



GHANA INTEGRITY
INITIATIVE (GII)

Local Chapter of Transparency International



TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL

the global coalition against corruption

REALISING THE
MDGS BY 2015:
ANTI-CORRUPTION
IN GHANA

Transparency International is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption. Through more than 90 chapters worldwide and an international secretariat in Berlin, we raise awareness of the damaging effects of corruption and work with partners in government, business and civil society to develop and implement effective measures to tackle it.

www.transparency.org

www.tighana.org

Authors: Vitus A. Azeem, Linda Ofori-Kwafo, Evelyn Nuvor
and Mary Awelana Addah (Ghana Integrity Initiative)

Editors: Craig Fagan and Rebecca Dobson

Cover photo: © Flickr/World Bank Photo Collection

Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. All information was believed to be correct as of October 2011. Nevertheless, Transparency International and Ghana Integrity Initiative cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use for other purposes or in other contexts.

ISBN: 978-3-943497-13-7

Printed on 100% recycled paper.

©2011 Transparency International and Ghana Integrity Initiative. All rights reserved.

Contents

1. Overview: Corruption in Ghana	3
2. Corruption and Water	4
3. An Anti-Corruption Response to the MDGs	5
4. Looking Back and Moving Forward	8

Background

This study on Ghana is part of an exploration of countries' experiences with advancing towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs are a set of goals aimed at making significant progress by 2015 on key development areas, including poverty, education and health.¹ Taken together with findings from Bangladesh and Peru, the three studies provide a window into how anti-corruption activities can positively support sustained advances in achieving the MDGs. They demonstrate how civil society actors are working towards combating corruption in service delivery – a practice that severely compromises a country's ability to provide basic services and meet the MDGs.

The studies help to critically assess whether initiatives undertaken by Transparency International's National Chapters in Bangladesh, Ghana and Peru have promoted positive changes in the communities and services that they have targeted with anti-corruption focused programmes. More importantly, the studies underscore how chapter experiences support in practice the principle that comprehensive governance and anti-corruption work does have an 'MDG pay-off'.

¹This study was completed by the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), Transparency International's National Chapter in Ghana. It was commissioned by the Transparency International (TI) Secretariat in Berlin. TI Ghana was tasked with carrying out the work based on its experiences and activities related to the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Similar country studies were completed in Bangladesh and Peru. These three TI Chapters were selected based on their continued involvement in projects designed to address poverty by building transparency, accountability and integrity in the local delivery of health, education and/or water services.

1. Overview: Corruption in Ghana

Key governance indicators show that Ghana has made gains towards strengthening government effectiveness, transparency and regulations in its fight against corruption. The 2000 presidential election marked a peaceful transition of power and the start of a period of relative stability, which has also been characterised by high-level political support for a zero tolerance policy on corruption.²

Despite these significant achievements, Ghana continues to face governance challenges that include scandals reportedly involving ministers and even a former president's son.³ While Ghana has the best score among West African nations in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, corruption continues to be a challenge. Perceived levels of public sector corruption in Ghana are on par with those in Croatia, Macedonia and Samoa.⁴

Ghanaians have been vocal about these problems and consider corruption to be an important stumbling block for the country's progress. A survey by the Ghana Integrity Initiative, a National Chapter of Transparency International (TI), found that more than 90 per cent of respondents to a public opinion survey felt corruption was a serious problem in the country.⁵ Additional surveys have shown that the police, political parties, and public financial management institutions (including for procurement) are some of the sectors most affected by corruption. These sectors often account for a large share of public spending. For example, public procurement is estimated to represent between 50 and 80 per cent of the national budget, and 14 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).⁶ There are concerns that the recently discovered off-shore oil reserves may not provide the expected windfall of a 30 per cent increase in government revenue, if transparency and accountability weaknesses in the sector are not effectively addressed.⁷

Research conducted by Transparency International in 2010 reveals a strong link between higher levels of reported corruption and reduced progress on three key MDGs: education (MDG 2), maternal mortality (MDG 5) and access to clean water (MDG 7).⁸ As in other developing countries, corruption in Ghana is considered to be one of the causes of its mixed progress on the MDGs. Despite advances on reducing poverty, the country will reportedly not meet all the health goals (MDGs 4, 5 and 6), those for gender equality (MDG 3) and the targets for clean water and sanitation (MDG 7).⁹

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, corruption is believed to be one of the major barriers to achieving progress on the MDGs. Petty corruption reduces service quality and access, serving as a tax on the

² Marie Chene, 'Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Ghana', U4 Expert Answer (Berlin, Germany: TI and U4, 22 February 2011). See: www.u4.no/helpdesk/helpdesk/query.cfm?id=271.

³ Georgette Dede Djaba, 'Mabey and Johnson Bribery Scandal – An Eyewitness Account – Part I', *Modern Ghana*, 10 October 2009. See: www.modernghana.com/news/242258/50/mabey-and-johnson-bribery-scandal-an-eyewitness-ac.html; 'Big Corruption Scandal under Mills: TAQA Paid \$1 m to Govt Officials – CEO Confesses', *The New Statesmen*, 27 May 2011. See: <http://elections.peacefonline.com/politics/201105/44792.php>; C. Apaak, 'Massive Corruption Made Ex-President Kufuor Unfit for Mo Ibrahim Award by Dr. C. Apaak', *Modern Ghana*, 26 October 2009. See: www.modernghana.com/news/245676/1/massive-corruption-made-ex-president-kufuor-unfit.html.

⁴ See: www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table.

⁵ Ghana Integrity Initiative, 'Voice of the People' survey (Southern Ghana), Project Completion Report' (Accra, Ghana: GII, 2005). See: www.afrimap.org/english/images/documents/GhanaVoiceofthePeopleSurvey05.pdf.

⁶ Transparency International, '2009 Global Corruption Report' (Berlin, Germany: TI, 2009). See: www.transparency.org/publications/gcr/gcr_2009.

⁷ Marie Chene, 'Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Ghana', U4 Expert Answer (Berlin, Germany: TI and U4, 22 February 2011). See: www.u4.no/helpdesk/helpdesk/query.cfm?id=271.

⁸ Transparency International, 'The Anti-Corruption Catalyst: Realising the MDGs by 2015' (Berlin, Germany: TI, 2010). See: www.transparency.org/publications/publications/other/mdg_report.

⁹ MDG Monitor, 'Ghana: Progress by Goal', Website, Accessed on 22 June 2011. See: www.mdgmonitor.org/country_progress.cfm?c=GHA&cd=288. For the targets for water, Frederick Asiamah, 'Nation needs 200 years to achieve water MDGs', *Public Agenda*, 19 April 2010. See: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201004200377.html>.

poorest. For example, findings from a seven-country study in Africa – Ghana, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda – have shown that 44 per cent of the parents surveyed had paid illegal fees for schools that were legally free for their children.¹⁰ Grand corruption exacts a high toll as well on the MDGs. It discourages investments in service delivery and needed infrastructure, hinders development and increases the risk of scarce resources earmarked for social spending being lost, misused or misallocated.¹¹

2. Corruption and Water

Despite emerging anti-corruption legislation, considerable corruption opportunities still exist in Ghana's water sector. Whether this takes the form of petty bribery or large-scale embezzlement, the source of the problem is the poor application of existing rules and regulations.

These implementation gaps have meant that access to improved water supplies remains a significant challenge, and as a result Ghana is having trouble meeting MDG 7.¹² It is estimated that only 59 per cent of the population has access to the public water supply.¹³ Even in urban areas, most users (70 per cent) largely rely on secondary and tertiary providers who sell water at a premium, placing a huge financial burden on the poor.¹⁴ In rural areas, people without access to the system depend on natural sources for their drinking water, which may not be hygienic, safe or sustainable.

While several studies have focused on direct factors leading to poor service delivery, very few have given attention to the governance dimensions of the water sector, including its transparency and integrity. As a result, the Ghana Integrity Initiative has carried out related research, documenting the governance deficits at the community level.¹⁵ Some common breakdowns have been identified, which include: political interference in the decisions taken by officials (from the community water and sanitation development boards and water and sanitation committees); under-reporting of daily sales at water points or stand posts by vendors and the under-stating of monies received by revenue collectors; and general misinformation about billing, connection costs and costs for replacing related service parts. These practices create the context of elevated risk that occurs as a consequence of the sector's poor governance and the prevalence of asymmetrical information.

Breakdowns in water governance not only affect the delivery of water, but have an impact on other MDG-related areas. Unclean water contributes to illnesses that lead to lost days of work and school, undermining the MDGs on health, poverty and education. The lack of direct access to safe water supplies also means that children, particularly girls, may be kept out of school in order to help their families collect water, creating a severe obstacle to meeting the goals on education and gender.

¹⁰ Transparency International, 'Africa Education Watch: Good Governance Lessons for Primary Education' (Berlin, Germany: TI, 2010). See: www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2010/african_education_watch#6.

¹¹ Transparency International, 'The Anti-Corruption Catalyst: Realising the MDGs by 2015' (Berlin, Germany: TI, 2010). See: www.transparency.org/publications/publications/other/mdg_report.

¹² MDG Monitor, 'Ghana: Progress by Goal', Website, Accessed on 22 June 2011. See: www.mdgmonitor.org/country_progress.cfm?c=GHA&cd=288.

¹³ Ghana Water Company Ltd, 'GWCL Sector Development Program' (Accra, Ghana: Ghana Water Company Ltd, 2009).

¹⁴ IRC/TREND, 'Ghana Intermediate Capacity Development Case Study Report', Background Paper of IRC Symposium, Strengthening Capacity for Decentralised Service Delivery, 26-28 September 2006, Delft, the Netherlands.

¹⁵ All the research was done under the auspices of the TISDA project.

Engagement in the MDGs

The Ghana Integrity Initiative has pursued capacity building with communities since 2009. The focus has been on the water sector (MDG 7) through two projects: Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa (TISDA) and Poverty and Corruption in Africa (PCA). The objectives of the work are to use greater transparency to increase access to quality water delivery, and to empower deprived communities to demand transparency and accountability from service providers and public officials.

TISDA has worked to promote a participatory approach between chapters and other partners from government, civil society and the private sector. Activities are centred around four areas of work: assessment and surveys; advocacy and communications; regional capacity building; and monitoring and evaluation. The assessment phase is the first step in the process where a risk map is drawn up to look at the relationships among governance, corruption and performance.¹⁶ This risk map then becomes the platform for undertaking subsequent activities.

The PCA initiative is targeted at empowering poor communities to make governance changes at the local-level. Capacity building activities form the core of the work, getting communities to take ownership in the fight against corruption. Transparency International National Chapters work to help communities in this process, mobilising local citizens to set the agenda of issues, voice their concerns to local authorities and make real change.¹⁷

3. An Anti-Corruption Response to the MDGs

Empirical findings from various studies have shown that promoting transparency, accountability and integrity can produce better outcomes in health, education and water, regardless of a country's level of income.¹⁸ For Ghana, it is argued that policy reforms in MDG-related sectors must include legislative action that fosters greater transparency, accountability and integrity. For example, transparency gives citizens and beneficiaries access to information that can allow them to participate in the development of policies, as well as monitor their implementation. Armed with such information, citizens can hold leaders accountable for whether or not they deliver on their promises. In turn, transparency becomes the leverage point for helping to combat corruption.

The Ghana Integrity Initiative has focused on projects mainly in education and water that are designed to empower under-served communities to hold their service providers and decision-makers to account for failing to deliver basic public services. The aim of this work has been to contribute to reducing poverty, advancing the MDGs and ensuring people are given a voice. Efforts are anchored in the belief that civil society organisations can play an effective and meaningful role through education, as well as by mobilising and empowering the public to demand greater transparency, accountability and integrity from their officials and service providers. In doing so, each and every citizen helps to bring the country closer to reaching the MDGs, linking the governance of a sector to its performance.

¹⁶ The countries are divided based on the sector of study: primary education (Cameroon and South Africa), health (Uganda and Zambia) and water (Kenya, Ghana and Senegal). For more information on TISDA, see: www.transparency.org/regional_pages/africa_middle_east/transparency_in_public_service_delivery.

¹⁷ The six countries in the study are: Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia. For more information on the PCA project, see: www.transparency.org/regional_pages/africa_middle_east/current_projects/pca.

¹⁸ Transparency International, 'The Anti-Corruption Catalyst: Releasing the MDGs by 2015' (Berlin, Germany: TI, 2010). See: www.transparency.org/publications/publications/other/mdg_report.

One pilot project by the Ghana Integrity Initiative, conducted through the Poverty and Corruption in Africa programme, is directed at improving water delivery and strengthening citizen participation in three rural communities in the Ga East Municipality, which is located to the north of the capital, Accra.¹⁹ The chapter has worked with these communities to facilitate a more accountable relationship with local-level bodies managing water services and to promote a more effective delivery of services. Through this work, disadvantaged communities have been given a voice, and have demanded greater transparency and accountability – and an end to corruption – on the part of community water and sanitation (WATSAN) committees as well as the authorities that oversee them (the water and sanitation development boards).

The Ghana Integrity Initiative has helped communities to demand water and sanitation services where they did not exist and to improve their quality where they did.²⁰ As with other initiatives by TI, there has been the belief that providing citizens with information on their rights and the responsibilities of local officials would empower citizens. Communities have been educated on what recourses they have to file complaints when services are not delivered. In all, about 200 community members and municipal water revenue collectors have been involved in outreach and training events.

Communities have also been trained to monitor and evaluate the performance of the system, as well as the public officials who are involved. Two monitoring and evaluation teams of volunteer community members, composed of five and seven people each, have been formed and trained. To follow up on the work of the communities, an integral component has been the organisation of regular community forums, with the presence of local chiefs and elders, to discuss progress, impacts and challenges. Eleven community meetings have been held with between 70 and 100 community members participating actively.²¹ In the initial stages, community participation was low. This changed, however, when community members realised they had an opportunity to meet with local officials and voice their concerns.

Community notice boards have been mounted in all the communities and the surrounding areas which fall under the same water management systems. This is to ensure that all information is disseminated from the water boards to community members.

As result of this initiative, community participation in the management of the local water system has improved. Community members now regularly visit the water and sanitation development board to ask for improvements to service delivery and are actively involved in the decisions that the boards take. There has also been better control over the funding that is spent by the community water and sanitation development boards, making the delivery of the service more effective. The frequent breakdown of the system due to power fluctuations and non-functioning generators is now a thing of the past. A water purification system has been provided to a community that still has no access to potable water. Another community has been able to organise the drilling of a borehole and discussions are underway with other community groups to help extend additional water services to them. Following these positive developments, there has been an increase in the provision of the quality of water to all three communities, marking quantifiable progress on access to water (MDG 7).

¹⁹ The project is funded through the Poverty and Corruption in Africa programme. The three communities that have been the focus of the project are: Kweiman, Otinibi and Adenkrebi. See: www.tighana.org/pca/about_pca.php.

²⁰ As a result of the efforts, one of the communities now has access to water and the other two communities have seen an improvement in existing services.

²¹ This total of meetings is as of October 2011.

Decentralising Rural Water Management

In Ghana, rural water provision falls under the responsibility of the Community Water and Sanitation Agency (CWSA). This relies on other decentralised bodies and various district assemblies to fulfil its mandate. At the district and municipal levels, the CWSA tasks rural water management to the water and sanitation development boards. These boards are the highest decision-making body responsible for the management of water systems in rural communities.

They have a specific set of mandates to ensure that the community water and sanitation (WATSAN) committees are in place and functioning; to supervise the work of the technical staff; to ensure high standards of hygiene at the standpipes; and to ensure that tariffs are fairly fixed and community members are informed accordingly.

Each water and sanitation development board has 11 members who are voluntary community representatives; at least 33 per cent of whom are women. Board members include one elected member from each of the community WATSAN committees, the Municipal Chief Executive or his/her representative, and the assemblyperson of the electoral area.

In addition, under the TISDA project, a broader group of stakeholders, involving representatives of the local and national government, has been brought together to build a lasting partnership around water governance, including the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing (MWRWH). Other partners involved are community chiefs and elders, WATSAN committees, local water vendors, and district heads and officials.²²

At the national level, a focus on improving the governance of water and sanitation has also been pursued. Through survey work and community consultation, a corruption risk map has been completed for the delivery of water and sanitation services. In producing the map, policy makers and ministries overseeing water and sanitation decisions have become engaged (through face-to-face interviews and discussions). These actors include the water directorate in the MWRWH and the Public Utilities Regulatory Commission (the national regulator). Water companies and independent water providers have also taken part. In doing the map, even local level actors have been involved, such as the WATSAN committees and district assemblies, in order to better understand the corruption risks at each point along the delivery chain.

This work has also entailed the completion of water governance case studies in communities, using survey sampling and advocacy. During the community case studies, interviews were carried out with 240 sampled households in six communities (three urban communities, two small towns and one rural community) in order to assess the state of the local water supply. Following the surveys, meetings were held with community members in order to share the findings with them and to raise their awareness of the 'risks' related to the lack of transparency, accountability and integrity.

Through the survey work and case studies, the Ghana Integrity Initiative has mapped the following risks in the delivery of water services in Ghana:

- There are no reporting mechanisms (such as technical and financial reports) that are open to users. This has made it difficult for citizens to access information about the operations of the water system in their communities;

²² Representatives include: District Chief Executives and District Assembly members, the District Planning department, community water and development board, WATSAN committees, system managers and water vendors.

- Users of the water system are not consulted as part of decision-making processes, including for tariff setting and budget allocations;
- Monies that accrue from water sales are not properly accounted for by the local WATSAN committees;
- There has been no accounting of the water sales by the WATSAN committees since they were established five years ago;
- Water vendors are not monitored by the WATSAN committees; and
- WATSAN committees have not kept records of their expenditures, resulting in poor accounting practices.

Consultations with four of the surveyed communities, service providers and public officials have highlighted these risks and the need to improve transparency, accountability and participation in the provision of water.²³ The knowledge gained through the survey work is seen as empowering community members in both rural and urban areas to demand transparency and accountability from utility providers and to improve the reach and quality of the service provided in order to advance Ghana's progress on the MDGs.

4. Looking Back and Moving Forward

A key factor in the success of this work has been the buy-in of different actors, from community members and local elders, to ministry officials and utility regulators. There has also been a high level of political will, which has helped to maximise channels for cooperation. Part of this has been secured by setting up an advisory committee, which includes representatives from government, water service providers and civil society.²⁴ Given the dire issue of water in Ghana, communities have been highly engaged, particularly in the communities where the problem is the gravest.²⁵

This strong base of support has led to some very positive impacts. The monitoring and evaluation teams in the three target communities in the Ga East municipality now oversee revenue collection by vendors, and funds are being deposited with the local water and sanitation development boards. Given the increased focus on the governance of the local water system, the communities have been able to secure backing for their work from the public regulator and the relevant ministry (MWRWH). Community members are empowered to engage other stakeholders and to undertake initiatives to address the governance of the sector and overcome some of the obstacles to improving service delivery.

In terms of the water and sanitation development boards, attendance at meetings has improved and the regulation pertaining to gender balance among members has been enforced. All statutory committees are now in place, bridging the gap between policy and practice. The water and sanitation development boards are adhering to better financial regulations and expenditures have been streamlined. For example, a new accounting system ensures that vouchers are prepared before payments are made and that all new requests are approved.

The main reason that this community-level work has been facilitated is because the Ghana Integrity Initiative has sought to address a critical community issue: water. Water is a basic necessity that

²³ The four communities were Nima and Madina in the Greater Accra Region and Adaklu-Abuadi and Ahoe in the Volta Region. For more information, see: www.tighana.org/giipages/publication/Annual%20Report%202010%20Aug.pdf.

²⁴ The advisory committee assisted the work of the TISDA project that TI Ghana was implementing.

²⁵ This community engagement has been done through the work of the PCA project.

has been lacking in many rural communities for years. Any efforts to improve the situation have been quickly welcomed and have attracted the involvement of the communities. In addition, the participatory approach that was adopted won communities' support. Although the project has come to an end, the community monitoring teams continue to work. Plans are also advancing to extend the project to 12 nearby communities before the end of 2011 with a new funding arrangement. As part of another funding arrangement, four communities in another part of the country (Upper East Region) have started a similar project, three working on road and electricity provision and one on water as their focus.

While the take-up and expansion of community monitoring have been strong, there have also been challenges. There have been heightened community expectations beyond what could be provided through their engagement. This reality has created obstacles for sustaining their participation and reforming the current practices. The communities that had the most severe problems expected tangible interventions such as the provision of a water system and not just efforts related to strengthening their voice and participation. Some community members also thought that they should be paid for their time and effort, which the Ghana Integrity Initiative could not oblige. Another key challenge has been maintaining political will and buy-in, since government resources are ultimately what are needed to improve the coverage and quality of a public service — to meet the MDG for water as well as any of the goals.

Acknowledgements

Our work is made possible by the generous support of individuals, companies, foundations and governments. We are grateful for the contributions to our core activities, including this publication, from the Canadian Agency for International Development; the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland; Irish Aid; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands; the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; and the UK Department for International Development. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of these donors.

For a full list of all contributors and to find out how you can support our work please visit www.transparency.org

Transparency International
International Secretariat
Alt-Moabit 96
10559 Berlin
Germany

Phone: +49 - 30 - 34 38 200
Fax: +49 - 30 - 34 70 39 12

ti@transparency.org
www.transparency.org

blog.transparency.org
facebook.com/transparencyinternational
twitter.com/anticorruption

Ghana Integrity Initiative
H/No. 21 Abelenkpe Road, Abelenpke
Private Mail Bag, CT 317, Cantonments,
Accra, Ghana

Phone: 233- (0) 21 - 760884

tighana@4u.com.gh
www.tighana.org