

# ACARA D-PRIZE CHALLENGE

2015-2016 Academic Year

## Improve Accountability of Public Officials and Services

*Online reporting platforms that encourage accountability through public monitoring or incentives for local government officials reduce corruption. In three months, engage at least 10,000 citizens with both monitoring information and an effective call to action that addresses at least one corrupt activity amongst elected officials and/or essential public services, and create a plan to scale nationally and engage at least 1 million citizens over two years.*

**The Problem:** The provision of public services in less-developed countries is rife with problems such as corruption and staff absenteeism. Sub-Saharan African countries average a 2012 Corruption Index score of 33, whereas the 10 least corrupt countries in the world averaged over 87.<sup>1</sup> Corruption at the local level is particularly problematic in these countries and directly harm the poor. For instance, 33 percent of every bribe in Rwanda is paid to a policeman.<sup>2</sup>

**The Proven Solution:** Over the past decades, several countries have successfully increased transparency and accountability in government offices. Organizations like I Paid a Bribe create an online platform where people can share stories of corrupt officials and public offices at the local level.<sup>3</sup> A similar reporting service in Morocco, named Mamdawrinch or 'we will not bribe', and another in Zimbabwe, allow citizens to report bribes onto Facebook and Twitter via mobile phone. The project in Zimbabwe received 150 cases within the first 24 hours of the service launching.<sup>4</sup>

Data reporting is often combined with a lever to create action. For instance, a monitor-and-incentivize program in India cut teacher absenteeism in half and increased student graduation rates by 40 percent.<sup>5</sup> The program required teachers to submit a time-stamped photo of themselves in their classroom before receiving pay.

**Your Challenge:** We will award up to \$20,000 to a social entrepreneur with a vision to improve transparency into public services or report data on the performance of publicly elected officials. The social enterprise should scale to a country-wide program within two years with data that is viewed by at least one million individuals. A three-month pilot program could target just one area of corruption with data viewable by at least 10,000 people.

### Additional Information:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results>

<sup>2</sup> Making Citizens Safer, Transparency International 2012 Annual Report.  
[https://www.transparency.org/files/content/publication/Annual\\_Report\\_2012.pdf](https://www.transparency.org/files/content/publication/Annual_Report_2012.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> I Paid a Bribe. <http://www.ipaidabribe.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Fighting Bribery Online, Transparency International 2012 Annual Report.  
[https://www.transparency.org/files/content/publication/Annual\\_Report\\_2012.pdf](https://www.transparency.org/files/content/publication/Annual_Report_2012.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/publication/solving-absenteeism-raising-test-scores>

- D-Prize is particularly interested in corruption related to the provision of quality of elected officials (e.g. rating public officials). We are also interested in reporting on key services, such as police services (e.g. police corruption report), justice services (e.g. corrupt judge reporting), education (e.g. reporting of teacher attendance), and health (e.g. reporting of doctor and nurse job attendance).
- A winning idea will have a clear vision for how data will drive improvement. Collecting data is not enough – it must be made actionable as well.
- Local support and buy-in from some levels of the government are often necessary. Initiatives in Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone have shown that Local community participation is necessary to turn data into actual impact.<sup>6</sup>
- Past winners include [Social Cops](#) (India).

## Ready To Apply?

Visit the Acara Challenge website to get started.

<http://acara.environment.umn.edu/acarachallenge/>

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<sup>6</sup> Poverty and Corruption in Africa, Community Voices Break the Cycle. Transparency International. 2012.  
[http://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/2012\\_PCA\\_brochure\\_EN.pdf](http://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/2012_PCA_brochure_EN.pdf)