

The Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute
REPORT TO MEMBERS ON ACTIVITIES
DURING THE PERIOD JANUARY TO DECEMBER, 2001
(Prepared by B. Reid, Secretary to the Board, 22 January, 2002)

The main activities of the Institute completed during the twelve months from January to December, 2001 were

- a survey for the international Global Forum II Conference of the laws and institutions that make up the National Integrity System
- a conference for members of the regional financial community and the media on ‘Cultivating Transparency in the Caribbean’
- a commentary submitted to the Law Reform Commission on the working paper on reforms to the Office of the Ombudsman
- the March and November issues of our newsletter—‘TTTI Update’
- public communication through the media on integrity issues
- A development of a draft Code of Ethics for the Institute
- Meetings with the Minister of Finance and Attorney General
- Research on Political Party Funding;
- participation in the TI AGM and 10th International Anti-Corruption Conference
- a presentation to the new Government’s Cabinet Retreat.

The main ‘works in progress’ were

- developing a commentary on the Integrity in Public Life Act
- Strategic Planning
- Essay Contest for Schools
- our outreach programme and membership drive.

1. Surveying Our National Integrity System

In April TTTI and Mary King & Associates completed a survey of our national integrity system—the institutions that are designed to foster integrity and curb corruption in Trinidad & Tobago. We were one of several national chapters of Transparency International (TI) assisting in preparing for the Global Forum II conference on fighting corruption, which took place in the Netherlands in May. This conference was part of the process of preparation of a future UN Anti-corruption Convention.

2. A Conference on Cultivating Transparency in the Caribbean

With the help of funding from the British Government, the Inter-American Development Bank and TI we held this conference for people from the Caribbean financial sector and media in May. The aim was to encourage dialogue between news media and the financial community leading to a more accountable financial sector and media better able to help generate the political will to put things right.

3. Reforms to the Office of the Ombudsman

In May, in response to the Ministry of the Attorney General’s invitation to the public, we submitted our comments on a working paper that discussed reforms to the Office of the Ombudsman.

4. The Newsletter

Last year we were able to produce just two issues of our newsletter, TTTI Update. These appeared in March and November. This year we aim to get back to producing one every quarter.

5. Public communication through the Media

During the course of the year we issued statements to the media on a number of topics including:

- the proposal to hire persons on contract as permanent secretaries in the Public Service;
- the Integrity in Public Life Act's requirement for directors of Statutory Boards and State Enterprises to declare their assets to the Integrity Commission;
- the need for the Integrity Commission to investigate the conflict of interest issue arising out of the Gillette application for a telecommunications licence;
- the principles that should inform the President's decision in naming a Prime Minister;
- the Integrity Pact as a means of preventing corruption in the award of public contracts; and
- the constitutional crisis following the appointment of a Prime Minister.

In October we wrote in *Newsday* the first of a series of monthly columns aimed at informing readers on integrity issues. On several occasions Board members appeared on radio and TV to discuss integrity issues.

6. A Code of Ethics for the Institute

At the request and with the guidance of TI we drafted a Code of Ethics for the Institute. The bulk of the work was done by a committee of members and friends of the Institute headed by Gerald Montes de Oca. The committee submitted a comprehensive report in August and the Board prepared a final draft just in time for TI's AGM held in Prague in October. We were one of only five TI chapters to do so. It was then decided at the AGM that TI should first develop a universal code and then individual chapters would define any standards required by their peculiar situations. In the interim, thanks largely to the Montes de Oca committee, TI has useful input from us and we have our own code to adopt and live by.

7. The Release of the 2001 Corruption Perceptions Index

In June we held a Press Conference to release the CPI. Several prominent people raised questions about the validity of the index which we were able to answer through articles in the Press and appearances on talk shows.

We contended that the score of 5.3 suggested that there was a significant level of corruption in Trinidad & Tobago. We were, as it were, only half way to where we should really be. Our thirty-first place on the list of 91 countries suggested that, as far as corruption was concerned, we were better off than many others. But we could hardly afford to be complacent. Soon afterwards the Auditor General's report on the NWRHA appeared. This and subsequent revelations of possible major corruption seemed to support our view.

8. Meetings with the Minister of Finance and the Attorney General

Besides raising TTTI's profile, the release of the CPI gave us the opportunity to discuss the prevention of corruption and promotion of integrity with the Minister of Finance and the Attorney General. And during and subsequent to these meetings we were able to supply them with information on some of the methods of corruption prevention promoted internationally by TI.

9. Research on Political Party Funding

What is being done around the world to regulate political party funding? What do we think should be done about it here in Trinidad and Tobago? These are some of the questions that Hugo Martínez-McNaught, a Mexican journalist doing post graduate studies at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, tackled during an eight-week internship with TTTI funded entirely by the University.

His research included compiling relevant material available on the Internet and interviewing local politicians, journalists, business people, trade unionists and academics. We will use his findings to help prepare for discussion of the issues at a stakeholders' Conference on Political Party Funding and Regulation which we are planning to hold in April.

10. Essay Contest for Schools

In October and November a committee of members of the Institute headed by Sonah Nagassar ran an essay-writing contest for secondary schools. Fifth formers were asked to explain what 'corruption' meant to them. Sixth Formers were to write on the public disclosure of political party funding. The essays submitted are presently being assessed.

11. The TI AGM and 10th International Anti-Corruption Conference

Thanks to funding made available by the British Government, the UNDP, TI and the Trinidad and Tobago Unit Trust, we were able to send four delegates to the 2001 Annual General Meeting of TI and the 10th International Anti-Corruption Conference, both of which were held in Prague, Czech Republic in October.

The delegates returned from these meetings full of ideas and enthusiasm for continuing the work of promoting integrity. We held a press conference and appeared on radio and TV to pass on to the public some of these ideas. We spoke on such

issues as political party financing, the education system, the roles of civil society and the media, conflict of interest and government procurement of goods and services.

12. Presentation to Cabinet Retreat

The Secretary made a presentation on behalf of TTTI to the Cabinet Retreat held at Pointe-à-Pierre at the end of December. The theme of the workshop was "The changing role of Government: partnering in good governance". He lead discussion on "Governance and Public Confidence: Transparency and Accountability".

13. Improving Integrity Legislation

In February a team began work on producing a commentary on the Integrity in Public Life Act that would make recommendations for improvement of the legislation and serve a basis for public discussion leading to reform of the law. By May the team had completed its examination of the main sections of the Act. But then resources had to be diverted to the Institute's Strategic Planning Project (see section 14 below) and the project leader was unable to complete the drafting of the commentary. In September, on the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Project team, the Board added an examination of the proposed amendments to the Prevention of Corruption Act to the teams' remit. It is hoped that a re-constituted team will be able to complete the project in 2002.

14. Strategic Planning

A *General Meeting of Members*, called for the 13 June at the CCN Head Office, Port-of-Spain never managed a quorum. However, the eleven members present were able to start the Institute's strategic planning process by drawing up a list of suggested objectives and strategies that was used by the Institute's Strategic Planning Project Team at its first meeting in June. Starting off with a nucleus of Board members lead by Boyd Reid, this Team was later expanded to include seven other TTTI members and is now headed by Annette des Iles.

The team has held four meetings to date and has stated the Institute's Mission to be "To create the conditions under which all public funds are used for the public good." It has identified the main strategic objectives as:

- To promote public awareness of the benefits to be gained from transparency, accountability and integrity in public affairs as well as of the economic and social costs of corruption.
- To motivate and work with all stakeholders to help build the National Integrity System of Trinidad & Tobago.
- The institutional strengthening of TTTI

The Team is currently developing strategies to meet these objectives and identifying projects to implement the strategies. One project that has already begun is *the improvement of integrity legislation*. Another that has just started is *the reform of political party financing*. Others that are likely to emerge are:

- *promoting transparency and accountability in Government procurement*
- *participation in Constitutional Reform*

15. Outreach Programme and Membership Drive

In the course of the year Board members spoke to meetings of the *Rotary Club of San Fernando*, members of the *Kiwanis* of North, East and Central Trinidad and shop stewards and branch officers of the *Oilfield Workers' Trade Union*.

It appeared that the efforts of our Operations Manager, Emerson Evelyn, to arrange contacts of this kind with several other groups were, to some extent, frustrated by inaccurate public perceptions of our Institute. The Board attempted to remedy this by making better use of the media. This included arranging to write the regular column in *Newsday*.

A further effort at outreach was the *TTTI web site*. Work on this began during the year and is continuing.

Six new *individual members* joined the Institute and five resigned during the period under review. There was no change in the *corporate membership*. During the period the percentage of individual members who were financial declined from 75 to 53. There was a similar decline in the percentage of corporate financial members. More details are given in the following table.

Members	at 1 Jan 2001		at 31 Dec 2001	
		% of Total		% of Total
INDIVIDUAL				
Financial	38	75	27	53
1 year in arrears	4	8	26	51
over 1 year in arrears	9	18	9	18
Total:	51		52	
CORPORATE				
Financial	4	67	3	50
1 year in arrears	1	17	3	50
over 1 year in arrears	1	17	0	0
Total	6		6	

16. The Annual General Meeting

The Institute held its second Annual General Meeting on the 11th of January, 2001. 16 of the 38 individual financial members were present and one of the 4 financial corporate members was represented. Highlights of meeting were an address from the Chairman of the Integrity Commission, Mr. Justice Gerard des Iles, remarks of the Chairman, Senator Mary King and the election of the new Board of Directors.

17. The Board of Directors

The Board comprised three members from the previous year—Mrs Mary King, economist and Independent Senator, Ms Jacqueline Burgess, feminist activist and Mr. Boyd Reid, information systems manager—and four new members—Mr. George Collymore, retired judge and former Chairman of the Integrity Commission, Mr Reginald Dumas, former ambassador and Head of the Public Service, Mrs Sonah Nagassar, retired teacher, author and voluntary social worker, and Mr. Lee Kelshall, attorney-at-law, The Board elected Mr. Collymore as Chairman, Mr. Reid as Secretary and Ms Burgess as Treasurer. During the year there were two resignations: Mr Kelshall in March and Ms Burgess in November. The Board acknowledges with gratitude these members' contributions.

During the period the Board held thirteen meetings with an average attendance of 78%.

18. Operations

Throughout the period the Institute rented a room at the offices of Mary King & Associates. Ltd. Operations were managed by Mr. Emerson Evelyn until September when he resigned to pursue other career goals. The Board gratefully acknowledged the contribution he made during his term of employment. Since then staff of Mary King & Associates have been providing administrative support.

19. Incorporation of TTTI

On the 1st of February, 2001 the Institute was registered as *non-profit company* under The Companies Act, 1995.