

GHANA ANTI-CORRUPTION COALITION

Award Winner of the “Anti-corruption Collective Action Competition for Practitioners”

Type of Organization: Multi-Sector

Country and Region: Ghana, Africa

Project Name: Long Term Project with the Idea of Building a Coalition Against Corruption

Participants: Public Institutions, Private Sector, Media, Faith based organization, Civil Society & think tanks

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I. Description of Initiative

The GACC is a long term initiative of cross sectoral group of organization in the public, private and civil society working in the area of corruption. The members are made up of Serious Fraud Office, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice and the National Governance Secretariat which are all independent public anti-corruption agencies, the umbrella organization of media practitioners, Ghana Journalist Association, The forum of Religions for Peace representing the various religions i.e. Muslims and Christian churches, Private Enterprise Foundation, which is the umbrella organization of the Private sector in Ghana, and think tanks and non-governmental organization such as the Centre for Democratic Development Ghana, Institute of Economic Affairs, and the Ghana Integrity Initiative, the local chapter of Transparency International. The main scope of the organization is to play a vibrant watchdog role in ensuring anti-corruption actions which the government has a primary responsibility is well mainstreamed into all policies and programs in the country. The Coalition was set up in 2000 and since has since used the broad based approach through research networking, lobbying and information dissemination to ensure that anti-corruption is a made an important issue in any development agenda. The coalition acts as a hub to bring together its members in the implementation and monitoring of anti-corruption activities. The objective of the coalition is to develop an integrated, systematic, broad based approach to the fight against corruption in Ghana and also to create a platform for interaction between the public, private and civil society sector working in the area of corruption. The Coalition also provides a forum to share information and experiences with development partners on the fight against corruption in Ghana. The Coalition in its inception conducted a national survey on corruption and through a national broad based consultative approach drew a national action plan against corruption and that plan is used by all our members and the government of Ghana as a guide in the implementation of anti-corruption actions in the country. The action plan was adopted in the Growth and Poverty Strategy Paper 1 and one of the actions taken in the Africa Peer Review Mechanism to improve governance in the country.

II. Contribution, done by the initiative, to reduce corruption in its operating environment

The Coalition initiative have been able to make corruption an important development issue in the country. It has led to the passage of such laws such as the Financial and Internal Audit Acts, Procurement Act 2004 and the Whistleblower Act 2007 and presently working on the passage of Freedom of Information Act. Before the above laws were passed the coalition reviewed them and held dialogues with various stakeholders on the relevancy of the acts in the fight against corruption and ensured that both the private

and public sector corruption are tackled. Since the passage of these laws the Coalition has worked with implementing agencies to monitor implementation and access challenges in implementation for research and advocacy on improvement of the legal environment. It has improved the role and capacity of the private sector in the development of the country through transparent and accountable systems. Also the initiative has brought the issue of corruption to the door step of the ordinary Ghanaian through its anti-corruption week, anti-corruption competition among the youth and building anti-corruption systems in every political parties manifesto.

III. Setup of the initiative

- Implemented mechanisms to ensure success of project – There is a nine member Executive Council and a secretariat with staff has been created to co-ordinate the activities of the Coalition. The initiative adopts the research, advocacy and lobbying mechanisms to ensure the success of its projects. The Secretariats develops National & Regional Policy dialogues on specific themes, instituted anti-corruption week to coincide with UN anti-corruption day, and works on all engagements in relation to the public, government and media. Researches and Programmes go through initial conception stages after which a technical team reviews before going to the general stakeholders for validation. The Secretariat has developed broad monitoring indicators that it uses to collate information for further advocacy and input into policy.
- Costs of initiative – it's a long term project being funded by different development partners such as the World Bank, German Development Corporation, UNDP and the Ghana Research and Advocacy Programme. Our average yearly budget is about USD150,000 which is used in running the Secretariat and implementing annual work plan.
- Use of auditing and enforcement initiatives – The initiative monitors the anti-corruption environment and issues press statement after careful assessment. The coalition has standards and regulations for its members.

IV. Achieved results / impact for businesses and society

The initiative has brought businesses and society closer in dealing with corruption. The passage of the Procurement Act for example has provided a level playing field for the business environment. Society takes social responsibility on the fight against corruption. The capacity of the private business sector has also been enhanced through capacity building as stipulated in the act. Government has been able to build the necessary political will to tackle corruption issues as it has the support of the businesses and society. Youth leaders who have been active in the Ghanaian body politic and businesses have been trained over the years and are involved in the fight against corruption. Each political leader in Ghana is fully aware that we can only develop if measures are put in place to check corruption and is prepared to collaborate with stakeholders to achieve it. Businesses have over the years been able to reduce their risk of tackling and being involved in the fight against corruption. The Private Enterprise Foundation through its work with the coalition is implementing a two project to build the capacity of small and medium scale businesses on anti-corruption to reduce risk by setting up standards to build consumer confidence and market share through corporate governance (adopted from the action plan). The strategy of advocacy adopted by the coalition and its members has further improved the increased the focus of media on anti-corruption. In our part of the world the private sector which is small scale is very fragile and does not have the capacity to engage in such ventures. They are also subject to political manipulation and find it difficult to survive in

the global competitive market. Working with associations through these networks has brought them closer to the decision making process, given them a voice and been a good source of information in developing strategies to combat corruption in the sector.

V. Replicability to other sectors/companies

The initiative can be replicated to work in solving specific sector developmental issues. Strategic issues and policies such as related to the environmental, educational and health sectors can replicate the partnership approach by bringing businesses and civil society closer to government in developing strategies to combat problems. Societal problems are caused by the society and it needs the collaborative efforts of all to be able to accept responsibility and move on to solve them. Individual companies can also adopt the partnership approach in developing their internal systems to reduce corruption. Thus in their dealing with their stakeholders and government on different levels of business, they could sign on to such initiatives and share and learn from each other to deal with the problem of corruption. Anti-corruption art competition among the youth which was implemented by the initiative could be replicated in other countries to sensitize and catch the young ones.

VI. What is new and innovative about this initiative

The Coalition brings diverse groups such as the public institutions, media, civil society and the private sector together to work together in the fight against corruption in Ghana. It adopts the national approach, is homegrown and takes on our traditional character of building a consensus to develop the society. It is able to highlight the need for a partnership and multi-sector approach in dealing with a complex issue such as corruption. All stakeholders who are part of the problem of corruption are made to be part of the solution. There is a shared incentive for all stakeholders as the success of it is beneficial to all. The initiative also brings with it a unique character of collective responsibility and commitment by all partners. In previous years most anti-corruption campaigns have only targeted at politicians as the main perpetrators, but this approach brings with it a shared responsibility and social capital by all the partners. It further adopts the new approach of research and advocacy where one is able to make impact on policy change. It's a project that builds the teamwork approach in solving the problem of corruption at the national and local level. It involves the active participation of the youth at all levels.

VII. Why should other practitioners learn about your initiative?

The coalition is a unique concept as it is principled based and homegrown. It builds credibility among partners and removes barriers in dealing with each other. The initiative has created a national concerted approach to the fight against corruption and the action plan drawn in 2000 has been updated and still relevant today. The initiative further brings an effective peer review monitoring mechanism where each partner takes full responsibility of its actions and has a better effect in instituting change. It also provides a level playing field for all partners to share and exchange information and experiences in dealing with corruption issues and adopts a multi-dimensional approach in combating corruption. Practitioners will further learn that the initiative is able to tackle systematic issues at both the demand and supply side of corruption thus adopting preventive strategies against corruption as against the curative methods which are very difficult and challenging to implement due to our culture and tradition. Over the years the initiative has learnt that consensus building with the political executive and strong political will at all levels of society is very crucial in tackling corruption that is systemic. This strategy of fighting corruption also enhances democracies by building institutions (private and public) in the developmental process for policy change. The fight against corruption should involve young leaders and build them up as strong ethical future leaders with a commitment to fight against corruption. The best way of getting the private sector involved in the fight against corruption is to build such a collective action that is based on a partnership approach, reduces his risk and thereby survival in such a competitive environment. Fighting corruption in our environment needs a long term consistent approach to make the needed impact.