

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Edinburgh		
Unit of Assessment: 22 – Anthropology and Development Studies		
Title of case study: Targeting corruption and improving governance in Malawi and Nigeria		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2011 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name: Gerhard Anders	Role: Senior Lecturer	Period employed by submitting HEI: Since 2011
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Research on corruption and government officials' everyday practices in Malawi and Nigeria has strengthened governance in several dimensions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) At the level of everyday "petty corruption": research findings on the importance of informal practical norms have informed public sector reform and contributed to the development of best practices for the health and education sectors in Malawi. (2) Tackling high-level corruption: research findings have been employed by law enforcement agencies in Malawi and Nigeria to improve policies targeting high-level corruption and anti-corruption operations. (3) Findings serve as a benchmark to measure progress in anti-corruption activities in Malawi, which supports further ODA funding by the UK and facilitates cooperation between policymakers and the donor community. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>The research underpinning this impact case study examines the corruption complex in several African countries. It builds upon extensive empirical, anthropological research on governance and civil service reform in Africa that Anders has been conducting for more than 20 years. His research covers all aspects of corruption and governance in Africa, ranging from petty, everyday corruption in government departments to high-level or grand corruption targeted by law enforcement agencies. It addresses three questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is divergence from official rules and protocols the norm in many African government public service facilities? • What is the impact of law enforcement on the extent of high-level corruption? • How can law enforcement be strengthened to tackle high-level corruption? <p>Funded by the British Academy and DfID as part of the Anti-Corruption Evidence (ACE) Programme (2016-2017), Anders led the first systematic study comparing practical norms, informality and petty corruption in government departments in different regions across Africa. Practical norms, in this context, are defined as informal sociocultural rules at the shop-floor level, which override official regulations and govern practices that do not comply with these official rules (3.1).</p> <p>Anders' research within this project focused on government health and education facilities in Malawi. It showed that government employees develop practical norms as a pragmatic effort to deal with the pressures created by the lack of resources and overwhelming demand for public services. Practical norms reconcile the discrepancy between public servants' everyday experiences and the official regulations, which are often perceived as impractical,</p>		

outdated and out of touch with reality. By comparing and contrasting data from a wide range of settings (i.e. schools, clinics, district offices and ministerial headquarters), the findings helped to identify practical norms in public service delivery. Examples of the latter include the unauthorized reallocation of budget posts for other, urgent purposes in case funds from central government are delayed, or the pilfering of drugs at ward level to build up a reserve in case drugs are not provided through official channels (3.1). These findings confirmed Anders' earlier research on the shortcomings of the civil service reform programme in Malawi, which had not taken into account the role of practical norms and informality in government (3.2).

In December 2016, DfID commissioned Anders to study the impact of Malawi's law enforcement response to 'Cashgate', a major corruption scandal (3.3, 3.4). Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study examined the extent to which the law enforcement response to 'Cashgate' had a deterrent effect on public officials in Malawi. The findings show that the convictions of public officials in several high-profile trials did have a deterrent effect on grand corruption in the Malawian civil service, despite weaknesses in the criminal justice system. The research further highlights to what extent the deterrent effect depends on sustained law enforcement (3.3, 3.4).

Building upon the positive impact from his previous findings, in 2019 Anders secured funding for a new research project comparing investigations and prosecutions of high-level corruption in Malawi and Nigeria. The project is the first comparative study of law enforcement efforts in Africa analysing the enabling and constraining factors and conditions for effective enforcement practice. Employing an anthropological perspective, it shows that Nigerian and Malawian criminal justice systems face significant challenges when dealing with high-level corruption, ranging from inter-agency rivalry to problems with case management and lack of resources (3.4, 3.5).

3. References to the research

3.1 Anders, G. and W. Chirwa (2018). The importance of practical norms in government health and education services in Malawi. <https://ace.globalintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Practical-norms-Malawi.pdf>

3.2 Anders, G. (2015). The normativity of numbers in practice: Technologies of counting, accounting and auditing in Malawi's civil service reform. *Social Anthropology* 23(1): 29-41. DOI: [10.1111/1469-8676.12101](https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12101)

3.3 Anders, G. (2017). Malawi faces toughest, most high-profile trial yet in massive Cashgate scandal. *African Arguments*. <https://africanarguments.org/2017/02/08/malawi-faces-toughest-most-high-profile-trial-yet-in-cashgate-scandal/>

3.4 Anders, G., F.E. Kanyongolo, and B. Seim (2020). 'Corruption and the impact of law enforcement: Insights from a mixed-method case study in Malawi', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 58:3: 315-36. DOI: [10.1017/S0022278X2000021X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X2000021X)

3.5 Anders, G. and M. Page (2019). Does innovative law enforcement help or hurt anti-corruption efforts? *The FCPA Blog: News and commentary about white-collar crime, enforcement, and compliance*. <https://fcpablog.com/2019/09/18/does-innovative-enforcement-help-or-hurt-anti-corruption-eff/>

4. Details of the impact

The research on both petty and high-level corruption has had significant impact in Malawi and Nigeria. In Malawi, it has raised awareness and changed perceptions amongst government officials, parliamentarians and development partners. As part of the ACE programme, which was welcomed by the House of Commons International Development

Committee in their 2016-17 session report as research into 'what works' in tackling corruption, it also contributed to reforms of public services in the health and education sectors. In Malawi and Nigeria, it contributed to the improvement of policies and practices of law enforcement in their fight against corruption and serious crime. Further, Anders' research helped to secure substantial funding for the DfID-programme "Tackling Serious and Organised Corruption" (TSOC) (5.1, 5.2), which is key to the anti-corruption strategy of the Government of Malawi.

Changing perceptions amongst public officials and influencing public service reform

Anders' research on the embeddedness of corrupt practices in social relations has contributed to a shift towards a more nuanced understanding of corruption at DfID (5.3). The social embeddedness of corruption was key to the impact in Malawi. Anders worked closely with the Public Service Reform Management Unit (PSRMU) at the Office of the President and the Cabinet, where he conducted a series of planning meetings and workshops in 2016 and 2017 to validate the project design, to present research findings, and to discuss their implications for public sector reform. To strengthen this impact, he also advised the Parliamentary Committees on Health and Government Assurances in Malawi's National Assembly that oversee public sector reform.

The findings and recommendations, as stated by the PSRMU Chief Reforms Officer, "contributed to a process of re-thinking in my department and have been taken into account in the development and implementation of the recent public services reform policies" (5.4). The Parliamentary Committees of Health and Government Assurances in the National Assembly "have been drawing on the research insights in their legislative work, especially the public service reforms advanced by these two committees" (5.5). Specifically, the research findings have contributed to the Malawi Public Service Management Policy 2018-2022, which emphasises integrity, social justice, professionalism (p. 19) and is committed to "implement a strategy for entrenching public service principles, values and ethos" (p. 27), to "combat corruption" (p. 29) and to address low morale in the civil service (p. 40) (5.4).

Impact on policies and practices targeting high-level corruption and serious crime

In Malawi, Anders has engaged policymakers and practitioners in the field of law enforcement. This included a high-level workshop in April 2017 to present findings and recommendations to 25 senior government officials, law enforcement officers, MPs, CSOs and donor representatives (USA, EU, UK). Further, Anders provided input for strategic working groups at the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and the Ministry of Justice. In addition, he discussed details of research findings and their implications for policy and practice in several meetings with the ACB's Deputy Director and the Director of Public Prosecutions at the Ministry of Justice.

Anders' findings and guidance related to high-level corruption were taken up by both policymakers and practitioners in law enforcement. ICAR (International Centre for Asset Recovery) advisors who worked with the Malawian authorities drew on his research (5.6), and the Director of Public Prosecutions stated that Anders' findings "inform our policy on law enforcement and are an important factor in policymaking at the Ministry of Justice [...] It shows us where we need to direct our resources in our fight against corruption". Further, she testified the insights from Anders' research to be "an important motivation for us" (5.7). The Director-General of Malawi's ACB confirmed that "Dr Anders' recommendations to maintain the law enforcement efforts, to build our capacity and to strengthen the protection of whistle-blowers have, among other things, been taken up by us and have been included in the new National Anti-Corruption Strategy" (5.8). Accordingly, these changes are reflected in Malawi's National Anti-Corruption Strategy II, 2019-2024: Strategic Goal 2 (Strengthening the rule of law; pp. 55, 72, 73), Objective 5 (Strengthening collaboration; pp. 59, 71), and "instituting whistle blowing mechanisms" (pp. 65, 75, 80) (5.8).

In March 2020, Anders held a workshop with policy-makers in Nigeria, bringing together representatives of all anti-corruption agencies and the legislature, to discuss the research

findings from Nigeria. The findings received very positive feedback from workshop participants, who highlighted that they gained new insights on law enforcement and high-level corruption and plan to draw on the insights from the research. Specifically, participants were keen to strengthen intra-agency and inter-agency cooperation (5.9). The findings have already been taken up by the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), one of the principal Nigerian anti-corruption agencies. As stated by the CCB, “the recommendations of the research, especially in the aspect of collaboration both internally (investigators and prosecutors) and externally (inter-agency collaboration), is currently being implemented as a policy directive”. Further, the CCB amended their Standard Operating Procedures “consequent upon findings from the research”, stressing that “the results could, actually, present a pan-African approach to fighting high-level corruption in Africa” (5.9).

Impact on further funding supporting the fight against corruption in Malawi

Anders’ study on the law enforcement response to ‘Cashgate’ has, as explained by a DfID Malawi Governance Advisor, provided a baseline for anti-corruption research in Malawi, that will serve as benchmark to measure future progress, i.e., to re-assess the evidence and determine overall impact of DfID interventions in the area of anti-corruption (5.1). It is seen by the Basel Institute on Governance (Anti-corruption NGO) to make “an enormous contribution to the identification of where we should invest intellectual and financial capital”, and as “an invaluable aid” in facilitating the cooperation between NGO’s, policy makers and the donor community in their anti-corruption efforts (5.6). Accordingly, his research helped the Basel Institute on Governance and DfID Malawi to secure £4.7 million initial funding under DfID’s ‘Tackling Serious and Organised Corruption (TSOC)’ programme (5.2), and a 2019 funding extension bringing it up to a total of £7.6m (5.1). Generally, Anders’ work on corruption in the public sector is considered to have been of “great influence” in the design of the TSOC programme in Malawi (5.2).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1 Impact of research on awareness and changed perceptions and impact on further funding in fighting serious and organised corruption.

- Testimonial by Governance Advisor, DfID Malawi.

5.2 Impact of research on DfID funding for TSOC programme in Malawi.

- Testimonial by Senior Advisor, Africa Directorate at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office/previously Governance Advisor at DfID Malawi.

5.3 Impact of Anders’ work-2011 on the DfID Evidence Paper ‘Why Corruption Matters: Understanding Causes, Effects and How to Address them.’ Evidence Paper on Corruption, January 2015.

- Testimonial by the author of the evidence paper from the Overseas Development Institute.

5.4 Impact of research on public service reforms in Malawi:

- Testimonial by Under Secretary at the Ministry of Transport and Public Works / previously Chief Reforms Officer at the Public Sector Reform Management Unit, Government of Malawi.
- Malawi Public Service Management Policy 2018-2022.

5.5 Improved awareness / changed perceptions of members of parliament, and impact on public service reforms in Malawi.

- Testimonial by National Assembly of Malawi / Clerk of Parliament – Parliamentary Committees of Health and Government Assurances and Public Service Reform.

5.6 Impact on law enforcement activities and the DfID-funded project Tackling Serious and Organised Corruption (TSOC) implemented by ICAR / further funding.

- Testimonial by the International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR), Basel Institute on Governance.

5.7 Impact on awareness and impact on anti-corruption law enforcement.

- Testimonial by the Director of Public Prosecutions, Ministry of Justice, Government of Malawi.

5.8 Impact on awareness and impact on policy and practice (National Anti-Corruption Strategy):

- Testimonial by the Director-General of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Malawi (previously Deputy Director responsible for prosecutions).
- National Anti-Corruption Strategy II, 2019-2024 (Republic of Malawi).

5.9 Impact of research on anti-corruption and law enforcement policy in Nigeria:

- Testimonial by Senior Official at the Code of Conduct Bureau, Presidency Nigeria.
- Results of feedback survey from March 2020 policymaker workshop in Abuja, Nigeria.