

SUGAR-TAF Engages Civil Society on Removal of Public Officials Convicted of Corruption from Public Service

With support from SUGAR-TAF, ACCU has engaged local governments to find out why convicted public officials have not been dismissed.

In 2017, SUGAR-TAF discovered that public officials convicted under the Anti-Corruption Act were often not being removed from office and continued to receive salaries. This is in clear contravention of the law. Yet as application of the law requires communication and cooperation between a number of public agencies, there does not seem to be a single obvious fix.

The Anti-Corruption Coalition of Uganda (ACCU) is a national coalition of NGOs with a focus on fighting corruption. Their work includes advocacy, information sharing, exposure of corruption, and input into policy and legislation. In 2018, SUGAR-TAF got in touch to let them know about the issue of convicted public officials. SUGAR-TAF was engaging with the government, but it seemed clear that civil society also had both the right to know and a role to play in keeping the issue in the spotlight. SUGAR-TAF has provided ACCU with information to inform the organisation's engagement on the issue.

As Cissy Kagaba, Executive Director of ACCU, explains, the relationship between civil society and government need not be adversarial. Based on the information they received from SUGAR TAF, ACCU chose to engage in two districts where convicted public officials remained in office, seeking to understand why they had not been removed. They found that district officials did not have a clear understanding about the procedure for removal, and sometimes were unaware that an official had been convicted. Ms. Kagaba is sympathetic to the fact that district officials often do not have full access to national-level information: "Kampala people omit to avail information and it becomes a bit of a trick." For this reason, engaging at the districts as well as in Kampala is necessary to make sure that everyone becomes accountable and processes become transparent.

ACCU expects to continue engaging on the issue, and are glad that SUGAR-TAF has brought it to their attention so that they can do their part in making sure it doesn't get lost in empty talk: "You can have dialogue and dialogue, and nothing can change...It doesn't have to be confrontational, but we need to speak up and say there seems to be a problem. Ignoring this undermines the rule of law. We have a zero tolerance policy to corruption....there is a need to call this out."

“It became clear to us that even at the district, people weren’t clear on the procedures...district leadership don’t know what the process is to remove someone.

People say, ‘Yes we’re willing to do it, but we don’t know how.’ Or sometimes they might not know that the person was convicted.”

- Cissy Kagaba,
Executive Director,
ACCU

Find out more:

To learn more about ACCU,
go to accu.or.ug

To learn more about SUGAR-
TAF, go to
www.sugarfacility.org

To find out more about
SUGAR-TAF's work on
convicted public officials,
please see previous articles,
titled:

ODPP Works with Public
Officials to Implement
Process for Removing
Convicted Public Officials
from Office

Convicted Public Officials are
Removed from the Payroll

These articles will soon be
available from the SUGAR-
TAF website under "Change
Stories."