



October 2021

Background

As part of their efforts to mainstream knowledge about the obstructive consequences of corruption practices in sustainable development, **UNITAR and the Rule of Law and Anticorruption Centre (ROLACC)** organized the e-learning course “**Anticorruption and Sustainable Development**”. The course highlighted the causes, consequences and challenges posed by corruption in sustainable development and emphasized the benefits of prevention for the enhancement of the rule of law and the enjoyment of human rights. The course also provided guidance on the formulation of strategies on anti-corruption and development and strengthened skills to facilitate training design and methodologies. In line with the UN disability-inclusive approach, the course included sign language video and narrative audio as part of the training materials.

A launch event “**Virtual roundtable: anticorruption and sustainable development**” was organized prior to the course. The discussion was aimed at sharing good practices for a culture of learning and capacity-building in the areas of anticorruption and sustainable development. Four experts shared their perspectives and experiences of the subject. Participants enrolled in the e-learning course were also encouraged to participate in the launch event.

Two iterations of the course have been concluded to date, one was delivered between December 2020 and February 2021 and the second between February and April 2021. This Impact Story focuses on participants from the first iteration, a total of 508 participants from 104 countries. India, Iran, Nigeria and Togo were the countries with the highest number of participants. Furthermore, 49 per cent of participants were male, 41 per cent female and 10 per cent identified as other genders. Fifteen participants reported having a disability. Moreover, the survey respondents with disabilities confirmed the use of sign language video and narrative audio during the course.

We collected feedback from 84 participants through a beneficiaries survey (with a 17 per cent response rate) and conducted 3 in-depth interviews to identify any potential changes in participants’ work or academic life.

508
participants in
first interaction



49% male
41% female
10% other gender

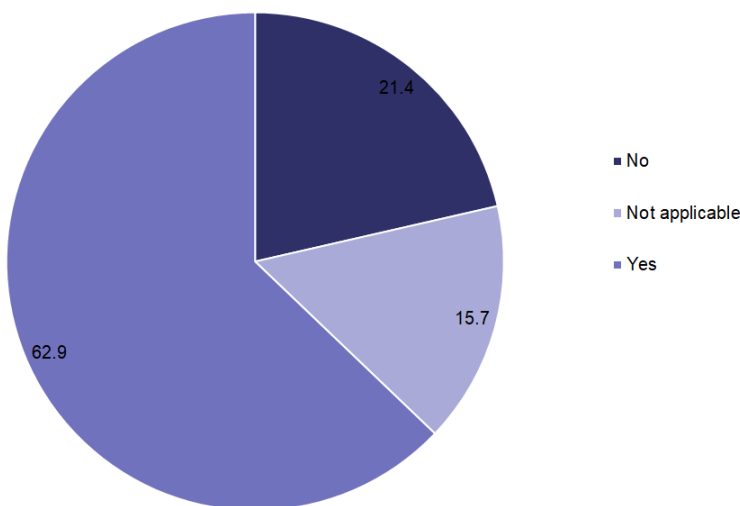


Application of knowledge and skills from the online course

The online course was attended by participants from diverse backgrounds, most of them were professionals working in government, international organizations and NGOs. Forty per cent of survey respondents were senior staff and most of the participants worked directly in areas related to the course contents. Forty-nine per cent indicated that their work was fully related to the areas of anti-corruption, governance and national institutions or sustainable development, while 30 per cent said that their work was “somewhat” related.

The number of participants confirming application of knowledge and skills was around 63 per cent. Figure 1 shows the application rate of survey respondents. The respondents who selected “Not applicable” were from outside the labour force, which includes students and professionals whose work was only slightly or somewhat related to the topics covered by the course. On the other hand, 74 per cent of those confirming application used the knowledge and skills from the course in their professional or academic activities with high frequency (frequently or often).

Figure 1. Application of knowledge and skills



The course contents with higher applicability for respondents were challenges caused by corruption, challenges in combating corruption for sustainable development and links between corruption and sustainable development.

Examples of application of course content, according to participants, include improved analysis of factors associated with corruption practices and the challenges for academic assignments and daily work tasks for judicial or legal activities; incorporation of auditing

and control procedures; use of knowledge in seminars and training and inclusion of instruments presented during the course to conduct a network analysis for the reconstruction of the "value chain" of corruption to determine origins and critical connections.

Alongside the main course content, 26 per cent of respondents (8 participants) who attended the launch event indicated using knowledge from this forum. Some forms of application comprise the use of quotes from presenters in academic writing, identification of stakeholders and organizations from other countries to expand networks and improvement of personal understanding of the topic.

Respondents attributed, on average, 71 per cent of general application to the online course. As highlighted in the interviews below, the course structure allowed participants to navigate through new knowledge and methodologies related to anti-corruption, even if they are experienced professionals. The course design and methodology were suggested as an enabling factor for applying knowledge and skills, as well as developing participant confidence. In contrast, a lack of funding and support from colleagues, and hierarchical work structures, were the factors which hindered application.

Suggestions from participants for enhancing achievement of learning objectives involve extending the course length (longer course) and more interactive sessions, including discussions or live videos.



Nkiru Joy Okpala

National coordinator of Nigerian network of women exporters of services

Anticorruption knowledge to improve policies fostering women's participation in trading services

Abuja, Nigeria. Nkiru is the national coordinator of the Nigerian network of women exporters of services and the Head of Trustees of the Association of Nigerian women business network. Throughout her experience in working with women's associations, Nkiru has realized that public policies in Nigeria do not always include women in their design and implementation. She attributes the poor inclusiveness to the lack of women's representation in leadership positions and to the presence of corruption practices which deterred integral policy implementation. The course arrived in good time to respond to Nkiru's need to fulfill the task at work of calling attention to corrupt practices deterring women's full participation in economic activities. Her main interest was in understanding international good practices on fighting corruption that could be helpful in the Nigerian context.

After the course, Nkiru shared knowledge from the course with her colleagues in the organizations in which she is engaged. During the monthly meetings of the network of women exporters of services, now quarterly due to COVID-19, women are welcome to present one topic of interest to the members in the format of a short one-day training course. Nkiru presented on the role of stakeholders in combating corrupt practices. Nkiru was also invited as a speaker on a webinar to address women's participation in governance and the fight against corruption practices in trade. As part of her speech, Nkiru incorporated information from the course. Moreover, Nkiru has also advocated for including topics on anti-corruption from the course during her participation with the association of women business network, in particular how to fight corruption, which includes retrieving data for budget tracking. She believes that thanks to the information she has shared, other women in the organization are becoming more knowledgeable and confident regarding the design of strategies and mechanisms to identify corrupt practices.

Nkiru recognized that an important factor that contributed to foster application of knowledge in her organization is the existence of a large network of women with the capabilities to utilize the new knowledge without the need for extra personnel. Yet, Nkiru is aware that achieving higher-level results of modified corruption practices can only be achieved if there is better cooperation between public officers and CSOs. She believes this to be the main hindrance to institutional change. Availability of funds for conducting tracking or auditing processes is sometimes lacking in the organization, which also represents a challenge to fully applying all knowledge from the course.

Another result from the course for Nkiru is related to her professional networks. Thanks to the course, she became closer to another course participant from Nigeria who she already knew. Now, they regularly exchange ideas and information which could be useful in their respective professional lives. Nkiru also appreciates the quality of the UNITAR-ROLACC training materials

and even states that having quality and reliable information has increased her confidence when speaking on anti-corruption issues or in her work tackling these practices.



Junelyn Pagunsan

Associate graft investigation officer at the Office of the Ombudsman

Improving public investigation using anticorruption elements

Manila, Philippines. Junelyn has been an investigator in the Office of the Ombudsman-Philippines since 2004 with expertise in handling cases involving criminal (especially graft and corruption), civil and administrative law violations by public officers. While the COVID-19 pandemic has stunted professional growth for some, Junelyn remains unfazed. The extended time at home gave her an opportunity to participate in online courses which equipped her with practical tools to incorporate into her training design-related work and a renewed perspective on the link between anti-corruption and sustainable development.

At the office, Junelyn is currently expanding a campaign to prevent the increase of anti-graft and corruption cases. In this regard, Junelyn found the second module of the course on the causes and effects of corruption on sustainable development useful. **Junelyn has used information about permanent factors and circumstances triggering corruption in the investigation process when analyzing the evidence.** Junelyn says that this information has helped her to expand her analysis and arguments when analyzing the evidence in the assigned cases and to determine the potential effects of specific corruption practices, e.g., negative effects on intended beneficiaries of a programme due to mismanagement of resources.

Junelyn believes that the course's international approach has given her an edge in handling investigation work with an international perspective. Training courses which touch on international perspectives are not common topics for her, or for other domestic training facilitators for that matter. Recently, her office collaborated with anti-graft and corruption organizations from Asia and the United States of America where she admits that, thanks to the course, **she was able to immediately understand and participate in discussions and meetings on investigation strategies.**

A third key change in Junelyn's work is an improved performance in her role as a training designer. Aside from being a seasoned investigator, Junelyn is also a certified trainer, a skill she uses to share her competence and passion for her subject. The online programme served as a refresher course, but also provided her with practical new tools to incorporate in her training design-related

work and a new overview of the link between anti-corruption and sustainable development. The online course arrived in good time for the preparation of an e-learning course at Junelyn's organization and for her investigation-related work at the Office. The fourth module of the course, specifically the content on "Identification of important steps for training", was key for performing this assignment. Although Junelyn is a certified trainer, **the information on how to conduct blended and online training was something novel and groundbreaking.** Incidentally, right after she participated in the training course, she was tasked by her office with organizing a five-day intensive training programme for 30 lawyer and/or investigator participants. Emboldened with the new perspective from the course, she wasted no time in adopting the "blended and online training approach", utilizing online training applications. Aside from her knowledge on training methodologies, Junelyn also incorporated key learning objective content and input from the course's forum discussions. To assess what her participants learned from the training course, she conducted a pre- and post-training evaluation. The course was an outstanding success and Junelyn's breakthrough approach was met with high praise and appreciation.

An unintended outcome for this experience is Junelyn's newly acquired knowledge of the functionalities of Microsoft Teams, the platform she used to deliver the training course, such as breakout rooms. Junelyn also feels more confident as a trainer because she can now successfully expand her training options, e.g., online as well as face-to-face modalities.



Elba Lucía Pacheco

Plenipotentiary Minister at Chancellery of Colombia

Contributing to anticorruption plans

Bogotá, Colombia. Elba Lucía has worked for the Chancellery of Colombia for 22 years. She is currently working as a plenipotentiary minister and she will soon sit an exam, for which she is studying very hard, to become an ambassador. Besides studying for this aspiring position, Elba enjoys growing professionally and participating in training courses. Elba received a course invitation from the diplomatic academy of the Ministry and found the topic very relevant to her functions. Specifically, she was interested in the link between anticorruption and sustainable development, given the priority of sustainable development on the international agenda.

Besides the importance of the topic for broadening her perspectives in sustainable development, the course arrived in good time for Elba to apply knowledge from the course in her day-to-day duties. During the course, Elba was working at the embassy of Colombia in Cuba and was responsible for editing the “public management quality improvement plan” [plan de mejoramiento de calidad de la gestión pública]. The course was useful in performing this task, because she was able to highlight the elements on transparency in public management. At the same time, the chancellery launched an anti-corruption programme aimed at improving the transparency of the institution and its diplomatic missions abroad. Diplomats were asked to provide feedback on the plan, and that is when Elba suggested elements from the course. During the course, the embassy also organized the first conferences and presentations of the anti-corruption plan. Elba took this opportunity to provide feedback on the plan making use of the knowledge on methodologies that public officials can use to get closer to the target population, based on the principles and regulations learned during the course, e.g., principles of transparency and accountability in public administration. Elba found her contributions were valuable and enriched the discussions.

Having said that, Elba would still have liked the plan to include some of the international frameworks discussed during the course. Although there is no plan to incorporate these as yet, she would be very keen to work on this task if the programme was to be revised. Also, Elba feels very confident in the knowledge that her work ethics align with the international principles of the course. In addition, the quality of the course materials has instilled Elba with a feeling of confidence when referring to the knowledge gained. She appreciates the systemized nature of the materials provided during the course.



Conclusion

This Impact Story confirms the utility and timeliness of the course for participants from the first iteration. Although the application rate from survey respondents is modest, a number of practical changes to participants' working lives can be identified. Moreover, the attribution rate and frequency of application were both high, meaning that those applying the knowledge learned benefited greatly from the training course. The semi-structured interviews suggest that the course was timely for the interviewees in terms of their role and responsibilities at work, either in developing new assignments or in enhancing day-to-day work practices.

The course contents and materials were very much appreciated by the participants and identified as key factors in the application of knowledge and skills. In particular, the link between anticorruption and sustainable development was seen as innovative by survey respondents. Some suggestions regarding organization and methodologies to further improve application include extending the course length (longer course), more interactive sessions and being able to download video lectures.

Networking and access to an international platform were identified as unintended positive outcomes from the course. Finally, the course participants included beneficiaries who indicated having a disability. This may be due to the addition of inclusive learning features, however we were unable to obtain specific feedback from participants who used these options.