PEOPLE POWER

AGAINST CORRUPTION


Shaazka Beyerle, FSI session, 2015
CORRUPTION IS -

the misuse of entrusted power for private gain.

*Transparency International*

*a system of abuse* of entrusted power for private, collective, or political gain – often involving a complex, intertwined set of relationships, some obvious, others hidden, with established vested interests, that can operate vertically within an institution or horizontally cut across political, economic and social spheres in a society or transnationally.

*Shaazka Beyerle*

...the external manifestation of the denial of a right, an entitlement, a wage, a medicine...

*Aruna Roy, Co-founder, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) movement*
What is impunity?

Impunity is “no consequences, no accountability, no punishment for wrongdoing,” (Maite Azuela, co-founder, DHP* movement, Mexico).

Photo: Maite Azuela at DHP* table collecting signatures, http://dhpmexico.mx/
WHAT IS ACCOUNTABILITY?

...the concept that individuals, agencies and organizations (public, private and civil society) are held responsible for carrying out their powers properly.

(Excerpted from the Transparency International Plain Language Guide, 2009)
Curtailing Corruption

People Power for Accountability & Justice

Shaazka Beyerle
Research project ...

30 nonviolent movements, campaigns, organized grass-roots initiatives → 16 cases, millions of people, around the world – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Egypt, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Italy (10.12-14.03), Kenya, Mexico, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, and Uganda.

Nonviolent tactics targeting corruption and impunity:

- information gathering, Right to Information procedures
- **monitoring** - reconstruction and development projects, officials, institutions, budgets, spending, public services (16.10)
- social audits and "face the people" fora (14.1)
- noncooperation with corruption
- civil disobedience
- low-risk **mass actions** (11.10)
- displays of symbols
- street theatre, visual dramatizations, stunts
- **music**, poetry, cultural expressions
- humor
- dilemma actions

Photos:
Top – Textbook Count campaign (Philippines) (photo from Annie Enriquez-Geron)
Middle- left - shayfeen.com tea glass (photo from Engi Haddad)
Middle right – DOSTA! I wrote the graffiti T-shirt, photo from Darko Brkan)
Bottom: CAGE (Citizens Alliance for the General Election) 2000 campaign
- engagement with powerholders
- digital tactics using FB, blog, SMS, e-petitions, Tweeting
- education and training (6.10)
- social and economic empowerment initiatives
- youth recreation
- creation of parallel institutions
- anti-corruption pledges, citizen-sponsored awards
- protests, petitions, vigils, marches, sit-ins
- reverse boycotts
- nonviolent blockades
- nonviolent accompaniment

Photos: Top-Provincial Monitoring Boards, Afghanistan, photo from IWA Middle- CAGE (Citizens Alliance for the General Election) 2000 campaign Action (Photo courtesy of Taeho Lee);
Bottom: Addiopizzo movement, mafia free shop (http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comitato_Addiopizzo)
5 TAKEAWAYS

1. *Citizens - organized in grass-roots movements, campaigns and community initiatives – achieved real outcomes, for example:*

- Empowering ordinary people to file RTI petitions and refuse bribe demands (India)
- Protection of anti-corruption commission and securing release of jailed deputy commissioners (Indonesia)
- Rectifying reconstruction/development/anti-poverty projects (Afghanistan, Kenya)
- Refusing to pay extortion money to Cosa Nostra mafia (Italy)
- Judicial investigations, trials and verdicts (Turkey)
- Resignation of corrupt prime minister halfway through term (Bosnia-Herzegovina)
- Ficha Limpa (Clean Record/Clean Slate) legislation (Brazil)
- Curbing police corruption (Uganda)
- 69% blacklisted candidates defeated in election (South Korea)
2. People power targeting corruption is manifested frequently in societies enduring poor governance, poverty, low levels of literacy, and severe repression, the latter perpetrated by the state, paramilitary groups, or organized crime.
A ten-year meta-case study analysis of citizenship, participation and accountability concluded:

[citizen engagement] “can make positive differences, even in the least democratic settings – a proposition that challenges the conventional wisdom of an institution – and state-oriented approach that relegates opportunities for citizens to engage in a variety of participatory strategies to a more ‘mature’ democratic phase…”


Photos: Movement to Defend Khimki Forest (Russia)
3. When the grass-roots fights corruption, it’s real, not abstract.

- It’s linked to grievances that harm people in their everyday lives or to blatant powerholder impunity that displays contempt and disregard for citizens.

- Movements and campaign are often not identified as anti-corruption.
4. Bottom-up nonviolent campaigns, movements and local civic initiatives can:

➤ Empower and protect honest powerholders and integrity champions pursuing accountability, reform and change from within the system

➤ Empower and protect honest state officials caught in a system of corruption to refuse to go along with it, i.e., noncooperation with corruption

Photos: Left – Twitter image; Middle - amis boersma blog,11.1.09 ; Right - Edi Lukas. Flickr Image “Free Bibit Chandra.” November 3, 2009
➢ Disrupt vertical and horizontal forms of corruption
➢ Create political will to enact policies, laws and administrative mechanisms to curb corruption and illicit financial flows and/or to implement them
➢ Contribute to changing behaviors, practices and general norms regarding corruption and, potentially, illicit financial flows.
5. **Top-down and bottom-up approaches are complementary (not mutually exclusive).**

**Assumption** – once anti-corruption structures are put in place, illicit practices will change.

But how can all those benefitting from corruption be the ones to curb it?

“...Sometimes an institution becomes too sick to fix itself. Not that the institution is necessarily blind to its own sickness. But that it doesn’t have the capacity, or will, to do anything about it. Sometimes an institution, like an individual, needs an intervention, from people, from friends, from outside.”

— Lawrence Lessig

*REPUBLIC, LOST: How Money Corrupts Congress and a Plan to Stop it*
People power can bring a strategic advantage to curbing corruption and impunity:

- adds *extra-institutional pressure* to push for change, when state and non-state powerholders are:
  - indifferent to civic demands
  - beholden to special interests
  - corrupt and/or unaccountable
  - have entrenched vested interests
  - and institutional channels are blocked or ineffective.
THREE DYNAMICS OF PEOPLE POWER TO CURB CORRUPTION

1. DISRUPTION -

disrupts activities, practices and dishonest relationships, within systems of corruption

[Interrupts the corrupt status quo and changes behavior]

Photos: Left – Movement to Defend Khimki Forest, ; Right – G-Watch, Ateneo School of Governance, Philippines
2. PRESSURE —
applies nonviolent pressure through the **power of numbers** — people raising their collective voice over shared demands, on corruptors who (up to that point) have been unwilling to change the venal status quo

[Pushes governments and also non-state actors to change policies, and enact/implement legal and administrative measures]

Translation: Small CICAK’s. Let’s attack crocodile!
3. ENGAGEMENT -

wins people over/shifts loyalties/produces “defections” from the:
- public
- government/state
- private sector
- other parts of society

[Not everyone is equally loyal – corruptible – wedded to the corrupt system!]

Photo: NAFODU-Police-Community Partnership Forum
GROUP EXERCISE