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Short Session Report: Global Solutions

Session Title: Challenges and innovations on local and sector specific indexes
Date & Time: 8 November 2012, 15:00-17:00
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Moderated by: Jana Palacios
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Main Issues Covered (500 words or more, narrative form)

This session focused on 5 diverse research projects using either a local or sector specific index. The overall consensus was that each methodology has its pros and cons but indices can be strong tool for advocacy.

Transparency International's Defence and Security program developed two indices to measure corruption risk in the defence sector. The first index measured risk from the companies and government perspectives which represent the supply and demand sides of the defense sector. The purpose of the indices was not only information but specifically as an advocacy tool to promote transparency and accountability in the defense sector. The selection criteria for the countries were the size of the military and 80 countries are currently being assessed and the information will be published in January. For the companies index 129 of the largest defense companies were selected from across the globe.

The second sector specific index was by Transparency International's Private Sector

Team. The index measured transparency in corporate reporting with specific focus on what corporates report publicly with regards to anti corruption programmes, in country reporting and organisational transparency. This allowed a fairer evaluation because public information improves the company's willingness to be held accountable and there was no incentive to give more information in order to score more favourably. The unit of analysis were the top 100 Multinational Companies according to size from the Forbes top 200.

Global Integrity presented a local index, the State Integrity Investigation which was a collaborative study between Global Integrity, Center for Public accountability and Public Radio International. The aim of the field research was to measure the strength of state laws and practices that promote open, transparent government and prevent corruption using an expert assessment with a blind peer review process. The unit of analysis were the 50 states in the United States of America. Journalists were contracted to collect the information because they are familiar with the issues and have experience accessing key sources. The study used an evidence based methodology to measure the risk of corruption and not the level of corruption in the 50 states. The results created a lot of debate as they produced some unexpected results. There have been some reforms in different states as a result of the study.

In Vietnam the UNDP is measuring citizens' experience of corruption. Given the context of Vietnam this has proved to be a useful tool to complement government's self-assessments. The study was first piloted in 2009 in only 3 of the provinces and has since been expanded to cover all 63 provinces and surveying over 13000 citizens. The units of analysis are individual citizens and their experiences of corruption not perceptions. In cases where citizens have no experience they were not asked to respond. For instance if the question asks about corruption in hospitals and the respondent has not has any dealings with the hospital then they may not respond.

The final index was conducted in Egypt by the Egyptian Centre for Public Research before the uprisings. It measured the public opinion and experience of corruption in the different governorates and captured the difference between the perception and experience of corruption. The rationale was that Egypt had been ranked poorly on many corruption indicators therefore this was to test whether these had an impact on people's opinion of government corruption and if it differed from their experience of corruption. An anthropological study was conducted initially to determine the local understandings of corruption. The results show that dimensions of corruption are localised and they vary from one governorate to another. Perceptions and exposure to corruption also varies according to level of education and location especially in terms of rural or urban.

Main Outcomes/Outputs

Any research methodology has a bias and it is important for the researchers to be transparent about their methodology and data. Evidence based methodologies can produce more effective results and reduce the discretion of the researchers therefore increasing the reliability of the data.

In the defence sector the info from the index was very helpful for the reformers in government who could then use it as a starting point for internal advocacy. Sector/local indicators can be instrumental in: designing and setting priorities for interventions, assessment, accountability and program evaluation.

Recommendations, follow-up Actions (200 words narrative form)

If indexes are detailed and sufficiently independent then they can be a key tool for advocacy. The more sector specific they are or locally relevant improves their impact. Local indexes when they are sufficiently detailed can help local authorities to prioritize and target relevant areas to fight corruption or fight corruption.

There is need to continuously seek to improve the methodology given the learning from doing the research to incorporate feedback from the process as well as assessment of what worked and what did not. In some cases this may mean changing the research parameters to strengthen the tools. In some cases the results expose areas that need further research and more in-depth analysis to better understand the issues and challenge what seemed like conventional tools and priorities. For instance the defence sector index exposed that it is not the procurement aspect which is a cause for concern but the legislative process when the decisions are made with regards to what defence equipment is necessary for the country and many loopholes can be overlooked or created in that process.

Highlights (200 words please include interesting quotes)

Ranking can be useful but can also be a distraction especially in cases where the results are surprising because people tend to be focused on the rankings and not the overall picture. However in certain cases as with the State Integrity investigation the controversy caused by the rankings can also be a positive in terms of the media coverage and therefore more attention drawn to the real issues. On the flip side this led to more press coverage and drew more attention to the research.

In the corporate reporting project an interesting point was that the advocacy was not only when the data was released but during the process, the fact that corporates new they were understudy in some instances began to make more information publicly available. This also applied to those companies that did not form part of the study. This shows the potential that indices have as a tool to fight corruption.

Key Insight Recommendations to include in the IACC Declaration

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Rapporteur's name and date submitted

Dadisai Taderera 08 Nov 2012