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Anti-corruption Measures in Post-conflict Reconstruction

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Question

What measures can be taken to address corruption risks in post-conflict reconstruction?

Contents

1. Summary

Corruption risks in post-conflict reconstruction are high, notably due to the typically large influx of international aid coupled with weak/illegitimate governments and low state capacity. Combatting corruption in post-conflict settings is vital in the short- and medium-term to promote development and growth, and in the long-term to prevent renewed conflict. Anti-corruption efforts can focus on strengthening the rule of law; public financial management; civil service reform to promote meritocratic hiring, proper training and proper remuneration; promoting transparency and accountability – on the part of both donors as well as recipient governments; and promoting external accountability mechanisms of the media and civil society.

This review looks at measures to combat corruption risks in post-conflict reconstruction. It draws on a mix of academic and grey literature, notably reports by international development organisations. The literature was 'gender-blind' and 'disability-blind'.

- **The literature stresses the importance of combatting corruption risks in post-conflict settings**. Failure to do so can impact donor willingness to provide vital aid, undermine development and economic growth, and ultimately lead to renewed conflict.
- **There is debate about whether anti-corruption should be a priority from day one, or if the focus initially should be on state building** (security, governance, development) – essentially tolerating some corruption as the price for maintaining peace and stability. The overall consensus is that, while tackling corruption might be destabilising, it cannot be avoided as, in the long run, it undermines state legitimacy.
- **There are three broad requirements to substantially reduce corruption in post-conflict settings:** an end to fighting and relative security; local political will to combat corruption; and public support and investment in the fight against corruption.

Key findings of the review with regard to anti-corruption measures are as follows:

Law enforcement

- Weak rule of law enables corruption. **Strengthening rule of law would entail** legislative reform, capacity building of justice sector personnel, setting of standards, protections for whistle-blowers, modernisation of court administration, and making records accessible. The aim is to have a criminal justice system that is legitimate, independent, and effective.
- Some authors argue that **criminalisation of corruption should only be carried out where enforcement is feasible**; otherwise it can be ineffective and even counter-productive. Rule of law reform is also difficult because it requires culture change. Such factors mean that rule of law reform has been one of the lower priorities in post-conflict reconstruction.
- **Anti-corruption commissions (ACCs) have been popular in post-conflict settings, but globally there are few successful examples**. ACCs set up in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Kosovo had prosecuted very few corrupt officials as of 2009. This has led to calls to focus on primary systems before setting up secondary bodies like ACCs.

Public financial management

- **Public finance** (collection and distribution of taxes and international aid) **is especially susceptible to corruption**. At the same time, the desire of post-conflict states to access foreign aid can be a powerful incentive for public financial management reform.

- **Key reform measures** include having an efficient revenue collection system, transparent regulations and procedures, capacity building, proper financial management information systems and strengthening audit and control capacity.
- The corruption risks and capacity challenges associated with post-conflict states, could tempt donors to **set up parallel systems** to channel aid. While convenient in the short-term, **in the long run this undermines state capacity and accountability**. An alternative could be to set up dual control mechanisms involving both donors and recipient country governments.

Civil service reform

- **Three features are needed in relation to the civil service in order to combat corruption**: a) **a meritocratic system of hiring and promotion** to ensure that civil servants can focus on their work rather than the personal agendas of political leaders; b) **proper remuneration** so people don't need to seek alternative sources of income; and c) **proper training**.

Transparency and accountability

- **Transparency allows corrupt practices to be detected** (reducing the chances of corrupt behaviour), while **accountability means those in public office must answer for their actions**. Both are vital to combat corruption.
- **'Competing accountability' can be a challenge in post-conflict settings**: donors are accountable to their governments and citizens, and hence focused on financial accountability; recipient governments are accountable to donors, but also to their own citizens to meet their needs for security, service delivery, jobs, etc.
- **Transparency and accountability are required of donors** as well as recipient states. Donors should 'lead by example' and ensure transparency in their own programmes. Publish What You Fund and the Aid Transparency Index are important initiatives in this regard.
- **Transparency and accountability of foreign aid can be made a condition of such funding**, as well as being promoted through public financial management reform.
- **Specific mechanisms to tackle corruption risks associated with natural resources** and illicit goods include the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI); these **inhibit both local and external complicity in corrupt transactions**.

External agents: media and civil society

- **The media and civil society can act as a check on corrupt behaviour**, through monitoring, reporting and mobilising the population to push for government accountability. For them to play this role, **access to information is essential** and this must be ensured in law.
- In order for the media to be effective in combatting corruption, **media freedom must be ensured in law**. The media itself has responsibilities to **ensure ethical and professional standards are followed**. The international community could provide media capacity building to support this.
- **Civil society can be even more effective than the media in pushing for state accountability** because of 'self-interest', as well as being in a better position to monitor service delivery, for example, and to disseminate findings and mobilise citizens. The international community is increasingly promoting use of NGOs/CSOs for this, but it is important to strengthen existing mechanisms and to hold NGOs accountable.

2. Importance of addressing corruption risks

Corruption risks in post-conflict reconstruction

Numerous factors in post-conflict states fuel corruption risks. These can broadly be divided into those stemming from international involvement in such states, and those stemming from shortcomings in the states themselves. The former include the typically large influx of foreign aid in such situations; donor imperative to spend quickly and show results; the presence of international development organisations/peacekeepers; the tendency of donors to 'accept' or tolerate corruption in the challenging environment of post-war states; and the donor push often seen for economic and political liberalisation. The latter include: massive humanitarian and other needs (especially for infrastructure rebuilding); weak/illegitimate governments; low public sector capacity (including to absorb and spend on a large scale); the weak rule of law; weak transparency and accountability mechanisms; and often a pre-conflict history of corruption. Underlying all these is the often ever-present risk of renewed violence and conflict.

[Note: K4D Helpdesk Report 1154 accompanies this report, and details corruption risks in post-conflict reconstruction.]

Need for anti-corruption measures

Corruption in post-conflict reconstruction can have very detrimental consequences: in the short- to medium-term on development, economic growth and poverty reduction, and in the long-term undermining peacebuilding and, ultimately, leading to renewed conflict.

Corruption in the use of foreign aid erodes donor confidence and hence often leads to less aid, vital for reconstruction. Harvey (2012: 8) notes that: 'Overall, the most immediate and visible consequence of corruption is a negative effect on the volume, quality and targeting of reconstruction assistance provided by international donors and local authorities'. However, the consequences of corruption can reach much further. 'The medium to long-term consequences…. are swelling public debt, opportunities wasted, the weakened legitimacy of domestic and international institutions, and all too often, the institutionalising of corruption in the longer term' (Galtung, 2004: 7).

> Corruption threatens not only governance in general but also the establishment and stability of democracies. When the corrupt excesses of political leaders lead to lack of basic services and economic opportunities, this may generate public frustration which erodes state legitimacy at a time when it is most needed. In the post-conflict environment, especially where democracies are fragile, this may fuel renewed violent conflict (UNDP, 2010: x).

Transparency International (2010: 1) echo this, explaining that, 'In a post-conflict context, corruption undermines state legitimacy and can undo the process of reconciliation, leading to a return to violence'. While forms of corruption can vary from one country to another:

> there is one common lesson on corruption that applies to all post-conflict countries: tolerating corruption erodes the prospects for sustainable stability and nation-building. Corruption destroys the idea that there can be a fair power-sharing agreement, collective peace and trust (Transparency International, 2010: 1).

Conversely, anti-corruption measures to reduce corruption in post-conflict reconstruction can have massively positive effects, strengthening the state across multiple dimensions:

> Economically, a reduction in corruption stimulates growth and increases investment. Politically, it serves to enhance the state's legitimacy. In terms of security, a state that is better able to control corrupt activities will also be able to enforce the rule of law in general. And as for social welfare, a reduction in corruption has the potential to translate into better service delivery — if funds that would be used for corrupt purposes are instead put to good use for the public, and if more qualified public servants are in service (UNDP, 2010: 19).

State-building vs. anti-corruption

The literature highlights two broad schools of thought when it comes to tackling corruption in post-conflict reconstruction: state-building and anti-corruption. 'Broadly, the anti-corruption approach regards corruption as having a negative impact in all cases, while the state-building approach will more readily ignore certain forms of corruption in order to safeguard the state-building process' (Hussman et al, 2009: 13). Zaum and Cheng (n.d.: 3-4) highlight the 'recurring tension between accepting (or even encouraging) forms of corruption in the short term to attain greater stability and the need to counter it in the longer term in order to lay the foundations for legitimate political institutions and sustainable economic development'.

According to the state-building approach 'combating corruption in the immediate aftermath of violent conflict can threaten the emergent peace' (Marquettte & Cooley, 2015: 353). Zeng and Chaum (n.d.: 6) write, 'As critical as fighting corruption is for sustainable improvements in security, governance, and development, it needs to be balanced with the other challenges that confront a society as it attempts to put itself back together again in the aftermath of war'. Le Billon (2008: 356) argues that the international community would be wise to 'let corruption buy a temporary peace when the risk of renewed conflict is too high'. In this view 'the need to maintain a fragile peace settlement overrides the risks associated with leakage or mismanagement' (Galtung & Tisne, 2009: 97). A further consideration can be the *difficulty* of combatting corruption: 'As much as donors, diplomats, UN agencies and the World Bank want to see corruption controlled, they are still often reluctant to talk about it with governments because they perceive it to be intractable, too sensitive, or both — especially in the early post-conflict years' (UNDP, 2010: 32). But the most extreme version of the state-building approach is that 'some degree of corruption is beneficial – that it can help to oil the peace process, strengthen the hand of the favoured reconstruction allies, and pay off detractors' (Galtung & Tisne, 2009: 97).

By contrast, according to the anti-corruption approach, tackling corruption should be a priority in the immediate post-war phase as this 'is a time when the course of a country's future is shaped; it is also a time when corruption is magnified', and 'ignoring it risks storing up problems for the future' (Marquette & Cooley, 2015: 353). In their review of eight post-war reconstruction countries, Galtung and Tisne (2009) show that the failure to include corruption in the list of policy priorities contributed to overall increased fragility. They conclude that, 'Although fighting corruption may be destabilizing, it cannot be avoided. Systemic corruption directly undermines state legitimacy, and it is incompatible with consolidating a nascent state' (Galtung & Tisne, 2009: 100). Cheng and Zaum (2008: 304) echo this: 'whilst corruption may, in the short run, create a peace and stability that is much preferable to violence, in the long term, attempts to buy

short-term peace by tacitly condoning corruption may end up backfiring'. Transparency International (2010: 6) also stress that, 'Anti-corruption initiatives need to be integrated into post-conflict efforts from the outset as part of nation-building'.

Ownership, pre-requisites, sequencing

In post-conflict settings with significant international aid, the question of 'ownership' of anti-corruption reforms often arises: who is in the driving seat? who is pushing for reform? Obviously, anti-corruption reforms will often be made a condition of donor aid, with donors 'prescribing' programmes/measures and recipient countries implementing those. Marquette and Cooley (2015: 354) argue that a better – as in more effective and more sustainable – approach would be to tie donor aid to recipient countries demonstrating that they have the political will to combat corruption, but doing so through measures/reforms of their own choosing. They cite Radalet (2006: 14, in Marquette & Cooley, 2015: 354) who argues that 'donors should spend less time trying to write contracts that force an alignment of incentives and instead give more aid to countries that on their own demonstrate similar motivations and objectives'. 'Using ex-post conditionality, donors can finance reforms rather than seeking to buy them' (Mathieson, 2007: 26, cited in Marquette & Cooley, 2015: 354).

Boucher et al (2007: 23) identify three broad requirements before corruption in post-conflict settings can be substantially reduced in any sector:

- 'First, there must be an end to fighting and the establishment of relative security throughout the country.
- 'Second, there must be local leadership determination ("political will") to combat corruption.
- 'Third, the public must be invested in the fight against corruption, moving beyond the cynicism and passivity that many years of war and experience of graft may have inculcated'.

3. Law enforcement

Weak rule of law is one of the factors that enables corruption. As Schuette (2020) explains: 'The rule of law institutions that are left in states emerging from violent conflicts are often seen as part of the problem and not the solution, as they suffer from endemic corruption and are often predatory in nature'.

Strengthening the rule of law can therefore be an important approach to combatting corruption. Essential elements of this would include: legislative reform to criminalise corrupt behaviour; training/capacity building of police/investigators, prosecutors, lawyers, judges and other personnel in the justice system; establishment of standards, and professional organisations for all those involved in criminal justice work; putting in place protections for whistle-blowers; ensuring adequate funding and facilities, and modernising court administration; and ensuring transparency and accountability, including by making records publicly accessible (Boucher et al, 2007: 28-29). The goal is to establish:

> an enduring criminal justice system that is trustworthy, legitimate and effective, with a truly independent and self-regulating judiciary that is governed by law rather than

personal or political interest. Such a system gains permanent legitimacy in the eyes of the public and becomes an essential actor in ensuring that corruption is kept in check throughout society, even well after international observers have left the scene (Boucher et al, 2007: 29-30).

However, given the challenges facing post-conflict states, notably with regard to institutional capacity, there are questions about whether a law enforcement approach can work. Boucher et al (2007, 42) note that 'in the absence of viable means of enforcement and punishment, which is often the case in weakened post-conflict settings, criminalising corruption will be ineffective and even counterproductive'. They cite the example of post-Taliban Afghanistan: a ban on poppy cultivation was not initially enforced, and led to a rise in poppy prices, creating financial incentives for farmers to grow the crop (Boucher et al, 2007: 42). In addition, 'Enforcement approaches can be destabilising in post-conflict settings, as they are easily politicised' (OECD, 2009, cited in Chene, 2012: 8). Boucher et al (2007: 42) conclude that criminalisation should only be carried out where effective enforcement is feasible and realistic; 'otherwise rely on other measures such as administrative regulations, media exposure, public pressure, and aid conditionality'.

The difficulties surrounding rule of law reform, and specifically judicial sector reform perhaps explain why this has 'mostly been left to one side' and 'despite occupying a central position regarding state legitimacy and the rule of law' has been one of the lower priorities of post-conflict reconstruction assistance (Hussmann & Tisne, 2009: 17). Hussmann and Tisne (2009: 17) suggest donors should work with traditional justice institutions, particularly at local level: 'Although they may not comply with international standards on human rights, they do exist and can be used. Examples of efforts to bridge formal and informal justice mechanisms exist in Rwanda (Gacaca courts) and Sierra Leone (Timap for Justice Project)'.

Schuette (2020) stresses the importance of appointing people with integrity and a clean track record to the judiciary, while acknowledging that this can be 'challenging in an environment of endemic corruption and particularly for senior justice sector positions that require experience'. She describes approaches that have been taken in a few rare cases of sitting judges and other law enforcement personnel being vetted both for expertise and integrity:

> In some cases, all sitting judges were screened to determine whether they had the integrity and capacity required for office. This is typically done by an independent committee adhering to clear criteria, sometimes even involving international experts, such as in Kenya after 2010. In other countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, a competitive reappointment process required everyone in the judiciary to reapply for their positions, competing with external applicants.

Schuette (2020) even suggests – in situations where trust in state officials is especially low – involving CSOs in the appointment process, and opening up positions to people from other professions, e.g. academia, other practitioners of law, accountants (depending on the required expertise) or from other countries with a similar cultural and legal context. However, she emphasises that – whatever recruitment/reappointment process is used – this 'should be spelled out clearly and be as transparent as possible' (Schuette, 2020).

Similar debate surrounds the establishment of anti-corruption commissions (ACCs) in post-conflict settings, a popular move often encouraged by international financial institutions (Boucher

et al, 2007: 43). Doig and Tisne (2009, cited in Chene 2012: 8) point out that globally there are very few examples of successful ACCs, 'and in post-conflict countries, they are often hampered by lack of effective control and accountability frameworks'. Schuette (2020) echoes this:

> Bundling resources in a specialized commission is a common feature of many anti-corruption regimes, but this approach has yet to succeed in any post-conflict setting….Too often broad mandates, too little resources (or ill-timed support) and political interference have rendered anti-corruption commissions ineffective.

Boucher et al (2007: 43) point out that ACCs can be 'subject to political manipulation, especially in the volatile political context of a post-war state, and they may also become objects of scapegoating'. Moreover, they warn that, 'To the extent they themselves are exempt from scrutiny, anti-corruption agencies may become the most corrupt of state agencies' (Boucher et al, 2007: 43).

Given this, there are calls that 'primary systems should be in place before secondary bodies like ACCs are created to oversee the functioning of inexistent institutions' (Chene, 2012: 8). Chene (2012: 8) cites the example of Afghanistan, where an ACC was called for in the constitution, and the Afghan president asked for international assistance to train and equip the office, at the same time as several line ministries still had no Chief Financial Officers in place. She notes that none of the ACCs set up in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sierra Leone had prosecuted corrupt officials as of 2009 (Chene, 2012: 8).

Zeng and Chaum (n.d.: 6) agree that setting up the rule of law has been one of the biggest challenges of international peace-building, and attribute this to the fact that it requires culture change:

> establishing the rule of law is not a technical problem with a technical solution in the same way as building a public finance system or providing primary healthcare is. Rather, it is deeply rooted in culturally-specific conceptions of justice and authority. It is this cultural specificity that makes the transfer of legal institutions and best practices much more challenging.

They argue that it might be more effective to focus anti-corruption efforts on key fiscal and revenue-raising institutions such as customs and the treasury, and related bodies such as supreme audit institutions, building their capacity. 'While such efforts will not be sufficient to fight corruption, they can help to increase public trust in the government, and contribute to an environment within which broader political and institutional reforms can be attempted' (Zeng & Chaum, n.d.: 6).

4. Public financial management

'Public finance – the collection and distribution of taxes and international financial aid – is especially susceptible to pervasive and high levels of corrupt behaviour' (Boucher et al, 2007: 38). Tax collection in particular can potentially be a very lucrative target for corruption on a grand scale (Boucher et al, 2007: 39).

The desire of post-conflict states to access international aid/debt relief and/or international recognition can serve as a powerful incentive for public financial management reform. Hence,

despite lack of capacity and the many other challenges faced, post-conflict situations can actually offer 'a window of opportunity' for reform (Chene, 2012: 8).

Boucher et al (2007: 39) identify some of the essential features of a responsible public finance system:

- Efficient revenue collection system, and properly secured land borders and sea and air terminals to enhance collection of customs duties;
- Procurement and contracting in accordance with clear regulations and government-approved budgets;
- Regular audits conducted by both internal and external mechanisms;
- Transparency, including publicly available financial records, and oversight.

Chene (2012: 8) echoes this, explaining that 'most recommendations to address corruption in fragile states call for the establishment of transparent regulations and procedures and emphasise the need to strengthen public finance management (PFM)'. She cites a study of six post-conflict countries, in which strengthening audit and control capacity, as well as training and technical assistance in budget monitoring, procurement processes, cash and debt management, and financial management information systems, led to 'increase in revenue collection and greater budgetary controls in those countries' (USAID, 2008, cited in Chene, 2012: 8). Another study, this time in 2012, of eight post-conflict countries also found that PFM reforms were 'positively associated with gains in state "resilience" and control of corruption and this approach also translated into a higher share of aid using country systems' (see below) (World Bank, 2012, cited in Chene, 2012: 8).

Given the capacity challenges and corruption risks typically found in post-conflict states, donors can be tempted to set up parallel systems for managing the support they provide, avoiding government systems. While this approach might be convenient in the short-term, in the long-term it undermines state capacity building and, critically, accountability of government to citizens (which comes through government raising revenue and managing resources efficiently). Hence, it is better practice to strengthen rather than bypass local financial management systems (Chene, 2012: 8). One way to do this could be:

> through the intensification of monitoring activities that do not side line the state but provides incentives to improve its performance while diagnosing problems. For example, concurrent and random state audits by national audit offices of donor countries on a rotating basis can be used in such settings (O'Donnel, 2006, cited in Chene, 2012: 8).

Another approach seen in some countries is dual control mechanisms involving both recipient country government and donors, whereby the signature of both would be required to release finds. In Liberia, for example, 'internationally recruited experts were placed within key agencies to establish transparent financial systems and provide technical guidance' (O'Donnel, 2006, cited in Chene, 2012: 8). This proved successful, but the caveat is that such approaches have to be backed by strong leadership and political will (O'Donnel, 2006, cited in Chene, 2012: 8).

5. Civil service reform

Boucher et al (2007: 31) identify three features in relation to the civil service which are needed to combat corruption: a meritocratic system, proper training and proper remuneration. Hiring and

promotion on the basis of ability rather than connections ('who you know') is important for an effective civil service in which employees work in accordance with agency standards and goals rather than the personal agendas of political leaders:

> A meritocratic system of hiring and promotion gives civil servants the freedom to focus on the operational details of their jobs, reducing time spent currying favour with (or making payments to) powerful bosses. A depoliticized civil service can afford a sense of loyalty to the state and the people at large and can be a more stable source of expertise in managing government affairs (Boucher et al, 2007: 32).

The relevance of proper remuneration in relation to corruption is obvious:

> Governments must balance civil service wage rates between the average living wage in the society and what the local private sector can pay a comparably-skilled person. Ideally, government would offer (and be able to pay consistently) a salary high enough that employees would not need to seek alternative sources of income (Boucher et al, 2007: 32).

However, Boucher et al (2007) acknowledge that in situations where civil servants (public officials) are used to getting a lot of income from bribery, matching that income through salary might not be feasible: in such cases, competitive remuneration needs to be supplemented with advocacy to combat bribery and corruption. As well as wages, they stress the need to ensure that public officials have the offices, equipment and facilities they need to carry out their work.

Chene (2012: 7-8) cites various experts who recommend strengthening controls over payrolls as an effective means of reducing corruption:

> In DRC for example, embezzlement of funds were reduced by the combination of improved oversight by the Congolese authorities and the introduction of a new payroll mechanism by the EU. In South Sudan very careful efforts are under way to clean up the payroll from ghost army officials, but such approach requires time and negotiation.

6. Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability are important elements of an anti-corruption agenda. Transparency allows corrupt practices to be detected – and hence reduces the chances of corrupt behaviour, while accountability means those in public office are answerable for their actions.

Galtung and Tisne (2009: 103) highlight the fact that donor agencies providing aid for post-conflict reconstruction are primarily accountable to their own government and public, and hence their priority tends to be financial accountability above all else. However, post-conflict governments will have different priorities, since they are accountable to their citizens to meet their immediate needs, notably for security, service delivery, public infrastructure, job creation. This can create a situation of 'competing' accountability: 'The post-war state's survival depends on its ability to manage the tensions and contradictions of this dual-accountability system. Ultimately, however, it is the aid beneficiaries' perception that matters if a renewal of conflict is to be avoided' (Galtung & Tisne, 2009: 103).

Zeng and Chaum (n.d.: 5) stress that transparency and accountability are important both on the part of post-conflict governments and donor agencies. They call for the latter to increase transparency and accountability in their own programmes (Zeng & Chaum, n.d.: 5):

> For peacebuilders, one of the most basic recommendations is to lead by example and to be transparent when interacting with local communities and to abide strictly by the laws of the country no matter what the activity (contract tendering, meting out appropriate punishment for international staff who commit crimes, obeying local traffic signals, etc.). While this recommendation may seem obvious, it is surprising how often the international community does not live up to the standards that it sets for others.

Publish What You Fund is an advocacy-based NGO set up in 2008, which works to ensure that all aid data is transparent, available, usable and used.[1] In the same year, the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) was launched to provide a universal standard of transparency for donor assistance. IATI brings together donors, developing country governments, CSOs and other users of aid information (Galtung & Tisne, 2009: 105). The first Aid Transparency Index, ranking donors on transparency, was published in 2011 and has been ongoing since then. Publish What You Fund carry out advocacy, engagement, research and capacity building to promote transparency in donor finance, and to move beyond publication of data to accountability.[2]

With regard to ensuring transparency and accountability of recipients of donor aid, Zeng and Chaum (n.d.: 5) suggest that this could be made a condition for financing projects, alongside provision of technical assistance to strengthen accounting systems and support for civil society monitoring (see below). They note that: 'a range of donor governments, the IFIs[3], and NGOs have focused on anti-corruption programs designed to increase the transparency of public finance systems in order to enhance the credibility of the system and reduce opportunities for corruption' (Zeng & Chaum, n.d.: 5). The example of Liberia, cited above, came under the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) and instituted a degree of international control in public financial systems, with the reasoning that increased transparency and accountability makes it harder for government to misuse resources.

Galtung and Tisne (2009) stress the role that community-based monitoring can play in ensuring accountability and reducing corruption. This can be both in relation to donor-funded programmes and projects, and delivery of basic services by government. Local communities are well-suited for this having a good understanding of the local context, and being 'in situ' and able to see whether projects/services are being delivered properly.

> An anticorruption approach that emphasises local accountability in the earliest post-war stages and builds on local resources and competencies in distinctive ways will not only see greater success in stemming corruption but will also increase participation and trust in the reconstruction process (Galtung & Tisne, 2009: 107).

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[1] https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/about-us/

[2] https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/about-us/

[3] International financial institutions

As well as tax revenue and foreign aid, there can also be corruption risks associated with revenues from natural resources and from illicit goods. Specific mechanisms to tackle such risks through increased transparency include the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which covers oil, gas and mining, and the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme for diamonds. The former requires the 'full publication and verification of company payments and government revenues from oil, gas and mining' and the latter extensive certification that 'shipments of rough diamonds are free from conflict diamonds' (Boucher et al, 2007: 40). Such international monitoring mechanisms 'inhibit both local and external complicity in corrupt transactions' (Boucher et al, 2007: 40).

7. External agents: media and civil society

The challenges of ensuring transparency and accountability on the part of the state, and the fact that the executive can itself be involved in corruption, point to the need for 'external' entities to play a role, notably the media and civil society (Chene, 2012). These can 'provide both formal and informal checks on corrupt behaviours and, when allowed to function freely, act as watchdogs for the public interest' (Boucher et al, 2007: 36). Further advantages are that, with the right access, they can be in an excellent position to monitor and report, and to mobilize the population to push for government accountability:

> Here, perhaps more than in any other domain, there is a constant cycle: the more that such groups and the media do, both qualitatively and quantitatively, the more the public at large scrutinizes the government and demands more information and further accountability (Boucher et al, 2007: 36).

Access to information is essential for both the media and civil society groups to play this role. This requires provisions in law for freedom of information ('legal public access to government information').

> Without legal requirements, governments may withhold information that calls into question a particular policy or activity. Access to information not only promotes informed political participation, but also reduces the mystique of secrecy that often surrounds government decision-making, thereby increasing people's willingness both to insist on government accountability and to trust government policy more. By giving the public ready access to the government, these additional layers of transparency further erode the culture of corruption and promote a culture of public service (Boucher et al, 2007: 37).

Media

In order for the media to play an effective role in monitoring, reporting and holding government accountable it needs both the freedom to operate and the capacity to do so. Boucher et al (2007: 37-38) stress that media freedom is vital:

> The mere existence of media outlets within a society does not bring about effective monitoring of the government: There must be legal and customary guarantees of a free and independent press. Otherwise, the media, whether publicly or privately owned, simply function as mouthpieces for government or for particular factions or interests.

As with access to information, media freedom needs to be guaranteed through legislation 'as media protection by administrative directive allows for too much government discretion in determining what is and is not appropriate journalistic behaviour' (Boucher et al, 2007: 38). Boucher et al (2007: 38) actually recommend that both protection of free speech and media freedom should be written into a state's Fundamental Law or Constitution, 'the better to insulate that freedom from legislative whim'.

However, the media also has responsibilities and must be held accountable. Boucher et al (2007: 38) stress that:

> The media in turn must take responsibility for ensuring their staffs are properly educated and function according to stringent professional and ethical standards designed to ensure that the information provided to the public is credible and politically neutral, and devoid of all fabrication.

The international community (donor agencies) can support capacity building of the media. The UN, for example, worked with national authorities and the media in Cote d'Ivoire to help with implementation of important decrees setting media standards, in a context where hate programming directed largely at migrant communities (from Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso) had been a feature of some media in the country (Boucher et al, 2007: 38).

Boucher et al (2007: 38) give some examples of the media promoting accountability and tackling corruption. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), MONUC's[4] Radio Okapi had programmes in five languages reaching 80% of the country's territory on current events, social issues (e.g. public health), music and other topics of public interest. In the run-up to national elections it carried a daily debate giving equal air time to political parties and others, as well as a civic education show for youth and students, and short video features which aired weekly on 33 television stations across the country (Boucher et al, 2007: 38). Similarly, Radio UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone was 'highly regarded for its mix of local music, objective news, interactive call-in formats, and balanced access to the airwaves for government officials and others' (Boucher et al, 2007: 38). It also sensitised the population on illegal mining and trade in rough diamonds.

Civil society

Chene (2012: 9) notes that in post-conflict settings 'community-based approaches sometimes represent the only feasible option for controlling corruption in service delivery through mechanisms such as participatory monitoring of expenditures, scorecards'. Boucher et al (2007: 38) highlight the fact that local NGOs are 'well-suited for proposing corruption fighting plans and initiatives, given appropriate access to information and officials'. They have the advantage over the media that they can monitor government activities in more detail 'because, acting in their own self-interest, they may be more dogged in pursuit of an issue' (Boucher et al, 2007: 38). They can also be more effective in getting the wider community to engage:

> Local NGOs can also disseminate their findings to concerned citizens through their own networks of personal contacts, exploiting, for example, the burgeoning availability of cell phone technology, both voice and text messaging. They can also engage the population

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[4] United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

in ways the media cannot, by holding meetings, workshops, and rallies or by launching lobbying campaigns (Boucher et al, 2007: 38).

Boucher et al (2007: 38) cite the example of the DRC, where a US NGO Innovative Resources Management supported locally created anti-corruption commissions with radios and information, and they helped cut petty corruption by up to 95 percent.

The international community is increasingly promoting use of such groups, but Chene (2012: 9) warns that 'existing grassroots engagement can be easily undermined by throwing money at the NGOs', and hence the focus should be on strengthening existing mechanisms. 'The starting point should be to identify existing resources and actors that can provide a basis upon which to rebuild'. She also warns that civil society groups can themselves be susceptible to corruption, and therefore 'transparency and open government in NGOs should be as much part of donor AC [anti-corruption] approaches the same as for state institutions and donor behaviour itself' (Chene, 2012: 9).

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