THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION - CROWDSOURCING

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Abstract: *Corruption as the abuse of public authority in order to achieve personal benefit is deeply rooted, takes various forms in order to cover and survive, adapt quickly and easily to all efforts to eradicate it. Therefore, the fight against corruption must likewise be persistent and stubborn, but also innovative, flexible and technologically current. Together we are a huge and powerful force - the basis of crowdsourcing that maximize the benefits offered by the Internet as a new technology. This paper summarize good and bad sides of this kind of association in trying to reduce corruption to the lowest level, as a parasite that is undermining the foundations of any society, developed and systems in developing countries.*

Keywords: *corruption, crowdsourcing*

1. CROWDSOURCING - A NEW FORM OF ANTI-CORRUPTION

Crowdsourcing as a way of fighting corruption has significant advantages and introduces new technologies and new opportunities, which represents a permanent, continuous activity and effort.

Together we are a huge and powerful force - it is the basis crowdsourcing.

Relying on the contribution of each of us, crowdsourcing could actually become a fundamental aspect of the fight against corruption because it has significant advantages: request us all to be engaged - thus, with our engagement or lack of engagement we all carry the responsibility for the level of success of this collaborative effort.

Crowdsourcing term was created by merging two English words: crowd meaning group, pile and sourcing which means to draw from the source.

The reporter Jeff Howe first used the term crowdsourcing in 2006. Crowdsourcing means the use of information collected from the public and usage of this information to perform a specific business tasks. The company itself performs these tasks or by a third party that provides execution services, but through crowdsourcing, the public helps in performing the task. Companies often resort to crowdsourcing because it expands the source from which you draw information and very often is completely free. Crowdsourcing also allows companies to gain an insight into who their customers are and what they really want.

A term that is slightly older may help us understand the etymological basis of the term crowdsourcing but other term is more common in our country - outsourcing. Outsourc-

ing is contrary to the term analyzed here because it actually means giving sources to others, or the relocation of jobs from other sources.

In outsourcing, company (organization) chooses to whom will forward the tasks (activities), while in crowdsourcing everything is going the opposite direction: group realized as a collection of a large number of people are choosing to whom will forward the information. In any case, it is obvious that we are talking about usage of new, broad and so far insufficiently used sources either as drawing from these sources (crowdsourcing), either as giving to these sources (outsourcing).

By exactly the same lexical definition, neither the crowdsourcing term should be translated into Serbian language. Although whenever is possible we should use our word and not foreign word, here it is obvious that we (just like any other languages) still do not have the right word for this term - this phenomenon appeared before less than a decade, so there was no word for it. As with already mentioned outsourcing, as a confirmation that the usage of foreign word is right thing to do, I want to specify the terms 'marketing' and 'management' also used in our language and no one will tell you these are English words based on exactly the same lexical principle as the crowdsourcing.

As a second argument that we should not translate the term crowdsourcing is the fact that using internationally accepted term it would be always easier to recognize this type of activity than if we try to translate it in a descriptive way.

Crowdsourcing uses new technologies - the Internet above all - and this new technologies have their own important advantages: they are cheap, fast, accessible to a large number of people, and even allow anonymity, where necessary, allow to find out the experiences, views, opinions and suggestions of people to which we cannot communicate in traditional ways in the fight against corruption (e.g. 'whistleblowers').

The big advantage of crowdsourcing is the fact it does not presuppose institutional, hierarchical organization, can be easily started, it is very adaptive and relatively small number of people can be coordinate the activities of a large number of those who contribute.

Crowdsourcing uses the same 'the wisdom of the group' theory that emerged in the early twentieth century in order to organize the collection of information. The whole process in this way expands the broad strata of society, often disengaged by then for given form of gathering information and organizing activities.

Although the practice of crowdsourcing - gathering information from the group, a large number of people - is older than the Internet, the term itself is recent. The fact that one phenomenon didn't have name until it gained its place on the Internet is talking that the Internet as a new technology is the best, fully adequate and optimal tool for this kind of gathering information of any kind and organization of activities based on the collected data.

When we look at things to their essence, we recognize that crowdsourcing actually is a form of an open call to the public, appeal to as many people gets involved and that their participation contributes to organized effort that has clearly defined goals and objectives. Because it is calling the broadest strata of society – it calls everyone to engage, not to remain passive, to contribute - in the right hands crowdsourcing is a very powerful tool and a way for the activity of any kind.

Counting on all of us, including all of us, encouraging us to realize that no matter how small our individual effort is, it multiplies exponentially when it becomes part of a broad movement in which we all participate - as a means to combat corruption, crowdsourcing not only represents the future of this struggle.

Crowdsourcing - a term that I would characterize as the common fight against corruption - must become our present.

1.1. From shareholders to stakeholders

Any activity carried out by an organization or group of people affects the other people associated with them in any way: geographically, historically, in terms of preserving the environment, in terms of sustainable community development, regarding the interests. Therefore, in recent years, especially in the study of corporate social responsibility (CSR)[1] the term stakeholder instead of the original shareholder has developed.

When it comes to business and economic relations, the shareholders are emerging as the primary stakeholders so the whole group consists of a shareholders, buyers (customers), suppliers, employees, creditors, and partners. Furthermore, secondary stakeholders are those who, although not directly involved in the economic and business impact suffered by the organization's activities. It's overall public opinion, community and every individual in it, all kinds of civic organizations and initiatives, the media - in a word all of us.

The business understood in this way and all other human activities make us conclude that we all - as stakeholders - must behave in the finest possible manner in all activities, to protect the community and the environment and to perceive ourselves as active participants and not passive observers who always shift the responsibility to someone else.

When it comes to corruption, it is important to emphasize that it prevents sustainable economic development and undermines the very foundation of all forms of social organization. The sole change of consciousness and perception of us as active participants rather than passive observers can help fight corruption. If we are all in some way stakeholders - and we are - then we have to accept that any form of rights entails responsibilities that we cannot always ask from the others, but primarily from ourselves.

How much people are actually aware of this shows the fact that any initiated action using a crowdsourcing method records an incredible number of received information. Crowdsourcing, as its name suggests, draws information from many (of the group) and uses them for the interests of all.

2. CROWDSOURCING, TRANSPARENCY AND GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

Corruption is by definition completely opposite of transparency and it is very difficult to follow, that's why it is so difficult - if not infeasible at all – to provide quantitative indicators of the degree of corruption at the international level.

At the end of the nineties, Transparency International[2] non-governmental organization was established with its headquarters in Berlin. TI systematically deals with the monitoring of corruptive practices in the world, and the basic logic is based on two postulates: 1) Tens of thousands of people are daily faced with corruption and do not know what to do, 2) it is simple and easy to quickly send and accept information over the Internet.

From this set of experiences, a large number of people and their perceptions of corruption, TI established a Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which is increasingly becoming the basis for quantitative investigations of corruption.

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[1] Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR
[2] Transparency International- TI

Every year since its founding TI published a report on the results achieved by the government. In these reports, '0' rating got governments perceived as the most corrupted and '100' those where corruption is least represented, and all of these reports are available on their site (Figure 1).
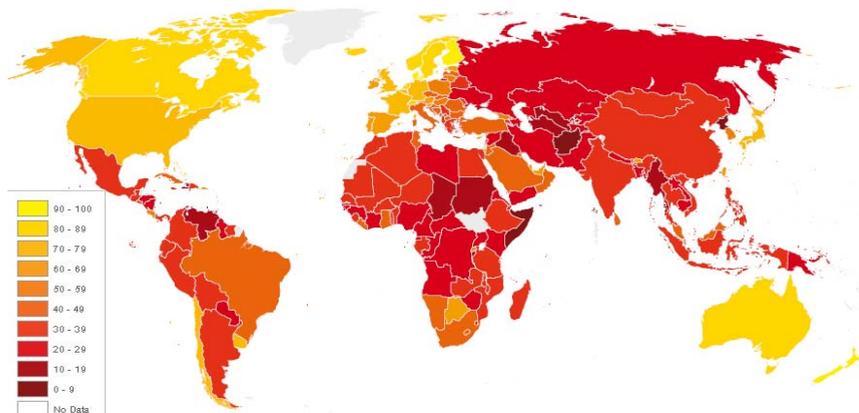

Figure 1: Global view CP Index reports for 2012
Source: Transparency International

"Looking at CPIndex2012, it becomes clear that corruption is a serious threat to humanity. Corruption destroys the lives of people and communities and undermines the state and institutions. Corruption creates anger of public opinion, which threatens to destabilize society and intensify violent conflicts."[3]

The state must increase transparency and access to public expenditure and its institutions while institutions must become more responsible to the whole society.

Recognizing the importance of transparency in the fight against corruption, China for example has introduced a 'zero tolerance policy' towards corruption and, according to the findings of Transparency International has made significant step forward in the last decade (Table 1). Survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics of China shows that in the period 2003-2010, satisfaction of citizens fighting corruption and creating non-corruptive government were continuously growing; the percentage of satisfaction among citizens went from the initial 51.9% to 70.6% at the end of the period. Moreover, the percentage of those who believed that corruption is actually on the decline increased from 68.1% to 83.8%.[4]

"We must have the courage to fight against all forms of corruption, to punish any corrupt public officials and to continuously eliminate soil where corruption appears, because we gained the trust of the people with visible achieved results."[5]

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[3] The Governments Must Prioritize the Fight Against Corruption, http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/results/

[4] National Bureau of Statistics in China, http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/index.htm

[5] Ksi Đinping, proslava 90 godina KPK, 22.01.2013. http://www.china.org.cn/china

Table 1: TI Corruption Perceptions Index – years and results

CHINA	TI INDEX	PERCEPTIONS	CORRUPTION (CPI)
Year	Result	Year	Result
1995	2.16	2004	3.40
1996	2.43	2005	3.20
1997	2.88	2006	3.30
1998	3.50	2007	3.50
1999	3.40	2008	3.60
2000	3.10	2009	3.60
2001	3.50	2010	3.50
2002	3.50	2011	3.60
2003	3.40	2012	39.00

3.   CROWDSOURCING OPPORTUNITIES IN SERBIA

Let's face opportunities like this, a new form of fighting at the moment in Serbia, which is by no means immune to corruption as a seriously rooted problem. Pretending to become a member of the European Union, one of the major tasks ahead for Serbia is fight against corruption, a systematic struggle at all levels of society, in all sectors, especially in the justice and health sector. Moreover, while it does not address a certain number of contentious privatization listed by name (corruptively performed), Serbia cannot even begin negotiations In Serbia, in the middle of 2009, the Anti-Corruption Agency began its work, and in the beginning of the 2010, was ready to implement the Law on Agency to fight against corruption. On several occasions, the Agency has organized dozens of working meetings in all parts of Serbia, where public sector officials, civil servants, representatives of local government, territorial autonomy, civil society and media from most municipalities participated. "Law on Anti-Corruption Agency for the first time stipulated penalties for violations of the law, and for the failure and providing false information about the assets prescribed imprisonment and prohibition of performing a public function for a period of ten years, if the official is sentenced to imprisonment."[6]

The government, at least declaratively, declared the fight against corruption and established the Agency for it. One aspect of crowdsourcing applied the Anti-Corruption Agency. It is the creation of integrity plans that by the end of last year all civil authorities were required to draw up, and that the completed integrity plan is submitted to the Agency. This is done in cooperation with the EU and the Council of Europe as a joint project entitled "Strengthening of the police and judiciary capacity to fight corruption in Serbia."[7]

What's the similarity with crowdsourcing: - Agency set the integrity plans and distributed them as a portal allowing quick and easy access and withdrawal; - The agency has asked of all government and public institutions to develop an integrity plan and that it within the time limit return it the same way – submitting on the portal.

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[6] Osnivanje i status Agencije za borbu protiv korupcije, http://acas.rs/sr_cir/o-agenciji/osnivanje-i-status.html

[7] www.coe.int/pacs

Differences in relation to the 'classic' crowdsourcing, differences are as follows: - The agency did not seek information from all groups or individuals but only from state institutions; - the Agency has not sought nor accepted the information in free form but in the prescribed form, in the predetermined manner; - as the name suggests, integrity plans were not providing data on corrupt practices but about existing ways of doing business that may allow corruption or the cases in which the corruption is not prevented, on ways and means of raising awareness and integrity of all stakeholders; - All these actions through the Agency were initiated and funded by the government.

Well designed, due to the above work on raising awareness and integrity and consideration of ways of doing business that allow corruption - actually based on self assessment, project of integrity plan development is not recorded significant result in the public nor it was presented to the public which measures are to be taken.

Serbia recognized that itself, its mechanisms and bodies are main source and engine of corruption. Therefore, the establishment and operation of the Agency deserve all the praise because it shows that the state is aware of the problem. Whether the agency itself is sufficient in the way it was conceived - is another question.

It is also commendable that the agency decide to use new technologies in the fight against corruption. Their site is clear, usable, and up to date.

With all the resources at its disposal - human, technical, financial - the Agency would be able to opt for the real crowdsourcing – to opt for collecting information directly from the public, information on all aspects and forms of corruption faced by people every day. There are several reasons why the agency would be an appropriate address for such a project: - The agency would be able to immediately begin work on crowdsourcing because it already functions as an institution and has all the necessary conditions and resources for it; - The agency already has experience in this business; - Agency as a public entity has direct access to the state authorities who should be obliged to take measures by reports that the Agency would deliver to each ministry.

Such a project would be possible to start relatively quickly and painlessly. Anti-corruption agency has both people and resources to handle information that would certainly arrive from civil society. The government would thus show it is indeed a serious partner - a serious stakeholder - and that is not willing to stay in a declarative attitude towards the fight against corruption.

In addition to the new legal obligation that provides that all public tenders must be published to the portal of the institution that opens them (transparency), hiring Agency to fight corruption as the engine that drives crowdsourcing as a way to fight corruption would make a great thing for many citizens to regain faith in their country and institutions.

If the government does not take this road, it will miss a great opportunity to show as a true partner (stakeholder) of the citizens of this country. Then the empty space will definitely fill some of our Alexei Navalny who started the crowdsourcing campaign in Russia because crowdsourcing advantages are so obvious that even in Serbia will not be long ignored.

4.   RESUME

A business without moral criteria and economy without business ethics cannot provide permanent, stable and significant results. The question of whether business ethics is a matter of personal conscience of directors i.e. managers, a matter of personal conscience

of each and every employee involved in any way in the process of doing business. Ethical behavior and moral responsibility in the use of both, old and new technologies is an important issue that requires some serious work.

Corruption is when we deliberately violate the principle of fairness in order to ensure an advantage of any kind for himself or another. A formula of corruption is well known, it is the sum of the monopoly and silence, when the responsibility is taken away.

Corruption is widespread and rooted, and not just that it seems it cannot be completely eradicated, the big question is how to reduce it generally and then to be reduced to minimum.

One way is definitely the fight against corruption using new, innovative ways and new technologies. Together we are a huge and powerful force - it is the basis of crowdsourcing as a new vision of fighting corruption.

Since it requires the contribution of each of us, crowdsourcing has three serious advantages - requires that all contribute to the fight against corruption, thus expanding the base and information gathering and liability base for any act or omission; - crowdsourcing uses new technologies that are fast, inexpensive and readily available; - crowdsourcing not have to wait for an institutional government action - the previous two advantages allow anyone who has the good will to do something and takes action.

In this way, crowdsourcing is fully in line with modern business principles and corporate social responsibility where it says that business organizations are not only responsible to the suppliers and subcontractors, but the wider community and all those who suffer the impact of their business - all stakeholders.

Becoming stakeholders, people are on the way to re-become something other than mere homo ekonomikus as has been the practice. However, understood as a spiritual being with a certain material needs and not as a means to exploit the other man to become rich, one must accept its responsibility for the environment, as a stakeholder, as one who has a certain share, rights and the responsibilities.

One of the primary responsibilities is the ethical struggle and the principle of impartiality that provides equal opportunities for all. Corruption, as the mortal enemy of ethics and fairness, threatens to endanger human society as a whole because it erodes the foundations for sustainable growth.

That is why everyone is obliged to participate in the fight against corruption - perhaps, until we come up with something better, crowdsourcing is the right solution - as in this way we fight as a group, following the One for all, all for one principle.

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