

RSOG-INTAN Workshop on Integrity Management in the Public

with

Professor Paul Collins

University of Nottingham, United Kingdom

When

6 November 2012

Where

Razak School of Government

Who

Professor Paul Collins

About The Workshop

During the last three decades, although there has been much attention paid to corruption at global levels and nearly all countries signed up to the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), its incidence continues – often taking new and sophisticated forms as boundaries between public and private become blurred.

The workshop thus focuses on approaches, old and new, to integrity management in the public sector. Participants were introduced to the range of approaches that have been pursued, what has worked what not and why and what has been missing. On the one hand, there have been the institutional, regulatory/legal and often "punishing" approaches (sanctions. codes of conduct, independent watchdogs, whistle blowing and more recently restitution of illicitly obtained assets). At the same time, there is increasing emphasis on the ingredients of individual honesty, reinstating values/ethics in public service, embedding these in the individual official in his/her organisation and the interdependencies with overall public administration reform. The workshop examined a cross section of cases, including from Asia. It concluded with an evaluation and practical exercise in self-assessment.

Summary

Ideally, a governance system should be based on trust; which is hard to gain but can quickly erode. The series of financial as well as fiscal crises of late is compounding scepticism on the system. In the old days, corruption was seen to go hand in hand with underdevelopment. The standard explanation was that modest salaries drove people who could to seek supplemental income through bribes. It was of course proven that even developed societies are not free of the corruption scourge, which was later attributed to be characteristic of greed rather than underdevelopment.

Many approaches to combat the scourge have been tried and tested by various jurisdictions with differing degrees of success – depending on focus and depth given and the time horizon invested. They include audits (which incidentally have also proven to be a means for manipulation for political purposes); people rotation; focusing monitoring at the top leadership levels; engaging international watchdog and donor organisations; and extending the ambit of integrity management outside the government sphere – to the business sectors and civil society, most notably through CSR.

However, it is universally agreed that education especially of the very young is extremely crucial to inculcate positive values and represents a more long term holistic and sustainable approach to integrity management.

Of late, the debate on institutional and regulatory approaches to integrity management have been centred, amongst others, on the issue of centralisation versus de-centralisation. Whilst centralisation offers benefits in terms of uniformity of enforcement actions and economies of scale, the argument against it is often that the size of the ‘market’ is sometimes too large and diverse for a one-size-fits-all approach. Modelling after a successful approaches in other jurisdictions should be done with care as the inherent characteristics of systems are quite unique and particular to each jurisdiction.

Information technology to certain extent helps to enhance the integrity of a system as it offers some degree of transparency as well as quicker progress tracking. Procurement is one example of where information technology has been applied quite successfully.

Targeting critical delivery systems, which are often perceived as ‘vulnerable’ to abuse, such as licensing, public order and subsidies is a good strategy to address issues of manpower or budget constraints. Success stories in this targeted areas has helped restore not only public confidence in the system but the motivation levels of those involved in the campaign.

There is no magic formula or a short cut in the pursuit to enhance integrity in the public sector. Having said that, Professor Paul Collins advocated the following self-assessment or action planning as a precursor:-

A. As for **NOW**

1. What does one face? Scope and challenges in one’s areas?

2. How is one doing? Are there positive achievements gained so far? What about negative occurrences of wrong doings?
 3. Why? Any key strengths or vulnerabilities identified? Or perhaps internal and external risks observed?
- B. As for the **FUTURE**
1. Can one do more? If yes, what is controllable?
 2. How? Are the existing standards, safeguards, statutory provisions and instructions alright? What about the reporting, monitoring and audit practices? Are there adequate and competent people to conduct it? What can be done in terms of public education and awareness?
 3. Who and what can help?
- C. Are there **common areas** – for sharing and learning from each other?

The following web-based toolkits were suggested for further reading and guidance:-

1. Global Programme Against Corruption: United Nations Anti-Corruption Toolkit, Vienna September 2004 (unpan020658.pdf) (PowerPoint summary).
2. European Commission: Concept Note on Corruption (by IDD, Birmingham University).

Short

version http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/infopoint/publications/europeaid/documents/251a_short_en.pdf

Long version – <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/government-society/idd/research/corruption-concept-note/full-version.pdf>

3. Paul Heywood, "Integrity management and the public service ethos in the UK: patchwork quilt or threadbare blanket?", International Review of Administrative Sciences, 78.3 2012 (Sept), 474-493, <http://iras.sagepub.com>

About the Speaker

Professor Paul Collins has been Editor of Public Administration and Development for 15 years and has served at Universities in the United Kingdom (Sussex and Bath), the Americas (Connecticut, Texas and Sao Paulo) and Africa (Tanzania, Nigeria and Ghana). He served at the United Nations in New York for 11 years, latterly as Principal Management Adviser of the UNDP's Policy Bureau. He returned to the UK as Principal Consultant of the then Royal Institute of Public Administration International Division, and has since been adviser to the World Bank, UK DFID, UNDP and EC in over 50 countries in Central America/Caribbean, Africa, E/Central Europe and Asia. Over the last 5 years, he has run workshops and made

presentations in Hong Kong, China, Singapore and Taiwan, and has recently completed a term as Visiting Professor of Public Policy at the City University of Hong Kong.

Contact

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