

# **NGOs Fighting Corruption**

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# **Defining Characteristics of Citizens Organisations**

- They are not formed to take political office**
- They are not formed to seek profits**
- They are formed to take action based on shared values and shared commitment amongst groups of citizens**

# **Functions of Developmental Citizens Organisations**

- To hold the government and business accountable to the citizen**
- To allow citizens to associate**
- To benefit the citizens**

# **Fighting Corruption offers a powerful new theme for Citizens Organisations.**

**Fighting corruption is:**

- Value based**
- Affects the well-being of large numbers of citizens**
- Offers a chance for:**
  - new directions for existing citizen organisations**
  - new citizens organisations**

# However...

**Citizens organisations, if they are to be effective in the long fight against corruption, need:**

- To have a strong constituency**
- To be well governed**
- To be well managed**
- To have skills in advocacy**
- To be focussed on winnable issues**
- To be sustainable**

# **Those opposing them will be:**

- Politically strong**
- Financially strong**
- In control of the major media**

# **Those opposing them will attack them for:**

- Representing the views of a small, unrepresentative clique**
- Being a tool of foreign interests**
- Being unpatriotic**
- Being politically motivated**

# **Citizens Organisations are vulnerable to these accusations**

**NGOs need to:**

- examine themselves carefully  
for the truth in these  
accusations**
- prepare to refute these  
accusations**

# **Accusation 1: Representing the views of a small clique**

**Difficult to refute: most Citizens  
Organisations working on  
corruption issues are NGOs  
with a shallow constituency and  
small membership**

# **Accusation 2: A tool of foreign interests**

**Difficult to refute:**

- they are almost completely dependent on foreign funding**
- fighting corruption is generally seen as a donor driven agenda**

# **Accusation 3: Unpatriotic**

**Easier to refute:very possible to show that the corrupt are the ones acting against the interests of the country**

- requires research/good data**
- requires good presentation skills**
- requires good command of the media**

# **Accusation 4: Politically motivated**

**Should be easy to refute: it requires -**

- clear understanding in the public of what an NGO is**
- a clearly non-partisan stance**
- well-placed champions to defend you**

# **Essentials for an NGO fighting corruption**

- To have a strong constituency**
- To be well governed**
- To be well managed**
- To have skills in advocacy**
- To be focussed on winnable  
issues**
- To be sustainable**

# **To have a strong constituency**

**Citizens Organisations working on corruption are of two types:**

**1. Mutual Benefit Organisations**

***composed of citizens who suffer corruption and want to change things to benefit themselves.***

**2. Public Benefit Organisations**

***composed of self-selected citizens who perceive that corruption harms others or harms everyone. (NGOs)***

# **Very few anti-corruption NGOs have:**

- A constituency**
- A membership**
- A mandate from people who  
suffer the effects of corruption  
and many of them are also  
looking for these**

# **Anti-Corruption NGOs need:**

- The public to verify their stance**
- coalitions of citizens with direct experience of corruption to give them a mandate**

**They are legitimized by the seriousness of the topic only so long as they can show popular support**

# **Funding is an indication of popular support**

**Anti-corruption NGOs must raise a  
part of their funds locally**

- this shows their popular support**
- this defuses accusations of being  
foreign pawns**
- this gives them independence from  
external donor conditions**

# To be well governed

**Boards provide the governance function for the NGO. They own it.**

**Board members must be:**

- impeccable**
- impressive**
- interested**

**Many NGOs do not separate governance from management**

# **Being a Board Member is a serious matter....**

**Board members must:**

- set policy for the organisation**
- advocate for the organisation**
- fund-raise for the organisation**
- be responsible for the organisation**
- defend the organisation**

# **To be well managed**

**NGOs are organisations. They need competence in:**

- **Governance**
- **Management Practices**
- **Human Resources**
- **Financial Management**
- **Service Delivery**
- **External Relations**
- **Sustainability**

# **To have skills in Advocacy**

**NGOs fighting corruption are advocacy organisations. They need competence**

**in:**

- planning and objective setting**
- media relations**
- coalition building**
- research and presentation**
- negotiating**

# **To be focussed on Winnable** **Issues**

- What is your NGOs own capacity?
- What is your own ability to mobilize others?
- What are the external risks?
- What short term objectives can you achieve with what time and resources?
- Will these short term gains add to a broader campaign in the future?

# **To be sustainable**

**Fighting corruption is not a short term process: it is not a project.**

**It needs:**

- broad base of support from the public**
- strong arguments to donors to move from project to program funding, and to support sustainability strategies**
- accessing a range of resource mobilization techniques**

# **Sustainability is not just a financial issue**

**Sustainability needs a competent organisation which can:**

- keep its staff,**
- build up a body of knowledge and experience,**
- develop a reputation and credibility,**
- deliver on its mission**

# **Citizens Organisations have a comparative advantage in anti-corruption work**

**They can:**

- raise the consciousness of the people**
- mobilise the people**
- provide skills and direction to the people**

**They can also be donor driven,  
unrepresentative cliques of self-selected  
people with their own agendas**