Is fighting corruption a collective responsibility?

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> When public money is stolen for private gain, it means fewer resources to build schools, hospitals, roads and water treatment facilities. The vulnerable suffer first and worst.
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> **Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General, 2009**
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Introduction

Up to 17% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developing countries is lost due to corruption, fraud and mismanagement (Asian Development Bank, 2004), thereby affecting basic human rights and democracy, as well as vital public services such as access to education, water, healthcare, roads and social services. Conservative estimates put this loss at more than USD 1 trillion a year (BMZ, 2011). We know that this impacts poor people the most (Ki-Moon, 2009) (Corruption Watch, 2014), but also undermines communities' trust in the social contract between the state and citizens.

From the statistics given above, we see that we live in a world where corruption is endemic and widespread. History teaches us that corruption is not just a case of public officials abusing their positions of power for private gain. Business managers, heads of families, religious leaders, the list goes on and on, have taken opportunities to abuse the power given to them for private gain (Pope, 2000). Despite a global movement to combat corruption, wise reformers would argue that

the fight against corruption should not be an end in itself, but that the goal should be to create more effective, fair and efficient societies led by democratic governments to the benefit of all citizens. Therefore by default, anti-corruption efforts should focus on building democracies where better standards of living for the poor and greater respect for human rights are widely encouraged, and the negative effects of corruption are combatted and hopefully reversed, if not stopped completely (ibid).

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This paper will review the rise of the anti-corruption movement, and show that the most successful anti-corruption efforts have commitment from political leaders as well as public support. Anti-corruption initiatives where civil society, in partnership with government and private sector actors, raises awareness and works not only to combat corruption, but to build integrity, have a higher success rate in terms of systematic designing out corruption. There is considerable global evidence on the active role civil society has played over the years in promoting participatory government and holding government to account. The impact of citizen participation on strengthening democracy, service delivery and empowerment is increasingly recognised (Spurk, 2010). Furthermore, there is a growing evidence base on the impact that civil society led anti-corruption efforts have had on indirectly reducing corruption and increasing state responsiveness (Chêne, 2012). Therefore a strong partnership and sense of collective responsibility between civil society and government is vital to build strong democracies and reverse the negative effects of corruption.

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Background to anti-corruption

The anti-corruption movement is a relatively new area of focus, which has evolved over the last thirty years to become a vibrant and continually evolving force for good globally. It is possible to break down the evolution into 4 phases

- Phase 1: Breaking the taboo - the case for reform;
- Phase 2: Setting international standards;
- Phase 3: Implementation and enforcement; and
- Phase 4: Pro-integrity, citizen-driven approaches.

Looking back over the last thirty years, we notice a considerable shift from a world where corruption in the main was ignored to a global anti-corruption community that seeks to build integrity. In the early 1990s and before, the majority of large development institutions and corporations did not refer to corruption, let alone try to combat it. This started to change, however, when campaigners set out the case for reform. They clearly articulated that corruption is endemic and everywhere and something needs to be done to address it. They also pointed out that we cannot limit corruption solely to the realm of public officials, but it permeates all levels of society, business, government and family life (Pope, 2000).

One of the strongest voices in support of awareness raising and the need for reform has come from Transparency International. Transparency International has become a household name through their advocacy for anti-corruption reform and the need to set international standards of good practice.

During the 1990s and early 2000s the world saw a flurry of international standards, laws and regulations being enacted in support of anti-corruption efforts. See box 1.

Box 1: International standards, laws and regulations

1995 World Bank Procurement Guidelines revised and expanded (further revisions in 1996, 1997, etc.)

1995 Treaty on the Protection of EU Financial Interests

1995 Policy Statement by International Federation of Consultant Engineers

1996 Rules of Conduct to Combat Extortion and Bribery adopted by International Chamber of Commerce

1996 Inter-American Convention Against Corruption approved by Organization of American States

1997 General Assembly Declaration Against Corruption in International Commercial Transactions

1997 Organization of American States Convention Against Corruption comes into effect

1997 Convention on the Fight Against Corruption Involving Officials of the European Communities

1997 UN General Assembly Resolution urges members to ratify international instruments against corruption

1997 Revised IMF guidelines adopted

1997 20 Guiding Principles for Fight Against Corruption adopted by Council of Europe Committee of Ministers

1997 CD Anti-Bribery Convention signed

1997 Recertification requirement introduced by North American Development Bank

1998 Revised Procurement Policies and Anti-Corruption Policies adopted by regional development banks (Inter-American, European, Asian, African)

1999 Criminal Law & Civil Law Conventions passed by the Council of Europe

1999 Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) of European Council comes into effect

1999 OECD Convention comes into effect

2000 Nyanga Declaration calling on Organization of African States to work on repatriation of stolen assets

2000 Wolfsberg Principles on Money Laundering and Corruption adopted by major private banks

2002 TI Business Integrity Principles introduced and adopted by major companies

2002 Sarbanes Oxley

2003 Introduction of Judicial Integrity Standard by group of Chief Justices, endorsed by World Court

2003 UN Anti-Corruption Convention (signed in December 2003)

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Throughout the 1990s, we saw a mainstreaming of the word "corruption" and specific "anti-corruption activities" in government, international development, business and society at large. Following the introduction of these laws and regulations, there was another shift from advocacy to implementation and enforcement. This led to a focused effort by many governments and businesses to ensure they were compliant with the relevant laws and regulations. In practice this meant the setting up of anti-corruption commissions, whistle-blower hotlines, codes of conduct, and compliance functions.[1] In most cases these anti-corruption efforts were seen as the obligation of the institution and therefore sole responsibility for activities rested with the implementing organisation.

Throughout this time, it became clear that compliance itself and independent actions by institutions was not sufficient to stamp out corruption. Studies show that corruption was and is thriving through opportunity and inclination. It became apparent that there was a need to combat this corruption through systematic reform and collaborative approaches - effective prevention, enforcement, deterrence, accountability, and community education that could only be brought aboutby collective action (Heeks, 2011) (Persson, Rothstein, & Teorell, 2013).

This understanding of collective action led to a recent evolution of the discourse, moving the dialogue from anti-corruption efforts to pro-integrity multi-stakeholder initiatives that have an emphasis on the role that regular citizens can have as agents of change. The role of citizens has significantly changed as a result. In the first and second phases of the anti-corruption movement,

most advocates of reform were content to solely raise awareness among the public. In the third phase, citizens were largely bystanders. But witnessing the poor results in most countries of this phase called for a reassessment of top-down reforms and led to an increasing role for citizens. This fourth phase has also been facilitated by advances in technology, which are responsible for two major breakthroughs. First, it is both easier and far less expensive than it was for governments to make data and information publicly available (both on a proactive and reactive basis). Second, social media, spread through internet access and mobile phone penetration, have made social mobilisation, citizen engagement and information sharing easier than ever before.

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By focusing on building integrity at scale, multi-stakeholder groups can now contribute to a culture change where a critical mass of citizens within a country can effectively act with and demand integrity in their workplaces, communities, and within government ministries. Rather than trying to reduce corruption, the focus is starting to shift towards building more effective, fair and efficient societies where human rights and civic responsibilities are realised. The OECD is one of the main international organisations to recognise the importance of public integrity as the foundation for any long-term anti-corruption reform.[2]

The lack of success in anti-corruption work over the last three decades - as can be seen by the terrible statistics shown in the opening paragraphs and the poor evaluations of many anti-corruption institutions (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2011) (Charron, 2011) (Batory, 2012) (Independent Evaluation Group, 2011) - demonstrates that institutions, whether they be governments, business or civil society, cannot combat corruption alone, but that combined input from institutions and citizens is crucial for effective and sustainable solutions that lead to democratic societies free of corruption (Pope, 2000). This article will argue over the next few pages that a multi-stakeholder approach to fighting corruption is the most effective approach, and collective responsibility in these efforts brings the greatest reward.

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[1] The "Anti-Corruption Authorities" website (https://www.acauthorities.org) contains data on over 60 dedicated anti-corruption agencies. In most countries, anti-corruption laws were recently passed or wholly revised in the last two decades.
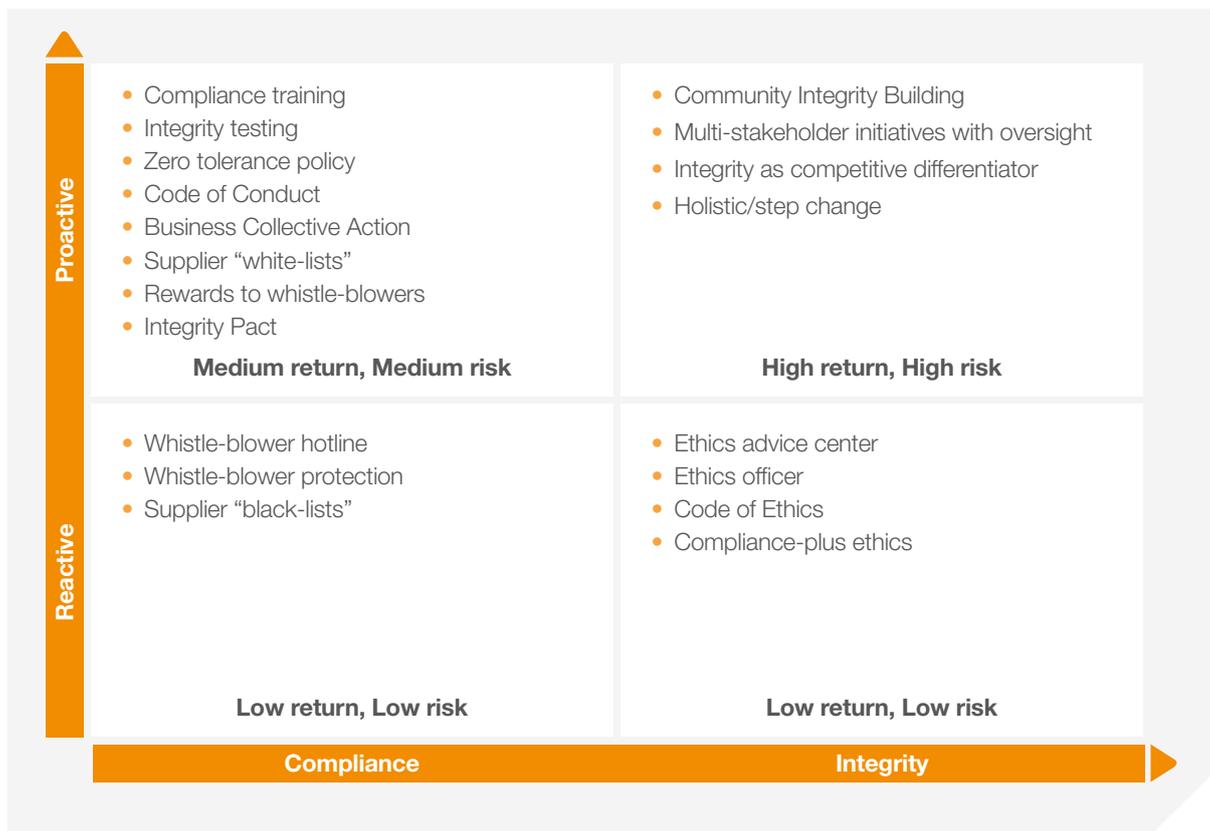
[2] See, for example, http://www.oecd.org/corruption/ethics/publicsectorintegrityreviews.htm

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Anti-corruption initiatives

Over the past three decades, a multitude of anti-corruption initiatives have been conceived, refined and implemented. There are many common threads and areas of overlap, but for ease of reference I have grouped them below under four quadrants (reactive and proactive compliance as well as reactive and proactive integrity) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Integrity versus compliance grid
- adapted in (Galtung, 2013) from (Paine, 1994)

Proactive	• Compliance training • Integrity testing • Zero tolerance policy • Code of Conduct • Business Collective Action • Supplier "white-lists" • Rewards to whistle-blowers • Integrity Pact **Medium return, Medium risk**	• Community Integrity Building • Multi-stakeholder initiatives with oversight • Integrity as competitive differentiator • Holistic/step change **High return, High risk**
Reactive	• Whistle-blower hotline • Whistle-blower protection • Supplier "black-lists" **Low return, Low risk**	• Ethics advice center • Ethics officer • Code of Ethics • Compliance-plus ethics **Low return, Low risk**
	Compliance	**Integrity**

An institution or organisation which seeks to fight corruption can either reactively respond to corrupt activities or proactively introduce initiatives that seek to prevent and deter corruption. This outlook can be both from the perspective of complying with anti-corruption regulations or from the perspective of building a new culture of integrity.

Reactive compliance
An institution or organisation faced with corruption will probably seek to address this challenge by responding and implementing some sort of initiative to detect or prevent corruption. This is usually reactive in order to deal with the corruption challenge that has been presented. An example of this would be implementing a whistle-blower hotline with protection assigned to any individual that comes forward. This would allow individuals to anonymously report organisational misdemeanours or crimes after the event and without fear of retribution. The aim would be to detect or catch wrong-doers retrospectively with the hope that fair and just treatment of a perpetrator may prevent further corrupt behaviour.

Alternatively or additionally, an organisation may want to implement an initiative to prevent corrupt activity in the future, such as a supplier "black-list" with suppliers on that list not eligible to tend for contracts or bids. This is usually in response to suppliers who have been convicted of corrupt activities.

Proactive compliance
An institution that is keen to avoid corruption will need to proactively develop a basic organisational-wide compliance framework to demonstrate that it is compliant with anti-corruption regulations and organisational policies. This framework would most likely include a code of conduct, which will probably include a statement from senior management that corrupt practices will not be tolerated (zero tolerance policy) as well as anti-corruption training and testing for staff in recruitment, induction and through continuing professional development. These measures are implemented to prevent corruption from occurring or to train staff on how to deal with corruption challenges if faced with them.

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An organisation interested in building integrity will seek to develop a new institutional culture. They will therefore go beyond demonstrating compliance with anti-corruption measures, and seek to encourage the practice of integrity and demonstrate that integrity rather than corruption should be the norm.

In a reactive integrity environment, an organisation will seek to react to the prevailing working environment by, for example, hiring an Integrity Officer who implements a code of ethics. The Integrity Officer can help employees with integrity challenges that they face in their workplace or even in society more generally. This is usually reactive in order to deal with the problem that has been presented.

Proactive integrity

Proactive integrity goes a step further, and seeks integrity solutions within an environment of corruption. This includes multi-stakeholder integrity initiatives such as Integrity Action's Community Integrity Building. I should add here that there are several global integrity initiatives which proactively build integrity. Community Integrity Building is just one example that I know well from my work at Integrity Action so will elaborate more on this, but the principles I discuss below can be applied more widely.

Community Integrity Building (CIB) is a collaborative method for local citizens, service providers and public officials to work together on improving the provision and performance of vital public services such as clean drinking water, safe school building, and access to healthcare. The approach works with a range of stakeholders on both the supply side of service delivery (those providing services) and the demand side (those receiving services) to increase performance of services to the poor. Often services are not delivered or aid money does not reach the intended beneficiary due to corruption[3] or mismanagement in the supply chain. Rather than name and shame, Community Integrity Building works to build trust between suppliers and beneficiaries of services, resulting in collaboration between stakeholders. We have found in practice that this approach provides a constructive environment where integrity is built and corruption challenges can be resolved. As of 2013, we could demonstrate that our method had delivered improved public services in 50% of cases, benefiting more than 3 million people in developing and fragile countries (Galtung, 2013).

The vast majority of anti-corruption initiatives undertaken in the last couple of decades fall within the two reactive quadrants - reactive compliance or reactive integrity (Galtung, 2013). In my view, in the last few years, we have seen a marked improvement in the investment given to proactive compliance methods. Legislation such as the UK's Anti-Bribery Act[4] has rightly forced UK related organisations to have a zero tolerance of bribery and educate their staff in what to do when faced with it.[5] But in my opinion, proactive integrity remains in the most part an aspiration.

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[3] Please note that Integrity Action uses a wide definition of corruption that seeks to address not only the abuse of entrusted power for private gain but also a lack of accountability, incompetence, as well as poor ethical behaviour.

[4] www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents

[5] See DFID's country strategies: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/anti-corruption-strategies-by-country ; Transparency International's guidance: www.transparency.org.uk/our-work/bribery-act and an example from the corporate world: https://www.smith.williamson.co.uk/anti-bribery-corruption-policy

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Whilst there is no commonly agreed metric to measure the success of anti-corruption efforts, it is widely accepted that proxies and case studies are a good starting point for impact measurement in this field (U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, 2013). In most of the anti-corruption examples given above there is no consistent proxy used. For Integrity Action's Community Integrity Building approach, a "Fix-Rate", or the rate at which problems are solved to the satisfaction of the main stakeholders, is applied. In that way it is possible to compare approaches and the success of an initiative by country, region or sector. As this is not consistently applied to all anti-corruption efforts, anecdotal or case study-based evidence is used below. This issue merits further study and the argument is made as strongly as can be done with the resources available at the time of writing the article.

Comparing approaches - stakeholder engagement
Looking again at the four types of anti-corruption initiatives given above, we see an interesting pattern emerge in relation to stakeholder engagement. It is clear that as one moves from the bottom left quadrant of reactive compliance up to the top right proactive integrity there is an increasing level of stakeholder engagement and sharing of responsibility between stakeholder groups.

Setting up a supplier "black-list" requires no consultation between stakeholders at all. If a supplier falls within specified criteria, they are automatically black-listed. This means that responsibility for fighting corruption remains solely with the institution implementing the "black-list". If the supplier continues to partake in corrupt activities, but finds vendors who will purchase his goods or services, that supplier can remain corrupt. If, however, the institution

that has instigated the "black-list" forms an integrity group of all buyers of that particular service and proactively facilitates the sharing of "black-listed" organisations, together they can build a new culture of integrity whereby the supplier either needs to clean up his act or will ultimately go out of business. By moving to a collective responsibility approach, the vendor has moved from reactive compliance to a proactive integrity approach, and therefore not only stopped corruption in one instance, but supported a more systematic approach to corruption that builds integrity. One would hope that the success rate of the second option would be higher than the first.

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Implementing a multi-stakeholder integrity initiative requires focused up-front investment to build trust between different stakeholder groups and systematically fight corruption. One could argue that the level of engagement required is directly proportional to the level of success (or return) achieved in combating corruption.

To demonstrate this further, Figure 1 also suggests that there are different levels of risk and return for each of these approaches. While reactive strategies are generally low risk with limited collective engagement, they also produce low success rates in the global fight against corruption (Batory, 2012) (Heeks, 2011) (Charron, 2011) (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2011). A successful criminal case formed from information provided by a whistle-blower may result in the conviction of a handful of corrupt individuals, but does not tend to bring about systematic societal changes.

Proactive compliance initiatives require a medium level of investment (or engagement) and result in a medium level of return. As a result of the UK Anti-Bribery Act and the subsequent staff training that businesses are now required to give, 81% of respondents to the E&Y Global Fraud Survey (E&Y, 2013) state that anti-bribery and codes of conduct are in place, with a similar percentage agreeing that senior management strongly communicates its commitment to these compliance based initiatives. This could suggest that throughout the corporate sector systematic change is occurring and bribery is no longer considered "business as usual".

The proactive integrity strategy is high risk and needs upfront investment - at least in the beginning when trying to engage multiple stakeholder groups - but it also produces the highest return. In Integrity Action's Community Integrity Building approach, for an investment

of under £1.50 per person we were able to improve services and reduce corruption[6] to the benefit of over 3 million people.

Intuitively, we know that anti-corruption approaches often have a component of compliance and integrity and therefore may not fall rigidly within one quadrant as the figure above shows. Ultimately, I have no doubt that the biggest return would come from a comprehensive proactive and reactive integrity and compliance framework that implements initiatives within each of the four quadrants.

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The lesson Integrity Action has learnt from our Community Integrity Building efforts is that stakeholder engagement of itself is not enough. Change happens when that turns into collective responsibility. Our approach brings to light a weakness of much transparency and accountability work. It relies on a rights-based approach, emphasising the right to access information, to contest power and to hold it accountable. While these values and tactics are extremely important - indeed democracies and open societies are predicated on them - they must be complemented by a sense of civic responsibility. Change does not simply happen when "others" behave better. To illustrate this point, I would like to share two short case studies from Integrity Action's work.

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Case study 1: Kyrgyzstan - Improving waste collection in Naryn.

Rubbish collection services across many cities in Kyrgyzstan have been transformed since Integrity Action's work in the country started in 2009. The remote glacial city of Naryn has led the way in the past four years in showing how an integrity-building approach can bring sweeping reform to local services. The council's rubbish collection enterprise has completely overhauled its procedures, with the announcement that 126 collection points will be visited on the same two days each week. All residents can access this information through large maps that are displayed in the supplier's offices. Additionally, more than 250 rubbish containers have been installed around the city, and twice as many trucks are now deployed.

Such transparency and accountability in the way a service is delivered - and dramatic improvement in the competency being displayed by a supplier - is proving to be a model for other cities in Kyrgyzstan. Recently, officials and elected councillors from the cities of Batken and Isfana visited Naryn to learn from their experiences. Meanwhile, in Osh City, Integrity Action contributed to stamping out the illegal dumping of rubbish in public areas, and brought rubbish removal services for the first-time to one of the most deprived estates in the city.

As a first step in its work in Kyrgyzstan, Integrity Action set up a think tank of university professors in Bishkek to conduct local scoping studies and to provide joint learning to public officials and community representatives. These academics recognised that a methodology was needed and that it would not be easy to find tools that would unlock better service delivery. Over several months, they developed monitoring tools and training manuals with Integrity Action's guidance, so that civil society activists had a framework for analysing service delivery, highlighting issues, and pushing for more transparency, accountability and competence. Professor Rakhat Bazarbaeva says, "We developed thirty integrity indicators relating to services, transparency, openness, participation, and ethics. We then trained local activists on methods for monitoring services."

A Joint Working Group (JWG) was established in 2010 to bring together local government officers, elected members, residents and community-based organisations - so that they could discuss issues and work together to identify and implement appropriate solutions. Known as the Naryn Coordination Council, this JWG considered whether public hearings and media campaigns could be used to improve rubbish collection services. Integrity

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Bilimbek Jakiev, a member of the JWG, says, "Through the campaign of the Coordination Council, the rate collection has increased from 118,000 Kyrgyzstani Som in 2008 [£1,600] to 1.9 million Som today [£26,000]. The community is now a lot cleaner, and the rubbish is collected regularly, and that is all down to the improvement in rate collection which only came about because of this project."

In the final stage, sustainability is at the top of the agenda. Nurjan Asanbekova, a lawyer from Integrity Action's partner, the Association of Attorneys in Kyrgyzstan (AAK), says, "Through this project we have discovered there is no benchmark for what the local supplier has to provide as a minimum. For instance, I couldn't score local rubbish collection quality in Naryn because I couldn't get answers to a simple question such as, 'How many rubbish bins should a city the size of Naryn provide?' The Coordination Council will ensure that standards are defined, agreed, and then adopted."

Action's country manager, Lilia Utiusheva, says, "Before, there was no system for rubbish collection in Naryn. There were no definitive routes that truck drivers would follow. The community monitors gathered photographic evidence that the trucks would just go around the city once a week, picking up rubbish wherever they saw it. In 2011 a plan was formulated by the Mayor's Office, city council, the architectural office and the community monitors, and a map was put up so different parts of the city got rubbish collection on the same days each week."

A media campaign to raise awareness of the need for rate collection led to a massive increase in the number of residents paying municipal taxes – which gave the supplier the income needed to install the 250 bins across the city, and deploy more trucks.

On-going interaction between residents and local councillors is also being embedded into Naryn culture through the use of community radio. A project partner, the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme, approached radio station 'Almaz' to see if it would be possible for the station to host a weekly 15-minute phone-in programme where residents could put their questions about local services – and highlight any issues they had noticed – to representatives from the Mayor's Office, local government, community based organisations and service providers. This was established in December 2012 and is provided as a free public service (Galtung, 2013).

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Case study 2: Palestine - Jericho water campaign stops residents from sabotaging their neighbours' water supply

"Before Integrity Action, residents were complaining individually about the lack of water. But now there are a lot of us who are speaking collectively to the Municipality about the same thing, so we get our voices heard." - Hisham Balou, member of Integrity Commmittee for Better Services

When tensions reached boiling point about problems with the summer water supply in Jericho, residents took matters in their own hands. According to civil society activists, residents regularly sabotaged their neighbours' water supply because it was the only way to get enough water pressure to fill their tanks.

Hisham Balou, a civil society monitor with Integrity Action, said that Jericho residents - who are predominantly farmers - felt the council was ignoring their needs. The local people were accusing the Municipality of corruption, prioritising water supply to the tourist hotels, the security forces training centres and wealthy people from other cities in the West Bank with second homes in Jericho who needed to fill their pools.

But Hisham said water supply had improved by around 25% in 2012, compared to 2011 - so there was now only inadequate water supply for just over 50% of the time. And he attributed this to the concerted efforts of the monitors, council employees and elected members who had come together as part of Integrity Action's initiative to form a joint working group.

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In 2011 and 2012, the joint working group - which is called the Integrity Committee for Better Services (Jericho) - held around 50 public meetings, and arranged five face-to-face meetings with the mayor. The Integrity Committee also held a public demonstration that was attended by around 150 residents.

Hisham says, "[Using public meetings] is a slower way to get things done, but it's a better way. If I cut the water off by using magnets or by running my own pipes

in front of my neighbour's I am doing an injustice to my neighbour, and it's illegal. Things are a lot better since we have brought the residents together. We can see that it's better for us, as a group, to channel our concerns to the right people."

Fellow Integrity Committee volunteer Nidal Hassan Jalayta agreed, saying, '"We built citizenship around people's rights and responsibilities. No-one would dare to cut their neighbour's water supply now. And because these acts of sabotage have stopped, it means that more people are now getting the water they need."

Last summer the Municipality announced its water schedules for the first time ever, so different neighbourhoods knew whether they would get water from 6am to midday, or midday to 6pm or 6pm to midnight. The civil society monitors ensured that the Municipality stuck to these shifts - and that certain neighbourhoods weren't able to lobby the council for the water to move across to their area before the allotted time. Monitors say that they will continue to work with the Municipality to make sure water supply improves further, and that action is taken to improve water quality as well (Integrity Action, 2013).

I think these case studies from Integrity Action's work, clearly demonstrate the benefit of collective action. In the Kyrgyzstan example, the government officials were not able to act to their fullest extent because citizens were not fulfilling their component of the social contract. For example, by not paying municipal taxes it prevented the authorities, or power holders, from dealing with problems. When citizens questioned whether taxes would be used appropriately or siphoned off, the Mayor had to give a personal confirmation that taxes would be used for public services. Citizens were then willing to pay their taxes, knowing that the money would go directly to improve vital

public services. The Mayor also had an increased incentive to follow through on his commitment as the community had mobilised joint multi-stakeholder working groups who were monitoring services to keep him accountable.

Whilst Community Integrity Building is a collaborative approach that citizens can start on their own, the greatest results are achieved when government or implementing agencies work together with service providers and communities to take collective responsibility to improve services.

Conclusion

Working from the premise that the main goal of the anti-corruption movement should be to build more effective, fair and efficient societies led by democratic governments to the benefit of all citizens (Pope, 2000), there is an onus on anti-corruption activists to ensure that all levels of society are engaged in the process. But more than engagement, activists are now realising they have a responsibility alongside other actors to change the status quo. As a result, the impact of citizen

participation on strengthening democracy, service delivery and empowerment is increasingly recognised (Spurk, 2010). In this way, anti-corruption initiatives where civil society works collaboratively with government and private sector actors have a higher success rate in terms of systematically designing out corruption and building integrity. Therefore a strong partnership and sense of collective responsibility between civil society and government is vital to build strong democracies and win the fight against corruption.

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Joy Saunders is the Chief Executive Officer of Integrity Action, a UK based NGO that seeks to build integrity in some of the world's most challenging settings. She has presented in various fora on the importance of metrics and measuring impact in the anti-corruption field and she sits as the civil society representative for the OECD Anti-Corruption Task Team.

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