

Saatchi fights corruption in Kenya

It doesn't take long to realize Kenya has a problem with corruption. Almost daily, the nation's press includes stories of public employees lining their pockets and donors are withholding aid to the East African nation because of corruption concerns.

Two Kenyan ministers - Education Minister George Saitoti and Energy Minister Kiraitu Murungi - quit this month after being linked to corruption scandals that have shaken President Mwai Kibaki's government. This follows the recent resignation of the finance minister and the departure from office of Kibaki's personal assistant in one of Africa's biggest corruption scandals - the billion-dollar Goldenberg affair. The hearings into the Goldenberg fraud have left Kenyans—a majority of whom live on less than a dollar per day—reeling at the news of how much money the country lost to fraudsters.

This is the backdrop against which Kenya put out a request for pitches on a government sponsored five-year Anti-Corruption Campaign.

Six agencies pitched for the account, but it was MCL Saatchi & Saatchi, one of three hubs in the extensive Saatchi & Saatchi Africa Network of agencies across 16 countries, that walked away with the account.

Managing director Catherine Kinyany says the pitch was incredibly difficult: "We needed to define how we would begin given the current mood of the Kenyan people and how to roll-out this campaign over five years. It's a national campaign so there are language barriers to address too."

Kinyany began 'The Fight Against Corruption' by creating a logo and pay-off line for the campaign - an eye with a tiny Kenyan flag flying in the pupil: 'See Kenya through proud eyes'.

Inspire change

Samira Matthews, creative director, says: "We had to create something that could be adapted to all phases of the campaign, so phase one - the launch - is to inspire hope and begin to change mindsets, while phase two is more direct and talks about everyone being 'in the eye of corruption'."

Launched by the president in Uhuru (Freedom) park in Nairobi in February, there is a huge educational aspect to the campaign.

Matthews says a large part of the problem is that people simply don't know what corruption is. She explains: "People have no idea that identity documents and birth certificates are freely obtainable. And the bureaucracy supports corruption because everything takes so long...so if the official is given some money, the process is speeded up."

"People just don't know their rights. They don't know the traffic laws; what is a ticketed offence and what not. It's so easy to stop people because we don't have formal driving schools and many people drive without licenses."

Kinyany agrees that the planned educational television and radio programmes are an essential part of the success of the campaign. She says that showing people the Kenya they could have is the next step: "We need to demonstrate the cost of corruption by saying these are the roads we could drive on, this is the building we could have, this is what our schools could look like."

In January this year newspapers began publishing the names and cases pending in the corruption courts. Matthews believes this was a turning point for Kenyans: "For the first time people saw that it's not just officials who are corrupt, but ordinary citizens and businessmen too. This started changing perceptions already."

"We have to get people involved by putting up signs in public offices - the tax, police and immigration departments, for example - that explain quite simply the steps involved in your transaction and whether you need to pay for the documents and if so, how much. Then people have to demand that these steps are followed. To make this campaign sustainable we have to get people to talk and raise awareness of the issues."

Measurement

The success of the campaign will be monitored by corruption indices, which will provide an approximation of the scope and aspects of corruption based on the assessment of citizens and public officials: "Personal involvement in corrupt practices can only be measured through anonymous admissions by respondents about their involvement in acts of corruption. This makes the index of personal involvement one of the few realistic measures of the actual level of proliferation of corruption."

These indices include attitudes, actual corrupt practices, and assessment of the spread of corruption and anti-corruption expectations.

"We will also monitor our ranking in the Transparency International Global report. This report is an annual evaluation of the state of corruption around the world. The report draws together analyses from experts and activists and presents recent developments pertaining to corruption as well as the fight against it."

Kinyany says they are hoping to enter a more positive phase of the campaign by 2008: "There will have been some changes implemented by then and we can begin to visit schools and other projects that will have benefited because the cost of corruption has dropped."

"There must be a clear demonstration of the success of the campaign by this point to keep people believing in the value of honesty."

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