

All are vulnerable

Corruption, cancer and HIV/AIDS drain the resources of a country and its people. The people most affected are the poor that do not have abundant resources to pay for medicine and/or to bribe officials to receive a service.

However, the affluent are also vulnerable to corruption, cancer and HIV/AIDS if their comfortable lifestyles are based on greed; if greed is combined with lucrative but illegal opportunities, it contributes to corruption. For example, the murder of hundreds of thousands of people by Presidents Suharto of Indonesia, Marcos of Philippines and Mobutu Sese Seko of former Zaire, and the influential role that the United States of America played in supporting these dictators in their greed and hunger for the resources of developing countries (Woodiwiss).

The affluent also become involved in situations where they could contract HIV/AIDS, such as having multiple sexual partners, especially if the probability of being infected with the disease is perceived as being low. As is the case with HIV/AIDS, the affluent are better informed than the poor about the implications of corruption if they are caught, such as scandals, being convicted and loss of social status. The rich are in a position to take better precautions and to manage the risks better than the poor. Compared to the poor, the rich can afford better medicine to treat HIV/AIDS and live relatively long and full lives, and the rich can afford better lawyers to get the best judicial outcome when involved in corruption.

Nations have immune systems

HIV/AIDS, the "second-order disease", breaks down the immune system of a patient, making him/her vulnerable to various other opportunistic infections, the "first-order diseases", such as colds and pneumonia. Treating only the symptoms or "first-order diseases" will bring tem-



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porary relieve, but will not contribute to curing or preventing HIV/AIDS, which reduces life expectancy as a whole.

Corruption breaks down the immune system of social systems and institutions, because it creates the atmosphere or climate for other diseases to flourish, for example cash flow problems, the "blood" of any institution that provide working capital for operations. These "symptoms" are "fifty shades of corruption" or multiple faces of the real disease called corruption.

The best treatment can extend the life expectancy of HIV/AIDS patients by several years, given the financial ability to afford the best antiretroviral drugs. In the case of corruption, institutional life expectancy can also be extended, either with more regulation and monitoring, or with an increase in the abuse of political power to protect corrupt and/or politically connected individuals, and/or bailout of institutions, e.g. the bailout of some State Owned Enterprises.

As more systems are subverted by corruption, the impact of the disease becomes more severe, e.g. year on year liquidity problems, and institutions eventually "die", like patients whose whole immune systems have been fatally compromised.

References

Woodiwiss, M. (2005). *Gangster Capitalism. The United States and the Global Rise of Organised Crime.*

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