

Fighting Corruption In Madagascar

Challenge

As in many other countries, corruption is a daily part of life in Madagascar. It is standard practice to pay bribes for the transportation of goods, a new permit, traffic violations, and even a high school diploma. When Madagascar received a score of 1.8 out of 10 and ranked 98th out of 102 countries in the August 28, 2002 Transparency International “Corruption Perception Index Rankings,” citizens, local business leaders, and government officials expressed their shock and dismay. A serious national problem affecting citizens at all levels of society was finally brought to the public consciousness.



Photo: USAID/Madagascar

Alex Rafamantanantsoa, board member of Transparency International Madagascar, presenting results from a public hearing held in 2003 on corruption.

“There are often only enough public servants to process paperwork for those willing to pay a bit ‘extra,’ so people who refuse to pay a bribe may never get a response!”

- Mrs. Irenée Wilkinson, citizen of Madagascar

Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests revoked thousands of illegally-issued logging permits; a presidential decree required high-level public officials to declare their assets; the Magistrates’ Superior Court suspended twelve judges for corrupt practices; the Ministry of Justice installed an information bureau at the main court in the capital of Antananarivo; and an anti-corruption hotline was created in the police department.

Madagascar now scores 2.6 and is ranked 88th out of 133 countries in the 2003 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index. With the objective of improving good governance across all sectors, USAID continues its support for the new government anti-corruption national council. Together, government and civil society are beginning to change the way “business as usual” is conducted in Madagascar.

Initiative

In order to better understand the impact of corruption in Madagascar, USAID provided a grant to the newly formed Transparency International Initiative Madagascar. This grant was used to conduct the first-ever survey on the perception of corruption among citizens and the private sector.

The project’s two major objectives were to inform people in Madagascar about the state of corruption and raise awareness about the practice of corruption to generate meaningful debate and constructive dialogue. After its inauguration in June 2002, the new government of Madagascar used the anti-corruption index as a point of departure for a major fight against corruption.

Results

During 2003, the Madagascar government established an anti-corruption national council by presidential decree which would be led by a well-respected Magistrate. As a result, the

