

Best Practice: Anti-Corruption Education and Community Relations

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CITY: HONG KONG

POLICY AREAS: PUBLIC INTEGRITY

BEST PRACTICE

Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has a robust three-pronged approach of **enforcement**, **education**, and **prevention** to eliminate corruption. These components work in tandem but the education element, which is the focus of this report, is one of the most varied and comprehensive of any global public integrity agency. The Community Relations Department (CRD) uses two complementary strategies to disseminate its education message. One is face-to-face sessions and seminars with public sector workers so they are properly trained to respond to bribery offers. The second is communications with the wider public through the usage of popular media platforms like television, radio, and the internet.

ISSUE

Today, Hong Kong is viewed as one of the least corrupt places in the world; this is radically different than much of the 20th century. During the 1960s and 1970s, bribery was so widespread that it was compulsory in order to receive public housing assistance, basic hospital services and even firefighters. This culture of corruption climaxed with the 1973 case of a Chief Superintendent of Police absconding with millions of dollars and fleeing the country. This case prompted the creation of ICAC the following year. The agency's mandate was not just to investigate corruption cases, but also to use education methods to break the expectation that corruption is obligatory to receive public services.



ICAC Regional Headquarters

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

ICAC uses different tactics for educating public sector workers, operators of private enterprises, and the general public. Public sector integrity training by ICAC includes workshops on ethical decision-making at work and managing staff integrity. For the private sector, CRD employees conduct door-to-door visits of homes and factories in order to introduce best practices, to update business owners on relevant legislation and elicit support for ICAC initiatives.

In order to reach the general public, ICAC undertakes a mass media strategy. One focus is on the promotion of broad themes about how corruption is damaging to society. This often is presented with anti-corruption messages spotlighting the social concerns of the time. For example, in 2011 there was evidence of widespread electoral fraud in local Hong Kong elections, so in response the 2012 ICAC mass media messages strategy concentrated on the promotion of clean elections to tie in with the impending vote on the Legislative Council members later in the year.

IMPLEMENTATION

ICAC disseminates its messages using many different mediums. In 2012, many of these advertisements focused on clean elections for the Legislative Council. These included using:

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- **Television advertisements:** One commercial in 2012 presented a woman tempted by gifts in order to sell her vote while another outlined some of the major cases ICAC prosecuted since the 1970s emphasizing ICAC's long and illustrious length of service.



Clean election advertisement

- **Posters:** These extensively publicize the message of "Support Clean Elections." ICAC has also produced a poster entitled "Vote for a clean election, vote for a better Hong Kong" for display in different locations.
- **Filmlets:** ICAC has produced a series of educational short films for the Legislative Council election, appealing to the general public to support a clean election. The subjects include voter registration, election expenses, and trading votes for benefits.



ICAC mobile exhibition vehicle

These are many other examples of initiatives other than clean elections. In 2011 the latest incarnation of "ICAC Investigators" premiered. This long-running fictional television drama is created by government-sponsored Radio Television Hong Kong, airs on commercial television, and disseminates anti-corruption messages through entertaining crime stories.

ICAC also generates radio dramas and has produced 80 commercials since 1975. Also, the department established "ICAC club" which recruits volunteers in the community to assist ICAC in planning and executing anti-corruption activities. ICAC also uses a mobile exhibition vehicle to widely disseminate clean election messages. The mobile exhibition vehicle tours different neighborhoods, where the public can find and use interactive e-books, exhibits with cartoon illustrations, video clippings, and computer games.

COST

In 2012, the budget for publicity for the CRD of ICAC was \$2.3 million. This outlay covers the costs of both media and non-media publicity and represents about 2% of ICAC's total.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

As a self-evaluation, ICAC produces annual reports surveying the general population about a variety of corruption-related questions. The 2011 report contained the following statistics that indicated the CRD affected the understanding and perception of corruption:

- From 2010 to 2011, total intolerance of corruption in Hong Kong rose from 68.6% to 78.4% of those surveyed in the sample.
- For respondents who thought that corruption would decrease in the next year, 42.5% of the sample indicated the decrease would come because "public awareness of anti-corruption had increased."

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- The majority, 87.8% of the sample, considered ICAC's anti-corruption work effective against just 5.5% who found it ineffective.
- For those who thought ICAC's work was effective, the most likely reasons were "efficient investigation of corruption cases" and "strong deterrence by the ICAC."

Despite these high marks, the survey indicated that there was still work to be done. The most cited answer to what aspect of work ICAC should strengthen, with 51.4% of those surveyed, was "publicity and education work for anti-corruption." And of those who said publicity and education should be strengthened, 76.1% of the sample thought the best way was "to enhance public awareness of anti-corruption."

TIMELINE

1960s-1970s: Hong Kong suffers from crippling corruption culminating with the subsequent flight of the Chief Superintendent of Police after his arrest for graft.

1974: ICAC established after citizens marched in the streets for government to deal with rampant corruption.

1975: The former Chief Superintendent of Police was extradited to Hong Kong and convicted after previously fleeing to Great Britain. In this same year, the CRD launched its first television advertisement, "the Hawker" in which a young woman reports bribery to an ICAC officer after continuous harassment for kickbacks to accomplish any task in her daily life.



ICAC Poster

Additionally, this was the launch year of "ICAC Investigators" a dramatic fictional television show that demonstrated the work of the anti-corruption law enforcement officers. This police procedural is based on real ICAC cases.

1980s: CRD adopts target-based approach to corruption by providing sector-specific corruption prevention services including guidebooks for specific professions. Partners in this approach included district organizations, schools, NGOs and professional organizations.

1990s: ICAC launches its website (<http://www.icac.org.hk/>) in order to provide unlimited access to anti-corruption news, educational materials, and contact information.

1997: CRD launches "ICAC club" which recruits volunteers of the community to assist ICAC in planning and executing anti-corruption activities. As of 2008, there were more than 1000 members.

2011-2012: The latest version of "ICAC Investigators" averages 1.2 million viewers per episode and is also rebroadcast on mainland China Central Television (CCTV).

LEGISLATION

In Hong Kong, regulations enforced by the Broadcasting Authority (BA) require local TV and radio licensees to devote air time of a certain proportion for "Announcements in the Public Interest" (APIs) produced by the government or NGOs after



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satisfying certain criteria. Under this context, ICAC benefits from a share of such airtime to publicize anti-corruption messages.

LESSONS LEARNED

In the same 2011 ICAC self-assessment report, the survey indicated that there was still work to be done especially for the CRD. However, the fact that the public is aware of the programming and advertisements indicate that the CRD is having a noticeable effect on the culture of corruption in Hong Kong.

TRANSFERABILITY

ICAC has a long history of working with other anti-corruption bureaus on initiatives. For example, in 2012 ICAC worked with Guangdong and Macau on anti-corruption computer animation and comics competitions. These contests encouraged youth to design creatively while keeping the content focused on integrity as a core value of society.

The educational programs of the CRD are transferable based on budgetary outlays. Certain programs such as "ICAC club" and the ICAC mobile exhibition vehicle are low cost while TV series such as "ICAC Investigators" or ICAC commercials are more expensive but reasonable due to a partnership with the government.

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