CIVIL SOCIETY ANTI-CORRUPTION PROJECTS
FAST-TRACKING UNCAC IMPLEMENTATION

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Background

The Civil Society Unit at UNODC implemented an anti-corruption project funded by the UK’s Government called “Fast-tracking UN Convention against Corruption Implementation”, which seeks to prevent and combat corruption through four regional platforms in Southeast Asia, East Africa and Southern Africa, South America and Mexico through effective implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

The grants were awarded to the civil society organisations to work collaboratively with their respective governments on anti-corruption projects. The anti-corruption themes per project reflected the regional recommendations adopted in each of the platforms to fast-track the UNCAC implementation.
Transparency International (TI) Rwanda held two training workshops on 4th and 27th August 2020 in Rwanda, to identify discrepancies in the law N°44bis/2017 of 06/09/2017 relating to the protection of whistleblowers, and to increase all relevant stakeholders from the private sector, media, CSOs, public actors, and the general public’s knowledge on the whistleblower protection law for improved reporting on corruption cases in Rwanda.

Around 30 participants took part in the workshops, including representatives from the African Parliamentarian Network Against Corruption, Office of the Ombudsman, Rwanda National Police, Rwanda Investigation Bureau, National Public Prosecution Authority.

The National Human Rights Commission, Rwanda Law Reform Commission, and various CSOs and media practitioners. The outcome were 12 recommendations such as enhancing collaboration among institutions and putting in place a trained person in charge of whistleblowers in every institution.

Due to COVID restrictions, TI Rwanda asked for a five-month no-cost extension until 30 November 2020. An outcome statement with 12 recommendations was adopted with the aim of consolidating achievements and making further progress, including the recommendation to enhance collaboration among institutions and placing a qualified whistleblowing focal point in every institution.

Advance South Sudan created a project named “Building Capacities to Influence Citizenship Anticorruption Debates in Public Procurement Sphere”, which seeks to enhance the capacity of South Sudan citizens to understand the content of the public procurement policy so as to effectively and confidently engage the government in seeking transparency and accountability.

With the grant received, Advance conducted a training workshop for 50 stakeholders to understand the content of the public procurement policy and two dialogue forums to engage various stakeholder groups that included business leaders, CSOs and the South Sudan Anti-Corruption Commission.

In a bid to increase awareness on South Sudan’s public procurement policy and transparency in public business dealings, Advance launched a weekly talk show program named “The Integrity Hour” the show broadcasts every Saturday (4:00 PM - 6:00 PM) at Advance Youth Radio 99.9 FM aimed at restoring citizen’s trust in the public service delivery in South Sudan, by providing a platform for stakeholder groups to meaningfully participate in dialogues and public media debates programs regarding transparency and accountability. The project ended in September 2020 with the final report forthcoming shortly.
Mid-western Region Anti-corruption Coalition (MIRAC) have popularized existing laws on public procurement and whistleblower protection in two districts of Uganda. MIRAC received support from UNODC to strengthen citizen action through trainings with government officials, distribution of pocket-friendly Acts, and civic education sessions.

MIRAC trained local government officials in the use of various communication channels, distributed 500 pocket-friendly whistleblower protection and public procurement acts, held six information sessions on whistleblowing to fight against corruption and four community civic education sessions. The project, entitled *Strengthening Citizen Action on anti-corruption efforts in procurement and whistle-blower protection*, was implemented in six sub-counties of the Hoima and Kikuube districts in Uganda.

The information sessions invited local leaders in the departments of planning and budget matters to be aware of the common threats of corruption. Executive Director of MIRAC, Kusemererwa Ismail, said “Through the information session with local leaders, we awakened the possibilities of reporting any corruption work by equipping them with the formal procedures when blowing the whistle. They assumed corruption is the only embezzlement of public funds for personal gains, not knowing that stealing government property is also a form of corruption.”

The relationships built through the trainings and information sessions, have led MIRAC to become a member of the Hoima District Technical Planning Committee, which is responsible for decisions on the beneficiaries of government projects. The input of MIRAC on the committee and future government projects stems from their service delivery monitoring reports and community dialogue meetings that show the citizens’ priorities based on the state of services in a given place or community.

Moving forward, MIRAC will act as the citizens’ voice to ensure that issues raised by the community are being discussed, continuing to bring accountability and transparency to budget decisions. The project is sponsored by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to contribute to fast-tracking UNCAC implementation in Eastern Africa.
Whistleblower Protection & Integrity in Public Procurement

**PICDO IDENTIFIED "WEAK LINKS" IN PP IN ETHIOPIA**

With the grant secured by UNODC - Civil Society Unit in Vienna, Austria; on 24 December 2020, PICDO organized a National Panel Discussion Workshop in collaboration with the Federal Attorney General on Prevention of Corruption and Promoting Integrity in Public Procurement, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with 35 participants from Government Institutions, Private Sector, CSOs, and representatives from UNODC Ethiopia.

The objective was to identify ‘weak links’ in the public procurement process where the risk of corruption is high, to explore the best ways of improving transparency and accountability, and to identify effective actions to prevent, detect and sanction corruption. The panel discussion provided government officials, businesses and civil society a practical introduction to the risks of corruption in public procurement and outlined key principles and minimum standards which can protect public contracting from corruption. The multi-stakeholder approach with private sector, public institutions and civil society all contributing to identify challenges and solutions in public procurement will strengthen those responses.

The workshop was concluded by confirming commitments of all participating stakeholders to join-hands and strengthen the firm engagements in the fight against corruption in public procurement.

**EMPOWERING SOCIAL MEDIA WHISTLEBLOWERS TO REPORT ON CORRUPTION IN KENYA**

With the UNODC support, the Civil Society Organization (CSO) Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO) successfully implemented the project ‘Empowering Social Media Whistleblowers to Report on Corruption in Kenya’.

At the core of CRECO’s project was the need to improve laws protecting whistleblowers in Kenya and the role of social media whistleblowers therein. To do so, relationships between social media whistleblowers, CSOs, private sector representatives, and government agencies had to be established.

In this context, CRECO and the Kenyan Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) collaborated on organizing training and meetings on the status of whistleblowing in Kenya. CRECO’s project provided space for building scenario workshops affecting whistleblowing in the country, including the impact of constitutional reform proposals and Covid-19.

The project identified pressing issues affecting whistleblowing, as well as key stakeholders, at an introductory meeting with selected media, CSOs, and individual whistleblowers. CRECO, in partnership with the EACC, subsequently held a virtual training for 50 social media whistleblowers on digital skills, digital media literacy, and digital security.

CRECO representative, Ms. Zipporah Abaki said: “Unclear laws worsen the situation as whistleblowers lack faith in the disclosure system. It forces potential whistleblowers to remain silent because of low awareness and lack of trust in the government’s witness protection mechanism”. Consequently, CRECO believes a culture of whistleblowing in Kenya has so far not been promoted as the various laws governing anti-corruption do not prioritise whistleblowing.

The network of stakeholders the project created will be a basis for further advocacy for the future enactment of the whistleblower laws and culture in Kenya.
Anti-Bribery & Corruption Online Training Course for Corporates and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

MALAYSIAN TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVES

TI-Malaysia implemented a project to raise awareness on the implementation of a new Corporate Liability Provision Section 17A of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009. TI-Malaysia held six trainings in four different languages (Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mandarin and Tamil) on Anti-Bribery & Corruption to Small and Medium Enterprises, with over 1000 participants registering across all the trainings.

To place the project in context, several months before the General Election in 2018, a new provision called the Corporate Liability Provision was added into the existing Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009 (Act 694) in efforts to prevent bribery and corruption involving commercial organisations. This new provision simply means that a commercial organisation commits an offence if any person associated with that commercial organization corruptly gives, agrees to give, promises or offers to any person any gratification for the benefit of the commercial organization.

The law is still in its advocacy period where close to one million SMEs in Malaysia need to be sensitized to its effects. Therefore, TI-Malaysia undertook the project to assist companies who are unaware as to what to do and how to approach the issue of compliance. The webinars helped further define the Act so organisations knew exactly how to implement the right procedures and prevent the risk of corruption.

TI-Malaysia held four initial webinars on the implementation of Corporate Liability Provision Section 17A and a further two webinars entitled ‘Adequate Procedures: How adequate is adequate?’

One of the webinars was delivered by Senior Superintendent Sivarasan Kalidawson of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC). The webinars were held across 4 different languages - Bahasa Malaysia, English, Tamil and Mandarin. The sessions in Bahasa Malaysia and English garnered the most interest from Malaysian SMEs, while the Mandarin and Tamil sessions particularly demonstrated participants’ need to improve their knowledge on Corporate Criminal Liability and the new Section 17A provision in the act.

The main stakeholders engaged with in the project are the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission; the Small & Medium Enterprise Corporation (SMECorp) who were vital in disseminating the invitations and content on the webinars to the SMEs; the SMEs themselves; Government-Linked Companies; and finally, government officials.

The project has engaged over 1000 participants across the six webinars thus far. Based on the findings from the participant survey, 9% of the companies still did not have any policies in place while 14% did not have an accessible, confidential and trusted reporting channels for corruption. TI-Malaysia will offer the technical support to these companies following up on the various webinars. TI-Malaysia were able to demonstrate the progress of the webinars and provide a short overview of the status of Corporate Liability Provision Section 17A at the 2021 OECD Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum on 25th March.

UNODC were selected as one of the OECD’s Knowledge Partners at this year’s Global Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum where TI Malaysia President Muhammad Mohan (centre left) presented on the project.
Manushya Foundation completed a project documenting the landscape of access to information in eight ASEAN countries. Manushya began by looking at international human rights obligations, regional commitments and national legislative frameworks of the relevant countries which were then used to create ‘Right to Know’ toolkits.

The project began with a desk study analysing the legislative framework in eight ASEAN countries. The desk review identified common barriers in accessing information in the context of the management of natural resources and the environment. These were weak national legal framework; lack of free, prior and informed consent and environmental safeguards; community manipulation; exclusion of women from a decision-making process; silencing and unfair criminalisation of human rights defenders. The desk research was corroborated by grassroots communities’ experiences as well as knowledge from civil society partners across the region to ensure evidence based and truly community-led research.

Each country profiles served as a “blueprint” providing an overview of the “right to information” status including information on: national legal framework, international human rights commitments; case studies illustrating each of the five barriers common across the ASEAN region; and community-led recommendations. An official campaign launch followed on the basis of these blueprints to be followed by a series of country specific webinars organised by Manushya Foundation and its regional grassroots and CSOs partners.

How are we doing it?

1. Our ASEAN Study provides a comprehensive overview of legislative and policy framework of access to information in 9 ASEAN countries as well as an analysis of sources of the right to information within international human rights law.
Grantee Spectrum SDKN (Sustainable Development Knowledge Network) from Myanmar, following the military coup, switched its focus from awareness-raising on the role of the Auditor General’s Office to producing materials promoting a culture of integrity in the country.

10,000 copies of an anti-corruption book “For a Better Future” were printed, including visuals illustrating anti-corruption. The contents are not considered sensitive to the ongoing political situation so there are plans for publicizing these images via exhibitions when the country situation is more stable and the restrictions limiting gatherings to 5 people are lifted. Various sources combined to print, publicize and distribute a larger print run of the 60 page book that contains 50 cartoons with 25 showing what happens without corruption and 25 showing after corruption. The book was distributed to public (non-government) libraries in addition to civil society groups.

Additionally, anti-corruption wrist bands and facemasks branded with “wise owl” mascot were produced. The facemasks distribution continuing due to the critical need for Covid-19 materials. An anti-corruption song and video clip was also produced, but has been delayed due to a campaign to remove media figures from the public view. When it is safe to do so, the video will be released.

In another pivot from original proposal, Spectrum ran a social media awareness campaign to improve access to information for “Citizen Journalists”. Products developed were distributed via social media networks including political related pages, public and private groups and personal accounts.

Through such exhibitions, publications and social media, Spectrum has been raising awareness and strengthening public stake-holding in the fight against corruption in Myanmar.
The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) launched a training and editorial fellowship program that sought to recruit more freedom of information practitioners in the country and contribute to exposing corruption or possible corruption issues in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The training program was conducted online from February 26 to March 26, 2021 with 25 media practitioners (15 female, 10 male) participating across the country. The training sessions included presentations, workshops, and discussions on accessing public documents, reporting on government contracts, understanding audit reports, investigating fraud and corruption, and fundamentals of investigative journalism. The sessions were conducted with the help of experts in the private and public sectors, including Director of the Commission on Audit, Sofia Gemora, Asst.

Ombudsman of the Office of the Ombudsman, Asryman Rafanan, and representative of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, Jay-R Batiles. The participants gave particularly positive feedback on the sessions devoted to investigative reporting and navigating public documents. Journalist Leilani Chavez said, “Being part of the seminar and learning the basics of certain data helped me identify which ones could be useful for my environmental reporting. This information helped me expand the coverage of my reports.” News reporter Wenilyn Sabalo said, “My takeaway is to persevere and pursue the investigative process and knowing where to start and sometimes, when to stop.”

The training program was followed by an editorial fellowship program where PCIJ received and deliberated story proposals. Two out of the eight proposals were selected based on content, feasibility, and importance. Journalist Leilani Chavez wrote a report on how the pandemic exacerbated illegal and undocumented fishing in the country (Philippine artisanal fishermen cry for help as illegal fishing empties municipal waters’ https://bit.ly/3ErCLqV). A ban on commercial fisheries in municipal waters in 2014 was supposed to protect the livelihood of artisanal fishermen who cannot compete with with bigger boats but the report explored how illegal fishing is operating through corruption and the consequences of the of around 257,000 to 402,000 metric tons of fish per year. Caecent Magsumbol and Ruth Malinao investigated how Cebu City had disbursed its Covid-19 funds (More questions raised about Cebu City’s P2.7-B Covid-19 spending https://bit.ly/3zerMNL).

The two stories were presented at a civic engagement activity on 30 September 2021 that gathered key stakeholders from government, civil society, academia and UNODC. Three fellows from the trainings shared their findings, challenges, and lessons learned from investigations.
Access to information and integrity in public procurement

**SEMILLAS USE OPEN DATA TO PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY**

The aim of the project by Semillas para la Democracia was to promote transparency in public institutions in synergy with civil society and citizens. The CSO developed an open-data platform called "Control Ciudadano" ('Citizen Control', available at https://www.controlciudadanopy.org/) where citizens can monitor resources stipulated in the Emergency Law and file complaints to promote transparency in the health sector and the actors involved in fighting the pandemic. The platform has been widely disseminated to involve citizens in the control and reporting processes.

The platform is accessible to the public to control and monitor the resources provided for in Emergency Law No. 6521/20. The platform thereby has enabled the detailed analyses of public procurement using emergency public funds in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Paraguay. It was established in collaboration with the Institute of Environmental Law and Economics, the Paraguayan Centre for Sustainable Development and the CSO reAcción Paraguay. Moreover, the project was technically supported by Open Contracting Partnership.

Previously, Semillas established a working group with the National Anti-corruption Secretariat (SENAC) in synergy with specialized organizations in Paraguay on corruption and citizen control issues. In this constellation, several interinstitutional working meetings took place which contributed to the successful implementation of the digital open-data platform. They include:

- A seminar on "Tools for Transparency and Citizen Control" with the participation of 125 referents as well as key actors of the public and private sector.
- A meeting for the exchange of good practices in the context of Covid-19.
- Launch of citizen control platform
- A citizen's forum against corruption with participants from civil society and parliament.

By means of this project, Semillas brought to public attention the social costs related to any undue usage of resources destined for COVID-19 efforts. Semillas raised awareness and sensitization campaign for citizens to exercise their freedom to seek, receive, publish, and disseminate information related to corruption, particularly in the context of COVID-19. In the framework of these activities, a network of CSO has been established and even released a joint manifesto against corruption which received significant local press coverage.
Access to information

FCD CREATE REGIONAL STRATEGY ON IMPLEMENTING UNCAC ART. 10

The project led by the Ecuadorian based Fundación Ciudadanía y Desarrollo (FCD), which is the coordinating organization of the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency (RLTL), aimed to improve the standards of parliamentary openness in the legislative organs of the region. To do so, FCD collaborated with members of the RLTL on a regional advocacy strategy to promote Article 10 on ‘Public Reporting’ of the UNCAC.

In order to develop the regional advocacy strategy, FCD held two regional working sessions in January 2021 in collaboration with 12 Latin American CSOs specialized on governance, transparency, and the promotion of access to public information. Moreover, FCD carried out a survey for the members of the RLTL to identify their knowledge and capacity to address the UNCAC within the organizations’ projects, as well as their capacity to conduct parallel monitoring and assessment of the UNCAC review mechanism. Another survey with special emphasis on regulations and mechanisms related to the implementation of Article 10 of the UNCAC was carried out. FCD will continue to work on the analysis of the results from the surveys and working groups in order to identify the projects with the greatest potential to fulfill Article 10 and to disseminate examples of good practices across the RLTL network.

FCD with UNODC’s support held a regional training session with representatives from 16 CSO from 12 countries on access to information, impact avenues for civil society and indicators for transparency projects which they held jointly. The training was able to promote a compendium on best practices FCD created on Article 10, such as the creation of an observatory on legislative transparency run by 300 volunteers in Ecuador and platform for citizens to vote on questions for addressed to parliamentarians. FCD’s project is set to promoted the application of open parliament policies as a management model for the prevention of corruption among the RLTL network. Collaboration on the regional advocacy strategy has translated into a greater sense of ownership among the region’s CSOs regarding their role as promoters of compliance with current regulations on access to public information.
AHK ARGENTINA SHARES BEST PRACTICES AMONG SMEs THOUGH ONLINE TRAINING

The project of the Cámara De Industria Y Comercio Argentino Alemana (AHK Argentina) built the capacities and awareness of business integrity in small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and disseminated best practices through online trainings. AHK worked on piloting a voluntary business integrity pact and conducting online compliance trainings and cross-border multi-stakeholder webinars gathering representatives of the public and private sector as well as civil society.

In close collaboration with the Global Compact Network Argentina, AHK organised a cross-border multi-stakeholder webinar entitled “Collective Action: how to create ethical and sustainable business environments” on February 23rd. The importance of Integrity Pacts were conveyed to more than 170 participants. In this context, companies identified common integrity and anti-corruption needs and issues which will help the stakeholders to address emerging compliance challenges. A follow-up webinar called “Integrity Pacts: a joint commitment to the fight against corruption” was held on 6th May with 140 attendees.

AHK collaborated with De Empresas Para Empresas (DEPE) on organizing two four-day compliance trainings for representatives of SMEs that took place in March. The first trainings offered to companies across the region focused on building their knowledge, methodology and practical tools to implement compliance measures within their organisations while the second training was exclusively oriented to Argentinian enterprises of the construction sector. AHK Argentina liaised with different authorities from the Cámara Argentina de la Construcción (CAMARCO), the main chamber in the country that gathers enterprises from the construction and infrastructure sector, on their participation, the involvement of their affiliated companies, and the usefulness of Integrity Pacts.

AHK Argentina formalized its collaboration with CAMARCO and Cámara Argentina de Insumos, Implantables y Equipamiento Médico (CADIEM), an organisation which brings together the key players in the health sector, through the project. The agreements made will continue to generate new spaces for cooperation between the different organisations, offering trainings and webinars jointly. While integrity pacts involving the public sector may appear aspirational in this context, private sector agreements are a model for action that can later involve the public sector.

The project created the capabilities and incentives in SMEs to fight corruption through trainings as well as strengthened alliances with strategic partners. The agreements made as a result of the project with sectoral chambers and associations, will strengthen the engagement between the private sector and civil society on jointly fighting corruption, and will serve the basis for future integrity pacts.
TRANSPARENCIA MEXICANA PRODUCE

COMPENDIUM ON PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Transparencia Mexicana systematized experiences in Brazil, Colombia and Mexico for monitoring, following up on and controlling public procurement in emergency situations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Transparencia Mexicana compared the participating countries governments’ actions taken during the pandemic to highlight recommended practices to strengthen integrity in public procurement and monitoring systems in Mexico, Colombia, and Brazil.

Transparencia Mexicana gathered a panel of experts in public contracting, data and tenders and purchases in the health sector to review their methodology on analysing government responses. This data served to identify the effects of different variables on public contracting outcomes and to identify the mechanisms that generated significant impacts in contracting systems.

The mapping conducted during this project allowed CSO to better understand the reality on the ground in other countries and was an opportunity for meaningful exchange on practices. As a result, Transparencia Mexicana were able to produce a compendium on best practices and recommendations entitled, “Guide for buying quickly and well in emergencies”. Transparencia Mexicana could verify that many of the fundamental problems such as lack of transparency or poor information on public procurement systems spread across the regional board. This challenge also presents the opportunity to jointly work on solutions. Ultimately these findings hope to inform governments to detect possible shortcomings and allow to further strengthen their integrity in public procurement and monitoring systems.

Mexico became the first Latin American country to launch a COVID-19 vaccination initiative (December 24, 2020)

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