

Poznan Declaration  
26 September, 2014

# WHOLE-OF-UNIVERSITY PROMOTION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

*Trustworthy, uncorrupt, honest, and impartial government institutions that exercise public power and implement policies in a fair manner - are likely to create social trust and foster social capital and thereby contribute to better health and wellbeing in a population (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005, Burke and Cooper 2009, Rothstein 2011, Schneider 2011, Bowles and Cooper 2012, Holmberg and Rothstein 2012, Siegrist, McDaid et al. 2013, Skinnari, Ekdahl et al. 2014).*

*However, large parts of the world's population live under various degrees of corrupt public authorities. The lives of people living under these conditions are far more likely to be "solitary, poor, brutish, nasty and short" (cf Hobbes 1651). A societal situation where children are denied education, elections are determined by money and not votes, and where vulnerable groups cannot access decent jobs or basic health care (Transparency International 2004, 2006 & 2013).*

*Our major challenges are therefore how to promote good government, ethical business and individual behavior -- and how to avoid the bad ones, and their detrimental effects on social capital, health and development.*

There are several reasons to take on these challenges. First, societies governed by corrupt systems and unethical norms – provide a breeding ground for economic crisis. Indeed much of the financial innovations prior to the financial crisis of 2008 involved "devising better ways of scamming others [and] manipulating markets without getting caught" (Stiglitz 2014).

Whatever the underlying causes of economic and financial crisis, many governments react by introducing austerity measures. The combination of crisis and austerity is likely to amplify unemployment, poverty and inequality, which in turn, directly or indirectly, may lead to increased morbidity, mortality and human suffering (Marmot 2008, Marmot, Allen et al. 2010, Siegrist, McDaid et al. 2013, Stuckler and Basu 2013, UCL 2013).

In addition, austerity measures often strike particularly hard against those unconnected with the causes

of the crisis, creating a perception of **unfairness** which may lead to an erosion of both social trust and legitimacy in our democratic institutions (*Siegrist, McDaid et al. 2013*).

The causal chain of events can be hypothesized as follows:

*Dysfunctional norms -> Corrupt behavior -> Economic crisis -> Austerity measures -> Unemployment, poverty, unfairness, rising inequality -> Erosion of social trust -> Societal dysfunction -> Morbidity, mortality*

Second, by no means are dysfunctional norms an issue solely of concern for the governance of the financial sector, as these norms and their consequential behavior are found across sectors and affect society-at-large. Globally, corruption is considered one of the major obstacles for meaningful democracy, economic wealth and human well-being (*Strömbäck 2013*).

In the EU member states alone, corruption is roughly estimated to cost the economy EUR 120 billion annually -- put in perspective, a cost just below the annual budget of the EU (*EU Commission 2014*).

Third, apart from its direct costs, both petty and grand corruption erode social trust and contribute to reinforcing dysfunctional norms (*Svendson 2012*). Because social trust is needed in overcoming most undertakings of collective action, this can in turn tamper with states' means of financing themselves, i.e. the states' ability to **collect taxes**. To further highlight the reinforcing nature of the problem, it is argued that the fundamental issue for countries that suffer from protracted economic crisis is often not excessive spending but rather the state's inability to adequately tax its population (*Rothstein 2010*).

While the problem is notably more acute in certain countries, it is not isolated to these. In the United States, the annual difference between what taxpayers owe and what they actually pay, the tax gap, amounts to US\$ 385 billion – effectively a tax cut primarily for the rich, that represents 11 percent of annual spending (*IRS 2012*). In Sweden the annual tax gap amounts to SEK 133 billion (*SKV 2014*). It is likely that tax evasions of this magnitude also carry a risk of eroding social trust.

Still Sweden belongs to a relatively small group of mostly northern European countries who rate high in quality of government, social trust, social capital and population welfare – and low in corruption, governmental dysfunction, and morbidity and premature mortality (*Svendson 2012*). Clearly, even in systems with advanced tax authorities there are ways to work the loopholes through aggressive tax planning.

## Trust as a “social capital”

There is a large body of research highlighting the relationship between social trust and the citizenry's general willingness to pay taxes (*Brautigam, Fjeldstad et al. 2008, Svendsen 2012*). As summarized by Fehr and Fischbacher (2002): “If people believe that cheating on taxes, corruption and abuses of the welfare state are wide-spread, they themselves are more likely to cheat on taxes, take bribes or abuse welfare state institutions”. Thus, the lower the social trust in society, the lower is the willingness to pay taxes, and consequently the lower is state income (*Rothstein 2010*).

The societal benefits of generalized trust have led to a view of trust as a form of **social capital**. As a collective attribute, social capital can loosely be defined as networks and norms that facilitate cooperation and collective action. In societies where the general trust in others is high, people are encouraged to cooperate on the basis of expected reciprocity (*Putnam 1995*). Paying taxes constitutes a collective action dilemma that can only be overcome by either a high level of social capital or effective control (which is both expensive and difficult to perfect) and because of the causal spiral of low trust, low tax, underfinanced bureaucracy and corruption, the situation provides a delicate **social trap** from which escaping is particularly hard (*Rothstein 2010*).

As Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom (1991) warned, it seems that by a one-sided focus on rationalism, society (including the university sector) has produced individuals incapable of solving the problems of social traps.

Is it possible to move from a state of general mistrust to general trust? Instead of continuing the production of individuals geared towards narrow self-interest and personal gain, this **Declaration** sets out to begin the change towards a more holistic approach and the promotion of an “enlightened self-interest”, of the importance of social trust and ethical behavior in an attempt to promote social capital.

Never before has “the welfare of nations [been] so closely linked to the quality and outreach of their higher education systems and institutions” (*UNESCO 2003*). This declaration asks universities to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of ethics, transparency and anti-corruption. These may be values of **democracy, equality, legality, objectivity, integrity and freedom of opinion and information**.

## Does cooperation trump individualistic egoism?

We seek a reversal of the negative chain of events, where social trust is strengthened through uncorrupt and impartial interactions, both between citizens and in their interactions with governmental institutions, and trade and industry. A society in which norms and rules are clear, and where the citizenry are emotionally as well as rationally inclined to act in an ethical manner, refrain from corruption and not to cater to narrow self-interest.

A high level of social trust is not only beneficial from the intrinsic value of trusting your surroundings. Trust is also tightly connected with economic efficiency and growth, by providing a basis for fair competition, reducing the cost of entering into agreements, enabling efficient taxation, new forms of cooperation and easing labor market conflicts (*Zak and Knack 2001, Svendsen 2012*). Furthermore trust is a key trait for successful integration of new citizens in society, especially so for those belonging to cultural, ethnic and religious minorities (*Rothstein 2014*). In increasingly globalized and multi-cultural societies, trust is essential for facilitating cooperation, and it is likely that impartial and non-discriminatory institutions help to contribute to the promotion of universal basic values.

When there is a high social trust and reciprocity is expected, one can talk about acting out of an “enlightened self-interest” – a realization that cooperation trumps individualistic egoism. Indeed it was cooperation that helped us survive instead of the individually stronger Neanderthal. Thus, a society will be better off where a large share of the population can be described as **homo reciprocans**, motivated by the desire to be cooperative and to improve their environment, or **homo empathicus**, driven by their empathy for others' suffering. Rather than where a large share acts as the strictly rational utility maximizer, **homo economicus**.

Accordingly, an increase in the proportion of the two former and decrease of the latter is desirable. The challenge lies in convincing even the most self-centered that empathy and reciprocal behavior is in their own best interests, an enlightened self-interest, and also in convincing most people that the ethical behavior of others is worth to reciprocate. Because if “people think that public resources are largely wasted and/or distributed in unfair ways, there is no reason

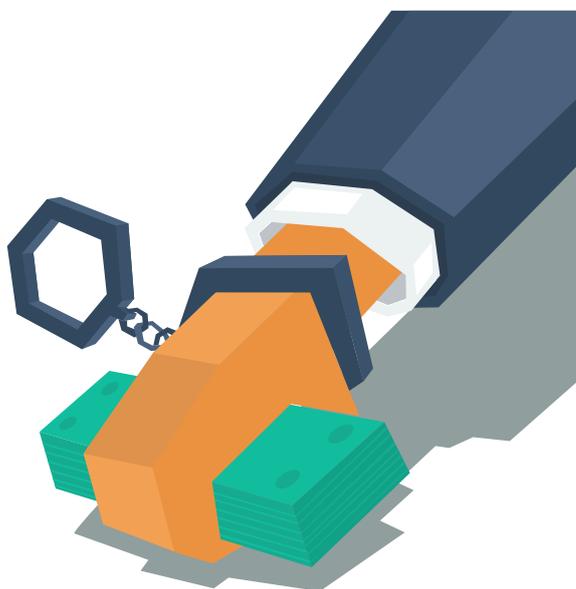
even for committed egalitarians to support high taxes or extensive welfare politics” (*Svallfors 2013*).

In addition to social capital, it is of importance that there are **institutional arrangements** in place, capable of managing free-riding, opportunistic behavior and corruption. In other words, systems that makes sure that the cost of corruption lands on the corrupt. The functioning of these arrangements requires not only a system capable of detecting and punishing corruption but also that the lion share of society do not tolerate such behavior, thus leaving little room of maneuver for unethical norms and corruption.

It should however be recognized that already, there are some developments moving in the preferred direction. As opposed to two decades ago, corruption is on the agenda amongst policy makers and within civil society. Corporations are increasingly adhering to the normative pressure to shoulder their **Corporate**

### **Social Responsibility**

(*Levi 2002, EU Commission 2011*). Not necessarily because of a sudden ethical appreciation but because of expectations from stakeholders and in order to minimize risks. Simply put, there are companies that are “doing good by doing good”. Furthermore some argue that in a knowledge based economy, takers, driven by self-interest are passé and that in flat structures, at least in the long-term, givers driven by reciprocity and mutual gain are awarded (*Grant 2013*). These winds of positive change are important to support, as there are strong undercurrents indeed.



How do we get to the desired state of affairs?

## Addressing the “causes behind the causes”

Since the rise of the anti-corruption agenda in the mid 1990's, a wide array of reports, conventions, and legislations have emerged, aiming at both enforcing and promoting transparency, integrity and accountability, such as the **OECD anti-bribery convention**, the **United Nations Convention Against Corruption**, and most recently of which is the **EU Anti-Corruption Report**. Despite the relative widespread implementations of anti-corruption reforms and institutional solutions, no more than 21 countries have enjoyed a significant decrease in corruption levels since 1996, while at the same time 27 countries have become worse off (*Mungiu-Pippidi 2013, Persson, Rothstein et al. 2013*).

To start counteracting the negative chain of events, we need to understand “the causes behind the causes”, i.e., the **determinants** of corrupt or otherwise anti-social behavior (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005, Persson, Rothstein et al. 2013), contributing to the development of economic crises and their sequel. With such understanding, communities will become more able to eliminate or at least counteract such determinants (EU Commission 2014). Alas in tackling corruption there is a need for a **multi system approach**, including punitive measure, institutional arrangements of transparency, and protection for whistle blowers. However, for the systems and arrangement to function there must be a will to act accordingly. I.e., the causes of corrupt behavior must be addressed. If this will doesn't exist and when corruption is the expected behavior, no matter how excellent the institutional set ups may be – corruption will prevail (Persson, Rothstein et al. 2013).

One part of such a multi-system approach promoted in the United Nations Convention against Corruption, is the undertaking of **public education programs**, including school and university curricula, which contribute to a “non-tolerance of corruption” (2004). Today, many schools work extensively to promote **basic values** to younger students, and later in their working lives as employees, people are often exposed to codes of conduct in one form or another. While of course this is not yet the case for all schools nor all workplaces, what is more apparent is the gap of values exposure during the years of higher education.

**At university level**, the curricula typically lack components that would contribute to a “non-tolerance of corrupt behavior”. On the contrary, norms of deception and personal enrichment prevail at several schools (Johnsson 2009). The reason why addressing this gap is of particular importance is that at universities, young people's identities are to a large extent formed, which lay the foundation for future professional identities.

It seems likely that dysfunctional governmental and anti-social market behaviors have their roots in the value systems of decision-makers at various levels, many of whom have been educated at universities. Key to anti-corruption has been **research** to expose and analyze such “toxic” cultures, attitudes and behaviors, but this is only the rational answer. As a necessary complement, and perhaps more powerful and effective is the **emotional** side (van Rooijen 2014). That may require **value-based education**, particularly in universities. Today, many institutions of higher education fail to adequately promote well-functioning norms during the very years it may matter the most.

The rationale for creating such **university curricula** builds on the modest assumption that social capital and trust are dependent on citizens' interactions with the provision of public goods in society. Such as, social services, healthcare, legal services (Rothstein 2005), but also with private providers of goods and

services. If citizens perceive these interactions as un-corrupt, non-discriminatory and at least reasonably effective, the recipients generalized trust is likely to increase.

On the providing side of such interactions are agents, many of whom have passed various faculties at the university system. If a majority of them have received training in anti-corruption, ethical and impartial thinking, it is possible that social trust and social capital will be promoted, leading to a **virtuous circle**, from which national health and development stands to benefit (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005, Gunnarson and Loxbo 2012).

From the many interactions that shape our trust in others it is clear that reaching out only to students of law or public policy will fail to produce the desired effects. To name but a few; your banker is likely an economist; engineers are often central in public procurement; doctors, nurses and administrators alike are all points of contacts in the health sector. Thus, for universities to optimize their roles as drivers of change, a Whole-of-University promotion is needed.

In addition to interactions with providers of public goods, trust can be created through voluntary participation in associations and civic engagements, and with it follows increased social capital (Putnam 1995). Notably universities already provide an excellent basis for such associations, and while participation in voluntary association, by definition, cannot be enforced, it can perhaps be further encouraged and facilitated, and should thus be part of a Whole-of-University approach.

The motives for such a Whole-of-University promotion can be found in a trust-promoting causal chain, as follows:

*Ethical citizenship education -> Trust & social capital -> High quality of government -> Good level of living -> Good public health and wellbeing*

Ethical citizenship education could comprise complementary educational approaches, such as the dissemination of hard data, seminars discussing basic values and ethics, and case studies – spanning respective faculty and school. The curricula would build on a **common base** applicable to students of inter alia: law, economics, social sciences, engineering, education, and medicine. This would help to mainstream a concern for corruption across professions, and a general ethical awareness and understanding. Complementing the general curricula, sector specific educational add-ons would help to provide a deeper understanding of how the dangers and pitfalls of corruption may take form in the students' future working life.

In addition to disseminating knowledge of the costs and other consequences of corruption – economic and as well as social – the suggested curricula may

entail value-based education that taps into the emotional side of the recipient, contributing to the formation of ethical professional identities. Value-based education is a process by which people transmit values to others. This can mean giving young people an initiation into values, giving knowledge of the rules and norms needed to function in this mode of relating to other people and institutions and to seek the development in the student to grasp certain underlying principles, together with the ability to apply these rules intelligently, and to have the settled disposition to do so (*Aspin 2000*).

*Intelligence plus character – that's the goal of true education*

– *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## Common base

**Bringing corruption to the classroom.** There is an ever growing body of research on correlates of corruption, social trust and health and development, pointing to a strong relationship between levels of corruption, social trust on the one side and health and development on the other (*Zak and Knack 2001, Rothstein 2011*). Through visualizing variables on maps, diagram and graphs, an initiation into these relationships may serve as a foundation as well as motive for the following components.

**Raise awareness** of existing domestic anti-corruption legislations, international conventions, such as the OECD and UN conventions, as well of national legislation with an international reach, such as the UK Bribery Act and the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. In addition, an introduction into some normative voluntary initiatives promoting transparency, corporate integrity and social responsibility, like Global Compact and Global Reporting Initiative and NGO's like Transparency International, may help students understand the global anti-corruption agenda.

**Discussion seminars** on which values and norms we want to govern our social interactions, and what they mean in particular situations. These may be basic values of democracy, equality, legality, objectivity, integrity and freedom of opinion and information. When in doubt of which rules and laws that apply, such basic values have a particularly important role as guidance (*Council on Basic Values 2014*). The seminars may also discuss: **whistle-blowing**, a key function, and often the only way of detecting corrupt dealings, that by nature are opaque for all but those involved -- is it a heroic act, or a betrayal of co-workers?; **tax evasion**, can it be justified? **Corporate social responsibility** (*Levi 2002*), what does it entail for your sector?

## Sector specific educational add-ons

**Case studies** from real professional practice to which the students can relate, may help to produce

a greater significance of ethics issues in their future working life. A case can involve presenting an ethical dilemma, allow student teams to develop solutions for the ethical problems, and explain their reasoning, both within and in between groups. Case studies works in a capacity-building way and have the potential to help students to develop better moral reasoning skills and provide them a basis for identifying and responding to ethical issues in their professional life.

While noting that the particular issues are not exclusive for the suggested student group, some sector specific case studies may for example focus on:

*Economists – Career between policy and industry*

*Political Science – Insider information, conflicts of interest, lobbying*

*Engineers – Public procurement, construction fraud*

*Medicine – Bribery, promotion of drugs without evidence basis*

*Law – Tax evasion, corruption, fraud*

**eLearning** – Computer based programs can be utilized to provide dilemma training through simulations that force the student to take appropriate action in sector specific practical scenarios. With the aim of helping students to identify corruption risks and ethical issues within their future professions and prepare them on how to act.

## Steps to take

Recognizing the university sector's potential, as well as responsibility to help shape the moral contours of society for the better, and given the societal benefits from increased social capital – we ask universities and institutions of higher education to shoulder their role as key agents of change and:

- **Endorse a cross-faculty approach** to broaden the curricula to include components of anti-corruption and the promotion of ethical behavior.
- **Appreciate the unique opportunity to shape professional identities.** At universities the norms and boundaries of acceptable behavior are to a large extent set for a number of professions. Universities have a possibility as well as a responsibility to help shape the moral contours of society for the better.
- **Teach the teachers.** Provide pedagogical resources and training to a wide range of faculty, in order to encourage the incorporation of issues of corruption and ethics within their classes.
- **Develop a webpage** for information dissemination of pedagogical material, discussion topics, case studies collection, eLearning-tools etc.

- **Organize conferences** to exchange good practices as regards implementation of the “Whole-of-University Promotion”.
- **Develop partnerships** with other university networks, national authorities for higher education, civil society organizations championing the anti-corruption agenda, such as Transparency International.
- **Commit for the long-run.** Changing norms and their consequent behavior is an inherently slow process. While there may indeed be ripple-effects from promoting ethical behavior, it is likely that the “exposed” generation will need to reach a critical mass and/or managerial positions before true and measurable change will occur.
- **Coordinate with national education authorities** on the fulfillment of the state’s obligation under the UN Convention Against Corruption, article 13.
- **Encourage voluntary associations** and participation in these, by facilitating with meeting-rooms on campus etc.
- **Talk the talk and walk the walk.** In addition to educating ethical behavior and promoting social capital it is crucial that universities – as agents providing a public good – themselves act accordingly, ensuring impartiality in teaching, student assessment, research and that matters regarding awards of degrees, employment and promotions are based on legitimate, transparent and objective criteria.

Considering the relative low costs of implementation and the possible societal gains, if implemented broadly – in the long term – this initiative has the potential of being extremely cost efficient. More importantly, however, is that ethically, it is likely the right thing to do.

This is a first attempt at outlining a curriculum that promotes trust and social capital, and enabling universities to contribute to better health and development. It will without doubt require future revision and amendments before implementation and it is our intention to continue this work within the framework of the Compostela Group of Universities, in close cooperation with the institutional partners that have given their endorsement, as well as with other relevant partners.

More information and the latest updates on the Poznan Declaration are available at: <http://goo.gl/xIYKNj>.

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Further, this Declaration was endorsed by the representatives of the 68 Member Universities of the *Compostela Group of Universities*, assembled for their *20th General Assembly*, at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, on September 26, 2014, and also by *Transparency International (TI)*, by the *Library of Alexandria*, by the *Istituto dell’Approccio Centrato sulla Persona (IACP)*, by the *World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS)* and by the *World University Consortium (WUC)*, represented by *Alberto Zucconi* [IT].



# Definitions

**Corruption** – to use one’s position to obtain unfair advantage in one’s own or other’s interest (Swedish Government) / “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (Transparency International) / “the abuse of public office for private gain” (World Bank).

**Social trap** - A situation where individuals, groups or organizations are unable to cooperate owing to mutual distrust and lack of social capital, even where cooperation would benefit all (Rothstein).

**Social capital** – networks and norms of trust and reciprocity that enable participants to act together more effectively to achieve common goals (Putnam); The amount of social relationships multiplied by the degree of confidence in these (Rothstein).

**Trust** – A belief that people in general can be trusted (World Values Survey).

**Basic values** – For example: Democracy, legality, objectivity, freedom of opinion, respect, efficiency, service (Council on Basic Values) / Dignity, equality, solidarity, citizens’ rights, and justice (The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union).

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