



INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

SHAPING VALUES FOR A NEW GENERATION: ANTI-CORRUPTION EDUCATION IN LITHUANIA, 2002–2006

SYNOPSIS

In 2002, Lithuania was struggling to defeat corruption, which had flourished during the Soviet occupation. Once viewed as the key to survival in an administered economy, offering gifts for services had become an accepted social norm. More than a decade after Lithuania regained independence, polling showed that although 77% of Lithuanians considered this form of corruption a problem, few were willing to change behaviors they saw as practical. The country's recently created anti-corruption agency, the Special Investigation Service, faced the challenge of changing those social expectations. It decided to focus on a new generation of Lithuanians. The Modern Didactics Center, an educational nongovernmental organization, and a dedicated group of teachers stepped in to help the agency work toward the ambitious goal of changing the attitudes of students across the country. The group experimented with a variety of educational approaches both in and outside the classroom, including a curriculum that integrated anti-corruption elements into standard subjects and projects that encouraged students to become local activists. Despite resistance from educators that limited the program's scale, the effort developed new approaches that illuminated the ethical and practical downsides of corruption for students across the country.

Maya Gainer drafted this case based on interviews conducted in Vilnius, Mažeikiai, and Anykščiai, Lithuania, during February 2015. Case published June 2015.

INTRODUCTION

On a fall afternoon in 2006, a group of students at Antanas Baranauskas secondary school in the Lithuanian town of Anykščiai made their way to the municipal government office, where local anti-corruption official Virgilijus Milaknis handed them a stack of public procurement documents. The municipality was renovating the school's cafeteria, and the students were looking for any signs of wrongdoing. They scrutinized the bids for new tables and chairs, checking for inflated figures. They aimed to ensure that the municipal government selected the highest quality at the best price.

The visit was part of an unconventional new subject recently introduced in some Lithuanian schools: corruption and how to fight it.

For decades, corruption had pervaded Lithuanians' daily lives. During nearly 50 years of rule by the Soviet Union, favors helped citizens obtain services, jobs, and permission to sell goods and services. Tadas Tamošiūnas, an educator who wrote a 2004 analysis of corruption in higher education, said it was "quite widespread practice" for students to give professors a "gift" before exams, perhaps a bottle of whiskey or opera tickets. Such practices were endemic throughout the country, Tamošiūnas stressed. "People would

easily ‘agree’ with a doctor or policeman. . . . It’s absolutely normal,” he said.

After Lithuania broke away from the Soviet Union in 1990, privatization of state assets and the establishment of new political parties created new opportunities for large-scale corruption in addition to everyday “gifts” and petty bribes.

In 2001, research by Transparency International’s Lithuanian chapter found that 72% of Lithuanians believed that paying bribes solved problems. Further, if asked for a bribe, 61% were willing to pay.¹ Although the same study found that 77% of Lithuanians considered corruption a problem in public life, few were willing to accept the difficulties that went with disavowing such practices.

Shortly after regaining independence, Lithuania began to address the problem of corruption at all levels of government. The nation had strong external incentives to do so: Combating corruption was essential to the country’s bids for membership in the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization. To join the EU, Lithuania had to align its legal framework with EU laws and standards, and tackling corruption was part of the negotiations on how the country would do so.

In 2000, the parliament, known as the Seimas, passed legislation to establish the Special Investigation Service (Specialiuju Tyrimu Tarnyba, or STT) as an independent enforcement agency. In 2002, at the urging of STT leaders and EU officials, the Seimas passed the Law on Prevention of Corruption, broadening the STT’s mandate to include prevention and education in the model of Hong Kong’s Independent Commission Against Corruption. The “three-pronged” approach sought to identify and punish acts of corruption, change procedures to decrease opportunities for wrongdoing, and reduce citizens’ willingness to participate through public education.

Although the STT’s original mission involved enforcement, by 2002 there was a growing understanding that “all three are priorities, and it’s necessary to implement all these measures together,” said Kęstutis Zaborskas, the agency’s first director of corruption prevention.

In line with that approach, in 2002 the Seimas also established the National Anti-Corruption Program, which sought to bring a wide variety of tools to the effort. However, the ambitious initiative, which covered everything from simplification of the tax payment system to radio commercials, did not earmark funds for each activity and instead “depend[ed] on the financial capacity of the state” for its budget.²

Among the National Anti-Corruption Program’s provisions was the establishment of anti-corruption education in schools as “an inseparable part of public education.”³ The long-term goal was to “build public intolerance toward corruption” and promote a new national mind-set that would influence all areas of Lithuanian life. Although many at the STT applauded the measure, its implementation was a daunting task for the agency.

THE CHALLENGE

Reducing social acceptance of bribery, nepotism, and other practices among youth required creativity. It was easy for STT agents or teachers to lecture students on the evils of corruption or to explain the law. But it was much harder to present the material in ways that were persuasive, easy for even young students to understand, and, above all, interesting.

Changing students’ attitudes and behaviors was especially difficult because of social influences that maintained the status quo. Corruption presented a norm coordination challenge. Although polls indicated that most Lithuanians disapproved of corruption, no one wanted to be the person who refrained from paying a bribe when everyone else did so—and then lost an

opportunity or a necessary service as a result. With few willing to make the first move, corruption persisted. It would be challenging for education programs to break the cycle, because even if students had no direct experience with corruption, they inherited norms held by their parents.

“Almost all families have stories about when corruption really worked for someone they know, and they have very strong beliefs that, if not for that, they would [have lost] lives or property,” said Daiva Penkauskienė, who played a key role in Lithuania’s anti-corruption education programs as director of the Modern Didactics Center (MDC), a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that worked closely with teachers and the STT. Although students who were enrolled in schools in 2002 were too young to have relied on corruption to get ahead during the Soviet period, she said, they had absorbed attitudes and expectations from their parents. Given the experiences of many Lithuanians, their children likely considered corruption as an unsavory but necessary part of daily life.

In addition, changing behaviors meant education had to go beyond teaching students that corruption was wrong by persuading them they could do something about it. But such a sense of empowerment was unusual in Lithuania at the time. When Transparency International asked about measures that could reduce corruption, the most common response (45%) was stricter punishment; public involvement was considered effective by only 17%.⁴ However, even government action faced skepticism. Among those who had heard of the National Anti-Corruption Program, three-quarters of respondents said they thought it would not help remedy the problem.⁵

“Some people think it’s impossible for one person to do anything, to combat any form of corruption,” said Andrius Vitkūnas, an English teacher who worked to incorporate anti-corruption material into his classes in Anykščiai.

“That’s what they would keep saying: ‘What can one person do about the situation?’”

Attempting to alter such ingrained attitudes and behaviors was a challenge for even skilled educators, and the STT faced an additional hurdle because the organization was not designed to carry out an educational role. Corruption prevention director Zaborskas noted that most agents had law enforcement backgrounds that reflected the STT’s original mission. A nationwide education program would be a massive task, and the agency’s new education department had only a small staff and a limited budget that relied largely on external funds. Former STT education specialist Aida Martinkėnienė said that although the agency’s leaders supported the three-pronged model, in practice “the focus remained on prosecution.”

With few resources and little experience in education, STT agents had to develop partnerships that could help them design a curriculum—and induce educators to adopt it. Implementing the program required cooperation across the education sector, from the Ministry of Education to individual school administrators and teachers.

Martinkėnienė said she and her colleagues were aware of the skepticism they would face in trying to persuade teachers that “education is important in anti-corruption efforts . . . that we can shape the attitudes of students while they are at school and influence their future.” Furthermore, teachers had to devote extra time to learn about the subject themselves and plan lessons about corruption. With no funding to pay teachers more for their additional efforts, the STT and its partners had to find ways to lighten the workload.

In addition, the STT agents who developed the education program had to do so with limited participation by the Ministry of Education. Artūras Paliušis, then head of the STT’s education division, recalled that at the time, ministry staff argued that they could not actively

support the anti-corruption program because of their focus on EU programs and national education reforms. Evaldas Bakonis, who was with the ministry-affiliated Education Development Center and served as a consultant on the curriculum project, added that the ministry was hesitant to require teachers to set aside class time for a subject that had no impact on schools' formal assessments.

FRAMING A RESPONSE

In 2002, the STT's education department began to evaluate ways to implement anti-corruption instruction. The most direct approach involved separate classes devoted entirely to the topic. But specialized classes would require more teacher work and more resources than either the Ministry of Education or the anti-corruption agency could contribute, and the ministry was concerned about taking students' time from other subjects. As a result, Zaborskas and Paliušis decided that the most effective strategy would be to integrate anti-corruption into the standard course curriculum. "We agreed with the Ministry of Education to prepare an integrated program, because pupils are busy and it's difficult to establish a new program," Zaborskas said.

With little funding and few STT staff dedicated to education, Zaborskas and Paliušis approached Diana Vilytė, head of the Open Society Fund–Lithuania, for support. The organization was the local branch of a network of foundations established by philanthropist George Soros and had contributed to the founding of numerous NGOs in Lithuania, including the Modern Didactics Center. The center specialized in teaching methods to promote critical thinking and had experience in developing curricula and working with teachers.

Penkauskienė, director of the MDC and a former Lithuanian language teacher, recalled that she was skeptical when Vilytė suggested the center work with the STT. Anti-corruption was "an

absolutely new topic for us," she said. "Usually, we have an idea, and then we start looking for funding, for stakeholders, for partners, and so on. In this case, it was quite different."

Although Penkauskienė had no background in anti-corruption work, she saw merit in the agency's plan for an integrated curriculum, with the topic woven into history, ethics, civics, religion, and other subjects. After discussions with the STT, she agreed to coordinate a partnership to develop a curriculum.

From the beginning, the partners had clear, separate roles. "We were experts in the anti-corruption area, and they were experts in teaching techniques," Paliušis said. The STT agents would provide information about corruption and advice on topics to cover and would ensure that the materials educators developed were accurate. Penkauskienė and her team at the MDC would facilitate the process of developing a curriculum—in cooperation with a group of teachers from around the country.

An important aspect of the early work involved enlisting teachers who embraced the program's concept and were eager to contribute. For the initial curriculum development project in 2002, the MDC invited applications from schools throughout the country. A total of 149 teachers from 52 schools applied, and the MDC selected teams of teachers from 11 schools to participate.

Penkauskienė recalled that the program required teachers to apply in teams because it was essential that those who took on the task "not feel alone." She and her STT partners also looked for teams that covered different subjects such as history, ethics, civics, or religion so that the resulting curriculum could be used by a variety of teachers, which would widen the possibilities for future expansion. They also prioritized regional diversity.

Although the 32 participating teachers were not paid, they received funding for regular travel to Vilnius, the capital, for workshops. The

prestige of working on an internationally funded project was also a powerful incentive at the height of the EU accession process. As Lithuania prepared to join the EU, international experience was perceived as a stepping-stone to other opportunities. However, much depended on teachers' enthusiasm. Penkauskienė said that when reading applications, she looked for the level of motivation that came through in application letters. "We were trying to read between the lines to see how strongly they felt about it," she said. A committed team of teachers, she and her collaborators hoped, would help the project gain traction.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK

From 2002 to 2008, the Modern Didactics Center and the STT collaborated to develop several approaches to anti-corruption education. A team of teachers with experience in grades 5 through 12 helped develop and implement each strategy on a trial basis. They first designed and tested a curriculum to incorporate anti-corruption material into standard subjects and later moved outside the classroom to extracurricular projects and partnerships with local governments. Scaling up the program to include new schools and higher education proved more difficult.

Developing teaching strategies

The goal of the first STT-MDC collaboration was to develop a curriculum that provided the facts and guidance needed by instructors who had little specific knowledge about corruption, Paliušis said. With funding from the Open Society Fund and the Embassy of Denmark, Penkauskienė, Paliušis, and Martinkėnienė began a six-month series of workshops aimed at ushering anti-corruption into the classroom.

In developing the curriculum, teachers first had to identify forms of corruption that students might not easily understand or might not

intuitively consider wrong—such as gift giving or conflicts of interest. Then they discussed ways of explaining why such behaviors were inappropriate in the country's new circumstances. The staff of the anti-corruption commission explained Lithuanian laws and corruption prevention policies. They also presented foreign experiences in anti-corruption and facilitated discussions to clarify the subject matter for teachers.

Regina Dirginčienė, who taught ethics in the town of Mažeikiai, recalled that discussions with STT agents and her fellow teachers helped deepen her understanding of the issue in preparation for teaching it. "I personally had understood corruption as [just] bribing people," she said.

Weaving corruption topics into existing coursework was a crucial next step in making the instruction both meaningful and unobtrusive. "For us it was important that it be authentic: you are not pushing the topic to be integrated; you are not forcing it," Penkauskienė said.

MDC staff and representatives of the Education Development Center reviewed the existing national curriculum and looked for places where discussions of corruption would follow naturally from the established subject matter, such as historical periods when corruption had flourished or ethical problems that could use corruption to illustrate important principles.

The biggest challenge fell to the teachers—in the form of developing lesson plans that would bring up corruption naturally, capture students' interest, and leave a lasting impression without preaching. When the educators decided something would not work from a teaching perspective, "theirs would be the last word," Paliušis said.

Drawing on the advice of Danish consultant Arne Nielsen, who supported the curriculum development process, the team decided to focus on broadly applicable values and ethical considerations rather than concentrating on the nitty-gritty factual details of corrupt practices.

The values framework offered several advantages. First, learning *why* corrupt actions were wrong enabled students to apply the knowledge throughout their personal lives rather than just in specific situations discussed in class. The focus on making ethical choices also gave students the opportunity to think independently about their actions rather than simply accepting what they were told or shown by teachers, parents, and other authorities.

In addition, the planners expected classroom debates to arise from discussions of what made actions right or wrong. Based on the teachers' own experience and the MDC's specialization in critical thinking, they emphasized participatory methods such as open discussions, group analysis of texts, and hands-on activities.

The design team also anticipated that students would respond better to value discussions as a starting point than to descriptions of specific problems. "It's difficult for children, especially younger children, to understand what corruption is as such," whereas concepts of fairness and honesty were already part of their vocabulary, said Anykščiai religion and ethics teacher Daiva Kuprionienė.

Approaching the subject from the perspective of fairness or community impact also aimed to draw skeptical, older students into the conversation. Teachers expected some students to be cynical based on what the students had heard about the issue of corruption from their parents as well as the corrupt politicians and graft cases they had seen in the media. They decided they could best break through that attitude by challenging students to apply familiar ethical concepts and reasoning to new situations.

Testing the curriculum

After the team decided on its overall strategy and discussed some possibilities, the teachers spent approximately six months testing lessons in their classrooms and reporting back to the group

about how their students responded. "It was a long process—one big homework assignment," Penkauskienė said.

As they tested the methods, teachers found that, as they expected, discussions and activities were more effective than lectures to explain concepts. "We certainly knew that if a teacher just speaks and students listen passively, we won't achieve anything," history teacher Daiva Tručinskienė said. Instead, they emphasized debates, analysis of specific situations, and projects like surveys of their communities.

For instance, instead of lecturing high school history students about corruption in the Soviet Union, one lesson focused on jokes about the Soviet period. Students tried to identify the problems being satirized by each joke—from nepotism and embezzlement to economic mismanagement—and then discussed the legacy of those problems in present-day Lithuania.⁶ For younger students, hands-on activities such as art projects depicting the impact of corruption helped maintain interest.

In workshops after the pilot lessons, teachers role-played to help understand how and why students responded as they did and to develop better ways to approach the topic. They also met in small groups by subject to talk about "what they would do in their classrooms and what was effective," Mažeikiai religion teacher Rūta Urbonavičiūtė recalled. Urbonavičiūtė found such smaller-group discussions especially helpful because the team members in each school taught different subjects, so although they could discuss broad strategies, they could not compare notes on teaching a certain topic or lesson.

The STT and MDC staff also visited classrooms to see the lessons in action. "Not all topics were interesting for students, and not all topics were convenient" for discussion, Penkauskienė observed. "But students were very involved—and very active—when those topics were connected not only with certain historical

periods, certain theory, or certain literature, but with daily life and practice.”

At the end of the process, Penkauskienė and consultants from the Education Development Center, an agency within the Ministry of Education that focused on curriculum development, selected sample lessons to compile into a handbook for other teachers. Although teachers could adapt the lessons as they wished, the curriculum was designed to serve as a user-friendly resource so that teachers could approach anti-corruption education strategically. The STT’s education team contributed an overview of basic corruption and corruption-prevention concepts for teachers. With the first version of the curriculum completed, teachers who had participated in the process returned to their classrooms to make anti-corruption a regular part of their lessons.

Refining and expanding

At the end of the curriculum development process in late 2003, the core group of teachers introduced into their regular classes the materials they had developed. As they taught anti-corruption during the next several years, they revised and expanded the curriculum and developed teaching strategies that suited their needs and those of their students.

Reasoning that too many dramatic, high-profile examples of corruption could dishearten students instead of building a sense of empowerment, teachers tried to find other ways to stimulate students’ interest. “The aim was not to make this threat of corruption so huge—not to blow it up too much,” Martinkėnienė said. “If the problem is huge, people think they can’t do anything about it, and we didn’t want that.”

Tručinskienė said she was careful about when she brought up the subject of corruption in class. “It would be bad if we spoke about it every day,” she said. “We should speak about this topic at the right time—and speak about particular cases. We don’t want to say society as a whole is corrupt.”

The teachers tried to adapt the curriculum to appeal to differing developmental stages and to the qualities students wanted to cultivate in themselves at each grade level. For example, Dirginčienė, who taught high school ethics in Mažeikiai, said that in their teenage years, many young people “want to be original,” so a message of standing out rather than following the crowd resonated with the teenagers she taught. Examples of anti-corruption initiatives at the local and national levels, Dirginčienė said, helped encourage students to think of themselves as part of a select group of moral leaders.

Active engagement and practical problem solving were essential classroom tools. The goal was to get students to recognize a specific instance of corruption and its impact, said history teacher Irena Lizdenienė. Using examples from ancient Rome or medieval Europe, “groups discuss the actions of historical figures and draw their own conclusions about their effects,” she said. She added that historical examples also helped students recognize the long-term consequences of corruption, which were not always clear when looking only at recent or personal examples.

For younger students, it was essential to make the concepts of fairness, integrity, and corruption tangible. Kuprionienė, who taught religion and ethics in both primary and secondary schools, said that in lower grades, “the most important thing is to make the children *feel* the activity so they will understand the idea.”

Learning benefited from the teachers’ recognition of what was meaningful to their particular students. For example, young students could easily understand the impact of a moral principle or an ethical practice when the medium of exchange was candy. A teacher could demonstrate the impact of different rules of fairness by showing how each rule could affect a student’s candy supply. It was also easy for teachers to show the effects of expropriation by plundering students’ candy reserves.⁷

Similarly, one teacher helped her class learn by asking students to relabel milkshake ingredients with the names of important values and then discussing what happened to the tastiness of the milkshake as those values disappeared and she removed the corresponding ingredients.

Teachers gradually expanded their influence beyond their own classrooms. In 2004, the MDC helped 22 of the original teachers become trainers who instructed other teachers and school administrators in the incorporation of anti-corruption material into their lessons. At the request of individual schools and districts, teams of teachers and MDC staff, sometimes with support from the anti-corruption commission, instructed colleagues and school administrators in the use of the modules they had developed. Although the curriculum served as the basis for the training, the goal was to discuss how the teachers could best adapt it to their lessons or develop their own methods.

Moving outside the classroom

In 2006, after three years of working in classroom settings, Penkauskienė and a group of teachers decided to experiment with extracurricular activities that would be more hands-on and enable students to apply concepts they learned. Further expansion of anti-corruption teaching in class had proved challenging because of time constraints and limited interest on the parts of other teachers. Extracurricular programs offered another avenue to spread the message and helped address the difficulties of responding to a community-wide issue through schools alone.

The MDC selected a small group of schools to work with local governments to design anti-corruption activities that would take place outside the classroom. The teachers who participated included some who had developed personal interest in anti-corruption work during preparation of the original curriculum and had

drawn attention to the issue in their schools and communities, such as those in Anykščiai and Mžeikiai.

Collaborations with local governments offered opportunities for students to work on actual anti-corruption programs and to feel their actions had a tangible impact. For example, in the eastern town of Anykščiai, Milaknis, the local government's anti-corruption adviser, introduced students to areas at risk for corruption within the local administration and to the municipality's strategies to address them.

"We did [the training] in the same way we did it with the staff in the municipality and the staff in our anti-corruption commission," Milaknis said. He instructed the students to inspect documents just as government staff did to check for signs of wrongdoing in high-risk areas such as the use of official vehicles. Students checked travel logs, fuel purchases, and employees' assignments to make sure that the cars had been used for official business rather than personal uses.

In addition to projects with the local government, teachers in Anykščiai stressed hands-on activities across grade levels. Middle school students surveyed their parents and community members, asking about their experiences with payments "in brown envelopes" (without official records) that avoided taxes. The surveys were starting points for discussions in class and later with families and adults in the community. Teachers also organized events at the town hall to promote honest salary payment—complete with banners designed in art classes and performances by music students.

Similarly, in Mžeikiai, a town near Lithuania's northern border, students investigated how to clarify confusing procedures for obtaining services from the local administration, Dirginčienė said. Groups of students focused on specific services, such as retirement homes or the labor exchange for the unemployed. They wrote reports on the level of transparency and then created user-

friendly guides to help make it easier for residents to get what they needed.

These types of projects were limited to a small group of schools in 10 municipalities whose teachers and local governments were especially interested. However, they laid a foundation for long-term engagement between students and local officials. “The schools showed themselves in another light,” Penkauskienė said: as drivers of social change within the community.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

With activities under way in the initial group of schools, in 2004 the anti-corruption commission and the MDC sought to expand their model to colleges and universities and make the program mandatory for all schools. However, both initiatives ran into unexpectedly strong resistance.

Reaching for higher education

As the MDC and the teachers slowly refined general education programs, the anti-corruption commission and the MDC sought to bring their model to colleges and universities. With funding from the United Nations Development Programme, they embarked on a similar curriculum development process for higher education beginning in 2004.

The first step was to reach out to a handful of professors and solicit their advice about how to best help college students assess corruption and take steps to counter it. Targeting students at the university level required a different approach, although some of the principles, such as a strong emphasis on discussion and student participation, carried over from the general education program. In contrast to the values emphasis used with younger students, the professors said older students would gain more from discussions of theories and global experiences so they could apply their prior understanding of ethical concepts.

In courses on such subjects as commercial law and social organization, a few professors incorporated classes or units on corruption. Those especially interested in the issue attracted students of sociology and political science by offering full courses on the subject. The courses enabled students to discuss more-complex theories about the factors that contributed to corruption. In some classes, students conducted surveys of attitudes toward corruption. They also interviewed key corruption fighters, including NGO monitors and managers of government departments at risk of corruption.

Despite the contributions of the small initial group of professors, MDC planners encountered a roadblock in trying to get colleges and universities to implement broad anti-corruption programs. In contrast to primary and secondary schools, for which the Ministry of Education set the curriculum, colleges and universities—and their professors—had complete autonomy in deciding what they did in their classrooms. It was entirely up to professors to decide “what to do during their lectures and how much to speak about it,” Martinkėnienė said. Few were interested in changing their courses to incorporate the new subject matter.

Penkauskienė recalled that most university administrators also responded with reluctance—if not outright hostility—to the idea of anti-corruption education when MDC and anti-corruption agency personnel met with them to seek support. She was surprised that “they were not looking at it as methodological material but as a danger for their universities . . . [like] maybe some audit will come, some inspection.” Penkauskienė wondered whether her team could have presented it differently but thought that unrelated government policy discussions taking place at the time about reducing the number of state-supported universities might have made university staff more sensitive to anything related to corruption.

Shifting focus in schools

Unforeseen obstacles also hindered efforts to expand the program to primary and secondary schools across Lithuania. Although the STT had initially planned for nationwide classroom lessons as envisioned in the National Anti-Corruption Program, resistance from the Ministry of Education and teachers forced the agency to shift direction.

From the beginning, the agency and the MDC had known that the Ministry of Education, which was focused on national education reforms and plans for integration into the EU, wanted no major role in developing the education program. Although the ministry contributed experts from its affiliated curriculum development agency to help review lesson plans and ensure the curriculum complied with national standards, the STT and the MDC took the lead in designing teaching materials.

As the MDC continued to hold training sessions for interested teachers and worked on community level programs, the STT approached the Ministry of Education with hopes to scale up the program across the country. The agency had sought support from the ministry previously. According to Martinkėnienė, “We discussed making this program mandatory for years.” However, the proposal hit another roadblock.

Jolita Vasiliauskaite, a corruption prevention adviser at the Office of the Government, which oversaw interministerial coordination and assisted in anti-corruption policy development, said it was often difficult to secure active participation in anti-corruption from government agencies that had other responsibilities. “It’s one of the biggest challenges to get all the ministries to do something in anti-corruption beyond what is legally required,” she said. “When anti-corruption is not their direct mandate . . . it’s like an additional burden” for ministries to engage in the activities, especially because they often did not

have the resources to hire additional staff or bring in outside experts.

Povilas Malakauskas, anti-corruption agency director at the time, said that in his discussions with the Ministry of Education, officials worried about displacing other important subject matter in a crowded school day. He said the prevailing view was that “if you want to introduce one more program, you have to reduce something else. So, is the priority math or corruption, geography or corruption?”

Bakonis of the Education Development Center who also served as a consultant on the anti-corruption curriculum project, believed many in the education sector were wary of the idea because it was nearly impossible to gauge its effectiveness at a time when trends in education called for greater reliance on quantifiable data. “All the schools are being evaluated and rated according to the tangible results they achieve—that is, according to exam performance and number of graduates who enter higher education establishments,” he said. “No one evaluates to what extent the schoolchildren become active citizens.”

Paliušis said he thought some of the ministry’s reluctance stemmed from ordinary bureaucratic inertia, because some managers at the ministry were “very much resistant to any changes; they were unwilling to implement anything new.”

Malakauskas and the education ministry eventually agreed that teaching anti-corruption would be voluntary and that activities would take place largely after school. However, teachers could choose use their ministry-allocated professional development funds to participate in training sessions focused on the use of the anti-corruption curriculum.

The STT reached out to schools directly with ideas and support. “We identified schools whose teachers and directors were eager to introduce this program,” Malakauskas said.

Contrary to the STT's initial expectations, Martinkėnienė found that shifting the focus to special events and extracurricular activities appealed to more teachers. "We were not the ones who decided to switch to such activities," she said, but the change received an "excellent" response in her opinion because the options were more interesting for both teachers and students.

The focus of activities outside the classroom was on International Anti-Corruption Day, a United Nations awareness-raising event celebrated on December 9. STT agents visited schools and held discussions, and the agency sponsored art contests and debates. In some schools, teachers organized lessons for an Anti-Corruption Week surrounding the official day, which was when most in-class activities took place. Teachers also invited members of NGOs such as Transparency International and White Gloves, a volunteer campaign-watchdog organization, to speak to students.

The appeal of Anti-Corruption Day inspired similar activities, such as contests and guest speakers, throughout the year. Participation was voluntary and required little additional effort on the parts of teachers. Extracurricular activities also offered a change of pace. Students in Mažeikiai said that activities like participation in a video contest and discussions with guests were often far more compelling than classroom lessons.

ASSESSING RESULTS

Lithuania's anti-corruption education program aimed to change the attitudes and actions of a generation of students who had little objective knowledge of the subject. Trends in public opinion highlighted the challenge of meeting that goal.

From 2002 to 2011, the Lithuanian Map of Corruption (originally conducted by Transparency International and later adopted by the STT) showed little change in (1) the percentage of Lithuanians who said that giving bribes would

help solve their problems and (2) the percentage willing to give bribes.

The Map of Corruption did find a significant increase in the number of people saying they did not give bribes because it was against their beliefs (from 12% in 2004 to 21% in 2011).⁸ But the data suggested no explanation for the shift.

Several interviewees said that measuring the impact of Lithuania's anti-corruption education program was extremely difficult. "With education, how do we measure it?" asked Elena Koncevičiūtė, an STT international cooperation officer. "One measurement is to say you've had a hundred lectures, but does that show that you've changed the mentality?" She said that the lack of clear-cut results added to the challenge of sustaining support for the program.

Some participants considered the development of the general education curriculum to be the program's greatest achievement. According to MDC director Penkauskienė, "I do not know of any other similar publication. . . . I think it's a very big achievement to think a little bit differently about corruption and how this anti-corruption issue could be introduced into the education system."

International recognition provided one measure of success. A group of donors that included the Open Society Institute, the UN Development Programme and the US State Department organized workshops for educators and civic leaders in eight other central and eastern European countries to learn from the MDC and STT and to adapt the materials to their own contexts.⁹

"We worked closely with Lithuania in preparing the guidebook for teacher training," said Melinda Mula, who participated in the project as program manager of the Education Against Corruption project implemented by the Kosovo Education Center. Although Mula and her colleagues revised the curriculum to reflect Kosovo's laws and institutions when they prepared

their own anti-corruption education program, “the basic materials were from Lithuania.”

The curriculum’s use, however, remained far more limited than the program’s proponents had envisioned. Instead of securing a national mandate, teaching anti-corruption remained voluntary. Many, although not all, of the core group of 32 teachers remained dedicated, but expansion proved a challenge. The MDC and its team trained an additional 564 teachers in anti-corruption education strategies from 2004 to 2011, and according to follow-up surveys and visits after training sessions, Penkauskienė said, most teachers were using the material in their classrooms. But the MDC was unable to monitor them over the longer term. In early 2015, no data existed to measure active participation.

Adoption of extracurricular activities such as contests and events for Anti-Corruption Day was more widespread but less in depth. The STT said 70 to 80% of schools probably conducted some form of anti-corruption education, but the estimate did not distinguish between schools that took a comprehensive approach—from the classroom to the community—and those that simply held a brief event to observe Anti-Corruption Day.

In a poll that related to the goals of the anti-corruption program, the Civil Society Institute, an NGO devoted to promoting civic activity, found that high school students were more willing than adults to organize activities in response to problems their communities faced. The institute surveyed students from 2008 to 2014 to assess their engagement in civil society. Each year’s survey interviewed approximately 500 randomly selected high school students from 27 cities and villages across the country. Then the organization compared the results with a similar yearly survey of approximately 1,000 adults.

In 2012, across economic, political, and local problems, the surveys found an average of 33.6% of students were willing to promote civic activity

compared with an average of 13.6% of adults.¹⁰ In addition, students were more optimistic about the influence they and other ordinary Lithuanians could have on national decision making, outscoring adults by 1.5 points on a 1-to-10 scale.¹¹ Encouraging student activism and promoting the belief that students could change the situation were important components of the anti-corruption teaching strategy. However, the institute’s survey did not ask about corruption specifically.

REFLECTIONS

Although the effectiveness of Lithuania’s anti-corruption education program remained unclear in the short term, the program’s proponents were confident of its long-term impact.

“We should never give up, because it’s a kind of investment,” said English teacher Andrius Vitkūnas. “When the younger generation comes to power, they’ll change things, and that’s very rewarding for us as teachers.”

Many teachers said that introducing the concept of corruption to the young in new ways would shape the next generation of Lithuanian leaders. “You have to start with the thinking of the new generation, because you can’t change the old generation,” ethics teacher Regina Dirginčienė said.

The focus on student participation and activism was critical to move students from collective knowledge to individual action. “At school, this is being raised as a problem that has to be solved, and we’re seeking solutions,” said Inga Tenytė, a 12th-grade student in Mažeikiai. She added that teachers and speakers stressed that if every student changed his or her own actions, then together students could tackle almost anything—even a complex problem like corruption.

One especially effective strategy was to reach beyond the classroom to form relationships with

local governments, NGOs, and national anti-corruption actors. The activists whom students met served as role models. But even as teachers exposed students to a range of role models, it was essential to maintain focus on actions they could take in their everyday lives.

Journalist and former Transparency International director Rytis Juozapavičius said that focusing on small but personal steps to address corruption helped students understand that there was no external “savior” to solve the problem for them. Instead, they needed to recognize that a solution would ultimately rely on the accumulation of individual behavior changes.

However, not every strategy was well crafted. Juozapavičius, who participated in events and discussions throughout the education program, said that early on, “I was mistakenly too focused on talking about the bad sides of corruption. . . . If I had a time machine, if I could go back, I would focus on positive examples” of those standing up to corruption.

Former director Povilas Malakauskas of the Special Investigation Service (Specialiųjų Tyrimų Tarnyba, or STT) echoed the observation. Ten years ago, he said, “We only tried to explain that corruption is evil, and that’s not enough.” The way lessons were delivered was also critically important, and despite the program’s attention to participation, at times students said, “It’s just slides.”

The voluntary nature of anti-corruption education meant that most of those who

participated were committed to the idea, but the reach was limited. “If a person is not enthusiastic enough, either these activities will not take place or they will be superficial,” history teacher Daiva Tručinskienė said.

At the beginning of the education program, there was growing interest in anti-corruption in Lithuania as a whole, Penkauskienė said, which likely drew some of the teachers. However, sustaining that interest was challenging, and schools that conducted regular anti-corruption activities over time, STT education specialist Aida Martinkėnienė said, “did it just because of the teachers’ dedication.”

Although the core group of teachers worked hard, changing Lithuanians’ entrenched views of corruption was an uphill battle. The things students heard in school and the conversations some of them started in their communities represented only some of the many influences that would shape their views in the long run.

“Education is necessary but not sufficient,” Malakauskas said. Even if graduates were increasingly inclined to resist corruption, widespread and lasting change required changes in the broader environment.

Reaching out to communities was essential, Modern Didactics Center director Daiva Penkauskienė said, because “you are doing your job as a teacher . . . but then you see that it’s really quite difficult because it’s not a school problem, and it’s not an education problem; it’s a societal problem as well. Then it has to be a joint effort.”

Box 1 Reducing Bribery in Universities

One area where anti-corruption efforts made significant progress involved reducing bribery within universities. In preparation for developing a higher education curriculum, the MDC and the STT commissioned research on university students' attitudes toward and experiences with corruption, which laid the foundation for separate efforts to control corruption in higher education.

According to a 2004 survey conducted by the National Union of Students, 33% of students had given bribes to professors, often in the form of gifts before exams. In the same year, research organization Spinter placed the figure at 40%.¹

Over time, some universities cracked down on bribery and other forms of cheating by firing professors and expelling students. However, enforcement was not the only tool. Universities shifted how they evaluated students—for instance, by allowing open-book exams—and adopted the use of honor codes; and the National Student Union organized volunteer proctors, typically from other schools or departments, to monitor exam rooms. Stressing that students had a personal interest in honesty—for instance, to obtain legitimate qualifications to compete in the tight job market—complemented appeals to integrity.

The multipronged efforts brought some results by 2015. In surveys conducted by the National Student Union, only 8% of students said bribery took place in their college or university. Although practices like purchasing completed assignments and copying from other students remained relatively common, reductions in bribery showed that corruption was not necessarily a permanent fixture in Lithuanian higher education.

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