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Promotion of Participation and Citizenship in Europe through the "Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs)" of Transparency International. Analysis and Enhancement of an Anti-corruption Tool to Enable Better Informed and Effective Citizen Participation in Europe

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Strong fundamentals, vast potential

Overall ALAC Situation Analysis Report

Global ALAC Unit, TI Secretariat (TI-S)

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1. Executive Summary

This overall situation analysis report of Advocacy and Legal Centres (ALACs) has been compiled by Transparency International Secretariat (TI-S) as part of its efforts under the project "Promotion of Participation and Citizenship in Europe through the "Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs) of Transparency International. Analysis and Enhancement of an Anti-corruption Tool to Enable Better Informed and Effective Citizen Participation in Europe". The project is supported by the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme.

This document is the third in a suite of materials produced to facilitate a research analysis of the ALACs as a tool to enable the participation of citizens in the fight against corruption. Following the context analysis on the European legal framework for citizen participation conducted by Prof. Ralf Rogowski and the individual ALAC situation analyses produced by TI's National Chapters in the Czech Republic, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Azerbaijan, this report provides the perspective of TI Secretariat (TI-S) on ALACs. Taken together, these materials will inform the further research and implementation of the remaining work packages of this project as well as the future practice of ALACs beyond the project.

The report comprises an assessment of the state of development of ALACs since the approach was first used by TI National Chapters in 2003. Due to the nature of this report, this assessment is necessarily subjective and exclusively the perspective of the authors who work at Transparency International Secretariat. It references the ALAC self-assessment reports submitted by TI's National Chapters, but as agreed with the research performers, it also goes beyond those and takes into view the state of development of the global ALAC community.

The first part of this report provides a broad description of the ALAC approach as well as an overview of how and where it is currently being used. The second section of the report focuses more in detail on the capacity of ALACs as perceived from the perspective of TI Secretariat. Section 4 and annex of the report contain the initial version of an ALAC Performance, Monitoring and Quality Assurance Framework, whose development was part of the deliverables by TI-S under work package 1 of this project. This tool has already been piloted by four of the participating TI Chapters in this project (CR, RO, BiH, AZ), and a summary of their feedback on the tool is also provided in the fourth section of the report.

2. Overall Situation Analysis of ALACs in 2010

In 2003, TI's National Chapters (NCs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania and Macedonia first started experimenting with an approach to fighting corruption that has since become known within the TI movement and beyond under the name Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs). Since then, this innovative way of fighting corruption has been taken up by more than 40 National Chapters in the TI movement. This rapid growth over a relatively short period of time reflects, we believe, the relevance of the approach across very different contexts, its practicality and – crucially – its adaptability to the needs in various governance contexts.

ALACs operate in more than 40 countries and have received more than 70,000 contacts from people from all walks of life.
Their cases range from small bribery to grand corruption involving hundreds of millions of Euros.

It is worth highlighting in the context of this project that Europe is in some way the home region of the ALAC approach. Following the rapid spread of ALACs to all regions of the world, it is not least through the support of the Seventh Framework Programme that ALACs are now able to grow further within Europe, and in particular in older EU member states. This is a particularly important development from TI's perspective and we have sought to highlight key thoughts in this regard where appropriate in the document.

The following section summarises the main motivations and objectives behind the work of ALACs.

2.1 The Purpose of ALACs

The overarching goal of Transparency International's Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs) is to contribute to an enabling environment for good governance in which people actively assert their political, economic and social rights by resisting corruption.

Pursuing this aim, ALACs have two objectives: (a) To empower victims and witnesses of corruption to address their grievances and (b) to promote systemic changes in policy and practice of public and private actors that can have a lasting impact in fight against corruption.

2.2 The problem that ALACs seek to address

Corruption undermines people's trust in the political system, its institutions and its leadership. Corruption and impunity corrode the rule of law, the consolidation of and the commitment to democracy, as well as the respect for human rights and fundamental

freedoms. It is a truly cross cutting issue which can retard all aspects of democratic development; it creates barriers for the poor and marginalised groups to access basic services such as education or health care and to the realization of political, social and economic rights; it distorts resource allocations, inhibits economic growth and foreign investment, degrades natural resources, and fuels conflict and human rights abuses. Corrupt judicial systems in particular become the instrument that denies people's rights and fair access to justice.

While corruption's sheer pervasiveness makes tackling it daunting, doing so is a structural condition for an inclusive, democratically participative and empowered society. As such, fighting corruption must be a central part of any meaningful attempt to promote democracy and the respect for human rights. In our view, the wide participation of citizens themselves is a key condition for the success and credibility of anti-corruption interventions.

There is of course no shortage of political declarations in favour of fighting corruption. In particular – but by no means exclusively – in countries suffering from high levels of corruption, politicians are regularly winning elections on anti-corruption platforms. Around the world, numerous government action plans to address graft have been announced, backed up by varying degrees of political will.

ALACs:

- *Engage people*
- *Help them to resolve their complaints/ cases*
- *Use their information to advocate for systemic change*

However, top-down or purely government–driven anti-corruption initiatives have repeatedly proven ineffective and unsustainable. Failing to produce meaningful change in the lives of people, this perpetuates the apathy and lack of demand for better governance from the citizens which allow corruption to flourish in the first place. In turn, purely confrontational approaches that lack constructive engagement with the state cannot produce sustainable change in public policy and practice. Thus, for anti-corruption initiatives to be successful and sustainable, they must facilitate the empowerment of citizens and engage governments constructively.

In both dimensions, we believe that ALACs have already demonstrated significant impact in an extremely cost-effective way.

2.3 The relevance of the ALAC approach

In pursuit of TI's anti-corruption mission, the principal strategies of ALACs are two-fold: Firstly, ALACs offer free legal advice and assistance to victims and witnesses of corruption. Through telephone hotlines, walk-in centres and community outreach services, ALACs help citizens pursue corruption-related complaints. Secondly, by harnessing the powerful, real life data gathered by ALACs on the consequences and mechanisms of corruption, TI Chapters then engage in strategic advocacy to bring about

systemic change in policy and practice. ALACs observe strict client confidentiality and – in line with TI's approach of constructive engagement – they build partnerships with public authorities, business and civil society to realise citizen's rights.

ALACs empower individuals to go from being corruption victims to protectors of their own rights, their livelihoods and ultimately their societies. The diversity of cases and people who use the centres – from the most vulnerable and marginalised to entrepreneurs and well-positioned whistleblowers – demonstrates the pervasive nature of corruption, and also that people will get involved in the fight against corruption when they are provided with a simple, credible and viable mechanism to do so.

2.4 The key activities of ALACs

ALACs provide victims and witnesses of corruption with free legal assistance and advice to pursue their corruption-related complaints and seek to translate citizens' concerns into structural changes through advocacy initiatives. While all ALACs share this common approach, the operation of each centre also reflects the specific context in the country. As such, it is useful to think of the ALAC as an *approach* rather than a pre-defined, rigid set of activities. Therefore, the four main activity areas described below are a framework of operation, with precise methods varying from country to country.

2.4.1 Legal advice and support for victims of corruption

ALACs assist people through paralegal and legal advice and other kinds of support to follow up on corruption-related grievances with existing complaints mechanisms and relevant authorities, including public service providers. Where cases do not fall within the mandate of the ALAC, i.e. when they do not appear to be linked to corruption, clients are referred to other civil society organisations or relevant government authorities. At times, ALACs also facilitate contact with investigative journalists and the media when important cases cannot be resolved otherwise. ALACs do

Hotline operator in BiH

not usually 'represent' clients, but rather empower people to act themselves. In this work, full time ALAC staff are often supported by volunteers who usually also have a legal background. This includes law students for the operation of the hotlines and client counselling aspects of the work, as well as senior legal experts for more complex elements of ALAC case work.

2.4.2 Outreach and public education

A second important component of the work of ALACs is the raising of awareness of corruption and its consequences. A key element of this is making the ALAC service itself

known to a broad section of the population through marketing, advertising and community outreach, as well as through the opening of satellite offices, for example in Azerbaijan and Kenya. The maintenance of anti-corruption libraries and resource centres for use by clients and community members is another strategy used by the ALACs to increase public awareness, as are how-to guides for citizens on official procedures. Some ALACs have also produced compendia of the questions most commonly asked by citizens.

2.4.3 Campaigning/ Advocacy

Going beyond the approach of legal clinics for example, ALACs use the information and insights gained from their case work to translate individual experiences into higher-level impact, aiming to change the systemic conditions that facilitate corruption. Their case work generates unique data on how corruption works in practice and how it affects people in their daily lives. Over time, this will undoubtedly become the most comprehensive source of first hand information concerning citizens' experiences of corruption. ALACs collect both qualitative data such as case studies and impact stories pointing to particular corruption problems, as well as quantitative data about corruption hotspots on the basis of recurrent complaints. This data is invaluable and very credible in any initiative that aims to address corruption in a systemic way, advocating changes in policy and practice of public and private institutions.

Civic Empowerment

ALACs reject the notion that people are apathetic in the face of corruption. They demonstrate that citizens will become involved in the fight against corruption when they are provided with simple, credible and viable mechanisms to do so.

ALACs use a broad range of advocacy techniques from the dissemination of case statistics, press releases and media appearances to meetings with officials (both within the authorities concerned by ALAC cases as well as with those exercising regulatory oversight over parties that are subject of complaints). The centres monitor and publicize the responsiveness of public authorities to clients' complaints. They also develop specific recommendations for changes in public policy and practice and advocate for their adoption in a firm but constructive way. Essentially, ALACs are an approach that provides a focus for advocacy by responding to citizen priorities and demand.

2.4.4 Building Effective Coalitions against Corruption

This important element of the work of ALACs includes cooperation with government authorities (at all levels) and collaboration with other civil society organisations.

ALACs, working in the TI multi-stakeholder tradition, aim to create dialogue and working partnerships with government institutions. They do not seek to replace government complaints mechanisms – which exist in many countries – but rather seek

to complement them. ALACs act as advisors to citizens rather than 'investigators' of complaints. Operating one step below existing complaint mechanisms, they ensure that when complaints do reach government, they are well-documented and well-articulated, making them more actionable by authorities. The relationship with government authorities (at local and national levels) is often constructive and focused on identifying solutions. Where the environment is conducive, it is explicitly desired that ALACs develop well-functioning relationships with different government agencies, including the judiciary. These relationships are typically underpinned by Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). Some of the ALACs have also supported capacity development of existing public complaints mechanisms.

The ALACs also build and maintain partnerships with other civil society organisations to join forces for more effective advocacy initiatives, to facilitate referrals of non-corruption related cases and to reach broader segments of the populations, in particular vulnerable and marginalized groups.

2.5 A brief history of the replication of the ALAC approach

The ALAC approach was first started in 2003 by three TI national chapters in South Eastern Europe. Surpassing all early expectations, the ALAC model has since been taken up almost half of the TI movement and represents one of its most dynamic initiatives. At this time, 41 chapters of TI operate ALACs; from Guatemala to Georgia, Pakistan to Papua New Guinea, and Romania to Rwanda. In 2011-2012, this number will grow to perhaps 65 or more countries. We believe that this rapid growth is evidence of ALAC's practical and results-driven approach, as well as their high cost effectiveness.

At its initial stage, the success of the ALAC approach was more a result of spontaneous innovation than a carefully planned and masterminded new strategy to fight corruption. In essence, ALACs began with the idea to advertise a hotline to the general public to provide citizens with information about corruption. Not least, this tactic was borne out of a certain frustration with the lack of tangible results in the reform process against corruption in countries in the near-abroad of the European Union at the time. This led to the idea of soliciting input from the general public and offering a service to assist people with any corruption-related grievances they had encountered.

Once opened, we were initially surprised by the strong demand for such a service among the citizenry. Over time, ALACs then developed a whole range of services to address the various needs reported by citizens, notably by establishing core legal capacities within the National Chapters to follow up on the corruption related concerns brought to them. Since then, TI Chapters have developed a broad scope of services to people, each according to the needs and opportunities in their context as well as the resources available to them.

Over the first few years and as more and more National Chapters took up the approach, ALACs continued to develop without an explicit growth strategy at the international level. However, the network exchange between TI Chapters at the regional and global level, often facilitated by the TI Secretariat, probably did make an important contribution to the growth of the number of ALACs and their impact.

2.6 Potential reasons for the successful replication of ALACs

The following are some of the potential reasons for the successful replication of ALACs:

(A) Relevance and effectiveness

The ALACs appear to have met a genuine need of both Chapters and the people they seek to serve, which is, of course, key to any spread of knowledge and innovation. The fact that ALACs are fully owned and operated by TI Chapters themselves is demonstrated by the large number of chapters which have adopted the ALAC approach relatively independently of TI-S and, even when they have received initial funding through TI-S, hardly any have closed once this funding has run out.

(B) Adaptability

The ALACs are an *approach* rather than a "project" or "blue-print" to fight corruption. They can be adapted to local circumstances and capacities, which sits comfortably with the founding principles of TI and its decentralised structure. This means that there is an extremely high level of local ownership.

(C) Simplicity

The basic concepts underlying ALACs – helping people solve their problems and using the information gained as a basis for engaging in advocacy for systemic change – are

clear and easy to understand, both internally and externally. For some within TI, assisting people was the most important thing, whereas others were more interested in the systemic change aspect. However, all realised that in the ALAC approach it was not a question of "top-down" **or** "bottom-up", but that the two are inextricably linked. This simplicity helped enormously in terms of gaining traction and understanding.

(D) Role of TI-S

While not implementing ALACs themselves, TI-S has played a central role in facilitating the expansion of ALACs. While TI-S never tried to micro-manage them (which would be both impossible and inappropriate), the Secretariat has provided a range of key tools and interventions. This has contributed significantly to developing a base of ALAC resource materials to assist the establishment, management, monitoring and evaluation of the centres.

2.7 From experiment to core competency of TI Chapters

At the beginning, ALACs clearly represented a very new and not always uncontroversial way to work. Within the TI movement, individual voices early on even suggested that while clearly being a highly effective approach, ALACs should perhaps be spun off from TI as an independent endeavour. For others, the involvement of ALACs with individual cases raised questions concerning TI non-investigative approach. However, more and more National Chapters began experimenting with the ALAC approach as they considered it a relevant and necessary part of fighting corruption in their countries.

An important milestone for the spread of ALACs was the success of the TI Secretariat in securing multi-year, multi-country agreements with a number of bilateral donor agencies to establish and/ or support existing ALACs. An important early example for this was the funding provided by the German government for ALACs in the Western Balkans and the Finnish government's support for replication of the model.

The most significant accelerator of ALAC growth to date came with the British Department for International Development's (DFID) support to more than 15 ALACs as part of TI's GBP 4.7m "Anti-corruption: Delivering Change" programme which has been implemented since 2008. With this support, new ALACs have been established in the last two years for example in Argentina, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Liberia, Pakistan, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji. Likewise, DFID supported the opening of ALACs in Morocco, Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories from 2008. The European Commission also became an important partner in replicating the ALAC model both through support at country level and through multi-country projects.

As a result of this spread of the ALAC approach, TI Chapters in all regions of the world now operate such centres. This has led to a firm integration of the double-pronged ALAC strategy – services to people and advocacy for systemic change – into the work of many in the TI movement, validating its relevance across a wide variety of contexts. Simultaneously, TI Chapters have innovated significantly within the overall ALAC approach.

For example, the opening of regional centres and mobile outreach to serve rural populations – pioneered in the Europe and Central Asia region by Azerbaijan and Armenia – is now a clear trend across many ALACs. As ALACs spread from the original transition country context to developing and least developed countries, outreach to entire communities rather than primarily individuals emerged as a common strategy in these contexts. Others, such as TI Russia, have taken the ALAC concept online, successfully scaling up the engagement of people in that way.

Perhaps one of the most exciting recent trends is the growing interest in the ALAC approach among TI Chapters in OECD, and specifically in EU countries. In addition to the imminent launch in Ireland and Finland, which will be supported by this project, TI Luxembourg is planning an ALAC and others such as TI France and our partners in Portugal have expressed interest in ALAC-type work. The present project will be an important milestone in understanding how the ALAC approach will be adapted and what its impact will be in this context.

Despite the relative newness of the approach in the TI movement, ALACs have, in November 2010, clearly become part of the core set of strategies and approaches that the TI movement uses to fight corruption. The recently adopted movement-wide strategy TI 2015 affirms a key role for the mobilisation of and support to people in order to promote transparency and integrity. A clear majority of TI National Chapters already operates ALACs or will begin to do so in the near future. In this context, we are

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ALAC Story: Cold Comfort

The construction of gas pipelines would have normally been welcomed by rural Moldovans, who struggle through freezing winters. Instead of providing a better standard of living, though, the construction project brought hundreds of them a series of unexpected costs. Although the government paid for the provision of a main gas pipeline to the city, the citizens were required to pay for a connection between the pipeline and their own homes. Soon after pipeline construction began, members of several communities were struck by the lack of transparency in the project details. First, there was no available information on the planned cost of the design and construction of the pipeline. Second, members of these communities were unable to access information on the origins and the allocation of financial resources for the project. Third, they were given no explanation for the amount of money collected from them by the construction company. As the project proceeded, the situation worsened as sub-contractors began defaulting on contractual obligations. This led to an unexpected increase in the cost of construction work, which in turn fell to the community members to supplement, significantly draining their already limited resources. Members of several communities contacted Transparency International Moldova to voice their suspicions that the money they had contributed for the gas pipeline was being misused. Based on this complaint, TI Moldova urged the Agency of Construction and Territory Development, a specialised national institution, to carry out a detailed study of the project's expenses. As community members had suspected, the real cost of the completed works in several rural localities was lower than the amount of money the construction companies had taken from them.

The company undertaking the work was ordered to pay back all "personal contributions" that exceeded construction costs, which on average amounted to one month's salary per person. A series of workshops were also held for the benefit of the complainants and information on the construction project's finances was finally made available.

extremely encouraged to see that the absolute majority of TI Chapters who have started to use the approach have firmly integrated it into their overall work against corruption in their countries. This becomes clear also in the situation analyses developed by our colleagues in the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania and Azerbaijan.

The ALAC is clearly a central component of these Chapters' work, feeding into many other activities, such as research reports and complementing other programmes with their citizen complaint capability. This makes us very confident that in the coming years, ALACs will continue to further strengthen the work of the anti-corruption movement. By providing a simple, credible and viable mechanism to increasing numbers of people, popular demand for better governance can be effectively and constructively harnessed to achieve lasting change.

2.8 ALAC Impact to date

To date, ALACs have received more than 70,000 contacts from people from all walks of life. This illustrates the huge demand for the ALAC services among the population in already more than 40 countries. The cases the centres have dealt with range from small bribes to grand corruption involving hundreds of millions of Euros. They involve issues of public procurement, abuse or misuse of public assets, privatisation, environment, judiciary, health, education, customs, and planning and development inspectorates. Numerous significant changes have already been effected by ALACs, including, for example, the introduction of whistleblower laws, new administrative procedures for inspections and licenses, changes in court procedures, re-tendering on large infrastructure projects, as well as resignations and prosecutions in situations where impunity had been the norm. In our view, ALACs are indeed successful at translating citizens' concerns on corruption into structural changes for better local and national governance.

Beyond the external impact, ALACs have also contributed substantially to the TI movements' own understanding of real-life corruption challenges. Even in cases where the TI Chapter in a given country was already considered the foremost civil society

Evidence for Impact

"As the evaluation progressed, it became increasingly clear that the project has been highly successful. Ample evidence of this success was available from all stakeholders: ALAC clients, other NGOs, government agencies and the media – all of whom were unstinting in their praise of the Centres. [...]

While caution should be exercised in order to avoid overstating TI's relative influence in government affairs, it is fair to point out that their advocacy efforts – as directly linked to the ALAC initiative – have attained a greater impact than originally envisioned, especially in terms of legislative and policy reform."

From the first external evaluation of ALACs (cf. footnote 2)

organisation in the fight against corruption, ALACs have often significantly broadened their understanding of corruption as it affects the citizens. One such example is the high number of contacts ALACs have received regarding potential corruption at the local government level. In a number of cases, the work of the ALAC has contributed to a much greater involvement of the Chapter in such areas of concern. Likewise, the immense challenges people face with regard to the respect of property rights (especially land issues); in accessing public services such as health, water and education as well as the close relationship between corruption and human rights violations have broadened TI's own understanding considerably.

2.9 Current trends and objectives across ALACs

The following outlines some of the key trends we are currently seeing across ALACs from a global perspective.

(A) Continued expansion of ALACs

Clearly, the growth in numbers of ALACs around the world over the last years will still continue for some time. We expect that in the next five years, the large majority of TI Chapters will use the ALAC or similar approaches in their work.

One of the key recent developments in that context is the spread of the ALAC model to OECD countries in particular within the EU, an extremely important development for Transparency International, as it believes strongly in the importance of fighting corruption in the Global North and the South. Without a doubt, expansion into countries with often lower perceived levels of corruption, different cultural and political contexts and, typically, highly developed institutional frameworks will yield important new lessons about the relevance and adaptability of the ALAC approach. We expect this project to contribute substantially to this learning.

Part of this continued growth is also an accelerated decentralisation of ALACs within countries. Whether it is through the opening of regional ALACs or mobile ALACs, both already implemented and/ or seriously considered by a number of TI Chapters, this has a significant potential to engage much greater numbers of people in creating sustained demand for better governance.

(B) Significant scale-up of operations

Despite the remarkable success of the ALACs, many still operate on very small budgets. Greater resources have the potential to significantly broaden the operational scope of ALACs and their ability to effect change.

Supporting the scale-up and sustainability of operations is a clear priority for TI-S, and we hope to increase the financial support to ALACs especially from new donors and partners.

(C) Harnessing ALAC data and documenting impact

ALACs generate a large amount of unmatched primary data on corruption that can be successfully captured and utilised for research and advocacy purposes. Supporting this through the development and roll-out of state-of-the-art tools is a key priority for TI-S.

Likewise, the remarkable impact of ALACs is clear from the stories, case studies and statistics they produce. Comprehensively documenting and promoting these would inspire even more citizens to seek assistance from ALACs, and further advance systemic change. This is another area where we expect to further increase our efforts in the coming years.

(D) Promoting innovation, collaboration and integration

ALACs have, in our view, the potential to fundamentally impact on the way anti-corruption interventions are designed and implemented. Identifying new partnerships, using technology to leverage even greater impact and integrating the capacities of ALACs with other interventions of the TI movement and others is another priority area for the present and future development of ALACs.

3. Perceived Capacity of the ALACs

This section focuses on the capacities of ALACs as perceived from the perspective of TI Secretariat. It uses the categories originally set out in the project proposal for this project. It is important to emphasise that this "Berlin view" does not represent an objective analysis of the capacities of the ALAC currently operated by TI Chapters. Rather, it articulates some of the impressions that in particular the Global ALAC unit at TI Secretariat has gained through its work with ALACs, remotely through email or phone contact, in cross-regional ALAC meetings as well as during visits to individual ALACs. It also spells out some of the assumptions that we are making in our work. All of the views articulated here remain to be validated or contested by the ALACs themselves, something that we look forward to and sincerely hope to learn from, including in the context of this project.

3.1 Quality of technical and personnel infrastructure

By and large, ALACs appear to have made a significant contribution to developing the technical and personnel infrastructure within the TI Chapters that operate them. Practically all ALACs have at least one full-time staff member with a legal qualification. Many ALACs do, in addition, have legal assistant positions and involve legal experts as volunteers in two principal ways: a) law students towards the end of their studies to staff the ALAC e and/ or to provide basic counselling to clients, and b) highly experienced and specialised lawyers as advisors or even legal representatives for the client or the Chapter. Often, ALACs simultaneously have both kinds of volunteers or collaborators.

With regard to technical infrastructure, ALACs have fairly basic needs. All ALACs are equipped with at least a minimum of IT and communications infrastructure such as personal computers, telephones etc. Those ALACs which operate a toll-free hotline have found different ways of ensuring its continued functioning. Often, this is a paid-for service purchased from telephone providers that must be fundraised for. However,

ALAC brands

some ALACs have also been able to secure toll-free hotlines as a pro-bono service at no extra cost to the Chapter.

In terms of physical infrastructure, ALACs require work space for their staff as well as room to receive clients. Ideally, clients are able to meet with ALAC staff in a separate room. Even where this is not within the means of the TI Chapter, the ALACs have found ways to ensure adequate client privacy, e.g. by reserving meeting rooms during designated hours. Another important aspect of ALACs is the security of clients, staff and the case data/ files. According to our impressions, most ALACs ensure the physical security of files through lockable cabinets. In some countries, ALACs have installed video surveillance equipment for the ALAC offices and others have equipped the Chapter offices as such with special equipment such as secure doors and fingerprint locks. However, the physical security aspect of ALACs remains an important area for continuous improvement in line with requirements in the specific countries.

3.2 Material and financial resources and constraints

Globally, the most important donors to ALACs are the development agencies of the large donor countries, such as DFID, the German Foreign Office as well as the European Commission as a multilateral actor in particular through its Human Rights and Non-State Actors funding lines. Others, including the Dutch government, USAID and AusAID also provide or have provided important support to ALACs. There is also a limited amount of funding going to ALACs from private philanthropic sources.

Despite their impressive impact, most ALACs still operate on very limited budgets. Also, many ALAC rely on only one donor to support their work. There is however no doubt in our minds that ALACs have demonstrated remarkable cost-effectiveness. The amounts of uncovered or prevented corruption in just one or a handful of cases of an individual ALAC often exceeds by many times the cost of running an ALAC in any given year. Some ALACs have dealt with potential cases of corruption running into the hundreds of millions of Euro.

This cost-effectiveness becomes clear when the case figures are put into the context of current median ALAC budgets. In a non-representative survey in late 2009, 8 out of 22 ALACs reported annual budgets of less than EUR 50,000, 10 had budgets of up to EUR 100,000 and only 4 reported annual expenditure above EUR 100,000. While this extremely favourable cost-benefit ratio is a great strength, the size of their budgets severely limits the sustainability of ALACs. Or put differently, we are absolutely convinced that ALACs can achieve even greater impact with larger resources at their disposal.

We believe that a number of current constraints need to be tackled to achieve this. On the one hand, TI Chapters themselves will need additional professional capacity so that they can invest in strategic resource development and diversification. At the moment, the majority of TI Chapter does not have a full-time fundraising position for example. There are significant local resources available in a number of countries and ALACs

should stand a good chance to access a larger share of them if the adequate investments can be made. From a global perspective, this is perhaps one of the areas where ALACs so far have remained below their potential. ALACs have an extremely strong case for support, but more needs to be done to translate this into greater resources and sustainability.

At the same time, the TI Secretariat has an important role to play in facilitating the access to much greater resources through fundraising from international donors and individuals in developed donation markets. To some degree, the implementation of such strategies depends on TI movement-wide dynamics and operational priority setting at the Secretariat. However, the new movement strategy 2015 provides an excellent launch pad for this to happen.

Even though by and large current ALAC budgets remain limited, some have had extremely encouraging success in diversifying their income sources and sustaining their work in the long term through innovative business models. Interesting examples for this include the Romanian and Czech ALACs. In the Romanian case, the ALAC is so central to the work of the Chapter that its citizen complaints function is being resourced through other projects that benefit from this capacity. In the Czech Republic, the domestic government provides financial support to the ALAC. While this is still an exception in the ALAC community, it is possible that the future ALAC in Luxembourg might be able to access government funding, too. In our view, these examples certainly provide grounds for optimism regarding the ability of TI Chapters even in so called developed countries to attract resources for this important work.

It is worth mentioning in this context that at various points, conversations have taken place within ALACs concerning the potential charging of fees for their services. To date, the overwhelming sense was that this would undermine the purpose of ALACs, in particular by potentially limiting the ability of more vulnerable individuals and groups to access the ALAC services (cf. also BiH ALAC situation analysis).

Lastly, it is also important to point out that ALACs do not only rely on financial resources to sustain their work. As mentioned, volunteers play a critical role in providing the services and in sustaining other areas of ALAC activity. Likewise, the pro-bono support of specialised private sector partners, such as law firms, communications agencies, software developers and others is absolutely critical – at the national and at the international level.

3.3 Efficiency of operation

This area is perhaps the one that is most difficult to comment on from a Berlin perspective. By and large however, our impression is that the ALACs and their staff generally show an extremely high-level of commitment and professionalism. Usually, they will seek to progress cases as speedily as possible towards resolution. However, a key determining factor of success remains the external context, i.e. the national system of governance.

In many cases, clients will bring cases to the ALACs which – although efficiently administered by TI – might never be successfully resolved due to shortcomings in the legal system or the lack of enforcement of existing rules in practice. In such cases, it becomes a question of how efficiently an ALAC then moves from the identification of such systemic weaknesses to articulating and addressing them in advocacy campaigns.

Here, it is our impression that those Chapters that combine legal and strategic advocacy capacity in the ALAC often have a more naturally integrated vision of the service and systemic change aspects. However, there are also ALACs staffed only by lawyers who have achieved this. In essence, focussing only on the efficient treatment of individual cases would almost be too short-sighted for an ALAC. Rather, it is key that the ALAC serves as a mechanism to understand people's real life concerns, identify structural weaknesses and take steps towards addressing them through advocacy. If this whole chain of ALAC activity is taken into view from an efficiency perspective, then this is certainly an often discussed issue among ALACs. A key aspect of continuously increasing efficiency in this regard in our view is data management.

3.4 Effectiveness of information management and database

A lot of work has been done around the issue of Monitoring and Evaluation for ALACs right from the start. Given the newness of Chapter work in this area, the approach has been explicitly incremental. The initial focus was on standardised data collection and the development of a database for use by the ALACs. [1] This database has been developed under the leadership of TI Secretariat starting in 2006 and has been used by the majority of ALACs since about 2007.
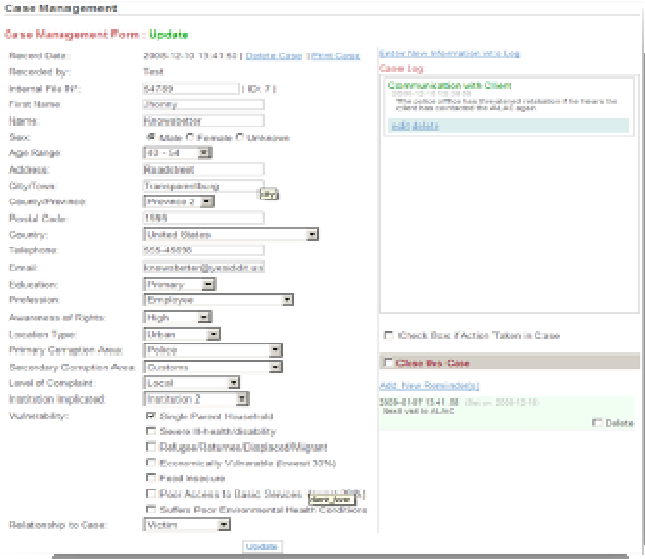
Screenshot ALAC Database

The ALAC database can be considered the technological backbone of operations. It is used to manage the relationships with clients and their cases. Additionally, it captures essential data about the types of corruption people are complaining about as well as regarding the institutions implicated or affected. This data can be reported out in graphs and statistics. In this way, it becomes a powerful information management and analysis tool. Notwithstanding its limitations, the first generation of the ALAC database has been one of the key innovations that have helped drive the advocacy work of ALACs

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[1] See http://www.ascerta.hr/myTI/form.php for a test version of the 1st generation ALAC database, ID and Password are "test")

Screenshot ALAC Database

themselves, as well as the marketing of their efforts to the donor community. Since the first ALAC database has been in use, we have progressed enormously, having developed a global results framework and tools for the measurement of partnerships and systemic changes in policy and practice for ALACs. A second generation of the ALAC database is currently being programmed, and it will be ready to be piloted in the 1st quarter of 2011. This new database has been a big investment for the global ALAC unit at TI-Secretariat and will join up all of our M&E work for ALACs. It will act as a Case Management system for ALACs, collection of statistics on ALAC cases, capturing of systemic changes, it links with the Global Results Framework, etc. It has also been designed so that ALAC data will also be compatible with TI Policy and Research tools.

We are convinced that through the ALACs we have access to absolutely unique data on the workings of corruption in practice and on how it affects people in their daily lives. We hope that this new database will allow us to start using this data much more extensively to communicate the impact ALACs are having on corruption. Simultaneously, we are also in the process of developing more systematic qualitative data on ALAC impact through case studies and stories.

3.5 Political, policy and legal constraints

As has also been noted in some of the situation analysis reports by the ALACs themselves, external factors are perhaps one of the most important issues to consider with regard to the ability of ALACs to effect change.

Every initiative to fight corruption is in some sense inherently political. As such, the work of ALACs is therefore always subject to the national political and institutional context in which they operate. To mitigate the potential tension between ALACs as a civil

society driven initiative and the public authorities, constructive engagement is a key strategy. By and large, the building of relationships and dialogue with those institutions responsible to investigate corruption and exercise oversight has been very positive. In many countries, the work of the ALACs has been welcomed by government and public agencies.

In individual cases however, ALACs have clearly touched on vested interests through their work. In a few instances this has led to a serious pushback from the authorities, and a heightened security risk for ALAC staff. Challenges included threats and attempts to seize ALAC records. Perhaps contrary to intuition, it seems however that in particular in extremely challenging environments, TI Chapters operate some of the best ALACs.

It is important to emphasise that ALACs have almost always found areas in which their work is more feasible than in others. Government and the public sector are seldom monolithic, and it is almost always possible to identify institutions and individuals who are willing to work with ALACs to effect change. Rather than addressing the objectively "most important" corruption issue in a country, ALACs are reactive to people's priorities and respond to the opportunities for change that exist within a given context. The ALAC approach is therefore – to some extent – opportunistic in that energies are channelled where people are willing to take action and where change seems possible.

One of the areas that have recently received significant attention from the global ALAC unit and some of the ALACs themselves concerns privacy regulations and other areas where the centres need to ensure their own compliance with applicable laws. This is an extremely important area that may in the future require additional resources within ALACs.

In some countries, NGOs are not allowed to provide legal advice itself, and in others advocacy and lobbying are subject to very strict regulation. While these situations require specific local solutions, e.g. a different name or slightly modified mission statement for the centre, the overall activity of ALACs has not been seriously limited by such situations.

However, ALACs generally do need a minimum space for civil society to operate. The same is true for many other activities of a TI National Chapter. So far, ALACs have been established under the TI name only by member organisations of the TI movement. This means that in most cases, the ALAC has benefitted from the existing experience and expertise of the TI Chapter, enabling it to flexibly adapt to the local context. ALACs currently operate successfully in highly diverse contexts, including European democracies, more or less authoritarian states and small island states. Their success seems to indicate that indeed, ALACs are a highly context sensitive approach.

3.6 Quantity and quality of direct citizen engagement

The direct engagement with citizens is perhaps the feature that most clearly distinguishes ALACs from other anti-corruption initiatives. Since ALACs first started, we have seen a steady increase of the numbers of people who have contacted ALACs around the world. To date, more than 70,000 people have phoned, written to or visited ALACs. As the number of ALACs continues to grow, spreading to new countries and to the sub-national level, we expect these figures to continue to rise.

Within the ALAC community, different centres receive varying numbers of contacts. Also, contact numbers shortly after the launch of a centre may be lower than those of a more established and well-known ALAC. To take the extremes, Argentina and Uruguay have received just over 100 contacts combined a year after opening and Azerbaijan continues to have the highest contact number of any ALAC with more than 23,000 since start of operations. The well-established ALACs in the Europe and Central Asia region have almost all received a few thousand contacts since opening. Among the newer ALACs, Morocco, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Rwanda and Nepal have all received between 400 and 1000 contacts in just over a year since opening. If Azerbaijan is taken out of the equation, ALACs globally receive about 350 contacts per year on average.

It is important to emphasise that overall contact numbers are only one indication of the quantity of ALACs' citizen engagement. In particular as ALACs are expanding into countries with significantly lower perceived levels of corruption, it may well be that overall contact number will remain relatively low. At the same time, the quality and importance of the contacts could still be very high, for example when well-positioned

whistleblowers turn to the ALAC. This is, for example, one of the possible directions that ALACs in the EU/ OECD context might take.

Overall, there are two broad lessons that ALACs have learned across very different contexts. Firstly, advertising of the ALAC hotline number usually has a very strong and immediate effect on contact numbers, as does extensive outreach to communities. Secondly, only about 10%-20% of initial contacts usually end up becoming ALAC cases. This is because in addition to clearly corruption-related issues, people also report concerns that TI Chapters do not consider as falling into the ALAC mandate. There are of course exceptions to the percentage rule, e.g. where the ALAC has specialised over time and works with a relatively small number of highly relevant complaints.

As ALACs have expanded into all regions of the world in the last few years, we have seen an impressive diversification of the types of citizen engagement activities they conduct. Notably, diverse outreach tactics have been developed by TI Chapters, including the promotion of ALAC services via theatre groups, radio phone-in shows and mobile ALACs travelling into rural areas.

ALAC outreach in Senegal: theatre group

Also, work with community concerns in addition to individual citizens has grown into a component of ALACs that is common to very diverse contexts. Along with growing overall contact numbers we expect this trend to deepen further as more and more ALACs are considering options to reach beyond the capitals and into rural regions, as well as seeking to increase their engagement with particularly vulnerable populations. It also worth noting that in terms of the engagement with people, ALACs go far beyond a mere client-counsellor relationship. A number of TI Chapters also integrates the ALAC will broader civic education programmes. Other ALACs have publicly backed prominent whistleblowers whose cases were already in the public domain.

Overall, the relevance of the ALAC approach is perhaps best demonstrated by the great variety of clients. ALACs have been contacted by people from almost every imaginable background: From the unemployed and most vulnerable to well-positioned and highly educated whistleblowers.

3.6.1 Information, legal advice, referrals, extra-legal support and level of client satisfaction

ALACs provide services to citizens along a relatively broad scale of activities. Despite the name Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres, it is actually our impression that the bulk of the work of the most ALACs is in providing relatively simple but extremely important information and orientation services to citizens. For example, this might include explaining to a complainant which official government agency they need to direct their concern to, and how they need to prepare the necessary documentation. Also, many ALACs have developed how-to-guides for citizens to help them navigate administrative structures concerning routine procedures such as obtaining a passport. While not necessarily always amounting to full-scale legal assessments, the legal capacity of ALACs is of course critical in ensuring the professionalism of this work and the accuracy of their advice.

The importance of this work cannot be underestimated as it is often precisely the frustration felt by citizens when confronted with unresponsive and complex administrative structures that produces apathy and disengagement. By helping people understand and navigate their legal entitlements and institutional structures, ALACs provide an important and much demanded service to people. ALACs are not law firms specialising in corruption cases but a civil society initiative concerned with structural change according to the priorities articulated by citizens themselves through their corruption-related complaints. This civic empowerment and education aspect of their work is a key feature of ALACs.

That said, as captured in the graph below, the scope of services that ALACs provide does at times go far beyond this basic level:

Level of Services Provided & Extent of Involvement of the ALAC
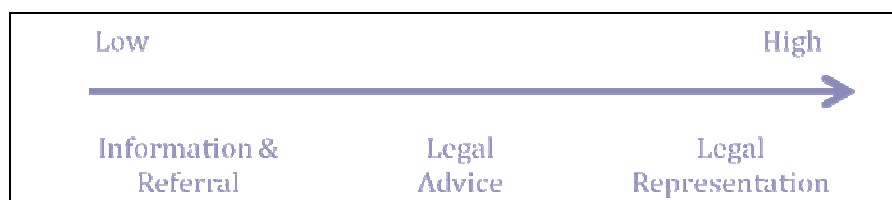
As indicated above, not all ALACs get involved at all levels along this continuum. A non-representative survey of ALACs in November 2009 showed that just under 23% of ALACs had represented clients in court. Roughly 41% were considering whether or not they wanted to do so in the future and 32% ruled out this possibility.

The following results from the same survey appear to confirm that the majority of ALAC work with clients takes place in the areas of information provision, referrals, legal advice and follow up with institutions.

The major focus of ALAC work with clients/ cases
November 2009, 22 respondents
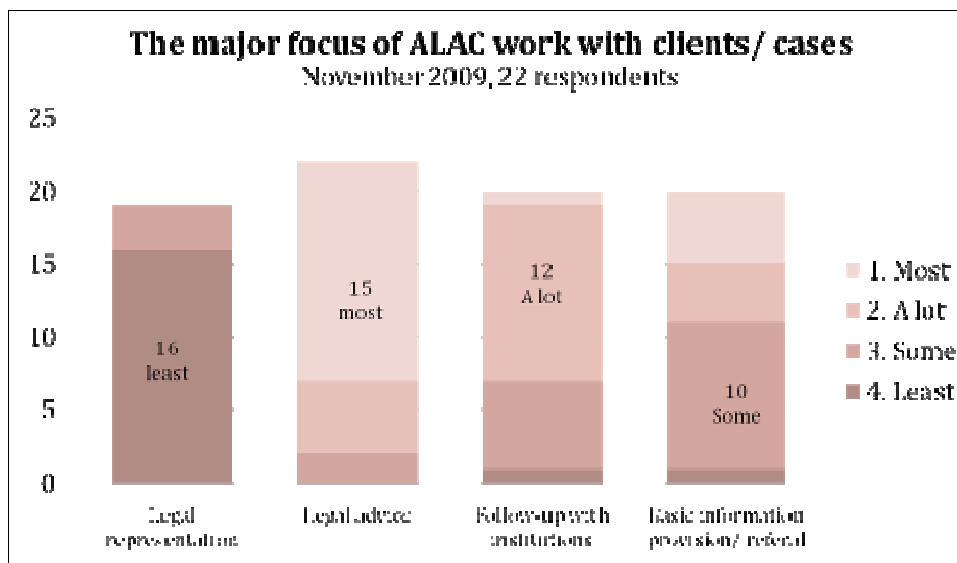
The scope of services provided by an ALAC is ultimately determined by a number of external and internal factors. The former include the local regulatory environment and political constraints or specific opportunities for impact. Internally, the skills and capacity, strategic and risk considerations and the financial means available to the TI Chapter are usually important determining factors. Also, the TI Chapter's narrow or broader interpretation of TI's non-investigation policy has traditionally played a role in shaping the scope of services offered to people. ALACs also sometimes appear to increase their degree of involvement when they perceive a case as particularly important.

However far they go, ALACs themselves tend to rate the quality of the services that they provide quite highly. Nevertheless, a number of ALACs have recently begun to express considerable interest in a TI-S led initiative to help increase further the capacity for legal advice work. In particular, the access to legal expertise and information beyond that currently available to TI Chapters is of great interest to them in that context.

In terms of a common challenge that many ALACs have consistently expressed, meeting the expectations of clients stands out. This has been a challenge for many ALACs, often particularly at the outset of their work. Many of the initial contacts received by ALACs turn out as not falling within the TI mandate or may not be actionable, due to the lack of evidence that can be presented by the client. Likewise, the success or not of addressing a clients concern is very often dependent on the reaction (or lack thereof) by the responsible authorities.

ALACs have developed different tactics to deal with this considerable challenge, including training of ALAC volunteers and staff, referrals to other organisations, less or more targeted advertising of the service as well as continually developing their relationships with other stakeholders to facilitate follow up on cases. However, meeting individual clients' expectations is a continuous challenge well-known also to other organisations providing legal advice and other types of support. In our impression,

ALACs usually learn how best to deal with this challenge as they mature and learn how to educate clients about what they can and cannot expect.

3.7 Quality and quantity of representative citizen work

As has been mentioned before, the provision of services to people is only one aspect of the work of ALACs. Equally important to the overall concept is the translation of citizens' concerns into systemic changes. These are understood to be changes to the policy and practice of in particular public actors (government and public authorities) that can have a lasting impact on TI's mission, by deterring corruption or promoting greater transparency and integrity in public life.

ALACs contribute to such changes by systematically gathering and analysing the information they have gained through the work with citizens. Coming directly from the people, this information is unique and powerful when used in advocacy initiatives, whether through direct exchange with decision-makers or through publication in the media and other public fora. Representing the voice of the people rather than expert opinion, that government and public agencies have often responded directly to the issues brought forward through the ALACs.

3.7.1   MoUs with relevant institutions / institutional interfaces

In order to foster positive and constructive relationships with the authorities responsible for the investigation and prosecution of corruption offences, ALACs have traditionally developed formal Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) wherever appropriate. These documents can help formalise the intent to cooperate on the resolution of complaints addressed to, for example, the Ombudsman Office by the ALAC on behalf of a client.

Rather than just the number of formals MoUs an ALAC has in place, it is more important to take into view the quality of relationship between the key public institutions in a country and the ALAC. It is our impression that the majority of ALACs has indeed invested significant time and resources to

Seminar for public officials, Guatemala

establish and develop working relationships with the key institutions in their countries. While some of this work typically takes places at the outset, e.g. in the phase leading up to the launch of a new ALAC, it also continues throughout the life of an ALAC. To some degree, relationships with new institutions are also fostered as the need to do so arises

in the context of specific complaints. This has been the case for example with regard to public services providers.

In some cases, we have seen that ALACs have been able to develop very valuable relationships even beyond the cooperation on the day-to-day level. For example, ALACs have been asked to help train public institutions such as the police which they had previously found to be especially affected by complaints from citizens. The example of the Czech Republic, where the domestic government currently finances a large part of the core ALAC infrastructure, also demonstrates another dimension of cooperation with the authorities. In other cases, TI Chapters have even helped public institutions set up and run their own complaints mechanisms.
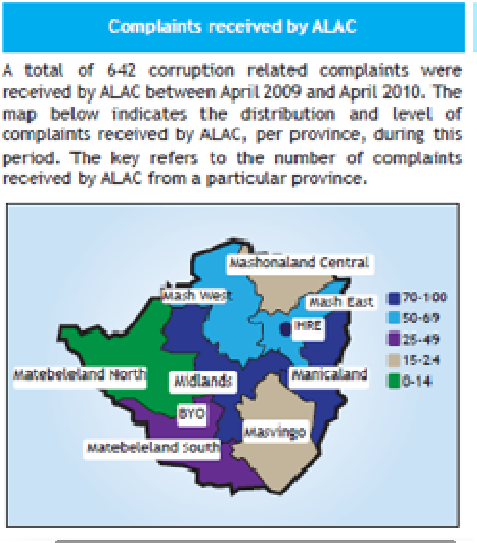
It is important to point out that relationships with other institutions extend beyond the public sector. Other non-governmental organisations in particular are key partners for many ALACs. On the one hand, ALACs regularly refer cases that do not fall within TI's mandate, but that may well be relevant to another NGO's mission. On the other hand, NGOs or civic associations and their constituencies are themselves potential and actual complainants and beneficiaries of the ALACs.

Recently, some of the longest-established ALACs have also begun to deepen their engagement with the private sector. This is potentially an important area for future innovation and collaboration with new partners. So far, no systematic attempt at bringing these ideas together has been made at international level, but we are planning to do so in the near future.

3.7.2 Quality of advocacy strategy, advocacy outputs and evidence of advocacy impact

As mentioned above, the service function of ALAC can in some ways be seen as essentially feeding into the advocacy work. Most ALACs consider the advocacy component of their work as at least as important as the advice function.

It is important to emphasise that the ALACs and the TI Chapter are usually indistinguishable – they are fully integrated, certainly in most of the older ALACs. This integration is also something that to a degree we actively promote from an international perspective. In consequence, it may be slightly misleading to speak of ALAC advocacy. In fact, it is usually the TI Chapter that carries out advocacy activities using information that originated in the ALAC work. In their advocacy work, ALACs then

Complaints received by ALAC

A total of 6-42 corruption related complaints were received by ALAC between April 2009 and April 2010. The map below indicates the distribution and level of complaints received by ALAC, per province, during this period. The key refers to the number of complaints received by ALAC from a particular province.

70-1·00
50-6·9
25-4·9
15-2·4
0-1·4

ALAC statistics, Zimbabwe

benefit from the existing experience, expertise and relationships that the TI Chapters have developed over the years.

As such, the advocacy that is carried out on the basis of ALACs is largely determined by the concerns brought to them by citizens. This does not reflect a lack of strategy or planning, but rather reinforces the point made earlier: ALACs do not necessarily identify the biggest corruption problem in a country, but they are responsive to the concerns of victims, witnesses and whistleblowers. ALACs are essentially demand-driven.

Working with the information that has been brought to their attention, ALACs regularly produce statistical analyses, communicate with the media and collate citizen guides to help avoid corruption where possible. More recently, a number of ALACs and TI-S have begun to devote significant resources to producing case studies and impact stories. These also have the potential to demonstrate to much wider audiences how corruption can be overcome. It is hoped that this will motivate both more people to come forward to report corruption and encourage greater support to the work from donors and other stakeholders.

There is ample evidence that even at this

Story: Diagnosing Abuse

The difficult conditions facing many Palestinians, where almost a third are unemployed, means that the job protection and social benefits provided by a workers' union are vital. When Salem* contacted his local union for advice on his health insurance, he was confronted with an unexpected charge of 80 New Israeli Shekels (US $20 / €14) - more than the average daily wage in the West Bank. Salem later discovered the service should have been provided for free.

Disillusioned by the experience, Salem promptly contacted the TI chapter in Palestine, AMAN. He reported what had happened and sought advice on what steps could be taken to recover his money. Concerned that other citizens might also be paying for a service that they were entitled to at no cost, AMAN reported the case to the Minister of Labour. A committee was established to investigate whether Salem's case was an isolated incident or if similar discrepancies had occurred in the public service delivery at other unions.

The investigation revealed that other workers' unions in the West Bank had also unfairly charged for services that should have been for free. This discovery prompted the Minister of Labour to write to each of the unions and explain that such practices were illegal and that any unions found flouting these rules would do so at the risk of facing stiff penalties. The ministry made sure that Salem got a fair deal on his health insurance and, in order to raise public awareness of the registration procedure, produced a publication on the health insurance system.

Names have been changed.

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early stage, ALACs have achieved significant impact in two principal dimensions. Firstly, ALACs aim to facilitate the empowerment of people themselves in the fight against corruption. Secondly, their goal is to contribute to systemic change in public policy and practice.

With regard to the systemic level, ALAC have, for example, contributed to the changing of laws. One recent example from Montenegro involves a labour dispute. After the ALAC in Montenegro intervened in a major mining strike action that took place for three weeks, 3 km underground, due among other things, to suspected corrupt dealings by the head of the trade union, the local TI partner was able to support the workers in obtaining their demands, namely regular salaries, working places and higher severance
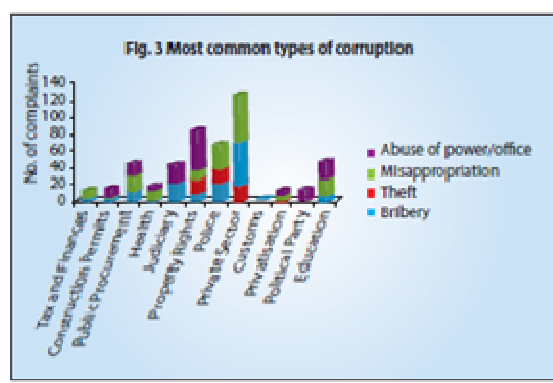
ALAC Statistics, Guatemala

pay. MANS has also successfully advocated for the adjustment to the existing pension law. Mine workers are now able to retire after twenty years of work.

In another case, the TI Chapter contributed to an important adjustment of the national procurement law. The high-level advocacy initiative leading up to this result was originally motivated by a case brought by a small-time businesswoman who had suffered from the opaque cancellation of a public tender which she had won. This case is particularly illustrative in showing how higher-level change can result from the work of ALACs even where the original concern cannot be successfully resolved.

In Palestine, just shortly after opening of the ALAC, we have already seen some impressive advocacy results, including the adoption of fundamental reforms in the transport sector by the Palestinian Authority. In many other cases, the ALACs have contributed to better implementation and enforcement of existing laws against corruption. This second aspect is just as important as the adoption of new regulations. The functioning of laws and institutions in practice, whether at the national or local level is ultimately where the greatest potential exists to overcome the apathy and cynicism people feel in the face of corruption.

Examples of this type of impact include the discovery of ghost-schools with massive implications for the national education budget, the cancellation of botched tenders and the compensation of communities for predatory business practices of an international energy company. If there is one single area where ALAC impact has been most commonly seen across the diverse contexts in which they operate, it is perhaps on access

ALAC statistics, Zimbabwe

to information regimes. An important example for high-level impact in this area is explained in the Czech ALAC situation analysis report.

From the very beginning of ALACs, it became clear that the centres would strongly rely on access to government information in their work. Where more or less adequate legislation was already in place, ALACs have contributed significantly to testing and

using existing legislation in practice, including by raising the awareness of citizens regarding their right to request public information. In other cases, TI Chapters have advocated, successfully in a number of cases, for the adoption of access to information legislation which citizens then are able to use resolve their complaints. In other cases, TI Chapters with ALACs made a strong contribution to the development and passing of whistle-blower protection legislation, another area of significant practical importance for ALACs.

Arguably, the advocacy side of ALACs is where we have recently made significant progress in terms of monitoring and understanding the impacts the centres are having. Developed in the context of TI's large DFID-funded "Anti-corruption: Delivering Change" programme, the following scale has been developed. It will also be integrated into the second generation ALAC database, and is likely to become a standard M&E tool for ALACs.

In essence, this scale allows ALACs to locate the impact of specific advocacy interventions along a continuum of change. The different stages do not imply any value

judgment. For example, it may be extremely difficult and important in some contexts to achieve an official acknowledgement of the need for reform which would classify as a change in discourse. However, the scale does articulate different depths of change, with a profound change in culture that sanctions corrupt behaviour being seen as the ultimate aim. Where along the scale an individual ALAC has the most impact is highly context dependent, but over the years we have seen impact in all of the above categories (except perhaps for profound impact on cultural change which is much more difficult to assess in the short term).

Education Sector Story: Nepal

In Nepal, a student studying to be a lab-technician was accepted to a vocational programme with full scholarship. However, in due course the institution began demanding various hospital, practical and other fees, despite the fact that the full scholarship was supposed to exempt the student from any payments. The father approached the ALAC and was subsequently threatened by the school administration. The ALAC took up the case in coordination with the Campaign against Corruption, Bharatpur, a local organization associated with TI Nepal. The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training refunded all fees. The ALAC is now working with the organisation to ensure that similar occurrences are eliminated.

3.8 Level of synergy and knowledge-sharing

As already referenced in section one of this paper, knowledge sharing and joint learning has been absolutely critical to the development and growth of ALACs. Whereas we have focused on providing some of the potential reasons for the successful replication of the approach across the TI movement, the following outlines some of the key tools and strategies that we have used to support synergies and knowledge-sharing among ALACs.

3.8.1   Within the TI network and TIS

Firstly, it is important to reiterate the extremely high level of local ownership of the ALAC approach. We consider it one of the defining characteristics and strengths of ALACs that TI Chapters themselves operate the centres independently. All ALACs essentially share the broad common framework of empowering citizens on the one hand and seeking systemic change on the other. Within this framework, TI Chapters have adapted their work to the concrete needs and opportunities within their countries, sometimes emphasising one dimension of ALACs over the other, but virtually always keeping both. This high level of local ownership also means that the vast amount of practical knowledge about ALACs actually resides within the TI Chapters themselves. Acknowledging this reality is what has driven our strategies for knowledge sharing from the very beginning.

(A) Workshops, Cross-Visits and Trainings

One of the key tools for knowledge sharing has from the beginning been physical meetings and direct contact between those operating ALACs. It may have helped to disseminate knowledge fast that the "home region" of ALACs – South Eastern Europe – is one of the closest-knit sub-groupings within the TI network, with many countries sharing similar experiences and sometimes languages. In the early days, the regular regional meetings of the TI Chapters in Europe and Central Asia therefore served as a key forum to share experiences with the ALAC approach.

In hindsight, a key milestone in the dissemination of the concept to the wider movement was the first cross-regional meeting where ALACs were discussed. This took place in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2006 and was co-hosted by the TI Chapter and TI Secretariat. At this meeting, about 15 TI Chapters from all regions were represented and learned about the ALAC approach, seeing firsthand the experience of TI Azerbaijan. As a direct result of this meeting, Acción Ciudadana, TI's Chapter in Guatemala for example began implementation of their ALAC in full independence. Today, they operate one of the most successful ALACs and have themselves contributed to the replication of the approach, for example in the Dominican Republic.

This type of cross-visit between Chapters and numerous trainings provided directly by TI-S continue to play a critical role in sharing knowledge across ALAC. We are particularly heartened by the fact that over time, many such direct exchanges between ALACs have taken place without the necessity of TI-S getting involved. However, TI-S

does actively promote such exchanges between TI Chapters wherever possible, typically in the start-up phase of new ALACs.

Other TI Chapters represented at the Baku meeting began implementing their learning in the context of some of the multi-country ALAC projects that we were subsequently successful in fundraising for. Three years later, in November 2009, the first global ALAC meeting already brought together more than 60 participants from around the TI movement to discuss the experiences they have had within their ALACs.

(B) External Evaluation

Very early on, we also realised that something powerful and new was happening in the first ALACs, both in terms of their impact and the new knowledge they were generating on how corruption worked in practice. The initial action taken in 2005 was to commission an external evaluation in order to get an outside perspective as to whether or not our initial interpretations made sense or whether we were fundamentally missing something. We genuinely wanted to learn. The evaluation did, indeed, reinforce what we suspected, namely that there was something very significant happening in a very cost-effective way.

Confirming the impressive early impact that the three first ALACs had achieved, this evaluation[2] was fundamentally important in at least two ways: Internally, it contributed to a clear momentum in favour of replication of this new approach, giving those working on ALACs in Chapters and the Secretariat the confidence to pursue the growth of the concept with vigour. Externally, the evaluation probably strengthened the case for ALACs considerably in the eyes of existing and new donors. This undoubtedly contributed to the subsequent success in mobilising the resources required for replication of the approach elsewhere.

(C) ALAC Documentary

At about the same time, we also produced a documentary in an attempt to explain both externally and internally what was happening in ALACs.[3] Although the documentary was done relatively cheaply and rapidly at the time, it was an important calling card.

Perhaps even more so than the evaluation, the ALAC documentary played an important role in making the ALAC concept known, understood and increasingly accepted as a key new approach within the TI movement. To this date, we are regularly screening the documentary in start-up trainings for ALACs and in meetings with external audiences.

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[2] This evaluation, entitles *DRIVERS OF CHANGE: An Evaluation of the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centers Project* can be accessed here:
http://www.transparency.org/global_priorities/other_thematic_issues/alacs/information.
[3] The ALAC documentary *Agents of Change* can also be accessed online via the following link:
http://www.transparency.org/global_priorities/other_thematic_issues/alacs/information.

(D) Manual

Also relatively early on in the development of ALACs, a basic manual was developed. Some of the first ALACs and notably TI Romania made absolutely key contributions to this, and – while it may require an update in the near future to reflect the growth in experience and diversity of ALACs since 2003 – it continues to represent a fundamentally important resource in particular for newly established ALACs.

A key reason for the continued importance of this document is perhaps its focus on simplicity and clarity, rather than detail. The manual has since been translated into key languages.

(E) Monitoring and Evaluation

As mentioned before, a lot of work has been done around the issue of M&E for ALACs right from the beginning. Given the newness of Chapter work in this area, the approach has been explicitly incremental, i.e. learning to walk before trying to run. The initial focus was on standardised data collection and the development of the ALAC database. Since that time, we have progressed enormously, having developed a global results framework and tools for the measurement of partnerships and systemic changes in policy and practice.

(F) ALAC Stories

An important newer area of significant investment into knowledge sharing has been the development of ALAC case studies and stories.

Although we are still somewhat at the beginning of this process, we have already collected about 30-40 stories, highlighting the impact of ALACs on diverse groups of beneficiaries and in numerous sectors. This work is expected to further intensify in the future as the stories (some of them are included in this paper) have huge potential to engage even more citizens in our work against corruption by motivating them to step forward. Likewise, we see ALAC stories as one of the major tools for future fundraising initiatives targeted at new audiences, in particular philanthropists and the general public.

(G) Security

TI-S has created a SAFE unit to help Chapters (including ALACs) when they face security issues, and have helped mobilise international political support when needed. We have also developed a standard proposal which Chapters and ALACs can adapt to try to raise their own funds to undertake security development plans.

(H) Quality of services

As well as focussing on replication, we have also tried to assist with quality issues in ALACs. Clearly, this is very much related to Workshops, Cross-Visits and Training and

runs throughout everything we have done. However, we are also in the process of developing some specific tools to help ALACs with ensuring the quality of the services they provide.

For example, we are in the process of developing a legal help desk so that so that ALACs have access to networks of *pro bono* external lawyers through partners such as Advocates for International Development (A4ID), as well as access to legal databases.

As part of the present project, we have also developed and piloted a Capacity Assessment Tool for ALACs (a self-assessment), which has been run so far by four ALACs. The feedback from this experience has been very positive (see section 4 and annex).

(I) Funding

Clearly, this is an area where TI-S has invested a lot of effort. This has involved supporting ALACs to raise their own funds (help with development of proposals, facilitating contacts with local donors, training, providing example proposals, advocating with donors) as well as providing funding directly through multi-country projects. Nevertheless, it remains a major challenge given that most of the ALACs continue to operate on extremely small budgets in comparison to their impact and the enormous potential for significantly expanding their work.

(J) Innovation and Learning

The notion of innovation and learning runs through all of the above and is not something separate. However, we continue to see an enormous amount of innovation. For example, the ALAC in Russia is currently piloting an online platform[4] (which can accept tweets, photos, and comments) for complaints which are then taken up and addressed by community activists and ALAC lawyers directly.

Part of the genesis of this came from a workshop convened by TI-S to explore the possibilities of using new media tools in the fight against corruption. We are also seeing ALACs expanding throughout countries (e.g., Senegal is in the process of establishing 15 ALACs, Azerbaijan already has 5 ALACs and undertakes mobile outreach to mountain villages). Very interesting is also the extent to which we are starting to see a lot of cases from communities and groups of people rather than just individuals. Other clear trends include increased work with and through other civil society organisation to serve particular populations and the use of outreach tactics such as radio phone-in shows and theatre groups.

This is all learning that we are seeking to share throughout the ALAC community, and which will be facilitated enormously with TI's new intranet (Chapter Zone) which is currently being rolled-out.

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[4] The website can be accessed here: http://karta.vibor33.ru.

3.8.2 Potential training and capacity development needs

In the past, the most common form of training ALACs have had focused on the start-up of operations. While this type of work – usually conducted or at least facilitated by TI-S – will continue as still more TI Chapters take up the ALAC approach, we are also beginning to see differentiated and specialised training needs as the ALAC community matures and professionalises further.

While the following is not an exhaustive list of potential training needs, it summarises some of the key areas for future ALAC capacity development.

(A) Legal Advice and Quality

As already mentioned, we are currently in the process of developing and piloting a legal help-desk initiative to assist with the development of legal capacity within ALACs. Following a pilot phase, this area of work is expected to expand to also include trainings and other capacity development measures.

(B) Fundraising and Communications

These two critical areas have been part of ALAC training efforts for at least the past two years already. In the future, this work will further intensify to help ALACs capitalise on their significant impact.

(C) Risk management and security

Clearly, these are cross-cutting issues running through other areas of capacity development as well. However, in the context of recent security concerns, this is an area that we are watching closely, with a view to facilitating ALACs' access to specialised expertise and support as required.

In addition to these broad areas of future capacity development needs, there are obviously many other specific requirements of individual ALACs. For example, it has been pointed out by at least one ALAC that the professional development and management of ALAC volunteers is critical to their day-to-day operations. At TI-S we will continuously evaluate such needs and seek to respond to these appropriately, and wherever TI-S has the resources and expertise to add value to the work of the ALACs. As a potential overarching project for the future, we have also been considering to invest into a comprehensive ALAC induction programme.

4. ALAC Performance, Monitoring and Quality Assurance Framework

Under this project, TI-S took responsibility to develop a Performance, Monitoring and Quality Assurance framework for the operation of ALACs. This framework was then to be consulted with the participating TI Chapters. The following provides a brief explanation of the approach that we have taken to arrive at the attached output, the initial ALAC Capacity Assessment Tool (CAT).

In light of the extremely high level of local ownership of the ALAC approach, which, as already stated, we consider a key strength, it would not be appropriate or even practicable for TI-S to set universal standards for the performance of ALACs. Rather, the strengths and weaknesses of ALACs have to understood by the practitioners in their own context. At TI-S we see it as our primary role to assist ALACs in achieving their goals and to provide technical input and support wherever we can clearly add value.

For this reason, it was our approach to develop a tool for ALACs that would help them to assess their own capacity along a set of common dimensions critical to the performance of the centres. In order to arrive at such a tool, we were able to build on an earlier TI-S effort to develop a general TI Chapter capacity assessment tool. With the help of a consultant who had already collaborated with TI in this context, we adapted the categories and structure of this tool to suit the particular needs of ALACs.

The process we used for this included a one-day workshop at TI Secretariat to which the staff of the Global ALAC unit, a TI-S regional coordinator with longstanding experience working with ALACs in South Eastern Europe and the consultant (who specialises in organisational development and NGO accountability) participated. Other TI-S staff who work closely with ALACs participated in the drafting of the first version of the tool via email input.

The initial version of the tool was then sent to the TI Chapters in Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Romania and Azerbaijan with the request to pilot its use and provide feedback on the usefulness and usability of the tool itself. All of the TI Chapters did so and partly used the results of the exercise to inform their own ALAC situation analysis reports delivered under this project.

It is very important to keep in mind that we do not see it as our role to judge the outcomes of the self-assessment of the ALACs. It is in fact a key feature of the tool that it is an internal assessment. In practice, this means for example that we do not necessarily expect the ALACs to even share the results of their self-assessment with us. Rather, the tool is meant to help facilitate a candid internal conversation to identify particular

strengths and weaknesses. For this reason, we limit our analysis here to the feedback we have received on the tool itself.

The following section summarises key points from the feedback the pilot ALACs provided to us.

4.1 Feedback from TI Chapters on the framework

Overall, the feedback regarding the usefulness of the tool was extremely positive. All pilot ALACs rated the tool between 7 and 10 (1 = Disagree, 10 = Agree) in the following categories:

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1. Using the ALAC- CAT identified specific capacity development priorities to which we are committed to undertaking:

2. The ALAC-CAT is appropriate in terms of its length, comprehensiveness and scope

3. By undertaking the CAT, we have a better common understanding concerning the capacity of the ALAC

4. The ALAC-CAT process was a good team building exercise

5. I would recommend the ALAC-CAT to other ALACs

7. We devoted adequate time to undertaking the ALAC-CAT

8. The involvement of TI-S was appropriate in terms of level and scope

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One ALAC expressed a slightly more critical view of the following aspects:

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6. We devoted adequate time to the preparation of the ALAC-CAT exercise

Disagree				Moderately agree				Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

9. The ALAC-CAT has the potential to play an important role in capacity development within our Movement

Disagree				Moderately agree				Agree	
1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

10. Individually and collectively, we learnt new things about our ALAC

Disagree				Moderately agree				Agree	
1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10

Regarding the point about usefulness for capacity development within the broader TI movement, and, related to that comparing the results of individual ALACs, there were in

fact slightly differing views among the pilot ALACs. While the majority noted interest in comparing their analysis with other ALACs, one TI Chapter expressed scepticism at the usefulness of doing so. We are particularly happy that the tool was considered useful in comparing the capacity of different regional ALACs within a country.

With regard to learning new things about the ALAC, this feedback can probably be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand it could point to the comprehensiveness of the tool in covering all relevant aspects. It could also indicate a particularly high awareness of all relevant issues within the ALAC itself. Lastly, this particular rating appears to be balanced by the perceived usefulness of the tool in uncovering potential blind spots in the operations expressed by the same ALAC.

In terms of additional feedback we received, the following stood out: One ALAC expressed a need to review the categories of the tool with regard to the actual size and staff numbers in ALACs, considering for example that no specialised M&E or fundraising position currently exist within the ALAC. In our view this is a perfectly valid point, and we will be interested to hear further feedback from other TI Chapters on this, in particular as the size of ALAC operations may continue to growth significantly in the future. This may well require adjustment.

Feedback also referenced the particular role of private sector actors with regard to ALACs, who can be beneficiaries, partners or other stakeholders in their work. This appears to be an area where we may need to develop a more in-depth understanding of the particular capacity challenges together with the ALACs. Also, the difficulty of defining success was highlighted, mentioning the relation of this notion to individual cases, which can be successfully resolved or not often due to external factors.

There was also feedback from the pilot ALACs regarding the usability of the tool and its reporting functions, in particular the graphs. This is clearly an area where we hope to continuously improve the tool including through the use of more advanced software tools where available.

All in all, we are extremely encouraged by the feedback we have received on the tool so far as well as seeing the professionalism the ALACs have applied to running their self-assessments. All of them seem to have used the tool to consult and discuss widely within their Chapters, also with the participation of senior management and in at least one case a board member. It was due to the availability of the necessary resources for the CAT development process that in at least one case there was perhaps less time than would have been ideal for the ALACs to pilot the tool.

For the future, we are committed to further refining and promoting the tool among ALACs. We consider it an extremely important addition to the resources at the disposal of ALACs as they seek to massively scale up their operations in many countries around the world.

5. Conclusion

As we developed this report, its title "Strong fundamentals, vast potential" almost naturally emerged from our discussions.

From a Berlin perspective, we are truly convinced that the ALACs have achieved major impact in the fight against corruption in a very short time and in an extremely cost-effective way. Clearly, they represent one of the most dynamic anti-corruption interventions anywhere. The recent developments towards an expanded presence of the ALACs in OECD/ EU countries cannot be overestimated in its importance for the engagement of citizens in the fight against corruption in general, and regarding the further innovation within the ALAC approach itself. These are the fundamentals that we see in place.

At the same time, we believe that in many ways we are still to see the real potential of the approach unfold. In our view, the opportunities for substantial scale-up and increased reach of the ALACs are vast. Achieving this goal, in particular with regard to mobilising much greater and new financial resources for the work of the centres, will require immense efforts by the ALACs themselves as well as by the TI Secretariat. However, given the uniqueness of the ALAC approach in responding to, articulating and channelling citizen demand, taking it to scale is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to achieve lasting impact in the fight against corruption.