

2. COUNT SUPPLIES

KEEP WATCH

IN A NUTSHELL

As the cost and importance of education go up, so does the temptation to act corruptly. In response to this, parents and students are getting better at sensing corruption and doing something about it.

You can make sense of the often complex spending in schools by counting school supplies. While this has been used primarily for small items like textbooks and classroom supplies, there's no reason it can't be used for building equipment and school assets.

HOW DO YOU SET IT UP?

- 1. Identify the problem:** Choose something that you are concerned about in your school or university. Brainstorm solutions.
- 2. What's the objective?** Decide what you want to achieve and set your goals.
- 3. Survey the terrain:** Understand the policies around the issue you want to monitor or address. Map the university or school budget and learn where the money flows.
- 4. Reach out:** Use the project as a means of opening doors with senior leaders within relevant authorities like the education ministry or governing bodies. Make it a conversation starter!
- 5. Kick-off the planning:** Convene an introductory meeting and plan the process. Orient and train staff and volunteers involved in conducting the research.
- 6. Do the fieldwork:** This is when your team is "on the ground", analysing the processes and spending patterns related to your research goal.
- 7. Share your results:** This might be a presentation to the school management or going to the media, depending on your findings.

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WHY DO IT?

- Fix the leaking tap. If there's money leaking out illegitimately, you can spot it and stop it.
- Education spending is a black hole for most governments. But this project can be a catalyst for much larger reforms and change if carried out effectively and regularly.

YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Have a well-resourced team with a shared vision and a commitment to getting the job done.
- Gain buy-in from people with influence in the school or university that is having its supplies counted.
- Gather support from the community! Get students and teachers on board with your project.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS?

- Education spending processes are complicated, so people using the tool will need a reasonable understanding of decision-making protocols. Find a parent, teacher or ally in government who can help you navigate these challenges.
- This tool demands data availability and accuracy. Talk to school and education officials on how best to go about getting access to the data.
- To encourage transparency in budget spending, follow-up tracking is needed at least yearly. Create and maintain relations with an appropriate official and teacher to give added weight and commitment to the cause.

IDEA IN ACTION

Philippines: A Million New Inspectors

About 1 million boy and girl scouts in Philippines have counted textbooks and conducted quality inspections throughout the country. Working hand-in-hand with government and non-government agencies, the programme discourages theft of textbooks and helps promote long-term transparency in the country's schools.

The Department of Education provided an open door to programme organisers, including access to budget information, contracts, and delivery points, as well as providing inspection sites.

Local organisations and volunteers that include schoolchildren also carry out the monitoring – including surprise inspections – during the textbook production process. The programme has proved successful at reducing corruption in the textbook distribution process.

Find out more: web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPUBLICSECTORANDGOVERNANCE/0,,contentMDK:23265513~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:286305,00.html