

# Ghana Integrity Initiative

“Voice of the People” survey  
(Southern Ghana)

Project Completion Report

Sponsors: PTF, UK

July 2005

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

This is a “voice of the people” survey – an urban household corruption perception survey conducted in Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Accra-Tema areas (Southern Ghana) from 10<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2005. The importance of assessing what the public thinks about corruption is premised on our belief that public support for anti-corruption efforts is critical to their success. By asking ordinary people their views, we are in a position to measure the impact of anti-corruption efforts and the extent to which corruption is successfully being fought or otherwise.

The report captured the views of 900 residents of households on their perceptions of corruption, personal involvement as well as other people’s involvement in bribery and corruption, underlying reasons for corruption, institutions and officials perceived to be affected by corruption and suggestions on how to deal with the problem of corruption.

### **Objectives**

1. The main objective is to measure the perceived degree of bribery and corruption.
2. To find out what ordinary peoples’ perceptions are of corruption in the country, ie, whether it’s getting better or worse.
3. To find out the most perceived corrupt institution(s).
4. To find out the underlying reasons for corruption.
5. To measure public perception of corruption in Government, Metropolitan and Municipal assemblies.
6. To find out respondents perceptions on Government’s commitment to the fight against bribery and corruption.
7. To assess respondents’ knowledge of key institutions in the fight against bribery and corruption.
8. To solicit remedies for policy makers and stakeholders in their attempt to mitigate bribery and corruption.

### **Methodology**

The quantitative research method using the **face-to-face** interview technique was employed and the survey was conducted using a **structured questionnaire**, which sought to capture perceptions as well as experiences of residents of households and their involvement in the act of bribery and corruption. The survey took into consideration the different social classes in the selected areas.

One eligible adult aged 18 years and above was interviewed in each household in three selected urban areas. The research took place between 10th and 26th March 2005 in Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Accra-Tema areas.

### **Sampling Procedure**

Using the Census Enumerated Areas (CEA) of the 2000 Population and Housing Census as the sampling frame, two (2) sampling methods were employed namely:

- (i) **Cluster Sampling:** This technique was employed to enable the survey capture the perceptions and/or experiences of the various social classes in the selected areas.
  
- (ii) **Systematic Sampling:** This method made it possible for the calculation of sampling interval for the survey. Principal Researchers and Research Assistants demarcated the selected areas into zones and identified the starting point for each Research Assistant. Every third house was contacted. In all cases, if a chosen house had more than one household, one was randomly selected to be interviewed.

A sample of 900 respondents of both sexes was randomly selected for the survey distributed as follows:

REGION	CITY	DAYS	DATES	NO. OF QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED
Ashanti	Kumasi	3	10 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> March 2005	300
Western	Sekondi-Takoradi	3	17 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2005	200
Greater Accra	Accra, Tema	4	23 <sup>rd</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> , 25 <sup>th</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2005	400
TOTAL				900

### **Review and modification of questionnaire**

A pilot survey was conducted to pre-test the questionnaire prior to the final survey. A total of 30 questionnaires were administered by Principal Researchers in selected areas in Accra-Tema Metropolis. The pre-test exposed certain weaknesses and limitations, which necessitated amendments and modifications.

### **Recruitment and Training of Research Assistants**

All Research Assistants were screened first to ensure their qualification based on the following criteria:

- (i) Must be a student or completed a tertiary level education (University or Polytechnic) or must have at least completed Senior Secondary School with some experience in research work.

- (ii) Must be Fluent in two (2) of the local languages spoken within the research areas ie *Akan* and *Ga*. Emphasis was placed on *Akan* because it is the dominant language next to English in the country, especially Southern Ghana.

A total of twenty-four (24) Research Assistants (8 for each area) were recruited and a (one) day training programme was conducted to explain basic concepts and contents of the questionnaire.

The training session enabled Principal Researchers and Research Assistants to familiarize themselves with the sampled Enumerated Areas (EAs), to map out survey areas into zones, look at sampling methodology and acquire or sharpen interview skills. The Research Assistants acquired practical skills of questionnaire administration through mock interviews and field trials.

### **Quality checks**

As a quality control measure, Principal Researchers corroborated 15% of the interviews conducted with the respondents. There were spot checks in most cases, since the Principal Researchers were present on the field with the Research Assistants. The Principal Researchers assisted the Research Assistants in the questionnaire administration to ensure the interviews were conducted in a manner as directed during the training programme.

### **Field observations**

Observations on the field revealed the following:

1. The subject under investigation (ie. corruption) is very sensitive and controversial, hence, delicate to discuss with non-familiar faces, thus making some of the respondents unwilling to co-operate. It took a lot of efforts from the Research Assistants to convince some respondents to co-operate, mainly by assuring them of confidentiality and anonymity.
2. Some respondents were pessimistic; they claimed that, like most corruption-related surveys conducted in the past, GII's survey would also end up on the shelves to gather dust. This concern notwithstanding, some respondents - especially the elite class - requested that the research findings be published and subjected to public debate, critique and education.
3. It was evident that bribery and corruption has eaten into the fabric of the society. Some respondents think nothing can be done to change the situation and so they have resigned themselves to fate (God) for intervention.

### **Limitation(s) of the survey**

- The study did not capture the bribery and corruption experiences of Public Officials and Enterprises/Business people as far as payment and acceptance of bribes are concerned, as these were not specifically targeted for the survey.

However, some members of these categories might have been captured especially on interview days that fell on weekends.

- Like many other corruption (perception) surveys, this study is unable to provide hard data on corruption to be able to make conclusive statements about real levels of corruption, neither does it give **trends** in the public perception or experience of corruption over time.

## **FINDINGS/RESULTS**

### **Prevalence of Corruption**

- Respondents interviewed were asked whether they ‘agreed’ or ‘agreed strongly’, ‘disagreed’ or ‘disagreed strongly’ with the statement: “Ghana is perceived as a corrupt country”. Out of 900 respondents interviewed, 92.5% at least, agreed that corruption is prevalent in Ghana. More than half (55%) of the respondents said they ‘agree’ that corruption is prevalent in Ghana while 37.5% said they ‘agree strongly’

### **Severity of Corruption**

- Out of 900 respondents interviewed, 90.1% (9 out of 10 respondents) consider corruption as a serious problem.

### **Degree of Corruption**

- Respondents were asked whether corruption is getting ‘better’ or ‘much better’, ‘worse’ or ‘much worse’ in Ghana today. Out of 900 respondents interviewed, 61% representing responses for ‘worse’ and ‘much worse’ said corruption has worsened whilst 36.4% said corruption is getting ‘better’ and ‘much better’ in Ghana today. Specifically 38.7% said corruption is getting ‘worse’, 22.3% said ‘much worse’ whereas 32.4% said corruption is getting ‘better’, 4.0% said ‘much better’.

### **Underlying Reasons For Corruption By Respondents**

- Respondents were asked to mention some of the underlying causes of bribery and corruption. Out of 891 respondents who answered the question, 76.5% cited ‘low income’ as the leading cause of bribery and corruption in the country, 67.3% said ‘greed/get rich quick’ 55.6%, said ‘high cost of living’ 45.6% cited ‘poverty’ and 38.2% said ‘making ends meet (survival).’ Apart from greed/get rich quick, almost all the causes are poverty related.

*(The above is a multiple response question where respondents were given the opportunity to select more than one answer. The percentage for each answer was calculated on a sample base of 891 representing 100%)*

### **Personal Involvement in bribery and corruption**

- Out of 900 respondents, 67.2% said they have been involved in bribery and corruption. Specifically, 49.6% were victims whereas 17.6% were perpetrators. The lower figure for perpetrators is indicative of the fact that people are usually not ready to admit the offence.
- Respondents were asked why they became victims or perpetrators. Out of 457 respondents, majority (77.5%) said they were forced by circumstances (e.g. Delays) while 18.8% said they offered it freely.

### **Last time respondent got involved in Bribery and Corruption**

- The survey results show that, out of 457 respondents 66.2% said they had been involved in bribery and corruption in the past one year while 17.7% said '2-3 years ago', a few (2.6%) said 'about 4-5 years ago' and 3.9% said 'more than 6 years ago'.
- Out of 457 respondents interviewed 47.5% said they 'occasionally' experienced bribery and corruption in their day-to-day activity whereas 33.3% said they experienced it 'very frequently.'

### **Types of bribery and corruption experienced**

- Out of 443 respondents who experienced bribery and corruption, 393 representing 88.7%, said the most common type of bribery and corruption experienced is 'demand for money before rendering of service' whilst 191 representing 43.1%, said 'taking money without issuing receipts'.  
*(This a multiple response question where respondents were given the chance to mention as many answers as possible. Calculation for each answer is on a sample base of 443 representing 100%)*
- Out of 457 respondents interviewed 76.5% disclosed that, they accepted the offer of bribe at the least opportunity whereas 16.7% said they rejected the offer of bribe.

### **Victims or Perpetrators of incident of bribery and corruption witnessed**

- Out of 900 respondents interviewed 72.9% said they had witnessed incidents of bribery and corruption.
- Respondents were asked the last time they witnessed someone being involved in bribery and corruption either as a victim or perpetrator. Out of 665 respondents 20.2% said 'everyday', followed by 15.2% who said 'a week ago' and 16.5% said 'about a month ago'
- Out of 665 respondents who witnessed incidents of bribery and corruption, 87.7% of the respondents said they are normally unconcerned when they witnessed an incident of bribery and corruption.

### **Institutions perceived by respondents as highly affected by corruption**

- The survey captured the perceptions of respondents on institutions or organizations highly affected by corruption in the country today. The top 10 institutions mentioned were: the Police Service 76.8%, Ministry of Education 31.5%, Customs-CEPS 31.1%, the Judicial Service 16.4%, Civil/Public Service 16.4%, Ministry of Health 15.6%, Politicians- (MP's, Ministers,etc) 8.7%, Electricity Company 5.5%, Internal Revenue 5.2%, and Ghana Immigration Service 4.3%.

*(The above is a multiple response question where respondents were given the opportunity to select more than one answer. The percentage for each answer was calculated on a sample base of 829 representing (100%)*

### **Respondents were asked how many MP's/Ministers, Civil/Public Servants and officials of the Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies they thought are involved in bribery and corruption. Their responses are as follows:**

- Out of the 900 respondents interviewed 37.3% said they 'don't know' the number of MP's/Ministers involved in bribery and corruption, while 28.3% said 'a few' (some) are involved.
- Out of a total of 900 respondents interviewed, 37.2% said 'most' Civil/Public Servants are involved in bribery and corruption; 30% said 'a few' (some) are involved.
- Out of a total of 900 respondents 34.7% said 'most' officials in the Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies are involved in bribery and corruption.

### **Respondents were asked to state which other means apart from tender they thought are applied by the Government and the Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies in award of contracts in the country. Their responses are as follows:**

- For Government, out of 900 respondents interviewed, 66.2% said consideration of party faithfuls, 54.5% mentioned backdoor (underhand) activities, 53.9% mentioned nepotism whiles 51.6% respondents said ethnicity.
- For Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies, out of 900 respondents interviewed, 61.7% said consideration of party faithfuls, 53.3% mentioned backdoor (underhand) activities, 52.6% mentioned nepotism whiles 48.4% said ethnicity.  
*(The above are multiple response questions where respondents were given the opportunity to select more than one answer. The percentage for each answer was calculated on a Sample base of 900 representing 100%)*

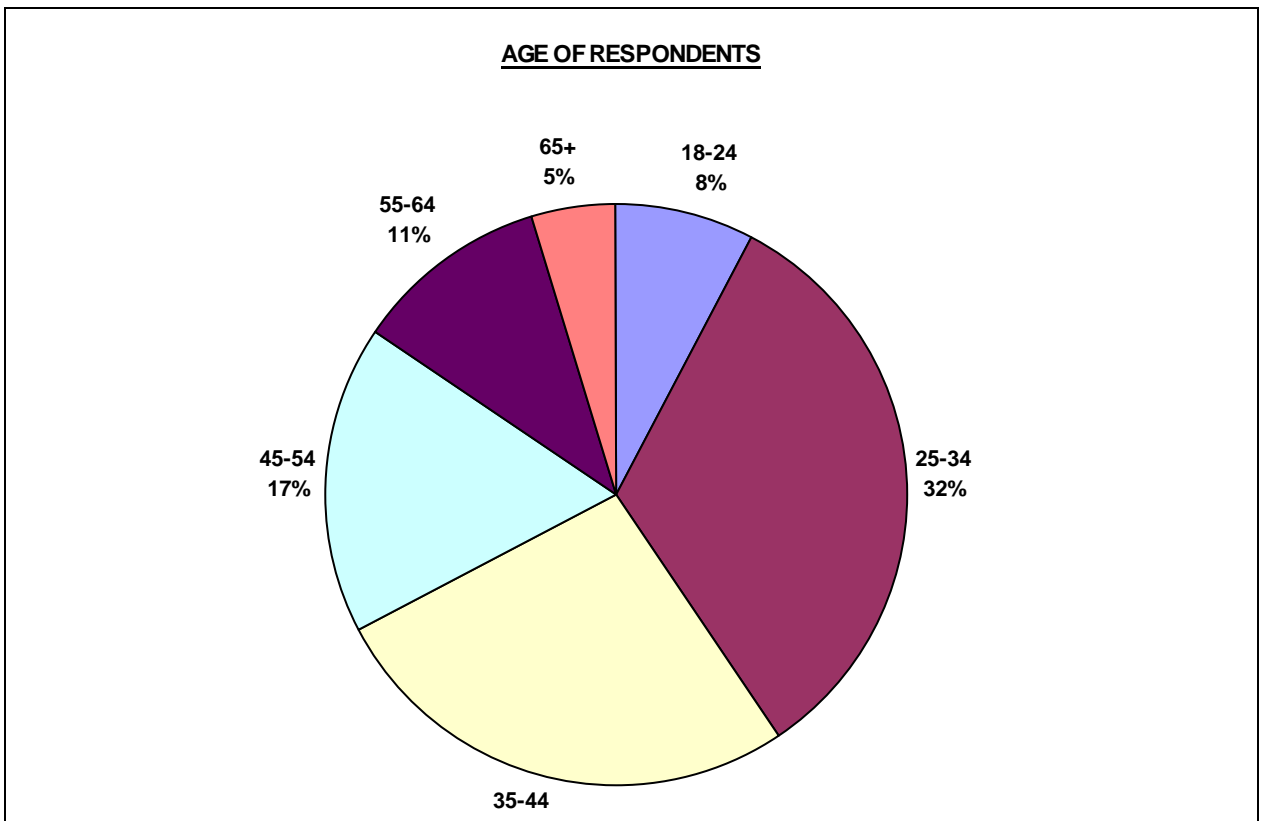
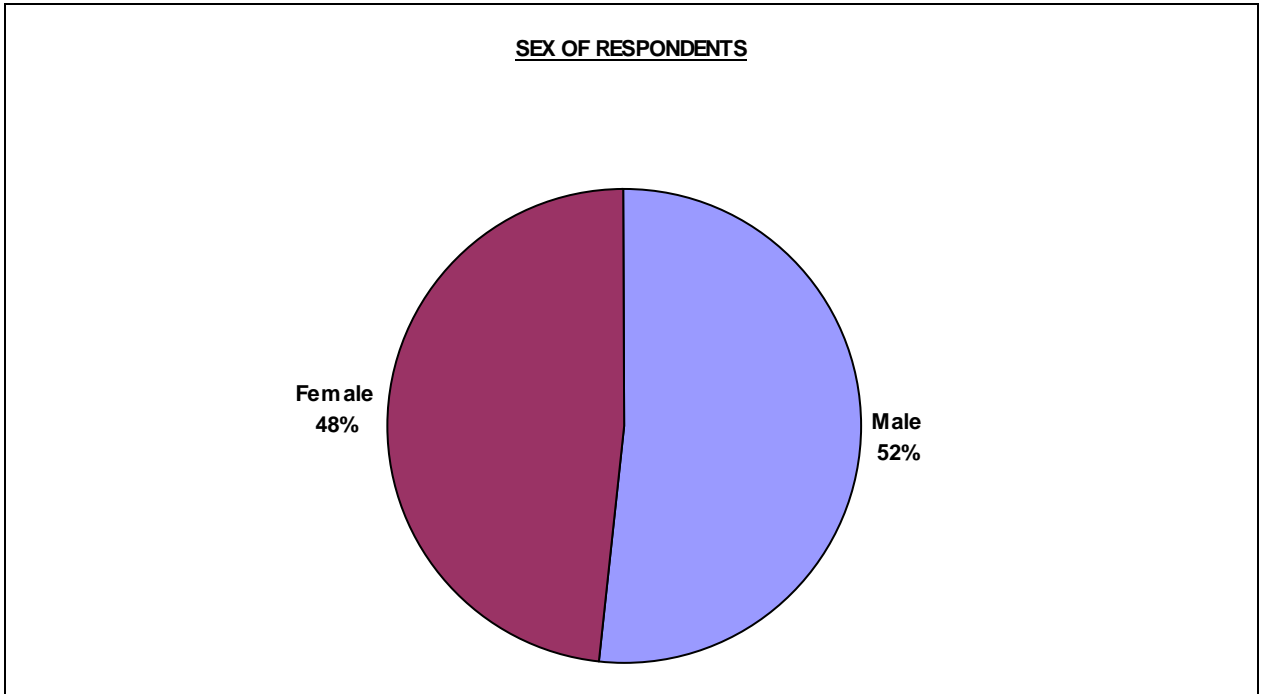
## **Government's Commitment Towards The Fight Against Bribery And Corruption**

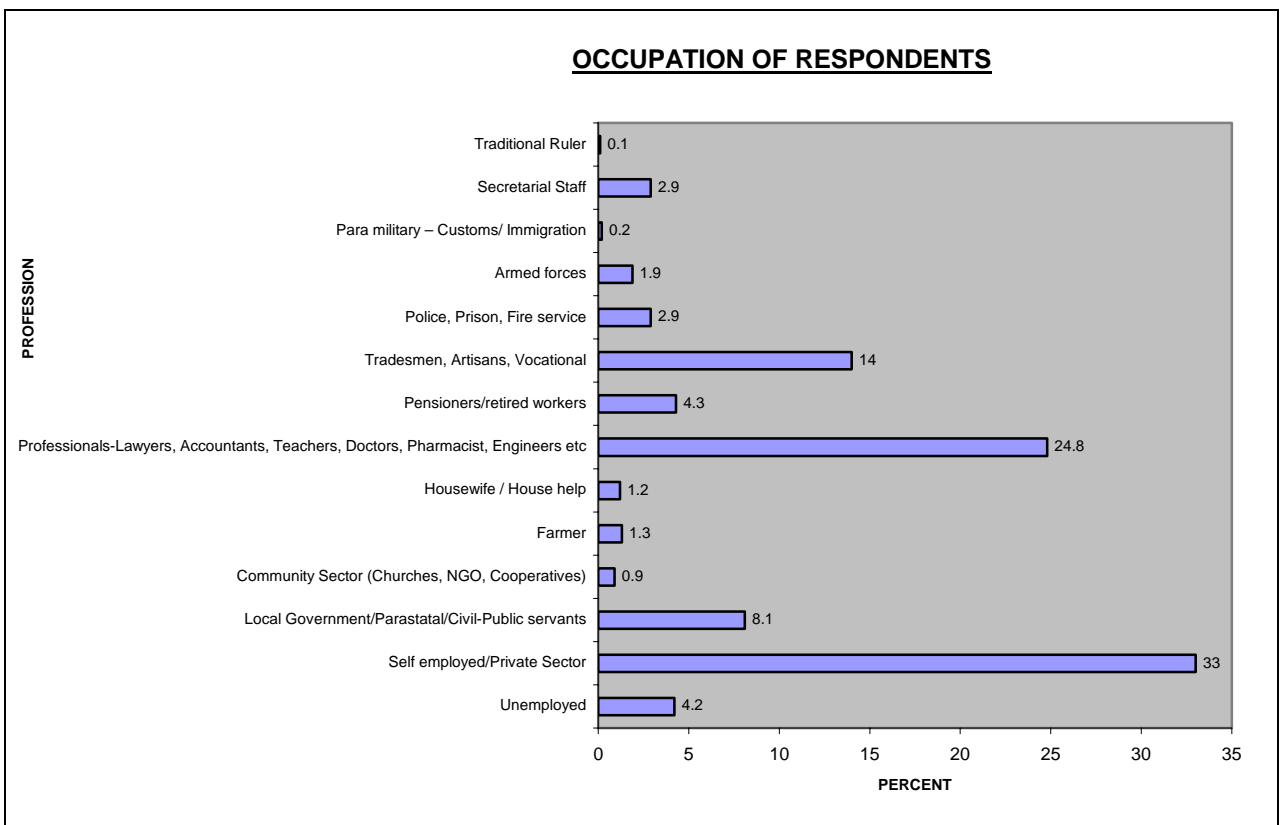
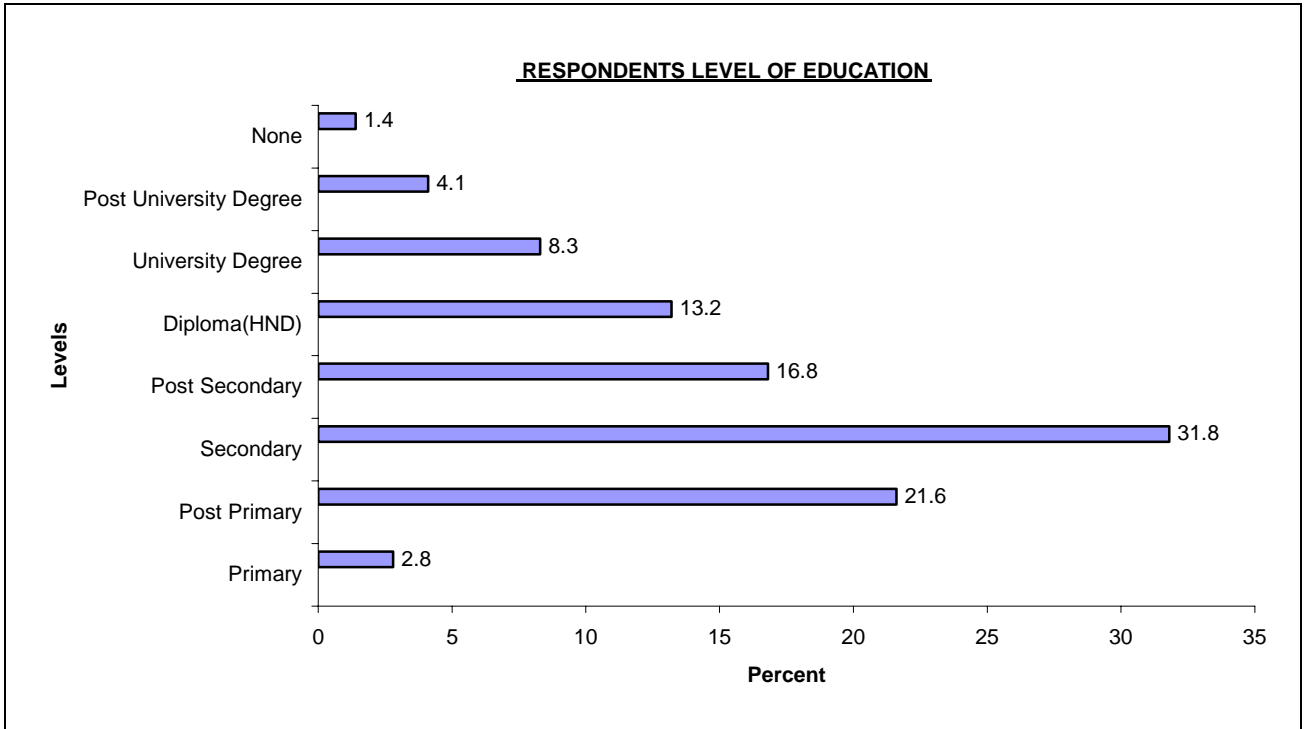
- Out of 900 respondents interviewed 51.1% said the government is committed to the fight against bribery and corruption as against 48.4% who said government is not.
- In response to the question, 'How well is the government handling bribery and corruption in the country?' Out of 900 respondents 40.3% claimed government is handling bribery and corruption 'fairly well' followed by 29.7% who said 'not very well', and 19.3% who said 'not at all'. Only 10% said government was handling bribery and corruption 'very well'
- Respondents were asked to mention key institutions or organizations fighting bribery and corruption in the country. Ironically, most respondents mentioned the Police Service. Other institutions/organizations mentioned included: Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Judicial Service, the Media, the Christian Council of Ghana (e.g. Catholic Secretariat) and Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII). Paradoxically, in spite of the fact that the Police Service and the Judicial Service were mentioned as being in the forefront in the fight against bribery and corruption, they were rated high as perpetrators.

### **Key suggestions by Respondents**

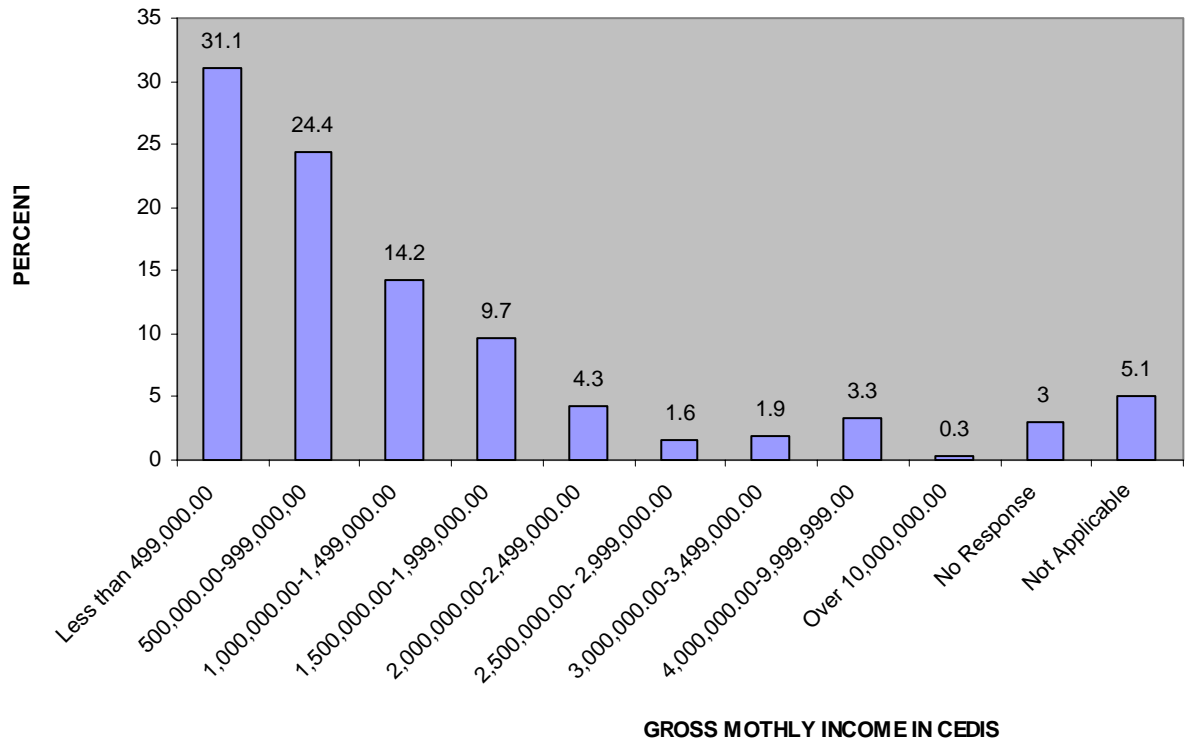
- The following are some of the suggestions (in order of importance) given by respondents to mitigate or minimize bribery and corruption:
  1. Government/Employers should pay workers realistic salaries and living wages coupled with good working conditions.
  2. Government should strengthen existing laws and impose stiffer and longer prison terms on perpetrators to serve as a deterrent to others.
  3. Ghanaians should be educated to eschew greed and be loyal to the state.
  4. Poverty-reduction strategies should be enhanced to improve on the living conditions of the people.
  5. The need to create more employment opportunities for the youth as the devil provides work for the idle hand.

# DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS





### RESPONDENTS' INCOME LEVELS



## CONCLUSIONS

GII believes that the findings of the survey, with all its limitations, provide the public and policy makers with some useful information on the perceived state of corruption in the country, and the expectations of the public in terms of dealing with the canker. Some of the findings are particularly interesting in that, they corroborate other findings of earlier research by Transparency International (TI) and other organizations. This calls for serious reflection and considerate action to address the issues raised by respondents.

- The findings reveal a perception of high prevalence of corruption in Ghanaian society from the respondents in the three (3) urban areas surveyed. This could in part be attributed to the frequent reports of alleged bribery and corruption put out by the Media and the perception that nothing/not much is being done to disprove the allegations or investigate them. Since such reports are often not investigated and their findings made known to the public, people make their own judgments, adding to the perception of pervasive corruption.
- There is a perception of high administrative or bureaucratic corruption compared to political corruption. Three out of ten of the respondents said they ‘don’t know’ the number of MPs, Ministers, etc. involved in bribery and corruption, whereas the same (3 out of 10) of the respondents are certain that ‘most’ Civil/Public Servants and officials in the Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies are involved in bribery and corruption. Again, respondents cited ‘delay tactics’ as a way by which the people are ‘forced’ to pay bribes for public services or indulge in other forms of bribery. This is a sure disincentive for investors in particular and a minus in terms of public trust in the efficient management of public resources.
- The report indicates a high tolerance for corruption among Ghanaians. Most of the respondents interviewed said they looked on unconcerned when witnessing acts of bribery and corruption. Typically, persons who try to confront perpetrators of bribery and/or corruption are often labeled ‘too know’, or asked to ‘mind your own business’ by their fellow citizens. Moreover, where reports are made to the Police and offenders are sometimes arrested, they (the offenders) still get off and nothing comes out of the investigations. For most people, therefore, reporting corruption is an exercise in futility. This is a particularly disturbing finding as it means that we are breeding a culture of impunity, in which those involved in corrupt acts get away with their destructive behaviour.
- Some of the institutions perceived to be highly corrupt, such as the **Police Service** and the **Judicial Service**, are paradoxically also the ones expected to help control corruption. This clearly indicates that there is a serious need for institutional renewal and reforms that will reinvigorate these oversight institutions and enable them play their expected roles to help address the canker of corruption in the society.
- Certain tendencies such as nepotism, cronyism and ethnicity, which are often inimical to development, appear to have eaten very deep into Ghanaian social fabric such that, nobody seems to see anything wrong with them. For

example, when respondents were asked their perception on other means applied by the Government and the Metropolitan/Municipal Assemblies in the award of contracts, apart from tender, most of the respondents were quick to cite ‘party faithfuls,’ followed by ‘nepotism’, ‘backdoor’ and ‘ethnicity,’ in that order. The challenges of cronyism, nepotism and ethnicity therefore remain areas in urgent need of attention.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A strong code of conduct for civil/public servants as well as political appointees, especially those in positions to hire, fire, and influence resource allocation, is needed as a matter of urgency. Such a code of conduct must be systematically and rigorously enforced.
- Parliament should consider reforming and reviewing legislative instruments establishing the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) to make them sufficiently independent as well as grant them powers of prosecution. This would go a long way to increase public confidence in such institutions, which have been established as instruments of accountability. More importantly, giving CHRAJ and SFO prosecutorial powers would help ensure that acts of corruption and abuse of office do not go unpunished. This will help check the creeping culture of impunity among those entrusted with elective and administrative power.
- Government should strengthen existing laws to include the imposition of stiffer punishment, such as longer prison terms for perpetrators of corruption. At the same time, the Public Service should institute a reward system for those who exhibit high standards of performance and commitment to duty in public office.
- Parliament should, as a matter of priority, enact the Whistleblowers Bill and the Freedom of Information Bill to encourage exposure of wrongdoing in the workplace as well as foster transparency in governance and public administration.
- Civic education should be increased to educate and sensitize Ghanaians on the deleterious effects of corruption. Ghanaians must learn to be loyal to the state rather than to friends, relatives and members of their ethnic groups. This calls for a change of attitude and a system of democratic practice where all citizens are equal before the law and where meritocracy rules over and above all other considerations.
- Government, Employers, Trade Unions and other Stakeholders should take steps to organize a national debate on income policy as a matter of urgency since research findings suggest that low income and poverty-related issues are among the root causes of bribery and corruption.
- Finally, recognition should be given to people who risk their lives and/or livelihoods in order to champion the anti-corruption cause.