



## Corruption

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## What Is It?

**Lack of integrity or honesty (especially susceptibility to bribery); use of a position of trust for dishonest gain.**

Corruption is the abuse of public power

for private gain.

Corruption comes under many different guises: bribery, misappropriations of public goods, nepotism (favoring family members for jobs and contracts), influencing the formulation of laws or regulations for private gain are common examples of wrongdoing or misconduct.

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## Why Should I Care?

One trillion dollars (\$1,000,000,000,000) is wasted globally **each year**, according to World Bank estimates.

Corruption decreases the amount of wealth in a country and lowers the standard of living.

Corruption affects you even if you don't come into direct contact with it. For example, corruption:

- Discourages businesses from operating in a corrupt setting, reducing the overall wealth in a country.
- Reduces the amount of money the government has to pay

## MULTIMEDIA

Video: [Daniel Kaufmann on Corruption](#) | [Good Government](#)

Gallery: [Zambian Youth Fight Corruption](#) [more](#)

## LEARN MORE

**Test your knowledge:** Take the [Youthink! quiz about Corruption](#).

### Explore these sites:

- [Youth & Good Governance](#)
- [Anti-Corruption Network for Transition Economies: Gateway for Europe & Eurasia](#)
- [Global Corruption Report](#)
- [Helping Countries Reduce Corruption](#)
- [Internet Center for Corruption Research](#)
- [OECD Anti-Corruption Division](#)
- [Transparency International](#)
- [World Audit](#)
- [World Bank Governance Data](#)

## TAKE ACTION

Tell the World Bank what you think about corruption and the problems it causes in your country by taking the [Youth Survey on Anti-Corruption](#) [more](#)

workers.

- Distorts the way the government uses its money so that the services it provides (schools, health clinics, roads, sewer systems, police forces, etc.) are worse than they would be.
- Allows those with money or connections to bend the law or government rules in their favor.
- Undermines trust in government.

When countries tackle corruption they increase their national incomes by as much as four times in the long term, according to research. Business can grow by as much as 3% faster and child mortality can fall as much as 75%, if corruption is reduced.

Four reasons that allow corruption to thrive are:

- **Opportunity for corruption:** People get involved in corruption when systems don't work well and they need a way to get their things done regardless of the procedure and laws.
- **Little chance of getting caught:** A lack of accountability comes primarily from a) a lack of transparency (for example, public officials don't inform about or explain what they are doing, how and why); and b) weak enforcement (law agencies don't impose sanctions on power holders who have violated their public duties).
- **Bad incentives:** For example, a clerk not earning enough to live on, or not being sure that he will have a job tomorrow, so he supplements his income with bribes.
- **Certain attitudes or circumstances** make average people disregard the law. People may try to get around laws of a government they consider illegitimate (for example, not paying taxes to the apartheid government in South Africa). Poverty or scarcity of goods (such as medicine) may also push people to live outside the law.

So instead of thinking about bribing officials to obtain something that may be valuable to them personally (like having a phone line installed), people should realize that giving a bribe contributes to the corruption problem in their country. Instead they should work to change the circumstances and curb corruption.

Fighting corruption is closely related to improving governance in a country. It's about improving how the government is set up and managed.

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## What Is the International Community Doing?

Corruption and good governance concern everyone in the international community: donors, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), governments, and citizens in developing and industrial countries alike.

The key to curbing corruption is disabling its four causes, listed above.

Some of the ways the international community is helping to curb corruption are:

- Providing assistance to countries that ask for help in curbing corruption
- Contributing to international corruption-fighting efforts
- Striving to prevent fraud and corruption in donor-financed projects

Fighting corruption is a key focus of the World Bank's analysis and consideration of lending to a country.

[Transparency International](#) looks at corruption in each country in the world and rates the countries on a corruption scale.

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## What Can I Do?

Corruption won't stop unless we choose to stop it. Make the right choices:

- Choose not to give or receive bribes
- Choose to achieve things on the basis of personal integrity
- Choose to speak out when you see corruption around you

You can also:

- Lobby your government for changes to the current system and to create laws to protect whistle blowers
- Write articles to your local newspaper when you see corruption in action
- Join many of the campaigns to fight against corruption and for good governance around the world

Visit the [Corruption and Good Governance](#) site to find out how the Bank is working with countries to eliminate corruption.

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Because eradicating corruption and promoting good governance is key to reducing poverty, the World Bank Institute launched a program in 2001 to raise awareness among youth about the impact of corruption in their countries, and to empower youth to do something about it.

### **Youth for Good Governance**

works with young people to improve the quality of governance, demand accountability from their government and reduce corruption.