



TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
ZIMBABWE

Special Edition

ALAC

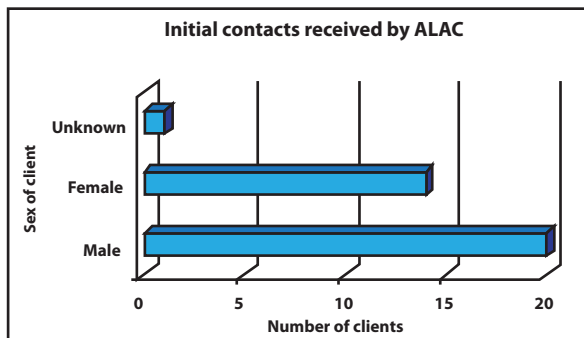
Advocacy And Legal Advice Center

November/December 2009 96 Central Avenue. PO box cy 434 Causeway Harare,

The Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) is an independent forum for citizens to report corruption, propose solutions and seek advice. ALAC services are for free. ALAC publishes information and statistical updates not to name and shame any individuals, entities or sectors, but to prompt a self reflection. The ALAC updates are also meant to raise awareness on the magnitude of corruption across sectors, political, regional, class, economic and social divides. This month's update is a special edition commemorating the UN International Anti-corruption day. It also combines statistics for November and December as **ALAC will be closed for the Christmas and New Year break.**

Initial Contacts Received by ALAC

ALAC received a total of 49 initial contacts in the months of November and December to date. From its inception, ALAC has received a total of 550 initial contacts. The graph below shows the distribution of initial contacts according to sex for the complaints received in last month. The unknown sex refers to those initial contacts made to ALAC through emails and letters where sex cannot be determined.



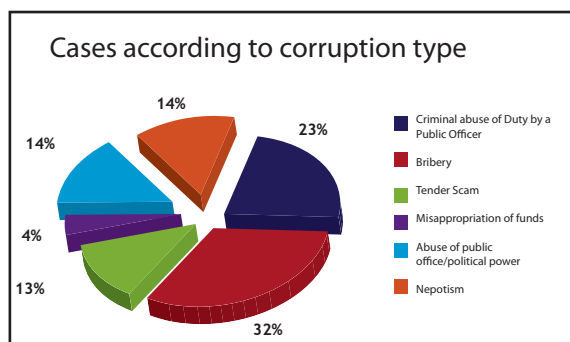
¹ The ALAC offices will be closed from the 18th of December 2009 to the 06th of January 2010 for the Christmas break.

¹ The unknown sex refers to those initial contacts made to ALAC through emails and letters where sex cannot be determined.

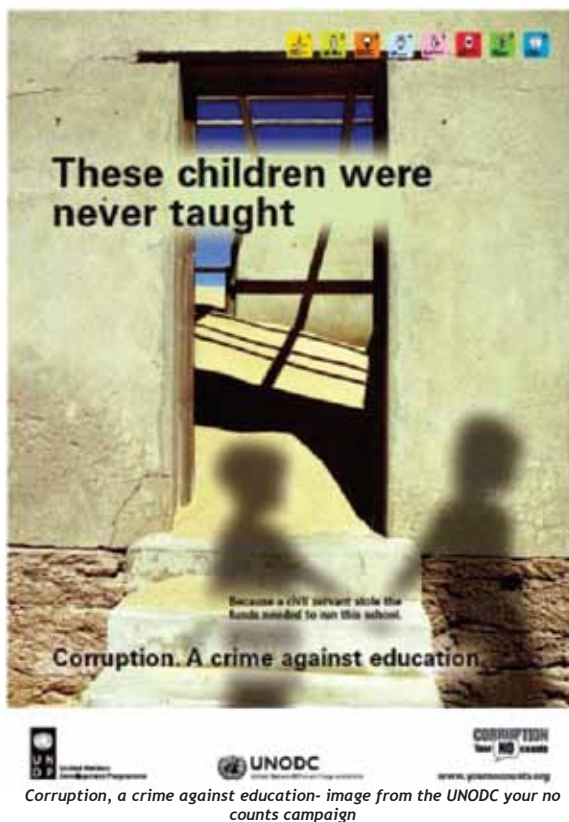
Walk-in Centre goes to the public- ALAC mobile Legal Aid Clinics

ALAC has began carrying out mobile legal aid clinics as part of the solution to growing demands for its services. The services are free of charge, and will ensure that citizens have access to ALAC in their communities. The Mobile Legal Aid Clinic also eases the burden of transport fares on citizens.

Emerging Trends sectors most prone to corruption



A high number of complaints were received relating to misappropriation of funds within the education sector. Concerned parents, continue to raise allegations of misappropriation of funds by school headmasters and headmistresses (especially in public schools) who are conniving and working in cohorts with members of School Development Associations (SDA) to defraud learning institutions of huge sums of money. As a result children continue to be denied their right to access basic affordable education as huge amounts of fees continue to be requested from the parents to cater for huge chunks being gobbled up by these “privileged few”.



Labour related complaints also account for a huge number of corruption related cases in the private sector. The complainants allege that the “labour disputes” arise as a result of victimisation after exposing corrupt practices. These whistleblowers are dismissed or suspended from work and these corrupt officials continue to siphon company resources for themselves. The current legislative framework in Zimbabwe does not provide for the protection of whistleblowers and this is a huge set back in the fight against corruption as people are discouraged from reporting and exposing corrupt practices for fear of victimisation and reprisal from institutional authorities.

Corruption at local government level and poor service delivery by some parastatals continues to be a major hindrance to development and improved standard of living for many citizens. The nature of the complaints received range from failure to provide tillage services (even after payment has been received by service providers) to failure to provide social and public utility services by institutions such as local authorities when residents continue to pay for rates.

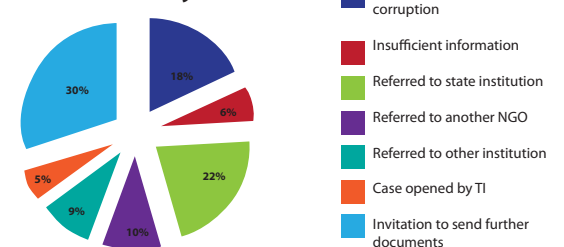


Corruption impedes development and access to basic services such as water

ALAC Human Interest Stories-changing lives, one complaint at a time

ALAC has assisted many victims and witnesses of corruption who have encountered corrupt practices in different facets. Empowered citizens have sought redress through ALAC's free services. Below are a few selected success stories to highlight ALAC's intervention in corruption matters.

Action taken by ALAC



Corruption and human-trafficking: Leeroy's story

The harsh socio-economic climate in Zimbabwe is causing the young generation to migrate in search of greener pastures. Leeroy's story is a tip of the iceberg on how dreams of migrating in order to provide for one's family are turned into nightmares through corruption related human trafficking.

Leeroy, a man in his mid-30s together with his 5 colleagues responded to an advert in the print media calling for applications from professionals in the electrical, plumbing and carpentry field to work in Angola. The “recruiting” company owned by Chinese nationals “facilitated” the processing of visas for Leeroy and his colleagues to enable their emigration to Angola. While in Angola, Leeroy and his colleagues were surprised to be informed by their “employer” after working for a month that their visa conditions were not for employment, but humanitarian grounds because the “recruitment” firm informed him that Zimbabweans are poor and would really appreciate free food and accommodation only without any remuneration. Leeroy and his colleagues only managed to come back home after the intervention of the Zimbabwean embassy in Angola. They then approached ALAC requesting advice on how to lodge a complaint against the “recruiting” company.

ALAC assisted Leeroy and his colleagues to raise a complaint with the Department of Immigration. The complaint called for an investigation to be conducted on how the “recruitment” firm was allowed to operate freely without any verification into their processes and operations. ALAC further assisted Leeroy and his colleagues to lodge a criminal investigation with the police into the fraudulent manner in which the same firm obtained visas for unsuspecting aspiring immigrants. The head of the company was taken in for questioning. Leeroy and his colleagues were happy with the outcome of the case. Through ALAC’s partner, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Leeroy and his colleagues received donations to start a business enterprise and are now earning income to look after their families.

Corrupt Investigation Officer Exposed

Paul and his wife, the owners of an internet café and phone shop fell victim to a gang of robbers suspected to be local police officers. At gunpoint, they were robbed of computers and phones. Paul reported the matter to the Officer-In-Charge of his local police station. The Officer-In-Charge assisted Paul until a docket was opened and a hunt was made for the 3 police officers implicated. Only one of the three was found. Paul also recovered one of the stolen computers. When the matter was set down for trial, Paul was shocked to find that his statement had been altered and the robbery charge against the accused had been lessened to that of theft. Paul notified the prosecution team that the statement had been tampered with. The prosecution team referred him back to the police. It soon became clear that the investigating officer may have exercised favoritism since he and the accused were acquaintances. Paul’s real statement could not be located. Paul approached ALAC where he was assisted to stop the incorrect matter from proceeding at court. ALAC facilitated a meeting between the investigations and prosecution team to the effect that a fresh statement had to be taken from Paul and real charges of robbery be laid against the accused. The corrupt investigation officer was excused from the case. The case was given to another officer for investigation. ALAC hopes that the corrupt officer is facing disciplinary charges.



Image from UNODC/UNDP Your no counts campaign

Commemorating the UN International Anti-corruption Day (09 December)

The theme for the 2009 International Day against corruption was ‘**don’t let corruption kill development’-your no counts.** The theme is of significant relevance to Zimbabwe especially during this period of transition when a number of donors and investors are looking to invest in the country. Corruption is now universally recognised as denying individuals and communities their basic human rights and affecting the very root of development processes. Results from the Transparency International (TI) Global Corruption Barometer show that poor respondents consistently pay more bribes than other income groups to receive medical services, attend schools or seek police assistance. Corruption drains international and domestic resources allocated to poverty reduction and reduces the quantity and quality of public services that the poor need most.



Corruption hinders access to good health care for our children

ALAC Zimbabwe has received cases of pregnant women who have been turned away from hospitals because ‘there are no drugs’ or ‘they do not have delivery utilities like needles, razor blades or buckets.’ In many instances, particularly for low income mothers, they are left with no option but to give birth in unsafe, poor sanitary conditions. This not only leaves the mother’s live at risk but has resulted in increased infant mortality at birth.

corruption exacerbates poor services- potholes and bad roads



Corruption exacerbates poor service delivery. Roads littered with potholes are now a common feature in Zimbabwe. ALAC has been doing a lot of community advocacy and mobilisation to encourage citizens to demand accountability around issues of service delivery from service providers such as local authorities. It is the right of every citizen to know what their hard earned money paid to councils as rates and central government through taxes is being used for. Unfortunately for towns like Kadoma, Councillors have allegedly been giving each other unprocedural loans to pay lobola, buy diapers and buy medication for their families amongst other things as reported in the Herald Newspaper of 09 December 2009. This flagrant abuse of office is punishable under Zimbabwean law. (Bribery, abuse of duty by a public officer, concealment of a transaction from a principal, falsification of documents and concealing of a business interest have been criminalized as corruption.) It is even more shocking that the Minister responsible for Local Government ‘forgave the Councillors for their indiscretions’. The acts by the Kadoma Councillors fall under abuse of duty by a public officer and cannot be pardoned at whim by ‘grey-haired’ politicians. It is sad that the requisite political will to seriously tackle corruption (with punitive measures) is lacking in many spheres of government.

As we commemorate the International Anti-corruption day, ALAC calls upon citizens to remain vigilant in combating corruption and demanding transparency and accountability from their leaders in order to promote development.

