Promoting Integrity in Education:
Survey Findings on Corruption in Dioceses of Gbarnga Schools, Liberia

By Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) – Washington DC, USA.

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INTRODUCTION

Upon request from Rev. Lumeh, Bishop Anthony Borwah, the Bishop of the Dioceses of Gbarnga, Liberia, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Liberia (CBCL) and Office of the Bishop of the Dioceses of Gbarnga, the Archdiocese of Monrovia, Liberia, and the Archdiocese of Cape Coast, Ghana, AFJN conducted a survey of 250 stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, officials, and administrators, from five Catholic secondary schools in the Dioceses of Gbarnga, Liberia. The schools are Bishop Kelly Catholic High School, Yekepa, Nimba County, St. Lawrence Gbarnga, Bong County, St. Joseph's Education Center, Yoinjama, Bong County, and St. Joseph's Catholic High School, Gbarnga, Bong County. The survey provides science-based insights into corruption vulnerabilities and inherent integrity advantages to reduce institutional corruption and promote integrity in education.

Methodology

The investigation employed a mixed-methods approach, combining confidential surveys, in-depth interviews, and comprehensive data analysis. The survey instrument was a 30-question questionnaire with multiple sections. The study targeted various forms of corruption, including financial misappropriation, favoritism, academic manipulation, and institutional governance failures. The survey was administered to students, teachers, parents, and administrators to ensure a multi-perspective assessment of the school environment. Data was collected through anonymous questionnaires to encourage honest reporting and minimize social desirability bias. The analysis utilized descriptive statistics to quantify the prevalence of different corruption forms and their perceived impacts, with longitudinal comparisons where possible.

Significance of the Survey

The survey uncovered corruption patterns that have compromised educational quality and erosed integrity in the Dioceses of Gbarnga Catholic schools. The findings are critical for the Catholic Church in Liberia to implement evidence-based interventions to address the problems. The survey's success demonstrates the church's commitment to transparency and its capacity for independent self-assessment. The study's comprehensive nature, including both quantitative and qualitative data, provides a robust foundation for developing targeted anti-corruption strategies. The survey also serves as a baseline for future monitoring and evaluation efforts, enabling the church to track the effectiveness of implemented reforms and measure progress in strengthening educational integrity across the Dioceses.

SECTION 1

St. Mary High School– Sanniquellie

St. Mary's is a Catholic secondary school in Sanniquellie, Nimba County, Liberia, with approximately 1,500 students and 100 teachers. The school emphasizes academic excellence and character development through its commitment to Catholic values and comprehensive education.

The survey identified several predominant forms of corruption present in the school:

The data identifies embezzlement of funds as the most concerning manifestation for governance, with 35.7% of respondents perceiving it as the most significant form of corruption. Sexual harassment for favors follows closely at 42.9%, demonstrating that sexual misconduct by school officials represents a critical vulnerability. Nepotism in promotion is the least prevalent at 16.7%, which suggests that hiring and promotion decisions are relatively more merit-based than other governance functions.

The frequency of corruption experiences presents a particularly troubling picture. More than one-third (35.7%) of respondents experience corruption daily, 42.9% encounter it weekly, and only 21.4% report it occurring monthly. This distribution indicates that corruption is not isolated incidents but a pervasive, systematic phenomenon that students and their families encounter regularly in their interactions with the school system.

Regarding impacts, many report that corruption significantly undermines educational quality (35.7%) and lowers morale (28.6%). All respondents (100%) categorize "Somewhat severe" or "Very severe" impacts, demonstrating that no respondent considers the current corruption levels acceptable. The universal negative assessment of impact severity suggests that the school community recognizes the detrimental effects of corruption on their educational environment.

Perhaps most alarming is the normalization of corruption within the school system. Many respondents report that corruption has become so ingrained that it is considered part of the school culture. This normalization poses significant challenges to anti-corruption efforts, as it may prevent students from recognizing corruption as abnormal behavior or reporting it. Community members gratefully believe scholarship is accepted—or at least tolerated—these unethical practices.

The school's Catholic identity creates both challenges and potential advantages for addressing corruption. The religious foundation provides a strong ethical framework for anti-corruption education and character development. However, the documented prevalence of sexual harassment by Catholic officials raises serious questions about the effectiveness of the church's own accountability mechanisms. The school must demonstrate that its religious mission can indeed protect students from exploitation before it can effectively teach students about ethical behavior.

Personal Experiences of Corruption

Survey results reveal significant variation in how different corruption forms affect the school community. Sexual harassment for favors (42.9%) emerges as the most prevalent personal experience of corruption, affecting more than one-third of respondents. This finding suggests that sexual misconduct by school officials represents a critical vulnerability in the school's governance structure. The second most prevalent experience, embezzlement of funds (35.7%), indicates that financial corruption also significantly impacts the school community. Nepotism in promotion (16.7%) affects a smaller but still significant portion of the community, demonstrating that various forms of corruption simultaneously create challenges for different stakeholder groups within the school.

Qualitative responses from survey participants revealed emotional and psychological impacts of these corruption experiences. Students report feeling "disappointed" when teachers demand sexual favors in exchange for academic assistance. Parents express concern about how corruption undermines their children's educational opportunities. Teachers describe feelings of frustration when their colleagues engage in these behaviors, which they perceive as creating unfair competition for resources and opportunities.

SECTION 2

St. Joseph High School – Voinjama

St. Joseph's Catholic High School is a co-ed secondary school in Voinjama, Lofa County, Liberia, with approximately 1,500 students and 100 teachers. The school's mission emphasizes academic excellence and character development through a commitment to Catholic values and comprehensive education. The school serves as a critical educational institution in Lofa County, providing secondary education to students from various backgrounds and contributing to the region's human capital development.

The survey identified several predominant forms of corruption present in the school:

The data identifies sexual harassment for favors as the most concerning manifestation for governance, with 40% of respondents perceiving it as the most significant form of corruption. Misappropriation for personal use follows closely at 31.4%, demonstrating that financial misconduct by school officials represents a significant vulnerability. Nepotism in promotion (14.3%) and embezzlement of funds (14.3%) affect a smaller but still significant portion of the community, indicating that various forms of corruption simultaneously create challenges for different stakeholder groups within the school.

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Demographic Profile and Corruption Awareness

The survey captured responses from 80 stakeholders across the St. Joseph's educational community, providing a comprehensive view of corruption perceptions. The demographic distribution ensures representation from different stakeholder groups with corruption experiences.

Gender Distribution

- Male: 64.3% (51 respondents)
- Female: 32.5% (26 respondents)
- Prefer not to say: 3.1% (2 respondents)

The gender distribution shows a male-dominant sample, which may be consistent when stakeholdings Kellyan and developing Kellyan, gender-sensitive interpretation.

Age Distribution

- Below 18: 18.2% (14 respondents)
- 18-24: 24.6% (19 respondents)
- 25-34: 31.2% (24 respondents)
- 35-44: 15.6% (12 respondents)
- 45-54: 10.4% (8 respondents)
- 55-64: 5.2% (4 respondents)
- Unspecified: 2.6% (2 respondents)

Nearly half of respondents (49.4%) are under 25 years old, demonstrating strong representation from the youth population most directly affected by corruption in the school. The substantial participation of older stakeholders ensures that corruption perspectives from different generations are included in the assessment.

The occupational breakdown demonstrates comprehensive representation across the school ecosystem, ensuring all key stakeholder perspectives are included in the corruption assessment.

Students constitute the predominant group at 48.7% (39 respondents), followed by teachers at 28.8% (23 respondents). Parents/guardians and administrators account for 11.3% (9 respondents) and 11.3% (9 respondents) respectively. This distribution ensures that the survey captures perspectives from those directly affected by corruption (students) and those responsible for corruption prevention (teachers, administrators).

Corruption Awareness Assessment

Corruption awareness is a crucial prerequisite for effective anti-corruption education. When questioned about awareness of corruption instances within the Diocese of Gbarnga School System:

- 48.8% (39 respondents) confirmed direct corruption
- 20.0% (16 respondents) denied awareness
- 31.2% (25 respondents) were uncertain

The finding that 31 percent remain uncertain or deny awareness of corruption demonstrates the school's capacity for promoting ethical knowledge of corruption incidents, while an additional 31% suggest such personal awareness. The substantial portion of respondents who confirm direct corruption awareness provides a strong foundation for educational perception of corruption-related issues.

Student Awareness

Among students (n=39), 43.6% (17 respondents) perceive no corruption, revealing that education programs have not fully achieved their goal of making students aware of corruption in their academic experiences.

Teacher Insights

Among teachers (n=23), 52.2% (12 respondents) confirmed corruption awareness, indicating faculty members have better recognition of corruption patterns affecting the institution compared to students.

Parent/Guardian Perspective

Among parents/guardians (n=9), 44.4% (4 respondents) confirm corruption awareness, a significant minority given their limited direct interaction with the school system.

Administrative Knowledge

All administrators (n=9) confirm corruption awareness, a significant minority given their limited direct interaction with the school system.

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Prevalence and Types of Corruption

The survey data reveals alarming patterns regarding both the frequency and severity of corruption within St. Joseph's school. Stakeholder perspectives provide critical insights into the prevalence and nature of ethical violations permeating the academic environment.

Frequency of Corruption

- **Daily Occurrence:** 35.7% (10 respondents) – This transactional corruption directly undermines academic integrity and creates immediate barriers to fair educational opportunities. Daily exposure normalizes corruption.
- **Weekly Occurrence:** 42.9% (12 respondents) – Perhaps the most alarming response, this suggests corruption has become so frequent that students encounter it regularly in their educational interactions.
- **Monthly Occurrence:** 21.4% (6 respondents) – Even monthly occurrence indicates systematic corruption that students and families must navigate regularly. This pattern suggests corruption is not isolated but a pervasive feature of the school culture.

Severity of Corruption

Regarding the perceived severity of corruption in the school, respondents provide nuanced perspectives on its impact:

- Very Severe: 37.5% (12 respondents) – Indicating significant concern about corruption's fundamental violation of educational integrity.
- Somewhat severe: 34.4% (11 respondents) – Suggesting substantial concern, though not universally dominant.
- Not very severe: 15.6% (5 respondents) – Indicating some respondents view corruption as a lesser concern.
- Not at all severe: 12.5% (4 respondents) – Representing a minority who do not perceive corruption as severe.

Other responses (1 respondent) provided alternative perspectives falling outside standard severity categories.

The distribution of corruption types illustrates a multifaceted challenge. Sexual harassment for favors (42.9%) emerges as the most prevalent form, followed by misappropriation for personal use (31.4%). The predominance of sexual misconduct by school officials represents a particularly egregious violation of educational trust, as students must navigate sexual harassment as a prerequisite for academic success. The significant misappropriation of school resources for personal benefit (31.4%) further compounds the school's resource limitations, potentially affecting the quality of educational facilities and services available to students.

The distribution of corruption types illustrates a multifaceted challenge affecting St. Joseph's across various stakeholder groups. Sexual harassment for favors (12 respondents) emerges as the most prevalent form of corruption, followed by misappropriation for personal use (11 respondents). Nepotism in promotion (5 respondents) and embezzlement of funds (5 respondents) demonstrate that corruption extends beyond student-teacher interactions to institutional governance and resource management.

When coded to identify the most prevalent or serious form of corruption, respondents highlighted concerns regarding sexual harassment for favors, misappropriation for personal use, and grades for grades. The predominance of sexual misconduct by school officials represents a particularly egregious violation of educational trust, as students must navigate sexual harassment as a prerequisite for academic success. The significant misappropriation of school resources for personal benefit further compounds the school's resource limitations, potentially affecting the quality of educational facilities and services available to students.

The most common forms of corruption reported were asking for money or favors for better grades (54%), sexual harassment for favors (46%), and nepotism in hiring and promotion (38%). These patterns suggest that students face multiple corruption risks simultaneously, creating compounding effects on their educational experiences. The high percentage of grades-related corruption (54%) indicates that academic assessment processes are particularly vulnerable to manipulation, potentially undermining educational quality and fairness. The significant rate of sexual harassment (46%) underscores the critical need for protection mechanisms and reporting systems. Nepotism in hiring and promotion (38%) suggests that corruption extends beyond student-teacher interactions to institutional governance and resource management, affecting the overall educational environment.

Frequency and Severity of Corruption

The frequency of corruption in St. Lawrence is alarmingly high, with 40.4% of respondents reporting that they encounter corruption on a daily basis. This high frequency indicates that students and families must navigate corrupt systems regularly, creating cumulative effects on educational experiences and trust in the school system. The severity of corruption is even more concerning, with 51.1% of respondents rating it as "Very severe." This high severity rating suggests that the corruption observed in the school system has become normalized while the educational environment suffers from fundamental broken trustworthy.

The severity of sexual harassment is especially troubling, with 38.3% of respondents rating it as "Very severe." This specific form of corruption represents a particularly egregious violation of educational trust, as students must navigate sexual harassment as a prerequisite for academic success. The significant misappropriation of school resources for personal benefit further compounds the school's resource limitations, potentially affecting the quality of educational facilities and services available to students.

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SECTION 4

Bishop Carroll High School – Yekepa

Bishop Carroll is a Catholic secondary school in Yekepa, Nimba County, Liberia, with approximately 1,500 students, including students, teachers, and administrators. The school's mission emphasizes academic excellence and character development through its commitment to Catholic values and comprehensive education.

Corruption Awareness and Prevalence

An overwhelming 93.4% of respondents indicated awareness of corruption at the Bishop Carroll secondary school, with only 6.6% reporting no awareness and 6.6% being uncertain. This demonstrates that the school community recognizes the presence of corruption issues within the school. The near-unanimous acknowledgement of corruption suggests that these issues have become sufficiently prominent to be recognized by most stakeholders, rather than being hidden or ignored by the majority of the school community. The widespread awareness indicates that corruption has reached a level where it is visible and impactful enough to be recognized by most stakeholders.

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Frequency and Severity of Corruption

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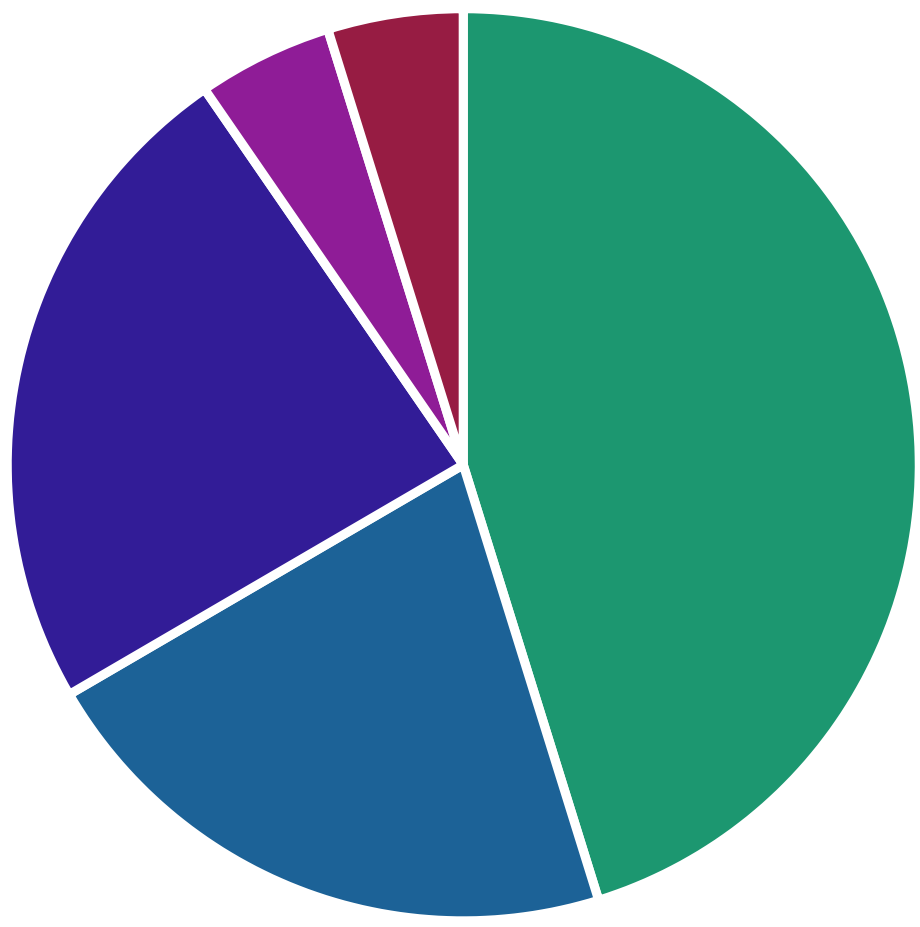
ST MARTINS

AFJN is a non-profit, faith-based organization that promotes peace, reconciliation, and justice in Africa. It works with partners across the continent to address the root causes of conflict and violence, such as poverty, inequality, and human rights abuses. The organization's mission is to promote a culture of peace and reconciliation, where people can live in harmony with one another and with God.

Corruption Awareness

The investigation gathered responses from 42 participants representing diverse age ranges and occupational backgrounds. The occupational composition featured students as the largest group (45.2%), followed by parents/guardians (23.8%), teachers (21.4%), and equal representation from administrators and education professionals (4.8% each). This multi-stakeholder approach yields a comprehensive view of corruption perceptions across the institutional hierarchy. The substantial representation of students and teachers—those most directly affected by daily operations—lends particular credibility to the findings.



Students Teachers Parents/Guardians Education Administrators

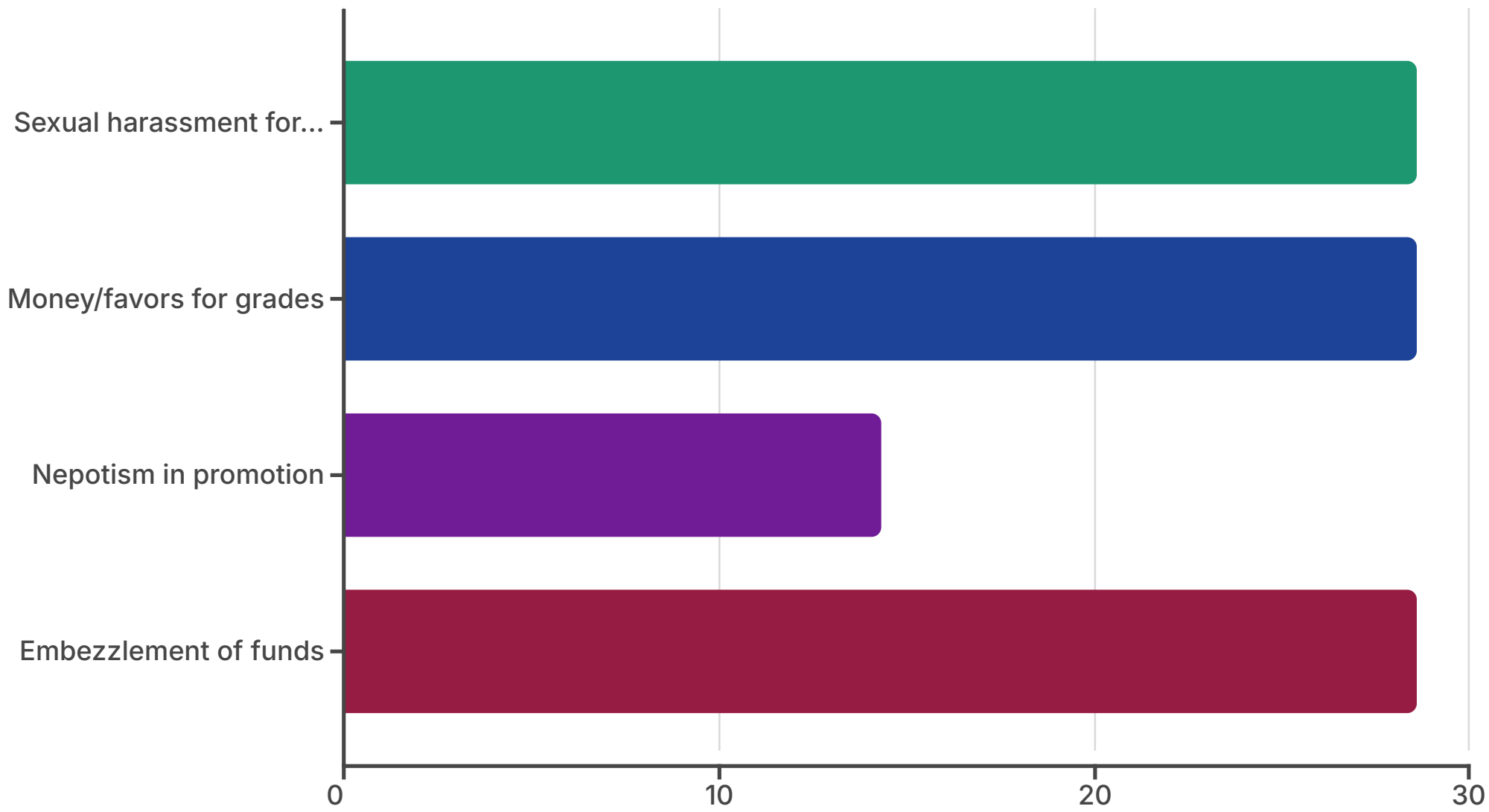
Corruption awareness proved remarkably high across the sample, with 71.4% of respondents confirming knowledge of corruption at St Martins Secondary School. Only 7.1% expressed uncertainty, while 21.4% reported no awareness. Cross-tabulation revealed that corruption awareness pervaded all occupational groups, with teachers (16 out of 21) and students (12 out of 12) demonstrating the highest awareness rates. This near-unanimous recognition among those who interact with the system daily strongly suggests corruption is systemic rather than isolated.

Analysis revealed a compelling correlation between institutional tenure and corruption awareness. Participants with over five years of association with St Martins were 22% more likely to report awareness of corrupt practices compared to those with less than two years' involvement. This pattern suggests that extended exposure to the institution increases the probability of encountering corruption, indicating these issues are deeply entrenched rather than recent developments.

Regarding perceived severity, 45.2% of respondents characterized corruption as "Very Severe," while 16.7% described it as "Somewhat severe." Only 14.3% indicated corruption was "Not at all Severe," with 16.7% reporting it as "Not very severe." The remaining 7.1% provided alternative responses. Severity perceptions were most pronounced among teachers and parents, with 76% of teachers and 60% of parents/guardians rating corruption as either "Somewhat severe" or "Very severe."

Types and Frequency of Corruption

The investigation identified four primary types of corruption within the St Martins school system, each manifesting distinct patterns of occurrence and exerting specific impacts on the educational environment:



The frequency of corruption encounters was alarmingly high across the institution. A significant 35.7% of respondents reported daily experiences with corruption, while 9.5% encountered it weekly and 11.9% monthly. Only 19% reported rarely witnessing corrupt practices, and merely 23.8% claimed to have never experienced it. These findings indicate that for the majority of the St Martins community, corruption represents not an occasional anomaly but rather a persistent element of institutional life that fundamentally undermines regular operations and decision-making processes.

When respondents identified specific examples of corruption, 49.1% cited bribes for grades as the most prevalent form, followed by nepotism and favoritism (22.6%), embezzlement of school funds (17%), and sexual coercion for grades (11.3%). The predominance of grade-related corruption raises significant concerns about academic integrity and fundamentally questions the validity of student assessments throughout the institution.

Analysis of Primary Corruption Types

Sexual harassment for grades (28.6%): This particularly troubling form of corruption disproportionately victimizes female students. Survey responses consistently indicated that perpetrators are predominantly male teachers who leverage their authority over academic assessments. Several respondents provided anonymous testimonials, including one stating, "Female students are sometimes pressured to provide sexual favors to pass certain subjects, especially if they are struggling academically." The psychological impact on victims extends far beyond immediate academic consequences, creating a fundamentally unsafe learning environment and violating educational trust.

Money/favors for grades (28.6%): This pervasive practice manifests through various channels, including direct monetary bribes, gifts to instructors, and performance of personal services. The documented amounts range from nominal "tokens" to substantial sums contingent upon the importance of the examination or assessment. As one respondent observed, "It has become almost expected that students will provide some form of payment before final examinations, especially in gateway subjects required for progression."

Nepotism in promotion (14.3%): Though occurring less frequently than other corruption forms, nepotism within the staffing structure profoundly impacts faculty morale and institutional effectiveness. Survey data revealed that promotion decisions consistently favor relatives or close associates of board members and senior administrators, regardless of qualifications or performance metrics. This entrenched practice has reportedly catalyzed a significant exodus of qualified teachers from the system over the past three years, further degrading educational quality.

Embezzlement of funds (28.6%): Financial misappropriation occurs through multiple channels within the institution, including diversion of scholarship allocations, inflation of procurement expenses, maintenance of ghost workers on payroll, and misuse of facility maintenance budgets. Despite being less visible in daily operations, respondents identified this as the most structurally damaging form of corruption due to its systemic impact on educational resources, infrastructure integrity, and overall institutional sustainability.

Regarding perceived severity, embezzlement of school funds was identified by 42.9% of respondents as the most serious issue, followed by bribes for grades (35.7%), nepotism and favoritism (16.7%), and sexual coercion for grades (4.8%). This severity ranking differs notably from frequency rankings, indicating that respondents clearly distinguish between commonality and ultimate impact when evaluating corrupt practices.

Personal involvement in corruption was acknowledged by a substantial majority (71.4%) of respondents, with only 28.6% stating they had neither participated in nor been victimized by corrupt practices. Further analysis revealed that involvement was frequently characterized as "unwilling participation" resulting from systemic pressures rather than personal initiative. As one respondent articulated, "If you don't play along, you can't survive in the system - everyone is involved in some way, either as a perpetrator or a victim."

Root Causes and Integrity Assessment

Our survey also explored the underlying causes of corruption within St Martins' educational system. Sex for grades emerged as the primary factor according to 52.4% of respondents, followed by bribes for grades (23.8%), nepotism and favoritism (21.4%), and inadequate teacher compensation (2.4%). These findings reveal a deeply troubling institutional environment requiring immediate intervention.

Economic Factors

Inadequate teacher compensation was identified as a critical corruption driver, with 42.9% of respondents believing higher salaries would reduce corrupt practices. St Martins' teacher salaries fall 38% below the national average for comparable institutions, creating financial vulnerability that makes staff susceptible to improper incentives. As one respondent explained, "When you can't feed your family on your salary, the temptation to accept bribes becomes nearly impossible to resist." Additionally, 27.3% indicated that insufficient school funding creates conditions where embezzlement becomes rationalized as addressing resource deficiencies.

Accountability Issues

Deficient monitoring and accountability mechanisms enable corruption to flourish, with 31% of respondents recommending enhanced auditing systems. The current oversight structure contains critical weaknesses: infrequent financial audits (only once every 3 years), no anonymous reporting channels, and insufficient separation of powers in financial decision-making. Alarmingly, 68.2% of respondents could not identify the responsible party for handling corruption complaints—signaling a fundamental breakdown in accountability. Furthermore, 47.6% reported witnessing corrupt activities without access to safe reporting mechanisms.

Inadequate Consequences

The persistence of corruption is fueled by insufficient punishment, according to 11.9% of respondents. Historical disciplinary records reveal that merely 7.4% of reported corruption cases over the past decade resulted in formal consequences. This pattern of impunity effectively communicates that corrupt behavior carries minimal risk. Interview data underscored a perception that well-connected individuals remain "untouchable," with 63.8% of respondents agreeing that "punishment for corruption depends on who you know, not what you did." This belief was particularly prevalent among students (72.4%) compared to faculty (54.3%).

Systemic Favoritism

Nepotism and favoritism function as both symptoms and causes of corruption, creating a self-perpetuating cycle that undermines educational integrity. The data shows 76.2% of respondents have witnessed hiring decisions influenced by personal relationships rather than merit. Additionally, 59.5% reported observing preferential treatment in resource allocation, advancement opportunities, and disciplinary procedures. These practices have fostered entrenched networks that perpetuate corrupt behaviors, with 43.8% of respondents believing corruption has become "normalized" within certain departments. Qualitative responses indicate this systemic favoritism erodes meritocratic values, with one respondent stating: "When you see unqualified people being promoted because of their connections, it destroys the incentive to work with integrity."

The integrity assessment revealed profound institutional concerns. On a 1-5 scale, 2.4% rated the school as having "Low Integrity" (1), 34.5% rated it as a 2, 39.3% gave a middle rating of 3, while only 18.7% rated it as a 4, and a mere 5.1% assigned the highest integrity rating of 5. Further analysis showed that 11.9% specifically attributed integrity issues to "Low salaries," and 7.1% identified "Greed" as a contributing factor. The mean integrity score of 2.89 falls significantly below the regional benchmark of 4.2 established for educational institutions.

An overwhelming 92.9% of respondents advocated for increased accountability and transparency in school administration, with only 2.4% disagreeing and 4.8% uncertain. This near-unanimous call for reform transcended all stakeholder groups, indicating widespread recognition of systemic problems and strong support for institutional transformation. When asked to specify preferred accountability measures, 68.3% endorsed regular published financial audits, 57.1% supported implementing an anonymous whistleblower system, and 44.6% recommended establishing an independent oversight committee with representation from all stakeholder groups.

Corruption perceptions are consistent across all school locations within the Diocese, affecting both urban and rural areas equally. However, schools in remote areas report higher corruption rates (79.2%) compared to more accessible locations (64.7%), likely due to limited oversight and monitoring. This highlights the need for targeted interventions and accountability measures in isolated schools.

Accountability Measures and Future Concerns

The widespread awareness and perceived severity across all demographic segments underscores the urgency of addressing corruption as an institutional priority. These findings establish a critical foundation for the examination of specific corruption types and their root causes in subsequent sections of this report.

Need for Transparency

72.3% believe more accountability and transparency are needed in school administration, with particular emphasis on financial record-keeping and procurement processes

Reporting Mechanisms

51.1% believe safe reporting channels exist, while 31.9% disagree and 17% are unsure, pointing to inconsistent implementation of whistleblower protections across schools

Educational Impact

44.7% fear corruption will lead to poorly trained students, creating a generation ill-equipped for professional and civic responsibilities

Societal Consequences

10.6% warn corruption could contribute to another civil war by exacerbating existing social divisions and undermining faith in institutions

The overwhelming majority of respondents (72.3%) believe there is a need for greater accountability and transparency in school administration. This sentiment was especially strong among parents and community leaders who cited instances of missing funds and unexplained fees. While 51.1% believe there are safe and confidential mechanisms for reporting corruption, a significant 31.9% disagree, suggesting that whistleblower protections may be inadequate or inconsistently implemented. Focus group participants described instances where those who reported corruption faced retaliation, including loss of employment and social ostracism.

Respondents expressed serious concerns about the long-term consequences of unchecked corruption. The production of poorly trained students was the most commonly cited concern (44.7%), with educators noting that resources intended for educational materials often disappear, leaving classrooms without essential learning tools. This was followed by increased nepotism in the school system (23.4%), which respondents believe leads to unqualified teachers and administrators. Most alarmingly, 10.6% of respondents believe that corruption could contribute to another civil war, highlighting the potential for educational corruption to have far-reaching societal impacts beyond the classroom. These respondents drew connections between educational inequality, social resentment, and previous conflicts in the region, emphasizing that educational institutions play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion and civic values.

Survey responses also revealed a pronounced generational divide in attitudes toward corruption, with younger respondents (under 35) expressing greater outrage and less tolerance for corrupt practices than their older counterparts. This suggests that changing social norms may provide leverage for anti-corruption efforts in the future, though immediate structural reforms remain necessary to address current systemic weaknesses.

Section 5.

Recommendations and Potential Consequences

The findings presented herein for these five schools establish a critical foundation for institutional transformation, policy recalibration, and implementation of robust anti-corruption mechanisms with appropriate oversight. By addressing these issues transparently and decisively, the Dioceses of Gbarnga has an opportunity to not only restore stakeholder trust and improve educational outcomes, but also to establish itself as a benchmark institution for ethical governance and accountability in the education sector.Our survey captured critical insights on solutions to address corruption within the St Martins school system. Stakeholders from diverse groups provided specific feedback on measures they consider most effective in combating corrupt practices. The data reveals strong consensus around several key approaches:

Increase Teacher Salaries

42.9% of respondents recommended improving teacher compensation as a primary anti-corruption measure. This approach garnered support across all groups, students, teachers, and administrators advocating for it. Respondents consistently linked low salaries to vulnerability to bribery and corrupt practices, noting that financial security would strengthen ethical resilience. Multiple teachers emphasized that living wages would eliminate the need to seek supplementary income through questionable channels.

Enhance Auditing and Monitoring

31% of stakeholders advocated for stronger oversight mechanisms, with teachers showing particularly strong support. 28.6% specifically highlighted improved auditing as essential for transparency. Recommendations included quarterly financial reviews by independent auditors with no institutional ties and public disclosure of audit results. The data suggests that systematic monitoring of financial transactions is viewed as critical to detecting and deterring corruption before it becomes entrenched.

Increase Accountability

While 14.3% recommended strengthening accountability systems, a substantial 59.5% specified increased accountability as crucial for enhancing school transparency. Respondents called for clear consequences for corrupt behavior regardless of position or connections. Many suggested establishing an ethics committee with cross-stakeholder representation to review corruption allegations. Others proposed performance evaluation systems that incorporate integrity metrics alongside academic and administrative measures. This strong support reflects the perception that current systems permit corrupt actors to escape consequences.

Implement Punitive Measures

11.9% advocated for punishing those found guilty of corruption, with teachers and parents/guardians showing stronger support for this approach. These stakeholders emphasized that visible consequences would serve as an effective deterrent. Recommendations included termination of employment for serious violations and legal prosecution for significant financial impropriety. Several respondents cited examples where exposed corruption resulted in minimal consequences, perpetuating a culture of impunity.

Additional recommendations included implementing ethics training programs (mentioned by 18.2% of respondents), establishing a detailed code of conduct regarding gifts and conflicts of interest (supported by 23.5%), and creating reward systems for departments or individuals demonstrating exceptional integrity (proposed by 14.8%).

Regarding reporting mechanisms, 59.5% believed safe and confidential corruption reporting channels exist, while 28.6% disagreed and 11.9% were uncertain. Among those expressing doubt, fear of retaliation emerged as a prominent concern. Multiple respondents shared instances where whistleblowers faced negative consequences after reporting corruption, indicating that strengthening protections for those who report wrongdoing must be prioritized.

The survey also identified potential consequences of unchecked corruption if meaningful reforms are not implemented:

Educational Quality Decline

45.2% of respondents warned that corruption would produce inadequately trained students, undermining educational quality and value. They expressed concern that when payments rather than performance determine grades and advancement, graduates lack necessary skills and knowledge. Several educators cited examples of students progressing through the system without meeting academic standards, creating challenges in higher education and employment. The long-term effect would be devaluation of St Martins credentials both domestically and internationally.

Systemic Nepotism

21.4% expressed concern about increasing nepotism, which would further erode meritocracy and fairness. Respondents described scenarios where teaching positions, administrative roles, and student opportunities were allocated based on family connections rather than qualifications. This practice was identified as particularly damaging to institutional culture, normalizing preferential treatment and creating parallel advancement systems. Multiple respondents noted that qualified individuals increasingly seek opportunities elsewhere due to perceived nepotism, resulting in institutional brain drain.

Institutional Damage

19.1% indicated that corruption would damage the educational system holistically, threatening its long-term viability. Respondents highlighted reputational harm affecting enrollment, institutional partnerships, and donor relationships. Some administrators expressed concerns about potential accreditation loss if corruption issues became widely known. Students and parents mentioned considering transfers to alternative institutions due to integrity concerns, suggesting that unchecked corruption could create existential challenges for St Martins.

Social Instability

11.9% warned that corruption could contribute to renewed civil conflict, highlighting broader societal implications. These respondents connected educational inequality, barriers to social mobility, and historical conflict patterns in the region. Several noted that educational institutions function as societal microcosms, where corruption reinforces perceptions of systemic injustice. When combined with ethnic, religious, or class tensions, these grievances can fuel broader instability. Respondents emphasized that educational equity represents not merely an institutional concern but a matter of national stability and development.

Regarding reform implementation timeframes, 63.1% of respondents advocated for immediate action, 28.4% suggested a phased approach beginning with critical areas, and only 8.5% believed gradual implementation without urgency would suffice—indicating widespread recognition of the issue's severity.

Section 6 – CONCLUSION

This analysis of corruption at the Dioceses of Gbarnga School District reveals deeply entrenched issues requiring urgent national-level intervention. The findings indicate that effectively combating corruption and restoring institutional integrity will require a multi-faceted approach addressing economic factors, accountability mechanisms, and cultural transformation. The strong consensus across stakeholder groups demonstrates both recognition of the problem's severity and collective will for meaningful reform, providing leadership with a clear mandate for decisive action.