



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: Mobilising Youth for Uprooting Corruption

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

Report prepared by: Megan Tribble, Anti-Corruption Visa Advisor, Department of State, INL-GPP

Moderated by: Oya Ozarslan, Board member, Transparency International

Panellists:

- Kirupairajah Gowriswaran - Head - Community Sector & Branches, Transparency International (TI) Sri Lanka
- Arianne Kassman - Chief Executive Officer, Transparency International (TI) Papua New Guinea
- Joshua Alade Executive - Director, Network of Youth for Sustainable Initiative (NGYouthSDGs)
- Deimantė Žemgulytė - Project Leader, Transparency International (TI) Lithuania
- Sonja Stefanovska-Trajanoska - UNDP Pacific Office, Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser
- Cille Hald Egholm - Medlem af Borgerrepræsentationen i København for Venstre
- Peter Eigen - Founder, Transparency International
- Claire Launey - Program Director Transparencia por Colombia
- Tasmin Tayari - I Watch Citizen Engagement Officer, Tunisia
- Ketakandriana "K" Rafitsoson - Director, Transparency International (TI) Madagascar

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

The session honed in on the vital necessity of increasing youth engagement and active participation in countering corruption around the world. Representatives from Transparency International, UNDP and several other organizations shared their successes and challenges in increasing youth participation and activating younger generations to join the fight. Participants and panellists also discussed ways to frame how we approach increasing youth engagement, specifically the idea of thinking of the younger generation as current leaders, rather than simply potential future leaders.

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

Oya Ozarslan - Board member, Transparency International established a deliberately welcoming tone of inclusion by moving chairs into a “fishbowl” circle formation and having not only panellists, but all attendees, join the circle to listen and participate. Anyone who wanted to speak was invited to the center of the circle. The seating design reinforced the central theme of the session—creating space and pathways for younger anti-corruption activists and practitioners to not only be heard, but to join the decision-making process.

Peter Eigen - Founder, Transparency International emphasized the need for solidarity between generations, and countered the idea that “old white men” should feel threatened by youth participation—on the contrary, young people can chain themselves to factory doors and march in the streets, and do not have the constituencies of older generations that interfere with gaining the courage to take a stand. Older generations need younger ones to join the debate, it is imperative on younger generations to learn how to join the decision-making processes that are already in place.

Kirupairajah Gowriswaran - Head - Community Sector & Branches, Transparency International (TI) Sri Lanka used the passing of a Right to Information Act to bring attention to and engage young people in anti-corruption efforts in Sri Lanka. Employed regional strategy with 25 regional boys and girls forums that allow youth to use their own unique interests in art, filmmaking etc. to engage on anti-corruption issues. Forums employ participatory budgeting to ensure a sense of ownership by youth over their own programs.

Arianne Kassman - Chief Executive Officer, Transparency International (TI) Papua New Guinea explained Papua New Guinea suffers from high levels of political corruption that worsens each year, so young people experience disheartenment and as a result are not inclined to participate in elections. To counter this TI works to involve youth in election monitoring; they operate democracy camps to fill the gap in the education program and get young people involved and excited about democratic processes.

Joshua Alade - Director, Network of Youth for Sustainable Initiative (NGYouthSDGs) said we must see all young people as current leaders and advocates in the fight against corruption. Shared his experience working to connect young people from all seven states in Nigeria to allow them to feel more comfortable speaking out about the needs of Nigerian youth. However, youth are not a homogenous group – they comprise different tribes with different experiences. Programs need to meet the needs of each group and all must feel empowered to join decision-making processes.

Deimantė Žemgulytė - Project Leader, Transparency International (TI) Lithuania shared the hugely successful “participatory budgeting” practices of students in Lithuania. They learn about how public procurement works, see transparency in action and take ownership over their school. Participatory budgeting builds trust between students and administration and teachers. Impact shows that 8x more students knew what their school budgets consisted of due to this program. Lithuania also hosts the largest anti-corruption school in the world that has an alumni network greater than 1,000 people from many countries.

Sonja Stefanovska-Trajanoska - UNDP Pacific Office, Regional Anti-Corruption Adviser stressed the importance of leveraging existing regional youth infrastructure, i.e. piggybacking on youth efforts to counter climate change in the Pacific Islands by making clear the vital connection between countering climate change and fighting corruption in the Pacific Islands region.

Cille Hald Egholm - Medlem af Borgerrepræsentationen i København for Venstre reminded us that young people are more idealistic and optimistic because we are playing a longer game. The need for youth to participate in decision-making (political, environmental, economic) is urgent. Experience should not be prized over a strong will to change and improve. She noted that “we have energy, we do not have children at home to take care of, and it is a huge mistake to not let us take an active role in decision making.”

Claire Launey - Program Director Transparencia por Colombia uses three key strategies in Colombia: a citizen anti-corruption school is open to the public, a huge mobilization of youth social movement against corruption employs social engagement, street art, and popular exhibits to attract attention and energize, and alternative medias are used to build community, connect and enhance security of youth taking risks to counter corruption by protest and activism.

Tasmin Tayari - I Watch Citizen Engagement Officer, Tunisia spoke about the success of building a youth army of volunteers to monitor and observe elections. Even middle and high school students who cannot yet vote are invited to participate in election monitoring. In this way, the principles of transparency and concepts of anti-corruption can be instilled in Tunisian youth.

Ketakandriana “K” Rafitsoan - Director Transparency International (TI) Madagascar shared the hard truth that anti-corruption work is more than a job, it

is a calling that is exhausting and frustrating, so constantly needs new energy and perspectives. Young people bring vital inspiration and creativity to ensure sustainability of effort. Youth are also more aware of latest developments in technology and have the unique capability of being able to spearhead peer-to-peer education that transmits values and messages in ways that traditional education cannot.

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

All panelists' contributions, and every participant's comments rested on the central theme of needing to feel a sense of ownership and belonging in order to sustain and encourage more youth engagement in anti-corruption struggles around the world. The fundamental need for anti-corruption actors to feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves was reflected in the consistent use of terms like "army," "summits," "networks," "community," "hubs," "safe spaces," "forums," "training camps," and "school classes"—all of which came up in discussion as successful ways of energizing and sustaining new youth participation in anti-corruption efforts.

Sarah from Lebanon: youth are not apathetic, but exhausted and burnt out and deserve our support and protection. In the Middle East they are being shot down. They need support to prevent them from leaving or giving up and turning apathetic.

Andrew from Brazil: the way we discuss corruption matters, if older generations use language of apathy, it can disincentivize youth from even trying to engage in anti-corruption efforts. Phrasing the effort as more positive and inviting, rather than using "fight" or "war" on corruption can better create entry pathways for more youth engagement.

Joanna from Albania, noted that anti-corruption efforts must come from both ends of the generational spectrum—older generations need to invite younger by explicitly connecting issues of corruption to youth concerns and younger generations need to step up and join efforts. She underscored that containing impunity is important, but we need to better tell why -- tell what we do every day that will improve young people's future.

Anne from Uganda, highlighted that young people have the demographic strength so their perspective **MUST** be taken into account, lest they rebel and use their energy and numbers destructively rather than constructively. Young people are also more gullible and need proper information sources.

Elected official from Ukraine, brought up carrot vs. stick actions that can be taken against corruption, Ukraine has had success with stick options, but needs to use carrot options too.

TI representative from Fiji, warned against tokenistic inclusion of youth ticking a box to satisfy donors as an example. Youth need to intentionally be at the table, not just trotted out as a token.

Issam from Palestine, beautifully encapsulated the entire session and spoke about the need to create on-ramps or entry pathways for youth by showing young people how corruption impacts them specifically, citing their core interests of fighting youth unemployment, and accessing scholarships and education. Older generations must draw a direct line from anti-corruption engagement to youth interests.

Paula from Colombia built on Issam's point by giving examples of how TI in Colombia has worked to say to youth, "this is how corruption affects YOU"

Khaled from Australia, brought the important undercurrent of social engineering and behavioral economics to eliminate barriers of entry and ensure that young people can come to the table and participate. He noted it's easy for youth to shut down if the situation feels too intimidating. He shared approaches like "policy drafting hackathons" that bring civil society, journalists, others together to discuss how to develop policy, and include youth participation and incorporate their viewpoints.

"One of the biggest mistakes is not letting young people participate in the decision-making process. If we don't, it will be harder for us to take care of the societies we will live in." ~ Cille Hald Egholm, 26-year old parliamentarian from Denmark

Defending democracy must include Youth – for their idealism, energy, and capacity, if you provide the space for them. They are the most invested in the values of democracy. As Kurt Cobain said, *"The duty of youth is to challenge corruption."*

Key recommendations for the future and concrete follow-up actions

- Large organizations, political leaders, older generations are responsible for creating space and entry pathways for younger generations to join the decision-making processes in countering corruption
- Inter-generational solidarity in countering corruption

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

- Invest funds in youth-focused organizations.
- When planning or designing anti-corruption efforts, organizers should intentionally and meaningfully include Youth from the beginning and throughout the process, including follow-on efforts. Avoid tokenistic approaches like inviting a Youth representative to speak on a panel or providing a quote to an article.

- Transparency International expressed eager willingness to partner with State Department with international outreach efforts that engage youth.

**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.**

Specific actions endorsed and called for:

- On-ramps for youth engagement and participation is the responsibility of older generations
- Transparency and integrity schools and programs
- Participatory budgeting
- Democracy camps
- Peer-to-peer education
- Policy draft-athons
- “Fishbowl” Circle-seating to re-shape the deliberative process to welcome all generations and experience-levels to participate
- Inclusive and protective communities are required for all anti-corruption effort, especially youth participation—young people want to feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves, which also provides necessary protections from adverse effects of speaking out
- Policies that account for diversity in youth needs and priorities, center the non-homogeneity of youth globally. Provide information using terms and illustrations that youth understand, including in local languages and dialects. Terminology like “anti-corruption” and “accountability” don’t always directly translate into other languages, so use terms understood locally.

Rapporteur’s name and date submitted

Megan Tribble and Charlie Kellett, 15.12.2022