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THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN FIGHTING EDUCATION CORRUPTION

Introduction

Corruption is a difficult challenge to both individuals and international development organisations in education development. Part of the reason is that there is not enough reliable knowledge of prevalence, structural characteristics or consequences, just to mention a few, of education corruption. The other part of the reason is that international organisations' anti-corruption strategies are general without providing means to recognise and address corruption in education. I have experienced that one or several of the next five assumptions are often present when international education development community engages in co-operation with education systems in corrupted or highly-corrupted countries.

First assumption is that "it is not our business". This refers to a belief that education corruption is part of larger set of issues in politics, economy and society that is beyond the means of education experts. There is also an aspect of safety related to this position: it is better to stay away from politics of corruption to guarantee that planned education reforms can be implemented. Second assumption is that "there is nothing we can do about it". It indicates that the roots of education corruption are too deep in education institutions, especially in universities, to be accessible, or too high in political establishments. Third assumption is that "education corruption is a cultural issue". This is related to a belief that in some cases corruption should be accepted as part a way the society operates. For instance, low public sector wages is sometimes used as an excuse not to include anti-corruption in education reforms. Fourth assumption is that "corruption can best be reduced by improving governance and transparency in education". This means that rather than raising the issue of corruption *per se*, smarter way is to develop those aspects of education system that will make corruption more difficult. Fifth assumption is that "corruption is not a special issue affecting education". This argument follows from the fact there is not sufficient country-specific evidence of education corruption.

Domestic political strength and will of countries that suffer from corruption are normally not enough to make any significant progress in governance and transparency that are often related to alleviating corruption. Therefore international organisations have an important role to play in combating wide-spread corruption. This chapter argues that they indeed have a pivotal role in reducing corruption also in

S. P. Heyneman (ed.), Buying your way into heaven: Education and corruption in international perspective, 1–20.

education. It first discusses some features of education corruption and how its complex nature complicates mapping it reliably in different countries. It then describes the prevalence of corruption relying on available surveys of perception and recent research. Brief introduction to anti-corruption policies of six international organisations and examples of how they have embedded anti-corruption measures in their education projects is then discussed. Finally, this chapter concludes that international organisations need to do more: they need better coordination and more collaboration if their planned anti-corruption strategies are to be successful in education. Moreover, each organisation need to engage in constructive dialogue with their counterparts, include concrete actions in their mainstream education development work, and jointly finance research, surveys, meetings and publications and conduct them in collaboration with partner countries.

The changing face of education corruption

Anti-corruption entered to the agendas of international organisations rather late. As recently as in 1990s corruption rarely appeared as a concrete issue in education strategies or partner countries' reform policies. It was the landmark speech of then-President James Wolfensohn in the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in October 1996 that brought term corruption to the surface and soon embedded it in the global development discourse. But it has taken a surprisingly long to awaken the education development community in international organisations to its consequences and "put teeth" into efforts to address prevalent malpractices in education.

Education corruption is not only a problem in developing countries but also in transition countries and many industrial nations as well. But it is not the same everywhere. Other chapters of this book make it evident that in Sub-Saharan Africa the main problem is sexual exploitation, in North America cheating and in South East Europe bribery. The late awakening of the education development community to education corruption is surprising because it has been known since the emergence of new market economies in Central and Eastern Europe and New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union that corruption was endemic in their education systems. Indeed, the result of weakening enforcement mechanisms of central governments in most of these countries led to looser coordination and control of 'rent-seeking activity'. "The result, at least in the earliest years of independence", writes Heyneman, "was an increase in overall corruption and inefficiency at many levels of government and administration, and the education sector was not immune from these forces" (Heyneman, Anderson & Nuraliyeva, 2007, 1). On some occasions, bribes and informal fees for being accepted to sit exams, for instance, were seen as acceptable means to top up low public sector wages.

Education corruption was, for a long time, also seen as general problem in the public sector rather than something to be addressed by education sector policies. For example, the global campaign to raise access to and quality of basic education worldwide known as *Education for All* did not include anti-corruption as an action in achieving its goals (UNESCO, 2008). By now it is evident that accomplishment

of Education for All and thereby the Millennium Development Goals will be seriously jeopardised as long as corruption, weak governance and lack of transparency exist in education systems as they do today. In fact, corruption when it was included in education projects by international development agencies was part of the overall development of governance or reformation of public administration. As we will see later in this chapter anti-corruption measures today are often put in place indirectly by addressing competition, accountability and transparency in education in recipient countries.

Numerous surveys and studies conclude that education corruption is a complex issue and that is not the same in different parts of the world (Barblan, Daxner & Ivosevic, 2007; Hallak & Poisson, 2007; Heyneman, 2004; Knack, 2006; Stefes, 2007; Transparency International, 2007a). First, it is sometimes difficult to determine exactly what corruption means in different situations or countries. Appointment of staff in the ministries or schools, approval and selection of textbooks to be used by students, and fee-based private tutoring to complement teaching in schools are examples of issues where the line between appropriate and corrupt behaviours is sometimes difficult. Sexual harassment, for example, may not be an issue in one country but is the main form of education corruption in the other as is described in other chapters in this book.

Second, corruption in education is difficult to make visible or verify because – in most cases – all those involved are also beneficiaries. Students or parents who pay bribes to teachers or professors benefit from higher marks and secured entry to admired school or faculty. Teachers and professors who take bribes top up their salaries and thus increase their personal income. School principals and Deans are often part of the profit-making chain. Therefore, it is good for all to keep wrongdoing a secret.

Third, corruption is closely linked to and a consequence of poor governance, the absence of transparency and lack of mutual trust within society as a whole. A common excuse for corrupted practices and procedures in countries of weak governance is that "this is the way we do things here", in other words, it is part of the culture. The purpose of this chapter is not to analyse and contribute to conceptual aspects of corruption in education but rather discuss some possible pathways that international organisations could use to better address malpractices commonly found in education systems around the world.

Today, corruption is widely recognised as harmful and destructive for social development, public moral and economic sustainability. For example, the United Nations (UN), Council of Europe (CoE), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and European Commission (EC) have recently strengthened their positions on anti-corruption issues. Strategies and resolutions of these organisations aim to assist governments and business communities in reducing corruption. Only recently have international development organisations appealed for better coordination and more coherent approach to anti-corruption issues (Asian Development Bank, 2007; OECD, 2007; World Bank, 2006). However, there are only a few concrete exam-

ples of joint efforts by international development organisations to address corruption directly as part of education sector reforms.

External support to education systems is increasingly channelled through alternative development co-operation modalities, such as a sector-wide approach or direct budget support to the governments. Traditionally, external assistance has been channelled to recipient countries through sector-specific projects that are often designed by consultants rather than by the Ministry itself. These new modalities, instead, finance government's own education sector development plans (sector-wide approach) or disburses assistance money straight to government's budget to fill the budget gap. This 'development cooperation paradigm shift' is moving donors' focus from corruption in their own projects' fiduciary structures onto enhanced transparency and reliability of recipient country systems. Upgrading procurement and financial management capacities of ministries and institutions have indeed become a common way to mitigate existing risks of corruption. A sector-wide approach is therefore less likely to reduce prevalent education corruption because, by definition, it finances implementation of governments' own strategies. Evidence from sector-wide education programmes in highly-corrupted countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia suggests that governments are reluctant to admit and accept even the use of word 'corruption' in their education sector development documents. Corruption will remain an unsolved issue in education development unless governments want to take the lead in improving governance and transparency in their own administration.

Any form of unethical practice is particularly harmful when it happens in education. Corruption destroys the very purpose of education. Students who learn that cheating in school exams is the best way to succeed have missed to learn the ethical foundation of school and are therefore more likely to break that code of conduct later in their lives. Teachers who accept bribery or favouritism send a wrong message not only to those involved in these malpractices but also to those who are not involved. Schools that raise grades or universities that sell diplomas without appropriate achievements of their students jeopardise their own reputation and also the professional future of their alumni. Finally, an education system that remains silent about the wrongdoings of their leaders and servants casts a shadow over an entire society. It signals with its silence that, in the end, it is money, not merit that counts. In other words, contrary to many other sectors where impact of corruption is primarily financial, in education sector its consequences are moral. This is one reason why it is easier to remain silent about wrongdoings in education: ethical damage is much more difficult to quantify than monetary losses.

The prevalence of the problem

Two questions are important here: (1) How common is corruption in education sectors compared to other sectors, e.g. health or police? (2) Is the incidence of corruption in education higher now than before? Both of these questions are difficult to answer. We know that cheating, political nepotism and corruption can be found in most, if not all, education systems. We also know that education corruption is

not the same everywhere. Because of the very nature of the problem, however, they are complicated to measure or difficult to research. Following paragraphs answers the first question whereas the second one will be commented in the closing section of this chapter.

There are only a few sources of reliable global data about corruption in education. None of the international organisations mentioned earlier has its own, systematically collected data of the prevalence or nature of education corruption. The best-known global corruption measurement, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) that is a service of Transparency International, provides some evidence through its annual data generation. However, actual corruption is difficult to track by such surveys. But there are some useful data about people's perceptions of corruption and also their experiences of petty corruption.

The Global Corruption Barometer 2007, also published by Transparency International, is a public opinion survey that was conducted by the Gallup Organization between June and September 2007. It included over 63,000 people in 60 countries and territories. People were interviewed face-to-face or over the telephone (Transparency International, 2007b). Samples were, whenever possible, randomly selected and had national coverage. According to the 2007 Barometer, one third of those interviewed around the world perceived their education system to be affected by corruption. Moreover, 16% labelled their education system as *extremely corrupted*. There is a significant regional variation of perceived extreme education corruption between the regions of the world, however, as shown in table 1. It is noteworthy that this only indicates respondents' perception of corruption, not actual corruption.

EU27	Western Balkan	NIS	Africa	Latin America	Asia/ Pacific	North America	World
6	35	39	25	15	15	9	16

Table 1. Perception of how extreme corruption has affected education systems in 2007 (N=63,000+; Transparency International, 2007b)

It is important to note that surveys of perception have limited power to measure corruption. For example, widely-cited CPI standardised corruption indicators are from numerous sources that are typically expert surveys – at least three are required – in order to place them on a comparable scale. A calculated un-weighted average provides a single value that for each country. This enables rank-ordering of countries according to the level of perceived corruption. It is not possible to make any further conclusions based on these composite values regarding the prevalence or nature of corruption in education in any country. The CPI offers, however, a context in which corruption in education can be assessed as part of the public service sector. Some other surveys are based on actual participation in corruption.

Different types of surveys are employed to investigate corruption with differing degrees of utility.

Typically, the police system is perceived as the most corrupted public institution in most countries. Thus, it is a relevant benchmark to estimate the magnitude of prevalence of corruption in education. Transparency International's 2007 Barometer data enables comparison of the perception of corruption in education in different regions of the world to that of police. Figure 1 shows how global public perception of *education corruption* compares to *corruption in police system* in different regions of the world. Regarding corruption, education is seen as a more corrupted institution in Western Balkan than police! Figure 1 also illustrates that level of perceived education corruption in three former Soviet Union republics and in Western Balkans included in the 2007 Barometer is higher than in Africa or Latin America.

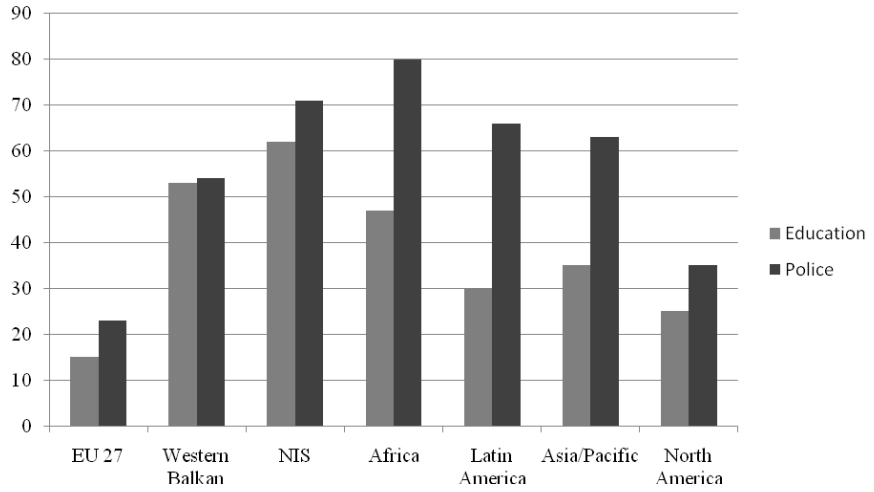

Figure 1. Perception of how corruption has affected education system and police in different regions of the world in 2007 (Transparency International, 2007b)

In the Western Balkans and the NIS, figure 1 shows that more than half of those interviewed perceived their education systems as corrupted or extremely corrupted. According to citizen's perceptions, corruption affects education systems almost to the same extend that it affects police. However, these numbers of perceived corruption do not show if respondents actually have experienced or been involved in corruption-like situations. The same 2007 Barometer provides data that describe how many respondents have paid a bribe in the education sector in comparison to police.

When asked about actual incidence, 9% of interviewed households reported that they have paid bribes when being in contact with education sector during the last 12 months. This may seem insignificant but being an international average that

includes many countries with relatively low levels of corruption, these figures take on greater importance. Moreover, based on the same source, education is reported to have a higher incidence of petty corruption than the legal system, medical sector or registry and permit service. Figures 1 and 2 indicate that bribery, fraud and cheating in their different forms seem to be widespread in education systems. Sadly the poor, whether in industrial or developing countries, are the most penalised by education corruption.

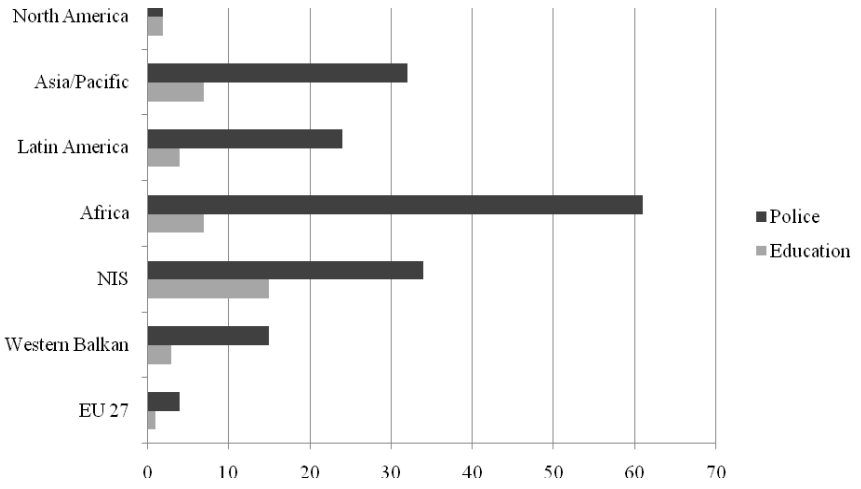

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents who have paid a bribe in the education sector and to the police during the last 12 months (Transparency International, 2007b)

As figure 2 illustrates, the incidence of bribery in education is highest in the region of NIS. It also shows, interestingly, that there is some inconsistency between actual engagement in paying bribes and perception of corruption. This would suggest that corruption has some other forms in many countries than bribery as is described by other authors in this book.

Another source of evidence relating to the first question comes from various studies and projects carried out in Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region. For example, Heyneman and his research team (2007) have reported the incidence of corruption in higher education in ECA. Their findings rely on their own data, those collected by the Anti-corruption Student Network in South East Europe (SEE) and Transparency International, and indicate two things.

First, that unethical practices ranging from cheating in exams to bribery, fraud, nepotism and large-scale state capture are widespread in all public universities in these regions. Their research shows that in four Eastern European countries, two out of three students who were interviewed knew of bribery for a grade or an exam

among their faculty. Second, based on the data available, it is evident that students' attitudes toward cheating, buying their way into desired faculty, achieving better grades and engaging in other illicit practices are far from those one would expect to see in an education institution. For instance, the vast majority of students who were interviewed in four SEE countries said that if they were in a situation to cheat without getting caught they would cheat. In one Central Asian country more than half of university students described their own university as capable of being bribed (Heyneman, 2007, 5). Additional evidence comes from recent large-scale corruption cases in Western Balkan countries where entire faculties have been arrested and sent to jail.

Despite growing interest and increasing research on education corruption much remains unknown. There is no reliable international survey or index that would help governments and international organisations to compare the incidence or perceptions of education corruption in different countries. Furthermore, there is no reliable means to find out if countries that are suffering from education corruption are making any progress over time. What is left is mostly anecdotal stock of evidence that is often spiced by personal memories, scandals reported on the front pages of tabloid papers and experiences shared by the education development community – often told off the record. One such effort was recently made by The Spokesman Review, a newspaper published in the state of Washington in the United States. It recently published in its online news the names of almost 10,000 people who spent total of US$7.3 million to buying phoney and counterfeit high school and college degrees from a Spokane diploma mill (Spokesman Review, 2008). The US Department of Justice refused to publish the complete list of buyers but it found its way into the public arena through that newspaper. This is just the tip of the iceberg in the world of educational fraud and bogus degree mills. Sellers of these fake degrees are a challenge to both national education authorities and the international organisations that support their reforms to confront fraud and rent-seeking that are often linked to foreign private education providers.

Campbell's Law in educational reforms

International organisations have been instrumental in profiling national education policies and financing the implementation of education reforms, not only in developing world but also in the industrial nations. Development assistance from multi-governmental organisations and grants from bilateral donors have often promoted improved governance and structural reforms insisting that recipient governments establish new institutions to increase objectivity and accountability in their education systems. The primary purpose of many of these education policies has been to shift the *modus operandi* of the education system towards how the open market and business operate. Indeed, reliance on principles of open competition as the main driving force of efficiency and improvement in education has brought high-stakes testing, merit-based teacher pay and financing schools according to predetermined results. This is now part of life of teachers and students in many parts of the world. Focusing more than before on competition, accountability and transparency – many

reformers believe – improves quality and governance of education and thereby reduces the chances of education corruption. Current World Bank education strategy offers a good example of the logic of combating corruption through better governance and transparency: "The government of the Kyrgyz Republic introduced high-quality standardized university entrance examinations in 2002 to eliminate corruption in university admissions, which immediately produced a sharp increase in the number of poor rural students admitted to university" (World Bank, 2005, 36). That is an important improvement but not necessarily evidence of reduced corruption.

The global educational reform movement has brought business-thinking to the world of education (Sahlberg, 2009a). A senior education expert with extensive career experience concluded that "when education became a market good, also the ethics among educators began to change". The pressures of high-stakes testing and school-to-school competition erode the validity of test scores and distort the integrity of the education system. In the United States, for example, Nichols and Berliner (2007) claim that this has caused the entire education system to become corrupted. It appears that the greater the social consequences associated with a quantitative indicator – such as test scores – the more likely it is that the indicator itself will become corrupted, or the more likely it is that the use of the indicator will corrupt the social processes it was intended to monitor. This is known as Campbell's Law: "The over-reliance on high-stakes testing and competition has serious negative repercussions that are present at every level of the public school system" (Campbell, 1975, 35). Therefore, the global educational reform movement, by endorsing and often insisting that governments create standardised testing systems, stronger school accountability based on these test results and then judging the performance of schools and individuals using these same data, has made many education systems more vulnerable in terms of becoming corrupted.

Using high-stakes assessments to determine the success or failure of schools or individuals is particularly problematic within the new 'business culture' that many schools today operate. The race for higher standards, a higher position in school league tables and competition for public funds has indeed made many school principals and teachers consider previously unacceptable methods of improving their scores in these high-stakes tests. Evidence provided by Jacob and Levitt (2002), Levitt and Dubner (2005) and Nichols and Berliner (2007) about the affects of test-based accountability policy in American schools to stimulate teachers and school districts to cheat for better test scores. With high-stakes testing, if students perform poorly in tests, teacher or entire school may suffer. In extreme situations, teacher may be fired or school closed. In order to avoid these negative consequences many teachers have chosen unethical solutions to secure better results for their students. Education strategies in many other countries put stronger emphasis on externally measured achievement than strengthening those aspects of schooling that are gradually getting weaker in our societies. I have argued elsewhere that this has left many teachers and schools 'hugging the middle' as they try to avoid professional failure and seek a way to individual victory (Sahlberg, 2009b). This can lead to unexpected situations especially in nations that are suffering from epidemic corrup-

tion in their societies. Competition, privatisation and accountability may help to solve some present problems in education but they can also create more reasons and opportunities for new forms of corruption.

International organisations and education corruption

Since the late 1990s international development organisations and donor agencies have designed policies that define their own positions on corruption and often suggest how to put anti-corruption as an active item on the development agenda. The reason for this is the recognition that corruption poses a serious threat to sustainable social and economic development and thereby also to poverty reduction. The Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008 states that "improvement of governance, including reduction of corruption, is key to achievement of the EFA goals, which demand considerable political commitment and management capacity" (UNESCO, 2008, 20). Anti-corruption and institutional integrity policies are often conceptual and rather general documentations that do not specifically describe any particular field of development. This is surprising given that annually more than US$10 billion of official development assistance is spent on education, mostly in countries where corruption is widespread in both public and private sectors and hence common practice in the education sector as well.

Education reforms rarely address corruption directly, i.e. to stop existing bribery, cheating or favouritism. Instead, a typical approach in practice to prevent corruption in educational development is one of the three different generic avenues or any combination of them:

(1) Improving governance and transparency;
(2) Increasing competition and accountability; and
(3) Decentralising management and reducing central regulations.

None of these strategies is unique to the education sector only but they have been applied in other sectors for similar purposes. Emphasis on good governance through public administration reforms often include such measures as new legislation, performance-based financing, improving education statistics, and making information about the education sector accessible to the public. Internally administrated entrance and exit examinations have been typical means to enhance transparency and fairness of these examinations. Promotion of private education, parental choice and school autonomy are all part of increasing competition within the education sector. These elements can be found in many education sector strategies and reforms from the 1990s onwards. Strengthening school and teacher accountability for student achievement is one concrete consequence of this movement (Sahlberg, 2009b). Finally, weakening power at the top of the education administration hierarchy by decentralisation and deregulation of education management is a common way to reduce the monopoly of corruption and increase local responsibility and ownership. This will not, however, necessarily stop corruption but with better involvement of local stakeholders it can be better controlled than management at the centre. Reforming poorly governed, corrupted education systems using these ideas also is well targeted when the aim is to make abuse of authority, systematic cheat-

ing and rent-seeking more difficult. But these measures alone will not remove the root of the problem unless the prevalence of corruption in any given situation is recognised and concrete steps to stop it are included as part of education sector reforms.

How do international organisations address anti-corruption? First of all, there are several private foundations and non-governmental organisations actively working on education corruption. Probably the best known is the *Transparency International*, a global civic society organisation that leads the global campaign against corruption. It is increasingly focusing also on specific sectors in corruption, including education. Another example is the project titled *Anti-corruption Student Network* funded by the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation Network) includes student organizations from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova and Serbia, and its long-term aim is to lower the level of corruption at the universities and to create transparent higher education environment in SEE region. Also, *Magna Charta Observatory* and *the National Unions of Students in Europe* (ESIB) have activities related to protecting the fundamental university values and integrity (see Barblan et al., 2007). Intergovernmental institutions are also becoming more operational in anti-corruption in education. Let us look at six international organisations that are present in education sector development in ECA region.

One of the basic anti-corruption documents is *the United Nations* (UN) Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) with 140 signatories and 84 ratifications or accessions to date. It is now prominent as a key global anti-corruption instrument and a basis for the leadership role that multilateral organisations are taking in fight against corruption. UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has contributed to the knowledge base of education corruption through its project "Ethics and corruption in education" launched in 2001. It led to a volume titled "Corrupted schools, corrupted universities" published in 2007 (Hallak & Poisson, 2007). IIEP promotes good governance, transparency and anti-corruption through training and publications to education leaders and policy-makers.

The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has worked for many years to criminalize transnational bribery, demanding stricter external and internal audit controls and tighter public procurement. In 2007 its Development Assistance Committee (DAC) took a step to support an agenda for collective action on corruption (OECD, 2007). The basic requirement is a need for more rigorous controls on fraud and corruption in donor-financed projects and programmes. As a point of departure the DAC lists three proposals for donor agencies to minimise the risks arising from corruption that will only be effective if they are undertaken jointly or in a strongly co-ordinated way. They propose that DAC (OECD, 2007, 28-30):

(a) facilitate joint assessments of corruption and the wider governance context, beginning with pilot exercises in selected countries;
(b) signal support for existing anti-corruption benchmarks and targets that can be agreed on jointly by donors and partners at country level and used to monitor progress; and

(c) endorse as good practice the close coordination of donor governance and anti-corruption work at country level.

This is the approach to corruption in general. The OECD has been less instrumental in education corruption.

The Council of Europe (CoE) has made the fight against corruption one of its priorities. Its multidisciplinary approach consist three interrelated elements:

(a) the setting of European norms and standards;
(b) monitoring of compliance with the standards; and
(c) capacity building offered to countries and regions.

The Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) was established by the CoE in 1999 to monitor its 45 members' progress in anti-corruption work. In the area of higher education, furthering transparency and combating corruption is one of the dimensions of the Council's bilateral and regional work in South East Europe and in the NIS. This work comprises advice on legislation and structural reform, in line with the principle of the European Higher Education Area, in which the Council of Europe is a major actor.

The World Bank's (WB) approach also envisions a balanced strategy to combat corruption (World Bank, 2007). It has seven guiding principles for strengthening its own engagement on governance and anti-corruption. These principles include, among other things, the idea that anti-corruption work follows from its mandate to reduce poverty, that the country has primary responsibility for improving governance, that there has to be a country-specific approach, and that this work has to be done with donors, international institutions and other actors in the country. The WB's policy emphasises that there are serious challenges in achieving better coordination among bilateral donors and international organisations. "If there are divergences in approaches and standards", the policy states, "recipient countries may be inclined to turn to donors that are less stringent on governance and anti-corruption issues" (World Bank, 2007, 28). All education operations in the World Bank's portfolio have to include specific anti-corruption element that aim at preventing the incidence of corruption in implementation. Examples of addressing corruption in education project implementation are described later in next pages.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recently revised its anti-corruption policy (Asian Development Bank, 2007). The ADB's position to anti-corruption is intended to "reduce the burden that widespread, systematic corruption exacts upon the governments and economies of the region" (ADB, 2007, 4). Its anti-corruption policy is centred upon three objectives:

a) Supporting competitive markets and efficient, effective, accountable, and transparent public administration as part of broader work on good governance and capacity building;
b) Supporting promising anti-corruption efforts on a case-by-case basis and improving the quality of dialogue with developing partner countries on a range of governance issues, including corruption; and
c) Ensuring that ADB's projects and staff adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The ADP emphasises that if the efforts to reduce illicit behaviours are to be credible, it is essential that its staff be beyond reproach and that its internal regulations and procedures support the highest ethical standards. Therefore updating code of conduct and improving the quality of oversight are some of the key actions in the ADPs position to anti-corruption.

The European Commission (EC) has recently recognised a need for a more comprehensive policy on anti-corruption. In its communiqué the European Commission (2003) states that in order to ensure credibility, a clear stance against corruption is essential from leaders and decision-makers. It further suggests that national anti-corruption strategies or programmes, covering both preventive and repressive measures, should be drawn up and implemented. The EC also requires that all current and future Members ratify and implement all main international anti-corruption instruments they are party to (see above). Third countries should sign and ratify as well as implement relevant international anti-corruption instruments. This policy also calls for codes of conduct in the public sector that should be monitored. Interestingly, education is excluded from the list of those public sectors when better integrity, accountability and transparency in public administration (judiciary, police, customs, tax administration, health sector or public procurement) are required!

Unlike other international organisations, the World Bank has a strategy for its work in education development. The official World Bank Education Strategy is from 1999. That document does not include word 'corruption', or have any other concrete suggestions to anti-corruption. The updated education strategy was approved in 2005. The document has a brief section that discusses governance and decentralisation. It mentions that corruption poses a fundamental threat to education outcomes. It correctly sets a demand that education sector reviews and assessments must adequately identify both the problem and the possible remedies. "Education interventions can contribute to higher standards of integrity" that strategy states (World Bank, 2005, 36). The strategy update remains silent on any suggestions what this could mean in concrete projects or sector assessments. It is, therefore, left to each loan or programme officer to decide how the anti-corruption issue is to be included in operations.

The World Bank has, however, changed a gear recently in its approach to preventing corruption in its own projects. Most of the efforts to fight corruption are related to Bank's own operations rather than addressing existing problems in the education sector. There are some good efforts that deserve to be mentioned here. Although it is too early to judge how successful each of these implemented anti-corruption measures are, there are some useful ideas that could be helpful elsewhere. Next paragraphs provide three examples of the WB financed projects that have incorporated some concrete measures to mitigate corruption related risk in education sector.

Education Financing and Management Reform Project was launched in 1997 in Armenia. It had a component to design a new textbook procurement scheme that would solve an inability of the government to provide textbooks for all students. The main goals of that component were to improve and upgrade core textbooks and

teachers' guides, enhance the quality of textbook production and reduce the purchase costs to parents, to provide core textbooks for every subject at every grade level to every student, and to establish a sustainable demand-driven system of financing school textbooks based on affordable parental contributions. The project accomplished full cost recovery of all textbooks within four years in order to purchase replacement copies as textbooks reach the end of their target life. This was done by establishing a national textbook rental scheme and creating a Textbook Revolving Fund Foundation (TRFF) to hold the rental fees collected by schools from parents in separate bank accounts under the direct control and supervision of each school. After the project was completed each individual school was able to use the funds which had accumulated in its account (including bank interest on deposits) to order new books through the TRFF, which would be consolidated for central procurement and delivery in order to take advantage of the cost benefits of bulk procurement. The selection of textbooks is done centrally by the Ministry of Education and Science with TRFF. Textbook pre-orders by schools is centralised. In other words, schools make a decision on how many copies of textbooks and teacher manual are needed based on the number of students and the funds that school has on its bank account. These orders are gathered by TRFF that then proceeds to competitive selection of textbooks. No cases of corruption or misuse of TRFF funds have been reported during the 11 years of existence of this system.

Managing Higher Education for Relevance and Efficiency Project in Indonesia, launched in early 2006, includes a Corruption Prevention Action Plan (CPAP). The purpose of the CPAP is to recognise and properly mitigate inherent risks of implementing a project in higher education institutions in highly-corrupted environment. Risk management included measures related to procurement, financial management, and implementation. CPAP included two main elements, namely corruption mapping, and plan for action. The main aspects of the CPAP are: (a) Enhanced disclosure provisions and transparency; (b) civil society oversight; (c) mitigating collusion and nepotism; (d) mitigation of fraud and forgery risks; (e) complaints handling mechanism; and (f) sanctions and remedies. This mechanism has been able to secure the safe operation of higher education innovation fund.

Education Excellence and Equity Program (EEEP) in Albania that was launched in September 2006 has a systematic anti-corruption framework to reduce inappropriate procurement and financial management. Corruption is brought to the Program Appraisal Document as a real risk as a reference to the government's anti-corruption strategy. The EEEP assists the government in instituting a more output-based use of public funds, focusing on service delivery, and emphasize the importance of the Semi-Annual Reviews. It also encourages the Ministry of Education and Science in transparent fiduciary management and reporting, for example by making the information of the education budget and actual expenditure available to the general public. Semi-annual reviews were introduced to increase both government's accountability to the public and the international financing institutions, and to promote transparency in planning and reporting. The significance of this programme is that it brings corruption to education policy dialogue rather than hides it in the technical documentation.

Success stories in fighting education corruption are still rare. Good practices often address only some aspects of education, e.g. university entrance exams (Georgia and Kirgizstan) or textbook procurement (Albania and Armenia). Anti-corruption policies of the international organisations are also general and do not deal with education or any other sector specifically. There are ideas that are similar in all or many of these strategies: improving general governance, enhancing transparency and holding service providers more accountable to the people. In the education sector, however, the problem of corruption is more complicated than that. Although these generic anti-corruption policies are necessary for the organisations themselves and the harmonisation of collective efforts, they are not enough to make significant improvement in the education sector. Therefore, education-specific anti-corruption policies are needed.

Conclusions: cleaning the way into heaven

We know surprisingly little about corruption in education. At the same time, we know that corruption is widespread in education systems around the world. If corruption is understood in its broader meaning, then we are facing a truly global problem. Part of the difficulty is that international corruption indexes do not measure actual corruption. They indicate respondents' perception of corruption. Anecdotal evidence through media, the Internet and from those who have been close or involved in corruption suggests that there is much more to the picture than meets the eye. International statistics, again from the same sources used in this chapter, suggest that corruption is not significantly decreasing as a global average (Anderson & Gray, 2006; OECD, 2007; Transparency International, 2007b). Up close, in some countries corruption in education is actually getting worse.

Cheating and plagiarism are the first signs of education corruption. Selling exam papers and grades can be the next. Education executive officers who appoint business colleagues to work with them and authorities who skim private shares from computer procurement deals signal to students and teachers that anything is acceptable as longs as it happens behind closed doors. National anti-corruption campaigns that are limited to catch absent teachers or to find bribing students are nothing but a bad joke when serious violations take place elsewhere in education system. As the anti-corruption policies of international organisations correctly emphasise, there is no single action that would ease the situation. Systemic and coordinated collective effort is needed.

All six international organisations that have a role to play in education development in the ECA region have recently sharpened their approaches to corruption. Some of them, like the Council of Europe and the OECD stress that fighting corruption is the priority issue in the overall agenda. Others, including the two development banks, have become more comprehensive and articulate in their positions on anti-corruption. None of the six organisations, however, has specific policy for education corruption. One of the reasons why may be the lack of systematic knowledge of nature, location and magnitude of education corruption. It is also possible, that the definitions used by these organisations limit education corruption

to bribery and fraud that is only a part of all malpractices found in many education systems.

Another conclusion of the review of six organisations and their approach to education corruption is that it is often done by improving education governance, transparency, privatisation of education services and stronger accountability. The example offered in this chapter is the changing development co-operation modalities adopted by many international organisations. A sector-wide approach and budget support to the governments are moving the focus onto using country systems but at the same time, as has happened with first education sector-wide programmes in Europe, fiduciary aspects are receiving most attention as far as corruption is concerned. As Hallak and Poisson (2007, 37) also observed in their study, test-based accountability in a school system can lead to teacher and student behaviours that can be called corrupted (see Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Sahlberg, 2009b).

A third conclusion is that, although all six international organisations call for better co-ordination and joint efforts among these organisations and other players in the field of education corruption, no common anti-corruption policy or joint action plans exist. Each development agency implements its own anti-corruption policy independently and often differently to the others. Some staff in the same institution may tolerate corruption in the same country more than other colleagues. In tightening 'project markets' mentioning corruption may be avoided simply because of the fear of losing a client and thus the project. As an example, the first sector-wide approach education programme supported by international development institutions was prepared and launched in one of the most corrupted countries in Europe some years ago without even mentioning the wide-spread education corruption in this country. The Project Appraisal Document made no reference to prevalent and publicly acknowledged malpractices that were also reported in recent surveys and studies (Heyneman et al., 2007). More surprisingly, it didn't include any transparency or accountability measures, such as semi-annual open meetings and public disclosure of project reports that are normal ways to ensure that minimum safeguards to protect the use of public funds are in place. This guaranteed smooth government clearance of the project but left external supervision toothless to raise governance and transparency during implementation.

It is important that when international organisations engage in collaboration with countries that corruption is understood broadly. If the efforts are focused narrowly, i.e. university admissions or teacher absenteeism, many of the practices that are harmful to education will remain untouched. It is also uncertain whether measures that rely only on improving governance and administration will be helpful enough. It is, therefore, conditional that the breadth and depth of the problem is assessed and recognised. This is best done by, not establishing anti-corruption or ethical commissions to work with the ministry, but by engaging in informative and constructive dialogue with all possible partners involved. This may be supported by monitoring, reviews and training that focus on understanding the actual situation in countries. It is also paramount that the staffs of international organisations have a shared position to anti-corruption in order to work with all partners in a coherent and consistent way.

Another necessary concrete action is advocacy and awareness-raising as part of education reform. This should focus on further dialogue and sharing knowledge based on findings and conclusions from monitoring, reviews and training. It is helpful if this advocacy process is closely linked to general national anti-corruption policies and government strategies. Talking about the importance of integrity and ethics in education and instating all members of education community to respect general rules should be given high priority.

Third, combating corruption will only be successful if people are mobilised to take concrete actions. Establishing an ethical code of conduct for all in the education sector is one such practical step. National and regional conferences and seminars, regularly conducted surveys among teachers, students and parents, and public recognition of good, innovative practices to identify, prevent and reduce corruption are other ideas that have been tested in practice.

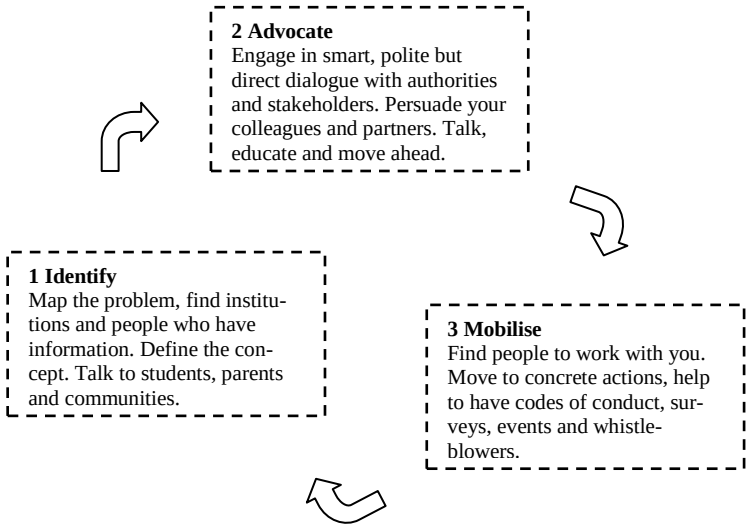

Figure 3. Action cycle for international organisations anti-corruption efforts in education development

International organisations have created a promising context for more coordinated and comprehensive joint approach to address education corruption. It is necessary that the spirit of the anti-corruption policies presented in this chapter is taken literally. There are many institutions in Europe who have their own comparative advantage, mandate and resource constraints. It is therefore necessary to begin inter-institutional dialogue to clarify what each organisation is able to do. For example, some institutions may have a mandate to work on education corruption but have no resources or funding available for that. Some other institutions may only work with

partner countries or specific levels of education. As a network of institutions, however, most of these issues become meaningless.

Within the overall framework for action for international organisations shown in figure 3, the following could be considered as ideas for joining efforts in combating corruption in education:

1. Finance research on education corruption. Despite growing interest the research base is still not sufficient to convince suspicious minds of prevalence and consequences of education corruption. Most contemporary research concentrates on malpractices in universities. Corruption in primary or secondary schools is much less investigated. For example, the recent Transparency International (2007a) working paper titled "Corruption in the education sector" had very little evidence from research. In order to strengthen the research base on education corruption international organisations could agree on the main research themes or questions and jointly finance research projects.

2. Coordinate surveys on education corruption. None of the current international corruption surveys (including Transparency International's *Corruption Perception Index*, World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Index*, World Bank Institute's *Control of Corruption Index*) provide information about education corruption in detail. As Knack (2006) points out in his critique of such cross-country indicators, these indexes are also unable to provide comparative information of countries' progress year-to-year or even reliable picture of cross-country comparisons. Transparency International's *Global Corruption Barometer* is a step forward but there is a need for more specified survey that could be carried out in ECA region. International organisations could work jointly on preparing such surveys and agree on who could take a lead in administrating them annually.

3. Arrange regular conferences on ethics and corruption in education. At the moment, education corruption has been part of general education conferences. As the research evolves, there will be a need for an annual event in which research designs and papers can be discussed. This conference should also invite national researchers and education experts to present national education reforms and work on corruption. International organisations could agree to hold an annual conference on ethics and corruption in education and host it on rotating basis.

4. Produce policy papers on education governance and corruption. If the joint work on anti-corruption that has been proposed by many international organisations becomes reality, there will also be a need for coordination of publications. Conferences and national seminars could be supported by a series of periodical policy papers that would report findings and news in education corruption. This would also be a way to help the advocacy work that is necessary in countries. International organisations could decide who would take the responsibility to coordinate and edit an Internet-based series of policy papers.

In 1984 President Museveni thought that his country Uganda had nothing to do with HIV/AIDS. Ten years later HIV-related infection rates in his country were the highest in the world. In finding ways to address the alarming situation, President Museveni drew inspiration from tradition. *"When a lion comes into your village, you must raise the alarm loudly"*, he said when addressing his colleagues in the

African Development Forum in Addis Ababa in December 2000. This is exactly what the Ugandans did. They accepted the situation and took it seriously. All government meetings had to include a moment to remind people about the issue and how to solve it together. In that same Forum address the President also encouraged the audience by stressing that AIDS is not such a serious problem; it is not like small pox or Ebola. Indeed, it can be prevented and if people become aware of the nature of the problem sufficiently, it will gradually stop. Today, HIV infections have not completely stopped in Uganda but reduction of the deadly virus spread is a top-of-the-class example for others.

Putting anti-corruption as a concrete aspect of education reforms that international development organisations finance and support is a moral obligation. Those who speak truth to power, however, often come to regret it, as Martin Luther King Jr. said. Regardless, we need to bring the issue of education corruption to the attention of power. We should talk to people openly and, if necessary, loudly about education corruption as President Museveni and his people did to save their country.

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NOTES

[i] The views are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of the European Training Foundation or any of the European Union institutions