

4. TECH SOLUTIONS

KEEP WATCH

IN A NUTSHELL

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) provide effective ways to report corruption and facilitate the lodging of complaints. Reporting can be done via websites, hotlines or phone applications that collect citizens' experiences of corruption.

Social media, in particular, is an effective way for you to address corruption in real-time and anonymously. ICTs that utilise crowdsourcing and mobile technology facilitate the compiling of databases of evidence and can mobilise people instantly.

REMEMBER

Before getting started on planning, it's important to verify that this activity is in line with your national and local laws and to check what legal permits, if any, are required. You should also let your parents know what you have planned. If you're not permitted to carry out this task, please refer to our other youth activities.

HOW DO YOU SET IT UP?

One of the most common and effective ICTs is crowdsourcing. To get it going, do the following:

- 1. Gather a reliable team:** Find other like-minded people who have an interest in using technology to fight corruption.
- 2. Select your topic:** Identify what you want to report and raise awareness about (e.g. bribes to go to school or transparency in political party financing).
- 3. Choose a ready-to-use platform:** Will it be an interactive mapping website like Ushahidi (www.ushahidi.com)? Should information be collected via text message with Frontline SMS (www.frontlinesms.com)? You decide what's best suited to your community.
- 4. Train your team:** You all need to know how to operate the platform. Be prepared to have answers readily available for user questions.
- 5. Spread the word!** Let all of your friends know on social media. Actively ask websites and blogs to promote the cause that you want to raise awareness about.
- 6. Collect your evidence:** Gather all the data collected through crowdsourcing and make a report.
- 7. Update and inform:** Make sure your community knows about the latest milestones and trends you've found. Notify leaders of what's happening and what's needed to help bring about positive change.

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WHY DO IT?

- As they are often ready-built and free to use, ICTs can be a very cost-effective tool in meeting your anti-corruption goals.
- It's a quick way to collect information, especially reports of corruption.

YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN

- Make sure you're in a political environment that is enabling (that is, promotes and protects free speech).

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS?

- There is the potential for misuse of ICTs. For example, they can be used to disseminate misinformation and incite violence. Ensure that you have the means and access to shut down the platform if faced with a hostile situation.
- A huge number of the world's population is still without internet access and thus cut off from participating. Recognise this discrepancy if there is any in your community.
- There are significant security challenges associated with the use of mobile phones for reporting corruption. If the system is poorly designed or vulnerable, participants risk being identified or having their messages intercepted. To deter this, consult digital security experts and ensure that the platform you're using is secure.

Source: Information taken from U4 Expert Answer.

Find out more: www.u4.no/publications/technological-innovations-to-identify-and-reduce-corruption/

IDEA IN ACTION

India: I Paid a Bribe

On www.ipaidabribe.com, citizens can report their experiences of corruption. The site received almost 22,500 reports between 2010 and 2012, some of which were picked up by the media and resulted in arrests and convictions. On the flipside, citizens can also report positive experiences they've had with honest officers.

Find out more: www.ipaidabribe.com

Philippines: Check My School

Check My School (www.checkmyschool.org) allows students to evaluate public schools across the Philippines. Students and parents are able to check that money budgeted for desks, textbooks and toilets are realised. The site also allows users to contest official data via Facebook, Twitter and text messages.

Find out more: www.checkmyschool.org
www.theengineerroom.org