



**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
ZIMBABWE**

the coalition against corruption

SEMINAR PAPER #4 2024

**CORRUPTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS
ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS (SDGS) IN ZIMBABWE:
A CALL TO YOUTH FOR
ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION**

About Transparency International Zimbabwe

Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI Z) is a non-profit, non-partisan, systems-oriented local chapter of the international movement against corruption. Its broad mandate is to fight corruption and promote transparency, accountability, and integrity at all levels and across all sectors of society. TI Z believes corruption can only be sufficiently tackled by all citizens including people at grassroots level.

ISBN: 978-1-77934-365-9

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Transparency International Zimbabwe ...*ii*

Table of Contents ...*iii*

List of figures ...*iii*

Acknowledgements ...*iv*

Acronyms and abbreviations ...*v*

1. Introduction ...1

2. Corruption's Impact on Selected SDGs in Zimbabwe ...2

3. Key Challenges for Youth in the Context of Corruption ...8

4. A Call to Action: The Youth in Fighting Corruption and Advancing the SDGs ...11

Annex 1: Facilitation Guide ...*13*

References used ...*15*

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Zimbabwe's Population Pyramid ...*3*

Figure 2. Corruption Risks in Admissions/Enrolment ...*5h*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Summary of this paper was presented at the 2024 edition of the **TI Z Annual School of Integrity Programme** in Ngezi, Mashonaland West between 6 to 10 October 2024. Each year, TI Z carefully selects 25 young leaders from the country's 10 provinces to take part in this programme. Candidates are chosen based on principles of transparency, fairness, competition, non-discrimination, accountability, and integrity. These young leaders represent a diverse array of practitioners from academic institutions, the public and private sectors, and community organisations, all playing critical roles in their communities. TI Z extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Embassy of Sweden for financing this programme.

This booklet is published in line with the 2024 United Nations (UN) Global Anticorruption Day **#IACD2024** commemoration, which will be held with the theme '**Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity**'. In marking this year's commemoration, the UN highlights, "While [the youth] are often the most affected by corruption, they also possess the vision and innovative ideas needed to create a future rooted in integrity" (UN, 2024). In line with this idea, the movement against corruption, policymakers and strategists in Zimbabwe are keen to harness the unique abilities of the youth in the fight against corruption. Hopefully, this booklet will empower youth by providing them with knowledge about corruption's impact on their lives and futures. TI Z would like to foster civic engagement by encouraging active participation in governance processes while linking these issues directly to sustainable development goals that matter deeply to younger generations.

[#UnitedAgainstCorruption](#)

PUBLISHED

December 2024

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
COVID-19	coronavirus disease of 2019
BEAM	Basic Education Assistance Module
CRA	Corruption Risk Assessment
COMALISO	Coalition for Market and Liberal Solutions
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GCB	Global Corruption Barometer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
THE	Higher and Tertiary Education
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LPMRU	Lettable Partitioned Mall Retail Units
NBPI	National Bribe Payers Index
NACS	National Anticorruption Strategy
NDS-1	National Development Strategy
NYC	National Youth Council
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
OPD	Organisation of Persons with Disability
PFM	Public Finance Management
PWDs	Persons with disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STIs	Sexually transmitted diseases
TAI	Transparency, accountability and integrity
TI Z	Transparency International Zimbabwe
UN	United Nations
VIDCOs	Village Development Committees
WADCOs	Ward Development Committees

1 INTRODUCTION



This discussion paper critically examines the impact of corruption on sustainable development in Zimbabwe, with a focus on how it undermines progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Transparency International (2009) defines corruption as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain, a practice that threatens development efforts across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Established in 2015, the SDGs outline global benchmarks

for sustainable development, encompassing specific targets and indicators designed to address urgent global challenges, including poverty, inequality, and climate change.

This analysis is not intended to be exhaustive but aims to illustrate the detrimental effects of corruption on selected SDG targets in Zimbabwe, sparking conversation on the need for action. It further highlights the role of Zimbabwean youth in safeguarding their future by

actively engaging in the national anti-corruption agenda. Given that the SDGs represent a vision for a sustainable and just world, the involvement of young people is essential; their advocacy and commitment can help protect their aspirations embedded within each goal from the corrosive effects of corruption. By understanding what is at stake, Zimbabwe's youth can be empowered to contribute meaningfully to a future free of corruption, a future that promises greater equity, opportunity, and resilience.

2 CORRUPTION'S IMPACT ON SELECTED SDGS IN ZIMBABWE



SDG #1 focuses on *Ending Poverty*.

With this goal, the UN aims to eradicate poverty by 2030 and address challenges related to providing adequate social protection for the poor, as well as basic services and support for individuals affected by climate-related events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters (UN, 2024). Accordingly, one of its targets is **Target 1.3, which emphasizes the implementation of nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all individuals, including establishing social protection floors and achieving substantial coverage for the poor and vulnerable populations** (UN, 2024). Among the targets associated with this goal is **indicator 1.3.1, which measures the proportion of the population covered by social protection floors**

or systems, disaggregated by sex and distinguishing various groups such as children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims, as well as the poor and vulnerable.

However, there are various accountability issues which impact Zimbabwe's SDG-related targets linked to the implementation of inclusive social protection systems, and these mainly relate to how public resources for safety nets are handled. In this regard, Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ's) National Development Strategy (NDS-1) has acknowledged that the country's Social Protection System has been negatively affected by a myriad of challenges, namely, "weak coordination of humanitarian responses and further corruption in access to support and exclusion of disenfranchised groups; poor monitoring and accountability systems for resources allocated towards social protection and limited stakeholder coordination initiatives enabling double dipping

by some beneficiaries" (GoZ, 2020 p197-198).

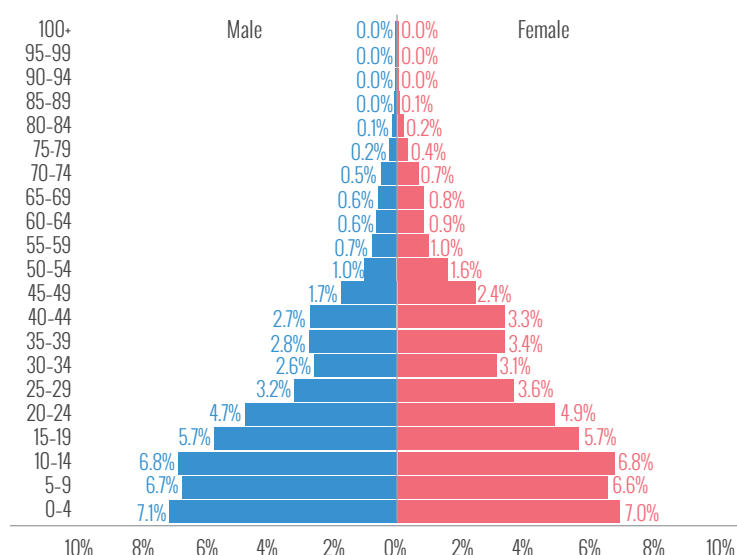
Some prominent examples bear testimony to the concerns in the NDS-1 above. Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI Z) conducted a corruption risk assessment (CRA) of the management and distribution of social protection initiatives and humanitarian aid in Zimbabwe using Cyclone Idai in Chimanimani and the Cholera Response in Harare as case studies. Among the concerning issues, TI Z found that collusion; clientelism; conflict of interest; political corruption, and weak whistle-blowing impacted GoZ's handling of the two disasters (TI Z, 2020). Over and above the cases of Cyclone Idai and the Harare Cholera crisis, reports by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Public Accounts (PAC) and numerous investigative journalists on how COVID-19 relief funds were used are quite concerning.

Briefly, reports by the OAG, and the PAC concluded that the intended

objectives of the publicly funded COVID-19 intervention were not met due to issues linked to the lack of transparency, accountability and integrity (TAI) (OAG, 2021; PAC, 2022). COVID-19 funds which were meant to cushion citizens and vulnerable groups were allegedly misused resulting in violation of the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act and related regulations (Newshawks, 2022). The report from the OAG indicated that there were discrepancies in the beneficiary databases, which were found to be outdated, containing incorrect or incomplete information, duplicates, and even instances of ‘ghost beneficiaries’ (OAG Zimbabwe, 2021 in Matanga, 2023). Consequently, the condition of these databases significantly complicates efforts to determine how many individuals in need have been reached by the resources and thus positively affected (Matanga, 2023). Where Target 1.3.1 is concerned, therefore, public emergencies have created scope for corruption, weakening safety nets that are part of the country’s social protection system.

Indeed, corruption diverts resources meant for poverty alleviation, reducing funding for social services and programs intended to uplift impoverished communities. For the youth, this means fewer opportunities to escape poverty cycles, and this is important in the context of Zimbabwe where young people collectively are a demographic majority as shown in Figure 1 below. In the context of the

FIGURE 1. ZIMBABWE’S POPULATION PYRAMID



(Source: <https://www.populationpyramid.net/zimbabwe/2024/>)

Zimbabwe - 2024
Population: 16,634,372

discussion, the majority status of the youth as a specific segment means that the probability of them facing challenges with climate-related events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters is higher than other groups. This means they are more vulnerable than their counterparts and therefore highly dependent on social protection systems and related measures.



SDG #3 focuses on the *Promotion of Good Health and Well-being*. With this goal, the UN aims to address challenges such as maternal mortality, premature

deaths from noncommunicable diseases, and access to essential healthcare (UN, 2024). The goal also aims to address inequalities among vulnerable populations exacerbated by the climate crisis (UN, 2024). Amongst this goal’s targets is **Target 3.1, which speaks to reducing the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030** (UN, 2024). In line with this topic, selected indicators under this target include 3.1.1 ‘*Maternal Mortality Ratio*’ and 3.1.2 ‘*Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel*’ (UN, 2024).

However, an analysis of evidence from the global movement against corruption using these specific indicators shows how various forms of corruption in the public healthcare sector threaten the attainment of SDG Goal #3.

According to Camacho (2023), many forms of corruption are prevalent in maternal and perinatal health, negatively affecting the health of mother and child. These include the diversion of funding from obstetric health through grand corruption; and informal payments charged by health workers, and unnecessary procedures such as Caesarean sections occurring through petty corruption at the point of service delivery. These problems are caused by the combination of large financial flows to the healthcare sector in situations where there is limited oversight, making accountability difficult (Devrim 2021; Schoeberlein 2021; Abisu Ardigó & Chêne 2017 in Camacho, 2023); and the asymmetry of information between health providers and patients (Amnesty International 2009, in Camacho, 2023).

Zimbabwe is one of the many countries globally, where informal payments occur in the obstetric care setting (Choguya 2018, in Camacho, 2023). "In Zimbabwe, pregnant women need to pay bribes to receive assistance during childbirth, and some claim that priority is given to those who can pay in US dollars" (The Guardian 2020, in Camacho, 2023, p5-6). Furthermore, "informal payments in state-run healthcare systems, where treatment should be free, are made to ensure better treatment during and before childbirth" (Camacho, 2023, p5). "Grand corruption can thus directly affect the maternal healthcare sector through the

mishandling or embezzlement of funds to the detriment of the quality and operation of its services" (Camacho, 2023, p4). On the other hand, informal payments hinder universal healthcare by granting health workers the discretion to determine who pays for a service, who receives it for free, and who obtains better quality care. This situation ultimately disadvantages those who are unable to pay (Derkyi-Kwarteng et al. 2021, in Camacho, 2023). If left uncontrolled, these forms of corruption are highly likely to worsen the maternal mortality indicators above, including a reduction in the availability of skilled health personnel available to attend to young women, especially those from low-income backgrounds.

It is plausible to assert that the youth are the most significant users of maternal and perinatal health services, being a statistical majority in the total population, but more importantly, being of childbearing age. At the same time, health care in Zimbabwe and most countries is described as catastrophically costly so most citizens depend on public health systems to protect them against the financial cost of illness (WHO, 2000 in Maguchu, Mundopa and Tshabangu, 2021). Women and children who are the main targets of maternal health care are also statistically the major recipients of care in public health facilities (Komtenza and Gatsi, 2024). In the context of the discussion, the huge cost of healthcare,

and the dependency of most Zimbabweans on the public health system on one hand; coupled with the majority status of the youth and their childbearing status on the other means that the corruption in the delivery of maternal and perinatal care has targeted impacts on them.



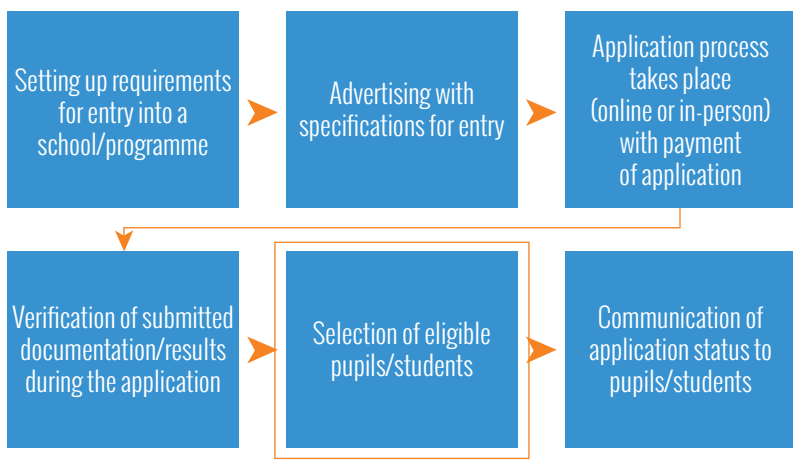
SDG #4 focuses on **Quality Education**. The UN aimed to address challenges such as the failure of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to achieve universal primary education. This includes addressing gender disparities in the ability of individuals to read and write, and acute shortages of trained primary school teachers (UN, 2024). **Target 4.3 of SDG #4 focuses on ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary (TVET) education, including university by 2030** (UN, 2024). In the context of the topic, **indicator 4.3.1 on the participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex** is noteworthy.

A CRA on the education sector conducted by TI Z in 2023 shows corruption risks in specific decision points which can impact this indicator. In analysing these

decision points, TI Z acknowledges that the education sector in Zimbabwe is vast and divided into distinct legislative and institutional domains (categorized into the Primary and Secondary Education sector on one hand, and the Higher and Tertiary Education or HTE sector on the other). However, it's possible to identify several decision points cutting across or common in both domains, such as enrolment (Malinga, 2024). As regards enrolment, the area identified as having the most likelihood and impact of corruption in the CRA was the selection of eligible learners due to the bias towards those applicants with any type of relationship with the selectors.

In terms of impacts, the CRA highlighted several ways in which women and girls are affected, such as sextortion (or the exchange of sexual favours) for enrolment; low self-esteem; contraction of STIs and HIV/AIDS; denial of access to education, discrimination and lowered numbers of enrolments (Malinga, 2024). Indeed, where indicator 4.3.1 is concerned, enrolment corruption significantly undermines efforts toward achieving universal education by decreasing access for marginalised groups (e.g. women and girls), eroding public trust in learning institutions, misallocating resources, compromising educational quality and other unforeseen, long-term societal impacts that hinder development.

FIGURE 2. CORRUPTION RISKS IN ADMISSIONS/ENROLMENT



SDG #8 speaks to the issue of *Decent Work and Economic Growth*, through which the UN aimed to foster sustained and inclusive economic growth to achieve sustainable development (UN, 2024). A noteworthy target under this SDG is *Target 8.5, which aims for the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities (PWDs), and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030. Under this target is Indicator 8.5.2 which tracks the unemployment rate, by sex, age and PWDs* (UN, 2024). The negative impacts of corruption on this SDG and its targets above can also be illustrated using TI Z's 2024 CRA on Zimbabwe's education sector,

using another decision point, this time *staff recruitment*.

Briefly, the CRA noted corruption risks associated with staff recruitment in the education sector (Malinga, 2024). Out of the 378 individuals surveyed in this CRA, 77.51% highlighted the promotion of staff as the process most highly associated with corruption in staff recruitment in the education sector. The second highest area of concern was linked to the transfer of staff (75.93%). The major driver of corruption with the transfer of staff is the desire by many individuals to be stationed in urban areas where there is better infrastructure as opposed to rural areas (Malinga, 2024). Corruption in the promotion of staff, as well as transfers was followed by the recruitment of staff which is not based on merit (Malinga, 2024). The CRA revealed that teachers may in extreme cases need to bribe education officials with

sexual favours or give up their salary for a specified period (Malinga, 2024).

As regards the impacts on women and girls of corruption in staff recruitment, the CRA highlighted a myriad of issues, such as denial of one's source of income; losing promotions and rewards; exposure of victims to STIs or HIV/AIDS; mental health issues affecting victims, and sometimes destruction of marriages/relationships and separation with families involved. Evidence gathered by TI Z also suggests that corruption in the recruitment or transfer of staff can deprive learners with unique needs based on their type and level of disability or language (TI Z, 2024). TI Z has in its outreach come across the challenge of the skewed deployment of teachers qualified to serve children with disabilities. Those with inclusive education qualifications can be placed in urban areas through favouritism or nepotism, thereby depriving PWDs in rural areas (OPD representative, 2024).

On the other hand, one respondent engaged in TI Z's education CRA said the failure to recruit staff based on qualifications negatively disadvantaged those from ethnic minorities (Malinga, 2024). Echoing this, another respondent in TI Z's ongoing research outreach spoke of the failure of the authorities to share information in minority languages, with the result that undeserving children were enrolled on the Basic

Education Assistance Module (BEAM) at the expense of minority language speakers, who are more vulnerable to corruption due to information asymmetry (Human Rights Defender, 2024). Where indicator 8.5.2 is concerned, therefore, corruption risks associated with staff recruitment are likely to disproportionately impact women, with knock-on effects on other segments that are marginalised or at risk of discrimination such as children and PWDs.



SDG #16 is focused on *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*.

The UN highlighted the importance of effective, inclusive and transparent national and international institutions as a *sin qua non* for sustainable development (UN, 2024). This is also linked to the issue of citizens' access to and trust in authorities, which the bribe-taking behaviour of public officials has in the past undermined as they encounter citizens in the delivery of their duties (UN, 2024). Under this SDG, Target 16.5 is *on substantially reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms*. Noteworthy indicators include **16.5.1 on the "proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official or were asked for**

a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months" (UN, 2024). Another indicator is **16.5.2 on the "proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months"** (UN, 2024).

Where indicator 16.5.1 is concerned, TI Z has noted concerning themes through its National Bribe Payers Index (NBPI) study of 2021, where it surveyed 2,583 citizens across the country's ten provinces on their experiences with corruption in the public sector. Most respondents (54.4%) indicated that they had been asked to pay a bribe in the preceding 12 months (TI Z, 2021). The majority (61.4%) said they had not offered the bribe, which implied that public officials were proactively seeking favours from members of the public (TI Z, 2021). Placed in a larger context, the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) for Africa in 2019 revealed that one in 4 African citizens is forced to pay bribes to access essential services (Transparency International, 2019). Furthermore, the poorest in society are twice as likely as the wealthiest to pay bribes, whilst **young people are more likely**



Most respondents (54.4%) of the National Bribe Payers Index (NBPI) study of 2021 indicated that they had been asked to pay a bribe in the preceding 12 months (TI Z, 2021).

than older people to pay bribes (Transparency International, 2019).

As regards indicator 16.5.2, a survey of 2,000 people by the Coalition for Market and Liberal Solutions (COMALISO) revealed the myriad challenges that young people encounter as they try to earn a livelihood in the informal sector. Briefly, the central business districts (CBDs) around the country have spawned the emergence of Lettable Partitioned Mall Retail Units (LPMRU) with 600,000 urban-based young people taking up these spaces (NewsDay, 2024; COMALISO, 2024). COMALISO says that municipal police and national police officers request bribes from LPMRU who have no operating licences (NewsDay, 2024). These bribes add to the other challenges they face in growing their business, such as

the lack of collateralised capital, the volatile economy which discourages savings, and no formal bank accounts among others (COMALISO, 2024). Indeed, individuals operating within the informal economy may face extortion, bribery, or other forms of corruption from government officials or law enforcement agencies entrusted with authority in the public interest. This in turn impacts their social and economic rights in profound ways including human rights violations (Amnesty International, 2024).

When the challenges faced by LPMRU operators are placed in a wider context, ZimStat (2024) recently announced that the national youth unemployment rate is 41.2% (using the UN definition of 15-24 years), rising to 59.7% if one uses the definition of Expanded Unemployment Rate.¹

Linked to this, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) also said that Zimbabwe has the second-largest informal sector relative to the size of the economy, estimated to account for nearly 61% of its GDP (IMF in the Herald, 2024). Most informal sector operators are women and the youth, with some sectors such as cross-border trading having 70% representation by women (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, FES, 2018). This exposes them to harmful forms of corruption such as sextortion. In the context of the discussion, the high dependency of most young people on the informal sector for survival in a context of limited employment opportunities means that they have higher chances of running businesses which are targeted with bribe-taking behaviour by public officials tasked to oversee their sector.

¹ Expanded Unemployment Rate is also called combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (ZimStat, 2024).

3 KEY CHALLENGES FOR YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF CORRUPTION

After analysing the impact of corruption on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from a youth perspective, it is essential to assess how effectively young people in Zimbabwe can confront the challenges posed by this issue. This paper argues that youth face four major obstacles in their efforts to mitigate the effects of corruption on the realization of the SDGs.

The first key challenge is linked to the *limited participation of the youth in decision-making processes*. The African Union (AU) has promoted youth participation in decision-making as a *sin qua non* for sustainable development (AU 2006, in Masuku and Macheka (2020)). There are opportunities for participation at different levels, such as the councillor committees for interaction with ratepayers by elected representatives at the ward level in the urban areas, as well as direct contact with traditional leaders in rural areas (Moyo, 2024). There are also Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) as participatory structures in Zimbabwe's rural areas (Masuku and Macheka, 2020). These structures and opportunities

span from the local level up to the national level to include the National Youth Council (NYC). However, it has been observed that patriarchy, gerontocracy and partisan actors within the governance architecture stand as significant obstacles to meaningful youth participation, despite the promulgation of legislation promoting youth participation and the existence of the aforementioned platforms (Masuku and Macheka (2020)).

Unfortunately, the challenges presented in the preceding section are mirrored in the decision-making structures spearheading the national fight against corruption. Zimbabwe is a signatory to key international anti-corruption conventions, including the UN Convention

Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. These instruments oblige the State to take concrete steps towards combating corruption, and one milestone was the promulgation of the National Anticorruption Strategy (NACS) which guided collaborative national efforts to tackle corruption between 2020 and 2024. The implementation of the NACS was done through subcommittees which were aligned to six thematic objectives such as citizen empowerment and awareness, asset recovery and compliance. However, it has been observed that there was no representation of the youth in the thematic subcommittees of the National Anticorruption Strategy Steering Committee (NACSSC). It is argued here that the challenge

of non-inclusion of the youth in structures to fight corruption is that decisions are made *for* them as opposed to *with* them, missing out on their unique perspectives and diversity and growing apathy..

Second, the youth need to grapple with ***disempowerment due to a lack of access to information and resources***. Again, the AU is quite clear on the need to provide the youth with "access to information and education and training for young people to learn their rights and responsibilities, to be schooled in democratic processes, citizenship, decision-making, governance and leadership such that they develop technical skills and confidence to participate in these processes " (AU, 2006, p6). However, "GoZ is playing a limited role in providing young people with access to information. Community information centres and similar structures are not available to all members of the public. Access to the airwaves is also limited for the youth in terms of allocation of licenses for community radio stations, broadcasting mainly in the rural areas" (Moyo, 2024). The segment of the youth who do have some resources enjoy more space or opportunities to be heard due to their proximity to governance



Opportunities for the youth to demand accountability are uneven, leading to frustration, apathy and disregard for community-related governance and accountability issues

structures. For example, the youth in the capital city have access to numerous ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), parliament and embassies compared to rural-based youth. This means opportunities for the youth to demand accountability are uneven, leading to frustration, apathy and disregard for community-related governance and accountability issues (Moyo, 2024).

Thirdly, there is the issue of existing ***policy gaps in the fight against corruption*** and a few examples can be given here. The fight against corruption is highly dependent on citizens reporting incidences of corruption to competent authorities. "However, in disclosing corruption and other forms of wrongdoing, whistleblowers face immense personal risks, which range from professional retaliation, imprisonment on false charges and even death." (Mundopa, 2022). However, at the time of writing, Zimbabwe had no whistleblower protection legislation and mechanisms. It can be argued that this policy gap has a chilling effect on youth participation in the fight against corruption. Furthermore, there are gendered forms of corruption which occur in Zimbabwe, and these create unique vulnerabilities for the youth due to complex power dynamics that occur at the intersection of legal frameworks for gender-based violence (GBV) and corruption. The impacts of these gendered forms of corruption impact women the

most, and are normally associated with the issue of sextortion above. However, analysis by TI Z has identified gaps in existing anti-corruption laws which require Zimbabwe as a jurisdiction to criminalise sextortion as a form of corruption by developing tailored legislation (Mundopa, 2024). The policy gaps highlighted here further erode prospects of securing the aspirations of the youth embodied in the SDGs.

The fourth obstacle which the youth face in the context of anticorruption relates to ***peer pressure, coupled with the normalisation of corrupt practices in contemporary Zimbabwe***. The AU asserts that one of the responsibilities of the youth is to espouse an honest work ethic and reject and expose corruption (AU, 2006). However, Zimbabwe's well-intentioned redistributive policies and black empowerment schemes commonly called indigenisation, have spawned a subculture popularised via social media which is characterised by ostentatious lifestyles by a new economic elite colloquially known as Mbingas (Mbofana, 2023; Madenyika, 2024). The metamorphosis of the once conservative black business class in Zimbabwe, to this flashier, shadier version was facilitated through the allocation of funding and government contracts to emerging businessmen which was not transparent (Madenyika, 2024). Muonde & Gwaze, 2024) reveal that the lobby to make opportunities more accessible to previously disadvantaged

blacks had a deliberate bias towards the youth. Linked to this, Zvoushe, Uwizeyimana & Auriacombe (2017) in Madenyika (2024) revealed that the benefits of indigenisation were given only to black businesspeople who were willing to be part of patronage networks that solely depended on state support for its survival. In this context, this paper

argues that the youth focus of the indigenisation lobby and the strategy of the political elites to guarantee steady political support ensnared the youth into a system that normalised the corrupt allocation of opportunities as a way of survival.

At the same time, these Mbingas have generated a huge following

of admirers among the youth in their role as social media influencers also likely leading many to emulate their shortcuts to wealth. As Maringehosi (2020) highlights, the identities of the youth on social media are constructed through the youths attempting to imitate their favourite social media stars on online platforms. Ultimately,

Corruption has become a pervasive aspect of life, as citizens increasingly resort to bribery to secure their basic rights. It has become a necessary means for survival like the 'air, food and water' which sustains life. Many young people find themselves paying bribes at roadblocks, for identity documents, driver's licenses, and job opportunities... As a result, today's youth shaped by a corrupt society are likely to replicate these behaviours when they assume positions of power, leading us toward systemic collapse if left unaddressed (Moyo, 2024)

In this context therefore, it is plausible to assert that the ideals of honest work espoused by the AU have been eroded, as the youth now cut corners by joining

the ranks of rich hustlers in their desperation for opportunities and advancement, placing obstacles in efforts to incorporate the youth in anticorruption strategies.

4 A CALL TO ACTION: THE YOUTH IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION AND ADVANCING THE SDGS

At this juncture, it should be clear to the youth what is at stake, regarding the damaging impacts of corruption on the attainment of the SDGs; as well as the related social, economic and political challenges which they currently face in tackling corruption. Zimbabwe's youth can be empowered to contribute meaningfully to a future free of corruption, a future that promises greater equity, opportunity, and resilience and a few proposals can be made in this regard.

Firstly, where the SDGs are concerned, the UN (2024) is itself convinced that *the youth play a "significant role in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Agenda as well as in holding governments accountable."* Elaborating on this goal they assert that the youth play a key role in the implementation of the [SDGs] agenda as *critical thinkers* (asking questions about the world around them and exposing contradictions and biases); *change makers* (having the power to act, powered by increased connectivity via social media); *innovators* (offering fresh ideas); *communicators* (relaying the development agenda across local and international

boundaries), and *leaders* (driving local change through youth-led organisations and networks) (UN, 2024). These statements by the UN place the youth at the centre of the agenda in an advocacy and watchdog role, pushing governments to implement related programmes as well as meet their own milestones.

Secondly, addressing the challenges of corruption requires *active youth participation in decision-making* at both local and national levels, consistent with constitutional and legal frameworks. Young people should *advocate for their meaningful inclusion in representative structures that drive national*

anti-corruption strategies and demand access to essential information that enables them to engage as informed citizens. Furthermore, they must *lobby for whistleblower protection laws and specific legislation criminalising sextortion as a form of corruption*. Central to this advocacy is a necessary shift in mindset among both youth and older generations; with an emphasis on ending the view of young people as merely tools for achieving vested interests. While overcoming power imbalances between governors and the governed presents challenges, recognizing their collective numerical strength can empower youth to effect change.

Conclusion

It is clear from this analysis that indeed the future aspirations of the youth in Zimbabwe are interwoven into the fabric of the SDGs and the targets and related indicators for achievement. Whilst they are major beneficiaries of the attainment of the SDGs, the youth have more to lose than other segments from the damaging effects of corruption on the SDGs due to their demographic characteristics (e.g. their majority,

gender and dependency status) making them more vulnerable. They therefore cannot afford to let the scourge of corruption erode the country's capacity to deliver on their socio-economic and other rights. However tackling corruption has its own challenges for them, linked to a combination of factors such as limited youth participation in decision-making processes; disempowerment due to a lack of access to information and resources; policy gaps in the fight against corruption and the

normalisation of corrupt practices through peer, societal and political pressures making them active participants. Notwithstanding these challenges, the youth can safeguard their interests in the SDGs by playing a watchdog role on the implementation of the agenda, demanding more meaningful participation in decision making platforms, rejecting and resisting collusive pressures by more powerful actors and demanding reforms in the laws and institutions for anticorruption in Zimbabwe.



The TI Z School of Integrity Class of 2024

ANNEX 1

FACILITATION GUIDE

The facilitator should circulate this booklet to participants several days before the workshop or meeting so that they can internalise the content. This will enable participants to engage with the discussions meaningfully and more time is spent on discussions.

Materials Needed:

A copy of the seminar paper with points about corruption and SDGs

Flip charts and markers

Projector and screen for presentations

Sticky notes for brainstorming activities

A timer for managing session activities

After a summary of the paper is presented, break up the meeting into two groups to discuss the following:



1. Impacts of corruption on the SDGs (10 minutes)

Objective: To provide a real-world perspective on corruption and inspire participants.

Description: Using one of the SDGs presented in the seminar paper, participants must draw a “*corruption impact map*” on a flip chart. The map must identify a core corruption issue (e.g., embezzlement in public funds) and enable participants to draw lines connecting this corruption to challenges in attaining the selected SDG Zimbabwe. This visual exercise helps them see the ripple effect of corruption on national development.



2. Challenges for the youth in the context of corruption (10 minutes)

Objective: To reflect on the challenges involved in tackling corruption for the youth.

Description: Each group discusses and lists the specific challenges they may face in addressing the corruption issue above. They must be holistic in their analysis, looking at social, economic, political and even personal challenges they may face.

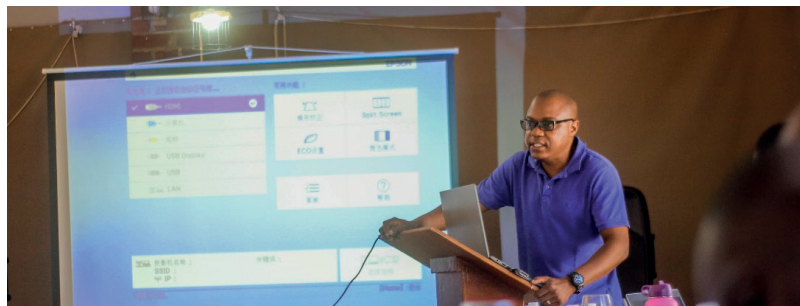


3. Fighting Corruption and Advancing the SDGs (5 minutes)

Objective: To encourage personal commitment and future action.

Description: A reflection activity where each participant writes down one action they'll take to promote anti-corruption in their community to advance the SDG identified above. The proposed activity must be specifically tailored to the youth's role in addressing these issues.

Each group then presents their outputs through an elected representative in a plenary session.



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ABOUT TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL ZIMBABWE (TI Z)

Transparency International Zimbabwe (TI Z) is a non-profit, non-partisan, systems-oriented local chapter of the international movement against corruption. Its broad mandate is to fight corruption and related vices through networks of integrity that are in line with the global strategy. TI Z believes corruption can only be sufficiently tackled by all citizens including people at the grassroots level.

VISION

A Zimbabwean society free from all forms of corruption and practices.

MISSION

To combat corruption, hold power to account and promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in all sectors of society.

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