

# The power of dialogue in public integrity and curriculum development —

## lessons learned from the training of integrity advisers in Hungary

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### Abstract

In recent years, both in the public and private sector, the integrity-based approach to corruption prevention, which combines active and integrated rule-based and value-based strategies, has gained importance because it proved to be more effective than traditional anti-corruption strategies built mainly on regulatory and legal compliance instruments. In the field of law enforcement the integrity approach is new. Only a very few countries and agencies employ integrity officers or include a strong value-building component in their anti-corruption strategies. The expectation is that this will change in the future.

In this paper we claim that the introduction of a local integrity development practice should not be based on the simple adoption of best practices but should aim to develop contextualised solutions. We propose that, in each new context, interdisciplinary work is necessary that involves a diverse group of professionals. We also present a highly innovative collaborative model for developing a localised integrity method that has already been tested in the Hungarian public administration. The process we present has produced a contextualised method, a profile for integrity professionals and a curriculum for their education. While the process engendered locally applicable methods for anti-corruption practice, through the collaboration a committed community of practice also evolved that is key for the sustainable application of the results. We propose that a similar approach should be applied by law enforcement agencies if they decide to introduce the new role of integrity officers in order to enhance police integrity and strengthen public trust in law enforcement agencies.

**Keywords:** integrity development; integrity officer; integrity education; integrity curriculum development.

### Introduction

Corruption is without a doubt among the biggest threats to law enforcement. Police officers demanding bribery, extorting money or framing innocent individuals are present not only in developing countries but all over the world. Police corruption has serious

consequences. It not only undermines the legality of police actions and harms human rights, but also makes law enforcement agencies ineffective. A corruption-free police force is not only a stable pillar of a given country's institutional system but is also key to fighting corruption in other sectors and a lever to encourage systemic social and political reform in

countries in crisis or emerging from conflict (Bayley and Perito, 2011: 1).

In order to explain why law enforcement is specially exposed to corruption, we can specify numerous factors.

- **Wide discretionary powers.** Police officers often have wide discretionary powers to limit the rights of citizens or impose fines. This creates a high risk of violation of professional procedures or regulations.
- **Direct contact with criminals.** Criminals are often involved in very profitable, illegal businesses like drug or human trafficking, prostitution or money laundering. These financial sources facilitate the bribery of police officers, who are often underpaid.
- **Organised crime.** In order to ensure uninterrupted criminal activity, crime organisations need access to information on ongoing prosecutions, police organisational models, etc. They look for loopholes in law enforcement agencies.
- **Organisational culture.** Law enforcement agencies usually have a strong *esprit de corps*, which helps them to overcome difficulties connected with the service. However, like a blue shield (Thurman-Zhao, 2004), it can also help to hide minor misconduct, irregularities or corrupt activities. A toxic organisational culture and lack of accountability can turn law enforcement agencies into entirely the opposite of what they are supposed to be, allowing police officers to commit crimes without consequences.

Law enforcement agencies are conscious of these risk factors and have put in place sophisticated responses for their management.

First of all, law enforcement agencies — together with prosecutors — detect and investigate corruption cas-

es. We can define this as the first-level anti-corruption activity of law enforcement agencies. In the 1930s, alcohol prohibition made criminal gangs in the United States powerful and violent and able to corrupt police officers. The appearance of drugs in the 1970s had a similar effect. At the time they led to numerous investigations. Bayley and Perito (2011: 15) report that, in the English-speaking world, 32 so called blue-ribbon commissions have been active since the late 19th century. Ten of them were created exclusively to investigate police corruption, the rest to investigate the police generally.

The increased public awareness and the propositions made by the blue-ribbon commissions have supported police reforms and have led to enhanced law enforcement accountability. The typical representatives of these reforms were the internal affairs units for crime detection and investigation. The names of these units varied from country to country but their main task was the same: to rid the police force of crime and corruption and to enhance public trust towards law enforcement. These second-generation anti-corruption activities include sophisticated, very often classified information and tools like integrity testing to detect and fight internal corruption in order to ensure police actions comply with rules and regulations.

The effectiveness of the first- and second-generation anti-corruption activities varied greatly, but they could not eliminate corruption from law enforcement. Detection and evidence gathering have limits, and criminals and 'fallen blue knights' (Kutnjak Ivković, 2005) use sophisticated strategies to avoid being detected. The common features of first- and second-generation anti-corruption activities are that they are both reactive and focus on individual corruption cases and individual perpetrators.

### **Our first claim is that, besides the first- and second-generation anti-corruption activities, third generation ones are also needed**

We acknowledge the importance of first- and second-generation anti-corruption activities in investigating and prosecuting corruption cases. At the same time, we propose that law enforcement has to use a wider range of anti-corruption measures, including preventive and integrity-building measures.

If we look for examples, we can find some law enforcement agencies that have successfully applied the integrity development method to anti-corruption. In the last half century the New York City Police Department has been shaken by corruption scandals. Multiple independent commission reports (Knapp Commission, 1972; Mollen Commission, 1994) have led to changes in the anti-corruption strategy within the New York City Police Department, including the creation of the position of integrity control officers in 1973. The position was originally created as a precinct-level contact point of the Internal Affairs Bureau, but over the last few decades it has lost many of its administrative tasks and gained active integrity-related duties (Commission to Combat Police Corruption, 1996: 7). The current *Patrol guide* (2013: 1) defines among other things that integrity control officers: '1. Perform NO DUTIES other than integrity control'; '4. Make recommendations to commanding officer concerning integrity control' and '5. Observe command conditions and visit corruption prone locations frequently, at irregular hours. Keep commanding officer advised of conditions and possible corruption hazards.' Integrity control officers are senior officers with the rank of lieutenant, designated as a key member of the commanding officer's management staff. In the last few decades the position of NYPD integrity control officer has changed a lot, but the complexity of the task has remained. Integrity control officers are responsible for both corruption control and corruption prevention.

In Hong Kong there is no distinction between civil service and law enforcement agencies regarding an-

ti-corruption. The regional government of Hong Kong embraces the holistic strategy of sanction, prevention and education to tackle corruption. It has developed the Ethical Leadership Programme, which seeks to entrench ethics and the culture of integrity throughout the whole civil service through the leadership example and commitment of senior management. Within the Hong Kong Police Force, the commissioner of police has appointed a director of management services responsible for ethics and integrity, who works as the force ethics officer. Each formation has a Formation Integrity Commission which is headed by the formation commander as formation integrity officer (FIO). The FIO's task is to promote values, advocate leadership, commitment and responsibility and instigate local initiatives for the reinforcement of Hong Kong Police Force values. The FIO heads the Formation Integrity Council, which reviews and monitors integrity related issues (Hong Kong Police Force, 2016: 15). Additionally, the law enforcement integrity officers are part of the government's online community for ethics officers and have access to the thematic website, which allows them to exchange views and experiences with each other. In this practice integrity work is focused on ethics management.

In Canada the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have a professional responsibility officer (PRO — former professional integrity officer) who has the rank of assistant commissioner. The PRO is responsible for providing a comprehensive integrity and responsibility regime for the RCMP, and for the entrenchment of professional values and ethics across all working levels of RCMP. The PRO is in regular contact with external and internal partners, including oversight bodies and agencies (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2014: 20).

As we can see from the above examples, new, third-generation, anti-corruption activities have appeared in some law enforcement agencies. Their main task is to enhance integrity, ethics and professional responsibility, and with it the concordance between rules and values. We can summarise the characteristics of the different generations of anti-corruption activities as follows.

**Table 1:** Three generations of law enforcement anti-corruption activities

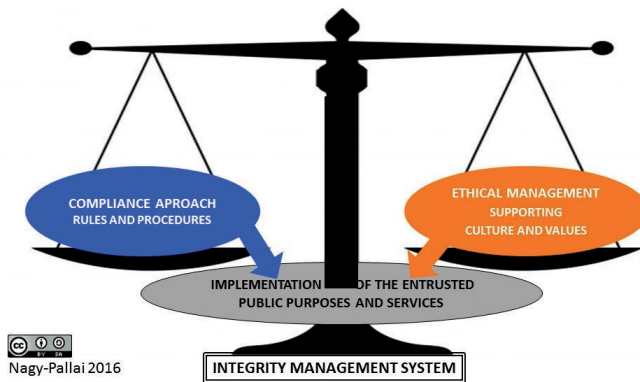
	First generation	Second generation	Third generation
1. Approach	repression	repression	prevention
2. Direction	external	internal	internal
3. Based on	rules	rules	rules and values
4. Implement	criminal code	criminal code/service regulations	integrity systems and ethics
5. Focus on	citizens	staff members	leadership, staff members
6. Activities	detection, investigation	detection, investigation	control, guidance, advice
7. Subject	individuals	individuals	organisation
8. Data types	restricted	classified	open

Based on anti-corruption development trends and law enforcement organisational needs, we propose that law enforcement agencies need to apply this new type of organisational answer to corruption challenges. Besides the detection and investigation of corruption cases, more emphasis should be placed on adequate control systems and value-building, and on the adjustment of organisational rules and values. That is, we propose that the introduction of an integrity management approach to corruption prevention would be important in the field of law enforcement. We also propose the creation of a new position ('integrity officer') which could serve as a key player in the process of strengthening integrity of operation and, as a consequence, enhancing trust with regard to law enforcement.

**Our second claim is that for effective integrity management we need contextualised strategies**

The main tenet of integrity management is that, in order to curb corruption, it is not enough to punish rule breaching, prosecute crime and alter the rules of an organisation — the values of the organisation that support the implementation of the rules need to be also strengthened. The approach aims to create a fine balance between regulatory and compliance instruments and ethics management instruments (Figure 1).

„Integrity management can be seen as a complex and never-ending balancing exercise between the rules-based and the values-based approaches” OECD



**Figure 1: Integrity management system**

Source: Balázs Ágoston Nagy and Katalin Pallai (2016).

Some instruments within compliance systems may be rather similar in various cultural contexts, but intercultural studies have demonstrated that the norms, cultural patterns and opinions of people on what is right or wrong can be widely different. (Douglas, 1978) This is why ethical and organisational culture-build-

ing strategies do not necessarily travel between different cultures (Hofstede, 2010). Consequently, we argue that when integrity management practice is introduced in a new context, instead of the adoption of instruments that worked in other contexts, contextualised solutions need to be developed. Instead of

the common 'best-practice' approach a turn towards a 'best-fit' approach is advisable (Huberts, 2016: 196). We also propose that, if we intend to avoid the traps of the 'best-practice' approach and produce effective practices that are 'best-fits' for the specific, local,

implementation context, substantive dialogic work is necessary between experts familiar with international anti-corruption practices and 'best practices' and local experts who have intricate knowledge of the local implementation context.



Figure 2: The dialogic process for setting out a 'best-fit' anti-corruption approach

Source: Pallai (2016).

### Our third claim is that to develop third-generation anti-corruption strategies a dialogue involving four types of expertise is necessary

We claim that to set out the 'best-fit' integrity approach, i.e. the integrity development method and the profile of the integrity officer that fit into the local context, we need not only the abovementioned two kinds of

anti-corruption professionals, i.e. international experts and local practitioners. We also need team members with regulatory expertise and others with expertise in value-building processes and a substantive dialogue involving the four experts possessing these four types of expertise (Figure 3) — a dialogue that stretches across professional boundaries (Pallai, 2016a: 11).



Figure 3: The four types of expertise for developing contextualised integrity strategy

In order to support our argument we present a highly innovative collaborative dialogic approach for integrity

practice and curriculum development that has already been tested in the Hungarian public administration.

The process we present was initiated when integrity development as a method and the role of the integrity adviser was new. The aim of the process was to develop contextually adequate practices for public integrity development in Hungary and the curriculum to train integrity advisers. The case study will show not only that the collaborative dialogic approach has produced a contextualised curriculum widely accepted by stakeholders, but also that the process also engendered locally applicable methods for the anti-corruption practice and a committed community of practice that is key for the sustainability of results (Pallai, 2016a: 16-28).

Law enforcement agencies that consider moving towards an integrity approach to anti-corruption and creating the position of integrity official face a similar threefold challenge to the one that the Hungarian public administration faced a few years ago: the new professional field of integrity management should be developed; organisational changes need to be implemented and integrity education designed. Our proposal is that instead of the fast adoption of a ready-for-use integrity curriculum and practice, contextualised solutions should be developed using our collaborative, dialogic approach. A diverse group of academics and anti-corruption and law enforcement professionals should together explore the complexity of the corruption problem within the local context and propose contextualised strategies in view of the whole. The dialogic model we propose could not only exploit the collective wisdom of national and international experts and academics but could also create an engaged and empowered local law enforcement educator and expert community prepared to follow up results, and if necessary make adjustments.

In the paper we present the model, discuss the implementation challenges and set out some proposals for its implementation in the field of law enforcement.

## Conceptual underpinnings

### The complexity of corruption in contexts with pervasive corruption and the consequent complexity of the anti-corruption strategy

The compliance approach and rationalist administration studies are underpinned by the conceptualisation of corruption as an act of rational calculation. The consequent response is focused mainly on regulatory instruments and external incentives: rewards and sanctions (Kiltgaard, 1988). However, especially in environments with pervasive corruption, the problem is more complex. Many practices that breach public integrity are deeply rooted in organisational operation and in the system of both formal and informal incentives. In such cases, resistance to corruption can be difficult for individuals (!). It is easier to give in to peer pressure, internalise the supporting social and organisational narratives and slide into faulty practices. This process can lead to the normalisation of corrupt practices within the organisation. When wrong practices are normalised they can distort the moral awareness of staff. Recent research in psychology has proved that when the results of individual moral judgement and social environmental pressure clash people often decrease stress by pushing the unethicity of their action beyond their awareness (Vries and Sobis, 2016). They may not even recognise that what they do and happens around them is wrong. This phenomenon is called bounded ethicality, a concept that encompasses the systematic and predictable ways in which humans act unethically beyond their own awareness (Chugh, Bazerman and Banaji, 2005).

One of the authors created a metaphor, the stretched tangle, depicted in Figure 2, that attempts to capture and visualise the complexity of material, social and psychological drivers that can lead to corrupt and integrity-breaching practices. (Figure 4) (²)

(!) The situation can produce a collective action problem (Persson et al. 2012).

(²) More detailed explanation of the metaphor in Pallai (2016a: 5-8).

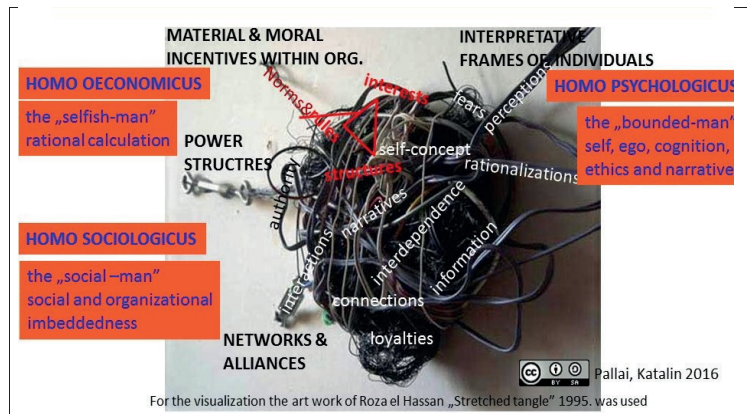


Figure 4: The stretched tangle — a metaphor for corruption

Source: Depiction of Rosa el Hassans' art work adapted by the author (Pallai, 2016a).

The role of the metaphor is to remind us of the multiple components of corruption and of the complex interdependence of the different factors. If visuals have power, this picture must convey that, if we want to curb corruption, we need to understand not only the roots of the problems but the interdependence of the roots as well. Otherwise, there is a high level of risk that we design an instrument that may eliminate one driver but the system recreates itself by creating new connections that substitute the eliminated one. We need complex intervention strategies that can eliminate multiple roots and drivers at the same time. And for this we need cooperation among many different kinds of expertise.

In corruption-tolerant environments conscious, selfish calculation and bounded ethicality are equally important drivers of corruption and are often in a mutually supportive relationship. Rational calculation can be diverted by external incentives that rules and compliance systems produce. For their design rationalist/positivist policymaking expertise is necessary. Bounded ethicality can only be corrected by a dialogic and processual approach that involves stakeholders in reframing their awareness, reflections and relationships. For this value-building component post-positivist/argumentative instruments need also to be applied in concordance with the positivist regulatory instruments.

### The role of dialogue in the face of complex problems

A complex approach that integrates positivist regulatory and post-positivist argumentative instruments can emerge only from a substantive dialogue involving a wide range of experts. Multidisciplinary dialogue can

only explore and capture the specific interrelationships between factors that are symbolised by the stretched tangle and prepare the ground for the 'untangling of the tangle', i.e. for the coordinated and holistic process of interventions that can liberate actors and practices from their multiple dependences. The experts involved must work across boundaries of professional paradigms and organisational mandates connecting their fragmented understanding, knowledge and capacities (Pallai 2016a: 10).

For models of this cross-boundary work we suggest going beyond anti-corruption theory and using insights from organisational and social-system theory (Heijden 2005, Senge 2013, Scharmer 2016). System experts suggest that in the face of complex problems we need to engage in a collective inquiry among many disciplines, fields and experiences and to initiate a processual and dialogic approach <sup>(3)</sup> that can create a new understanding and knowledge from the diverse insights and expertise of those who participate (Pallai 2016: 12). Such a 'dialogue' is the process from which new solutions can evolve (Bohm, 2004).

### An illustrative case: collaborative dialogue for parallel praxis and curriculum development for integrity advisers in Hungary <sup>(4)</sup>

The case that we present to support the viability of our propositions is peculiar because a postgradu-

<sup>(3)</sup> 'Bohmian dialogue': the flow of a conversation in which participants attempt to explore, understand and experience everyone's point of view and reach a new and deeper common understanding of the situation/problem and engender shared responses/solutions. (Bohm, 2004).

<sup>(4)</sup> For a more detailed presentation of the case see Pallai (2016a) and Pallai (2016b).

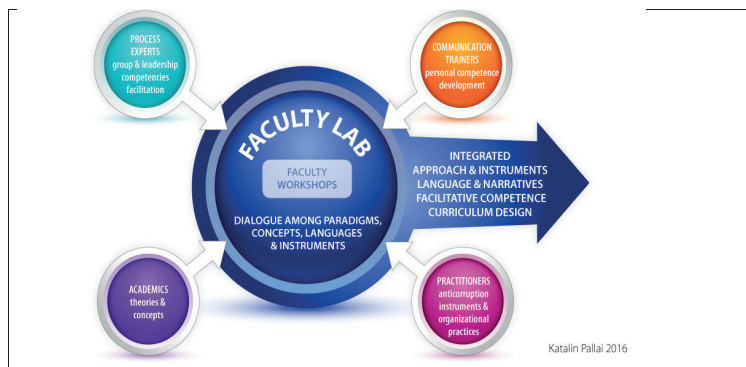
ate training curriculum for integrity advisors and the elaboration of a 'best-fit' method for public integrity development was designed within the same process. The process, started in 2014, shows how a sustained collaborative dialogue involving a diverse team of professionals could engender a localised integrity method and the curriculum for the postgraduate programme for integrity advisors at the National University for Public Service in Budapest.

The background to the case is that in 2013 a new position, that of integrity advisor, was created in Hungary in an attempt to create a new and effective anti-corruption agent within each public administration organisation. The regulation defined the post through a list of technical tasks. In 2014, when the redesign of the education programme for integrity advisors started, it

was already obvious that the actual practice had little impact. Not only was a new curriculum needed, but also a new integrity development method.

The abovementioned (Figure 3) four types of expertise, international and local knowledge and regulatory and value-building expertise were brought into the process by four types of experts. Academics and anti-corruption practitioners possessed the international and local knowledge and process and communication experts the value-building instruments.

These four types of experts were invited to a dialogue process. A faculty lab was established for the parallel dialogue on professional methods and their education (Figure 5).



**Figure 5: The composition of the faculty lab and the aim of the process**

### The work process in the faculty lab and in the classrooms

The professionals who entered the faculty lab had different views and saw different components of the stretched tangle. Establishing a collaborative dialogue was a challenge. Although the aspiration to advance public integrity and create a good curriculum was more or less shared, the communication was the usual type of professional debate and definitely not a creative dialogue<sup>(2)</sup>. Nobody had an effective solution for curbing corruption, nobody looked at others for solutions either. Months of work was needed for the faculty members to begin to develop connections and realise that fields previously neglected by them can contribute to finding better responses to problems that they alone could not solve. Nearly a year passed

<sup>(2)</sup> We use the word debate for the competitive and adversary exchange of ideas whose usual aim to decide what is right or wrong, as opposed to the collaborative nature of the dialogue whose aim is to explore and create shared understanding and ideas.

before the first moment of 'presence' (Senge, 2013) evolved: when walls between professional universes collapsed and ideas suddenly became aligned and integrated. This condition of 'group flow' opened the door to the integration of ideas in a locally applicable integrity approach and curriculum. The core concepts and instruments began to crystallise. Technical and process experts who had gained mutual understanding of each other's fields could integrate the technical tasks in an internal multistakeholder dialogue process: in an integrated risk management process. The innovation that evolved from the dialogue: a collective, processual, dialogic method to integrity development, a method that involve internal stakeholders in a collective inquiry and action process. The design was not addictive from different technical and dialogic tools but a new approach, born across traditional professional boundaries, and designed for the specific local context. A method that at this point could be accepted by the stakeholders within the faculty group.



The new profile of the integrity advisor is a hybrid professional (Pallai 2016: 13) who facilitates the integrated risk management process within the organisations and offers technical support for its participants. This is a profile that none of the professional groups involved in the faculty lab could have designed alone.

The merit of the process was that while the locally 'best-fit' method evolved from the discussion, thanks to the contribution of academics the conceptual frames, language and curriculum content necessary for the education of the integrity professionals was also developed. Two key pillars of an effective implementation process were created parallel: a strategy and the training curriculum for the professionals who can implement it.

Another benefit of the involvement of all faculty was that on the basis of the shared concept of the profile and the tasks of the integrity advisor faculty members see what is relevant from their knowledge and can omit unnecessary elements from the subjects. This is how the training of the hybrid professional can be squeezed in a one year long programme. The integrated curriculum is certainly leaner and more effective for mid-career professionals' training than the usual 'solo performances' of individual faculty members could have been. The result is a curriculum that faculty members could create only together.

Parallel to the dialogue in the faculty workshop the evolving new method was also piloted in an organisation with the leadership of those faculty members who were active practitioners and many of the students have also experimented with dialogic methods in their organisations. We did not have resources for research to evaluate the impact of these multi-stakeholder dialogues within the organisations. The only indicative data we have about the result is that the organisation where the new method was piloted has improved the measure of Factors of Risk Reducing Controls according the yearly survey of the State Audit Office much more rapidly than the average in the same group of organisations <sup>(6)</sup>.

As a result of the process in July 2016, the Hungarian regulation was changed: the collective risk analysis and management process that evolved from the fac-

<sup>(6)</sup> The average improvement from 2014 to 2015 in public organisations was 1.5 %. The organisation where the first pilot was executed improved by 13 %.

ulty dialogue has been included in the regulation of the internal control and integrity systems of public organisations <sup>(7)</sup> in the form of an integrated risk management process. Since 1 October 2016 the duties of the integrity advisors have been extended: they are responsible for involving stakeholders and for facilitating this integrated risk management process within their organisations. The some 18-month-long dialogue produced a method for organisational integrity development that fit in the local context and also built a community of professionals who could advance it to the decision-making process and support it in various forums until re-regulation. It is our conviction that this parallel introduction of the method into education and its institutionalisation is the most effective way to change practices.

Based on our successful experience, we propose that it is effective to combine the processes of the development of a new method and the curriculum for its education because when those who will educate professionals who will implement the method take part in the dialogue developing the method, they will be prepared to design the most effective curriculum.

### Proposals for implementation in law enforcement

We propose that a similar dialogic process be applied in law enforcement if the decision is made to introduce integrity development strategies, to introduce the integrity officers' function and to design their education in contexts where the integrity approach is new.

In the case of the adaptation of the integrity method to law enforcement, the profile of the professional groups involved in the process should partly be different.

- There should be academics from various disciplines, in a similar way as in the process described.
- There should be anti-corruption practitioners who have experience with integrity management instruments and building integrity systems in organisations.

<sup>(7)</sup> Government Decision No 187/2016 (VII.13) amending the Government Decision No 50/2013. (II. 25.) and Government Decision No 370/2011. (XII. 31.).

- There should be law enforcement officers who know the actual practices and are aware of the possibilities and constraints of the targeted organisations.
- There should be competence trainers who can identify and train the new competences necessary for the work of the integrity officers.



Figure 6: Model for law enforcement

If the dialogue involving these professionals can be sustained there is a good chance that they will design a method and a profile for the integrity officer that fit the local environment. That is the 'best fit', instead of plugging in a 'best practice' from somewhere else.

For the adaptation of the method to law enforcement we make further suggestions.

- **Innovation.** Law enforcement agencies generally have a strict hierarchical order which leaves little room for innovation. This, however, hampers innovation and better adaptation to the local environment. The integrity officer could become the innovation hub for the law enforcement unit. His/her most important tasks are to draw up and implement innovative solutions and changes. For this, risks connected to innovation and organisational changes could be both shared between leaders and limited through tedious preparation processes.
  - **Professional autonomy.** The integrity officers should perform no duties other than integrity management. They should work in their own organisation and keep professional contact with other integrity officers, sharing experiences. At best, such knowledge and information sharing should be coordinated by an appointed commander or by a central integrity unit maintaining discretion and confidentiality.
  - **Visibility.** Integrity officers should be visible for law enforcement agents and citizens. Only this wider visibility allows them to perform their integrity building duties well.
- **Leadership support.** The future integrity officer should provide direct support to the commanding officer of the law enforcement agency. The integrity officer is not an additional control over the commanding officer; his/her main task is to make the leadership performance of the organisation better and to enhance integrity and trust with regard to the organisation. This is crucial for the success of the whole organisation, therefore rivalries should be avoided.
  - **Position.** The integrity officer should be a high-ranking, senior officer of the law enforcement agency who understands not only the organisation and processes of law enforcement but has an intricate understanding of the organisation as well. Regarding his/her personality, he/she should be a widely trusted person in order to bridge the gap from the commanding officer to staff members and citizens.

As we have presented in the paper, a new generation of anti-corruption activities are needed in order to further enhance police integrity and strengthen pub-

lic trust with regard to law enforcement agencies. For an effective integrity management system we need contextualised strategies, i.e. 'best-fit' solutions. We suggest that a facilitated collaborative dialogue pro-

cess involving diverse professional groups can not only contextualised anti-corruption strategies, but can also build a local professional community.

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