The International Essay Competition 2007

REPORT AND WINNING ESSAYS

How does corruption affect your life?
What can you do to fight the corruption that you face?

The World Bank

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
This report was prepared by:
Anna Kuznicka & Pierre Girardier
Development Policy Dialogue
The World Bank, Paris Office

Under the supervision of:
Jean-Christophe Bas
Development Policy Dialogue Manager
The World Bank, Paris Office

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this document are entirely those of the author(s) and are not necessarily those of the World Bank, or its affiliated organizations, or members of its Board of Executive Directors, or the countries they represent. The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication and accepts no responsibility whatsoever for any consequence of their use. The boundaries, colors, denominations, other information shown on any map in this volume do not imply on the part of the World Bank Group any judgment on the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART I: Description of the International Essay Competition

- About the International Essay Competition .................................................. 3
- Facts and Figures ......................................................................................... 4
- Essay Competition Partners ........................................................................ 4
- Review Process ............................................................................................. 5
- Award Ceremony of the Essay Competition 2007 ....................................... 6

## PART II: Analysis of the essays submitted for the Essay Competition 2007

- Issues discussed by youth in their essays ..................................................... 8
- Selection of key findings and proposals put forward by youth ..................... 11
- Conclusions ............................................................................................... 13

## PART III: Winning Essays

- First Prize: Fabian Wajner Adler, Uruguay .................................................. 16
- First Prize: Abdullah Abdulsalam Al-Thawr, Yemen ................................... 29
- Third Prize: Olumide Adekola Adewoye, Nigeria ....................................... 40
- Finalists
  - Ogbu Emmanuel Chukwuemeka, Nigeria ............................................... 51
  - Marta Guzniczak, Poland ........................................................................ 63
  - Bwengye Deusdedit, Uganda .................................................................. 75
  - Angela Gapa, Zimbabwe ........................................................................ 88
  - Maria Cristina Castro, Colombia ............................................................ 100
  - Steven Allan Sumner, USA ..................................................................... 110
PART I: Description of the International Essay Competition

1. About the International Essay Competition

Young people are not only the future, they are the **now**. More than one fifth of the world’s population is between the ages of 12 and 24, with 1.3 billion young people living in developing countries. Over the last two years, consultations with youth and research work have demonstrated that youth can make a difference in fighting poverty through **their actions and advocacy activities in youth organizations**. Youth are key agents of change, but too often the nature and impact of their projects is not recognized or documented sufficiently, and youth face difficulties being heard and engaging more directly in civic life. In order to learn from youth how they can make a difference in reducing poverty, the World Bank launched the **International Essay Competition**.

The Essay Competition is a yearly worldwide competition for youth aged 18-25 initiated for the first time in 2004, and managed by the World Bank Office in Paris. The competition is designed and implemented in partnership with Country Offices of the World Bank and Public Information Centers (PIC) in 84 countries, as well as partners representing universities, NGOs and youth organizations all over the world.


The best gift for a young and curious mind is an opportunity to explore and learn more. Winning the essay competition opened up a world of such opportunities for me. (...) At times immense talent and ability to perform lie in a young individual, but his/her society is unable to recognize that talent, and an unfortunate gap emerges between the society’s demand for modification and its youth’s ability to contribute. (...) The World Bank Essay Competition makes a commendable attempt to bridge this gap by encouraging young voices to speak out and be heard. I request people and organizations around the world to take inspiration from this admirable effort and find more innovative ways of reaching out to youth and motivate them to think constructively and take part in positive activities.

Asnia Asim, 1st Prize Winner of the Essay Competition 2005
2. Facts and Figures

The Essay Competition 2007 was launched on January 5, 2007. It invited young people from all over the world to reflect on how they make a difference by addressing the following questions:

(1) How does corruption affect your life?
(2) What can you do to fight the corruption that you face?

As result of a massive communication campaign in 104 countries (50,000 leaflets and posters distributed), more than 2,300 young people from 130 countries submitted their essays. 95% of the essays came from developing countries. The highest number of submissions came from: Nigeria (441), Philippines (107), Indonesia (103), India (94) and Colombia (74). Essays were submitted in French, Spanish and English.

- 50,000 leaflets distributed
- 2,300 submissions from 130 countries
- 90% from developing countries

3. Essay Competition Partners

The Essay Competition 2007 was organized by the World Bank and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, in partnership with 11 prominent academic and civil society institutions:

- World Bank
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- U4 Anti-Corruption Center
- Cairo University, Egypt
- Jadavpur University, India
- National Autonomous University of Mexico
- University of Texas San Antonio
- Conciencia Argentina
- The Glocal Forum
- AEGEE Europe
- AIESEC International
- Junior Achievement Worldwide
- Africa Leadership Forum
### ESSAY COMPETITION CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 5</td>
<td>Launch of the Essay Competition 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Deadline for the submission of essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>First round of review completed (best 150)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Second round of review completed (best 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Final round of review completed (best 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Finalists announced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17, 10 am – 2 pm</td>
<td>Finalists present to Jury in Bled, Slovenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17, 2 pm – 4 pm</td>
<td>Juries meet to discuss presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17, 4 pm</td>
<td>Winners announced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17, 7 pm</td>
<td>Winners receive awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Finalists present their essays to the Jury, May 17, 2007, Bled, Slovenia*

### 4. Review Process

In April 2007, essays were blind-reviewed by the Essay Competition partners (reviewers), in a 3-round reviewing process. Authors of the nine best essays were invited to present their work to the jury during the ABCDE Conference in Bled, Slovenia on May 17. Finalists were selected based on the following criteria: i) impact of the projects described in the essay, ii) replicability and scalability of the proposed actions. The final jury took place on May 17, 2007, in Bled, Slovenia. Each of the nine finalists had 10 minutes to present his/her paper, followed by Question and Answer session with the jury and other finalists. After the presentations, the jury discussed the presentations and announced the winners.
Finalists:

- Winner of the 1st Prize (ex-aequo): Abdullah Abdulsalam Al-Thawr (Yemen)
- Winner of the 1st Prize (ex-aequo): Fabian Wajner Adler (Uruguay)
- Winner of the 3rd Prize: Olumide Adekola Adewoye (Nigeria)

Runners-up:

- Marta Guzniczak (Poland)
- Ogbu Emmanuel Chukwuemeka (Nigeria)
- Bwengye Deusdedit (Uganda)
- Steven Allan Stumner (Honduras)
- Angela Gapa (Zimbabwe)
- Maria Cristina Castro (Colombia)

Awards:

- 1 prize: 3,000 US dollars for each winner
- 3 prize: 1,000 US dollars

5. Award Ceremony of the Essay Competition 2007

The winners received their awards during the Award Ceremony on May 17, chaired by Cyril Muller, Special Representative, Europe, The World Bank. Diplomas were awarded by François Bourguignon, Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, The World Bank. More than 400 people from all over the world attended the Ceremony.

By 2015, children and youth will account for nearly 45% of the population in developing countries. The Essay Competition is part of a broader effort of the World Bank to address the needs of youth and to engage them all over the world. Cyril Muller, Special Representative, Europe, The World Bank, Chairman of the Essay Competition 2007 Award Ceremony

First prize winner Abdullah Abdulsalam Al-Thawr receives his diploma
Winners, finalists and juries during the Award Ceremony in Bled, Slovenia

Winners Said...

**Fighting corruption is not a simple task or a simple plan.** It is a strategy that requires cooperative work to involve all people in the community. We will all agree that youth are tomorrow’s leaders. But I also believe that youth can make a change today. And I believe youth have the potential and strength to do the changes. So the question now is not what youth can do or what adults have already done. The real question is: how can we strengthen the partnership between us youth and adults to improve this relationship, to fight corruption together.

Abdullah Abdulsalam Al-Thawr (Yemen), winner of the Essay Competition 2007, in his address during the Award Ceremony

**Corruption is a universal and eternal disease, a real cancer of our societies.** We have to fight it with prevention and education, because sometimes we are only surrounding the problem, not attacking it. In my essay I propose the development of an incubator program for young people to internalize the logic of trust, an essential value for managing public interest. We have to do it and we have to do it well, because now another generation of youngsters is entering work without being educated to allow their democracies to feel committed to them and repudiate the different axe of corruption that could appear in the future. We have to do it and we have to do it now.

Fabian Wajner Adler (Uruguay), winner of the Essay Competition, in his address during the Award Ceremony

More...

- Website of the Essay Competition [http://www.essaycompetition.org](http://www.essaycompetition.org)
PART II: Analysis of the essays submitted for the Essay Competition 2007

1. Issues discussed by youth in their essays

Corruption in the eyes of youth
Youth who participated in the Essay Competition 2007 believe that their countries are corrupt: most government officials accept bribes and most citizens offer bribes. Most authors claim not to experience corruption directly, but they nevertheless suffer from its consequences as citizens, patients, students and job-seekers. Youth define corruption broadly, as abuse of public office for personal benefit, which ultimately poses a threat to democracy. The phenomenon reaches far beyond the financial aspect of passing a bribe from one pair of hands to another, it touches on every facet of an individual’s life. The most notorious cases of corruption that youth are directly aware of occur in the spheres of education and health, but are not limited to those: one needs to pay a teacher in order to pass an exam, give a bribe to enter university, bribe the doctor to get hospital care, pay the instructor to obtain a driver’s license or a clerk to speed up the passport issuing process, bribe the policemen to pass a checkpoint or avoid a fine etc. Some authors claim that corruption is so rampant in their countries that they no longer notice it, they simply take the status quo for granted, as this is the only reality they know. However, all contestants are of the opinion that corruption ought to be called by its name: crime. They liken it to a disease that slowly eats up a country, but most importantly - a curable disease that has to be dealt with. Youth recognize that the phenomenon does not only involve the bribe-taking official, but also the bribe-giver and the indifferent bystander who, witnessing abuse, does not report it. Some say that corruption is a classical vicious circle: the government is expected to tackle it, yet it is corrupt itself.

Causes of corruption
Many authors make an attempt to identify causes of corruption, with the assumption that “no one is born corrupt”. Corrupt behavior often stems from post-colonial history, where newly independent nation states (in particular in Africa and former Soviet Union) are governed by immature, incompetent and power-oriented ruling elites. The most
commonly named cause is poverty, or more specifically, large economic and social inequalities that make corrupt practices irresistibly tempting when compared to alternatives. Coupled with poverty is the strong societal pressure to succeed in life and accumulate wealth, which is easier to achieve by treachery rather than by honest work. In addition, lack of accountability of public officials increase the incentives to engage in corrupt behavior, while complicated, non-transparent legal systems full of loopholes guarantee impunity. Youth see their societies as lacking positive role models that would promote values such as honesty, integrity, fair competition, hard work. In many countries the acceptance of corruption has become a social norm. People believe that corruption is the only way to achieve things and since everybody is corrupt, it is no longer morally condemnable.

**Impact of corruption on the lives of youth**

Youth recognize that corruption affects them in their daily lives, on the individual and collective level. It ultimately always affects the entire society, including those who on the surface seem to be benefactors of the system. Corruption is a serious obstacle to economic and social development. It impedes economic growth and discourages investors by rendering transactional costs of business too high. Corruption in the public sphere results in faulty policies and inefficient laws, as well as faulty implementation and application of the law.

Corruption affects the allocation of scarce public goods and services. It denies access to public services to most vulnerable groups in the society: the poor, the young and the elderly. Youth mainly talk about access to medical care (having to pay in order to secure quality treatment or a place in hospital) and education (having to bribe teachers in order to enter university or pass an exam). In consequence, health care and education are only accessible to those with sufficient means (and willing) to pay the bribe. It leaves a big group of citizens permanently outside the system, with no access to services that should be guaranteed to them by the state. In the long run everyone is at disadvantage, as the level of services deteriorates and in the end even those who manage to obtain a place at university receive insufficient education that does not secure a professional future.
Corruption is perceived as injustice: services and resources are provided not on the basis of real needs (healthcare) or merits (education), but factors such as personal connections, power or money. Youth claim that corruption leads to waste of resources and potential, to shrinking opportunities for everyone. Access to justice is similarly impained by corruption. The legal system no longer serves its role protecting the citizens, it itself becomes a tool of discrimination. The ultimate consequence is general apathy in the society, no trust in leaders and institutions or in democracy (rigged elections), no incentives to make an individual effort at improving one’s lot.

**Essay authors said...**

“It’s common to hear such phrases from students: “I want to receive the excellent mark on this exam. How much will it cost?” (Ukraine)

“Many people believe that *Stealing from the state is not really stealing*” (Moldova)

“Everybody steals”. (Poland)

“Corruption does not affect my life nor does it affect anyone else’s for that matter. I say this for the very reason that corruption has become a part of our everyday life. In fact, it has become an integral part of our life having conquered and defeated us just like that.” (Nepal)

“I personally associate corruption with rust. Rust is able to spoil the work of even the most ideal mechanism. It appears, while the mechanism is working, and gradually, invisibly steals in every part of it.” (Latvia)

“Corruption distorts in favor of the undeserving and penalizes the truly deserving.” (Nepal)

“Personally I have heard about the cases, when doctors didn’t want to treat the patient, without getting a bribe.” (Latvia)

“The problem is much wider than giving your money away. What makes the problem enormous is the fact that the youth is not taught on the true values, nor to think about their future.” (Macedonia)

“In fact, my survival is dependent on collaborating with the corrupt.” (Zimbabwe)
2. Selection of key findings and proposals put forward by youth

Youth are far from pessimistic in their perception of corruption. They propose innovative, creative ways of tackling this ‘social disease’ on three levels: level of the state, level of the organized civil society and level of the individual. The battle against corruption can only be won if all the three levels work together.

State level
Youth unanimously call for greater accountability of political leaders. Politicians need to feel that they are directly dependent on the support of the citizens they represent. Many authors propose decentralization of power as a remedy, as well as curbing bureaucracy, simplifying legal procedures, laying down clear and understandable public procurement rules, as a way to ensure more transparency and citizen control. Many recognize that officials in developing countries are not paid sufficiently to guarantee themselves a decent standard of living, therefore they postulate ensuring adequate pay to remove incentives for bribe-taking, while at the same time strengthening control. Youth propose that public officials disclose their assets and reveal their sources of income on a regular basis. The immunity clause that protects active politicians from legal responsibility should be done away with. Youth propose establishing a Code of Conduct for public officials that would oblige them to commit to ethical demeanor. At the same time, the authors see an urgent need for clear, detailed and efficiently implemented anti-corruption laws, that should be harmonized across countries and be subject to international scrutiny. Special independent and multi-disciplinary committees could be set up in order to monitor rightful application of the existing law. Contestants have strong faith in democracy and the free market. They believe that a well-functioning democracy and market economy (deregulated, liberalized) can shield the society from corruption.

Civil society
Participants of the International Essay Competition 2007 believe that strengthening the civil society is essential in all anti-corruption efforts. Representing citizens, civil society organizations can be a guarantee that all social groups are included in the debate. Citizens must be adequately educated in order to be able to fully and consciously participate in
public life. Youth consider formal education received at schools as insufficient and emphasize the pivotal role of non-formal and informal education that one obtains at home and in various community-based organizations: NGOs, youth clubs, sports or religious groups. Young people, as a most vulnerable group, need to be targeted by a strong social campaign, aiming at instilling values of integrity and honesty. Youth recognize that this educational campaign is a long process, but probably the only really efficient way. Anti-corruption efforts can prove successful if the civil society acts as an important partner and watchdog of the public sphere. Information sharing with the society at large is key to ensure that this social monitoring and whistle blowing can bear fruit. Lastly, youth stress the importance of free media as a forth pillar of the society and important guarantor of social freedoms. Independent media are an important partner in the monitoring and reporting effort of the civil society.

**Individual level**

Youth strongly disagree with the popular belief that an individual cannot do anything to combat corruption. They believe that taking personal responsibility is a necessary moral choice: refusing to engage in corrupt behavior of any kind, instructing others and setting a positive example, as well as reporting all witnessed cases of corruption. Every individual ought to make use of his or her civil rights, namely the right to petition the authorities and join public protests against unacceptable behavior of officials. Some of the papers’ authors are also themselves actively engaged in anti-corruption activities. They are members of youth-founded and youth-led organizations and clubs that have as their mission sensitizing fellow youth on the issues of corruption by means of lectures, workshops and meetings with public figures, often in collaboration with the local branch of Transparency International. Many youth support the idea of “thinking big, acting small”, saying that they want to be model citizens, fulfilling their job well and setting an example by their own behavior. They are confident that they will one day be able to instill the values of honesty and integrity in their own children.
Essay authors said...

“If you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem” (Nigeria)

“Fighting corruption is never a one-man show. The whole society should be involved in this war.” (Malaysia)

“Corruption solving, is not the sole responsibility of government, it is also the responsibility of each and everyone, starting from one’s immediate environment.” (Cameroon)

“The youth first of all, have to own the culture of integrity and honesty. Catch them young and they will be yours forever.”  (Ghana)

3. Conclusions

Young people who submitted essays to the International Essay Competition 2007 have very strong views on corruption. Major conclusions gathered from the analysis of all essays could be summarized as follows:

1) **Corruption is a common phenomenon in developing countries**
   Youth who submitted essays for the competition for the most part live in developing and transition countries. According to their testimonies, corruption is so widespread in their countries that people take it for granted, treat it as an integral part of life and often do not imagine a different reality.

2) **Corruption leads to enormous waste of talent, resources and potential**
   Youth are well aware of the wasteful effect of corruption on their countries. Corruption limits access to public goods and services, such as healthcare and education, it impedes development and prevents growth. Finally, corruption erodes trust in politics and institutions, eventually leading to a sense of helplessness and apathy in the entire society. Corruption is deeply unjust, as it favors the undeserving at the cost of the deserving.

3) **Need for a concentrated effort to fight corruption**
Youth realize that fighting corruption is a slow and arduous process, which can only be successful if all the forces in the society work together. In particular, the state needs to cooperate with the civil society and the media.

4) **Call for more transparency and accountability**
   Youth advocate for good anti-corruption laws in the countries that would be implemented by responsible politicians, fully accountable to the citizens. Most importantly, youth call for less bureaucracy and more transparency in their countries’ public life. Social scrutiny is indispensable to make sure that the state abides by the laws it drafts.

5) **Educating citizens to participate and make demands**
   Youth emphasize the importance of education in making the citizens aware of their civic rights and responsibilities, as well as exercising their power over the politicians. Non-formal and informal education is critical to complement the often inadequate formal system.
PART III: Winning Essays

Winners:

1. First Prize: Fabian Wajner Adler, Uruguay (p. 16)
   Corruption and education, a matter of trust

2. First Prize: Abdullah Abdulsalam Al-Thawr, Yemen (p. 29)

3. Third Prize: Olumide Adekola Adewoye, Nigeria (p. 40)

Finalists:

1. Ogbu Emmanuel Chukwuemeka, Nigeria (p. 51)

2. Marta Guzniczak, Poland (p. 63)
   Saying No to corruption

3. Bwengye Deusdedit, Uganda (p. 75)
   Have I ever bribed? - Ask me if I breathe: We are all part of the problem

4. Angela Gapa, Zimbabwe (p. 88)
   Corruption: Tracing the Effects, Charting a Sustainable Future

5. Maria Cristina Castro, Colombia (100)
   Jóvenes colombianos, a pedir cuentas!

6. Steven Allan Sumner, USA (110)
   Do No Harm: Eliminating Corruption in the Honduran Public Health Care System Through Technology
First Prize: Fabian Wajner Adler, Uruguay

Corruption and education, a matter of trust
CORRUPTION AND EDUCATION, A MATTER OF TRUST

SUMMARY

What would lead a young person like me -- and so many others before me -- to have our hands on so much money and not be tempted to keep a single dollar even though no rigorous controls existed?

I kept going over this question in my mind in late 2006, at the end of my term as a leader in a volunteer movement. It was not simply a matter of moral integrity. A social factor also came into play, which I think I eventually understood: a logic based on trust existed in our movement, a system ruled by collective values, personal responsibility and mutual commitment, for which reason the scourge of corruption was virtually non-existent.

This essay originated from the desire to share this experience with the rest of society. It has the objective of describing the different forms of corruption I have witnessed. I then draw conclusions and develop a practical proposal for combating it. My methodology consists of narrating experiences, citing academic sources relevant to the different topics discussed and developing a working hypothesis that serves as the basis for the proposal.

Corruption is understood as a universal ill that has always existed and that slowly eats away at the fabric of society through a process that is truly cancerous for democratic systems. This is why it must be combated.

Several measures are regularly developed to this end, but they invariably depend on public awareness. The proposed solutions can only be successful when corruption is socially repudiated. Only in a system where the logic of trust, the primordial value in social relations, prevails.

Systems of trust can be built through education. Individuals can learn to trust their peers and the system through a process of comprehension-practice-habit. Therefore, we should support the development of non-formal education for young people, recreating situations similar to those they will eventually face.

To this end, I propose the creation of youth trust systems, movements that act as “incubators” to restore the desired values and structures in public life, based on the logic described above.

If we really want to become corruption free in the future, we should concentrate our efforts (and our money) on this type of education policy.
CONTENTS:

1. Introduction

2. Why…?

3. Corruption, a social ill

4. The weight of public opinion

5. The logic of trust

6. Education for trust

7. The proposal: youth trust systems

Bibliography
1) INTRODUCTION.

Without a doubt, corruption is one of the greatest ills affecting the existence and development of our democratic societies. It is also one of the most difficult challenges these societies will face in the coming decades.

The objective of this paper is to describe the different forms of corruption and their consequences I have witnessed in my lifetime. I then draw conclusions on this subject and develop a proposal to contribute to eradicating this ill.

This remedy will obviously not cure the disease. Nevertheless, I think it is a step in the right direction.

2) WHY …?-

Weeks before this essay contest was announced, I kept going over the same question in my mind. Until January of this year, I belonged to a voluntary youth movement together with friends from my childhood. We had served as leaders since mid-adolescence, in the same way that others had led us previously.

I ended my term – as the regulations stipulated – after participating in a leadership course for one year, after forming two groups of more than 50 adolescents and after studying abroad for a year in order to lead the movement for two years after my return.

During this time, I served as the general manager and treasurer of the movement, which had almost 500 members, organizing weekly activities, talks and camping trips for more than 350 young people. The movement had a budget of approximately US$ 30,000. We developed magazines, merchandise, promotional spots and events, education and aid projects, etc.

We did everything ourselves, with a little help from two young people who recently resigned. Today, as we are completing our university degrees, we are leaving the movement to embark on our professional paths and to make room for the next generation to lead it, undoubtedly with the same passion and commitment we gave to it.

Naturally, we made mistakes and faced problems, but that did not stop me for asking the same questions: What causes young people, with this level of responsibility, to lead, in an incorruptible manner, a voluntary movement with a budget that was impressive for our country and our own pockets? What would lead a young person like me -- and so many others before me -- to have our hands on so much money and not be tempted to keep a single dollar even though
no rigorous controls existed? Was it primarily the values our families taught us? Or was there something else going on?

I will provide an overview: we were all friends, had similar goals and felt that belonging to the organization was a crucial commitment in our lives. We all worked for it, although some harder than others. No case of corruption had ever occurred during my term or in previous ones, even though several members had economic difficulties and the organizational structure required the funds to pass through many hands.

Beyond a matter of personal integrity, I believe no one stole from the movement for a social reason: each of us really felt that the money belonged to the others, and we trusted one another. If someone had tried to take money, he probably would have managed to avoid the controls, but the social punishment he would have had to face if discovered would have been severe.

I conclude: a logic based on trust existed in our movement. Since we were all committed to the system and its objectives, the possibility of corruption by those who administered and/or handled money simply did not exist. A system governed by collective values, personal responsibility and mutual commitment – and therefore trust – can practically eliminate the scourge of corruption.

How can this experience be transferred to the rest of society? That is what I want to address in my essay.

3) CORRUPTION, A SOCIAL ILL.

Throughout history, corruption has occurred in widely diverse scenarios. It took place in developed and developing countries; in democratic and autocratic regimes; in religious and lay societies; in populations of white, black and yellow peoples, and of every other color imaginable. This universal ill affects all of us.

In the Spanish language, corruption is synonymous with immorality and degradation, as well as with decay, with putrefaction. As such, it slowly and surreptitiously permeates the fabric of society, without making its presence obvious. Once there, it begins to destroy the threads of society, breaking down the system bit by bit. By the time the disease is finally recognized, it is extremely difficult to reverse, and the whole system collapses. This is how this true cancer of modern democracies operates.

I have thought about this phenomenon ever since I can remember. My parents began their careers as government professionals when they were young, moving up their respective career ladders thanks to their hard work while government administrations came and went and with them, the political “colors” of the moment. I therefore had a birds-eye view of how to be a public servant, at
home and in the hallways and offices of government. That is how I learned that the phenomenon of corruption largely depends on social perceptions.

One of the major misconceptions regarding corruption is the tendency to imagine a politician opening a safe of the national treasury and fleeing with the gold bars. This does not occur. Corruption – illegally using “the public” to the detriment of “the private” – can be disguised in a variety of ways, whether through clientelism, abuse of functions, delivery of commissions or gifts, illegal contributions, evasion, fraud, bribery, nepotism or theft.¹

A second misconception is that only one individual is responsible for an act of corruption. At first glance, it might seem that the deed involves two subjects: the corruptor and the corruptee, the former being the person who commits the crime and the latter the individual who encourages him to do so. The first person of the action is usually blamed in a type of double standard that overlooks the sins of the other. In retrospect, however, does not an individual become an accomplice when he asks a business not to write a receipt to avoid paying taxes or when he proposes bribing a police officer to avoid a fine?

Moreover, there is a third, hidden actor who often is ignored. I call these individuals “corruptants.” By “corruptant” I mean that individual who “endorses,” by action or omission, the act of corruption and is aware of its occurrence. These people are key players in that they determine the success of the act of corruption. There’s a saying in my country: “He who remains silent, condones.” If the act is not reported, it is consummated. It is when the “corruptants” remain silent that corruption abounds, and before long, what had seemed like a localized tumor has become a generalized infection.

Putting aside moral considerations, this practice forces us to reject those “detours” because corruption generates more corruption. A successful act of corruption functions like a vicious cycle in which: a) an individual commits the crime; b) he obtains certain benefits from it; c) he does not receive due punishment; and d) it generates distrust and envy among other individuals, one of whom commits another crime, and thus the cycle repeats itself. In this way, societies are created in which an immoral vision prevails: the corrupt individual is the vívo (clever one), whereas the honest person is just the opposite. Everybody begins to believe that everyone else is corrupt, creating an atmosphere of absolute distrust. When those responsible for controlling corruption become corrupt themselves (politicians, judges and police), everything is lost. Therefore, we must break the cycle of corruption before it is too late. As Tortosa says: “In

this case, the fight against corruption is an act of legitimate defense...because if it is not done, corruption will destroy the whole society...If corruption is not halted, it reaches the police and judges. And then who controls the controllers?``2

We have seen here that corruption is a social phenomenon subject to perceptions, that it occurs in different ways, that it involves several people and that it will always be present. Nevertheless, we must fight it. Where should we wage this battle?

4) THE WEIGHT OF PUBLIC OPINION.-

Discussions on how to deal with the problem of corruption generally mention the crucial task of forming “coalitions” among four main actors: the political class, the private elite, the media and civil society (organizations and networks outside the government system). Solutions are developed that call for transparency in public spending, accountability of politicians, special anti-corruption task forces, powerful control agencies, stiff penalties, etc.

While these measures are necessary for reducing corruption, if we look at them more closely, we realize that they do not seek to impede corruption, but rather to identify and punish it after the fact. In other words, they surround the problem rather than attack it. After all, the press writes what people want to read, companies sell what people want to buy, associations promote what its members propose and politicians act according to what voters want. Everything invariably depends on “the people.” That is the rule. And if people are not sufficiently concerned about a public agency having five “gnocchi”3 or a party collecting millions illegally for its political campaign, these measures will fail. The system destroys itself, as experience has shown.

The ecological movement serves as a reference for analyzing this issue. What differentiates anti-corruption efforts from ecological activities? Mainly, the lengthy process of creating public awareness. Suffice to compare the number of non-governmental organizations that work in the respective areas, their budgets and the size of their constituencies. Disputes like those existing in Uruguay and Argentina today clearly demonstrate that the ecological debate has penetrated the heart of governments. This is no coincidence; it occurred because the debate first took root in civil society. Why doesn’t the same thing happen with corruption?

3 Gnocchi (ñoqui in Spanish) is the term used in Uruguay to describe public officials who submit their work only on the 29th of each month (when gnocchi are traditionally eaten) so they can collect their salaries.
Perhaps the following anecdote will be illustrative. Backpacking through Europe, my friends and I were dumbfounded by a daily occurrence: the functioning of the subway system. We could not believe that in certain cities there were no turnstiles or employees checking to see that nobody tried to slip through the side. No one controls anything, simply because everyone complies. How could this be? I discovered the answer when a friend decided to try his luck jumping over a turnstile. Everyone around him looked on with disgust, several reprimanded him and one woman went to call the police. That’s when I understood: no individual breaks the rules simply because those around him discourage him from doing so. The social punishment is severe; consequently, so is the risk.

The example of the subways in Europe shows us that when a society deems a certain act unacceptable and is willing to combat it, the system works. Only where corruption is socially repudiated can the aforementioned anti-corruption measures be successful. Only there will all rules, sanctions and controls have been worth it.

Only there, in a system where the logic of trust prevails.

5) THE LOGIC OF TRUST.-

Niklas Luhmann and Francis Fukuyama are probably the two most important essayists on the subject, although one uses a sociological-psychological approach whereas the other employs a more economic-administrative perspective. I will take the liberty of using the concepts proposed in both approaches that are relevant to the subject under discussion.

Trust is a key mechanism in the task of social development. In systems where corruption is rampant, distrust prevails among its members. I distrust, you distrust, we all distrust one another. The lack of collective acceptance of the risk eradicates mutual freedom and increases social complexity, which has a tendency to reinforce itself through inverse thinking: Everyone does it, you do it, I, therefore, can (and should) do it.

Trust, for its part, is based on the opposite effect. It relies on having a positive expectation of others, which confers a certain freedom of action. If this is reciprocated, then we can talk about the existence of mutual trust, which Luhmann says “reduces social complexity” so that it “generalizes expectations of behavior.”

Four types of trust exist in every complex system: a) of the individual in himself; b) of the individual in another; c) of other individuals in the individual; and d) of others in others.

The first three types refer to the building of trust among individuals, which is a process that demands mutual commitment. He who trusts notes how this creates feedback, helping to generate more trust. It is strengthened when opportunities to betray trust arise but are not taken and is broken when the opposite occurs. It is a process of opportunities and restrictions; by increasing both, one is obligated to maintain the way he presents himself, to the point that appearance becomes reality and trust becomes a habit.⁵

Nevertheless, the last type of trust, that of “others in others,” refers to more than trusting in individuals; it also encompasses trust in the system one belongs to and the way in which the tool of distrust is used. In Fukuyama’s words: “The rational basis of trust lies in the trust deposited in the trust of other individuals.”⁶

Trust and distrust present a special dichotomy. While they appear to be opposites, they must go hand-in-hand: real trust cannot exist in a system that lacks a mechanism of distrust that judges and controls; neither can it exist if the parties involved do not believe in that mechanism. According to Luhmann, to prevent everyone from distrusting everyone else, it is necessary to depersonalize the mechanism of trust by institutionalizing a specific dictate that collectivizes risk and provides protection from a personal extension of the conflict.⁷

The issue here is rational rather than moral. Rationality in the management of the dual trust-distrust mechanism, enabling their mutual existence and ensuring the preservation of the system. Consequently, if the goal is to develop a system based on the logic of trust, habit and rationality form an essential part of the process to build trust. People should be encouraged to believe in the system in which they act and be willing to defend it if others appear who want to harm it. They should trust in themselves and their peers, as well as in the collective dictates of distrust.

Only this adequate management of trust will convince individuals that acting ethically makes sense. To convince them to believe that it is not necessary to betray trust to obtain personal benefits. To believe that if someone attempts to break that trust, his peers will reject rather than support him. And to believe that if he does do so, he will not be successful and will be severely punished, serving as a lesson for others.

Urban traffic is perhaps the most representative example of a system where the logic of trust operates – unconsciously. Cars, buses, trucks and bicycles all have the objective of allowing

---

people to travel through the city without suffering accidents. Everyone trusts that others will drive properly. Traffic rules and signs establish permissible behaviors and police officers punish those who do not comply. Nevertheless, in the end, the success of the system depends on training drivers to use their vehicles.

One learns how to drive. And how to drive through life, too.

6) EDUCATION FOR TRUST -

Customs and values are not innate in people; they are acquired through a process of socialization known as education. When we talk about education, we generally first think about the transfer of information, textbooks, etc. All of this is indispensable. However, ethics education does not only consist of information but of learning by doing above all.

Effective education requires being able to put theory into practice. Ethics is doing the ethical thing. Using the example of traffic, an individual can read hundreds of books on how to drive a car but will only learn to do so by practicing next to a good teacher who gives instructions. Much later, that individual will have internalized traffic regulations and the habit of driving.

The same thing occurs with corruption. Until an individual has the opportunity, he is simply a potential corruptee, corruptor or corruptant. A person learns how not to be corrupt when given the opportunity to choose between doing and not doing something corrupt. Opportunity is decision. When making a decision, we need to know the reasons for choosing one path over another. Returning to the case of the ecological movement: why did an ecological awareness develop in society? Mainly because we became aware of the potential disastrous effects of our actions.

Telling a man that something he does is harmful is insufficient; if he is to rectify it, he must understand the catastrophic consequences of his actions.

Let’s look at it another way. It would seem obvious to say that when someone steals from the government he is stealing from everyone. Why do I get angry, shout and report someone if he steals US$ 100 from my pocket, but do not react in the same way if the same thing happens because of an act of government corruption involving US$ 100 of my tax money? Most likely, it is because I am unaware of the enormous harm caused. I do not know that this is unacceptable and that I should take responsibility for eliminating it.

In general, this situation occurs in societies where a true concept of civil democracy does not exist. For honesty to prevail, it is necessary to reintroduce civic virtue, the sense of a ‘demos’ responsible for one another, where a collective effect produces an effect on the individual.
In conclusion, an effective education against corruption will require the student to pass through three successive steps: I) understand why it should not be done; II) put this decision into practice; and III) convert the practice into a habit.

How do we achieve this desired “traffic?” Where will we learn how to “drive,” what “rules” should we respect and what “fines” we will receive if we break the rules?

I believe that a formal education in information (theory) should be accompanied by a non-formal education in ethics (practice). Starting from childhood, with an emphasis on adolescence, when people first face these practical dilemmas. This is where we have to “attack.” It is the best age to form a group of individuals that love the democratic system, that feel committed to and responsible for it, and that therefore disdain corruption so much so that they are willing to report it.

Preventive education for trust. Learning to trust in oneself, in others, in the system itself. And later to make it an intrinsic habit, inseparable from one’s being. In the words of Faulkner: “One must resist corruption not only before contemplating it, but before knowing what it is.”

7) THE PROPOSAL: YOUTH TRUST SYSTEMS.-

Therefore, educating youths to prevent them from becoming corrupt (corruptee, corruptor or corruptant) implies recreating situations similar to the ones young people will face in the future and helping them to rationally choose the correct action, incorporate it as a skill and then as a habit.

Consequently, I propose the creation of a “pilot plan” or “incubator” for high school students, which recreates the ideal public system. These youth systems should be based on values and structures different from those that exist in a corrupt government administration. Given that, as we have seen, corruption is rampant in systems based on distrust among members, the logic of trust should prevail in the pilot youth systems. In these systems, participants should be committed to a democratic system and distrust should be institutionalized through specific control measures.

Although this system could take hundreds of forms, I took the liberty of basing it on the experience of my movement and on the Junior Achievement programs in which I participated. A civil association, in close coordination with the government, could implement this system, strengthening government capacity and civil activism. It would have the following characteristics:

---

8 TORTOSA, José María. “Corrupción.” Barcelona. Icaria. 1995
MOVEMENT: In each school, a youth movement would be sponsored, which, as its name implies, would rotate its members as they advance in their studies. Students in the last three years of high school could lead the movement. Although their activities would take place outside of school, students could receive school credits for their participation in the movement.

PROJECT: At the beginning of the year, each movement would design a project plan, which would be developed under the slogan: “This is how I want to help my people.” The plan should include the project rationale, objectives, activities and the required budget. The project should be non-profit and would not necessarily have a business structure (unlike similar programs), as long as it demonstrates that it would produce a good for society.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Based on the above, the movement would receive a budget from the sponsoring organization, to be administered in accordance with regulations established in the plan. After a specified period, the movement would present the organization with work evaluations, accounting records and progress reports on activities.

CIVICS: Although the movement would include young people of different ages, it should function as a democracy. The structure, duties and projects should be defined by voting, and preferably, posts should be rotated annually. Decisions should never be made in an isolated manner, but rather as the result of an effective, regulated and guided group effort. Those who hold executive posts should fully disclose information on the implementation of activities, especially with regard to the use of funds.

MONITORING AND CONTROL: Objectives, regulations and procedures should be established for all movement activities, and should be subject to close internal monitoring. In addition, a committee of former members of the movement, school principles and those responsible for the program could act as external monitors, with the ability to sanction violations of rules or the spirit of the collective efforts.

AWARD: Movements that have acted with transparency and whose projects produce the best results would be generously rewarded (for example, with a group trip).

Youth trust systems. Like the one I worked in and the one in which I was trained during my childhood, like the one that I hope others can participate in and learn from.

Does this seem difficult? To educate always is. However, if we really want to achieve societies in which these values and customs prevail in the public administration, I believe we must concentrate our efforts (and our money) on ensuring the success of this type of education policy.
When I finished writing these lines, an older student in my department asked me what I was writing about. I told him I was writing about public corruption. “What a subject!” he said, with irony. “Well, what can you do?…surely you know that anyone who does not become involved in it can’t survive…”

It was at that exact moment that I became determined to send in this paper.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- TORTOSA, José María. “Corrupción.” Barcelona. Icaria, 1995
First Prize: Abdullah Abdulsalam Al-Thawr, Yemen
ANTICORRUPTION ACTIONS VS. TRANSPARENCY CLAIMS: THE ROLE OF YOUTH

ABSTRACT

Before more than 4000 years ago, one of the many first law codes in history that penalized corruption such as, a false testimony or unjust accusations, were ruled by King Hammurabi during the Babylonian era. This was only the beginning of a long challenging journey in anticorruption. Today, with complex scientific strategies in anticorruption and a vast experience of nations worldwide, we have reached to nearly half the journey, but we are still remained with the tougher and more challenging other half, as we pursue good governance in every country to attain prosperous development and end of poverty.

If a country with a government that claims and pretends to have transparent institutes, but the citizens still face poverty in their everyday lives, lack and delay of basic services, and difficulty of finding a job, then obviously the transparency of that government are just claims. The people are the victims in the end, and development is curbed. And since the youth are the majority of the population; they are the most affected by corruption. However, the future leaders do have an important role in anticorruption actions, and their involvement today in anticorruption actions guarantees a more promising future in development. The methodology of the youth involvement is of a youth anticorruption strategy, which consist of three parts; role of youth in awareness and monitoring, role of youth in assisting the National Anticorruption Committee, and actions to fight corruption from the roots of the society.

My country Yemen, a developing country with a stable government and steady-increasing development, still struggles with the problems and effects of corruption. Lead by the President, the Government of Yemen has expressed its willingness and commitment to fight corruption, and has come up with the new “Anti-Corruption Law” last December, 06. Therefore, Yemen is still starting its journey of anticorruption. What can youth contribute to this journey, and how? I explain in the essay my personal experiences and other experiences of youth who are supporting anticorruption actions in its very first stage, and the ideas that can be done so that the youth
become a primary contributor in boosting the journey of anticorruption and the wheel of development.

This essay contains two parts, first part describing the effects of corruption in the lives of the youth generally. The second part is about the role of youth in fighting corruption, taking my country Yemen as a case study.

Preface

In the UN Anticorruption Conference in 2002, an alternative suggestion was proposed, while trying to come up with a complete definition for corruption, suggesting that corruption remains undefined at all, due to the fact that it differs from country to another. Instead, the conference came up with a common list of different behaviors, actions and activities that are considered corrupting and causing potential damage to the country’s development. In the end, all types of corruption in all countries are like cancer, killing and weakening the country’s economy, as well as suffering the people.

FIRST: Effects of Corruption in the Lives of Youth

- **Youth Opinions**

  In my work with an NGO for more than six months, I had the opportunity to interact with many distinctive youth and young hard-working people. It will not be strange that you hear from them expressing a disappointment or more regarding not able to find a job opportunity, or not qualifying for a scholarship or an abroad student exchange, even though they look so qualified, but unfortunately they lack an influencing family. Yet, these youth have never complained or got depressed from their current situation, because they are always fueled and motivated with the belief that they can make a change to the better in the near future. Taking into consideration other youth who might not have the same belief of changing into better, or have had less educational opportunities and a discouraging environment, facing such disappointments that result from effects of corruption might lead them to the belief that the whole government is corrupt, and that life is not worth living, unless they become corrupt themselves. These youth when questioned about their odd belief, they will tell you an Arabic saying that says “If you are between blind people, then blind yourself”, thinking wrongly that the meaning of it implies becoming a corruptive person. To be a bit detailed about describing the effects of corruption on the youth, this
is a mini-story of a person named ‘Ahmed’, and how has corruption affected his life, and consequently the society was affected. ‘Ahmed’ is an inventive name, but whose story reflects real incidents of many youth in a lot of countries that face corruption.

• **Mini Story: Ahmed**

  Ahmed is a young enthusiastic and brilliant guy. He has just finished high school with all subjects straight A’s, and first rank in school. He tried to apply for a scholarship to study university abroad, yet he is shocked with the news that there aren’t enough scholarships, later then shocked also that one of his friends (has influence), who got few B’s and few C’s is travelling on a scholarship abroad. Nevertheless, Ahmed did not give up; he studied in a local university. After he graduated, it takes him over a year so that he finally gets a job with a very low pay, his job came after paying a large bribery, or otherwise it might take him few more years. Ahmed also tried to run for candidacy in the local parliament. He discovers later that his opponent is buying votes, bribing the election monitors, and eventually the opponent wins and Ahmed loses. Ahmed is depressed with his situation, and convinces himself that the only way to live wealthy is to be corruptive. He passes along his wrong beliefs to his children and family.

• **Corruption Effects in my Life**

  When wrong beliefs and experiences regarding corruption are passed to other generations and people, this can be described as an Echo of Corruption. The echo of corruption causes more damage than healing, and will cause the future generations to be more corruptive, less responsible and less concerned with development. I have been personally affected directly by corruption, and indirectly by the echo of corruption. The direct effect on me is when I realize that all the basic services take a long time to process and complicated procedures that require bribery to accelerate your process. Another effect is when the products prices are not stable and tend to be increasing constantly. I am also affected directly when corruption reaches development projects, and resources are stolen resulting in increased poverty.

  The echo of corruption affects me indirectly when I come across with people with the wrong ideas and nearly no beliefs in trying to change things into a better situation that will assist in the development of the country. The echo affects me specifically when I come up with projects or awareness activities that target the youth. An example from a real life experience is when I formed a debate club in my last year at school (due to the lack of other extra-curricular activities). The debate club aims were to develop the debating and negotiation skills of the students, as well as to discuss important youth-related issues to raise awareness on such topics. Since the debate
club was a first of a kind activity in the school, many students discouraged the idea of discussing topics related to corruption and good governance for two reasons, these topics are sensitive to discuss and are considered not safe to discuss in public, and the second reason was that these topics should be accepted the way they are, because according to their opinion; what can a group of youth do about it anyway?

SECOND: Youth against Corruption (Case Study: Yemen)

- An Intro to Anticorruption Actions in Yemen

  In December 2006, the government of Yemen issued a new law called “The Anticorruption Law”, which orders to form a National Committee for Anticorruption. The Committee first task is to plan a national strategy for anticorruption. Another anticorruption action the government has executed is the system of taking the fingerprints of all the employees in the government sectors in order to prevent job duplications (i.e. a person has two jobs or more at the same time). This action enabled to reduce the percentage of job duplications, thus giving more job opportunities to unemployed people. Although the government is still at the beginning of its fight against corruption, but the government always expresses its commitment to fight corruption, which is considered an important step in supporting anticorruption whether the government is doing the best it can in fighting corruption or not.

- “Youth Against Corruption” Strategy

  Youth have a big role in anticorruption, and their involvement is inevitable. In fact, their involvement today will produce more aware and responsible future leaders; in other words preventing the disease of corruption in the future by immunizing the future generation.

  The youth involvement in anticorruption is not random and simple, but constitutes of different forms and types of involvement, each type completing each other, thus forming a strategy of “Youth against Corruption”. This strategy consists of three main parts, two of which are supported with real existing initiatives, and one which is a new initiative to start.

  The three parts of the strategy are:
  1. Role of youth in monitoring actions and in the awareness of community.
  2. Fighting the corruption from the roots of the society
  3. Role of youth in supporting the national anticorruption committee.
• Role of Youth in Monitoring Actions and in the Awareness of Community
  
  ➢ A living example: The Youth Consultative Council

  Started in late 2006 by a distinctive NGO (called the Democracy School, of which I work with as a volunteer) in Yemen, the Youth Consultative Council consists of 111 youth members from different political parties, organizations, government sectors from the different regions in Yemen. The council objectives are to discuss youth-related issues and problems and to find solutions, and to deliver the voices of the Yemeni youth to people to hear. The council consists of different committees, one of them the Committee of Anticorruption. Although this committee has started work very recently, the committee has produced a questionnaire to about 300 government employees in various sectors, to try to discover the size of corruption. The fact that nearly 10% of employees have answered the survey until now due to the fact that employees feared to answer that questionnaire in order not to get into trouble (although the questionnaire doesn’t asks for any names), indicates that corruption does exist in a high level. The future goals of the Corruption Committee of the Youth Council are to start awareness campaigns and programs (although the availability of budget creates a potential obstacle), and to publish a youth magazine in which youth express their opinions.

  The content of the future awareness programs, whether done by the Youth Council or done by other NGOs and youth groups, should describe the negative effects of corruption, the ways to fight corruption, and to describe how the community can participate in the anticorruption strategy. The awareness programs will also aware the community of the efficiency and type of basic services they should expect taking into consideration that corruption is minimized. These awareness programs will result eventually in increasing the power of the community hidden voice, as the people and youth are united together, thus creating pressure on the politicians in the government, making the anticorruption actions become more efficient and effective.

Awareness programs can be organized in forms such as seminars where distinctive members from the community speak, in specific courses delivered to students in schools and

34
universities, or in the form of workshops, where the community participate in offering their own opinions. Specific programs that target the youth also include trainings in topics related to journalism and media, surveys and reports, and methods of building a local awareness seminar or program. These specific programs certainly depend on local or international NGOs, but they will result in a wide awareness campaign in the whole country, thus increasing impact.

Provided international support for these awareness programs, many individuals and NGOs will emerge to assist in these awareness programs. Simple awareness programs can be replicated in schools by creating awareness clubs, if the primary requirements (such as guidelines of forming a club and recruiting members) for forming a club are provided by an organization and the Ministry of Education consent.

- **Fighting the Corruption from the Roots of the Society**
  
  *A living example: The Children Parliament*

  The roots of society here mean the children, specifically students of schools. As discussed earlier, I pointed out that the Echoes of Corruption are the wrong ideas and experiences that are passed to the succeeding generation. Therefore, unless there aren’t any attempts to remove any traces of corruption from the youngsters, corruption will remain to be a constant problem in the future regardless of the strength of the anticorruption strategies and programs. There are many ways to fight corruption from the roots of the society, either by awareness programs that target the young students, or by integrating anticorruption in the school curricula.

  The Children Parliament, formed in 2002 by the Democracy School, consists of 39 members (number may change in each parliament cycle which is every two years) from different schools across the whole country. These children (aged 14-15 years old) from all the cities of Yemen meet every three months in a meeting room provided by the Yemeni Parliament Council to discuss children related issues such as, children rights, violence against children and other topics that have an affect on children and youth. In their meeting, senior officials from the government are invited to be questioned by the children themselves regarding the children-related issues and the extent of achievement of the government promises in improving the life of children (such as improving education, respecting children rights, not imprisoning children, limiting children trafficking etc...).

  In the beginning of its formation, the Children Parliament has faced difficulties in receiving responses and recognition from the government, until the President Ali Abdullah Saleh met the Children Parliament in 2004 (the second cycle). Since then the government responds better to the Children Parliament that has gain a wide reputation nationally.
The Children Parliament changes every two years, where the old parliament members become members of a youth network (not active yet) that works in advocating youth issues. The new Children Parliament members come from selective schools around the Republic. Students (grades 8 and 9) in these selected schools can run for candidacy for this parliament. These candidates are then elected by the students in that school, where the winners become the new members of the Children Parliament. The elections are held fairly and transparent in every school, and they are almost similar to real government elections.

“Once the child puts his thumb in that ink bottle and votes, he will never forget the meaning of fair elections”, says Mr. Jamal Al-Shami, former and director of the Democracy School. The Children Parliament activities, which are supported by international organizations such as the UNICEF and the Save the Children, are not limited only to the national meeting every three months, but the children are being trained in important topics that are related to children rights protection reporting, where these intelligent and distinctive parliament members work in their local community influencing and affecting the children around them. This parliament also produces a quarterly periodical newspaper discussing children related matters and issues. Since the Children Parliament only consists of 39 members, an initiative to increase the target group of children is to form student governments or local student councils in the schools, where students experience the same democratic experience and have the opportunity to express their opinions. The obstacle with these governments or councils is the difficulty of forming them in public schools, since schools lack enough fund for extra-curricular activities.

A real initiative: Transparency in Schools (not approved yet)

Although education should be free in all public schools, school education in Yemen still requires a small entry fee. Other fees are still required during the term-examinations or other events, under the claim that these fees are collected for the stationery budget. I have written a full project proposal, as part of my work with the Democracy School, which aims to teach transparency among students in schools. In this project, selected public school administrations are requested to explain their financial situation and the budget of that school with full transparency and honesty to the students. Expenditures of the schools, the budget distribution, as well as the collected fees from students are all part of what should be explained to these students and of which a full report is made for the parents and guardians of these students. This project also includes delivering some introductory lessons in corruption and its effects, ways towards transparency and good governance.
Although some might criticize the idea as being forward and not acceptable to execute, the refusal of such idea and the fear of executing it indicates corruption in the educational system. However, the primary goal of this project is to teach the students the importance of transparency, and to create trust among the parents and families towards the educational system of the country. The public knows that every penny is spent to improve the educational system, and instead of criticizing the current situation of education, the community takes initiatives and contributes to the development of education. Sadly, the Ministry of Education hasn’t responded and given its approval for this project yet.

- **Role of Youth in Supporting the National Anticorruption Committee (NAC)**

  Youth are considered the most productive category in the society, as well as the first victims to corruption. Yet the relationship that should exist between the youth and the National Anticorruption Committee is to be more like a partnership than just a mere relationship of support. It is a big advantage for the NAC to involve the youth as well as the rest of the civil community in planning the national anticorruption strategy. By involving them in the strategy, more trust and credibility is given to the strategy, thus leading to an effective execution of the strategy. Youth involvement in the strategy can be of many ways, offering their opinions, monitoring the performance of the NAC through NGOs in the country and through their voices in the media, assisting with the survey process and the questionnaire, promoting awareness among other youth and community members of the importance of this strategy. However, the youth involvement also depends on the government support to the youth, which is considered a weak support that can only be emphasized by international pressure to support youth. Since the international pressure on the government regarding anticorruption actions is limited by the amount of jurisdiction allowed for these international organizations, these international organizations can pressurize the government to support the involvement of youth (as a part of the community) in the anticorruption strategy for the reason that the participation of the community is a key to the success of the anticorruption strategy.

- **Opinions of Youth Outreached**

  “The battle against corruption cannot be fought and won by the Anti-Corruption Commission alone nor by continuing to deal with the older leadership that we say is corrupt. It also needs the new ideas from those who will run economies and the state in the years to come, it needs the fresh blood of the youth who possess both the capability and will to shape a prescribed path for their own future.” Andrew Nnewe (29), National Coordinator of NAYAC-Zambia
Explained previously in the role of youth in supporting the National Committee of Anticorruption that one of the methods that youth can be involved in the national strategy for anticorruption is by offering their opinions and participating as part of the community in the preparation of this strategy. But how are their voices outreached and listened? And how can an international or local organization help the youth voices to be heard. Outlined below are three ideas that can be done to help in outreaching the voices of these youth.

❖ Idea One: The National Youth Anticorruption Commission

To coordinate all efforts (e.g. awareness programs) of youth in anticorruption, a youth group such as a commission should be formed. This is the commission which shall represent the Yemeni Youth in the strategy, and acts as a shadow institute (monitoring) to the National Anticorruption Committee (NAC). International organizations or local organizations can adopt the idea and start or support the commission. To improve effectiveness and prevent bureaucracy, this commission should be independent from any organization. One of the tasks of this commission is to organize the anticorruption awareness programs nationwide. In addition this commission monitors the performance of the NAC. Other tasks of this commission are to present the youth opinions and ideas to the NAC in order to consider them while planning the anticorruption strategy. More tasks of the National Youth Anticorruption Commission are pointed out in ideas two and three below.

❖ Idea Two: The Youth Anticorruption Newspaper

Free media is a powerful tool in influencing governments and public opinions. Who will know about the youth efforts in anticorruption, if not published? Who will know that corruption is somewhere and no one is doing anything about it, if not told to the public? The media is considered important in awareness about the problems endured by the public, thus important in waking up the conscious of unaware people. The Youth Anticorruption Newspaper is important for outreaching the youth and public opinions and problems to the government.

❖ Idea Three: The Yemeni Youth Anticorruption Website

The newspaper delivers information to public, yet it doesn’t receive responses back, not at least at the same moment. The website aims to receive the maximum amount of youth opinions and ideas, thus increasing the impact of receiving information. The government can also be convinced that it announces its yearly budget for different cities, regions and projects on a
website, so that public opinions are taken into consideration. This idea is nearly the same action take in Obninsk, Russia.

These three ideas can reach maximum impact if coordinated and supported together.

- **Conclusion**

  Corruption consists of many forms that affect the youth directly and indirectly. But instead of complaining from the current situation and criticizing life, youth should act TOGETHER against corruption and fight it with every effort. A one hand cannot clap, therefore youth should unite and contribute to the country’s development because they are the future leaders and it is their obligation to protect their country from every corruptive that damages the country’s vast resources

References:


Third Prize: Olumide Adekola Adewoye, Nigeria
ABSTRACT

Corruption has often been identified as the singular most important problem obstructing Nigeria’s path toward sustainable development. Most institutions in the country are riddled with this social ill, which has cost many innocent citizens the lives of their loved ones as well as the dream of a better future. The country has consistently been ranked for more than fifteen years in succession as one of the most corrupt in the world. This essay however aims at giving accounts of how corruption has affected me and some of the initiatives that were taken to tackle this social menace through concerted efforts with all the stakeholders.

In order to achieve these objectives, the essay begins by delving into the background to corruption in the Nigerian society. This is further put into perspective using as a case study, a personal experience of how the corrupt practice of extortion of money from commercial car drivers by officers of the Nigerian Police resulted in the tragic loss of my father and consequently, its effect on me. In addition to that, my ugly encounter with corruption during the course of my university education is also used as an illustration of how this social ill potentially kills people’s dream of a better future, thus breeding a citizenry with passive or cynical attitude towards life. The essay afterwards proposes various ways by which a winning battle can be waged against corruption among the police as well as in our higher institutions of learning.

In conclusion, when poverty crosses the threshold virtues fly out of the window. To wage a winning battle against corruption, it is necessary that human beings are provided with their basic needs thus ensuring that they live above the subsistence level. It is also imperative to elect credible political leaders as the battle against corruption can only be spearheaded, fought and won by non corrupt leaders who have the political will. The existing anti-corruption agencies need to be restructured to ensure their independence and fairness. Continuous public enlightenment and anti-corruption education are viable weapons needed to advance the fight against corruption to every mind consequently achieving a society where corruption is relegated to the background.

CORRUPTION –THE NIGERIAN SITUATION

According to ‘Handbook On Fighting Corruption, 1999’ corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain which also encompasses unilateral abuses by government officials such as embezzlement and nepotism, as well as abuses linking public and private actors such as bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and fraud.

To say that corruption is the singular most important problem obstructing Nigeria’s path toward sustainable development will just be stating the obvious. Like a wild fire, this monster has
proliferated to all segments of the country, making one to wonder sometimes if the name Nigeria is synonymous to the word ‘corruption’. The 1996 Study of Corruption among selected countries by a Berlin-based Transparency International (TI) ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt nation among the 54 nations listed in the study, with Pakistan as the second highest (Moore and Stephen, 1997). Also in 1998, Nigeria was 81 out of the 85 countries pooled (Lipset and Lenz 2000); thus rating the country as the fifth most corrupt country in the world. The country did not fare better in 2001 as the corruption perception index released by TI ranked her 90 out of 91 countries pooled thus making it the second most corrupt nation. In year 2004 which marked five years into the country’s newly found democracy, Nigeria was still ranked 144 on the 146-nation Corruption Perceptions Index published, leaving only Bangladesh and Haiti as worse-placed. (www.IRINnews.org). However, the country recorded a slight improvement in 2006 as it was jointly ranked with some other countries 146 out of the 153 countries pooled. This placed it amongst the fifth most corrupt countries in the world.

According to Dike, 2003 the forms of corrupt activities prevalent in Nigeria include political corruption, electoral corruption, bureaucratic corruption, embezzlement and bribery. Amongst all these forms of corruption, he reckons that bureaucratic corruption, which occurs in the public administration or the implementation end of policies, is the one that Nigerians encounter. These have eroded the value system of the society as well as plunge the country into a seemingly irreversible economic crisis.

With the quantum of natural resources in the country (one of the world’s largest producers of crude oil.) one cannot but disbelieve the visible poverty and decay in infrastructures that have been accepted as normal in our society. Corrupt political leaders who have been desensitized to images of poverty are publicly celebrated and constantly rewarded with national awards. This institutionalization of corruption has a contagious effect on the citizenry as a whole; it is a ‘top-down’ infection.

GROWING UP

Having been born in early 1980s qualifies me as someone who was born into corruption, corruption being one of the few words I was able to pick up from my parents while growing up. I can remember vividly as a little child, watching my parents discuss the corruption related reports in the newspaper with visible anger. One of such discussions that had always stuck in my memory was that of a particularly neighbour of ours who left our slum to build a mansion as a result of a political appointment given to one of his relatives. My father who was a taxi driver at the time would say to us children ‘Look, there’s no way we can live a better life if we don’t know people in government’. Years later, I struggled with this wrong notion that had been planted into
At that tender age, my knowledge of corruption was limited to that associated with the siphoning of public fund by government officials. Little did I realize that I was going to experience on an individual level other aspects of corruption in later years which to my mind, are even worse than the conventional corrupt practices I had being raised to accept as a culture.

**My Experience**

**The murder of a bread winner – corruption amongst the police**

Four months after my fourteenth birthday, tragedy struck! My father was gruesomely murdered in a war-free environment by those people who were supposed to protect us- the police. The death of my father made me to be resentful against anything that represented the government, not because I was made to be a fatherless child at such a young age or even because my poverty-beclouded future was finally crumbled by the death of the bread winner but for the circumstances surrounding his untimely death.

My father was conducting his transportation business on this fateful day when he was stopped by a police officer at one of the multiple illegal check points who demanded for ten naira (the amount has been increased to fifty naira now due to inflation) being the money extorted from commercial car drivers. According to an eye-witness report, my father who claimed to be on his first trip with apparently insufficient amount of money refused to oblige the police officer. A disagreement ensued; the policeman pulled the trigger and the man on whose ‘head’ the hopes and aspirations of many had been heaped was left writhing in the pool of his own blood.

At the time, I still had one more year before the completion of my secondary school education and the hope of furthering my education instantaneously flew out of the window while my father’s dream to educate his children to the university level even if it would require the last drop of his blood instantly became literarily more difficult than the ‘passage of a camel through the eye of a needle’. The attendant poverty and suffering that followed his demise knew no bound as the case was gradually swept under the carpet by the police. From that moment onward, I was made to know the agony of child labour as I was involved in all sorts of menial jobs at least to raise enough money needed to complete my secondary school education.
Finally in 1998, I wrote my final secondary school examination and eventually finished with one of the best results in the school. Without any hope of going beyond this level of education, I took up a teaching job at a local primary school where I was paid ₦1000 (approximately eight USD) monthly. As I became involved in my newly found teaching profession, I constantly felt the urge to pursue a university education at least that would make my murdered father happy in his grave. I took up additional jobs and was able to save sufficient money over the next one year to obtain the ‘Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination’ form which was the entrance examination into Nigerian universities. I always told myself ‘there’s no plan B’ this determination helped me to study hard and pass my examinations at first attempt since there was no guarantee that I was going to have any second chance. A combination of hard work and mother luck paid off as I passed the entrance examination and was eventually offered admission to study chemical engineering.

**Corruption in school**

The journey to my personal encounter with corruption continued in the year 1999. At that time, I had just been admitted to the university to study Chemical Engineering; a dream that was made possible by a scholarship given to me by one of the multinational oil companies based in the country. In school, I met lots of lecturers that would give the ‘dullest brain’ the highest mark obtainable after money had exchanged hands. One of my lecturers was even bold to say to us in class ‘people have always accused me of being partial, well there’s little or nothing you can do about it. If you write any petition against me like your senior colleagues, you’ll be victimized’. To him, corruption had been reduced to mere partiality. It is now a common knowledge that one does not have to be hard working to pass one’s examinations in our institutions of learning since according to popular belief; there are always shortcuts to academic excellence. The very hard working students are usually taunted as workaholics with nothing to show for it. Results are swapped in favour of the ‘dull-but-rich’ students, leaving the hardworking and dedicated ones with poor rewards.

As expected, this corrupt practice breeds a population of ‘student-prostitutes’ among the female folks since those of them that cannot afford to pay in cash are required to pay in kind by having sex with lecturers before they can pass examinations. While some are just victims of circumstance, others who have suddenly developed phobias for hard work consider it as a better alternative. I once over-heard a female student who was scolding her friend just before entering a
male lecturer’s office for being too conservative in her dressing. According to her, provocative
dressing had helped her obtain good grades where ‘provocative study’ had failed.

This type of corrupt practice leads to frustration and creates a potential for the development
of feelings of hopelessness, dejection, and low morale among the ‘ready-to-learn’ students. Gire,
1999 is of the opinion that when a sizeable portion of a society’s citizenry perceives that it is not
capable of producing positive and desirable outcomes through honest efforts, the result is either
passivity or excessive cynicism.

FIGHTING CORRUPTION

The Status Quo

Several governments have come with different ideas of fighting corruption in Nigeria. The
same sets of efforts have undergone repackaging and mere changes in nomenclature, for instance
a change from ‘Nigerian Police Force’ to ‘Nigerian Police Service’. Most of these efforts have
resulted in negligible success. Gire, 1999 reports that typical responses to corruption have
involved the overthrow of whole regimes or removal of individual officials implicated in the
incidences that have come to light. According to him, these replacements often end up being
more corrupt than their predecessors. Some of the examples that readily come to mind are those
of the immediate past inspector general of police; Tafa Balogun who was convicted on a 47
charge count after he was discovered to have stolen more than N17 billion and the first speaker of
the national assembly after the return of the country to democratic government in 1999; Salisu
Buhari who was discovered to have forged a university certificate. Both of them were simply
removed, the first was fined N4 million while the former speaker was even granted a state pardon
and is now seeking to be elected as the governor of a state in this year’s election.

Although corruption is a global problem, the situation in Nigeria is however peculiar in that
our society does not have the apparatus to trace and prosecute the chief culprits. We are often
bombarded with news and display of wealth by public officials with no legitimate source of
income. This often tempts the common people who are reluctantly pushed into corrupt behavior
in their struggle for survival.

New Proposals for Fighting Corruption

Any proposed solution targeted at waging a winning war against corruption among the
Nigerian police and in our institutions of learning would be fruitless if it fails to take into
consideration its causes. With this in mind, I have put forward some of the ways by which corruption can be tackled headlong.

**Fighting temptations**

It has been proven overtime that the costs of fighting a battle are usually much more than those needed for its prevention, rather than fight corruption, why not prevent it? To achieve this, there is a need to understand some of the reasons why police officers extort money from the motorists at various check points across the country.

Poverty is a great enemy to human happiness; it certainly destroys liberty, and makes some virtues impracticable and others extremely difficult. According to 9th November edition of Nigerian Tribune (a national newspaper), some of the factors responsible for corruption among the police are alleged 25 to 50% deduction from their salaries, non-payment of allowances, poor condition of service and the inability of the authority to provide them with the necessary working tools. In the words of one the police officers who pleaded anonymity as reported in the same edition of the paper, “Our monthly salary is not enough for us to take care of our responsibilities, we often find it difficult to pay our children’s school fees and meet up with the family needs” She said apart from the fact that the salary was poor; it was being deducted from source without any reason. “If the salaries and allowances are better, no police officer would be willing to stand at check points” she concluded.

Several Nigerian newspapers have reported the collapse and eventual death of pensioners (police officers inclusive) while waiting endlessly to collect their stipends called pensions. In certain cases, these retired officers are owed up to one year pension arrears. This sends wrong signals to the younger generation of police officers who are desperate to accumulate more than what can outlast them (legally or otherwise) so that they won’t suffer the same fate that has befallen their senior colleagues.

In accordance to the common saying ‘To whom much is given, much is expected’. If issues relating to welfare of the police are given top priority then, there will be moral justification to bring any of their officers involved in any corrupt act to book.

**Need for credible leadership**

‘Once a system has been corrupted right from the very top leaders to the lowest rungs of the bureaucracy, the problem is very complicated. The cleansing has to start from top and go downwards in a thorough and systematic way’

Kuan Yew Lee
Straits Times (Singapore)

The election of credible leaders with the political will in my opinion represents the most important tool in the fight against corruption. I belong to a school of thought who believes that irrespective of the feasibility of any proposal geared toward fighting corruption, it can only be actualized if the policy implementers are sincere. The Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) is a typical illustration of what can be achieved when there is a will (though its preferential selection of culprits for investigation is another cause of worry).

With like-minded young people, I would like to start a campaign that would ensure that would-be contestants are made to answer questions relating to their corrupt antecedents since corruption can only be fought with uncorrupted hands. We shall start from the grass root in conjunction with the traditional leaders in the community by encouraging electorates to make sure that these would-be leaders are resident in the communities which they seek to govern as this will guarantee some form of knowledge about their past.

To achieve the desired result, manifestoes shall be organized just before elections at the grass root level. This will allow for question and answer sessions where issues that bother on the integrity of the politicians and their anti-corruption plans if voted into power will be asked. In addition to this, these people would be demanded to declare their assets, which obviously would be known to the people resident in their local communities. The major advantage this offers is that it holds anyone who eventually wins accountable to the community.

The status-quo is that manifestoes are held only at the national levels (these are often boycotted by politicians with apparent corrupt records.). The so called ‘money-bags’ come from the city during the election period to contest for elective positions in their local communities which most of the time they are not in touch with. These money-bags often exploit the abject poverty of the local community by giving them stipends in exchange for their votes.

Institutional reforms of anti-corruption agencies

This aims at making the various corruption-fighting institutions work by emphasizing their independence. As noted above, corruption is not peculiar to Nigeria; however the only difference is that the country lacks the necessary apparatus to bring the culprits to book. The heads of the existing corruption-fighting institutions such as EFCC and ICPC more often than not must first ask for permission from the president who appoints them before certain corrupt personalities can be investigated. This clearly enshrines the famous ‘Animal Farm’ concept- all animals are equal but some are more equal than the other. When these institutions are reformed to be independent and to carry out their tasks without any undue interference from the government, the current
notion that they exist for the purpose of witch hunting would be removed, consequently building the confidence of the public in their activities.

The reformation can be achieved by reviewing the laws setting up these institutions in the following areas:

1. Appointment of the head of the institutions: the head of the reformed corruption-fighting institutions shall be a non-partisan reputable judge nominated by the Nigerian bar association instead of the hitherto appointment by the president. The appointment should be based on merit, previous records and should be democratic among the members of the association. This will seek to achieve fairness, rule of law, accountability and respect for human right.

2. Financing of the activities of the institutions: the institution should be financed like the other arms of the government where statutory allocation of funds are made at the beginning of every year and provisions are made for this in the annual budget. This will ensure the independence of the institution.

3. Constitutional powers of the institutions: it is important to prevent the institutions from being ordinary bull dogs that can only bark but can’t bite. This can be done by giving them some constitutional power to prosecute rather than the usual practice of handing the culprits over to the police which has been tagged as being one of the most corrupt institutions in the country. It is also important to remove certain immunity clauses in the country’s constitution that prevent certain political office holders from being prosecuted. These clauses have always being one of the reasons why the corruption fighting agencies have failed to perform well in the past.

**Public awareness and education**

During my undergraduate days, I initiated the formation of a club named ‘Say No, Act Right’ with the main objective of educating fellow students on the need to say no to corrupt practices and embrace enviable virtues. The club still exists after my graduation and has grown from its initial membership of fifteen to over two thousand students. The club’s officers are democratically elected to the various positions.

The objectives of the club are realized by organizing various talk shows, mentoring and recognition of people who have stood their grounds against corrupt practices both within and outside the school.
(1) Talk shows: Once in every semester, speakers are invited from various NGOs whose primary interest is to fight corruption. These speakers give talks on their personal experiences and ways by which academic excellence can be achieved without compromising one’s dignity. Question and answer sessions are incorporated into these shows where real life corruption experiences constantly being faced by students are examined.

(2) Mentoring: realizing the effects the older generation can have on the younger society, the club tries to assign each of its new members to mentors who can advise them on personal experience relating to corruption on campus. The most important challenges being faced however are those relating to finding mentors in a society where corruption has almost been adopted as a way of life.

(3) Recognition and Awards: this is one of the new additions to the activities of the club. Here, students who have exhibited exemplary conducts in the fight against corruption are named as the anti-corruption vanguard of the semester, an award that comes with prize money of N5000. Nominations are received from various quarters and the final award is made after thorough investigations about nominee’s anti-corruption records have been made from their departments and amongst their classmates. We are hoping that the school authority will adopt this initiative as this will go a long way in increasing its popularity and competitiveness.

(4) Other Programmes: in addition to the above efforts, other programmes are also organized to champion the anti-corruption crusade in schools. One of such is the ‘Say no, Act right rally’ which seeks to popularize the activities of the club among the student community. Other efforts being made include distribution of hand bills and leaflets by inserting them in question papers before they are given to students during the examination period. This is done after seeking the consent of the school authority. The printing of an anti-corruption magazine is also in the pipeline where pieces of news that bother on the activities of the club are published.

Results

While it may be difficult to present numerical data relating to the number of students that have been affected by our initiatives, (since most people would not want to publicly accept their involvement in corrupt acts for the fear of stigmatization) there are evidences however that there is an increasing level of acceptability of the club within the academic community. We now have more people who are passionate about the various activities of the club which is reflected in the
rate at which its membership is growing. Also, we have a renewed enthusiasm among the students population who now believe that academic excellence can be achieved without necessarily being corrupt. The slogan ‘Say No, Act Right’ has been adopted as the default response whenever any corrupt practice within the academic environment is about to be carried out.

CONCLUSIONS

I started the essay by looking at some of the factors responsible for corruption among the Nigerian Police and in our Institutions of higher learning. Poverty reduction, election of credible political leaders with political will, restructuring of the existing anti-corruption agencies to be more proactive, continuous public enlightenment and intensive anti-corruption education were proposed as potent tools that could be used to fight the corrupt practices that had been identified.

Although the above proposals had been specifically targeted at the Nigerian situations, I believe they can also be adapted to other countries where similar corrupt practices are being experienced daily.

REFERENCES

A Handbook on Fighting Corruption, Technical Publication Series February 1999


www.IRINnews.org
Ogbo Emmanuel Chukwuemeka, Nigeria
ABSTRACT
Corruption did not suddenly become a way of life in Nigeria within a great step but metamorphosed by series of chain reactions. All my life, I have always distasted corruption in school. Such practices like offering bribe, “sorting” one’s teacher and teachers diverting school funds for personal enrichment was to mention but a few corrupt practices that pissed me off.

On gaining admission into the University, I decided not to die in silence but to contribute to the transformation of my wishes and aspirations through actions focused on grass-root anti-corruption initiatives. In the university, I joined YACF (Youth Anti-corruption Forum), a student anticorruption Non-governmental organization. As students, we developed a model which we called “the school-family-Youth Anti-corruption” model for action. In this model, we developed sets of sociological actions based on close interactions between the school, family and youths in fighting corruption.

The methodology we employed in most of our projects/ seminars included: Targeting primary, secondary and University students; involving more primary and secondary schools in national anti-corruption essay contests; and initiating the Parents-teachers forum. We also employed motivational speaking, advocacy and outright condemnation of corruption by inculcating in members the various aspects of “societal morality”.

YACF believed that in taking the fight against corruption we must deal with the roots rather than the branches, and with the disease rather than the symptoms. This Grass-root anti-corruption initiative makes for genuine and all-embracing raising of anti-corruption opinions by harnessing ideas from children and youths. It also creates general participation of Nigerian citizens in government affairs, and sustains the ethos of the divergent Nigerian ethnic groups by embracing societal morality and anticorruption crusades as instruments against corruption.

The aim of this essay is focused on grass-root anti-corruption strategies. Major themes like the macrostructure and microstructure of corruption in Nigeria was exposited. Our YACF grass-root anti-corruption model and strategies were then finally explored.

LETS CALL A SPADE, A SPADE - macrostructure of corruption in Nigeria: Facts Vs Fiction

The problem of corruption in Nigeria is a function of gross abuse of offices and positions of authority by both the Government, private sector and even the common peasants (1).

Professor Wole Soyinka
Africa’s & Nigeria’s First Nobel Prize Laureate

Nigeria is the largest black nation in the world (2). And the second most corrupt country in the world (3). This is despite the fact that on assumption of office, the president of Nigeria promised all Nigerians that he will fight corruption to a standstill. But two years latter, the
Transparency International (4) ranked Nigeria, the second most corrupt country in the world, second to only Bangladesh!

In Nigeria, state favors are purchased from civil servants charged with the job of formulating and implementing national development plans, enforcing state regulations and protecting private property rights. Activities of interests thus, include; payment of bribes to obtain import and export licenses, foreign exchange permits, and investment and production licenses.

Our plight is further exacerbated by the tradition whereby every Nigerian citizen, civil service employees included, view public service as an opportunity for self-enrichment. Little wonder Pita Agbese (1992:229-30) observed that

*In post independence Nigeria, all political coalitions and groups have been engaged in determined efforts to capture the apparatus of the state in order to use the state’s redistributing powers to amass wealth for themselves. Soon after capturing the government, the incumbent regime usually erects significant barriers to entry and monopolizes the supply of legislation, thus making certain that other groups do not participate in the allocation of the resources. For locked-out groups, participation in the economic system must be obtained through the payment of bribes to incumbent bureaucrats all of whom are members of the politically dominant group* (5).

According to figures recently compiled by Nigeria’s anti-corruption commission, our past leaders stole and misused £500 billion. The amount equals the total Western aid to Africa for almost four decades (6). Recently, the governor of Bayelsa State (7), Diepreye Alamieyesiegha, was arrested at heathrow airport on three money laundering charges after the London metropolitan police found £1 million in cash at his London address and property worth £10 million in his name. He jumped bail and fled back home on a false passport, disguised as a woman! And in his home state, he was welcomed as a folk hero!

Last year, President Olusegun Obasanjo (8) dismissed two cabinet ministers and the inspector general of police for misusing huge sums of money - a euphemism to corruption. More so, the Vice-president has been linked to some form of fraudulent deals and the decision on the case is still pending - an allusion to corruption in its highest form.

**Insecurity of the Common Man - The Micro Structure of the Affliction**

“*We were in the bus, and then suddenly our driver halted, making my head to hit the iron bar. The policeman asked the driver for his drivers license which he provided. He then requested for a thorough search of the car and all the passengers alighted the bus. After his would be “thorough” search, he looked at the car windsreen which had a crack and said to the driver, “your windsreen has a crack. Don’t you know it is risky to drive with a bad windsreen?”*” he
queried. “Okay, for that, you have to give me “kola” he added sharply. The driver however, refused to give him the bribe and an argument ensued. Before we could say “JESUS IS LORD”, the policeman shot the driver on the chest and disappeared with his colleague. The driver gave up the ghost in the hospital latter that day and it was about 7.30 pm in the evening”

The above tale by this eyewitness is one out of a million cases most Nigerians face today. It taught me that corruption cost lives. The driver was shot to death for refusing to offer bribe to the corrupt policeman. He paid with his life because he rejected, refuted, dissented, outlawed, abhorred and condemned the unscrupulous tendencies of the law enforcement agent.

The impact of corruption on the lives of various Nigerians like me - the social fabric of the society, is the most destructive of all. First it undermines people’s trust in the political system, in its institutions and its leadership. This is then followed spontaneously by frustration and general apathy among a disillusioned public resulting in a weak civil society.

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH CORRUPTION

1. Coming to terms with corruption in my secondary school: My first baptism of fire

I had a hard time coming to terms with certain corrupt practices and malpractices at secondary school.

In my form 4, Ikwo became my bosom friend. We were so close to each other that we shared everything in common. Although I was brighter and smarter than him, he always scored higher in every test and examination.

We were preparing for our 5th form promotion exams, when he gave me the greatest shock of my life. He said to me, “Emma, why waste time and energy burning the midnight oil, when your parents can always bribe Mrs. Nzodi (our form mistress)”

I was astonished and when I probed further, I discovered to my dismay that Ikwo’s parents had always paid teachers to pass him, and that there were 31 of them on the form mistress list of “favorites”. The 31 of them consisting of those students whose parents had offered money to our form teacher.

I was disheartened and my face turned red with both jealously and anger. Yes. I was jealous because my parents would never at any time in their lives offer bribe to my teacher to pass me. The primary reason being the high level of morality which they preached to me at home.

On the other hand, I was angered because the teacher was deceiving us. I was angered because my hard work was thrown to the mud; because I was simply told that it isn’t worth reading to pass; because the school an agent of socialization, has failed in it’s duty of ensuring
high morality, ethical reorientation and advocacy against bribery and corruption. But most importantly, I was angry because there was no solution.

As tears clogged my ugly face, Ikwo told me that the school principal was also aware and involved in such bribery. Then it became clear to me that I couldn’t report to him either. I was thus helpless.

Through the rest of my secondary school days, I was tortured by the incessant rate of bribery and corruption in my school. We were indirectly taught by the school that hard work, success and honesty could be bought and sold. The school made us learn that it was possible to influence people around you by offering them bribe, we were taught that for one to be successful does not depend on what one is, but on who one knows and how much one has. I was soon to discover more when I entered the university.

2A Life in the Campus and Its Future Consequences

Life in campus was as I had anticipated. Student’s offering bribes to lecturers in order to pass exams, some corrupt lecturers abusing their offices by diverting the university’s resources for personal enrichment, while still others requesting students who failed their courses to pay “in cash” or “in kind”. There were also multiple cases of students and lecturers engaging in widespread examination malpractices and corrupt practices.

Hence, hard work is lost as a virtue, and the society ends up producing half-baked graduates ill prepared for the labour market. The pathetic consequence is that these graduates later manipulate their ways to becoming personalities in the country. When they ascend the presidency or any other political office or position of importance, they tend to abuse it since they were products of such circumstances. But this doesn’t make sense!

More so, some unbaked graduates enter the education sector and plague it. It is common sense that one can only give what one has, and for the unbaked graduate who made his way through offering bribes to his lecturers, he has nothing to offer - just a lacuna. He in turn, requests his students to offer some sort of gratification to him by coercing them.

This vicious circle therefore continues over and over again. The country further degenerates. The gross consequences of all these chain reactions include but are not limited to: depletion of the nation’s wealth by irresponsible leaders who are themselves products of corruption, loss of the natural virtues of leadership like hard work, honesty, perseverance, accountability, transparency, and sense of moral judgments by the would be leaders of tomorrow. Finally, greater hardship, poverty, disease hunger and strife set in because of excessive mismanagement of the country’s resources.
What I Did Not Do

I did not join the band-wagon because of the parental influence on my upbringing. This influence had nothing to do with my religious belief and orientations. It had nothing to do with my being a Christian or a catholic. But rather dealt with morality as an individual and a person - knowing what is right and wrong with respect to the general societal stereotypes. I call this “societal morality”. For instance, if I know offering bribe is destructive because it undermines a student’s hard work, then I must try to out rightly reject it openly and try to let others know WHY it is WRONG and then ensure that I do not indulge in the same act I condemn. YACF was thus a point of contact to actualize my aims and aspirations of fighting corruption.

YACF (Youth Anticorruption Forum): A School-Family-Youth Anticorruption Organization

In taking the fight against corruption, we must deal with roots rather than the branches, with the disease rather than symptoms. And provide a framework that is morally and ethically right, through persistent advocacy and responsive reaction from all and sundry.

- Building the Nigeria of our dreams by President Olusegun Obasanjo

In my second year in campus, I was made the Public Relation Officer (PRO) of this organization. And in October 2005 we held the first inauguration of the organization. As one of the organizations executives, we proposed a model for fighting corruptions. The model is reproduced below.

Our school-family-youth anti-corruption model

- Teachers/parents instructs the children on societal lit... 
- Teachers/parents in turn out rightly condemn corruption in the society and... 
- Children grow unto youths 
- Youths Latter become better parents 
- Join YACF 
- Increases anti-corruption campaign 

Widespread increase in call
Why Government Cannot Fight Corruption Alone

The model above emphasizes fighting corruption by involving the family, school and every Nigerian Youth. Because President Olusegun Obasanjo was the first person that called such a school family-youth anti-corruption initiative the “grass root Anti-corruption strategy”, we named our model the “Grass root Anti-corruption model”.

To us, it remains the most potent means we could fight corruption as students. Little wonder V.C. Uchendu\(^\text{11}\) said (and I quote):

\[I\text{ can say, without any fear of contradiction that grassroots anti-corruption models are the only way to completely combat corruption in developing countries and economies. Any model short of involving the ordinary people is nothing but a mockery of itself. Corruption stereotypes societies and growing children including youths quickly absorb these wrong stereotypes as a way of life. But when these young people are made to know, understand and assimilate the consequences of the present corruption plaguing the system, they tend to “dislike” corruption which in turn makes them abhor engaging in it}^{(12)}\]

Furthermore, in his reaction to the inadequacies of the government corruption clean up strategy, the former chairman of the Nigerian independent corrupt practices commission has this to say:

\[“\text{Government anti-corruption strategy is grossly flawed. Imagine a situation where a government unconstitutionally puts itself into office, it is common sense that such government would be passive in fighting corruption. But when corruption is fought by all citizens (i.e.) when every one puts hands together to fight corruption, the Government tries to amend its ways..............”}^{(13)}\]

As a corollary to the above, it is pertinent to note that in Nigeria, despite the so called government anti-corruption programmes, they are usually flawed because court cases of most government officials and civil servants indicted by anti-corruption commission are either withdrawn by “unknown” forces from “unknown” quarters or those charged with fraud unlawfully released. Thus, the merits of the grass root anti-corruption initiatives cannot be over emphasized.

**Merits of our school-family-youth Anticorruption model (Grass-root anti-corruption programme).**

From the fore goings, the importance of our model cannot be overemphasized. These advantages include:
1. It makes for genuine and all-embracing raising of anti-corruption opinions by enabling YACF harness ideas from children and youths around its domain.

2. This grass-root anticorruption strategy makes for a responsible and responsive citizen: While YACF send its advocacy squad to the families and schools to teach societal morality to the teachers and parents. The parents and teachers in turn impart the same to their children and students respectively. Hence, when the two categories recognize the detrimental effects of aiding corruption in their homes and schools, and realize that corruption does more harm than good, they then vociferously and out rightly reject it in their homes, schools and working places. They also directly criticize government corruption.

3. The Grassroots anticorruption model creates general participation of Nigerian citizens in its political affairs. This leads to grassroots democracy, which in turn creates a government whose foundation is built on majority opinions, criticisms and contributions. In that regard, such a government will also be willing to adjust its programmes that will have adverse effects on the common man.

4. Finally, it sustains the ethos of the divergent Nigeria ethnic groups by embracing societal morality and anti-corruption crusades as instruments against corruption.

**YACF OBJECTIVES**

Some of the objectives of YACF include

- **Integrating Corruption Awareness with Education**: Anti-corruption campaigns cannot be launched without students and teachers understanding the detrimental effects corruption have on education. We integrate corruption awareness with education by ensuring that certain courses in schools like *citizenship education* are used to create strong anti-corruption awareness.

- **Teaching and Advocating Societal Morality**: By societal morality, YACF mean the ability of every Nigerian citizen to judge either as right or wrong any political or social actions of the government based on the prevailing societal stereotype. This morality has nothing to do with one’s religious belief. The YACF teach societal morality by helping students and parents come to terms with various political and social issues, and to differentiate between societal rights and wrongs.

- **Building a Critical, Rational and Creative Thinking Nigerian**: YACF by enabling Nigerian citizens know more about corruption and possibly inculcating in Nigerian youths the spirit of constructive criticism, will help to build an informed and creative Nigerian citizen. This objective is in line with YACF belief that the fight against
corruption depend not only on government participation but by outright participation and support from all citizens. Building a critical, rational, objective and creative citizen able to voice out their distaste for corruption constitutes the first step not only in ensuring a corruption free society but also in achieving an ideal Nigerian society.

- **Empowering Students Leadership and Patriotism:** YACF empower student leadership and patriotism by calling upon its participants, who are mostly students, youths and parents to be responsible leaders in their own localities and to practice patriotism. A Nigerian who is not just a mere spectator but a role player in shaping the necessary institutions instrumental to the success of democracy by out flawless those ills which militate against democracy - the major militant which is corruption.

**Important Elements of YACF**

The elements of YACF are:

- **Targets Primary, Secondary and University Students:** YACF provides custom designed seminars, workshops and sensitization programs depending on the target audience.

- **Involves more Primary and Secondary Schools in National Anti-Corruption Essay Competitions and Contests:** In these competitions, students are subjected to essay questions on corruption, government anti-corruption efforts and how they (the students) can contribute to fighting corruption in their locality.

- **Free Membership:** Membership of YACF is extremely free provided interested students meet our requirements. Our requirements entail that: applicants must have attained 16 years of age, must be a senior high school student or an undergraduate, and must have passed our written tests and oral interviews. Skills examined in the interviews include; knowledge of corruption clean-up strategies, ability to convince people, and an excellent flair for both English and Nigerian language. The criteria however, are reviewed by the YACF executives from time to time.

- Ensuring that well written anti-corruption articles in journals, magazines, newsletters and emails, and telephone text messages are sent to participants free of charge. Recently, YACF has aired anti-corruption jingles in the state radio station.

- **Parents-Teachers Forum:** This forum is held annually by YACF as part of its efforts to checkmate corruption in both schools and families. Studies have shown that children are inducted into corruption by certain factors principally by their family members and teachers\(^\text{14}\). The YACF parents-teachers forum is aimed at creating a nurturing environment where parents, teachers and school administrators interact in order to find
out among other things, why teachers and school administrators accept bribes from students and why parents encourage their children to influence their teachers. The forum is usually presided by two distinguished professors from any Nigerian University whom must be anti-corruption activists. Case reports and recommendations are then forwarded to school administrators and the education ministry.

**YACF Challenges and Accomplishments**

No doubt, YACF has been a successful organization but the financial and material resources to make YACF activities free and accessible to youths around my state and beyond was a great challenge.

Because YACF wanted to make anti-corruption seminars, campaigns and materials as accessible as possible, we decided to bear all costs alone and provide it completely free. To obtain the needed fund, we embarked on large-scale fundraising exercise during school holidays. More so, when we approached sponsors, we ensured that they had similar interests. We didn’t want to look like students begging for alms, but an efficient organization with a mission and a clear means to achieve that vision.

Before mid-2006, we distributed appeal-fund cards to students, parents and teachers alike. By July last year, we realized up to $3000. Notable contributors to the project included Medical Students Association, Law Students Association and the Joint Science Students Association of my University. Other non-student sponsors included: The Nigerian Medical Association, the State Ministry of Education and an American human rights NGO.

The lessons from these experiences are that most students are discouraged by the fundraising exercise. Most of the members believed that since we were still in school, and coupled with the fact that undergraduates are seen as unserious and un-ingenuous students, that it was impossible to fight corruption. But the executives believed otherwise because we had a defined direction. We calculated what we wanted to achieve and went out to accomplish it. We had a great idea for an organization that was relevant to the needs of the country. From thereon, the larger society recognized our salt and provided appropriate support.

**Sustaining our Mission and Vision**

After the 2006 academic session, we had reached out to 8 Primary Schools, 5 secondary schools and 2 campuses, and about the same time nearly 1500 students and teachers had benefited from our seminars and campaigns. YACF also recorded about 367 members in 2006, making it one of the biggest student organizations in my State. These distinguished and accomplished members in turn were willing to reach out to people in their homes and villages to share their
knowledge with people who are also interested in making a difference by understanding how corruption can be fought if every Nigerian citizen embraces societal morality.

To keep the YACF dream alive, we helped primary and secondary schools to establish similar anti-corruption programmes, so that they can toll our line. If we could reach out to 15 schools in 11 months and these schools in turn reached out to some 8-10 schools in another 11 months, then we are making a difference in our fight against corruption.

Accolades and Social Recognition: Creating an Impression

History is made to correct the past so as to forecast the future. YACF has been recognized as an outstanding student anticorruption organization and project by: The Student Affairs Department of my University, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of woman affairs and Youth Development. But importantly, we were able to leave an indelible legacy for other Nigerian students to follow.

Looking into the Future: A Network for Students Anti-Corruption Organizations this 21st Century.

The YACF initiative can apply to other countries, and trends show that this is the case. With the deadline to achieve the United Nation millennium development goals (MDG’s) set at 2015, students therefore must set their minds to support this initiative. Corruption is antithetical to the actualization of these UN goals because it is Anti-developmental to a nation. Students must hence campaign against corruption while refraining from engaging in it.

I believe students, be they in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, are the future leaders of tomorrow and building a Nigerian student body with a high moral standard and value system will imply that the future leaders will turn out to be men and woman of integrity, who are able to differentiate between societal rights and wrongs and who in turn, implement efficient and effective polices that would move the nation forward. In addition, our future leaders by being imbibed in various aspects of societal morality will ensure they refrain from abusing their offices and avoid corruption. This is in congruency with the popular quote “Train up a child in the way he should grow and when he is old he will not depart from it”15.

On the other hand, student anti-corruption organizations at the university level in North America and Australia is vibrant and active. In West Africa, Universities like the University of Liberia, International University Ghana, university of Ibadan, University of Lagos, and other private and public polytechnics and colleges of education in cote d’ivore, Mali, Cameroon and South Africa continuously seek to reach more students, teachers and people through their various anticorruption projects. The key challenge here is the network to link these organizations
together, so that there would be an exchange of ideas and information that will in the long-run aid in learning processes.

**Conclusion**

I commenced this essay by examining the macrostructure of corruption in Nigeria. I explained that citizen’s participation in fighting corruption is the most potent corruption clean up strategy. This strategy is based on advocacy and outright corruption rejection by the family and schools since they influence every individual in a society directly or indirectly. Morality is something that is static because when our future leaders are imbued with the necessary morals, they tend not to depart from it. By contributing my own quota as an executive of the Youth Anti-corruption forum, I believe I have taken the right step in the right path towards fighting corruption affecting me.
Marta Guzniczak, Poland

Saying *No to corruption*
Saying no to corruption

Corruption is like AIDS. It is a problem in every country, but especially prevalent and damaging in a few. It has aspects of a contagion. It is based on private behavior, usually consenting, which the prevailing moral code usually considers immoral. The social consequences are at many levels, including economic. Finally, the disease itself is difficult to combat, and frighteningly it may adapt itself to efforts to defeat it. (Robert Klitgaard)\(^9\)

I understand perfectly well that the world we live in is far from being faultless. It resembles a tree trunk rather than a smooth surface of a table. I know that one should not expect miracles and that to err is human. Hence I do not expect implementation of any of utopian ideas. However, I do not intend to look in complacency at surrounding reality. When I switch on television, the avalanche of bad news overwhelms me. Every day brings fresh portion of scandals and corruption affairs. A watchword, *First milion must be stolen*, became proverbial in Polish actuality. The country, like a gravely ill person, has too weak immune system against that scourge. It’s representatives utter some unconvincing promises, persuading that time is a great healer and tomorrow everything will look much better. I dare express my doubts. Corruption spreads virtually everywhere. I switch off television set, but it does not solve the problem. The stream of conscience is still floating in my mind. With whom I would not talk, the issue inevitably appears in the end. To give or not to give? And the real question: how much? It is sheer madness.

Recently I have invited my parents to the discussion on that matter, asking if they know from their personal observation any case of corruption. To my surprise, in a few minutes we produced a very extensive list. Due to the limits of the paper only selected examples will be presented of how does corruption affect my life and a life of any other person living in Poland.

1) As a child I have been training canoeing many years. I remember that all kids were giving their best on trainings and always waited with huge excitement for a summer season. I also clearly remember a heap of rewards stored in a club for an upcoming competition. There were sportswear of different kind, board games, books, as well as watches and tape recorders. However, none valuable prize was given to the young sportmen. The awards seemed to mysteriously disappear. What we got instead were

some plastic hangers and clips, of no use for us at all. The costly things were sold in a shop belonging to a trainer’s wife later on.

2) The very same canoeing club obtained a subsidy for its complete renovation. In the financial records from the repairs, security glass was included for each window. Notwithstanding, plain glass was inset. Even though in such places like sport club, glass resistant to shattering should be evidently used for security reasons. The discrepancy was discovered when one window was accidentally smashed by playing children. Luckily, nobody was injured. The insecure windows still jeopardise children. It is important to add, that during the guarantee period, when it was possible to make necessary amendments, the building inspector did not react. He was closely related to the director of an investing, state-owned firm.

3) It is well known that one can easily obtain a driving license in Poland bribing an examiner. Some of the instructors and owners of the training centres are acting as a middlemen. They enable passing the exam for a bribe. According to the police investigation, in 2003 one could pass a driving exam of any category with flying colours for 100-250 euros\textsuperscript{10}. Failure to pay a bribe often leads to exam failing and repeating it several times. Consequently, the peril of accidents on our roads rises. What is more, it became a common practice to obtain a medical certificate from an oculist without even being examined. It means that people who have poor eyesight are permitted to drive a car without an obligation to wear glasses.

4) At the beginning of 2002 a terrifying scandal shocked general public in Poland. It was revealed that in Lodz (the city I study in) for ten years has been blooming a dirty business of corpse trade. Who was selling? Doctors, ambulancemen and ambulance drivers. Who was buying? Undertakers. The estimated cost of one corpse was 300-400 euros\textsuperscript{11}. An investigation disclosed that few patients were killed by injection of a muscle relaxant – Pavulon. Two ambulancemen pleaded guilty. All the country was seized with fear.

5) In the year 2006 a surgeon from Warsaw conducted a heart transplantation on a patient despite serious arguments against the operation. Afterwards he demanded a large sum of money from a family of the patient. When the doctor did not received it, he disconnected a respirator which caused an immediate death of a man\textsuperscript{12}. How does it influence my life?

\textsuperscript{10} http://www.kwp.radom.pl/krym_pg.htm, Last accessed 22.02.07
\textsuperscript{11} http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/1,34384,656146.html, Last accessed 20.02.07
\textsuperscript{12} http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/1485798,11,1,1,item.html, Last accessed 21.02.07
It brings about insecurity and feeling of helplessness. It escalates concern about my relatives and friends, when they need to undergo even small-risk operation.

6) Since there is only one adjudicator deciding whether to grant a disability pension, wide field for corruption is created. That gap is frequently used, resulting in deterioration of the situation of authentically ill people who do not get due benefits. I personally know the girl who was deprived of her disability pension, although she has a serious heart disease. She is functioning only thanks to implanted defibrillator, monitoring her heartbeat rate. She shall under any circumstances go out alone for fear of fainting and need of immediate help. Cardiologists classified her condition as incurable and stated that she is not able to undertake any job. However, her adjudicator was of a different opinion. The doctor decided that if she is able to dress, eat and walk by herself, she is able to take a part-time job at least. She won her case at the Court of Appeal, but the process dragged on for months. I think that two instances adjudication system should be introduced to eliminate such mistakes.

7) Invitations for tenders are often fictitious due to the fact that unofficial deals are taking place beforehand. It is possible to close the bidding without giving the reason and such solutions are used when the price raises too much. The tenders will be organized at another term in order to exclude competitors. Subsequent strategy depends on underpricing an offer and regaining the value by arrangements in an appendix to an agreement.

8) In my opinion, the heart of darkness is exemplified by the attitude of students from a faculty of law and administration at one of Polish universities. Future lawyers and these who supposed to be intelectual and moral elite of the country, bought a washing machine for their lecturer in the hope of lenient treatment during the exam. It is not surprising that lawyers do not react on the cases of corruption in their work environment. They gained tolerance towards immoral behaviour already during their student’s years.

Poland occupies 61st place in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index\textsuperscript{13}. It is one of the most corrupted countries in the EU. I have read that statistics and I do feel ashamed. I would like to live in a strong, upstanding country, where common good of all citizens is not a mere soundbit placed in the constitution\textsuperscript{14}, but a fact.

\textsuperscript{13} \url{http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/cpi_2006/cpi_table}
Last accessed 14.02.07
\textsuperscript{14} \url{http://www.gdansk.pl/g2/other/12/25_file.pdf?PHPSESSID=a8c93f0452ff9c0fe10ce3ff761881cb}
Corruption can be expressed as the exploitation of a position of influence for private benefit\textsuperscript{15}. However, the definition coined by Robert Klitgaard puts more light on the phenomenon, saying that corruption equals monopoly plus discretion minus accountability\textsuperscript{16}.

In my view, the causes of corruption can be divided into two separate groups: mentality-related and system-related.

**Mentality-related causes:**

1) Negative, money oriented pattern of success.
2) Social acceptance of corruption.
3) Diminishing role of moral authorities.
4) Priority is given to personal ties rather than professional qualifications while appointing to high public posts.

**System-related causes:**

1) Impunity – the lack of precisely specified personal liability of an official for a realization of particular tasks.
2) Anticipated punishment does not produce a deterring effect.
3) Adequate salaries to officials are not provided.
4) Existence of legal loopholes, the lack of transparent, coherent system, hence discretionary powers of an official. The absence of collective decision making and excessive concentration of competence in the hands of one official.
5) Negligence of reporting procedures combined with weakness of internal control units.
6) Frequent power shifts characteristic for transition countries result in a tendency to treat political posts as temporary source of revenue.

Corruption transforms a free market into a system of shady deals. It has a huge impact on the way companies function. According to the World Bank research, in the countries where the

Last accessed 14.02.07
\textsuperscript{15} http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/3255, Last accessed 14.02.07
\textsuperscript{16} http://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc1193.html, Last accessed 11.02.07
phenomenon is prevalent, it devours 20% of their income\textsuperscript{17}. In addition, it hits most the poorest layer of society, being the most dependant on public services\textsuperscript{18}.

I utterly agree with the words of Edmund Burke who claimed that \textit{among a people generally corrupt liberty cannot long exist}\textsuperscript{19}. Corruption is a demoralizing factor and it undermines sense of security in a society. It also contributes to loss of trust towards the state and it’s political system. In effect, a lack of interest in public issues, as well as disrespect for legal order can be observed. Consequently, electorate is very susceptible to demagogy of populist, extremist parties, as it had place in Poland where the League of Polish Families and Self-Defense Party became coalition partners in the ruling government. Such situation turns foreign investors off and decreases prestige of a country at international arena.

\textbf{What can I do to fight corruption I face?}

First of all, I would not participate in the process. I would not offer bribes under any circumstances and I would not accept it if proposed. That is the base. I am a student, not belonging to any political party and not holding any high post at the moment. However, I believe that everyone of us can have influence on surrounding reality. Everyone can make a difference. Article no 63 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland guarantee me the right to petition the authorities, public institutions and organizations with respect to their responsibilities\textsuperscript{20}. Thus, I will create a proposal of effective fight with corruption and send it to the bodies responsible for dealing with the problem. I will pay particular attention to the solutions worked out by the least corrupted country in the world – Finland. I will encourage my government to take an example of these, who succeeded to defeat that problem and to adjust their counter-measures to our national conditions. I can prove that it is possible to radically diminish the level of corruption, pointing out the case of Hong Kong, which struggled with corruption in the 1970’s\textsuperscript{21} and presently occupies 15th position in Transparency International Index\textsuperscript{22}. I will emphasise that the state free from corruption is a result of a long process, not revolutionary actions and high-sounding watchwords.

During the parliamentary election campaign of 2005 the Fourth Republic of Poland was

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{17} \url{http://www.transparency.pl/www/pliki/Raport%20ABW%20Korupcja%20w%20Polsce.pdf}, Last accessed 13.02.07
\item\textsuperscript{18} \url{http://web.worldbank.org/WEBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/EXTANTICORRUPTION/0,menuPK:384461~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:384455,00.html}, Last accessed 22.02.07
\item\textsuperscript{19} \url{http://www.quotationsbook.com/quote/8573/}, Last accessed 16.02.07
\item\textsuperscript{20} \url{http://www.gdansk.pl/g2/other/12/25_file.pdf?PHPSESSID=a8c93f0452ff9e0fe10ce3ff761881cb}, Last accessed 14.02.07
\item\textsuperscript{21} \url{www.21stcenturytrust.org/hongkong.doc}, Last accessed 18.02.07
\item\textsuperscript{22} \url{http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/cpi_2006/cpi_table}, Last accessed 14.02.07
\end{itemize}
proclaimed by the Law and Justice Party. This slogan denoted a turning point and crucial changes in the functioning of the country. It announced moral renewal of Polish society. I have an impression that some politicians prefer to live in a state of hyperreality than to take constructive, applicable measures.

The changes are possible. The Finnish built a democratic, information society, based on legal order and awareness of common good. We have a chance to achieve the same, but time and determination are necessary.

I will address corruption prevention measures with regard to the above mentioned causes.

Anthony Eden said once that corruption never has been compulsory and I identify with his thesis. I believe that the society I belong to, needs a comprehensive civic education.

1) First of all, to fight corruption effectively, we must change our attitudes. Widespread consent for corruption should be eradicated and each case of bribery stigmatized.

2) Mass media play essential role in that process, revealing corruption affairs and creating ethical standards. Naturally, only free and independent journalists are able to handle the task.

3) I am also convinced that ethos of power as a public service must be established. Introducing a system of rewards and sanctions at all levels would have a incentive effect on officials. It certainly could help to build a job satisfaction. The scheme is crucial for such branches as police and customs service. An ethic course could become a part of curriculum on administration interships as it has place in Finland.

4) Undoubtedly, complex informatization of public sector would contribute to providing data to all citizens interested in it.

It is also possible to tackle the system-related faults, provided that a serious consideration is given. We say in Poland that opportunity makes thieves, thus it is indispensable to liquidate any occasion of misconduct.

1) Better efficiency of prosecuting organs needs to be provided. Bribery should not be an action that pays off. I propose aggravation of penalty by criminal law. It is important to ensure that the guilty are judged. Confiscation of property acquired through corruption should be implicitly performed. Controlled purchase should be in wider use. A guarantee of impunity for a bribe – giver would disrupt solidarity between two parts of a deal.

---

23 [http://thinkexist.com/quotatation/corruption_never_has_been/171737.html](http://thinkexist.com/quotatation/corruption_never_has_been/171737.html), Last accessed 17.02.07

2) I recommend simplification of law regulations and revision of legal system in order to trace and eliminate loopholes and incoherencies. Question of lobbing should be clearly specified. Furthermore, fight with corruption should be enclosed in the constitution as a right of citizens to good governance.

3) Officials should be suitably paid. When the basic needs are unsatisfied, people are more prone to justify their actions, even these illegal ones. The chasm between expectancies and reality causes frustration and feeling of injustice. If an official fails to provide for himself/herself from a salary, the morale is undermined. Living standard on the edge of poverty brings about pathologies to the civil service.

4) Bidding procedure needs to be streamlined. In cases of relevant public purchases an independent observer should be present.

5) Concessions and licences granted on the base of discretionary decisions must be limited. Each decision should be supported by economic analysis.

6) Government functioning should be based on the rule of transparency. I would like to refer to the example of French law which obliges candidates for relevant public posts to reveal their income before elections and, if succeed to an office, declare it again after cadence expires25.

7) Verification system of privatized estate by impartial advisory companies should be introduced. Transparent criteria for nominating of privatization committee members should be established. As well as interests and relations between the members elicited.

8) International Court of Justice under the auspices of the United Nations should be created with a mission to investigate the cases of high officials charged with corruption in their country, but looking for asylum in other one26.

9) Poland should intensify cooperation with other countries on the field of curbing corruption. We could learn more from experiences of other countries as well as share our own ideas. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, World Bank, Transparency International, The Stefan Batory Foundation should combine efforts and launch the Evaluation Summit. The Summit would be devoted to reviewing of anti-corruption policies of countries-participants, detection of faults and presentation of achievements as well. The aim is to learn from the best how to cope with the problem, but also creative

www.transparency.org/content/download/5456/31861/file/political_corruption_party_financing_france.pdf,
Last accessed 17.02.07
26 J. Kurczewski, B. Łaciak, Corruption in public life (Original title: Korupcja w życiu publicznym),
Warsaw 2000, 32
brainstorming, resulting in working out new solutions. It should be summoned every year. Special attention should be paid to the representatives of business circles. Experts on law, administration and finances should be given close attention.

Ethics can be taught

Socrates claimed that ethics as a knowledge of what one ought to do, can be taught\textsuperscript{27}. In my view, ethics should become a permanent element of Polish educational system, embracing all levels of schooling: from basic schools to universities. Presently, it is religion which dominated moral education in Poland. An alternative is seldom given, especially in the majority of Polish villages. What is more, ethics is not lectured at most faculties, it is a particular rarity at technical universities, perceived as unimportant course and simple loss of money. That attitude needs to be changed. It is of utmost importance that children learned about moral problems in their formative years, deepening their awareness later on. Such a formal education would help to create better understanding of power and moral principles relation by citizens and their more effective control over public sphere. I believe that equally beneficial would be informal education activities undertaken by students. Different initiatives focused on informing about corruption problem could by performed at primary schools in the shape of workshops. Such events should be first of all interesting for children and demand their interaction. They must provide them food for thought and opportunity to express ideas by brainstorming techniques. The project should run on a voluntary basis and gather passionate individuals under the content - related supervision of a professor or other person having relevant knowledge and experience on the field. Useful would be cooperation with local NGOs, which can support student’s initiative launching a publicity campaign and call for a team-members. Teaching would be a developing experience for students who would need to prepare themselves to conduct the workshops and answer many tricky questions from children.

Battle for the freedom of press

\footnotesize

\textsuperscript{27} \url{http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/canethicsbetaught.html}, Last accessed 19.02.07
Free press is the guardian of transparency. It informs the society about irregularities, mistakes and problems the government faces. Properly functioning press sector, with unrestricted freedom of expression, is the first step towards a country without corruption. I found it alarming that the position of Poland in the Worldwide Press Freedom Index has fallen from the 30th\(^{28}\) to 58th\(^{29}\) place since last five years. According to annual reports prepared by Reporters Without Borders, any criticism of Roman Catholic Church, especially of the pope, is allowed. The journalists who broke that tabu, often faced defamation suits\(^{30}\). The situation became more serious in 2005, with the ultra-conservative League of Polish Families as a part of ruling coalition. Polish government reacted hysterically on the article published in German *Tageszeitung* which derided the president and the prime minister of Poland – Kaczynski brothers. They categorically claimed that the article should be condemned by German authorities\(^{31}\). Mass media are under particular pressure when they touch upon corruption affairs concerning prominent politicians. In 2003 a programme disclosing corruption scandal, involving well-known local politician was banned on the Radio Lodz\(^{32}\). Libel, a criminal offence, according to Polish law, results in fines or even imprisonment, which is a convenient tool for intimidating unapologetic journalists\(^{33}\). Without independent media, protection of common good is simply impossible. What can I do? What can do anybody, being only a plain, unknown citizen to strengthen the word freedom in his/her own country? My answer is to join the public debate on that issue. The more people will respond on abuse of power by authorities, the quicker reaction will follow. We have presently an opportunity to demand our rights on many ways. Internet helps us to communicate fast, let’s use it for active participation in discussion about society we live in. Let’s express our opinion on problems of our local community. Let’s protest, when we disagree with the mode of problem solving and let’s propose alternative solutions. Finally, let’s read more, because only that way we can shape our awareness. Press is the source of general, easily accessible information on public life. There is a correlation between the level of

\(^{28}\)http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=4116, Last accessed 19.02.07
\(^{29}\)http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=639, Last accessed 19.02.07
\(^{30}\)http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=6526, Last accessed 21.02.07
\(^{31}\)http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20820, Last accessed 21.02.07
\(^{32}\)http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=10155, Last accessed 21.02.07
readership and corruption. Finland, the world least corrupted country, distinguishes by it’s high level of newspapers reading\textsuperscript{34}.

I am young, but I am not naive. I have my dreams, but I realize that they will not come true effortlessly and out of blue, just because I wish so. To achieve something I need to put a lot of work and heart into it first. However, actions taken without due consideration will lead nowhere, consuming precious time and energy. Although it seems complicated, following the dreams is the only way we can progress. If Nicolaus Copernicus gave up and forsaken his aspirations, we would not know nothing of the place of the Earth in the solar system. There is only one Nicolaus Copernicus in the history, that is true. Nevertheless, everybody is unique on his own way. We shall not be humble, what we do need is to be rational. I would like to live in a corruption-free country and I am not going to emmigrate. I truly believe that it is a feasible dream. To make it real, both mental attitude of the Polish and system imperfections must be coped with. Moral changes cannot be made where malfunctioning institutions are a commonness. System improvement is not enough, given the willingness of general public to take part in shady deals. Transformation towards civic, transparent society is a process of growing up a nation. It is a long, evoloutional struggle with it’s own immaturity and ignorance. It is a lesson of learning from own mistakes. I truly believe that my country will grow up one day and will be able to match it’s European partners. I want to witness that change and give it a warm welcome. I have already made my first step: I do not accept any form of bribery. It is the only step I can make not to move backwards.

LIST OF SOURCES

1) Kurczewski J. Łaciak B., Corruption in public life (Original title: Korupcja w życiu publicznym), Warsaw 2000
2) \url{http://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc1193.html}
3) \url{http://www.kwp.radom.pl/krym_pg.htm}
4) \url{http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/kraj/1,34384,656146.html}
5) \url{http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/1485798,11,1,1,item.html}
6) \url{http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/cpi_2006/cpi_table}
7) \url{http://www.gdansk.pl/g2/other/12/25_file.pdf?PHPSESSID=a8e93f452ff9c0fe10ce3f761881cb}
8) \url{http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/3255}
9) \url{http://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc1193.html}
10) \url{http://www.transparency.pl/www/pliki/Raport%20ABW%20Korupcja%20w%20Polsce.pdf}

\textsuperscript{34} \url{http://www.warc.com/LandingPages/Data/NewspaperTrends/PDF/Finland.pdf}, Last accessed 21.02.07
12) http://www.quotationsbook.com/quote/8573/
   http://www.gdansk.pl/g2/other/12/25_file.pdf?PHPSESSID=a8c93f0452ff9c0fe10ce3ff761881cb
13) www.21stcenturytrust.org/hongkong.doc
14) http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/cpi_2006/cpi_table
15) http://thinkexist.com/quotations/corruption_never_has_been/171737.html
17) www.transparency.org/content/download/5456/31861/file/political_corruption_party_financing_france.pdf
18) http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/canethicsbetaught.html
19) http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=4116
20) http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=639
21) http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=6526
22) http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20820
23) http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=10155
Bwengye Deusdedit, Uganda

Have I ever bribed? - Ask me if I breathe: We are all part of the problem
ABSTRACT:

Having a father whose life is slowly trickling down the edges of death can be an experience very hard to come to terms with-especially if he is tucked away in prison for the wrong reason. Vis-à-vis that perhaps, hadn’t my father been arrested and wrongfully convicted of a murder that he had not committed, I doubt if I would have done anything to change the status quo in our small but
populous district. When my father’s political rival bribed to have him jailed, I, his only son, in
turn bribed to have him released. While at university and my father out of prison, we initiated the
Youth Collective Against Corruption (YCAC) on 17th October 2005, along with the man my
father is said to have murdered and an ex-female warden with the hope that we could effect
change and make a difference, that what my father had undergone in prison would not happen to
our future generation of youths and the young and that everyone would receive an equal chunk of
the justice cake.

It is against this background that we decided not to Talk and Run but to Act and Stay in a deep
and dedicated search for freedom, for a corrupt free society in our district and country at large.
Our major target was the government especially its weak policies against corruption and we
focused our sights mainly on the top guns in the provincial judiciary in our district. From an
initial number of four, the YCAC membership had knocked 300 in the first five months of its
inception, most of whom had relatives in jail, were unemployed and a few from our local
university and secondary schools. Youth edification in form of anti-corruption rallies, sports
activities especially football, health and fitness lessons, drama sessions and performances, theatre
plays, newspaper columns and television programs have been our key weapon in driving the
anticorruption message across. The reaction and feedback especially from the opposition and
Human Rights groups was tremendous so much so that until today, we hardly spend from our
own account since funds have been sent to us from our backers. As a result of our activities, many
criminals who had been freed went back to jail and many convicted innocents were freed.

The fundamental idea here is that, at one point in time each one of us has benefited from the
corrupt minds of other people and despite the fact that we have corrupted them to get the
best for our families and ourselves, we should not habitually maintain the poisonous
ideology that without someone to corrupt, we can not achieve what we want as there are
other licit and at the same time fruitful channels. For example, chances are far too remote that
had I not bribed the judge, my father would not have been freed. Our concerted efforts have been
backed by a strong reasoning: that based on my father’s experience and evidence, we could reap a
very rich harvest- force the government to give in to our pressure make it possible that we live a
life free of corruption. With 800 members today, we have been rewarded tremendously and have
the President as one of our members. The YCAC’s undertakings provide an umbrella for the
natives against the hard-hitting impetus of corruption and all the time, we hope that the example
we have set can drive the efforts of millions of youth around the world to unlimited bounds in the
battle against corruption. But it is a battle that is not going to be won overnight but gradually.

1. **PROLOGUE:**
[The king] shall protect trade routes from harassment by courtiers, state officials, thieves and frontier guards… [and] frontier officers shall make good what is lost…just as it is impossible not to taste honey or poison that one may find at the tip of one’s tongue, so it is impossible for one dealing with government funds not to taste at least a little bit, of the king’s wealth.

- From the treatise “The Arthashastra” by Kautilya

(chief minister to the king in ancient India),

circa 300 BC to AD 150

The quotation above attests to the existence of corruption in ancient times. Yet it also illustrates that even then corruption was regarded as corrosive to the development of the state and required specific measures in response. The king’s adviser perceptively hinted at the link between illiberal trade, bureaucratic harassment at the border, and corruption. And he understood that corruption encompassed far more than bribery: he explicitly addressed the theft of public revenues.

In more recent times, a contrasting view has emerged, holding that corruption may not be consistent with development and at times may even foster it. Proponents of this contemporary view wrap corruption in a cloud of ambiguity. They suggest, for example, that the definition of corruption varies among cultures, implying that what is regarded as corruption in the West would be differently interpreted within the customs of emerging economies. Nevertheless, either definition of corruption suffocates life out of any type of society.

On the international list of corrupt countries, Uganda is placed between Tanzania and Kenya. According to the Corruption perception Index, CPI 2005, released by Transparency International (TI) in October 2005, Uganda’s CPI score is at 2.5, while last year it stood at 2.6. The lowest the most corrupt country can score is 0 while the highest is 10. Kenya scored 2.1, Tanzania scored 2.9. But even though things are looking better on paper, corruption is still a big problem in
Uganda. Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU), is a coalition of 50 Ugandan anti corruption groups trying to involve more people in the fight. According to them, 200 billion Uganda shillings (about US$107 million) disappears into the air every single year. The widespread corruption means that the Ugandan people pay for work that is not done. Companies are simply wasting the money they get to build roads and buildings by keeping it to themselves. We have examples of roads that are officially completed on paper, but if you visit the area nothing has been built.

ACCU believes that the fight against corruption must start at public level. The coalition arranges an Anti Corruption Week in Uganda every year, and in 2005 the theme of the week was public procurement. “The locals see that the companies put too much sand in the cement so the buildings are in danger of crashing. People just need to pass their knowledge on, so the companies can be held responsible for their mistakes,” one member said. Our group, called the YCAC forms the core of the ACCU. In the Anti Corruption Week, ACCU uses different activities to inform the public about corruption, like processions with banners against corruption and debates on different themes. The most popular activities though are theatres and sport activities that are held all over Uganda.

In Black Africa we say, “The sun never sets without fresh news” and indeed in the beginning of 2004, the sun never set without fresh news of corruption. Before, “corruption” had been just a usual, normal word, just a little problem in our little district. Articles about it seldom made the papers and the daily television journals. I never expected to be part of this problem, not even in the next 100 years of my life, but alas.

2. **MY EXPERIENCE:**

Having a father but seeing no father was becoming a lot more unusual, a life too threatening. Tears strolled down my young, adolescent face when I remembered him. He had been contesting the Parliamentary seat to represent our tiny mountainous district. Then, activity was getting high around our household for there was no sense of mediocrity; my father was guaranteed to win for he was a very good man, a man for and of the people. With my father in Parliament, life seemed pretty good, but one day, three weeks prior to the voting day, he did not come back from work. Perhaps he had stayed longer in his campaigns but why did he not call? I wondered. Two days later however, I could not recognize him; he was not the cut out figure of my father that I knew but a shadow of himself. From among a little crowd of seated prisoners, hadn’t he said out my name a little loud, I would never have recognized him; not even I, his only son. The checked suit
he had bought a week earlier was torn to shreds, now a size bigger. I felt a strong urge to run, run away from my own father, to ignore him for he looked very helpless. But there is a time in every man’s life when he has to be brave, to stand up to what he faces. I walked to him.

But what my father told me that day still rubs hard and thick against my heart. How could my own father weep not because I was very ill (he often did) but because he had been locked in a small metallic container with among all things a petrol injected pit viper, poached from deep down the densest of rain forests in the west of the country. He had been convicted of murder so his lawyer had told him. Without even a single minute of trial, a whole parliamentary candidate was sent down on his knees, begging to at least see his only child. As events turned, he had been framed for murder; a murder that he did not commit, a murder that even never happened. Why? So that he could not stand to be elected, so that he would be ‘away.’ The man reported dead was a friend of his who had once given his account on running for parliament in the future. My father’s political rival had arranged every thing; given one billion shillings (1bn) to four high court judges and a local magistrate to send him to the gallows. Determined he came to prison himself and whispered to my father,” I am close to the President. He wants me in parliament, not you, you will die here and you will never see light”

My father was not the only convicted innocent in the prison. The number was large, many of whom could not afford the costs of an appeal, had given themselves to the lord, forgiven their enemies and waited for the hangman. They did not care anymore. On the other hand, cases like robbery or housebreaking or to the worst, murder cost more and it could involve an accused in paying off a chain of officers- every one of them claiming to be responsible for the case. With judicious placing of bribes, an accused will eventually reach the appropriate official and cause the relevant files to be dropped because police files disappeared. Thus criminals are able to escape conviction either because they have powerful patrons or they have bought their way out. Even when it may seem too late, after sentence has been passed, a patron with the right connections can still get his client out. There are convicted criminals in Uganda today with sentences of over 10 years hanging over their heads walking the streets as free men.

Business no longer exists in the conventional sense. There are people who have access to foreign exchange because they have good connections with the ministry of finance or because they are high ranking military officers with business interests.

Corruption finds expression as well in the appointment of family members, relatives, and friends to public organizations that have profitable monopoly positions in some areas of public or public
sector activity.

At a more petty level—though the one that most directly affects an aggrieved public-corruption involves countless underpaid or greedy civil servants who overcharge the public for services such as granting of driver’s licenses, Passports and business permits. Often these same civil servants are, in turn paying a perverse form of tithe to their superiors for the right to hold a public sector job and profit from the many opportunities it offers for extortion.

What I heard from my father lit in me a fury of anger and hatred towards my country, our President, towards everything and everyone that stood for him, for our motherland. I hoped for the best. However, one week later, I was in critical ward of our local hospital for I had spent a couple of days in oblivion. How and why? I did not remember much. But to the good of my memory, two things stuck afloat: the dead man and a cyclist. From a specific portion of my brain, I saw that image again, the image of the man my father is said to have killed. As I had been crossing the main highway, I saw him speed by in a large van. That is when I had stopped and stood still, when I had seen the cyclist, then darkness. I could not have seen the wrong man, it was definitely him. It was high time the truth showed up.

3. **MY CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A CORRUPTION FREE SOCIETY:**

“Improper upbringing has contributed to the corruption in our societies. And you know what, this improper upbringing most often is not done intentionally. This is how it happens. We the young are doing more of what we see than we are taught or told. That is why observation is the greatest means to learning. At home and in our schools, we are taught that corruption is bad. But right before us, the same people that taught us this are the ones practicing it. So, the young concludes that corruption is a good means to fast arrival in life, which means we are being deceived. If not the one teaching us would not have done it. What we actually need to eradicate corruption are these: We need the right education to govern our mode of living, and a practical example of what the mode is from our leaders, and we youths, since we have known the detriment of it, we must take a U-turn to instill a right living ethics in us and the young.”

Peter Emamuzo Wisdom

Thus began the quest for the proof of my father’s innocence and eventual acquittal. I was a first
year Computer Science student and when I visited my father in prison, he sent me to a woman he had known, an ex-prison warden whom he thought to have influential and powerful contacts in the government. Successfully, we filed a case of “Conviction without Trial” at the district police station. Overtime, we were directed to a number of judges and magistrates and though we had the presence of the so called ‘dead man’ (for he had agreed to come and testify against the government), we failed to make progress. The court refused to give my father a day of trial. We seemed to be the only ones, just the three of us, who wanted my father a free man. When one of the high court judges asked if we could raise a cool thirty million shillings (30m) to buy his interest in the case, I almost lost the verve to move on with the case. I felt I wanted to kill him, to take him to where they wanted to take my beloved father. He was taking us back to the dirty days of Idi Amin. Prison life can be a living death. My father was being continuously attacked and tortured in prison, he was dying. During the course of 8 months for which my father was imprisoned, what I never did was to forget him but everything else I did: I hoped, begged, smiled, thanked and cried. But one thing I swore never to do – let anyone take a single penny of my father’s. I would not give in to corruption; I would fight to the end.

“Although anyone may become evil, no one can persist in good” – Nigeria/Dahomey.

One afternoon on 4th October 2005, I thought: If money could send my father to jail, why couldn’t money bring him out? I was hours away from becoming the most corrupt youth on the planet. If it would need me to corrupt someone in order to save the life of my father, this time round though, I would do it and no one would stop me, no one. Our family was not poor. My father rented out an apartment and two department stores 4 miles east of town. Added to the tuition I had kept for my second year, the 28.5m from the sale of the two properties with the consent of my father, I raised the required thirty million (30m). The next morning, I took the money to the judge at his home and within a week, my father’s file had disappeared. Without it, the case was dropped and my father was, to my relief, a free man.

“What can not be cured must be endured”- North Africa.

That was not going to be the case though. We could not be such heavy losers; the government had to pay, we had to throw our hat in the ring, stand up for social change. Now that my father was out, there would be no more convicted innocents anymore and criminals would not walk the
streets but the corridors of jail. 17th October 2005 is the special day the Youth Collective Against Corruption (YCAC) was formed with a concerted effort to defend and represent people like my father and to deter the government from charging people before they are tried before court and to challenge it to tackle the growing cancer of corruption. My father sued the government for one billion shillings for wrongful arrest, which would do a lot for the YCAC. Our first message to the government was a peaceful street protest that saw many of my father’s supporters, mainly youth joins our movement and hold banners condemning its handling of his case and call on it to release all innocents and hasten trials. This was hugely publicized and we received a warning from the local police which wrongly accused us of inciting violence. Mobilization and sensitization of the youth was our main target. By March 2006, the YCAC membership had knocked 300.

Some of the solutions to corruption lie within civil society- reducing public tolerance of corruption, making the unaccountably rich into figures of contempt rather than role models, and encouraging citizens to report and provide evidence of corruption wherever it occurs. Civil society can only address the problem on a non partisan basis, but it can draw on the talents of lawyers and accountants in private practice, academics, other leading figures in the private sector, and, perhaps most significantly, opinion makers and religious leaders. But just as some of these solutions lie within civil society, so too does a part of the problem. Corrupt public officials are a product of- and participants in – that society. In addition, it is often the general public who are paying bribes, sometimes with resentment but sometimes to actively court corrupt consequences. It is, too, in the interface between the private and public sectors that grand corruption flourishes and the largest bribes are paid. Therefore, in our first rally at the main university, we challenged the government to adopt such organizational changes within the civil service so as to minimize the opportunities for corrupt practices as:

- Improving work methods and procedures to reduce delays.
- Increasing the effectiveness of supervision by enabling superior officers to check and control the work of their staff.
- Carrying out surprise checks on the work of officers.
- Formulating and disseminating clearly defined ethical guidelines and rules of conduct and instituting in-service training for civil servants at all levels.
- Developing internal financial management systems that ensure adequate and effective controls over the use of resources.
- Providing channels for junior officials to complain about their superiors’ corruption.
- Rewarding achievement, recognizing good behavior, and acclaiming role models.
Making the necessary security arrangements to prevent unauthorized access to a department’s premises.

Reviewing anticorruption measures every three to five years, with the aim of introducing further improvements.

My father narrated and had his experience edited in the daily newspaper and the country was shocked. Pressure on him to resign on grounds of corruption intensified. When I went back to university, it became difficult for me to conduct the YCAC activities as the government kept a keen eye on me. Secretly, I founded the YCAC drama club with an initial number of 20 students with which I staged our first anti corruption play at the national theatre, in which play; the most corrupt actor was portrayed as the President. Our play received huge applause and acceptance from the public so that a foreign based entertainment group donated some music equipment to us. Back home, we founded the YCAC football club that still competes against regional teams. After the match, the winning team gets a cow. While we are grilling the cow, the two teams and the spectators are told about corruption. Every two months, we organize a marathon around our town in a bid to spread our message.

In June 2006, we staged two more plays entitled “Something for Something” and the effect was catastrophic; theatre attendances catapulted, the government opposition organized and funded a tour of east and Northern parts of the country. Then with the gate fees from our performances and some help from our father, we set up a gymnasium in which we conducted health and fitness lessons and workouts while in training, we informed the trainees about the essence of a strong force and unlimited desire to wipe out corruption and encouraged them to stand for the truth.

Today, we are about to launch our own website, apart from that of the ACCU.

4. **EVALUATING AND MEASURING RESULTS:**

“Where systems have broken down, the first control to go is accountability. Eventually, a feeling of immunity characterizes the system so that politicians and civil servants think that they can do anything without any adverse repercussions against the culprits.”

Augustine Ruzindana (1994)

Who thought that the actions of a mere university could effect the release of 20 convicted innocents and the conviction of another 20 greedy men. My father had long retired and I was in
the driving seat of the YCAC. The President on the second day of August set up a commission of inquiry into police and judicial corruption made up of four judges, three of whom were from Malawi, but it was not everyone’s cup of tea. A lot of tension grew up in the higher ranks of the beleaguered judicial system in our district; the winds of fear were blowing to whoever was involved in my father’s arrest. It is well known that some persons with knowledge of wrongdoing may be unable to disclose it fully because of overriding, constitutional, legal, and official restrictions. Some informants may even fear retribution, so the government retaliated by burning down our gymnasium but the ACCU built it again. It was not long before success came.

The panel sat in our district and reviewed all pending cases. Though most of the files had long been hidden or stolen, new ones were hastily opened and everyone waited. Over the course of four months, 100 prisoners served their one month sentences for petty crime, fresh criminal hunts brought 30 freed convicts back to jail, three magistrates and two judges and fifteen judicial staff were found guilty of abuse of office, asking and accepting bribes and living decadent lifestyles and jailed up to a minimum of eight years, twenty convicted innocents were freed and more than twelve police officers and their station were decommissioned. Many others had their sentences reduced and twenty were pardoned by the President. Most of the top positions in the provincial judiciary became vacant and thus there seemed to be a window of hope for those who had qualified, knocked but closed out. Because of the transpirations of the past four months, tendencies of corruption went at an all time low, level of poverty nosedived. The judiciary absorbed more employees than ever before. The YCAC movement became officially recognized and the President became one of its members and the government funded the construction of its head office. At the end of 2006, the YCAC was voted the most active group in the country- a feat that has never been achieved by an anti-corruption movement anywhere in Africa in the past 100 years. There could be no better satisfaction and hope for a bright future than what the YCAC has provided to our youths, our future men.

5. **LOOKING AHEAD:**

Just as a builder ought not to possess the fear of heights, so should we, the youth, not possess the fear of retribution, the fear to speak for what we stand for and to fight to achieve it. The future of today’s youths and the young holds a lot if groups like the YCAC could spring up and if the government could encourage more research and extensive media coverage on the scope of corruption, it will benefit everyone especially if the taboo on discussing the subject is removed. As long as the existence of corruption is denied, it can not be tackled. Denials and blanket
reassurances only confirm popular assumptions about officials’ hypocrisy and trustworthiness and prompt suspicion that the situation might be worse than they thought. Once people publicly acknowledge corruption in their midst and feel free to express their concerns, it becomes possible to discuss solutions. Furthermore, corrective action is much more likely when allegations of misconduct are based on reliable, credible information instead of secondhand sources and hearsay. Thus to keep the voice of the YCAC bellowing loudly, we are focusing on recruiting more members and adopting various measures as statistical records of the level of corruption and equipping field teams to access the remote areas from where cases of corruption begin to take root while encouraging the development of young talents that could be used as a weapon in the fight against the cancer of corruption. If all youth could take initiative and advocate for a corrupt free world in general, a lot can be achieved. Theirs might be a success story too, just like ours.

6. **EPILOGUE:**

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing” - Tears of the Sun.

Against the backdrop of our accomplishments, it is hard to escape the conclusion that achievements of the YCAC has benefited our society and improved the general perception of corruption from being a part of life that we have to rub shoulders with to the knowledge that it is an evil practice that ought not to be forgiven or taken lightly. But the bottom line is that both the corrupted and those who corrupt are guilty, for we all seek to achieve the best that life offers us despite any impediment. Oftentimes, resorting to corrupt means seems the only possible way to provide light at the end of the tunnel. However, it should not be taken for granted that corrupting others or ourselves is the only possible path to a successful life as there are other legal, respectable and better means. But it might not be as easy as anticipated. Each country or region is a unique blend of its history and culture, each has its own political system and beliefs, and each is at its own stage of economic and social development. What works against corruption in one place may not be valid in another. But sometimes the experience gained in the struggle against the widespread problem can provide guidance elsewhere.

In addressing the social evil of corruption, there are two universal truths. First, corruption, however defined, can not be eradicated in any society. It will persist because it is motivated by two fundamental aspects of human nature- need and greed. But it can be reduced to and contained
at a level where it no longer gnaws at the heart of society. Second, within any society corruption can be curbed only if the population at large perceives that the leadership is deadly earnest about attacking the problem that leaders at the highest levels demonstrate the integrity and ethical conduct, and that economic development is filtering down to benefit the lowest levels of society.

To summarize this complex equation in another way, the need for corrupt activity in society can be dissipated. Given the support of the community, and nothing less, the greed can be attacked and constrained. But stop-start, crash-bang, hyperbolic campaigns against corruption will never achieve anything more than contemporary, superficial success. Ultimate success can come only in the context of a long term strategy, flexible shorter term tactics and a profound change of attitude in the community.

REFERENCES.

Curbing corruption: Toward a model for building National integrity- by Rick Stapenhurst and Sahr J.Kpundeh
http://www.gyia.org/?q=node/15
http://www.delva.ln/org/?sec=134
http://www.answers.com/topic/yoweri-museveni
http://www.anticorruption.or.ug/news8.html (suspended)
Angela Gapa, Zimbabwe

*Tracing the Effects, Charting a Sustainable Future*
Abstract

It can be very tempting to be resigned to, cynical even, about the notion of corruption, especially when you come from a society imbued with, or an economy entangled in corruption. Corruption is a problem that poses a significant threat to the development of my part of the globe, thus failing to eradicate it will have detrimental effects. Corruption is not only a local problem but has been universally accepted to be one of mankind's contemporary foes.

This paper critically discusses how corruption affects me as a representative of mankind as it manifests itself within the political, social and economic institutions at national, regional, continental and global levels.

Using information obtained from personal encounters with corruption, structured interviews with various groups, as well as literature reviews, the discussion makes effort to offer a definition of corruption, citing both classes and examples of corruption. The consequences of corruption are spelt out with emphasis placed on those unique to developing countries like Zimbabwe. Ways that could be used to combat corruption are also explored and ways in which the youth can help end corruption are suggested. An attempt is also made to explore the role of the individual in the cause and obliteration of the corruption crisis.

The conclusion is a personal standpoint on possible ways our world can be saved from the ruinous effects of corruption.


Introduction

The billboard is vivid. "Stop Corruption" it reads. Strategically positioned at the railroad junction, it is impossible to miss. I shrugged it off. Corruption was nothing new to me. After all, it is common knowledge that if one wants a driving licence or vehicle certification, and doesn’t want to go through the stipulated process, he or she simply “runs” an envelope to officers via middlemen or touts. Even the police, who should be the beacon of moral uprightness, are succumbing to temptation demanding bribes on the country’s roads. Indeed, in my society where bribery has become a conventional part of the process, few people perturb with going through the rigours of approved procedures. I myself have been guilty of such types of trifling corruption crimes. After all, I reasoned, I was neither the first, nor would I be the last. I neither deem myself as dishonest nor believe I lack integrity, as corruption is not a yardstick for honesty in my society. In fact, my survival is dependent on collaborating with the corrupt.

I acknowledge that I sound brazen for someone who has just confessed to such a horrific act. But then again, in this age of moral relativism, the definitions of right and wrong are elastic. As a relatively educated member of my society however, I should know better. With the 2006 inflation hovering around 1,590 percent, and the few citizens of my country still gainfully employed struggling to make ends meet, its clear solutions are imperative. A 2006 survey by Transparency International unravelled frightening levels of corruption in my country, with Zimbabwe ranking number 130 out of 163 countries on the most corrupt list. So instead of breast-beating over the sorry state of affairs, I believe in being proactive in exploring solutions to fight this scourge.

In writing this paper, I harnessed information from structured interviews with officials from the Zimbabwean Anti-Corruption Ministry, academics from the University of Zimbabwe, businesspeople, expatriates (from Japan and Nigeria) and the general public. Extensive use of the vast wealth of information on the Internet also helped me gain insight on how corruption affects my life and provided inspiration on how I can contribute to the development of concrete strategies to fight it.

---

35 Transparency International 2006 Corruption Perception Index
Corruption: A Conceptual Analysis

One school of thought has described the concept of corruption as a moving object, one that mutates in a particular place and time. Given this perception of corruption, the exact definition of the term becomes not only intricate but implies cultural and epoch specificity. Thus, culturally, what would be viewed as corruption in one society during a particular historical epoch may not necessarily be regarded as such say after a given time period. It is true to allege that if the assertion given about corruption is something to go by, the definition becomes somewhat society specific as corruption manifests itself differently from one culture to another.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption attempted to provide a universal definition of corruption as “an abuse of public office by public officials for personal gain”\(^\text{36}\). The term "office" here goes beyond the physical walls to cover one's occupational position, incorporating the institutionalised power or authority and influence one exerts over others. This definition of corruption has however been surpassed by events in its assertion that it is only found in the public sectors and not in the private sector in any economy, which is regrettably untrue. There are various areas of intersection among different people's view of the bane, some of which are that corruption is a crime in all languages, its effects are dysfunctional to society and transcend international borders.

Literature broadly classifies corruption as “petty” and “grand”. “Petty” corruption involves the exchange of small amounts of money, the conceding of minor favours or nepotistic employment. The term 'petty' however, serves only to highlight the minuteness of the individual corrupt activity, but cumulatively, the effects of petty corruption can sum up to major problems.

“Grand” corruption pervades the highest levels of government, resulting in an erosion of confidence in good governance, the rule of law and economic and political stability\(^\text{37}\). Grand corruption is difficult to detect because it takes place within the normal operations of organisational systems. In most cases, this type of corruption has well prepared documents such as invoices, receipts and/or even quotations and is thus characterised by under invoicing, inside trading, monopolistic business practices, poor corporate governance and bureaucratic machinery. Whether the corrupt activity is grand or petty, the effects to individuals and society at large are not healthy. The common examples of corrupt activities range from bribes, fraud, nepotism, laundering, embezzlement, extortion and kickbacks.

---

\(^{36}\) United Nations Convention against Corruption

Corruption is a grandiose concept that does not affect individuals in isolation. It infiltrates into systems, distorting them and threatens economies at high levels. Thus, how corruption affects my life is discernible in how it impacts on my niche. This section will focus on the salient effects of corruption, which translate to a diminished standard of living of the affected individual like myself.

As earlier alluded to corruption erodes the moral fabric of societies and has adulterated many cultures to extents that is has become part of the acceptable norms and values of such societies. Hossain, (1999) explained that corruption affects "morals" by the "perversion" or "destruction" of integrity in the discharge of public duties by bribery or favour or the use or existence of corrupt practices. The implications of this observation have far reaching facets. If corruption is an acceptable part of mankind's culture, then the vulnerable, usually the poor, risk extinction from society. Human identity is equally weakened at each generation as this "dog eats dog" culture takes over.

Corruption affects my life as it subverts the rule of law by distorting the political directions of the leadership. The role of the political leadership is one of providing policy guidelines to its electorate, ensuring that the interests of the public are safeguarded. Under corrupt governance this role easily crumbles.

Paulo Mauro, (1997) noted that one common feature of economies marred by corruption is the distortion in resource allocation. When resources are in the hands of corrupt leaders, the intended beneficiaries, myself included, do not enjoy our rights to service from our governments. A clear picture that emerges is that of the widening gap between the majority poor and the few filthy rich. Corruption tempts government officials to choose the levels of government expenditures on the basis of the opportunity for extorting bribes rather than on the public welfare. Large projects whose exact value is difficult to monitor may present lucrative opportunities for corruption. A priori, one might expect that it is easier to collect substantial bribes on large infrastructure projects or high-technology defence systems than on textbooks or teachers' salaries.

Corruption denies societies in particular, the poor, the benefits of free and open competition. A case in point in my country is discernable from the distribution of anti-retroviral

---

drugs. Last July my Aunt Yulita succumbed to a four-year battle against AIDS. Though her CD4 count had made her eligible for getting Anti-retroviral drugs for five months prior to her death, the demands for bribes over ARV tablets saw her dying without ever getting the drugs.

Corruption compromises the quality of infrastructure and public services. Generally, corruption results in poor service delivery, uneven distribution of resources to the deserving people and reduced access to public facilities by the majority. Corruption has perforated systems resulting in shortages of basic commodities, soaring production costs affecting industries leading to very high commodity prices to consumers. In economic terms, corruption disables members of society to fully participate in their expected economic activities due to viability problems.

Corruption misallocates talent. A paper by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) communicated that where rent seeking proved more lucrative than productive work, talents were diverted\(^{40}\). The financial incentives of corruption lures talented and educated citizens to engage in rent seeking rather than in productive work, with adverse consequences for the country's growth rate. A “brain-drain” usually results in countries where the educated opt to leave for developed countries with lower unemployment rates and better working conditions. Despite graduating top of my class over a year ago, I am yet to secure employment. Recently I have found myself considering emigrating to beyond my countries borders where there are supposedly greener pastures.

Corruption impedes the ability of developing countries to attract scarce foreign investment. Rampant public corruption in emerging markets contributes to the currency crises in countries like Zimbabwe because corrupt acts repel foreign investment leaving those countries dependent on volatile foreign loans to finance growth\(^{41}\). In the presence of corruption, entrepreneurs are often made to pay up-front bribes is before an enterprise can be registered and afterwards lay claim to part of the proceeds from the investment. These bribes act as pernicious taxes that diminish foreign business investment. Paradoxically, these countries still need foreign capital to fuel their economies. Dzichauya of the Zimbabwe Anti-corruption Ministry, supposed that while a corrupt country may be undesirable for foreign direct investment (FDI), it may not be

\(^{40}\) ibid
\(^{41}\) [http://www.nber.org/digest/aug01/w8187.html](http://www.nber.org/digest/aug01/w8187.html)
at an equal disadvantage when it comes to obtaining bank loans from “international creditors”\(^{42}\). One reason why loans are easy to procure even when corruption is widespread is that the IMF and governments from developed nations offer considerably more insurance and protections to lenders than to direct investors. Resultantly, investment portfolios are heavily skewed toward loans.

When it takes the form of tax evasion or claiming improper tax exemptions, corruption may bring about loss of tax revenue. By reducing tax collection or raising the level of public expenditure, corruption may lead to adverse budgetary consequences. It may also cause monetary problems if it takes the form of improper lending by public financial institutions at below-market interest rates\(^{43}\).

A common aspect of developing countries flawed by serious corruption is the emergence of parallel markets. In most cases where trade has taken the sale of hard currencies, inflation has soared terribly. In hyper-inflationary environments, the economy becomes a preserve of just a few in society, while the majority languish in abject poverty.

Corruption undermines democracy by maintaining the status quo and hindering the growth of democratic institutions. In the political arena, it fosters repressive policies designed to eliminate threats to the ruling party. This may result in allegations of “stolen” public elections through rigging resulting in a corrupt legislature. Corruption in elections and in legislative bodies reduces accountability and distorts representation in policymaking; corruption in the judiciary compromises the rule of law; and corruption in public administration results in the unfair provision of services. Moreover, corruption erodes the institutional capacity of government as procedures are disregarded, resources are siphoned off, and public assets are disposed of secretly. At the same time, corruption undermines the legitimacy of our governments and such democratic values as trust and tolerance\(^{44}\).

**The Role of Individuals in the Corruption Crisis**

My neighbour Webe\(^{45}\) drives a commuter omnibus for a living and ferries passengers daily to and from the city. Yesterday after passing through a police roadblock where he routinely handed the policeman a $5000 bill, I asked him what it would take to make him stop. His answer

---

\(^{42}\) Dzichauya, interview held with a representative of the Zimbabwean Anti-Corruption Ministry

\(^{43}\) ibid

\(^{44}\) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_corruption

\(^{45}\) Name has been changed
went along the lines of, "You see, my vehicle is not roadworthy, but I can't afford to fix it. It would cost me over $1 million. I'd rather pay the cops $10,000 a day out of my $200,000 daily takings than get off the road completely."

That admission helps to examine the psyche of the corrupt and makes the entire exercise of eliminating corruption an arduous one, especially at the individual level. Historically, behaviours such as corruption stemmed from individuals unable to see beyond their short-term welfare and from perceiving their interests to be different from societal ones. For most people, instant gratification is more attractive than some long-term benefit. But what is it that makes us want to satisfy our short-term needs to the detriment of our long-term welfare?\(^\text{46}\)

Peter Russell, (1994) reasoned that in developing countries, where the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and healthcare are not well catered for, people tend to spend considerable time and effort attempting to fulfil these needs. Our attempts to solve the pressing problem of corruption will remain incomplete until we take account of the human psychology that gives rise to it.\(^\text{47}\)

**Prescriptions for Eradicating Corruption**

Recent years have seen the emergence of a well-established body of theoretical knowledge, as well as some tentative results on the solutions to corruption.\(^\text{48}\) In spite of this, several more questions need to be answered to enable governments to design effective policies aimed at curbing corruption. Since the costs of corruption are soaring, it should be our imperative to lobby to our governments to try to annihilate it. However, this is a challenge since once a corrupt system is in place, and majority of players operate within such a system, individuals like ourselves, lose incentive to try to change it or to refrain from taking part in it, even if everybody would be better off if corruption were to be eliminated.

Possible ways to prevent corruption in the key economic institutions should deal with a closer analysis of private and public management systems. Governments should ensure the presence of non-porous management systems, which are well spelt out, monitored and evaluated regularly and above all accountable to the electorate. In parastatals for instance, there can be

\(^{46}\) Peter Russell, Ecology or Egology? The Role of the Individual in the Environmental Crisis

\(^{47}\) ibid

performance targets, and in the public sector all activities should be based on Result-Based Management guided by the principles of Results-Based Budgets. It is essential to ensure that codes of ethics are introduced in both private and public sectors to guide occupational behaviours at all personnel levels.

It is of utmost importance that politicians demonstrate high levels of political will to fight the scourge of corruption. Anti-corruption laws should be timely and their enforcement must be ahead of criminals. No matter how good policies on Anti-corruption any nation could have, without authentic political will, the fight against corruption will fail. Thus, it is our democratic right to vote wisely and impress upon the political leadership to deliver realistic levels of political will and accountability through party structures.

Steps should be taken to educate the society at large to understand corruption and its implication on the society values. Education on corruption must be introduced into the school curriculum so that pupils are taught about its effects from a tender age. Corrupt practices should be exposed through electronic and print media. “Tip-off Anonymous” linked to hot lines and undercover surveillance mechanisms, can ensure the discreet exposure of corruption. At home, all socialisation centres should stress on the unacceptable effects of corruption as a value and norm in society. Society should expose those involved in corrupt practices and those that are “clean” to be rewarded or publicised as role models for the youths to emulate. Integrity awards can be given annually to institutions that are perceived as the least corrupt. People should be made aware of the various forms of corruption: the extortive, transactive, investive and nepotistic. Processes of public debate coupled with promotion of transparency and the establishment of just distributive mechanisms will go a long way towards rendering corruption loathsome.

No matter how much education is promoted by the state, perpetrators of corruption will continue to exist. Therefore there is need to establish preventive measures to ensure that such perpetrators face the wrath of the law. Higher penalty as a deterrent must be legislated, adequate punishment should be meted to offenders according to the prevailing country's laws thus ensuring that would-be offenders will refrain from committing corrupt offences. It is crucial that egregiously corrupt, high profile, public figures, multinationals and institutions, both domestic

49 www.transparency.org/iacc8th_iacc/papers/binpuchta.html
and foreign, be singled out for harsher legal punishment as demonstration that no one supersedes the law and that corruption crime does not pay50.

Effort should be put towards the establishment of independent Anti-corruption agencies such as the Financial Intelligent Units (FIU), Anti-Corruption Commissions and/or Anti-Corruption ministries, all of which should be adequately resourced in the areas of capital, human skills, operational time and updated equipment. Having laws that are adequate to curb corruption must be complemented with the freedom of the anti-corruption agency to enforce it. The agencies must be unfettered by political patronage for them to be effective. Concrete actions should be taken to convince public officers not to commit corruption crimes, if necessary having them to sign a declaration not to commit that offences upon appointment. Politicians and those appointed in public office should declare their assets to the agency for scrutiny51. Head of government departments should be made accountable to anti-corruption activities in their departments and furnish information to the Anti-Corruption Agencies on corruption in their departments. Making use of active agent provocateurs to check on corrupt activities can also dissuade corruption52.

Efforts should be employed to harmonise corruption laws through ratifying anti-corruption instruments such as the SADC protocol, African Union Convention against Corruption and United Nations Convention against Corruption. The establishment of both multi-lateral and bilateral agreements can ensure effective legal mutual assistance and extradition processes. Domestication of international anti-corruption laws ensures that the laws are deterrent and help in preventing would be corruptors.

Corruption cannot be reduced solely by punitive measures. A system of incentives to avoid corruption including higher pay, good behaviour” bonuses etc can go a long way in deterring it53. Opportunities to commit corruption should be minimized by liberalizing and deregulating the economy. Deregulation should be a developmental target integral to every program of international aid, investment, or credit provision.

As earlier elaborated, corruption is a symptom of systemic institutional failure. The strengthening of institutions is consequently of critical importance. The police, the customs, the courts, the government, its agencies, the tax authorities, the state owned media - all must be subjected to a massive overhaul. Such a process may require foreign management and supervision for a limited period of time. It most probably would entail the replacement of most of the current

50 samvak.tripod.com/nm089.html
51 ww1.transparency.org/iacc8th_iacc/papers/binpute.html
52 ibid
53 ibid
- irredeemably corrupt – personnel and would need to be open to public scrutiny. One example in which strategy has been successful was the placing of a number of suspect banks under curatorship in Zimbabwe for investigations into corruption allegations. In some countries, agencies such as “Copwatch” have been established to report on the police public interactions through volunteerism.

Lastly, religious belief on anti-corruption activities should be taken advantage of by the public in its preventive action or anti-corruption campaign. The heads of all religions should be encouraged to preach on the subject so that moral, culture, ethical and universal values would not be eroded by corruption. The world can learn from the examples made by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches on their nationwide anti-corruption campaign.

The Youth as Facilitators in the Fight against Corruption

The youth are amongst the worst hit by the vice of corruption and thus should be facilitators of anti-corruption initiatives. Fostering virtues of accountability, transparency, and integrity in their public and private lives is a stepping-stone in the anti-corruption campaign. The fresh perspectives provided by today’s youth and the ability they have to release traditional biases makes us an ideal group to battle corruption. As the next generation of public service leaders, youth must thus be encouraged, and given the opportunity to translate their training and study into real action against the vice, bringing with them the ideas of and commitment to a corruption-free society.

The first step the youth can take is to refuse to give or receive bribes. The choice to achieve goals on the basis of personal integrity is a noble one and if youth foster this attitude, it will have good impact on the future of our countries. The youth should be whistle blowers of corruption and should empower themselves to expose the corruption that they face. Lobbying to the government for changes to the current systems and for the protection of whistle blowers of corruption can go a long way in nurturing a culture of transparency and accountability. They can learn techniques to combat corruption through formal and informal education systems, at community and a personal level, through the Internet and getting involved in the work of non-governmental organisations that raise awareness. Finally, youth can strengthen transparency in government through active participation in government affairs through voting, advocacy.

---

54 ibid
55 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copwatch
56 topics.developmentgateway.org/youth/highlights/viewHighlight.do~activeHighlightId=104426
campaigns, pursuing opportunities for training in ethical leadership and governance, taking a personal stance against bribery and unethical conduct, and sharing their experiences with others.

**Concluding Remarks**

It is this paper's personal view that corruption is mankind's number one enemy. No one anti-corruption strategy is perfect and none can satisfy all the competing claims on the socio-economic climate of any country. In a rapidly changing world, new issues and new ideas will evolve as fast as contradictions are reconciled. Innovative anti-corruption strategies will have to address complex social, political, economic and legal issues in arenas ranging from the private and public institutions to the international fora and markets. The three-P's (3P's) - Public education, Prevention and Prosecution could possibly gradually eliminate corruption but at the end of the day it is up to us the public, young, middle-aged and old, to refuse, reject and report all forms of corruption. I want to lead the campaign!
Jóvenes colombianos, a pedir cuentas!
Jóvenes colombianos, a pedir cuentas!

La prensa colombiana sacude al país cada semana con una noticia de corrupción distinta. A pesar de ser llamados de alerta que parecen lejanos en nuestro país se desarrollan proyectos de Control Social Juvenil que han puesto a estudiantes universitarios y a líderes de comunidades a pedir cuentas a los políticos, a exigir resultados en las políticas educativas y hasta a medir el impacto de los sistemas de transporte masivo. En el presente ensayo se describen estas experiencias que son para nosotros escenarios que deben fortalecerse y multiplicarse en el largo plazo. Los jóvenes colombianos tenemos muchos motivos para hacerle frente a la corrupción. Con los miles de millones de pesos que el país pierde cada año por este tema, los jóvenes colombianos perdemos en asignación de recursos, perdemos en dignidad cuando por ejemplo la rama administrativa no juzga y castiga los crímenes que nos hacen víctimas del conflicto armado y perdemos a futuro la posibilidad de salir de la pobreza y el subdesarrollo.

El presente ensayo no pretender hacer un examen de la corrupción en Colombia, imposible de sintetizar en 10 páginas, pero si es un intento por mostrar como para nosotros, los jóvenes colombianos la indiferencia ante la corrupción es un mal negocio. No sólo porque con los grandes capitales que la sociedad pierde por el mal uso de los recursos se podrían satisfacer necesidades en salud, educación, vivienda que en nuestro país tanto nos hacen falta, sino porque invita el desanimo, deslegitima las instituciones y nos obliga a creer falsamente que nada podrá germinar en ella.

La corrupción hace parte de nuestra vida como país, en gran parte porque a los jóvenes no nos duele, no nos indigna y porque seguramente en unos años cuando seamos nosotros quienes administremos los recursos de los demás también creamos que esta es la vía más fácil. Nosotros somos quienes más vamos a ver los resultados de la ausencia de ética y de transparencia con que se manejan los temas públicos en nuestro país.

Las cifras reveladas por organismos como Transparencia Internacional y Transparencia por Colombia no son muy alentadoras. Estudios han mostrado que alrededor del 50 por ciento de los
correlativos de compras estatales contienen algún elemento de soborno. El promedio de los cobros podría ascender hasta cerca del 19 por ciento del monto de los contratos\textsuperscript{57}. Es obvio que estas malas prácticas se dan en los diferentes aspectos de la contratación estatal, un tema para muchos de nosotros especializado. Pero si las nuevas generaciones fuéramos conscientes, por ejemplo, que cuando existen inadecuadas concesiones en las construcciones de vías, nuestras empresas en el futuro no podrán tener los mecanismos para transportar sus productos, si entendiéramos que quizás por culpa de esa desviación de recursos es que no contamos con las suficientes universidades para realizar nuestros estudios seguramente las experiencias de control social juvenil serían más comunes, serían de nuestra vida diaria.

Según una investigación de la Fundación Transparencia por Colombia alrededor del 11 por ciento de las asignaciones públicas estarían siendo desviadas para fines distintos que su función legal\textsuperscript{58}. Esta cifra no sorprende. El año pasado la Revista Semana reveló que el país está pagando más de 500 mil millones de pesos por cuenta de órdenes judiciales irregulares que autorizan pagos pensiónales millonarios por fuera de los requerimientos de ley\textsuperscript{59}.

**Corrupción, ¿a los jóvenes cuánto nos cuesta?**

Este ejemplo sencillo de la desfachatez de ciertos funcionarios judiciales, que seguramente en la vida diaria se repetirá en varios escenarios del país, puede ejemplificarnos lo que significa para nosotros la corrupción en nuestro país.

Con esos 500 mil millones que se perdieron el año pasado Bogotá habría podido construir 90 colegios. El año pasado diez colegios nuevos dotados con todas las comodidades le costaron al Distrito 55 mil millones de pesos\textsuperscript{60}. Esta inversión permitió que 27 mil niños y jóvenes pudieran ingresar al colegio. Pero también podría haber ayudado a crear 71 mil cupos de educación superior aun pagando el costo de la universidad privada más costosa de Colombia (cerca de 3 mil dólares semestrales).

---

\textsuperscript{57} Diagnóstico acerca de la Corrupción y gobernabilidad en Colombia: elementos para la Construcción de una estrategia anticorrupción. Resultados de las encuestas a usuarios, empresarios y funcionarios públicos sobre corrupción, desempeño del sector público y gobernabilidad. Efectuada por la vicepresidencia de la república, el banco mundial y organizaciones no gubernamentales, con la colaboración del centro nacional de consultoría. Página 4.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{60} Educación en Bogotá llegó al millón de alumnos. Diario la República. Febrero 25 de 2007.
La situación de los jóvenes colombianos no permite que nos demos el lujo de permitir que los recursos estatales se desvíen de manera inadecuada. Los estudios sobre el tema han señalado que más del 75 por ciento de los jóvenes colombianos no alcanza a lograr un cupo en alguna institución de educación superior61.

Esta ausencia de inversión en juventud que podría haberse logrado de no presentarse los altos índices de corrupción es una trampa para el país si tenemos en cuenta que en los países en desarrollo, organizaciones como el Banco Mundial62 han señalado que los jóvenes representamos una ventana de oportunidad hacia el desarrollo económico.

Los jóvenes colombianos somos cerca de 18 millones de la población calculada en 44 millones. Al ser Colombia un país joven tiene mayores oportunidades de aumentar su potencial económico, pues la gran mayoría de su población está en edad de trabajar. En nuestro país cerca de una cuarta parte de la población entre los 18 y los 25 años se encuentra desempleado y aun así, los pocos que logran encontrar un trabajo lo hacen en malas condiciones. El subempleo alcanza a más de un tercio de la población de menores de 18 años, y a la mitad de los mayores63.

**La impunidad, un gran ejemplo**

Por otra parte, el Programa Presidencial Colombia Joven calcula que 7 de cada 10 combatientes en los grupos al margen de la ley tiene menos de 25 años. Organizaciones internacionales como Human Rights Watch han señalado que de ellos cerca de 11 mil son menores de 18 años64. La corrupción en la administración de justicia señalada en el ejemplo de las millonarias perdidas a causa de asignaciones pensionales ilegales podría verse reflejada también en el caso nulo acceso a la justicia que tienen los niños y las niñas víctimas de delitos relacionados con el conflicto armado que no son ajenos a las altas cifras de impunidad que se registran en Colombia.

Según el Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística la impunidad alcanzaría el 99.5 por ciento de los casos65. Por el contrario la Fiscalía General de la Nación considera que esta no sería más del 55.4 por ciento. La percepción de los ciudadanos no es muy lejana que la de las

---

65 Informe los abusos y vulneraciones contra los derechos fundamentales de los niños y niñas y su tratamiento en la administración de justicia: de la retórica jurídica a la ineficacia y la impunidad. Fundación Restrepo Barco 2006.
instituciones públicas. Según una encuesta de la Fundación Transparencia por Colombia, el 70 por ciento de los empresarios y 77 por ciento de los ciudadanos considera que “la justicia es sólo para los de ruana”, es decir que sólo cobija a los ciudadanos pobres ya que los casos en los que las personas de la clase dirigente se ven involucrados quedan siempre en la impunidad. Además, cerca del 74 por ciento de los encuestados considera muy frecuente el pago de sobornos en la justicia.

Los jóvenes podríamos ver la corrupción en la administración de justicia como un tema lejano. Pero para sólo citar crudas cifras de la ineptitud del sistema judicial para juzgar a quienes nos hacen víctimas del conflicto armado producto en gran medida de la corrupción reinante en los despachos judiciales, seguramente casos como el de la asignación de pensiones anteriormente citado nos desvelaría a todos.

Según una investigación de la Fundación Antonio Restrepo Barco, entre el 2002 y el 2005, el Consejo Superior de la Judicatura sólo registró 10 personas condenadas por el delito de desplazamiento forzado que en Colombia afecta a cerca de un millón de niñas y niños. Por otra parte, mientras el Observatorio de Minas Antipersonal del Programa Presidencial de Derechos Humanos y Derecho Internacional Humanitario de la Vicepresidencia de la República asegura que son 387 los niños afectados por este delito, la Fiscalía sólo tiene en sus estadísticas a 53 de ellos. Más aterrador aún, en Colombia no existe condena alguna por el cruel delito de reclutamiento forzado de niños que tiene combatiendo en la selva según Human Rights Watch a cerca de 11 mil jóvenes menores de 18 años.

Por eso, no es extraño que quienes conocen de cerca la corrupción en el país señalen que “junto con los graves problemas de seguridad que vivimos en Colombia es una puerta abierta para la falta de institucionalidad y de confianza”.

A los jóvenes colombianos la corrupción nos hace daño en todos los aspectos de nuestra vida. Hay que decir que al lado de estas cifras oscuras en Colombia se presentan experiencias de Control Social Juvenil innovadoras que han logrado comprometer a las nuevas generaciones con sus comunidades, identificar problemas y proponer soluciones.

---

66 Diagnóstico acerca de la Corrupción y gobernabilidad en Colombia: elementos para la Construcción de una estrategia anticorrupción. Resultados de las encuestas a usuarios, empresarios y funcionarios públicos sobre corrupción, desempeño del sector público y gobernabilidad. Efectuada por la vicepresidencia de la república, el banco mundial y organizaciones no gubernamentales, con la colaboración del centro nacional de consultoría.

El Control Social Juvenil, un primer paso y un reto pendiente

Los jóvenes colombianos no podemos darnos el lujo de dejar que otros desperdicien nuestros recursos. Quizás son tantas las preocupaciones que nuestra generación vive en el día a día que la corrupción pasa a ser una noticia más entre tantas tragedias. Por eso, como joven y como estudiante universitaria considero que las experiencias desarrolladas en Colombia sobre Control Social Juvenil, que obligan a los universitarios o a los jóvenes líderes de las comunidades a vigilar la adecuada implementación de los recursos son una experiencia enriquecedora para toda la sociedad.

En Colombia se han desarrollado proyectos tanto en las áreas urbanas como rurales tendientes a involucrar a los jóvenes en la grave problemática de la corrupción. La mayoría de estas iniciativas han sido lideradas por los mismos jóvenes y han contribuido en gran medida al empoderamiento de la juventud, a fortalecer los procesos democráticos y a darle visibilidad a las problemáticas de las comunidades.

“Yo rindo cuentas, yo exijo cuentas”

En Bogotá, la capital del país, un grupo de universitarios obtuvo el año pasado el reconocimiento del Programa de Pequeñas Donaciones del Banco Mundial. La idea del grupo de jóvenes era realizar un programa de rendición de cuentas entre los políticos elegidos por votación popular, desde los ediles de las localidades hasta los representantes a la Cámara. Así con el lema de “Yo rindo cuentas, yo exijo cuentas”, los congresistas y otros funcionarios públicos pasaron frente a cientos de universitarios a contarles cuales de las propuestas con las que se lanzaron a la campaña política han sido cumplidas.

Estas experiencias de control de los universitarios a los políticos tienen una ganancia por lado y lado. Por una parte, es una excelente oportunidad para quienes ejercen cargos de ese nivel de acercarse a su electorado en unas nuevas generaciones distantes de los medios de comunicación tradicionales, además les permite darse a conocer y establecer vías de comunicación directa con los ciudadanos. Pero por otra parte, los jóvenes también resultan grandes ganadores no sólo 68 Bogotá se encuentra dividida administrativamente en 20 localidades que conforman la División Político Administrativa del Distrito Capital.
porque estos encuentros permiten tener un conocimiento sencillo de la forma como funcionan las instituciones sino porque las rendiciones de cuentas se convierten en una buena vara para medir la calidad de los candidatos, exigir resultados y tener la posibilidad de abogar por los intereses de los jóvenes usualmente desconocidos en los espacios de decisión.

Otra gran enseñanza de los espacios de rendición de cuentas ha sido el uso de Internet como estrategia de comunicación con la juventud. Hoy la mayoría de los congresistas jóvenes\textsuperscript{69} hacen Informes de Gestión sobre su trabajo en el Congreso mensualmente y lo envían al mail de sus electores. Así, también a través de sus páginas Web, los parlamentarios pueden mostrar cómo votaron, qué proyectos han presentado o apoyado y cual ha sido su posición en los debates de control político. Además han desarrollado herramientas como foros y chats para acercarse a un electorado cada vez más difícil de conquistar, por la incredulidad que demuestra la juventud colombiana ante las instituciones consideradas corruptas. Así, los temas tratados por los congresistas en sus páginas van desde sus iniciativas para que por ley se prohíba los establecimientos de venta de alcohol cerca de los colegios hasta los que regulan la responsabilidad penal juvenil.

Teniendo en cuenta que en el 71 por ciento de los colombianos ve al Congreso como la entidad con mayores niveles de corrupción\textsuperscript{70}, y además, en el contexto de la grave crisis de la infiltración paramilitar en el Parlamento que ha sacudido al país en los últimos meses y que tiene a 8 congresistas\textsuperscript{71} detenidos luego de que la Corte Suprema de Justicia, les abrió investigación por delitos como concierto para delinquir en asociación con grupos de autodefensas e incluso los congresistas se encuentran acusados de ser determinados de masacres o del delito de secuestro, las iniciativas de los jóvenes para recuperar el control de los votantes por sus elegidos es una contribución al fortalecimiento de la democracia y una invitación a las nuevas generaciones a controlar las actividades de los políticos y a volver a creer en quienes con su buen trabajo se lo merezcan.


\textsuperscript{70} Diagnóstico acerca de la Corrupción y gobernabilidad en Colombia: elementos para la Construcción de una estrategia anticorrupción. Resultados de las encuestas a usuarios, empresarios y funcionarios públicos sobre corrupción, desempeño del sector público y gobernabilidad. Efectuada por la vicepresidencia de la república, el banco mundial y organizaciones no gubernamentales, con la colaboración del centro nacional de consultoría.

\textsuperscript{71} Los cinco congresistas capturados por sus nexos con los 'paras' son trasladados a la cárcel. Revista Semana. Edición Online. Febrero 15 de 2007
En lo personal, recuerdo que cuando aun estaba estudiando la primaria, una política ganó las elecciones al Congreso con la más alta votación luego de repartir condones en la calle. Su campaña tenía una idea simple con la que los colombianos se sentían identificada: La corrupción es como el Sida. Hoy una década más tarde, cuando esa mujer lleva 5 años secuestrada en poder de las FARC, la guerrilla de nuestro país, estas experiencias de rendición de cuentas de universitarios siempre me traen esa imagen a la cabeza. Quizás los jóvenes no necesitemos condones para alejar a quienes quieren robarnos la posibilidad de tener un futuro más prometedor y un presente más digno, pero lo cierto si es que si la corrupción es Colombia es como el Sida, no sobra estar atentos para protegernos.

**Universitarios bogotanos, a vigilar el sistema de transporte**

Desde 1999, Bogotá la capital de Colombia cuenta con un sistema de transporte masivo. Tan sólo el año pasado, en estos buses rojos se transportaron 1.498.119.164 pasajeros\(^{72}\) en una ciudad que no supera los 8 millones de habitantes. Los universitarios no han sido ajenos a la evolución del Transmilenio. Como la primera generación que creció en Bogotá con un sistema de transporte masivo que hoy es ejemplo para otras ciudades en desarrollo, este ha sido uno de los escenarios en los que mejor se ha desarrollado los programas de rendición de cuentas.

En el año 2004 el Programa Presidencial Colombia Joven promovió entre los jóvenes un proyecto para cuidar las finanzas y hacer seguimiento a las políticas de los sistemas de transporte masivo, en especial del Transmilenio en Bogotá. Para la fecha en que se lanzó el programa se calculaban cuantiosas asignaciones presupuestales de la Nación para implementar el transporte masivo. En el caso de Bogotá ascendían los 1,296 millones de dólares, en Cali los 241 millones de dólares y en Pereira a $56,102 millones en pesos corrientes\(^{73}\).

Así, mediante convenios con las instituciones de Educación Superior se logró que los estudiantes pudieran diagnosticar el estado de las obras, “con el objetivo claro de realizar un análisis y evaluación constructiva sobre los temas de construcción, calidad, seguridad y eficiencia en la construcción y prestación del servicio por parte de los constructores y operadores privados\(^{74}\).”

---


\(^{73}\) [http://www.colombiajoven.gov.co/control_social_sitm.htm](http://www.colombiajoven.gov.co/control_social_sitm.htm).

\(^{74}\) [http://www.colombiajoven.gov.co/control_social_sitm.htm](http://www.colombiajoven.gov.co/control_social_sitm.htm).
Así por ejemplo, en la Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano en Bogotá participaron cerca de 300 estudiantes en este proyecto. Algunos estudiantes se ubicaron en las entradas de los buses para calcular el ingreso de los pasajeros y establecer si existía la necesidad de mejorar la calidad en el servicio. Luego la información recogida fue tabulada y presentada con los resultados posteriormente.

La educación también paso al tablero

El programa presidencial Colombia Joven puso a los jóvenes a invertir los papeles de la escuela y ser ellos quienes evaluaran la calidad del servicio educativo que les estaba siendo prestado. Diferentes entidades públicas fueron vinculadas al proyecto entre ellas 26 instituciones educativas, 5 secretarías municipales de educación, contralorías municipales, personerías, organizaciones sociales y asociaciones de padres de familia.

El proyecto logró tener impacto en 35 mil alumnos matriculados y logró comprometer en su causa a cerca de 500 jóvenes que utilizaron para su difusión 13 emisoras escolares, 15 periódicos murales y 16 medios de comunicación escritos en los colegios.

Así con la ayuda de las instituciones, los jóvenes se encargaron de recoger la información necesaria para determinar si los jóvenes por lo que el estado está pagando la educación son efectivamente los que asisten a las aulas, cuántos de los niños que entraron a tomar las clases han desertado en el transcurso del año escolar y las razones por las cuales se alejaron de la escuela. El proyecto permitió también determinar cobros que los colegios estaban realizando de manera ilegal.

La iniciativa llamada “sobre el pupitre”, no sólo arrojo los resultados técnicos de las investigaciones sino que permitió en los niños y jóvenes desarrollar valores como el liderazgo y el compromisos por los bienes que les conciernen. “Sobre el Pupitre es una iniciativa que le ha permitido a los jóvenes de Pereira, Manizales, Ibagué, Armenia y próximamente a los de Pasto aprender de una forma dinámica sus derechos y deberes al interior de las escuelas, formarse como líderes, fortalecer su sentido de pertenencia y trabajar en llave con sus padres y maestros para

---

75 http://www.colombiajoven.gov.co/control_bogota.htm
76 http://www.colombiajoven.gov.co/control_social_educacion.htm

108
poner la eficiencia, recursos, problemáticas e instituciones SOBRE EL PUPITRE\textsuperscript{77}, señaló en uno de sus informes el Programa Presidencial Colombia Joven.

\textit{Sobre el Pupitre} es sin lugar a dudas un programa modelo, especialmente en el contexto de lo que en Colombia se ha llamado como la “Revolución Educativa”. Las políticas en este tema quizás ha sido una de las fortalezas más importantes de los últimos gobiernos. Para el año 2005, la escolaridad promedio entre los jóvenes de 15 a 24 años era de 9 años, 2 años más que en 1992. Por otra parte, el analfabetismo entre ese grupo de edad se había reducido de 3,6 a 2 por ciento.

Pero otra parte, es claro que los jóvenes colombianos no podemos dejarnos conquistar por la euforia que representan las cifras. A pesar de que la cobertura haya tenido niveles de crecimiento adecuados lo cierto es que la educación continua siendo en Colombia una puerta abierta hacia la inequidad. Según un estudio de la Procuraduría General de la Nación sobre el derecho a la educación en el marco de los Derechos Humanos\textsuperscript{78}, los grandes logros del gobierno de Álvaro Uribe no han ido acompañados de políticas que permitan el acceso equitativo de niños y jóvenes a la escuela. Según se reseña en el informe, mientras el analfabetismo de la población de 15 años es de 7,89 por ciento, el de los grupos indígenas es de 17,7 por ciento y el de los afrocolombianos, de 13 por ciento. Por otra parte, existe una notoria diferencia entre el impacto de las políticas educativas en el campo que en la ciudad. El analfabetismo entre los jóvenes entre 15 y 24 años es 4 veces mayor en las zonas rurales que en las urbanas y la escolaridad promedio, tres años menor.

En este contexto, si los jóvenes se sienten parte del sistema educativo, si lo conocen a profundidad, si detectan sus falencias podrían hacer que una revolución a gran escala, no vaya a ser una revolución coja.

Estos tres ejemplos mostrados en el presente ensayo muestran cómo los jóvenes colombianos le hacemos frente a la corrupción. Las experiencias lejos de ser un motivo para dejar de sentirnos responsables por lo que suceda en el largo plazo son una invitación a fortalecer los procesos de rendición de cuentas, pero ante todo son un reto pendiente para hacer posible el país que todos esperamos vaya cambiando con nosotros.

\textsuperscript{77} \url{http://www.colombiajoven.gov.co/control_social_educacion.htm}

\textsuperscript{78} La educación en la perspectiva de los Derechos Humanos. Procuraduría General de la Nación. Mayo de 2006.
Steven Allan Sumner, USA

Do No Harm: 
Eliminating Corruption in the Honduran Public Health Care System
Through Technology
Do No Harm:
Eliminating Corruption in the Honduran Public Health Care System
Through Technology

Content:
A. Introduction
   1. A Journey to Hospital Escuela
   2. My Studies in Honduras
B. Analysis of Corruption in Hospital Escuela
   1. a. Problem: Persistent, Unexplained Loss of Supplies and Poor Management of Hospital Resources
      b. Solution: Radio Frequency Identification Technology, Automated Supply Ordering
   2. a. Problem: Misappropriation of Medical Cadavers
      b. Solution: Bar-coded Electronic Medical Records Systems
   3. a. Problem: Physician Abuse of Paid Time and Patient Negligence
      b. Solution: Pay-for-Performance Reimbursement Strategies with Electronic Physician Ordering
C. Conclusion
   1. Analysis of the Costs of Such Technologies
   2. Steps That Need to Be Taken to Implement Proposal
Introduction: A Journey to Hospital Escuela

A short distance from my school, on a small cattle farm in Honduras, Raul cut off four fingers on his right hand. He was trying to free up a pasture shredder which had jammed and in a second his hand was pouring blood and he was in immediate need of care. He was taken 40 minutes north, to the capital city of Tegucigalpa, where there is a large public hospital known as Hospital Escuela.

Hospital Escuela is the medical school’s training hospital and the centerpiece of Honduras’ public health system. Patients who cannot be treated in the country’s small health clinics or rural outposts are referred to Hospital Escuela. For patients without any health insurance, Hospital Escuela is their last and only hope. Such was the case with Raul.

By the time Raul arrived at Hospital Escuela and entered the waiting room he had wrapped his hand tightly in his shirt and managed to plug up most of the bleeding. Six hours later the doctor saw Raul. In that time, three other patients had died in the waiting room. But Raul made it to see the doctor and he was happy to be inside the emergency room and not still waiting outside with all of the others.

Raul’s hand was a dried clot of blood but they washed it. Then the doctor told Raul that what he needed was stitches to close up the ends of his fingers. Unfortunately, like many days, the hospital had no stitches. Raul left the emergency room and sometime later he found a pharmacy and bought the needle and the thread that the doctor said he needed. He came back to the hospital and that night the doctor closed up the ends of Raul’s fingers.

My Studies

My interest in public health systems began with a university project. I attend a college in the south of Honduras where I was involved in a project making a map of disease incidence in the area. I frequently rode my bike out to a small public health clinic near my school to collect the necessary data. It was at the clinic that I became introduced to many of the patients who rely entirely on the public health system. These patients end up traveling to Hospital Escuela when they have a serious problem or need help that a basic rural clinic cannot provide. Their stories of their experiences at the large public hospital both shocked and captivated me. I have increasingly
become interested in health care systems management as a career and so I have spent much of my recent time at Hospital Escuela, shadowing physicians and medical students who are friends of mine.

From my very first day at Hospital Escuela, I noted blatant examples of corruption. Over the course of time, through both eye-witness experiences and interviews with physicians, I began detailing several severe problems at the Hospital that all stemmed from corrupt conduct—(1) the persistent unexplained loss of supplies, (2) the misappropriation of medical cadavers, and (3) physician abuse of paid time and non-compliance with professional standards. It is these three problems that I will analyze.

My interest in my university in Honduras has been the use of technology in health-care development projects. I have come to realize that by turning my interest and knowledge of technology to the problems I have seen in Hospital Escuela, I could propose ideas that have an excellent potential for curbing many of the problems due to corruption. This essay discusses various medical-system technologies that are currently being used in developed countries. I explore their potential use in Honduras to attack corruption in the public health system. Finally, I discuss the costs of implementing the proposed technologies. Corruption in Hospital Escuela is a problem I desperately want to tackle for the benefit of all of the patients who arrive there, a place they see as their last and only hope.

Section 1

Where Are All of the Supplies?

Like Raul, who worked on the farm of one of my schoolmates, I discovered many patients arrive at Hospital Escuela in desperate circumstances only to find the Hospital unable to help them due to a persistent lack of supplies.

On September 13th, 2006, a large Honduran newspaper ran a story entitled “Deaths Rise at the Escuela.” The article announced an alarming 5% increase in the morbidity-mortality rate in the surgery wards and 12% in the maternity-infant wards at Hospital Escuela, attributed to a severe deficiency of medicines and supplies. Over the years, numerous reports have surfaced over a
commonly acknowledged reality: corruption in the purchase and handling of supplies is part of the problem.

On May 17th, 2006, the director of the Honduran National Association of Public Employees demanded an audit of Hospital purchasing. He stated, “We have a report that indicates that Hospital Escuela has received from January 1st to May 11th about 28 million Lempiras in medications, but we are worried because here (in the Escuela) they insist that there are not any supplies.”

Just over a week later, another investigation reported that officials from the Human Rights and Corruption department arrived at one of the central medication storage warehouses to see whether the medicines were being distributed to the needy hospitals and clinics. When the officials arrived they found the warehouse full of medicine.

Such problems are frequently documented in Honduran news sources; however, the problem is never solved. Honduran patients continue to suffer. Hospital Escuela desperately needs a system to assure that the medications and supplies purchased by tax-payer dollars actually get to their intended hospital or clinic to benefit needy patients.

Solution to Medication Supply Problem

Radio Frequency Identification technology

Within recent years Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology has seen an explosion of uses within the field of medicine. Passive RFID tags are the most basic forms and are simply a minute antenna that can be imbedded within any object. These RFID tags require no electric source to transmit information. When a radio wave hits the minute antenna it provides sufficient energy to permit the antenna to transmit out information. Most commonly, RFID tags are imbedded in tags or packaging to locate items.

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) of the United States has promoted the use of RFID technology to ensure “the long-term safety and integrity of the U.S. drug supply.” Medications such as narcotic painkillers are frequently counterfeited or diverted from legal channels to illegal
ones. American pharmaceutical companies are currently scaling up use of RFID technology in their packaging to better track their products.

If RFID technology was used in the Honduran medication supply it would prevent the possibility of supplies being taken from government warehouses and re-sold on the market. RFID’s ability to locate each and every package of medicine will effectively end misdirection of supplies. RFID devices can even provide sophisticated security services such as automatically sending an electronic message to security officials when supplies leave a building. Furthermore, since the World Health Organization estimates that 6 to 10 percent of medicines worldwide are counterfeit, RFID would help to remedy this form of corruption because only authentic medications would be tagged.

It is important to note that corruption occurs not only through the misdirection of supplies but also in the purchasing process. For example, dishonest officials who make the medication purchases may overprice the medication on order forms and then pocket the difference. Hospital officials may also purchase medications from suppliers who have offered them attractive bonuses and kick-backs but the medications may not be reasonably priced and the hospital is not receiving the best deal for their money. I believe that another technology, automated supply ordering, has the potential to solve such problems.

Automated Supply Ordering

Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) in the U.S. operates the largest health care system in the Northern New England region. DHMC occasionally had problems in promptly supplying their many rural clinics with their old manual supply ordering process in which employees wrote out order forms by hand daily.

With DHMC’s new system the quantity of supplies in the hospital is maintained electronically in a computer system. When levels of supplies become low the computer program automatically orders the appropriate number of new materials. DHMC has found increased cost savings in the fact that inventory levels have fallen up to 50% in some departments because there is no need longer a need for hoarding supplies. DHMC also has been able to reduce costs by observing how and where their supplies are being used. For example, they discovered expensive surgical
gloves were being used for routine procedures and thus realized significant cost savings by ending this practice.

The Honduran medical system could employ an automated supply ordering system to effectively combat the corruption that exists in the purchases of medications and supplies. Supplies would be purchased automatically without the need for a hospital official processing the orders so there could be no falsely marked-up prices. Also, the computer system would purchases supplies from the supplier offering the most attractive prices; no longer could large contracts go to companies who provide kick-backs to the buyer. Finally, an electronic ordering system would generate records that are completely auditable, providing the ability to review each and every purchase in the case of any irregularities.

Section 2

Misappropriation of Cadavers

For years, students in the public medical school had not received new cadavers for their anatomy class. Consequently, they have to study plastic models and the remains of cadavers which had been used in previous years’ courses. My friends in the medical school complain that their learning experience has suffered. I interviewed one of the professors of the anatomy class and he confirmed that for about 3 years the school had not received new cadavers.

Honduran law includes a provision meant to support medical education through cadaver use. In Honduras, there are a number of truly indigent people who die every year in the public hospital without family or friends. Many of the bodies remain in the hospital morgue without ever being claimed. Honduran law states that these cadavers must then pass on to become property of the State and are to be used to serve a noble purpose by advancing medical education.

Studying human anatomy through a medical cadaver course is one of the principal methods of educating medical students in developed countries and medical students in developing countries should have the same opportunities to learn.

However, in my interview with one of the professors at the public medical school, I was told that the public medical school had not been receiving cadavers because officials at the private medical
schools have been paying money to the personnel of the hospital morgue to obtain the cadavers—essentially bidding or bribing for medical cadavers that the law has established to be free and for the purpose of educating all of Honduras’ future physicians. The professor I interviewed explained that whenever an unclaimed body arrives at the morgue it is transferred directly to the private schools. Thus, whenever the teachers from the anatomy course at the public university call the morgue for a cadaver they are told that none are available.

The professor I talked to told me that he has found a difficult way to solve this problem in recent months. He travels to the hospital morgue and waits there, sometimes all day, for a cadaver to arrive. In this way, he has recently been able to obtain 7 cadavers for the students. This constitutes an enormous amount of labor for an already busy doctor. But only through this strategy can he prevent the officials at the morgue from telling him that “there are no cadavers available.”

**Solution to Misappropriation of Cadavers**

The Hospital’s problem with its medical cadavers is one of patient management. With a largely antiquated and paper medical records system the public health system has great difficulties in tracking patients. Indeed, as many doctors make their patient notes on plain white sheets of paper, any rapid systematic review of the patient population is an impossible task. To solve the problem of the misuse of cadavers the hospital would need a system where each patient is registered into a computer system and the system provides information about the movements of patients to different departments in the hospital, the time of those movements, and who was responsible for the movement. Fortunately, technologies are being used today that have the potential to provide such a solution.

**Bar-Coding**

Bar-coded patient wrist bands were one of the first patient management technologies used in developed countries because it is relatively inexpensive to print bar-codes on plastic wristbands. Hospitals began using bar coded wrist bands because patients often move from one department to another for laboratory work, X-rays, procedures, and overnight stays. Personnel in the various departments need to be able to rapidly and accurately identify the patients, access their medical
records, and track patient locations. Hospital staff can do all of these things simply by scanning the patient’s bar-coded wrist band when the patient arrives at a new department.

Studies have shown that bar-coded wrist bands are appropriate technologies for managing large volumes of patients accurately. In a recently published example, the Massachusetts Department of Health and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency used bar-coding technology to track 22,500 runners in the Boston Marathon to show that bar-coded technology was a feasible patient management technology in complex situations.\textsuperscript{xv}

Interestingly, bar-coded wristbands not only provide a record of every transfer of a patient but when they are scanned they can also take a record of the hospital employee who was responsible for that patient interaction.\textsuperscript{xii} Thus, there is maximum accountability.

Hospital Escuela could no doubt make effective use of bar-coded wristbands to fight corruption. The wristbands would allow every patient to be inventoried in each department and their inter-department movements would be tracked. This would allow professors who teach the anatomy class to know when a cadaver is transferred from the Hospital wards to the morgue. Any corrupt hospital employee who would try to receive money in exchange for diverting the cadavers to other locations would easily be caught because the Hospital computer system would carry all of the data of the transfers of the patient and the badge information of the employee who was responsible for the transfers.

Section 3

Physician Misuse of Time

In Honduras, many physicians work part of the day for the public health care system and part of the day in their private clinics. Working for the public system assures them important state benefits and working for the private system assures them a lucrative salary.

In the private health care system, physicians are financially reimbursed for their productivity—the more patients they see, the more money they make. However, in the public health care system, where some physicians feel they must just put in their time, productivity drops. Examples of inadequate patient care abound.
One surgeon informed me of a chronic problem in his particular surgical department. Few doctors would arrive at the scheduled start of the surgical day. When they did arrive, they would have coffee and then breakfast, essentially prolonging the beginning of the work day for about an hour and sometimes more. After that they would begin to review the charts of the surgical patients and decide which patients to see. Because significant time had already elapsed and many doctors leave mid-day to work at their private clinics, the most difficult cases would be pushed back. Patients never knew when they were going to be seen by the surgeon.

One of the internal medicine doctors I know told me that she once personally escorted her patient to a particular surgical department where he had been pushed off of his scheduled appointment because “the surgeon was too busy.” When the internist demanded that her patient be seen, she was met with the statement “Excuse me, but this is a hospital for the poor.” Apparently, some Hospital employees believe that poor patients at a public hospital do not deserve the same quality of care or respect that paying patients at private hospitals receive.

Another surgeon informed me of a case involving a young man with a brain tumor. The surgery was necessarily long and complicated but at mid-day the lead surgeon headed off to his private clinic. He left the case to two of his interns to finish.

Doctors misuse of paid-time at public hospitals and violations of professional standards provide clear examples of how this form of corruption presents a grave health risk for patients.

**Solutions to Physician Misuse of Time**

The pay-for-performance strategy of health care reimbursement is growing in popularity in many countries. Pay-for-performance is a health care financing approach that rewards doctors financially for better patient outcomes or for at least following standard guidelines dictating what is appropriate treatment for a certain condition.

The United States is moving toward implementing certain pay-for-performance policies for physicians who treat patients covered by federal Medicare and Medicaid insurance plans after a large pilot study in 2005 revealed an improvement in all of the health care indicators measured by
According to the federal report, U.S. policy makers expect “long term savings, because of...improved patient health, fewer complications and fewer hospital readmissions.”

Insurers in the U.S. state of California actually include patient satisfaction as 40% of their pay-for-performance reimbursement plan. More specifically, patients rate their health care experience on “doctor-patient communication, overall rating of health care, specialty care access and satisfaction, and timely access to care.” Furthermore, doctor groups are actually ranked publicly online at http://www.opa.ca.gov/report_card/.

However, in any pay-for-performance approach, there must exist a way to effectively monitor how much work physicians do and the quality of their work. Current medical records systems that allow physician to place orders electronically offer solutions to this problem.

For example, a 2005 report published in the American Journal of Public Health documented that the Indian Health Service (IHS) is implementing such a system because studies discovered great inequalities in health care services provided to Native Americans versus white Americans. The new system will allow health care administrators to target poor care down to the level of individual clinics to ensure that Native Americans are receiving appropriate treatment.

Electronic medical records and electronic physician ordering systems really do work. A prominent study of the system recently implemented by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) in the U.S. revealed that patients in the VHA system receive 60% of appropriate care whereas the rest of the nation only receives 39% of appropriate care.

In Hospital Escuela, implementation of a pay-for-performance system through an electronic physician ordering system will greatly reduce corruption in the form of physician misuse of paid-time and patient negligence. Doctors who work for the public health system are being paid with tax dollars. Consequently, when physicians work less time than they are being paid for or see less patients than they should, they are essentially committing a form of robbery.

But it is not just physician waste of time that is a problem. Patients must be assured that they are receiving quality treatment and that they are treated with dignity. Rigorous pay-for-performance systems such as the state of California’s will make doctors fully accountable for neglect of patients.
Additionally, since the Honduran government is responsible for providing care to all of its citizens through the public health system, improved patient care will actually provide cost savings through reduced hospital stays and less treatment failure with need for repeat treatment. The benefits of reducing corruption through a pay-for-performance system are thus far reaching.

Section 4

What might it all cost?

There is no doubt that technologies such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), bar-coded medical records systems, and pay-for-performance monitoring are expensive. However, they are by all means feasible and would be an excellent investment.

RFID technologies are one of the newest and hence priciest tracking devices. However, some businesses have found it too costly not to utilize RFID. For example, Delta Airlines spends over $100 million dollars per year on lost luggage so they are phasing in use of RFID baggage-tags that cost 25 U.S. cents a piece.\textsuperscript{ix} In the medical sector, Bon Secours Health System in Virginia, U.S., implemented RFID technology to monitor 12,000 pieces of equipment; they estimate they have saved approximately $200,000 a year in now being able to assure the whereabouts of their supplies.\textsuperscript{x}

Bar-code technology is even less expensive than RFID because bar-codes can be easily printed on many type of products or paper. The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) estimates that the cost of implementing a bar coded medical system is “slightly less than $2,000 per bed (including hardware, software, data management systems, service costs, and user training), with operating expenses of approximately $1,000 per year.”\textsuperscript{xx} In 2003, the public health system in Honduras ran 28 hospitals with an average bed capacity of 151 per hospital.\textsuperscript{xxi} Thus, according to the HIMSS estimate, to bring each of these hospitals a functional bar-coded medical system would cost an average of $302,000 for start-up costs and $151,000 a year in maintenance cost.

For an electronic medical records system to enable monitored pay-for-performance policies, the costs would largely amount to the value of hardware and personnel training. Surprisingly, much
of the software for electronic records and ordering is “open source” and thus free. The Veterans Health Administration of the U.S. uses public domain, free software called VistaA in their government hospitals. And obviously, computer hardware could be used for electronic medical records, bar-coded systems, and RFID tracking, resulting in significant cost savings due to the multi-purpose nature of computer technology.

Although the costs of implementing such technological advances are great, they are not unreasonable when compared with other projects that have been attempted. For example, in 1998, the Inter-American Development Bank approved a $45 million dollar loan for the Honduran government to test the impact of household cash vouchers at increasing the use of primary health care services. Furthermore, there is even money that exists within Honduras to support new projects. For example, in 2004, the Honduran Institute of Social Security spent only $70,809,000 to run its network of hospitals but received $83,850,000 in intake, thus ending the year with a $13 million dollar surplus.

**Conclusion: Steps Forward**

Technology has the ability to provide needed accountability and shed light on the purchases of Hospital Escuela, the care of the patients, and the activities of the physicians. In the past, data about such things were nebulous, paper-based, and easily distorted. The medical technologies I have mentioned finally provide the opportunity for a transparent and statistically accurate appraisal.

There is no doubt that this strategy requires significant financing. My next step would be to seek the help of Honduran organizations such as the Honduran Association of Public Employees, who are already very active in decrying the poor state of the public hospitals and constantly seeking reforms. Together, we would write a proposal and appeal to international donor agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank for technology grants or loans. A loan would not be too burdensome for the Honduran government because I truly believe that implementing this technology would lead to cost savings for the public health care system over the long-term.

I would also appeal to private-sector technology enterprises in developed countries. If private businesses would donate technology for a pilot study in Honduras this could lead to substantial publicity for them, making it an even more attractive donation for their business.
Investing in technology to prevent corruption and better manage medical care would seem a wise and fruitful investment for donors. Preventing corruption makes future donations all the more beneficial because portions will no longer be siphoned away through corruption. Making substantial up-front investments in technology is both innovative and practical—resulting in an exponential savings over the long-term and finally ensuring Hondurans the medical care they deserve.

Sources Cited

3. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
xxi Ibid.
xxiii Harrison and Palacio, pg 209.