

# BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF TERMS AND COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES IN MANAGING CORRUPTION RISK IN HIGHER EDUCATION: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

*PRESENTED*

*BY*

*OLU SAMUEL AFOLABI*



# INTRODUCTION



- ❖ **Understanding Key Terms/Issues: Decision Areas, Decision Points, Potential Perpetrators, Qualitative and Quantitative dichotomy, Methodology**
- ❖ **Corruption in Higher Education: Issues and challenges**
- ❖ **Best Practices: Governance and Risk Management**
- ❖ **Kazakhstan**
- ❖ **Georgia**
- ❖ **Conclusion**

# Understanding Key Terms/Issues



- ❖ **Decision Areas – Offices/spaces (macro level) that could be explored or used to influence actions that may lead to corruption. Decision points are subsumed in decision areas.**
- ❖ **Decision Points – These are pinpointed (micro level) offices/spaces/processes (smaller than decision areas) where actual decisions are taken**
- ❖ **Potential Perpetrators – Direct or indirect. Occupy a central place in curbing or influencing corruption**
- ❖ **Qualitative/quantitative dichotomy: Both are used in anti-corruption methodology.**
- ❖ **Methodology: While methodological disciplines may differ, there is consensus that anti-corruption methodology involves both qualitative and quantitative methods.**
- ❖ **See OECD anti-corruption risk management methodology; Lebanon NAC Strategy 2020-2025**



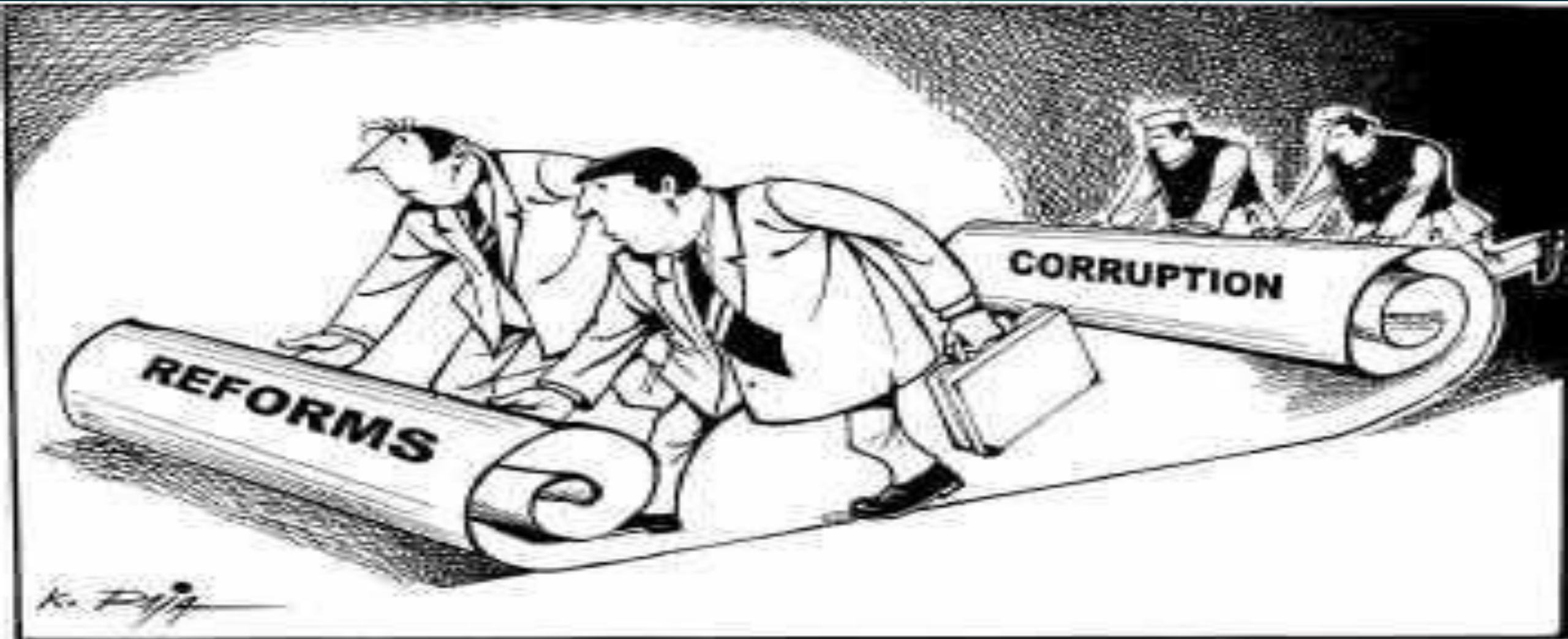
# Corruption in Higher Education: Issues and challenges



Four Areas have been identified by the working groups which corresponds to what obtains INTERNALLY in most HE in virtually all countries. The areas are:

- Students Track (Academic and Administrative)
- Academic track (Teaching Staff)
- Professional Track (Administrative and Technical Positions)
- Public Procurement Track

# Corruption Anti-corruption reforms and Corruption synergy



# Student Track (Teaching Staff)



## Issues

- ▶ Registration,
- ▶ Examination,
- ▶ Project/exam assessment,
- ▶ Accommodation,
- ▶ Bursary,
- ▶ Transfer,
- ▶ Sponsorship, etc

## Challenges

Clarity and opacity of rules and regulations

Process and procedures

Conformity to rules and regulations

Presence of sanctions and rewards

# Academic Track



## ➤ Issues

▶ Employment

▶ Promotion

▶ Appointment

▶ Conversion

▶ Sponsorship

▶ Release, etc

## ▶ Challenges

Clarity and opacity of rules and regulations

Process and procedure

Conformity to rules and regulations

Presence of sanctions and rewards



# Professional Track – Non-teaching /administrative



## Issues

- HODs, Deans, VC, President, Faculty/Departmental Secretaries, Administrative/technical/clerical staff –
- ▶ Appointment
- ▶ Promotion
- ▶ Sponsorship
- ▶ Transfer.

## Challenges

- Clarity and opacity of rules and regulations
- Process and procedure
- Conformity to rules and regulations
- Presence of sanctions and rewards

# Public Procurement Track



## ▶ Issues/Areas

▶ Imprest

▶ Allowance(s)

▶ Purchasing

▶ Bidding

▶ Authorization

## ▶ Challenges

Clarity and opacity of rules and regulations

Process and procedure

Conformity to rules and regulations

Presence of sanctions and rewards

# Best Practices: Kazakhstan



- ❖ 129 higher educational institutions as at 2016/2017 session
- ❖ Currently, 55 Private Universities, 43 State Universities, 17 universities with mixed state-private ownership, 13 belonging to law enforcement agencies or armed forces; and one (1) international university.
- ❖ The largest share of funding for both public and private universities comes from private sources.
- ❖ On average, study fees and other private investments, e.g. donations, fee-based services, loans, etc. account for about 80% of the budget of public universities and some 88% of funding in private institutions
- ❖ HE in Kazakhstan, adheres to the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy,
- ❖ HE have a degree of independence to manage and govern themselves, and are trusted to do so in conformity with rules and regulations

# HE in Kazakhstan



- ▶ HE providers have full (private institutions) or almost full (public institutions) control of their day-to-day operations, including in sensitive areas such as procurement, assessment of academic performance, and staffing decisions.
- ▶ The framework in which such activities are carried out include sectoral legislation, namely the Law on Education, various regulations and model rules.
- ▶ **Others** are: Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Offenses, the Law on the Fight against Corruption, the Law on Public Procurement, the Law on Licensing.
- ▶ The Business Code is directly related to the fight against corruption and its prevention in the higher education sector.

# Issues and spheres of corruption risks in Kazakhstan HE



- ▶ Education is one of the sectors most susceptible to corruption, and the number of criminal cases instituted against corruption crimes rose by 50% from 2015 to 2016.
- ▶ Most common manifestations of corruption are property theft and fraud, including in the area of personnel records (for example, the inclusion of the “dead souls” in the payroll), falsification of data, plagiarism and unreasonable overestimation of ratings.
- ▶ most of the complaints received from the citizens by the MOE concerning HE relates to abuses by candidates when entering universities.
- ▶ National Anti-Corruption Report published in April 2017 shows a high degree of corruption in the education system as a whole

# CONT'D



- ▶ Key example 1: Abuses in the allocation of budgetary resources through government grants
- ▶ Grants are awarded on two conditions: the average score of academic performance must be above a certain level, and unused previously allocated grants.
- ▶ Due to the relatively high cost of education, these 'freed' (unused) grants are highly demanded "commodities" and susceptible to corruption.
- ▶ It is at this point that corruption risk becomes very high as there is no transparency in the process of such a "secondary" grant allocation.
- ▶ Advantage is given to students enjoying a privileged attitude from the administration of the university for reasons unrelated to their academic performance.
- ▶ Such privileged attitude can be explained by political, family or business connections or by calculations of the received donations that are considered important for the institution and its employees. Such "rogue" students are often included in the so-called "Dean's lists"

# Key Example 2: Undue process of recording students' performance ratings



- ▶ Assessments are deliberately underestimated to create conditions for obtaining illegal rewards in exchange for a higher score.
- ▶ Assessments are crucial for the academic career of students, the right to receive state grants as well as on state funding of universities and their risk indicators depend on such assessments.
- ▶ Typical conditions for carrying out the assessment seem to create favourable conditions for abuse.
- ▶ This is because texts and examinations are conducted orally and one-on-one with the teacher, while in the case of written exams the assessment, and the criteria are not always transparent and not in all cases reported to the students accordingly.
- ▶ Such risks are often encountered in responsible examinations (i.e., those which seriously affect the future fate of the student) in other countries too, and one can be protected from them in various ways, in particular by establishing an appropriate procedure for assessing knowledge.

# Corruption Risk Management Strategies in Kazakhstan HE



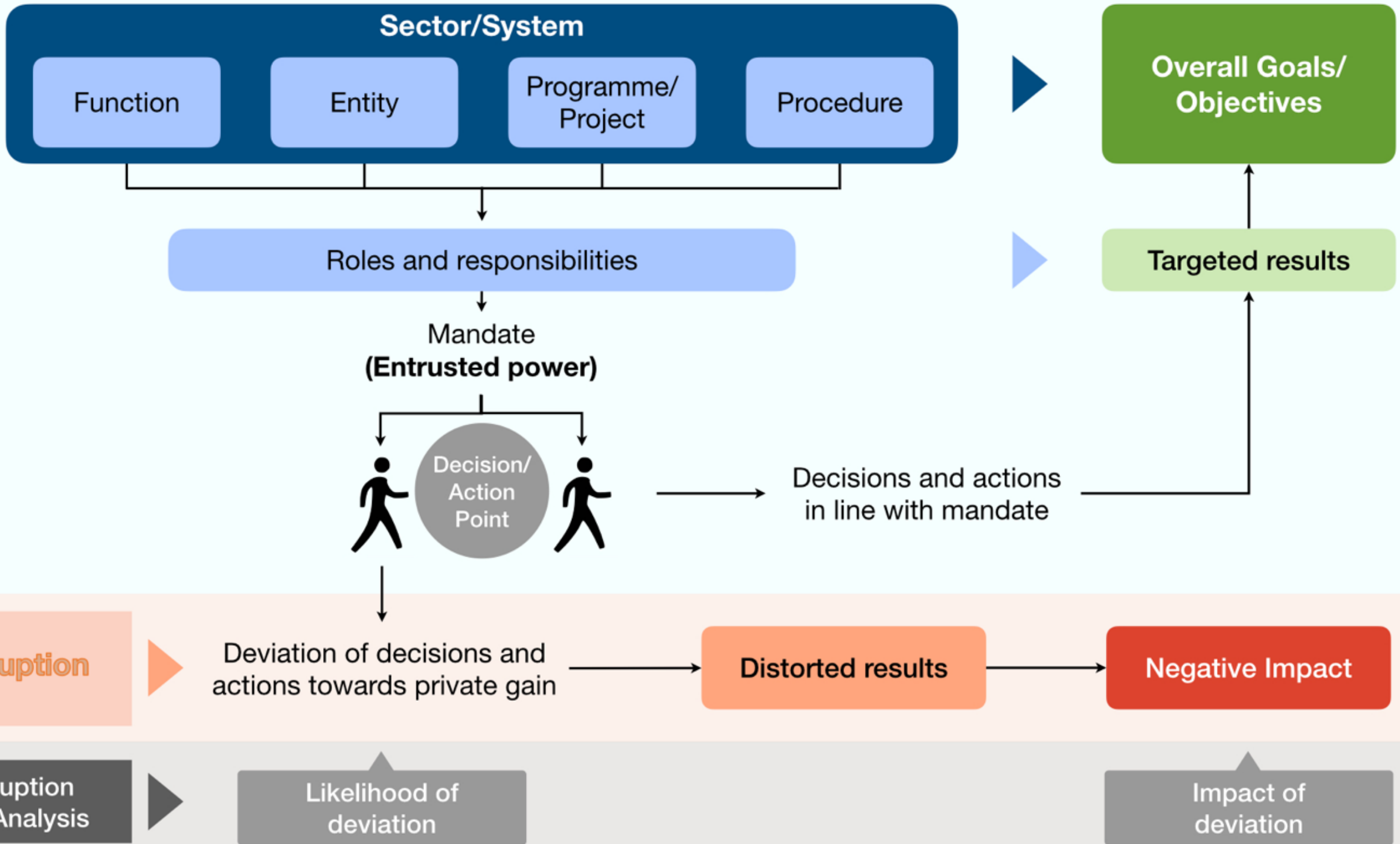
- ▶ A comprehensive analysis of the causes and factors that affect the integrity of students' performance records in practice,
- ▶ The significant restriction or abandonment of the use of oral examinations and interviews alone,
- ▶ The limitation of the ability to make subjective assessments by clearly defining the standards of academic performance and communication of these Standards to students
- ▶ A clearer rule, regulation and procedure for the disbursement of 'unused' grants was introduced
- ▶ Elimination of Dean, or management lists.



# CONT'D



- ▶ Access to up-to-date and accurate statistics is an important condition for the formation of effective anti-corruption policies, as well as informed public participation in countering corruption
- ▶ Compliance with the licensing and accreditation requirements – through the elimination of fraudulent practices, falsification and false claims
- ▶ Participation in the formation of anti-corruption policy for HE
- ▶ Declining rates since 2017 after reforms



# Georgia



- ▶ Bribe costs for admission during the 1990s in higher education reached \$15,000-\$20,000 depending on the prestige of the department. Law, business, medicine and international relations were usually priced the highest followed by humanities, social sciences and technical disciplines.
- ▶ Members of the entrance examination committees share the portion of bribes with the chairs of the committees to guarantee the high grades of their private students, as well as to enhance their chances of being selected to the examination committee in the following year.
- ▶ This resulted in a legitimacy crisis for the universities
- ▶ The introduction of University accreditation procedures meant to curb corruption, worked initially but ended up contributing to it
- ▶ This is because universities found a way round it through corrupt means

# Georgia



- ▶ Employment of faculty (academic) was through favoritism and bribery and the Departments became overstaffed
- ▶ staffing problems that could result in corruption are noted as follows:
- ▶ older professors may refuse to accommodate curriculum changes or shoulder increased workloads;
- ▶ staff members might adapt to new technology with difficulties;
- ▶ staff might be performing redundant tasks;
- ▶ Atmosphere of antagonism and tension between academic and administrative personnel.
- ▶ These create spaces for corruption in Georgia HE

# CONT'D

- ▶ Solutions:
- ▶ Standardized entrance examinations
- ▶ Well defined and decentralised accreditation process and procedures
- ▶ Transparency and objectivity in hiring staff
- ▶ Localised anti-corruption risk management strategies developed



# Lesson Learned



- ▶ Corruption in education is still under-researched, in spite of attention to corruption issues in general (See Huss and Keudel, 2020).
- ▶ **Physical audits of education processes.** Checks at education processes and facilities to verify that managers and educators are carrying out their duties. This approach was, for instance, used to gauge and reduce teacher absenteeism in India, where staff absence from duty became uncontrollable (Duflo, Hanna and Ryan, 2012).
- ▶ **Public expenditure tracking surveys (PETS):** These surveys are used for collecting detailed data from different government tiers and frontline service providers on financial transfers and accountability mechanisms within the education sector.
- ▶ **Peer Review Mechanisms:** This is based on Indirect measures predicated on differences between reported and actual performance (cross-checking).

# Lessons for HE in Lebanon



- ▶ Transparency of standards and procedure
- ▶ Capacity-building and management automation
- ▶ Outsourcing of management and verification processes
- ▶ Codes of conduct for educators
- ▶ Access to information

# Conclusion



- ▶ Conceptualization and definition of corruption and anti-corruption terms are identical and known in all countries
- ▶ Corruption in HE is real, insidious, ubiquitous and occurs in all countries
- ▶ Corruption manifestations in HE in Lebanon are similar in many respects to corruption in other countries
- ▶ Risk management strategies can be developed to suit local situations but with applicable indicators for comparisons and shared values



شكراً لكم



Thank YOU