

# Anti-corruption between Education and Culture:



Studies have proved a direct relationship between the spread of corruption practices and the abandonment of positive values and ethics in societies. The farther the individual departs from positive moral foundations, the greater his tendency to commit corrupt practices with no internal deterrent or conscience to resist those negative thoughts and actions. This is called “the culture of corruption”.



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**«Corruption is unjustifiable  
in all its types and forms»**





The United Nations agreement against Corruption did not provide a specific definition of it; it only provides a part on illegal actions and crimes of corruption commonly committed in various countries, such as bribery, embezzlement of property, abuse of power, illicit enrichment, money laundering, concealment of looted funds and obstruction of justice. This agreement gives the member states freedom to define corruption in accordance with their legal system. However, the widely used academic definition of corruption is “the abuse of delegated power for private gain”.

According to this definition, it is easy for a non-specialized to monitor corruption through two factors. The first is position power, as an official may abuse the powers delegated by his job for a certain intended result, or even refrain from performing his job duties. The second factor is achieving personal gain (special interest), whether for himself or others. To discover the act of corruption, the power delegated and the profit gained should be monitored.

### Society View of Corruption

Corruption exists in many countries, but in varying degrees and definitions according to the view of society. In some societies, family, social relations and tribal ties are close (such as in our Eastern societies). Social solidarity is misused to the point of tolerance with careless employees, paying them small bribes (what is known as tips), justifying it as a help because of high prices. Others, even, consider it a way to provide alms or zakat. All these actions help spread and legalize petty corruption, or the corruption of the base.

The view of corruption in these societies is based on two main factors: the financial value of the incident and the position of the offender. The higher the value and position are, the more serious the crime is. The less value and position are, the more justifications are provided for the crime; excuses like unintentional mistake, financial pressure, compelling circumstances, etc. This is unquestionably a dire mistake, as corruption is unjustifiable in all its forms.

Corruption of the base (as a form of petty corruption) is committed by corrupt public officials of the lowest levels in the career ladder with small financial values. Indeed it is more serious than top corruption, as it spreads widely and most members of the society are exposed to it. It inevitably contributes to the acceptance of corruption culture. Unlike the top corruption practiced by a minority, whether top officials or persons with high value returns, base corruption has a greater effect on the majority of people that lead to a more corruption tolerant culture. In either case, the two types are undoubtedly a great threat to society

### Prevention of Corruption: Education and Culture

To set a clear framework to combat the spreading culture of corruption, many terms should be defined in order to establish the mechanisms of confrontation:

**Education:** eradicating ignorance in order to learn something new; it is an interactive process of transferring knowledge and information from sender to recipient. It could be optional or compulsory according to the rules and variables of society and its educational system.

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Unified complaint system, a tool in fighting corruption

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**Learning:** a personal behavior (based on a personal trigger) chosen by the individual to acquire information and experiences and refine skills; it is also a search for knowledge and its tools (educational institution – book – electronic means).

The essential difference between education and learning is that education is an institutionalized process organized in society; it also has a fixed period to eradicate ignorance and receive knowledge from a specialist. On the other hand, learning is a subjective process of acquiring knowledge. The educational process comes before the learning process, as education can be the locomotive and motivator for the acquisition of learning.

**Knowledge:** learning the truth of things and the accumulation formed over the years, or even in a lifetime.

**Culture (community heritage):** customs, traditions and behaviors formed and shared within a particular group, that have a profound and decisive impact on their actions. Culture is a set of distinctive features that distinguish a society from another, including the spiritual, legal, ethical, customary, artistic, musical, etc.

These four characteristics are sequential to correct the culture of society in the face of corruption.

### The Added Advantage of the Egyptian Society:

The Eastern societies in general and the Egyptian society in particular and -with relative differences regarding the spread of corruption culture are distinguished with common spiritual ideals and traditional values; there is a dire need to restore, revive these ideas and to strongly adhere to them. In contrast, other societies do not have such similar values whether customary, religious etc. They do not have the basis of a road map towards a change of corruption culture. Hence the difference,



between restoring cultural identity (that already exists) and the need to search for a cultural identity (that is already missing), is quite evident to transform from one cultural pattern to another.

#### Conflict between Values and Corruption:

To provide an example, the “corrupt” is in conflict with two cultural identities; the first (personal) has a limited scope, as he believes he is required to provide personal and family needs that may exceed his financial capabilities in addition to his desire to achieve the consumerist pattern of other rich people. To reach his goals, he justifies accepting commissions and gifts from citizens in return for doing his job duties. As for the second cultural identity (community), it has a broader scope; it starts from the commitment to values , rejection of religiously forbidden and legally criminalized bribes until it ends with a peaceful conscience and a stable psychology.

The conflict here arises between two goals: one is limited and treacherous, the other is broad and patriotic. Are we to achieve personal interest that is socially rejected and legally punished, or realize the public interest of the entire community? The person- in the above-mentioned example- is standing before the two choices; anti-corruption experts at –a common role of several institutions in any integrated strategy – have to develop a set of beliefs and a pattern of perception among members of society to promote higher and wider goals over the narrow ones.

#### The educational efforts of the Administrative Control Authority in the field of anti-corruption:

In this section, a review of the Authority’s educational efforts will be explored. Many efforts of the Authority were made through addressing a number of strategic objectives. These objectives were met via collaboration with variant entities during the execution of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2014-2018-). The efforts of implementing the second version of the strategy (2019-2022) will be discussed in a later issue. The objectives of the first version included:

#### Second Objective: Setting the rules of transparency and integrity in all elements of the administrative system:

Updating and implementing the Code of Conduct for State Administrative Staff, printing and distributing copies and posters of the code to all ministries and governorates, making it available on the Internet, and training many workers on it.

Conducting several training courses for workers in the units of the state’s administrative apparatus (ministries / governorates / universities) and preparing trainers at the National Academy for Combating Corruption.

Setting up online platforms in some ministries / governorates / universities and providing services on them.

Preparing codes of conduct for diplomats, envoys at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Central Bank employees, a manual for implementing the Integrity Code in the private sector, and an ethical code for university students launched in Feb. 2018 through student competitions.



One of the specialized courses in fighting corruption

**Egypt’s Constitution includes a complete section on independent institutions and regulatory entities from Articles 215 to 221. It granted them legal personality and technical, financial and administrative independence in a manner that enhances their role and ensures the necessary protection of their members.**

Designing a unified complaints system across the country, linking 1844 ministries / governorates / authorities / agencies and their affiliated entities to the system

#### Third Objective: Making and updating legislations supporting anti-corruption:

Articles in the 2014 Constitution that include the state’s commitment to combating corruption, integration between agencies to develop and follow up a national anti-corruption strategy, and amending and enacting dozens of special laws that complement anti-corruption legislations.

Issuing the Civil Service Law No. (81) for the year 2016, which contain articles that support integrity, justice, merit, transparency and combating corruption; emphasizing the application of the Code of Conduct for Employees of the State Administrative Apparatus.

The Ministry of Justice has prepared draft laws for the protection of witnesses, whistleblowers and experts, and the availability and freedom of information circulation.







University workshops to educate college student with anti-corruption culture

**Preparing codes of conduct for diplomats, envoys at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Central Bank employees, a guide for implementing the Integrity Code in the private sector, and an ethical code for university students launched during Feb. 2018 through student competitions.**

Fourth Objective: Developing judicial procedures to achieve prompt justice:

Some judicial and law enforcement agencies have prepared a database of all cases and their documents and archived them electronically to facilitate work and access to documents and information without compromising the rights of citizens.

Preparing codes of conduct for members of Public Prosecution / Administrative Prosecution

Designing websites in most judicial entities that include all the information and services that citizens need

#### **Fifth Objective: Supporting the authorities concerned with combating corruption:**

Egypt's Constitution includes a complete section on independent institutions and regulatory entities from Articles 215 to 221 granting them legal personality and technical, financial and administrative independence in a manner that enhances their role and ensures the necessary protection of their members.

Amending the law of the Administrative Control Authority, granting it technical, financial, administrative and legal independence, to give it the ability to prevent and combat corruption and ensure proper performance.

Seventh Objective: Raising the level of public awareness of the dangers of corruption and the importance of combating it, and building citizens' confidence in the State institutions:

Media campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of corruption in 2016 under the slogan "Egypt is stronger than corruption". In 2017, the second campaign was launched and broadcast on all satellite channels, radio stations and social networking sites. It was developed according to a survey study and away from direct preaching. It included the "Mirror" campaign: "If we look in the mirror, this is the beginning" and "You are the mirror of yourself", to stir the conscience of society, create shared responsibility and encourage citizens to

expose corruption by including the hotline numbers of the regulatory entities. The "Mirror" campaign was also developed and broadcast in 2018.

Successful practices in the field of education indirectly introduced concepts of transparency, integrity and rejection of corruption in the curricula of various educational levels; holding workshops for curriculum developers, citing slogans on the back cover of textbooks; designing training programs for teachers and administrative staff on integrity, transparency, and dangers of corruption.

#### **Eighth and Ninth Objectives: In the field of strengthening local, regional and international cooperation in combating corruption:**

Holding a number of training courses at the National Academy for Combating Corruption for members of law enforcement agencies to stimulate coordination and exchange of information in anti-corruption fields

The Information and Decision Support Center, in coordination with the Administrative Control Authority, prepared the Local Corruption Perception Index, issued in 2019/2020-.

Participation of law enforcement agencies in many training courses implemented by the units of the state's administrative apparatus for training on the systems of combating and preventing corruption, most notably the Ministries of Youth and Sports, Foreign Affairs and Local Development.

The establishment of the National Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Corruption headed by the Prime Minister to design general policies; this committee has resulted in the establishment of the Sub-National Coordinating Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Corruption headed by the Minister, Chairman of the Administrative Control Authority to draw up and direct the implementation of the objectives of the national anti-corruption strategy and monitor its implementation

#### **Tenth Objective: Participation of civil society organizations in combating corruption:**

Issuance of a law regulating the work of NGOs in the field of civil work; it enforces them to publish their budgets on their websites to achieve transparency and integrity and form a higher committee for civil work organizations.

Workshops were held for some civil society organizations to spread awareness of the dangers of corruption at the level of the governorates and to create a positive role for the citizen in curbing the phenomenon.

Adopting a code conduct for workers in NGOs and circulating it at the level of the Republic.

The Administrative Control Authority, in coordination with the Ministry of Social Solidarity, held training courses for some civil society organizations. The National Academy for Combating Corruption had a distinguished role in spreading awareness of anti-corruption efforts in the past few years by participating in the implementation of the objectives of the two versions of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy; it also participated in the successive annual plans that organized the work of the Academy; a full article will be dedicated to this topic in the forthcoming issue of this cultural periodical .