



BBC Media Action Zambia, in collaboration with Diakonia and funded by the FCDO, conducted a study under the Deepening Democracy Facility (DDF) to examine perceptions and experiences of 'everyday' corruption among ordinary Zambians and public sector officials. The study focused on understanding the impact of small-scale corrupt practices—such as minor bribes —on public attitudes towards governance and the perceived effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts.

By gathering insights from both the general public and public officials, the research offers a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities in fostering a culture of transparency and accountability in Zambia. The DDF project, aims to strengthen democratic governance by enhancing civic engagement, promoting transparency, and combating corruption through targeted interventions.

This study on 'everyday corruption,' part of DDF's workstream on accountability, transparency, and anti-corruption, focused on routine, small-scale corrupt practices like minor bribes, unofficial fees, and nepotism—often seen as necessary to expedite services or avoid

penalties. The study was informed by a review of key literature, including reports from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which noted Zambia's improvement in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and linked this progress to government initiatives like " " , and the , and The review emphasized the role of Integrity Committees

¹ Anti-Corruption Commission (2023), Report of evaluation of the Integrity Committee Programme, Zambia

against these norms—by refusing to pay bribes or follow corrupt practices—would result in significant delay and denial of services. Economic pressures also play a critical role, as individuals in financially strained situations may feel they have no choice but to participate in corruption to achieve their needs.

Fear of retaliation, lack of knowledge about reporting channels, and distrust in authorities were identified as key barriers to reporting corruption. Awareness of formal reporting mechanisms, such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), varied across demographics, with women, particularly in rural areas, being less aware. Additionally, many individuals who engage in corrupt practices themselves may be reluctant to report others, as doing so could expose their involvement. As one participant noted,

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