

U4 Expert Answer



Anti-corruption training in sectors – current approaches, experience, and evidence about effectiveness

Query

What are the current approaches used in anti-corruption training in sectors and what are the experiences and evidence regarding its effectiveness? What challenges and achievements have been identified?

Purpose

The answer will be used to inform research on training and capacity development on water integrity.

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Summary

There are two broad categories of anti-corruption training, respectively aimed at 1) identifying and addressing corruption risks in specific sectors and contexts and 2) raising the integrity of various actors through ethics training. Anti-corruption training in sectors often includes a combination of both approaches. Depending on context and sector, different training techniques can be used to maximise the effectiveness of the training programme. While there is broad consensus on the importance of fighting corruption at the sector level including through training, there is little evidence available on the effectiveness of training on corruption, anti-corruption tools and ethical conduct at sector level. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that in some cases, anti-corruption training has contributed to increasing compliance with anti-corruption guidelines and that, for example, illegal school fees for Peruvian public school have disappeared.

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U4 is a web-based resource centre for development practitioners who wish to effectively address corruption challenges in their work. Expert Answers are produced by the U4 Helpdesk – operated by Transparency International – as quick responses to operational and policy questions from U4 Partner Agency staff.

1. Overview: why fight corruption at the sector level?

Sectors such as health, education, infrastructure and water are guided and regulated by specific rules and receive large amounts of public funding (Boehm 2014). It is therefore instrumental to ensure that integrity, fairness, accountability and transparency govern the way that related rules and policies are adopted, funds are allocated and spent, as well as how services are delivered. Anti-corruption measures have therefore been increasingly integrated into sector work by development agencies, government and civil society organisations as a way of achieving the sector's own policy goals and improving service delivery (Boehm 2014).

In addition, it is reasonable to assume that curbing corruption in one sector can create a "positive spill over to other sectors and can enhance state legitimacy more broadly, as citizens regain trust in their government and ask for more reforms" (Boehm 2014).

How to integrate anti-corruption strategies into sectors: the importance of anti-corruption training

Anti-corruption training and policy analysis are among the preferred instruments to mainstream anti-corruption issues into sector work (Boehm 2014).

Anti-corruption training is considered an important element in the fight against corruption as stated in the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Article 7.1 of the convention calls for education and training programmes to enable (civil servants and where appropriate, other non-elected public officials) to meet the requirements for the correct, honourable and proper performance of public functions and that provide them with specialized and appropriate training to enhance their awareness of the risks of corruption inherent in the performance of their function.

At the sector level, anti-corruption training typically aims to help public officials develop skills to: (i) identify and understand problems of corruption and corruption risks in a specific sector, (ii) design anti-corruption strategies and tools to address these risks, and (iii) respond to personal exposure to corruption issues, such as how to react when

they suspect someone is involved in corruption or when they are offered a bribe (Whitton 2009).

Training also aims to raise awareness about the forms, causes and consequences of corruption, how it flourishes in a given context and to provide information about the tools and problem-solving approaches used to address identified corruption challenges in practice (Whitton 2009b). Such training may be conducted as a stand-alone project or as part of a broader anti-corruption strategy. Experience suggests that success is more likely when training is provided as part of a broader anti-corruption programme (OECD 2013).

2. Approaches used in anti-corruption training and their effectiveness

There is limited information about anti-corruption training approaches and their effectiveness. An assessment of training in sectors conducted by governments, donors and civil society organisations indicates that there are two main types of training being provided: (i) anti-corruption training aimed at providing a better understanding of corruption and the measures used to fight it in a given sector and (ii) integrity and ethics training for officials working in a specific sector. Many programmes combine these two complementary approaches and there is a broad consensus that the most effective training tends to combine elements of both (OECD 2013).

Anti-corruption sector training on corruption risks and tools to fight corruption in sectors

Although different anti-corruption training is often structured differently depending on contextual needs, most anti-corruption training tends to include the following components:

Definition of corruption

Several training courses clarify basic terms, concepts and types of corruption as a useful starting point. This can be complemented with an analysis of the root causes of certain types of corruption. For example, the Global Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Centre uses Transparency International UK's module on fighting corruption in the infrastructure, construction and engineering sectors – starts by defining what corruption is, who may be prone to commit corruption offences and the risks involved in indulging in corruption. It then provides examples of various forms of

corruption that can occur at various stages of the project cycle.

Analysis of the legal framework and awareness of the accountability and oversight mechanisms in place

It can also be valuable to establish what anti-corruption legislation is in place locally as well as internationally, as part of an early component of anti-corruption training. For example, a comprehensive anti-corruption training programme used in 2008 and 2009 to educate several thousand customs and excise officials working at the Belgian Administration of Customs and Excise began with a session on anti-corruption legislation (Dormaels & Vande Walle 2011).

Some courses also raise awareness about the various oversight and accountability mechanisms in place at the sector level. In Peru, the first sessions of a training programme developed by a civil society organisation for school principals, teachers, local authorities and parents, focused on introducing participants to the programme and explaining the mechanisms in place for enhancing transparency. A handbook highlighting the roles to be played by the different stakeholders was produced as a result. The programme was considered a success – following the training, members of the educational community were aware of the various oversight and accountability mechanisms available for ensuring the correct administration of public funds (Global Corruption Report 2013).

Identification of corruption risks

An important component of training aims to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to identify and recognise corruption risks related to their work. This can involve teaching them reliable techniques for assessing the risks, causes and forms of corruption occurring within the context of their day-to-day work.

The training programme on water integrity developed by the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Water Governance Facility in cooperation with other partners is a good example of a programme with a component devoted to the identification of corruption risks. It highlights measures that can be used to identify corruption risks and teaches participants to map corruption risks using the corruption interaction framework developed by Plummer and Cross (2007). The training manual can be found [here](#).

Anti-corruption measures and priority setting

Following the identification of risks, subsequent components tend to focus on the context-specific selection of anti-corruption measures. In the training programme on water integrity mentioned above, the component aimed at the identification of risk areas is directly followed by a session on the corresponding instruments available to sector practitioners.

Implementation

Taking the next step and actually implementing the anti-corruption measures is difficult. The context and sector-specific elements have to be taken into account. There are programmes that devote an entire training module to this step and focus on the sector-specific considerations that have to be taken into account for successful implementation. The International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), for example, offers a training programme on anti-corruption in the infrastructure sector in which the last component focuses on implementation. The training folder can be found [here](#).

Monitoring and evaluation

Where training is aimed at sector practitioners who will develop and implement anti-corruption programmes, a component on monitoring and evaluation is sometimes included. The U4 anti-corruption research centre offers an [online course](#) on introducing anti-corruption approaches into sector work and the final components focus on the monitoring and evaluation of anti-corruption programmes. The course refers to [monitoring and evaluation tools](#) developed by the World Bank.

Although anti-corruption training typically covers all these items, the content of each component is largely sector-specific and tailored to the participants being trained. For instance, anti-corruption training in the health sector provided to officials responsible for the procurement of medicines could include common patterns of corruption and measures that can be undertaken to avoid overpricing and other wrongdoing. For hospital managers, anti-corruption training may focus on the effective management of funds and on the adoption of adequate transparency and accountability mechanisms. In this context, anti-corruption training can be provided for each of the core areas of a given sector (e.g. financial management, budget, service delivery, etc.).

In light of this, in order for a training programme to be effective it must take into consideration the officials to be targeted and the main corruption risks related to their specific function.

The U4 Anti-Corruption Centre has been organising country workshops for public officials, representatives from civil society organisations and donors. The workshops are tailored to the specific context of the country and have been focusing less on the general issues of anti-corruption and more on issues and challenges specific to the sector and country in question. This is usually welcomed by the participants as a way of increasing their knowledge and understanding of corruption in the sector.

Integrity and ethics training for sector professionals

Training programmes are useful tools for strengthening ethics and integrity and preventing corruption among sector professionals, particularly when undertaken in combination with other tools or as part of broader anti-corruption strategies. As stand-alone initiatives, training aimed at enhancing integrity and ethics cannot be expected to produce sustainable results and they should be complemented with training that provides information about corruption risks and anti-corruption tools more broadly. With this two-pronged approach, integrity and ethics training can serve as an effective way to provide sector officials with awareness about particular corruption risks and practical skills for addressing them.

The integrity and ethics training currently provided can roughly be divided into two different categories; one focuses on ethical values that form the basis for ethical behaviour, the other focuses on ethical dilemmas that can be encountered in sector work and teaches participants to handle them effectively. The two categories complement one another and can be included in the same training programme. Both discuss values, ethical principles and expected conduct. In some cases, ethical training sessions are developed based on sector codes of conduct, providing the necessary information to ensure the correct application and implementation of applicable codes. The sessions often target newly trained public officials who are about to enter the service, or senior officials who can pass the knowledge gained during the training down through the chain of command. Training is thus often provided at the start of a sector career, at

regular intervals (for example annually), or as part of anti-corruption initiatives.

For example, the training for officials of the Belgian Administration of Customs and Excise also included components on ethical values and simulated ethical dilemmas. Participants took part in a session on the ethical obligation to report corruption they might encounter during their work. This was complemented by another session that simulated dilemmas encountered in their field of work, for example being offered gifts or processing cases that involve relatives or friends (Dormael & Vande Walle 2011).

As is the case with the training approach focused on corruption risks and anti-corruption tools, the selection of an appropriate mix of training components will depend on the sector targeted by the programme, as well as its intended participants. For instance, ethical training for doctors may focus on identifying and dealing with conflicts of interest that may arise in their interactions with pharmaceutical companies (Vian and Nordberg 2008). Ethical training for teachers may focus on ethics and children's rights, as well as on the conduct expected when dealing with parents, for example.

Transparency International Morocco, for example, developed instruction manuals for teachers that cover theoretical aspects of justice and integrity and provide concrete examples of the kind of ethical challenges that teachers may face (Transparency International 2013).

The UNDP project on Integrity in the Health Sector in Mongolia also aimed to enhance integrity among health officials. Among other things, the project included the organisation of training about professional, civil service and public management ethics, as well as the development and publication of a manual for trainers and the organisation of a "train the trainers" session on health sector ethics. In addition, the project also included the development of a code of ethics for medical professionals and the organisation of training to disseminate the code.

3. Designing anti-corruption training in sectors

The organisation of anti-corruption training relies on well-informed planning and a decision-making process that starts a long time before training

commences. During the design phase, the most important course features must be determined. This phase is consequently an essential part of the organisation of anti-corruption training. Important aspects of the design process are highlighted below.

Needs assessment

The need for anti-corruption training differs greatly between sectors and a successful training approach relies on a good understanding of the sector's needs. An assessment of these needs can help to establish the priorities of the training programme. Furthermore, it can ensure cost effectiveness and help to target the sector functions most affected by corruption. In most cases, needs assessments rely on surveys and studies. Not all corruption surveys are useful and a careful selection of existing sources and newly developed surveys or studies might be required. While indicators that show the general state of corruption in countries and sectors are readily available, the challenge is to determine the particular needs of both the sector and the target audience (OECD 2013).

Selection of participants and target group

The number of participants who can be included in training programmes is usually limited, which raises the issue of selection. It is important to target the most relevant sector employees to increase the effectiveness of the training programme. Even in the case of online training exercises, which could simply be sent out to anyone affiliated with a particular sector, it is important to consider which practitioners to include. Time spent on training exercises means less time for other work-related tasks and overburdening sector workers with too many exercises can cause fatigue. In public institutions, training often focuses on new recruits and senior staff who are able to ensure that a department or programme is run according to certain standards and who are able to pass knowledge on to their teams. This emphasis on training the trainers can be an effective way of reaching many practitioners while training fewer. The selection of course participants can also be motivated by the need to include different perspectives and diverse input for the training's interactive components. One interesting approach for promoting stimulating debates, constructive synergies and practice-oriented outcomes involves bringing together both

governance and sector staff in the same session (Whitton 2009b).

Duration of the training programme

The duration of anti-corruption training varies greatly. The factors that influence duration include the availability of resources, the availability of participants and trainers, the comprehensiveness of the training, the number of training components and the frequency of training sessions. Online courses tend to engage practitioners for the longest number of days in a row. They are often conducted over the course of several weeks, whereby the participants spend a few hours a day on coursework, and consequently provide an opportunity for extensive knowledge exchange. Some training programmes, such as the water integrity training programme developed by the UNDP Water Governance Facility, run for three years and invite different groups of participants for several training sessions or conferences throughout that time. Most introductory sessions on ethical conduct or anti-corruption tools however, last between half a day and three days.

Training techniques

Different training techniques can be used depending on the course's objective and intended audience. Analyses of the different anti-corruption training programmes that have been carried out in sectors underscore the relevance of several considerations. Combating corruption is an interdisciplinary field and related training often utilises a mixed approach. It is clear that training techniques that combine the transfer of knowledge and information with a focus on the implementation challenges participants may be confronted with in a given sector or environment are more successful than those that don't offer this combination.

There should therefore be a balanced mix of theoretical and practical knowledge transfer, with adequate emphasis on finding constructive solutions for overcoming potential obstacles and successfully implementing anti-corruption measures (Whitton 2009b). While training programmes often start with the provision of the required conceptual and analytical frameworks, they then generally shift the focus towards the practitioner's actual situation. As this situation is frequently very specific and as trainers often have predominantly theoretical knowledge but lack local expertise, it can be useful to incorporate

interactive sessions into the training programme in which specific and local issues can be addressed by participants through cross-learning.

There is an observable trend towards engaging course participants for a longer period of time and beyond the duration of the training programme. Online courses and more extensive training programmes usually give participants the opportunity to access training resources through an online platform during and after the training. Such online platforms also often provide participants with a place to interact, with the aim of creating a community of practitioners.

Common training techniques include:

Use of information and communication technologies

Many of the courses reviewed incorporated the use of information technology, such as videos, online learning platforms and virtual schools. Online learning platforms create a virtual space where all the training materials can be found: from articles and presentations to videos, discussion forums and online lectures. An advantage of this is that different training techniques can be combined and course components can be made interactive even if participants do not share the same location. For instance, the Water Integrity Network (WIN) developed this kind of [virtual school](#). It offers a course with two main modules. The first module focuses on increasing transparency, accountability and participation in the water sector. The second module provides information on methods and tools to assess integrity and corruption in the water sector. The course also discusses the main drivers of corruption in the water sector and sub-sectors, as well as the main actors involved.

The Anti-Corruption Education and Training (ACET) initiative took a unique approach and produced a film called ETHICANA about corruption in the construction sector. The film aims to provide audiences with

- (i) a clear understanding of what is expected from public officials working in the sector,
- (ii) increased ability to effectively communicate ethical concerns and potential conflicts with colleagues and supervisors,
- (iii) increased ability to recognise the main forms of corruption, as well as

- (iv) the skills to apply ethical principles and problem-solving approaches. The film is accompanied by a pre-training kit with information on how to prepare training and different training scenarios for different target groups. The film and the accompanying training material can be found [here](#).

Interactive sessions

The evaluation of multiple training programmes has led several training organisers to conclude that participatory and interactive training components can greatly increase the degree to which participants engage with the training material. In addition to the traditional lecture format, training programmes now often include case studies to be discussed by all participants and re-enactments of real life dilemmas faced by practitioners. The UNDP Water Governance Facility discussed in the previous section uses participatory and interactive learning methods, such as discussions, role playing, group exercises and experience sharing to teach participants about water integrity.

The online training offered by the Global Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Centre (GIACC) was designed in a less interactive way with the aim of providing more information on corruption and the main principles to be followed by middle and senior public officials in the infrastructure sector responsible for procurement, project management, financial management, compliance and internal auditing. However the last part of the module focuses on ethical dilemmas that public officials working in those areas could face. The training manual can be found [here](#).

Lectures and conferences

Lectures are a common training technique and are often used at the start of training programmes to convey concrete information, such as definitions of corruption and the details of anti-corruption legislation. Most training programmes include lectures. Several training organisers found however, that participants had trouble concentrating when the lecture part of the programme was too extensive.

Training can also be organised in the form of conferences or be concluded with a conference that highlights the lessons learned. The three-year training programme run by the UNDP Water Governance Facility concluded all training activities with a conference that brought together

all the different sector practitioners who took part in the programme.

Publication of manuals and guidelines

In a large number of cases, training manuals are only made available to course participants. There are however some initiatives that offer training manuals and simple online sessions free of charge. These training manuals are often complemented by anti-corruption tools that can be used by sector practitioners in specific situations.

Selection of trainers

Successful transfer of knowledge also depends greatly on the selection of trainers. Recently there has been a trend towards inviting local experts and trainers alongside established general anti-corruption experts. Inviting local experts tends to make course content more relatable and relevant. Also, participants are increasingly being seen as potential future trainers.

4. Main challenges

In general, the feedback provided by participants has been largely positive. In terms of research however, there is little evidence regarding the effectiveness of training and the development of training programmes is still at an early stage (Dormaels & Vande Walle 2011).

While the results of internal evaluations are rarely published, the experiences gained so far have led to a few changes being made in training programmes. Evaluations of anti-corruption training tend to pursue two main objectives. Firstly, the specific training programme is assessed through the use of feedback forms, which participants are asked to submit upon completion of the course. The main aim here is to identify areas requiring improvement. The second objective is to assess the programme's impact on ethical and integrous conduct within an organization or sector.

Feedback from participants

Participants tend to rate the course content and overall experience highly. Evaluations reveal that almost all participants gained new, concrete knowledge which they feel will help them professionally. Participants were occasionally critical if the training failed to address locally relevant issues and when there was too much

emphasis on lectures. As a consequence, there has been a general trend towards providing more examples that relate specifically to the context and/or sector in question, as well as workshops and training experts. In order to make training sessions more applicable to the local context in which practitioners work, training programmes now feature greater scope for local experts to complement the teaching of general anti-corruption approaches with locally and sector relevant information. There is also a general consensus that training programmes should feature a variety of training techniques and that some components should be interactive. In the case of the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, the evaluation of existing anti-corruption courses revealed a clear demand for more sector-specific training and as a result three sector-specific online training courses were added to the curriculum in 2013.

Impact evaluation

There is little information available about the impact of anti-corruption training at the sector level. Such assessments can be particularly challenging, as the impact is rarely immediately apparent. It is currently almost impossible to definitively establish the effectiveness of particular anti-corruption training programmes, yet there is anecdotal evidence that training is having positive results. In Peru, where training aimed at teachers, local authorities and parents was carried out (as mentioned above), parents no longer pay illegal fees to get their children enrolled in schools (Global Corruption Report 2013). In Belgium, customs and excise officials who were trained in anti-corruption tools and ethical behaviour seem to be better equipped to identify cases of corruption and handle ethical dilemmas (Dormaels & Vande Walle 2011).

Considerations beyond the sector

The broader challenges tend to correspond with the challenges faced when mainstreaming anti-corruption in sectors as outlined by Boehm (2014). Firstly, when focusing on a particular sector, there is a chance that broader corruption can be overlooked. In order to establish the cause of corruption within a sector, it might be necessary to look beyond that specific sector. For example, the role of money in politics outside a given sector may be key to understanding corruption within that sector, although links to the sector might not be visible (Boehm 2014).

Secondly, it can be difficult to sustain progress made in a particular sector if it is surrounded by a much more corrupt environment. While a high degree of integrity within a sector can have a positive influence on its environment by means of a spill-over effect, a more corrupt environment can work against the progress made in the sector.

Thirdly, corruption is dynamic and can move to other sectors. This is especially true if organised crime is involved. Progress made in one sector might mean that corruption has shifted to another sector that has fewer or less successful anti-corruption mechanisms. Another danger is when corruption remains a sector problem, but moves below the surface and becomes even less visible.

The establishment of a successful anti-corruption training programme requires a thorough understanding of both the workings of the sector, as well as the ties to its environment. If this is the case, and if general implementation challenges like limited resources can be overcome and sector practitioners can be convinced to take part in training, sector programmes have great potential to produce concrete results and have a direct, positive effect on people's well-being.

It is also essential that the training initiative has considerable support from both within and beyond the sector. Within the sector, a successful programme can have a significant impact on the way many people work and on their good will, which is essential for the acceptance of any necessary reforms. The presence or absence of political willingness too can have major implications for the success of training programmes and support might also have to come from outside the sector.

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