



Advancing Transparency and Accountability and Countering Corruption in Sri Lanka

Interim Narrative Report

EAST • WEST
MANAGEMENT
INSTITUTE



AFRIEL
Association for Friendship and Love

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Grant Details

Organization Name	AFRIEL (Association for Friendship and Love)
Grant Number	G1377-17-100-3025-20
Grant Amount	\$ 11,215.40
Grant Start and End Dates	May 1, 2017 – October 31, 2017
Project Title	Advancing Transparency and Accountability and Countering Corruption in Sri Lanka
Reporting Period Covered	May 1, 2017 – July 31, 2017

Objectives

To increase youth involvement in anti-corruption movements and promote whistleblowing in corruption-fighting efforts.

Progress of Activities

Table 1: Q1 Planned Activities and Status

Activities	Q1	Q2	Note
	P = Planned V = In Progress C = Completed		
Activity 1: Development of a mobile application, I against Corruption (IAC), to promote whistleblowing in corruption-fighting efforts	P		
Activity 2: Anti-Corruption Intervention Training Programme for youth activists in the Northern Region	V		Completed in 3 districts
Activity 3: Village level anti-corruption forums	V		Completed in 38 villages

Anti-Corruption Intervention Training



In the first quarter, AFRIEL conducted 3-day anti-corruption trainings for the 117 selected youth volunteers and Citizen Watchers from Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Kilinochchi districts. Youth were trained on sources of corruption and social effects, ways of prevention, good governance and its benefits, anti-corruption related law and regulations, and anti-corruption law and regulations. They were also given knowledge of how to identify and tackle corruption issues in their communities and beyond.

During the training workshops, the participants shared their experiences and made contributions in discussing the reason why people engage in corrupt activities and challenges of anti-corruption interventions in post-conflict context. They found that people in the Northern Province, affected by nearly three decades of war, are not familiar with the public administration system nor law and legal process. As a result, people commonly do not know that bribery is illegal and they have rights to refuse the request for a bribe. Moreover, the participants also indicated that people suffer from long-term issues and expect a quick solution, even if they have to pay a bribe. People are used to rely on politicians to solve their problem and have fear of government officers and military personnel.



Gaining insight into the social factors underlying corruption, the participants all agreed that people need to feel motivated to take action against corruption with proper guidance and support. They suggested steps to be taken against corruption and further developed a joint action plan with shared tasks after the workshops. According to the plan, they will break up into groups for village awareness raising to increase grassroots people's understanding about corruption as an illegal act and anti-corruption regulations. These trained youth planned to take responsibility to support both witness and victims of corruption solving their issues legally and coming forward as whistle blowers. They will also intervene in revealing evidence of corruption through the use of legal tools such as the Right to Information Act.

Village level Anti-Corruption Forums

Following the Anti-Corruption Intervention Training, the trained youth from Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi conducted 38 village level anti-corruption forums for a total of 593 people with more than 70% of participants were women.

Table 2: Village Level Anti-Corruption Forums Conducted in Q1

District	Village	Male	Female	Total
Vavuniya	Maharambaikulam	1	19	20
	Maniar Kulam	0	12	12
	Pampaimadu	14	8	22
	Sinnaputhukulam	3	27	30
	Mathuranagar	3	10	13
	Kallikulam	3	12	15
	Ayiladi	6	17	23
	Erukalamkal	0	7	7
	Neeliyamottai	7	33	40
	Rambaikulam	6	2	8
	Manik Farm	17	52	69
	Thaskottam	3	3	6
	Nithyanagar	5	5	10
	Asikulam	1	9	10
	Mullaitivu	Mallikaithivu	0	53
Udayarkaddu		8	1	9
Kilavankulam		1	13	14
Indupuram		3	3	6
Katkuwari		0	14	14
Panikkankulam		7	4	11
Thirumurukandi		2	8	10
Kombavil		16	4	20
Ambalavanpokkanai		4	7	11
Anandapuram		9	0	9
Mullivaikkal East		0	5	5
Kepapulavu		7	0	7
Puthukkudiyiruppu East		2	9	11
Mullaitivu		4	16	20
Kilinochchi		Malaiyalapuram	0	8
	Vivekanandanagar	2	9	11
	Thiruvaïaru	0	9	9
	Santhapuram	0	14	14
	Vivekanandanagar East	0	10	10
	Kilinochchi Town	4	11	15
	Periyakulam	2	7	9
	Iyakkachchi	2	12	14
	Thondamannagar	3	2	5
	Umaiylapuram	13	0	13
Total		158	435	593

During these village forums, the trained Citizen Watchers gave an introduction about the definition of corruption and its social effects and facilitated the participants to discuss about common problems they face every day. Through examining the stories shared by the villagers, the Citizen Watchers further explained what might be the corruption causes behind the issues they face and behind the challenges they encounter while seeking for solutions to their issues. The participants were motivated by learning that there are many legal mechanisms and tools available for finding solutions and showed their

determination against corrupt activities in cooperation with these Citizen Watchers on reporting on corruption cases through the I against Corruption mobile application in the next stage.



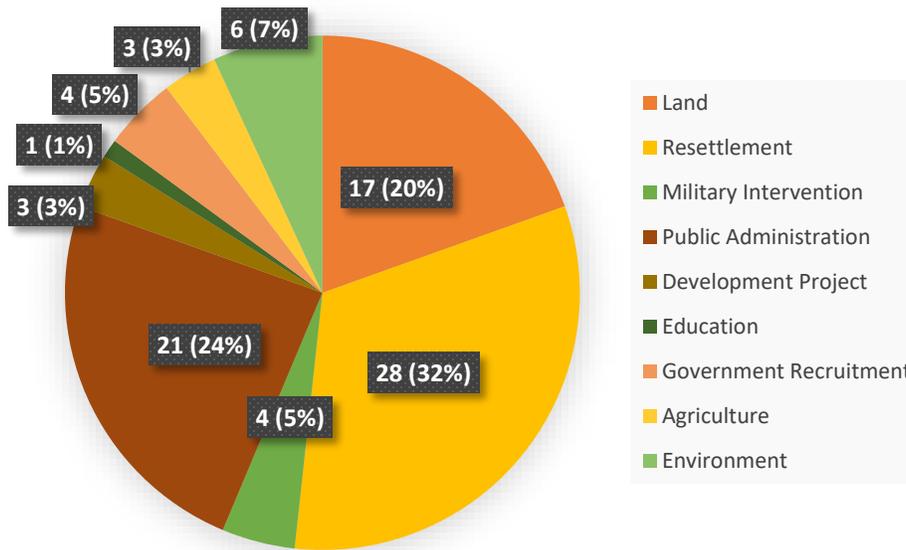
The discussion in the village forums built a solid background for collaboration between people in remote areas and the youth activists on anti-corruption and whistleblower initiatives and also helped Citizen Watcher better understand the corrupt practices in the northern society. Gathering the information obtained through the village forums, the Citizen Watcher team mapped out critical corruption issue areas in the Northern Province as shown in the table below and have also reported 83 major corruption complaints affecting nearly a thousand individuals in this quarter. The youth volunteers and Citizen Watchers are currently collecting supporting documents of these cases and relevant evidence by filing RTI petitions, especially which related to land and resettlement that affects many people, for reporting to the relative authorities through the I against Corruption mobile application.



Table 3: Critical Corruption Issues in the Northern Province Identified in Village Forums

Issue Area	Corruption Identified
Anti-poverty/Relief Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people were removed from the Samurdhi beneficiary list due to political intervention and the benefits were provided to some others who did not meet the eligibility criteria.
Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government officials provided fake documents for private or State land acquisition. It was also learned that land officers asked bribe for land distribution. Political parties and politicians abused their powerful position to occupy private or State land and distributed it to people who have no proper documentation for political purposes. For example, forest reserve land distributed by Ministers to party supporters.
Resettlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political intervened in housing scheme beneficiary selection process and asked bribe from the selected beneficiaries. Government officers charged commission for releasing housing scheme grant. Grama Niladhari collected signatures from housing scheme beneficiaries without providing materials for construction.
Military Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are plenty of issues regarding military occupied or illegally acquired private or State land in the north through producing fake documents or intervention in public administration. Military personnel asked bribe from rehabilitated person and threatened people who refused.
Public Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grama Niladhari not report to work at their office. Government officers produce fake documents for land acquisition. Land officers asked bribe for releasing land permits.
Development Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political intervention and corruption in contractor selection process. There are also many corruption issues in the Rural Development Society Development Programme. Corruption left a lot of idle buildings and unfinished construction sites.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bribery and corruption during school admission seasons and military intervention in preschool education.
Government Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corruption in government job recruitment. The selection was in favor of political party supporters and those who hold politician's recommendation letter, rather than based on the exam performance.
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police supported criminal groups to steal farmers' property.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divisional Secretaries provided illegal permits for sand mining. People who transported sand with legal permit were arrested by police and asked for bribe for releasing their property. Police and politicians supported illegal tree cutting.

Figure 1: Corruption Related Complaints Reported in Q1



I against Corruption (IAC) Mobile Application

AFRIEL has basic discussions with few developers about the I against Corruption mobile application at the start of the project and learned that it is important to have a source of data to estimate the needs of users more accurately before we begin the app development.

Considering this matter as well as we need to ensure the trained youth know the best practice to obtain corruption evidence and information to increase responsiveness of the government institute where a case is referred to, AFRIEL decided to conduct the Anti-Corruption Intervention Training and Village Forums ahead of the app development. With the complaints and evidence collected by the trained youth by now, AFRIEL will complete the development of I against Corruption in the next quarter and introduce it to these youth volunteers, who then will be familiar with the app by registering the complaints received in the first stage themselves and visit house-by-house in the target 100 villages to assist people in installing the app. This arrangement will help the project to ensure public interest in using the app and a considerable amount of complaints with strong evidence will also attract more of the authorities' attention to the issues.

Summary of Major Outcomes

- 117 Citizen Watchers and youth volunteers from Vavuniya, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts were trained on anti-corruption intervention. The trained youth identified the reason behind people's engagement in corrupt activities as well as challenges of anti-corruption interventions in post-conflict context and further developed a joint action plan for awareness raising at village-level to increase grassroots people's understanding about corruption as an illegal act and anti-corruption regulations.
- 593 people from 38 villages in Vavuniya, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts with more than 70% of them were women learned about how corruption delays settlement of their day-to-day life issues and poses challenges for people to find solutions. The forums also enhance their knowledge about legal mechanisms and tools available for finding solutions that motivates them to fight against corruption activities.
- The Citizen Watcher and youth volunteers identified critical corruption issues in 9 topic areas, including anti-poverty or relief programme, land, resettlement, military intervention, public administration, development project, education, government recruitment, agriculture, and environment. 83 major corruption complaints affecting nearly a thousand individuals in respect of these areas were received during this quarter.