PEOPLE COUNT: HOW CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND ACTION CHALLENGE CORRUPTION AND ABUSE

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In the global fight against corruption and impunity, the first ten years of the 21st century may well go down as the decade of the people. Citizens are proving that they are not passive recipients of top-down initiatives; they are drivers of accountability, reform and change.[1] This process, by its very nature, can build societal cohesion, mitigate the propensity for violent conflict and human rights abuses, advance economic and social justice, and enhance prospects for democracy and rule of law. This paper will: explore the linkages between corruption, violence and poverty; identify the conceptual and practical limitations of top-down, technical approaches to combating corruption; articulate a bottom-up approach in which the civic realm is included in the anti-corruption equation; and explore recent cases of civic action campaigns and movements to curb corruption and win accountability.

Corruption, Poverty and Violence

A stocktaking of both past and current efforts to reduce poverty suggests that corruption has been a constant obstacle for countries trying to bring about the political, economic and social changes desired for their development. Across different country contexts, corruption has been a cause and consequence of poverty.
          Transparency International[2]

War economies are built on corruption as the parties in conflict rely on criminal syndicates, fraud and bribery to grease the wheels of the supply chain…
          Cheyanne Scharbatke-Church and Kirby Reiling[3]

Corruption does not occur in a vacuum. To touch corruption, so to speak, is to simultaneously touch so many other social ills and injustices in society, from violence to poverty, human rights abuses, authoritarianism, unaccountability, substandard medical care and education, and environmental destruction. Thus, fighting corruption is not a superficial solution that avoids the underlying problem; it can be a direct attack on oppression, all the while creating ripple effects for the common good.

At an aggregate level, corruption has been found to be positively correlated with higher risks of political instability.[4] Human Rights Watch sites a direct relationship between corruption and political violence, in which public officials use stolen public revenues to pay for political violence in support of their ambitions.[5] A 2004 report of the Secretary General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change states that "corruption, illicit trade and money-laundering contribute to State weakness, impede economic growth and undermine democracy. These activities thus create a permissive environment for civil conflict."[6] In a checklist on the "root causes of conflict and early warning indicators," the European Commission includes the corruption troika of bribery in bureaucracies, collusion between the private sector and civil servants, and organized crime.[7] Finally, corruption also creates an overall climate of impunity.[8] Human Rights Watch and the Center for Victims of Torture tie corruption to repression, as it hampers government accountability, while benefitting officials and security forces who commit abuses for financial gain.[9]

When endemic, corruption can also rouse social unrest and foment violent conflict. In such circumstances, a complex system of graft permeates the political system, economic spheres, and basic provision of services. One acute example is in the Niger Delta, where insurgent groups are amassing weapons and recruiting young men from a destitute, frustrated and angry population that sees little benefit from oil wealth while living amidst environmental degradation from its extraction and processing.[10] Corruption can also prolong civil or regional conflicts because it functions as an enabler--violent groups engage in illicit activities to make money and acquire weapons. Nowhere is this more wrenchingly evident than in DR Congo. Hundreds of thousands of girls and women have been systematically raped and approximately 3.5 million lives have been lost since the onset of war in 1998.[11] The military, rebel groups, and various foreign allies have plundered the country's diamonds, gold, timber, ivory, coltan and cobalt to finance their atrocities.[12] A USAID report concluded that in the Casamance region and oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula in Africa: "More often than not, corruption has played a key role in fomenting and prolonging these conflicts."[13]

In other instances, corruption is an enabler of state capture. In Central America, "narco-corruption" refers to the inter-relationship between transnational drug cartels and state security forces, as well as the infiltration of organized crime interests into politics, governance and the actual functioning of institutions, leading to countries such as Guatemala and Mexico being called "narco-states." Finally, corruption can function as an inhibitor of sustainable peace in post-conflict settings. In Afghanistan, the Taliban is recruiting new members from among the marginalized population oppressed by unrelenting graft. In a recent poll of Afghans, 83 percent said corruption affects their daily lives.[14] Often, in such settings, corruption allows the entrenchment of the political status

quo that operated during the conflict – which undermines the new government's legitimacy.[15]

The Limitations of Top-Down Strategies to Fight Corruption

In its silent crisis, the anticorruption movement has not been able to effectively make the transition from the awareness-raising stage to the concrete action-oriented stage, and from a supply-side, narrow public sector management focus to one encompassing all demand-side issues and stakeholders.
        Daniel Kaufmann[16]

The global anti-corruption realm has emerged over the past 20 years. Strategies have been top down and rules-based, and attention was directed mainly to administrative corruption. Efforts focused on international agreements, legislation, institution-building, such as anti-corruption commissions, improvement of national and local government capacity, and public finance management. In essence, these approaches were largely based on the experiences of industrialized, Western democracies.

While there certainly has been progress, real change has been modest. Transparency International's 2009 Global Corruption Barometer found no difference in public opinion from 2004 to 2009; hence no perception of improvement concerning political parties, parliaments, the judiciary and media. Political parties were viewed as being corrupt by 68 percent of the 73,000 respondents from 41 countries and territories. This was followed by the civil service at 63 percent and parliament at 60 percent. Half of the interviewees perceived the judiciary and private sector as being corrupt, the latter having increased by eight percent.[17]

From the perspective of civic power and civil resistance, it's not surprising that a predominantly top-down approach has had inherent weaknesses.[i] First, the definition of corruption has traditionally been defined as "the misuse of entrusted power for private gain," or the "abuse of public office for private gain."[18] This conceptual approach does not convey the systemic nature of corruption, which involves a complex set of relationships, some obvious and others hidden, with established vested interests, that can cut across political, economic and social forces.[19] Moreover, there tended to be an over-emphasis on the state. Less attention was paid to other potentially corrupt groups in societies, such as big agricultural landowners, multinational corporations and oligarchies, as well as their inter-relationships.

The result was "one-size-fits-all" types of technocratic strategies aimed at replicating Western bureaucracies. Institutions accused of corruption are often made responsible for enacting change. But those benefitting from graft are much less likely to end it than those

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[i] Civic power refers to pressure and power that comes from significant numbers of people organized together. Civil resistance is the expression of civic power through the use of nonviolent strategies and tactics. It is also called nonviolent action, nonviolent struggle, and nonviolent conflict.

suffering from it. Thus, even when political will exists, it can be thwarted, because too many people have a stake in the crooked status quo.

Second, the top-down approach has focused on processes. According to Daniel Kaufmann, there is the fallacy that one "fights corruption by fighting corruption." This has translated into ongoing, elite-driven anti-corruption initiatives, more commissions or ethic agencies, and the drafting of new or improved laws, codes of conduct, decrees, integrity pacts, etc., which he asserts, appear to have had minimal impact.[20] Nor has this had an effect on where it counts most—the daily lives of ordinary citizens.

Which leads to the third weakness; traditional strategies have not factored people into the equation—although they are the ones who bear the brunt of corruption, directly experience it, endure its harmful effects, and can play a role in controlling it. For those on the receiving end, the experience of corruption can be oppression and a loss of freedom. Aruna Roy, one of the founders of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) movement in India, characterizes corruption as "the external manifestation of the denial of a right, an entitlement, a wage, a medicine…"[21] When citizens fight corruption, the priorities often shift from technocratic reforms and grand corruption, to curbing those forms of graft and abuse that are most harmful or common to ordinary people, particularly the poor. In people-centered approaches, curbing corruption becomes part of a larger set of goals for accountability, participatory democracy, and social and economic justice.

A Bottom-Up Approach to Curbing Corruption

> *…And we noted that an empowered citizen is the best tool we have for fighting corruption… We must strive to reach and mobilise people from all quarters, and from all age groups.*
> *13th International Anti-Corruption Conference[22]*

There has been a growing recognition in the international anti-corruption community and among development institutions and donors, especially over the past five years, that corruption cannot be challenged unless the civic realm, including an active citizenry, is involved.[ii] Mobilized people, engaged in organized nonviolent action, comprise a social

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[ii] The civic realm refers to the collective non-state, bottom-up initiatives and relationships in a society. This includes: nonviolent civic campaigns and movements; civil society organizations (CSOs); nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); community-based organizations (CBOs); civic coalitions and alliances; unions;

force that can exert pressure both on the state and on other sectors in society. Therein lays the strategic advantage of civil resistance. It consists of extra-institutional methods of action to push for change, when power holders are corrupt and/or unaccountable, and institutional channels are blocked or ineffective.[23]

Civic power is wielded through the sustained, strategic application of a variety of nonviolent tactics that are designed to:
- Strengthen citizen participation and campaign capacity;
- Disrupt relationships and the status quo within systems of corruption;
- Weaken the sources of support and control for unaccountable and corrupt power holders; entities, systems, and their enablers; and/or
- Win people over to the civic campaign or movement.

Nonviolent tactics constitute the methods of civil resistance. Scholars have identified over 200 tactics, and most campaigns and movements create new ones. Civic anti-corruption initiatives engage in varieties of:
- noncooperation
- civil disobedience
- low-risk mass actions
- displays of symbols
- visual dramatizations, street theatre and stunts
- songs, poetry, and cultural expressions
- humor
- citizen "report cards" for public services
- civic "report cards" for political candidates
- monitoring of officials, institutions, budgets, spending and public services
- social audits
- social networking technologies (e.g., Facebook organizing, blogging)
- education and training
- social and economic empowerment initiatives
- youth recreation
- creation of parallel institutions
- anti-corruption pledges; public awards
- protests, petitions, vigils, marches, sit-ins
- strikes, boycotts and reverse boycotts
- nonviolent blockades
- nonviolent accompaniment.

Well-organized, strategic nonviolent movements and campaigns engaging in civic action, may be particularly suited to a systemic approach to curbing corruption, as the dynamics of civil resistance involve both disrupting an oppressive status quo and pulling people to one's side. In the anti-corruption context, this involves shaking-up corrupt interactions and

professional organizations; grass-roots networks, committees, and collectives; local citizen groups; activists, community organizers, and last but not least, citizens.

relationships, generating political will, pushing for specific measures, and reinforcing new patterns of administration and governance centered on accountability to citizens.

Civic pressure can also bolster efforts, and support honest individuals within state institutions and other entities who are attempting reforms and change. All too often, lone figures or agencies cannot challenge or dismantle entrenched, multi-faceted, systems of graft and unaccountability. Such attempts have been compared to the actions of political dissidents, who stand in singular defiance before an entire undemocratic system and are therefore easily suppressed.[24] This was the fate of John Githongo, a former Kenyan anti-corruption chief, who fled the country in 2004 after threats to his life.

Where corruption breeds volatile social unrest, the potential exists for citizen engagement and mobilization to activate people power to bring forth positive change, and channel popular frustration and anger to fighting oppression through nonviolent methods. This could possibly aid in preventing the eruption of violent conflict, fostering conflict transformation, and strengthening post-conflict peacebuilding.

Civic Action Campaigns and Movements to Curb Corruption

The greatest enemy of corruption is the people.
Robert Klitgaard, Ronald Maclean-Abaroa and H. Lindsay Parris[25]

As always, real life precedes analysis. Nonviolent social movements and civic campaigns have a rich history of ending oppression and injustice, and the apparatus of state and other forms of corruption. Over the course of the past twenty years, from the 1986 "People Power" uprising in the Philippines to the "Color Revolutions" in the former Soviet Union, corruption has been a font of public displeasure and an important mobilizing issue of nonviolent movements.

While not widely known, there has been a grass-roots, bottom-up "eruption against corruption," to borrow a campaign slogan of the Fifth Pillar in India. An in-depth research project is documenting civic campaigns and movements to fight graft and abuse, demand accountability and win rights, in order to distill general lessons learned and good practices.[iii] While traditional, top-down approaches tend to frame corruption in abstract terms, grass-roots civic initiatives more often than not link graft and abuse to concerns that impact wide swathes of society or people's everyday lives, for example, poverty, budgets and spending, access to information, authoritarian rule, governance, elections, impunity, organized crime, human rights, education, health services, and the environment. Hence, these social movements and civic campaigns tend to be multi-dimensional rather than one-dimensional.

Over fifteen cases are being documented and analyzed. The following seven campaigns and movements are illustrative of the remarkable variety of struggles, in terms of

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geography, political-social-economic circumstances, forms of corruption, objectives, and demands.

<u>Albania: Youth say "Enough!"</u>

The Mjaft! ("enough" in Albanian) movement emerged in 2003 out of a successful four-month public awareness campaign on issues impacting Albania's social, political and economic development. Youth-driven, it seeks to: increase citizen participation at the local and national levels; promote good governance; curb corruption; improve Albania's image, and "rehabilitate the concept of protest."[26]

Over the past six years, Mjaft has effectively engaged in ballot monitoring, as well as the monitoring of public officials, budgets and expenditures. For example, in 2005 it was at the forefront of fostering clean, free and fair elections, a significant achievement for the former totalitarian state. Mjaft organized a "Get Out the Vote" campaign targeting young voters, public debates in the main cities, and concerts, and volunteers observed the elections. Following the elections, it monitored elected officials' assets and parliamentary activity, and tracked their votes vis-à-vis campaign promises in order to hold them accountable to citizens.

Mjaft engages in a diverse range of nonviolent tactics, from protests, vigils, petitions, street theatre, the latter often of a humorous nature, to an "Office of Complaints," where ordinary Albanians can register complaints (often involving corruption) and seek help, as well as get information about their rights and the responsibilities of officials. This connection to the grass-roots not only offered information and assistance, but provided an ongoing mechanism for Mjaft to build support and involvement in its campaigns while interacting in a constructive manner with authorities. It also took advantage of transparency rules that had heretofore existed on the books but had not been utilized, in order to track the assets of members of parliament, government ministers, judges, mayors, and officials in the tax directorate and customs. Mjaft requested this information, and after significant efforts to overcome obstacles, succeeded in getting it. Once acquiring such information, it wields it to hold those in power accountable through the publication of results, negotiations with political parties, and media engagement (television, print, electronic). It also has conducted grass-roots training in election monitoring, informal and formal alliance-building, and utilizes digital technology (websites, uploading photos on internet, mobile phones with internet connectivity and video capacity, blogs).

It reports having over 8000 members and 1000 volunteers, and branches in 18 cities across the country that also function as local government "watchdogs" and engage citizens to push for changes in the community. Overall, Mjaft has fostered public awareness about the

rights and responsibilities of governments and citizens in a democracy; and increased civic participation in public policy.

<u>Egypt: "The people are watching you"</u>

The civil society landscape in Egypt is one of fragmentation and government repression. Law 84 restricts the ability of NGOs to gather and organize. Human rights abuses are rife. The average citizen is confronted with corruption on a daily basis, which has permeated all facets and aspects of society. In 2005, a small group of women and volunteers launched Shayfeen.com (a play on the Arabic words 'we see you', or 'we are watching you'). It was sparked by the brutal suppression of protests (including molesting women) after a referendum to change the constitution was held, which many charged was rigged. They began with the objectives of providing safe outlets for people to report on corruption and express their sentiments about it. This soon expanded to increasing public awareness that people did have power to fight graft and abuse, honoring those who undermine it, actively involving ordinary Egyptians in curbing it (including monitoring the 2006 elections), and using both traditional media and social networking technology to mobilize citizens, document corruption and exert civic pressure on authorities.

They launched a website to monitor government irregularities and provide citizens with a platform to register complaints, 80% of which were about corruption. They reframed the anti–corruption struggle--moving it from abstract notions to the tangible ways it harms common person. They created a series of innovative, low-risk, simple mass actions to raise awareness, visibility, and support for the campaign. Approximately 100,000 tea glasses with the shayfeen.com logo were distributed, bringing the campaign into homes and tea houses around the country. They printed more than 250,000 plastic bags carrying the slogan, "We see you, and at the elections we are observing you," which in Arabic happens to rhyme. The bags were used and re-used so much that the minister of trade dubbed those carrying them, "the supermarket activists."

Shayfeen.com launched a popular anti-corruption contest on December 9, the International Anti-Corruption Day--whereby ordinary people could vote for anti-corruption heroes via SMS. They also developed communication strategies targeting both the public and various sources of support for the corrupt status quo, such as parts of the government, political and policy elites, and the media. To document fraud in the 2005 parliamentary elections, a network of citizen volunteers fanned out across the country to observe the polls, call-in, email-in or film (often via mobile phones) polling abuses and police violence, with footage placed on websites such as *youtube* or screened on the facades of buildings in public squares for all to see.

In 2007 Shayfeen.com was charged with incitement; corresponding with a foreign entity; possessing documents challenging government policy (one of which was the Transparency International Toolkit); and propagating negative information about Egypt. They successfully sued the government by demonstrating that their activities were legal because Egypt was a signatory to the UNCAC (United Nations Convention against Corruption). As a result, the government was forced to publish UNCAC in Egypt's official legal chronicle, which was essential to render it binding in courts of law. In 2006 Shayfeen.com spawned a new social platform to fight corruption, called Egyptians against Corruption, which continues to the present.

Guatemala: Grass-roots resistance to narco-corruption

People, even if they do not live under authoritarian systems, can nonetheless face repression. In these weak democracies, often emerging out of bloody conflict, citizens can be subjected to violence perpetrated by narco-cartels, organized crime, gangs, paramilitary groups, insurgents, and state security forces. In Guatemala, innovative grass-roots civil resistance movements have been undermining this corruption-violence nexus. One particularly poignant case is in Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa, a town populated largely by indigenous people that is unfortunately situated in a geographical spot convenient to cross-border narco-trafficking from Columbia to Mexico.[27] A local citizen's movement emerged in the aftermath of the civil war. Its objectives were numerous and daunting: to reclaim the community and local government from organized crime, promote social and economic development, foster a collective sense of worth and empowerment, prevent electoral fraud, challenge the climate of impunity, and defend hard-won gains.

Organizers put together a strong coalition that included women, youth, and community groups. Notwithstanding a history of repression, they initially built alliances with Finca (sugar plantation) owners (which later broke down), in order to kick out a drug lord from the local government and support an honest candidate in the local elections. Over the years, they engaged in a diverse range of nonviolent actions, including: solidarity demonstrations; civil disobedience; radio call-in programs; literacy, education and development programs; theatre; art festivals; and recreation projects for youth, who are often targets for organized crime recruitment.

A significant dimension was added to the struggle—the international community. The movement garnered support for civic initiatives from UNDP and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. A security plan was devised, bolstered by human rights organizations that networked to bring international observers and nonviolent accompaniment to protect people at risk. The plan succeeded to reduce general violence levels, and linked security with development. But along with success came harsh counter-attacks. By 2007, 11 community leaders had been murdered, four attempts were made on an honest mayor's life, slandering and defamation cases were lodged, and the police, prosecutors and judges favored the drug cartels, a confirmation of the extent of corruption and state capture. Subsequently, electoral fraud was orchestrated.

In spite of such terrorization, citizens refused to be subdued. Civil disobedience and solidarity demonstrations continued. People engaged in new tactics to disrupt the corrupt status quo, such as monitoring the spending and actions of the new authorities, as well as criminal activities. The latter were reported to the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CIGIC).[iv] Guatemalan human rights defenders garnered world attention to the struggle. Santa Lucia Cotzumalguapa hosted national and international meetings. This sent a crucial message to corruptors that the country and the world were watching and stood together with the townspeople. Lastly, grass-roots coordination and solidarity networks have been forged with other indigenous communities engaged in civil resistance both in Guatemala and across borders. They share experiences, information, and strategies, transmit alerts, and have even come to one another's assistance, for example, by blocking a road.

In extending the arena of resistance from the local to the regional and international, the community is increasing civic power, that is, strength in numbers. From internal unity, they are building a wider front that involves allies at all levels. To confront a system of violence, graft and impunity involving the state and transnational organized crime, in essence, the citizens' movement is creating its own system of civil resistance, involving national and transnational networking, action and solidarity.

India: Freedom from corruption

A ten-year grass-roots nonviolent struggle, that originated from the MKSS movement, achieved a historic victory for Indian citizens in 2005, when the Parliament passed the Right to Information Act (RTIA). Launched in 2006, the Tamil Nadu-based Fifth Pillar is an emerging movement that is strategically using the RTIA. Its long-term mission is nothing less than to "encourage, enable and empower every citizen of India to eliminate corruption at all levels of society."[28] "Everyone can be freedom fighters of India through "noncooperation, nonviolence and self-defense against bribery," explains its founder, Vijay Anand.[29]

Fifth Pillar considers bribery as a particularly harmful manifestation of corruption, due to its prevalence and impact on the poor. This, however, makes it a tangible and meaningful target of mass action. Strategically, to curb bribery is to shake up the entire system of corruption--both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, systems of bribery function throughout public administrations in tandem with all parts of society they touch, from

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[iv] As of May 2010, there has not been a response from CIGIC.

education to health care to the private sector. Vertically, within an institution, bribery functions up and down a chain, from the lowest level clerk all the way to the top.

Fifth Pillar seeks to foster awareness about corruption, motivate and educate citizens on how they can fight bribery in their daily lives, and thus, begin to change corrupt practices. To do so, it directs much of its outreach to students and youth, because they will be the next generation to govern, run and develop India. It conducts workshops on college and university campuses throughout Tamil Nadu, educating them to use the RTIA, encouraging them to take an anti-bribery pledge, and supporting the establishment of campus groups.

The movement has developed two defining methods. The first is the innovative Zero-Rupee note. It's a "nonviolent weapon" for ordinary citizens to refuse to pay petty bribes. It also sends a message of "noncooperation to corruption" and shows that the person is not alone; he/she is part of a larger movement. Fifth Pillar maintains that there's not been a reported instance in which the dishonest official didn't back down. Approximately one million notes have been distributed and it's available online. The second defining method is to file an RTI. With the proper questions, it's possible to document misbehavior, thereby holding officials accountable. Nonviolent tactics associated with the RTI include: workshops in urban centers and villages; assistance to write and submit RTIs; "people's inspection and audits" of public works; leafleting; and back-up for those wanting to approach the state government's Vigilance Department and the Central Bureau of Investigation's Anti-Corruption Zone.

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

Indonesia: Save KPK, save Indonesia

Since its inception in 2003, the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) has earned the public's respect and admiration. KPK has not hesitated to confront the powers that be, and expose corrupt behavior and relationships among the local and national governments, Parliament, Administration, private sector, and police. It has convicted

governors, judicial figures, and politicians, and in 2008, the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank, who also happens to be the father-in-law of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's son.[30]

Such activities threatened the entire tangled system of influence and graft benefitting the ruling elites, and the KPK inevitably became a target. Since early 2009, efforts to weaken, and even to crush it, have intensified, including parliamentary attempts to cut its budget and authority, police criminalization of some of its activities, investigations of deputy commissioners, and the arrest of its Chairman for murder.

By July of that year, a group of civil society leaders "saw the signs."[31] They determined to proactively develop a strategy to protect KPK—the institution, its authority, and mandate. One of the activists explained: "We realized that what we faced was so big and so strong and has so much authority, we needed to come together." Subsequently, the CICAK campaign was launched. The name has a dual meaning. It's an acronym for "Love Indonesia, Love Anti-Corruption," but also is a gecko lizard, referring to a derogatory wiretapped comment by the Chief of the Police's Criminal Department, who likened KPK to a gecko fighting the crocodile (police). One hundred civic organizations soon joined CICAK, a graduate student independently created a Facebook group, local groups formed in 20 of the country's 33 provinces, and well-known public figures came on board.

On October 29, the police arrested two KPK Deputy Chairmen, Bibit Samad Rianto and Chandra Hamzah. The charge was abuse of power. The detention came a day after President Yudhoyono ordered an investigation into wiretapped telephone conversations involving a senior Attorney General's Office official, in which the leader was said to support attempts to subdue KPK. However, this repression backfired. CICAK was ready to channel popular anger into civic mobilization. The Facebook group reached 1.3 million, and became a key tool through which to communicate with and rally citizens. CICAK organized actions in Jakarta. In addition, local chapters and high school and university students initiated their own events throughout the country.

Campaign tactics included demonstrations, marches to the Presidential palace, petitions, wearing a black ribbon, CICAK clothing and accessories, banners reading "Say no to crocodiles," street murals, sit-ins, gathering in front of police stations, a hunger strike, street theatre, concerts, and humorous stunts that garnered media attention, for example, jumping off the KPK building with parachutes. Popular singers composed an anti-corruption song, which was used for ringtones. People of all ages, social-economic groups, and faiths took part. Senior clerics of Indonesia's five religions paid solidarity visits to KPK.

CICAK called on the President to save the KPK and demanded an immediate independent investigation. As people power escalated, he agreed to the investigation, which subsequently recommended that the charges against the KPK officials be dropped. Bibit and Chandra were released, senior figures in the attorney general's office and police resigned, and other investigations have commenced. Civic leaders remain vigilant against new attacks being launched on the KPK, and also monitor the Commission itself, in order to uphold its independence and commitment to fighting corruption.

Kenya: "It's our money. Where's it gone?"

Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) is a civil society organization in Mombasa, Kenya that is catalyzing civic action campaigns to access information about budgets, curb corruption, promote accountability, and ultimately, fight poverty. It empowers poor communities to make their voices heard to their elected representatives and local officials, and to participate in the management of public finances. The immediate focus is on the misuse of constituency development funds (CDFs), which are annual allocations of approximately one million dollars to each Member of Parliament (MP) for his/her district. MUHURI's long-term vision is to cultivate a sense of agency amongst local communities. Hussein Khalid, the organization's Executive Director stated: "If people are able to be encouraged to go out, today it's CDF, tomorrow it's something else, and another day it's another thing. So CDF is an entry point to the realization of so many rights that people are not getting."[32]

Since 2007, through a pioneering collaboration with the International Budget Partnership and veteran activists from the MKSS movement in India, MUHURI has developed a defining nonviolent method, the five-step social audit, which is designed to pressure legislators to confront corruption and mismanagement. The first step is gathering information from the local CDF office. The second step is training local people--men, women, and youth--to become community activists. They learn how to interpret documents and budgets, monitor expenditures and physically inspect public works.

The third step is inspecting the CDF project site. Newly trained activists systematically compare records with the reality on the ground. They also use site visits to speak with local people, in order to get them to attend the public hearing and collect additional information about improprieties and corruption. The fourth step is educating and motivating the community about the CDF and their right to information and accountability. Local activists and MUHURI use nonviolent tactics to attract attention, directly engage people, and encourage them to attend a "public hearing." This includes street theatre, puppet plays, musical processions, and leafleting. Information about CDF misuse and graft is shared, and reactions and input are collected.

The final step is the public hearing with CDF officials, the media, and in some cases, the MP. MUHURI first leads a procession through the community, replete with chanting, a youth band, theatrics and dancing children. Once the forum begins, local activists present the results of their investigations and CDF officials are questioned. At MUHURI's first

ever public hearing in August 2007, the MP finally agreed to investigate the problems and register citizens' complaints and charges against the concerned contractors. MUHURI then rolled out a cloth banner petition demanding that accountability and transparency measures be added to the CDF Act and the RTI law be passed. After the people and opposition candidates signed it, the MP acquiesced to civic pressure and added his name. Follow-up monitoring tracks progress.

In 2009, during the Likoni constituency social audit, MUHURI's office was ransacked and their guard was stabbed. The intimidation backfired. The next day a popular radio station reported the incident and interviewed activists, which gave them another platform to communicate with people. Later that year, civic actors from eight constituencies that conducted social audits joined together in a national campaign to change the CDF law. By June 2009, the Kenyan government set up a task force to review it. MUHURI continues to foster new campaigns. During the last week of October, 2010 a social audit was conducted in the Mwatate constituency, where earlier in the month, the local public Chair and Secretary were arrested and charged in court for misappropriation of funds. The audit seeks to determine if other project funds were embezzled besides those in the court case.

Philippines: Counting textbooks to curb corruption

In the Philippines, whistleblowers and civic activists have faced loss of employment, libel cases, detention, threats, and extra-judicial disappearances.[33] Despite this dangerous climate, in 2003 an unusual public-civic partnership zeroed in on

a visible aspect of corruption--graft in the elementary and secondary public school system, which was plagued by overpriced or defective materials, ghost deliveries, unaccountable losses, irregular or late deliveries, and non-distribution. For ordinary citizens, this was viewed as a form of theft that robs their children of an education. Not surprisingly, the Department of Education was seen as the most corrupt agency in the government.[34]

A consortium of civil society organizations coordinated by G-Watch, the social accountability program at the Ateneo School of Government, together with the Department of Education, launched a nation-wide campaign to "ensure the prompt delivery of the right quantity of quality textbooks to the intended recipients."[35] The Department of Education agreed to provide access to essential documents and information, such as budgets, contracts, prices, inspection sites, and delivery points. Civic organizations and volunteers carried out the monitoring, including surprise quality inspections during production.

Organizers sought to develop a simple, easy tactic around which the campaign could be centered. That defining method was the textbook count. A meticulous, nation-wide plan and logistical system was constructed. The campaign harnessed the skills, resources, and time of civic organizations, trade unions including the Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK), local community groups, Christian and Muslim groups, teachers, citizen alliances, civic anti-corruption networks, and parents.[36] And the nonviolent "foot soldiers" on the ground were none other than girl scouts and boy scouts. By 2006-07, 11,960 million textbooks were tracked in over 5,500 delivery points.[37] Between 2003 and 2008, textbook prices were reduced by 50%, the procurement process was shortened from 24 to 12 months, and ghost deliveries ceased.[38]

In 2006 a second defining method was added to the campaign--the "Textbook Walk." The objective was to create public awareness and empower local people. Where deliveries to remote areas are made to district offices rather than directly to schools, a citizen "march" led by the scouts would transport the boxes to their final destination. The event has become a social fiesta. In 2006 it is estimated that one million children took part in the receipt, tallying and inspection of books.[39]

The Textbook Count has evolved into an ongoing community-led, community-based initiative. The system of corruption in the Department of Education has been dismantled, and a culture of transparency and social accountability has been inculcated into the bureaucracy. By 2009, the Department of Education was perceived to be the least corrupt of government agencies.[40] The campaign has had a ripple effect. After the tragic floods in 2009, the civic network built over the years mobilized to help victims and get relief services and supplies to people in need.[41]

Turkey: "One minute of darkness for constant light"

In 1996, Turkey was beleaguered by a nationwide crime syndicate that involved paramilitary entities, the mafia, drug traffickers, government officials, members of Parliament, parts of the judiciary and media, and businesses. That November a speeding car crashed into a truck on a highway late at night. Among the passengers were a parliamentarian, a police chief who was also a police academy director, and an escaped criminal and paramilitary member (wanted by the Turkish courts, Swiss police and Interpol) who possessed a fake ID signed by the minister of internal affairs. The car contained cocaine, weapons and cash. The next day students held unplanned protests throughout the country, but were harshly repressed.

A small, diverse group of professionals decided that this scandal provided an opportunity to tap public disgust, mobilize people to action, and push for definable changes.[42] They had clear demands: to prosecute the founders of the criminal groups; protect judges trying such

cases; reveal the crime syndicate relationships; and remove parliamentary immunity. They formed the Citizen Initiative for Constant Light. Strategic choices were made from the outset--the campaign would be apolitical and citizens should feel a sense of ownership in the effort--in order to protect against smear attacks, build a broad alliance, and attract the widest possible base of people. Well before taking action, they first defined goals, analyzed the media's views on corruption, and developed a publicity strategy. Because the mafia had recently been taking control of a major broadcasting corporation through manipulating legislation and business links, parts of the media were concerned about its image, which increased its responsiveness.

The group systematically built a coalition by reaching out to non-political organizations, including the Bar, the Istanbul Coordination of Chambers of Professions, unions, professional associations of pharmacists, dentists, civil engineers and electrical engineers, and nongovernmental organizations. The organizers endeavored to design a creative nonviolent tactic that would overcome real obstacles, such as imprisonment, violent crackdowns, and public fear and feelings of powerlessness. A lawyer's teenage daughter of came up with the idea to turn off lights. A chain of mass faxes and press releases signed by "an anonymous aunt" got the word out.

At 9:00 p.m. on February 1, 1997, citizens began to turn off their lights for one minute. After two weeks at the campaign's peak, the group estimated that approximately 30 million people participated throughout the country, with many adding their own flourishes, such as banging pots and pans and staging street actions. As people overcame their fear and gathered together, neighborhood squares took on a festive character. The campaign lasted six weeks. It broke the strong taboo over confronting corruption. Although it did not succeed to remove parliamentary immunity, it nonetheless empowered citizens to fight corruption, forced the government to launch judicial investigations which resulted in verdicts, and exposed crime syndicate figures and relationships.

Conclusion

Several common attributes of civic action campaigns and movements to fight corruption are emerging from the case studies. Bottom-up initiatives can be found across the globe, both in democracies and brutal authoritarian regimes. They are prevalent in societies enduring poor governance, poverty, low levels of literacy, and severe repression, the latter perpetrated by the state, organized crime or paramilitary groups. Rather than spontaneous outbursts, organization and planning precede action, even when a scandal or tragedy arouses public indignation. Taken together, they confirm what some civil resistance scholars assert; strategy and skills matter more than conditions.[43]

Women and youth are playing galvanizing roles in many campaigns. "Defining methods," around which a host of nonviolent tactics revolve, are common.[44] Success can be "contagious"; it inspires new applications, knowledge-sharing and campaigns—locally and even across borders and continents.

The case studies provide general lessons learned about the application of civil resistance to curb corruption and win accountability and rights:

- Unity of goals and people, together with a sense of shared ownership in the struggle (the sense that everyone is part of the fight against corruption and can play a role), are essential and can be strategically cultivated.
- To motivate and mobilize citizens, civic action campaigns link general concepts or issues to widely-held or everyday grievances and concerns.
- Information is a source of power, when accompanied by civic action to demand accountability and change.
- Creativity is a hallmark of effective mobilization, tactical development, and messaging. Effective tactics can derive from local circumstances and reflect local culture.
- Tactical innovation can be critical to overcome repression, human rights abuses, and maintain campaign resilience.
- Low-risk, mass actions can overcome fear and intimidation.
- Effective communication is strategically important for building awareness, winning support and actively involving citizens.
- As in other nonviolent struggles, power comes from numbers—locally, nationally, and even internationally when citizens confront endemic corruption involving national and cross-border relationships and actors. Power is indeed not monolithic. Support and allies can be drawn from within corrupt institutions and systems, which can be a source of information, access and constructive negotiations, especially when the latter is backed by citizen mobilization.
- Education and training are vital to build campaign capacity, confidence and resilience.
- Finally, as a result of top-down, rules-based anti-corruption initiatives, many countries have transparency and accountability legislation and mechanisms, at least on the books, where corrupt governments would like them to unobtrusively remain. Inventive campaigns and movements take advantage of them in order to secure information and repel attacks.

In conclusion, corruption can be curbed and some of the most destructive forms of it controlled. When ordinary citizens are involved in the struggle, by raising their collective voice and exerting their collective power, they can transform the struggle itself—on the one hand, by linking corruption to social and economic injustice, while on the other hand, bonding it to a fundamental vision of participatory democracy and freedom.

ENDNOTES

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[27] This section is based on a presentation, written materials and conversations with Claudia Samayoa, Co-founder, Unit of Protection of Human Rights Defenders (UDEFEGUA); Member of the Advisors Council for Security to the President of Guatemala.

[28] This section is based on interviews with four civic anti-corruption leaders and activists of the Fifth Pillar movement, including its founder, Vijay Annand.

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