

# Informal governance, social norms and corruption: reflections on health care in East Africa

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# Basel Institute on Governance

We are an independent not-for-profit competence centre working around the world with the public and private sectors to counter corruption and other financial crimes and to improve the quality of governance. <https://baselgovernance.org/>



# Corruption risks in health care in East Africa

- Practices of corruption persist, despite the presence of formal elaborate legal, institutional, and organisational frameworks. Why?
- Corruption risks: understanding the distance between formal legal rules and informal social rules of the game
- 2 researches explain this phenomenon:
  - Governance Assessment of the Public Sector Drug Management System in Uganda (2011)
  - Behavioural drivers of corruption in health facilities in Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda (2017)

# Corruption risks in the health care system

## Hospital boss explains theft of Gov't drugs

By Moses Walubiri Added 26th June 2019 05:28 PM

Commissioner of Parliament, Peter Ogwang, demanded that the health workers who appear selling government issued medicines in the television documentary; "Stealing from the Sick" should be arrested and prosecuted.

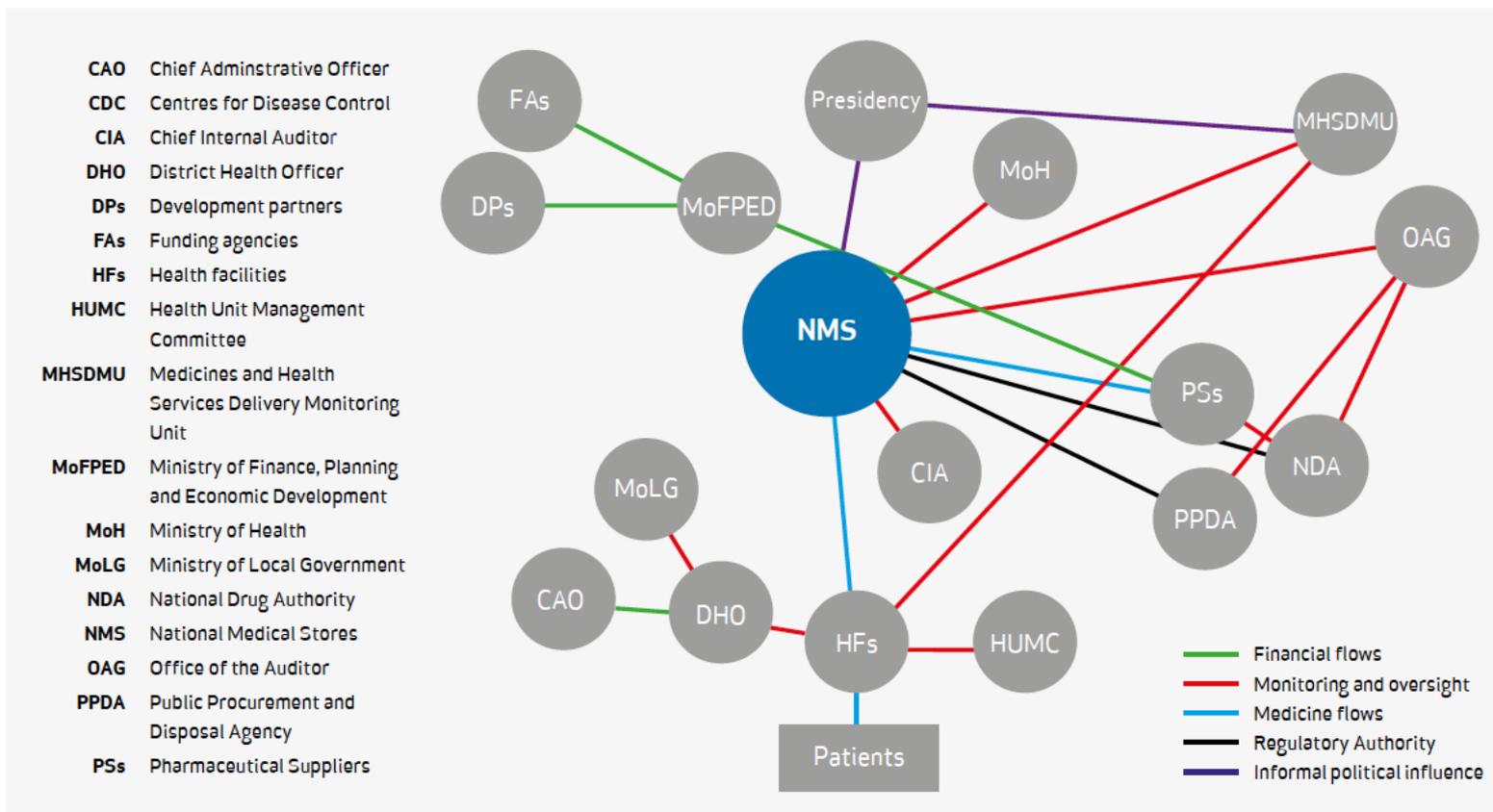


*Dr Nathan Onyachi (centre), the director of Masaka Regional Referral Hospital answering questions during the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament on Wednesday June 26, 2019. Right is the hospital's accountant Basil Kamara. Photo by Timothy Murungi*

# Governance Assessment of the Public Sector Drug Management System in Uganda

- In November 2009 there was a large public outrage over widespread stockouts of essential drugs at public health facilities
- The Ugandan government centralised the budget for drugs and medical supplies to the National Medical Stores
- NMS is a parastatal corporation mandated with the procurement, storage, and distribution of drugs for the public sector
- The aim of this study was to assess the new system for corruption risks and to suggest suitable anti corruption measures

# Institutional mapping of the Uganda public sector drug chain



Source: Baez-Camargo and Kamujuni

# What did we learn?

The study identified two major corruption risks along the drug supply chain:

1. Lack of transparency and accountability at NMS
2. Leakages of drugs along the distribution line leading to stock-outs

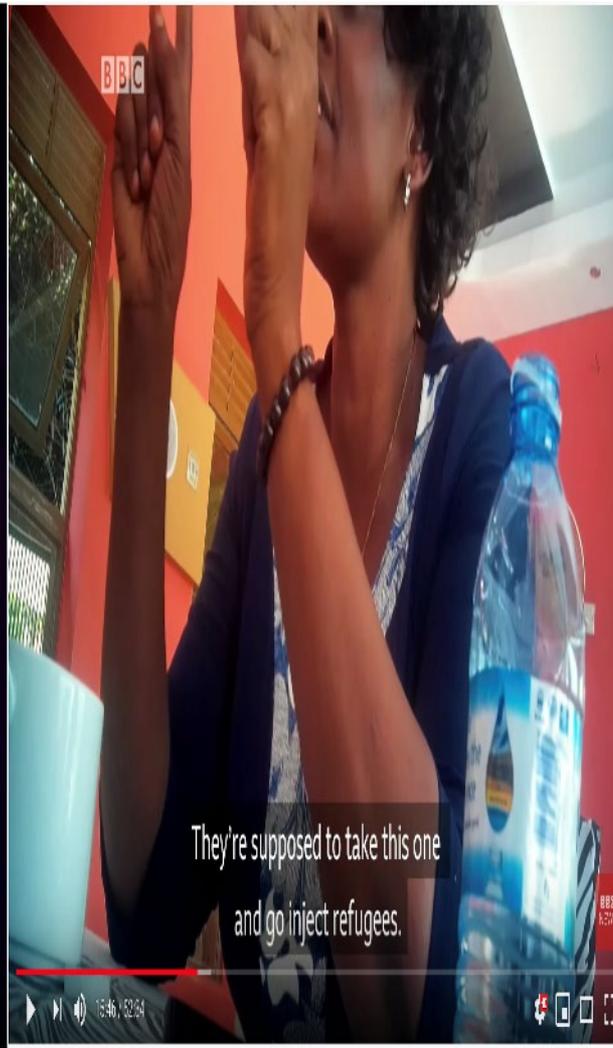
## **Centralisation of informal power and lack of accountability and transparency at the NMS:**

- personal connection between the general manager and the President
- Large space for discretionary action skewed power and influence in the health sector towards NMS

Fragmentation of formal decision-making power and drug leakages at the local level:

- health workers face poor working conditions: salary and career opportunities

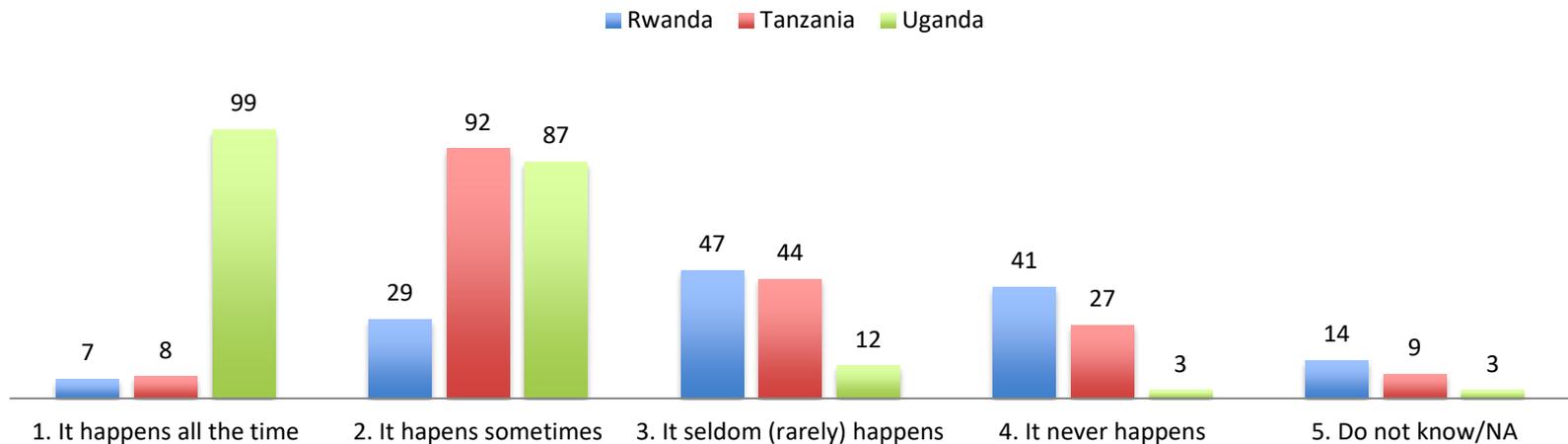
# How to curb corruption risks?



# Corruption, Social Norms and Behaviours in East Africa

The research aimed to understand social norms and attitudes that drive individuals to engage in petty corruption in the health sector in Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda

## Is corruption prevalent in the health sector?



# Sociality and informal networks spur bribery, favouritism and gift-giving in health services

- Social networks are a form of currency
- Social norms: solidarity, reciprocity and obligation towards the group
- Norms are enforced: The social costs of not helping the family member outweigh the potential risk of being caught breaking institutional rules



# Social networks and corruption

- Expectations that public official must extract rents for the benefit of the group
- People offer unsolicited bribes and “gifts” in order to create a relationship (co-optation into the network)
- Hierarchical networks coerce public providers into joining into the corrupt schemes

The consequence of the superposition of informal rules and expectations over formal entitlements endows the behaviours of citizens and public officials alike with a great deal of ambivalence

# Can social networks be harnessed in favour of anti-corruption?

- **Research project: Addressing Bribery and Favouritism in the Tanzanian Health Sector**  
<https://ace.globalintegrity.org/projects/tanzhealth/>
- Although social networks have been identified as fuelling and perpetuating practices of petty corruption, *they can also be harnessed to promote positive anti-corruption behaviours*
- Working with community opinion leaders to deliver behavioural interventions (attitudinal and behavioural change)

# Thank you.... time for questions and comments

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