



C2 REVEALING GOOD PRACTICE

Tackling bribery

At a glance

There are different ways of acting against bribery at the local level. These include:

- Challenging any cultural acceptance of bribery.
- Raising awareness of the need to refuse to participate in bribery, for example through sermons, school lessons, local media, posters, community dramas and community discussions.
- Providing ways to report bribery anonymously, for example through 'bribe boxes' or websites.
- Meeting politicians to call for change.



Why use this tool?

Bribery is unfair and wrong. It affects all people but poor people suffer the most. It leads to poorer quality public services, such as hospitals, schools and roads. It also leads to unequal access to these services, because people who can afford to pay a bribe can often access the service sooner. It also undermines the rule of law and so makes communities and whole countries more unstable. It hinders businesses from completing their work or being able to afford to pay better wages or implement better working conditions.

See **Tool A1 - Revealing corruption: information for facilitators** to understand more about bribery and its impacts, and what the Bible says about bribery.



A brief description

This tool explains some of the ways that communities can begin to tackle bribery.



Explaining the words we use

Anonymous – when somebody's name and identity is unknown

Bribery - offering, giving or promising money or another advantage to encourage somebody to perform their duties or activities improperly. It can be initiated by the person offering the bribe or the one seeking the bribe

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Examples of bribery

Bribery involves giving money in order to gain an unfair advantage. Examples of why people may pay a bribe include:

- to obtain a certificate or passport by not following the proper process
- to turn a blind eye to an illegal act
- to unfairly access a service quicker than others (such as enrolling children in schools or gaining access to medical treatment)
- to avoid being fined by traffic police

Fears and challenges

Sometimes people feel they can't avoid engaging in corruption (for example, accepting a bribe) or feel they cannot work to tackle corruption, because they are afraid for their own, or their family's, safety. However, it is crucial that people stand up to corruption. The fears and risks people face will depend on the context. It is important to be aware of any risks involved in confronting corruption and to try to lessen these risks. Here are some steps to help overcome challenges and fears:

- Be aware of your rights and who to contact if you face any harassment.
- Try to focus on things that are wrong with a system or process, rather than *who* in particular is to blame. As much as possible, focus on what needs to be done, giving examples of good practice.
- Respect those in power and give them clear explanations about what is being done.
- As much as possible, build networks and links with other local groups and organisations such as CBOs and NGOs.
- Try to build good relationships with the local authority and/or police.
- Work with the media. This will make your work to confront corruption more visible and enable the media to work with you and to play their role in tackling corruption (see **Tool C1: Working with the media**).

Please also see Tearfund's Advocacy Toolkit (see 'Finding out more' below) which has a very helpful chapter on Risks, concerns and challenges.



Keys to success

- When seeking to address bribery or any other form of corruption, try to build networks and links with other local groups and organisations such as CBOs and NGOs. Try also to build good relationships with staff in the local authority and police.
- In raising concerns with people in authority, try to focus on things that are wrong with a system or process, rather than *who* in particular is to blame. As much as possible, focus on what needs to be done, giving examples of good practice.



What to do

There are different ways of changing a culture of bribery. Here are some suggestions of what can be done at the community level:

Challenging cultural acceptance and raising awareness

Bribery has many negative impacts. For example it:

- undermines just and stable governance
- undermines the rule of law, as people can 'buy' their way out of justice
- leads to poorer quality public services, such as hospitals, schools and roads
- leads to unequal access to public services, as those who can afford to do so can pay a bribe so they can jump the queue and access the service sooner.

It is therefore important that any cultural acceptance of bribery is challenged. In places where bribery is accepted, raising awareness of the impacts of bribery, and of the need to refuse to participate in bribery, will be important.

How could you raise awareness in your community about the damage that bribery causes, and the need to refuse to participate in it?

- Could preachers talk about it in their sermons?
- Could school teachers teach about it in schools?
- Could you use the media (eg local radio stations) to raise awareness and publicise methods to report corruption? (See **Tool C1 – Working with the media**)
- Could you develop posters with a simple message?
- Could you develop a drama about bribery and perform it in community meetings or other public places? (See **Tool C1 - Writing a community drama**)

Education is very important in tackling bribery

Can you advocate for school curricula to include teaching about bribery, the damage it causes and the importance of refusing to take part in it? It often may take a generation to change a culture of bribery. The sooner our children can be taught about the harm it causes, the better.

How can the people in your community be encouraged to talk about these issues?

It may be helpful for communities to discuss:

- ways in which people can avoid and refuse to participate in bribery (eg avoiding certain places, learning where bribery can be reported, not engaging with corrupt officials etc),
- ways in which they can tackle the issue together,
- how they can safely report experiences of bribery (called 'whistle blowing'), and
- challenges involved in taking a stand against bribery and how these can be overcome.

Could people be encouraged to make an individual commitment not to take a bribe and to report any instances they encounter?

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Providing ways to report bribery anonymously

Simple, anonymous ways of reporting bribery can be a very important method of tackling it. Are there ways for your community to report bribery anonymously? If not, could the community set up a simple mechanism such as:

- a bribe boxes (see below)
- a telephone hotline for anonymous calls
- a bribery text messaging/SMS service
- a website for people to anonymously report bribery

Reports of bribery can then be shown to local leaders, the local government department or the media, and used to highlight where bribery is happening and needs tackling.

A bribe box

This is a method by which people can anonymously report bribes. A box is placed in a public place (for example in a church or school building). If people are offered or asked for any kind of bribe, they can write it on a piece of paper and post the paper into the box. Posts should include the date and type/amount of bribe (eg where the bribe was requested and for what reason), but **should not** use names or put anybody at unnecessary risk. The information is collected and can be given over to local leaders or the media.

These boxes have been used in church services where congregants have posted their instances of bribery.

Casestudy: a bribe reporting website

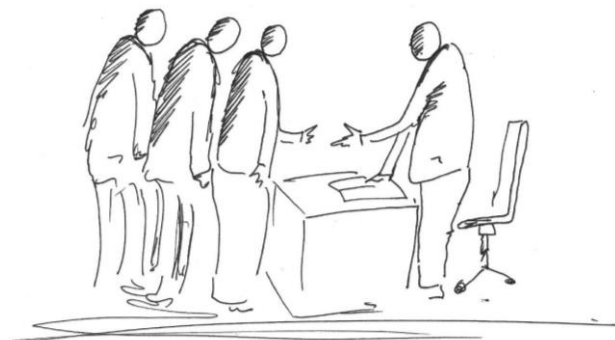
The website [Ipaidabribe.com](http://paidabribe.com) was set up by a civil society organisation in India. It gives people throughout India the chance to report anonymously their experiences of bribery. Since it started, thousands of bribe experiences have been reported, and some people have reportedly avoided paying bribes by mentioning the website to officials seeking bribes.

Source: Tearfund (2012) Why advocate on governance and corruption

Meeting with politicians to call for things to change

Could a group from your community meet with your local political representative? The group could discuss the communities' concerns about bribery and tell the representative why this is an important issue. They could suggest possible actions that could be taken to tackle bribery in your locality.

See **Tool C1 – Making the most of meetings with decision makers.**





Finding out more

- Tearfund (2012) *Why advocate on governance and corruption?*
<http://tilz.tearfund.org/~media/Files/TILZ/Topics/Why%20advocate%20on%20governance%20and%20corruption.pdf>
- Tearfund (2013) *Partner resource: how to get involved in tackling bribery*
<http://tilz.tearfund.org/~media/files/tilz/research/partner%20resource%20-%20how%20to%20get%20involved%20in%20tackling%20bribery.pdf>

Related tools:

- A1 – Revealing corruption: information for a facilitator [A1: *Corruption & governance-1*]
- B – Corruption (Bible study) [B: *Corruption & governance-1*]
- B – Advocacy work (Bible study) [B: *Awareness-raising-2*]
- B – Being an advocate (Bible study) [B: *Awareness-raising-3*]
- C1 – Advocacy – Communicating with people in power [C1: *Influencing decision-makers-1*]
- C1 – Working with the media [C1: *Influencing decision-makers-3*]
- C1 – Making the most of meetings with decision makers [C1: *Influencing decision-makers-4*]

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