

Introduction

In practice, most of us recognize corruption as a nebulous feature to our every day lives, especially in developing country environments. Corruption is a character trait that we most like to associate with people of compromised morals, but even very upstanding citizens can sometimes be a party to subtly corrupt behavior. In government and politics we consider corruption as the abuse of public power for private gain. It comes under many different guises such as bribery, the misappropriation of public goods, favoring family members for jobs and contracts, or creating laws and regulations that aim to impact private gain over the public good.

We know that approximately one trillion dollars (\$1,000,000,000,000) is wasted on corruption around the world *each year*. It lowers the standard of living and decreases the amount of wealth in a country by undermining trust in government, working in favor of the rich and against the poor, worsening the quality and reliability of public service delivery, and discouraging business thereby hurting a nation's development.

When countries tackle corruption they increase their national incomes by as much as four times in the long term. If corruption is reduced, business can grow by as much as 3% faster and child mortality can fall as much as 75%. Finally, it will consider the role for parliament as a role model, legislator and representative in reducing corruption in a nation and improving standards for fighting against it.

The first unit of this module will explain how corruption evolves as a part of the global, national and community framework. It will define the various classifications, situations, and levels of corruption, and will consider how corruption creates an environment for poverty, and can change social, economic and environmental norms.

The second unit of the module looks at the causes for corruption, considering what motivates people to participate in corrupt behavior. The third and fourth units express the need for strong tools to diagnose corruption in order to develop effective responses, including government mechanisms for prevention (e.g. transparency), improving the governance and civic education of civil servants, elected officials and

the enforcement of anticorruption laws against those who use public power for private gain.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh units consider additional responses to corruption. Unit five looks at the role of an informed civil society through the improvement of access to information and better communication with their government representatives. Unit six goes into greater depth on political commitment to anti-corruption strategies through the creation of an Anticorruption Commission, the elements of a national anticorruption strategy, an analysis of the stakeholders, and budget oversight. Unit seven looks at the role of the media for providing a nonbiased source of information to act as an apolitical source to balance the power of government. Finally, the last unit considers the role of parliament in anticorruption strategies. This unit is particularly important for parliamentarians to consider their role in creating anticorruption legislation, developing budget oversight methods, building coalitions with civil society and joining international networks of parliamentarians to share and learn best practices.

