



**PROMOTING THE
AFRICAN UNION CONVENTION
ON PREVENTING AND
COMBATING CORRUPTION**

Tactical Area 2

Empower African civil society organisations to effectively
engage in anti-corruption activities

ADVOCACY TOOLS AND TACTICS

This is one of six toolkits – each focusing on a different tactical area – from the collection, *Promoting the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption: Tools and Tactics*.

While monitoring and advocating for the implementation of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, several Transparency International chapters developed advocacy tactics to hold governments accountable. These have helped them work with decision-makers to meet the as yet outstanding commitments in implementation and enforcement of this convention.

This collection was developed as part of Transparency International's project, Towards Enforcement of Africa's Commitments against Corruption (TEA-CAC), funded by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It presents tools and tactics that are based on real examples of creative advocacy work so that other civil society organisations can replicate them in their own anti-corruption campaigning.

The other toolkits:

Tactical area 1

Increase public awareness to the implementation status of African states' anti-corruption commitments

Tactical area 2

Empower African civil society organisations to effectively engage in anti-corruption activities

Tactical area 3

Strengthen the capacities of media partners to monitor the implementation of anti-corruption commitments and demand accountability

Tactical area 4

Strengthen anti-corruption institutions and anti-corruption work by public authorities

Tactical area 5

Advocate for legal reforms in the domestication of the AUCPCC

Tactical area 6

Monitor the AUCPCC's implementation

You can access each toolkit and the full collection of tools and tactics on the [Transparency International website](#).

TACTICAL AREA 2

Empower African civil society organisations to effectively engage in anti-corruption activities

The right of access to information empowers citizens to obtain information held by public bodies (with limited exceptions). Access to information is essential in the fight against corruption because it enables civil society activists and the public to participate in public debates, engage directly with public decision-makers, and have their rightful say in the development of public policy and law.

Transparency International (TI) Rwanda noted potential whistleblowers' reluctance in reporting corruption, resulted in comparatively low reporting

levels due to fear of reprisals. The [Rwanda Bribery Index](#) 2020 reports that 88.1 per cent of citizens who encountered corruption did not report it. To counter this, the organisation not only helped train those responsible for protecting whistleblowers but also publicised the protection offered to them among society.

In Tunisia, I WATCH is building the next generation of corruption fighters by creating student hubs on university campuses to support transparency and anti-corruption measures.

ENGAGING OFFICIALS AND CITIZENS IN PROTECTING WHISTLEBLOWERS (RWANDA)

How it relates to the AUCPCC

Article 12 (civil society and media) and Article 5 (anti-corruption institutions). This work involves engaging the media and civil society, as well as strengthening anti-corruption institutions because, according to the convention, every government institution should investigate whistleblower complaints and have rules to protect whistleblowers.

Why use this tactic?

Whistleblowers disclose information about corruption or other wrongdoings to individuals or entities that can take corrective action. Unfortunately, exposing wrongdoing that threatens the public interest can mean risking one's career or even personal safety. Many cases of corruption are not reported because people are afraid to come forward to expose problems they have seen. Offering protection to people who blow the whistle would encourage more people to report corruption. Thus, protecting whistleblowers is key to effective enforcement of anti-corruption laws.

Description and objectives of the tactic

In sub-Saharan Africa, many countries do not have a law defining whistleblowing or offering protection to whistleblowers. Even countries that do have a law do not guarantee its implementation.

This tactic builds the capacity of authorities responsible for protecting whistleblowers and builds trust among the public that they will be protected should they come forward to report an act of corruption.

The objectives of this tactic are to:

- + Standardise whistleblower protection across duty bearers in government who are entrusted with protecting whistleblowers. This is achieved through training workshops for the responsible personnel and the creation of guidelines for their work.
- + Raise awareness and increase confidence among citizens who still refrain from reporting due to fear of retaliation.

Key conditions for success

- + Access to heads of institutions. High-level one-on-one advocacy meetings with ministers and heads of institutions can facilitate cooperation among middle-ranking officials.
- + Willingness of authorities to coordinate. Countries that have some whistleblowing legislation are more likely to cooperate with civil society on implementation measures.
- + Sophistication in public communication. Raising awareness of what whistleblowers do and why they need to be protected can require advanced communication techniques.

Background to the tactic

In Rwanda, it can be easy to track and find out who the person behind a whistleblowing report is. They can therefore be threatened by those they have made the complaint against. This risk can deter people from blowing the whistle, which makes it more difficult to obtain reports of corruption for use in investigations. Rwanda adopted a legal framework to protect whistleblowers in 2012, revised in 2017 to strengthen

protection measures. TI Rwanda's advocacy since 2009 contributed to the adoption of the law and the chapter disseminated the text of the new law among civil society and the private sector when it was adopted.

Challenges remained, however, in implementing the law. According to TI Rwanda, reporting was consistently low. And further research found that, in many key institutions, there were no focal persons to receive whistleblower cases or ensure information was passed on to the relevant law enforcement authorities. TI Rwanda decided to advocate for the nomination and training of such focal persons in government. In following up, the chapter found that many of those who had received a report of corruption did not know how to deal with it properly to protect the whistleblower, investigate the case or report the person accused of the crime.

"We have been creating awareness so that citizens feel free to report corruption cases. Before, they didn't know that you could be a whistleblower and still be protected and not be afraid of speaking," says TI Rwanda Executive Director Apollinaire Mupiganyi. "Through media engagement and raising awareness through TV and radio outreach, we did a lot at the national and district levels, engaging with citizens and sharing info with them in terms of what their rights are, how they can be protected and also their right to speak out and not fear repercussions."

How to do this

1. Be clear about the legal definition of whistleblowing

Defining clearly what constitutes protected whistleblowing activity is key to avoid engaging with a client who would not qualify as a whistleblower under national legislation. Develop your own definition as an organisation to position yourself clearly if there is a gap. Caution is needed in handling whistleblowing cases that cannot be guaranteed protection.

2. Analyse factors discouraging whistleblowing

Using both an annual bribery survey and results from collecting cases via a hotline reporting system, TI Rwanda found that the number of people reporting corruption was lower than those who said they witnessed corruption. In follow-up research, the organisation found a commonly held perception that some

whistleblowers are punished for being "talkative", even driven from their villages by authorities.

3. Acknowledge progress by government in order to engage constructively

When progress in adopting or implementing whistleblowing legislation is acknowledged, government officials are less defensive and more open to recommendations. To balance critical research about public distrust underlying fewer whistleblowing reports, positive messaging should be used to encourage government authorities' involvement, even in the preliminary steps.

4. Compile a list of recommendations

For example, draft a policy paper to be shared with key institutions in the justice chain, with recommendations targeting public sector institutions to ensure the protection of whistleblowers.

5. Conduct high-level meetings

Organise meetings with institutions and departments such as the office of the ombudsman to help them better implement the legal provisions required by the country's law, such as ensuring that each public institution has a focal point for whistleblowers. By keeping this advocacy discreet and out of the public eye, private lobbying can successfully create policy change without embarrassing officials with a public airing of their problems in implementation.

6. Agree on a consensus on definitions and protections offered under law

Bringing together different stakeholders in a workshop can help to involve various public institutions and establish common concerns through, for example, disseminating a policy paper.

7. Follow up with technical workshops to develop guidelines for implementation

Using agreed upon action points in, for example, technical meetings at each institution on how to receive and resolve whistleblower allegations and protect the informant.

8. Develop guidelines

The material from the workshops can become commonly agreed upon guidelines for responsible

officials for protecting whistleblowers. A further high-level meeting with the heads of public institutions will formalise the internal guidelines to be official standards for each institution.

9. Public campaign using sophisticated communication

Public awareness on practicalities of reporting corruption is important, such as the number to call and information about guidelines and systems in place to ensure whistleblower confidentiality without repercussions. Using wide-reaching platforms like radio and TV talk shows can showcase people who spoke up about corruption, which can embolden other citizens to follow suit.

Additional information

Using a clear definition of whistleblowing is important to create a common understanding within the organisation before starting a campaign to educate the public. This can avoid discrepancies in defining someone as a whistleblower only to find they do not qualify for protection under the law. This is an important issue of protection for individuals who may be

exposed to legal threats of libel or defamation if they do not fall under the protection of the law.

- + Transparency International Secretariat. [Definition of Whistleblowing](#)
- + Transparency International Rwanda. [15 Years of TI Rwanda Experience: Citizen Engagement as a Driver to Fight Corruption](#)
- + Transparency International Secretariat. [A Best Practice Guide for Whistleblowing Legislation](#)
- + Transparency International Secretariat. [International Principles for Whistleblower Legislation](#)

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ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN INTEGRITY CAMPAIGNING (TUNISIA)

How it relates to the AUCPCC

Article 12 (civil society and media) states that governments undertake to: “Create an enabling environment that will enable civil society and the media to hold governments to the highest levels of transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs...” while the Preamble declares that member states of the African Union are... “Determined to build partnerships between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular, women, youth, media and the private sector in order to fight the scourge of corruption.”

Why use this tactic?

Young people have an important role to play in society and can change the culture to one that has integrity at all levels. With innovative perspectives, young social change activists can renew and refresh the current status of society. It is important to create a culture of integrity as early as possible. This is even more important when children under 18 years of age account for almost one-third of the world's population. For example, in Africa, 60 per cent of the population was under 25 in 2017, according to the [United Nations](#).

Description and objectives of the tactic

The young citizens of Tunisia should be informed, consulted and encouraged to take part in formulating public policies and evaluating government action. I WATCH CAMPUS is an initiative led by [IWATCH](#) to create a student movement for integrity.

The objectives of this tactic are to:

- + create a number of student clubs for transparency and anti-corruption
- + create the next generation of corruption fighters by providing participants with training in anti-corruption issues as well as useful skills in activism, such as communications, advocacy and management

Key conditions for success

- + Political engagement by young people should be accepted in the country's political culture. To replicate this tactic more easily, politically mobilised youth groups or movements should already exist in universities and high schools. Schools and universities also need to support youth activism with time and space.
- + Examine your own organisation's workplace culture to be sure that this tactic can be supported by a policy of letting young people take ownership of their actions. Supporting youth activism will require investing in building leaders among the youth groups which will allow for self-directed advocacy and peer-to-peer awareness raising. Your organisation also should be ready to integrate those youth networks into its large campaigns and anti-corruption network in the country.

Background to the tactic

Youth were involved in the 2011 Tunisian revolution as they participated in an intensive campaign that

led to the departure of long-time president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Since the founding of I WATCH, many students have become actively involved in its activities. However, I WATCH did not need young volunteers throughout the year, so it was important to keep them engaged through youth clubs in their own schools/universities, which kept them connected to the anti-corruption cause.

How to do this

1. Create clubs among faculties at universities

(such as the faculty of law, the faculty of journalism) Currently, those clubs exist in seven college campuses in Tunis. I WATCH plans to extend those clubs to other universities and colleges in the major cities of the country.

2. Organise training seminars for the students of those clubs

I WATCH offered comprehensive training to anti-corruption clubs on the following topics:

- + money laundering
- + corruption in the public sector
- + access to information
- + illicit enrichment
- + role of civil society and the media in anti-corruption
- + political party funding

Additionally, they receive training in management, communication and advocacy.

3. The clubs organise activities related to transparency in the governance of the faculties

Some of the clubs' activities include observing the elections of student representatives and organising debates between the different candidates.

4. Engage those clubs in general campaigning and volunteering outside the university

Participants can help organise youth conferences to talk about young people's concerns, their priorities and participation in local decision-making processes.

5. Formalise those clubs into independent associations to enhance an ecosystem of organisations fighting corruption

In this tactic, the Transparency International chapter wanted to create different, independent entities consisting of many youth clubs to strengthen the larger ecosystem of civil society. Creating new actors offering youth-specific objectives to be part of Tunisian civil society enlarges the country's democratic space.

Additional information

Using this tactic may require planning for specific support beyond the inception of the clubs. In this tactic, the aim was to create an independent entity. Even though the objective of this tactic is to create an independent entity, it is useful to continue supporting youth organisations. I WATCH found that it was important to connect the different youth groups together, both to find strength in numbers as well as to learn best practice from each other. I Watch believes that the more civil society actors there are that advocate for transparency, the better it is for the fight against corruption. Their strategy is to support the creation and capacity building of new civil society organisations that then constitute what they called 'an ecosystem of civil societies' with similar objectives. An alternative, less ambitious means for creating this network of independent youth clubs could be to support young activists by involving them in your organisation, which can generate new insight and create exciting exchanges.

I WATCH, Campus website

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Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. All information was believed to be correct as of July 2022. Nevertheless, Transparency International cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use for other purposes or in other contexts.

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