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Using Media to Fight Corruption

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The Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) supports citizens and civil society organizations around the world in their fight against corruption. PTF provides small-scale grants and pro-bono technical assistance through highly experienced and specialized volunteer project advisors.

Abstract

The fight against corruption needs to be fought on several fronts. Institutional reform—legislation and oversight—is one, but it will not be successful if it is not embedded in a broad change of culture. Corrupt practices are often embedded in institutional practices and every-day lives and are perceived as fixed and uncontestable. Citizens are not aware of their rights, are cynical about governments' propensity to abuse power, fear repercussions, or are simply not aware that corruption is a social, economic, and political problem. The media—traditional mass media as well as new technologies—can play a vital role in unveiling corruption, framing corruption as public problem, suggesting solutions, and generally empower citizens to fight corruption. Media are watchdogs, agenda setters, and gatekeepers that can monitor the quality of governance, frame the discussion about corruption, and lend voice to a wide range of perspectives and arguments. By doing so, media coverage influences norms and cultures, which in turn can influence policy-making and legislative reform. Examples from India and the Philippines, among other places, show that media effects the range from public awareness of corruption to massive protests against the abuse of power. Those in the international community whose work is dedicated to the fight against corruption need to be aware of the power of the media to aid this fight and need to know how to utilize its potential. This paper provides an overview over the basic principles of media effects and illustrates these with a few case studies before presenting specific techniques of involving the media in the fight against grand corruption and every-day corruption.

Introduction: The media as a pillar of culture

Legislative change and institutional oversight are important cornerstones in the fight against corruption. However, no law will change society if it does not become part of a country's culture, if it does not have an effect on people's everyday lives. Corruption is not a legal issue alone. Corruption is also an issue of society, of culture. In order to fight corruption, we need to change the culture that enables corruption, not only the laws that prohibit it. Corrupt practices are often embedded in institutional practices and everyday lives. They are perceived as fixed and uncontestable. Citizens are often not able to recognize corruption or to differentiate grand structural corruption—extensive unethical behavior by public officials—from petty everyday corruption—minor deviations from the rules for the benefit of an individual or a small group of people—or simple inefficiency and incompetence. The result is a culture with entrenched corrupt practices and very few people to stand up and speak against them. Citizens are not aware of their rights, are cynical about governments' propensity to abuse power, fear repercussions, or are simply not aware that corruption is a social, economic, and political problem.

Media are an important pillar of culture. Media are also an important political player. Media influence our perceptions of what is right and what is wrong. They inform us about corruption and about solutions to this problem. They make politicians pay attention through wide-spread coverage. They also provide platforms for citizens to voice their opinions and demand accountability from those in power.

In the modern media environment, the effects of traditional media on our norms and culture have been enhanced by new communication technologies. Cell phones and the Internet have become an integral part of the media environment. In August 2011, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) registered almost 866 million subscribers to wireless phone services¹, making India the country with the second-largest cell phone user population after China and before the United States. By the end of June this year, about 100 million people used the Internet in India, which puts the country third in the World with regard to online users after China and the United States².

New information and communication technologies have become an integral part of today's media sphere. In many cases, traditional and new media reinforce each other and amplify each other's effects: Television takes up stories from the web and brings them to the attention of a larger audience. News stories from the traditional media are discussed online and create movements through online communities. This paper gives a brief overview over why traditional and social media can be useful tools to create a culture of transparency, openness, and honesty. Three examples from India and the Philippines help illustrating the media's power in the fight against corruption. The main part of the paper provides hands-on practical suggestions on how anti-corruption organizations can work with the media to gain public support for their work, and to work towards changing perceptions, norms, behavior—and culture.

¹ TRAI press release No. 51/2011, http://www.trai.gov.in/WriteReadData/trai/upload/PressReleases/841/Press_Release_Aug-11.pdf

² Internet World Stats, <http://www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm>

What can media do against corruption?³

The media may not be traditional tools in the fight against corruption. However, they are crucial in achieving the cultural change that must accompany any legislative change to make laws and institutional changes sustainable. Media can amplify the effect of anti-corruption legislation by a) reaching and mobilizing a broader audience, b) motivating political leaders to act, and c) facilitating a cultural change that will improve the sustainability of change.

Media are crucial in changing people's beliefs about the prevalence and legitimacy of corruption. The media's ability to change perceptions, norms, and behavior is at the core of their relevance for the fight against corruption. Every society is built on norms. Norms are standards of expected behavior and regulate the way we interact with each other. Research has shown that behavior is influenced mainly by our perception of norms: the norms that we accept for ourselves and the norms that we believe the people around us apply to their own behavior⁴. Whether people accept corruption, go along with it, or stand up against it depends on whether we are aware that corruption is wrong and whether we believe that other people think that corruption is wrong, too. If we assume that most people do not mind paying a bribe to a local official or that most people think that there is nothing they can do against government corruption, then we will tend to just accept it ourselves and not do anything about it. If, on the other hand, we get the impression that many people are against corrupt practices and are willing to challenge them, then we are also more likely to do something about corruption. Media coverage is a major factor in shaping our perception about norms. For instance, local news on television, on the radio, and in newspapers can pay particular attention to instances of corruption and give voice to people who complain about it. That way they can create the impression that corruption occurs often and that people are upset about it. Social media can amplify this effect in particular through websites where citizens can report instances of corruption and through initiating a discussion about it. On the other hand, media can also propagate false perceptions about corruption, which can hinder the work of organizations that engage in the fight against corruption. A typical misrepresentation concerns the differences between grand corruption, petty everyday corruption, and unfortunate, but legal inefficiency. If media misrepresent inefficiency as grand corruption, they can mislead the public and set wrong priorities for the public and policy agendas.

There are three mechanisms through which the media influence our perceptions and norms: media act as watchdog, agenda setters, and public forum for a diverse set of voices. In their function as watchdog, media act as monitor of government behavior and guard the public interest by highlighting cases of misadministration, abuse of power, and corruption. By covering such cases they help ensuring accountability and transparency of governments and other powerful factions. The watchdog function of the media is perhaps the most obvious with regard to corruption, and we can draw on many examples

³ This part of the paper mainly draws on Norris, P. & Odugbemi, S. (2010). Evaluating media performance. In P. Norris (ed.), *Public sentinel: News media and governance reform* (pp. 3-30). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

⁴ Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179-211.

where the media acted as catalyst for policy change by highlighting malfeasance. One of those examples comes from the Philippines and will be introduced later in this paper.

As *agenda setters*, media can put corruption on the public and the political agenda. Agenda setting is one of the media's most crucial democratic functions. By discussing issues and putting them on the public agenda they draw attention to problems in society. Corruption is often not publicly discussed, either because it is perceived as a social norm or because people are afraid of repercussions should they engage in public discussion about it. Media attention legitimizes corruption as a problem in the eyes of the audience: if the media think corruption is problematic, the public will pay more critical attention to it. Furthermore, politicians can be compelled by media pressure to reconsider existing legislation and policies. This is particularly efficient in democracies, where politicians need to be concerned about election outcomes.

Media also provide a *public forum* for citizens to voice their opinions on and experiences with corruption. This mechanism goes back to the idea of the public sphere, which posits that communication flows between state and citizens form a space where accountability and legitimacy are exchanged between both sides. In this ideal democratic public sphere, the media have a responsibility to reflect the plurality of viewpoints and political persuasions in society. This way they maximize the diversity of perspectives and arguments in the public sphere, which can then inform public debate, deliberation, and policy-making. By reflecting a range of perspectives the media can help introduce innovative solutions to the problem of corruption and provide a wide range of suggestions and arguments that citizens can use in their particular circumstances.

While agenda setting is a classic role of the mass media, ICT have been shown to be very effective as watchdogs and, even more so, as public forum. New media provide the infrastructure for a public forum in which different opinions and voices can come together. They enable deliberation, which is a cornerstone of democracy, and which allows citizens to find acceptable solutions to public problems. In many countries, online platforms allow citizens to report instances of corruption by mail, phone, text message, and other channels. These reports are then compiled into regional reports by the platform host organization so that users can see what forms of corruption occurs in which region of the country. An example from India is ipaidabribe.com. The platform was launched in 2010 and aggregates citizen reports to show which departments and situations are most vulnerable to corruption. It hosts a "Top 5" of the most corrupt cities in India: At the moment, Bangalore beats Mumbai, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Kolkata as cities with the most bribes paid⁵. The platform also publishes reports of corruption, expert advice, and links to news stories about corruption. The later is an example how ICT and traditional media amplify each other's effect by highlighting each other's coverage of corruption.

ICT, while not a perfect remedy for all problems of society, are able to overcome some problems of traditional media and are to some extent more accessible and more democratic. Traditional media are limited with regard to their reach and with regard to the degree of literacy they require. Television sets are not prevalent in rural and poor communities because receiving equipment is expensive. Newspapers

⁵ www.ipaidabribe.com, accessed 11/20/11.

require a high degree of literacy. Mobile services, such as text messages, overcome these limits because they are cheaper and easier to use. Political and economic interests have dominated the mass media system almost since its emergence: Advertisers and political parties can exert pressure to skew coverage. ICT are less susceptible to those pressures and provide access to information and voice to people with relatively little political or economic clout. Most notably, however, traditional media and new technologies amplify and reinforce each other's effects. Traditional news media pick up stories that have been reported online, and vice versa. Through this synergy, coverage of corruption can reach more people and has a stronger mobilization effect. Social media in particular have been shown to provide opportunities for social movements to organize more efficiently and to spread wider and faster by significantly lowering transaction costs of participation.

Examples: The role of the media in the fight against corruption

Three examples will help illustrate the power of the media in the fight against corruption. The first comes from the Philippines, where in the late 1990s a group of investigative journalists uncovered corruption at the highest level of government. President *Joseph Estrada* was reported to conceal many of his assets, which allegedly came from illegal sources. Reporters revealed that Estrada did not disclose the houses and cars of his four mistresses in his asset disclosures or tax returns, but had purchased them through other people or companies. Investigative journalists implied that those assets were not disclosed because they were paid for by money from illegal sources. These reports were crucial in mobilizing massive demonstrations against Estrada. Eventually, the Parliamentary opposition initiated an impeachment charge against the President. When it seemed that many senators were unwilling to act on the evidence against Estrada, hundreds of thousands Filipinos marched onto the center of Manila in the so called second "People Power" uprising (the first People Power Revolution was directed against President Ferdinand Marcos, who was forced out of office in 1986). Estrada was ousted in 2001.⁶

Two more recent examples come from India and demonstrate the amplification effect between traditional media and new communication technologies. The small independent media organization *Tehelka* began as a news website in 2000 and was able to uncover corruption in defense deals through an audacious journalistic investigation. Government backlash after this discovery almost crushed *Tehelka*, but it continues as a weekly newsmagazine unto the present day. The news organization was founded in 2000 during the dotcom boom and immediately launched its anti-corruption coverage by releasing stories about match-fixing in cricket. Information for those stories came from secret audiotapes. In 2001, *Tehelka* started an eight-month adventure with two journalists posing as agents of a fictitious UK arms company. In secret meetings, the undercover journalists enticed dozens of defense officials and political personalities to accept or demand bribes. Those meetings were recorded with a hidden camera. In the process, clues to malfeasance in 15 actual defense deals surfaced. When published, the story caused a sensation, seriously rocking the ruling party and causing the government

⁶ S. Coronel (2010). Corruption and the watchdog role of the news media. In P. Norris (ed.), *Public sentinel: News media and governance reform* (pp. 111-136). Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

to set up a commission of inquiry. The military initiated court martial proceedings against its personnel involved. Even though the journalistic methods uncovering this scandal were criticized, the story did unleash a staggering public upsurge of acclaim for *Tehelka*. While this watchdog maneuver certainly revealed serious problems in the administration, it also caused significant backlash against the news organization. The government targeted *Tehelka's* main investor, forcing them into bankruptcy through a slew of tax and other investigations. The commission of inquiry set up by the government focused its investigation on *Tehelka* instead of those involved in the corrupt defense deals. *Tehelka's* staff was forced into a time- and money-consuming legal process—more than 35,000 hours spent at the commission and a dozen lawyers hired—which led to the discharge of most of its staff and the suspension of its website. In time, they were able to raise sufficient funds to relaunch the tabloid as a weekly news magazine, but the financial future of the news organization remains unsteady. *Tehelka* continues its mission by covering corruption and abuse of office. At enormous cost to the news outlet, *Tehelka* certainly succeeded in putting corruption on the public agenda. It also enacted its watchdog function by using methods of investigative journalism to uncover corruption in the first place.

Anna Hazare is leading a popular public movement against corruption in India. Media coverage of his activities is a large part of his impact. Hazare has become a media personality, which gives him more leverage and political influence than any leader could have outside the media theater. Hazare's campaign taps into already existing public frustration with corruption. Since the audience is already perceptive to the issue, any media coverage of Hazare's work will fall on sympathetic ears. That, in turn, means that the media can actually make money by covering his campaign since they are able to attract an audience for this kind of coverage. Hazare's campaign uses multiple channels to get the message across, making use of traditional media as much as of social media. A team of former TV journalists manages his campaign, making sure that all buttons are pushed when it comes to media attention. By evoking the image of an Indian hero—Mahatma Gandhi—Hazare taps into beliefs and attitudes of the population that guarantee him widespread support. Hazare has also been using social media and new communication technologies to his advantage. His hunger strike was supported by millions of tweets, which brought his purpose to the attention of a very large international audience. When he was jailed right before his fast, he recorded a video message to his supporters on a cell phone, which was then posted on YouTube. Facebook pages, news gadgets for web browsers, and even cell phone applications and online games center on Hazare's activities, saturating the public sphere in India and elsewhere. As a result, the government must pay attention to Hazare and his demands. Hazare has created a huge public spectacle, and with it immense public pressure on lawmakers to heed the demands of the movement. The extent of Hazare's public influence would not have been possible without his constant presence on all communication channels.

How to engage the media in the fight against corruption

While media have a large potential to support the fight against corruption, organizations working with them should be aware of some approaches and mechanisms that increase chances of a successful cooperation with the media. These recommendations fall roughly into two areas: *understanding how the media work* and *understanding how citizens use the media*.

Understanding how citizens use the media

Before any systematic engagement with the media, organizations should identify their audience: who do you want to reach with regard to the objective of your organization? The definition of the audience depends primarily on the *objective of the organization* and on the *type of corruption* that is the focus of the organization's efforts. Grand corruption, for instance, is a structural political problem. Attempts to fight grand corruption need either a very broad public base that has a chance to influence elections or an elite base of opinion leaders that will be able to influence policies or specific politicians. Petty everyday corruption cannot necessarily be corrected through elections or legislation and should probably be addressed on a local basis. For instance, if the problem is about doctors taking bribes for treating patients, local communities of those most affected—possibly parents—are a more appropriate audience.

After defining the audience of anti-corruption efforts, the next step is to explore the media environment this audience moves in: which media do they mostly turn to, where do they get most of their information from? Influentials and opinion leaders, for instance, tend to read one or more national and even international newspapers, usually those considered to be sophisticated and politically influential. In poor rural areas, radio is much more likely to be the medium of choice because it is cheaper and requires a lower level of literacy than newspapers. Young, urban, and educated people can be reached through social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and platforms specifically dedicated to corruption issues. It is very important to identify the media most relevant to the intended audience, because only properly targeted communication efforts will be effective and sustainable. Often a mix of media is most successful: corruption can be discussed in radio or television shows and this discussion can then be continued and amplified through social media. Interpersonal contact through, for instance, village meetings, is also highly relevant for spreading a certain message and for mobilizing people to stand up against corruption.

Understanding how the media works⁷

Once audience and their preferred media have been identified, a relationship with the media should be built. Long-term systematic change requires a coalition of reform-minded partners. A coalition with the media—with journalists or editors—can enhance the efforts of an anti-corruption coalition by increasing its public profile and establishing it as part of the public discourse about corruption. Coalitions are more

⁷ This part of the paper significantly draws from Byrne, E., Arnold, A.-K., & Nagano, F. (2010). *Building public support for anti-corruption efforts. Why anti-corruption agencies need to communicate and how*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

sustainable and therefore more likely to succeed than one-sided efforts, such as pushing out press releases in the hope that a news outlet will pick them up. Steps toward forming a coalition with the media include:

1. *Identify and specify the issue:* as outlined earlier, it is necessary to clearly define the objective of an organization's fight against corruption in order to mount an effective media campaign. The issue determines which media are most relevant: petty corruption is likely to be an issue of the local media, while grand corruption might more successfully be targeted through the elite media. Social media complement all media campaigns.
2. *Map relationships and stakeholders:* Identify significant partners in the media—which journalists are known to cover corruption? Which editors have a reputation to reveal corruption in their news outlets? What is their place in the national power hierarchy? The ideal media partner is dedicated and knowledgeable, and does not hesitate to reveal corruption. The ideal media partner also has some public clout in the community the organization wants to target.
3. *Form the coalition:* Once media partners are identified, they need to be won to join the coalition against corruption. They need to be convinced that it is in their interest to cover and criticize corruption. Background conversations and media breakfast are possible instruments to inform journalists about your work and to forge a relationship with them. Relationships should be equal—no partner should withhold information and all sides should benefit from being members of the coalition.
4. *Sustain the coalition:* Anti-corruption coalitions with the media should not be limited to one issue or instance of corruption at one point in time. Coalitions become more sustainable and powerful if they work together over time and on a range of issues. Relationships can be kept alive through, for instance, regular meetings and co-hosted events.

When forming a partnership with the media, some constraints of the media industry should be understood. Journalists are no miracle workers: just because you tell them about a story does not mean they can cover it, or if they cover it, it will not necessarily have a big audience or make a big change. The media are an industry and operate under a number of constraints that need to be understood by those that want to engage them in the fight against corruption. Those constraints include:

- *Freedom of the press:* Press of speech and expression, if not specifically of the press, is guaranteed in Article 19 of the Indian constitution. This provision allows the media to report without being subject to government censorship. However, this does not guarantee that the media cannot be attacked by political or other powers if their reporting is inconvenient. As described in the *Tehelka* example, repercussion can be severe and ruin a media outlet. Media naturally will hesitate to risk repercussions that will endanger their existence. Also, government owned media are less likely to speak up against corrupt government practices. Indira Gandhi famously stated in 1975 that *All India Radio* was “a government organ,” it was “going to remain a government organ.” A government organ is unlikely to criticize the government.
- *Protection of journalists:* Closely related to freedom of the press are other laws and provisions that protect journalists from backlash—or expose them to persecution. Libel laws, for instance, are often described as journalism's worst enemy: If libel laws are too general and encompassing,

reporters can be punished for unfavorable reporting on any person, even if they report facts as they find them. In some countries where libel laws endanger investigative journalists, non-profit legal centers have been established to provide legal advice and protection. Laws that guarantee the anonymity of sources and the precedence of fact over defamation contribute to a culture of investigative journalism.

- *Access to information:* Journalists need reliable and verifiable information to make substantiated claims about corruption. India has strong laws that guarantee and regulate access to information. However, sometimes it takes combined efforts and patience to gather necessary information from public sources.
- *Journalism culture:* In many countries, the journalistic profession does not subscribe to the ideals of the democratic functions of watchdogs, agenda-setters, and public forum. Investigative or critical journalism is considered impolite and even unthinkable in some cultures. In those cases, journalists and editors see themselves as distributors of information and perhaps as mouthpiece for the government, but not as pillars of democracy. Changing journalistic culture is a difficult endeavor that would take considerable time and effort. Intense engagement with journalism associations and journalism schools would be required to initiate changes in culture.
- *Journalism capacity:* Journalists' ability to understand issues of corruption and their ability to utilize investigative techniques significantly determine whether the media can be a useful ally in the fight against corruption. Corruption has many faces, can occur in many sectors, and is not always obvious. The distinction between petty corruption, grand corruption, and simple inefficiency is not always clear to journalists. This is a problem when actual corruption is different from what is being perceived as corruption by the public. If the public believes, for instance, that the government is corrupt when it is actually inefficient, public confidence in moral and political authority would be undermined for no good reason. Media tend to label many unethical actions as corrupt, without necessarily having legal grounds. Failure to distinguish between different types of corruption or between corruption and malfeasance prevents the audience from understanding the importance of systemic and institutional corruption. Constant reporting on even small missteps can also lead to sensationalism and too much emphasis on scandals, which can create mistrust and cynicism among the public. Misrepresentation of facts hinders the process of educating about corruption and even the prosecution of specific cases. Another problem with regard to journalism capacity is the ability of individual journalists to utilize investigative methods in their reporting. Investigative reporting is at the core of the watchdog function of democratic media—no investigation, no watchdog. Investigative journalism requires analytical skills, research capacity, and persistence. Those skills are not necessarily part of a journalist's education and may need to be acquired through, for instance, seminars and workshops. Unskilled journalists would either not be able to act as watchdogs on those in power or could even do damage. Insufficient research and analysis can easily lead to the problems discussed above: misrepresentation of facts and circumstances, false accusations, or scandalizing.
- *Competition and capture:* Media organizations are vulnerable to political and economic pressures. In order to attract a sizable share of the audience, they must be faster and more exclusive than their competitors. This is an advantage for organizations working against

corruption because many media outlets will be interested in breaking news about malfeasance—provided it does not create immediate backlash that can threaten their existence. On the other hand, media organizations are also dependent on political goodwill and on advertising revenues from private corporations. They may hesitate to cover corruption if it involves important and powerful political figures or companies that are their advertising clients.

- *Motivation*: Motivation is a key factor for the success of investigative journalism. Motivation can be fostered through recognition and awards. Civil society organizations, universities, private corporations, or government offices can set up awards recognizing thorough and professional investigative reporting on corruption. If these awards reach a certain level of public acclaim—and possibly are endowed with even small sums of money—they may be able to foster responsible and well-researched reporting on corruption.
- *Short media cycle*: In the modern media environment, journalists are more competitive and faster than ever. The pressure of the media market sometimes leads to more shallow analysis, short sound bites that are reported out of context, and a disregard for complexities.
- *Tight deadlines*: Depending on the form of the media, journalists need information fast. Newspaper journalists often need to finish their stories in the early evenings for them to be included in next day's paper. A story to be included in the evening television news must be filmed and ready for editing in the afternoon. Radio is the fastest of the traditional media—news are broadcast around the clock and new items are included every hour. Radio journalist will want to beat the competition by getting the fastest scoop—this is also true for online news. For organizations fighting corruption this means that information and interview partners need to be made available quickly. News magazines, online or printed, often have more time at their disposal and are able to do more thorough research over longer periods of time.

Above everything else, the media will be interested in stories that they can sell to their audience—that are interesting and relevant to their audience and that are likely to attract a large number of people. Corruption is an issue of general public interest, but organization engaged in the fight against corruption can increase the success of their media work by framing their stories and campaigns in ways that journalists and audience will find attractive, but that at the same time communicate the objectives of the organization. For instance, grand corruption, petty corruption, and inefficiency should be clearly distinguished in order to avoid misrepresentation of facts and a media frenzy that may be unjustified.

Moreover, organizations can use particular *frames* in their messages to emphasize certain aspects over others. “Framing” means to communicate in a way that leads the audience to see something in a certain light or from a certain perspective. Framing highlights certain aspects of a story over others. Successful framing taps into existing beliefs, attitudes, and opinions—Hazare’s “Gandhi frame,” for instance, taps into very specific values that most Indian citizens would support. By framing messages, anti-corruption organizations can use the media as vehicle to drive their campaigns and focus public attention on the issues that really matter. What is said and how it is said can shape how people perceive the facts of a news story.

Different frames have different effects on the audience. News stories can, for instance, be framed from an episodic perspective or from a thematic perspective. Episodic framing is most often used by

journalists and emphasizes recent events without paying much attention to context or long-term implications. Episodic frames focus on the responsibility of individuals or small groups and foster domain-specific knowledge among the audience. Thematic frames, on the other hand, present issues in a general or collective context, drawing attention to the roots of a problem in society. Episodic frames are more appealing to journalists, but thematic frames communicate more information and knowledge.

Another approach to framing corruption is through issue vs. strategic framing. A news story focusing on a specific problem or policy has an issue frame, while a strategic frame emphasizes the process by which something happens. An issue frame on corruption would include naming the culprits, citing statistics about corruption in certain sectors and regions. A strategic frame would require a look at how corruption is corruption evolves, how it is investigated, and which measures can be taken against it. Strategic issues have been shown to sometimes produce cynicism among the audience—strategic discussions can make the audience weary of politics and politicians because the audience may feel that politicians are not focusing on the real issues that concern the people.

Psychological appeals play a large role in any communication campaign. Gain and loss frames are used to motivate people to do or not do certain things. Gain frames point out that something good will happen if people engage in a certain behavior. Loss frames emphasize that something bad will happen if people do not engage in a certain behavior. An example for a gain frame: A family refuses to pay a bribe to a doctor for treating their sick child and calls on other families in the community to do the same. As a result, doctors stop asking for bribes and treat all children of the neighborhood, whether their parents can afford a bribe or not. Children are healthier and families are happier. A loss frame, on the other hand, would show parents paying the bribe, while another family, which cannot afford to pay up, loses their child because of the lack of medical care. Gain frames can prompt audiences to be hopeful and to feel good; they can motivate people to act in a certain way. Loss frames, on the other hand, are a more urgent call to action as they point out dangers and negative consequences that can occur if a specific action is not taken.

The decision on which frame to choose depends, again, on the objective of the anti-corruption campaign or organization. It depends on which aspects of corruption need to be emphasized, which solutions are presented, and which audience emotions should be activated.

Conclusion

Media are crucial players in changing culture toward more transparency and accountability. By changing perceptions of what is right and wrong, the media can affect the norms that society is built on. Changes in norms will, over time, initiate changes in behavior. This, in turn, can lead to less tolerance for corruption, stronger vigilance, and stronger participation in anti-corruption efforts. The media as watchdogs can create a broad coalition against corruption and be a catalyst for reform by uncovering grand corruption and forcing politicians into making changes. As agenda setters, media organizations

can support anti-corruption movements by bringing them to the attention of a large audience. When the media act as public forum, they can introduce and spread opinions, solutions, and innovations.

In many countries, media coverage of corruption has led to considerable political and social change. In the Philippines, investigative reporting on the president's illegal assets led to his ousting. In India, reporters uncovered deeply entrenched corruption in the defense industry and motivated many other reporters to use similar methods. Currently, a movement against corruption is sweeping through the country, which could not possibly be as successful as it is if the media were not covering it extensively. In particular in that last example, we see how traditional media and social media function together to amplify the movement, to give it legitimacy and clout.

Organizations engaged in the fight against corruption can use media as allies and as vehicle for their work to improve their chances of success, their effectiveness, and their sustainability. To use the media, organizations need to be aware of the way people use the media and of the way the media works. Understanding these two aspects will enable organizations to communicate with specific audiences to increase their awareness of corruption and to mobilize them to support efforts to fight it.

Success in working against corruption will depend on whether a lasting cultural change can be achieved. Even if regulation and oversight are in place to curb corrupt behavior and abuse of power, the real change will come through the people. If people stop paying or demanding bribes, if they consider corruption immoral, if they report corruption when they see it, and if they support the work of organizations fighting against corruption—then change will truly have arrived. The media are a major ally in achieving these goals. Media reach and media effects can amplify the efforts of any organization and contribute to their eventual success. Coalitions between civil society and the media are more likely to be effective in uncovering corruption in the short turn, and creating a culture of transparency and accountability in the long run.