ongoing innovation in the application of citizen reporting mechanisms in civil society work.

Actions

TI Russia plans to engage government in the further stages of development of the project. They also plan to add a mapping feature to the site.

Summary of the session

The ALAC approach represents a game changing strategy in the fight against corruption, involving a broad base of citizens in initiatives to increase accountability and identifying sustainable solutions to address corruption. In this way, ALACs overcome a key obstacle in fighting corruption: public apathy and cynicism. They offer a simple, credible and viable mechanism through which people in very different contexts are becoming involved in the fight against corruption. At the same time, ALACs seek to translate individual grievances into constructive proposals for longer-term, structural change. As a result, fighting corruption moves from being an elite or expert preoccupation to a broader based undertaking that people themselves can actively and effectively participate in.

Various levels of impact of this work have been identified in the sessions, e.g. in terms of increasing access to public services, addressing corruption in procurement, privatisation and election contexts. In all examples it became clear that the key actors are citizens themselves. A key objective of this work is facilitating the empowerment of people in the face of corruption, encouraging and supporting them to take a stand against it.

Key lessons from the session include the strong evidence for the transferability and adaptability of the approach in very diverse contexts, now more than 45 countries. Likewise the relevance of the approach to addressing diverse corruption issues (from petty bribes to

grand corruption involving millions of dollars) and a highly diverse group of people (from the poorest to white-collar whistleblowers, individuals as well as communities) was shown through the case examples. Finally, the constant evolution of the approach was highlighted through the examples of sectoral application in an election context and through an online extension of the approach.

TI Chapters are committed to further growing and expanding this approach in the next years, serving greater numbers of people outside the capitals through regional ALACs and mobile outreach. Also, a growing number of TI Chapters in countries with lower perceived levels of corruption, such as Ireland and Luxembourg are currently in the process of establishing ALACs.

Supporting Victims, Witnesses & Whistleblowers - 12th November 2010 - 15.00 - 17.00

B7 - Legal Redress for Victims of Corruption:
Enhancing the role of civil society in corruption related litigation

Corruption is not a victimless crime – all citizens suffer as a consequence of corruption.

International conventions compel countries to put laws in place so that victims can hold violators accountable, but these conventions are drafted by states for states. What if the state is involved in the theft of the country's resources? What if a victim-state is unable or unwilling to conduct the appropriate legal proceedings?

In many jurisdictions the legal tools are unclear, untested, or even nonexistent - leaving victims little recourse against corrupt officials or those who collude with them. The ability of victims to initiate civil claims and to participate in criminal proceedings is a crucial counterpart to enforcement by state actors. This is most profoundly true for victims in countries where corruption is systemic and meaningful prosecution is a fiction.

How can civil society play a role in corruption related litigation?

The workshop on Legal Redress for Victims of Corruption at the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions created a space to empower civil society by mapping the current legal landscape and scoping strategies and tools available to those involved in litigation related to trans-national corruption. It followed a workshop organized on the 11th during which concrete corruption cases initiated by civil society was presented.

Contributor Team included:

- Alan BACARESE, Head of Legal and Case Consultancy; Basel Institute on governance (Switzerland)
- Edward H. DAVIS, Lawyer, Astigarraga Davis Law firm (US)
- Abiola MAKINWA, PhD Researcher, Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands)
- Maud PERDRIEL VAISSIERE, Managing Director, SHERPA (France)
- Elizabeth RYDER, Senior Legal Consultant (Norway)

Problem(s)

Public enforcement & political will

There will always be illegal conduct that is not pursued by state actors for a host of reasons including scarce resources, shifting priorities, and, most troublesome, the political sensitivity of high-level investigations. Despite a well-publicized up-tick in public enforcement, in the overwhelming majority of jurisdictions enforcement is actually quite low or absent. While this is expected of kleptocracies, recent OECD statistics indicate that it is also true of many developed countries.

Civil remedies & the issue of standing

Article 35 of UNCAC is our reference point, which requires state parties to ensure that those who have suffered damage as a result of an act of corruption have "the right to initiate legal proceedings against those responsible for that damage in order to obtain compensation".

According to the legal standing requirement applicable in most jurisdictions (also know as the locus standi), parties can only sue when they have an interest at stake and for damage that they have personally suffered. In other words, only the affected parties have the locus standi to file a case and pursue the litigation and the non-affected persons have no locus standi to do so. Locus standi is an admissibility condition that acts as a gate-keeper for the filing of cases and if a complainant does not have standing, the complaint will be rejected by the judicial body on formal grounds, without consideration of the merits.

When dealing with grand corruption, the primary victims are States but it is also clear that citizens suffer damage as a result of the mismanagement of public resources. However, citizens are rarely considered as victims, i.e. legally entitled to initiate civil proceedings to recover corruptly acquired assets.

Funding

Funding for strategic litigation can be challenging to secure because the ultimate legal ruling is an unknown, for example, whether looted assets will be recovered and/or a public official will be held accountable

Solution(s)

Public enforcement & the political will

Where private prosecution is not available, raise media awareness. The media can play a role in deterring corruption and convincing enforcements agencies to act.

Civil remedies & the issue of standing

Conduct a gap analysis to identify jurisdictions where public interest litigation is permitted in respect of corruption and consider bringing strategic litigation in these jurisdictions. Explore unconventional methods on which to base and/or bring cases by developing a network of practitioners to share experiences and knowledge. Consider drafting a model law that effectively implements Article 35 of UNCAC to ensure that victims have the right to legal redress.

Funding Litigation

International donors are learning that while counting the number of convictions and the value of the assets recovered can be illuminating, it should not be considered determinative. A better approach to measure the value of strategic litigation considers broader benchmarks

that, taken together, can reveal the true value of an effort. These benchmarks might include, for example, the lessons learned in testing the scope of national anti-corruption laws, strengthening judicial capacity to manage complex financial crimes, and the deterrence value of cases brought against public officials. Further research must be done to articulate broad benchmarks that donors can use to measure the impact of their interventions.

Impact

The workshop generated considerable interest and linked a core network of experts on legal remedies and victim's rights.

Lessons

Working together with private sector attorneys can be beneficial because government resources are not required to finance the trial costs and it is often faster.

Questions

How can CSOs bring criminal prosecutions?

What needs to be done so that laws in different countries allow individuals to file claims against high-ranking government officials and demand compensation?

How can the argument be best presented to international donors to secure financial backing for legal redress endeavours?

How can we best link and utilize the growing network of experts interested in this issue?

Insights

As a particular approach in terms of progressing a legal redress case, it is important to follow the embezzled assets and to target the jurisdictions where the assets are found.

Proposed Actions

Organize a small working-group to address the issues raised within the workshop to meet in February or March 2011 in order to identify key issues in private enforcement, find ways to strengthen and link our work, and consider how to build and use our growing network of experts. At this meeting, create a road map that can be circulated and developed, and then discussed at a meeting held later in the year with the larger network.

Supporting Victims, Witnesses & Whistleblowers - 12th November 2010 - 15.00 - 17.00

B8 - Young People: victims and [game-changers]?

It is widely recognized that young people are more fragile and easily influenced. Thus they are also, both directly and indirectly, more vulnerable victims of corruption. This is especially so when corruption exists in the education system.

However, young people are also those who have the most potential to initiate change. For these reasons the international anti-corruption movement is increasingly working on understanding youth integrity, and raising awareness amongst, mobilizing and empowering youth as [game-changers] in the fight against corruption.

In this session of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions the contributor team lead a broad discussion to explore and learn from different international experiences about:

a) the status of young people in respect to corruption (e.g. Are they the most vulnerable victims of corruption? Do they view corruption and integrity differently than "adults"? Who shape their views? Are they the activists who we should bet on); and

b) how young people can be supported, mobilized and empowered as witnesses, whistleblowers and proactive anti-corruption campaigners?

The focus of the workshop was guided by the question: how to facilitate young people to contribute towards changing the rule of the game.

Contributor Team included:

- Nguyen Thi Kieu Vien, Executive Director, Towards Transparency, Vietnam
- Dr Geo-Sung Kim, Chairperson, TI Korea
- Gina Romero, Executive Director, OCASA , Columbia
- Dr. Iftekhar Zaman, CEO, TI Bangladesh
- Sergej Muravjov, Executive director, TI Lithuania
- Dr Dang Hoang Giang, Deputy Director, CECODES (Center for Community Support and Development Studies), Vietnam
- Do Van Nguyet, Country Manager, Live & Learn, Vietnam
- Matthieu Salomon, International Senior Advisor Towards Transparency, Vietnam

Problem

The issue identified by the discussion group was to gain a better understanding and analysis of youth experiences and behaviours related to corruption. This understanding would then inform the formulation of training, approaches and activities to mobilize and engage youth in the most efficient ways in anti-corruption.

Special attention was also draw to corruption in the education system as bribery in schools cancels efforts of anti-corruption education, especially when students themselves are in situations where they are paying the bribes.

Solution

Ownership of activities (i.e. who has it, the young people or the adults?), is crucial for engaging youth in anti-corruption activities. The approaches must be flexible, innovative and incremental (to demonstrate concrete results and build trust) and align with youth interests. Training and engagements can often be organized outside the school environment for better success: these should influence formal education in return. Engagement of youth in concrete small monitoring activities (which can demonstrate tangible results to them and offer news experiences) appears to be an effective approach.

Impact

The impact of youth engagement in anti-corruption is potentially very important because in countries where the population is young (South), the youth has a very strong political weight and is often more innovative (i.e. familiar with IT, etc.).

Some experiences of organising innovative anti-corruption training or mobilisation activities for youth which have demonstrated impact are:

- the Summer School on Transparency and Integrity led by TI-Lithuania or other initiatives in Russia;

- the experiences of mobilising youth through new networks like OCASA in Colombia (http://www.ocasa.org.co/) or

- the Global Youth Anti-Corruption Network (http://www.voices-against-corruption.org/);

- and the experiences of mobilising youth for monitoring and raising awareness activities like the Youth Engagement and Support (YES) groups created by TI-Bangladesh for informing citizens of their rights related to access to public services (http://www.ti-bangladesh.org/)

Lessons

Community support is essential. Incentives must exist in society for young people to continue acting with integrity in the real world. Following this, indentifying and promoting role models, in everyday life and in the leadership, is crucial.

Questions

The main challenges to youth engagement include the limitations by Governments, limited resources and the need to ensure safety. Resistance to change from the rest of society impacts also on youth. These issues remain as key challenges to be explored and overcome.

Insights

Managing the expectations of Youth is fundamental in terms of expected results and impacts of activities. But also engaging with youth requires exemplary leadership: young people will seek leadership from your words and actions, and they will thus demand accountability and responsibility from you. The transition period when young people start to work needs special attention for continuous engagement.

(Proposed) Actions

The discussion group identified the following three general action options: Conduct Youth Integrity Survey to improve knowledge of youth "situations" related to corruption.

- Develop an anti-corruption tool-kit that youth groups can use for concrete small monitoring activities.
- Establish global Youth Networks that reach out to role models and leaders – facilitating virtual and live exchange between youth groups to exchange ideas and initiatives.

Connecting the [Game-changers] 13th November 2010 - 14.00 - 16.00

C9 - Making the invisible visible: technology Vs corruption.

Citizens are the too often the ones most affected by corruption. For many, corruption and government opacity pose an obstacle to basic public services. Corruption also raises the public's concerns about political leaders' actions, and diminishes equal and fair treatment under the law. Additionally, some members of the public may be witnesses or whistleblowers of wrongdoing in their workplace or communities and have no way to report or receive support.

Up until recently, it has been challenging to integrate these citizens into traditional anti-corruption programmes. This session will discuss opportunities and challenges of using technology and social media to allow citizens to join the fight against corruption and become active in holding their leaders accountable. We will also look at the incentives of specific social groups to make the best use of these new tools.

How we use theoretical information and collected data is key. To target interventions to support citizens and to make strong arguments in a competitive media environment, we need to use our data to help create meaning – to help tell stories. We can use interactive infographics, mapping tools and other technologies to reach new audiences and strengthen advocacy strategies.

We believe that presenting information and visualising data can be an incredible tool to understanding corruption and its impact on people's lives.

In this session of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions the contributors showed case study examples of how existing and new information technologies can improve engagement between citizens and [game-changers].

Contributor Team included:

- Hernán Charosky, Executive Director, Poder Ciudadano, Argentina
- Marek Tuszynski, Executive Director, Tactical Technology Collective, Poland
- Stephanie Hankey, Executive Director, Tactical Technology Collective, UK
- Georg Neumann, Senior Communications Coordinator, TI Secretariat

Problem(s)

The session looked at how corruption-related data and information can be collected, what to do with it and how to make it accessible and transparent. And finally, the session explored how this information can be made useful to engage citizens and government in tackling corruption and fostering good governance in their environment.

How we use information and collected data is crucial in reducing corruption. To target interventions to support citizens and to make stronger arguments in a competitive media environment, we need to use this information to help create meaning – to help tell stories.

Solution(s)

Focussing on existing and new technologies the session presented three steps that are directed in addressing the abovementioned problem effectively.

Firstly, the power of data and information was presented looking at successful examples that have achieved change by presenting information visually in an attractive and engaging fashion. Presenting information and visualising data can be a useful tool to increase the understanding corruption and its impact on people's lives.

Secondly, often, the data is not yet available in a format that allows for successful advocacy for an issue. The second part of the session looked at political financing in Argentina. On this example, the steps of extracting government data and developing an open source software tool and visualisation to support advocacy activities became evident.

Thirdly, an example from Sao Paolo, Brazil, showed that citizen engagement in different aspects of the visualisation or online platform (such as through data collection or so-called crowd-sourcing, or opportunities to engage with the stakeholders online), can be crucial to improving livelihoods and awareness of problems related to corruption, transparency and governance.

Lessons

There is a trend, in relation to building online resource spaces, from the 'classic watchdog' type (providing information with a general focus and with static content) towards a more focused targeting of audiences with versatile and dynamic information.

EXAMPLES

The power of data and information:
  ▪ Using information to engage citizens: Political Nascar
  ▪ Exploring data. Examples by the Sunlight Foundation, New York crime data, and water polluters in the US
  ▪ Action orientated visualisations: Adopt a Chevron Board Member
Examples for successful visual-based advocacy are Moroccan Sniper and Exxon Secrets

How to get data hidden on local government websites, and make it accessible and attractive for making change: ▪ Dinero y Politica: www.dineroypolitica.com/

How to get from technology and information to citizen participation
- Citizen engagement in local governance esferapublica: http://esferapublica.org

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Examples of static yet targeted information:
- Social Policy - information on subsidies for the unemployed http://poderciudadano.org/?p=967
- Waste Management - Waste Management: participative process towards a public bidding www.cambiodemocratico.org/residuosurbanos

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Questions

How to make information activism work for organisations that have traditionally published long reports?

What tools can small NGOs use to create visualizations, even with limited resources?

Insights

The best is to use simple messages for visualising a problem/issue - but distilling simple messages can be very difficult. The following programs can be used to create visualisations: DataViz, ManyEyes, Gapminder and Google analytics

And once you have unlocked relevant data, make sure to keep it open using Open Source software agreements or Creative Common licences.

Resources

Global Voices Technology for Transparency Network provides an overview of projects around the world that use information and data for transparency and fighting corruption http://transparency.globalvoicesonline.org. The platform is open for anyone to submit successful and interesting examples of online transparency projects.

Tactical Tech has developed some useful guidance documents http://www.tacticaltech.org/toolkitsandguides providing help and resources on presenting information online.

The software and code used as part of the Dinero y Politica project are open source and can be used and adapted by anyone interested.

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C10 - Right to Information as an Anti-Corruption Tool: Strategies for Citizen Empowerment

This session, convened by Access Info Europe and the Centre for Law and Democracy, held at the People´s Empowerment Special Sessions 14th IACC in Thailand 2010 was designed to explore strategies for the use of Right to Information (RTI) laws in the fight against corruption.

The right to information (RTI) is essential in the fight against corruption. It is vital that information is made available to citizens, NGOs, journalists and businesses both through proactive publication and upon request.

The structure of the session was built along two main strands; firstly, to look at what qualities in an RTI law are key to ensuring that it might later be effective; and secondly, to look at practical strategies for the use of RTI laws in the fight against corruption.

Contributor Team included:

- Toby Mendel, Executive Director, Centre for Law and Democracy, Canada
- Dr Johan Lindberg, School of Journalism and Australian Studies, Monash University, Australia
- Gillian Dell, Programme Manager, Transparency International Secretariat
- Hussein Khalid, Hussein Khalid, Executive Director of Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), Kenya.
- Sinfah Tunsarawuth, Director, Thai Media Law and Policy Centre, Thailand
- Lydia Medland, Freedom of Information Advocates Network, Access Info Europe, Spain

Problem(s)

From the first round of introductions it became clear that participants in this session spoke from experience. Obstacles to using the right to information to tackle corruption were easily and collectively identified. They included the following**:**

- Discrepancy between the promise offered by RTI (the law) and what happens in practice (where FOI requests are met with silence or refusals from government.) This comment was returned to at various moments throughout the seminar, perhaps because it seemed to resonate with many of those present at the seminar. The notion of referring to the law as a 'promise' also led to an emphasis on how governments could be called to account to ensure that this 'promise' was realised.

- Little way of knowing at global level which laws can really be useful. While there are now over 80 RTI laws worldwide, citizens, journalists and civil society activists have little way of distinguishing credible right to information laws from those which hold no real potential for increasing transparency or which may even make it more difficult to obtain public information.

-" If not used it will wither and die." Another problem, that was identified at the beginning of the seminar and consistently returned to, was the need to ensure that the right to information, once recognised in law, must be made use of and valued. Many participants spoke of governments being able to ignore right to information legislation when it is not used and valued by citizens and civil society.

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- Fear of using the right to information laws, in particular when asking for corruption related information.

A general fear of using the right to know was also identified as a core problem in making more use of RTI to tackle corruption. Forms in which this fear might be manifested include anything from doubts about ownership of information and ability to re-use it, to intimidating attitudes of public officials to outright fear of persecution.

Solution(s)

As facilitators of the session Access Info Europe and The Centre for Law and Democracy presented two ways in which we are working on addressing the problems identified above.

RTI Rating

Toby Mendel from the Centre for Law and Democracy presented the RTI Rating methodology, a tool developed with Access Info Europe designed to distinguish good laws which make every attempt to protect, advance and support requesters, from those that, like Uzbek law, cannot be recognised as valid transparency laws. The tool identifies and rates seven essential elements of RTI laws and provides a system for comparing standards worldwide. (The seven elements are Right of Access, Scope, Requesting Procedures, Exceptions and Refusals, Appeals, Sanctions and Protections, and Promotional Measures.) See, http://www.access-info.org/en/rti-rating

Tell Us What You've Done

Gillian Dell presented this initiative by Access Info Europe and Transparency International. The Tell Us What You've Done initiative uses the right to information to ask governments that have signed and ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption what they had done to implement it. The presentation of the preliminary results demonstrated how the right to information had in some countries produced unexpected and encouraging results while in some developing countries RTI laws did not appear to be working as well as we might expect. See, http://www.access-info.org/en/anti-corruption

Impact

The impacts of a good and functioning RTI law are many; however this seminar was tasked to focus on the power of RTI for tackling corruption.

There are also many ways that RTI laws and civil society activity to promote RTI can be seen to have created an impact. One of the main tactics discussed for creating impact was training:

> *Training: Participants reported positive impacts from training people on the right to know. For example, the Indian Organisation, 5th Pillar, reported that they had had mass up-take from a free training offered to students and citizens and that those that had done the training had much more success in getting the information that they requested. See, http://india.5thpillar.org/rti-training.html*

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Lessons

There are many challenges for using the Right to Information to tackle corruption worldwide. However, these challenges, whilst products of very different contexts, are often common challenges. A united civil society on this issue can help at the local, national and international level. Inspiring stories from one country can often motivate activists from other countries and models developed at the local level can often be replicated at the international level. RTI advocates should work together and keep information flowing about the right to know.

Examples mentioned

- Networks such as the Freedom of Information Advocates Network, www.foiadvocates.net

- International standards and tools such as the OAS model law on access to public information, http://www.oas.org/dil/AG-RES_2607-2010_eng.pdf

- International civil society initiatives to on anti-corruption work, http://www.uncaccoalition.org/

Questions

Below are some of the main issues considered during the session:

- *How can civil society ensure that the potential of an RTI law for investigating exposing and preventing corruption is realised?*

- *How can we usefully distinguish between genuine and tokenistic RTI laws?*

- *Having made these distinctions how can this information best be used?*

- *What needs to happen for people to make full use of an RTI law?*

- *What are the best means to promote an RTI law? (Through promotional measures in the RTI laws themselves, government promotion, CSO promotion, what type of promotion, training or campaigning?)*

- *How can real dangers to using the right to ask for information be overcome, and how can fear and intimidation be overcome?*

- *What are the respective roles of local and international civil society?*

- *How can civil society best work together and support each other on this issue?*

Insights

This session dedicated a large proportion of the time to the proposal of strategies for using RTI laws to fight corruption. Below is a list of the strategies and insights offered by our participants. Some of them are directed at the core question of how to use RTI laws to tackle corruption, others are in response to the related questions above, raised by the group.

1. Lead by Example, make requests.

2. Do promotional Activities

3. For low-literacy countries use verbal requests and records

4. Do comparative monitoring – use thematic information - analyse performance on access to information

5. Make and use recommendations for reform of law and practice

6. Use ongoing tools and comparative information

7. Local level requests

8. Use RTI Rating methodology

9. Use appeal mechanisms (and help citizens to do so)

10. Pressure from inside government can make a big difference – therefore identify pro-transparency allies

11. Popular theatre, SMS, billboards

12. Submit tightly-framed questions

13. Sanctions on public officials for not releasing information – check if people are aware of sanctions

14. To Tackle Fear: Needs to be addressed through proactive strategies

15. To Tackle Fear: Solidarity requests

16. To Tackle Fear: Act through civil society groups or other organisations

17. Appoint quasi-information commissioners from civil society in   situations where there is no information commissioner

18. Nationally and Internationally use national results of monitoring at international forums

19. Individuals are encouraged to contribute time or money to promoting and defending the right to information in their communities.

20. Governments are encouraged to train public officials

21. Draft, use, and promote model laws on access to information

22. Establish and use advice centres on legal advice and advocacy

23. Media: talk about administrative silence and mention FOI in stories

24. Promote proactive publication.

Proposed Actions

In sum we feel that the session can be evaluated as having been very positive and of having facilitated the exchange of much information, many stories and tactics, as well as having produced some fresh ideas.

Specific Proposals were to:

- Share with the group final results of the RTI Rating

- Share with the group final results of the Tell Us What you've Done Initiative

- Assist one another in making international requests (where requests are made to foreign countries)

- Share comparative material about national RTI laws

- Pay more attention to the role and rulings of Information Commissioners worldwide

- Invest in journalists and trainings for journalists e.g. www.legalleaks.info

- Share good news and positive case studies.

Connecting the [Game-changers] - 13th November 2010 - 14.00 - 16.00

C11 - How is investigative journalism helping the [game changers]?

From the early days in the fight against corruption when the 'c' word was only whispered in the halls of power, investigative journalists have faced barriers to the truth that include censorship, surveillance, and state control of the media. According to the Committee to Protect Journalist, of the 44 journalists killed thus far in 2010, 30[5] per cent were reporting on corruption, making it the second deadliest beat after politics.

Investigative journalism plays a key role in tracing and deciphering how corruption works: its mechanisms, channels and complex networks. Such work has in the past - and continues to do so today - highlighted rampant cases of corruption. However, more subtle and technically complex cases of fraud continue to escape under the radar of journalists and therefore don't reach the public opinion. This can be addressed by supporting the technical, scientific and legal capacities of journalists, for example in the areas of: money laundering, defence and security sectors and the stock exchange market of environmental funds. In addition there is growing recognition of the need to have more exchange between investigative reporters and anti-corruption NGOs, policy research institutes, etc.

This demonstrates the need for investigative journalists to become familiar with these issues and also to be more connected and to work together. Corruption does not know boundaries, journalists shouldn't either.

This session of the 14th IACC's People's Empowerment Special Sessions explored the relationship between investigative journalists and civil society leaders, considering them both as active [game-changers] who are challenging corruption. The contributor team led a discussion to draw conclusions on how these relationships can be nurtured in order to continue advancing the fight against corruption.

Contributor Team included:

- Gerardo Reyes, Investigative Journalist, Miami Herald, USA
- Giannina Segnini, Investigative Journalist, La Nación, Costa Rica
- Miranda Patrucic, Investigator, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, Bosna i Herzegovina
- Alessandra Fontana, Project Coordinator Christian Michelsen Institute, Norway
- Marta Erquicia, Americas Department, Transparency International Secretariat, Germany

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[5] According to the Committee to Protect Journalists: www.cpj.org

Session notes:

Problem(s)

In order for investigative reporters to do a better job uncovering the rapidly changing reality of corruption and continue exercising their oversight role in society, there are some issues that need to be addressed. These go from lack of funding, to self-censorship or impunity. We will not focus on these issues here and now but will try to narrow our analysis to: the role of journalists as connectors of the game-changers: the challenges and the possible solutions around this key role they play.

We experience that the communication between investigative reporters and anti-corruption NGOs or research institutes is not sufficient, and not always based on trust. This can hinder the use of the information generated by campaigning NGOs and can also stifle important leads for investigative journalist to start their research.

Corruption has with time become much more sophisticated and more often involves networks that are active in more than one country. As corruption is a problem that crosses borders, its investigation should similarly not be limited by frontiers. This makes it crucial for journalists from different countries and areas of expertise to work together. Nowadays we see that working relationships between investigative journalists don't always happen and these are seldom facilitated through structured networks at national and international levels.

There is also the aspect of psychology that hampers investigations. It is sometimes a challenge for journalists to have an open attitude towards new sources for their work, which, at times, can hinder their efficacy. Journalists also face the burden of responsibility, as there often exists a mentality that shining a light on corruption damages the reputation of a country and its people. This belief can be a significant obstruction to the work of investigative journalism.

Solution(s)

A means to address these challenges would be for NGOs to be more proactive and insistent with journalists about their research findings. NGOs can learn to package their information in such a way that they are attractive and easily understandable for reporters, as often time only allows for quick scanning through the information. This trust-based and regular relationship would allow for journalists to have access to possible new sources. Often citizens approach NGOs with corruption cases they have witnessed and there is not much that NGOs can do with this information. If a more natural flow of information between NGOs and reporters would be in place, NGOs would be able to have confidence that journalists are going to be responsible with the confidential information they receive.

There are quite a lot of events were journalists, normally from one region, meet and discuss about investigations and investigative techniques. This is a very useful space to get contacts and learn about different investigation paths. Nevertheless there is often a lack of "outsiders" (i.e. non-journalists) attending these events. Inviting issue experts to journalism events and having thematic sessions could contribute to having a better capacity for journalists to investigate new and complex fields.

Technology offers unlimited possibilities to stay connected. Journalists should use these to act as networks and collaborate when investigating cross-border issues as sometimes it is even easier to get information in a foreign country than "at home". New technologies and social media make it possible for each person to become a journalist (the citizen journalist). This overcomes the obstacle of media outlets that don't have the political will or resources to carry out investigations.

Impact

Investigative Dashboard, connecting the game changers
The Investigative Dashboard (ID)[6] is a non-for-profit collaborative space meant to facilitate and enhance cross border cooperation between journalists, bloggers and other information communities. It is a space for investigative journalists and citizen reporters to find resources, share information, and learn new 'tricks of the trade'. The main aim of the ID is to assist investigative efforts of people interested in tracking down organized crime activities and corruption across borders.

ID is working on three levels: a worldwide companies' directory with links to over 280 business and financial databases, a software center where the journalists and citizen reporters are able to find the latest open source tools used for mining, scrapping and analyzing data, and an information desk run by researchers. Once negotiations with commercial databases are completed researchers will have access to an array of national and international databases and will be able to provide journalist with information on companies and court cases.

Besides these, the ID is also a proactive space where researchers are scouring the Internet, archiving information and building databases with the help of journalists all over the world. The data vault currently contains many gigabytes of information such as: corporate records, court records and criminal records. These are very useful in order to help researchers to follow the money and track down crime across the borders in our region.

The positive impact of investigative journalism for society
Corruption has usually been mistakenly portrayed as a "victimless" crime. This definition ignores the damage suffered by citizens as a result of low quality or non-existent public services or infrastructures, as well as the opportunity cost to society of squandered public funds and the costs to companies of losing business opportunities for playing fair, to name a few.

A normal citizen made what she thought was a normal comment to an investigative journalist in Costa Rica. Something from that information alerted the journalist who started investigating. As a result of this, and much time spent investigating further, the La Nación journalist and her team unveiled how two international companies had made illegal payments to get public contracts. This corruption scandal involved three former Costa Rican presidents.

The prosecution of these statesmen was not the only result of the investigation. The Office of Public Ethics of the Attorney General's Office in Costa Rica adopted a victim-oriented approach and focused on the concept of "social damage" as the centrepiece of its argument. One of the companies involved in the scandal mentioned above had to pay 10 million dollars to the State of Costa Rica to compensate the damage caused to society by the acts of corruption.

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[6] ID web site is in its final phase of development. It is currently available at http://www.datatracker.org and will soon be moved to http://investigativedashboard.org

Insights

Journalists can often be ignorant about lots of information and are at times lacking background and technical expertise. CSOs and NGOs should not be afraid of tipping journalists off with leads and/or information so they can start investigations.

Citizen journalism can offer an alternative route to the spread of stories where traditional media in not interested, or there is a dis-trust/disconnect between mainstream media and society in general.

Proposed Actions

The session discussion resulted in two specific outline proposals:

1. The creation of a facilitative space that supports the international networking and collaborative work of investigative journalists. Such a space might be online and could allow journalists to create connections, list and share information resources and could host a database of people of interest for journalists.

2. The facilitation of thematic experts on corruption and contributors with relevant technical expertise conducting workshops at journalist events.

Also, a future action to note is that in March 2011, Investigative Dashboard will organize a workshop between journalists in its network and internet technology experts. The journalists will bring to the workshop's table a number of web based databases that need to be reshaped and stored offline and programmers will build web scrappers in order to gather data and process the data in these databases. Grouping of such data will allow comparative analysis and will help to give meaning to otherwise scattered information.

The Organising Team wishes to thank the following people for their active support and participation, which made the Peoples empowerment sessions possible:

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