



Executive Summary

Vietnam Youth

Integrity Survey

2014

Supporting values and practice of integrity among
young Vietnamese



INTRODUCTION

With almost 50% of Vietnamese aged below 30, young people represent an important part of the overall population (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2013). Therefore, young people's resistance to corruption and ability to act with integrity is of particular importance to the long-term success and sustainability of economic and social development. Previous research in Vietnam (Transparency International, et. al., 2011) has shown that young people are particularly vulnerable to certain forms of corruption. In government policy, the importance of supporting youth understanding of corruption and integrity has been recognised with the establishment of Project 137, an anti-corruption initiative that has been rolled out across the education system starting in the academic year 2013-2014 (Government of Vietnam, 2013).

The Youth Integrity Survey (YIS) 2014 aims to inform policy and practice by policy-makers, educational institutions, civil society organisations and other stakeholders with detailed data on young people's understanding of concepts of integrity, their concrete experiences and the challenges they face in applying their values in daily life. Through the use of this data, efforts to support young people in increasing their understanding of, and acting with, integrity can be made more effective.

METHODOLOGY

The YIS 2014 builds on the successful experience of the first edition of the YIS in 2011. For the first time, the 2014 edition allows for the comparison of key data points across time. In the research, the Transparency International definition of integrity as "behaviours and actions consistent with a set of moral and ethical principles and standards, embraced by individuals as well as institutions that create a barrier to corruption" is applied.

The research has been carried out in collaboration between the partners from the previous round of research: Transparency International, Towards Transparency, the Centre for Community Support Development Studies (CECODES) and Live&Learn.

For the YIS 2014, a research sample of 1.110 randomly selected young people (aged between 15-30 years old) and 432 adults (as a control group) were interviewed across 11 provinces and cities in all regions of Vietnam. Face-to-face interviews were carried out between December 2013 and May 2014

by Live&Learn, with the support of CECODES and the collaboration of provincial departments of the Vietnam Fatherland Front (VFF). Interviews were carried out by specially trained volunteers, students and young graduates.

KEY FINDINGS

Values and attitudes towards integrity

The YIS 2014 finds that young people in Vietnam profess values which are highly aligned with integrity. However, they tend to loosen their values when it comes to loyalty to family and friends.

Young people continue to have a very high level of understanding of "right" and "wrong". 94% place honesty over wealth and 82% place law abidingness and integrity over wealth. 89% agree that a person of integrity should not cheat or break the law, and 95% agree that a person of integrity would not accept or give bribes. About 85% consider the lack of integrity harmful for the country, their family and themselves. Nonetheless, there are significant differences in levels of awareness of the importance of integrity, in particular between the least educated youth (up to completing primary school) and the best educated ones (above upper secondary school), with the latter demonstrating higher levels of understanding and greater willingness to engage against corruption.

However, compared to 2011, across economic status and education levels, youth now appear more willing to place increased family income and attaining wealth before integrity. Youth are also more willing to compromise their definition of integrity when family income or loyalty to friends and family is concerned. In particular, the number of youth saying that it is acceptable to lie or cheat in such situations has risen from 35% (2011) to 41% (2014), with the most pronounced rise in the least educated group. At the same time, among the best educated, the willingness to accept petty bribery is falling.



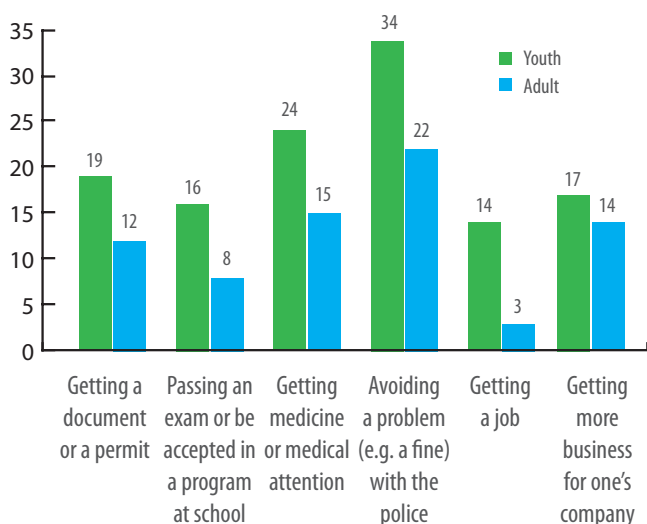
Experiences and behaviour

Compared to 2011, reported experiences with corruption have declined somewhat among youth respondents. Nonetheless, trust in the integrity of public services is deteriorating fast among young people.

Traffic police, the health sector and standard administrative procedures such as getting a

document, are now being reported as the most vulnerable areas. The fact that more than one third of youth report corruption when interacting with the traffic police, almost a quarter with regard to the health sector and a fifth with the education sector is highly problematic. As in 2011, young people continue to be more vulnerable to corruption than adults, in all areas that were surveyed in the research (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
Experiences of corruption among those having contact with services in the past 12 months: youth and adults (%)



In a concerning development, young people's views of the integrity of key public service providers are deteriorating, with only 6% - 8% assessing the integrity level of four public service providers as "very good", half the level of 2011. Ratings of the local and national administration, traffic police, public education and public health care fell, while "very bad" ratings rose for all services except for public education (Figure 2). The more educated youth group were the most critical in this respect.

Likewise, when presented with choices concerning concrete situations, the willingness of young people to take unethical decisions rose between 2011 and 2014: respondents are increasingly willing to compromise integrity when it comes to passing an exam, applying for a document or getting into a good school or company. At the same time, there is a notable fall in their willingness to accept corruption at a job interview (Figure 3).

New questions concerning typical situations in commercial life revealed that a strong majority (72%) would reject the offer of a bribe for a contract, and 84% would reject a facilitation payment on behalf of their company (Figure 4).



FIGURE 3

Willingness to take decisions which violate integrity in different situations among youth: 2011 and 2014 (%)

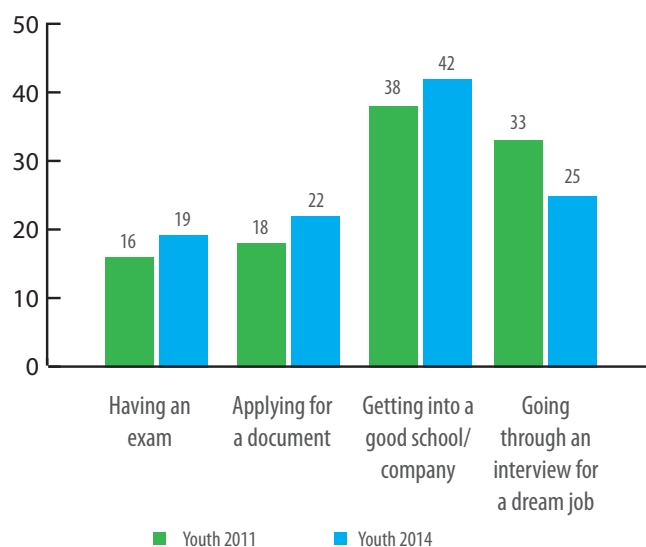


FIGURE 2

Youth ratings of public service providers' integrity as "very good" and "very bad": 2011 and 2014 (%)

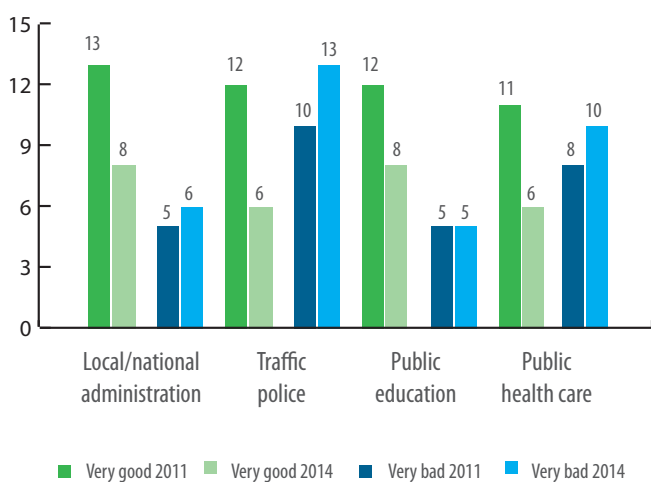
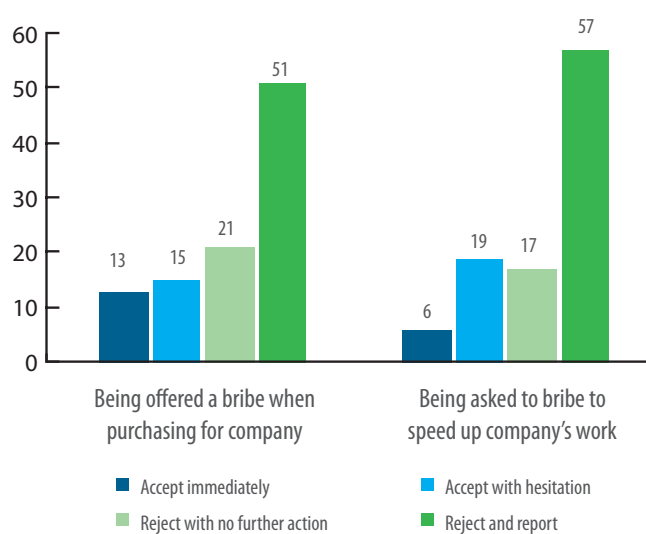


FIGURE 4

Willingness to take decisions which violate integrity in business situations among youth (%)



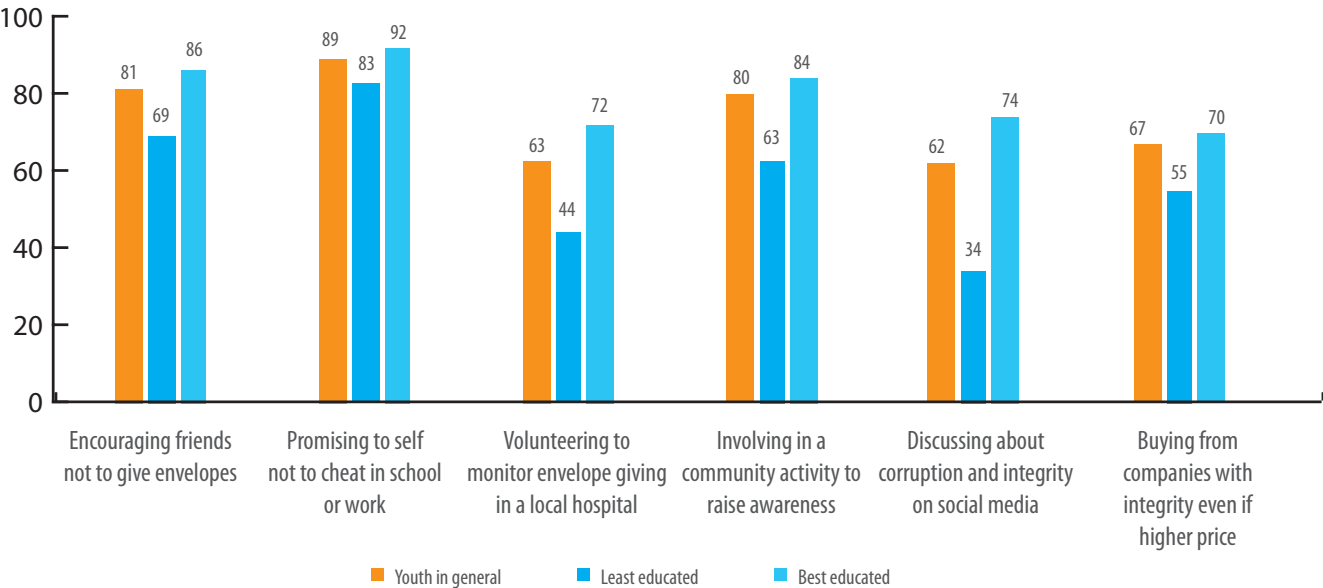
Young people are becoming more willing to engage in integrity initiatives, which is also evident in a growing number of youth-led integrity initiatives in the country.

However, the best educated youth group appears to be significantly more ready to promote integrity than the less educated group. The highest rates of support are recorded for activities such as encouraging

friends not to give envelopes, behaving ethically in the school or work context, and engaging in community awareness raising activities. In particular, using social media to discuss corruption and integrity sees a huge divide between the more educated and the less educated groups with the latter seeing this as much less relevant.

FIGURE 5

Willingness to engage in awareness raising activities: youth in general and by educational background (%)



The willingness to report corruption among youth is largely unchanged since 2011. In 2014, when being asked whether they would report a specific education-related case, 60% said that they would report. Importantly, among those choosing not to report, the reasons have shifted decidedly towards resignation, i.e. that “it would not help anyway” (37% in 2014 compared to 28% in 2011), reflecting broader views among Vietnamese citizens (Towards Transparency, Transparency International, 2013).

Overall however, young people continue to be very optimistic about their ability to promote integrity, with 87% saying that youth can play an important role in this regard. Most encouragingly, significantly more of the least educated youth say so now, compared to 2011. In this group, a rise from 67% (2011) to 84% (2014) was recorded.

Influences on youth behaviour

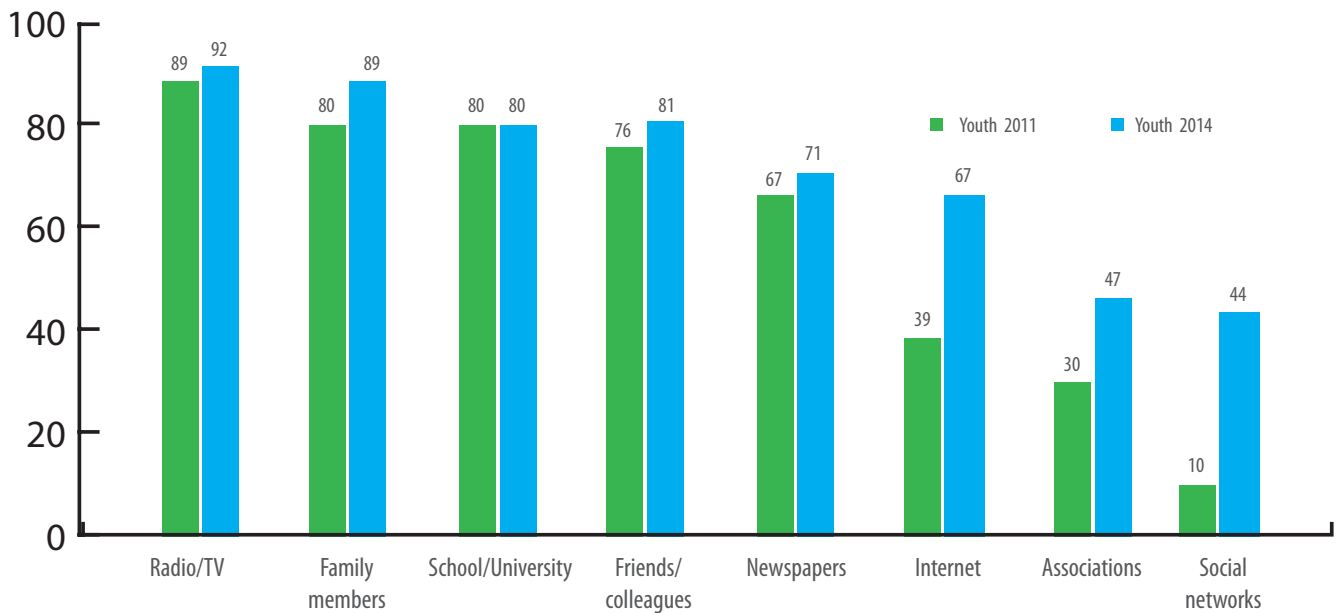
An important observation made in the YIS 2014 is that the information sources shaping the views of young people on integrity are changing.

While radio/TV, family and educational institutions – found to impact most in 2011 – retain their importance, internet, social media and associations

record a very strong rise. At the same time, sources such as educational institutions, newspapers, associations, internet and social networks remain vastly more important for the more educated group of youth. For less educated youth, radio/TV and family members are the most important sources.

FIGURE 6

Information sources shaping youth views on integrity: 2011 and 2014 (%)



Despite the importance of the education sector in influencing young people, the YIS 2014 does not detect an increased reach of formal anti-corruption education programmes since 2011. This may be due to the only recent commencement of Project 137 as a formal government programme in this area.

Only 18% of youth report having received anti-corruption education, and among the least educated the figure is only 3%, while 74% of youth profess having no or very little knowledge of anti-corruption and integrity regulations. This demonstrates a significant need to increase reach and effectiveness of anti-corruption education.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the YIS 2014 presents a mixed picture. On one hand, young people's values appear to remain firmly rooted in integrity and reported experiences with corruption in selected sectors are declining compared to 2011. Young people also express a strong belief in their ability to promote integrity and strong willingness to take concrete actions. At the same time, young people are now increasingly ready to compromise their values, in particular to secure their family income. They are more sceptical towards the effectiveness of reporting corruption. A significant divide in attitudes about integrity is appearing between more and less educated youth. This emphasises the importance of proactive efforts by multiple stakeholders to support young people, who are strongly committed to their values, to practice these in a challenging environment. The following key recommendations are made in this respect.

To anti-corruption agencies, government education institutions, and educational institutions

- That close attention is paid to increasing the reach, content and effectiveness of anti-corruption and integrity education.
- That existing and new youth integrity initiatives led by the government, mass organisations, civil society organisations and educational institutions are actively supported by relevant government agencies.
- That key sectors where young people experience corruption are targeted for anti-corruption reform, in particular the education sector.
- That senior leadership in educational institutions encourage the development of youth and teachers, and the involvement of parents in discussing and promoting concepts of clean education and integrity.
- That adequate systems and procedures are established to safeguard integrity in the classroom.

To other youth organisations (formal and informal), NGOs and other actors interested in supporting youth integrity initiatives

- That they, particularly the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, considers the inclusion of youth integrity as a priority topic in its annual plans.
- That they consider integrating youth integrity into existing initiatives and collaborate with existing youth integrity initiatives.
- That the results of the YIS are carefully considered in the design of youth integrity initiatives.

To young people

- That they consider joining or starting their own youth integrity initiative and encourage their peers to do so, in order to learn more, get inspired and inspire others to act with integrity.

To parents and other family members

- That they encourage the development of integrity-based values by setting an example and by supporting their children to act with integrity.
- That they engage proactively and use existing accountability mechanisms in educational institutions to demand clean practices in the sector.

To media organisations

- That they engage in active efforts to support an increased understanding of concepts of integrity among young people in particular.
- Depending on their particular strengths and reach, that they make proactive efforts to reach less privileged youth.

To business sector organisations

- That leading businesses support existing and new youth integrity initiatives to demonstrate leadership and the relevance of integrity for career development.
- That across the business sector, competitive and transparent hiring procedures are developed and maintained, which place strong importance on the integrity of candidates.

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