



Session Report

Please know you may design the structure of this report to better suit the session. It's important to capture the key outcomes and solutions proposed for the future.

Session Title: Anti-Corruption Reset: Beyond Siloes to Shifting Power, Civil Society Collaboration, Localized Donor Support

Date & Time: Friday, 09.12.2022, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm GMT -5

Report prepared by: Abdulai Taylor Kamara, Program Manager, USAID

Moderated by: Ann-Sofie Jespersen, Senior Governance Specialist, Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA), World Bank

Panellists:

- Shaazka Beyerle, Senior Fellow, Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC), George Mason University, and author of Spring 2023 publication, “Supporting Nonviolent Action and Movements: A Guide for International Actors (U.S. Institute of Peace)
- Nada Zohdy, Global Network Lead, Obama Foundation
- Nikhil Dey, founding member of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) with Aruna Roy and Shankar Singh
- Odeh Friday, Country Director, Accountability Lab Nigeria

Share the thematic focus of the session, its purpose and corruption risks?

The session focused on the need for an overall anti-corruption reset that anchor on shifting power, civil society collaboration, and localized donor support. With shrinking civic spaces, democratic backsliding, rise of authoritarian regimes, climate change and rising transnational social movements such as the #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo, we need to do things differently to prevent anti-corruption backsliding, maintain momentum and make progress. The session examined the components needed for an anti-corruption reset such as proactively addressing intersectionality issues and incorporating inclusion and diversity into priorities, policies, and practices; shifting power imbalances between Global North and Global South actors; cultivating civil society collaboration; breaking down and learning across silos; and promoting action research in our work.

Summary of panellists' contributions & discussion points (please be as detailed as possible)

- Cultivate and strengthen civil society collaboration and adaptation across sectors (state actors, donors, civil society, nonviolent campaigns/movements, researchers/scholars). This includes convening civil society organizations so they can share and form common understandings around development and democracy - instead of competition among themselves across sectors and for funding.
- While corruption is one of the biggest common challenges facing people around the world, the bar to entry to tackle it is high. Therefore, engagement through cross-country networks/learning from each other is essential for a reset.
- Power shifts from Global North to Global South and at national levels from the capitals to peripheries involve who sets and defines terms, agendas and desired outcomes, who prioritizes issues and problems, who decides who/what are the protagonists; and which activities and practices have merit.
- Civil society needs vertical partnerships - partnerships between policy specialists or professionalized NGOs and grassroots organizations which builds complementary assets and strengths to a campaign or a project. However, overly focusing on professionalization can crowd out local organizations. Therefore, one has to create right balance and be strategic in building these partnerships.
- There are useful tools that can be adapted to benchmark and understand over time the development of collaboration, networks, and coalitions for change, including from the social movement field. Some examples are: social network analysis, Rhize's Movement Mapping Tool, the Global Fund for Women's Movement Capacity Assessment Tool, and the American Jewish World Service's Social Movement Tool.
- We need to break down silos otherwise we miss: the frontlines of where corruption is being tackled; the full picture of corruption challenges; who is involved in corrupt systems; and appropriate responses and lines of research.

- Understanding intersectionality and integrating it into our discourse, analyses, and proactive policies and practices for diversity and inclusion are necessary. Intersectionality is a concept developed by the legal scholar, Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw. She states that it's "a lens to understand how aspects/characteristics of a person or group interact and affect their experiences and lives, ranging from marginalization and abuses on the one hand to opportunities and advantages on the other hand." In the international arena, intersectionality has evolved to mean "the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage" [\[1\]](#) (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *The Time is Now: Addressing the Gender Dimensions of Corruption* (Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).
- Peoples' point of view should be central to inform and direct the anti-corruption agenda. They suffer the most and should be empowered to define the problems and the concepts and find the solutions as corruption cannot be separated from injustice.
- The international anti-corruption community must hold a mirror up to itself. This includes shifting power and equalizing relationships with the civic groups and initiatives they interact with in countries, introducing mechanisms for two-way accountability so they are also accountable to those they interact with, and dropping the policies and practices based on the notion that they hold the knowledge and skills and this needs to be adopted by the Global South.
- Support interdisciplinary action research programs, such as the Accountability Research Center, American University; BIT-ACT (Bottom-Up Initiatives and Anti-Corruption Technologies), a multi-year, international research programme, University of Bologna; and TraCCC, George Mason University's interdisciplinary Disrupting Operations of Illicit Supply Networks (D-ISN) in the cyber world, a collaborative research initiative (full disclosure, one of the speakers is from TraCCC though not involved in this effort).

Main outcomes of session (include quotes/highlights and interesting questions from the floor)

- 'Corruption is perhaps the single most universally felt and understood social problem in the world. It is deeply understood by ordinary people in every corner of the universe, but there is a high barrier to entry.'
- 'We have a real paradox in the anti-corruption field - despite corruption being a universal experience and problem, there is barrier to entry in the anti-corruption world.'
- "Life is not in silos but anti-corruption work is"
- "There is no one-size-fits-all."
- In 2020, a coalition in the DRC built a strong campaign to change a government passport contract awarded to a foreign company that increased the cost of a passport to \$300. Various NGOs came together to follow the money of that government contract. This grassroots mobilization led to pressure to cancel the

contract. This case demonstrates how combining respective specializations and constituencies could lead to transformative change.

- Shifting power is also about recognizing and enabling the voices, concerns and participation of those left behind, including youth.
- ‘We need to get away from our technical way of looking at corruption, to looking at it as something people see as injustice, unacceptable ethical behaviour and then they will fight it no matter what with their own means.’
- Accountability is also about international actors being accountable to their recipients/partners, and about civil society being accountable to citizens. On the latter point, there are efforts to create adaptable guidelines/principles and global networking, for example, through the [Global Standard](#) for Civil Society Accountability and entities such as [Accountable Now](#).
- Fighting corruption is struggle rather than a profession.

Key recommendations for the future and concrete follow-up actions

- Combine specializations from different constituencies to bring about change
- Support inclusive and diverse civil society networks across sectors, within and outside countries, with a focus on knowledge building and sharing to maximize impact (leaving no one behind).
- Communication: support organizations in framing their campaigns in ways that resonate with their audience/communities.
- Implement new international support paradigms that recognize and operationalize intersectionality and enable localized civic initiatives and movements and citizen-state collaboration.
- Implement two-way accountability, including policies and practices that hold international actors accountable to in-country partners, recipients, interlocutors.
- To move from silos to integrative practices, create support mechanisms that don't pigeonhole civil society - nonviolent action initiatives – into narrow, externally-defined thematic categories.
- Support and provide solidarity and protection to reformers and their work so they continue to thrive in the space.
- Integrate intersectional perspectives into anti-corruption work to understand the problems and be able to find appropriate solutions to them.
- Build ecosystems possible to conduct global research, and support interdisciplinary action research programs, such as the Accountability Research Center, American University; BIT-ACT (Bottom-Up Initiatives and Anti-Corruption Technologies), a multi-year, international research programme, University of Bologna; and TraCCC, George Mason University's "Disrupting Operations of Illicit Supply Networks (D-ISN)" in the cyber world, a collaborative research initiative (full disclosure, one of the speakers is from TraCCC though not involved in this effort).

What can be done to create opportunities for scaling up the solutions discussed in the session? And by whom?

- Catalyze dialogue and discourse that will both continue after the IACC and be integrated into other international and regional fora focusing on corruption, for example, the Anti-Corruption Advocacy Network (ACAN), CSO Standard for Accountability, Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA), Human Rights Funders Network, OpenGovHub, Open Government Partnership, Summit for Democracy and UNCAC Civil Society Coalition.
- More civil society collaboration and solidarity networks within and outside of countries.
- Empower anti-corruption campaigners both at the top and at the bottom levels. Design and implement projects/campaigns with them to sustain interventions way after project ends.
- In designing and implementing projects/campaigns, empower anti-corruption campaigners at all levels to build sustainable interventions.
- Build coalitions and form cross-sectoral collaboration among journalists, reformers, civil society organizations, social movements, etc.
- Positive reinforcement: Balance the negatives of anti-corruption and the positives of what we want- reinforcing the kinds of behaviours we want to see that are antithetical to corruption like integrity, duty, responsibility, for example, Accountability Lab's [Integrity Icon](#) grassroots, youth-led annual nonviolent campaigns.
- Let the people decide, empower them with the skills and capacities of strategic nonviolent action, focus on the most marginalized and give voice to the voiceless.

Is there a specific call to action to key stakeholders, such as governments, businesses, funders, civil society, young people, journalists or any other stakeholder that should be noted? Please specify if relevant.

- Everyone should work to break the silos we work in.
- Corruption is a universal problem and citizens must be empowered to fight it.
- Understand and address corruption from an intersectional perspective.
- There is no one-size-fits all in fighting corruption. Adapt to contexts and communities.
- Strive to answer to the right people
- Fight corruption as a struggle- let the people decide.
- Increase the use of civil society and social movement mapping tools and their work around the world.
- Explore new business models to raise funds to support your anti-corruption work.

Rapporteur's name and date submitted

Abdulai Taylor Kamara