



2

RATIONALE FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES TO ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE



Chapter 2 - Rationale for anti-corruption authorities to engage young people

Chapter overview

Guiding question:

Why should anti-corruption authorities engage young people?

Key points:

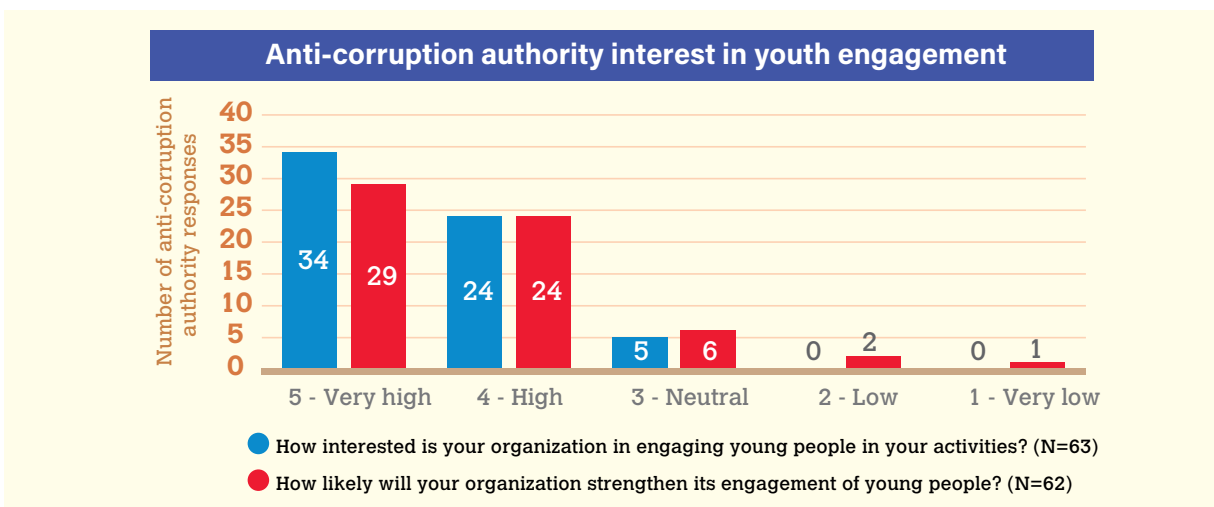
- Anti-corruption authorities typically face three core challenges in the pursuit of their mandate: to prevent and combat corruption effectively, to communicate with key stakeholders appropriately, and to manage resources efficiently. Engaging young people can help meet these challenges.
- The most common obstacles faced by anti-corruption authorities in promoting youth engagement relate to the capacities of young people and the institutional readiness of agencies themselves.
- Engaging young people offers significant opportunities for anti-corruption authorities, including outside their sector.



2A. Benefits of youth engagement

Traditionally, youth engagement has not been regarded as a primary component of the work of anti-corruption authorities. Many agencies lack the mandate, budget or necessary competence. The nature of their work requires a high degree of confidentiality and a specific skill set. Combined with a certain caution about cooperating with civil society, these factors explain the limited uptake of youth engagement among anti-corruption authorities.

Our survey of anti-corruption authorities shows that the vast majority of participating agencies see value in engaging young people. These agencies intend to continue or strengthen their youth-engagement activities.



Note: The figure does not include survey responses "I do not know/I prefer not to answer/Not applicable" that were chosen by 10 respondents for the first question (blue bars) and 11 respondents for the second question (red bars).

Some anti-corruption authorities are tasked to engage young people either as part of their mandate or through their role in national anti-corruption strategy. In the survey, 47 (64 per cent) of the 73 responding anti-corruption authorities responded that they are responsible for national strategy. Out of these, 35 agencies (74 per cent) indicated that this strategy contains a youth-engagement component.

According to the 49 anti-corruption authorities in our sample that already engage young people, the top benefits of youth engagement are:¹⁰

- ➔ Increasing awareness among the general public of the work of the organization (78 per cent)
- ➔ Recognition that young people can enjoy when participating in anti-corruption activities (71 per cent)
- ➔ Activities becoming more responsive to the interests and needs of young people (65 per cent)
- ➔ Anti-corruption authorities having exposure to innovative solutions and ideas (65 per cent)
- ➔ Young people helping to gather information to support anti-corruption activities (63 per cent)

¹⁰ Multiple answers were allowed for this survey question.

The basis for the beneficial effect of youth engagement by anti-corruption authorities is the particular attributes of young people that can add value to the operations and knowledge of the agencies engaging them. These attributes are:¹¹



Resourcefulness: Young people often overcome resource constraints through creative ways of approaching challenges. Studies have shown that when faced with challenges in funding or acquiring resources for development work, young people think of innovative ways to deliver even when resources are limited.



Natural collaborators: Young people typically place importance on collective approaches such as networking and building alliances, including cooperation across generations, driven by the desire to improve community conditions.



Caring, responsible citizens: Young people with access to technology and knowledge of global affairs are more likely to be prepared, determined and passionate about contributing to a better world and to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals.



Digital skills: The natural tech-savviness of young people is well known and is in tune with the rapid advancement of digital technology. Evidence shows that youth-driven digital components of development initiatives increase the delivery of positive outcomes.



Influencing: Young people build trust with communities and gain deep insights, influencing and educating their peers, parents and communities to support and inform project outcomes.

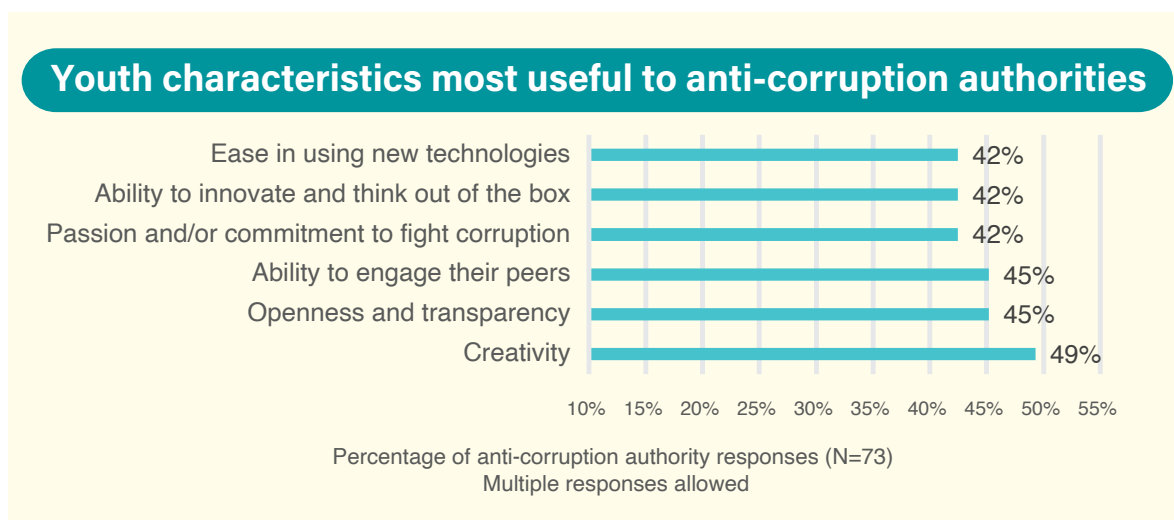


Innovative thinking: Young people who are empowered to identify new approaches to historic problems are a potentially high-value assets.

¹¹ Adapted from ADB, "ADB Youth for Asia".



Our research confirms that these attributes are beneficial to the work of anti-corruption authorities. The five characteristics of young people considered most useful by anti-corruption authorities are detailed in the chart below.



The institutional capacity of anti-corruption authorities must meet certain criteria to allow young people to achieve their potential as partners in the fight against corruption. A literature review, interviews and focus-group discussions indicate the following three key institutional enablers (see chapter 3A):

- ➔ Youth-engagement structures to mobilize young people, ensuring the participation of young people in decision-making at all levels and early dialogue and consultations, as collaborators and/or partners
- ➔ Adequate safeguarding processes for youth engagement (e.g. safe locations for workshops and privacy of names and contact details during online meetings)
- ➔ Adequate resources for youth-led¹² anti-corruption organizations (e.g. expenses for transport and subsistence for youth volunteers and grants to fund youth consultants and youth-led initiatives)

This indicates that engaging young people in a conducive environment can help anti-corruption authorities overcome the following three main challenges that they commonly face in the pursuit of their mandate, which are explained on the following pages:

1. Preventing and combating corruption effectively
2. Communicating with key stakeholders appropriately
3. Managing resources efficiently

¹² "Youth-led" refers to youth managed (and also youth owned) as opposed to youth-focused, which could include adult-run organizations.

1. Preventing and combating corruption effectively

The challenge:

Fighting corruption is inherently difficult and achieving measurable results is a complicated task. There is no commonly agreed method for accurately assessing levels of corruption, making it even harder to measure improvements and attributing success to the work of anti-corruption authorities. Furthermore, finding solutions to the problem of corruption requires innovative thinking.

How young people can help meet the challenge:

Young people can help anti-corruption authorities achieve better results. Projects are more effective and sustainable when young people are engaged as early as possible in the design and preparatory phases of a project, especially when projects are also aimed at raising awareness or building capacity among young people (see the information on opportunities for meaningful youth engagement on pages 30-31). Engaging young people also yields benefits in terms of development efforts. Therefore, programme reach and quality can be enhanced as a result of the early involvement of young people in research and data collection, unlocking access to information that improves the responsiveness of project interventions.¹³ In our survey, 65 per cent of the 49 anti-corruption authorities working with young people reported that their work became more responsive to the interests and needs of young people as a result of youth engagement.

Young people bring innovative ideas. In the private sector, it is common for interns to “mentor” senior executives on the innovative use of the internet and social media. In anti-corruption authorities, such support should be a welcome addition to the traditional knowledge base. Indeed, 65 per cent of anti-corruption authorities working with young people in the survey indicated that the exposure of the agency to innovative ideas and solutions was one of the major benefits of youth engagement. Such intergenerational dialogue also empowers young people by providing a sense of usefulness and developing their leadership skills.

¹³ ADB, “Meaningful Youth Engagement in Water: Partnering with the Youth in Improving Water Security”, 29 April 2022.



2. Communicating with key stakeholders appropriately

The challenge:

Anti-corruption authorities are often created with high aspirations that, in turn, result in ambitious mandates and elusive expectations. To address this inherent challenge, it is crucial for anti-corruption authorities not only to successfully fight corruption, but also to convey their achievements. Agencies must demonstrate and communicate their results to two critical external stakeholders:

- ➔ Higher authorities tasked with the supervision of anti-corruption authorities must be convinced that agencies are achieving their objectives (i.e. realizing their mandates and adequately using their resources).
- ➔ Citizens require convincing that anti-corruption authorities are succeeding in reducing corruption and thus having a positive impact on their lives (for example, contributing to more efficient public service delivery).

Strengthening communication with these stakeholders will help anti-corruption authorities garner more support, which is critical to their overall success as institutions.

How young people can help meet the challenge:

Young people can help anti-corruption authorities better understand the priorities of younger age groups to which these agencies traditionally have less access. Being aware of the needs and interests of young people will help agencies ensure that their programming addresses issues that matter to a significant proportion of their constituents. Smart prioritization is key for anti-corruption authorities constrained by limited resources and young people can help meet this challenge.

Young people can help communicate the achievements of anti-corruption authorities to their peers. Engaging young people lends credibility to anti-corruption authorities and enhances their ability to reach this group through social media and youth-friendly language and messaging. Young people can get the message out to a broader audience. This can work in terms of sharing positive messages about integrity and ethics and also with regard to stopping socially harmful justifications of corruption becoming acceptable on the grounds that “everyone does it”. The experience of meaningful youth engagement in other settings shows that amplifying the voice of young people creates important opportunities to contribute to communities, to strengthen formal and informal institutional capacities, and to deter youth participation in harmful or illegal activities. Peer-to-peer influencing is a remarkably powerful instrument. Beyond this, young people can be influential in educating and mobilizing siblings, parents and other family and community members.¹⁴

¹⁴ Youth Power 2, “Peer Mobilizers”, 13 December 2021.



Many young people are willing and able communicators. The ability and readiness of young people to communicate and share solutions openly, ask questions and pass on knowledge are important attributes for anti-corruption authorities to taken advantage of. In our survey, 78 per cent of the 49 anti-corruption authorities working with young people considered the fact that the public had become more aware of the work of their organization as one of the most important benefits of their youth-engagement programme.

The fight against corruption cannot be won without a whole-of-society approach. Therefore, engaging young people in anti-corruption activities constitutes a positive result in itself. Underlying the experience of anti-corruption authorities working with young people is a belief or an assumption that young people play a pivotal role in the future success of the fight against corruption. Channeling the potential for positive change starts when individuals are young – whether through education, internships with anti-corruption authorities or similar initiatives. The skills and values developed when young people actively participate in positive change carry over as they play key roles in civic organizations (including youth organizations, whether youth-led or youth-focused) and later, when as adults, they occupy leadership positions of political, social, religious or cultural importance in society. Accordingly, meaningful youth engagement leads to the empowerment of young people. Young people who are meaningfully engaged in anti-corruption initiatives are empowered because these opportunities equip them with skills, resources and social capital to become active citizens and contribute meaningfully to governance and development. In our research, 71 per cent of the 49 anti-corruption authorities working with young people indicated that the recognition young people can enjoy when participating in anti-corruption activities is one of the most important benefits of engaging them.

Successfully run youth programmes create opportunities for positive publicity for anti-corruption authorities, both nationally and internationally. Working with young people can help demonstrate agencies' commitment to national and international efforts to promoting meaningful youth engagement. As a result of an increasing recognition of its benefits, meaningful youth engagement is now pursued by many governments and organizations around the world. By engaging young people, anti-corruption authorities demonstrate support for Governments' national and international commitments (for example, complying with article 13 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption on participation of society, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and meeting national goals on youth development or international targets such as those embodied in Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy.)¹⁵

¹⁵ United Nations, Youth 2030: Working with and for Young People (2018).



3. Managing resources efficiently

The challenge:

Many anti-corruption authorities face significant shortages in financial, human and technical resources. Their budgets and capacity are often not commensurate with their role, which, in many cases, is the highly ambitious and resource-intensive task of leading the fight against corruption in their country or territory. This can apply especially to developing countries, where anti-corruption authorities often struggle with a combination of low levels of resources and high levels of corruption.

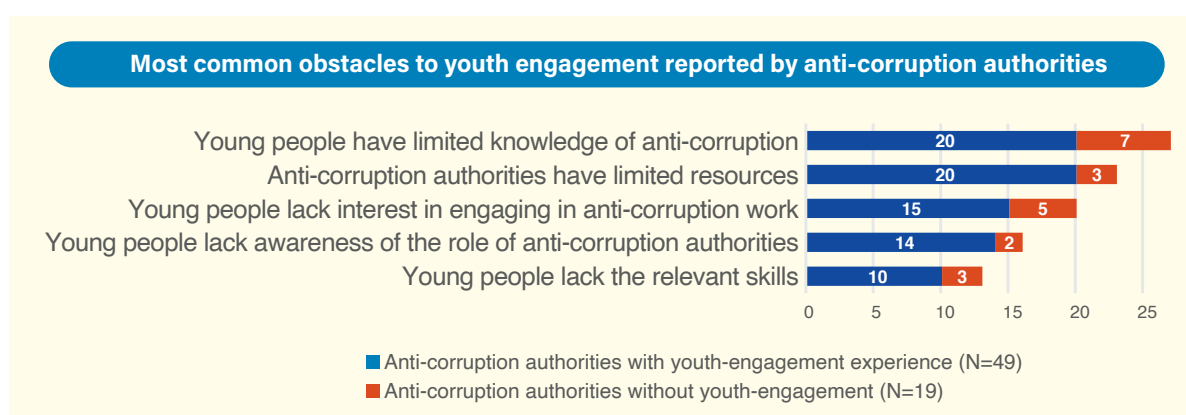
How young people can help meet the challenge:

Partnerships with young people can be a valuable addition to anti-corruption authorities' resources. When engaged appropriately, young people can take on part of anti-corruption authorities' heavy workload and become an effective partner to leverage in the fight against corruption. Meaningful youth engagement requires significant effort and budget on the part of anti-corruption authorities, not least because young people need adequate financial and administrative support and reasonable remuneration. However, proper engagement frequently leads to a situation where the significant benefits of the positive contribution of young people outweigh the cost of their engagement.

2B. Obstacles to and opportunities for meaningful youth engagement

Obstacles to meaningful youth engagement

There are institutional and practical barriers that prevent anti-corruption authorities from embracing youth engagement as a mainstream activity. The most common obstacles identified by the surveyed anti-corruption authorities are as follows:



Comparing responses from the 49 anti-corruption authorities that already engage young people to the 18 responses of anti-corruption authorities without this experience allows for some interesting observations. The responses show agreement on the most common obstacles: the knowledge of young people and the organizational readiness of anti-corruption authorities. However, anti-corruption authorities with youth-engagement experience focus more on obstacles related to their own readiness and enabling environment and selected twice as many options (on average 6 of the 25 options available compared to 3 selected by those with no experience). This indicates a learning curve for anti-corruption authorities when working with young people.



The views of young people paint a similar picture. In focus-group discussions, young professionals cited the confidential nature of work of anti-corruption authority and the high degree of specialization required in much of work of anti-corruption authority as natural barriers that stop agencies engaging outsiders, including young people. A lack of mandate, budget, competence and skills in relation to working with young people are also perceived as principal obstacles.

Lastly, an analysis of literature and the results of interviews and focus groups identified the following additional challenges:

- ➔ Risks of engaging only “elite” young people who have access to financial resources and/or socio-political connections, thereby excluding marginalized groups
- ➔ Challenge of making anti-corruption work relatable to young people
- ➔ Tokenistic youth participation practices rather than meaningful engagement
- ➔ Negative perceptions about the lack of technical anti-corruption skills and experience among young people

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES

Anti-corruption authorities should:

1. Establish a clear rationale for their pursuit of youth engagement that includes how it aligns with their strategic objectives.
2. Explicitly work towards ensuring that they are ready as institutions to engage young people.

These steps will enable agencies to overcome challenges and barriers relating to youth engagement and to embark on a journey that will eventually generate vital benefits.

Opportunities for meaningful youth engagement

Youth engagement is already frequently practised by anti-corruption authorities.

These agencies often engage young people as receptive participants (beneficiaries) of their work. In our sample, anti-corruption authorities reported the involvement of young people to be highest in their awareness-raising and public outreach programmes (82 per cent) and education programmes (72 per cent).

Meaningful youth engagement by anti-corruption authorities is not yet common, but its concepts are simple and its benefits are clearly identified. In an enabling environment, young people take on larger roles and more responsibilities. Simple youth engagement programmes evolve into more meaningful initiatives with young people involved from the onset in the design, planning and implementation of activities.

Meaningful youth engagement enhances youth engagement. Targeting young people as participants (beneficiaries) of anti-corruption authority programmes has significant benefits. Agencies in our survey reported that their youth-engagement efforts most frequently resulted in enhanced capacity: 78 per cent of youth participants acquired new skills and 76 per cent developed existing ones. In addition to producing young people more knowledgeable about anti-corruption work, youth engagement empowers and motivates young people to engage more, to collaborate and to take the lead in further anti-corruption activities. Applying meaningful youth engagement principles in youth-engagement programmes at anti-corruption authorities would further enhance their effectiveness and amplify their impact. Young people bring fresh perspectives, new skills, enthusiasm and energy, innovative ideas and a deeper understanding of their own needs and challenges. And in a safe, intergenerational, engaging and empowering environment, this meaningful youth engagement leads to more effective and sustainable outcomes for anti-corruption authorities. Research confirms that engaging with young people can be particularly helpful in anti-corruption authorities' work on education, sensitization and awareness.

Enhancing youth engagement by applying meaningful youth engagement principles is easily achievable for anti-corruption authorities. Agencies already working with young people can significantly enhance their results without adding significantly to the cost of their ongoing youth-engagement programmes. The potential to unleash a generation of agents of change to work in their communities to eliminate corruption is an opportunity available to anti-corruption authorities across the globe.



To successfully engage young people, it is important to listen to them and to co-design activities that help meet their needs and are aligned with the interests of their generation. These include, but are not limited to, education, decent work, climate change and the environment, health and wellness.¹⁶ Tackling corruption to create an impact on topics that young people care about will deepen intergenerational dialogue and understanding, thus enabling agencies to tap into the full potential of youth engagement.

Youth engagement is a topic currently high on the agenda of many organizations around the world, including the United Nations. Thanks to the efforts of young advocates, governments have recognized that young people are capable of being part of change, if not leading it. Therefore, youth engagement is actively pursued by many countries and territories through their national development plans or similar strategic documents. Consequently, activities in this field provide anti-corruption authorities with opportunities outside their sector. These include, but are not limited to:

- ➔ Positive public exposure: through events, webinars and national and international campaigns.
- ➔ Financial and technical support: through projects and funding opportunities related to strengthening the role of young people.
- ➔ External institutional and political support: by aligning the agendas of anti-corruption authorities to national and international priorities (see chapter 2A).
- ➔ Public support for their mission: transparency and accountability are core principles of the fight against corruption. Working with young people, anti-corruption authorities can become more accountable to their citizens through effective engagement of the public, linking the abstract fight against corruption to issues that matter to citizens, and by actively involving young people in the design and implementation of anti-corruption work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES

Anti-corruption authorities should use their anti-corruption programmes that target young people as beneficiaries (or participants) as an entry point for meaningful youth engagement.

The justification for anti-corruption authorities to target young people, and the design of their anti-corruption programmes, should be based on how this involvement benefits both the agencies and the young people involved.

Once anti-corruption authorities define their youth-engagement concepts, they should adopt meaningful youth engagement principles to ensure effective and efficient implementation and to maximize the impact of the programmes.

¹⁶ NielsenIQ, Global Youth survey report (2022); PwC, "The Global Youth Outlook: A voice for youth action on the Sustainable Development Goals"; United Nations, "Global Issues – Youth"; International Labour Organization, "Decent Work".

MORE EXAMPLES ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT BY ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES



Integrity club members in Bhutan taking part in literary activities

As part of its National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy, the Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan has implemented a strategic **Youth Integrity Programme** that focuses on series of activities targeting children and young people aged from three to 24 years old.

These programmes include integrity clubs, curriculum development and teacher and sectoral training in formal schooling programmes. As a result, they act as a continuous integrity education programme. Integrity clubs bring young people together to develop public information and advocacy campaigns. The programme has also targeted concern among young people for the environment and offers accessible training on professional ethics in forestry and climate change. These programmes are complemented through out-of-school programmes, which are open to employed and unemployed young people.

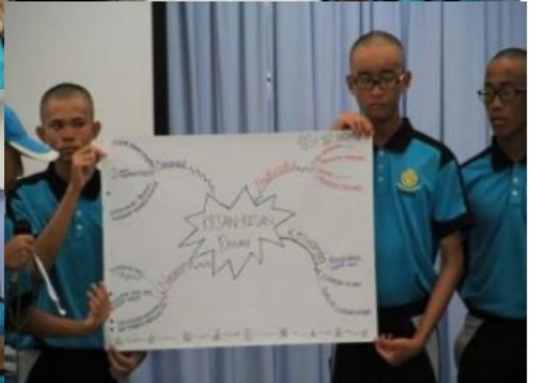
Lectures on Anti Corruption and Integrity



Dialogue Session



Group Discussion



Presentation

Brunei Darussalam includes corruption prevention in the national curriculum and provides internships to young people

Driven by the fact that 55 per cent of population of Brunei Darussalam are aged between 15 and 40 years, the Brunei government developed a series of youth programmes designed to raise awareness and knowledge on the danger of corruption and also offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, and to instill a common set of moral values amongst the generation.

From 2006, corruption prevention was included as a topic in the national curriculum. As part of its youth strategy, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Brunei Darussalam created a system of **internships**. The internships are open to students from various academic backgrounds, with the primary intention of acquiring knowledge about anti-corruption practices and supporting the information technology, communications, and educational and outreach initiatives of the ACB. Before commencing the internship, participants are provided with training to familiarize themselves with the ACB's work environment and practices. Moreover, participants are given the opportunity to express their preferred learning methods and outline their desired final products or outcomes to be achieved by the end of the internship. Upon successful completion, participants are awarded a certificate of completion, as well as scores from their respective universities evaluating the quality of their internship experience.



Young people in Kenya are inspired to fight corruption with music and drama

Among public education programmes targeting the youth in Kenya, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) had sponsored and participated in integrity awareness activities during the annual Kenya National Drama and Film Festivals (KNDFFF) and **Kenya National Music Festivals (KNMF)**.

These are separate annual events organized by the Ministry of Education, Kenya. The KNDFFF events involves over two million learners from all over the country and all levels of education (preschool, primary, secondary schools, Teacher training Colleges, Technical Training Institutions and universities).

The EACC sponsors and participates as a key stakeholder in support of the anti-corruption category, a sub-theme in the national festivals. Under the anti-corruption sub-theme, the youth utilize their talents and creativity to generate ethics and anti-corruption content, expressed through songs, plays, narratives, film and dance. Drama and film as well as the music competitions take place at four levels (Sub-county, County, regional and national levels). The winning teams in the various categories, including the anti-corruption category, are given a chance to present the items during a gala event involving members of the public as well as a State Concert involving top leadership of the country and other public officials. Selected items are also aired on Edu Channel, which is the television channel of the Kenya Institute of Education.



Young delegates collaborate at the 2022 Anti-Corruption Student Force Convention in Malaysia

By establishing the **Anti-Corruption Student Force** (AMAR), the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has created an alliance between the educational system and youth activism.

Working with and through education institutions, AMAR has recruited young people to spearhead anti-corruption movements within universities. AMAR has fostered the formation of anti-corruption groups that undertake activities ranging from campaigns to policy advocacy within and beyond their campuses.

These youth-led groups design projects that raise awareness of how corruption harms people and society and how to counter it. The projects are run under the close supervision of school directors and MACC.

During the projects, which lasts for one year, MACC provides extensive capacity-building programmes that are integrated into the institution's educational framework. Upon project completion, MACC officers carry out reviews and evaluations, assessing whether a project has achieved its objective. After the projects, participants are encouraged to become mentors for future AMAR members.



Young Moldovans engage in team-building during an Anti-Corruption Volunteers session

Anti-Corruption Volunteers is aimed at supporting public awareness and the government's efforts in promoting anti-corruption initiatives. Pioneering the involvement of young volunteers in public institutions across Moldova, the National Anti-Corruption Center initiated the project in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, focusing on engaging young people within educational institutions.

Through an online recruitment process, over a hundred enthusiastic young people have joined as volunteers. Following their application, candidates undergo a rigorous selection and interview process, ensuring that the most suitable individuals are chosen. Once accepted, participants have the flexibility to determine the duration of their voluntary commitment and are provided with a per diem payment.

These dedicated young volunteers are entrusted with responsibilities spanning three key areas: public engagement, research and data collection, and campaign initiatives. For example, a popular activity has been the sharing of anti-corruption information through theatrical performances, comics and cartoons focused on the fight against corruption. Upon completion of the volunteer programme, participants receive certificates and awards in recognition of their contributions.

Details about these examples can be found on [the web portal of this policy guide.](#)

