

Professor Johannes Coetzee is a senior lecturer at @NUST, specializing on corruption and trying to find ways to combat it in developing countries. We wanted to learn more about him, as well as hear his thoughts on corruption in Namibia. We also discussed Transparency International's report and discussed the possibilities an individual has to fight corruption.

How did you become interested in anti-corruption research?

"I studied history and became very aware of war and conflict. When studying, I realised if you only look into history and blame others for things that happened in the past, you can't help the future. I decided I want to look for ways to make the future better. I was inspired by one of my lecturers in ethics and accountability, Willie Esterhuysen. Because of him, I became interested in anti-corruption and wanted to start building bridges between people. I was also working in the private sector, where I experienced corruption myself and became even more inspired to do something about it."

The Transparency International's CPI was recently published, and Namibia placed 52nd in the world. How do you see this, has the ranking improved over the years?

"This index is extremely important because it is what is referred to when investors are looking for new countries to invest in. When analysing the TI ratings in Namibia from 1998 up to 2017, the trend was negative. However, what is positive is that since 2004, the worst year, with a rating of 4.1 out of 10 – the trend has been positive overall, and it has slowly but surely been rising, with a rating of 5.1 in 2017. The rating has stayed very similar throughout the years. When analysing the long-term trend, it can be said that there is a tolerance of corruption in Namibia that has become part of the culture. When looking at the mode and the median, we can say that Namibia is 45 % corruption free and 55 % corrupt."

Who, in your opinion, should be responsible for preventing corruption?

"All of us. We are all responsible and accountable. All of us citizens, we are all part of the same challenge and we all contribute to the same problem. Even by doing nothing when we are aware of corruption."

What can an individual do?

"The individual is the antidote for corruption. Be a leader. Be the change you want to see in the world. Report corruption. If you don't, you are as guilty as those that are corrupt. Become an ambassador of accountability and anti-corruption. Share stories of hope and inspiration. We need success stories of inspiration. Corruption is not static – it changes all the time and we need to remember that the ways to combat it also need to change."

Professor Coetzee is writing a book, "50 shades of Namibian Corruption". He would like to encourage anyone with any contribution about what can be done, any views or any stories, to reach out. His e-mail address is [jcoetzee\(a\)nust.na](mailto:jcoetzee@nust.na).